

FROM KEMET TO THE NEW WORLD: HISTORY AND RECEPTION OF THE FIRST EGYPTIAN COLLECTION IN LATIN AMERICA*

By ANDRÉ ONOFRE LIMÍRIO CHAVES¹

In 1826 Brazil, or more precisely the city of Rio de Janeiro, received its first collection of Egyptian antiquities, acquired by the Brazilian monarchy.² The purchase was made with the purpose of enlarging the collection of the Imperial Museum,³ one of the earliest Brazilian museums. From a broader perspective, the arrival of the Egyptian collection in the country constituted an important step towards the imperial policy of polishing Brazilian court cultural environment and bringing it to the level of the greatest European cities, in an attempt to civilize this young Brazilian nation which had become independent from Portugal only four years earlier.

Most of the artefacts in this Egyptian collection, presently located at the National Museum of the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro (Museu Nacional da UFRJ), were funerary objects, such as the coffins from the Third Intermediate and Late Periods belonging to the priests of Amun Hori, Pestjef and Harsieset.⁴ Other items in this significant collection are stelae from the Middle and New Kingdoms, among which the 19th Dynasty stelae of Raia and Haunefer stand out, and sculptures, mainly *ushabtis*, some of which belonged to pharaoh Sethy I and came from his tomb in the Valley of the Kings.⁵ At the time the collection was acquired, the human and animal mummies generated great admiration and amazement among scholars and the population of Rio de Janeiro. Much debate about the authenticity of objects also appeared in newspapers at the time. In this light, it is the objective of this article to present the first Egyptian collection of Latin America, revealing the origin of its formation and how it was received and treated until the middle of the 19th century.

Emulating the great civilized nations

Upon the arrival of the Portuguese royal family in Rio de Janeiro⁶ in 1808, the Brazilian colony seemed, from a European perspective, underdeveloped in many aspects, from its administrative organization to its cultural life. To many travellers from the Old World, it seemed not surprising that there were few cultural establishments in such a Portuguese colony, especially a place such as Brazil, which, with the concurrent presence of indigenous peoples, poisonous animals and excessively hot weather, struck them as a place that could never be civilised'. To some of these visitors, the tropical conditions made it impossible for Brazilians to become as refined as Europeans or as the inhabitants of other nations deemed civilized. According to Lilia Schwarcz:

As soon as they arrived [1808], the Portuguese government began implementing some sort of “civilizing project”, which included the establishment of the main

institutions from the metropolis, such as the Desembargo do Paço [then Portugal's Supreme Court], the Conselho da Fazenda [Finance Council], the Junta Comercial [Company Register], among many others. After all, it was necessary, and urgent, to import and transplant practices which, originally in Portugal, made the government machinery work. On one hand, there were created a new press, the Botanical Garden, the Brazilian Bank, the National Museum and many other implements that converted Rio de Janeiro into an exemplary mirror of the metropolis. On the other hand, there remained, as stubborn traditions, the customs of the land, which inverted the reflection meant to be looked at or gave it a blurred and unfocused aspect.⁷

Established on 6 June 1818, the Imperial Museum (later, National Museum), together with several other cultural institutions founded by King João VI's (1767-1826) cultural politics, served as an instrument to create a new image for Brazil, elevating the new capital city of the Portuguese Empire to a simulacrum of those of civilized European nations. With a modest initial collection, the museum possessed objects from every category of item typically amassed by great European collectors: artworks, stuffed animals, minerals, ancient coins and indigenous objects. Consequently, the museum presented itself as a hybrid institution, with not only characteristic elements of a natural history collection, but also artistic items. This form of collecting practice was, to some extent, an inheritance from the Enlightenment tradition, and created an encyclopaedic space that addressed the educational needs of that moment.

From its creation to the country's independence in 1822, the Imperial Museum lived amidst uncertainties regarding its destiny and role in Brazilian society. From the 1830s onwards, the institution's directors were aware of the need to order its operations and regulate its collections management. The museum went through processes that aimed at enlarging its collection, mostly in order to reinforce its primary mission: to display the potential of Brazilian natural resources as well as to establish a tradition in accordance to the European fashion.

