

Ruined Tourism and its Relation to Geographical Categories: an analysis based on the Igreja de Nossa Senhora do Rosário dos Homens Pretos in Sabará, MG, Brazil¹

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Abstract

This article discusses ruins from the categories of the geographic method point of view, which considers the processes that lead to the modification of their form, function and structure. We sought to understand ruins as active elements in the composition of landscapes and how they interfere with the dynamics of cities. We conducted a bibliographical research on the role of ruins in the urban context regarding new uses, especially the Tourist use. Under the name of tourism in ruins, we present a different view of this type of heritage that is so threatened and undervalued in cities. To clarify such ideas, we used the concepts offered by Milton Santos on the categories of the geographic method that encompass form, function, process and structure. Aligned with Walter Benjamin's aesthetics and Georg Simmel's philosophical proposal, it helps demystify ruins as mere remains of worthless buildings in the urban fabric. We examined the ruins of *Igreja de Nossa Senhora do Rosário dos Homens Pretos* (Church of Our Lady of the Rosary of Black Men), in Sabará-MG, Brazil, as object of study that allowed us to understand ruins as relevant elements for tourism in urban space.

Keywords: Ruins; Urban space; Categories of the geographic Method; Tourism in Ruins; *Igreja de Nossa Senhora do Rosário dos Homens Pretos* in Sabará-MG.

Resumo

O turismo em ruínas e sua relação com as categorias do método geográfico: uma análise a partir da Igreja de Nossa Senhora do Rosário dos Homens Pretos em Sabará, MG, Brasil

Este artigo aborda as ruínas sob o ponto de vista das categorias do método geográfico, considerando os processos que levam à modificação de sua forma, função e estrutura. O objetivo foi entender as ruínas como elementos ativos na composição das paisagens e de que maneira elas interferem na dinâmica das cidades. Para tal, realizou-se um levantamento teórico-bibliográfico, cuja intenção foi provocar reflexões acerca do papel das ruínas no contexto urbano, vislumbrando novas possibilidades de usos; notadamente, o uso turístico. Sob a denominação de turismo em ruínas, este estudo apresenta uma

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forma diferenciada de olhar este tipo de patrimônio tão ameaçado e pouco valorizado nas cidades. Com o intuito de aclarar tais ideias, foram utilizados os conceitos sugeridos por Milton Santos sobre as categorias do método geográfico que abarcam forma, função, processo e estrutura, que alinhados à proposta estética de Walter Benjamin e à filosófica de Georg Simmel contribuem para a desmistificação das ruínas como meros restos de edificações sem valor no tecido urbano. Ilustrando este artigo, temos as ruínas da Igreja de Nossa Senhora do Rosário dos Homens Pretos, em Sabará-MG, como objeto empírico e elucidativo, que deu o suporte necessário para a compreensão das ruínas como elementos relevantes para o turismo no espaço urbano.

Palavras-chave: Ruínas; Espaço urbano; Categorias do método geográfico; Turismo em ruínas; Igreja de Nossa Senhora do Rosário dos Homens Pretos em Sabará-MG.

Resumen

El Turismo en Ruinas y su Relación con las Categorías de Método Geográfico: una análisis de la iglesia de Nossa Senhora do Rosário dos Homens Pretos en Sabará, MG, Brasil

El presente artículo aborda las ruinas desde el punto de vista de las categorías del método geográfico, considerando los procesos que conducen a la modificación de su forma, función y estructura. El objetivo fue entender las ruinas como elementos activos en la composición de los paisajes y cómo interfieren con la dinámica de las ciudades. Para eso, se realizó un estudio teórico-bibliográfico, con la intención de reflexionar sobre el rol de las ruinas en el contexto urbano, indicando nuevas posibilidades de usos, sobre todo, el uso turístico. Bajo el nombre de turismo en ruinas, este estudio presenta una manera distinta de mirar este tipo de patrimonio tan amenazado y subvalorado en las ciudades. Para aclarar las ideas, utilizamos los conceptos sugeridos por Milton Santos sobre las categorías del método geográfico que abarcan forma, función, proceso y estructura, y alineados con la propuesta estética de Walter Benjamin y la propuesta filosófica de Georg Simmel contribuyen a la desmitificación de los conceptos de ruinas como simples restos de edificios sin valor en el tejido urbano. Ejemplificamos este artículo, con las ruinas de la Iglesia de Nossa Senhora do Rosário dos Homens Pretos en Sabará-MG, como un objeto empírico y aclarador, que proporcionó el apoyo necesario para la comprensión de las ruinas como elementos relevantes para el turismo en el espacio urbano.

Palabras clave: Ruinas; Espacio urbano; Categorías del método geográfico; Turismo en ruinas; Iglesia de Nossa Senhora do Rosário dos Homens Pretos en Sabará-MG.

