

Manoel Bonito Square in Araguari (MG): The cultural significance of a modern square and the demand for its preservation

João Paulo Campos Peixoto

Master's Student, FAU-USP, São Paulo, Brazil

joaopcp@usp.br

SUMMARY

The present work seeks to demonstrate the cultural significance of modern landscaping through Manoel Bonito Square, in the city of Araguari (MG). The history of this public free space is recovered as a fundamental element of the city's history. Manoel Bonito Square is historically the most important public space in the urban layout in the city of Araguari. Although the uses and appropriation have decreased and the role of the square as a leisure space has been transformed, its value is still latent for the population that sees it as a place of affection and memory. In addition, Manoel Bonito Square is a project of the architect João Jorge Coury, who stands out, as from the 1950s, as a diffuser of modern architecture in the region of Central Brazil. This work aims, therefore, to recognize the value of the square as a modern design and document of an important historical period in Brazilian architecture, with the final purpose of stimulating its preservation.

KEYWORDS: Modern garden. Historic garden. Restoration. João Jorge Coury Architect.

1. INTRODUCTION

Manuel Bonito Square is located in the municipality of Araguari, Minas Gerais State, downtown, it expresses in its history all the values of a public space which, besides urban equipment, is a milestone of the local memory. The Square has an original document of the historic landmark of its construction: it's associated to the landscape production of the architect João Jorge Coury and, also, goes back to the beginning of the modernism in the center of Brazil (GUERRA, 1998). Besides the project itself, the history of the free space where nowadays the square is located it blends with the history of the city of Araguari. In the contemporaneity, however, the Square is in a state of abandon and degradation.

Since the beginning of the 1920's the environment where the current Manoel Bonito Square is located, the former Largo Número 5, fulfils the role as a public space. Former to the law which authorizes the urbanization of the first garden of the city, Municipal Law No. 266, July 25th 1923, the location where today it's located was already considered a free space. Two different projects were implemented in the site. The first of them, of eclectic purpose, was inaugurated in 1924. The second one, modern, from the architect João Jorge Coury, was finalized in 1996 and, although it was partially uncharacterized, it resisted until contemporaneity. Different of the ordinary-space which has in the square attached to Igreja Matriz, catholic church, the central public space, in Araguari the main square, object of study of this paper, is attached to Igreja Protestante (Presbyterian).

João Jorge Coury, architect responsible for the project of the square in 1965, already acted in an expressive way in the city of Uberlândia, a neighbor city at about 37 km from Araguari, and it has in Tubal Vilela Square project (1962) a spotlight in his work. The architect, from de 1950's, was considered a diffuser of the modern architecture in the region of the center of Brazil. The modern architecture was unprecedented in the region until then (GUERRA, 1998). Coury projected several squares requested by the public power, another one even in the city of Araguari, Getúlio Vargas Square (1966). The portfolio of the architect has projects of free spaces implemented in several cities of Triângulo Mineiro region: Ituiutaba, Uberlândia, Tupaciguara, besides other projects in Goiás state.

Manuel Bonito Square had been highly attended among the decades of 1930 and 1970, as an exponent of Araguari's social life. Even today it's a reference when it comes to the city of Araguari and its history. Besides the daily transit and the former *footing* scenery, important events had the Square as setting. The Square was a stage, worth mentioning, of rallies of

candidates to the presidency such as Juscelino Kubitschek, on April 26th, 1953 (Gazeta do Triângulo newspaper, April 24th, 1953) and Ademar de Barros, on March 7th, 1960 (Idem, March 7th, 1960).

Nowadays, however, the Square hasn't kept its spotlight. Today, the place has its attendance maintained as a passage place downtown, used, overall, due to public toilets, which work only during working days. On weekends, it's mostly empty and marginalized.

Therefore, the present paper is an enforcement documentation of acknowledgement of the history of the referred Square and its project, aiming the recognition of the cultural signification and values linked to this patrimonial asset of the city of Araguari (MG), of meaningful and symbolic importance to the history of the city and its people, but also as a free public central space in the urban layout.

Figure 1: Aerial View of contemporary Manoel Bonito Square, Araguari (MG).



Source: AUTHOR, 2018.

