

## THE TERRITORIAL REQUALIFICATION OF THE SOLEDADE CEMETERY: BELÉM – PARÁ



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### ABSTRACT

This article is one of the technical products of the doctoral thesis research entitled "Urban land regularization and access to environmental justice: mediation in urban and environmental land regularization in the state of Pará". The objective was to build the diagnostic study applying the methodology proposed by the action research, inserted in the territorial approach to development. Use specialized technical mediation to build a diagnosis of territorial requalification, relating Reurb and disaster prevention. Diagnosis as a management tool for a complex work inserted in the challenge of territorial requalification. The Anthropocene will be presented from a temporal perspective, including as a methodological tool. The territorial cut is the Cemetery of Nossa Senhora da Soledade in Belém do Pará – historical heritage listed by the National Historical and Artistic Heritage Institute. Finally, some results of the dynamics of monitoring the execution of the territorial requalification work with emphasis on the safeguarding of the historical and archaeological

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heritage are presented, addressing the two vulnerabilities in environmental disasters, flooding and animal abandonment. In the final considerations, some proposals are presented for the construction of a management plan.

**Keywords:** Anthropocene. Mediation. Archaeological Heritage. Reurb.

## INTRODUCTION

Cemeteries, urbanistically, follow a territorial logic of distance from urban centers, even stimulated by the Government since the eighteenth century, being a milestone the Imperial Law No. 29, September 11, 1828 – Structuring of the Municipality, as we will see below.

In the territorial perspective proposed by the research, the intangible heritage value of a cemetery is inestimable. When viewed collectively, the place where humans are buried is considered sacred territory. Cemeteries present exactly the intangible heritage value that surpasses the scales of natural resources.

The research does not consider it correct to link Urban and Environmental Land Regularization to financing, but rather the importance of preserving local territorial resources. Therefore, the present dynamic aimed to identify the main difficulties in relation to territorial requalification, that is: transforming a cemetery listed by the National Historical and Artistic Heritage Institute (IPHAN), Process No. 376-T 48, into a Park Cemetery, without decharacterization. In other words, it is essential to recognize that the territory object of the case study is of great historical, artistic and landscape value - Archaeological, Ethnographic and Landscape Books of Heritage. (IPHAN, 1948).

The research is based on the assumption that local territorial heritage can be both material and immaterial. Likewise, the great differential of any type of territorial requalification is to improve the territorial quality of human beings, especially local residents. The present work is one of the developments of the Environmental Residency at the Emílio Goeldi Museum of Pará, being a technical product to be used by the State Secretariat of Culture and other partners that work in the execution of the works and in territorial management. We will present below the relationship between the archaeological heritage found in the cemetery inserted in the context of the COVID-19 Pandemic in the logic of the Anthropocene.

Article 4 of Decree-Law No. 25/1937 (Landscape Listing Book) provides that things belonging to the categories of archaeological, ethnographic, Amerindian and popular art, as well as those mentioned in paragraph 2 of the aforementioned article 1. (BRAZIL, 1937). It is interesting to mention, within the logic of the Anthropocene, the pandemic context in which the Cemetery of Nossa Senhora da Soledade was found – created in 1850 – which is very close to the current context of the Covid-19 Pandemic. According to journalistic articles published in April and May 2020: "Covid-19: Cemeteries in Belém are overcrowded and

numbers of burials continue to rise" and "Covid-19 fills hospitals and generates funeral collapse in Belém" (PONTES, 2020).

It is noteworthy that the Imperial Law of Structuring the Municipality, in 1828, initiated a public policy called "sanitization of death", reorganizing the public spaces of the cities, with the transfer of burials to cemeteries far from urban spaces (BRASIL, 1828). As much as the aforementioned law does not bring express reference to cemeteries, it is important to transcribe that it is the first Brazilian normative instrument that regulates the concession of essential public services to be provided by private companies for consideration.

### **CHRONOLOGICAL DESCRIPTION OF THE FACT AND RELEVANT DOCUMENTS IDENTIFIED IN THE LISTING PROCESS NO. 376-T 48 (IPHAN, 1948)**

In 1850 there was the arrival of the Danish Barque "Pollux" and the Brazilian Charrúa "Pernambucana". Sick with Yellow Fever, they killed 12,000 (twelve thousand) people in Belém. In 6 months, 516 people died. As a result, burials inside churches were prohibited. Even with the resistance of certain classes called graded people and the clergy, the Public Power determined the fencing of the old Public Cemetery, located on the then called Rua de São Vicente de Fora.

