

THE ROYAL ROAD IN BRAZIL

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INTRODUCTION

The Royal Road in Brazil, shaped through centuries in the country's vast hinterland, along its 1400 km crosses 177 towns in three Brazilian states,

162 towns in Minas Gerais, 8 in Rio de Janeiro and 7 in São Paulo, from where the *Bandeirantes*, the first *Paulista* colonizers, set forth. On their paths and trails it is possible to reconstruct the cycle of the quest for gold and precious stones, the hardships of the pioneer colonial urban settlers and the suffering of thousands of African slaves who actually built the road.

The greatest Brazilian Baroque and Rococo Monuments, several of them in the *Worlds Heritage List* are located along this historical and cultural itinerary.

This impressive road is for historical reasons classified in two different manners: the Old Road (17th Century) from Paraty to Ouro Preto and later on to Diamantina, is known as the Gold Road which is almost entirely preserved and the New Road, (18th Century) which was an alternative connecting Minas Gerais directly to the port of the city of Rio de Janeiro, where no consistent preserved part can be found.

This paper intends to show to specialists, the actual situation of this unique Heritage and discuss ways to avoid the destruction of part of Ouro Preto, of the Aleijadinho masterpieces in Congonhas do Campo and the constant attempts to devastate the magnificent rain forest in the mountain range of Bocaina, the main site of the Old Golden Road. To draw the audience's attention, we will present a photographic documentation of the problems described in this publication:

The Gold Road in the Bocaina Mountains and the port of Paraty-aerial views; the situation of the sculptures in Congonhas do Campo; the growth of shanty towns in the *core* of the city of Ouro Preto, a classified area. We hope that the discussion will define measures to help the management and protection of cultural Itineraries as a whole and especially for the severely threatened Brazilian World Heritage Properties.

THE OLD ROAD

The remaining part of the Golden Road (Caminho do Ouro) in Paraty is the largest paved section of the entire (Estrada Real) Royal Road which goes all the way to Ouro Preto. This pavement was built according to projects designed by military engineers working in Paraty at the crown's service, who were responsible for demanding the Empire's territoriality and land planning, as confirmed by historic documents from the 18th and 19th Centuries.

The Gold Road in Paraty is also known as Old Road because it was the first road to connect the coast with Minas Gerais in the 17th Century. Later, in the 18th Century an alternative road was opened, connecting Minas directly to the port of Rio de Janeiro, Today however, we cannot find any consistently preserved part of this alternative road, known as New Road (Caminho Novo) differently from Paraty's segment, which is almost entirely preserved.

Paraty's exceptional features are due to the conservation of the Gold Road crossing the Atlantic rainforest., At least, in Brazil the town is the only port village of the 17th Century to preserve its characteristics of trading post. For 250 years Paraty prospered as the entrance gate to the Brazilian hinterland, removed from the large commercial trade lines, separated from the rest of Brazil by its high and ridged mountains. In the last quarter of the 19th Century, Paraty was losing its importance, since then it survived on artisan fishing, on the production of cachaça (sugar cane brandy) and above all as a cluster of tourist interest. Paradoxically, impoverishment was the main aspect responsible for the preservation of the town's built area, today one of the most harmonious architectural ensembles in the whole Country. In 1945, the town received the first legal measure of historic protection, and since 1947 the National Historical and Artistic Institute (Instituto do Patrimônio Histórico e Artístico Nacional - IPHAN) has been in charge of the restoration work of historic buildings, preventing destruction of the built area and the surrounding landscape. Paraty's urban layout attests to the Portuguese vernacular knowledge acquired in medieval times for the creation of insular and maritime towns and later to the introduction of an erudite model, a characteristic of Renaissance urbanism. The city nowadays is a point of culturally important

meetings such as modern world literature and exponential writers, Historical Heritage conferences and international symposia.

