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# The Connectedness of Archives: Museums in Brazil and Europe

A conexão dos arquivos: museus no Brasil e na Europa

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**Abstract:** The destruction of the collections at the Museu Nacional in Rio de Janeiro, which had hosted indigenous material culture gathered over two centuries, spotlighted the importance of early Amazonian collections in European museums. The circulation of objects and knowledge in the 19<sup>th</sup> and the early 20<sup>th</sup> century is part of a history of interactions within global systems. Epistemological, political, social and economic aspects shaped the collections, following shifting interests related to scientific endeavors, colonization or extractivism, just to name the more common ones. The agents involved in the collecting in the South American Lowlands were scholars from different disciplines, settlers, politicians and traders linked by global interests. The close relationship of the then Museum für Völkerkunde in Berlin and the Göteborgs Museum in Gothenburg with the Museu Nacional and other Brazilian institutions since the 1880s is striking, as they mutually engaged in the exchange of objects for major exhibitions and enriched the scientific exchange of knowledge, by sending and interchanging collections. Today, these objects stored in Berlin as well as in Gothenburg, could be incorporated into the reconstruction of the Museu Nacional, or directly could be put in dialogue with communities in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. These collections were gathered with many purposes; however, from the beginning in Berlin with Adolf Bastian, and in Gothenburg with Erland Nordenskiöld, the idea of an archive for the future was a primal one. The question remains, how to handle this ‘universal archive’ at risk?

**Keywords:** scientific exchange; archives; European museums; Museu Nacional, Rio de Janeiro; Museum für Völkerkunde, Berlin; Göteborg Museum; early Amazonian collections.

**Resumo:** A destruição das coleções do Museu Nacional do Rio de Janeiro, que abrigava cultura material indígena reunida ao longo de dois séculos, destacou a importância das antigas coleções amazônicas nos museus europeus. A circulação de objetos e conhecimento no século XIX e no início do século XX faz parte de uma história de interações dentro de sistemas globais. Aspectos epistemológicos, políticos, sociais e econômicos moldaram as coleções, acompanhando as mudanças de interesses relacionados aos empreendimentos científicos, colonização ou extrativismo, apenas para citar os mais comuns. Os agentes envolvidos no colecionismo nas Terras Baixas Sul-Americanas eram acadêmicos de diferentes disciplinas, colonos, políticos e comerciantes conectados por interesses globais. A estreita relação do

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então Museum für Völkerkunde em Berlim e do Göteborg Museu em Gotemburgo com o Museu Nacional e outras instituições brasileiras desde a década de 1880 é notável, na medida em que eles mutuamente permutavam objetos para grandes exposições e desta forma enriqueciam o intercâmbio de conhecimento científico, enviando e trocando coleções. Hoje, esses objetos, armazenados em Berlim e em Gotemburgo, poderiam ser incorporados à reconstrução do Museu Nacional, ou diretamente colocados em diálogo com as comunidades do século XXI. Essas coleções foram reunidas com diversos propósitos; no entanto, desde o início em Berlim com Adolf Bastian, e em Gotemburgo com Erland Nordenskiöld, a ideia de um arquivo para o futuro foi primordial. A questão, portanto, permanece: como lidar com esse 'arquivo universal' em risco?

**Palavras-chave:** intercâmbio científico; arquivos; museus europeus; Museu Nacional, Rio de Janeiro; Museum für Völkerkunde, Berlin; Göteborg Museum; coleções iniciais da Amazônia.

With the destruction of the Museu Nacional in Rio de Janeiro by a fire on September 2, 2018, almost 20 million objects of botany, zoology, entomology, geology, anthropology and the archives collected over two centuries were lost in a single night. This event should be a moment for all museums to reflect upon the fragility of their existence and the threats posed by natural catastrophes, armed conflicts, or negligence. It is also a reminder of the connectedness of institutions since the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when research programs were shared, a network of exchange was established, and personal relationships shaped the creation of knowledge including the exchange of collections.

In this paper, we will focus on the connectedness between Brazilian and European museums, particularly the ones in Berlin and in Gothenburg with those in Rio de Janeiro, where close relationships were established during the long 19<sup>th</sup> century. Particularly the Museu Nacional in Rio and the then Königliches Museum für Völkerkunde (now Ethnologisches Museum) in Berlin have been since the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century involved in constant exchange within a broader network,<sup>1</sup> with institutions, scholars and amateurs contributing to common research programs, sometimes with different agendas, joined by the Göteborgs Museum since the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. These different contexts in research and collecting on a regional, national and transnational level are obviously determined by the changing policies within the corresponding nation-states.

### The imperial network

Even in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century 'curiosities' from Brazil had already entered the Prussian *Kunstammer* directly and through exchange with other institutions. The so-called Hoffmannsegg's collection was acquired in 1818 due to the concession Count Johann

1 An important international forum and meeting point since 1875 was the International Congress of Americanists (see Comas 1974).

Centurius von Hoffmannsegg (1766-1846) had received from the Portuguese king.<sup>2</sup> Hoffmannsegg had made botanical studies within Europe, in Austria, Hungary and Italy. But it was the systematic survey of the flora of Portugal in 1796-1801 which gave him the chance to obtain permission from the Portuguese court for an expedition to Brazil (Hoffmannsegg and Link 1809). Hoffmannsegg sent his assistant, Friedrich Wilhelm Sieber, who arrived in Belém do Pará at the end of 1800/beginning of 1801 and stayed for eleven years, sending samples of plants, bird skins and objects mainly from the Mundurucú (Hermannstädter 2005, 28) (Figures 1-3).<sup>3</sup>

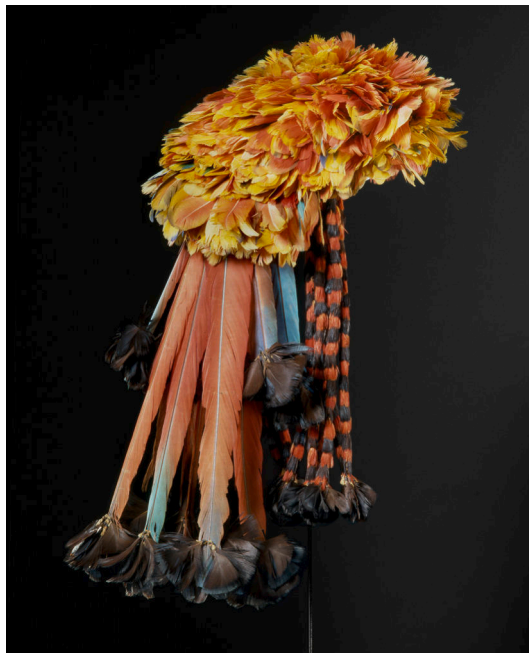


Figure 1. Feather head dress, Mundurucú. Collection Hoffmannsegg (Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Ethnologisches Museum, v B 96, photographer: Claudia Obrocki).

2 The Collection 'Hoffmannsegg' at the Ethnologisches Museum today has the inventory numbers v B 36-47, v B 52 a-d, v B 54 a-c, v B 95-96, v B 98-99, v B 138, v B 136, v B 148-156; lost: v B 97, v B 137, v B 147; see also Hermannstädter (2005, 27-28).