In 1842 the first set of internal regulations of the institution was created, intended to provide 'the National Museum with an organization in accordance to the best classification and conservation of the objects'.⁸ The museum was divided into four sections: Comparative Anatomy and Zoology; Botany, Agriculture and Mechanical Arts; Mineralogy, Geology and Physical Sciences; and, lastly, Numismatic, Liberal Arts, Archaeology, Uses and Customs of Modern Nations. The Museum henceforth presented divisions devoted to explaining and showcasing collections of Brazilian items. At the same time, it still encompassed collections meant to construct a narrative of other nations' history, including a division of greater interest to the present study: the Section of Numismatic, Liberal Arts, Archaeology, Uses and Customs of Modern Nations. This section of the museum was responsible for collecting ancient artefacts, including Egyptian antiquities.



Fig. 1: This engraving shows the National Museum in the nineteenth century in its original premises in the Field of the Acclamation. Author: Pieter Godfred Bertichem, *O Brasil pitoresco e monumental*. (Rio de Janeiro, 1856). Fundação Biblioteca Nacional do Rio de Janeiro.

The presence of objects illustrating the ‘Uses and Customs of Modern Nations’ had a double meaning in the museum’s narratives. From one perspective, this traditional type of collection pointed to similarities between the Royal Museum and other European national museums, with whom it shared the internal organization and many interests. From a different angle, examples of the material culture of other nations, especially of those considered civilized, enabled drawing comparisons of Brazil and its native societies with the stages of historical development of nations in other parts of the world. As Myriam Santos points out:

[...] the Royal Museum, soon after renamed National Museum, closely approximated the European museums of the period. The National Museum reproduced the discourses of the great European museums, albeit in a smaller scale. The constitution of national imagined communities always involves narratives about origins, and for the articulators of the Brazilian Empire one of our origins was undoubtedly the same that founded the great European powers.⁹

The National Museum was created as an entity that, from its very beginning, was expected to establish dialogues with other civilized nations from Europe, especially after Brazil’s independence, so that the Brazilian Empire would erase its colonial past and boast its glory to its new peers. The Louvre and the British Museum were taken as

models for its organization. This correspondence was prominent in the first decades of the Royal/Imperial Museum with the presence of European artwork and Natural History specimens among its collections.



Fig. 2: In 1892, after the end of the monarchy in Brazil and with advent of the Republic as a political regime, the National Museum was transferred to the palace of Quinta da Boa Vista, former residence of the royal family. Photo: Halley Pacheco de Oliveira

The development of a collection

“I tell you that I went to the Customs to show the mummies to the Empress”;¹⁰ in a brief and simple excerpt in a letter addressed to his lover Domitila de Castro, Marchioness of Santos (1797-1867), the Brazilian Emperor revealed his initial contact with the pieces that would constitute the first Egyptian collection in Brazil. On that 21 July 1826, accompanied by his wife, the Empress Maria Leopoldina of Áustria (1797-1826), Emperor Pedro I of Brazil (1798-1834) went to the Customs House in Rio de Janeiro to view the objects described by the *Jornal Astrea* as ‘worthy of the admiration from all friends of antiquities.’¹¹ The Emperor and Empress’s enthusiasm for the novelties was so great that three years later their addition to the collection of the Imperial Museum was formalized.¹²

The arrival of these antiquities in Brazilian lands took place in the middle of 1826.¹³ An antiquities dealer who was travelling to Argentina allegedly met unexpected conditions and was compelled to stay in Rio de Janeiro. In his luggage, Nicolau Fiengo¹⁴ carried not only clothes and personal objects, but also a cargo of mummies, sarcophagi, sculptures, funerary objects and other items that composed a batch of ‘curiosities’ from the East.

