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Rescue archaeology heritage valuation in Europe's largest dam - Alqueva: exsitu products as elements
of creative tourism

Rescue archaeology heritage valuation in Europe's largest dam – Alqueva: *ex-situ* products as elements of creative tourism

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Abstract: The study aims to determine how the knowledge obtained from the study of prehistoric heritage found during the construction of the Alqueva dam and irrigation system (Portugal) can enhance the current tourist experience of the destination. A new approach is necessary given the inaccessibility of the archaeological remains, thus creative tourism and experience economy frame the theoretical basis of this paper. Semi--directed interviews were carried out to 35 tourism stakeholders in order to assess their view of the regional tourism experience, their interest in ex-situ and virtual products based on the archaeological knowledge and how these may add to the Alqueva destination. Findings show that stakeholders are still firmly attached to the conventional approach to archaeology but that, even though unaware of the archaeological findings, they believe that they could benefit from the introduction of creative products as a way of complementing the current offer.

Key Words: Alqueva dam, rescue archaeology, creative tourism, experience economy, archaeological tourism, intangible heritage.

Valorização de arqueologia de salvamento na maior barragem da Europa - Alqueva: Produtos *ex-situ* enquanto elementos de turismo criativo

Resumo: O estudo tem como objetivo verificar o modo como o conhecimento obtido a partir do estudo do património pré-histórico encontrado durante a construção da barragem e sistema de irrigação do Alqueva (Portugal) pode contribuir para a experiência turística do destino. Dada a inacessibilidade do património é necessária uma nova abordagem, pelo que o enquadramento teórico deste trabalho foca o turismo criativo e a economia da experiência. Foram realizadas entrevistas semi-dirigidas a 35 entidades ligadas ao turismo, a fim de avaliar a sua visão da experiência turística regional, o seu interesse em produtos ex-situ e vir-tuais baseados no conhecimento arqueológico e como estes podem valorizar o destino Alqueva. Os resultados mostram que os stakeholders estão muito ligados a uma abordagem convencional relativamente à questão arqueológica mas que, porém, acreditam nos benefícios que poderão advir da introdução de produtos criati-vos, por forma a complementar a oferta atual.

Palavras-chave: Barragem do Alqueva, arqueologia, turismo criativo, economia da experiência, turismo arqueológico, património imaterial.

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1. Introduction

The knowledge produced by archaeological research provides a window into the past of a people, helping to understand and to strengthen their historical and cultural identity. The way that such knowledge is conveyed, namely by means of tourism, in this case cultural and creative tourism, is the theme of this paper.

The practice of archaeology has been changing during recent decades, turning more and more to the rescue intervention related to development expansion and the prevention and mitigation of impacts of large construction projects. Since the drafting of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) European Directive in 1985 and the 1987 Environmental Law, in Portugal, it is required that the project for the construction of large building works include in the EIA the evaluation and recording of the archaeological heritage to be affected by the construction before it is destroyed (Ferreiro, Gonçalves, and Costa, 2013).

This practice is also called commercial or contract archaeology, for it prompted the rise of businesses specializing in archaeology whose work currently represents about 90% of the archaeological research conducted in Portugal (Bugalhão, 2011).

Similarly, the tourism industry has also undergone tremendous changes over the last decades. Apart from basic services, tourism currently aims to provide a unique experience (Richards and Wilson, 2006; Stamboulis and Skayannis, 2003; Waitt, 2000), as is the case of cultural tourism, for instance, where the tourist seeks above all to *"discover, learn and explore the attractiveness of a region"* (Turismo de Portugal, 2006: 9). In this way, cultural tourism has become a form of commodification of culture, in that it manages to transform cultural heritage into consumable experiences (Pereiro, 2009). The same applies to creative tourism. Stemming from cultural tourism, creative tourism seeks to stimulate the creative streak of the consumer by structuring the destination and the products in a way that encourages tourist participation in activities that fuel their creative expression. This process allows to achieve an almost uniqueness of the tourist experience that is difficult, if not impossible, to replicate (Richards, 2011a).

