

The Genesis of Pousos in Modern Brazil: considerations on (urban) forms sprung from waiting

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Abstract

This article aims at questioning the theoretical foundations that guided the main research on *pousos* in Brazil, before suggesting further reading. We suggest the following definition of these paths' sons: spatial forms sprung from waiting men on the move, and dedicated to home men in pause. We show that, far from being a Brazilian invention, the *pousos* fall within the long tradition of spatial forms dedicated to the transitional home for men on the move. Initially resulting in a bodily experience in the wilderness of the interior of the colony, *pousos* managed to establish themselves in the landscape as political structures indicating the extension of the Brazilian territory. Constituting a unique space-time, interpreting them requires articulate morphology and history, while guarding against the risk of evolutionism.

Keywords: Brazil, *pousos*, waiting territories, urbanization, 17th-19th century

A gênese dos pousos no Brasil moderno: considerações sobre as formas (urbanas) nascidas da espera

Resumo

Neste artigo, ambiciona-se questionar os fundamentos teóricos que orientaram as principais pesquisas sobre os pousos no Brasil, antes de sugerir outras abordagens. Partimos da seguinte definição desses filhos dos caminhos: forma espacial nascida da espera dos homens em deslocamento e dedicada ao acolhimento dos homens em pausa. Mostramos que, longe de ser uma "invenção" brasileira, os pousos se inserem na longa duração das formas espaciais dedicadas ao acolhimento transitório dos homens em deslocamento. Resultando, inicialmente, de uma experiência corporal do cenário selvagem do interior da colônia, conseguiram impor-se na paisagem como estruturas políticas, assinalando a extensão do território colonial. Constituindo um espaço-tempo peculiar, sua leitura necessita articular morfologia e história, mas deve precaver-se do risco evolucionista.

Palavras-chave: Brasil, pousos, territórios da espera, urbanização, séc. XVII-XIX

La genèse des pousos dans le Brésil moderne: considérations sur les formes (urbaines) nées de l'attente

Résumé

Cet article prétend interroger les fondements théoriques qui ont orienté les principales recherches sur les *pousos* au Brésil, avant de suggérer d'autres abordages. Nous sommes partis de la définition suivante de ces fils des chemins: forme spatiale née de l'attente des hommes en déplacement, et dédiée à l'accueil des hommes en pause. Nous montrons que, loin d'être une invention brésilienne, les *pousos* s'insèrent dans la longue tradition des formes spatiales dédiées à l'accueil transitoire des hommes en déplacement. Résultant initialement d'une expérience corporelle dans l'espace sauvage de l'intérieur de la colonie, ils ont réussi à s'imposer dans le paysage comme des structures politiques signalant l'extension du territoire brésilien. Constituant un espace-temps singulier, leur lecture nécessite d'articuler morphologie et histoire, mais doit se prémunir du risque de l'évolutionnisme.

Mots-clés: Brésil, *pousos*, territoires de l'attente, urbanisation, XVIIe-XIXe siècle

La génesis de los pousos en el Brasil moderno: consideraciones sobre las formas (urbanas) que nacen de la espera

Resumen

Este artículo cuestiona los fundamentos teóricos que guiaron la investigación principal sobre *pousos* en Brasil, antes de sugerir otras miradas. Dejamos la siguiente definición de estos hijos de los caminos: forma espacial nascida de la espera de los hombres en el camino, y dedicada a su acogida pasajera. Se demuestra que, lejos de ser una invención brasileña, los *pousos* se insertan en la larga tradición de las formas espaciales dedicada al hogar de transición para los hombres en el camino. Inicialmente lo que resulta en una experiencia corporal en el desierto del interior de la colonia, lograron establecerse en el paisaje como las estructuras políticas que indican la extensión del territorio brasileño. Constituyendo un espacio-tiempo singular, su lectura requiere articular la morfología y la historia, sino que debe protegerse contra el riesgo del evolucionismo.

Palabras-clave: Brasil, *pousos*, territorios de la espera, urbanización, siglos XVII-XIX

As soon as the Brazilian Social Sciences field was established, the *pouso* (which we can, at first sight, define according to the *Aurélio Dictionary* as a “place where someone uses to rest”) has become a privileged object of analysis. Such thematic field in fact occupies a relevant position in the research of some historians: both the ones focused on the issue of Brazilians’ penetration in the countryside and the ones concerned with the question of provisory social life. The *pouso* also interests geographers aiming at cataloguing the nets, or embryos of cities, also drawing the attention of architects as well as sociologists and anthropologists.

This scientific query has been inherited from a strong sense of the imaginary, anchored in the fascination of the European travelers from the 19th century on the *pousos*. Be them French, English, Swiss, Austrians, or Germans, their reports formed the basis for the majority of the studies in Social Sciences. Along such studies, the *pouso* was considered a privileged instrument of society’s internalization and the Brazilian urban net. To an extent that we can take into account this historiographic object as a true myth, and, as such, it deserves to be deconstructed in order to be clarified.

I would like to hereby propose a different interpretative angle: instead of being analyzed in terms of its external objectives (the territorial occupation, urbanization, etc.), it seems important to understand the *pousos* in and by themselves. The sole etymology of the noun “*pouso*” (from the Latin *pausare*, which originated the lexis “pause”) clearly suggests that it carries a double meaning of temporal (pause) and site (*pouso*) specificity. So we can define *pouso* as a spacial form derived from the, wait of men in displacement, dedicated to sheltering those in pause. Such nature of “territories of waiting” allows us to question the specific form of social life developed there (Vidal, 2014, p. 285-286).

I intend, therefore, in this work, to register the analysis of *pousos* in the crossroads of three perspectives:

- The first, consists of showing how similar apparatuses can be found in Europe (throughout the paths and roads of the crusaders, pilgrims, and transhumances) as well as in the East Asian world (with the tradition of the caravanserais);
- The second, restricted to the Brazilian context, consists of replacing the typology of *pousos*, inherited from journey logs and reports, or traditional historiography (based on morphology and their functions), for another category of analysis capable of explaining their appearance and structuring;
- The third, and last perspective has to do with the transformation of many of these *pousos* into villages or towns. The so-called issue of *pousos* as embryos of cities, which invites us to understand the articulation between continuity and discontinuity of socio-spatial forms in Brazilian history.

