

## URBAN TRANSIT: MEMORY AND MATERIAL CULTURE IN QUIXADÁ (1900-1964)<sup>1</sup>

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**ABSTRACT:** This research is part of the project “Allegory of Heritage: Nature, technique and cross-images of the central Ceará backlands” (NATIMA). The activities carried out by this project were divided into two blocks: 1- research on the history and cultural heritage of the Ceará backlands; 2- interventions in

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<sup>1</sup> This work is part of the artistic-cultural project “Allegory of Heritage: nature, technique and cross-images of the Ceará backlands” (NATIMA), which started in February 2018. This project is part of the program of artistic initiation scholarships offered by the University. State of Ceará, with FECLESC as its operating space, which aims to link research, teaching and extension. The activities carried out by this project were divided into two blocks: 1- research on the history and cultural heritage of the Ceará backlands; 2- interventions in public schools through workshops on the research carried out. These activities were performed by three fellows: Antonio Samuel; Fabricia Santos and Rita de Cassia. All members are part of the UECE/FECLESC History course, as well as the project is coordinated by Professor Assis Daniel Gomes. An early version of this work was presented at MIHL's III Interdisciplinary Day of History and Literature on September 22 and 24, 2018.

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public schools through workshops on the research carried out. This paper seeks to analyze the representations of the architectural heritage of Quixadá, relating it to the interventions made in its space for the construction of educational establishment between 1900 and 1964. Verifying through photographs the buildings of these buildings, their political relations and economical for building the image of Quixadá as an important space for education in the Ceará backlands. We understand both photographs and this heritage “stone and lime” as a monument document (LE GOFF, 1990), produced in a given time and space. As well as photography is a private monument (BARTHES, 1982). The focus of the choice of photography for the analysis was to verify the common life (CERTEAU, 1993) of the inhabitants of that urban space; Thus, we searched for photos that represented the daily life of the city and its material heritage, specifically those linked to its religious monuments. Finally, such elements contained in photography were built to exalt some particularities used in the construction of local identity.

Keywords: Quixadá. Representations. Patrimony

### INTRODUCTION

In this exhibition about the actions taken by NATIMA, we chose to address the memory and material culture of the city of Quixadá. According to Gomes (2018), the construction of a representation about Quixada's urban daily life is linked to the invention of its identity and also marks a historical process in Brazil, given that the photos we analyzed are immersed in the so-called First Republic or “Old Republic”.

The proposed dialogue in this paper is linked to photography as a source of research for history. For this, we use those collected and cataloged by NATIMA, for example, one of the institutions researched for this collection was the Jacinto de Sousa Historical Museum, located at Station Square in Quixadá. At first the institution was known as the Quixadá Historical Museum, but in the name of the artist Jacinto de Sousa the building was named after him.

Jacinto de Sousa was an artist known for his talent in making art through sculpture, and for being a photographer in his day - a self-taught visual arts artist who had visibility in the Brazilian Northeast. The museum named after him has the purpose of preserving the cultural memory of Quixadá, through photographic images, models and other ancient objects.

In order to do this work, we first worked on academic texts such as Roger Chartier (1991) and Ana Mauad (2014), seeking to deepen the concept of representation and the use of photography as a historical source. The discussion of the texts of

these authors gave us a clearer view of how to look at images, be it photography or discursive.

In a second moment, the group set out to search for images that represented the city of Quixadá (Ceará) between 1854 and 1964. The group searched these photos in libraries, museums, and websites that worked to archive this material, for example, the website of the Catholic College of Quixadá and blogs of memorialist content that expose images that were taken in the years chosen for the research. After collecting the images, a cataloging of the images was made through two distinct forms: one referring to the technical issues of photography and the other to historical elements.

The focus of the choice of photography for the analysis was to verify the common life (CERTEAU, 1993) of the inhabitants of that urban space; Thus, we searched for photos that represented the daily life of the city and its material heritage, specifically those linked to its religious monuments. We understand both the photographs and the “stone and lime” heritage as a monument document (LE GOFF, 1990), produced

in a given time and space. As well as photography is a private monument (BARTHES, 1982). Therefore, according to Gomes, “photography must be transformed into an image where this individual character becomes a collective symbolic. It is therefore this perspective that we will also seek to look at photographs, that is, their transformation into images” (2018, p.01).