The items were exhibited at the Customs House in the capital city of the Empire¹⁵. What would the reaction of a Brazilian be, in hearing from a foreigner that those objects

were thousands of years old and from a place only known through biblical passages? Most likely the visitors who were there regarded those articles with curiosity and apprehension.

The collection acquired by the Imperial State did not stay long at the Customs House. Given the monarch's interest, soon after their visit all the items were transferred to the Imperial Museum, as can be confirmed by contemporary documentation. Registers from July 1826 attest to the presence of the objects at the Customs House; by September of the same year, the critic Basílio Ferreira Goulart could record: 'Mr. Editor, it seemed to me that the *museum hall* had turned into the ancient catacombs [...] *how much people go see them!*'.¹⁶ These excerpts from notes printed in the newspapers of Rio de Janeiro ascertain that shortly after the monarchs' tour at the Customs, and three years before the completion of the purchase, Fiengo's Egyptian collection was moved to an exhibition in the Imperial Museum and, once there, attracted a large number of visitors.



Fig. 3: Egyptian section of the UFRJ National Museum. Photo: Lucas Badini

Until the 19th century, most Brazilians only knew Egypt as a biblical setting that served as a hideaway for Jesus and his parents. It was there, as well, that the Hebrew people was enslaved and became workforce for "tyrannical pharaohs". Since medieval times, the land of the pharaohs had been difficult for westerners to access. It was no wonder that the Bible became the most popular reference regarding Egypt.¹⁷ Therefore, it was not unexpected when suspicious reactions ensued in relation to the antiquity and value of the objects and that Fiengo's credibility was called into question. In this context, the figure of Basílio Ferreira Goulart becomes of paramount relevance to the study of this collection.

N. 37.

1826.

SUBSCREVE-SE

Nas lojas dos Srs. J. P. da Veiga e Comp. na rua da Quitanda, J. B. Bompard na rua dos Pescadores, e J. B. dos Sanctos na da Cadea, mensalmente por uma folha, que sairá ás Terças, Quintas, e Sabbados, 80c rs.



Terça feira 19 de Setembro.

No caso de cessar a publicação, os Srs. J. P. da Veiga e Comp., J. B. Bompard, e J. B. dos Sanctos fôrão responsáveis aos Senhores Subscriptores pela parte da subscrição feita em suas casas e não cumprida.

ASTREA.

... in universum quaeramus: sime tu ex publico remedio quantum voles. Totum interim vitium in medium protrahendum est, ex quo agnoscat quisque partem suam.

CORRESPONDENCIAS.

Sr. Redactor.

Quando peguei na penna para remeter-lhe o meu esboço sobre a divida do Tezouro ao Banco tinha tido em vista os artigos 171, e 179 § 23, assim como tive em vista, quando foi impreço, o vel-o combatido offerendo-se-me as duvidas, que podesse ter para eu então demostrar as vantagens que julgava devêr produzir para assim se acumular algumas luzes, de que a Augusta Assemblea se podesse aproveitar (porque nada tinha aparecido nos papeis publicos sobre este objecto); enganei-me, nada se fez, divirgio-se da questão; e em lugar de se demostrar onde estava o erro, e o mal que faria, dando-se a razão, veio-se com as do costume, e a questão ficou intata: portanto, Sr. Redactor, eu fiz o que devia, ou julgava dever fazer, pois que não sou accionista, capitalista, ou credor ao Tezouro: o dever de cidadão era sufficiente para me impôr a obrigação de concorrer para a felicidade publica com as luzes que eu podesse ter: para isso hé que nos systemas liberaes há liberdade de imprensa, para que todos possam emitir as suas ideias, e os que governão aproveitarem o que for util. Aqui está, Sr. Redactor, o que me movêo a fazer o que fiz, o que julguei dever fazer: não foi do agrado do Sr. seo correspondente; que

tenha paciencia, que eu tambem a tenho e com muita gente tambem da minha opinião: agradecendo ao Sr Redactor a sua atenção, despeço-me do Sr seu Correspondente: e creia que sou

De Vm.

Attento venerador e obrigado.