This study is part of the ongoing project *Funerary practices in Alentejo's Recent Prehistory and socio--economic proceeds of heritage rescue projects* (Ref. *PTDC/HIS-ARQ/114077/2009)*, which focuses on the study of prehistoric funerary practices in the low Alentejo region and the creation of knowledge diffusion models produced over non-accessible (or totally dismantled) archaeological heritage, while simultaneously attempting to merge the archaeo-

logical problem and its accessibility by the general public. The purpose of the present study is to test the relevance and value of non-accessible archaeological heritage for the development of *ex-situ* and virtual tourism products and services that enable a certain region (Alqueva, Portugal) to become a destination of archaeological interest. We aim to understand specifically how the stakeholders of the regional tourism sector perceive and value the archaeological knowledge obtained in the Alqueva region, particularly from two Neolithic necropolises, and what their expectations are in what concerns the potential use of this knowledge from a creative tourism perspective. Moreover, we analyse how stakeholders view these creative products with regard to the overall tourism experience of the Alqueva destination.

To meet these goals, and in order to get a deeper understanding of the stakeholders' view (Albarello *et al.*, 1997), we used a qualitative method based on semi-directed interviews held with representatives of public authorities and tourism promoters of the study area.

The paper first presents a brief summary of the literature that contextualizes the study in its theoretical framework of the concepts, namely creative tourism and experience economy. Secondly, the Alqueva dam and the archaeological findings are presented, followed by a description of the applied methodology. We then present and discuss the results, followed by the conclusion.

2. Rescue archaeology and creative tourism

One of the primary peculiarities of rescue archaeology is the fact that in most cases only the knowledge of the past obtained from archaeological research is kept, according to the so-called "principle of conservation by scientific record." Prior to the execution of a construction project, the archaeological remains unearthed at the construction site are studied and documented and afterwards, except for a few specific cases, they are destroyed in order to give rise to the proposed building work. As a result, only the archaeological knowledge of the studied site remains for future reference (Silva, 2005). The valuation of this knowledge through its use for tourism purposes is not possible by conventional means (*i.e.* visit to archaeological sites); hence a different approach is necessary. Creative tourism has the potential to provide an innovative approach to intangible assets that result from rescue archaeology intervention.

The huge growth in cultural tourism in recent years has led to the search for new ways of designing tourism products (Richards, 2011b). Thus, there has been a growing interest in creative tourism with the

intention of differentiating products in the over-crowded marketplace (Richards and Wilson, 2006; Stamboulis and Skayannis, 2003). UNESCO defines this type of tourism as "travel directed toward an engaged and authentic experience, with participative learning in the arts, heritage, or special character of a place, and it provides a connection with those who reside in this place and create this living culture" (UNESCO, 2006: 3). Rather than providing a product for passive consumption, creative tourism encourages the active involvement of the tourists with local people in local activities, thus enabling them to develop their creative skills. Creative tourism, therefore, seeks to differentiate itself from mainstream tourism by offering greater freedom for the consumers to create their own product which, by reflecting their own interests, makes the overall experience more personal, authentic and impossible to be duplicated by someone else (Richards, 2011a).

