



João Barbosa Rodrigues: lore and practices The circulation of collections: Barbosa Rodrigues' Amazon Botanical Museum

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Abstract

The article mentions aspects of the collections gathered in the Amazon Botanical Museum (*Museu Botânico do Amazonas*), directed by João Barbosa Rodrigues (1842-1909). It presents evidence of the continued circulation of some objects from these collections, even after the formal extinction of the Museum, which existed for seven years from 1883 to 1890. The interest of this article is to encourage further research on the subject of the circulation of collections and their proxies, to recover stories of donors, objects and museums that have been lost, in different times and places in the country, in order to value our continuously neglected scientific heritage.

Key words: Barbosa Rodrigues, collections, Amazon Botanical Museum, paleontology, *Purussaurus brasiliensis*.

Resumo

O artigo comenta aspectos das coleções reunidas no Museu Botânico do Amazonas, dirigido por João Barbosa Rodrigues (1842-1909). Apresenta indícios da continuidade da circulação de alguns objetos dessas coleções, mesmo após e a extinção formal do Museu que existiu por sete anos de 1883 a 1890. O interesse do artigo é incentivar novas pesquisas sobre o tema da circulação de coleções e seus proxies, para recuperar histórias de doadores, de objetos, de museus perdidos, em diferentes tempos e locais do país, para valorizarmos nosso patrimônio científico, continuamente desprezado.

Palavras-chave: Barbosa Rodrigues, coleções, Museu Botânico do Amazonas, paleontologia, *Purussaurus brasiliensis*.

Introduction

The Amazon Botanical Museum - which formally existed between 1883 and 1890¹; the previous trips to the Amazon in the 1870s; the disagreements with Ladislau Netto (1838–1894), the director of the National Museum, and the political articulations at Court were crucial aspects of Barbosa Rodrigues' (1842-1909) career,

which led him to the board of the Rio de Janeiro Botanical Garden of. His work in the Botanical Garden is more widely known than that in the Amazon Botanical Museum. Despite existing works and, particularly, the circulation of the collections or their proxies, Barbosas' work at the Museum has not yet received greater attention from historiography.

The Amazon Botanical Museum can be taken as a classic example of what the literature has called 'lost museums' (Lubar 2017; Jardine *et al.* 2019). Its general aspects have already been followed by numerous newspaper reports of the time and considered among other authors, as Porto (1891), Lopes (2009), Lopes & Sá (2016), who stressed how political disputes in Amazonas led to

¹As Barbosa Rodrigues explains in the Prologue of the 1st edition of Vellozia, the Museum founded in June 1883, with regulations approved in January 1884, remained without funds for its complete organization until 1887. In the Prologue of the 2nd edition, he explains its extinction by government ordinance of April 1890, due to the abrupt change of the house, complete dismantling of the collections and lack of funds (Barbosa Rodrigues 1891a). Porto (1891: 61) describes the Museum's short seven years as 'founded amidst applause, which soon after turned into resentment that reached the point of persecution...'

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the end of the museum. In this article we focus our attention on the circulation of the collections of this museum, carefully described in their catalogs by Barbosa Rodrigues (1891a), which survived the end of the museum.

This article aims to encourage further research on the subject of the circulation of collections, based on the presentation of just a few initial aspects of the histories of the mobilization of these collections, articulated with the history of the practices of collectors, their classifiers, and their publicizers.

Collections on the move in the Journal *Vellozia*

After leaving the Amazon Botanical Museum, already in Rio de Janeiro, Barbosa Rodrigues managed to publish as a second edition, his three volumes of *Vellozia* 1885-1888. The first edition of the first volume was published with many errors and on very low-quality paper, as explained in the Prologue of the second edition. *Vellozia*, as Barbosa Rodrigues defined it in the Prologue to the first edition of the first volume reproduced, was “no more than the archive of the original research done at the Museum” (Barbosa Rodrigues 1891a: VII).

