

# The Brazilian Anthropological Exhibition of 1882: History, Science, and Power at the Museu Nacional of Rio de Janeiro

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On September 2, 2018, the Museu Nacional at the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro was engulfed in a significant fire, which resulted in the loss of a substantial part of its collections. This disaster marks a pivotal moment in the history of the museum, which is currently undergoing a reconstruction process (Duarte 2022). As a two-hundred-year-old scientific institution and the first of its kind in Brazil, until the 2018 fire the museum housed one of the largest collections of natural history and anthropological sciences in Latin America. Originally named the Museu Real (Royal Museum) and later the National Museum of Rio de Janeiro, its trajectory holds a prominent place in the country's history, given that the disciplinary knowledge produced within its walls was closely tied to state policies (monarchic, imperial, and republican) concerning the management of territories and populations. [1]

In the late 19th century, the then director of the National Museum, Ladislau Netto, organized the Brazilian Anthropological Exhibition in the year 1882 for various reasons: the concern to consolidate and legitimize the anthropological sciences in Brazil, the need to integrate

indigenous peoples into national history, and the urge of the imperial government to establish a specialized ethnographical museum. This was the first and only exhibition of its kind in Brazil and lasted for three months, showcasing hundreds of indigenous objects and attracting thousands of visitors. It was a commemorative exhibition planned to coincide with the Exhibition of the History of Brazil held at the National Library in 1881. While the latter displayed written documents highlighting the achievements of the Portuguese colonizer, the former displayed ethnographic and archeological objects in order to present the past and the 'evolution' of non-literate peoples. Delays in organizing the Anthropological Exhibition, primarily due to difficulties in acquiring collections, meant its inauguration was postponed to the year 1882. This study analyzes the intentions of its creators and the representation practices that shaped the exhibition layout, giving it specific meanings.

## The Past as a Question

In 1866, Ladislau de Souza Mello Netto (1838–1894) [2] returned from France after studying botany at the Jardin des Plantes in Paris for two years. He was appointed as the director of the 'Second Section—Botany, Agriculture, and Mechanical Arts' at the National Museum of Rio de Janeiro. He held this position until 1874 when he became the general director of the museum, a role he kept until the end of his life. During this period, the National Museum was already a significant scientific institution in the Empire, centralizing studies in the natural sciences in the country. It established connections and exchanges with foreign institutions, facilitated relationships with naturalists, and operated in a building located in Campo de Santana, the political center of the court [3] (Guimarães 2011). Ladislau Netto attributed his motivation to explore the distant past of Brazil and its 'primitive' inhabitants to his experience in France. In the preface to the sixth volume of the journal *Arquivos do Museu Nacional*, published to celebrate the Brazilian Anthropological Exhibition, he wrote that, while in Paris, he was carried away by the waves he saw sweeping across Europe with the discovery of Boucher de Perthes. This discovery, according to Ladislau Netto, 'expanded the boundaries of the origins of man.' [4]

Ladislau Netto closely followed the discussions surrounding the significant discovery of that time: the finding of fossilized human remains by Boucher de Perthes. It marked the invention of prehistory. Jacques Boucher de Perthes (1788–1868) discovered carved stones alongside mammal fossils in northern France around 1840. This finding led him to associate the contemporaneity of the carved stones with the geological fauna specimens found in the same location. Boucher de Perthes' discovery extended the timeline by expanding the antiquity of humankind, a subject that, until then, had been mired in controversy without substantial evidence. In the years following the discovery, Boucher de Perthes sought validation for his study at the Museum of Natural History in Paris, but his efforts were in vain. His work remained under suspicion among scientists (Hurel 2014). It was only in the late 1850s that his findings were acknowledged and embraced by scientists in France and England (Blanckaert 1990). In 1860, the material discovered by Boucher de Perthes was finally accepted to be displayed in the galleries of the Museum of Natural History in Paris, thanks to

the support of Armand de Quatrefages (1810–1892), a professor of anthropology, who characterized the discovery as a scientific revolution (Hurel 2014).

The 'revolution' brought about by Boucher de Perthes's study lay not only in demonstrating the antiquity of humankind but, above all, in the transformation of the human perception of the past, and of time itself (Blanckaert 1990). The invention of prehistory extended the notion of time, establishing a past of unlimited and incalculable duration. It represented a cognitive invention for human understanding of this long and indefinite time, created precisely at a moment when the ideals of progress (technological and economic) and its accelerated rate marked the imagination of modernity, giving a swift pace to evolution (Labrusse 2019). This complex temporal perception likely motivated the emergence of the idea of catastrophe, wherein that gigantic past began to weigh on human expectations, taking the form of disaster and extinction (Labrusse 2019). Moreover, the invention of prehistory presented scholars with a notion of time that was not spatialized, challenging their understanding of human history, no longer objectifiable in terms of historical temporality: the time before history became inexpressible within the system of dates and events (Labrusse 2019).

Boucher de Perthes's study provided evidence in favor of the evolutionary paradigm by enabling associations between 'fossil man,' 'primitives,' and contemporary humanity. Comparisons between prehistoric objects and those used by 'primitive' peoples, for example, served as evidence for creating links between different times (Dias 1991). The 'retrospective march' facilitated by this type of study allowed the convergence of transformist ideas with the geological method, nurturing the belief that the people of the geological era represented the infancy of humanity, heading towards perfection (Pautrat 2011). Reflections on the 'fossil man' would integrate the new world order born from the dissemination of evolutionary theories, where a universal law of progress would become the key to interpreting the history of humanity (Hurel and Coye 2011).

Upon returning to Brazil, Ladislau Netto could then apply his experience and training from Europe to the archeological and ethnographic studies he dedicated himself to at the National Museum of Rio de Janeiro. He wrote that the museum was

the sole scientific institution in Brazil capable of collecting and studying the remains or the last representatives of several million individuals who inhabited the coasts and plains of the interior of Brazil for ten centuries.

Today, a few hundred thousand descendants of these ancient lords of South America still remain to give us, unfortunately, a very weak idea of their ancestors. However, a considerable number of them die each year, and the race will soon disappear completely or merge through miscegenation [...].