Creative tourism products frequently provide the opportunity to participate in day-to-day activities, *e.g.*, the production of local crafts, cooking workshops for local cuisine or other typical activities that represent the region's uniqueness (Richards and Wilson, 2006; Tan, Kung and Luh, 2013). What distinguishes creative tourism is the fact that tourists can interact, develop and express their creative sides and participate in creating their own product. One of the reasons for the success of this kind of product is the fact that all of us are creative to some degree, each person in his/her own way (Tan *et al.*, 2013).
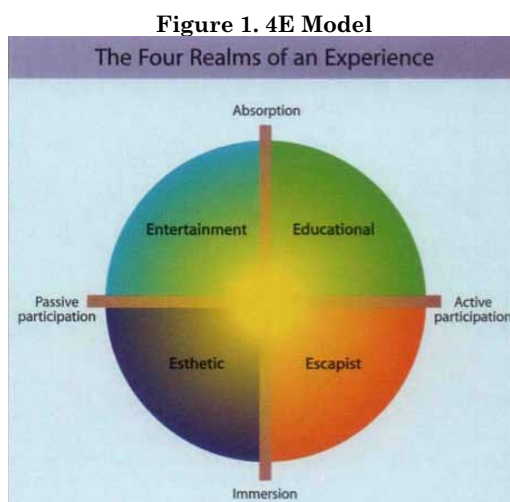
3. Experience economy

The development of creative tourism from cultural tourism can be traced back to the experience economy (Richards, 2011a). According to Pine and Gilmore (1998), after a first economic stage essentially based on transactions of primary goods, followed by a phase of industrial production and another dedicated to the production of services, the experience economy emerged as the fourth stage in economic development. In the latter, the aim is to stimulate the senses and emotional and rational aspects of the consumer in order to ensure a memorable experience of unique contours (Oh, Fiore and Jeoung, 2007; Pine and Gilmore, 1998).

Creative tourism has like no other tourism form embedded this experiential perspective. Whereas tourism activity was previously limited to providing the opportunity to visit and enjoy other places and cultures, today we witness a great demand for "authentic experiences" and products which, more than allowing the visit, encourage as much as possible the participation and involvement of the tourist in the destinations activities in an attempt to devise an experience of total cultural immersion (Hayes and MacLeod, 2007; Richards, 2011b; Stamboulis and Skayannis, 2003).

This experience is far more dependent on the irrational and emotional side of the consumer, since it goes against the conventional business logic that takes the consumer as a rational thinker (Schmitt, 1999; Gentile, Spiller and Noci, 2007). The important thing here is to capitalize on and profit from the emotive aspects that a product stirs in the consumer. Gentile *et al.* (2007) go further and state that it is not only about selling an experience, but rather a way of understanding the consumers as individuals and trying to create a holistic relationship between them and the brand, offering items and contexts so that they may craft the experience on their own (even if unconsciously) thus developing an emotional relationship with the firm.

To clarify this level of consumer involvement, Pine and Gilmore (1998) suggested a conceptual framework that structures the experience into four realms. Therefore, depending on its degree of participation, immersion and absorption, the consumer experience can be classified in the realms of Entertainment, Education, Esthetic and Escapism (4E Model) (Figure 1). An experience may combine the dimensions and simultaneously stand in one or more realms. Indeed, according to Pine and Gilmore (1998) and Gentile *et al.* (2007), an *optimal experience* will be that which evenly combines all realms. However, this concept is debatable, as the value of the experience depends mainly on each person's expectations and desires and the transformation that it can effect in the individual (Morgan, Elbe and Curiel, 2009).

Figure 1. 4E Model

Source: Pine and Gilmore, 1998.

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Nevertheless, despite the utility of Pine and Gilmore's (1998) 4E Model to conceptualize the experience as a marketable product, be it touristic or not, there are few empirical instruments that allow for an effective evaluation and operationalization of the experience (Morgan *et al.*, 2009; Oh *et al.*, 2007). Hence, some authors have carried out exploratory studies and sought to build scales that make it possible to assess the tourism experience based on this conceptual model.

Oh *et al.* (2007) applied a Likert response survey to guests and owners of Bed & Breakfast units in order to measure their perception of the experience in light of each of the four realms and understand which ones were most valued in the consumption/planning of the accommodation experience. The study also sought to create theoretical variables to assist promoters in interpreting the experience of tourists so as to better plan their products.

