

Ruins of the Jesuit - Guaranis Missions of São Miguel Arcanjo: An Overview on the UNESCO World Heritage in Brazil

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Abstract:

The study deals with the Jesuit-Guarani Missions of São Miguel Arcanjo, located in Brazil, more precisely in the Rio Grande do Sul state, as National Heritage protected by the National Historical and Artistic Heritage Institute (IPHAN) and recognised as World Heritage by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), its relation with the others Jesuit reductions in the region and also as a tourist attraction. Initially, the dimensions of a site are contextualised as heritage of humanity, as a tangible property built or natural, linking it to others items related in the World Heritage List that are located in the Brazilian scene. Subsequently, it is offered a clipping about the Jesuit Missions on the continent, whose existence is usually estimated at 30 missions. These indigenous reductions, presented as an achievement of Jesuit missionaries in the context of the Catholic Church's Counter-Reformation, happen at Spanish America territory, although social and architecturally materialise in places that currently belong to the countries of Paraguay, Argentina and Brazil. The research unfolds specifically on the missions located in Brazil, in the study of documents with asset recognition and bibliographic theoretical references. However, an analysis *in loco* enables recognition as a tourist attraction. The objective in research is to strengthen the intention of appropriation of an identity as reference of the *gaúcho* people and of the Brazilian nation itself.

Keywords: World Heritage; Cultural Heritage; Jesuit Missions; São Miguel Arcanjo

Resumo:

O estudo trata das Missões Jesuíta - Guaraníticas de São Miguel Arcanjo, situado no Brasil, mais precisamente no estado do Rio Grande do Sul, como Patrimônio Nacional (IPHAN), e

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Mundial reconhecido pela Organização das Nações Unidas para a Educação, a Ciência e a Cultura (UNESCO), sua relação com as demais reduções jesuítas na região e ainda como atrativo turístico. Inicialmente, contextualiza-se a dimensão de um local como patrimônio da humanidade, seja como bem material construído ou natural, relacionando-o com outros itens presentes na Lista do Patrimônio Mundial, situados no cenário brasileiro. Deste modo, faz-se posteriormente, um recorte acerca das Missões Jesuíticas no continente, cuja existência é estimada geralmente em trinta missões. Estas reduções indígenas, apresentadas como uma realização de missionários jesuítas, no contexto da Contrarreforma da Igreja Católica, acontecem em solo da América espanhola, embora materializem-se social e arquitetonicamente em territórios que atualmente pertencem aos países de Paraguai, Argentina e Brasil. A pesquisa desdobra-se especificamente sobre as missões localizadas no Brasil, no estudo de documentos com reconhecimento patrimonial, e referenciais teóricos bibliográficos. Entretanto, a análise *in loco* possibilita o reconhecimento como atrativo turístico. Objetiva-se na pesquisa, reforçar a intenção da apropriação de uma identidade que seja fruto da América espanhola como referência identitária do povo gaúcho brasileiro, e da própria nação brasileira.

Palavras-chave: Patrimônio Mundial; Patrimônio Cultural; Missões Jesuítas; São Miguel das Missões

Resumen:

Este estudio trata sobre las Misiones Jesuíticas - Guaraníticas de San Miguel Arcángel, situadas en Brasil, más precisamente en el estado de Rio Grande do Sul, cómo Patrimonio Nacional (IPHAN) y mundial reconocido por las Naciones Unidas para la Educación, la Ciencia y la cultura (UNESCO), por su relación con las demás localizaciones jesuíticas de la región y también como una atracción turística.

Inicialmente, se contextualiza la dimensión de un sitio cómo Patrimonio de la Humanidad, - sea material construido o natural -, relacionándolo con otros elementos en la lista del Patrimonio Mundial que se encuentra en la escena brasileña. Seguidamente, se hace un recorte de las misiones jesuitas en el continente, cuya existencia por lo general se estima en treinta misiones.

Estas localizaciones indígenas que se presentan como un logro de los misioneros jesuitas en el contexto de la Contrarreforma de la Iglesia Católica, se llevan a cabo en territorio de la América española, aunque social y arquitectónicamente se materialicen en los territorios que actualmente pertenecen a los países de Paraguay, Argentina y Brasil.

La investigación se desarrolla específicamente en las misiones ubicadas en Brasil, en el estudio de documentos con reconocimiento patrimonial y marcos teóricos bibliográficos. Sin embargo, el análisis permite el reconocimiento como una atracción turística.