The inauguration of the Cemetery of Our Lady of Soledade took place on January 8, 1850, with the official blessing of the Chapel of Our Lady of Soledade on July 7. The Builder of the Chapel was Joaquim Vitorino de Sousa Cabral (Order of Senhor de Santo Cristo). The cost for the construction of the Cemetery was 8 contos de réis and the Provincial Government (Public Power) paid only 600 thousand réis. The Military Order of the Holy Christ 2.5 contos de réis, because he provided the services. The City Council acquired, from Martinho de Freitas Noronha, 6 fathoms of the land. It was defined that the brotherhoods could buy the land separately: 5 thousand réis per fathom. Acquisition of part of the land by the Government to be able to make the fencing. Divided into four quarters: 1 - Private Monuments; 2 - To catacombs; 3 - For graves of free people; 4 - For slaves. The Brotherhoods: Order of the Holy House, Third Order of Carmel, Military Order of Santo Cristo and Third Order of Saint Francis of Penance.

From 1946 to 1948: The City Hall tries to demolish the Cemetery for the purpose of allotment and construction of houses. In 1962: Archiving of the Listing Process by IPHAN. In 1963: Request for Reconsideration (Real Estate Speculation). On December 20, 1963:

Favorable Opinion of IPHAN. Official Letter No. 320 – Notification No. 904: Listing of the Landscape Complex of Nossa Senhora da Soledade Cemetery, December 27, 1963 (p. 69).

In Article 4 of Decree Law No. 25/1937 (Landscape Listing Book):

Art. 1 The national historical and artistic heritage is the set of movable and immovable assets existing in the country and whose conservation is of public interest, either because of their connection to memorable facts in the history of Brazil, or because of their exceptional archaeological, ethnographic, bibliographic or artistic value.

[...]

Paragraph 2 - Natural monuments, as well as sites and landscapes that must be conserved and protected due to the remarkable features with which they have been endowed by nature or managed by human industry, are equivalent to the assets referred to in this article and are also subject to listing.

[...]

Art. 4 - The National Historical and Artistic Heritage Service shall have four Tombo Books, in which the works referred to in Article 1 of this law shall be inscribed, namely: 1) in the Archaeological, Ethnographic and Landscape Tomb Book, the things belonging to the categories of archaeological, ethnographic, Amerindian and popular art, as well as those mentioned in § 2 of the aforementioned Art. 1.

(BRAZIL, 1937)

It is noteworthy that there was difficulty in notifying the Municipal Mayor of Belém about the listing. Official Letter No. 79, of January 27, 1964, received on February 24, 1964, as can be seen from page 76, as described in the following important documents of the year 1970:

- Official Letter 548/1970 – Communicating the acts of vandalism in the Cemetery and concern with the image of Christ in the Chapel of Our Lady of Solitude. The image was sent to the Court of Auditors of Pará, conditioned to place an identical replica on the site;
- Official Letter No. 15/1970 – July 30, 1970 – Santa Casa de Misericórdia (Installation of Mortuary Chamber);
- Letter from the Directorate of National Historical and Artistic Heritage – October 7, 1970 – Suggesting to transform it into a Garden Cemetery. IPHAN Official Letter No. 1001/1973 – Transform the Cemetery into a Public Park.

In other words, the territorial requalification project to transform the Cemetery of Nossa Senhora da Soledade into a Public Park, began in 1970, having actually started the works only more than 50 (fifty) years later.

## **COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS BETWEEN THE 1850 CHOLERA EPIDEMIC AND THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

After the study with the descriptive analysis of the LISTING PROCESS NO. 376-T 48 (IPHAN, 1948), a great similarity between what happened in the year 1850 in relation to the Cholera epidemic and the COVID-19 Pandemic can be evidenced

In addition, what the authors Kodama and Pimenta (2020) say, is highlighted: an epidemic disease may not choose social class or color to reach, but it does not affect everyone in the same way. In the article on *Living conditions and vulnerabilities in epidemics: from cholera in the 19th century to Covid-19*, it is highlighted that the cholera epidemic began in Belém.

In turn, the cholera epidemic was a true massacre for the enslaved, with much more emphasis on those who had been born on African soil. The arrival of the third cholera pandemic – which was the first recorded in Brazil – greatly affected the entire population. The marginalized, including immigrant foreigners, enslaved people and Afro-descendants in general, suffered the most from the calamities generated by the disease. Emblematically, its beginning, recorded in Belém, was associated with a boat of sick immigrants coming from Porto. (KODAMA; PIMENTA, 2020).