3 The Collection 'Hoffmannsegg' is composed of collections made by Friedrich Wilhelm Sieber, but also shipments from Brazil sent by Beltrão (First name not known) and Francisco Agostino [Agostinho?] Gómes from Bahia. Hoffmannsegg settled in Berlin in 1804 and dedicated himself to the edition of *Flora Portugaise* and contributed to the foundation of the Zoologisches Museum in Berlin with the collections sent by Sieber in 1806, 1809 and 1812.



*Figure 2.* Feather tassels, Mundurucu, Brazil. Collection Hoffmannsegg (Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Ethnologisches Museum, v B 52 a-d, photographer: Martin Franken).

The transfer of the Portuguese court to Rio de Janeiro in 1808 opened Brazil for foreign researchers.<sup>4</sup> Friedrich Sellow (1789-1831) for example, a botanist from Potsdam who had studied with Karl Ludwig Willdenow in Berlin and at the Sorbonne and the Jardin des Plantes in Paris, joined the expedition of the Russian consul Baron Georg Heinrich von Langsdorff (1774-1852) in 1814, and later was part of the expedition of Maximilian Prinz zu Wied-Neuwied (1815-1817) and the zoologist Georg Wilhelm Freyreiss (1821-1828). In 1818 he joined the expedition of Ignaz von Olfers (1793-1872), a Prussian diplomat who later became general director of Berlin's Königliche Museen (Royal Museums) (Ledebur 1831, 44-45; Hermannstädter 2001; Zischler *et al.* 2013). Before Sellow could return to Berlin to work on the collections, he died on a voyage on the Rio

<sup>4</sup> Collection Karl Ferdinand Friedrich von Nagler (1770-1846), acquisition date: 1835, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Ethnologisches Museum: v B 48, v B 51 a-b; v B 56 a-b, v B 67-68, v B 144; Collection Dr. Casper, acquisition date 1848, SMB, Ethnologisches Museum v B 35, v B 49-50, v B 55, v B 58-59, v B 100, v B 102, v B 104-107, v B 110, v B 141 a-b, v B 165-165; lost: v B 34, v B 104.



*Figure 3.* 'Purse', made of the head and the throat of a king vulture. Collection Friedrich Sellow (acquisition date 1832, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Ethnologisches Museum, v B 25, photographer: Martin Franken).

Doce. His collections are now housed in different institutions in Berlin and elsewhere.<sup>5</sup> The 'Brazilian curiosities' of the Hoffmannsegg and Sellow collections stayed at the Royal *Kunstkammer*, after the 'European arts and antiquities' left to be exhibited in the Altes Museum ('Old Museum') in 1830 (Ledebur 1831, 45) and were shown in a separate exhibition only in 1856 in the Neues Museum ('New Museum') (Bolz 2007, 183).

The other early collection from Brazil in Berlin was gathered by the 'Austrian Expedition to Brazil' (1817-1835), organized on the occasion of the marriage of the Habsburg princess Maria Leopoldine to the Portuguese king Dom Pedro I. By exchange

5 Collection Sellow/Olfers: The Museum für Naturkunde in Berlin hosts his archival legacy, the Botanisches Museum in Berlin and the Ethnologisches Museum, Collection Sellow/Olfers v B 1 a-c-4, v B 6-8, v B 10-18, v B 25-33, v B 57, v B 61, v B 63-65, v B 103, v B 108-109, v B 112-126 a,b, v B 128-131, v B 133-134, v B 139-140, v B 143, v B 146, v B 162-164, v B 167, 174-175, v B 240, v B 242 a,b ; lost: v B 5, v B 9, v B 24, v B 60, v B 127, v B 132, v B 135, v B 166, v B 168, v B 239, Archival material (letters) in Museu Nacional in Rio (now destroyed).

with the Museum in Vienna some objects from the Johann Baptist Natterer collection<sup>6</sup> came to Berlin in 1886 as did items from the museum in Munich from the collections of the zoologist Johann Baptist von Spix (1781-1826) and the botanist Carl Friedrich Philipp von Martius (1794-1868) in 1893 (Hörschelmann 1920; Helbig 1994).<sup>7</sup>

### **The worldwide scientific network**

Exchanges between museums and particularly those of Natural History were of crucial importance since the 18<sup>th</sup> century, and, due to the marriage of the Habsburg Emperess Leopoldina to the future Brazilian Emperor Dom Pedro, the connection between the museums in Rio and Vienna was certainly the closest (Augustat 2012). The most active exchange between German and Brazilian museums was established between the Museu Nacional in Rio and the Königliches Museum für Völkerkunde in Berlin on the initiative of Ladislau de Sousa Mello Netto (1838-1894). There were three major exchanges between Berlin and Rio de Janeiro: The first two were arranged between Ladislau Netto and Adolf Bastian (1826-1905) in 1880/1883 and in 1888; the third exchange was carried out in 1928 by the then director of the Museu Nacional, Edgar Roquette-Pinto (1884-1954), and Max Schmidt (1874-1950), head of the South American department at the Museum für Völkerkunde. A general request for exchange sent to different museums in 1896 by the then director of the Museu Nacional, João Baptista de Lacerda (1846-1915), did not bear fruit (Acta 1896/0687) (Figure 4).

A special agent, who became an ‘institution’, and has to be mentioned in the context of connectedness between people and institutions related to Amazonian studies, is Curt Unckel-Nimuendajú (1883-1945), who emigrated to Brazil in 1905 and established a close relationship with anthropologists in South America, the USA and also in Europe (Welper 2002, 22).

The last decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century were a time of profound change including in Europe. The foundation of the German Empire after the Franco-Prussian War in 1871 marked the beginning of the ‘Wilhelminian Empire’. In Berlin, a new era for anthropology began with the arrival of Adolf Bastian in 1867. He was a medical doctor, who on his trips around South and East Asia became an adherent of what has been called ‘salvage anthropology’, which was dominant in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century (Köpping 1983; Bolz 2007). He came from a family of merchants in Bremen (Bellers 2013). In Berlin, Bastian

6 KuK Naturhistorisches Hofmuseum Wien, 19 objects v B 1954-1972, exchanged in 1886 by the then director F. Heger. The Naturhistorisches Museum in Vienna received bone sculptures from Alasca from the collection of Johan Adrian Jacobsen.

7 Objects received from the Königliches Ethnographisches Museum in Munich in exchange, collected by Johann Baptist von Spix and Carl Friedrich Philipp von Martius from the Rio Negro in Brasil. From the river Yapurá EMB, v B 4104-4105. “Festschmuck” from the Coëruna. In exchange the museum in Munich received: I D 12945-12958, I C 25883-25899 “Volksgötter China, Indien”.