O Amigo da Prosperidade Nacional

Sr. Redactor.

Que mangação! Fui ver as Múmias, e seus anexos! Eu podia ser, como o outro, que, achando-se logrado pelo Estudante, que ensinava a advinhar, caio na esparrela, e se calou, para ter a consolação de ver ao menos tambem cairem os mais; mas estê alvitre não me serve de nada; cai, e não devo deichar cair os outros. He verdade, que vi as Múmias, e só sei, que são Múmias, pelos pés de huma, que vi tão bem, como aquelle outro cheirou, o que era na verdade; mas porque já não havia de haver huma Alma piedosa, que fizesse o que eu agora faço? Para que havião de vir huns Habitantes do Semiterio com hum Cosmopolita vivo, que conduz os Mortos do Egipto, para querer ganhar quarenta mil cruzados em trapos, e farrapos embrulhados em cadavres esmirrados, e com a compostura de almofadas por musculos? Sr. Redactor, as duas Cabeças de Indios, isso sim he que

Fig. 4: One of the main sources for the study of the Egyptian collection of the UFRJ National Museum is the newspaper *Astrea*. In this journal was published the list of the main pieces of the collections, as well as the criticisms that were made by the public on the necessity of the acquisition of these types of objects. It is also possible to see the defense that the seller of the antiques Nicolau Flengo does about the legitimacy of his collection. Digitized by Hemeroteca of Fundação Biblioteca Nacional do Rio de Janeiro.

Basílio Ferreira Goulart, best known by his pseudonym 'B.F.G the constitutionalist Carioca', wrote a long critical review of the collection to the *Astrea Journal*. Published on 19 September 1826, the review contended that the collection on exhibition at the Imperial Museum was but 'filthy wrappings' and 'rags and tatters shrouding meagre corpses'¹⁸. From his critique one can also infer the concepts of taste and artistic quality that inform him, as Goulart claimed that he saw more relevance in the paintings by great artists possessed by the museum than in the Egyptian objects.

Besides the critique by Basílio, there is the written response from the antiquities merchant, Nicolau Fiengo, who was responsible for selling the Egyptian collection. In a remarkably defensive tone, Fiengo asserted multiple times that the objects were authentic, as well as sneered at the lack of knowledge shown by Basílio, who thought the indigenous objects to be more elaborate. In his defence, Fiengo declared 'I have nothing else to do but take back what is mine and find other lands where gold is more esteemed than beads'. In this passage, the Italian equates the value of those antiquities to gold and diminishes the indigenous arts, considering them inferior. Furthermore, he sharply criticizes the lack of education and enthusiasm of certain Brazilians regarding the Egyptian collection. It is particularly interesting to note how the acquisition of these objects caused uncertainties among the population. Many doubted, but many others wondered at the richness and exuberance of these curiosities from the East.

After the assimilation of these objects into the museum's collections, most available information concerning the Egyptian collection relates not to its public perception but to its management inside the institution. As previously stated, the Imperial Museum initially operated on a modest scale as regards its collection management, albeit in conformity with the contemporary conceptions of disposition and storage. Since the Imperial Museum's records survive all the way back to its foundation, we can follow the development of its collections around the museum, identifying the ways they were organized and exhibited throughout the time. Thus, it is possible to trace the paths taken by the Egyptian collection in the Imperial Museum through the institution's annual reports and some inventories produced over the 19th century.

In the moment of the constitution and consolidation of the Imperial Museum, objects were placed as 'most convenient'. The documentation for the initial years of the institution up to the 1820's is somewhat laconic, with no indication to whether there were any directives as to the arrangement of exhibitions in the rooms to reflect thematic divisions according to the sciences or branches of knowledge. Nevertheless, as early as 1838 there is the first *Relação dos objetos que se conservam no Museu Nacional desta Corte* ('List of objects which are kept in the National Museum of this Court'), which inventoried the items that constituted the museum's collections, indicating the location of each one inside the building.



Fig. 5: Egyptian section of the UFRJ National Museum. Photo: Lucas Badini.