Vellozia is explicitly the Amazon Botanical Museum’s catalog, and as Paula Findlen (1994) reminded us several years ago, catalogs are the most important objects in a museum. The catalog of plants and the catalog of objects from the ethnographic section published in *Vellozia* allowed us to evaluate the importance of the extinct Amazon Botanical Museum. It is a rendering of accounts of Barbosa Rodrigues’ performance at the Museum, also detailed in several newspaper reports and in the various official reports to and from the presidents of the Province, in which the difficulties he faced, the criticism of local authorities and the appreciation of his own activities are reiterated.

The volumes of *Vellozia* are the ‘vestiges of the ephemeral passage of the museum in the scientific world’ as stated by Barbosa Rodrigues (1891a: XI). The publication records all the stages that Samuel Alberti (2005) proposes to follow in the trajectories of the collections. How they arrived at the museum (the collecting processes of the director himself, and of his donors), their history in the museum (their classification processes, changes of addresses, rooms and showcases), how they were seen by the public (in their arrangements in showcases, exhibitions) and, in this case how the collections continued to circulate after the museum was closed.

The collecting processes that built these collections systematized by Barbosa Rodrigues, circulated as news, in newspapers not only from Rio de Janeiro, but also from Belém do Pará, Recife, Fortaleza, etc., emphasizing the difficulties of the expeditions to collect plants for the Museum, even around Manaus (Lopes & Sá 2016), or its famous contacts and the political and religious controversies involving the Krichanás (Waimiri Atroari), who after the first and difficult contacts, started to leave objects of their culture and daily use as gifts to Barbosa Rodrigues (1885).

Even in his scientific articles, the director of the Amazon Botanical Museum did not fail to emphasize the hardships of the field; the lands that disappeared in the river floods; the chance of finding a palm tree that he had not studied yet; the loss of blooming orchids, which often forced him to new trips, not always successful; the difficulties of collecting perfect ceramic objects, which broke into fragments when they were excavated, etc. Barbosa Rodrigues described in his articles everything in details, to value even more his work and the botanical, archaeological, ethnographic collections he gathered in the Museum.

Filled with images, *Vellozia* circulated the proxies (since many of these collections may no longer exist) of possible new classified plants and of unique indigenous artifacts. In his thorough descriptions of archaeological sites, Barbosa Rodrigues provides evidence of traceable collections, for example a ‘Kangueras rerus’, a ‘larger, more elegant urn,’ which may have belonged ‘to a notable person’, reproduced with no.1 of Print I in *Vellozia*’s volume of images. He regretted not indicating their exact dimensions, although it would be easier to obtain them from the Amazon Botanical Museum, where it was left. He also added that all the objects pictured belonged to the collections of the Amazon Botanical Museum and that he stopped providing long and detailed descriptions of other artifacts, since the illustrations more easily allowed a better understanding of the objects belonging to the collections of the Museum.

Mentioning other articles already elaborated, the director, describing objects excavated at the Muras Island, mentions not only objects belonging to the Amazon Botanical Museum, but also, for example, a vase from the collection of the 1st lieutenant Laurindo (Barbosa Rodrigues 1891a: 18, 24, 33), leaving us evidence of local private collectionism. Further ample evidence of this private collectionism emerges from other articles

and from the list of donations to the Museum, which Barbosa Rodrigues also published in *Vellozia*. Those who made such donations are yet to deserve further research. Many of these names are mentioned more than once in the descriptions, especially of ethnographic objects from the region.

The mobilization of the collections was planned after the Museum's statute, which in its article 14, determined that there would always be duplicates of the herbarium to be exchanged with European museums. At first, the museum was located in a precarious building in a place called Cachangá. It was transferred, not without problems, with the collections that grew due to the director's work and the donations he obtained, to a building in better conditions in the São Sebastião district, where a Chemical Laboratory was adapted for the director's tests and for a chemist hired in Geneva, Francisco Pfaff.

The years 1885–1886 seem to have been the years of greatest activity for the Museum, including two public exhibitions, widely reported and praised in local newspapers and even by the Imperial Government of Rio de Janeiro. As Porto (1891) describes, the 1,103 objects in the ethnographic collection, representing the 60 indigenous nations of the Amazon valley (also named in a listing in the *Vellozia*) were arranged in new cabinets and display cases on the upper floor of the São Sebastião building, as evidenced in the catalog.