2. Objectives and Methodology

According to what the Florence Letter (1981), the historic gardens are architectonic and vegetal compositions intentionally created which represent a public interest, from the point of view of art and history. These gardens, therefore, are objects of preservation and restoration, as a way of ensuring their maintenance as testimonies from the past. Even Manoel Bonito Square isn't considered a "historic garden" concerning its definition, it has an important role as a testimony: it's an example of the modern architecture in public gardens, being part of the collection of projects of João Jorge Coury in Triângulo Mineiro, besides being an urban-historic milestone, an object of affection for the population of the city. Thus, the present paper emphasizes its necessity of preservation, in order to assure that the good state of preservation, as an historical document, but specially destined to the use and appropriation by part of the people.

This paper focus on the historic premises of the square in the city of Araguari and on the remodeling project made by the architect João Jorge Coury, as a way to promote not only

the preservation of the characteristics of the modern garden, but also the restoration of sociability and the support which it offers to the city and its operation. The final objective of the present study is to expose the cultural meaning of an important asset to the city of Araguari, aiming its documentation and, eventually, its further preservation and restoration.

An important motivation of this paper is also in the need to preserving gardens and present the historic garden as a preservation element. The inventory of historic gardens in Brazil has an emergency level, due to the fact that the tradition of preservation of free spaces is still rudimentary in the country. The minority is maintained and preserved, which is substantial to the creation of a gardens documentation center to preserve the Brazilian landscaping culture (MACEDO, 2016). This paper is in agreement with this positioning.

To accomplish this paper several researches were made, such as bibliographic and field ones. Initially we've focused on the iconographic and textual spheres, sustained by the extensive range of documents, photos and newspapers archived in the Municipal Public Archive Doutor Calil Porto, besides books which themes were the history of this city of Minas Gerais state. We've also tried to understand, although briefly, the trajectory of the architect João Jorge Coury, his acting in the region, his papers, focusing on his acting in the public and urban spheres. This research over the city and over the architect, together, was of great importance to understand the proposed project to Manuel Bonito Square in 1965.

Beyond the Square itself, we've tried to accomplish a brief historic over the historic gardens and their preservation. The patrimonial letters, especially those which discuss the preservation of historic gardens, as well as the first and second edition of the *Manual of Interventions on Historic Gardens (1999, 2005)* of Iphan, were very importance documents, as theoretical references to the accomplished studies.

The acknowledgement of Manuel Bonito Square was accomplished from meaningful field trips. Several visits were made, with diverse objectives: identifying the place's own dynamic, finding out who are its users and frequenters, how the space is organized during weekdays and weekends, who maintains it (if there's any) and how this maintenance would be done. We've accomplished several metric-architectonic surveys regarding the Square, so as to elaborate technical drawings, besides identification and vegetation inventory maps, with the help of a biologist, and the mapping of damages and pathologies. A good part of the surveyed documents isn't a part of this article due to its proposal, however it takes part of a wider research yet to be published.

3. CONSIDERATIONS OVER HISTORIC GARDENS AND THEIR PRESERVATION

The garden is a unique, perishable document, which cannot be replicated, it has a specific project, with a particular history and reflects the society and the culture where it was inserted in its creation, from those who created it and those who have lived it (AÑON-FELIÚ, 1993).

It's important to understand the garden as to beyond the vegetation exclusively. The gardens are composed by paths, architectonic structures, flooring and pagination drawings, levels, flowerbeds, even their sensorial characteristics such as scent, color and illumination can compose them entirely.

A garden is a living element, time modifies its materiality and transforms its perception. This comprehension is the key to work on it. It's important to understand what the garden represents to comprehend its values and preserve it. Though a garden has its vegetation uncharacterized (as Manoel Bonito's Square case), it can represent an environmental culture, a tendency of a project, a moment, an idea to be transmitted, a form of architecture.

Therefore, the objective shouldn't be preserving, or even restoring, the gardens with a historical approach as they were initially made. It's impossible to do so, due to the inevitable action of time over its vegetation and even over its structures. The objective must be the restoring and the intention so this heritage won't disappear (AÑON-FELIÚ, 1993). The garden, as a living organism, it's a structure which needs attention, maintenance and care, otherwise it won't resist over time. As an urban element structured mainly by living beings, it's fragile, it demands constant maintenance and it's susceptible to the action of several sectors or public managements.