El objetivo de la investigación es fortalecer la intención de apropiación de una identidad -que sea resultado de la América española-, como una referencia de la identidad del gaucho de Brasil y de la propia nación brasileña.

Palabras Clave: Patrimonio Mundial; Patrimonio Cultural; Misiones Jesuíticas; San Miguel de las Misiones

1. Introduction

This research aims to present some general points about the heritage of São Miguel Arcanjo, the ruins located in the National Historical Park of the Missions, in Brazil. Its initial formation refers to Spanish America and paradoxically to the creation of a specific territory of the Jesuit priests, resultant of a subsequent geopolitical project of the Catholic Church's Counter-Reformation. It can be said that, over time, these ruins of an old building held by indigenous labor have become values of an imaginary identity of Brazil and they also have contributed to others from neighbouring nations.

Nowadays, the tourist attraction has the effort and the organization of policies from various countries to present it as a Cultural Route. However, several other structural actions, that will not be approached here, inhibit the achievement of specific cultural tourism itineraries with these tourism attractions and resources located in Brazil, Argentina and Paraguay. The presented text is a synthesis of this condition.

The research is based on several references in terms of its methodology. As method, an effort is made for the recognition of contrasting conditions, always looking for a relation to different wholes. To this common adoption in using genetic history in terms of "observation guided by experience and look informed by theory, in order to capture the real from the visible" (Cunha, Canuto, Linhares and Monte-Mor, 2003: 72), it is presupposed even for small considerations. It's expected to contribute to the understanding of the contradictions that emerge from the historical process and, more than that, the ability to understand them as mismatch of times, of unrealised virtualities (Cunha, Canuto, Linhares and Monte-Mor, 2003: 72). More specifically, the look adopted portrays the spatial dimension, which closer to the deployments of this method as History-Space (Harvey, 2004).

In the framework of this research were used some methodological procedures. Initially, it is carried out an exploratory study about the Heritage with UNESCO protection in Brazil. At this study, stands out the direct observation in the object: the ruins of São Miguel as well as the recognition of their surroundings. To it, it is added to operational difficulty in developing it as a transnational circuit. Therefore, the research is restricted to Brazil, where social actors in/from the site directly or indirectly involved with its development were interviewed.

The interviews were informal, without a previous script to be followed, which allowed observing a wealth of information from several people who have in memory some contextualization about that space. With this research is expected to reflect about the possibilities of more real, current and social Policies towards Cultural Heritage.

2. Heritage of Humanity panorama in Brazil

The heritage can be portrayed as a synthesis of the legacy left by a process of the past; a historical, artistic, architectural or natural heritage that identifies memorable values. It relates to a resource that must be conserved in the present and transmitted to future generations as a common good for all people around the world, regardless of their geographical position. But symbolic values determine its recognition by various dimensions (Riegl, 2008), and several hierarchical qualifications, from the understanding of the local community, to national and international levels.

Therefore, from 1959, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) develops international campaigns for the recognition and preservation of historical sites. In order to strengthen these campaigns in the international community, this institution, together with the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), starts, among others projects, the elaboration of a convention on the protection of heritage, establishing a framework of assumptions to the subject. So takes place in Paris, in 1972, the Convention on the protection of World Heritage which provides that Member States undertake to support the identification, protection, conservation and the enhancement of cultural and natural heritage of their territory. The sites registered and declared at the UNESCO World Heritage List constitute a universal heritage, with whose protection the entire international community has a duty to cooperate (UNESCO, 2016).

To be elected as World Heritage, the property must present recognizable value from some criteria defined in the Paris Convention. Among these criteria, the declared goods with verified authenticity must testify the exchange of values and significant periods of human history,

providing unique or exceptional testimony to a particular culture, or representing ecological and biological phenomena or natural beauty.

Thus, according to the United Nations, the heritage can be classified into two groups: cultural or natural. The category of properties recognised as Natural Heritage consists of monuments or natural sites, geological and physiographic formations and precisely delineated animal and plant threatened species' habitat areas which are of outstanding universal value whether by the scientific feature, by the conservation or by their natural beauty (IPHAN, 2008: 10).