The catalog lists and describes the objects in each of these cabinets, even allowing a museographic reconstruction of what visitors (who were few nationals but many foreigners) could have admired in the museum. The purpose is not to copy it here, since it is available and easy to access, but just to point out that the cabinets, numbered from 1 to 4, included divisions by letter and also numbered groups informing the general contents. Example: Cabinet 3 division B - Group 1 - 1 Poisoned weapons and musical instruments; 2- Hunting weapons; 3- Weapons of war, oars and badges; 4- Household utensils of straw; 5- Household utensils of wood; etc. In Cabinet 1 - Division A - Usual ornaments, festive ornaments, etc., the objects were numbered, their quantities and even the materials used in their composition are identified by scientific names. For example: n.14 - 2 collars of teeth (incisors, canines, molars) of monkeys, genera *Cebus* and *Callitrix*, interspersed with black *puká* (*scissus* sp.) seeds. Parintintins Indians, from Madeira River, a gift of Captain Deodato Gomes da Fonseca. In a

note, there was the explanation that in the division of this cabinet, there was a precious item: the head of an *uirapurú* (classified as a *tannophyllus* genus *dentirrostrum*) which the Indians believed to bring happiness. According to belief, when the *uirapurú* walked through the forest, the birds followed him 'singing their most harmonious songs'.²

Among the numerous information that the catalog offers, about the description of each object, its locations, works in which they were published, their donors, there is also, for example, the record of plaster molds of the 'Amazon Idol' (n. 451, p. 119) - object of one of Barbosa Rodrigues' other famous articles (Barbosa Rodrigues 1875). The mold was sculpted by the Brazilian sculptor Almeida Reis and other models of this idol made by the German sculptor Knieter circulated and could be found in the museums of Berlin, Baden, Freiburg and Munich. There are also records that the Museum director donated objects from São Paulo, Espírito Santo or Minas Gerais (examples: n. 443, 444, 445, 446, axes), which could have resulted from his previous trips around the country.

During those years, the herbarium had 1,283 specimens among Brazilian species, representing 78 families and 322 genera, including 5,000 classified and catalogued specimens. Among the foreign species there were 800 specimens from the United States. The botanical collections still included oils, fibers, dried and alcohol-preserved fruits, resins arranged in new cabinets bought with the museum's always mentioned low budget.

In 1886, collections from the Museum and other collections of wood, fibers, resins, plant products - obtained by Barbosa Rodrigues himself and by Campos Porto, the Museum's secretary, who went into the field without the help of the local committee in charge - were sent to Berlin with by their catalog published in German. Thus, 150 items were sent to the Exposition of South American Products, in Berlin, which was organized by the Commercial Geography Society. The products were selected and organized by Barbosa Rodrigues in a catalog with detailed descriptions of their botanical qualities, uses, prices and names of private exhibitors or the commission in charge of the shipping, for which the museum director did most of the work.

The products to be exhibited and possibly sold were classified into groups. Among others:

² Catálogo da Seção Etnográfica e Arqueológica do Museu Botânico do Amazonas, *Vellozia*, 2 (1891), 87-120. <<https://ia902701.us.archive.org/12/items/vellozia12rodr/vellozia12rodr.pdf>>. Citações p.88-90.

aromatic herbs, baskets, roots and fibers: 51 samples; hardwood: 30 samples collected in Manaus and prepared by Barbosa Rodrigues himself; resins and oils: 6 samples; juices and milk: 12 jars; fruits and seeds: 17 samples; industrial products: 34, from typical plants of the region, mostly still used throughout Brazil such as manioc; guaraná (*Paullinia sorbilis*); nets made from Amazonian fibers; *piacaba* broom made from *Leopoldinia piacaba* palm; different samples of rubber produced from *Euphorbiaceae* (*Hevea discolor* Muell; *H. Guyanensis* Aubl.), with explanation about the first species that produced a superior quality, whose extraction occupied most of the local population and then became the country's largest export (Barbosa Rodrigues 1886).