INTRODUCTION

In general, when we address the ruins theme, it immediately comes to our minds degraded landscapes ruined by the weather, natural disasters or even human action. These ideas are invariably associated with desolation and indignation, for we tend to evaluate them only for their chaotic aesthetics or their functionless forms within the urban structure. However, ruins represent much more than that and like any other cultural heritage they present a past history that carries within it marks and transformations suffered by society over time and because of this is loaded with symbolism and memories.

We performed a conceptual analysis of ruins in the light of the categories of the geographic method proposed by Milton Santos, aimed at understanding its insertion in the context of cities, as well as the processes to which their form,

function and structure are subject. Specifically, we aimed at perceiving ruins as active elements in the composition of landscapes, as well as their role in urban space and their relationship with society. As for methodology, we draw on authors such as Walter Benjamin and Georg Simmel, and other theorists who research tourism in ruins. To illustrate and deepen this concept, we used the ruins of the *Igreja de Nossa Senhora do Rosário dos Homens Pretos* (Church of Our Lady of the Rosary of Black Men) in the city of Sabará-MG, Brazil, as empirical object, due to numerous discussions involving these ruins during a technical visit.

This study is divided into sections to facilitate the perception of ruins as forming elements of memory-laden urban landscapes that go beyond mere ruined and misshapen buildings. This is all illustrated by the shapeless aesthetics of the church and the events that have taken place throughout its history, allowing us to reflect on the richness of this type of heritage, which has much more to reveal than to conceal. Thus, in these sections we present the theoretical foundations of ruins, tourism and tourism in ruins, as well as methodological procedures and analysis/discussion of the results in the light of the church's history and of the categories of the geographic method.

We conclude that even though they are shrouded in tragedy or left to fend for themselves, these places hold memories, for every ruin has a history prior to its decay and this fact makes them powerful objects of remembrance. In the Church of Our Lady of the Rosary of Black Men, in Sabará, this is no different, as these characteristics represent an archetype of emblematic ruin with strong tourist appeal. The Church is an iconic local element that accurately translates this type of heritage into the composition of urban landscapes, especially when analyzed in the light of the categories of the geographic method, which permeates its form, function, process and structure.

LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Ferreira (2010): “ruin means remains of collapsed buildings; annihilation, destruction; loss of material or moral property; absolute decay, downfall”. Obviously, these definitions allude only to the classic idea of ruin and do not fully meet the proposal of this study, which is much broader, as it considers forms that have lost their main function, but that survive in urban space in other ways, presenting among them the tourist function. However, it cannot be denied that ruins bring in its essence the connotation of weakness and decline, as these are permanent characteristics of its current physical state. The depiction of decay of ruin entails

... sharp contrasts with the contemplative drive and obsession with conservation typical of the romantic setting. The “new” ruins make clear the failure of the modern world structures and highlight the vulnerability and finitude of the values that constitute the idealized progress of modernity. (Fortuna, 2016, p. 9)

In terms of aesthetics, ruins are not exactly beautiful and organized, but represent a visual disorder among the other buildings, which often shocks

people. This disharmony bothers public administrators and strongly supports the processes of touristification and gentrification imposed by modernity, replacing or even eliminating them from cities. Affected by the urbanistic discourse of space hygiene and aesthetization, these public managers, in an effort to eliminate these “architectural ills”, put in check the ruins, understood by them as nodules in the urban fabric and must be extirpated.

Following this reasoning, Matos (2007, p. 77) is vigorous in stating that: “the bourgeois city is moving towards imposing its preference for solid, lasting conservation or reconstruction rather than ruins”. Both the speeches of tourism planning and Matos’ statements reveal the threat to the survival of the ruins amid cities, if it is not made clear their real value and role for society and the city.

In Walter Benjamin’s words, a ruin occurs when

something of the urban fabric is about to disappear, but illuminates, with a singular and poetic light, everything that has condemned it, its other and its opposite. . . . enabling the phantasmagoria of those memories that, like gaps in history, remain to haunt the present and warn about the future. (Benjamin, 1989, p. 85)

Feitosa (2013), cited Benjamin, to mention the processes of temporal order and the changes that affect ruins, speaking also of the social movement implicit in them, so that

. . . the notion of ruin formulated by Benjamin is the result of a thought wrapped in an urban fabric: an architectural element, permeated by the subjective characteristics pertinent to the city that runs through various and restless frames of social movement, typical of city dynamics. (Feitosa, 2013, p. 5)

From this point of view, that is, ruins as elements of the urban landscape integrate the fixed and contributes to the fruition of the flows (Santos, 1988), precisely because it arouses the curiosity of both residents and visitors. This fact frees the ruin of being considered an empty space, without life or use, since it is