The properties determined as cultural heritage are characterized as monuments – architectural works, monumental sculpture and paintings or structures of an archeological character; sites – works of Man or combined works of Man and Nature; and sets of buildings whose architecture, unity and integration to the landscape are of outstanding universal value, from the historical, aesthetic, ethnological or anthropological points of view. The assets can also be considered as mixed cultural and natural heritage, if their characteristics refer entirely or partially to both definitions of natural and cultural heritage (IPHAN, 2008: 11).

In 2003, the international community also adopted a list of intangible properties (forms and means) as World Cultural Heritage. Therefore, it established a Convention for safeguarding this kind of heritage. This is a more vulnerable relation since it is in constant change but of great importance for the protection of cultural manifestations, traditions and memories, people's culture's constituent factors. In this chapter, however, the clipping is about the material heritage present in South America, specifically in Brazil.

According to UNESCO, by the year 2015, the World Heritage List included 1.031 properties, 802 of these as cultural heritage, 197 natural and 32 mixed properties, distributed among 163 Member States. Italy is currently the country that houses the largest number of sites related in the list. Brazil, also one of the Member States of the Convention, currently has 12 properties recognised as World Cultural Heritage and seven reserves of Natural Heritage (UNESCO, 2016). Of these properties, two are located in the southern region of Brazil, five in the southeast region, four in the midwest, six in the northeast and one in the northern region of the country (Figure 1).



Figure 1. Map representing the World Heritage in Brazil

Source: Authors

In 1980, the historic city of Ouro Preto, located in the state of Minas Gerais (MG), was the Brazil's first site to be declared by UNESCO as cultural heritage. Other country's properties recognised in this category are:

North – the Olinda historic centre (PE); the historic centre of Salvador (BA);

Midwest – the Pilot Plan of Brasília (DF); the historic centre of the city of Goiás (GO);

Northeast – the Serra da Capivara National Park (PI); the historic centre of São Luiz do Maranhão (MA); the Diamantina historic centre (MG);

Southeast – the Sanctuary of Bom Jesus de Matosinhos (MG); the São Francisco Square (SE); and the city of Rio de Janeiro (RJ), for its landscapes between the city and the sea;

Southern – the Jesuit- Guarani Missions, ruins of São Miguel Arcanjo (RS).

Can be portrayed that the Olindas historic centre, the ruins of São Miguel Arcanjo, the historic centre of Salvador, the Sanctuary of Bom Jesus de Matosinhos, the Serra da Capivara National Park, the historic centre of São Luiz do Maranhão and the Diamantina historic centre

stand out as attractions and formers of the tourism offer in their respective localities. The Pilot Plan of Brasília, proposed by the architect and urban planner Lúcio Costa and built in the late 1950s to host the federal capital, has its own specificity for recognition and visitation, and the other properties contribute to the development and differentiation of primary offering. However, it is known that the choice of Rio de Janeiro city to host the 2016 Olympics was associated with its landscapes values.

In 1986, the first natural heritage to be recognised in Brazil by UNESCO was the National Park of Iguazu, located between the state of Paraná and the province of Misiones in Argentina. Later, beyond this, were declared as World Heritage in Brazil: the Atlantic Forest reserves in the southeast region; the coast of Discovery, between the states of Bahia and Espírito Santo; the protected areas complex of Central Amazonia (AM), of Pantanal (MT), of the Cerrado at the Chapada dos Veadeiros and the Emas National Park (GO); and the reserves of the Brazilian Atlantic Islands of Fernando de Noronha and Atol das Rocas (UNESCO, 2016).

It can be said that Brazil, due to its territorial dimension – its extension in the earth's surface amounts to over 1/20 of its land area (Brazil, 2016), and to its cultural and geographical diversity could house more properties internationally recognised as World Heritage if compared to the list of properties located in Europe, despite its “recent” territorial and historical formation if associated with the Occident (from the “discovery” of America by Europeans and the colonization of its lands). The heterogeneity of landscapes and natural beauties, the arts, the architecture and the urban centres constitute sets of properties in the country whose conservation and protection are recognised by the National Historical and Artistic Heritage Institute (IPHAN), institution associated to the Ministry of Culture of the Federal Government that deals with this issue.