THE PERMANENCE OF ART and HISTORY

The main historical towns still standing along the OLD ROAD are: Mogy das Cruzes; Taubaté; Guaratinguetá; Santuário Nacional de N.S.Aparecida, Cunha; Lorena; (State of São Paulo), which as from 1821 became the Coffee plantation road; Passa Quatro; Pouso Alto; Caxambú; Conceição do Rio Verde, Ipoena, Piedade do Rio Grande; and the historical colonial towns: *São João –del- Rei; *São José –del –Rei (current Tiradentes); *Congonhas do Campo; *Ouro Preto; *Mariana; *Sabará and *Diamantina.

Some of the highlights of the Brazilian Baroque Art are expressed in the churches and built Heritage of the Minas Gerais State as noted *.

These historical towns on the Royal Road are the main attractions for tourist and technical purposes.

MINAS GERAIS: HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

The inhabitants of the São Paulo de Piratininga Village, “PAULISTAS”, were the first explorers of the gold mining territory, who for over one hundred years crossed the uneven land, capturing Indians and looking for riches. Success in finding the precious ore, especially of gold only took place only at the end of the 17th Century – 1693, leading to the coming of hundreds of migrants who, by the end of the 18th Century were already living in large settlements. The Captaincy of Minas Gerais was established in 1720 to overcome the difficulties of supplying the population’s subsistence, jeopardized by the fight between the Brazilian and Portuguese colonizers. Almost all the Paulistas went back to their land of origin or went to Goiás and Mato Grosso, opening new mining zones in this region. The Portuguese metropolis never considered fostering organization of agriculture, animal husbandry or other subsistence activities, nor to provide geologists or technicians for the progress of mineral extraction. The metropolis’ only policy was to increase the taxes to be levied. During five decades the economy bloomed, coming to a stand still in the last decades of the Century when the scarcity of ore induced coercive measures which originated such a severe inspection that it gave rise to a number of protest insurrections, which exploded in the “Mineira” Revolt of 1788/89. This revolt was crudely repressed with

the condemnation of José Joaquim da Silva Xavier, the TIRADENTES to a horrendous death and the exile of various conspirators to Africa. This bred between nationals and colonizers a permanent hostility, which was the root of Brazil’s independence in 1822. During the Reign and Regency many turbulent events broke out and during the Empire (D. Pedro I and his son D. Pedro II), progress was slow. After proclamation of the Republic in 1889, the people of “Vila Rica de Ouro Preto”, revolted against moving the capital (political seat of the Province) to the location of Curral del-Rei in 1897 (called Belo Horizonte in 1901).

SÃO PAULO, A NEW WEALTH ON THE OLD ROAD: THE COFFEE PLANTATIONS.

However all mineral richness comes to an end. Even the fabulous Potosi silver mines did. Thus inevitable decadence befell the colony. The unreasonable Portuguese requirement demanding more and more brought about the most important native movement against the Metropolis. At that time the impoverishment, of the São Paulo province was remarkable. Another asset was to replace gold: a new commodity- coffee – rapidly spread over the Paraíba do Sul basin linking São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro. The Paraíba Valley plantations produced an enormous wealth. Huge farms with significant constructions bear witness to its magnitude. It financed the history of São Paulo’s industrialization. Coffee was so important for the country that it made possible the construction of a number of railroads. In 1870 the first one in the Paraíba Valley linked Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo, where all the main coffee plantations were concentrated. The OLD ROAD was abandoned, Paraty and the beautiful cities of Minas Gerais slept for years like a sleeping beauty, waiting to be rediscovered.