Numerous tribes have already disappeared, taking with them their languages, their barbaric ceremonies, their traditions, and various other documents that would be precious foundations for ethnographic studies today. We must hurry to save what little remains, lest we be condemned by our successors in the future, just as we now disapprove of our predecessors' negligence in the past. [5]

It was with an eye on the future that Ladislau Netto sought to understand the past. He was interested in documenting indigenous customs, which he referred to as 'documents,' saving them from the disappearance to which indigenous races were condemned. These 'documents' would hold the keys to understanding Brazil's prehistoric past. It is important to note that Brazil's prehistory was quite distinct from European prehistory: while in Europe, 'primitives' were extinct and fossilized in a time concluded before history, in Brazil, the 'primitives,' represented by 'wild Indians' were alive before the eyes of naturalists, with their language, habits, customs, and beliefs, following the natural course of 'evolution' that would lead them to extinction. 'Documenting' their practices and preserving their productions was essential for understanding the enigmatic past of the peoples of the Americas. The National Museum would, therefore, serve as an archive of this extinct and soon-to-be-extinct humanity.

Motivated by this understanding, Ladislau Netto planned the Brazilian Anthropological Exhibition of 1882. Indigenous objects of different uses and types, as well as paintings, photographs, and books with them as a theme, were presented on this occasion. The indigenous body also drew interest in the exhibition: in the case of the living, serving for the creation of sculptures and anthropometric measurements; in the case of the deceased, providing bones for comparison and serialization. In Ladislau Netto's words, the Anthropological Exhibition should be 'complementary' to the History of Brazil Exhibition held at the National Library. [6] Both would present a narrative about the national formation: the history exhibition would introduce the public to the national past, whose time and space were well-defined in written documents and were influenced by Portuguese 'civilization' (Galdeira 2015; Macedo 2013); and the anthropology exhibition would make intelligible the past and 'evolution' of peoples without writing through ethnographic and archeological objects, which held the status of either antiquity or specimen, oscillating between classifications of natural history and national history (Andermann 2004).

## Scenes from the Exhibition

On July 29, 1882, the Anthropological Exhibition at the National Museum was inaugurated. The choice of the date was a tribute to Princess Isabel, whose birthday was on this day—the History of Brazil Exhibition at the National Library was inaugurated on December 2, 1881, the birthday of Emperor Pedro II. The opening event was attended by members of the imperial family and other political figures, who were welcomed 'to the sound of the national anthem.' [7] The music to enliven the ceremony was provided by the band from the Asylum for Helpless Boys. [8] The exhibition lasted for three months, during which the public could visit, explore the eight rooms comprising the exhibition, and observe the entire display structure arranged in dioramas and panoplies. The dioramas consisted of scenarios where the reproduction of the indigenous way of life was imagined. This exhibition technique created an effect of reality and plausibility, quite different from the visual experience derived from showcases and cabinets. As for the panoplies, objects similar in form and function were organized symmetrically, side by side, on the walls of the rooms. This type of exhibition

structure was marked by exhaustiveness: a large quantity of morphologically similar items were repeatedly displayed.

The eight rooms were organized by areas of knowledge and designated by the names of those who contributed in some way to the understanding of the indigenous theme. The Vaz de Caminha room [9] gathered ethnographic objects such as bows, arrows, spears, and paddles 'from different tribes of Brazil,' including the 'Guajajara,' 'Carajá,' 'botocudos Nak-nanuks,' 'Parintintins,' and 'Coroados.' [10] The room featured forty items, including contributions from private collectors such as Emperor Pedro II and Count D'Eu, as well as institutions like the Museu Paraense, the Museu Paranaense, and the National Museum itself. Three items were extracted from wartime situations, making them witnesses to the narrated episodes:

30. Arrows taken from the dissected corpse of Silverio da Costa Alecrim, killed by the Botocudos at Lagoa Grande, 21 leagues below Philadelphia, on May 17, 1882. – Exhibitor: João Ferreira de Andrade Leite. [...]

35. Arrows taken at Ribeirão da Prata from the savages who attacked the expedition of 30 men led by Major Jorge Lopes da Costa Moreira, director of the military colony of S. Lourenço, province of Mato Grosso. – Exhibitor: M. Paranaense.

36. Arrows with which the Matanaués, on the Aripuanã River, municipality of Borba, province of Pará, murdered five people. (MN) [11].

The arrows, viewed as objects of attack rather than defense, served as 'evidence' of the 'barbarism' and 'savagery' attributed to the indigenous people, with terms like 'dissected corpse,' 'attacked,' and 'murdered' associated with them. The episode of the 'Botocudos' who allegedly 'dissected' Silverio Alecrim, and whose arrows were collected by João Ferreira de Andrade Leite, is a clear example of this. Indigenous resistance was prompted by the invasion of their territory for the construction of the Bahia-Minas railway, leading to intense conflicts in 'Philadelphia.' [12] A week after the confrontation that led to Silverio's death, stories were heard of the death of thirty indigenous people as retaliation (Agostinho 2020). The dispute over the construction of the railway was not mentioned in the *Guia da Exposição Antropológica Brasileira* nor in the exhibition room. However, from a critical perspective, we cannot lose sight of the contemplative dimension of a museography that overlooks violence and erases the conditions under which collections were formed.

The next room was named Rodrigues Ferreira. Alexandre Rodrigues Ferreira (1756–1815) was a Brazilian naturalist who, at the request of the Portuguese Crown, led a scientific expedition that crossed the northern region of Brazil between 1783 and 1792. The room also presented ethnographic objects from indigenous groups such as the 'Ipurinãs,' 'Jurunas,' 'Caingangs,' 'Tembés,' 'Parecis,' and 'Cherente.' Among the objects were 'poisoned arrows,' 'instruments of war, hunting, fishing, and music,' representations of indigenous people in sculptures, watercolors from Alexandre Rodrigues Ferreira's scientific journey, and a 'bow' reinterpreted as a war trophy. [13] The accompanying description stated that it was an object taken from a defeated individual: 'Bow taken from Chief Voãe, Botocudo, in December 1881,

in the place called Estiva, municipality of Rio Negro, province of Paraná (MN).’ [14]



**Fig. 1. Rodrigues Ferreira Room (Ethnography)**  
 Brazilian Anthropological Exhibition: artifacts and aspects of indigenous life, 1882, National Museum.  
 Photo: Marc Ferrez (1843–1923). Source: National Library

In Figure 1, we see three ‘ubás,’ types of canoes ‘made from jutaí bark by the Tembés of the Capim River.’ [15] Inside them were sculptures representing indigenous people with ‘oars’ [16] accompanied by ‘covo’ and ‘jequi,’ [17] objects used for fishing, implying navigation through rivers for that activity. There is also a standing female sculpture carrying baskets next to taxidermized animals. Possibly, on her head, was the ‘pãnacary,’ which, according to the *Guia*, was used to ‘cover the head, carry fish, and various objects.’ [18] In the background, there are numerous panoplies consisting of spears, arrows, bows, and paddles, along with three other sculptures and a ‘model of a hut,’ [19] captured in the foreground by the photographer in Figure 2.



