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### Abstract

The ruin is singular, sublime and picturesque, formed by stratifications of the time and gaps that allow the inseparable relationship with the landscape. The ruined work, although shapeless, provides the interpretation of the past and assists in the construction of the memory, as it is a material witness to history and bear the marks of time. Because of its condition of emptiness as absence, promise and expectation, and, apparently, abandoned place, residual and with accentuated cultural charge previous predominant, we associate it with the notion of *terrain vagues*. In this way, ruin is adopted as an open space, with the objective of confirming in the discussions about the preservation of heritage ruins, points that contribute to conservative interventions. We analyze the case of Hospedaria dos Imigrantes in Santos, São Paulo, Brazil, an unfinished construction, underutilized until its consolidation as ruin and *terrain vague*, debating the possibility of an intervention based on the currents of conservation and the approach of the *verdant ruins*, capable of guaranteeing the permanence of the ruin as a vegetated open space in the city.

**Keywords:** Ruins, Landscape, Terrain vague, Open space, Verdant ruins

## 1 Introduction

The term ruins can designate from monuments of Classical Antiquity to abandoned industrial sites and obsolete urban infrastructures. A monument is in ruins when it loses its function and part of the elements that complete it, forming gaps that give place to the appropriation of the vegetation.

The sublime (Burke, 2013) and the picturesque (Ruskin, 2008) found in the ruins (Ruskin, 2008; Choay, 2006) are recognized as aesthetic and subjective values linked to perception (Meneguello, 2003). These values are formed from features that help in understanding the atmosphere of a work (Zumthor, 2009), through "[...] poetry produced by the interaction between mass and light, between natural and artificial elements" (Spirito, 2012, p. 84, authors' translation).

Georg Simmel (1911)<sup>1</sup> pointed out the seduction found in the ruin caused by the process of destruction, in which nature overlaps with human work (Simmel, 1911 apud Souza; Öelze, 1998). The ruin is originated from a construction of man. However, the artist does not think of the destruction of his work, in the passage of time that eventually happens to all monuments. He certainly does not think about the beauty of this process and the final result before it collapses or undergoes human intervention. Who dictates this aesthetic is time. "Two buildings that look the same in their architectural form probably become quite different as ruins after they were abandoned. Every ruin is unique" (Nieszczerzewska, 2015).

In the case of modern and industrial ruins, their value as obsolete space is usually associated with the value of currentness and use (Riegl, 2014), due to the demands of occupation, the offer of these spaces and the ease of reconstruction, because they date from more recent times and have been constructed with materials and techniques still executed today.

According to Fortuna (2015, p.7, author's quotation marks, author's emphasis), "[...] it is worth mentioning that urban-industrial ruin is valued for its phantasmagoria and the way it represents the superfluous landscape of marginal spaces that, as a rule, escape the logic of the territorial planning of the city" (authors' translation). The author discusses the value of these ruins that defy the contemporary city, remaining in disuse and degradation, configuring an unwanted but intriguing landscape.

*[...] ruin is the founder of imagery and emotional motivations. This same ruin can be a sign of degradation for the urban discourse that demands intervention by the State. Simmel asks in this context why do we fear the ruin that inspires us to remember? Why cannot this landscape last in its mourning condition? (Eckert, 2007, p. 7, authors' translation).*

*In cases of ruins located in the urban network, its permanence in the landscape of the city can configure an open space. The ruin, formed by gaps and fragments, becomes open access, besides allowing the appropriation of nature, often forming vegetated open spaces, and establishing a continuity with the landscape.*

Spirito (2012, p. 88, authors' translation) explains that "ruin expresses another fundamental condition: to be incomplete, partly destroyed, which allows it to open up and become involved with the landscape, the natural elements and the geography of the place in which it is". This relationship of the constructed work with nature provides the intrinsic union of ruin with the landscape.

Thus, the ruins in the landscape are recognized through their relationship between nature and culture, exposed by the picturesque and sublime aesthetics and their involvement inseparable from the surroundings, making ruin the landscape *per se*.

In the ruins there are ingrained the values of memory (Riegl, 2014), because although its configuration has been altered by the time, the process of degradation of the work allows the construction, in the imaginary, of the individual and collective memory, completing the gaps from the vestiges. Such memory can be compromised from the intervention of man, capable of creating a "historical forgery" (Boito, 2003), by restoring a ruin, transforming it into a new building.