In addition to the planning of products, likewise a destination should be arranged strategically and can gain if there is an understanding of the current trends in the tourism industry. Thus, some authors, such as Morgan *et al.* (2009), analysed the perception of tourism promoters from three localities concerning the transition from a service economy to an experience economy, as well as the implication that this concept has in destination management and the strategic planning of their products. For this purpose, the authors led interviews in order to identify what kind of experience the promoters aimed to provide to their customers, whether this process was done consciously or unconsciously, and their opinion about this new management approach. In these interviews, in addition to questions, cards with sentences were handed out that gave the promoters the opportunity to reflect and comment directly on the ideas present in the literature on the subject, particularly if they thought the current economy was, in fact, directed toward the transaction of experiences.

In sum, the 4E model has been a helpful tool for strategic planning of touristic products and destination management.

4. The Alqueva dam and archaeological findings

The Alentejo is a region with low rainfall and low population density. The history of the Multi-Purpose Alqueva Dam (EFMA) dates back to

Figure 2. Map of Alqueva Great Lake and Location of sample municipalities

Source: adapted from EDIA, n.d.b.

1957, the year the Alentejo Irrigation Plan was developed with the aim of improving conditions for agricultural development in the region. After several decades of advances and setbacks, concreting the dam began in 1998 and was completed in 2002, giving birth to the largest artificial lake in Europe. However, the EFMA, which also includes the primary and secondary irrigation system in addition to the lake, directly affects a much larger area that spans about 10,000 km² (EDIA, n.d.a). The Alqueva dam is located between the municipalities of Vidigueira, Moura and Portel and the Great Lake stretches towards north, covering an area of 250 km² (Figure 2).

During these years several environmental impact studies and many archaeological interventions were conducted, intensified from 1995 onwards by the outbreak of the Foz Côa dam case (Silva, 2002). The huge expanse of land affected by the EFMA and the resulting archaeological interventions in the region - one of the most intensely excavated territories in Portugal - revealed empirical data that allow to know with particular detail the communities that lived in this territory for centuries and trace the history of the region over the last 8000 years (Fabião, 2002; Oliveira, 2002).

Some of the most significant findings in the area are Neolithic necropolises. For this study, two funerary complexes of particular relevance are used as references: the necropolis of hypogea Outeiro Alto 2 (located in Serpa municipality) and the funerary complex of Sobreira de Cima (Vidigueira municipality). Both reflect in exemplary manner the possible outcome of rescue archaeology intervention: the first because it has been closed off on an artificial island in the middle of an irrigation tank, preventing easy access to the site; the second

because it was found during the construction of an electrical substation, so consequently the safety measures due to high-voltage are incompatible with the presence of visitors or tourists.

5. Methodology

In order to meet the goals proposed in this study, data collection was conducted through semi--structured interviews with local and regional stakeholders connected to the tourism industry.

5.1. Sample selection

The geographical area covered by this project is the Alentejo, specifically the region south of the Alqueva dam, and includes the following municipalities: Beja, Serpa, Ferreira do Alentejo, Alvito, Cuba, Vidigueira, Moura, Barrancos, Aljustrel, Castro Verde, Mértola (in Portugal); and part of the province of Huelva, in particular Rosal de la Frontera and Aroche (in Spain). Due to the large extent of the area covered, we restricted this study to a sample of three municipalities, namely Serpa, Moura and Vidigueira, the area where the two main archaeological sites of this project were found (Serpa and Vidigueira). Moreover, the municipality of Moura was also included in the sample because, despite the fact that the Sobreira de Cima necropolis is located within the boundaries of Vidigueira municipality, it is geographically closer to the city of Moura.

Stakeholder selection was based on the Andalusian tourism cluster map (Lastra-Anadón *et al.*, 2011) assuming a similar framework for a possible tourism cluster in this area of Portugal and Spain. Stakeholders of the sample were categorized according to the scope of action taking into account the classification suggested by Grimble and Wellard (1997) namely: regional, local on-site and local off-site.

The regional stakeholders included the institutional organizations responsible for the management, coordination and tourism promotion in the Alentejo, as well as archaeological experts of the region.