Origins of a practice – European uses and American connections

A bibliographic research on the *pousos* in Brazil, a wide bibliography in terms of case studies, but relatively scarce from a comparative standpoint, may suggest

to the reader that such places have no predecessors in history. As in no other time authors have suggested so many comparisons to other regions of the world or between periods of time, the idea that *pousos* are a Brazilian invention is somehow imposed, even though nobody has ever posed such statement.

Without intending the exhaustion, it is necessary to demonstrate (even briefly) how the orientation of the first studies durably beacons the perception of *pousos*. From this point of view, geographers may be the first ones to attempt a systematic reflection on *pousos*, namely the works of Rubens Borba de Moraes (1935), Pierre Deffontaines (1938), and Aroldo de Azevedo (1957a, 1957b). These authors described *pousos* as sons of the paths and roads, flags and troops, and analyzed their role in the construction of an urban net. After all, in these studies, as it also happened to the approach by some architects, such as the classic studies by Benedito Lima de Toledo (1966 and 1967), the *pousos* were taken from a predominantly typological and morphologic point of view.

As far as historians were concerned, it must be recognized that, despite the instigating title (“Caminhos antigos e povoamento do Brasil”), the pioneer study by Capistrano de Abreu did not really focus on the issue of *pousos* (Abreu, 1988). Nevertheless, it presented the “marcha a paulista” (way of organizing the time in an unknown trajectory, between the march, the hunt, and the installations for the night) as an adaptation and appropriation of customs from the colonizers, neglecting other affiliations, such as the European military forces (Abreu, 1954, p. 179). Thus, Sérgio Buarque de Holanda may have been the first (in *Monções*, published in 1945, and in *Caminhos e Fronteiras*, published in 1956) to point out the place of arrangements, which we can now qualify as *pousos*, for the provision of supplies and sheltering men: be it along the ways, in the “mobile existence of the *bandeirante*” (Holanda, 2001, p. 137), or in the “mobile roads,” which are the monsoon rivers (Holanda, 2014a and 2014b). However, the scholar was not very concerned with the material forms of the *pousos* in the same ways he was with the valuing the hinterlands resources to settle.

This perspective, highlighting the *mobile existence*, will be first summed up and explained by the historian Laura de Mello e Souza. In 1997, consecrated a chapter from *História da Vida Privada no Brasil* the “provisory forms of existence” of the paths, inviting us to penetrate the life in these upcoming halts throughout the way. The religious ceremonies, sometimes accompanied by dances, such as the act of eating, participated in a “series of rituals” and provided an “occasion to build an environment of domesticity and politeness” in a backwoods scenery (Souza, 1997, p. 67). In 2004, the historian Glória Kok, studying “*O sertão itinerante*”, in other words, the expeditions in the captaincy of São Paulo in the 18th century, dedicated a chapter on “*pousos* and mandatory stops”, demonstrating how, “over the first centuries of the colonization, almost all the travelers’ *pousos* in their journeys alongside the backwoods were improvised, reflecting the unstable European presence in America (Kok, 2004, p. 124).

The definition of *pousos* as a form emerged from the waiting of men in displacement, inserting itself in critical filiations to these readings, allows us to insist on the rhythm that originated these shelters. As a temporal category, the rhythm and its embedded ruptures open up a definition of *pousos* as a modeled time form. A time thought spatially in order to embrace the temporary immobilization of a flux along a certain trajectory. Being passing places, in other words, thresholds between a civilized form and wilderness, *pousos* are not neutral: they affect people that experience its temporality and spatiality.

As in no other time authors have suggested so many comparisons to other regions of the world or between periods of time, the idea that pousos are a Brazilian invention is somehow imposed

It is also known that the reticular form of *pousos*' display depends on men and pack animals' abilities to travel in the paths (displacements mobilizing, during long centuries, the only forces of natural energy: the human and animal forces, as well as the wind and water's forces) and overcome natural obstacles along the way. From this point of view, the appearance of *pousos* illustrates the way in which "the obstacle creates"² – it is the creator of architectural and social forms. This is why we can consider *pousos* simultaneously witnesses of a certain period of time and traces of an epoch³, when human mobilization transformed territories, the spaces they used to rest.

This reading of *pousos* enables comparisons, since throughout the history of societies we can find various mobilities that created ways of following transit: military campaigns (from the Roman soldiers until the crusaders), pilgrimage (for example, in the paths of Santiago de Compostela [Livet, 2003]), the long distance trading market, or the transhumances (for instance, the *Mesta* case in Spain [Klein, 1994]). One could even evoke the famous *Cápac Nan*, main axis of the Inca road net, 6 thousand kilometers long, counting on supply places (*tambos*) and rest, for both men and troops, and military camps... (Espinosa e Gerardo, 2007; Herrera e Schrimpff, 2000). Each social form of mobility created spatial forms and took advantage of the pre-existing constructions for the shelter and rest of men and their animals. If pilgrims used hospices, hospitals, or farms, the travelers resorted to lodgings. In the Orient, merchants resorted

² "C'est l'obstacle qui est créateur et non la facilité : la ville naît de l'obstacle sur la circulation, au gué sur la rivière, au col de la montagne, à l'orée de la forêt, et non en pleine zone de facile communication [...]. On est étonné de la valeur de certaines régions d'hostilités qui ont été pour les hommes des zones éducatrices d'efforts et initiatrices d'inventions" (Deffontaines, 1948, p. 12).

³ By the way, the word "epoch" comes from the Greek *epoché*, which means "to stop". The Encyclopedia of Diderot entry specifies that "the epochs in history are like resting places, and, because of that, resorts to calmly take into consideration more easily what precedes and that is to follow (Diderot and D'Alembert, 1751, p. 834).

to *fondouks* (enclosed places, similar to monasteries, related to the exchange economy, protecting foreigners) or to the caravanserais (Vingopoulou, 2010).

The appearance of a specific vocabulary testifies the social diffusion of these temporary shelter forms. Taking the French language as an example, one can note the birth and evolution of multiple meanings to many words: *gîte* appears in the XII century (home), meaning “a place where it is possible to sleep and stay” (Rey, 2005, v. 2, p. 1356).

In the XIII century, in the military vocabulary the term *gîte d'étape*, which designates the separate locations one from the other for one marching day, allowing the troops to stock up.

