

Foreword

According to Lévi-Strauss, cities, especially in America, were not made to last, but to be renovated with the same speed as they were built.¹ His observation has in mind the capacity for transforming urban space, which has occurred in a more and more accelerated form. On appropriating the spaces of the cities, subjects interact with them, conferring new meanings on them, even on the old European urban landscapes. Numbers 29 and 30 of *Varia Historia* features the collection of articles *Urban Spaces and Territories*, which is divided into two parts. The first part, published here in number 29, is titled *Urban Spaces and Territories of Power*. The second part, to be published in number 30, is called *Urban Spaces and Symbolic Territories*.

The collection *Urban Spaces and Territories of Power* includes studies of different cities in their interrelations with the powers that constitute them. In "Colonial Cities and Elites: Networks of Power and Negotiation," Maria Fernanda Bicalho analyzes the role of the city councils as articulating centers between local power and royal power. The article begins with historiographical interpretations of the theme, especially the work of Charles Boxer and Evaldo Cabral de Mello, to propose a new approach. Starting from the study of the role of the city council in Rio de Janeiro in the 1640s, soon after the acclamation of D. João IV as King of Portugal, the author focuses on the role of the networks of local power and their insertion in the more general politics of the empire, particularly with respect to the business and interests of this elite in the complex market of the South Atlantic.

The article by Cláudia Damasceno Fonseca studies the concession of titles of town and city in the captaincy of Minas Gerais in the course of the eighteenth century. The traditional studies have usually emphasized the political issues resulting from the disputes of power involved in these dissensions, attributing to metropolitan rigor the lack of honorific titles conceded to urban centers in Minas. From another angle, the author analyzes the representations of cities and urban centers that appear in

1 LÉVI-STRAUSS, Claude, *Tristes trópicos* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Universitária de Buenos Aires, 1970), pp. 81-82.

contemporary discourses, which highlight the aspects that ennoble the localities, such as: the seating-order, the loyalty of the inhabitants to the Crown, the defensive and/or strategic role of the community, among others. These discourses reflect the interests and disputes among the local inhabitants for the autonomy, or lack of it, of the urban spaces, adding new meanings to the conflicts between colonists and the metropolitan power.

The urban reliefs of the city of Macau are unravelled in a semiotic reading of the urban landscape by Isabel Marcos. The occupation of Chinese territory by the Portuguese corresponded to three different stages, which, according to the author's analysis, can be identified as three distinct map reliefs. This dispute over the occupation and transformation of urban space reveals the disputes over power between the original inhabitants and the conquerors. At first, the Portuguese invested against the symbolic locales of the Chinese, especially those related to death. At a second stage there is a differentiated constructive process simultaneously undertaken in competing spaces by both the Portuguese and the Chinese, which resulted in diverse interactions in the form of large urban routes. By the eighteenth century, the third stage of territorial appropriation takes place, when Portugal allows big foreign companies into Chinese territory, and a process of mass construction takes place in the city, with new neighborhoods, squares, and buildings creating an intriguing, diversified space.

The architectural transformations of the urban elite residences in Brazil from the colonial period to the beginning of the Republic are investigated in the article "History, Culture, and Patrimony: the Urban Houses of the Nineteenth Century." Calling attention to the indifference of the policies for preserving historical patrimony in Brazil with respect to popular dwellings, the author Sandra Pelegrini emphasizes that the transformations and peculiarities of the architectural projects of these dwellings reveal the hierarchical organization that characterized Brazilian society, and illustrate the structures of power in the social field. In this aspect, the adaptations and characteristics of the kitchen in Brazilian homes throughout time are symptoms of the segregation that the labor force, especially the slaves, encountered in Brazil.

In contrast with the collection on the urban space, the world of the *sertões* (backlands) is investigated in Márcia Amantino's article. The *sertão*, identified as the place of the border and the void since the beginning of the Portuguese occupation, takes shape in the eighteenth century in Minas Gerais as the space for resistance of Negroes in *quilombos* and wild Indians. Represented in the discourses as an empty place, but really occupied by the other, this space, in the eyes of the authorities, becomes the land to be conquered and incorporated into the civilized world of the white man.

The policies of control and encouragement of local commerce to supply the urban centers of Minas Gerais is studied by Flávio Marcus da Silva, whose article analyzes the role of municipal councils in establishing policies favorable to organizing the market of provisions, at the same time that they set up a policy of repressing intermediaries and illegal trade. The article focuses on the study of the relations between the local authorities and three of the principal agents responsible for food supplies: farmers, deputies, and intermediaries.

In "History in the 'history' of José Bonifácio: Fundamentals of a National Project," Ana Rosa Coclet da Silva analyzes the vision of history in the political thought of José Bonifácio, basic for understanding his reform project for Brazil and the kingdom. Grounded in the double aspect of continuity—of physical and human nature, and of rupture, since it informed the specificity of the parts and their inhabitants, the history was a fundamental aspect of the imperial modernizing project to the extent that it furnished the bases for amending the old kingdom and creating the new Brazilian nation.

Rodrigo Patto Sá Motta and his research group close this issue with an article in which they study the document files of the Department of Social and Political Order of Minas Gerais (DOPS/MG) and present the preliminary results of their study of this provoking collection. They begin with a discussion on the politics of access to the files of the agents of repression, which only became possible in a state of law and is associated with the struggle for a state consonant with the common interests of the community and subordinate to public power, a meeting-point with the republican theme itself. At a second stage, they study the regulations and apparatus of the organs of repression, a necessary aspect for organizing and understanding the documentation itself, by composing a picture of the organ's progress as an institution.

JÚNIA FERREIRA FURTADO
(organizadora)