

Origins of Public Policies for Bibliographic Heritage in Brazil in the XXth Century¹

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The reading of the word is not only preceded by the reading of the world but by a certain way of "writing it" or "rewriting" it, that is, of transforming it through our conscious practice. (FREIRE, 1989).

Abstract: The present investigation looks at the public policies established in Brazil, at the national level, from 1930 to ca. 1945 relating to the preservation of bibliographical heritage. A brief history of the book in Brazil from the colonial period and a survey of policies regarding basic education serve as a basis for a review of patrimony issues pertaining to books and documents. The Ministry of Education, Mário de Andrade, and the Biblioteca Nacional are the key actors in this story, which concludes with the thought that much of the situation at present has roots dating back to 1937.

1. Introduction

In the many studies on patrimony (or heritage) published in Brazil in the last decades of the twentieth century by social scientists, museologists, anthropologists, intellectuals, and others there has been almost no attention paid to public policies focusing on bibliographic patrimony (or rare books) in the scope of Culture at the national level. We can mention, among others, the works of Schwartzman et al. (2000); Miceli (1979); Miceli, org. (1984); Fonseca, M. (1997), and Badaró (2000), who analyzed cultural policies, in general, emphasizing built historical monuments, artistic, ethnographic and other types of patrimonies, but not books.

Previous research (Gauz, 2015) dealt with the theme of bibliographic heritage as a cultural asset since the emergence of this concern in modern Europe, based on the concepts of monument explained by Alois Riegl (which includes written movable property, and the criteria of historical importance and age-value, among others). As part of this research was the emergence of the notion of bibliographic patrimony in France and in some other European countries. As seen, the construction of bibliographic heritage (and of other types) did not occur at first associated with a social representation, that is, with links to specific communities.

The cited research observed the difference between patrimony that represents a particular society and that which is considered important in general, and sought to

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distinguish, preliminarily, the Brazilian rare book patrimony from the Brazilian historical bibliographical patrimony (relating to the main narrative of Brazilian history). It also recognized the enormous challenge for Brazil to specify which items would compose its patrimonial collections, on national and local levels (and its internal delimitations and external borders with other countries), i.e, which books would transform our population into a people and our territory into a nation, in the words of Melot (2004). In spite of the existence of collections of books dating from the colonial period (1500-1822) and from the Empire (1822-1889), it is only in the Republic, more specifically in 1937, that the book is contemplated, by the intellectual elite of the country, along with other patrimonies, as worthy of being preserved and, therefore, inserted in the roll of national public policies.

In the present paper I am approaching the same theme in a different way, focusing on the period from 1930 to circa 1945, with the intention of contributing to an understanding of the beginnings of Federal cultural policies in relation to the Brazilian bibliographic (historical) heritage, and eventually discussing the Biblioteca Nacional of Brazil, as depositary and guardian of the written memory of the country. Considering that the book, the object of the present investigation, cannot be dissociated from the area of basic education, I also mention briefly events in that field of knowledge.

Several possibilities of studies that won't be present in this paper, where much still needs to be investigated are: terms and concepts; listing of libraries and collections to be protected; legal issues (in a wide range of aspects, including evasion of rare book collections relating to Brazil to other countries), the Instituto Nacional do Livro and the role of schools and libraries, to name a few subjects. The importance of universities as knowledge-enhancers and today much valued for patrimonial education will not be approached either. Likewise, I will not address the important Unesco *Memory of the World* program, which can be read about in Abid (2014), among other sources. International organizations such as Unesco and IFLA, through their working groups, events, courses, and publications have been a safe haven internationally for libraries and librarians interested in bibliographic heritage.

2. The book and education in Brazil until the end of the XIXth century

One of the legacies of the nation-states of Europe in the cultural area, that still raises relevant and necessary discussions, is the notion of cultural heritage - public goods valued by society or by the institutions that maintain such collections, as museums, libraries, and archives. Enforced preservation of collections is justified as a means to guarantee access to them in the future, even though the property characterized as heritage can be questionable and is always a choice that excludes other assets. Considering that most of these items in Brazil are located in public institutions (state and federal), official discourse naturally guides the policies that addresses the subject. This discourse governs the area but does not do it in isolation, since its implementation is related to economic, political, educational, social, etc. conditions.