Faced with this picture, we ask: How can projects of intervention in ruins preserve heritage without abruptly transforming its landscape? What principles can guarantee the aesthetics of the ruin? How can consolidating a ruin can exalt its values and explore its potential as a ruin?

The case of the Hospedaria dos Imigrantes in Santos, SP, Brazil, was chosen to discuss approaches in the intervention project in declared heritage monument and raise understanding of ruins in the landscape of the city.

## **2 The landscapes of terrain vagues**

*The notion of landscape emerged from the representation on the canvases of painters to be the target of garden and park projects. Landscaping projects have explored the ruins as picturesque and sublime elements, creating fake ruins or intervening in these abandoned spaces for restoration through landscaping, such as the public garden project in the ruins of St. Dustan church in the East of London, England.*

To this landscape with ruins is associated the notion of *Terrain Vagues*, of Ignasi de Solà-Morales (2002).<sup>2</sup>

The notion of terrain, with that of vague, contains at the same time the ambiguity and multiplicity of meanings that make this expression an especially useful term for designating this urban category with which we approach the places, territories or buildings that participate in a double condition. [It means] an available area, full of expectations, of strong urban memory, with original potential: the space of the possible, the space of the future. (Solà-Morales, 2002, p. 23 apud Donadon, 2009, p. 18, authors' translation)

*Terrain vagues* made up of ruins of old buildings and abandoned industrial sites are common scenarios for cities that face the dynamics of urban growth, the changes in the economic activities and changes in landscapes.

*The point is to emphasize that "spaces made empty", decayed or abandoned of the city (eg. undeveloped land, deactivated social facilities, unfinished residential projects, etc.) constitute a type of terra nullius, a land of no one, for this reason, stimulates the lucrative impetus of*

*capital that does not tolerate emptiness and converts it into "space to be filled". (Fortuna, 2015, p. 6-7, quotation marks by the author, authors' translation).*

The recognition of the *terrain vagues* generated attention and allowed the valuation of obsolete, abandoned and deteriorated spaces, identifying in the emptiness the connection with the past and the possibilities of space in the future (Solà-Morales, 2002).

### 3 Preservation of heritage ruins

Strongly influenced by the Romantic Movement, the cult of the ruins and the valuation of the sublime and picturesque aspects marked a generation of authors who discuss about heritage preservation.

It identifies four main points in the theories of patrimony, intrinsic to the debate on the concept of ruin: valuation of monuments, authenticity, patina and ambience.

The **valuation of monuments** presupposes that what establishes the intervention in works of cultural interest is the institution of values (Riegl, 2014), which deliberate what characteristics must be maintained, exalted, recovered, etc. Choay (2006) points out the notion of *mise-en-valeur*, which can be summarized in the two main strands for the preservation of monuments. The first, from conservationist thought, has proponents such as Ruskin (2008), Boito (2003), Riegl (2014), and values the documentary values, the history and the memory of society in relation to heritage. The second, from the restorative thought of Viollet-le-Duc (2000), which tends to result in the idea of *mise-en-scène*, of cultural animation, which seeks to reuse the monument and its conversion into money and spectacle – dangerous actions, condemned already in the 19th century and in the Venice Charter (Icomos, 1964), which nevertheless have become increasingly common (Choay, 2006).

The issue of **authenticity** is intrinsic to the ruin as the idea of original character of the work and, obstructing this character, it creates a historical forgery (Boito, 2003) present in the discussions about restoration in the sense of repristination (Viollet-Le-Duc, 2000).

The **patina**, the original aspects of the passage of time in the work and the stratifications, expose the natural course of the aging of monuments and contribute to the conformation of the ruin and its aesthetics. The idea of preservation of the patina is an association that several authors make with the field of sensations (Ruskin, 2008; Dvorák, 2015; Choay, 2006). This patina, besides being part of the trajectory of the work of art in time, being inserted by the same, which brings a historical value to these "natural additions", becomes beautiful, precisely because of its proximity to nature and is worthy of be appreciated by an aesthetic instance (Brandi, 2014), stating the idea of preserving the marks of time in monuments and their approach to the sublime and the picturesque.

The notion of **ambience** of the monument (Kühl, 2013), considering its surroundings as a fundamental part, guarantees the reading of the landscape of which the work is part.

In Brazil, intervention projects in the ruins of São Miguel Arcanjo Archaeological Site, in São Miguel das Missões, Rio Grande do Sul (Fig. 1) and the ruins of São Jorge dos Erasmos' Sugar Mill, in Santos, São Paulo, can be considered as examples of such approaches (Fig. 2).



