

# *Artigos Dossiê*

## *Heritage: two monuments in comparison in Rio Grande do Sul*

*Patrimônio Cultural: dois monumentos em comparação no  
Rio Grande do Sul*

Donatella Strangio<sup>1</sup>

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**Abstract:** The originality of this contribution, which wants to be inserted in the deepening of the trend of tangible and intangible cultural heritage, lies in the interpretation of two monuments of the same region (the Monument park called “Berço da Imigração Italiana” and the national monument to immigrants in Caxias do Sul/BR,) erected in memory of the Italian migration, which represent two different ways of perpetuating his memory. Monuments, memorials and signs of various kinds are apparently created to fix the time, “to defeat history”, as W.J.T. Mitchell said it. These objects work in multiple, often overlapping, ways; they could identify a site of historical importance (for example, a battlefield), commemorate a life lived (for example, a tombstone) or designate a sacred space (for example, a religious statue). How sites are marked for a special designation involves cultural politics of the meaning of features including wealth, gender, race, and power.

Keywords: Cultural Heritage; Italian Migration; Monuments.

**Resumo:** A originalidade deste contributo, que se insere na discussão do patrimônio cultural material e imaterial, reside na interpretação de dois monumentos da mesma região (o Parque Monumental denominado “Berço da Imigração Italiana” e o monumento nacional aos imigrantes em Caxias do Sul/BR), erigidos em memória da migração italiana, que representam duas formas distintas de perpetuar sua memória. Monumentos, memoriais e sinais de vários tipos são aparentemente criados para fixar o tempo, “para derrotar a história”, como postula W.J.T. Mitchell. Esses objetos funcionam de diversas formas, muitas vezes sobrepostas; eles podem identificar um local de importância histórica (por exemplo, um campo de batalha), comemorar uma vida vivida (por exemplo, uma lápide) ou designar um espaço sagrado (por exemplo, uma estátua religiosa). A forma como os locais são marcados para uma designação especial envolve políticas culturais do significado de recursos, incluindo riqueza, gênero, raça e poder.

Palavras-chave: Patrimônio Cultural; Imigração italiana; Monumentos.

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<sup>1</sup> Full professor of Economic History; affiliated Department Memotef (Sapienza University of Rome). Her most cited works are on famine in the pre-industrial era, Migrations, Public Finances, Colonization and Decolonization, Institutions and Long-Term Economic Growth, History of Tourism. E-mail: [donatella.strangio@uniroma1.it](mailto:donatella.strangio@uniroma1.it)

## Introduction

The legacy of emigration, especially Italian emigration, has profoundly marked Brazilian society, as it imported a social system that was very different from the one that had existed up until then in Brazil. The entrepreneurial spirit of the immigrants gave rise to countries and cities, just as it transformed landscapes and brought new languages. This was particularly the case in the states in the South and South-East, especially in Rio Grande Do Sul and Santa Catarina, where most of the Italian immigrants settled. The cities of Nova Brescia, Nova Milano, Nova Padova, Nova Treviso and Nova Roma do Sul were all established here. Immigration to Rio Grande do Sul began in May 1875, with the arrival of three Italian families: the **Crippa**, **Radaelli** and **Sperafico families**. They left Italy, their country of origin, crossed the Atlantic Ocean and landed in a small port on the Taquari River, in what today is the region of Santa Teresa. Nova Milano, which is in the Farroupilha district, Santa Teresa and Monte Belo do Sul formed a kind of cradle for Italian immigration to Rio Grande do Sul.

In the present work, before dealing with the Monument park called “Berço da Imigração Italiana” and the national monument to immigrants in Caxias do Sul/BR, it is necessary to discuss the concept and the various facets of cultural heritage and why it is so important to link them to these monuments in order to highlight their particularities. In this way, it will be possible to highlight the novelty of the “Berço da Imigração Italiana”. Monument park compared with the other one mentioned and its conception, which was so different from that of other important monuments dedicated to the same subject, Italian immigration. It will therefore be appropriate to recall the exegesis of the history of Italian migration with particular reference to Brazil.