In Berlin, at the Exposition of South American Products, the material and the organizing committee - which supposedly did not work - were awarded. In this case, as in the various mentions of the Museum's activities, the criticism of the lack of appreciation by the Brazilian government of Barbosa Rodrigues' work is a constant in the pages of Vellozia.

In July 1888, following a succession of problems (constant lack of funds, opposition from local politicians and religious leaders, alleged economic issues), by force of law the Museum was transferred from the building in which it occupied 10 compartments, to a room in the Liceu Amazonense building.

The 'director's tireless struggle', according to his son-in-law and secretary of the Museum, Campos Porto, allowed, with the change of the provincial government, the Museum to be reorganized and the collections that were piled up in a dark room, to be mobilized again now to occupy the left side of the Liceu building, arranged in six rooms and two wide glazed balconies and a 'noble' entrance (Porto 1891).

The secretariat occupied the entrance room of the Museum giving way to the board of directors and to the room of the archeological section. The administration and the library occupied the main room, where the books on botany, chemistry, zoology, geology and paleontology were organized in 'elegant' cabinets and where the Geographical Society of Amazonas held its meetings.

In this 'Description of the Museum' (Barbosa Rodrigues 1891b) in the pages of Vellozia, each of the rooms is described, allowing, like the catalog, its museographic reconstruction. Thus, we know that the room of the archaeological section, besides

mortuary urns, fragments of ancient ware, and arrows and garments of Peruvian 'tribes', exhibited skulls of 'wild Indians'. Bones of the huge turtle *Emys macrococcigiana* and of *Purussaurus* fossil, the giant of the *Saurios*, occupied the center of the room.

We will not repeat here one by one the arrangement of the objects in the ethnographic room, with the walls and cabinets full of objects from the 60 indigenous nations of the Amazon, described in the catalog. Nor the two botanical rooms, in which 100 green-painted tins occupying 8 large and cabinets, contained the herbarium arranged by families, following De Candolle; the central tables a large Nachet model microscope and the instruments and fundamental materials for the director's botanical classifications. These rooms faced the balcony where there were samples of wood and more indigenous objects on the walls. The three other large rooms of the laboratory, described in detail with their materials and equipment, have their floor plan, with explanations of each item, also published in Vellozia, and occupied the lower floor of the Lyceum. In a note it is mentioned that when the chemist previously hired left, most of the apparatus was completely destroyed. By this time the ethnographic section of the Amazon Botanical Museum had 1,260 objects, the Botany section more than 10,000 specimens, and the laboratory more than 500 objects.

It is worth commenting that not all problems were consequence of the lack of support from local authorities, as Vellozia's texts in defense of the director suggest. The significant donation of ethnographic objects by private individuals also suggests that the Museum had some kind of public recognition.

According to Lopes & Sá (2016), the Museum was a true family business, calling attention to the performance of his family members, his son-in-law, secretary of the Museum, his sons who accompanied him in field work and took care of the Museum's maintenance, and especially Constança Eufrosina da Borba Pacca Barbosa Rodrigues (1844-1920), his wife, who in addition to taking care of the Museum, also accompanied him in field work, and made many of the drawings that illustrated his works.

On March 25, 1890, Barbosa Rodrigues was appointed director of the Rio de Janeiro Botanical Garden, leaving the Museum, which would have been formally extinguished by Decree 42 of the

state of Amazonas, April 25, 1890³. However, we have found and are still looking for evidence that some of his collections have survived and circulated through exhibitions, even abroad.

Traces of the Museum's ephemeral passage in the scientific world

For the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago, in 1893, many objects were dispatched from the collections of the Amazon Botanical Museum. In the Brazilian catalogue to the Exposition, in the Department of Fish, Fisheries, Fish Products and Apparatus for Fishing, the Amazon Botanical Museum is explicitly mentioned' in Group 39: Fresh Water Fishing and Angling with the number '29. Museo do Amazonas: a. Indian fish arrows and bows; b. Indian canoes and paddles (itens n.270)' (p.70). In the Department of Ethnology, Archaeology, Physical Anthropology, for instance, in the groups 'Furnitures and Clothing of Aboriginal, Uncivilized and but partly Civilized Races' are mentioned in item 8. Commission of the State of Amazon a series of ceramic artifacts from the indigenous people of Rio Branco; and in the group 'Implements of War and the Chase', about 135 objects of pottery, clothing and adornments, musical instruments, canoes and paddles, baskets, arms of war, bows and arrows, *zarabatana* or blow-gun, poisoned arrows of the Indians Crichanás and Maués, Indians of the Purus River and many others. Objects such as these are abundantly described in the Museum's catalogs and official documents.⁴