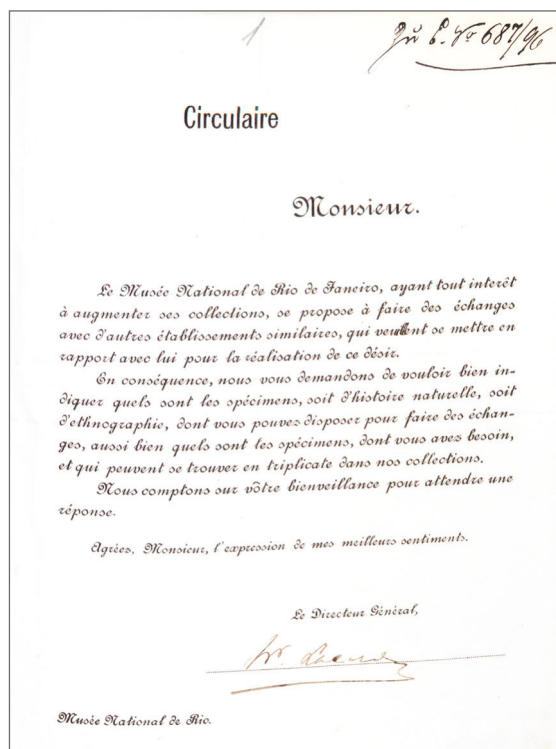


Figure 4. Request for exchanges by João Baptista Lacerda in 1896 (Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Ethnologisches Museum, Archive, Acta 1896/0687).

earned his Habilitation qualification in geography and history, assumed the chairmanship of the Gesellschaft für Erdkunde (Geographical Society) (1868) and in 1869 was a co-founder of the Berliner Gesellschaft für Anthropologie, Ethnologie und Urgeschichte (Berlin Society for Anthropology, Ethnology and Prehistory) and its journal *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie* (Journal of Ethnology). In 1869, he assumed the position of assistant director at the Königliche Museen (Royal Museums), and when Leopold von Ledebur retired in 1875, Bastian was named director of the ethnological collection (1876).

In 1873 the Prussian state decided to found an independent ethnological and anthropological museum in Berlin, and in 1886 this museum acquired its own building (Bolz 2007, 174). In a programmatic overview published soon after the opening, Adolf Bastian revealed his plan to establish a future 'archive of humanity'. Aware of the fact that there were European countries with a longer history of colonial rule, such as England, France, and the Netherlands, who had already established a 'monopoly' for example in India,

Indonesia, and East Asia, Bastian's vision was quite pragmatic, since he focused on work-sharing (*Arbeitsteilung*) rather than competition. According to Bastian, anthropological research in the Americas should concentrate on the 'obvious' categories, which were native people (*Naturstämme*) and pre-Columbian archaeology (*Alterthümer des vor-columbischen America*) (Bastian 1887, 6). Thus, the collections of the Americas at the museum in Berlin were based on the purchase of archaeological collections mainly from private collectors and expeditions to 'native' America. Consequently, today they add up to approximately 200 000 objects out of the 500 000 total holdings of the museum.

A region considered particularly suitable because of its seclusion was the Upper Xingú. The waterfalls (*cachoeiras*) impeded shipping further up the river. Therefore, the river became a space of retreat for indigenous communities (Münzel 2004, 436). For the Berlin-based anthropologists, it became a place convenient for proving the theory of the 'geographical provinces', postulated by Bastian (1893). Karl von den Steinen, a medical doctor, made the first expedition to the Upper Xingú within this program, but the importance of his fieldwork also "needs to be understood in the context of a political negotiation involving multiple interests, in which even the representation of Indians shifts from a symbolic order to a political issue" (Petschelies 2018, 562).

An important forum where the government and scientists met in Rio was the Instituto Histórico e Geográfico Brasileiro (IHGB), founded in 1838 in order to shape a national identity. It became an active institution for knowledge exchange in the 1850s under the young Emperor Pedro II, who presided over a total of 506 sessions at the IHGB between 1849 and 1889 (Schwarcz 1998, 126-127). Karl von den Steinen (1855-1929) also gave talks there, and met Dom Pedro, who decided to support his expedition with personnel and infrastructure (including animals) (Andermann 2003, 296; Petschelies 2018, 556).

Most of the museums of natural history in Latin America were founded in the aftermath of independence in the first decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and as the "loci of institutionalization of natural history [...] became symbols of national identity" (Lopes and Podgorny 2001, 110) and by consequence were meant to reflect the changing policies in the relationships of 'races' within the nation-states. In Brazil, the Museu Real, which later was renamed the Museu Nacional, had a similar function, although it was founded in an imperial context.

In 1866, at the same time that Bastian came to Berlin, Ladislau Netto returned from Paris to Rio de Janeiro. With the support of the Emperor Dom Pedro II, he had been able, to study botany in Paris at the Sorbonne and the Jardin des Plantes (Dantas, Kubrusly, and Aprígio da Silva 2013; Duarte 2019, 364). Although the Museu Nacional was founded as a museum of natural history in the first place, with the appointment of Netto, an interest in anthropological collections emerged. The universal scope Netto had in mind for the exhibitions stimulated research within Brazil but also closer international relationships. In 1870, Netto was appointed as the interim director of the Museu

Nacional, and six years later he took over the position of director (1876), which he held until 1892 (Lopez 2000, 228). Netto's program for the Museu Nacional was to shape it as a center of research, teaching and display of the exact sciences (Andermann 2003, 296). Part of this program was the publication of the different disciplines represented at the Museu Nacional. The journal *Archivos do Museu Nacional*, first published in 1876, showed a network of corresponding members mainly from France and Germany.<sup>8</sup> Most of them were botanists, although in the articles in the *Archivos* published from 1876 to 1926 the zoologists dominate (Schwarcz 1993, 73). From Berlin, the physical anthropologist and physiologist Rudolf Virchow is listed as a member. The Königliches Museum für Völkerkunde in Berlin received the journal from the first issue until its closure in 2010.

In 1870, Ladislau Netto presented his programmatic vision of the future of the Museu Nacional (Netto 1870). Once officially in charge as director in 1876, Netto immediately reorganized the display of the Museu Nacional through a first *regulamento*, which bolstered archaeology and ethnography by exhibiting them in an annex to the museum. This new concept also included a program for the public, with evening lectures by invited scientists from abroad. Summaries of these lectures were published in the local press (Andermann 2003; Dantas, Kubrusly, and Aprígio da Silva 2013). Dom Pedro II was an honorary member of many scientific associations. In Germany, he was also an honorary member of the Berlin-Brandenburgische Akademie der Wissenschaften (The Academy of Sciences of Berlin and Brandenburg) from 1882 and of the Berliner Gesellschaft für Anthropologie, Ethnologie und Urgeschichte (Society for Anthropology, Ethnology and Prehistory, BGAEU), where an extraordinary meeting was organized on April 7, 1877 to honor Pedro de Alcântara's visit to Berlin (Virchow 1877, 462-463).