- *étape*: is derived from the Dutch *stapel* (place where produce is laid up and sold): in the XVI and XVII centuries, it described a merchandise and pasture depot for the passing troops, before meaning (XVIII century) a place of cantonment for the troops (Rey, 2005, v. 2, p. 688-689);
- *station* (derived from the Spanish *estación*) appeared in the XII century meaning stage, temporary stop. In the XIV century, it acquires the meaning of “military post”, “arranged place of stay” (Rey, 2005, v. 4, p. 998).
- *halte* became part of the French lexicon in 1566. Built upon the influence of at least three different roots: a German term (*halt*: stop), an ancient *Picardian* one, from the Picardy region (*halt*: a place where one stays for a given time), and an Italian one (*alto*: from *fare alto*, stop oneself). In the XVIII century, it also means “a place where one stops” (Rey, 2005, v. 2, p. 1539);
- *relais* served, in the XVII century, the purpose of describing the rested horses in condition to replace the tired ones for long distance mail delivery, evolving into the meaning of the place where these horses were prepared and where cavaliers were bundled up (Rey, 2005, v. 4, p. 100);
- *auberge* (lodging) is derived from the German *harberger* (XI century), which means to host. It appears in the XV century to designate a simple home, typically in the countryside, where it is possible to be hosted and eat after paying (Rey, 2005, v. 1, p. 633-634).

If a dictionary of historic French witnesses the antiquity and variety of these forms of transitory shelter in Europe, historians' researches offer other perspectives to tackle their functioning. Thus, the most important of these places of waiting has turned into real handcraft centers, with the presence of a carpenter, a blacksmith, etc, not to mention the necessary labor for the maintenance of these paths. As Daniel Roche explains, with the lodgings, “hospitality has come from gift to economy”⁴ (Roche, 2003, p. 517). By the way, the same historian also defines lodgings as “a liminal space, not totally marginal, nor fully integrated” (Roche, 2003, p. 518), whose activities belonged to an “economy of chance”. A place for exchange of information, the lodging was also described as a “place of acculturation: of consumerism and relational

⁴ On hospitality, also see Montandon (2004).

habits” (Roche, 2003, p. 519), and as “a draft of public service” (Livet, 2003, p. 117), some owners of which worked as commercial brokers. In other words, these apparatuses have helped in the implementation of State structures in distant, poorly integrated regions.

Other researches have highlighted the fact that the implementation of these apparatuses for temporary sheltering throughout the paths varied according to the evolution of knowledge and the interpretation of the trajectory’s role, in both the regional and national scenario. In general terms, one can observe that commerce and (geo)politics determined and dictated the struggle against time and space. Due to the exchange needs, or protective boundaries, some paths and trails were paved, what has increased displacement velocities, which turned useless some stages along the way. “From the lived mobility to the thought distance, which mobilize the reflection on spatial improvement, a transformation of experience takes place.” (Roche, 2003, p. 214).

Pousos were at the same time witnesses and traces of a time in which human mobilities transformed into territories the places where one used to rest

When the Portuguese people arrived in Brazil, they were aware of these provisory forms of shelter’s (for military troops, pilgrims, merchants, and travelers) mutability and instability. Because of that, we can talk about transposition, or reinvention, in the New World’s context - or even whether it is necessary to recognize that these bonds have not been tackled by researched yet and that we can only, within this work’s limits, elaborate hypothesis and possible analysis’ hints. In this perspective, the trajectory suggested by Sérgio Buarque de Holanda could be taken and broadened: he in fact insists on the assimilation of the natives’ abilities to orient themselves in the middle of thick woods by leaving traces along the way, tearing down branches with their hands or by leaving axe cut marks on tree trunks. However, he also demonstrates how *bandeirantes* knew how to used catholic symbols, “inspired probably on the traditions from the peninsula. One of them, the wood cross in the general roads’ paths to alert the traveler that after few steps ahead he would find a shelter to rest, is clearly an example.” (Holanda, 2001. p. 20).

The Long History of *pousos* in Brazil (centuries XVII-XIX).

The historic study of *pousos* in Brazil faces two impediments: on one side, a collective memory that values the *pouso of tropeiros*, the former being associated to a symbol of the “man freed from the slavocrat order” (Franc, 1976 [1969]). This valorization benefitted from the iconographic eighteenth century diffusion (commonly derived from European travelers’ logs), which linked the

image of the *pouso* to the open ranch, covered by *sapé*, where the *tropeiros* rested while listening to guitars, as Johann Moritz Rugendas it on the *Repos d'une caravane* (1835).



Figure 1 Johann Moritz Rugendas. *Repos d'une caravane*.

The second challenge lies on the weight of the explanatory model induced by the historiographic production, which attempted to show a typology of *pousos* from the functions performed by the different groups that stayed overnight: so, *pousos paulistas* were distinguished from *pousos tropeiros*, and from travelers' *pousos* as well. Instead of facilitating their comprehension, these typologies imposed a strict reading of these areas, based as much on the morphology as on their functions.

Our proposal here consists on understanding the appearance and structuring of *pousos* in articulation with a double dynamic: the frequency of the paths use and human presence in the region. Depending on geo-economic and geopolitical factors, the frequency of use contributes to the transformation of the *pouso* from a simple camp into a set of infrastructures, as the British traveler Richard Burton suggested, distinguishing four stages in these transformation: the *pouso*, "a mere camping-ground"; the ranch, "the traveler's bungalow"; the trade-in, "a room where strangers were accommodated"; and "the inn" (Burton, 1869, p. 101-103). The frequency variation can even lead to the *pouso's* disappearance (be it abandoned or turned into a town). On the other hand, the human presence in the region meant the existence of previous structures (such as farms) capable of being adapted to serve as *pousos*, since for the *pouso* in the unpopulated areas, it was necessary to take provisions, barracks, and hammocks. *Pousos* were left in the open, the hammocks "placed between

trunks and covered by linen mosquito nets, which, in turn, were covered by baizes, not to spatter water (Kok, 2009, p. 101-102).⁵

The *paulista* march, as the most ancient and rudimentary form of penetrating the land was named, consisted of “initiating the march before dawn and end it before the middle of the afternoon, avoiding the rigors of extreme heat and solar intensity, taking advantage of the rest of the day to seek food (gathering, hunting, and fishing)” (Lima Júnior, 2010, p. 46). Once the place was identified as a favorable *pouso*, they often left their inscriptions for the way back and future *sertanejos*, commonly referred to as “the ones who seek the path[s]” (Costa, 1885).⁶ From this standpoint, we can mention a tradition of cartography, built upon the blurs (Bueno, 2009b, p. 130), signaling the presence of inscriptions left by men (rocks or engraved trees) to indicate where to rest before continuing the path or cross a river. Resulted from the knowledge acquired throughout the time, this signs testify the efforts to “turn into familiar hostile hinterlands” (Kok, 2009, p. 96). Captain’s André Vaz Figueira’s map, drawn in 1754, perfectly illustrates this cartographic use.

