

Historic Gardens Heritage

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Historic Garden is a category of historic heritage enshrined in the Florence Charter as a Living Monument (ICOMOS, 1982). They belong to the category of landscape designed and created intentionally by Man (UNESCO, 2021). As the expression of the relationship between Man and nature (ICOMOS, 1982; Kimber, 2004), gardens are part of the cultural landscape of any civilization and society and reflect the culture, identity and history of a people (Añón, 1993; Kimber, 2004). As such, constitutes cultural, artistic and historical documents (Doolittle, 2004) and horticultural compositions (ICOMOS, 1982) of great importance and interest. Since it is composed of living plant material, a garden is a dynamic and constantly changing environment where different types of time (ecological, social and subjective) are brought together and interact (Bhatti et al., 2009). A garden therefore becomes an unfinished work (Estadão, 2005) and one that is necessarily ephemeral (Gollwitzer, 1993). This dynamic transformation leads Sales (1993) to say that a garden is not an object, but rather a process undergoing constant development and decomposition.

Keywords: historic gardens heritage ; sustainable management and safeguarding

1. Introduction

Gardens are thus one of the richest, but also the most delicate, expressions of cultural and landscape heritage ^{[1][2]}. This is especially true of historic gardens, because of what they represent, which should be understood and preserved. The inventory is the first instrument in the process that leads to the safeguarding of the cultural heritage, as it allows the recognition of its existence. According to Meyers ^[3] (p. 102), "This principle makes inventories an essential tool for cultural heritage management in all of its various aspects". The author ^[3] points out that inventories are essential to protect heritage from various constraints, both human and natural, to contribute to determine intervention priorities and to enable and provide a broader understanding and appreciation of, and public engagement with such places and their preservation. As such, it has been a constant premise of several documents on heritage conservation. Under the Principles for the Recording of Monuments, Groups of Buildings and Sites ratified by the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), it is assumed that recording is one of the principal ways to give meaning to, and to understand, define and recognize the values of cultural heritage ^[4], and so promoting its effectiveness is a vital tool for sustainable heritage management ^[3].

Therefore, following this line of reflection, cataloguing historic gardens is a key element in protecting and safeguarding them; it is the first step in identifying, quantifying, and publicizing them and their value and importance, and it is also an essential tool to support decision making about their oversight and recovery ^[2]. However, the task of protecting and safeguarding such a delicate cultural heritage is hampered when the full legacy is not properly known. This handicap derives from the length of time during which gardens of historical interest were not taken seriously and only given scant attention in discussions about heritage ^[5]. The recognition process for historic gardens as part of the cultural heritage took a long time. It is in a broader framework of the need to protect heritage that historic gardens emerge, albeit largely implicitly until the Florence Charter specifically focused on historic gardens.

The Portuguese Garden perfectly expresses the idea of a garden presented at the start, that is "a reflection of the culture, identity and history of a people", because it has cultural features that are typically the result of particular circumstances in territorial, historical, cultural, political, religious, economic and social terms ^{[1][6]}. These sites represent an invaluable heritage and cultural value, one that is crucial for understanding Portuguese culture and for preserving national memory and identity. Therefore, the knowledge provided by an inventory is extremely important. However, in Portugal, historical gardens have never been a major interest, much less have they had any particular attention paid to them by the competent legislative and administrative authorities, at least in comparison with other forms of cultural heritage ^[7]. Proof of this are the many gardens that have been disappearing due to new urban needs, as well as those that have been undermined and lost their original historical and artistic character because of unregulated changes ^{[1][7][8][9]}. Additionally, since the vast majority of them are private property, closed to the public and often abandoned, cataloguing is not an easy

task ^[2]. Ignorance of their existence and/or their real value have fueled this saga, and impoverished the country in terms of its heritage of historic gardens.

In Portugal, it was mainly in the academic world that an interest in historical gardens, in learning about them and protecting them, manifested itself most clearly and fruitfully, resulting in some listings and inventories. However, state institutions linked both to the management and preservation of heritage and to the tourism sector have also been embracing this theme in recent decades. They have achieved this through partnerships and protocols with academia, which have led to more studies and inventories being carried out on landscape art. Their purpose is not only to remedy the previous lack of knowledge about this heritage, but also to make it accessible to everyone, at home and abroad.