The decade of the 1880s (1880-1889) was the only time Adolf Bastian stayed constantly in Berlin without extended travel. The construction of a new building for the museum was under way, and it was inaugurated in 1886. Already in 1878, the Deutscher Fischerei-Verein (German Fishery Association) decided to organize an International Fishing Exhibition (*Internationale Fischereiausstellung*) in Berlin, supported by the German Emperor and the Prussian State (Lindeman 1881; Offizieller Katalog 1880). The exhibition was presented in the recently built Museum of Agriculture (Landwirtschaftliches Museum), close to the Museum of Natural History (Museum für Naturkunde) and opened on April 20, 1880. Brazil was one of the 18 countries taking part in the exhibition.<sup>9</sup> Supported by the German consuls, Hermann Haupt in Rio de

8 The nationalities of the correspondent members in the foundation of the *Archivos* in 1876: France (9), Germany (8), Brazil (4), Sweden (3), Britain (3), Austria (3), Italy (2), Portugal (2), Belgium (1) Canada/USA (1), Denmark (1), 4 could not be identified.

9 The participant countries at the International Fishery Exhibition 1880 in Berlin: Austria, Brazil, Cambodia (Annan), China, Denmark, Germany, Great Britain, Indonesia ('Netherland India'), Italy, Japan, Madagascar, Netherlands, Norway Russia, Samoa, Sweden, Switzerland, USA.

Janeiro and F. Laport in Salvador da Bahia, Ladislau Netto sent a broad sample of fishing tools and boat models, which were officially transferred to the Königliches Museum für Völkerkunde after the closure of the exhibition. Although this contribution to a professional exhibition may be regarded as surprising, Brazil was very active in international exhibitions and world fairs (Schwarcz 2006; Turazzi 2006; Schuster 2015).

### **The creation of a Brazilian 'Ancient past'**

The concern was mutual, as the scholars in Berlin also had a marked interest in projects of the Museu Nacional. This was the case for the *Exposição Antropológica* organized by Netto in 1882, which was reported in detail to the Königliches Museum für Völkerkunde in Berlin by the German ambassador (*außerordentlicher Gesandter*) in Rio, Johann Friedrich Le Maistre (1835-1903). His assessment about Netto's gathering of objects for this exhibition was not tempered; he called it an 'exhibition raid' (*Ausstellungs-Razzia*) as Netto in an expedition to the Amazon had gathered 40 crates of archaeological objects to present in the exhibition. In 1881, Netto had undertaken an expedition to the coast of Pará, where he excavated ancient pottery and skeletons from Amanajé tombs on the upper Rio Capim (Netto 1889, 55-89), which were presented in the *Exposição Antropológica* in 1882 at the Museu Nacional. This exhibition has been widely discussed in the frame of the Second Empire policy (1831-1889) as an image of modernity, which was constructed through 'the anthropological other', where the image of a modern Brazilian identity was split between a romantic view of indigenous communities and the idea of modernity (Andermann 2003, 301). The importance of this new definition of national identity can be grasped in the documentation of the exhibition by the renowned photographer Marc Ferrez (1843-1923) (Netto 1882).<sup>10</sup> The presentation of indigenous people as mannequins or of their 'life' with their material culture arranged in a decorative aesthetic is a decontextualization, appropriation and musealization of the indigenous within the Brazilian Empire (Andermann 2006) (Figure 5).

Netto, through the press, also asked private collectors and whoever would be willing to collaborate, to contribute to the exhibition (Acta 1882/1591). In response to this call for contributions to the *Exposição Antropológica* by Ladislau Netto, Carl (Carlos) von Koseritz (1832 Dessau-1890 Porto Alegre) provided seven crates with archaeological and mineralogical objects as well as indigenous skulls and bones, under the condition that this material would be forwarded to Berlin after the closure of the exhibition in the *Museu Nacional* (Acta 1882/1966, 1882/2023).

10 These photographs circulated and can be found in numerous archives worldwide. At the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Ethnologisches Museum, the photographs of the *Exposição Antropológica* have the inventory no. VIII E 706-715, see also <https://www.smb.museum/>.



Figure 5. *The Exposição Antropológica* in Rio de Janeiro 1882 (Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Ethnologisches Museum, VIII E 706, photographer: Marc Ferrez).

Carl von Koseritz was a friend of Ladislau Netto and supported Netto's ideas regarding the construction of a Brazilian past. The collections he sent to Berlin consisted exclusively of archaeological objects from Rio Grande do Sul.<sup>11</sup> Von Koseritz was a 'Neo-Brazilian' immigrant, born to a noble family of Saxony-Anhalt in Germany; he served in the Brazilian army, was a teacher in Pelotas (1857-1862), and from 1882 served as a deputy in the parliament of São Pedro do Rio Grande do Sul. Von Koseritz was a fervent defender of 'Germanness' (*Deutschtum*) and the policy of settlement in Brazil as he expressed in 'Advice for emigrants' (*Rathschläge für Auswanderer*, Koseritz 1881) and in the newspapers where he was editor, e.g. *Die Deutsche Zeitung* (1864-1881) and later in his own newspaper *Koseritz' Deutsche Zeitung* (1882). His book *Bilder aus Brasilien* (Images from Brazil, 1885), based on a trip in 1883 from Porto Alegre to Rio de Janeiro, is a sociogram of life in Brazil at that time (Figure 6). For the shipment, he used the Centralverein für Handelsgeographie und Förderung Deutscher Interessen im Ausland (Central Association for Commercial Geography and the support of German Interest abroad) as an intermediary (Acta 1883/1702).

11 Hantzsch 1906; The Collection von Koseritz contains 172 objects, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Ethnologisches Museum, V B 534-V B 704, acquired 1883.

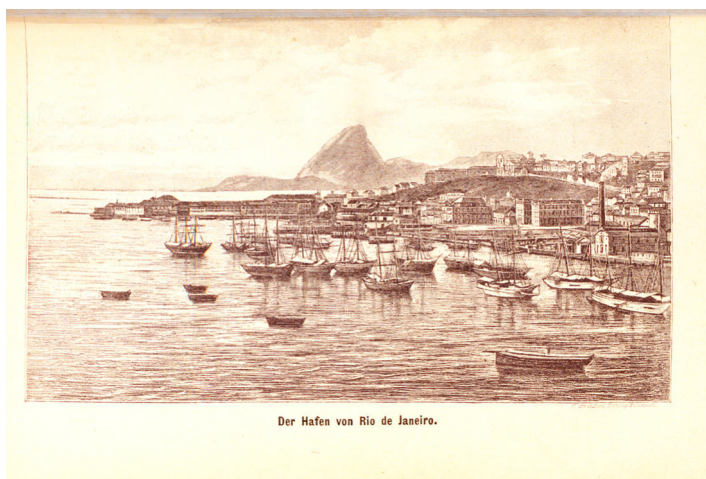


Figure 6. "Images from Brazil" (*Bilder aus Brasilien*) (Koseritz 1885, frontispiece).



Figure 7. "Cayapo Indians", Province of São Paulo, Brazil, photographer: Carlos Nehring, 1876 (Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Ethnologisches Museum, VIII E 34).