**Fig. 2. Rodrigues Ferreira Room (Ethnography)**  
 Brazilian Anthropological Exhibition: artifacts and aspects of indigenous life, 1882, National Museum.  
 Photo: Marc Ferrez (1843–1923). Source: National Library

There you can see two sculptures positioned face to face: while one of them has an object brought to the mouth, a 'blowgun' [20] perhaps, the other seems to assist it, perhaps 'herbing' [21] the arrows. Both are dressed and adorned with feather ornaments. The quantity of weapons organized in panoplies is significant. Spears, bows, arrows, and clubs, deprived of the functionality for which they were created, now form geometric designs decorating the exhibition room, indicating the disarmament of indigenous peoples and the triumph of war over them. The panoplies gave indigenous weapons a decorative function, removing any potential threat from them by making them available only to the gaze, no longer for handling.

Dioramas served as an effective educational resource by providing a realistic effect, facilitating the visitor's understanding of the use of each item shown and leading them to imagine different and distant ways of life. The use of dioramas and panoplies as exhibition resources was common in the ephemeral world's fairs and permanent exhibitions of foreign museums throughout the 19th and early 20th centuries. In Europe, an engineering of reality was constructed in exhibition spaces, eliciting in the observer a sense of reality based on the representation and verisimilitude of the lifestyles of Africans captured in colonial wars (Magubane 2009).



Fig. 3. Rodrigues Ferreira Room (Ethnography)  
Brazilian Anthropological Exhibition: artifacts and aspects of indigenous life, 1882, National Museum.  
Photo: Marc Ferrez (1843–1923). Source: National Library

The next two rooms were the Léry Room and the Hartt Room. It is noteworthy that the geologist Charles Frederick Hartt (1840–1878) led the Geological Commission of the Empire (1875–1877), an expedition in which he gathered collections for the National Museum. He was the director of the Third Section of the National Museum. He had died four years before the Brazilian Anthropological Exhibition, in 1878, a victim of yellow fever. Jean de Léry (1536–1613) was in Brazil during the Antarctic France, a period of French domination in Rio de Janeiro. In 1578 he published *Histoire d'un voyage fait en terre du Brésil*, a work in which he wrote about indigenous customs. Both rooms displayed a total of two hundred archeological

objects, such as 'fragments of ancient pottery from the Amazon [...] and from the shell mounds in the south,' 'ancient ceramic products,' vases, and 'smooth,' 'carved,' or 'painted' fragments, 'zoomorphic and anthropomorphic ornaments,' 'idols,' 'funerary urns,' 'igaçabas,' and 'pots.' [22] The material was 'excavated' in the provinces of Amazonas, Pará, Ceará, Alagoas, Minas Gerais, Espírito Santo, Santa Catarina, and Rio Grande do Sul.

The next room was the Lund Room. Peter Wilhelm Lund (1801–1880) was a Danish paleontologist who, in 1843, discovered human and animal fossils in the city of Lagoa Santa, Minas Gerais. The finding was considered an important contribution to Brazilian paleontology. This room was the only one dedicated to anthropology and presented visitors with the museum's bone collections. We will talk more about this later. Next to the Lund Room was the Martius Room with objects from both ethnography and archeology. Karl Friedrich Philipp von Martius (1794–1868) was a German naturalist who came to Brazil as part of the Austrian Mission. Between 1817 and 1820, he traveled with Johann Baptist von Spix through various provinces to study Brazilian flora. In 1845, he wrote *Como se deve escrever a história do Brasil*, a work awarded by the Brazilian Historical and Geographic Institute (IHGB). Regarding the archeological material gathered in the room, there were ceramic collections from Peru and Dutch Guiana owned by Emperor Pedro II. The ethnographic collections included 'cuia,' 'balaio,' 'tipitis,' and 'esteiras,' as well as 'some modern ceramic products from the Amazon, São Francisco (Alagoas), and Paraná.' [23] About the 'tipitis,' which were used to squeeze cassava or extract oil from seeds, a visitor recognized it as an object widely used in Rio de Janeiro: a 'clever press invented by the Indians to extract cassava juice, and of which even at the end of three centuries, civilized man still makes use near the capital of the Empire.' [24] About the ceramic objects, they were highlighted for their beauty in the *Diário de Pernambuco*:

In the clay objects displayed there, although made by indigenous hands, one can already recognize the touch of civilization, the modern product; however, it is not without admiration that one looks at this industry of the country and reflects on the Indians' aptitude for ceramic work. The clay vessels [...] are worth seeing due to their well-finished and tasteful form and ornamentation. [25]

The next room, named Gabriel Soares, also attracted visitors' attention. Gabriel Soares de Souza (1540–1591) was a Portuguese nobleman who came to live in Brazil in 1569. He wrote the *Tratado descritivo do Brasil em 1587*. In that room, there were 'archeolithic collections' and 'many products of Brazilian feather art, ornaments, fabrics, and clothing' [26] were described as 'undeniably beautiful due to the combination of colors and shapes,' and the clothing worn by the Ticunas 'in their dances and festivities' was 'truly worth seeing and arouses the greatest curiosity.' [27] In this room, there were also 'mummified heads' from the Jívaro people (Ecuador) and the Mundurucu people (Brazil). About the first, Ladislau Netto wrote: 'Mummified and reduced head of an indigenous chief from Ecuador, preserving its entire structure in miniature'; [28] the second was described as follows:

131. Heads of two Parintintin chiefs mummified by the Mundurucu. After



the battle, the Mundurucu cut off the heads of the enemies they killed, take them to their villages, and prepare them in a way that preserves them for many years. It is the esteemed trophy that always accompanies the warrior. [29]

