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# Sorcery objects under institutional tutelage

Magic and power in ethnographic collections

Ulisses N. Rafael

Yvonne Maggie

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## Abstract

This essay returns to a discussion of two collections of objects taken from two *terreiros* (places of worship) for Afro-Brazilian cults, namely the *Magia Negra* (Black Magic) collection at the Museu da Polícia do Rio de Janeiro (Rio de Janeiro Police Museum) and the *Perseverança* collection at the Instituto Histórico e Geográfico de Alagoas – IHGAL (Alagoas Historical and Geographical Institute), in Maceió. In both cases we looked at how members of Brazil's elite are involved in sorcery and how members of this elite circulate in candomblé, xangô, umbanda and other *terreiros*.

In this essay, in particular, we examine the subject of the collections in the context of recent changes arising from heritage-listing policies in Brazil that have decisively affected relations between these objects and institutions charged with protecting and preserving cultural heritage.

**Keywords:** Afro-Brazilian cults, collections, heritage, sorcery, State, elites

## Resumo

Nosso objetivo aqui é retomar uma discussão iniciada em trabalhos anteriores acerca de duas coleções de objetos apreendidos nos terreiros de cultos afro-brasileiros, mais especificamente da Coleção de Magia Negra no Museu da Polícia Civil do Rio de Janeiro e a Coleção Perseverança do Instituto Histórico e Geográfico de Alagoas, em Maceió, quando o interesse esteve voltado, nos dois casos, para uma reflexão acerca do modo como no Brasil o Estado se imiscui nos assuntos da magia, bem como sobre a circularidade da elite brasileira pelos terreiros de candomblé, xangô, umbanda, entre outros.

Neste ensaio, em particular, retomamos o tema das coleções no contexto

do conjunto de transformações recentes decorrentes das políticas de patrimonialização no Brasil e que afetam decisivamente a relação das instituições de proteção e de preservação do patrimônio cultural com tais objetos.

**Palavras chave:** Cultos afro-brasileiros, Coleções, patrimônio, magia, Estado, elites.

# Sorcery Objects under Institutional Tutelage

Magic and Power in Ethnographic Collections<sup>1</sup>

Ulisses N. Rafael

Yvonne Maggie

*Objects express a physical bond  
between us and the missing other,  
they have a potential for evocation  
(Dominique Poulot)*

This essay returns to a discussion of two collections of objects taken from two *terreiros* (places of worship) for Afro-Brazilian cults, one in Rio de Janeiro, and the other in Maceió.

In previous studies of the *Magia Negra* (Black Magic) collection at the Museu da Polícia do Rio de Janeiro (Rio de Janeiro Police Museum) (Maggie et. al., 1979; Maggie, 1992) and the *Coleção Perseverança* (Perseverança Collection) at the Instituto Histórico e Geográfico de Alagoas – IHGAL (Alagoas Historical and Geographical Institute) in Maceió (Rafael, 2012) we looked at relations between the Brazilian state and magic, and, more specifically, how members of Brazil's elite were related to Afro-Brazilian religious temples (*terreiros*). We showed that members of these elite were willing to avail themselves of the efficacy of these practices, despite denying their legitimacy. Their ambiguous relationship with belief is analogous to the resigned attitude of those who collected the objects that compose these collections.

The collection at the Rio de Janeiro Police Museum consists of objects seized in the early 20th century by the police charged with persecuting what was called *baixo espiritismo* (literally “low spiritism”). The very institution

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<sup>1</sup> The authors wish to acknowledge editor, friend and former advisor Peter Fry for his suggestions and in particular for his patience in the final edition of this paper.

charged with suppressing and controlling Afro-Brazilian cults preserved these objects. On May 5, 1938, just a year after Brazil's Artistic and Historical Heritage Service (past acronym SPHAN, renamed IPHAN) was founded, the collection was listed as cultural heritage to be protected (Case 0035-T-38), and registered as No. 001 in the book of Archaeological, Ethnographic and Landscape Heritage.<sup>2</sup> For many years, the museum's collection remained in the "Black Magic" museum of the police precinct that sequestered the objects, but was then transferred to Rio de Janeiro's Police Museum in 1945. Correspondence dated November 1945, between the head of SPHAN and the modernist poet Dante Milano, the then director of the Police Museum, included this statement: "... the museum was created as an 'extra-scholastic' body for the study of criminology. Due to certain peculiarities of specimens in its collections, the museum has become an institution in which its learned character predominates, but it also has something of the nature of a museum of folk art to it."<sup>3</sup> Dante Milano headed this "scientific" museum for eleven years, from 1945 to 1956. The pieces kept for so long were exhibited in the Police Academy building until 1999.

The Alagoas collection originated from the 1912 riots<sup>4</sup> led by the *Liga dos Republicanos Combatentes* (League of Republican Combatants), who attacked Xangô<sup>5</sup> terreiros accused of being associated with state governor Euclides Malta. Members of this paramilitary group were the first to sort through the objects and decide which to destroy or burn in the houses where they were found. The rest were carried through the city and publicly displayed to the scorn of locals in buildings occupied by groups opposing the state government - the same pieces, perhaps, that were then cataloged and exhibited at the League's headquarters before going to the museum collection of the now-extinct Maceió store clerks mutual society (*Sociedade Perseverança e Auxílio dos Empregados no Comércio de Maceió*, hereinafter *Perseverança*), where they were virtually forgotten for about 40 years. The collection was finally recovered by members of the

2 The Museum's official website states that heritage listing was requested by senior police officer Silvio Terra. <http://museupoliciacivil.hdfree.com.br/> retrieved June 24, 2012.

3 Letter from director Dante Milano to the head of SPHAN, as in case no. 0035-T-38 in the Book of Archaeological, Ethnographic and Landscape Heritage Listing / Registration no. 001 of May 5, 1938.

4 "Quebra de Xangô" (The Breaking of Xangô) is the expression by which the episode became known in the state of Alagoas.

5 In Maceió the Afro-Brazilian terreiros are termed Xangô, pronounced shan-goh.

Alagoas Historical and Geographical Institute, which has been its home to the present day.<sup>6</sup> The process of listing the *Perseverança* collection as heritage started a hundred years after the notorious 1912 riots.

This essay returns to the subject of the collections in the context of recent changes arising from heritage-listing policies in Brazil that have decisively affected relations between these objects and institutions charged with protecting and preserving cultural heritage. An important point to bear in mind is that it was not until 2003 that we saw a new stance on the subject of heritage and preservation policies in the form of a convention on safeguarding intangible heritage (Cf. Arantes, 2009).

That said, there are some questions that stand out; some of them posed at the time of the corresponding specific investigations, but which may be useful to summarize here. What was the context in which these objects were collected and taken from their traditional place of origin to become museum specimen? How can we explain the paradoxical contrast between search and seizure by violent means and careful conservation in the institutional homes found for them? Which agents or actors were involved in the processes of gathering, cataloging and maintaining these collections and what were their underlying motivations? May this preservationist démarche point to broader aspects of relations between the State and Afro-Brazilian religious practices, and with heritage-listing policies in Brazil?

Objects have a life of their own. Their actions in the world derive not so much from their intrinsic qualities but from the meanings attributed to them. In this new condition, their meaning attributed from outside, objects become factors in social action, as Victor Turner (2005) was to say of the Ndembu symbols. To examine them is to give an account of their journeys, from their enthronement as objects of worship in the sanctuaries from which they were appropriated, through to their transformation into cultural objects based on various processes of identification, collection, preservation and restoration (Gonçalves, 1996).

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6 Xangô is the term for Afro-Brazilian cults in the states of Pernambuco and Alagoas, although, as Yvonne Maggie points out, these categories do not reflect the dynamics of the classifications provided by the informants themselves. In one interview, we often saw the use of all these expressions by an informant referring to the same set of ritual practices. Even the use of “Afro-Brazilian” here should be hedged with precautions, as Beatriz Góis Dantas warns, due to the ideological charge associated with it. However we have all continued to use these terms for the lack of anything more satisfactory (Cf. Maggie, 2001 e Dantas, 1988).