A Monument Park for the Centenary of Italian Immigration was created in memory of this epic period in 1975. The Park was inaugurated on 13 December 1975, and was intended to mark the centenary of Italian immigration to Rio Grande do Sul and to honour the three Italian families that first settled there and brought their culture with them.

Italian emigration to Brazil forms the basis of this article; the heart of the essay is the history of this Monument Park, which is little known but very important for the local population. It examines why and when it was created, what its various spaces represent and what meaning it aims to pass down from generation to generation.

This work intends to use the history of this monument to reconstruct the history of the Italian migrants of that time, and also underlines how this monument is an example of cultural heritage that is not expressed solely through tangible forms, such as artefacts, buildings or landscapes, but also through intangible forms.

## **Cultural heritage**

What is cultural heritage? There are many correct answers to this question. We can also add that each epoch has produced its own specific definition. The one proposed by ICOMOS on the occasion of the 12th General Assembly held in Mexico in October 1999 today represents an important reference at the international level:

Cultural heritage is a broad concept that includes the natural as well as the cultural environment. It includes landscapes, historical places, sites and environments built by man, as well as biodiversity, collections, past and present cultural practices, life experiences and knowledge. It records and expresses the long processes of historical development, which form the essence of the different national, regional, indigenous and local identities and is an integral part of modern life. It is a dynamic reference point and a positive tool for growth and change. The specific cultural heritage and collective memory of each locality or community cannot be replaced and is an important basis for present and future development. (ICOMOS Mexico 1999)

Each generation, each society delimits the set of cultural materials shaped by individuals and communities of previous eras that deserve to be handed down to posterity and therefore must be protected. According to this dynamic vision, each generation reactivates the social process underlying the identification and selection of what must be preserved.

Yet why do societies define their own cultural heritage? According to Tunbridge and Ashworth (1996), this process comes from the need to respond to the identity needs of the present.

The interpretation of the past in history, the surviving artefacts and buildings, individual and collective memories are all used to respond to current social identity and economic needs. Thus, on the one hand, cultural heritage is the indispensable material for building and defining the social, ethnic and territorial identity of

individuals, on the other it is an economic resource that can be used within the production and marketing schemes of creative industries. (TUNBRIDGE and ASHWORTH 1996, pp. 21, 29)

This explains why countries have often guaranteed protection for the same type of cultural property by referring to different motivations. One of the most interesting examples of expanding the concept of cultural heritage as a response to the identity needs of the present generation is that of the creation of natural parks in the United States and in Europe. In the United States, the invention of the park was the result of a multiplicity of elements. First of all, in a young country, lacking in artistic testimonies of high value around which to claim/assert a cultural and historical identity, the natural environment and above all its codification within a park assumed the same meaning as Renaissance art or impressionism had for Europeans (DE GIORGIO, 1995).

We must remember that the United States was a newly established country, and there was the pressure of a population of the most disparate cultural and ethnic origins. The search for common values through which the great original differentiation and the identification of symbols in which everyone recognized themselves could be recomposed at a higher level was as important as defining the institutional structure of the state. The enhancement of these extraordinary monuments of nature was therefore part of the process of building a national cultural identity.

### **Tangible and intangible heritage and monuments**

The notion of heritage includes very different realities, from historical monuments, which are the most closely linked to a nation's cultural heritage, to private buildings of great architectural interest.

The number of monuments that are catalogued and under the protection of the State is steadily increasing owing to historical additions, and because the very concept of heritage has been extended to include industrial heritage, gardens, and commercial and maritime heritage too. Safeguarding all of this goes hand in hand with the desire to preserve the memory of past economic activities. Alois Riegel, the great art historian (1903), traced the origins and development of the cult of monuments, and identified the values most suited to twentieth-century sensitivity, considering above all the new and emerging classes (see also AHMER 2020). The transition to the following century has led to a deep change that is as yet little understood. As Eugenia Bitsani (2016, pp. 4-5) writes,

we can understand the importance of migration memory, and the importance of its conservation for the next generations. We can also understand the identity connection between the migration memory and the collective memory of the city. Collective memory is metaphorically a construction. Its formation and establishment is in need of a specific means. Antiquity, monuments, architecture, and material cultures have the ability to convey meanings and to symbolize things, by having the advantage of an image that is easily printed on the human mind (see also: FOUCAULT, 1984; MITCHELL 2002).