The complex situation in relation to burials continues to be a current problem, even with the decrease in cases of deaths from the Covid-19 Pandemic. In this context, we transcribe the article of the Municipal Secretariat of Urbanism of the Municipality of Belém (SEURB) entitled *Municipal management plans to increase vacancies in the cemeteries of Belém in the short and long term*. (LOPES, 2023). SEURB's disclosure article on the planning for the year 2023 also highlights the speech of the Director of Necropolises, Lucas Farias, in relation to the regulation of the public service, that is, the director warns that the big problem is the cleaning of cemeteries. "In public cemeteries there is a concession to users; As a result, the responsibility for maintaining the graves falls to those who have this right to use. "These users have to look for the cemeteries to regularize the concession with the administration and especially clean the place".

The archaeological heritage found – which is the object of the excavation – is apparently a replacement area for bones from graves that were supposedly destroyed by the construction of the old site that served the stallholders, possibly a "common grave" where several corpses were buried, in the same grave, probably victims of yellow fever and *cholera morbus*.

The bones have not yet gone through the dating process, but it is estimated that they would be from the beginning of the twentieth century (1910). There are still no conclusions, however, the initial hypothesis is that Belense society experienced a pandemic situation, with the need for more bodies to be buried than there were in the respective graves. In the same way, the Soledade Cemetery is made up of brotherhoods and the great architectural beauty of their graves, also indicating that only upper-class families would be able to be buried in the cemetery. That is why it is assumed that cholera victims were supposedly buried in mass and mass graves. It is important to note that we did not locate, along with the listing process, the registration number of the property. We verbally worked with SECULT, but he was not located either.

However, over many years, the Nossa Senhora da Soledade cemetery was the target of vandalism and suffered from abandonment. On March 20, 2021, after a technical inspection, the Municipal Civil Defense interdicted the space, which already presented risks of falling from the portico. The decision to restore the site and turn it into a park was announced in 2021, but there was already a determination by IPHAN in relation to territorial requalification since the 70s. In recent years, the Cemetery of Nossa Senhora da Soledade has remained in a situation of abandonment, which led to its interdiction by the municipal civil defense of Belém in the aforementioned year.

## **MATERIAL AND METHODS**

Dynamics in the Cemitério Parque works with the participation of one or two representatives of each of the institutions that participate directly or indirectly in the work. It is important to note that the doctoral student has already attended part of the Environmental Residency with the works of the Cemetery Park. The objective is to carry out the dynamics to conclude the Research and Mediation Report in Reurb with contributions to the Management Plan of the Parque da Soledade Cemetery.

Schedule of activities – December 12, 2022: Reception/attendance list: 08:30 am to 09:00 am; Presentations: 09:00 am – two representatives from each institution/company;



Opening statement: 09:15 am; 1st Stage of the dynamics – identification of the main difficulties, execution and compliance with the work schedule: each of the representatives presented three of the main difficulties encountered for the execution of the work (Complexity). Objective: Identification of the main asymmetries; 2nd Stage of the dynamics – identification of local territorial heritage: each of the representatives presented three of the main local territorial heritages from the perspective of the management plan of a cemetery park (territorial requalification). Objective: identification of local territorial heritage; 3rd Stage of the dynamics: guided tour of the construction site with identification, including photographic registration of asymmetries and heritage; 4th Stage – closing: summary of what was presented in the stages, collective snack and acknowledgments. Evaluation of the dynamics.

Representatives of the following institutions participated in the activities of the research and mediation dynamics in Reurb: SECULT, IPHAN, MPEG, Archaeological Heritage Excavation Team, representatives (in charge) of the engineering company executing the works and, of course, the Environment Center (NUMA).

In all, 11 (eleven) representatives of the institutions participated in the dynamics from start to finish, and all signed the attendance list. At the time of the opening declaration, in addition to the two company foremen responsible for carrying out the works, all the workers who were working that day were invited to participate in the opening declaration. Then, the collective snack was served.

Each of the participants received a script to follow the stages of the dynamic. The purpose of the script is not to compile data, but rather a methodological tool to facilitate understanding and make sure that participants do not lose focus. On the other hand, the script also has an item in relation to the evaluation of the dynamics, all participants evaluated the dynamics as satisfied or very satisfied.

