

P02. Archaeological tourism in Portugal: Challenges and Obstacles

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Abstract: Tourism has been transformed in a massive and extensive global industry and it comes as no surprise the recent interest in archaeotourism. The development of the tourism industry is closely related to a country and local regions' economic growth and cultural diversification. Worldwide archaeological tourism, or tourist visits to archaeological sites with some relevance, is a tourism segment or niche that has been growing considerably in recent years, and Portugal is no exception. Meanwhile, also the academics' interest in archaeological tourism has been growing considerably in the last decade, and today, one can find a panoply of papers exploring a diversity of issues related to people's consuming the past through visits to places of archaeological significance. It is agreed amongst academics that when having a 'common heritage' viewpoint, protecting heritage sites is an effective tool for social, educational, economic, and environmental development, which is considered paramount for present and future generations. However, these achievements cannot be fulfilled by the archaeological sites that change in an unhealthy way due to the exposure to touristic development. Nevertheless, much of Portugal's cultural heritage has been in many ways neglected. The outcome is the evident lack of a specific territorial orientation for archaeotourism development. There are so many archaeological sites identified all over the country without proper preservation or management. As consequence, in terms of heritage and more specifically in terms of archaeological sites, Portugal has still much to give touristically speaking, and it is unquestionable the number of resources available that can be transformed in the near future into tourist attractions. For that matter, the understanding of the challenges and obstacles that Portuguese archaeological tourism is currently facing is the focus of this session. It is our understanding that some aspects can be pointed out when discussing the way forward for Portuguese archaeological tourism. Among these are the dilemma between site preservation and economic profitability, the unregulated tourism development in archaeological sites, authorities' sensibility towards the effects that archaeological tourism development can have in local communities, and the need of integrating these communities in the decision-making.

Keywords: Archaeological Tourism; Portugal; Tourism Development; Archaeological Sites; Common Heritage.

Thematic lines: Archaeological Tourism in Portugal; State of the Art; Challenges; Obstacles.

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