Monuments, that is to say, constructions made by man in certain places, constitute collective representations, aiming to shape collective memory (HALBWACHS, 2003, p. 124; see also NELSON and OLIN, 2003). They encapsulate a narrative place that combines the “indirect” speech of history with the “direct” speech of memory and they survive materially and intellectually in time and space (BENEVOLO, 1997, p. 119). Monument is a word whose meaning is broad and can be understood as a legacy from the past, but also as a commemorative and / or funerary work, as Le Goff tells us. For Françoise Choday, everything that is built by a community of individuals will be called a monument to remember or make other generations of people remember events, sacrifices, rites or beliefs. The monument’s specificity is due precisely to its way of acting on memory. A monument can be expressed by a public sculpture, a building, a house or a bridge built in a certain style and by including a given technique in its composition. In this text, the word monument is used to define “The Centenary Park of Italian Immigration” located in Nova Milano, a district of Farroupilha, in the Serra Gaúcha, Rio Grande do Sul / BR. (LE GOFF, 1990, 535; CHODAY, 2001, p. 18).

Intangible heritage includes voices, values, traditions and oral history. This is popularly perceived through cuisine, clothing, types of shelter, traditional abilities and technologies, religious ceremonies, the performing arts and storytelling, all of which are part of this area. Cultural memory is ‘the interaction between the present and the past in sociocultural contexts’. Nowadays, we consider tangible and intangible cultural assets to be inextricably linked.<sup>2</sup> UNESCO, in Article 1 of

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<sup>2</sup> The cultural heritage of a territory has to be understood more and more in a broad sense and includes both tangible and intangible cultural resources, since the intangible assets of the communities also refer to identity expressions and the legacy of the past to be passed on to future generations. UNESCO has taken into account the evolution and extension of the concept of Cultural Heritage and, after an initial division of World Heritage into Cultural Heritage and Natural Heritage, further distinguishes Cultural Heritage into Material and Intangible (MAURANO, 2005; UNESCO 1997).

its 1972 Convention, which defines Cultural Heritage, only takes into consideration material goods; only in the following years did it also begin to pay attention to the intangible aspects of culture, in order to promote the richness of cultural diversity, in all its forms and expressions.

As is well known, UNESCO was created in 1945 to contribute to the reconstruction of the world after the Second World War and to promote peace and cooperation between peoples. Its mandate extended to all aspects of culture, education and science. For many years, it was the best example of international cooperation on the issues of conservation and enhancement of cultural heritage. In the 1950s, the idea of a second international organization matured within UNESCO, in which restoration and conservation specialists could meet and work together. Thus, the International Council on Monuments (ICOMOS) was born in 1965 in Warsaw, as a professional association for those who worked on the conservation of cultural heritage. Its constitution was a complement to the 1964 Venice Charter on the Conservation and Restoration of Monuments and Sites, which affirmed the need for international guidelines on conservation. Since then, ICOMOS has issued a series of principles and international charters on the protection of cultural heritage that have gradually formed the framework for the introduction of the World Heritage List. As is well known, the Convention on the Protection of World Culture and Natural Heritage was adopted in 1972, the Committee that was supposed to make it operational was established in 1976 and the first sites were registered in 1978. The Convention recognized that some places on earth were of “exceptional universal value” and should be part of the world’s heritage. The creation of a list of artefacts of universal value responded to important cultural issues that emerged with particular vigour in the 1960s and 1970s: the desire to preserve the evidence of the past in a context in which, due to the progress of the industrial revolution, it places the desire to identify common reference values, valid for the various countries of the world, in an increasingly internationalized context that was changing ever more rapidly.