Regarding the main difficulties regarding the complexity of the work, the suggestions contemplated the following points: greater participation of society; the need for adjustments to the works, as it was an archaeological heritage that was being excavated (researched) concomitantly; the need for a preventive archaeological conservation plan.

There were recurrent manifestations that the large amount of rain, which some called difficulties in the "climatic conditions", was one of the factors that most complicated the execution of the works. On the other hand, objectively, the company providing the engineering service presented a major obstacle to be overcome, which is a flooding point,



which will only be solved after permission is allowed to connect the drainage structure of the Park Cemetery with the municipal urban drainage network.

Thus, two of the vulnerabilities object of the research were identified: flooding and the need to connect the work to the municipal urban drainage network. In fact, according to reports, there were complaints from residents and fairground vendors, especially those located on Travessa Dr. Moraes, that they were being hit by construction waste during the heavy rains. Likewise, some of the participants in the dynamic mentioned that one of the main difficulties in relation to the execution of the works was the abandonment of animals, especially domestic cats, and animal feces.

It is important to clarify that if a cat is pregnant, it is because she has not been neutered. Regarding the dog that was abandoned at the construction site, it was adopted by the workers, coming to be affectionately called "Soledade". Animal sanitary control, in relation to the Park Cemetery, will be analyzed in a specific diagnosis. It is important to note that, in addition to the cats, the snails *Achatina fulica*, the scientific name of the African snail (INSTITUTO OSWALDO CRUZ, 2023), were also present during the activities of the environmental residency.

In relation to the local territorial heritage, concerning the territorial requalification, with the transformation of an abandoned Cemetery into a Cemetery Park as one of the tourist attractions of the capital of the State of Pará, the contributions were many. Simplifying the requalification for didactic purposes of the dynamics, we presented the participants with the following challenge in relation to local territorial heritage: "What would make you and your family interested in visiting a Cemetery, including legends from sightings to apparitions?". In other words, how to transform a territory that some people are afraid to frequent and even consider it unhealthy to be present in a place where thousands of people are buried?

In order to facilitate the dynamics, we now present to the participants the most varied possibilities of using the territory to be requalified as a Cemetery Park, always considering that the territory is a cemetery and, on top of that, listed by IPHAN: a) - We suggest the use of both the Chapel of Our Lady of Soledade and other parts of the Cemetery Park for ecumenical weddings, commemorative events in general and photo shoots in general; b) - Annual events related to the Popular Saints, the Visagens and the traditional families of Belém. Week of the Popular Saints of the Soledade Cemetery Park, such as the storytelling of the stories of the Saints and also of the Visagens and urban legends of Belém and the Cemetery itself, including the participation of family members; c) - Traditional use during the

week of the dead, with candlelight celebrations at night (vigils), similar to the District of Porto Salvo, in Vigia, but insert the activities of *Halloween*, or Halloween - popular celebration of worship of the dead, celebrated annually on October 31st; d) - Exhibitions and artistic presentations (musical and theatrical), including at night, especially during the period before All Souls' Day; e) - Use of one of the cemetery spaces as a source of wishes, on site, visitors could dump part of the ashes of deceased loved ones; f) - Permanent archaeological excavation as an exhibition of the Amazonian archaeological heritage, clarifying to visitors about the millennial historical occupation of the territory.

It is important to note that regardless of how the Cemetery Park Management Plan will be, from then on, it is no longer linked to just one religion. In other words, as much as, in its history, it has belonged to the Santa Casa de Misericórdia and, consequently, to the Catholic Church, as a Cemetery Park, it needs to be respected in the context of religious syncretism.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

For the purpose of building the Management Plan of the Parque da Soledade Cemetery, what is proposed is the construction of a Management Committee, with technical representatives from the three governmental spheres: SECULT, FUMBEL, IPHAN, Conservation and Restoration Laboratory of the Federal University of Pará and MPEG. The vacancies in the public power would be filled by volunteering and technical capacity.

The employees of the respective institutions who wanted to participate in the Management Committee would apply and, if there was more than one interested party, the one with the best technical training or experience in the management of archaeological heritage would be nominated. There would be 9 (nine) vacancies for the public power, distributed as follows: 3 (three) for the Municipality of Belém, with the respective alternates; 3 (three) for SECULT, with their respective alternates; and 1 (one) vacancy for each of the federal institutions, with their respective alternates.

