

Foreword

The collection of articles *Urban Spaces and Symbolic Territories* discusses the transformations and appropriations that the cities undergo, or have continuously undergone. Acts of construction, reformulation, reappropriation, and demolition are constantly performed by their inhabitants, which confer a web of new meanings on urban spaces, always in transformation.

Roberta Marx Delson, in her article "Versaille in Guaporé: the Visual Evidence of the Glorious Past of Vila Bela, Goiás," starting from two late iconographical sources, discusses the evidence of a monumental urbanistic project that guided the building of the city of Vila Bela in the colonial period, but which later transformations of the urban space completely erased, even from memory.

In the initial construction period of Belo Horizonte, from 1894 and 1897, the old hamlet of Curral Del Rei was razed and the Building Commission of the new capital promoted a true urban revolution. The article by Anna Karina Castanheira Bartolomeu analyzes the collection of photographs made at the time, which constitutes the archive of the Photographic Office of the Building Commission. According to the author, the photographers' lenses captured the images of a modern city in accelerated construction, whose photographs circulated in Brazil, boasting of the success of the enterprise.

Regina Helena Alves da Silva looks at the new approach of the modernists of São Paulo toward the imaginary of the *bandeirantes* (trail-blazers, adventurers) associated with the city of São Paulo. The multiple, fragmented images that emerge from their pens contrast to the modernizing novelties coming from outside a national identity that begins with values intrinsic to Brazilian culture, recovering the *bandeirante* identity as a motive force of national being. Thus, the city of São Paulo, which was then passing through various urban transformations, is read through the double sign of the colonial tradition and the elements of the modern, civilized dream.

Finally, closing this collection on urban spaces and their symbolic territories, in the article "Segregation and Artifices in Contemporary Cities," Denise Bernuzzi de Sant'Anna suggests some concepts for intensifying

the debate and problematicizing the experiences of creation in megalopoleis like São Paulo. If on one hand, the common life in contemporary urban spaces tends to segregate difference, on the other, it is possible to identify a number of experiences of resistance and creation, without, however, risking making these experiences idols of veneration.

In "The Place of America in History: Natural History, State of Nature, Object of Men's Greed," Vera Chacham reconstructs the discourses of Voltaire and Buffon on the appearance of man, especially the American man. By situating the place of the American populations in the history and nature, the Enlightenment discourse of the European naturalists of the eighteenth century represents America as an inferior place, favorable to the manifestation of European superiority, an anti-example of civilization, since there one could see a history of the barbarism of the civilized.

The study of the freed population of the community of São José do Rio das Mortas, in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, in its quantitative and qualitative aspects, is the challenge of historians Douglas Cole Libby and Afonso de Alencastro Graça Filho. Taking as a point of departure a series of sources, especially the confession roll of the locale, and completing it with other, scarcer sources like letters of freedom, wills, registries of baptisms and deaths, letters of allotments, among others, the article attempts to reconstruct the world of the freed people of the locale, its composition, and its forms of access to freedom. Finally, the individual careers of two freedwomen serve as a counterpoint to the collection of mass data gathered by the authors, illuminating several aspects suggested by the catalogued documents.

Roberto Carlos dos Santos analyzes the municipal attitudes that accompanied the urbanization process of the city of Patos de Minas at the end of the nineteenth century, in order to unveil the hygienist and moralizing discourse of the municipal authorities. The discourse of power, produced in an authoritarian way, tended to exclude the poor and marginalized, making them responsible for the corruption of the idealized order of the modernizing urban space.

"The Country Faust: Joaquim Macedo Bittencourt and the Faces of Urban Modernization in Riberão Preto in the First Republic (1911-1920)," by Rodrigo Ribeiro Paziani, analyzes the discourse of the doctor and mayor of the city, Joaquim Macedo Bittencourt, who reflects the interventions and projects of urban modernization that took place in the republican period, reflecting the ties between politics and the private power of the coffee-growing elite.

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