However, the recognition and appreciation of historical property in Brazil can be considered late. The thematic of preservation and heritage becomes evident after the 1922 Modern Art Week, in which these terms figured in the modernist appointments (Camargo, 2002: 75). The sense of brazilianess and national identity, strategy that served the ‘New State’ reorganization purposes in the 1930s, also made the historical past valued as cultural heritage and no longer considered as the country's delay symbol. Before this period, the process of “civilization” of the cities converged to the demolition of the colonial buildings, the Portuguese and Jesuit legacies (Camargo, 2002: 76).

Note that, by a Lusitanian tradition, the properties recognised by Brazilian government authorities, whether federal, state or municipal, stand out as heritage and are registered in a

“book”⁷⁸, except for the intangible heritage. This way, the Iphan’s registered heritage are divided into four books: Book of Fine Arts, Book of Historic Register, Book of Applied Arts and Book of Archeological, Ethnographic and Landscape Register, regulated by Decree Law No. 25 of November 30, 1937 (Brazil, 1937).

In the first are subscribed the arts with non-utilitarian feature, according to their artistic value. In the second are related the cultural properties or buildings with historical value, linked to relevant factors in the Brazil’s history. The third book records the cultural properties of artistic value associated with their utilitarian function. Finally, in the fourth book are associated the cultural heritage related to historical traces of human occupation and to ethnographic and landscape values including both spaces created by Man as natural areas (IPHAN, 2016).

For research and the detailing of the historical and cultural formation, it is established as a clipping in this chapter the presentation of the Mission of São Miguel Arcanjo and its ruins as World Heritage, also recognised as National Heritage by IPHAN. In essence, the indigenous reductions were an achievement of Jesuit missionaries in the context of the Catholic Church’s Counter-Reformation that materialised social and architecturally in territories that currently belong to Paraguay, Argentina and Brazil. It also works to with their relationship as a tourist attraction, and as an identity reference gaucho and Brazilian nation itself.

3. The development of the Jesuit Missions

The Jesuit-Guarani missions of America are characterized, for years, such as recognition and national and international tourist destination demand. Altogether, it is estimated generally that there were 30 missions on the continent. In the Brazilian state of Rio Grande do Sul, these sites are known as ‘the seven people of the missions’ formed by the reductions of São Francisco de Borja, São Nicolau, São João Batista, Santo Ângelo Custódio, São Luiz Gonzaga, São Lourenço Mártir e São Miguel Arcanjo (Figure 2), and the latter stands out by its legacy of archeological and architectural value recognised as World Heritage site.

⁷⁸ In Brazil, the properties declared as heritage, whether national, state or municipal, are registered in a book called ‘Livro-Tombo’.



Figure 2. Map of the Jesuit Missions in South America

Source: Authors

The configuration of the Jesuit Missions originated in 1609, as an ideological proposal for expansion of Catholicism through indoctrination and politicization of the Guarani people that lived in the region. The reductions - villages for catechesis, control and defense of indigenous (Tavares and Dalto, 1999), are defined by a justified logic of the Counter-Reformation and the "Europeanization" of the South American Indian. These settlements refer to the reproduction of architectural forms and to urban formation with unique characteristics that reinforce their degree of socio-economic development. According to Custódio:

The Society of Jesus was created in the context of the Counter-Reformation in which the Catholic Church also used the architecture, urbanism and the arts as scenarios and apparatus for conversion process. It was due to the spirit of the Baroque that social practices in reductions, corresponding to the scenic and theatrical spirit of this movement, gained greater dynamics and value of representation (Custódio, 2007: 72).

The location of the Missions occurs in places of great landscape value. It is observed that are located in the heights at some plateau overlooking a wide horizon. It is emphasised that:

The choice of the location of each reduction was carefully studied taking into account the climate, soil fertility, the surrounding landscape and the advantages for its defense. Generally held in dominant points of streams or navigable rivers, 21 miles from each other (Lugon, 2010: 51).

Initially, the Missions can be considered as an ideal form of society with which is associated the utopia of an egalitarian society where each person had a profession of interest to the common life (Telles, 2008: 73). However, the own Jesuit reduction can only be seen as a form of captivity (Ribeiro, 1995: 103). In this condition, the Guarani were at the disposal of social interests and of the governing for each and every task of interest of the urban administrator, performing functions such as opening roads, urbanise the site and build churches.

In Spanish America, the urban formations distributed in rectilinear grid were presented for defining the order. In it, the pathways culminate in a central square – Plaza Mayor or Plaza de Armas – which distributes the buildings of spiritual and temporal powers (Marx, 1980: 29). Such spatial formation can be easily observed in the Jesuit Missions, even giving little value to the civil administration (Figure 3).

