

In search of Brazil: Edgard Roquette-Pinto and the Brazilian anthropological portrait (1905-1935)

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The thesis deals with the history of physical anthropology and the debates on race and nation at the beginning of the twentieth century, focusing on the anthropological studies carried out by the physician and anthropologist Edgard Roquette-Pinto. As a scientist linked to the National Museum of Rio de Janeiro between 1905 and 1935, he was dedicated to research on anthropology and ethnography of Brazil, through which he sought not only to describe the formative racial characteristics of the country, but also to evaluate the biological feasibility, psychological character and social conditions of the population. By linking Roquette-Pinto's nationalist activism, his public actions and his dialogue with the anthropological thought of the time, the thesis analyzes the relations between anthropology, nation and politics, highlighting the national and international frontiers involved in the debate. Roquette-Pinto's anthropology was based both on a national context and Brazilian intellectual and scientific concerns, and the international debate on race and populations. On the one hand, the thesis analyzes the dialogue and the controversies between the anthropologist and Brazilian writers, such as Euclides da Cunha, Manoel Bomfim, Oliveira Vianna, Renato Kehl and Gilberto Freyre, seeking to understand how controversies about racial miscegenation, immigration and the settlement of Brazil were central to the construction of interpretations, diagnostics and projects of national reform. On the other hand, the work shows how his anthropological writing was constructed in dialogue with physical anthropologists, historians and foreign eugenisists, mostly German and American, including Charles Davenport, Madison Grant, Eugen Fischer, Rüdiger Bilden and Franz Boas. One of the arguments defended here is that the anthropology of Roquette-Pinto becomes more intelligible when analyzing the international debate involving anthropological studies and intellectual networks. The thesis is a contribution both for the history of anthropology in Brazil and for the history of the circulation of ideas about race, national identity and population in an international context.