Brazil has been socially structured in an unequal way since its discovery. In the colonial period (1500-1822)³, there was not much awareness of the issue of nationality in a society still a subsidiary of Portugal and characterized by slave-produced agriculture and alienated indigenous peoples. The slaves were not regarded as part of society and the Portuguese in Brazil still had strong ties with their homeland, seeing in Brazil primarily an opportunity for self-enrichment. The only group that benefitted were members of the elite educated in exclusive religious schools (the only ones available). As early as the sixteenth century there were Jesuit schools and libraries and also some Benedictine (with rich collections), Franciscan, and Carmelite's communities which extended into the eighteenth century in many cities. With regard to the libraries of the Franciscan, there is not much information. As a whole, what is known is that much was stolen, sold, or destroyed by insects, as Moraes (2006) tells us.

Jesuits missionaries as part of their responsibility of converting the natives in Portuguese colonies introduced printing presses in Goa (India), Macau (China), Japan, and also in South America, in the Guarani missions in Paraguay. If such presses existed in Brazil, we don't know. So far no documents have surfaced that prove the existence of presses belonging to Jesuits in Brazilian territory (Annals, 2000), an idiosyncrasy in the history of Brazil also considering that printing was introduced long after there were already presses in Peru and Mexico, for example (Gauz, 2013). Also Villalta (1999) notes that there were relatively few books in Portuguese America in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. This would change in the eighteenth century, following cultural initiatives and other actions, including the formation of (few and short-lived) literary academies. Moraes (2006) points out that there is almost no information on private collections in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Antonio Cândido (1967) goes further stating that until the Republic in 1889, the great majority of the society was illiterate and had practically no access to erudite culture, which was true even of the small literate elite.

The absence of presses until 1808⁴ and the lack of a public educational system undoubtedly prevented or retarded a process of growth with solid foundations in Brazil. With the expansion in the number of bookstores in Rio de Janeiro after 1808 when the Portuguese court crossed the ocean to establish itself in Brazil following the Napoleonic invasion of the homeland, and gradually in other states in the nineteenth century, there was an increase in the supply and circulation of books and many private collections have survived enough so that their stories could be told by Rubens Borba de Moraes in two of his books: *The Apprentice Bibliophile/O Bibliófilo Aprendiz* (1998, 1st edition in 1965) and *Books and Libraries in Colonial Brazil/Livros e Bibliotecas no Brasil Colonial* (2006, 1st edition in 1979), in which the author also emphasizes the need for research in the area. Even after the Jesuits were expelled from Brazil around 1750 and

³ In 1815, the State of Brazil was elevated to United Kingdom, under the denomination of United Kingdom of Portugal, Brazil and Algarves. The State of Brazil existed from 1621 to 1815.

⁴ In 1747, the typographer Isidoro da Fonseca printed a few leaflets in Rio de Janeiro, but his workshop was soon confiscated by the Portuguese government.

the great reform undertaken by the Marquis of Pombal occurred—in which State and Church were separated—the educational system did not significantly change for the better. As Ribeiro (1993) indicates, even though teaching went from the hands of the Church to those of the State, the teachers were the same, in the majority, and the models, old. This would last until the end of the nineteenth century (despite some initiatives), thanks to the maintenance of the elite in power and the convenience in perpetuating this situation.

The coming of king D. João VI to Brazil in 1808⁵ led to many improvements in the city of Rio de Janeiro. The amount of local publication increased with the creation of the royal press, the *Imprensa Régia*, and the whole apparatus brought about by the king moving to Brazil caused undeniable cultural progress. Institutions suitable for a capital city were established, such as banks, the Botanical Garden, the National and Public Library of the Court (now *Biblioteca Nacional do Brasil*); the Royal Military Academy; and the Royal School of Sciences, Arts and Crafts, now *Escola Nacional de Belas Artes* (Annals, 2000). However, elementary education continued to be neglected.