We support our hypothesis that at least some of these objects would have belonged to the museum with newspaper reports and official documents. In preparation for the Chicago Exposition, on October 8, 1891 - therefore more than a year after the formal extinction of the Museum - Mr. Franck E.

Sawyer, 1st Lieutenant of the North American Navy and Mr. Antonio Barros Barretto, 1st Lieutenant of the National Navy, special commissioners for the Chicago Exposition visited and examined 'thoroughly' the Amazon Museum. They requested from the Amazon government a catalog of all the existing objects so they could study what would serve them as orientation to perform their mission in the preparation of the Brazilian participation in Chicago⁵.

The objects from the extinct museum had been transferred to the Amazon Public Education Department. To be sent to the Chicago Exposition, the cabinets that were in the Ethnography and Archeology sections were dismantled in disorder and without the knowledge of those responsible for the collections. The organization of a meteorological station in the Education Department building and delays in the delivery of a copy of the list of objects sent to Chicago did not allow the reorganization of the collections⁶. Another news about possible circulation of the collections reports that, these collections have been requested again, for a regional exhibition in Belém, Pará, in 1896, which included a section about Museums, natural sciences and ethnography.⁷ The Commission Promoting the Representation of Amazonas in this Exposition requested the governor to deliver the objects that had been exhibited in Chicago⁸. Apparently this exhibition after several postponements did not take place, or at least the newspapers do not mention it.

In 1897, the collections that would have belonged to the Barbosa Rodrigues Museum were practically non-existent. The old museum

³ After Barbosa Rodrigues left the Botanical Museum of Manaus, we have not yet been able to obtain more information about its continuity. The museum would have been re-established by a new governor in 1891. But only in 1897 the museum would be reopened, now named Museu Amazonense, having received the addition of a botanical garden and donations of specimens of the Amazonian fauna. In 1900s it would be located in the Municipal Woods of Manaus. <<https://idd.org.br/iconografia/plano-do-laboratorio-do-museu-botanico-do-amazonas/>>. Access on 10 January 2022.

⁴ Catalogue of the Brazilian Section at the World's Columbian Exposition. Chicago, 1893. <https://archive.org/details/cataloguebrazil00expogoog.L.B.Bittencourt>, 'Relatório apresentado ao Cidadão Dr. Eduardo Gonçalves Ribeiro pelo Representante do Amazonas na Exposição de Chicago', Diário Oficial. Estado Federado do Amazonas, 3 May 1894, p. 1058 Diário Oficial (AM) - 1893 a 1900. Ano 1894\Edição 00132 (1) <<http://memoria.bn.br/DocReader/docreader.aspx?bib=028843&pasta=ano%20189&pesq=Chicago&pagfis=1001>>. Access on 10 January 2022. See also: (Lopes, forthcoming Centaurus).

⁵ Exposição de Chicago. Diário de Manaus: Propriedade de uma Associação (AM) - 1890-1894. Ano 1891/ Ed. 00079(1). 8 de outubro de 1891. <http://memoria.bn.br/DocReader/DocReader.aspx?bib=716642&pesq=Museu&hf=memoria.bn.br&pagfis=1010>. Access on 10 January 2022

⁶ Francisco A. Monteiro, Relatório apresentado ao Exmo. Sr. Dr. Eduardo Gonçalves Ribeiro. Governador do Estado Federal do Amazonas pelo Diretor do Instituto Normal Superior, em 20 de junho de 1894 (Manaus: Typ. do Jornal do Amazonas, 1894). Mensagens do Governador do Amazonas para Assembléia (AM) - 1891 a 1927. Ano 1893\Edição 00001 (2) <<http://memoria.bn.br/DocReader/DocReader.aspx?bib=872784&pesq=Museu&hf=memoria.bn.br&pagfis=206>>. Access on 10 January 2022.

