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Mapping the circulation of goods in the captaincy of Minas Gerais (Brazil) in the seventeenth century

The archives are vital resources for Historical Geography to understand specific spatio-historical contexts. Although archival research poses some challenges for studying colonial Brazil, including partial and fragmented data, it is fundamental to interpret XVIII century Brazilian spatial organization. The Coleção Casa dos Contos de Ouro Preto in the Brazilian National Archives provides valuable material for analysis of the economic and spatial relations between the coast (specifically Rio de Janeiro) and the outback (*sertão*), where mineral production was concentrated. Consulting historical maps, including five maps by cartographer José Joaquim da Rocha about Minas Gerais and its counties (1778), revealed settlements and paths that structured the colonial space. Using such materials, I have produced unpublished thematic maps using the tools of Historical GIS (Geographic Information Systems) to represent past geographical features, spatial processes and physical elements, such as rivers and relief, addressing challenges such as fixing the location of settlements that no longer exist and leave only traces of their (approximate) location on the historical maps.

In this paper, I present some of these maps and analyze the contributions of methods of Historical GIS mapping that draw both on contemporary media and on information contained in historical sources, such as the documents in the Coleção Casa dos Contos describing the circulation of goods. I argue that in spite of the fact that mapping based on historical sources does not always produce precise locations (due to limits in the historical record), the use of GIS contributes to understanding of processes and issues through the spatial representation of historical places.

Patrícia Gomes da Silveira is PhD student in Geography at Federal University of Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ). The focus of my research is Historical Geography and the study of networks of circulation in the past. Master in Geography (UFRJ) which dissertation title was: "The Metropolis is here: supply networks and the port of Rio de Janeiro in the coastal trade, 1799-1822". BSc. in Geography (UFRJ).

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View of the *Caminho Novo*, an important trade route that linked the coast and the colonial hinterlands of Minas Gerais (Brazil) in the 1700s (RUGENDAS, [1835] 1979 pág. 53).

	1782	1783	1784	Total
República	6228519	6228519	6228519	18685557
Alcázar	1018723	1018723	1018723	3056169
Alcaide de Agui	3328250	3328250	3328250	9984750
São Luiz	1208714	1208714	1208714	3626142
S. Antonio	3438873	3438873	3438873	10316619
De paginas de	1478224	1478224	1478224	4434672
Confess...	7683371	7683371	7683371	23050113
Somma	20718113	20718113	20718113	62154339

Exemple of a manuscript log book (*Coleção Casa dos Contos*/National Archives - Brazil).