The garden means movement, transformation, maturation and ephemerality, because it deals with living beings, which are born, grow up and die. The project and the conception of a garden can, from the beginning of mature vegetation, full grown, and from the time it takes to achieve such maturity, or, even, the understanding of the several configurations which it can assume over time – and it's with one of these images that they identify themselves and appreciate a garden and its meaning in a certain cultural moment (MACEDO, 2016, p. 38)

The first step to understand the complex message transmitted by the Garden while a document it's to recognize it as a cultural heritage. Analyzing and living its space, instead of only observing it from the outside, it's another important point for this understanding. All the analysis concerning the garden – which go from the metric to the most complex ones involving vegetation and peoples' own use – reinforce the knowledge concerning space. Understanding each aspect of the garden separately, as Añon-Felú (1993), allows us to understand it as a time and stylistics unit.

It's due to this perspective that we come across the documentation of the garden and its preservation. The character of ephemerality which is essential to this cultural asset and its fragility among the urban scenario, make the documentation of the gardens – in the most diverse spheres – an essential and urgent matter. Silvio Macedo (2016) points out in his article entitled *Brazilian Gardens – Origins and Relevance* that the accomplishment of the gardens inventory is an emergency in a country where the tradition and preservation of this type of space is still small.

In this context, the notion of urban environmental heritage, in the perspective of its preservation, it would apply to the garden matter in a reliable way. The urban environmental heritage concept rises the discussion over the cultural heritage and urban planning field in the 1970's and, potentially, it would unite the visions concerning preservation of the patrimony and of the urban planning in a wider perspective. This union would be greatly valid concerning the public gardens and the squares which are also understood as historical heritage. The notion of urban environmental heritage is close enough to matters related to the current concept of

cultural landscape (PEIXOTO, 2017). Understanding the garden among an ambience is vital not only to its preservation, but also to the imagery constructions of the cities.

The cultural landscaping, on the other hand, according to UNESCO's definition and interaction between the natural environmental and the human activities, where the traditions are created, folklore, arts and other cultural expressions, resulting in a modified natural landscape. Carneiro (2009) indicates the cultural landscape as a gathering of a set of attributes which relate time and space, memory and knowledge. The garden would fit into this definition, bearing in mind its landscape tied to architecture, to the flooring drawings and seedbeds, to the appropriation by people and the city. It would fit, as Carneiro (2009) points out, in the category of *a landscape designed and created intentionally by man* (UNESCO World Heritage Committee, 1992).

Treating historic gardens in a specific way, there are three main documents to be discussed: the Florence Letter (1981) the main international reference related to historic gardens; the letter of Brazilian Historic Gardens also called as Juiz de Fora Letter (2010), which takes into account the Florence Letter however it brings out the discussion over particular elements of the Brazilian garden; and the Manual of Intervention of Historic Gardens (1999; 2005), which has as an objective the guidance of those who take part in the preservation of the Brazilian cultural heritage, with norms, guidelines and recommendations.

The Florence Letter was created on May 21st 1981 by the International Committee of Historic Gardens and ICOMOS/IFLA and it's, possibly, the most important document widely spread concerning the protection of historic gardens. It was written with the objective of complementing the Venice Letter (1964), which incorporates its content, with a smaller emphasis, to matters related to the protection of urban environments and landscapes.

It had and has still a primordial function on the consolidation of theory and practice in the preservation and restoration of gardens. Concerning the Florence Letter, it's valid to highlight its educational character and the stimulus over the discussion of the theme related to historic gardens and their preservation. Thereon, Carmen Añon Feliú (Apud CARNEIRO, CASTELBRANCO, SILVA, 2016) points out that:

Without a doubt all these currents were in need of an official instrumental support. The garden had to cross the frontier between the practice and a few elected ones and the legislative public intervention. [...] In first place the establishment of precise laws which included the gardens as assets to be preserved." (ICOMOS, 2006, s/p)

However, we can also notice that not all topics apply to the most diverse realities and to the most diverse contexts – what takes us to also analyzing the *Letter of Brazilian Historic Gardens* (Juiz de fora Letter) of 2010), which approaches the discussions present on the international document of the Brazilian reality¹. This letter is the resulting document of the *National Meeting of Historic Gardens Managers*, organized by the National Historical and Artistic

¹ The Juiz de Fora letter itself presents, in its content, that "it translates to the Brazilian reality the Florence Letter". Juiz de Fora Letter, 2010, p. 3)

Heritage Institute (Iphan), the Mariano Procópio Museum Foundation (MAPRO) and Casa Rui Barbosa Foundation.