The Independence proclaimed by D. Pedro I in 1822 guaranteed that the elites would remain in power in their respective jurisdictions (provinces), continuing the disadvantages of colonialism, at least in the beginning of the imperial period. In 1834 there was decentralization of educational responsibility: "The provinces would have the right to legislate and control primary and secondary education, and the central power reserved the exclusive right to promote and regulate higher education" (Ribeiro, 1993, 17). The author also reports that the lack of governmental resources has made the private sector responsible for the middle level, thus contributing to strengthen the existing elitism.

The country became a 'nation' three years after declaring independence when Portugal recognized it in 1825. Slaves remained excluded from the nation and European and Asian immigrants arriving in large numbers beginning in the second decade of the nineteenth century did not for the most part contribute to the cultural homogenization of Brazil (Alencastro, 2006 apud Jurt, 2012). But it is in this monarchical period that the ruling classes united in search of a state nationalism. Jurt (2012) points out that by the 1870s, after the War of the Triple Alliance, the Army also contributed to the desired nationalist sentiment, by presenting a guarantee of the territorial integrity of the country despite its internal ideological and class divisions. The creation of the Historical and Geographical Institute of Brazil (*Instituto Histórico e Geográfico Brasileiro*), the founding of national museums, and the state historical institutes focused on the study of nationality are among the various examples of innovations and change of mentality in search of a unit that was more than territorial. The nineteenth century was the era of the construction of distinctly Brazilian thought, of a nationalism that until then did not exist

⁵ From 1808 to 1822, it was from Brazil that Portugal ruled its possessions. There is no knowledge of a colony that has become a metropolis in the Americas, at least – a second idiosyncrasy of the country.

on a large scale, gathering for the first time the people who thought about the history of Brazil (Iglésias, 2000; Fernandes, [2010?]). There was now a unified movement, a concern for the preservation of national memory and also for the safeguarding of documents abroad related to Brazil. Intellectuals and political elites discussed whether it was possible for a mestizo nation to become civilized (Fernandes, [2010?]). In the area of education, according to Bragança (2009), there was growth in the school system and an interest of some social groups in acquiring knowledge, although the publishing system did not have the necessary infrastructure and still needed to import machines and paper. There was little translation of books into Portuguese for the Brazilian market, and relatively few Brazilian authors, with those who existed choosing to publish in Europe rather than in Brazil.

From colonial agriculture, Brazil has turned to mining as the main economic activity in the transition from the eighteenth to the nineteenth century and, at the end of the nineteenth century, industrialization began, signaling the emergence of a new prosperous class in the Brazilian social structure that frequented schools, but it cannot be said that there was a structural change in the educational system until after the Republic was proclaimed in 1889. In the previous year, the abolition of slavery was effected, but that belated accomplishment did not mean that former slaves were truly integrated into society. Afro-Brazilians remained an oppressed class to whom the country was indebted for much of its progress.

3. Advances in the XXth Century

In the twentieth century it was understood that education was an important instrument for the formation of an integrated society, and that it should encompass all the segments that comprised it. It is also from this period that the idea of patrimony arises as a social conception. There was no national public educational system but the Brazilian Association of Education (Associação Brasileira de Educação) carried out initiatives aimed at better education for the people in the 1920s. The lack of a national educational system, as Schwartzman et al. (2000) bring out, was an obstacle to be overcome in a society, as said, constituted by former slaves who were not assimilated, plus a large number of immigrants proud of their nations of origin living together with a weak and expressionless Brazilianness. The country's regional diversity was a significant obstacle to progress, as well.