The *Relação* indicates that when the Egyptian collection entered the museum, the objects were separated, the most important pieces being placed in the room containing ‘objects related to the arts, uses and customs of diverse peoples’. This space also housed elements of material culture of other civilizations, such as Mexican and European antiquities, artefacts identified as coming from the ‘Uncultivated Africa, Asia, New Zealand, the Sandwich Island and Atleutas [*sic*] Islands’,¹⁹ and objects from several Brazilian indigenous groups. One could imagine, therefore, that the museum already had a space dedicated to exhibiting and interpreting antiquities from all over the world. It is possible to infer that this arrangement of objects reflected the persistence of antiquaries’ practices evidencing a tradition of collecting transposed from Europe to Brazil by those who were familiar with this kind of museum arrangement. According to Myriam Santos:

[...] in the Imperial Museum there is a combination of collections which are constituted mostly by objects from ancient civilizations, by a romantic representation of the native nature and population, and by the silence around the black population. The attempt to represent Brazil through a link with the European tradition, especially from an imperial and encompassing perspective, was restricted to the National Museum in its first decades.²⁰

In order to provide ‘the National Museum with an organization in accordance to the best classification and conservation of the objects’ the institution implemented a reorganization of its collections. Management the Egyptian collection was transferred to division of Numismatic, Liberal Arts, Archaeology, Uses and Customs of Modern Nations, so as to join other objects in the section of the exhibition devoted to

archaeology. In any way, this was an ‘attempt from the Brazilian Empire to unite the Old and the New World’.²¹

It was necessary for any monarchy to establish and display traditions of culture and of power. Hence, connecting the young nation to the ancient world was imperative, and this was done, as in the European Empires, by associating objects from Classical antiquity with current artwork, similarly to what was done in France in the 19th century:

[...] the Louvre, in organizing artwork according to art history, ordered the pieces from Roman Classicism and Italian Renaissance as if they were natural predecessors to French Classicism. In so doing [...] it officialised once again the French republic as the authentic heir to the Classic civilization.²²

The building that housed the National Museum, as with many around the world, was not constructed nor conceived as a museological institution. Adaptations were needed to better display the collections over the early years of the institution. Nonetheless, the ‘boom’ in donations and prospection of items to compose the collections caused the depletion of space in the small building, crammed with objects. Thus, an expansion became necessary. This was one of the main issues addressed by several directors who ran the institution through the years. Manuel Araújo Porto Alegre (1806-1879),²³ for instance, extensively praised the Section of Numismatic, Liberal Arts, Archaeology and Uses and Customs of Modern Nations in the annual report of 1844. At the same time, however, he expressed his concerns about the direction the ordering of that division was taking due to the enlargement of the collection. According to Porto Alegre:

[...] the objects from this division have been placed as is best convenient for *the location*, but not as would befit the *museum of a civilized Nation*, the minuteness of the room and its improper construction don’t offer the means to *present to the public a classification and symmetric order in the plastic objects* and in the *Egyptian antiquities in accordance to the good taste of the European Nations*.²⁴

This excerpt evinces valuable information regarding the director’s perception of how the setting of this environment would connect the New World to the Old. It is evident that, contrary to popular belief, the directors of the Museum showed great concern in ensuring the best display of the collection. The exhibition was not, thus, the result of total disorder. There were efforts to think how the collection would be arranged in the room. For Araújo Porto Alegre, it was necessary to arrange the collection in a manner that expressed classification and in a symmetric order to facilitate the visit. In addition, this concept of exhibition was connected to European taste, so we can imagine that museum staff was attuned to what was current in Europe in terms of museum spatial organization.