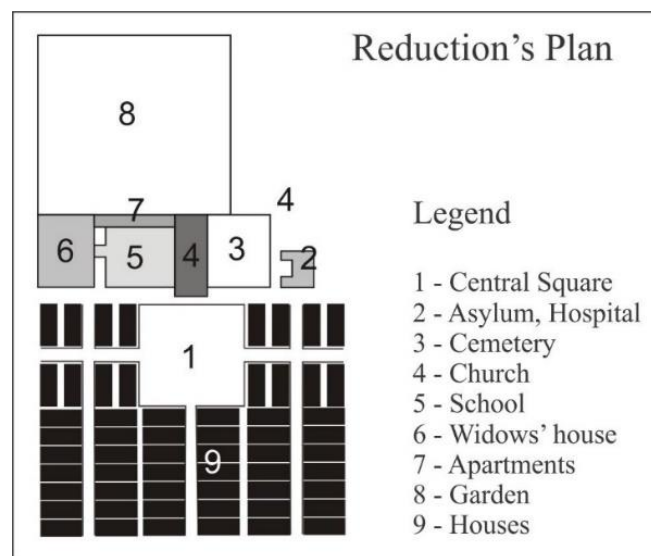


Figure 3. Schematic layout of the Jesuit-Guarani Missions

Source: Authors

To the architecture is aggregated the direct understanding of European matrices. However, the architecture of the new continent must be understood as synthesis of a socio-spatial formation. Many religious orders come with the aim to reduce the Protestant expansion. In this sense, the Society of Jesus defines its forms in a new proposed style. In their churches, for example, they adapt the Latin Crosses to the new requirements. Therefore, the architectural heritage found in the region of the missions can be classified as Jesuitical style.

For this purpose, the constructions should be solid, using materials that perpetuate them. Commonly in South America, was used the rammed earth, stone and lime (Costa, 1978: 21). Its use was associated with available materials that allowed achieving stability in the construction. The Catholic Church not only created temples, rectories and schools. Its ideological imposition reinforced the formation of urban plans and consequently of cities. The Brazilian territory is a mosaic of these spatial forms.

For the local architecture, the Jesuit buildings had the unconditional labor force of the Guarani. The São Miguel Arcanjo church (Figure 4), that was located in front of the central square, involved, for decades, the effort of the indigenous workers. Conceived by the plans of European Jesuits, its erection demanded the removal of tons of sandstone rocks from the Santa Barbara stream, performed by hundreds of people, with hard work, creating an urban set of reference. Telles (2008: 74) describes its construction:

The church was built in the period of 1735-1744, according to the assigned project, with safety, to the Jesuit architect Gian Batista Primoli, Italian who also was its builder. Its architectonic section had three naves separated by arches that end in the transept, where there were two altars and in the end, the chancel.



Figure 4. Church ruins in São Miguel Arcanjo

Source: Pedro Alcântara Bittencourt César, 2011



Figure 5. Angelopolitana Cathedral and the excavated ruins in Santo Ângelo

Source: Pedro Alcântara Bittencourt César, 2011



Figure 6. Museum of the Missions

Source: Pedro Alcântara Bittencourt César, 2011

The decay process of the missionary history was occurred in the mid-18th century, due to the expulsion of the Jesuits and the administrative exchanges between the colonies of Portugal and Spain, through treaties. This process culminated in Guarani's wars. The Indians, interested in defending their land, were defeated and forced to leave the reductions. The destruction generated by the confrontations characterises what is now known as one of the heritages of humanity: the ruins of the archeological site of São Miguel Arcanjo.

4. Missions as Heritage

In Rio Grande do Sul, currently there are still traces of four reductions: São Miguel Arcanjo, São Lourenço Mártir, São João Batista and São Nicolau. The other three Jesuit Missions established in the state were destroyed with the passage of time and with the development of

new towns and urban agglomerations. Cities of São Miguel and Santo Ângelo have greater representation: the first for its reference as Heritage of Humanity, as cultural tourism attraction for its ruins and social relations and as the seat of IPHAN's office; and the second one by its administrative regional centrality. The others remaining archaeological sites are located in the vicinity of these locations and are characterised as complementary attractions.