In doing so, we hope to contribute to our understanding of nation-building processes. Specifically, the aim is to reflect on the paths that led the state-government bureaucracy to establish intimate relations with magic and how this ambiguous relationship – between fascination and fear – may be reified in museum or ethnographic collections.

That said, we shall proceed to look at the political and administrative situation in Brazil in the early years of the republican period, paying special attention to practices for regulating religious activities thought to be of African origin. This contextualization is needed to understand the meaning behind the decision – often taken by the persecutors themselves – to catalogue and conserve objects that had been obtained through repression, the issue that we shall now proceed to address.

### **Repression of sorcery in Brazil's "First Republic" period**

Since the colonial period, Brazil had developed regulatory mechanisms for dealing with accusations directed at witches or sorcerers in *terreiros* and other places of worship. Unlike many other societies with a strong belief in sorcery, practitioners in Brazil were not usually punished with death. However, the advent of the First Republic saw a decree of October 11, 1890 move the State onto the path of regulatory mechanisms to combat sorcerers through a new Penal Code,<sup>7</sup> which included three articles referring to the *illegal practice of medicine*, the practice of magic, and banning *faith healing*. The introduction of these articles by the framers showed their fear of evil doing and the need to create institutions and means for combating those who gave rise to evil. Thus they wrote:

Article 156 – Exercising medicine in any of its branches, or dentistry or pharmacy: practicing homeopathy, dosimetry, hypnotism, or animal magnetism, without being qualified to do so under the laws and regulations.

Penalties – one to six months prison and a fine of 100 to 500\$000.

– for abuses committed in the illegal practice of medicine in

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7 Penal Code of 1890. Decree of October 11 1890, Rio de Janeiro: Imprensa Nacional.

general, in addition to the penalties thus established, perpetrators shall suffer those applicable to the crimes to which they have given rise.

Section 157 – Practicing spiritism, magic and its spells, use of talismans and fortune-teller cards to stir feelings of hatred or love, inculcate cure of curable or incurable diseases, in short to fascinate and subjugate public credulity.

Penalties – one to six months prison and a fine of 100 to 500\$000.

§ 1. If through the influence thereof, or as a consequence of any of these means there results in the patient being deprived of physical faculties, or their temporary or permanent alteration.

Penalties – one to six months prison and a fine of 200 to 500\$000.

§ 2. The same penalty, and being barred from practicing the profession for the same time as the sentence will be incurred by any doctor directly practicing the above-mentioned arts or assuming responsibility for them.

Article 158 – Ministering, or simply prescribing as a means of cure for internal or external use in any prepared form, a substance from any of the kingdoms of nature, thus acting as a faith healer.

Penalties – one to six months prison and a fine of 100 to 500\$000.

– if the use of any substance leads to a person losing, or suffering temporary or permanently alteration of physical or physiological functions, deformity, or inability to exercise an organ or organ system, or, in short any illness:

Penalties – one to six months prison and a fine of 200 to 500\$000.

If it results in death:

Penalty – six to twenty-four years prison.

Based on this republican code, the State began to intervene in matters of magic in the name of the law, energetically combatting witchcraft and suppressing *terreiros*. Special courts were set up and staff trained to identify and distinguish those guilty of wrongdoing or evil. There was no argument over



the reality of spirits, spirit possession, divination, or magic itself. Rather, the law made it necessary to distinguish between good and bad magic, or between black magic and white magic to use the words of the *terreiros* themselves. Over the years, policing institutions were set up to regulate, combat, and punish evildoers. The State was heavily involved in this role in the 20th century, even after the Penal Code was substantially altered in 1940.

How different is this system that recognizes the reality of witchcraft and sorcery from those that deny its existence! The decline of belief in witchcraft in England from the 16th century onwards, documented by Keith Thomas (1973), finally resulted in the British Empire forcing this disbelief on the peoples it colonized, punishing not the alleged healers, but those who *denounced others* for witchcraft or sorcery. Under this system, only the accusers could be brought to justice on account of their manipulation of what were considered spurious beliefs. This can be seen quite clearly in Crawford's (1967) book on sorcery and witchcraft in the former British colony of Southern Rhodesia, now Zimbabwe, where the 1890 *Witchcraft Suppression Act*<sup>8</sup> stipulated punishment for those convicted of accusing witches. After independence in 1980, the law remained in place until 2006, when it was repealed by the dictator Robert Mugabe, once again showing there has to be belief in the supernatural power of producing evil if there are to be regulations on accusations and punishment for wrongdoers. For the people of Zimbabwe, witchcraft was as real as summer rain. British law meant nothing to the subject peoples of the Empire. In republican Brazil on the other hand, judiciary, police and the people in general all shared the same beliefs and thought the State had a duty to punish persons accused of doing evil through witchcraft or sorcery.

Brazil's legislation was impregnated with [belief in] magic and it was incumbent on the State to intervene and separate true "priests" and "priestesses" (*pais-de-santo* and *mães-de-santo*) from false ones; to separate those doing good from those using their supernatural powers for wrongdoing or evil. As the great British anthropologist Sir Edward E. Evans-Pritchard wrote in his

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8 The Witchcraft Suppression Act-1897 made it a crime to accuse someone of witchcraft. "Whoever imputes to any other person the use of non-natural means in causing any disease in any person or animal or in causing any injury to any person or property, that is to say, whoever names or indicates any other person as being a wizard or a witch shall be guilty of an offence and liable to a fine not exceeding two hundred dollars or to imprisonment for a period not exceeding three years, or to a whipping not exceeding twenty lashes or to any two or more of such punishments." (Apud Crawford, 1967).

classic *Witchcraft, oracles and magic among the Azande* (2004), belief in witchcraft, magic or supernatural powers of doing evil is a system of knowledge used to interpret misfortune, imponderable events, or that which cannot be explained by science; chance. The same belief in magic reigned in 20th-century Brazil in the minds of everyone, rich and poor, black and white, women and men, young and old alike.

Although the State was charged with suppression, the process always started with a neighbor or a client making accusations.<sup>9</sup> Most criminal cases in Rio de Janeiro began with an accusation posed more or less in these terms:

I have the honor of addressing you even though I have never had the honor of meeting you. Because we know that your Excellency is a champion of morality and of justice, I appeal to your Excellency in writing that you may bring to an end this abuse [illegible] sorcery and fortune telling that infest this city; the victims are many, We shall report a fact that will allow your Excellency to understand the full shamelessness of these people. There is a certain Rocha or Costa on Rua Senador Pompeu, a black man from the Mina Coast who lives off ignorant victims. On the advice of others, a woman came to find the black man to consult him about her missing husband, whom she wanted back. The sorcerer (*feiticeiro*) told her he could make the husband come home through an advance payment of 300\$000. Then the woman began to cry and said she could not [pay him] because she did not have money, and that if he would make her husband come home she would get the money from him. The black man said that was not necessary because she could pay with her body. He pointed to the woman. She left in desperation, and came and told us about it. I was indignant and promised to send a letter to your Excellency denouncing him. There are others in worse conditions, too many to describe. However, I give your Excellency the number and the house so that you can catch them for the immoral acts practiced there in *flagrante delicto*. It is a disgrace. There is one on Monqueiras across from number 49 (...) these men are sorcerers (*feiticeiros*) who say that they could do away with the Republic if they wanted to; certain women use the place for indulgent activities and deflowerings. That one on Monqueiras calls himself Cipriano and is known as Bedé and there is another known as Diogo Mina. These are terrible killers; they give tips on the *bicho*

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9 Sir Edward Evans-Pritchard (2004) noted that Azande sorcerers or witches are always among the enemies and these are people close to the accused.

[numbers racket] for a certain percentage. On behalf of the poor ignorant victims of such nonsense, we ask you to look into these matters. In time I shall supply your Excellency with lists of these people and of numbers runners and fortune-tellers.<sup>10</sup>

There is a morality to witchcraft or sorcery too. “Azande say that hatred, jealousy, envy, backbiting, slander, and so forth go ahead and witchcraft follows after.” (Evans-Pritchard, 2004: 75). In Brazil, the phrase most often heard is – big eye [jealousy or envy] is worse than a spell – envy is worse than witchcraft (Maggie, 2001: 42). Witchcraft morality disapproves of antisocial vices and approves of virtue. People only try to identify a sorcerer producing evil when a disease or misfortune is severe. There are several methods of finding the name of the real culprit. Among the Azande there was the “poison oracle” as the most important technique for investigating. The diviner ministered a chicken a special potion that might kill it: if the fowl died, the name queried was guilty, if the chicken survived, he was innocent.