The main inclusion criterion on the local scale was the geographical distance to the archaeological sites of reference. Thus in Serpa priority was given to stakeholders in the parish of Brinches; or Pias if there were none, since the Outeiro Alto 2 site is located between the two villages. In Vidigueira priority was given to stakeholders in the village of Marmelar, near Sobreira de Cima; or Pedrógão do Alentejo, the seat of the parish, if there were none. In Moura priority was given to stakeholders

of the city, as it is the urban center closest to the Sobreira de Cima graves. The local on-site scope refers to the villages of Brinches and Marmelar and the off-site refers to interviewees from Pias, Pedrógão, Serpa, Vidigueira and Moura. Interviews were held with representatives of governing bodies (town halls and parish councils), museums and cultural associations, producers of local products and handicraft and owners of private sector companies: tour operators, hotels and restaurants.

A total of 35 interviews were carried out from February through May 2013.

5.2. Analytical tools

The interview was structured in two parts. The first part consisted of a set of questions grouped under the following goals: (i) to examine the Alqueva tourism destination in light of the experience economy; (ii) to understand the stakeholders' perception of the archaeological works undertaken in Alqueva and the touristic value of the knowledge obtained; (iii) to understand their views on the operation and benefits of archaeological knowledge of Alqueva and associated products for the regional tourism market.

In the second part of the interview we handed out four cards with selected sentences to understand how the stakeholders perceive the four realms of experience and place the archaeological tourism products within Pine and Gilmore's (1998) 4E model. Unlike Oh *et al.* (2007), the interview script used by Morgan *et al.* (2009) does not address directly Pine and Gilmore's (1998) 4E model. Therefore, and given that the size of our stakeholder sample was not adequate for the use of surveys, we took some of the questions raised in Oh *et al.*'s (2007) survey and adapted them to the form of cards used by Morgan *et al.* (2009). A single sentence that best represents the nature of each realm was drawn from Oh *et al.*'s (2007) questionnaire for each card, and in some cases two items were combined in the same card for clarification purposes. The following sentences were used:

1) Archaeological tourism should provide the chance for tourists to learn something new and increase their knowledge. *(Educational realm)*
2) Archaeological tourism should be attractive and stimulate the senses of the tourist. *(Esthetic realm)*
3) Archaeological tourism should allow the visitor to relax whilst watching recreational activities and events for his/her entertainment. *(Entertainment realm)*
4) Archaeological tourism should allow visitors to forget about their daily routine and encourage their participation in different activities. *(Escapist realm)*

5.3. Data processing and content analysis

The interview script was tested on the first five interviews and then subject to minor adjustments. All interviews were recorded on audio, each lasting on average 45 minutes (total of 26 hours and 50 minutes), and were later transcribed by the researchers. Content analysis of the interviews was performed with the assistance of MAXQDA 11 computer software, and the resulting categories obtained by axial coding (Saldaña, 2009). These categories are:

Group 1. Perception of tourism in Alqueva: The first category reflects the stakeholders' perception of the Alqueva tourism market, the most relevant tourism products and resources, description of the destination before and after construction of the dam including product diversification, and the potential of the Great Lake for tourism. It also includes thoughts on a few other issues, such as expectations about the future of the destination and problems that affect tourism development.

Group 2. Perception of rescue archaeology intervention: This includes the stakeholders' knowledge about the archaeological works that took place during the construction of the Alqueva dam and irrigation system as well as their opinion on the value of the archaeological heritage for local communities and for tourism. Some examples of current tourism projects that benefit from archaeology are also referred.

Group 3. Operationalization of archaeological knowledge: This category covers the opinions of stakeholders on the possibility of developing tourism products based on the archaeological knowledge, plus their comments on how these products can be combined with their current business. It also relates to issues concerning the promotion and marketing of these products and the need to assess the market before product development can take place.