Some aspects of the initial concern with the question of nationalism in Argentina resemble those in Brazil. As Conti (2009) points out: the strong presence of immigrants at the turn of the century and the question of cultural identity; the construction of the historical patrimony in the first decades of the twentieth century and strongly by the elite; an initial preoccupation with the colonial architecture; the creation of an institute (Comisión) to identify cultural heritage; and the concept of heritage as an instrument to stimulate interest in the issue of cultural (and national) identity.

In the political realm, Brazil began a period of progress with Getulio Vargas in power. From 1930 to 1937, as chief of the Provisional Government and President, he set up a policy for valorizing coffee, sugar, and alcohol; instituted the work permit, established the secret ballot and voting rights for women. However, his government also treated an opposition political party as illegal, not to mention other controversial policies. From 1937 to 1945, during the Estado Novo dictatorship, there was strong political repression, arrests, and torture. The Department of Information and Propaganda (DIP), Vargas's propaganda machine, was created to allow for censorship in fields of culture, while at the same time trying to get closer to intellectuals and artists. Many books were banned and others produced to strengthen the State in the cultural field. Ironically, a number of laws and institutions promoting heritage that exist today emerged during these years. It has to be said that Brazil made some progress in the establishment of federal cultural policies during dictatorial periods, that of Vargas and the civilian military one of 1964.

Although the first legislative action protecting patrimony (bibliographic and others) occurred on November 30, 1937, through Decree-Law no. 25, as a public policy on the national level, efforts to preserve the public good were already underway by some State governments and museums and were intensified in the 1920s by the intellectuals linked to Modernism (Fonseca, M., 1997, Fernandes, [2010?]). The roots of the Decree-Law, according to Fonseca, V. (2014), were in the Federal Council of Artistic and Scientific Expeditions (Conselho Federal de Expedições Artísticas e Científicas) of 1933. The government of Getulio Vargas recognized the existence of an unorganized patrimony that needed to be preserved:

Art. 1 - The national historical and artistic heritage is constituted by a set of movable assets existing in the country and whose conservation is of public interest, either because of its connection with memorable events in the history of Brazil, or because of its exceptional archeological, ethnographic, bibliographic or artistic value. [...] (SPHAN, 1980, 111).

In Article 26 of this Decree-Law, "old or rare books" are specifically mentioned in the section dealing with the need for dealers to make a special register of what they owned at the National Historical and Artistic Heritage Service (Serviço do Patrimônio Histórico e Artístico Brasileiro, or SPHAN)⁶, with the obligation of submitting updated reports⁷ to the Serviço. Fonseca, M. (1997) points out that the creation of the Serviço do Patrimônio Histórico e Artístico was due not only to a modernist movement of Brazilian intellectuals, but also to what happened in several countries regarding the prevention of

⁶ The National Historic and Artistic Heritage Institute (IPHAN) was created in 1937 as a Service under the Ministry of Education and Health, having its name changed to Department in 1946 and in 1970, Institute.

⁷ This register was object of the Normative Instruction nº 01, of June 11, 2007, by IPHAN.

illegal circulation of objects looted from their countries during World War I. The conceptualization of patrimony, however, was not clear, as noted by the author.

Patrimony, as well as the theme of national identity, common to the Modernists, had already been the subject of debate in cultural institutions, in the press and, as said, in some State governments and in the National Congress. Cândido (apud Fonseca, M., 1997) points out that it was at this time that writers began to have a social function, as constructors of critical thinking. Books were seen as the cause of social changes. They addressed national aspects of our culture with a bias towards modernity, which had not been possible in the colonial period or in the monarchy. The author also remembers as exceptions Machado de Assis, during the Empire period, and Euclides da Cunha and Lima Barreto, in the first Republic (1889-1930), all famous Brazilian writers.

The Minister of Education and Health⁸ Gustavo Capanema (1934-1945) was at the forefront of those actions. His neutrality in relation to the ideological combat between the Education group and the group responsible for the patrimony brought good results, especially to the latter group. While in the area of education traditional Catholicism and the valorization of the motherland symbols strengthened an authoritarian national State after 1937, the “culture section” was able to remain more independent. Also in São Paulo it was a time of changes. The city Cultural Department (Departamento de Cultura da Cidade) assisted by the leadership of Mário de Andrade⁹ innovated by recognizing both the popular and the scholarly; the tangible and the intangible heritage, and the city as a place fostering conditions for the culture to flourish, without interference in the processes of creation (Schwartzman et al., 2000). Andrade would also be more than an influence in the actions of the Ministry of Education and Health, as will be seen.