While the Venice Charter with its concept of transmission of memory and cultural studies on the symbolic value of assets had expanded the range of artefacts worthy of protection, it cannot be said that they had made it exhaustive.

On 17 October 2003, a further step forward was taken in Paris, with the adoption of the Convention for the protection of intangible cultural heritage. In particular, Article 2 of this Convention defines intangible cultural heritage as:

the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, know-how - as well as the instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces associated therewith - which communities, groups and in some cases individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage. This intangible cultural heritage, passed on from generation to generation, is constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with nature and their history and gives them a sense of identity and continuity, thereby promoting respect for cultural diversity and human creativity. For the purposes of this Convention, consideration will be given solely to such intangible cultural heritage as is compatible with existing international human rights instruments, as well as with the requirements of mutual respect among communities, groups and individuals, and of sustainable development. (UNESCO 2003, p. 2)

This opened up the possibility of preserving and transmitting traditions and oral expressions, including the language of small communities; the performing arts; social practices, rites and feasts; knowledge of nature or the universe and related practices; and the craft traditions.

In addition to broadening the concept of cultural heritage, the Paris Convention took up and rethought some of the reference concepts for the entire process of identification and then for the protection of universal heritage, such as those of authenticity and cultural diversity. In summary, the recognition of the existence of an intangible heritage has been one of the most interesting cultural innovations of the last twenty years. It made it possible to systematize problems and reflections that had characterized the international cultural debate from the 1990s onwards and to offer a framework within which to experiment with new cultural policies. Yet at the same time, it created the conditions for a potential conflict between the recognition of human rights and the right of a community to protect its cultural diversity.

The aim of conservation projects is to preserve both the tangible and the intangible heritage, and this was the intention of those who brought to life the Monument Park, the subject of this paper, in memory of a particular period of Italian emigration to Brazil.



## Italian migration at the roots of the history of the Two monuments

In order to fully understand the “Berço da Imigração Italiana” Monument Park, it is important to have some idea of the history of Italian emigration to Rio Grande do Sul.<sup>3</sup>

The presence of Italian immigrants in the province of Rio Grande do Sul was established starting from May 1875, in the upper hills of the plateau between the valleys of the Caí River and the das Antas River. Colonies such as Dona Isabel and Conde D’Eu (Bento Gonçalves and Garibaldi, today), as well as Colônia Caxias, the first three created for the purpose of welcoming immigrants, had their borders drawn up and were populated in colonial areas. Other colonies close to the first three were subsequently settled.

In 1877, the Silveira Martins colony, the fourth Italian colony for immigrants was created towards the centre of the Rio Grande do Sul Province, near Santa Maria. From 1877, the first harvests began in many of these communities, with the production of some essential foodstuffs (HEREDIA, 2001 and HEREDIA MERLOTTI 2015;). The continuity of economic development was gradually taking shape, despite the many difficulties there. With the advent of the Republic, the first colonies gained emancipation and became prosperous municipalities (AA.VV., 1975).

The first three Italian families the **Crippas**, the **Radaellis** and the **Speraficos** that left their town of origin (**Olmate, in the province of Monza in Lombardy in Italy in the Nord**) in **may 10, 1875** settled in a locality which they named “Nova Milano”, which was inhabited mostly by Indios, on the Taquari River, in what is now the region of Santa Teresa. In the following year, the government had a refuge built there to serve as a shelter for emigrants on their way to the plantations of Caxias do Sul (Barracão) (FRANCESCONI 1983, p. 128).

Nova Milano, which is in the District of Farroupilha, together with Santa Teresa and Monte Belo do Sul, form a kind of cradle of Italian immigration in the Rio Grande do Sul, as previously mentioned. The little town of Nova Milano, for example, hosted the families of the abovementioned pioneers, Stefano Crippa, Tommaso Radaelli and Luigi Sperafico, who actually came from Milan. The Italian

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<sup>3</sup> On the interpretation, in general, of Italian migration, among the various works, that of Donna Gabaccia is extremely stimulating and full of reflection: she deals, for example, with all the Italian diasporas from the ancient regime to the twentieth century and highlights how they can be compared with other migrations of the past (GABACCIA 2000; 2002 pp. 215-232).

immigrants initially adopted the agriculture they already knew and later opened simple business activities or sold fabrics.