Finally, we have the Anchieta Room dedicated to ethnography. In it, bibliographic and iconographic material produced by travelers about the indigenous people was exhibited. There were books, paintings, photographs, engravings, lithographs, and watercolors, among which we highlight works by José de Anchieta (1534–1597), a Jesuit priest who worked on the catechesis of the indigenous people of Brazil and authored the first grammar of the Tupi language, and Ferdinand Denis (1798–1890), a French historian and writer who traveled to Brazil in 1816 and, in partnership with the painter Hippolyte Taunay, wrote *Le Brésil, ou Histoire, mœurs, usages et coutumes des habitans de ce royaume*, published in Paris in 1822; or the oil paintings by Décio Villares (1851–1931) and Francisco Aurelio de Figueiredo (1854–1916), Brazilian painters, sculptors, and caricaturists trained by the Imperial Academy of Fine Arts; and engravings from the following publications: *Reise nach Brasilien* (1820), by the German prince Maximilian zu Wied-Neuwied; *Reise in Brasilien* (1823), by Karl Von Martius; *Voyage pittoresque dans le Brésil* (1835), by Johann Moritz Rugendas (1802–1858), a German painter who came to Brazil in 1822 as a draftsman for the scientific expedition promoted by the Russian consul, Grigory Langsdorff (1774–1852), having traveled through Brazil portraying the landscape, fauna, flora, and scenes of everyday life. This room was full of illustrations. The oil paintings by Décio Villares and Francisco Aurelio de Figueiredo were specially commissioned for the Brazilian Anthropological Exhibition, with many of them painted 'en plein air,' inspired by the indigenous people who were brought to the National Museum for study and public display. [30] Both artists created portraits of busts, adding realism to their works. According to Nascimento (1991), the images produced by painters can be defined by the concept of 'classical clarity, which is directly linked to the ideal of perfection, with which reality is copied. The figure of the set of portrayed individuals always presents perfect visibility, achieved through setting them against a neutral background' (Nascimento 1991, p. 66). Below are some of them.

The 'Chamacôco' was an indigenous individual from the 'tribe' of the same name, twenty years old, and was an 'artillery apprentice at the fortress of São João in Rio de Janeiro.' [31] 'Anhorô' was Kayapó José Marques Anhorô, the first indigenous person hired to work at the National Museum. His responsibilities included recognizing indigenous objects and assisting the director Ladislau Netto with various tasks. [32] When he was a child, Anhorô studied at the Isabel School (located in Leopoldina, now Aruanã), participating in the civilizing project for indigenous children along the Araguaia River in Central Brazil. The students were often acquired through violence, abduction, and imprisonment (Marin 2009). After studying at the Isabel School, he arrived at the National Museum in 1882, around the age of 20, recommended by Aristides Spínola (1850–1925), a deputy and former president of the province of Goiás. [33]

There, Anhorô collaborated with Ladislau Netto in various roles, including teaching him

about the use of *tembetás* among the indigenous people of the Tocantins and Araguaia valleys. [34] When portrayed by Décio Villares, Anhorô was depicted as an exemplary indigenous person, dressed in a luxurious outfit—jacket, shirt, collar, and bowtie—unlike the 'wild' Indians portrayed with lip plates, tooth necklaces, and traditional attire (Nascimento 1991). Anhorô is shown with his left earlobe stretched, indicating his status as a 'former savage,' someone who used the lip plate, an ornament signaling savagery but who reached the state of 'civilization.' According to Andermann (2004), the visual representations produced for the Anthropological Exhibition of 1882 sought to revalue Indianism while also attempting to replace it with the scientific perspective, bringing together a mix of both views of the indigenous people in the museum space. In Brazilian literary and artistic romanticism, Indianism expressed the idealization of the indigenous person as a mythical national hero; it fit into a regime of memory that always placed the image of the indigenous person in the past, aestheticized and ennobled in their customs. In contrast, the real indigenous person was seen as unusual and resistant to civilization (Oliveira 2016).



Fig. 4 & 5 Chamacôco & José Marques Anhorô

Fig. 4: Francisco Aurelio de Figueiredo. Chamacôco. 1882. Oil on canvas. 51.5 x 42.5 cm. Bust. Lost in the fire of 2018.

Fig. 5: Decio Villares. Anhorô. 1882. Oil on canvas. 52.5 x 43.5 cm. Bust. Lost in the fire of 2018.

Source: National Museum/UFRJ

Let us return to the Lund room. There were 'skeletons and skulls of Tembés and Turiuárias Indians [...]; a large number of skulls from various Botocudo tribes; many bones taken from the shell mounds in the province of Santa Catarina [...]' [35] The room contained remains of 93 individuals from different times and places, as counted from the skulls listed in the *Guia da Exposição*. Regarding their origin, approximately half of the 'skulls,' 'skull fragments,' and 'mummies' were obtained from 'caves' and 'shell mounds,' in Brazilian provinces—Amazonas, Pará, Amapá, Alagoas, Minas Gerais, Espírito Santo, São Paulo, Paraná, Santa Catarina, and Rio Grande do Sul—along with Bolivia and Peru. These likely represented archeological remnants. The remaining 'skulls' and 'skeletons' were obtained in recent times from the provinces of Minas Gerais, Rio de Janeiro, Santa Catarina, Paraná, and the Xingu River. It is surprising that the vast majority of them were attributed to the 'Botocudos,' a term that characterized the bearer as a 'ferocious' and utterly 'primitive' being. Many were extracted from indigenous bodies that had died from disease or in combat.

For example, in the room was the 'skull' of a Xavante 'killed during the assault on Jaguareté Farm in 1876,' identified by number 111; or the 'skull' of a Guarani, No. 110, 'who died of smallpox in 1876 on the banks of the Tibagy River'; the 'skull and bones' of the Tuxáuas Mandú and Manuel Raymundo, both 'from the Turiuára tribe'; the 'skeleton of Captain Amaro,' also 'Turiuára.' [36] There were also the 'skeletons' of two children and an 'old woman' from the 'Botocudos of Santa Catarina' in that room. [37] In fact, these were João Brusque (unknown–1861), Djalma Schutel (unknown–1861), and his grandmother (unknown–1861), captured in 1861 after a military attack against their people, baptized, and 'adopted' by the president of the province of Santa Catarina, Francisco Carlos de Araújo Brusque (1822–1886), and the physician Henrique Schutel (1805–1885). The three, days after the 'adoption,' died due to 'high fever' and were buried in the public cemetery of the city [38] (Agostinho 2020).

The acquisition of human remains for the anthropological collections at the Museu Nacional occurred either through donations or by exhuming bodies, such as the one Ladislau Netto conducted 'on the banks of the Capim River, province of Pará.' [39] We did not find documents indicating human dissection at the institution, although this practice was common in other museums around the world. [40] It is important to note that the opening of tombs and the removal of human remains were authorized in Christian cemeteries in Rio de Janeiro, provided that legal deadlines were met. [41] The extracted 'skeletons' could not 'remain exposed on the ground, scattered, or piled up; in each cemetery, there will be a separate place where they will be buried as they are unearthed.' [42] The place to which the exhumed bones were transferred was the ossuaries, spaces intended for the perpetual deposit of remains (Vidal 2015). Fines and penalties could be applied to those who failed to comply with the deadlines and violated graves. [43] This care for the deceased was reinforced by the Christian faith, which believed that burial would ensure the spiritual integrity of the individual, necessary for resurrection (Reis 1991). Even though the flesh had disintegrated, the body would be recomposed around the skeleton, the sole survivor of decomposition (Vidal 2015). In relation to indigenous cemeteries, the necropolis of the Other, the treatment given in the name of science was not visibly the same.