Mário de Andrade had been invited by Capanema, the minister of Education, to prepare a draft patrimony law that was effected in 1937. The result was considered quite advanced for the time, with a more popular approach to the issue of heritage (without abandoning the erudite) and a rather democratic vision of culture, considering the authoritarian government then in power. This version was not used. A more elitist document by Rodrigo Mello Franco de Andrade (no relation to Mário) served as the main text for the law in 1937 (Fonseca, M., 1997). One aspect of this Decree-Law that draws our attention is the fact that the establishment of public policies for bibliographic heritage seems not have included the voice of the Biblioteca Nacional, where most of such heritage books were located.

Mário de Andrade's relationship with Capanema was quite friendly, even intimate, as is evident in his correspondence with the minister. He was also close to Carlos Drummond

⁸ The ministry had the following names: Ministry of Education and Health (1937), Ministry of Education and Culture (1953) and finally Ministry of Education, since the creation of the Ministry of Culture (1985).

⁹ Poet, literary critic, musicologist and Brazilian essayist was one of the main names of the Modern Art Week of 1922. He lived from 1893 to 1945.

de Andrade¹⁰ (no relation to Mário or Rodrigo Mello). How much they wanted Mário's presence in Rio de Janeiro can also be seen in a letter by Drummond (sent at the request of the minister), dated September 12, 1935, asking if Mário would consider working in Rio de Janeiro, as the director of the Department of Cultural Extension and teach at the Music Institute (Andrade, C., 1935). That is also evident in the various letters from Mário to Capanema and to Drummond informing them about his progress with requested freelance works.

With regard to bibliographic heritage, in particular, one should also speak about Mário de Andrade. On February 18, 1938, still working in the Department of Culture of the City of São Paulo, Mário wrote a letter to the Minister of Culture, partially cited below:

"When I was there I took notes regarding the National Documentary Heritage Service whose draft you have requested. In my notes I find three different titles: Documentary Heritage Service; Bibliographic Heritage Service, and Technological Patrimony Service. [...] Do you want three different services or one? [...]" (SCHWARTZMAN et al., 2000, 386).

He asked for a reply, directly, or from Carlos Drummond de Andrade. The answer¹¹ came right after, in a letter of February 23:

"... I answer to your questions now. In a speech that I made (and that I am sending to you) the thing is exposed. I think we should have three different services: that of documentary heritage (papers, records, films and photographs), that of bibliographic heritage (books) and that of technical or technological heritage [...]. This is in my head just like a sketch. You can suggest managing differently, contrary and better [...]" (CAPANEMA, 1938).

In his speech in the commemoration of the 100 years of the Pedro II School a few months before, along with President Vargas, Capanema had specified his ideas about the bibliographic heritage, referring to it as a "set of books and other rare or precious publications, now dispersed everywhere" and declared its intention to create special services for different types of heritage, in order to "control the conservation of all existing heritage in the country." It also sought to disseminate the cultural heritage ("extra-school work") through the Cairú Institute (the origin of the National Book Institute or Instituto Nacional do Livro), also including the Biblioteca Nacional, which

¹⁰ Poet, chronicler, Drummond (1902-1987) is considered the most influential poet of the twentieth century and one of the foremost of Modernism. He was Capanema's chief of staff.

¹¹ I am grateful to Denise de Almeida Silva for locating the letter at IEB/USP and to Pedro José de Carvalho Neto for the transcription.

would "lend its invaluable cooperation to this endeavor." (Brasil. Ministério da Educação e Saúde, 1937, 44-45).