The legacy of emigration made a profound impression on Brazilian society, as it brought a social system with it that was very different from the one existing at that time in Brazil. The entrepreneurial spirit of the immigrants gave rise to countries and cities in Brazil, just as it transformed landscapes and brought new languages. This was particularly the case in the states in the South and South-East, especially Rio Grande Do Sul and Santa Catarina, where most of the immigrants settled. The towns of Nova Brescia, Nova Milano, Nova Padova, Nova Treviso and Nova Roma do Sul were established (CRISTALDI, 2015, p. 51; see also DE ROSE, STRANGIO, CORÀ, 2013). Altmayer reports that, in 1905, Carlo Bertoni, the Austrian consul, visited the Trentino communities in southern Brazil for the first time, which had been founded in 1875, in the Itajaí Valley in the state of Santa Catarina. He travelled along the “Tyrolean Way”, which was the colonial road inhabited by the Trentino immigrants, and arrived in the small community of Rio dos Cedros, where he was cheered by the local population (ALTMAYER, 2009, p. 4. See also DE ANDREIS, BERNARDINI, 2018). The landscape was also greatly altered in many areas of the country. On this subject, Cristaldi (2015, p. 45) writes that “the arrival of the immigrants in the Serra Gaúcha area profoundly changed the appearance of a virgin territory: stretches of forest were replaced by broad flattened areas where houses and villages were built”. He goes on to observe that “first the settlement of the German colonists and then that of the Italians visibly modified the territory by building houses. In addition, the colonists’ agricultural activity significantly influenced the shaping of the current landscape in Brazil, especially the production of wine, corn and wheat (CRISTALDI, 2015, p. 56). However, starting the migration process proved to be anything but simple.

As Cristaldi’s study (2015) on Venetian emigration shows, despite the objective difficulties, the identity of the Italian emigrants was preserved (see also FRANZINA, 2009). There are cities in Brazil where the Trentino dialect is still spoken by the descendants of the emigrants, especially by the older people. The dialect is still called “dialèt tirolés” in the areas where there are German colonies. Altmayer recalls that the term “Trentino” (because the people came from what is known today as the autonomous province of Trento), only began to be used in Brazil in 1970, with the commemorations of the centenary of their emigration. They were previously referred to as being Tyroleans, or Italian Tyroleans.

Caxias do Sul, a town in the state of Rio Grande do Sul, is famous in Brazil because it holds one of the best cultural and folkloric festivals in the country,

“Festa da Uva” (the grape festival), which is considered to be a real celebration of Italian heritage and culture, while respecting the diversity of Carioca culture. When the Italians arrived in the region, they brought their winemaking knowledge with them and they planted vines and began to make good-quality wine, a tradition that happily continues to the present day. The Festa da Uva is the consecration of all of this: it was first organized in 1930 by the then mayor of the town, Miguel Muratore, of Italian origin and is held every two years during the period of the grape harvest, which is between February and March in Brazil (ZOTTIS, 2009). The festival, which only takes place in even-numbered years, lasts about one month and, in addition to the numerous food stands where you can buy typical local wines and products, it hosts artists and musicians who perform concerts and stage plays inspired by Brazilian, Italian and German traditions and those of neighbouring countries such as Uruguay. The event is held inside the large Parco Mário Bernardino Ramos, one of the biggest and best-equipped exhibition spaces in Brazil and in 2009, it was given the prestigious accolade of being recognized as part of Rio Grande do Sul’s historical and cultural heritage, given the great importance it has had for generations. As well as hosting the Festa da Uva, the park offers several other cultural attractions to visitors, such as a reproduction of the city as it was in 1885, some museums exhibiting locally manufactured products, a museum dedicated to the history of how the city’s reservoir has been used, a chapel for religious functions and several statues dedicated to famous people, such as the actor, Pedro Parenti.

