

## THE RELATED TECHNIQUES: REPRESENTATIONS OF THE QUIXADAENSE DAILY (1885-1930)<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 Ceará backlands” (NATIMA), started in February 2018. The activities carried out by this project were divided into two blocks: 1- research on the history and cultural heritage of the backlands of Ceará; 2- interventions in public schools through workshops on the research carried out. In this paper, we intend to think about the

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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.

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representations of Quixadá urban daily life made from some photographs. For this, we chose to analyze images of this city produced between 1885 and 1930. Thus, aiming to work the representations of their daily life through the photographs produced in this period, we looked at their sayings and unspoken (CERTEAU, 1993). Finally, they identified how these representations helped in the construction of their own image, their spaces of sociability and their identity. For this, cataloging of several photographs was made, selecting, among them, those that will be presented and analyzed in this work: José de Barros Square by photographer Jacinto de Sousa (1920) and Quixadá City by photographer Miguel de Moura (1885- 1909). From this analysis we also understand the contexts of an era, the desires to maintain a memory of the city and the attempts to silence the other images that opposed this idealization represented by photographs.

**Keywords:** Representation. Daily. Quixadá

## INTRODUCTION

The city of Quixadá, which was a site in its early days, became a village in 1870 after becoming independent of Quixeramobim. With its independence begins to develop as a village, especially with the creation of the town hall. Only from 1889, Quixadá gains the status of city. It is in this context that Miguel de Moura's photography from 1885-1909 is inserted. Already the second photograph that will be worked was recorded by Jacinto de Sousa, in 1920, in the period of the Old Republic,

when the country was immersed in political issues. From this, we can think of the motivations that surrounded these records in search of creating the image of Quixadá and the imaginary that was built as a way to affirm its process of urbanization and progress.

## **HERITAGE, TECHNIQUE AND MEMORY**

To think of photography as a source for history, which allows us to understand the context of an epoch, it is essential to make readings that make reference to this source. For example, Ana Maria Maud (1996) is one of the researchers who addresses the thematic. She pays attention to the meaning present in photographs since the 19th century and questions us:

But is photography a faithful copy of the world and its events as the Eight hundred positivists wanted? For a long time this inseparable mark of reality was attributed to the photographic image, being its use extended to the field of the most different sciences. (1996, p.02)

With this we realize how the idea was built that photography brings itself a truth about what was photographed, which often prevents open a range of questions about it. At this point comes the work of the historian, who seeks to break these paradigms, bringing new interpretations of the image. According to Le Goff,

What survives is not the whole of what existed in the past, but a choice made either by the forces operating in the temporal development of the world and humanity, or by those dedicated to the science of the past and the passing of time, historians. These materials of memory can come in two main forms: monuments, heritage of the past, and documents, the choice of the historian (1996, p.535).

From this, we can understand photography as a documentary-monument, because it carries the choices and intentions of those who produced it. When we analyze this way we can understand the motivations and interests of an era and a society in constructing meaning for these images.

To carry out the research the first step taken was the search for photographs. We visited the city's museums to look for photographs from the late 19th and early 20th centuries. In

addition to these places, we mapped memorialist blogs about Quixadá and facebook pages, such as “Quixadá Antiga” (created in 2015 by Cícero Costa), which also does memorialist work on the city. Costa built on his page a virtual album with photos that portray aspects of the private and social life of the Quixada people. In it we collected some photographs that portrayed the common life (CERTEAU, 1993) in this urban space; We also searched the site of “Brasiliana Fotográfico”, by Miguel de Moura, in order to find images referring to the period selected for the research; We seek images that represent their daily lives, their spaces of sociability, their material and natural heritage.

The second step was based on cataloging of several photographs found on Quixadá. Both content form issues - for example, the place, theme, and people portrayed - were analyzed as well as the person who produced the photograph. As well as issues of form of expression such as photo size, photo type, support, sharpness and framing. After this process we arrived at the choice of the photographs covered in this research. We understand that photography is a documentary-monument (LE

GOFF, 1990) and a private monument (BARTHES, 1982). Finally, for Gomes, “photography must become 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).