. . . frequently appropriated in different ways by various actors: neighborhood residents, passers-by and people from other places looking for fun, quietness, adventure etc. A more detailed and prolonged look at what is happening in the ruined and abandoned spaces of the city is an essential contribution to a better understanding of contemporary urbanity itself. (Sarmento & Pereira, 2019, p. 36)

This is because the ruin is configured as a place of memory with a strong capacity for remembering the past by contemplating its fragments in the present. According to Meneguello (2003), “the ruin is in itself a way of recognizing the past and inhabiting both times, past and present”. By contextualizing these aspects and aligned with the categories of the geographic method, we can reach the concept of landscape as

. . . formed by the facts of the past and present. Thus, the understanding of spatial organization, as well as its evolution, is only possible through accurate interpretation

of the dialectical process between form, structure and function over time. (Santos, 1988, p. 50)

Therefore, the statement that ruin represents something that ends would only make sense if understood only in its aspect of decay, citing only its finitude, or as Benjamin (1989) states, its condition of “ghost”. From this point of view, it would only evoke feelings of desolation, loss or decline, which is far below ruins condition in urban space. We must, therefore, perceive it as a heritage that, although ruined, contains earlier history capable of provoking recollections of facts and events, by contemplating their “remains” in the present.

To understand ruins in its entirety, we must interpret it through its fragments, for it is through them that the architectural work survives and reveals its history. Ruins are defined in its incomplete and fragmented aspect, allowing several readings, changing meanings and narratives, allowing to freely imagine what is missing, even its total aspect as a heritage that it once had. Similarly and according to Walter Benjamin’s ideas, Paraizo (2006, p. 3) states that: “if ruins as allegories, are something left over from a supposed larger set that has disappeared, then there is also a tension between the ephemeral and the eternal, reminding us that the whole, of which it is supposedly part, can no longer be reconstructed.”

Indeed, it is by contemplating the fragments of ruins’ fragments that we refer to the past and through them select memories whose choices imply remembering but also forgetting. The consequence of this lies in the varied meanings attributed to ruins and the different reactions and understandings they provoke in people. Ruins, imbued with an essentially interpretative sense, are configured as places of memory capable of provoking reflections and activating memories. Despite its chaotic and functionless form, ruins can acquire new functions, including tourism. In this sense, it cannot simply be ignored or erased from cities, for it carries with it strong emotional and symbolic burdens, sometimes more intense than the conserved heritage properties themselves.

Starting from the romanticized discourse of Mikhail Bakhtin (1998), there is a chronotopic relationship in ruins, i.e., they are units of time and space, so that they reaffirm themselves as places that allow time to transcend. This combination of time and space, coupled with the symbolic energy coming from them, represents what Benjamin (1987) calls the aura, which is what allows us to be moved by contemplating ruins. This auratic energy is present in ruins and other objects and has no precise definition but suggests interpretations from Benjamin’s explanation. According to him,

. . the aura is a singular figure, composed of spatial and temporal elements: the unique appearance of something distant, however close it may be. (For example), observing at rest, in a summer afternoon, a mountain range on the horizon, or a branch that casts its shadow over us, means to breathe the aura of such mountains, of such branch. (Benjamin, 1987, p. 170)</cit>

It is by contemplating ruins that their aura fills us and we are led to often experience controversial feelings, alluding to an endless sensation that mingles in the midst of loss, desolation, strangeness, curiosity and fascination.

Similarly, another theorist who researches the ruins thematic, Georg Simmel, sees them as founders of the imaginary and motivators of emotions. The author states that daily practices do not end with decay since new meanings are constantly attributed to them by those observing. Simmel (2005) supported the idea that the main destructive agent of architectural works was not man, as it was thought, but nature, for turns the heritage into ruins. He therefore emphasized the relationship between ruin and nature, to which he attributed some manifestly destructive seduction of nature over human work.

According to him, the process that transforms heritage into ruins would be a type of battle between man and nature, in which the former's artistic impulse submits the natural space to buildings erected in cities, thus characterizing a (temporary) victory over the latter. On the other hand, ruins represent the "revenge" of nature that, by its forces and weather, takes back what have been taken, appropriating the destroyed parts, covering them with vegetation, eventually reincorporating them into space and giving them new entireties.

Referring to cities, specifically to architectural structures, Simmel (2005) stated that urban space is the main site of disputes for appropriation of spaces, where buildings, houses, squares and bridges constitute only temporary advantages of the human kind. Sooner or later nature claims back what it has lost to man. However, nature does not immediately take ruins over, as the author is emphatic to point out two stages of ruins: those called "fresh ruins", in which there is no flora in their remains, and "late ruins", when vegetation growth starts to incorporate debris, walls, roofs, and everything else into the natural environment.