On another level, ensuring a basis of organization and regulation of the collection was a way for the National Museum to project the image of an institution worthy of a civilized nation. Brazil had just obtained its independence and it was necessary to obliterate any signs of its condition as a former colony of Portugal. Thus, the individuals

who were responsible for the museum were aware of the relevance of this institution to composing a favourable picture of the young nation. Manuel Araújo Porto Alegre's interpretation of the Section of Numismatic, Liberal Arts, Archaeology, Uses and Customs of Modern Nations thus ran as follows:

The European Nations work arduously to take to the highest increase these genres of studies, since they are an index of the spiritualistic matter of the industry's intelligence, and the script to the greater or lesser perfection, to the greater or lesser degree of civilization of the peoples. *Although our country is far-removed from the deposits of art monuments*, and here these *European antiquities Markets* can't be found, nor in the products of its industries [can be found] pronounced characteristics which sensibly reveal the history of the arts and crafts over the three centuries of its existence, nonetheless in this division there are objects of high value which can guide in the appreciation of the study of the fine arts.²⁵

This excerpt from the 1844 annual report reveals how the director of this division of the Museum interpreted its function as an instrument of education of the nation. To him, the absence of art produced in Brazil that represented certain artistic evolution could be replaced by examples from civilized nations. The existence of a room dedicated to elements of fine art in the museum points to the manner in which this institution followed the existing museums. It is very likely that the British Museum and the Louvre were considered models to be emulated as, at that moment, these institutions housed an assortment of natural history, fine arts and archaeological objects. Despite being a small institution, the National Museum owned artistic pieces that compared to those of great European museums, including objects from the main ancient civilizations in the world: Rome and Egypt, with a larger number of objects from to the latter.

Furthermore, Araújo Porto Alegre described difficulties in copying the European models, indicating that there were no European antiquities markets in Brazil. It is also evident in this account made by the director of the museum that thus far, the antiquities were perceived as artistic pieces with high aesthetic value. Concerning the Egyptian antiquities, Egyptology was then an embryonic field and it could not be expected that these objects would be treated as scientifically in Brazil as they were in France or England.

After the 1840s there were few mentions of the Egyptian collection in the annual reports. New acquisitions to this part of the collection were made, but they were few in number. It is interesting to perceive through the reports that some inhabitants of the Brazilian Empire would send objects to enlarge the fourth division of the National Museum. This fact indicates that private collecting was taking place, possibly under the influence of the activities of the Museum institution and of the imperial couple.

Royal donations were important to the Imperial Museum from the time of its foundation. The year 1856 was important for the fourth section of this institution. The empress Tereza Cristina of Bourbon-Two Sicilies (1822-1889) donated to the museum her private collection of Pompeian antiquities²⁶ in order to enrich the section. We perceive the intentionality of this noble lady to make public her collection, so that it would serve as instruction for the Brazilian people. Therefore, it is interesting to observe



Fig. 6: Cartonnage containing the mummy of Shaamuninsu. Photo: Museu Nacional da UFRJ

the relevance of the Brazilian royal family for the development of culture in this period. This was the last major donation coming from a private individual to the Numismatic, Liberal Arts, Archeology, Uses and Customs section of Modern Nations.

Until mid-nineteenth century, there was a concern to collect antiquities, whether they were Egyptian, Greek or Roman. However, after 1850 the museum diminished these practices of collecting antiquities. Now the museum had a new mission: to carry out studies on Natural History, anthropology and ethnography. Brazil needed to know the history of its people, and for that to happen it was necessary to study the indigenous groups that still existed and the vestiges of those which had disappeared. According to Myriam Santos, 'in the early nineteenth century, even the National Museum ... changed the course of its trajectory by turning itself almost completely to the study of the realm of nature'²⁷. Therefore, diverging from conceptions of the early nineteenth century, the museum began to follow new tendencies - it was necessary to update itself, leading to the decline of the practices of collecting antiquity.

Conclusion

As an expression of the desire to bring civilization to the tropics, the establishment of the Imperial Museum was a resource mobilized by the Crown to adorn the Portuguese Empire in the New World. With all the existing difficulties, this institution changed as new directors were appointed and imposed their own conceptions of organization and regulation to the collections. In 1826, the country was presented with a significant and relevant Egyptian collection, a fact which becomes even more important when considered that it was the first of its kind in Latin America.