The Brazilian letter has a similar structure to the international one. The inherent characteristic to this kind of document, fulfils a didactic and elucidative role model as to define the historic garden in the Brazilian background and its importance, as well as the concept of authenticity and integrity. It's also about its problematics content and degradation factors, beyond the identification, protection, preservation and maintenance actions as in the conceptual point of view as the explanatory one. It's important to emphasize the recommendation, management and financing and promotion instruments actions, fundamental in the Brazilian background where the protections of heritage assets in a general way isn't widespread.

Among the listed documents present in this paper, which distinguishes in a more expressive way from others is the *Intervention Manual on Historic Gardens* on its first and second edition (1999; 2005). For being a manual, the content is approached in a more detailed and extended way. The first edition, in 1999, was organized by technicians of the Protection Department of IPHAN – DEPROT/IPHAN with technical-operational support of the *Grupo Tarefa do Programa Monumenta*, and from UNESCO, through the technical cooperation agreement with the Ministry of Culture. The second edition, in 2005, has the authorship of Carlos Fernando de Moura Delphin. The highlight for its content is in chapters 4, *Interventions and operations of preservation*, and mainly in chapter 5, *Recommendations for projects and inventions*, in which it's applied in a detailed way, passing through several important points, its respective subjects in order to guide the necessary actions concerning the care of the gardens. The manual brings important questions for the preservation in a practical way, approaching the way in which such actions must be taken, always supported by questions related to the patrimonial letters and the proper way of working with such assets.

4. THE SQUARE IN THE HISTORY OF THE CITY OF ARAGUARI (MG)

The advent of the city of Araguari is no different from the pattern attributed to the several cities of Triângulo Mineiro region and Brazil's inland. The populational formation of the territories has its origin attached to land ownership, resulting of the donation and transference of sesmaria to the Catholic Church and the donation of lands to the formation of religious patrimony that would give rise to the urban centers. The area's official occupation, according to MAMERI (1988), has started in 1815, with the claim of the Sesmaria of Corrêgo Indaiá.

The chapel which gave rise to Araguari has its first records dated 1823, the Chapter "*Senhor Bom Jesus da Cana Verde*". The village, known as *Bom Jesus da Cana Verde do Brejo Alegre*, establishes the association between religion and the water course (Córrego Brejo Alegre), which supported the settlement of the population in that place. From that initial core there was the origin of the first constructions, such as Nossa Senhora do Rosário and São Benedito's Chapels – aligned to the matrix, destined to the slave population – and Direita Street. Brejo Alegre Village was emancipated by the Provincial Law No. 3591 of August 28th 1888, named *Araguary*. Until 1895 the city had developed slowly, aligned to the rural economy. (PEIXOTO, VIEIRA, 2013)

The Mogiana Company of Railroads arrived in Araguari in 1896 which made the city become integrated to Triângulo Mineiro region. Araguari, in that moment, was already economically and historically attached to the cities of Bagagem and Araxá, due to both centralities. With the rails, there was a proximity to Uberaba and São Paulo. Araguari has become the first railroad connection between the middle-west and the Brazilian south-west and, in the 1930's, it was connected to Belo Horizonte with the inauguration of Ferro Oeste de Minas Railroad (EFOM). From those relations, there has begun a demand for a territorial planning which would support the envisioned urban growth.

The urban expansion plan of Araguari was created by Achilles Vidulich² and had total emphasis on the road matter and the land division. Thus, it hasn't fallen behind on urbanistic matters referred to the city. For example, specific places for the constructions of squares were defined, spaced each three blocks in the urban layout, in addition to settling the urban road over the existing river basin (OLIVEIRA, 2015). The beginning of the XX century delimited changes in the central area of the city, due to the establishing of the urban outline and the installment of Estrada de Ferro Goiás in 1906. With improvements in the infrastructure (transportation, electric power, sanitation) instigating the development of the commerce, there was also the concern with the city's aesthetics. From which there was alignment of houses and the urbanizations of the squares.