The nine representatives of organized civil society could be chosen from within participatory councils that already work in the inspection of public works, such as the *Tá Selado!*, Space for Citizen Participation of Belém. The term of office is one year, extendable for another year. The Management Committee would meet at least once a month at the Park Cemetery, especially for the purpose of monitoring the execution of the construction schedule and building the Management Plan.

Although not all guests participated in the dynamics, it was possible to perceive the systemic construction, especially in the opening statement, with the participation of everyone who worked on the works. Even though only the two people in charge participated in the activities until the end, the workers felt represented. According to information from the participants of the dynamic, it would be the first time that everyone gathered in collective activity, that is, symbolically it was possible to build the complex justice system.

It is important to understand, as a basis for the management tool, that in addition to the landscape, artistic and historical heritage concerning cemetery art, there is archaeological heritage. Parts of the ceramics found have not yet been dated, and are even on display in the Chapel of Nossa Senhora da Soledade, with the indication that they may be from hunter-gatherers who lived in the territory more than a thousand years ago (MAGALHÃES, 2016). Thus, the proposal would be a permanent archaeological excavation work, with the possibility for visitors to watch the excavation work and understand the importance of research and preservation of the Amazonian archaeological heritage.

In addition to the artistic, historical and architectural importance that justified the listing of the Soledade Cemetery by IPHAN, inaugurated in 1850, we highlight the listing as an archaeological heritage. In other words, during the excavations of the territorial requalification works to transform the Cemetery into a Park Cemetery, four moments of territorial occupation were found in terms of its use: indigenous occupation, colonial occupation, cemetery occupation and the current one, as can be seen from the text of the permanent exhibition installed in the Chapel of Nossa Senhora da Soledade, located inside the Cemetery, called: *Archaeological research in Soledade Park* (LOPES, 2022).

Thus, according to the research coordinated by Lopes (2022), before being a cemetery, the site was occupied by indigenous people. In fact, the archaeological black earth and some fragments of supposedly indigenous pottery were identified, which are on display in the Chapel of Our Lady of Solitude.

The survey considers that the listing of the Cemetery remains in force. What is happening is the requalification for use also as a park, as suggested by IPHAN itself, still in the 70s. The place where the dead are buried is a sacred place and death must be respected, that is, at no time has it ceased to be a cemetery. For the research, the name should be Nossa Senhora da Soledade Park Cemetery and all works should be restoration works, not renovation works. However, between being abandoned and being renovated and still requalified as a park is already a great contribution to society.

For the purpose of obtaining recent parameters, it is important to use the work of the author Rodrigues (2014): *Two faces of death: the body and soul of the Nossa Senhora da Soledade Cemetery, in Belém/PA*, especially in relation to the popular saints for restoration purposes.

Regarding the registration of the property, it is important to expand the diligence for the location. If it does not exist, it is necessary to request the negative certificates from the Real Estate Registry Offices of Belém, prepare the georeferencing of the property, with the presentation of a descriptive memorial that contains the georeferenced coordinates of the vertices defining its limits, subpoena the public farms of the Union, the State and the Municipality of Belém.

Currently, the Executive Branch of the State of Pará is responsible for the execution of the works, with the construction of several partnerships. It is essential to regularize the registration of the property, even for the Management Committee to decide whether the management will be carried out by the Government or through a concession to the private sector.

Regarding felines, the Superintendence of IPHAN, together with Rio de Janeiro, approved a pilot project that will have demountable, washable, low-height shelters with a color that does not contrast with the vegetation can become a reference for other historic gardens in the country, in an unprecedented partnership between IPHAN and other agencies. (DIÁRIO DO RIO, 2023). The diagnosis of the territorial requalification of the Soledade Cemetery Park was a success. Thanks are given to all participants, especially the State Secretariat of Culture and the Emílio Goeldi Museum of Pará. We believe that the institutions that participated in the dynamics will be able to make good use of the technical product, including in relation to the Management Committee and the respective Management Plan.

Finally, it is important to note that the territorial requalification of the Soledade Cemetery Park is in a second stage, having been included in the PROJECT A NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM, in July 2023: 3rd Edition of the Project 'A Night at the Museum' has new spaces in the circuit this Friday (4). Tours are free and guided to expand and democratize access to the various equipment of the Pará State Department of Culture. 04/08/2023. (SECULT, 2023), aligning with the proposals presented in the dynamics of territorial requalification.

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