A similar case was that of Carlos (Carl) Nehring, closely linked to Berlin through his brother, the well-known zoologist Alfred Nehring (1845-1904) who from 1881 was professor at the *Königliche Landwirtschaftliche Hochschule* (Royal University for Agriculture) in Berlin,<sup>12</sup> and who collaborated with the then *Königliches Museum für Völkerkunde* in paleozoological issues, for example doing research on the guinea pig excavated by Wilhelm Reiss and Alphons Stübel in Ancón (Peru). Carlos Nehring,<sup>13</sup> was a pharmacist in S. José Piracicaba, Province of São Paulo, but also did some anthropological research (Vasconcelos 2011). The collections he sent to Berlin between 1877 and 1890 consisted mainly of archaeological items he found or excavated near his hometown of S. José Piracicaba and some photographs of Cayapo people he encountered (Figure 7).<sup>14</sup>

Netto's interest in indigenous archaeology would become a chief concern under the new republican order imposed in 1889. Already in his programmatic overview "Investigações históricas e científicas sobre o Museu Imperial e Nacional" (1870), Netto states, in relation to an archaeological object from Lago Arary on Marajó Island:

None of the tribes known in Brazil over the last three centuries would have been capable of producing objects, or instruments of prayer or superstition, as perfect as this curious adornment. The individual who made it was more than an intelligent son of our forests he was almost an artist of modern civilization (Netto 1870, 252).

Netto compares his findings to the discoveries of Schliemann in Troy or other then famous discoveries (1885, 402, 466). Pre-Columbian relics were associated with a glorious past and opposed to the material culture of the contemporaneous indigenous communities. A sharp division is constructed between the contemporary and the pre-Columbian societies in the Amazon (da Cunha 1992, 133-154; Andermann 2003, 298).

### The Universal Museum

This long digression is useful to give an idea of the spirit in which the 'exchange collection' from Berlin was selected in 1883. The exchange initiated by Ladislau Netto with the contribution to the Fishery exhibition in 1880 was reciprocated by the *Königliches Museum für Völkerkunde* in Berlin in 1883 with a sample of 172 objects (Acta 1883/2859) (Figure 8).

12 Bio-bibliography of Alfred Nehring: <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/item/109156#page/12/mode/1up> (25.04.2019).

13 [http://wiki.ihgp.org.br/NEHRING,\\_Carlos](http://wiki.ihgp.org.br/NEHRING,_Carlos) (04.11.2020).

14 The Collection Carlos Nehring had a total of 157 objects, 17 were lost in World War II.

3

no 2859/83

No.	Objets.	Notes.
1.	Cuiller, sculptée. Bosc.	en bois, sculptée tout d'une pièce, comme cela se fait principalement en Afrique. Les ornements se rencontrent dans un vaste domaine, de l'Arabie jusqu'à l'Afrique septentrionale.
2.	Poigne de bois. Batak.	en bois de bambou.
3.	Bracelet de coquille.	
4.	Sac à Bétel.	pour porter les feuilles du bétel, le bois de Anca et la sève à chaux - pour l'usage des mâcheurs du bétel.
5.	Fris. Madagascar.	cette arme est répandue dans tout l'archipel malais; souvent remplacée avec du papier.
6.	Ceinture.	tissée de laine; répandue en Finlande, s'appelle "Mömmä paitat".
7.	Banier à ventouse. Assam.	tissé de bois des forêts d'Asie méridionale.
8.	Bracelet de fer. Bari.	
9.	Couverture brune, en étoffe d'écorce. Egypte égyptienne.	l'écorce a été mouillée de l'eau et battue avec des bâtons.
10.	Le panier tissé. Makassar.	de bois de jute.
11.	Soucoule d'osier. Senaar.	tissé de paille de plusieurs couleurs et de bois de cuir vert.
12.	Instrument musical. Afrique orientale.	trois manières de frapper d'un palmier, écorché.
13.	Encre sculptée. Congo.	sculpté à l'aide d'un clou de fer; répandue dans l'Afrique centrale et méridionale.
14.	Parure d'ivoire, ressemblant à un dent. Madagascar.	avec un ornement caractéristique, qui se voit partout où l'on travaille l'ivoire.
15.	Tête de pipe. Loango.	trois ornements sont trouvés; la couleur noire est brûlée.
16.	Bracelet. Madagascar.	fait du cuir de la plante d'un éléphant.
17.	Anneau de cuir jaune. Congo.	fait en même temps à l'arbre.
18.	Fétiche. Congo.	on en voit partout dans les pays du Congo, sert à guérir les maux de tête.
19.	Bracelet. Fuso.	
20.	Tête de pipe. Maum.	à dessin noir et en graphite.
21.	Bracelet tissé.	d'herbe tressée.
22.	Bracelet pour les femmes. Baringo.	de perles coralliennes sur cuir.

Figure 8. First page of the list of objects sent from the Königliches Museum für Völkerkunde to the Museu Nacional in Rio de Janeiro (Acta 1883/2859).



*Figure 9.* Urn of Marajó (Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Ethnologisches Museum, v B 1980, photographer: Martin Franken).

The collection from Berlin fitted perfectly into the agenda of the universal museum Netto had in mind, with collections from Africa, USA, Canada, Mexico, Colombia, Peru, Chile, Australia, New Guinea, Sumatra, Indonesia, Europe and Persia. The largest part came from German expeditions in Africa (36 objects), although Germany would take on an official colonial rule only the following year (1884), complemented by collections from the Northwest coast of North America (27 objects of Johan Adrian Jacobsen [1853-1947]), from New Guinea (from the Dutch Antonie August Bruijn [1842-1890]), but also, pre-Columbian collections from the Cahokia mounds (Missouri), Central Mexico, Colombia, and Peru.

Within the new concept at the Museu Nacional, with sections dedicated to anthropology, zoology, paleontology, mineralogy, geology, archaeology, numismatics, the sections of anthropology and ethnology were considered the most important parts of the museum. Ethnographic collections became a central concern for Ladislau Netto (Anderman 2003, 296-297; Dantas, Kubrusly, and Aprígio da Silva 2013). But there

was also an idea of competition in his motivation, a sense of the Museu Nacional being able to outrival its European peers: “We might oppose equal if not better ones in the European museums, whereas this showroom holds the most complete ethnographic collection of our numerous indigenous tribes ever to have been displayed” (Netto 1870, 266 in Andermann 2003, 296).

In 1888 Ladislau Netto as well as Hermann von Ihering (1850-1930) participated in the 7<sup>th</sup> International Congress of Americanists in Berlin as representatives for Brazil. On this occasion Netto brought 15 archaeological objects to Berlin, from different areas of Brazil, offering an overview of the pre-Columbian past (Figure 9).<sup>15</sup>

In exchange, Adolf Bastian offered ‘duplicates’ from the Jacobsen Collection from the Northwest coast of North America (see also Porto 2016) and reproductions of pre-Columbian gold objects from the Chibcha in Colombia manufactured by the Court Jeweler Paul Telge (1846-1909).

### **The integration of Brazil**

After the military coup on November 15, 1889, nationalist issues sparked open conflict at the Museu Nacional. As a consequence, the museums’ resident foreigners could not maintain their positions. Scientific work also was redefined in a nationalistic way. At that time, João Baptista de Lacerda (1846-1915) was acting director of the Museu Nacional as Netto was travelling (to the 7<sup>th</sup> ICA in Berlin and the Paris World Fair). Lacerda asked that the collections be moved to Quinta de Boa Vista, the imperial palace, a transfer that was completed in 1892 (Andermann 2003, 301), a few years before he was appointed director of the Museu Nacional from 1895 to 1915 (Duarte 2019, 366). Lacerda’s request for exchanges with different museums received no reply from the museum in Berlin (see Figure 4).