Not long afterwards, Mário would move to Rio de Janeiro, in order to carry out occasional works at the National Book Institute (Badaró, 2000), where he would face some bureaucratic problems that would affect his stay in the city. Sick, in May 1942 he asked for dismissal from the institute.

Some critics would later question if what happened after 1937 was in fact a national cultural policy or only a policy for preservation of architectural monuments (Machado, 1984; Falcão, 1984). The ministry ended up preserving what the elite considered worthy of surviving for the future generations. In judging their actions, it must be understood that resources were scarce; there were a large number of moveable assets deserving of preservation; and there was little sense in the population as a whole of the value of these cultural goods.

4. The Biblioteca Nacional of Brazil between 1930 and 1945

The National Library of Brazil (BN of Brazil or BN) is undoubtedly the institution that best represents the bibliographic heritage of the country. It is an institution that has experienced many advances and obstacles, and alternates periods of more or less visibility, be it for projects or problems.

For the moment, we can group the problems of the national library from its origin in Rio de Janeiro in 1808 until at least the end of the 1970s (even further) in four general lines: lack of administrative autonomy, insufficient staffing, low budgets, and lack of adequate storage space for collections. These problems are pointed out in the reports of several directors throughout the twentieth century and, needless to say, have a direct impact on the preservation of the institution's written patrimony. In fact, some of these problems go back to the management of Camillo de Monserrate (1853-1870) in the middle of the XIXth century, as recorded by Castro (2000), in particular difficulties in hiring qualified personnel, also mentioned in the 1940s by Moraes (Sphan/Pró-memória, (1987).

Reading the reports of the BN directors in the period from 1930 to around 1945 one notes the various efforts to provide the Library with what the institution required. There were some positive developments under the management of Rodolfo Garcia (1933-1945), such as in the training of librarians; some significant acquisitions of iconic rare books, like the *Res Brasiliae*, by Barleus, from 1640; and the accessioning of impressive donations (such as the collection of 320 photographs of Armando Fragozo about the State of Bahia and the collection of the writer and politician Coelho Neto, with 3,547 volumes). Repairs in the building were undertaken; microfilming services introduced; and a plan developed for the gradual conservation of the rare collections, always a problem because of climate.

In 1945, at the end of World War II, the various problems of the BN were aggravated, with new problems added to old ones: international invisibility, poor security over collections, precarious conditions of the building, etc., all reported by Rubens Borba de Moraes in his confidential report for the minister Capanema (while still responsible for the Preparation Division, before he became director in 1945). In 1966, the librarian Edson Nery da Fonseca would reiterate the same comments, emphasizing that such an institution could not be at the mercy of political issues, with so many national and international commitments to fulfill and "depending on the benevolent and unstable understanding of the higher echelons of the government." (MONTE-MÓR 1987, 168).

Between 1944 and 1971 there is a gap in the reports of directors of the Library, despite the presidential decree of 1939 requesting annual reports (BRASIL. Decreto n. 3764). It is known that Rubens Borba de Moraes' term as director (December 1945 to February 1947) was short but of great importance for the bibliographic patrimony, with the creation of the Rare Book Section/Seção de Livros Raros in 1946, among other achievements. Moraes made clear his preoccupation with those aspects of Librarianship, unlike his predecessors, more focused on the diffusion of historical knowledge based upon research in the library collection, as the contents of the *Anais da Biblioteca Nacional* show.

Although beyond the temporal scope of this paper, the importance of Jannice Monte-Mór as director of the BN of Brazil between 1971 and 1979 deserves a few words.