Constant references to the inventories of historic gardens and their authors were made in the various studies on gardens. However, there is a lack of general knowledge about those inventories and the information contained in them, since they have never been subjected to a more specific analysis in evolutionary and comparative terms, nor was their effectiveness discussed. That raised three key research questions that guided this work: (i) what inventories of historic gardens exist in Portugal; (ii) what are their characteristics, what kind of information do they include, where/how are they available; and (iii) what constraints do they present with negative implications for the effective and sustainable management of this heritage.

2. Historic Gardens as Cultural Landscapes

Cultural landscapes are realities anchored in a long history of complex interaction between humans and nature ^[10]. Through their actions, humans have shaped the landscape, and the geographic and natural resources have in turn shaped the history and life of human societies. This means that nature and humans are the two most important factors in determining the character of landscapes. They can then provide information about the relationships established over time between societies and the natural environment, and can therefore contribute to the understanding of history, science, anthropology, technique, literature, among the other foundations of society. It is from this perspective that it makes sense to establish landscapes as cultural heritage, insofar as they are goods in constant evolution that are inherited, used and bequeathed to future generations ^[11].

As a result of this interaction, landscape consists of both natural and cultural components, which cannot be separated, and so it embraces a variety of manifestations that have been recognized in the framework of the UNESCO Convention for the Protection of the World Heritage, Natural and Cultural. Cultural landscapes thus fall into three main categories, namely, landscape designed and created intentionally by man, organically evolved landscape and associative cultural landscape ^[10].

Landscapes are valued for their unique character and cultural heritage, and for providing feelings of attachment, belonging and inspiration ^[12]. Therefore, they are part of the cultural heritage and are key components of local, regional and national identities ^[13]. They are part of people's collective identity, as recognized by UNESCO ^[10], and a core element of individual and social well-being, as admitted by the Council of Europe ^[14]. When the landscape is valued by itself, taking a memorial dimension and founding the identity of a group, this assumes a new assignment, to "express dreams" ^[15]. The best expression of this landscape category is, in the opinion of Andrade ^[16], the historic garden.

Some of the most valued elements of worldwide cultural heritage are historic gardens ^{[11][2]}. Garden and parkland landscapes constructed for aesthetic reasons, and which are often (but not always) associated with religious or other monumental buildings and ensembles, belong to the category of landscape designed and created intentionally by man ^[10]. The historic garden is a creation of societies and a reflection of their history and different cultures; it bears witness to times past and the relationship of humans with nature and with the landscape. It is a complex architectural system, whose joint composition of life and the inert makes it a "Living Monument" ^[17].

The definition of the historic garden was formalized at the first international symposium on the conservation and restoration of gardens of historical interest, which was held in Fontainebleau (1971) on the initiative of ICOMOS and the International Federation of Landscape Architects (IFLA). It was later adopted and institutionalized by the Florence Charter. A historic garden is described as an architectural and horticultural composition, applicable to a small garden or a large park, whether formal or landscape, of interest to the public from a historical or artistic point of view, and thus a monument, a living monument ^[18]. The term "historic" acquires a certain relativity, because gardens that have been produced in the past, whether recent or not, can be considered historic ^[19] so that "historic" transcends the value of antiquity ^[5]. This definition also has huge elasticity, in that it includes several types of gardens (regular or irregular, classic, baroque, romantic or landscape), which, since they represent an original work, are recognized as part of cultural heritage, and have a certain cultural value ^[19]. A historic garden is not a matter of age, stylistic features or dimensions; it is defined by its

character and historical interest, for what it represents in terms of memorial, identity and culture, for the value it adds to the sites and monuments it may be associated with and for what it awakens in the present ^[5]. It is this wide conceptual dimension of a historic garden that is considered in the course of this work about inventories.