It is worth noting that, from the observers' perspective, the display of bone collections did not represent a moral offense. Firstly, because there was already a diffuse image of Catholic European ossuaries that, since the 13th century, exhibited rows of skulls arranged in ornate compositions, in anonymous series and repetitive patterns. In the French case, for example, photographs of the Paris Catacombs became a public attraction in 1861 (Dias 2012). Secondly, the museography itself and the status of a scientific object transformed bones into abstract entities: they ceased to belong to specific individuals and became representations of a people or a 'race' (Dias 2012). This process of transforming human remains into scientific objects was consolidated by practices common to the scientific method, such as the constitution of series that dissociated bones from the individuals they belonged to, turning them into a sequenced and anonymous set; the creation of 'craniological types,' formed through classifications, measurements, and anatomical comparisons; and the omission of acquisition

conditions, which could involve grave violation, theft, or illegal purchase (Dias 2012). As a consequence of this process, the mortal remains were then devoid of their religious significance and, no longer occupying cemeteries, ended up in museum halls, which, one might say, became the ossuaries of science, places for the perpetual storage and conservation of osteological collections.

Regarding the distribution of all ethnographic, archeological, and osteological material in the eight rooms of the exhibition, it is also important to note that, beyond the groupings by areas of knowledge, with each room dedicated to what was then called 'ethnography,' 'archeology,' and 'anthropology,' there was no textual information about the origin of the items. The visual composition in the exhibition space did not communicate the specificity of each represented people or the practices that formed the collections. Many of these practices were involved in massacres, looting, and violent acts of conquest. [44] The visual language of the exhibition presented to the public objects from Brazil, reaffirming its uniqueness and contributing to the dissemination of a homogenizing idea about indigenous populations.

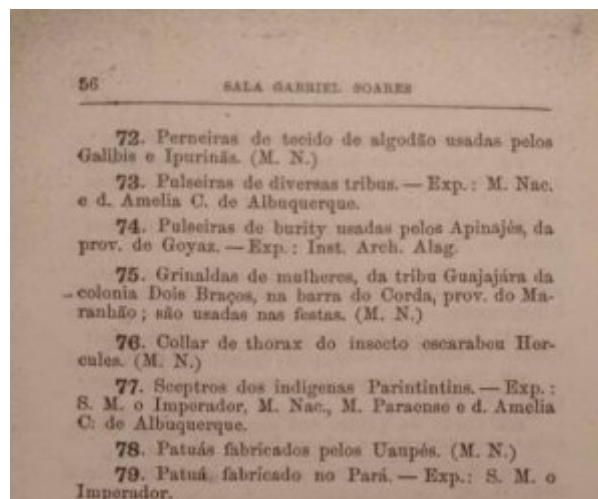


Fig. 6. Excerpt from the *Guia da Exposição Antropológica Brasileira*

Source: *Guia da Exposição Antropológica Brasileira* held by the National Museum of Rio de Janeiro. Rio de Janeiro: Typ. de G. Leuzinger e Filhos, 1882, p. 56.

But if the exhibition's expographic language generalized the indigenous peoples of Brazil, especially for the non-literate observer limited to visual experience, the same cannot be said of the *Guia da Exposição*, a printed document that provided information about the location and indigenous group associated with each listed object. For the literate audience, it was possible to pay attention to the specificities of what was exhibited and to the origin of the object by reading the *Guia*.

Finally, we emphasize that, in addition to the absence of information on origin in the exhibition space, time there also remained undefined. An imprecise temporal dimension marked the exhibition planned by Ladislau Netto. The artifacts classified as archeological evoked the notion of a distant time, of extinct lives, while ethnographic objects carried

another temporality—contemporary, of simultaneous contact, even though this contact did not mean that those involved were in the same temporal order. This is because indigenous and non-indigenous people, despite being contemporaries, were situated in non-synchronous times and, consequently, positioned in different places on the evolutionary scale. This reinforces what Johannes Fabian (2013 [1983]) stated regarding the diachronic downgrading of spatially distant peoples, an idea that emerged in the 19th century when a naturalized and spatialized epistemology of time prevailed, founded on the paradigm of evolution and the Enlightenment belief in a single, universal progress.

## Resonances

The Brazilian Anthropological Exhibition had a significant impact on the public and resonated strongly in both national and international periodicals. Firstly, it is important to mention that approximately 100,000 people visited the exhibition during its three-month opening period [45]—the History of Brazil Exhibition in 1881 at the National Library was visited by seven thousand people over the course of one month of the event (Macedo 2013). In light of the success of the Anthropological Exhibition, Ladislau Netto was honored with the honorary insignia of the Imperial Order of the Rose, awarded to those who distinguished themselves through services rendered to the state. [46] The newspapers of the time echoed the popularity of the exhibition. The Anthropological Exhibition attracted such a large audience that, at times, it was necessary to prohibit entry. [47]

The crowd that visited the Anthropological Exhibition yesterday was immense. The director of the museum was forced to suspend the entry of the wave of people several times, for a few minutes each time, as there was not enough capacity in the exhibition halls. [48]

The number of people visiting the halls of the Anthropological Exhibition on Sundays continues to be extraordinary, where they can hardly move, seeing nothing of what they came to see. [49]

A portion of the crowd that gathered at the National Museum was interested in seeing indigenous people, especially the 'Botocudos,' brought for public exhibition. Indeed, in addition to artifacts, the National Museum displayed indigenous individuals from different ethnicities brought there to qualify objects, undergo anthropometric studies, be drawn, and scrutinized by naturalists, who also codified their language. The indigenous individuals allowed themselves to be examined and exhibited to the public in exchange for receiving food, clothing, tools, and money, items necessary for their survival. [50]

It is unfortunate, however, that a portion of the public did not understand the spirit of charity that we should have towards the poor Botocudo Indians who willingly submit to the studies at the museum and have pursued them in an indefensible manner, both in their own shelter in the Campo garden and even when the museum doors are closed, with a crowd waiting for the poor savages in the vicinity. [51]



Fig. 7. Cartoon of the “Botocudos” at the National Museum

“But who would have thought! These anthropophagi are the ones who were afraid of being devoured by public curiosity. Only with great difficulty did the director of the Museum prevent them from escaping.”