### **The history of the two “Monuments”**

The Centenary Park of Italian Immigration is on the side of street RS-122, at kilometre 55. It was in this location that Stefano Crippa, Tommaso Radaelli and Luigi Sperafico, the heads of the first three families of Italian immigrants from Rio Grande do Sul, arrived in 1875, as we have seen.

There is also a monument in the park inspired by these families. This monument, with abstract shapes, symbolizes the conquest of the Serra Gaúcha by immigrants (MARCOSH, 2018). The monument is by the artist Carlos Augusto Tenius, from Rio Grande do Sul, and the project belongs to the architects Olmiro Pinto Gomes and Vera Maria Becker Lovato and to the urban planner Antônio Carlos Oliveira. The park opened in 1975.

The monument was built inside this five-hectare park and is an abstract piece with abstract shapes, which expresses the strength and courage of the colonists

who, despite not being able to count on material resources, managed to overcome all the difficulties facing them.

The park has been improved over the years and continues to be enriched by other elements and objects that remind us of the period of migration and of Italy. The objects inserted in the monument tell the story of the odyssey of the migrants and enhance their dignity: for example, there is a reproduction of the first immigrants' passports.

Among the objects is the restoration of the replica of the Winged Lion of São Marcos. The lion is the symbol of the city of Venice and was offered to the city of Farroupilha by the Italian government.

Another gift from Venice was an authentic gondola, which was in the centre of Nova Milano. The boat, which was 11 metres long and weighed more than one ton, was “moored” in *Piazza Immigrazione Italiana in Nuova Milano*, near the church of Santa Cruz, which was one of the first religious buildings in this mountainous region. The gondola was sent to this town by the Italian government for the celebrations in 1975 of the centenary of the first Italian immigration there. After the centenary park had been built and extended, the gondola was moved there.

Also in the park are the 24 flags of the municipalities in the Italian colonization region Rio Grande do Sul<sup>4</sup>: they represent the 24 municipalities of Rio Grande do Sul, where Italian colonization took place.

The Nova Milano centenary park has a weir, accessibility via a ramp, tactile flooring throughout the route, a children's playground with a cycle path, lighting and concrete benches. The place is used by locals for hiking and leisure activities, especially at weekends. Nova Milano is a few kilometres from Farroupilha, on the RS-122 road. Armazém Bergamo is also located there, in an 1884 building on the central avenue of this district of Farroupilha. It is the oldest in the region. The warehouse is still operative today on the lower floor of the mansion, where the Italian family lived.

In addition, there is a small museum preserved and maintained by generations of descendants of Stefano Crippa, a member of one of the first three families to land on gaúcho soil in 1875. Stefano Crippa opened the business for his daughter Rosa and son-in-law Pedro Bergamo to take care of. The warehouse is currently

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<sup>4</sup> Provenance of Italian immigrants in the Northeast Region of RS and percentage of participation in the total number of immigrants: Veneto - 54%; Lombardy 33%; Trentino-Alto Adige (Tyrol) - 7%; Friuli-Venécia Júlia - 4.5%; Others - 1.5% - Piedmont, Emilia Romagna, Tuscany and Liguria (see DE ROSE, STRANGIO AND CORÀ, 2013, p. 161).

managed by Stefano Crippa's great-granddaughter, Beatriz Elvira Bergamo Flach, and her husband Ilario Flach, a very friendly and attentive gentleman. Seu Ilario is sought after by several people, including from other states and countries, who seek to learn more about the stories of the first immigrants and other personalities, since he carefully archives documents, photos and reports, in short, everything that can serve as material for research. Students also visit the site. Seu Ilario is always involved with the community and is in charge of organizing the municipality's memory. The relics are kept in cardboard boxes and folders, all very well organized. When entering the warehouse, the old counters attract attention. Nova Milano is considered the birthplace of Italian immigration here in the State. From there, the families that arrived were taken to other regions in the Serra. In the Bergamo warehouse, there is a sign showing the first passport granted to immigrants. The warehouse is on the main square, opposite the church of Nova Milano.