Many techniques were used in *terreiros* to find out a sorcerer, but it was in the Republic that the State devised a method that became popular in the form of proceedings brought under articles 156, 157 and 158 of the Penal Code. The oracle was an expert who specialized in analyzing objects seized by the police when they invaded a *terreiro*, place of worship or home of one so accused. Experts analyzed objects to develop techniques identifying those used for evil-doing or false objects belonging to charlatans or fraudsters (*mistificadores*).

From the early days of the Republic, *terreiros* were subjected to a continuous process of regulation through police investigations and criminal proceedings brought under the abovementioned articles of the Penal Code that governed and hierarchized these practices.

Soon after the proclamation of the Republic, the authorities were eager to regulate the activities of religious associations. Law 173 of September 10, 1893, regulated the “organization of associations founded for religious purposes ...” under Article 72, §3 of the Constitution. Article 1 also states that associations founded for religious purposes “... may acquire legal personality by registering their bylaws or articles at the civil registry of deeds in the district in which their headquarters were established.” Article 13 reads: “Associations

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Case 6, C 21 National Archives. Letter kindly provided by Marcos Bretas.

promoting unlawful purposes or used for illegal or immoral purposes will be wound up by a court ruling upon complaint brought by any person or the public prosecutor's office."

In 1917, before the reorganization of the National Public Health Service, a new law set up a body called Inspection of Exercise of Medicine and Pharmacy. Its Article 35 regulated the use of these public establishments and religious corporations and allowed them to have a pharmacy if licensed by the General Directorate of Public Health. The Service also foreshadowed the changes that came about in the 1920s, when the city's administrators felt they had to carry out another energetic sanitary campaign. Decree 3987 of January 2, 1920, for example, set up the National Public Health Department, reorganized the National Public Health Service, and restructured the supervision of medicine. The decree also set up a health or sanitary police force, enabled by legal formalities freely to enter any public building or private house. Along with the civil police, they controlled rules for hygiene and public health. The 1920s were particularly rich in attacks against spiritist centers and teams were set up specializing in matters relating to practices deemed harmful for public health.

The final part of this history clearly shows which of the persons thus accused were most dangerous when the Penal Code was promulgated in 1942. In the late 1930s, shortly after the 1937 coup<sup>11</sup>, a section was set up to pursue drug traffic and fraud (*Tóxicos e Mistificações*). A controversy arose over altering regulatory procedures for accusations against sorcerers or witches. Lawyers and doctors debated the three articles of the Code in closed meetings or in the press. When the new code was voted in 1942, Article 157 was amended to classify the crime of "inculcating or announcing healing by secret or infallible means" as "charlatanism". After heated debates, the category of spiritism was removed from the letter of the law but the doctrine established by this article defined charlatans and described Candomblé and Macumba as dangerous and criminal. These articles remained unchanged until the most recent code. After 1942, persons accused under this article were designated "macumbeiros"<sup>12</sup>.

11 In Brazil, the Coup of 1937 launched the historical period known as Estado Novo – a totalitarian regime headed by President Getúlio Vargas, who had been in power since the so-called 1930 Revolution. This regime ended with Vargas' death by suicide in 1945.

12 Decree-Law 2,848 of December 7, 1940 was published in the Official Gazette on 12/31/1940, but only

Since the turn of the century, then, legal, public-health and police institutions had been organized to combat these practices considered harmful to public health and morals. The institutions that waged heavy-handed repression against *terreiros* and places of worship, or mediums whose leaders were accused of using spiritual powers for evil doing in Rio de Janeiro, seized ritual objects and kept in the fine collection of the Rio de Janeiro Police Museum, which we shall proceed to describe.

## The Black Magic collection of objects in Rio de Janeiro

In 1938, the Rio de Janeiro Police Museum's Black Magic collection was housed in the section covering drugs, narcotics, and fraud of Auxiliary Police Precinct 1, whose mission was suppressing "low spiritism and faith healing". It was not until some years later, in 1945, for reasons not precisely known, that it was moved to the Rio de Janeiro Police Museum, where it has remained until the present day, although it has not been exhibited since 1999.

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became effective in 1942 when the Law of Criminal Misdemeanor was enacted. Articles 282, 283 and 284, in the chapter on Crimes Against Public Health, remained until today, read as following:

**Illegal practice of medicine, dentistry or pharmacy** – Article 282 – exercise, albeit for free of charge, of the profession of doctor, dentist or pharmacist, without legal authorization or exceeding its limits: Penalty – imprisonment from six months to two years.

Paragraph One of One: if the crime is committed in order to profit, a penalty of one to five contos de réis shall also be applied.

**Charlatanism** – Art. 283 – inculcate or announce healing through secret or infallible means:

Penalty – imprisonment from three months to one year and a fine of one to five contos de réis.

**Faith healing** – Article 284 – practicing faith healing: I - habitually prescribing, administering or applying any substance II - using gestures, words or other means; III - making diagnoses:

Penalty – imprisonment from six months to two years.

Paragraph One of One – if the crime is committed for remuneration, the agent is also subject to a fine of one to five contos.

Qualified form – Article 285 – the provisions of art. 258 are applicable crimes under this chapter except as defined in art. 267.

Meaningful forms of crime common danger – Article 258 – if the felony of common danger resulting in severe bodily injury, the penalty of imprisonment shall be increased by half; if leading to death, doubled. In case of blame, if there is bodily injury, the penalty increases by half; if it leads to death, the penalty applied is for manslaughter, increased by one third.

Illegal practice of medicine, dentistry or pharmacy – Article 282 – exercise, albeit for free of charge, of the profession of doctor, dentist, or pharmacist, without legal authorization or exceeding its limits.

**Charlatanism** – Art. 283 – inculcate or announce healing through secret or infallible means.

**Faith healing** – Article 284 – practicing faith healing: I - habitually prescribing, administering, or applying any substance II - using gestures, words, or other means; III - making diagnoses.

Paragraph One of One – if the crime is committed for remuneration, the agent is also subject to a fine of two to ten thousand cruzeiros.

According to the current director, senior officer Cyro Advincula da Silva, the items have been kept in storage since the museum was transferred from the police academy to a building (Palácio da Polícia) on Rua da Relação. The museum is currently closed for repair and restoration work.<sup>13</sup>

The best description of the role of this museum found in official documents is in a 1946 report of the Minister of Justice and Internal Affairs of the Federal Public Safety Department, pages 196-197:

The Police Museum is divided into two sections: History and Technique. The former assembles all material once it has been prepared and classified or modeled as applicable. The latter compiles the history of each piece and divides them by room. The museum aims to be a wellspring of studies and research for specialists, professors and authorities, and a living palpable document to be used as the basis for education of students and the public.

According to the report, the museum's file index comprised the following record cards: obstetrics, 32; narcotics, 36; fortune-telling, 8; evidence, 5; palmistry, 4; false identity cards – foreign, 31; false identity cards – Brazilian, 17; pharmaceutical material, 48; gambling, 91; historical documents, 3; black magic 254.

Items comprising this incredible museum collection are listed in a document that assistant precinct officer Demócrito de Almeida forwarded to the heritage service (SPHAN) in 1940, shown below as originally composed by the anonymous writer:

List of objects comprising the Black Magic Museum, Toxics, Narcotics and Fraud Section, Auxiliary Precinct 1, Federal District Police Force.