In the end of the XIX century the place where today Manoel Bonito Square is located was called Largo da Gameleira, due to a dense tree present in that place. In the beginning of the XX century, due to the claiming of the population, demanding better infrastructure, the square was urbanized with the city hall's financing. Law No. 266, which authorizes the construction of the first garden in that environment, dated 1923. The construction aiming for electric power was initiated in 1923 and inaugurated in 1924, called, then, Francisco Salles Square³ (Images 2 e 3).

Figure 2 and 3: Images of the square when it was still called Francisco Salles, 1938 and 1950 respectively



Source: Dr. Calil Porto Public Archive.

Through the image's analysis, we can notice that the way the old garden was built: the square was defined in a circular center, where the gazebo was located, and all the paths had

² No documentation nor precise information were found regarding the date of elaboration of the expansion plan at Doutor Calis Porto Public Archive of Araguari, only the record of its approval (Law No. 11 of 1895). (OLIVEIRA, 2016)

³ In honor of Francisco Antonio de Sales, mayor of Belo Horizonte and governor of Minas Gerais state in 1902.

access to this center in a tortuous way, creating drawings of the seedbeds. It's interesting to observe the pictures of the Square over time. While comparing the pictures, it's possible to understand the garden as a living and mutable organism. Over the years the growth and the expansion of the vegetation in the square are notable.

In the 1940's, a little over twenty years after its construction, the square was remodeled, possibly due to its degradation state, according to a feature on Gazeta do Triângulo newspaper of April 14th 1946. During the renovation, the gazebo was destroyed and in its place a luminous fountain was built (Jornal Gazeta do Triângulo 04/14/1946) (Image 2). Through the feature, it's possible to understand that the square was abandoned, and that the renovation, and consequently, the construction of the fountain gave "the main public square the ancient beauty and enchantment" back. Besides the fountain, with this renovation a garden was added with new vegetable species (Image 3).

With the election of Juscelino Kubitschek in 1955, there was the beginning, in 1956, of the transference of the Federal Capital to Planalto Central and the construction of the city of Brasília. The expansionist ideology of JK Government rebounded in a meaningful way all over Brazil, influencing several cities. The city of Araguari, under this influence, supported by the construction of BR-050 highway and the settlement of the Military Unit of Construction and Engineering (2nd Railroad Battalion), has been through changes in diverse sectors. According to Oliveira (2016), it's in line with these alterations that a demand for the renovation of Manoel Bonito Square emerged. The mayor, Miguel de Oliveira, hired the services of the architect João Jorge Coury to rebuild to central squares, Manoel Bonito Square and Getúlio Vargas Square, initiated in 1965 and concluded in 1966.

5. MANOEL BONITO SQUARE: MODERN PROJECT BY JOÃO JORGE COURY, 1966

Manoel Bonito Square would, then, be remodeled in 1965-1966. It's valid to say that, in the moment of the renovation of the Square, the Brazilian political scenery was tempestuous, right after the coup d'état of 1964 and the deposition of João Goulart of the presidency. According to Segawa (1999):

(...) Brasília is in the center of this expansionist Project and it built the final milestone of this architectonic avant-garde feed by a politics of ideological conciliations. The final chronological milestone of this step is in 1964 with the implantation of the military dictatorship, ending the utopia of the post-war (SEGAWA, 1999).

In this spectrum, the outcome of the entitled "Brazilian miracle", in the context of the dictatorship, influenced the cities of Triângulo Mineiro, which were benefited and had a meaningful economic growth, with emphasis to the city of Uberlândia. Through Brasília, also, the image of the "architect as a professional" was widespread mainly through Oscar Niemeyer's work.

Inserted in this context, the architect João Jorge Coury, from the 1950's, was considered a diffusor of the modern architecture, introducing a new architectonic vocabulary in

the region. It was in that moment when his production was consolidated and diversified, with the public power as his client. It's the modern architect who offers the city the modernity, in a political-social context searching for innovations (GUERRA, 1998).

Figure 4 and 5: Inauguration of João Jorge Coury's Project for the Square, 1966.