⁷ 'Exposição Interestadual de 1896', Diário Oficial. Estado Federado do Amazonas, 6 November 1895. p.1 Diário Oficial (AM) - 1893 a 1900 Ano 1895\Edição 00564 (1) <http://memoria.bn.br/DocReader/DocReader.aspx?bib=028843&Pesq=Chicago&pagfis=4221>. Access on 10 January 2022

⁸ 'Exposição Interestadual de 1896', Diário Oficial. Estado Federado do Amazonas, 6 November 1895. p.1 Diário Oficial (AM) - 1893 a 1900 Ano 1895\Edição 00564 (1) <http://memoria.bn.br/DocReader/DocReader.aspx?bib=178691_02&pesq=%22Exposi%C3%A7%C3%A3o%20Interestadual%22&pasta=ano%20189&hf=memoria.bn.br&pagfis=15646>. Access on 10 January 2022. Although we have found several news about the preparation of this exhibition in various newspapers, so far we have not been able to find information about its realization. Nor of the participation of the Amazon collections in the event.

building had been turned into housing for soldiers in revolutionary movements of the early Republic in 1891–1892 and the collections would have remained abandoned in the Ginásio Amazonense. Bezerra de Meneses (1908) comments that in Manaus it was thought that the former director had taken them with him on his departure from the Museum.

Perhaps anticipating such future criticisms, Campos Porto reproduced in his history of the Amazon Botanical Museum the governor's words, when it was organized in 1883: "A good number of collections were already there, both in the botanical and ethnographic sections. However, the administrator of the province did not add that these collections belonged to the director, particularly those acquired between the years 1872 and 1875, when, in charge of the Ministry of Agriculture, he traveled the valley of the Amazonas doing botanical studies". (Porto 1891: 64).

The limit between the public and the private was not exactly delimited in the period, in the understanding of many museum directors. This is not the case of committing anachronisms judging such practices, with our current codes of ethics. The well known examples of Ihering in the Paulista Museum or of his Argentine colleagues and from several other countries in the world, who sold or exchanged collections of their own or of their museums, or bought or obtained during the period when they directed their museums and later took them with them when they left (Podgorny & Lopes 2014) and illustrate such practices.

Analyzing aspects of the correspondence between Barbosa Rodrigues and the Italian anthropologist and zoologist Enrico Giglioli (1845-1909), and collections of La Specola of Florence, authors mention and photograph a specimen of the exposed Amazonian manatee *Trichechus inunguis* and its entry in the 1886 register book and the specimen of *Lepidosiren paradoxa* (described as *Lepidosiren giglioliana*) sent by Barbosa Rodrigues to Giglioli in 1886, therefore during the period when he was at the Museum, as it is also attested by the image of a letter of the same year with the logo of the Amazon Botanical Museum – Director's Office and the Imperial Coat of Arms. We know that these specimens were preserved in La Specola and that another single specimen representing the species *Tynanthus ignei*, which Barbosa Rodrigues described, is preserved as a rarity in the herbarium

of INPA-Manaus, next to some books with the Museum stamp, in the library (Lopes & Sá 2016).

Another specimen, now of a fossil that Barbosa Rodrigues obtained in his excursions through the Amazon and described in 1888, would have been taken to Rio de Janeiro, perhaps because of its scientific importance. His proxies - the article and the drawings - published in *Vellozia* have a long life and are still a reference in international paleontology.

Dated from 1888, Barbosa Rodrigues published in *Vellozia*, in French, his article on *Les reptiles fossiles de la vallée de l'Amazon* (Barbosa Rodrigues 1891c), with descriptions of what he believed to be new species from the Tertiary and Quaternary of the Amazon *Emys quaternaria*, *Emys macrococcygeana*, *Chelis* and *Purussaurus brasiliensis*. Mentioning numerous authors as was his habit, to prove the originality of his discovery, Barbosa Rodrigues considered that the fossil chelonians were represented in South America only by the turtle described by Florentino Ameghino (1853–1911), the well-known paleontologist who would become the director of the Museum of Buenos Aires from 1902 to 1911 (Podgorny 2021).