Four bass drums (*tabaques*), one ochossi (sic), one exu, one inhassã and one ogum; One statue of Mephistopheles (eixu), the highest entity in the bloodline of the Malei; A clay statue of ossanha (forest spirit) protector of medicinal trees; Three plumes and two helmets worn by *macumbeiros cavalos*, [i.e., 'horses' ridden by spirits, or mediums] and *cambonos* [assistants to mediums in trance] for spells or ceremonies in the *terreiro*; Three glasses containing snakes (spells or ceremonies); A cushion with a skull and two tibia bones with drawings of umulu (sic) (king of cemeteries) the most respected entity of all laws; An oil painting

13 Thanks are due to senior police officer Cyro Advincula da Silva for kindly meeting us for an insightful interview (2012) covering the recent history of the Police Museum and its Black Magic collection.

of a caboclo [backwoodsman or Indian]; A drawing of a root, representing *eixu-tiriri*; One full ogum warrior outfit with two spears, a sword and a shield; An embalmed chicken (for spells or ceremonies); Three *aoxum* (sic) stones; a *inhassã* stone; Two bound candles filled with pins (spell); Two bound figures used to honor an entity; Four candles (festive embers) A stone (*ita iemanjá*); Seven rings worn by *macumbeiros* (when they are on the *terreiro*); Three bowls (*cuité*) for liquor; *aluá* (*mandioca-puba* [cassava], maize and fruits) or *malafa*, also known as *cutimbá* (*cachaça*), 19 pipes (*pito catimbau*) for “smoking” [incense type]; Three cigars (*Pancho*) also used for smoking; Three images of Saint Anthony bound with ribbons, bound to make a marriage match; A metal cone (*cassiri* [fermented cassava]) for chants; Three black *pembas* [chalk with magical properties] (*eixu pembas*); six colored *pembas* (*ochossi pembas*); Three white *pembas* (*orisha pembas*); A black stick of *guiné* (used to free the body of evil); Nine talismans; One roll of tobacco and a pipe (*catimba*) bound with ribbon; A snuff pouch (used to bring the spirit near to materiality); A brass fan (*inhassã fan*); “Saint Mary Magdalen”, used to ward off persecution; A bottle of Paraty (*cutimbá* or *malafa*) used as holy water; Two daggers (*obê* ou *obelê*); loose, used to hold chants; Two images of Saint George on horseback (ogum warrior fighting warrior satan) Two lead shoes (shoes offered by a believer to the orisha oxum) Two images representing Crispin and Chrispiniano; A white metal star (guiding star) A metal fan (oxum fan), “Our Lady of Conception”, used to ward off persecution; A small image of umulu (Saint Lazarus), Four amulets ou talismans used by *mussulmis*; An image of Saint Jerome (*pai xangô ogodô*), the axe lightning and thunder man; An image of Saint John the Baptist (*pai xangô locô*); A cutlas (dress sword, *obelê*) costume for *terreiro* festive events; A star fish (*calunga*) of white magic; A dress sword (*obê* or *obelê*), offering to ogum engraved on the blade; A small image of Saint Onofre (*omulu*); A bottle with gunpowder (*fundanga* or *tũa*), used to ward off an evil entity; An image of Saint Barbara (*abodojô*), protector against storms; 30 (*ifá* ou *aburi*), used by *macumbeiros* for chanting, or communicate with a superior entity; Seven Umbanda *cruzeiros* (entity below *umulu*, or *obaloaê* in Nago); *quibandú*, used in *eixu* (sic) chant in order to punish a *terreiro* member not following rules: An image representing the entity *vume* (queen of *efu*), which means death by lightning; Beads (*guiame*) of oxum and *inhassã*; Beads (*guiame*) of oxum with *oxala*; Beads (*guiame*) of *eixu* warrior; Beads (*guiame*) of *zambi-japombo* (meaning supreme god known as *babá*); Beads (*guiame*) of ogum with warrior *eixu*; Master beads (*guiame*); Beads (*guiame*) of *inhassã* or Mary Magdalene; Beads (*guiame*) *nana-buruquê* (Saint Anne).



Figure 1. Yemanjá/sereia:  
Photo Luiz Alphonsus

Due to the ambiguous and intricate relationships between accusers and accused, and between the elite and the *terreiros*, the same police precinct that seized the objects during investigations took them for safekeeping in the Black Magic Museum and then at the Police Museum.

When contacted for the first study made by one of the authors of this essay in 1979, the director of the Rio de Janeiro Police Museum said that the objects were seized “in the period of repression” and that he had organized the collection as a whole in the mid-1960s based on the ritual significance of its components. In doing so, he often resorted to explanations given by the “people of the *terreiros*”, to use his own words, and information gathered from books by researchers of Afro-Brazilian religions, such as Edison Carneiro, Roger Bastide and Artur Ramos. There seems to be unanimity in relation to the meanings of objects, but disagreement over the cultural and geographical origins of pieces.

A list of objects comprising the Black Magic Museum, made by the head of the Auxiliary Police Precinct and forwarded to the heritage body (SPHAN) in 1940, gives the impression of having been compiled by someone with intimate knowledge of Afro-Brazilian religious practice and belief.



Along with the ritual objects and belongings of mediums and their leaders (*pais-de-santo* and *mães-de-santo*) assembled at the Police Museum were other items seized such as artifacts used by counterfeiters for fraud, toxic substances, or operators of the illegal numbers racket (*jogo do bicho*). In addition, there were objects taken from “angel makers” (this term appears to have been used, depending on the region, for women informally involved in abortions, or in assisting childbirth, or in caring for the newly born in precarious conditions) as well as photographs of victims of notorious criminals in Rio in the 1950s, such as Luz del Fuego and Dana de Tefé. In 1979, the Black Magic collection was arranged next to flags of the *Integralistas* (neo-fascist movement of the 1930s) and objects belonging to famous communists, such as Luis Carlos Prestes’ typewriter.

Interestingly, the Police Museum’s Black Magic collection was arranged in the layout of a *terreiro*, where the spirits of light are kept carefully segregated from the spirits of darkness. Images of exus were separated from those of other orisha deities, drums from images, and artifacts used in favorable spells or interventions were placed on a separate shelf to those used against adversaries (Cf. Lody, 2005).

The history of this collection and how it was first organized demonstrates the wealth of detail and complexity of a repressive activity within the field of beliefs that included members of all social classes. The fact that SPHAN listed it as heritage in 1938 shows the significance of these beliefs for the policemen who investigated the *terreiros* and impounded their ritual objects, the judges and prosecutors, who tried the cases, as well as the intellectuals who founded the heritage preservation institutions, a point we shall return to below.

### **The *Perseverança* collection at the Alagoas Historical and Geographical Institute and memory of the 1912 riots**

This collection was assembled, as noted above, after a mob led by the League of Republican Combatants took to the streets in Maceió on the night of the February 1, 1912 and pursued members of the main Xangô *terreiros* in one of the most violent episodes ever in the history of these cults in the state of Alagoas, or perhaps anywhere in Brazil.

The origin of the episode lay in opposition to the oligarchic group headed by Euclides Malta, whose political maneuvering helped keep him in power

for a period of nearly twelve years often called the “age of the Malτας”, including an interim mandate (1903/1906) for his brother Joaquim Vieira Malta.

During the election campaign of 1912, Euclides Malta was accused of close relations with the followers of Xangô, being referred to as “*leba*” and other “derogatory” terms. *Leba* is a variant of *legbá* that, according to Verger’s analysis of the meanings of African orishas, was part of the pantheon of the exus whom ancient travelers associated with the god of fornication, due to format shown as a mound earth in the shape of a man squatting, adorned with an exaggerated phallus. According to Verger, “this erect phallus is nothing more than the assertion of his truculent, bold and shameless character and desire to shock decorum.” (Cf. Verger, 1981). According to Bastide, this Dahomean *legba* should not be confused with the exu of the Yoruba; in their country his phallic character is seen on the staff of the Nagô exu, but not the *legba* priests’ dramatized coitus in public ceremonies with a large wooden phallus. (Cf. Bastide, 1971: pp. 348/349). This would be an initial first association between the xangôs of Alagoas and the Dahomean influence. Unfortunately, among the objects seized that are now in the *Perseverança* collection, there is no ritual sculpture of exu that might show the origin of the entity worshiped in Alagoas, based on the characteristics described above. Coincidentally or not, this was one of the few objects seized that was totally destroyed after being displayed and mocked by onlookers. I shall return to this issue below

According to local reports, people could not sleep in peace in certain streets of Maceió at the height of the political crisis confronting Euclides Malta. The noise of drums and *zabumbas* from Xangô houses was apparently taken as provocation by many of the state capital’s inhabitants, who were dismayed by Malta’s administrative excesses. It was widely reported that he assiduously sought the help of sorcerers to obtain more protection and stay in power. Now religious practices of this type had always enjoyed much acceptance in the state, not only among the populace as a whole, but also among the established authorities. Afro-Brazilian practices rarely featured in police reports. This was all to change when certain temples were accused of defending and supporting the “tribal chief of the big forest” (*Soba de Mata Grande*), another of Euclides Malta’s nicknames. These *terreiros* were accused of straying from their role of resolving affliction to sponsor evil doing, a kind of “cheap witchcraft.” But the wrecking Xangô houses was part and parcel of the struggle against the political authority of the Malta family and their oligarchy; putting



Figure 2. Oxum Ekum.  
Photo: Marcelo Albuquerque

an end to an abominable practice, without ever doubting its efficacy. Failing to punish those who use their powers for evil purposes would be inadmissible.