The ways in which cultural landscapes are understood and managed are vital to sustainability ^{[19][20]}. In the current context of increasing concerns about sustainability, and the great pressure cultural landscapes are under due to climate, demographic, social and ideological changes ^[20], it is fitting to recall how historic gardens have been understood, managed and valued, and what role inventories have played in this process.

3. Safeguarding and Enhancing Historic Gardens over Time and the Inventory Figure

Until the 1980s, the guidelines in documents such as the Conventions, Recommendations and Resolutions produced and disseminated by UNESCO, ICOMOS and ICOMOS-IFLA, and even the Council of Europe, did not make any specific reference to historic gardens, although some of them could be adapted and applied to this heritage asset. One example is the 1931 Athens Charter, the first instrument for the conservation and preservation of monuments. It considered the need to study and preserve their surroundings, specifically the ornamental vegetation, and where the inventory was already mentioned as the responsibility of each State or of institutions with due power ^[21]. The Recommendation concerning the Safeguarding of Beauty and Character of Landscapes and Sites, presented by UNESCO in 1962, laid down guidelines for the protection of landscapes and natural sites, rural and urban, whether or not resulting from the “work of man”, which were of aesthetic, and cultural interest or that constituted characteristic natural surroundings ^[22]. In 1964, the Venice Charter on the conservation and restoration of monuments and sites formally expressed the extension of the concept of monument to other elements such as the landscape and, although there is no concrete reference to historic gardens, there is an appeal to the need to preserve the traditional framework ^[21].

Although interest in gardens and their protection had arisen at the time of the Universal and International Exhibitions, which occurred before the Second World War ^[23], it should be noted that it was only in the late 1960s that the specific Section for gardens was set up by the IFLA. The purpose was to discuss an approach for dealing with gardens of historical interest and it set out to identify and catalogue the major historical gardens in various countries around the world, a total of 1550 in all ^{[5][24]}. The International Committee of Historic Gardens and Sites was established in the early 1970s at the Fontainebleau meeting, as a subdivision of ICOMOS and IFLA. It was intended to investigate and inventory the gardens of greatest interest, which made the promotion of conservation, restoration and research of historic gardens and cultural landscapes more effective ^[25]. This meeting also formalized the definition of historic garden and made recommendations for safeguarding gardens.

Still in the 1970s, the Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage held that cultural and natural heritage can be proposed as world heritage, with cultural heritage including places of interest, which includes the works of man, or the combined works of man and nature. The importance of inventories was again mentioned ^[21]. The Burra Charter, first adopted in this decade, established guidelines for conserving places of cultural significance, defining terminologies and principles of intervention in architectural and landscape heritage ^[26].

A new attitude developed towards gardens, principally since the 1980s with the drafting of the Florence Charter by ICOMOS-IFLA International Committee for Historic Gardens, as an addendum to the Venice Charter, covering the specific field of safeguarding historic gardens that was missing. This document defined the historic garden, assigned it the status of a monument, a “living monument” perishable over time and with use, and established a set of principles for interventions in the maintenance, conservation, restoration and reconstruction, use and the legal and administrative protection of this heritage. Furthermore, its Article 9 explicitly drew attention to the importance of identifying and creating listings, along with their relationship with effectiveness in the protection and preservation of historic gardens ^[18]. The production of garden listings, inventories and registers has since thrived, involving central and local authorities and even civil society. Take the case of the United Kingdom, for example, where each country has its own heritage agency to draw up inventories of parks and gardens and, in addition to the National Register, a number of other agencies, authorities and local associations keep registers of historic parks and gardens ^[27].

Within the broad spectrum of cultural heritage, guidelines continue to emerge in the various documents produced after the Florence Charter that can be adapted to the preservation of historic gardens. Among the most relevant are the Granada Convention for the Protection of the Architectural Heritage of Europe approved by the Council of Europe in 1985, the Washington Charter for the Conservation of Historic Towns and Urban Areas adopted by ICOMOS in 1987, the previous versions of and the current Burra Charter issued by Australia ICOMOS, the Charter of Krakow 2000 about the Principles

for Conservation and Restoration of Built Heritage and the European Landscape Convention of the Council of Europe (2000).