The last exchange between Rio and Berlin took place in 1928 and was organized by the then director Edgar Roquette-Pinto (1884-1954) at the Museu Nacional and Max Schmidt at the Museum für Völkerkunde (1874-1950). The 30 items that the Museu Nacional gave to Berlin had been gathered by the Comissão Rondon, while laying the telegraph line from Cuiabá to Santo Antonio (today Porto Velho) along the Rio Madeira (a distance of over 1500 km) (today national route 364). This ambitious project in the construction of modern Brazil was realized between 1907 and 1915 by the Marechal Cândido Rondon and his team (Diacon 2004). The object list sent to Berlin specifies the contexts: collectors involved, date and place, and also indicates the

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15 The objects now hosted at the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Ethnologisches Museum, Berlin (V B 1980-1994 [1888/0964]), mainly stem from Netto’s own expedition to the Isle of Marajó and from the Sambaquis from Santa Catharina.

original inventory number at the Museu Nacional.<sup>16</sup> The collection stems from different moments of this expedition, but mainly from the Nambikwara, in the “Serra do Norte, Mato Grosso”. The dates indicated in the list show that the collection covers a large part of this project, from 1910 to 1915.<sup>17</sup>

Edgar Roquette-Pinto was a medical doctor who began to work as an assistant in the department of anthropology of the Museu Nacional in 1906 and was appointed director in 1926. He joined the Comissão Rondon in Mato Grosso in 1910, and interrupted his involvement in 1911 due to a trip to Europe where he participated in the “First Universal Races Congress” in London together with João Baptista de Lacerda, then director of the laboratory of experimental physiology at the Museu Nacional. His fieldwork in 1912 is documented in *Rondônia*, a popular book which went through several editions in Brazil, since 2016. The project of the ‘fio telegrafico’ was a major endeavor in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, promoted by the organizer Marechal Rondon, who gave talks about the advances of the telegraph line (Diacon 2004). Roquette-Pinto’s book was even translated into German by the then curator, later (1955) director of the Völkerkundemuseum in Vienna, Etta Becker-Donner, and published in 1954 (Roquette-Pinto 1954). *Rondônia* is a logbook, with ethnographic information about the different communities the commission encountered, mainly the Pareci and Nambikwara, but it is also a personal account of people Roquette-Pinto met in the course of his work in the Comissão Rondon.<sup>18</sup>

The value of the 30 objects from the *Museu Nacional* was estimated at 1000 Reichsmark by Max Schmidt, curator of the South American collections in Berlin (Acta

16 The inventory numbers Museu Nacional, Rio de Janeiro: 2244, 2246, 11453, 11735, 11741, 11556, 11559, 11742, 11840-11842, 11961, 12092, 12130, 12137, 12543, 12729, 12765, 12783, 12790, 13031, 13220, 13280, 13806-13807, 13810-13811, 13817, 13824, 19022.

17 Contexts given in the list in exchange for Berlin 1928 (number of objects): 1910 “colhido em 11-7-910 em Retiro de Campos Novos – Vendo Branco por Severiano Godefredo de Albuquerque – Comissão Rondon” (1); 1910 “Colhido em Set. 1910 em Retiro de Campos Novos, por Severino Godefredo de Albuquerque” (1); 1911 “colhido em Campos Novos pelo Tenente Pyreneus em 1911” (1); 1912 “colhido em Campos Novos” (1); 1912 “colhido na Estação telegraphica de Vilhena em Agosto de 1912. Collecção Rondon Estação telegráfica de Vilhena (collected in August 1912), Excurção Roquette-Pinto 1912” (2); 1912 “Collecção Rondon – Excurção Roquette-Pinto” (18); 1915 “Enviada pelo escriptorio da Comissão Rondon por intermedio do Sr. Alipio de Miranda Ribero – 20-5-1915” (6).

18 People and places mentioned in the list for Berlin: The Tenente Antonio Pyreneus da Souza (? - 1936), as a provider of ethnographic objects, was a knowledgeable sertanejo, born in Goiás, who accompanied Rondon from the very beginning of the expedition, organized the logistics and the work flow. He seems to have been gifted with a knack for easily establishing friendships, and he also reported word lists of the Nambikwara. Alípio de Miranda Ribeiro (1874-1939) was a zoologist at the Museu Nacional since 1884, who joined the Comissão Rondon (1908-1910, and the expedition Rondon-Roosevelt 1914). The headquarters Rondon had created for the Serra do Norte in 1907, ‘Campos Novos’ (today Campo Novo do Parecis), a mile away from the telegraph station ‘Nambicuará’, was a *fazenda* (farm) with buildings made of local bricks and provided with an infirmary. It evolved into a meeting point for members of the Comissão Rondon and the indigenous communities (Roquette Pinto 1954, 143).

1928/1410).<sup>19</sup> Schmidt met Roquette-Pinto in 1926 in Rio and spent several weeks studying the collections at the Museu Nacional, where he got all conceivable support as well as recommendations and logistic assistance for his travel to Mato Grosso (Schmidt 1911, 85). Although there is no indication in the documentation of this exchange, it is likely that Roquette-Pinto and Max Schmidt agreed on the content of the collection selected for Berlin during his stay in Rio de Janeiro. The exchange collection from Rio was 'repaid' with 26 objects from West Africa. With one exception (Dahomey) all stem from Cameroon,<sup>20</sup> which was a German colony from 1884 through World War I, and where colonial officials, civil servants, settlers, missionaries and scholars contributed to the collection.

The Federal Council's 1889 decision (*Bundesratsbeschluss*) had privileged the Museum in Berlin (until 1911) to receive the collections from the colonies. Only 'duplicates' were forwarded to interested museums outside of Prussia (Krieger 1973, 113-114). While conducting fieldwork in Cameroon between 1907 and 1909, the Africanist Bernhard Ankermann (1859-1943), head of the African department at the Museum für Völkerkunde in Berlin, collected 1500 objects (Krieger 1973, 117). Using the *Anleitung für ethnographische Beobachtungen und Sammlungen* (Instructions for ethnographic observations and collections) originally conceived by the physical anthropologist Felix von Luschan (1854-1924), Ankermann instructed German officials to collect ethnographic data in a systematic way (Krieger 1973, 115; Ankermann in Staschewski 1917, 1). He also contributed to the Cameroon collection, which was the biggest within the African department in Berlin, consequently convenient for an exchange from the Berlin museum's point of view. The interest of the Museu Nacional particularly in West African collections can be explained by the effort to make the history of the Afro-Brazilian population more visible within a multiracial 'Brazilianness' (Figure 10).<sup>21</sup>

### The network of Curt Unckel-Nimuendajú

The museum in Gothenburg was a small province museum until the appointment of Erland Nordenskiöld (1877-1932) as head of the department of Ethnography in 1913. In his early years on the job, the museum's collection grew from almost 4000 pieces to 20 000. Nordenskiöld was inspired by Bastian and the idea of the universal museum. For Nordenskiöld the Museum für Völkerkunde in Berlin was about *Idealtypen* (examples) to follow. He recognized that Gothenburg was not Berlin but took the opportunity

19 Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Ethnologisches Museum, v B 10136-10165; lost in World War II: v B 10148, 10153, v B 10154.