*Revista Illustrada*, 1882, n. 310, p. 4. Source: National Library

Other publications emphasized the beauty of the exhibited objects, which caused ‘a deep impression of satisfaction on the faces [of the people], contemplating innumerable artifacts of which they had never heard.’ [52]

This room [Lund] is extremely interesting from a scientific point of view; there is important material for phrenological study and for the occupation of inquisitive minds. Those skulls of individuals of various races and different places transport the thinking man to a world of considerations whose depth only Providence knows [...].

In the clay objects exhibited there [Martius Room], although made by indigenous hands, the touch of civilization is already recognized, the modern product; however, it is not without admiration that one looks at this country’s industry and reflects on the Indians’ aptitude for ceramic work. The clay vessels [...] are worth seeing for the well-finished and tasteful form and ornamentation.

The Gabriel Soares room is the largest in the exhibition and contains the most objects; there is much to see and cause admiration [...]. The feather objects are undeniably beautiful due to the combination of colors and shapes; among these objects, there are the garments of the indigenous people [...] which are truly worth seeing and arouse the greatest curiosity. [53]

The success of the Brazilian Anthropological Exhibition of 1882 at the National Museum of Rio de Janeiro inspired Brazilian merchants to organize an anthropological exhibition for commercial purposes, but in London. In 1883, a group of ‘botocudos’ was exhibited at the Piccadilly Hall, brought by members of the Barata Ribeiro family who saw the event as a possibility to make a profit (Vieira 2019). On that occasion, a collection of artifacts from the

'botocudos,' such as bows, spears, arrows, bags, and pots, was taken by 'Mr. C. Ribeiro' and given as a gift to the Anthropological Institute of London. The members of the institute examined the collection and, in gratitude, transferred it to the Ethnological Department of the British Museum. [54] 'Mr. C. Ribeiro' was Cremilde Barata Ribeiro, a businessman in the shipbuilding industry who took the indigenous people to London amid protests and controversies in Brazil (Vieira 2019).

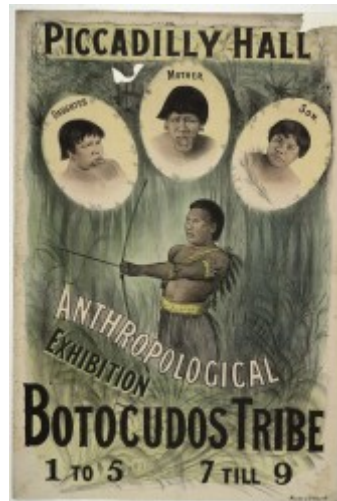


Fig. 8. Poster for the exhibition of a 'Botocudo' family in an anthropological exhibition held in London, 1883.

Courtesy of the British Library. © British Library  
Board. Evan. 344

From an institutional perspective, the Brazilian Anthropological Exhibition at the National Museum not only allowed for the public recognition of anthropological sciences, which was essential to legitimize and strengthen scientific practices, but also facilitated the expansion of the museum's ethnographic and archeological collections. Since the 1870s, the institution had been receiving a considerable volume of objects due to the modernization efforts of the empire, which promoted and intensified contact between indigenous and non-indigenous peoples. However, as a result of organizing the Brazilian Anthropological Exhibition, Ladislau Netto publicly requested donations of collections to the National Museum through the press. Private collectors—including naturalists, missionaries, military personnel, administrators, and others—who had participated in exploration trips, military expeditions, railway installation projects, and immigrant colony creation projects, responded to Ladislau's request, motivated both by a desire to contribute and to immortalize themselves. They transferred their collections to the museum. [55]

Regarding the foundations of the production and communication of the Brazilian Anthropological Exhibition, they were part of the effort to create a rhetoric of nationality that, according to Cezar (2018), was present in the writing of history throughout the 19th century. This rhetoric consisted of a set of discursive strategies aimed at bringing together elements of national formation, even if they were heterogeneous and dispersed, to convince

nationals of a shared past, a common origin, and identity (Cezar 2018). The rhetoric of nationality faced the challenge of answering the question: where do we come from? Understanding the origin of the indigenous people, once the origins of Africans and Portuguese were clear, was necessary because mastery of the 'savage' past implied their incorporation into the civilizing process (Cezar 2008; 2011). However, indigenous objects did not have temporal markers, such as monuments, written documents, or other evidence of the past that served the 19th-century historical culture, where organizing time chronologically was synonymous with 'civilization' (Guimarães 2000). To explain the enigmatic indigenous past, it was necessary to resort to the concept of nature's time (Guimarães 2000). For these indigenous people and their objects, the naturalized notion of time served as a heuristic tool for understanding a past that could not be expressed through history but was accessible through ethnography. This was also the understanding of the Brazilian Historical and Geographic Institute (IHGB)—of which Ladislau Netto was a member—which in the mid-19th century created the Commission for Archeology and Ethnography to investigate the indigenous past. 'By including the study of indigenous people in the history of Brazil, it would be possible to shed light on a remote time, in which this land would be fixed alongside the ancient civilizations of the world' (Kodama 2009, p. 60).

In this sense, Ladislau Netto sought, with the Anthropological Exhibition, to establish a historicity specific to those who existed in another order of time, thus giving substance to the rhetoric of nationality. The exhibition consisted of a way of narrating the national past, using artifacts and the museum space to compose a narrative about the indigenous people whose historicity deviated from the temporal frameworks of 19th-century historical culture. It was a form of ethnographic historicity expressed through visual language and based on two foundations: the collections and the exhibition—which in the realm of history would have their equivalent in the written language of manuscripts and printed sources. It was not by chance that Ladislau chose certain names to designate the rooms of the exhibition. *Tratado descritivo do Brasil* (1587) by Gabriel Soares [de Souza; or de Sousa] was extensively referenced in the works of Robert Southey (1774–1843), Ferdinand Denis, José de Alencar (1829–1877), Karl von Martius, and Francisco Adolfo de Varnhagen (1816–1878). Varnhagen, who became a prominent figure in historiography at that time, also used the writings of Jean de Léry and Pero Vaz de Caminha (Cezar 2018). Ladislau Netto's decision to bring these names into the exhibition circuit was, beyond paying homage to them, a way to visually and spatially validate the historicity inscribed in the museographic narrative.