In Santo Ângelo is concentrated the greater offer of equipments and services for the visitor. This city is positioned as headquarter of that Rio Grande do Sul region, hosting a large university and many public and private services. Historically, it is the youngest of the seven indigenous reductions located in Brazil, but little remains of the original buildings, nowadays. Through the excavations and the "archaeological windows" (excavated spaces covered with transparent glass) surrounding the Angelopolitana Cathedral (Figure 5) built in the mid-20th century, it is possible to observe parts of the foundation of the missionary chapel that once existed on the site. The set, complete with the square, the City Hall and the Municipal Museum, composes the main attraction related to the missions in the city.

The archaeological site of the Jesuit Mission of São Miguel, dating from the year of 1687, is recognised as a historic place. For this condition, the Regulation of Rio Grande do Sul Lands, established in 1922, determines to be kept in the public domain and properly maintained the places remarkable by facts related to the evolution of the state. In 1937, with the creation of the Historical and Artistic National Service (SPHAN) and with the report of the architect Lúcio Costa, the ruins of São Miguel were included in this category. And in 1983, to this condition is added the recognition by UNESCO as World Heritage along with the others missionary reductions of Argentina.

Lúcio Costa, federal employee involved in the preservation of national heritage, achieves operations on the site of the Missions in the late 1930s. Adopting a logic of reconstitution of new elements, he raised a museum with remains material of the ruins (figure 6), that was inaugurated in 1941. Its composition helps to define a new spatial distribution in the square, opposing in distant axes, visually, the ruins and the preservation of heritage institutions. Its construction techniques are the first example in Brazil of the use of current techniques and materials complementing a building of historical character (Telles, 2008: 75). Contrast of ruins, memories and recognition of architecture that once existed. While trail or 'shard' of what existed, the ruins have the metonymic character of, through the part that is exposed, allowing to see and imagine the whole of what there was once (Pesavento, 2007: 55).

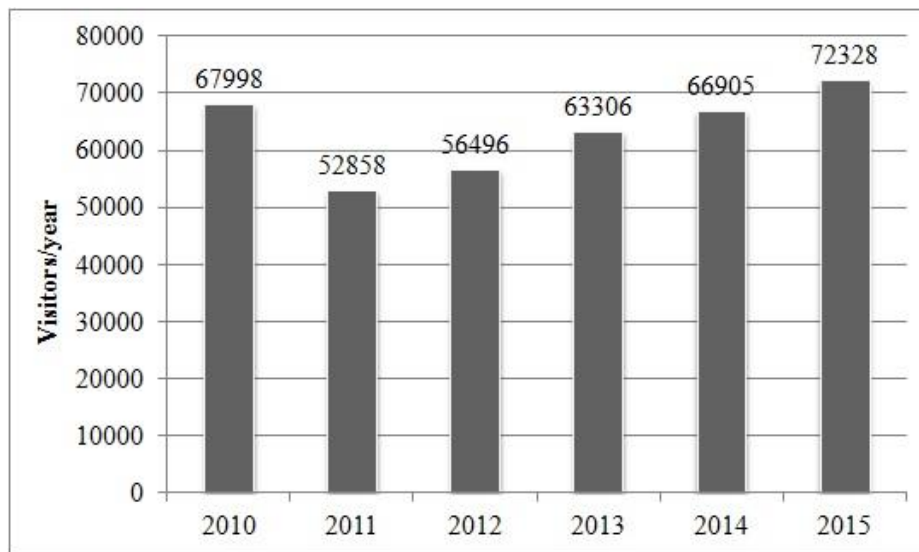
In the museum, parts of the missionary collection are kept, which refer both to the archaeological artifacts and to the environmental and cultural diversity that are related to the

Jesuit reductions (Brazil, 2015). As depository, adds value of a new museology such as the regional. This is a process in which new symbolic constructions are made, as Custodio described (2007: 76) highlighting the Museum of the Missions in São Miguel and its symbolic constructions:

The collection of Missionaries images were scattered in farms and chapels in the region, where they still performed duties linked to the sacred. With their transfer to the museum, they acquire a new representation function: artistic-documentary. Tensions and ruptures. New situations.