**Fig. 1.** São Miguel Arcanjo Archaeological Site, 2017. Photo: Rodrigo Schwabe Meneguetti, 2017.



**Fig. 2.** São Jorge dos Erasmos' Sugar Mill Ruins. Photo: Laís Hanson, 2017.

Both ruins stand out for their intrinsic value of antiquity and preserve the landscape with few interventions of incisive character, even though they are questioned by completing gaps and using materials of difficult dissociation. In the intervention projects, were inserted carefully located annexes far from the ruin, considering respect for the ambience of the protected heritages and thinking of the visibility issues of the ruins.

An example of the use of modern and contemporary ruins is the park project on the industrial ruins of Landschaftspark in Duisburg-Nord, Germany (Fig. 3). In it, it can be seen the possibilities of exploration and use of space without abrupt transformations in the landscape, recognizing the patina of time and valuing the picturesque aesthetics of the ruins and the sublimity of their gaps, considered as a fundamental part of the landscape design.



**Fig. 3.** Landschaftspark. Photo: Karin Schwabe Meneguetti, 2015.

The preservation of heritage ruins does not always see the stratification of time in a positive way, which can result in transformative interventions. On this point of view, Dvořák (2015) stated:

In cases of ruins, it is necessary first of all to take into account that one cannot destroy what consists of its singular attractive: the character of a construction victim of the lords of time and its picturesque aspect in the landscape. A rebuilt ruin is no longer a ruin, but a new, usually mediocre, architectural work (Dvořák, 2015, p. 110, authors' translation).

The institutions and professionals responsible for the preservation of these monuments must ensure greater intelligibility in their presentation, to aid in the reading and perception of space. "The purpose of the physical presentation must be authentic in all respects (design, materials, finishes etc.) and determined by the particular nature and scenery of the site" (White, 2007, p.49).

The approach of *verdant ruins* (White, 2007) values the broader ecological issues and the "sense of place" of the ruins by preserving them as vegetated open space, with the absolute minimum of intervention for the conservation of the structure. Although it is necessary to remove plant species whose roots are damaging structures to the point of causing collapses, it draws attention to the fact that it recognizes the protective function of the vegetation that has developed over time in the ruins.

Pure conservation and critical-conservative strands (Kühl, 2004) are the fruit of conservationist theories of the 19th century and are close in actions that seek to preserve the aesthetics and the condition of ruin. While the former, although more rigid

and values the minimal intervention, relies on the idea of authenticity and preservation of the ruin in its present state; the second is based on the critical judgment of defining, for example, the differentiation between patina and pathology, which is important for determining what must be respected, for its intrinsic values and what must be withdrawn, for causing damage to the monument.

In Brazil, there is a contradiction between theory and practice. Kühl (2008) warns about interventions based on use value, highlighting the confusion of a distorted reading of one of the classics of heritage theory that influenced the text of the Athens Charter of 1931, the restoration according to Boito (2003). The documentary value of the work remained secondary, as the additions and alterations over time were removed, undone or masked. Kühl (2008) identifies that there was no practical adoption of the deliberations of the Athens Charter (1931), from the stylistic restoration of the late 19th century to the critical restoration (Brandi, 2014) set out in the Venice Charter (Icomos, 1964) in theory. This gap in the evolution of preservation culminated in the "non-understanding of cultural property as historical monuments" (Kühl, 2008, p. 114, authors' translation)

The misunderstandings, however, continued with the erroneous interpretations of the principles of the Charter of Venice (1964). Brandi (2014) gave continuity to Boito's position (2003), warning that intervention in the monument should not be based primarily on use value, which is secondary. He recognizes that a work is endowed with aspects that are not limited to matter as a human product, integrating the environment in which it is inserted and all its subjective relationships. Carbonara emphasizes such an understanding, stating that "it must be considered that the ruins can acquire a 'second aesthetics' for its environmental and picturesque value" (Carbonara, 2006, p.11, author's quotation marks).

There is a need to subtract the use value as a dictator of interventions, enhancing the valuation of the matter (Brandi, 2014) by which ruin is formed: the cultural (human) and natural (patina, vegetation) matter; to consider it endowed with aspects that allow the attribution of subjective values, besides heritage values, in the field of perception; analyze the ruin more broadly, recognizing its unique aesthetics, and its inseparable relationship with the landscape.