If the written language of documents predominated as the basis for historical knowledge production in the historiographical production of the 19th century, in ethnographic historicity, visibility assumes a central role. A visit to the Brazilian Anthropological Exhibition of 1882 was, like many other exhibitions of its time, a visual experience. As Walter Benjamin wrote about 19th-century exhibitions, 'All eyes, nothing to touch' (Benjamin 2009, p. 236). The act of looking, when focused on a particular visibility, combines information, imagination, and introspection and connects authority and power (Mirzoeff 2016). In the exhibition space of museums, the eye of power—or public inspection—is available to all



(Bennett 1995). There, the exhibitionary complex—architecture, path, and exhibition design—governs this space, organizes things and people, regulates behavior, and creates a rhetoric of power. The entire apparatus of the exhibitionary complex aims to attract, persuade, seduce, and guide reception. The objects on display create in the observer the perception of themselves as a participant in that rhetoric and transform them into an integral part of the spectacle. In the ethnographic museums of the 19th century, the visual experience turned the visitor into a subject of knowledge, allowed the constitution of a national public, and confirmed their superiority through the gaze upon the radically different Other, originating from a distant time and space (Bennett 1995).

The Brazilian Anthropological Exhibition, in this sense, was a place of discovery of the Other, a perception of the differences between them and oneself, and served to delineate the boundaries between the 'savage' and the 'civilized,' reinforcing the mark of the observer's superiority through their gaze. The exhibition also allowed nationals to encounter their 'imagined past' by presenting indigenous people and their objects in a temporal order that denied them a future, either through physical or cultural extinction, and the present, through diachronic demotion and the suppression of the simultaneity of the ethnographic encounter (Fabian 2013). The Anthropological Exhibition established a visibility that allowed the court's public to exercise the eye of power: to see everything and inspect everything to know and believe they were in control.

During this time, national and international exhibitions were spectacular events, grand and ephemeral, endowed with strong social meanings (Castro Faria 1993). In these exhibitions, nations showcased their technical and scientific potential, presenting the achievements of modernity to the world (Pesavento 1997). Industry and its technologies were presented as signs of 'civilization' in the 'concert of nations' and as affirmations of nation-states. Depending on the greater or lesser degree of sophistication of the Other in relation to oneself, the social and political world was hierarchized and ordered (Nascimento 2009). Moreover, 19th-century exhibitions had an instructive dimension, inherited from the Enlightenment tradition, through which their organizers aimed to educate visitors, using visual spectacle to disseminate values and ensure the strengthening of the nation; the scientific and recreational nature of exhibitions ensured the interest in 'teaching while entertaining' (Barbuy 1999). Rio de Janeiro, as the capital of the empire, underwent profound transformations, becoming a postcard of 'modernity' and hosting the country's exhibitions, where the ideology of progress, with 'civilization' as its binomial, took shape and directly impacted mentalities with its symbols, rites, and didacticism (Neves 1986). From an anthropological perspective, the court still represented the birthplace of the 'modern' nation due to the mestizo character of its population, marked by the fusion of 'races' [56] (Morel 2018). Miscegenation, the origin, and antiquity of American man were posed as the major questions to be explained by the 'anthropologists' of the time (Castro Faria 2006).

It is also important to mention that the indigenous policy throughout the 19th century aimed at advancing over the yet unconquered indigenous lands and redefining those already

dominated, restricting access whenever possible. Asserting the absence of indigenous people in certain areas, arguing that they were assimilated and integrated into national society, served as a pretext for the seizure of their legitimate lands. This was because the legislation of the 19th century recognized indigenous people as the legal owners of the land by original right (Cunha 1992). There was an effort to strip indigenous people of this right, using various subterfuges to erase their existence. These went from the creation of settlements that freed large indigenous areas for exploitation while settling the 'savages' in reduced boundaries, to the extinction of these same settlements because it was claimed that indigenous people had mixed with the neighboring population, lured there precisely with the intention of breaking their isolation and integrating them into new settlement areas (Cunha 1992). It was the task of science to analyze the effects of this miscegenation and explain, in biological, racial, and evolutionary terms, the 'natural' and 'inevitable' disappearance of indigenous people.

Finally, we emphasize that Ladislau Netto played a crucial role in the history of the National Museum and in the consolidation of anthropological practices within the institution (Keuller 2008). The plan to organize the Brazilian Anthropological Exhibition is part of his broader museum project, which especially included the foundation of a specialized museum. For him, an ethnographic museum would be the most suitable to house anthropological collections, and certainly, the 1882 exhibition would justify before the government and the public this imperative need. While the idea of creating the ethnographic museum failed, the same cannot be said for the Brazilian Anthropological Exhibition, a successful event in its time when moral and ethical dilemmas that are now part of the debate on museum practices were not issues for men of science.

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[2] A native of Alagoas, Brazil, Ladislau Netto (1838–1894) studied at the Imperial Academy of Fine Arts in Rio de Janeiro. He participated as a draftsman in scientific expeditions and was a member of various scientific societies and institutions, such as the Linnean Society of Paris, the Academy of Sciences of Lisbon, and the Botanical Society of France. In 1862, he was part of the Hydrographic Studies Commission of the Upper São Francisco in Minas Gerais, accompanying Emmanuel Liais (1826–1900). A French botanist and astronomer who arrived in Brazil in 1858, Liais later assumed the directorship of the Imperial Observatory in Rio de Janeiro and facilitated Ladislau Netto's journey to France (Duarte 1950; Cabral 2023).

[3] There, the National Museum remained until 1892 when it was then transferred to the São Cristóvão Palace, the former residence of the emperor deposed by the military forces that proclaimed the Republic in 1889.

[4] Ladislau Netto, "Prefácio," *Revista Arquivos do Museu Nacional*, v. 6, 1885. We chose to reference the primary sources in footnotes and the bibliography consulted at the end of the work.

[5] Ladislau Netto. *Aperçu sur la théorie de l'évolution*. Rio de Janeiro: Messager du Brésil, 1883, p. III.

[6] Ministério da Agricultura. *Publicador Maranhense*, n. 28, 4 de fevereiro de 1882, p. 1.

[7] *Jornal do Commercio*, n. 210, 30 de julho de 1882, p. 1. National Library.

[8] BR.MN.RA.8. Book of Official Documents (1881–1885). 13/09/1882. Office of the Director-General of the National Museum to the Director of the Asylum for Helpless Boys expressing gratitude for the services provided by the minors. The asylum, founded in 1875, was located in the Vila Isabel neighborhood and operated until 1889, catering to boys under 12 years old, primarily from poor backgrounds, whether orphaned or not, with the majority being of African descent (Souza 2008; Braga 2014; Rizzini e Gondra 2014).

[9] Pero Vaz de Caminha (1450–1500) was the scribe of the fleet led by Pedro Álvares Cabral that landed in 1500 on the territory that would become Brazil. He wrote the letter to the king of Portugal narrating the first contact between the indigenous people and the Portuguese.

[10] We used the spelling employed at the time to name the indigenous peoples. Regarding the 'botocudos,' the term was used pejoratively to refer to the indigenous people who wore wooden disks in their ears and lips. On the other hand, 'crowned' designated the indigenous people who had a hairstyle resembling a crown.