The initiatives in the National Historical Park of the Missions can be considered pioneers as route of Heritage Interpretation of the cultural legacy, and attract thousands of tourists every year. The Sound and Light Show stands out a touristic attraction. The event presentations in Portuguese occur daily, if the weather conditions are favorable, since it is held outdoors. This project performed since 1978 received updates and new technologies in the first half of 2016, to arouse more the society's attention, usually middle-class and well-educated. In addition, it sets up a great potential in relation to tourist exploitation, since it is the main achievement of Mission's Heritage Interpretation in Brazil.

With regard to demand, the period between the 1960s and 1970s is characterised by the visits of large school groups, bus tours and excursions that stimulated the economic activities related to tourism. Recently, according to data collected by IPHAN at the Missions National Historical Park, between the years 2010 and 2011 there was a decrease of approximately 28,5% in the number of visitors. In the last five years it is clear that the number of visits has increased gradually until 2015, last annual record available, as shown in the graphic below.



Graph 1. Visitors at Missions National Historical Park (2010 – 2015)

Source: IPHAN, 2016

Therefore, since the 1950s, the locality elaborates a tourism product with historical and educational appeal, related to the architectural and archaeological collection, portraying a clear communication and thematization between the missionary utopia and the formation of the Guarani people. Tourism is based on multidisciplinary dimensions in which various areas of knowledge are involved. Approaching the heritage and its interpretation, through an interactive process, aggregates revelation sources based on imaginary: myths, rituals, archetypes, symbols, icons, allegories, routine and location (Farias, 2002: 59). In this context, the declaration of a property as Heritage of Humanity creates an image in the international scope that attracts visitors with diverse interests that may be of a scientific intent or purely related to leisure (Nogueira, 2007: 110).

In the case analysed, the heritage constitutes a great potentiality for the regional tourism development (Nogueira, 2007: 111). For this purpose, it was established in 1995, through a joint proposal between the governments of Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay, the International Circuit of the Jesuit Missions which added the statement of practical actions related to the recognition of the sites as World Heritage. However, spatially, the location is drafted as a tour corridor, according to the theory of the Touristic Space (Boullón, 1994), and the attraction and the visitors have little integration to the current social and urban contexts.

In addition, according to Nogueira (2007: 120) the circuit implementation did not meet the expectations of the regional community because the distances are large between the major centres from Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay. The sites' infrastructure is still

precarious, the roads are compromised by the lack of maintenance and the hotels and restaurants do not offer many conditions to serve a large number of visitors. These problems aggregated to the lack of information and communication at the locals may distance the tourism product as an intra and international offer.

5. Final Considerations

When it comes to the recognition of a heritage by the UNESCO as World Heritage always confronts complex issues and often ambiguous in its many social, cultural, artistic positions, etc.

Another contentious issue is to portray if the idea of something for everyone (from humanity) is not taking off the conquest and the local relation, leading to consider it as something impersonal. Therefore, back to the analysis field: in the study of the Missions of São Miguel Arcanjo there are ruins as well as are found in others ancient missions created by the Guarani people in this region. It is known that the ruins operate as past operation. The ruin is not only materiality, it is also image, is the presence of an absence (Pesavento, 2007: 55).

In this context, can be portrayed the disregard of the hegemonic forces for the indigenous civilizing process, practically not recognising it by its cultural values and civility. It is also denied a large project formulated by the Catholic Church, probably because it confronts the mercantilist logic that enables the conquest of the Americas and the implementation of an emerging capitalist production relation.

Today, the site, with its successes and failures keeps present historical values, not memorable. Initially, this symbolic elaboration is related to the formation of a national identity, developed from the 1920s to portray the construction of a brazilianness that is based mainly in the following decade, project very questioned nowadays. On the other side, the Heritage Interpretation plan leaves much to be desired of a broader proposal for Education, although the chosen thematic have mainly crucial values for the elaborated period.

In the current situation there are still many other reflections (looks and epistemological constructions) about this marginal place: peripheral by being in Latin America, by its contrast to capitalism, by its indigenous array from emerging people, among others conditions. Although these are present in the imaginary, it is expected that the current direction walks along with cultural policies.

It is known by the diversity of interpretations, that locations that once represented production, modernity and progress were revitalized as recreation places under the perspective

of new interpretations of history, opening up possibilities for other uses and new perspectives to these ancient practices (Maia, 2010: 406). UNESCO, by expounding and highlighting about World Heritage, is closer to the local interests and their social recognition. It is expected to local counterpoint protrudes increasingly its own duty to strengthen the heritage dimensions.

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