These *pouso* practices, derived from the needs imposed by the contingencies of traveling long distances, left less traces in the space than in the imaginary, notably in the spatial imaginary of a continent-country in which a permanent project is experienced and whose space is considered a never-ending reservoir of new possibilities. In this spatial vastness, the “penetrating ways” (Prado Júnior, 1972 [1942], p. 237) (composed of trails, paths, and mobile roads... oriented east-westward and south-northward) weave a net of unequal threads, narrow in some areas and wide in others. In such irregular net, *pousos* appear as *knots* in which a first process of internalization of the hinterlands’ civilization is articulated. The social practices experimented in the *pousos* (which embrace from the spoken language to the cuisine, not to mention practiced religious ceremonies) allow its socialization and insertion in a symbolic topography, which culminates with the attribution of a toponym to the place. Unlike the majority of toponyms attributed to patrimonies and camps, built around a saint name, the ones chosen for these *pousos* usually came from the indigenous linguistic realm and refer to the peculiarities of the landscape, to the “taxonomies of the physical nature” (Ananias and Zamariano, 2014, p. 205), what denotes a pragmatic knowledge, supported by a vernacular reading of the natural resources (Drumond, 1965; Dick, 1990 and 1999).

⁵ Provisions were not varied: “flour, beans, lard, *aguardente*, olive oil, and salt. Tapirs and fish [...] complemented the menu” (Bueno, 2009b, p. 130).

⁶ See, for instance, Miguel Pereira da Costa’s report (1721), which evokes “the negroes of more strength [who go] and touch the bottom [of a river] and beacon the other part” (Costa, 1885, p. 44). He also points out the “difficulties they [*sertanejos*] overcome with hard work, those who follow this path; the hungers and thirst, illnesses or deaths; the amazing sight of the plateaus in which numerous troops could have been consumed, if interested [...]; it can be clearly seen how impractical it would be to perform this march in any nation of Europe (Costa, 1885, p. 52).

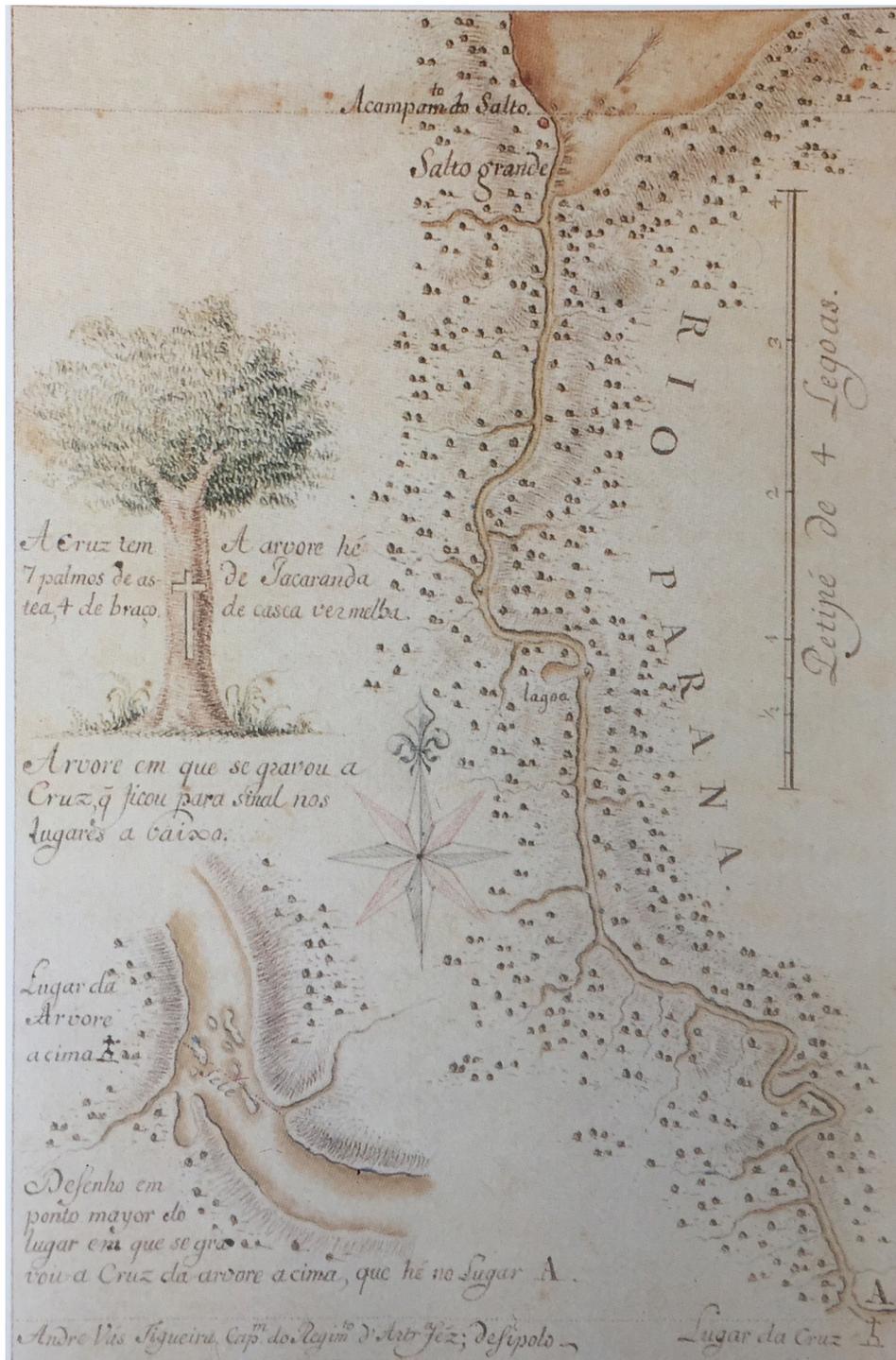


Figure 2 Captain André Vaz Figueira's Map (1754) (details from the Salto Grande do Rio Paraná view - © Mapoteca do Itamaraty).