The period under the scope of the present study extends until the 1860's. After this time, Brazil's second emperor, Pedro II of Brazil (1825-1891), distinguished himself by his passion for the sciences, including Egyptology. He owned a private collection, including the cartonnage and mummy of Shaameninsu²⁸, of exquisite workmanship, as well as other Egyptian antiquities. After his exile, with the end of the monarchy in Brazil, his collection was donated to the National Museum.

The field of the history of collections allows scholars to retrace the paths taken by specific collections throughout time, comprising an area of great relevance to the comprehension of the variations of collecting practices in the modern and contemporary worlds. In this Brazilian case, the study of the Egyptian collection serves not only to clarify its formation, but also to evince how Brazil's first museum managed and interpreted its collection, reshaping the influences of the 'civilized nations' that reached the tropics.

* Tragically on 2 September 2018 the Egyptian collection of the National Museum of UFRJ was largely destroyed in a fire, which devastated the entire museum. The National Museum, which was celebrating its 200th anniversary this year, has now been reduced to ashes. Two hundred years of scientific work, research and knowledge has been lost along with the collections, laboratories and exhibition areas. This day will forever remain in the memory of Brazilian scholars and museum professionals.

¹ This article is abstracted from the author's master's degree research conducted at the Department of Post-Graduation in History of the Federal University of Minas Gerais, Brazil, supported by an award from Coordination of Improvement of Higher Education Personnel (CAPES) development agency. The author is grateful for the support of the Rariorum, Research Nucleus in History of Collections and Museums (ECI-UFGM) and indebted to Carolina Vaz de Carvalho for the help in translating the article and to Professor René Lommez Gomes for his support.

² From 1500 to 1815, Brazil was a colony of the Kingdom of Portugal, becoming autonomous in 1822 and a monarchy until 1889.

³ The institution is currently named the National Museum of the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

⁴ Kitchen, K.A. 1990. *Catalogue of the Egyptian Collection in the National Museum, Rio de Janeiro* (Warminster: Aris & Phillips). 4-10.

⁵ Brancaglion Júnior, A. 2004. 'Coleções egípcias no país'. In Bakos 2004: 33-41. To learn more, see: Brancaglion Júnior, A. 2007. 'La collection égyptienne du Museu Nacional do Rio de Janeiro: nouvelles perspectives.' *Actes du neuvième congrès international des égyptologues* (Leuven: Peeters): 221-24. ; Brancaglion Júnior, A. 2002. 'From Egypt to Brazil an Egyptian collection in Rio de Janeiro.' In M. Eldamaty and M. Trad (eds), *Egyptian Museum Collections around the World: studies for the Centennial of the Egyptian Museum*, (Cairo: Supreme Council of Antiquities): 155-62.

⁶ In 1808, with the Napoleonic invasions, the Portuguese Royal Family was transferred to Brazil bringing their most notable members - the prince regent João VI and the queen Maria I. Their court was composed of more than fifteen thousand people.

⁷ Schwarcz, L.M. 2011. 'Cultura'. In *História do Brasil Nação: 1808-2010. I: Crise Colonial e Independência 1808-1830* (São Paulo: Objetiva). 207.

⁸ Museu Nacional, Regulamento nº123 de 3 de fevereiro de 1842. In: *Livro dos Ofícios desde o ano de 1819 até 1842*, Seção de Memória e Arquivos do Museu Nacional da UFRJ (Section of Memory and Archives of the National Museum of UFRJ), fl 4.

⁹ Santos, M.S. 2000. 'Os museus Brasileiros e a constituição do imaginário nacional'. *Soc. estado* 15/2 (2000): 281.

¹⁰ Arquivo Nacional, 1984. *Cartas de Pedro I à Marquesa de Santos* (Rio de Janeiro: Nova Fronteira): 633.