ROYAL ROAD: RECOVERY OF CITIES OF THE GOLD ERA IN MINAS GERAIS

The hoped for revival of the Minas cities, holders of the largest and most representative heritage of the Baroque and Rococo in the South-American continent took place in Brazil thanks to the Modernist Movement of 1920. Historians, architects, writers, interested in the international movement of Modern Art, began research on the Brazilian-Portuguese origin of all the fine arts and literary manifestations that would justify the Brazilian form to break with the precepts of Classic Arts in the 19th Century and the preceding. In contrast with the “modernists” of other countries, in Brazil disclosure of the towns along the roads of the Slaves, of the Gold, of the Coffee and of the Troops as well as those of the populations seeking ore riches in the Middle-West. This denoted a significant cultural

commitment with the past history of the Brazilian nation furthered by the intellectuals of the first quarter of the 20th Century. In 1937, through the Decree-Law 25 of December the Service of the National Historical and Artistic Heritage (IPHAN) the sector of protection, preservation and restoration was created and furthermore the service of classification (listing of the chattel) officially setting the historical value of the cities of the gold era. Along the Royal Road, one hundred and seventy two cities, originated from the old colonial settlements in Minas Gerais, became part of the different cultural paths. Twenty eight of these towns have chattel listed by the National Heritage. To illustrate this presentation I will summarize only five, viewed as regional centers, dissemination clusters of tourism, organized for trekking along trails and itineraries, of a unique natural beauty, distinctive identity and artistic homogeneity: Tiradentes, São João del-Rei, Congonhas do Campo, Ouro Preto and Diamantina.

1. TIRADENTES CITY

Named São José del-Rei or of the River of Death or still Old Hamlet and Hamlet of Santo Antonio, the city has a rich historical collection in which are noteworthy the public fountain, the house of the revolutionary Priest Toledo, today the Town Museum, the Parish Church of Santo Antonio, four chapels, the housing complex and the urban plan. Alluvial gold was found in the nearby rivers in 1702, leaving the soil deeply scarred from the mining that continues to date. Located on slopes of a most beautiful topography, where there are numerous inns and craftsmanship stores. Like Paraty it is a starting point for various ecotourism itineraries always attracting a large number of tourist-students that come to the cultural and musical events and to the poetry contests. Religious festivities highlight the Holy Week.

2. SÃO JOÃO DEL REI CITY

Situated in a large undulating valley between the mountains of São José and of the “Lenheiro”, at the beginning of the “Espinhaço” mountain range, one of the oldest geological formations of Brazil, the city’s original core was Porto Real da Passagem, an obligatory route for those who traveled from São Paulo to Minas Gerais. The city is crossed by the “Córrego do Lenheiro” an affluent of the auriferous River of the Dead which attracted hundreds of prospectors. “Capão da Traição” was the scene of the historical episode when the “paulistas” were surrounded by Portuguese and forced to retreat, signaling the end of their presence in the Province of Minas Gerais. The village was established in 1713 and designated as a town in 1881 with the arrival of the railroad. The contingent of Italian migrants from Bologna and Ferrara, the building of two bridges in

European style and the constitution of a music center (the Bastos Ribeiro orchestra), famous throughout the Empire, boosted the cultural life of the city. One of the best known traditions, of significant cultural value is the “Language of the Bells” now listed in the Immaterial Heritage of the Nation. Similar to the neighboring cities it has special celebrations during the Holy Week.

3. CONGONHAS DO CAMPO CITY

The small city of Congonhas do Campo, is located on a hilly rise and receives water from the “Ribeirão do Carmo”, whose fountainhead is in the town of Mariana. It was the first capital city of Minas Gerais, seat of the Bishopric which has the largest baroque treasure, made by the master Antonio Francisco Lisboa – “The ALEIJADINHO”. The churchyard of the “Bom Jesus de Matosinhos” Sanctuary is adorned by twelve magnificent statues carved in soapstone, representing the prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah, Baruch, Ezekiel, Daniel (considered the masterpiece of the baroque sculptural art), Hosea, Jonas, Amos, Joel, Abdias, Nahum and Habakkuk. The façade of the church is extensively ornamented with corner stones, piers, and stone decorations. On the top of the slope where the Church is located, six pavilions were built side by side in which are placed the Steps. Inside of the small chapels are human size statues representing Scenes of the Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ. They are made of painted wood and seem to be in movement: 1- The Last Supper, 2 – Jesus in the Garden of Olives, 3- Prison of Jesus, 4- Flagellation and Crowning with Thorns, 5 – Encounter of Jesus with his Holy Mother, 6 Crucifixion.