The management of Monte-Mór occurred partially in the most repressive years of another Brazilian dictatorship, 1968-1974, the so-called Lead Years. Despite the political climate, and the lack of assistance from the governments — "500,000 volumes in storage since the earliest days of the institution¹², which had not yet received any technical processing" (Monte-Mór, 1987, 168)— this was a positive period for the library. The director updated the publication of the previous directors' reports in the Annals of the library, interrupted in 1943, and carried out impressive administrative reform. In addition, she sought to integrate the library into the cultural life of the country, with exhibitions, courses, and conferences, honoring commitments previously assumed. Monte-Mór prepared a report exposing the same problems pointed out by Moraes in the 1940s, such as the lack of administrative and financial autonomy. She found the national library in a worse administrative situation, subordinated not directly to the head of the Ministry of Education and Culture, but to a department within it. Under her management, perhaps for the first time, renowned architects helped to think through the already serious problem of space. The solution, located right in the next building, had bank financing guaranteed for the execution of the project. Unfortunately, in 1978, the military government made clear its lack of interest in the subject. It was this

¹² We believe the director was referring to 1911, the year the actual building was inaugurated.

director who in 1987 also defended the holding of a Latin American conference of national libraries - which perhaps was already in maturation, since it happened in 1989.

5. Considerations for the moment

As with the construction of patrimony in Europe, Brazil has had bibliographic patrimonies sometimes dissociated from its social communities. The coming of the royal library to Rio de Janeiro in 1808 brought the most relevant written heritage although many items had little or no connection to Brazilian history. If the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (and now the twenty-first) are the most important of our publishing history which now also includes digital patrimony (Adib, 2014), determining which books make us self-conscious as a nation seems to be a way to go forward.

We observed the Minister Gustavo Capanema's plan to create three more Services (for Documentary, Bibliographic and Technological Heritage), besides SPHAN, to take care of other kinds of heritage. In what regards the bibliographic patrimony (and also the Documentary one), it seemed that the Biblioteca Nacional was not initially regarded by the minister as the depository of the already most impressive collection of rare items, although the institution was seen as useful to help disseminating the cultural heritage ("extra schools work"). Likewise, he intended to gather all rare collections, which was never accomplished. It is possible that these intentions were expressed because it was a new phase of implementation of a government, the Estado Novo, where controlling, actually, was in the agenda, for the strong presence of the State in the political and cultural life of the country under Vargas's term - an ironic contradiction to the leftist tendency of the cultural wing of the Ministry of Education and Health (later, these institutions would compose the Ministry of Culture, in which the BN would be located). In fact, since 1935 Capanema wanted the Ministry to have the word "Culture" in its name (Schwartzman et al., 2000). As known, it is not unusual for nationalist authoritarian regimes to emphasize national heritage using a certain kind of patriotism as a way of unifying the country behind the regime, leaving out much of the history that does not fit the image one wants to convey. Vargas was very good at that using medias such as the radio, the cinema, the book, and the music for his propaganda.

The library cannot be dissociated from its context, belonging to a ministry that has produced significant advances in the heritage field back to 1937. Thus, the hardships of the institution were mentioned here with a purpose. It is a fact that Capanema recognized the importance of the BN of Brazil, but it is not clear how its bibliographic patrimony was in fact perceived as distinguished from the library's educational mission. In June of 1937, after a visit to the BN, Capanema wrote a letter to President Getulio Vargas requesting additional funds to renovate the building, to update collections and "to create conditions for school students to have access to the library [...] to arouse their interest in reading" (Badaró, 2000, 286-287). In the same letter, he did recognize that "the bibliographic heritage is enormous and precious today" and also reported the "poor state of conservation of most federal services within his ministry". It is possible to perceive already a relation between those actions of the past and the present situation in

Brazil. However, further research is needed in many aspects of this subject aiming at, among others, a better understanding of the role of that national library in the years 1930-1945, during the administration of Rodolfo Garcia and along the years (since the library was classified merely as an "institution of extracurricular education" in the Ministry). It was observed by Miceli (1979) that at that time there was little interchange between the cultural institutions. At an event organized by this author in the 1970s (Miceli, org., 1984), with the collaboration of more than ten intellectuals analyzing (and often criticizing) the beginnings of public policies for patrimony in the 1930s, bibliographic patrimony was ignored and the national library hardly mentioned – forty years after the implementation of Capanema's policies, in which it was included the term "bibliographic" in the text of the law. The invisibility of the subject of bibliographic patrimony continued in the speeches of some intellectuals who were concerned with a national cultural policy.