If the designation of a toponym testifies the frequency of a path and *pou-sos* use, the installation of infrastructures, such as ranches, also follows the

process of densification of the *pouso*. The historian Maria Sylvia de Carvalho Franco provides a subtle description of these establishments in the province of São Paulo in the XIX century:

The structure of the ranch was the same everywhere: a barrack supported by pillars, open on the sides, simple roof for the mules and its conductors. They presented only solidity variations, size, and cleanliness, and were regular dependents of the trade shops. On these former establishments, most of them were able to offer a meal of beans, flour, and jerk beef to the traveler, as well as corn for the animal. Its installations could be extremely precarious: a dirty shop with provisions scattered everywhere, the kitchen, and a dorm that looked more like a storage room, made of cob walls, full of holes, invaded by the wind and the sun [...] It was less rare than one could imagine and were not circumscribed to the neighboring towns and villages. [...] Not always were these ranches related to the trade shops, being also linked to the farms [...] In other situations, the farm, the ranch, and the trade shop were all related, forming a unity of production and commerce.⁷ (Franco, 1976 [1969], p. 67-68)

In the paths to the mines or to the frontiers, the knowledge of the routes and *pousos* rapidly became a Crown's concern. In January 12th 1731, Quaresma Delgado is designated by the vice-king to go from the city of Bahia towards the recently discovered the auriferous region of Minas Novas, aiming at, throughout the journey,

[...] observing along the way in which the path is made to those mines and settlements, rivers, sierras, and any other places that are worthy of attention, enquiring their names, the distances between them and also parts in which they are used to get their conveniences of water and provisions. [...].⁸

The *pousos* is no longer a place to be discovered throughout the way, but a point to be achieved in a territory already incorporated to the colonial project. The control of the paths and their *pousos* to penetrate the countryside became,

⁷ A estrutura do rancho era, por toda parte, a mesma: barracão sustentado por pilares, aberto dos lados, simples teto para as mulas e seus condutores. Apresentavam apenas variações de solidez, tamanho e limpeza, e eram, de ordinário, dependentes das vendas. Destes últimos estabelecimentos a grande maioria estava habilitada a oferecer uma refeição de feijão, farinha e carne seca ao viajante, e milho a seu animal. Suas instalações podiam ser extremamente precárias: a loja suja e com as provisões espalhadas em confusão, a cozinha, e o dormitório que mais parecia quarto de despejo, construídos de pau a pique e barro, esburacados, varados pelo vento e pelo sol [...]. Eram menos raras do que se poderia imaginar e não estavam circunscritas à vizinhança de vilas e cidades. [...] Nem sempre os ranchos estiveram associados às vendas, aparecendo também ligados às fazendas [...]. Em outras situações, a fazenda, o rancho e a venda aparecem ligados, compondo uma unidade de produção e comércio. (Franco, 1976 [1969], p. 67-68)

⁸ “[...] observar pela estrada por onde se faz caminho para aquelas minas as povoações, rios, serras e mais coisas dignas de atenção, averiguando os nomes e as distâncias em que ficam umas das outras e também as partes em que se acostumam a arranchar os comboieiros com conveniência de águas e mantimentos [...]”, Portaria com instruções para a viagem de Joaquim Quaresma Delgado, 12 de janeiro de 1731. Partially published in the *Anais do Arquivo Público do Museu do Estado da Bahia*. Bahia: State's Official Press, v. IV and V, p. 237, 1919 (apud Neves and Miguel, 2007, p. 23)

thus, notably from the second half of the XVIII century, a political-military concern. In 1776, the governor of São Paulo's captaincy ordered the staff sergeant Theotonio José Zuzarte to

[...] march to the *Pouzo* of Caraecuuba and there arrange in trust-worthy hands, forty four bushels of corn, ten bushels of flour, five of beans, and four arrobas of lard to be delivered for each cavalry, which in the aforementioned *pouso* stays overnight; one arroba of lard and two bushels of corn, and with the same brevity march from the *Pouzo* of Caraecuuba to provide the same amounts of corn, beans, flour, and lard in the *Pouzos* of Baruerim-merim in the Barreiros, after Matto do Payol, and in the *Pouzo do Olho de Agoa* passing the necessary receipts declaring the comestibles, and their prices to be adjusted with zeal, and commodity to promptly by the same receipts of the Captains order payment to the *Junta da Real Fazenda* of the sums to the respective vendors: furthermore, you will provide in each *Pouzo*, four bushels of flour, four of corn, two of beans and two arrobas of lard, for these portions to buy and pay to the officials whatever they need for their slaves and beasts, that are accompanying them. São Paulo, January 2nd 1776.⁹

This effort of systematic knowledge and description of the territory would become the elaboration of a new cartography. For such purpose, the Jesuits Diogo Soares and Domingos Capassi were hired in 1730, with the official mission of "tracing systematically the cartography of the Brazilian territory, not only of the coastal region, but also of the countryside of the colony" (Guerreiro, 1999, p. 25). The maps carried out under this project, which counted on the support of the captaincies' governors, demonstrate the pats and places of *pouso* (the majority of which received a name). We can mention the captaincy of Bahia's map of the territory (dated 1758) or the map of the path of Vila Boa until Cuiabá, carried out in the occasion of the governor Luís de Albuquerque de Melo Pereira e Cárcere's trip in 1772 (Araujo, 2015).