Details of the sculptures portray the characteristics of “Aleijadinho”, magnificent heads of hair, slanted eyes, minute and very detailed ornamentation of the attire and labels with writings in Latin. Classified in 1939 and listed in the Book of Fine Arts, it is one of the religious ensembles most visited in Brazil.

Often requested to be part of exhibitions in Brazil as well as abroad, requests for this collection have been vigorously denied by the IPHAN. In the History of Universal Art there is no example of a country sending its original treasures, risking destruction, misplacement and damage. Circulation of chattel of an inestimable value must be restricted to the remittance of replicas.

4. OURO PRETO CITY

Located on the slopes of the “Serra do Espinhaço” the city harmoniously slides downhill and into the valleys of the Funil, Piracicaba and Tripui Rivers, confluents of the das Velhas River whose source is 5 km away from the city center.

In 1938, it was registered in its entirety as a “Historical City” in the UNESCO list of World Heritage. Within its urban site it aggregates architectural chattel of inestimable historical and artistic value, shaping a harmonious, complete and authentic ensemble of civil and religious buildings. The current seat of the Museum of the Revolt was formerly the Town Council and Jail, and the Palace of the Governors is now the Mining and Metallurgy School of the Federal University of Ouro Preto. The “Casa dos Contos” had diverse uses along the 17th, 19th and 20th Centuries. Until today it houses a bureau of the Federal Tax Service and one of its latest functions was to serve as Council of the Royal Treasury. During the tragic episodes of the Minas Revolt, Claudio Manoel da Costa was found dead, hung within its walls.

Magnificently located churches can be seen throughout the town, crowning the mountain tops that surround the center: these add to about 10 buildings, with four of them noteworthy for their quality: N.S. do Carmo, São Francisco de Assis, N.S. do Pilar (Parish Church) and N.S. do Rosário. Some six fountains belong to the listed chattel of the city because of their exceptional conception and relation to facts of local history; The Marília de Dirceu fountain, beloved by the poet Thomas Antonio Gonzaga – conspirator banished to Africa.

Three bridges blending into the landscape and images in the oratories at the street corners put the last touches on part of the city’s overwhelming collection. Jewel of the Royal Road it is the center for many tourist routes to other cities so that one can stay at Ouro Preto and visit, Sabará, Mariana, Congonhas among others of major significance.

5. DIAMANTINA CITY

The hamlet of Tejuco emerged as the outcome of the concentration in 1729 of fortune-hunters coming from all parts of the Colony in quest of fortune in the diamond mines. For control and to stop the evasion of this wealth, the Portuguese Crown created the post of Contractor of Diamonds, of which the most famous was João Fernandes de Oliveira, the lover of Chica da Silva for whom he built the most beautiful house in the city. Since the Tejuco village was remote from the gold mining center and located in the middle of the “Serra dos Cristais”, with steep mountains and of dangerous access, it was easy for Portugal not to disclose its real location. No religious convent orders had access to the village thereby avoiding that the Holy See (Vatican) spread information to other governments in Europe with their inevitable greed. As for quantity the production was immense, even today impressing prospectors engaged in mining. Because of its topography the city is connected to

others of the state by steep and winding trails which during the colonial times served as the route of the Slaves, a considerable paved part which today is part of the Royal Road. As the birth place of President Juscelino Kubistrchek de Oliveira it was bestowed with a connection to the cities near Brasilia by the building of an asphalt road of great scenic beauty. Its complete and authentic historical center was enrolled in the List of World Heritage in 1998.

THE NEW ROAD

The abolition of Slavery (1888) a conquest of all progressive Brazilians, urged the launching of a new production system. Foreign immigrants joined the existent Portuguese such as Italians, Spaniards, and later on Russians, Polish families Germans and later at the end of the 19th century Japanese and Arabs, called Turks due the Turkish Ottoman Empire Passports. The need of exportation to the rest of the World made the building of well constructed sea ports mandatory t, no more isolated and hidden as Paraty. Santos in São Paulo State, Rio de Janeiro, Salvador ,Recife, Paranaguá and São Francisco in the Southern states.