¹¹ Anon. 1826a. 'Antiguidades na alfândega do Rio de Janeiro'. *Jornal Astrea* 16: 149

¹² The purchase of the antiquities was completed towards the end of 1829, registered on the Chamber of Deputies Gazette, under the heading of extraordinary expenses as 'Purchase of Egyptian antiquities' (<http://memoria.bn.br/DocReader/749419/4745>, accessed 25 August 2017).

¹³ In the *Astrea* journal was published the list of the most interesting objects that were in the lot of antiques that Nicolau Fiengo brought to be sold. In the description we notice that the journalist paid attention to the mummies, both human and animal, such as cats and ibis. For a list of the Egyptian antiquities in exhibition at the Customs of Rio de Janeiro, see: *Jornal Astrea, Notícias*. Rio de Janeiro, Nº37, 19 de setembro de 1826. p. 63. To see more, access: <http://memoria.bn.br/DocReader/749700/63>

¹⁴ To this day, it is not known for certain how Nicolau Fiengo obtained these antiquities. In the newspaper *Astrea* there is the information that those objects "came from the excavations made by Mr. Belgolli famous traveler and antique dealer; and the royal tombs of the former Kings of Thebes at the Palace of Karnac, Bibau and Malouch valley." Of course, so far no records of this Belgian gentleman, perhaps the journalist had not been able to write Belzoni (Jean Baptiste Belzoni,, 1778-1823) who even made excavations in Karnac and the Valley of the Kings. It assumes that Nicolau Fiengo bought these pieces at some auction during the 1820s in the Europe.

¹⁵ Anon. 1826b. 'Notícias'. *Jornal Astrea* 37: 63.

¹⁶ O Carioca Constitucional, Que mangação!. in *Periódico Astrea*. Rio de Janeiro: Typographia de Torres, 29/07/Anon. 1826c1826, nº 37. p. 150 (emphases by the author's emphases).

¹⁷ Araújo, L.M. 2015. *O Egito faraônico, Uma Civilização com três mil anos*. (Lisbon: Arranha-céus): 291.

¹⁸ Anon. 1826c. 'O Carioca Constitucional, Que mangação!' *Periódico Astrea* 37: 150.

¹⁹ Museu Nacional, Relação dos objetos que se conservam no Museu Nacional desta Corte ('List of objects which are kept in the National Museum of this Court'). Section of Memory and Archives of the National Museum of UFRJ. fl.143-152.

²⁰ Santos 2000: 274.

²¹ Santos 2000: 282.

²² Santos 2000: 277.

²³ Manuel Araújo Porto Alegre was an important Brazilian intellectual, painter and politician. He was designated as the director of the Section of Numismatic, Liberal Arts, Archaeology and Uses and Customs of Modern Nations in August 9th, 1842.

²⁴ Museu Nacional, Seção de Numismática e Artes Liberais, Arqueologia, Uso e costumes das nações, in: *Relatório dos trabalhos e aquisições havidas no Museu Nacional durante o ano de 1843, e assim bem das necessidades mais urgentes do mesmo Estabelecimento*. Section of Memory and Archives of the National Museum of UFRJ. fl. 43-44 (author's emphases).

²⁵ Museu Nacional, Seção de Numismática e Artes Liberais, Arqueologia, Uso e costumes das nações, in: *Relatório dos trabalhos e aquisições havidas no Museu Nacional durante o ano de 1843, e assim bem das necessidades mais urgentes do mesmo Estabelecimento*. Section of Memory and Archives of the National Museum of UFRJ. fl 44 (author's emphases).

²⁶ To know more about the antiquities of Pompei, see: SANTOS, S. F. A Coleção Greco-Romana do Museu Nacional e a Identidade Feminina. In: XXXIV Colóquio do Comitê Brasileiro de história da Arte, 2014, Uberlândia. XXXIV Colóquio do Comitê Brasileiro de História da Arte. Uberlândia: UFU, 2014. v. 1. p. 163-164.t

²⁷ Santos 200:285

²⁸ Shaameninsu's mummy was a gift from the Khedive Ismail Pasha (1831-1895) to Emperor Pedro II when he visited Egypt for the second time in 1876.