Based on such Milton Santos theoretical contributions on the categories of the geographic method it is possible to make some considerations about the ruins in urban space. We start with the concept of geographic space, from the perspective of form-contents, which states that forms do not exist by themselves, but are endowed with their content and meaning, gaining substance by human action. The author states that

... as geographic forms contain pieces of the social whole, they are not just forms but form-contents. Therefore, their meanings change as social changes attribute different pieces of the social whole to them. We can say that forms, in its form-content quality, are continuously altered and that the contents gain new dimensions by fitting the forms. Action is inherent to function and consistent with the form that contains it, thus processes only gain full significance when they are embodied. (Santos, 1988, p. 2)

In such spaces not only technique and differential times prevail, but also the daily life loaded with symbolism and meanings, which suggests that space is the result of an objective reality. Being more specific, space is

... a social product in continuous transformation and imposing its own reality, therefore society cannot operate outside it. Moreover, to study space, we must apprehend its relationship with society, as it dictates the understanding of processes' effects (time and change) and specifies the notions of form, function and structure, which are fundamental elements for the understanding of the production of space. (Santos, 1988, p. 49)

Thus, we may understand the urban space as influenced by several dynamics, resulting from collective and subjective social relations that occur and are intensively established by it, producing new spatial configurations. It becomes clear that it is from collective experiences and subjective constructions that interactions with the place occur, as well as the transformations of space that results in new configurations. Consequently, spatial production

.. takes place daily and appears in the forms of appropriation, use and occupation of a certain place at a specific moment. And it reveals itself by the use as a product of the social and technical division of labor that produces a fragmented hierarchical spatial morphology. Since each subject is located in a particular space, the place allows us to think about living, residing, working and leisure time as lived situations, revealing the daily conflicts of the modern world. (Carlos, 2007, p. 20)

By analyzing space, we come across geographic categories that are defined from concepts such as territory, region, landscape and place (Santos, 1999). Such concepts are considered in this study to clarify the understanding of the categories suggested by Milton Santos, which involve form, function, process and structure, allowing us to understand the multiple interrelationships and connections that ruins can promote in urban space. Following this reasoning, territory may be understood as a delimited space, whose borders are defined by man or nature, but not always visible or well defined, as they are based on the relations of power, domination and appropriation of such spaces. According to Saquet & Silva (2008, p. 31): “a territory can be considered as delimited, constructed and deconstructed by power relations involving a very wide range of actors that territorialize their actions over time”. An example of this type of territorialization is the Estrada Real², that goes through the states of São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro and Minas Gerais. In turn, a region can be defined for studies on the general characteristics of a territory, for example, the Brazilian Southeast region – it is formed by the states of Espírito Santo, Mato Grosso do Sul, Minas Gerais, and São Paulo. Similarly, to understand certain specific aspects of space, such as the geoeconomic regions of Brazil we may analyze the Brazilian economy or highlight its cultural practices, among many other criteria.

To understand space there is also the concept of landscape which results from a constant process of modification and adaptation of the interrelations between man and nature. The concept of landscape received a great contribution from Paul Vidal de La Blache at the beginning of the 20th century, when he defined it as how far eyes can see. Currently, however, the understanding of landscape goes beyond solely the mere looks to considering how we can interpret it based mainly on interrelationships among natural, cultural, technical and socioeconomic elements. The formation of landscapes occurs through a series of cumulative processes over time, which is

2. The Estrada Real (Royal Road) is the largest touristic route in Brazil. It is over a thousand miles long, passing through Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo and Minas Gerais. It currently rescues tracking traditions valuing the identity and the beauties of the region. Its history begins in the mid-seventeenth century, when the Portuguese Crown, which colonized Brazil, officially selected the routes for the transit of gold and diamonds from Minas Gerais to the ports of Rio de Janeiro, as to be sent to Portugal. Thus, its trails were delegated by the royalty and named Estrada Real (Instituto Estrada Real, [ca. 2000]).

intrinsically linked to the manifestations and spatial phenomena that can be apprehended by man through his senses. An example of urban landscape is the Brazilian city of Sabará (MG).

Place can be defined as a perceived space and its concept is associated with the affective space, i.e., the place with which a person has a certain familiarity or intimacy, which can be a street, a square, a church or house. For a long time, geography treated place punctually, as an expression of geographic space. However, the discussions that imply place as a geographic category have been approached in other ways, such as experience and uniqueness. Place as experience is characterized mainly by the appreciation of relationships of affection developed by individuals in relation to the environment. It signifies the construction of meanings based affective references experienced by a person over time. Place as singularity is a result of the historical-cultural characteristics inherent to its formation process and is related to the daily practice shared by various people and institutions as the notion of "lived space". The ruins of the Church of Our Lady of the Rosary of Black Men are a good example of a place for the inhabitants of Sabará as well as their visitors.

