



## **The Preservation of the Historical Towns that Supported the Rural Activity Related to the Golden Extraction Cycles in the 1700's, in the Interior of the State of Minas Gerais, Brazil**

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The present paper discusses, in the Brazilian historical heritage's context, resulting from the Portuguese colonization, the condition of the historical towns that supported the rural activity, related to the golden extraction cycles in the 1700's, in the interior of the State of Minas Gerais, in Brazilian southeast. These historical towns, due to their isolation regarding the main Brazilian colonial urban centres and, principally, regarding the Portuguese cities, were adapted in special way as for the interpretation of the predominant architectural and urban design styles of their time. These towns were constituted basically by religious constructions, squares and civil constructions of residential, commercials and services uses, being government constructions practically non existent. These urban nucleuses had the major function of weekend's dwelling of the rural owners, who were going to their houses in the town due to religious cults, which were the base of the local sociability. The major utility of these nucleuses was the installation of an urban identity, still precarious, from a rural base's economy. The urban space produced is endowed of landscape beauty, as a result of a good relation with the natural site. The constructions have simplicity, few ornamentation, but are endowed of rhythm and harmony. Due to being relatively recent (original of the century XVIII), these historical towns, related to the local elites, had few generations in the possession and in their use. The daily relation of his current users leads to devaluation of the architectural and urban complex while built heritage. This devaluation is accented to the measure in which the preservation strategies of the architectural and historical towns in the state of Minas Gerais are principally focused in the major colonial cities: Ouro Preto, Diamantina, Tiradentes and São João Del Rei. In this way currently few urbane original nucleuses from rural base from the colonial period in the State of Minas Gerais are preserved. As only a few examples of these nucleuses are preserved it's possible to consider that the cities of Entre Rios de Minas and Santana dos Montes keep their original features preserved.

At present, the region suffers an economical transformation with the installation of great industries. This economical transformation produces a pressure that, added to the positivist idea of progress has been leading the owners to intend to get rid of the real estate in a substitution by buildings of several floors and limited architecture quality, whose massive insertion would destruct the historical heritage. The local governments have the same positivist attitude and have been adopting, in the strategies of urban planning and management, parameters that can bring damages to the preservation of the historical towns.

The destruction of this heritage and the homogenization of these spaces would turn these places into anonymous and equal peripheries, similar to many others by the planet. In this context the work discusses current strategies and tools of urban planning and management that seek to reconcile the preservation of the colonial architecture and historical towns with the local economical development.

**KEY WORDS:** Colonial Brazilian heritage, historical towns of support to the rural activity, strategies of preservation of the built heritage, conflicts and new insertions.