Capanema's letter sets forth the situation of the Biblioteca and shows it as a public and school library (those existed in small numbers), as opposed to a special collection. To arouse interest in reading should not be a first function of a national library. After more than one hundred years since establishment in Rio de Janeiro, the BN remained a Public Library, now of the Republic, no longer of the Court. But the library survived. Nevertheless, to the present, the aftermath of this situation is evident: not only that institution, but others under the Ministry of Culture (including the federal museums, with many of the most significant historical book collections), get insufficient funds from the federal government, suffer from lack of personnel, and administrative autonomy is relative. Although the subject of culture is present nowadays on the platforms of some political parties, it is the artists and the elite who are listened to by candidates. It is not for the written heritage that a good part of the budget is destined and the bibliographic patrimony remains invisible to society, to some managers, and to politicians.

Considering that today we work with the notion that heritage is a social construction, it seems clear that a link with society must exist in order for the patrimony to be sustained and preserved. In the case of collections in the different Brazilian States, a great challenge faces the country, requiring collaboration of specialists and institutions, such as Borba de Moraes (Sphan/Pró-memória (1987) did for the public library in São Paulo, as the director between 1936 and 1943, when he asked specialists from various areas of knowledge to create a list of essential books. The idea could be applied for local bibliographic heritage. Also committees representing citizens and specialists would help librarians reach information on the importance of books and authors on a local level. The history of Brazil taught in schools at different levels could show how that history is constructed from books and manuscripts in Brazilian libraries. But we also think about the role that institutions play, as intermediaries between the State that supports them and the society that enjoys their contents (or should, if it knew they existed). Guided by hegemonic groups, the society can see its own history in the cultural heritage, but

should also participate more on the choices, although the formation of a culture is partly percolation from the top.

The strong Brazilian State was born before the formation of a Brazilian identity. A nation is more than a geographical place and culture is the element that brings a nation together. Developing a heritage policy should consider different universes, too, such as Education, History, Literature, Arts, and many others.

More recently, several authors from Spanish-speaking America, some European countries, and Brazil as well are publishing research on a variety of issues related to bibliographic and documentary heritage. This reflects the interest and the need to advance actions that will allow the knowledge of these collections and their history to be disseminated.

The events that bring together heritage institutions, which are of great importance to our countries, will be more and more useful if the participating countries are well aware of their own collections and those common to two or more countries, like the *Província Cisplatina* manuscript collection at the Biblioteca Brasileira Mindlin, a set of bound documents of interest to Brazil, Uruguay, and also Argentina.

Of course, by knowing which books constitute our heritage, I am not referring to the well known books that are representative of our culture, such as *O Povo Brasileiro*, by Darcy Ribeiro, about the formation of Brazil; *Raízes do Brasil*, by Sergio Buarque de Holanda, about the Brazilian society; and *Os Sertões*, by Euclides da Cunha, on the isolation of the populations in the backlands of Brazil, among others, but to those of importance for the history of the country and representative of its culture that are less well known. The structure of the country has many economic and social inequalities, with classes without access to basic (or one of good quality) education. The absence of books and libraries prevents ordinary people from understanding the notion of bibliographic heritage. Many projects with bibliographic heritage can be accessed on the internet nowadays, such as the *dossiês* of the Biblioteca Nacional Digital of Brazil. All over the world countries deal with the question of preserving legacies from the past and can learn from each other. To promote historical consciousness seems to be a path and a task for rare book librarians.

We also must think about what the near future will bring. The above text mentions social class inequality, when the world already speaks of multitude as a political agent and works with concepts such as biopolitics and biopower while at the same time questions the notion of nationality, present in the books of Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri. Social networks have undoubtedly been changing the configuration of the world in terms of relations among peoples. As the present time is perceived as transitional, the issue of nationality is, in our understanding, still essential for building identity and still valid as a basis for discussions with others, as well as a path for collective construction.

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