We must emphasize that in studying space one must grasp its relationship with society, because in it resides the true understanding of processes in relation to time and changes, which specify the notions of form, function and structure, basic elements of spatial production. It is worth remembering that whenever society undergoes a change, its forms acquire other functions, which, adapted, create new spatial organizations, so that the functioning of this structure attributes certain values to the forms. The city, as a result of a complex spatial organization is based on constant interactions between its fixed elements and flows (Santos, 1988). The fixed georeferenced spatial elements were built by human action and endowed with intentionality (function) that justifies their construction. In addition, they generate flows that give meaning and life to every moment, causing innumerable interrelationships that can even produce knowledge by adding other socio-cultural, historical and economic values to them, such as tourism. Indeed, the tourist phenomenon directs flows, brings visitors closer to what is to be visited, stimulates interactions and invariably provides leisure and knowledge. Thus, the visitation to ruins, as part of the tourist activity, also increases knowledge, generates flows, promotes reflections and feelings based on the contemplation of ruined forms that reveal the changes suffered by them over time.

Milton Santos believes that to understand the evolution of the socio-spatial totality of cities, it is necessary to interpret the dialectical relationship among structure, process, function and form of its elements. Thus, a ruin can be interpreted as an element of the landscape, because despite the lack of its original form that has been transformed by the action of time and the loss of its function, it remains an active element in urban landscapes. The analysis of the structure reflects how ruins are interrelated with the other elements of urban space, how it is inserted in such space and what types of relationships can be established with the local population. A more accurate look at ruins may reveal a place impregnated with memories that enable several new readings, and may contribute to the collective construction of a social memory. The process

that defines it is the result of continuous action and implies changes over time, highlighting the evolution of societies that have built and still build different power relations in these places.

The fact is that ruins appear in urban space as time-decayed buildings, unfinished works, collapsed bridges and walls, demolition remains and debris of houses and buildings, which indicates that not every ruin holds the power of evoking memories. If they are just piles of rubble, they will not arouse visitors' attention as tourist attractions as well. Regarding the significance that some ruins carry in their fragments, Oliveira (2012, p. 22) recalls that they "have much more to hide than to show". This indicates the need to reach them in their entirety, not just looking at the present moment; One must understand the historical and socioeconomic processes that led them to take on other forms and functions in the urban structure.

METHODOLOGY

The methodological procedure employed in this work was based on a theoretical and bibliographical survey whose authors, such as Walter Benjamin and Georg Simmel approach ruins, including other theorists who deal with tourism, ruins and tourism in ruins. Regarding the categories of the geographic method, the work of Milton Santos (1988) called *Espaço e Método* (Space and Method) was used to more accurately understand the theme.

During the bibliographical survey, we found that ruins can be approached in many ways, given the variety of attributes characterizing them and the different agents and levels of degradation affecting ruins. Considering these points, we chose the Church of Our Lady of the Rosary of Black Men as empirical object for this work, as it offered a very accurate idea of the type of ruin that is adequate to tourist activity. Another factor that motivated this choice was the great impact that these ruins had on the students of the technical course in Tourism of the *Colégio Estadual João de Oliveira Botas* (high school level), from Buzios-RJ, during a visit to Sabará-MG. These students were very impressed with its aesthetic aspect and its grandeur, which fostered numerous discussions and doubts about the real role of ruins in tourist places, as is the city of Sabará. This choice was corroborated by the fact that this ruined church maintains a chapel and a museum inside, placing this ruin on a different level from others, because it maintains its main function as a place for celebration of religious practices. Finally, the fact that this church was one of the first ruins listed in Brazil by the National Historic and Artistic Heritage Institute (IPHAN) on June 13, 1938 also contributed to its choice.

This study is justified as an attempt to understand the insertion of ruins as well as the reflections they entail in the urban landscape as places of memory. This idea is analyzed from the evolution of landscapes, implicit in the categories of the geographic method.

THE RUINS OF CHURCH OF OUR LADY OF THE ROSARY OF BLACK MEN IN SABARÁ-MG, BRAZIL

As the ruins are configured in many forms, inserted in different contexts and with varying levels of conservation/degradation, it was necessary to delimit the type of ruined heritage to reference this study, enabling the identification and explanation of the processes that a heritage undergoes over time in its form, function and structure by the ruins of the Church of Our Lady of the Rosary of Black Men. It also allowed us to guide the analysis as a constantly changing social product whose society seeks to understand its effects as a total spatial phenomenon. This idea fits in with the fact that this ruin is configured as a historically unfinished architectural work with a privileged location in the historic center of Sabará, which stimulates constant flows of visitation and simultaneously brings out a range of controversial feelings in those who visit it.

Figure 1 - Partial view of Praça Melo Viana with the ruins of the Church of Our Lady of the Rosary of Black Men at the bottom



Source – Retrieved from <http://bit.ly/368ISj0>. Access on: Dec. 10 2019.

Figure 2 - Approximate view of the church facade with churchyard and staircases



Source – Retrieved from <http://bit.ly/34WIUK0>. Acesso em: 10 dez. 2019.