#### **4 The Hospedaria dos Imigrantes**

Located in Santos, São Paulo, Brazil, the Hospedaria dos Imigrantes (Fig. 4) was designed in eclectic style by the Italian architect Nicolau Spagnuolo in 1910. However, the work was not finished due to lack of money, and its construction ceased in 1912 (Segawa, 1989).



**Fig. 4.** Hospedaria dos Imigrantes. Photo: Laís Hanson, 2016.

With the disruption of the project, only the north wing was finished. The south wing was later raised only to delimit the area of the Hospedaria, uncharacteristic of the original design of the architect, which provided two mirrored wards. The inner courtyard was covered and there were modifications in the openings and internal arrangements of the north wing for the creation of offices and storage of products.

For decades the Hospedaria has operated as one of the warehouses connected to the Port of Santos. Its total abandonment took shape in the decade of 1990 and in 1998 the Hospedaria dos Imigrantes was declared protected by the Defense Council of Historical Heritage from Santos (CONDEPASA).

The Hospedaria has historical and documentary value for portraying the context of the time, a building coming from a greater sanitation project of the city that strongly influenced the landscape of Santos.

Although not used for the purposes for which it was designed, it reveals almost one hundred years of appropriation, which demonstrates its use value. The underutilization has led to adaptations and misconfigurations that demonstrate the difficulties encountered in exploring the ruins for the various purposes. Currently, the use value dictates the intervention projects at Hospedaria dos Imigrantes, considering the proposed installation of a university campus in process of designing since 2012.

The issue of authenticity is discussed aiming at the original Hospedaria design, which has not been finalized and has since consolidated as an unfinished building.

Currently, the Hospedaria dos Imigrantes is overrun by patina, strongly characterized by the vegetation that takes over the ruins. The appearance of the masonry, the lack of floor and roof, the coloring of the bricks, the gaps and the present nature reinforce the marks of the passage of time and affirm the sublime and picturesque character intrinsic in the urban landscape with ruins.

Pimentel (2005) discusses how gaps provide a continuous relationship of the interior with the exterior and, when analyzing the ruin in relation to the surroundings, increasing the view for the scale of the landscape. In the case of the ruins of Hospedaria, gaps such as lack of roof and floor allow the relationship between the open space inside the ruins and the outer open space, the sidewalks, lanes, vacant lots and other ruins.

The surroundings constitute a historical urban landscape of a region characterized by the relationship with the Porto and its constructions dating from the late 19th and early 20th centuries, which are of utmost importance to the history of the city of Santos.

Some buildings were demolished, others restored and those already in ruins, without use, floors or roofs, gave space for nature to follow its course, taking over the building, where trees were born in the gaps and at the top of the ruins (Fig. 5).



Fig. 5. Trees at the top of the north wing of the Hospedaria. Photo: Laís Hanson, 2012.

The open spaces found in the Hospedaria and its surroundings constitute *terrain vagues* with ruins and enable the existence of vegetated areas due to the permeability of the ground and the space "greening".

The ruins are responsible for the presence of scarce open spaces in the neighborhood (Fig. 6), and its high degree of deterioration results in the naturalization of the process, which provides the growth of several species of vegetation and the formation of a landscape of sublime and picturesque aesthetics.

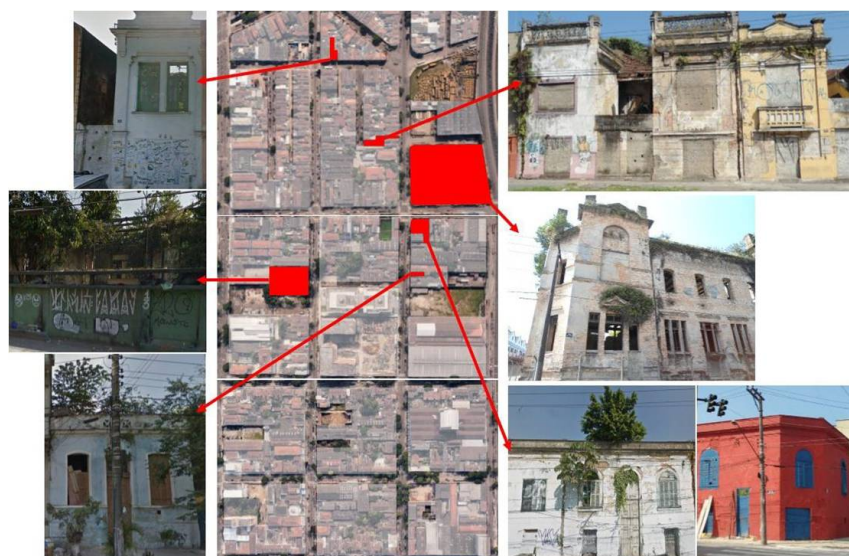


Fig. 6. Map highlighting the terrain vagues. Source: Google Earth. Photo and editing by the author, 2016.