The new Royal Road had been built from Rio de Janeiro going towards Ouro Preto, Belo Horizonte and Diamantina passing throughout Itaipava, Petrópolis Juiz de Fora ,Barbacena, Caraça, Santa Bárbara, Ouro Fino and some other colonial towns avoiding the abrupt and dangerous outskirts of the Serra do Mar and the Bocaina Mountain Range., By the end of the 19th Century on the monumental Caminho do Mar (between São Paulo and the port of Santos) an imposing railway was built reducing the travel time: The São Paulo Railway ,that started in the city of Jundiahy, cutting the urban area of São Paulo.

Cradle of wealthy families the Paraíba valley still keeps the glamour of the coffee glorious times; the growth of a hundred of modern industries made of the poorest province of the Brazilian Empire, the richest productive region of the 20th Century. .That is why we can understand how the local transformation of the NEW ROAD, changed the romantic old route, visible over a large extension of the ancient colonial Gold Road.

Is impossible to write about the Paraíba Valley towns, without mentioning the centenary religious local festivities of the Roman Catholic Faith: The National Sanctuary of Nossa Senhora da Apararecida (Our Lady of Aparecida), the cult of Saint Benedict and others.

MAIN ATTRACTIONS ON THE ROYAL ROAD

secret of those tiny delicious tidbits.

- A wide range of propositions are connected with the natural environment: mountain trails, water falls very attractive to students and sportsmen. A series of protected areas have been created to safeguard the astonishing natural landscape: the remnants of the Atlantic Forest and its main attributes, such as biodiversity, scenic beauty, the reserve of the Biosphere, coastal areas, mangrove swamps. A representative quantity of birds, small monkeys, snakes and lizards ,a small specimen of the jaguar, a considerable diversity of insects from bees to some more dangerous kinds of flies.
- The local craftsmanship is of great variety, colorful, unique presenting some icons in earthenware (ceramics),tapestry, wood, stone ,leather, painting and sculpture, hammocks, silk and cotton lace for clothing, gloves, socks, hats, bags and house ware as carpets, curtains, cushions, napkins and table dresses.
- Projects intended for the preservation of the traditional knowledge related to nautical engineering and the fabrication of traditional fishing devices are also supported by a special project, concerning the preservation of the great diversity of Paraty's ships and boats, considered as significant cultural Heritage.
- The making of the cachaça, alcoholic traditional Brazilian beverage made from sugar –cane, is a secular tradition in Paraty whose name became synonym to the national drink; nevertheless the most sophisticated commercial marks are registered in the Distilleries of the Minas Gerais State. Famous throughout the country some trade marks of bottled cachucha are very rare and expensive.
- The fresh white cheese the Minas cheese, part of the every day food in the countryside and the urban area, is one of the major commercial commodities of the whole region. Main ingredient for preparing traditional dishes it is an important source of income. The specialists of the IPHAN (National Institute of the Historical and Artistic Heritage) are preparing a Register of the specialty to list its making in the Book of Intangible Heritage.

A delicious mixture of tastes with aborigines (Tupi-Guarani people) African and Portuguese cultural influences were uniquely taken over by the “mineiros and paulistas”. Bearing witness to this creative vigor, the typical food, diverse forms of cooking pork and poultry, the cheese bread and over one hundred artisan cookies, comfits and jellies from different fruit such as pumpkin, oranges and lemon, guavas, green figs, papaya and coconut candies. The tourist and the trekking traveler are always asking for the

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The proposal to present the ROYAL ROAD OF BRAZIL at this Symposium in Section IV “CULTURAL ROUTES” is a way of accepting a long standing challenge among Brazilian specialists who, with pleasure accepted the request of the president of the International Committee of Cultural Itineraries. Among a dozen or more significant routes crossing the continental area of the Federative Republic of Brazil, my choice supported by the Brazilian Committee of ICOMOS, became a brief dissertation on the ROYAL ROAD OF BRAZIL which in my opinion is the more representative expression of the special terms of the CHARTER OF CULTURAL ROUTES. This is a text that will be forwarded for approval of the plenary at the 15th General Assembly and International Symposium (XI' AN – CHINA, October 17th to 22nd, 2005).