Source: Dr. Calil Porto Public Archive

Investments in the building industry, the industrialization and the importation of new materials to supply Brasília, also reflect on the production of the architect. Disposing of hard acquisition materials at the time, along with local materials, Coury started developing his own language. This language could be seen in the project of the squares, where there was, among its production, the greatest innovations, originality and expressivity. The previous implementation of the project of Tubal Vilela Square in Uberlândia (1962) guarantees to the architect the regional highlight, enabling the possibility of projecting free spaces in several cities inserted in that context.

For the renovation project of Manoel Bonito Square, João Jorge Coury reconsidered completely the former eclectic project. There isn't even the preservation of the pre-existing vegetation, an attitude that would be ordinary to contemporaneity. Guerra (1998), while analyzing Tubal Vilela Square's project, in Uberlândia, points out that, besides the architect is passionate about botanic, as a modern architect he wouldn't preserve the pre-existing species in his project, overall for being a great measure of exotic species. This is a hypothesis that he also has for his projects in Araguari.

The architect proposes a space where the community sense can manifest, at the same time that it seeks new ways of manifestation and living, of the collective public space of the square itself. The project of Manoel Bonito Square shows in a clear way the social perception of the architect to the vocation of the place, foreseeing spaces like an "open aired auditorium" in its interior.

The project of Manoel Bonito Square follows the pragmatic change of public and private Brazilian free spaces in the 1960's and r, which had in their interior equipment related to commerce and sport. This inclusion demands radical changes in the patterns of gardening which were made until then, and have a strict relation to the urban growth in Brazil. The cities grew in extension and in number of inhabitants, generating a greater demand for formal open aired leisure spaces (MACEDO, 2015; GUERRA,1996). In this case, there's only the commercial use in a way of rooms which are located in the central part of the square at a semi-buried level.

Besides the ramp structure which embraces the toilets, the commerce and the structures at a superior level, there's the luminous square fountain that also acts as a water

mirror (Image 7), positioned more to the north. In the external faces of the walls of both sides of the toilets, there's a tile panel (Image 6). According to a conversation with an employee of Araguari's City Hall responsible for the Square, Luciana Resende, such tiles were brought from Portugal do compose the square⁴.

Figure 6, 7, 8: Tiles, where it can be seen the commerce area, the fountain and cobogó. All of them in a precarious state of preservation.



Source: AUTHOR, 2018.

Regarding the vegetation, in the original project there're trees such as Sibipiruna and Quaresmeira. The unit of the project is conceived mainly by the paving of Portuguese stones, in parallel stripes of white and black stones, which become a milestone of language in his landscaping projects. Another milestone are the continuous benches, a clear contraposition of the previous benches which fit the maximum of three people.

It's interesting to highlight the tribute to the new Federal Capital present in the square, attached to the seedbed by the fountain, which has in its cobogó a reference to structural elements of the Palácio da Alvorada (Image 8). This tribute, even with a *kitsch* character, symbolizes the attention to detail by the architect.

The environment in the square is defined mainly by the ramp and commerce, which sections two environments in its extension (Image 9 and 10). The structures in higher levels, when not used for performances and cultural activities, constitute a living environment reserved for the people. In the southern part, the continuous and extensive benches are another living environment, attached to the vegetation, however less reserved than the previous ones. In the northern part, next to the parking lot, there's what we can call as a cozier space, attached to higher trees and the luminous fountain. This description allows us to notice that the landscaping is also thought in a way to define the space in the interior of the square, having the vegetation an excellent spatial definer.

Coury uses mainly palm trees (imperial, mainly), bushes and even benches to delimit spaces, and he makes the corners a convergence point to the center of the square. Due to the present of the ramp with the commerce in the center of the square, the interior of the square is not entirely free even if the ramp is leaked allowing the flux of pedestrians. Even so, the two spatialities attributed to the square, from the division by the ramp, have their respective free centers, which keep the welcoming characteristic of the space. Bearing in mind the center of the square, over the ramp, as a space of great flux of pedestrians, the option of allocate commercial rooms in this space demonstrates a smart solution and clearly not random.

⁴ Such information was obtained during informal conversations with workers and inhabitants of the city, however there wasn't found any kind of documentation that proves it.