In June 1915, a few years after the party headed by Euclides Malta was soundly defeated in the 1912 elections, his portrait was slashed symbolically to eliminate any trace from memory of the evil he represented. This assault took place during a ceremony held at the Alagoas Historical Institute to mark another anniversary of the government of his successor, Clodoaldo da Fonseca. Much later, in the 1950s, the pieces that were to comprise the *Perseverança* collection were finally moved from the basement of the Maceió Commerce Employees Perseverance and Aid Society and taken into the possession of the Alagoas Historical and Geographical Institute. Among them were no images or sculptures associated with former-governor Malta, if only because they had been destroyed when the *terreiros* were wrecked immediately after his forced removal from power.

This selective destruction points to a certain ambiguity. On the one hand, it was the expression of a revolt against a political representative who, in those circumstances, was the personification of evil. On the other hand, they were remnants of services performed in those magical-religious places, of all



Figure 3. Oxalá.  
Photo: Marcelo Albuquerque

they retained of sacred and ceremonial in opposition to evil-doing magic. A decision was taken to conserve some of these sculptures, namely oxalá, oxum-ekum, oyá, omolu, iemanjá, obabá, ogum-taió, xangô-dadá, xangô-bo-mim and xangô-nilé,<sup>14</sup> instead of those representing entities such as the “horned idol” leba, as “the spirit of evil”, or “ali-baba, the saint in the form of a boy who presided over lively activities and pleasures,”<sup>15</sup> which were burned in the many fires started during those nights of 1912. The preservation of African pieces, to the detriment of others such as those the leba, with whom the Governor was associated not only stood for the victory of good over evil but also sought to remove them from their original locus, where they might continue to be manipulated for witchcraft. By placing these objects in a neutral environment, their efficacy would kept be under control.

14 According to Raul Lody (1985), xangô nilê, the name of an entity that in Alagoas was syncretized with Saint Anthony, who is also associated with the orisha Ogun in other Brazilian states, comes from a Nigerian title known as Onin Irê, from which the terms Onirê and Nire came as corrupted forms. In relation to the syncretism of Santo Antônio [Saint Anthony] with ogum nilê or ogum onirê, one of seven names given to this orisha in Brazil, see Verger (2000: 157/158).

15 Jornal de Alagoas. “Bruxaria”. Maceió, 07/02/1912, p. 1.



Figure 4. Uncle Salu.  
*Jornal de Alagoas*. Maceió,  
 February 13, 1912

Note that most of the pieces found in the former Xangô *terreiros* in Maceió retained many links with African tradition. As Abelardo Duarte stated, many of them came from interchange between these houses and Candomblé houses in Bahia and Africa instigated by the famous leader (*pai-de-santo*) Tio Salu, who had traveled in Africa and brought back to Alagoas many of the pieces now in the *Perseverança* collection (Duarte, 1985: 6).

In the aftermath of the 1912 riots, a veil of silence was drawn over Afro-Brazilian religious practices in Alagoas. As a legacy from those dark times, a quieter or more reserved ceremonial format was introduced, omitting drums or any instrument that would be noted in the neighborhood. On a visit to Alagoas several years after the events, Gonçalves Fernandes witnessed this type of worship which he called “Candomblé in silence” (among other terms), and chapter 1 of his book on religious syncretism in Brazil *O Sincretismo Religioso no Brasil* was entirely on the subject of “A New Afro-Brazilian Sect – whispered Xangô,” after seeing some houses of worship in Maceió in June 1939, almost thirty years after the fateful “Operation Xangô” (1941: 09-28).

## Two collections, two experiences of persecution

A first point to note on comparing the two collections, has to do with the context in which persecution of Afro-Brazilian religious practices developed. In the early part of this article, we looked at the general context of the regulatory system for repression of witchcraft in the First Republic period, recalling that it was this period that saw institutionalized repression of magical practices by an entire legal apparatus, based on Article 157 of the Penal Code. However, we must not forget that although the model stipulated regulation of all magical practices everywhere in Brazil, in practice the system had a more direct effect on groups and communities who bore some kind of proximity to the seat of power, at least geographically, as in the case of the *terreiros* in Rio de Janeiro and other major state capitals such as Recife and Salvador.

The very idea of the republic as a federal system did not appear to have extended much beyond these major cities, especially Rio de Janeiro, the center of administrative power. It was as if the rest of the nation had remained under the control of more traditional power structures. An example of this was the fragility of the Alagoas republican leaders when they tried to oppose the old politicians surviving from the imperial past. In the more remote states of the federation, such as Alagoas, members of the elite who had emerged from the cadres of the Monarchy to set up the institutional basis of the First Republic, were not guided by the scientificist discourse and technical competence that marked the generation of Republican positivists in Rio de Janeiro (Cf. Sevchenko, 1988).

As we have already observed, during the early years of the Republic, most of the judiciary, police, and the general public shared a common belief in spirits, spirit possession and the powers of magic. They therefore had no interest in eradicating the temples, but to punish those who were thought to use their spiritual powers for evil ends. But in the early years of the Republic there were considerable regional differences, as the distinct paths taken in Rio de Janeiro and Maceió suggest. In *Medo do feitiço* Maggie argued that *terreiros* in Rio were systematically persecuted by police under the aegis of the State, through initiatives against specific individuals accused of practicing magic, faith healing, or “low spiritism” at varying intervals of time. Many *terreiros* were legally persecuted by the police, as seen in the *Diário de Notícias*



headline: “Seventy ‘*terreiros*’ searched and eighty ‘*macumbeiros*’ arrested.”<sup>16</sup> In Alagoas, however, things were different. The unique aspect of the Alagoas case, lies in the fact that the usurpation of the *terreiros* and the capture of their ritual objects resulted not from police repression, but by members of society at large.

The League of Republican Combatants was chiefly responsible for the attacks on Afro-Brazilian places of worship named “Operation Xangô”. Unlike the events in Rio de Janeiro, where the persecutory campaign was developed under the complacent eyes and the aegis of the State, which intervened in the affairs of magic in order to regulate the process of accusation, witchcraft-related accusations and revenge developed with the consent of broader society in Alagoas, absent the State and official organs of justice that were totally disorganized in those circumstances. The process of persecution was unleashed by the League with the consent of the population, who swarmed into civic centers to support the candidate opposing Euclides Malta, and it took place in a completely arbitrary manner.

This aspect also helps clarify another point of convergence that enables us to compare the two collections in terms of their constitution and organization. Although both resulted from repressive procedures and seizures, in the case of the Black Magic museum collection, it had at all times developed on institutional levels, whereas the Alagoas collection came into being through the initiative of the League of Republican Combatants. In Rio, the objects were brought in by the police, and stored in a space created specifically for this purpose, where they remained available to public for visits until 1999 when the Police Museum was transferred (to Palácio da Polícia, as mentioned above) and never again exhibited, awaiting the end of restoration work on the century-old building. In 2008, part of the collection was seen in an exhibition of photographs at the José Bonifácio municipal cultural center in Gamboa. The photographs were taken by Wilson da Costa with Roberto Conduru as curator <sup>17</sup>.

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16 *Diário de Notícias*, April 1, 1941, p. 1.