- 1 to be a road developed to serve the concrete purpose of transporting goods and animals (mules) to the gold mines and on the way back to transport the gold cargo prepared for shipment at the hidden sea port of Paraty;
- 2 depending on the different exchange endeavors the Old Road had various names: The Gold Road, the Slaves Road (carrying the people from Africa to work) the Coffee Road, in the beginning of the 19th Century, the Mules' trail, the Merchants' Road, the Diamond Road (from Ouro Preto to Diamantina) and a special branch the “Old Mines Way” that begins in Bahia and in the state of Goiás, going from São Felix on the sea coast to the central core of Brazil;
- 3 for three Centuries it was used as the only major route for exchange and mobility of men performing cultural activities, transporting books, musical instruments and above all ideas from the French philosophers who played a fundamental role for the French Revolution and the fight for independence in the Spanish and Portuguese territories;
- 4 Improvement of the building techniques responsible for the harmony of the architectural style, brought from Portugal;
- 5 the action of the Roman Catholic Church, in charge of imparting to humble children the knowledge of painting, sculpture, singing and playing musical instruments to take part in the church celebrations Thus in the whole area a significant number of good artists and musician had been developed.

The Royal Road bears witness to the essential chapters of Brazilian history from the colonial times through the Empire and the Republican Era to present times. Accordingly it is classified as Natural, Artistic and Historical Heritage. Built

in the 18th Century for the purpose of transporting gold and precious stones it has survived the 19th and 20th Centuries serving side by side with the new railway as a main transport means for innumerable commodities. Now an Institute (Instituto da Estrada Real) has been created to act as special instance for conservation and tourist marketing. It is responsible for publications with the official support of the Ministries of Culture and Tourism.

The material evidence associated to the intangible spirit evident along the 1400 kilometers is a coherent argument to preserve this living testimony for all citizen of the world, owners of the beauty and value of this splendid and unique heritage.

Abstract

The Royal Route in Brazil,shaped through centuries in the country vast hinterland ,in its 1400 km crosses 177 towns in (3)three Brazilian states 162 towns in Minas Gerais, 8 in Rio de Janeiro,and 7 in São Paulo,from where the *bandeirantes*, the first *Paulista* colonizers,set off.Through their paths,and trails it is possible to reconstruct the cycle of the search for gold and precious stones the plight of the pioneer colonial urban settlers and that of the suffering of thousands of African Slaves who actually built the road.

The greatest Brazilian Baroque and Rococo Monuments several of them on the *Worlds Heritage List* are located in this historical cultural itinerary.

This impressive route for historical reason is classified in two different ways: the Old Way (17th.Century)from Paraty to Ouro Preto and later on to Diamantina, is known as The Gold Route which is almost entirely preserved,while the New Way,(18th Century)an alternative road,connecting Minas Gerais directly to the city port of Rio de Janeiro,where no consistent preserved part can be found.

This paper intend to show to the specialists, the actual situation of this unique Heritage,and discuss the ways to avoid the destruction of part of Ouro Preto, of the Aleijadinho masterpieces in Congonhas do Campo and the constant attempts to devastating, the magnificent Rain Forest through the Mountain range of Bocaina,the main site of the Old Golden Route. To draw the audience's attention,we will present a photographic documentation on the problems described in this present publication: the Gold Route at the Bocaina Mountains and the port of Paraty-aerial views;the situation of the sculptures in Congonhas do Campo;the growth of *favelas* in the *core* of the city of Ouro Preto classified area.We hope that the discussion could define measures helping the management protection of Cultural Itineraries as a whole and specially to the Brazilian World Heritage Properties in serious danger.