It also composed the project conception of João Jorgue Coury the idea of the square as a shortcut. And, this way besides definite fluxes through diagonals through which the people can get shortcuts, there's in Manoel Bonito Square the central ramp working as a bridge to Brasil Acciolly Street and Travessa São Bento (Image 10).

Figure 9, 10: Copy of the original plant, aerial view of the square.



Source: Personal Archive of the teacher Maria Eliza Guerra; AUTHOR, 2018.

6. THE CURRENT SITUATION OF THE SQUARE

The composition projected by João Jorge Coury remains in Manoel Bonito Square until modernity. Even with diverse alterations, the Square while an architectonic-landscaping element is still very similar to how it was thought. That, however, isn't necessarily a good sign: it's visible that, right after its renovation, the square was forgotten by the public power in the city and it became hostage of the actions of time and degradation. The interventions which were accomplished had a few care with the asset. Such interpretation emerges when you take a look specially at the garden. The vegetation was transformed, the great majority of species that are of traditional use of the architect in his free space projects are lost (such as Sibipirunas, for example), there wasn't care or preservation.

From a simple walk through the square it's possible to notice it's state of degradation: it's dirty; the vegetation is greatly deteriorated and altered; the guardrails are all very rusty; there are stains of humidity all over the square, mainly in its architectonic structures; there are spots where the Portuguese stones are missing or damaged, and when they are replaced it's done in an improper way; there's too much graffiti; the garbage bins are in a precarious state; there's oxidation of the metals and broken glass. Finally, even if nothing corrupts the structure of the square and its equipment, its preservation state is not proper.

The damages resulting from the presence of water and humidity are a separate issue. Talking to the city hall's employees and even with some pedestrians, the matters concerning drainage are always mentioned. The employee of the Association of Cultural Producers and Artisans of Araguari (APCAR), located in the interior of the square, relates that in rainy seasons working is very complicate, because the rooms are flooded and there's water leaking thorough the walls and ceiling. It's possible to easily validate the report through the leaking and humidity stains on the walls, although the craft store is the most well-maintained environment, due to its use. The ceilings and all the rooms present infiltration, peeling and stains, all possibly due to

humidity. Luciana Resende, the employee responsible for the cleaning, reported that even if, due to the relief, the rainfall falls with great intensity the grids aren't enough to contain it, even with rainfalls not so intense.

There's the record of two more recent renovations of the square, one in 2001 in the management of the Mayor Marcos Alvim (2001-2004), which counted on a renovation of the toilets – they are currently in a precarious state, although they are locked most of the time. Another one in 2012, with the objective of “preserving”, in the first management of Marcos Coelho (2009-2012) as a mayor – in which, we can identify the reposition of the missing Portuguese stones, in a very irregular way; accessibility ramps were built by the edges of the square, and taking the taxi stands to the interior of the square, as predicted in the project in a new structure.

The poor preservation state of the Square reflects its use, the abandon of the space by part of the public power marginalized it and creates among population the feeling of insecurity. It's important to emphasize that the degradation of the square is not only physical, but also social. The square in the contemporaneity is no longer used as a leisure equipment as in the past, and the imminent insecurity only promotes its greater disuse. It all culminates in a kind of vicious cycle: the abandon by the public power takes to disuse by the people, there's marginalization of the space and, therefore, the square fails to comply with its traditional function of an aggregating public space.

There are several problems related to the security of Manoel Bonito Square. On April 26th 2015, according to a local feature of *Jornal Gazeta do Triângulo*, a young man was found dead in the premises of the square, with a stab wound⁵. The image of the square is many times associated to drug use that happens in its premises.

7. FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The present paper comprehends that the raised documentation regarding the square and its history, in this respect, complies with the primordial objective of affirming the cultural valuation of Manoel Bonito Square in the city of Araguari, Minas Gerais. With this cultural valuation acknowledged, the square can't remain in the degradation state it currently is.

Due to the relevance demonstrated through the historical research, we long for this paper to collaborate with the process of so the square can be considered a cultural heritage by the municipality, recognizing it as an important safeguard instrument. It's recommended, ideally, a restoration project focused on the Square, but, beyond that, a preservation approach which comprehends the urban set at which it's inserted, in line with the discussions of the Urban Environmental Patrimony and Cultural Landscape. It's necessary that the population mobilizes itself in order to demand an action by the public power and responsible entities. A symbolic asset with such an historical importance for the city, a free public space in the central area, shouldn't remain in the degradation state in which Manoel Bonito Square lies.