[11] *Guia da Exposição Antropológica Brasileira realizada pelo Museu Nacional do Rio de Janeiro*. Rio de Janeiro: Typ. Leuzinger e Filhos, 1882, pp. 9–10.

[12] The city in Minas Gerais, now called Teófilo Otoni.

[13] *Guia da Exposição Antropológica Brasileira*, 1882, p. 18.

[14] *Ibidem*.

[15] Item n. 90. *Guia da Exposição Antropológica Brasileira*, 1882, p. 17.

[16] There is also the designation 'jacumã' in the item n. 101. *Guia da Exposição Antropológica Brasileira*, 1882, p. 18.

[17] Items nos. 104 and 95, respectively. The fish trap was also called 'munzuá' in Bahia. *Guia da Exposição Antropológica Brasileira*, 1882, p. 18.

[18] Item no. 96. *Guia da Exposição Antropológica Brasileira*, 1882, p. 18.

[19] There is a record of two "maloca models," nos. 52 and 79. *Guia da Exposição Antropológica Brasileira*, 1882, pp. 15–16.

[20] Item 12 corresponds to 'mbucu-unas (blowguns)'. *Guia da Exposição Antropológica Brasileira*, 1882, p. 12.

[21] The expression meant the act of poisoning the arrows. Ladislau used the term to refer to item no. 72: 'gourds and small clay pots containing urari poison, with which the indigenous people of the Upper Amazon typically herb their blowgun darts'. *Guia da Exposição Antropológica Brasileira*, 1882, p. 16.

[22] *Guia da Exposição Antropológica Brasileira*, 1882, p. 22 & 25.

[23] *Guia da Exposição Antropológica Brasileira*, 1882, p. 47.

[24] *Jornal do Commercio*, n. 210, 30 de julho de 1882, p. 1. National Library.

[25] *Diário de Pernambuco*, n. 186, 1882, p. 1.

[26] *Guia da Exposição Antropológica Brasileira*, 1882, p. 51.

[27] *Diário de Pernambuco*, n. 186, 1882, p. 1.

[28] *Guia da Exposição Antropológica Brasileira*, 1882, p. 60.

[29] *Guia da Exposição Antropológica Brasileira*, 1882, p. 59.

[30] Regarding the indigenous presence at the National Museum for study and public display, see

Agostinho 2020.

[31] Item no. 7. *Guia da Exposição Antropológica Brasileira*, 1882, p. 64.

[32] We are unaware of the birth and death dates of the indigenous individual 'Chamacôco' and of José Marques Anhorô. Regarding the latter, we know that he received a monthly salary of 50\$000 (fifty thousand réis) as a 'servant.' The director of the National Museum received approximately 500\$000, and the caretaker received 66\$000. BR.MN.DR.AO. Pasta 22. Document 78. 1883. Expenses incurred at the National Museum from July 1882 to May 1883.

[33] During that time, intense conflicts were occurring in the Kayapó territory due to the encroachment of cattle ranchers and farmers on their lands (Karasch 1992; Neto 2005).

[34] NETTO, Ladislau. Pré-História Sul-Americana. Pedras Verdes. *Jornal do Comércio*, 1885, no. 128, p. 2.

[35] *Guia da Exposição Antropológica Brasileira*, 1882, p. 39.

[36] *Guia da Exposição Antropológica Brasileira*, 1882, pp. 42 & 45.

[37] Items nos. 69, 70 e 71. *Guia da Exposição Antropológica Brasileira*, 1882, pp. 42–43.

[38] Duarte Paranhos Schutel. *Breve notícia sobre três esqueletos brasilienses da Província de Santa Catarina*. Rio de Janeiro: Tipografia Moreira, Maximino, 1875.

[39] *Guia da Exposição Antropológica Brasileira*, 1882, p. 39.

[40] In the Natural History Museum of Paris, human dissection was a common practice in the 19th century (Patin 2014). In the United States, the Army Medical Museum in Washington took advantage of the bodies of people who died in the Dakota War of 1862, especially Sioux Indigenous people, to produce material that was later sent to the Smithsonian (Redman 2016). In Timor, the Portuguese colonial government, exploiting the ritual practice of decapitation, sent heads of Timorese obtained in colonial wars to Portuguese museums (Roque 2010).

[41] The Decree No. 2812 of August 3, 1861, regulated cemeteries and funeral practices in the city of Rio de Janeiro. The period for opening the tomb was five years for the exhumation of adults and three years for children. For the deceased buried in common graves, called 'valas,' the period was seven years.

[42] BRAZIL. Ministry of Imperial Affairs. Regulation of August 3, 1861. Approves the regulations for public and private cemeteries in the city of Rio de Janeiro, burial services, and funeral fees. *Coleção de Leis do Império do Brasil de 1861*. Tomo XXIV, Parte II. Rio de Janeiro: Tipografia Nacional, 1861. See Art. 19.

[43] Ibidem. See Art. 68.

[44] Regarding the conditions of collecting the collection donated to the National Museum to be part of the Brazilian Anthropological Exhibition, see Agostinho 2020.



[45] BR.MN.RA.8. Book of Official Documents (1881–1885). November 22, 1882. Letter from the director of the National Museum to the minister of agriculture, commerce, and public works, informing that the Brazilian Anthropological Exhibition concluded on October 29.

[46] *Revista Illustrada*, n. 313, 26 de agosto de 1882, p. 6. National Library.

[47] *Gazeta de Notícias*, n. 218, 7 de agosto de 1882, p. 1. National Library.

[48] *Gazeta de Notícias*, n. 211, 31 de julho de 1882, p. 1. National Library.

[49] *Gazeta de Notícias*, n. 225, 14 de agosto de 1882, p. 1. National Library.

[50] Regarding the subject, refer to Agostinho 2020.

[51] *Gazeta de Notícias*, 1882, n. 188, p. 1. National Library.

[52] *Gazeta de Notícias*, 1882, n. 211, p. 1. National Library.

[53] *Diário de Pernambuco*, n. 186, 1882, p. 1.

[54] Hyde Clarke. Miscellaneous Business of the Meeting on June 19th, 1883. *The Journal of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland*, v. 13, 1884, pp. 198–199.

[55] For information on the profile of collectors who donated their private collections to the National Museum, see Agostinho 2020.

[56] In the 19th century, the concept of race served as a descriptor for hierarchically organized human groups based on physical and sociocultural characteristics attributed to them. This concept was closely linked to the debate surrounding the human origin polygenist or monogenist and evolution (Maio and Santos 2010).