The "Berço da Imigração Italiana" Monument Park is therefore completely different from the other monument created to commemorate Italian immigrants, the National Monument to Immigrants in Caxias do Sul/BR.

The idea of building this National Monument to Immigrants in Caxias do Sul/BR came up in January 1949, in the context of the celebrations planned for the 75 years of Italian immigration in Rio Grande do Sul. The motto was launched by journalist Luis Compagnoni, through Radio Caxias.

That same year, a subcommittee was organized within the Central Commission of the 75th anniversary of the arrival of the first Italian immigrants in the region. Along with the Grape Festival, another objective was now added: that of building the monument. The subcommittee was called the Pro-monument Commission and was responsible for collecting funds for the construction of the monument and for discussing the concepts around it (MARTINS, 2008, p. 30; ADAMI 1966, p. 30).

At the suggestion of historian João Spadari Adami, and with the approval of the majority of the Pro-monument Commission, the sculpture was supposed to represent a couple of pioneering, young, courageous and resolute immigrants accompanied by their son. Compagnoni accepted the idea and embraced Adami's suggestion (ADAMI 1966, p.6). For the construction of the monument, a competition was launched by this Commission, in which the gaucho sculptor Antônio Caringi participated with the "Nova Pátria" project. This was the winning project and so it fell to him to do the work.

The sculpture is a work with monumental characteristics, as it is five metres high and weighs 2,920 kilos. It is composed, as we know, of a couple and a child in their arms and, in its content, it pays homage to work, family and the desire to seek new horizons. Behind the main sculptural ensemble is an obelisk, which, at the top, marks the date of the arrival of the pioneers - 1875 - and where three marble and relief panels stand out. They represent first the arrival of the immigrants and their contact with the indigenous people; second, the victory of immigrants through work and third, the integration of immigrants into the Brazilian homeland through the squares. Below the main sculpture, the crypt houses a small museum dedicated to the memory of the construction and inauguration of the monument. What can be deduced from the above is that the indicative elements for the erection of the monument were all linked to the arrival of Italian pioneers in the region, from 1875 onwards.

Another source enlightens us about the inauguration of this monument in February 1954. It is the *Correio do Povo* newspaper, which, in a text by Brasílio Machado Neto, specially written for the periodical, referred to the construction of the National Monument to the Immigrant in Caxias do Sul, which was to be inaugurated in those days:

The set of panels is intended to offer a synthesis of the colonist's contribution to national development and represents a tribute to the recognition of the nation abroad that arrived here in the spirit of staying and working for collective progress (MACHADO, 1954, p. 2).

The speech of the President of the Republic, Getúlio Dornelles Vargas, also tells us about the inaugural act, unveiling the plaque referring to the inauguration of the monument on February 28, 1954.<sup>5</sup> His speech started like this:

People of Caxias

This majestic monument, destined to celebrate the immeasurable contribution of immigrants to the progress of the country, has a great historical sense and a profound human expression. Consecrating such good companions to a laborious and fruitful life, it also consecrates the generous soul of our people, to whose initiative the superb sculptural ensemble that now illustrates the flourishing part of this city is due. In the harmonious beauty of his

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<sup>5</sup> Getúlio Dornelles Vargas (São Borja, April 19, 1882 - Rio de Janeiro, August 24, 1954) was a Brazilian lawyer and politician, president of Brazil for two terms, from November 3 1930 to October 29 1945 and from January 31 1951 to August 24 1954.

artistic conception and in the symbols created by the statuary, the whole adventure of those who came from far corners is condensed to find here the opportunity for a new life, under the sign of hope and freedom (VARGAS, 1954, p. 2).

In the continuation of his speech, the President highlighted that:

It is Brazil's destiny, as it is its glory, to be the welcoming nation, par excellence, the great hospitable homeland, where children from all corners of the earth can work in a climate of encouragement, tolerance and fraternity. We have thus kept the traditions of our formation unchanged.