⁵ <http://gazetadotriangulo.com.br/tmp/noticias/policia-civil-identifica-autor-de-assassinato-no-centro/> acesso realizado em 24/04/2018, às 17h41min

Acknowledgments

I thank CAPES, by the financial support and viabilization of publications as this one. I thank PhD Professor Marília Maria Brasileiro Teixeira do Vale, counselor of the Project which gave rise to this article.

BIBLIOGRAPHIC REFERENCES

AÑÓN-FELIÚ, Carmen. **El jardín histórico: notas para una metodología previa al proyecto de recuperación**, 1989, p. 312-325. In: ICOMOS – IFLA. Comité International des Jardins et des Sites Historiques. Journal scientifique: Jardins et Sites Historiques. 1993.

ARAGUARI. Lei Municipal n. 266, 25 de julho de 1923.

_____. Lei Provincial n. 3591 de 28 de agosto de 1888.

CARNEIRO, A. R. S. **A conservação do jardim moderno: o jardim moderno como fato marcante do modernismo brasileiro e a sua proteção, gestão e conservação**. In: Curso Latino Americano sobre a Conservação da Arquitetura Moderna – MARC/AL, 1.,2009.

_____. CASTEL-BRANCO, Cristina; SILVA, Joelmir Marques da. **Burle Marx no Recife: Restauo do Jardim do Aeroporto dos Guararapes como bem patrimonial**. In: Paisagem e Ambiente: Ensaios – N. 37, São Paulo, p. 53-71, 2016.

CARTA DE FLORENÇA, (1981) in **Cartas Patrimoniais**, Cury Isabelle (org.). IPHAN, Rio de Janeiro. Edições do patrimônio, 2000.

CARTA DOS JARDINS HISTÓRICOS. CARTA DE JUIZ DE FORA. 2010. Avaiabe in: <http://portal.iphan.gov.br/baixaFcdAnexo.do;jsessionid=3D52CDFD271ACC123EEBD3C8E284FDB1?id=2510>. Acesso em: 20 fev. 2010.

DELPHIM, Carlos Fernando de Moura. Manual de intervenções em jardins históricos. Brasília: Iphan, 2005.

GUERRA, Maria Eliza Alves. **As praças Moderna de João Jorge Coury no Triângulo Mineiro**. Dissertação (Mestrado) – Escola de Engenharia de São Carlos, Universidade de São Paulo, São Carlos, 1998.

IPHAN, PROGRAMA MONUMENTA. **Manual de Intervenções em Jardins Históricos**. 1999.

JORNAL **Gazeta do Triângulo**. (1930-1970)

MACEDO, S. S. **Jardins Brasileiros – origens e relevância**. In: PESSOA, A.; FASOLATO, D. (org). Jardins históricos: intervenção e valorização do patrimônio paisagístico. Rio de Janeiro: Fundação Casa de Rui Barbosa, 2016.

MAMERI, Abdala. **Pelos caminhos da história: pessoas, coisas e fatos de Araguari**. Araguari: ARTGRAF, 1988.

OLIVEIRA, LUCAS MARTINS DE. **Araguari: o sistema de espaços livres na forma urbana**. Dissertação (Mestrado) – Faculdade de Arquitetura e Urbanismo, Universidade de São Paulo. São Paulo, 2015.

PEIXOTO, João Paulo Campos. CUNHA, Claudia dos Reis e. **A contribuição da Revista CJ Arquitetura para a revisão conceitual no campo do patrimônio cultural no Brasil**. In: Encontro Internacional sobre Preservação do Patrimônio Edificado (5.:2017: Salvador, BA), 2017, Salvador - BA. Anais do V Encontro Internacional sobre Preservação do Patrimônio Edificado - Arquimemória, 2017.

PEIXOTO, Juscélia A.; VIEIRA, Aparecida G. C. **Araguari e sua história**. Goiânia: Kelps, 2013.

SEGAWA, Hugo. **Arquiteturas no Brasil 1900 - 1990**. Edusp, São Paulo; 2ª edição, 1999.