20 Original inventory at the Museum für Völkerkunde, Berlin: III C 68a, 4978, 5610a, 6130 (Dahomey), 6716, 6423e, 6831, 7191, 7741, 10106, 10214, 20230, 21097, 21521, 22457, 22500, 23948, 24645, 24943, 25053, 25259, 25585, 26510, 28985, 32536, 32781i.

21 [https://artsandculture.google.com/asset/mask/\\_wHEBjXUb\\_Cug](https://artsandculture.google.com/asset/mask/_wHEBjXUb_Cug) (23.10.2020).



*Figure 10.* Ngbe Mask, head covered with skin of antelope or monkey, Keaka, Cameroon/Nigeria (Museu Nacional, Rio de Janeiro, 22193) (destroyed?), former Collection Rodatis, 1907 (Museum für Völkerkunde, Berlin III c 21521).

of engaging the bourgeoisie of the city in his museum project (Muñoz 2012). An important measure to involve the museum in an international sphere was to deepen the contacts with the German museums and their scholars. He conducted extensive written correspondence with many of the best-known German scholars: Theodor Koch-Grünbeg, Max Schmidt, Max Uhle, Konrad Theodor Preuss, and others.

Erland Nordenskiöld's aim was to create an encyclopedia of Latin American material culture. For this purpose, he participated in the international network of ethnographic material exchange. The relationship between the museums in Gothenburg and Berlin was quite close from 1911 until 1928, and relevant in the context of the network of museums, as Nimuendajú was a connecting point. The anthropologist Erland Nordenskiöld in Gothenburg had established a friendship with Max Schmidt (1874-1950) in Berlin, and they exchanged collections of their fieldwork in South America: 330 objects and 268 photographs were sent to Berlin, while Gothenburg got around 1000 objects, including photographs. Of particular interest for research are the photographs which

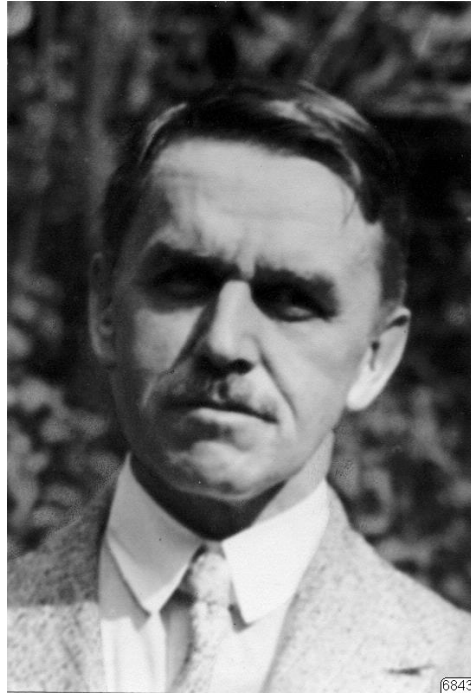


*Figure 11.* Feather head dress collected by Karl von den Steinen among the Nahuquá, Upper Xingú, Brazil. Exchange received from the Museum für Völkerkunde, Berlin (Världskulturmuseet, Gothenburg, 1929.18.0051, photographer: Ferenc Schwet).

survived in Gothenburg while the copies in Berlin were destroyed in World War II. Nordenskiöld sent material he had collected in the Argentinean Chaco and in exchange received material mainly from the Amazon, Peru and Mexico, but he also asked for objects from specific collections, for example from the expeditions of Karl von den Steinen to the Xingú (Archive SMVK, October 5, 1928)<sup>22</sup> (Figure 11). The criteria sometimes seemed to be, to have at least one object from every single group in Latin America.

However, the largest collections from Brazil at the then Gothenburg Museum stem from the connection with Curt Unckel-Nimuendajú (1883-1945). Curt Nimuendajú established special relationships with Berlin and, to a much larger extent, with Gothenburg. The Världskulturmuseet in Gothenburg today hosts around 8500 objects collected by him, as well as letters, maps, and drawings made by him.

<sup>22</sup> Världskulturmuseet Archive, Gothenburg, letters between Erland Nordenskiöld and Walter Lehmann, 1934.



*Figure 12.* Curt Nimuendajú in the courtyard of the museum in Gothenburg, 1934 (photographer: Stig Rydén).

Nimuendajú was born in Jena in 1883 as Curt Unckel and died among Tukuna in 1945 as Nimuendajú. In 1903, he immigrated to Brazil and became a Brazilian citizen, changing his name to Nimuendajú, ‘he who builds himself a house, long existing’.<sup>23</sup> The relationship between Nimuendajú and the museum in Gothenburg continued even after Nordenskiöld’s death in 1932. Nimuendajú went to Gothenburg in 1934 to work with Rydén on the archaeological collections he had gathered for the museum (Figure 12).

During the time that Nordenskiöld was director at the Gothenburg’s museum, there was even an exhibition hall named after Curt Nimuendajú where his collections were displayed. This gave Nordenskiöld the possibility for fundraising to support Nimuendajú’s expeditions. Erland Nordenskiöld needed to prove to the donors that Curt Nimuendajú was the best ethnographer of Brazil, despite his not having been educated among Germany’s anthropological elite. Nordenskiöld even tried (unsuccessfully) to find a permanent position for Nimuendajú in Sweden.

<sup>23</sup> For his biography see Grupioni (1998), Hartmann (1975), among others.

Nimuendajú did archaeological fieldwork on the island of Marajó (1922), in Rio Tapajós (1923), Rio Trombetas, Rio Nhamundá, Caviana, Amapá (Brazilian Guyana) (1925), Rio Madeira, Rio Autaz and Rio Tocantins (1926) and Rio Negro, Rio Içana and Rio Vaupés (1927). Exceptional objects from Marajó were bought by Nimuendajú at the pre-Columbian sites (Figure 13). However, since they lack secured contexts, discussion has arisen about the origin of ceramics in the area.<sup>24</sup>

After Nordenskiöld's and Nimuendajú's deaths, the largest collection from the Amazon at the museum in Gothenburg was the one bought by Borys Malkin (Collection no. 1961.18).



Figure 13. Ceramic from Marajó donated by Curt Nimuendajú (Världskulturmuseet, Gothenburg, 1924.16.0038, photographer: Ferenc Schwetz).

### Nimuendajú and Berlin

Curt Unkel emigrated to Brazil in 1903 when he was 20 years old, but established close relationships with several institutions in Germany through the ornithologist Emilie Sneath (1862-1929), director of the Museu Goeldi in Belém and the anthropologist Theodor

<sup>24</sup> While Nordenskiöld dated these objects in postcolonial times, Nimuendajú had the hypothesis of Mesoamerican influence or an introduction by exchange, a theory which is quite unlikely based on recent archaeological research (Neves 2004, 7).