Considering The Peculiar Aesthetics Of The Ruins (Hetzler, 1988), Its Intrinsic Relationship With The Landscape (Simmel, 1911; Spirito, 2012), Taking Into Account The Premises Of Preservation Of Conservation Monuments Such As Ruskin (2008), Boito (2003), Dvořák (2015), Giovannoni (2013), The Definition Of *Terrain Vagues* Of Solà-Morales (2002) And The Premises Reported In The Venice Charter (1964) Of Brandi's Theory (2014), It Proposes In This Work An Approach For The Ruins Of The Hospedaria.

The conservation through the *verdant ruins* (White, 2007) is faithful to the preservation of the characteristics that shape the landscape of the ruins. Through the appropriation of nature, the ruins continue to carry their historical and documentary values, as well as assuming its picturesque and sublime character, while still allowing ruin to function as an open space.

The notion of *verdant ruin* implies the resilience of vegetation (White, 2007), reinforcing the idea that ruin is a manifestation of the intrinsic relationship between nature and culture (Simmel, 1911; Spirito, 2012). It allows the permanence of the aesthetics of the ruin of the Hospedaria, formed by the actions of the time and by the presence of the patina (Ruskin, 2008; Hetzler, 1988), besides establishing a vegetated open space in the middle of the urban network.

## 5 Final Considerations

The ruin is formed from the disintegration of human work and the integration of nature. Formed from gaps, the materials that made up the old building are being degraded by the actions of time. From the abandonment of man, nature appropriates the space, taking it for itself, transforming the building into ruin, into an open space that communicates with the landscape through the empty spaces.

Such a landscape of ruins can be appreciated and explored from the urban memory (Solà-Morales, 2002), being a space of transition between the construction of the past and the ephemeral transformative character of time. Faced with the need to preserve the memory and through the valuation of the protected property listed as patrimony, attention is given to the transformations of anthropic nature that are not always respectful towards the picturesque and sublime atmosphere of the ruins.

The concerns about the interventions in ruins take into account the respect for the stratifications of time (Ruskin, 2008), the threats of historical forgery (Boito, 2003), the issues of the perception of the monument before its values (Riegl, 2014) and its intrinsic relationship of continuity with the landscape (Simmel, 1911).

The approaches that respect the aesthetics of ruin, when combined with an intervention in the landscape using natural elements, consolidating it as an open space, permeable and continuous with the surrounding landscape, contribute to maintain the values and aspects that constitute the ruin.

It is considered that the ruin and its landscape cannot be dissociated (Simmel, 1911; Spirito, 2012) and, in view of the possibility of exploring the aesthetics of ruin, endowed with sublime and picturesque values (Ruskin, 2008), unique and challenging (Simmel, 1911; Hetzler, 1988; Fortuna, 2015), the approach *verdant ruins* is highlighted in this paper (White, 2007).

As this approach is still very little documented in the field of preservation of monuments, we sought to identify actions in the intervention projects of aesthetics preservation and the history of the monument that approached the idea of assuming the ruin as an open space.

The proposed discussion approximates the principles adopted by the critical-conservative and pure conservation strands (Kühl, 2008), together with the notion of scarcity of open spaces and the configuration of ruins as *terrain vagues*, resulting in the consolidation of these spaces with a function of open space, respecting its values, its aesthetics and its landscape.

Kühl (2008, p. 58) warns that "different ways of facing historical monuments must coexist". Each case is a different case involving peculiarities related to history, trajectory, memory and values attributed by each culture (Meneses, 1995). In the case of the Hospedaria, the preservation of the ruin in its deterioration is not established, as this would imply in the death of the building (Ruskin, 2008). Ruin is taken as a starting point for an intervention that preserves the monument or the set of monuments respecting its aesthetics and its history (Brandi, 2014), dictated by its patrimonial and subjective values. The ruin is seen as a document (Boito, 2003), identified between the practices of pure conservation and critical conservation (Kühl, 2008) and represented by the approach of "*verdant ruins*" (White, 2007), preserving it as vegetated open space, in order to exalt the relationship between nature and culture and among ruin, landscape and city.

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