When you get to Sabará Historic Center, more precisely at Praça Melo Viana, you can see an unfinished building that looms amid houses and townhouses. Encrusted at the highest point around the square, it draws attention for its grandeur, but also for arousing feelings of desolation and loss. Flanked by two streets giving access to the highest part of the city, it is majestic and enigmatic for those who visit it. These are the ruins of the Church of Our Lady of the Rosary of Black Men, a construction begun at the end of the 18th century by the Brotherhood of the Black Men of Our Lady of the Rosary of the Barra do Sabará, MG, Brazil.

Looking back at history, the building of the Church's work has come to a standstill over the years, driven mainly by the financial difficulties that the brotherhood was experiencing. In addition, an economic crisis that struck the region due to the scarcity of gold and the incipient slave liberation movement, contributed greatly to the impossibility of its conclusion.

Figure 3 – Interior of the Church of Our Lady of the Rosary of Black Men: view from the side and door.



Source – Retrieved from <http://bit.ly/34WIUK0>. Access on: Dec. 10 2019.

Figure 4 – Interior of the Church of Our Lady of the Rosary of Black Men: chapel



Source – Retrieved from <http://bit.ly/34WIUK0>. Access on: Dec. 10 2019.

The structure of the Church is all in stone masonry framing the gaps in stonework. The structure comprises two rectangular sections; the first represented by the nave, enlarged on the lateral flanks of the facade by the base of the towers, and the second containing the chancel and at each side the sacristies. The building's courtyard gives access to a two-flight staircase. Its façade features a large span front door, two upper window openings and two small openings on each flank at the base of the towers, through which arrows would be thrown as a way to defend the church.

This ruin houses inside a small chapel, built “provisionally”, until the Church was ready, but it is still currently functioning. The chapel is inserted into the body of the nave, from its halfway until the chancel arch connecting both of them. This small chapel has independent volume, rectangular form and internally presents common floor, with a whitewashed ceiling and rustic choir, supported by wood.

The main chapel is the only finished part of what would be the definitive structure of the church, and features grave floors, framing of the openings in stonework and ceiling of boards, with decorative painting. The two sacristies communicate with the main chapel, the one on the right side depicting smooth floor and whitewashed ceiling and the one on the left with a brick floor and vain tile roof. The former has a small museum of sacred art. The chapel has no gold coating, but rough painting. On the main altar is the image of Our Lady of the Rosary flanked by two saints of the brotherhood: St. Benedict and St. Efigenia.

Regarding its function, it has some particularities, as it houses a chapel inside, as a religious place for celebration, which is unusual in a ruined heritage. In its finished part, there is a collection of photos and religious objects that are part of its history, which gives the church another function: museum of sacred art.

TOURISM IN RUINS

Tourism, as a socio-spatial phenomenon, appropriates the ruin for tourism, whose practice is capable of offering countless possibilities of interactions, especially between visitors and the place visited. According to Paiva (2013, p. 136), “tourist activity is one of the main contemporary socio-spatial practices, as it stimulates contact with other people and enables interaction with space”. Aguinaldo Fratucci clarifies this matter by stating that:

... tourism understood as a phenomenon is the result of a social practice with strong spatial imbrications. It is a social phenomenon because it involves people and their relationships; It is spatial because it always involves the displacements and actions of people through the space traveled and visited. (Fratucci, 2008, pp. 28-29)

In the production and consumption of tourism space, segmentation dictates how it will be appropriated, since “each type of tourism requires spatialized demands” (Coriolano & Silva, 2005, pp. 107-108). According to this logic, we can understand that it is through tourism segmentation that these modalities report

not only to environmental preexistences, but also to their social practices (daily and traditional), which are adapted or transformed into attractions or tourist locations. Hence, the inclusion of ruins in the local itineraries is not surprising, as many people seek or identify with this type of heritage. By contrast, there are those who yearn unconditionally for the pursuit of the new and the modern. Thus, there is room for all these demands, including tourism in ruins. We identify as resources of this type of tourism the marks left by the weather (sun, wind and rain); the tragedies caused by the forces of nature (earthquakes, tsunamis, volcanic eruptions, hurricanes and floods) and even human action (or its absence), such as abandonment, neglect and war.

According to Simmel (2005), ruins gained tourist attraction status in the early 20th century, when the habit of contemplating ruins merely for leisure or curiosity was created. Unlike other types of heritage, ruins do not necessarily need major adaptations for its consumption as tourist attractions, as essentially its degraded aesthetics is what generates people flows. Thus, even with minimal adaptations in their unharmonious form, they still attract large numbers of people eager to visit them. That is why ruins are characterized much more as something to be interpreted than properly adapted or even rebuilt/restored, which leads us to believe that

. . . . the tourist space is determined from the moment when there is interest and visitation to a certain place by people, i.e., it does not depend solely on formatting of places and products for consumption, which is the result of touristification. (Paiva, 2013, p. 134)

Ruins, by their very condition, would theoretically be doomed to abandonment and complete contempt on the part of visitors, but instead they turn into tourist attraction, enhancing people's curiosity and flows for themselves, thus going against forgetfulness. Simmel (2005) explains that ruins stimulate the senses in an especially temporary relationship based on aesthetic criteria.