Koch-Grünberg (Schröder 2019a, 218). He built collections for the museums in Dresden, Hamburg, Leipzig, Munich and in 1935 also for Berlin (Schröder 2019b, 2/21, 6/21).

The then Museum für Völkerkunde in Berlin acquired a collection from the Ramko'kamekrã (Canela), gathered by Nimunedajú during a trip he made from May to July 1935. In his letters to Walter Krickeberg, then director of the Museum für Völkerkunde in Berlin, with whom he had an agreement about the collecting, he also described the problematic situation he encountered in the villages afflicted with illnesses. Nimuedajú tried to fight measles and influenza with vaccination and describes his qualms about having to negotiate prices under these conditions. In addition, he describes the pressure due to his commitment to the Museu Nacional to acquire a comprehensive collection of 600-700 objects from this area (Schröder 2019b, 8/21). This 'order' of a collection from the Ramko'kamekrã (Canela) from Nimuedajú was certainly due to the previous research on the 'Canela' by Kissenberth in 1908 (Kissenberth 1912)<sup>25</sup> and Snethlage in 1924 (Snethlage 1930),<sup>26</sup> since both generated small collections hosted in the museum in Berlin. Nimuedajú sent a larger collection of 225 objects and photographs which suffered only small losses in World War II.<sup>27</sup>



*Figure 14.* “The hut of the Kokri't society two kilometers from the village where the masks were produced”, Ramko'kamekrã, photographer: Curt Nimuedajú, 1935 (Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Ethnologisches Museum, VIII E 5417).

25 Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Ethnologisches Museum, v B 8476-8493 (one object lost in World War II).

26 Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Ethnologisches Museum, v B 10097-10118, v B 12351 (one object lost in World War II).

27 The Collection Nimuedajú of the Ramko'kamekrã (Canela), Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Ethnologisches Museum, v B 11111-11338 (27 objects lost in World War II) and 38 photographs: VIII E 5402-5409, VIII E 5411-5543, see also <https://www.smb.museum/>).



Figure 15. “Procession of the Kokri’t mask dancers”, Ramko’kamekrá, photographer: Curt Nimendaju, 1935 (Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Ethnologisches Museum, VIII E 5419).

The book *The Eastern Timbira* (1946) was edited by the US anthropologist Robert H. Lowie (1883-1957), an admirer of Nimuendaju, and is one of the many impressive ethnographies Nimuendajú published for different areas of Brazil. There he gives a detailed description of a ritual witnessed in 1935, also documented by a series of photographs which show different aspects of the Kokri’t society of the Ramko’kamekrá (Canela) (Nimuendajú 1946, 207, plate 38: 338-339).<sup>28</sup> His complex discussion gives us an idea of Nimuendajú’s capacity to focus on and reveal the relevant aspects – here of the production of masks and the dance of Kokri’t society (Figures 14 and 15); however, the photographs also visualize the influence of ‘rescue anthropology’ of the time, where in contrast to his descriptions, the ‘external’ influences are obscured (Welper 2002; Schröder 2019a).

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28 Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Ethnologisches Museum, VIII E 5404-5418.

## Conclusion

This narrow glimpse of half a century (1880-1930) into the networks established between museums, in Europe and Brazil, touches several topics related to the current museum debate concerning the provenance of collections, the circumstances of acquisitions, their metahistories as well as institutional and personal relationships.

In this paper the institutional emphasis in Brazil was laid on the Museu Nacional, but Berlin and Gothenburg also maintained close relationships with the provincial museums in São Paulo and Belem once they were founded (Schwarcz 2005). Hermann von Ihering (1850-1930), the first director of the Museu Paulista (from 1895 to 1916), visited Berlin on several occasions, attended the sessions of the Berlin Society (BGAEU), and published in the *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie* (Lopes and Podgorny 2014, 810).<sup>29</sup> The exchange with the Museu Goeldi was even closer. The museum in Gothenburg in the early 1930s had an exchange specially with Carlos Estevão de Oliveira (1880-1946).<sup>30</sup> The museum in Berlin was connected to the Museu Paraense Emílio Goeldi through the ornithologist Emilie Snethlage (1868-1929) and her nephew Emil Heinrich Snethlage (1897-1939), whose research at the Guaporé river was supported by the museum in Belém (Snethlage 1930).

The close relationship between the different agents involved in the acquisition of collections in the last decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> and the early 20<sup>th</sup> century blurs the distinction between ‘scientists’ and ‘amateurs’ as these agents included diplomats, the military and German settlers in Brazil. This is the case around the 1880s when mainly German settlers from Rio Grande do Sul contributed their archaeological collections to the construction of the Brazilian past, while in the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the integration of indigenous, Afro-Brazilian and European populations became the guiding principle in the creation of a modern nation. An example of this policy can be seen in the collections gathered in the project of the ‘fio telegráfico’, where military personnel of the Comissão Rondon together with anthropologists from the Museu Nacional explored the interior of Brazil, documenting the material culture of their encounters with indigenous communities.

The exchange of collections between the museums in Rio de Janeiro and Berlin also show, how these collections served changing policies and were chosen to fit the current political agenda. On the one hand, the European museums – especially the ones in Berlin and Gothenburg – were interested in ‘completing’ the ‘map’ of material culture, in the spirit of Adolf Bastian’s ‘archive of humanity’, even into the first decades of the

29 Von Ihering sent only 17 objects to Berlin (one was lost in World War II), most of them archaeological finds, and samples of wood worked with stone axes, an example visualizing common research programs (Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Ethnologisches Museum, v B 6618-6620, Acta 1907/1489).

30 From this exchange the museum got 33 objects, but also information about objects collected by Nimuendajú in the same area.

20<sup>th</sup> century. The early research expeditions to Brazil related to the then Königliches Museum für Völkerkunde in Berlin, for example, were focused mainly on the Upper Xingú.

In Brazil, on the other hand, the agenda changed significantly from the Empire to the Republic, from the universalist approach, with an image projected towards the exterior, of a museum reflecting with its collections and exhibitions a global scope to the construction of a national identity of *Brasilianidade*, while after the abolition of the Empire (1888) the history of Afro-Brazilians was presented through the cultural heritage from West Africa.

Finally, the destruction of two centuries of collecting in the Museu Nacional in Rio de Janeiro raises questions about the sense of national centralizations of cultural heritage. The debate in recent decades about the legitimacy of hosting material culture in institutions outside their national territory has led to museums policies, where the accessibility through digitizing the collections and research on provenance became a main issue. But the question remains, what happens to these 'universal archives' in different parts of the world when they are at risk and how can these archives be maintained for future generations?

### Unpublished Documents

Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Ethnologisches Museum, Archive:

Acta betreffend die Erwerbung ethnologischer Gegenstände aus Amerika:

Acta 1882/1591

Acta 1882/1966

Acta 1882/2023

Acta 1883/1702

Acta 1883/2859

Acta 1883/1573

Acta 1888/0964

Acta 1896/0687

Acta 1907/1489

Acta 1928/1410

Världskulturmuseet, Göteborg, Archive:

Archive SMVK, October 5, 1928

Museu Nacional, Rio de Janeiro, Archive:

Archive, 1876

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