At the beginning of his article Barbosa Rodrigues claimed the honor of being the first to reveal to the scientific world the reptile fossils of the Amazon, although his work was not complete, because his samples were not in perfect condition. Apparently following Cuvier's catastrophism, at least for the classification of his fossil and comparing the fossil and living species he considered that the great chelonians and saurians that existed in South America and Brazil, would have been extinguished by the catastrophe responsible for the substitutions of the old life forms.

The classification of a jaw of a gigantic crocodylian, one of the largest known until then, found in the basin of the Juruá river, in 1962, confirmed for the paleontologist Ivor Price 'a hitherto problematic genus, based on a badly preserved fragment described by Barbosa Rodrigues in 1892, under the name of *Purussaurus brasiliensis*.

Considering that the publication of Barbosa Rodrigues' article was in a little-known journal (the *Vellozia*), he republished in Portuguese parts of the description originally in French of *Purussaurus brasiliensis*, granting Barbosa Rodrigues priority in the classification of the fossil (Price 1967). The

Purussaurus was found in some undetermined place in the ravines of the Purus River, in the state of Amazonas, but in Barbosa Rodrigues' article there are no explicit mention of the collector, or further information about this find. Although the fossil was thought to be missing, Price obtained information that "an Italian citizen was in Manaus after the Museum closed and managed to send part of the remaining collections to Italy". Price also mentions that, in 1945, a granddaughter of Barbosa Rodrigues, when writing his biography, referred especially to the *Purussaurus*, and added in a footnote that it belonged to her. He states that "in spite of the unsuccessful outcome of our research, we still have some hope of finding this fossil type" (Price 1967: 361).

Price was referring to the book by Dilke Barbosa Rodrigues Salgado who, in chapter XVII - Os répteis fósseis, relies on Barbosa Rodrigues' text about the *Purussaurus*, to highlight Barbosa Rodrigues as the "great Brazilian scholar and fountain of knowledge, who revealed to our scientific circles the original encounter of anthropology" (*sic*) (Salgado 1945: 147).

Considering that the saurians that Barbosa Rodrigues had attributed to the Tertiary, were monstrous, destructive and more similar to the present crocodiles, Dilke Salgado repeats the description of Barbosa Rodrigues' text about the anterior fragment of the right mandible with the teeth, weighing 15.6 kg and width of 0.57 m, to again emphasize that "with this contribution the Brazilian naturalist has enriched our anthropological panorama". At the foot of the page is the note to which Price referred: "(1) Currently owned by A." (Salgado 1945:148).⁹

We do not yet know if Ivor Price's hopes can still be fulfilled. What we do know is that despite earlier doubts by national and international paleontologists, definitely the genus and type species of *Purussaurus brasiliensis* Barbosa-Rodrigues, 1892 (Miocene of South America). Holotype: specimen described and figured by Barbosa-Rodrigues (1891c), still lost, but validated (Souza *et al.* 2021)¹⁰.

⁹ I thank professor Magali Romero Sá for the access to these pages of Dilke Salgado's book.

¹⁰ It is worth noting that the authors elaborate a historical reconstruction of the importance of Ivor Price's work in corroborating *Purussaurus brasiliensis* as a valid species, highlighting the importance of the paleontologist Diogenes de Almeida Campos (DNPM) for having preserved and made possible the study and dissemination in the literature of images of the specimen collected and described by Price (1967).

Conclusions

The circulation of collections, traveling through different spaces and guided by specific interests and different criteria represents a crucial dimension of the trajectories of museum objects (Alberti 2005). This seems to apply to the objects in the collections of Barbosa Rodrigues' Amazon Botanical Museum. They were collected, integrated into collections, designed, classified, exhibited, incorporated into catalogs, transformed into scientific articles, into holotypes, moved to other places, dispersed, and largely lost. Recovering stories of donors, of objects, of lost museums, in different times and places of the country, remains crucial to deepen our stories about the founders of the various sciences among us, to value our continuously neglected scientific heritage.

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