## TRACES OF A TIME

In figure 1 below, it depicts the image of the structure and material culture of the Santa Cruz monastery in *Serra do Estevão*, where sisters were isolated from temporal practices and engaged in spiritual activities. The monastery is seen by Western society as a place of prayer, worship of God and symbol of the presence of a belief, for example Christianity. The image was taken by Jacinto de Sousa in the 1920s.

Figure 1. Santa Cruz Monastery in 1920.



Source: Jacinto de Sousa Museum Photo Collection

In Figure 2, the photograph of José de Barros Square and the Sacred Heart of Jesus Church were captured, depicting daily life at that time, showing the movement of people around the square and its use as a place of sociability. Photograph also produced by the plastic artist Jacinto de Sousa.

Figure 2. José de Barros Square in 1920.



Source: Jacinto de Sousa Museum Photo Collection

We observe here the similarity between two structures linked to a religion, not dealing here with the structural appearance, but with its use, because as much as they are linked to a religion both differ in a simple aspect: where the structure Church is a place reserved For the general public, the monastery is a place reserved for a specific public: the nuns.

However, with regard to these two heritage sites, both have a very intense representative feature in this period, because, taking into account the time depicted, we see that they are structures linked to the initial and cultural development of Quixadá. Based on this principle, it is possible to observe which religion prevailed in the city and played a prominent role in its political and economic life.

The photographic image is also something that reminds us of memory, where it shows a people who had their particular customs, beliefs, daily activities, etc. According (POLLAK, 1992), memory must also be understood as a phenomenon and construction of the collective, the social and the symbolic. Therefore, the identity of the Quixadá people represented in the image in this period is the result of the social movement in the present daily life of its inhabitants and a framing of memory made by a certain group.

It is very interesting to observe these two images, because both carry a lot of similarity and distinction at the same time. As discussed above, the issue of similarity in being religious

centers will now be made to observe the difference between the two images by portraying a very different daily life. We can say that differently from what is being portrayed in the image of José de Barros Square, which stands out for being, according to Gomes (2016), a place of order, but also of disorder, love and unloving, it is a place of encounter and the mismatch. The image of the monastery depicts a more private and private place where its target audience, the sisters, is dedicated to prayers, fasts, and other activities in their daily lives.

In figure 2, the photograph also framed a place that will be a local reference in later years, it is the urban perimeter of the city, is the heart of the city and its representation. José de Barros Square, which in the future will be known as Leão Square, during this period was the receiving stage of events that happened to praise and value this city, such as gangs, carnival, religious festivals, etc. Although the square is of mere importance to these movements, what draws attention is the fact that people go to the square to meet, exchange ideas, date, etc. Turning to the present, we think how people no longer have this custom of meeting

others to dialogue in these spaces, this culture has been gradually taken over by technology and virtual dialogue.

Photographer Jacinto de Sousa somehow sought through photography number 2 to convey the idea of Quixadá as a modern and progressive city, leaving aside the poor vision and other uses of the square by the other people who inhabited it. So here we have an identity of the city created by the photography producer. According to what is being represented in the image, according to (PÁDUA, 2010), the human being always acts from senses and understandings, being immersed in language, mechanisms of cognition and the presence of historically constructed cultural visions. Thus we have a break in the reality of everyday life by focusing only on what is printed in photography taking it as “truth”.

Returning to the structure of the Mother Church that appears at the bottom of the image. What is noteworthy about this structure is the fact that its clock has a cultural charge, because if we look closely at it, you can see that in addition to having the numbers in Roman numeral, the number “IV”, the

structure carried elements of the economic and social situation when it was founded in 1784 and reformed in 1895. However in the twentieth century, its architectural structure will be expanded with the construction of the Sacred Heart of Jesus College in 1938.

## FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The activity with photography, as an imaginary representation, is an exercise that demands from the researcher a vision beyond what is printed, is to transport his gaze to the past and to realize that behind people's constructions, objects and daily life, one can see features constructed by certain social groups that gave the city status in a certain period and defended its material progress.

Finally, the material heritage represented by photography wanted to strengthen the image of a modern city, which Quixadá was not, and to show institutions and buildings

that symbolized a material growth that was used to propagate this idealized image about it.

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