17 See the catalog of the collection titled *Multicolor Reliquary* - The collection of Afro-Brazilian cults of the State of Rio de Janeiro Police Museum. Curatorial design by Roberto Conduru, head of the José Bonifácio municipal cultural center, Carlos Feijó; photography Wilson da Costa; exhibition design Carlos Feijó, supported by the Carlos Chagas Filho Research Support Foundation of the State of Rio de Janeiro, 2008.



Figure 5. Bruxaria [Witchcraft]. *Jornal de Alagoas*. Maceió, February 4, 1912

The *Perseverança* collection evolved differently. After the riots led by the League had attacked *terreiros* in Alagoas, items that survived the initial destruction were carried around the city to be mocked or exposed to derision in buildings occupied by the state government's opponents, such as the image of a *leba* displayed at the *Jornal de Alagoas* newspaper offices. The rest of the pieces reached the League's headquarters intact and were put on public display. There are no reports as to how long these objects remained there on Rua do Sopapo, but this collection was later transferred to feature in the museum of the Maceió store clerks mutual aid society (known as the *Perseverança*), and remained somewhat abandoned in the basements there until the 1950s, when it was recovered by two members of the Alagoas Historical and Geographical Institute, which has still holds the collection.

In the course of this trajectory, the *Perseverança* collection's objects were submitted to at least two types of classification, not to mention the fact that the destruction of religious artifacts already reflected a kind of morality-based selection of the pieces more directly bearing some kind of relationship with the "Alagoas tribal chief" (*leba*) as his opponents called Euclides Malta.



Reports filed by a journalist who covered the riots in a series of articles on witchcraft helped to reconstruct part of the process that led to the destruction of the leading Xangô houses of Maceió and the surrounding area. He wrote that the material collected during the riots against the Xangôs, was initially displayed at the headquarters of the League of Republican Combatants, with the collaboration of one of the many Afro-Brazilian practitioners (*filhos de santo*) who went to see the “precious spoils,” certainly a member of one of those *terreiros* that had been destroyed. The latter “explained everything and the League jotted down on paper the various mysteries of that flood of bric-a-brac.”<sup>18</sup> The second approach to classifying came when the collection was taken to the Alagoas Historical and Geographical Institute under the auspices of two well-known local intellectuals, Theo Brandão and Abelardo Duarte, the latter producing an illustrated catalog of the *Perseverança* collection.

It could be said, then, that when the exhibition was first assembled at the League’s headquarters, the selection of objects was designed to exhibit the malevolent relationship between the ruling political elite and the Xangô *terreiros*. Later on, however, when the objects arrived at the Historical Institute, they were classified according to the scholarly criteria in the tradition of the new host institution. In this second phase, in particular, classification was based on the provenance of the pieces, in particular their remote African origin. Perhaps it was nostalgia for the past that guided the classification of pieces by Historical Institute scholars as the “mythical celebration” that Beatriz Góis Dantas saw in the regionalist discourse of writers such as Gilberto Freyre, (Dantas, 1988:160).

Interestingly, except for Duarte’s catalog, there are no known writings that deal more systematically with the Afro-Brazilian cults of Alagoas. This lacuna is even more surprising given scholars from Alagoas, such as Manoel Diegues Junior and Arthur Ramos, whose renown and research on Afro-Brazilian religion extended beyond the borders of the state yet did not write about Alagoas in general, let alone the 1912 riots. Maybe this is why the Xangôs of Alagoas were so vulnerable to repression during the long period after the overthrow of Euclides Malta.

On the Police Museum collection, mention must also be made of the important role of the modernist intellectual Dante Milano as director, a

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18 *Jornal de Alagoas*. “*Bruxaria*” [newspaper article on witchcraft], Maceió, 07/02/1912, p. 1.

position he held from 1945 to 1956. Milano shared the antiracist approach characteristic of part of the intelligentsia of the period, so he rid the museum's Black Magic Collection of the pernicious amalgam between evil and satanic cults with expressions of black culture of African origin. As a writer, poet and director of the Afro-Brazilian Magic collection – thus renamed due to his influence in 1945 –, he contributed decisively to lend the collection its significance as Brazilian cultural heritage, together with other expressions of culture of African origin.<sup>19</sup>

A different way of classifying objects in the Black Magic collection was subsequently identified by Maggie *et al.* (1979), in the form of intervention of the Museum's director, who had decorated altars for Umbanda centers and *terreiros*. His religious experience was put to use as to classify these objects in 1964, using references from specialized literature on the subject.

Thus, the criterion that determined conservation seem to be directly associated with the pieces' mystical aspects and a widespread belief in magic.

The “witchcraft objects” shown at these museums are living proof of sorcery and show that witchcraft is not imaginary but a reality.

### **By way of conclusion: disputed meaning of objects and their history.**

In the early history of these collections, meanings were attributed to objects from the standpoint of repression. In Rio de Janeiro, the objects entered into the custody of the police who were responsible for suppressing *terreiros* accused of practicing wrongdoing. The objects testified to the existence of black magic and served as trophies standing for the victory of the police force over “*macumbeiros*” who practiced “low spiritism.” In the 1930s, especially after the SPHAN heritage institution was founded, they took on the meaning of assets representing the African past, Afro-Brazilian culture and Brazilian culture tout court. The founders of SPHAN shared a project for the nation that was first posed by Mario de Andrade and Rodrigo Mello Franco de Andrade, who fought to preserve what stood for Brazilianness in the version of the author of *Macunaíma* (Andrade 2000). The SPHAN project, according to Rodrigo himself, was based on the first of its kind previously conceived by Gilberto

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19 For an analysis of the relationship between the modernist poet and the Black Magic collection, see Correa (2009).

Freyre for Pernambuco, which also influenced the state of Bahia's institution for preservation set up by Anísio Teixeira (Cf. Guimaraens, 2002).

In Alagoas, the objects asserted the power the Afro-Brazilian religions to lend power to the governor/candidate. The *Perseverança* collection was initially kept at the headquarters of the same League that had led the riots, as a trophy and symbol of the wrongdoing of the oligarch Euclides Malta. For a long time it was held by the *Perseverança* mutual aid society and stored in a museum finally, in 1950, it gained the status of art to be preserved as heritage of cults of African origin, by the most prominent anthropologists of the period in Alagoas.

This ambiguous relationship between the elite and Afro-Brazilian cults is not new. In his 1906 book *As religiões do Rio*, João do Rio had formulated a terse metaphor: "We live in dependence on sorcery... it is us who ensure its existence with the affection of a businessman for an actress lover ..." (Rio, 2006:35).

But the collections were also generated by widespread belief in witchcraft and here let us quote Raimundo Nina Rodrigues in his *O animismo fetichista dos negros baianos* of 1897:

... all classes in Bahia, even the so-called higher classes, are apt to become black. The number of whites, mulattoes, and persons of all colors and hues who consult black sorcerers for their afflictions and woes, who publicly believe in the supernatural power of talismans and spells, who in much greater numbers mock them in public but secretly listen to them, consult them, this number would be incalculable if were not simpler to say that generally it is the population en masse, except for a minority of superior enlightened spirits who have the true notion of the exact value of these psychological expressions. (Rodrigues, [1897] 2006, p. 116)

The process that led to these two collections was based on fear of sorcery and therefore a belief in the efficacy of magic. As we write, a new interpretation of the collections arises from the perspective of identity politics. It is now argued that the objects preserved there are symbols or representatives of Africanness, the origins of a people, or a "segment of the Brazilian people." As the collections joined the ranks of the institutions that represent Africanness in Brazil, so the intellectuals were joined by the social movements in promoting them.

Translated by Izabel Murat Burbridge

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# Rio de Janeiro Police Museum Collection

Photos by Luiz Alphonsus, 1978

This rich collection is no longer on display and some items were lost in a fire in the 1990s. During restoration of the century-old police building on Rua da Relação, where the museum was eventually relocated, the objects were put into store.

Photo captions were composed by one of the museum directors, a member of an Umbanda community who specialized in decorating altars for terreiros in the 1960s. The museum director often quotes from books by renowned anthropologists who have studied these beliefs.