This fact is daily observed in Church of Our Lady of the Rosary of Black Men ruins, whose privileged location facilitates the generation of flows of people attracted by the thought-provoking vision it provides. Many visitors are keen to understand why it constitutes an unfinished work, while others are intrigued by the real reasons for its decay. The truth is that during a visitation in Sabará, most people that approached the church's ruins became impressed, wrapped in a mix of feelings alluding to desolation, surprise, curiosity and admiration, but were always aware of its emblematic presence.

Ruins as a decayed, collapsed or wrecked architectural work would certainly come to an end within the logic of cities. However, the spatial expression of tourism is so genuine and insightful that it turns ruins into tourist attractions, often preventing their demolition. Nicolas (2001, p. 49) states that "tourism creates, transforms, and even differentiate spaces that could have no value in the context of the production logic". And, according to Paiva (2013, p. 134),

. . . . tourism not only stimulates the creation of new urban and architectural configurations, but it also uses existing ones, including those conceived and erected within historical and social contexts that are absolutely different in time and space.

Mainly . . . when the motivation for its construction had no relation to tourism, but was related to the affirmation of the political, religious or economic power or the logic of the industrial production and the technological advances.

Understanding the meaning of ruins and their role in the urban and tourism context can be found in David Lowenthal's (1975) research, which is based on the historical imaginary that the presence of a ruin can cause in each visitor. According to the author, ruins acquire different meanings and can be understood as:

- evocation of an extinct past, as they gain a connotation of antiquity and approach a certain community in which technology, art, culture and nature are balanced, so the ancient ruins contain a sense of balance in space;
- something derived from a process of invention and aesthetic surprise, in which the past is continuity and, alike it, the ruins also tell us of a process of creative accumulation of facts and events from which we descend and are heirs, conveying personal and social security;
- learning from the past through the present image, i.e., ruins are understood as perceptions of the past, whose finalism is contained in the fragment of ruins and constitutes a sign of stability, of finished work, which fills us with confidence in the face of the misunderstanding and disorder of the present; and
- relics and inventions of bygone times from the perspective of the present, in which the past is a sequence, a link between two temporal moments, an aspect that we are unable to attribute to the present, and that is why ruins comfort and help us organize and make past understandable. (Lowenthal, 1975, pp. 52-67, our translation)

Lowenthal's research both shows ruins as great motivators of culture and tourism and suppresses the existing prejudice against ruined heritage in urban planning, considered as something to be discarded.

Ruins are linked to historical accounts, somehow configured as places of memory evocation and therefore are relevant to the context of cities. Likewise, ruins are extremely important for tourism, as the following examples shows: Machu Picchu in Peru; Acropolis in Greece; Mesa Verde in the United States; Angkor in Cambodia; Great Pyramids and Memphis in Egypt; Tikal in Guatemala; Petra in Jordan; Colosseum in Italy; the Great Wall in China; Palmira in Syria and the São Miguel Arcanjo Archaeological Site in Brazil. All these ruins are tourist attractions *par excellence*, given the originality and uniqueness they present, and are therefore capable of generating great flows of visitation.

RESULTS: ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

We showed in this study the importance of ruins for tourism and how they may gain visibility and notoriety when understood and interpreted in the light

of the categories of the geographic method. Ruins are unique elements in urban space and as such are well-aligned with concepts and categories of such method.

The ruined patrimony of the Church of Our Lady of the Rosary of Black Men has some singularities that are characteristic of its process of transmutation into ruins, and can be analyzed from its form, function and structure. Like all ruins, it has a historical trajectory and is inserted in a socio-spatial context deeply ingrained in meanings and values capable of attesting its human spatiality and territoriality, referring such ruins to the concept of place. Similarly, if we emphasize only the visual, aesthetic and scenic aspects of the ruins, this analysis gains an experiential, symbolic and subjective connotation that, sharpened by the relationship of visitors and residents with their insertion space, suggests the concept of landscape.

We may also observe in such ruins the cohabitation of two times: the past and the present. As a ruined heritage it serves the functions of antiquity, continuity and finalism, precisely because it holds facts and events that marked its existence, placing those who admire it as heirs of its creation. Also, aesthetically the church imposes its uncomfortable and unfinished presence on Sabará's main square. However, the idea of disturbing the aesthetic order of the city loses meaning when the visitor or resident understands this is much more lack of information than of beauty of the church. According to Oliveira (2012), "ruins have much more to hide than reveal", since in its present form both visitors and residents may not reach all the processes that culminated in the current aspect of ruin. This fact reinforces the need for better knowledge of this kind of heritage in its fullness, and moreover, for learning to value it in the urban fabric.