⁹ "[...] marche Logo ao Pouzo de Caraecuuba, e aly faça aprontar em mão Sigura quarenta e quatro alqueires de milho; dez alqueires de farinha, Sinco de feijão, e quatro arroubas de Toucinho p.a aly Se entregar a cada companhia de cavalaria, que no dito Pouzo hade pernoitar; huá arrouba de toucinho, dous alqueires de milho, e com a mesma brevidade marchará do dito Pouzo de Carapecuuba a fazer os mesmos provimentos de milho, feijão, farinha, e toucinhos nos Pouzos de Baruerim-merim no dos Barreiros p.a lá no Matto do Payol, e no Pouzo do olho de Agoa passando os bilhetes necessarios declarando os Viveres, e presso deles que ajustará com zello, e comodidade p.a promptam.te pelos mesmos bilhetes e recibos dos Capitaens, ou Furries fazer eu pagar na Junta da Real Fazenda da importância deles aos repectivos vendedores: Outro Sim fará aprontar de Sobrecellentes em cada Pouzo, quatro alqueires de Farinha, outros quatro de milho, dous de feijão, e duas arroubas de Toucinho, p.a destas porçoens comprarem, e pagarem os aficiaes o que precisarem p.a os Seus escravos e Bestas que levarem além das suas Companhias. Sam Paulo 2 de Jan.ro de 1776". Para o sargento-mor Theotonio José Zuzarte, "marchar Logo ao Pouzo de Carapecuuba e aly fazer aprromptar em mão Segura mantimentos como nos mais pouzos p.a as Compas que vam marchando" (*Documentos*, 1961, v. 84, p. 62).

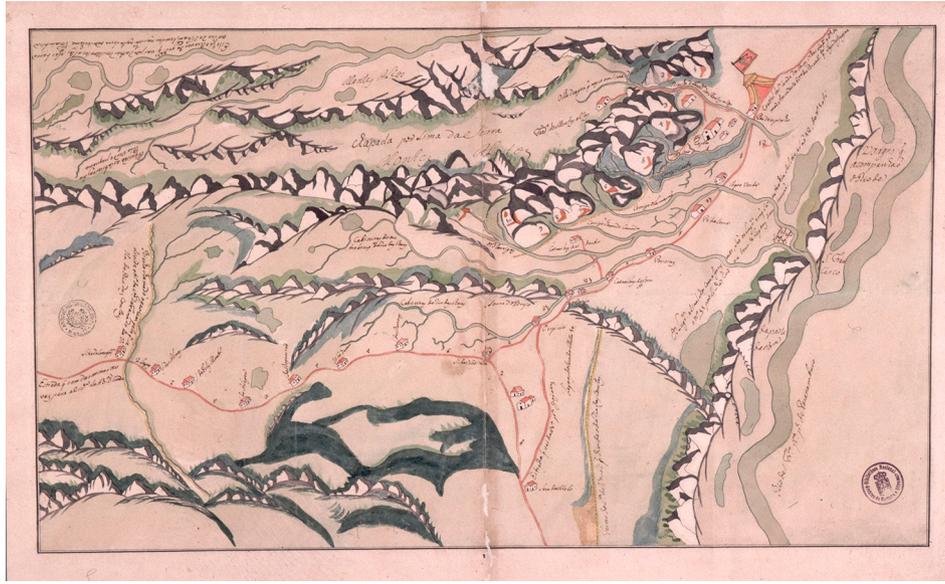


Figure 3 Map of the captaincy of Bahia's territory, between the São Francisco river, Rio Grande and a stream called Gavião, which divides the term of Vila do Fanado from the Vila do Rio das Contas, 1758. © Arquivo Histórico Ultramarino (Lisboa). AHU-CARTm-005, D. 980.

Once again, the dictionary could help us understand the evolution of the historic role of *pousos* in Brazil. In the first dictionary of the Portuguese language, written by the Priest Rafael Bluteau between 1712 and 1728, the word “*pouso*” is defined as “a tree or a place where the bird rests”. The author also recognizes that “hunters use this word in different ways, e.g., take the *pouso*, fly to *pousos*, walk from *pouso* to *pouso*, etc”. Maybe this is the reason Pero Vaz de Caminha, in the famous letter informing Brazil’s discovery in 1500, evokes the search of Cabral’s fleet for “some shelter and good *pouso*, where we would get water and firewood” (*Carta*, 1987, p. 63). Finally, this word only appears in the Brazilian Portuguese language in the second half of the XVIII century, under two renderings: “safe place for the ships to stop; anchorage” (1754); “temporary resting place” (1769) (Biderman and Mirakawa, 2012). These genealogic data show that the word appeared not only to qualify an already established social practice, but also to testify a change: with the discovery of gold, with the need to protect the frontiers (after the Madrid Treatise), defend the commerce routes, and with *pousos* becoming object of attention from the power. The need to incorporate these distant regions to the economic centers in order to supply them emerged new social practices linked to the circulation of “animal troops [...] the colony and independent New Empire’s most important means of transportation” (Prado Júnior, 1972 [1942], p. 254). The frequency of use of these supply routes was responsible for the appearance of new stops, commonly known as “*bate-estacas*”, since it was a habit to bury a stake to tie the animals.¹⁰

¹⁰ A philologist who studied the toponym of towns located in the Caminho das Missões and in the Estrada de Palmas in the state of Paraná annotated that 211 out of 1800 collected toponyms are direct and indirectly related to *tropeirismo*. Among them, a third refers to places of overnight stay and rest: dawn, apparition, trough, support, *cantagalo*, rest, wait, buoy, wintering, picket, landing ranch, *reponte*, retreat corner. (Moreira, 2006). On *tropeirismo*, see Goulart (1961, p. 149), Gil (2009), Neves and Miguel (2007), and Dornas Filho (1956).

From *pousos* to towns: the role of discontinuity

If the diffusion of the aforementioned terms testify the variety of advents and uses of these forms of transient sheltering in the “ways towards the hinterlands” (Costa, 1885, p. 43), it is also necessary to insist on their instabilities. Evoking the mines of Rio das Contas, in 1721, Miguel Pereira da Costa points out that “there, *comboeiros* would go and sell the provisions from their wains, and from here move those men the ranches to the parts they mine” (Costa, 1885, p. 58). It is argued, thus, the question of what happened to these *pousos*: how did these forms of temporary refuge transform over time?