Finally, Getúlio Vargas affirmed as follow:

Brazilians,

This monument is a gift of justice and a source of national pride. A work of great historical and cultural richness, the National Monument to the Immigrant represents the intensity of human displacement for those who aim to realize the hope and dream of a better life.

Inaugurated, as we said, on February 28, 1954, by the then President of the Republic, Getúlio Vargas, the construction, which took five years to complete, honours immigrants from the most diverse ethnic groups who contributed, and still contribute, to the construction and development of both the city and Brazil itself. Having chosen the location for its construction, it was up to Silvio Toigo and José Zambon to execute the work in masonry, stone and granite. Far from there, in Rio de Janeiro, Antonio Caringi, winner of the contest that would choose the project to be developed, started the great mould that would be forged in bronze at Metalúrgica Abramo Eberle SA, in Caxias do Sul. The Pelotese artist, who had gained experience by studying at the Academy of Fine Arts in Munich, in addition to having studios installed in the cities of São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, used photographic records of Italian immigrants Luigi and Enrica Zanotti to develop his work. The Monument would also have a large obelisk where three reliefs would highlight how the arrival, work and integration in the new land had taken place. Just above them, the year 1875 would highlight the arrival of the first European immigrants there. Under the sculptural group, the ornate bronze door gives access to the crypt that houses a museum space intended to showcase ethnic plurality and promote women. A monument that honours both life and the plurality of people who built Brazil, told in a fascinating way through objects,

panels and the monument itself, which bears the phrase “The Brazilian Nation to immigrants” engraved in it.

In contrast, the “Berço da Imigração Italiana” Monument Park is completely new monument, a space where people can ‘live’ the memory and make it active and alive every day. The common thread linking these two monuments to Italian migration is the fact that it was erected as a testimony of our gratitude for all that we owe to those who, coming from such diverse lands, but brought by the same hope, worked as we do to promote the aggrandizement of our land, which for them is also a homeland (VARGAS, 1954, p. 2).

We also understand that erecting a monument to immigrants in the city of Caxias do Sul has made the word gratitude another important term that appears, directly or indirectly, in the sculptures dedicated to “praising” immigration.

The “Berço da Imigração Italiana” Monument Park is constantly changing and is enriched by new objects and spaces every year; unlike a traditional monument, such as the one erected in the city of Caxias, this one interprets the complex meanings of cultural heritage and constantly feeds the memory of the sacrifice that the immigrants made to provide their families with a better future.

## Conclusions

The “Berço da Imigração Italiana” Monument Park of Italian Immigration can be said to form a lively network museum area. Successfully incorporated into modern life, it builds a bridge between the future and the past (bearing in mind the fact that it is used as a playground for children or a park where people can read and relax, a public space where the new generations “live the memory of their ancestors” migration). At the same time, it testifies to the legacy of the Italian diaspora and therefore constitutes the tangible part of its memory. As Eugenia Bitsani (2016, 14) wrote:

The human environment refers to every one of man’s creations, which regards the past and is connected to its historical situations and its identity and is indelibly associated with the natural environment. Its conservation must therefore be based on a framework of completely viable and sustainable development, focusing on certain requirements such as man’s need to update and enrich the quality of his life. The quest for the ‘message’ of cultural properties has become more important. It requires us to identify the ethical values, social customs, beliefs, or myths of which intangible heritage is



the sign and expression. The significance of architectural or urban constructions and the transformation of natural landscapes through human intervention are increasingly connected to questions of identity (BITSANI & KALOMENIDIS, 2007; BITSANI, 2014, p. 36).

The tangible and intangible cultural heritage of the Italian community, today part of the Brazilian community, promotes and preserves the continuity of the memory of migration over time, precisely through spaces and monuments like these.

The meaning of monuments lies not in the objects themselves, nor strictly speaking in the eyes of their beholders, but in the fluid relationship between them. This viewpoint leads to the realization that although monuments may be physically stable, their associated memories are highly mutable.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Interview with WILLIAM JOHN THOMAS MITCHELL and JAMES OSBORNE. (2018), Tableau <https://tableau.uchicago.edu/articles/2018/05/two-perspectives-monuments>.

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