The first selected photograph dates from 1885-1909 and is authored by Miguel de Moura, one of the forerunners of making allegorical photomontages, for example, the images: The Lady of Flowers and Imitation of Roman Wrestling, preserved in the Thereza Christina Maria collection of the National Library in Rio de Janeiro. The photograph we highlight here brings the city of Quixadá in the late nineteenth century. In it we can observe a panoramic view of the Mother Church and part of the city, which in this period was in the process of urban growth. It also presents the natural landscape that surrounds all this urban space.

Figure 1 - City of Quixadá



Fonte: Miguel de Moura (1895-1909)

The second photograph selected for the research dates from the 1920s and was taken by Jacinto de Sousa, sculptor and photographer from Quixadá, considered one of the most important artistic artists of Ceará. Being a self-taught, he sought, through the visual arts, to express his gaze and his sensitivity on the Ceará backlands. For example, in his work “The Worker”, we

verify his representations about the Quixadá proletarians. We highlight here the photograph that deals with José de Barros Square. In it we have the Mother Church, the space that would later be the Sacred Heart of Jesus College and some children present on the site, who stood in front of the camera for the record, with traces of curiosity, fear and suspicion.

Figure 2 - José de Barros Square



Source: <https://www.facebook.com/QuixadaAntiga/>

From the analysis of the two photographs, we realized how an imaginary was built of a beautiful city, rich in its natural environment, a city that would be in the process of development and expansion. According to Pesavento (2004), nature as an object of aesthetic construction creates the landscape as its representation. When both urban and natural spaces are brought into focus, we seek to build a representation of the city, identifying it as a place that is intended to be modern, thus placing itself in front of the other places.

The capture of the image of the Mother Church and the panoramic view of Quixadá in the nineteenth century and the 1920 photograph of the same building, however, focusing specifically on it, next to the space that would become the Sacred Heart of Jesus College leads us to think about the attempt, bring to the population of the city an idea of progress, in order to show the development from the constructions of sociability spaces, as well as images that give the idea of an airy, sanitized space and owner of important constructions used to represent the growth Quixadaense material. In addition, the 1920s photograph, also

bearing the image of children who were present in that space, builds an image about the use of that place by their social classes, as a way of determining a daily life for the city, intentionally producing it.

According to Henri Lefebvre (1972, p.227), “despite efforts to institutionalize it, daily life escapes; its base is hidden, escaping the influence of forms”. We can understand that daily life is a product of culture, but daily life is not tied to forms and should not be thought of as something determined, it is lived. When you have the types of photographs mentioned above and are propagated, you create in the local population the image of a city where people have spaces of sociability, an image about childhood and urban infrastructure, as well as their environment. creating in them an idea that everything is going towards progress.

Several questions are pertinent when we analyze the photographs: What was the socioeconomic life of the families of the children in the photograph like? What is your access to education? Where did they live, in the center or outskirts of

Quixadá? Or how was the natural space in one of the photographs used? Was he another victim of urban sprawl? Or, the children in the photos are African descendants who live with their families in a Quixadá in the 1920s, after 32 years of the signing of the Golden Law that decreed the extinction of slavery in Brazil. These questions are thus pertinent: How was the socioeconomic life of their families? What is your access to education? Where did they live, in the center or outskirts of Quixadá?

Finally, the visual field (GOMES, 2016) of this photographer did not portray the socioeconomic conditions of this population, which also lived in the first years after the 1915 drought. Seek to make a representation of this urban space as modern, to silence the tensions and clashes of classes that were undertaken in it.

## **FINAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Many difficulties were present during the research, especially the very process of finding the photographs. However, we realize how much it is necessary to discuss history through these sources and to verify the construction of their urban representations, which serve, in turn, as an element for the construction of their identity. We also realize the importance of a measure of preservation of these photographs that are being lost over time, leading to a lack of such sources to discuss the construction of the history of Quixadá.

From the analysis of the photographs we can conclude that, in most cases, it is used as a “representation of the real”. The captured image is seen as a truth, leading to no questioning. However, we do know that photographs are representations. They carry the choices, the interests, the motivations of an era. In the case of the photographs used here, we see how strong was the attempt to build the image of a progressive city, however, we know that they sometimes silence the reality of that society, the tensions present in the city and so many other issues, that were not selected for the registry.

There are many ways to research and think about the history of a place. Photography fits into this tangle of options. Finally, it enabled us to understand the contexts of an epoch, the desires to maintain a memory of the city, and attempts to silence the other images that countered this idealization.

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