Despite its frailty and instability, *pousos* participated in the historic process of the Brazilian territorialization, working as knots of articulation in a movement of internalization, as it is recognized by the historian Beatriz Piccolotto Siqueira Bueno in the case of the Captaincy of São Paulo: “if we analyze the data presented by the cartography in evidence, one can say, in terms of urbanization history, that an infinitesimal net of villages articulated a vast territory, supported by a dense ecclesiastical net of chapels and parishes, *pousos* and records.” (Bueno, 2009a, p. 291). This role was so valued that *pousos* were, therefore, considered “embryos” of many towns. For the promoter of this term, Aroldo de Azevedo, *pousos* were settlements

[...] whose destiny is to become villages and, one day, reach what means the supreme aspiration of its inhabitants - the category of towns, municipalities. Except for instances of villages and towns that were born as such, they are the real embryos of Brazilian urban centers [...] It is indispensable to study these embryos of cities, because most of our major urban centers reflect this initial stage of their evolution in their origins.¹¹ (Azevedo, 1957b, p. 35)

However, the posterity of the term deserves to be questioned. Derived from the Greek *embruon*, which means “what grows in the inside,” the word “embryo” has two meanings: “developing organisms,” and, figuratively speaking, “whatever starts to be, but is not yet finished” (*Aurélio Dictionary*). As a metaphor, the notion of “embryo of town” allows us to imagine that a city would develop from the inside of a *pouso*, in a slow, but progressive process of transformation, and suggests that the *pouso* is an unfinished form, a stage in a process of which the ultimate goal is the invention of a city. In other words, our evolutionary reading, the continuity between *pousos* and cities is valued. It is precisely this articulation that must be questioned though, because if a *pouso* is the adequate form of “temporary existence,” the city intends to organize and install, in a long term, social life. The articulation between the provisory and the durable

¹¹ “[...] cujo destino é transformarem-se em vilas e, um dia, alcançar o que significa a suprema aspiração de seus habitantes – a categoria de cidades, sedes municipais. Salvo os casos raros das vilas e cidades que já nasceram como tais, são eles os verdadeiros embriões dos centros urbanos brasileiros. [...] Torna-se imprescindível estudar esses embriões de cidades, porque a grande maioria dos nossos centros urbanos reflete essa etapa inicial de sua evolução nas origens.”

is, and the spatial forms derived from these roles, does not suppose continuity as much as it does imply discontinuity.

The control of the paths and their pousos to penetrate the countryside became, thus, notably from the second half of the XVIII century, a political-military concern

One can mention the well-documented example of Camapuã, founded in 1720 in the path towards Cuiabá, between the headwaters of the Sanguessuga and Camapuã rivers. Emerged as a beaching to fix canoes, Camapuã would eventually also receive a farm to raise cattle and grow foods in order to supply the fleets. In a few years, it would become “the gateway to the territory of Mato Grosso, and one of the main points in which one could stop to rest, get food, animals, services etc.” (Sena, 2010, p. 19). Even then, as Laura de Mello e Souza points out, “never could the region become a dynamic center, keeping a slow and ordinary pace that the arrival of troops barely interrupted” (Souza, 1997, p. 65). This support to the travelers remained until the end of the monsoons, when land trails overcame fluvial paths. In 1800, the military officer Cândido Xavier de Almeida e Souza commented that the place “had faded out” (Kok, 2004, p. 129). In 1830, another officer, Augusto Leverger, notes that Camapuã had been “a notable place [...] but, however that started to decay” (Leverger, 1960, p. 387). After all, after a long dormant phase, Camapuã will “reborn”¹² in the 1920s when big farms take place, expanding agriculture and cattle raising. It will become a village in 1933 and a town in 1948.

If the Camapuã case is frequently mentioned, it is also important to recognize that the historian is constantly confronted by major difficulties while illustrating the discontinuity of forms among *pousos* (the ones which left fewer traces) and the villages or towns (which did not value a lot their past as a *pousos*). Moreover, the archive does guard the genealogies (continuities) a lot more than chances (or unexpected ruptures). This is why, sometimes, novelists can help historians due to their ability to synthesize social and historic situations that are not so evident in the archive. Their readings must be taken as a challenge to dive back into the archive in search of other sources.

In one of his last novels, *Tocaia Grande*, Jorge Amado narrates the birth of a fictional town, Irisópolis, which “from a reduced sheltering stop” (Amado, 1986, p. 240) for sergipanos that would go to work in the coconut plantations in Bahia becomes a hamlet, a thorp, and then a village before being a town. Metaphorically speaking, Amado invites us to pay attention to the history of these cities that came into existence from the stops of men in displacement.

¹² On the subject of “births/rebirths” of Brazilian cities, see Vidal (2008). Notably, the introduction to “Appréhender la ville en ses commencements” (p. 7-12).

Therefore, the novelist, who witnessed the birth and transformations of various towns in the cocoa route¹³, insists on the role of discontinuity and ruptures that induce change:

In the distant erstwhile there was a small warehouse, sheltered by the brave ones that opened the trail reducing the trajectory of the cocoa wagons and, as they ended up in such beautiful and warm places, referred to the still recent event as *tocaia grande* and named and baptized it after that. As the *tropeiros* movement rose and the number of inhabitants increased with the traffic of prostitutes, *mateiros*, rentals, Turkish shops, and donkey farriers, there was a need for a more spacious place.¹⁴ (Amado, 1986, p. 302)

But Tocaia Grande's biggest opportunity comes from a disaster:

In the trails and roads comes and goes, of the shortcuts and paths, *tropeiros*, *alugados*, prostitutes moving, *jagunços*, including colonels, commented on and magnified the progress of Tocaia Grande. Sacrificed by an horrendous flood, the thorp was reborn from the swamp it had been reduced to: not content enough to being back to what it was, a hectic thorp, it started gaining the prosperity of a village, an ensured future: it moved forward.¹⁵ (Amado, 1986, p. 321)

After having told the most important remarks of Tocaia Grande, the novelist concluded his narration:

And hereby in its beginnings the history of the town Irisópolis is interrupted, when it still was Tocaia Grande, the obscure face. What happened later on - the progress, the emancipation, the change of name, the county, the municipality, the church, the bungalows, the palaces, the British paving stones, the intendand, the vicar, the prosecutor, the judge, the courthouse and jail, the mason shop, the social club, the literary club, the luminous face - is not worth telling, it's not fun at all.¹⁶ (Amado, 1986, p. 421)

¹³ "Some entries in dictionaries and encyclopedias make me born in Pirangi. In fact the opposite occurred: I saw Pirangi being born and growing. When I passed by it for the first time, on the stand of my father's riding saddle, there were only three isolated houses." (Amado, 1982 [1981], p. 35-37).