Photos taken by Luiz Alphonsus in 1978, during the first research project with Marcia Contins and Patricia Monte-Mór conducted at Museu da Polícia Civil do Rio de Janeiro [Rio de Janeiro Police Museum] with support from the National Foundation for the Arts (Funarte).



Photo 1

Plan of the police museum's main hall. Objects comprising the Black Magic collection are placed alongside others seized by the police in Rio de Janeiro, such as flags bearing swastikas or photos of famous criminals of the 1950s.

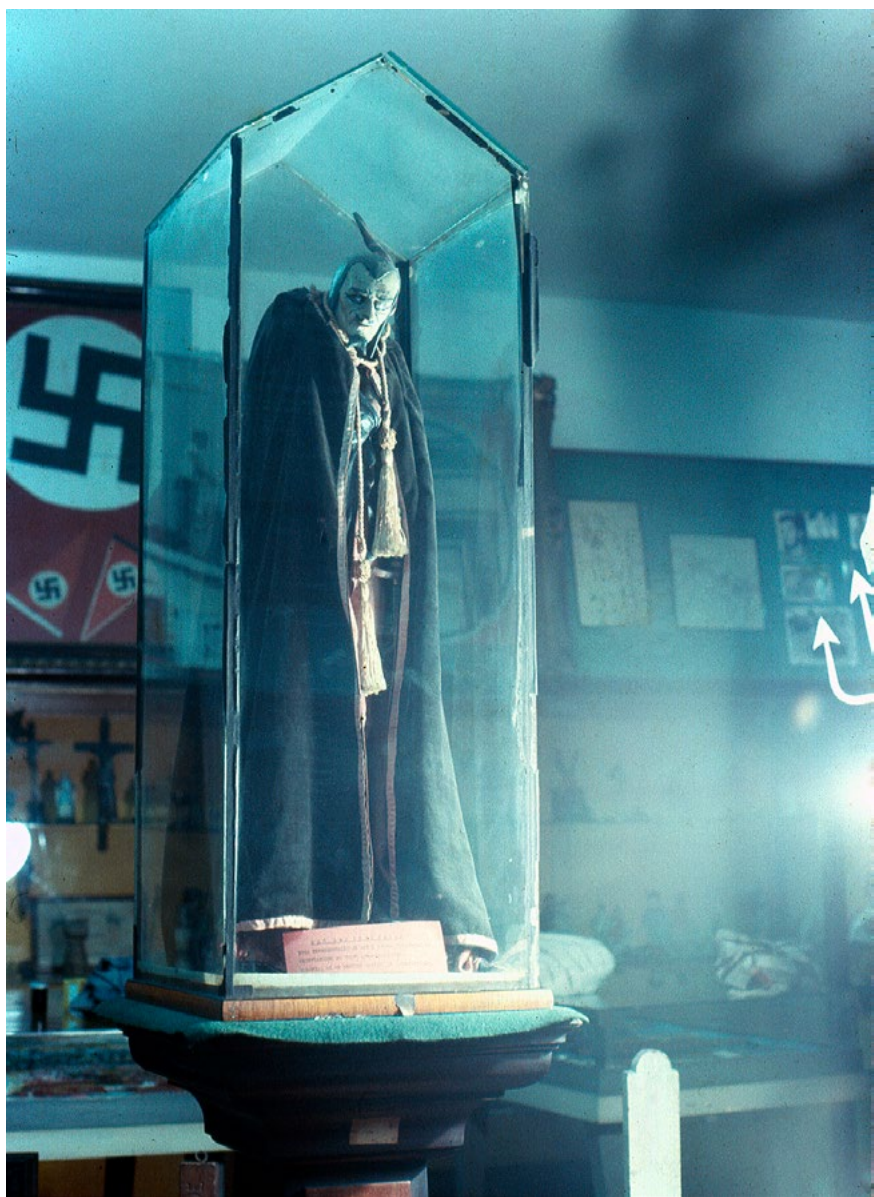


Photo 2

Eshu Sete Capas [Eshu of seven cloaks]. This representation of Eshu is typical of the influence of Christianity in the Afro-Brazilian cults. However, the match is somewhat oblique. While the Satan of Christianity is depicted as an undesirable entity cast out from paradise, Eshu in the Afro-Brazilian cults is depicted as a kind of ambassador of men to the court of the Orishas.





Photo 3  
Detail of the face of Eshu Sete Capas





Photo 4

Eshu Tiriri. Unfired-clay figurine representing Eshu Tiriri, made with soil from all the cemeteries of Rio de Janeiro.



Photo 5  
Offering to Eshu - Eshu Marabô figurine sculpted in unfired clay



**Photo 6**  
Bust of Eshu Alequeça - crudely shaped in unfired clay.



**Photo 7**  
**Offering to Eshu – bust of Eshu Alaguetô. Female fetish of Eshu Maria Padilha - sculpted in unfired clay.**





Photo 8

The cult to Yemanjá, the mermaid and marine ornamentation are examples of the influence of European folklore on the Afro-Brazilian cults. Legend has it that the mermaid is a femme fatale who brings death to those who see her or hear her singing. Yemanjá represents water, but not the ocean, and symbolizes fertility and reproduction of the species. The photo features an obvious disfigurement. (References: *Os africanos no Brasil*, Nina Rodrigues – *Candomblés da Bahia*, Edison Carneiro).



Photo 9

Oshossi chalked symbol – Worship of the god of hunting, of an enduring character. Note, however, that the symbol was not outlined with pemba chalk. Thus, according to Afro-Brazilian belief, it does not have the same strength as a magic symbol chalked with pemba to call up the orisha (deity). Figurine of the orisha of hunting, Oshossi is the name for Saint Sebastian in Afro-Brazilian liturgy.

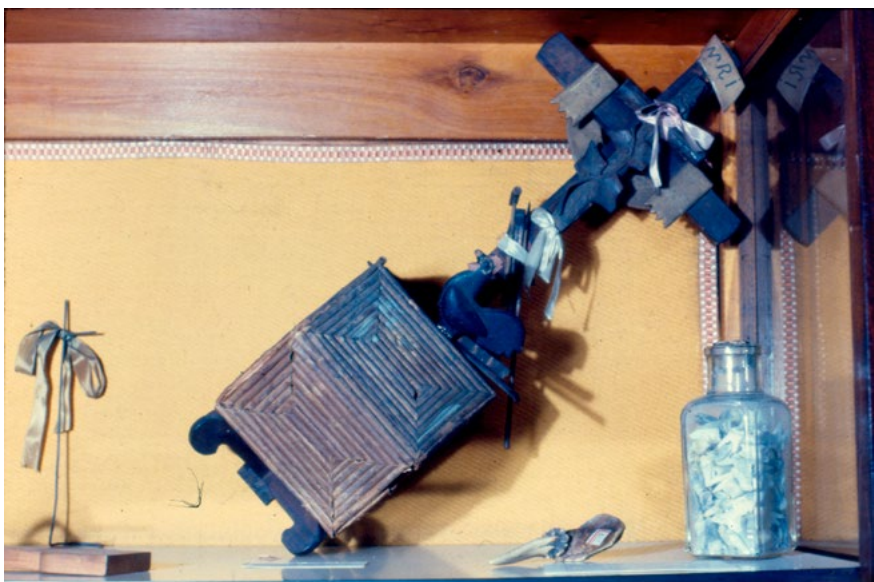


Photo 10

"Spells cast – Bottle containing pleas for Oshossi's power to intervene. Spell cast on a miniature cross. Small wooden "Calvary" attached to the upper part of a polygon -shaped alms box.



Photo 11  
The steel-chested Ubiratã





Photo 12

Case containing two shelves. The upper shelf contains objects described thus:  
 Headdress used in Candomblé terreiros. Made of colorful feathers. The guinea fowl - food of the orishas (gods) - stuffed for black magic spells; only the largest of which is actually stuffed, while the others are miniatures made of feathers from the birds they represent.  
 Fundanga - gunpowder used to ward off evil entities from a terreiro. Gunpowder was formerly used to unmask false priestesses. Aspirants were submitted to fire burning their hands. Offering to female spirit (Pomba-gira) - lead slippers. Human skull used for terreiro ritual - image representing Eshu. The lower shelf contains terreiro offerings described in photos 5, 6 and 7



Photo 13  
Previous photo shot from a different angle.



