

The Brazilian Houses in the northwest of Portugal as heritage of transatlantic encounters

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Abstract

To emigrate in the nineteenth and early twentieth century meant to meet aspirations built in the confrontation with the environment and social representations dominant.

Between Portugal and Brazil there was always a good relation to the point of being referred to as "brother countries". This meant that when one country was in crisis, it was primarily for emigration to the other and vice versa. These movements, in the case of the Portuguese who went to Brazil to return later, originated the so-called "make-travel".

The attribute of 'Brazilian' applied to 'make-travel' developed in the homeland as a stereotype of social identity, of the mythologies of emigration and return. In the collective mentality, the classification conferring the status of 'Brazilian' corresponded to the final stage of the migratory journey dreamed, to the closing of the cycle with the return of the 'son of the land', accompanied by traces of a distant culture and in case of by savings kept throughout life. That is why there was a cascade of expectations and/or frustrations about this moment of return, depending on the development of the various migratory experiences and the capacity demonstrated to satisfy the hopes of those who, by staying, had cooperated to help emigrate. When returned, the emigrant felt he needed to invest his money in the local community, creating factories or participating in charitable works, whether in social ascension, becoming bourgeois, and building the so-called "Brazilian houses" (Casas Brasileiro).

These are still visible today in the northwestern landscape of Portugal and inhabited by descendants or other individuals, constitute an architectural mark of the transatlantic dialogue and inhabit traditions that constitute means of crossing distances, as it is intended to develop in this paper.