¹⁴ "Nos distantes outroras houvera um pequeno galpão, abrigo pelos valentes que abriram a trilha reduzindo o percurso dos comboios de cacau e, ao desembocar em lugar assim bonito e acolhedor, referiram-se à ocorrência ainda recente da tocaia grande e com esse nome o batizaram. Tendo crescido o movimento dos tropeiros e aumentado o número dos moradores, tornando-se intenso o tráfego de putas, mateiros e alugados, instaladas bodega de turco e tenda de ferrador de burros, houve necessidade de local mais espaçoso". (Amado, 1986, p. 302)

¹⁵ "No vaivém das trilhas e estradas, dos atalhos e caminhos, tropeiros, alugados, putas em mudança, jagunços, inclusive coronéis, comentavam e engrandeciam o progresso de Tocaia Grande. Sacrificada por pavorosa enchente a povoação se reerguera do pantanal a que ficara reduzida: não se contentando em voltar a ser o que já fora, movimentado lugarejo, ganhava foros de próspero arraial, de futuro assegurado: dera um salto para a frente." (Amado, 1986, p. 321)

¹⁶ "E aqui se interrompe em seus começos a história da cidade de Irisópolis quando ainda era Tocaia Grande, a face obscura. O que aconteceu depois — o progresso, a emancipação, a mudança de nome, a comarca, o município, a igreja, os bangalôs, os palacetes, os paralelepípedos ingleses, o intendente, o vigário, o promotor e o juiz, o fórum e a cadeia, a loja maçônica, o clube social e o grêmio literário, a face luminosa — não paga a pena contar, não tem graça." (Amado, 1986, p. 421)

The change of name, of which Jorge Amado refers to, is revealing of such focuses on the moment of transformation from *pouso* into village. Very few villages that came from a *pouso* kept the prefix *pouso* in the moment of choosing a new name, such as Pouso Alegre, Pouso Alto, Pouso Novo, or Pouso Redondo. Most of them changed their names, both to demarcate a new beginning of development and progress (for instance, Bananal, Cotias, Itapetininga...) and to testify the desire to forget their origins: how could a town, symbol of roots, be born from a spatial form destined to transits? It is also not rare to change the centrality of the town to symbolize this new time? the public square is distanced from the path and dictates a new principle of urban organization, such as Juazeiro, installed far from the tree that originated its name and the *pouso* where *tropeiros* rested by the São Francisco river.

Pousos participated in the historic process of the Brazilian territorialization, working as knots of articulation in a movement of internalization

The succession of forms from *pousos* to towns cannot be denied, but it is important to insist on the role of the context for ruptures and discontinuities in which these transformations were brought about. From the campsite to the ranch, the ranch into the installation of a hall-street to the long path with blacksmiths and salesmen, to the construction of other streets (parallel and perpendicular ones) and of a square, the rhythm of this long genesis of the city is unstable and irregular¹⁷. Because of that, instead of using the metaphor (evolutionist) an embryo of a city, I would like to suggest the seed of cities, which brings us back to the complex process of transformation of *pousos*. The seed knows a rhythm marked by a dormant period of time (which can be long) and an abrupt time (which depends on the reading of the environmental conditions or that can also be artificially imposed). This dormancy serves then to designate the power that these seeds have of conserving its capacity of germination, even with a slow life rhythm. The dormancy constitutes a form of “temporal dispersion”, in other words, dispersion in time and not in the space of potentialities that can come about at any time, or maybe never¹⁸.

Thus, far from being the natural outcome of an evolution, the city establishes a critical relationship with the *pouso* that allowed its birth. If, today, many projects of patrimony intend to rescue the memory of these original places, valuing the *pouso* as a primitive form of the city, it is important to remember that at the time of transformation, there was usually an attempt to hide such past, or at least mask it - be it by changing its name or urban plan.

¹⁷ Such instability has deeply marked the geographer Pierre Deffontaines, who qualified these small agglomerations as “eclipsing cities” (Deffontaines, 1944 [1938], p. 306).

¹⁸ For the use, in the philology field, of this metaphor, see Bailly (2011, p. 48).

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In this paper, we aimed at questioning the theoretical foundations that guided the main reseaches on *pousos* in Brazil, suggesting other approaches. To sum up, one can say that, first, far from being a “Brazilian invention”, *pousos* were inserted in various spatial forms destined to the shelter men in transit (attested in Europe, East Asia, and Africa, and even in the Pre-Columbus Americas). The challenge would be to understand to what extent the degree of modification that occurred as they were adapted to the Brazilian context notably in their integration to indigenous habits. Initially coming from a bodily experience in the wilderness, *pousos* were able to impose themselves in the landscape as political structures, demarcating the extension of the colonial territory. In a different level, another challenge would be to analyze *pousos* as they were inhabited, in other words, as a target of singular social and cultural practices.

Sprung from the articulation of displacement and waiting (Vidal, 2013), *pousos* constituted a peculiar *time-space*, whose reading requires articulating history and morphology¹⁹. But this reading must avoid an evolutionist danger. Seeds of many towns, *pousos* invite us to identify the dormancies (in other words, to pay attention to weak intensities and silent transformations) (Julien, 2009) and the abrupt moments of change - namely integrating their analysis in a perspective of discontinuity. Just like territories of waiting, they “must be conceived as events, since they the offspring of a mobility rupture or impose a rupture in mobility. They possess a historicity that must be questioned, what suggests that their birth and death should be apprehended” (Vidal, 2014, p. 285).

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¹⁹ On this articulation, check Ginzburg (1998 [1986]). “J’ai fini par me rendre compte que s’il y avait une unité thématique ou méthodologique, parmi les recherches que j’ai entreprises – souvent très disparates du point de vue du contenu, de la chronologie ou des disciplines – c’est précisément la réflexion sur les rapports entre histoire et morphologie. Qu’est-ce que cela veut dire ? Peut-être que l’histoire, la discipline historique, accorde un rôle central à la chronologie et à l’idée que l’on peut aussi interpréter ces rapports chronologiques, même si de façon complexe, selon des rapports de causalité. Une telle idée me laisse très perplexe : même si d’un côté je suis littéralement obsédé par la chronologie, de l’autre côté, je m’intéresse comme tout le monde aux causes, prétendues ou réelles. Dans la perspective de la morphologie, il n’y a pas place pour la chronologie : tout est par définition atemporel. Je suis tiraillé entre ces deux perspectives ; je suis fasciné par leurs rapports, leurs tensions ; je pense en tant qu’historien qu’il faut accepter la fécondité d’une perspective morphologique. Peu d’historiens l’admettent. Je continue en ce qui me concerne à travailler sur cette tension” (Ginzburg, 2003, p. 121).

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