Pursuing the goal of knowing and safeguarding this heritage, a European database of gardens has been set up more recently by the European Institute for Gardens and Landscapes (IEJP), which so far includes data from Portugal, France, Belgium and England in a total of about 18,000 historic gardens. Several other inventories from different European countries are currently being compiled to be added to this database ^[28].

In addition, some initiatives that have been developed to enhance and publicize historic gardens within Europe should be mentioned. Examples include the European Cultural Heritage Information Network (HEREIN), the European Garden Heritage Network, the Network of European Royal Residences and the European Historic Houses Association. It is also important to mention the European Route of Historic Gardens, a Council of the Europe Cultural Route, seen as the best way to recognize its historical, artistic and social value ^[29].

In the Portuguese context, historic gardens have never been a major concern. Nonetheless, the Law on Portuguese Cultural Heritage includes a specific reference to historic gardens. It recognizes them as a cultural asset and therefore one of the components of the general valuation regime (Article 70º), and an element that enhances the coherence of monuments, ensembles and sites (Article 44º) ^[30]. Although it provides two levels of heritage registration—classification and inventory—with a view to ensuring their legal protection and valuation and to prevent their disappearance or degradation, it does not define a historic garden or a specific legal regime, which jeopardizes a more effective protection.

4. The Cultural Specificity and the Differentiating Nature of the Portuguese Historic Garden

Portuguese gardens are not comparable to those in countries such as England, France or Italy. The ultimate purpose of displaying or being a symbol of ostentation and power is not part of the essence of the Portuguese garden. On the contrary, a garden was built as an extension of the house and therefore to be habitable, as a haven, intimate and quiet, a place of charm and well-being with nooks and crannies, a crypto-magical spot, more to be enjoyed from within it than admired from the outside ^{[1][31]}.

The Portuguese garden, originating as an orchard garden, has gone through times and trends and over the centuries has found ways to adapt to circumstances and absorb the various influences that came its way. Caldeira Cabral ^[1] sees a concept of Portuguese garden being created under a series of varied circumstances and a mix of influences that made it different and unique.

Their location between the Mediterranean and the Atlantic, the climate, the socio-political and economic history, organization and social evolution, together with the rugged topography have left Portuguese gardens imbued with a set of characteristic and distinctive features that give them a character and originality that distinguishes them from the large European gardens to which the general public will be accustomed ^{[1][6]}.

In the opinion of Castel-Branco ^[6], the variety of flowering trees and shrubs; the deep views and prospects; the different levels that form terrace-gardens; the tiles with various motifs and colors; large water surfaces in the form of pools, lakes, fountains or monumental fountains, often functioning as the polarizing elements of the area, are the key elements of a Portuguese garden. Other important identifiers define the very essence of the Portuguese garden. They include trellises and arbors, flower beds (*alegres*), decorative shell-and-pebble masonry (*embrechados*), benches and other embellishments (natural and artificial), paths and high walls/hedges, which can be found alone or combined, especially in the large *quintas de recreio* (recreational farms) (a cluster formed by woods, a formal garden next to the house and a vegetable garden/orchard) of the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries ^{[1][6][31][32][33]}.

The concept of a garden as a closed space and somewhere to be became diluted in Romanticism, with the influence of European aesthetics, and, above all, with the fashion of the eighteenth and nineteenth century English garden park. The Renaissance period also fostered the development of the monumental religious landscape of the north and, in the second half of the eighteenth century, botanical gardens made their appearance. The twentieth century saw the modernist style making its mark on some national parks ^{[1][31]}.

According to Caldeira Cabral ^[1], from north to south and including the islands, Portugal has a wide and diverse spectrum of gardens from the most varied periods, and they display characteristic cultural features. The examples, albeit in different states of preservation, range from the Roman peristyles and mediaeval cloisters to twentieth-century public parks, by way of *quintas de recreio*, convent and monastery landscapes, sanctuaries, botanical gardens, private and public gardens,

parks, avenues and squares of historical, cultural and artistic value and interest. The assortment of types of gardens and the mixture of styles characterize the originality of the art of landscaping in Portugal [1][31].

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