When analyzed by the four categories of the geographic method, the ruins of the church denote the unfinished and decayed aspect of its forms, which evidenced by the fall of the gold cycle in Minas Gerais, and the last moments of the slavery in the country. However, the religious function was maintained thanks to the chapel built inside, which preserved its primary function as a hieratic temple for celebration. The structure is materialized both in its original ruined and finished parts, where there are the main chapel, the two sacristies and the museum of sacred art, in addition to the "provisionally built" part, which houses the small chapel. In the analysis of the structure we can also understand the multiple interrelationships that these ruins establish with the other architectural elements around the square. Finally, the process is represented by the continuous action of time and the changes that have taken place in the forms of the church over the years, which have gradually turned it into ruins. This all resulted in the recomposition of the landscape, which provided new arrangements, allowing other uses for urban space, including tourism.

Tourism in ruins has proven to be an effective means of fulfilling this role, as it is in a very usual way to bring knowledge to those who contemplate ruins, since at first glance they cannot fully understand the real reasons that made this church an unfinished and ruined work. Without information, visitors speculate why this ruin remains in the historic center of the city of Sabará, question its continuity, suggest its overthrow or even do not understand why it cannot be restored, as the city present a strong Catholic tradition. In this

sense, the tourist activity corroborates to experience the historical context that framed it over time, enabling new interpretations and rereading capable of giving meaning or evoking feelings from the discursive narratives during the visitation of its space.

CONCLUSIONS

Milton Santos (1988), in explaining the formation of a landscape, describes the successive forms that it takes over time. This is analogous for architectural heritage, which may have its forms, function and structure modified by various agents causing changes to be small or profound transformations. Within this process the landscape becomes a ruin, disharmonized from its surroundings, its presence in the urban fabric becomes undesirable, no longer receiving due attention from the planners, who tend to leave them behind. Ruins then acquire a condition of invisibility, which changes only when it is about to collapse completely or when it is destroyed, giving rise to some feeling for the loss of such heritage.

This behavior almost involuntarily is reproduced since the idea of ruin as something decayed and worthless is present in the common sense of most people, being reinforced by its misshapen aesthetic that “contaminates and uglifies” the city. However, this idea is impregnated with a reductionist vision, and is the result of the hasty reading of the real potential that the ruins carry in them. Thus, ruins suggest not only the melancholic and tragic air (Benjamin, 1984) or the victorious result of nature overwhelming the human spirit (Simmel, 2005), but they act as links uniting temporalities and historical narratives. From this perspective, ruined heritage transcends all this and represents the connection with the past; understood in this other way, even without apparent functionality, they fit into a new structure, offering new uses to the urban fabric.

Produced over time, ruins become a visitation space full of symbolism and are characterized as a nostalgic source of information and memory. As physical symbols representing a past in the midst of the present, ruins imply a minimal degree of form that sustain and distinguish them from simple piles of rubble in order to allude to the historical antecedents that guides the experience of people in their space. Its importance for cities is notably justified because they bring together, two elements in their current form: representation and deterioration, and from these elements they continue to survive in urban space

Regarding tourism, some types of ruins acquire the status of tourist attraction, precisely because they represent a historical, landscape and even decaying evolution of that locality, which is why it is able to remind us of the past. Also, there is a mixture of fascination and desolation in its fragments, which arouses the curiosity of those who contemplate them. We may say that ruins preserve the memory of certain groups and transform forgotten places into memory places (Nora, 1993).

The very condition of the ruins of the Church of Our Lady of the Rosary of Black Men leads us to reflect on its transience and other heritage assets throughout the ages, highlighting the human fragility before nature. The kinds of feelings this

ruined heritage provokes on its observers is intriguing but justified by the power it has to represent the past by its remnants in the present. The historical past materialized in the ruins of the Church has been contributing to give movement and liveliness to the historic center of Sabará.

Finally, we state that the main contribution of this study was to draw attention to a type of heritage little valued by the population and its rulers, but that has much to reveal about the local history. We also highlight that this work focused primarily on tourism in ruins from the point of view of the categories of the geographic method, which delimited it and did not investigate other relevant aspects such as social memory, places of memory and cultural identity. Therefore, we suggest these themes for future research on ruins.

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CONTRIBUTION

José Ângelo Carneiro: Definition of the research problem and objectives, development of the theoretical proposal, bibliographic review and theoretical basis, choice of the methodological procedures, data collection, data analysis, preparation of the tables, graphs, figures, writing of the manuscript.

Valéria Lima Guimarães: Bibliographic review and theoretical basis, data analysis, critical review of the manuscript, adjusting the manuscript to the RTA norms.