Photo 14

Images from Catholicism. Metal star: Christianity's influence in Afro-Brazilian liturgies. Piece of a tree trunk with a niche and holy man used as altar. "Tree - among the Jeje in Africa, lôko always showed the dwelling place of a god, a symbol that the latter would like to become an altar, hence its sacred character. In Brazil, however, the tree itself is a god." (Candomblés da Bahia, Edison Carneiro – p. 230)



Photo 15

Religious syncretism. “.... assimilation with Catholicism continues to take place today, and on a larger scale even: having begun as a subterfuge to dodge police persecution... Thus we find Catholic altars in all Candomblé places of worship; all orisha deities correspond to Roman Catholic saints; the cross, the host, the chalice, the episodes of the ark, of Christ's birth and baptism...” (Candomblés da Bahia, Edison Carneiro, p. 44/45). Images of Saint George, Saint Anthony, Our Lady, Jesus Christ, etc..



Photo 16

Worshipping the caboclo is a religious recognition of the Amerindians and has its origin in a backwoods legend of an enchanted native who came back to life. The caboclo is represented by figurines or of Amerindians in terreiros.





**Photo 17**

Figurines - vegetable fiber and wood. (a) Caboclo Rompe Mato. (b) Caboclo Guarany. (c) Female caboclo Jurema. (d) Female caboclo Jacyra



Photo 18

Small wooden gourds (coités or cuités) - mostly for fermented beverages, all showing symbolic images and figures. Gifts for Eshu to intercede with deities. Eshu head crudely carved from a log. Metal figurine symbolizing the Eshu who blocks paths. Believers see Eshu as the men's messenger to the gods. Eshu has various names and has been widely depicted in Afro-Brazilian art. Identified with the devil through influence of Catholicism in the Afro-Brazilian cults.



Photo 19  
Magic spell cast with Eshu symbol





Photo 20

Worship of Ogum (Saint George) - Orisha of metal and war. Each object on this shelf represents a favored dwelling of this Ogum. The only direct representation of a deity occurs when a believer possessed by him becomes his instrument, in other words the "horse" of Ogum.

Miniatures of Ogum's paraphernalia: ladder, hammers nails, etc..

Dagger-shaped Ogum crosses.

Set of metal items: machete, axe, cross, sign of Solomon, sword, chain and ring.



Photo 21

Guinea fowl - food of the orishas (gods) - stuffed birds for black magic spells, although only the largest of them is actually stuffed, while the others are miniature made from feathers of the bird represented.



Photo 22

African figurine used as fetish for Quimbanda ritual.

(palmer cane) - terreiro heads have parental responsibility and apply punishments.

Tobacco - placed in "old black man" (preto-velho) pipes.



Photo 23

Figs [crossed fingers] - defensive objects used to ward off the evil eye.

Table showing appointments paid for at the Choupana de Tupinambá [Tupinambá's Hut]



Photo 24

These bottles are purchased from stores. But no mystical value is attached to them until they have been blessed in a terreiro. The influence of Roman Catholicism and the mermaid legend may be noted in this relatively recent cult.

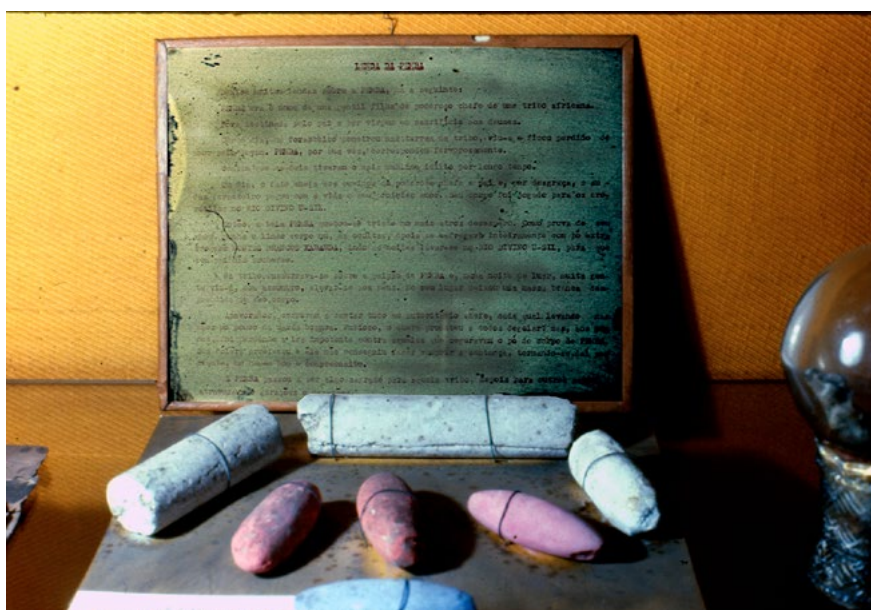


Photo 25  
Legend - pemba [ritual chalk]





Photo 26

Pemba - a type of chalk used by the head of a terreiro to draw or scratch a magic symbol as part of a ritual to summon the orishas (gods). There is a special symbol for each orisha. Each also has its own matching color.





Photo 27  
Spell . Cast to free up a person's way in life.



Photo 28

Pemba chalk made from clayish substance used in Macumba identified with Bahia:  
 blue – Ogum / yellow – Oshum / white – Oshalá / green – Oshossi / black – the devil,  
 crossroads, evil spell / red – Inhassã (female) / pink – Nanã (female)



Photo 29  
Xerêrê - percussion instruments for Shangô (Saint Jerome)



Photo 29  
Xerê - percussion instruments for Shangô (Saint Jerome)





Photo 31

Pipes smoked to ward off evil spirits, used by priests (pais-de-santo) and old black men (pretos-velhos). As means of protection, they are considered more powerful than the necklaces that are used by mediums (defense of the "horse" against evils brought by the person who has come to consult them).



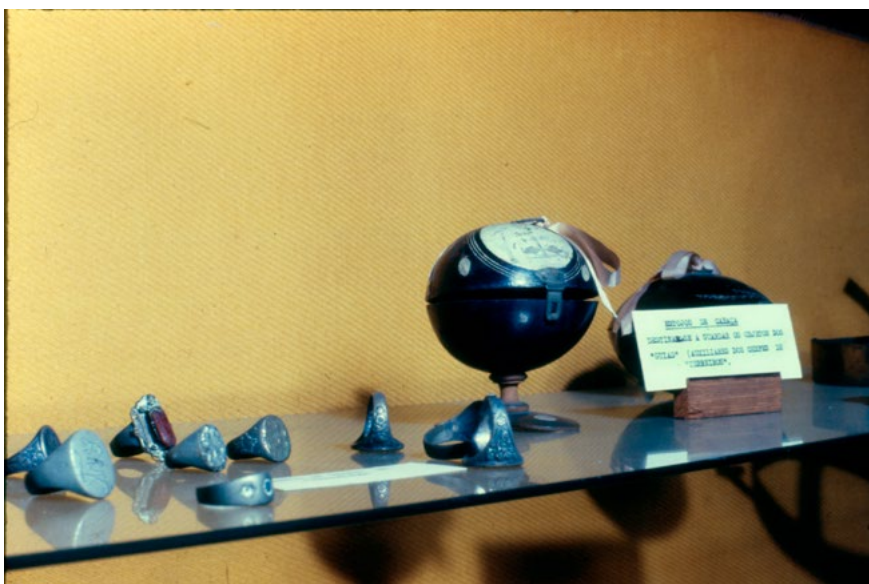


Photo 32

Rings worn by heads of terreiros. Gourd cases for storing objects of those who act as helpers to the heads of a terreiro)





Photo 33. Ritual vestments - Ogum, Saint George.



Photo 34. Vestments worn for Macumba ritual: brown is for Shangô (Saint Jerome); red and black, the Eshus.



Photo 35. Ogum - Saint George. Items used for Umbanda ritual: Swords, clothes with name engraved in stone. Stole and sword of Saint George (Ogum). Saint George (Ogum) helmet worn on feast days.

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