Group 4. Experience realms of archaeological tourism: The final group comprises the results on the relevance of each realm of experience defined by Pine and Gilmore (1998) for archaeological tourism. Stakeholders received four cards, each with a different sentence describing one realm, and ranked the cards according to what they believed was more important in an archaeological tourism experience. Their comments about the realms were also collected.

6. Results

Group 1. Perception of tourism in Alqueva

· Tourism in Alqueva

Four participants (n=4) stated that prior to the dam there was no significant tourism activity in the Alqueva region and that it was similar to the rest of the inner Alentejo. Currently, the region's most popular tourism products and resources are food and wine (and related products: food festivals, wine routes, etc.) (n=12), its architectural/historical heritage and museums (cultural tourism) (n=9), with handcrafts (n=4), house-boats and nautical recreation (n=3), landscape (n=2), the rural setting (n=2) also mentioned. Less significant are, according to the stakeholders interviewed, hunting tourism (n=1), birdwatching (n=1), nature and active tourism (n=1), despite the region's potential.

Five respondents mentioned that the dam has the potential to become a structural element for tourism in the Alentejo, although others (n=3) are doubtful about its tourism potential, justifying their opinion with similar tourism projects related to dams in the past that have failed. An entrepreneur said the Great Lake has created the conditions for it to become a "tourism destination" in the definition of WTO, although the regional tourism authorities are more cautious, acknowledging that the region has gained visibility and an important resource but which is still not significant in terms of market.

· Impact of the dam

Regarding the impact of the dam on tourism, some stakeholders (n=8) stated that there was an increase in demand after the construction of the dam. Ten others said there was a great movement of people visiting to see the dam finally built, although these contribute little to the tourism sector (n=4). However, most interviewees (n=12) stated that, apart from this sightseeing activity, there was no increase in tourists visiting the region after the inauguration of the dam in 2002. Similarly, although there is a new feature – the Great Lake – few new tourism products have been developed which are associated with it (n=5). An exception is the example, several times mentioned (n=7), of the Amieira Marina, a local tour operator that rents boat-houses to tourists who wish to cruise the lake, a product which has become pivotal in the region. There is also the Dark Sky Alqueva, an astro-tourism project, although it is still in an early stage and therefore its acceptance as a full "tourism product" is arguable, as two respondents stated.

This lack of demand is attributed by stakeholders to several limitations, such as the absence of infrastructure (n=10) (low accommodation capacity or lack of piers to support nautical and beach leisure activities), desertification (n=6) and aged population (n=3), poor quality of the water (n=3), a fragile business environment (n=2) and the current economic crisis (n=2).

A tourism entrepreneur summed up the sense of dashed expectations regarding the impact of the dam: "There was so much talk about Alqueva, as a great national hope, not only for the irrigation, but in what concerns tourism it came to nothing. All people spoke of were projections".

Group 2. Perception of rescue archaeology intervention

• Archaeological works

Apart from the experts, who follow the archaeological research done in Alqueva and its results, and are aware of its scientific and empirical relevance, there is general lack of knowledge on the part of the local and regional tourism promoters (n=15) in regard to the archaeological intervention held during the EIA of the Alqueva dam. There is a widespread notion that the building works involved teams of archaeologists, but very few stakeholders actually know what was found. Only five of the respondents, namely public authorities, said to have followed the excavations but still do not know their scientific relevance.

However ignorant, still stakeholders argued that archaeology is an important part of regional tourism, as there are plenty of archaeological sites in the region, mostly megalithic monuments (a reference in tourism), and many (n=10) showed great interest to know the results, unable to understand the reason why this information has not been disclosed to the tourism stakeholders and local communities beyond academia.

• Touristic value of archaeology

With regard to the touristic value of archaeology four experts revealed that the archaeological heritage in general is not a feature that attracts many tourists compared to other resources. Moreover, two experts and those who are aware of the findings in Alqueva recognized that, despite their great scientific value, most of the pieces found are not sufficiently attractive for the conventional tourist market.

On the other hand, despite the widespread ignorance about the results, many stakeholders (n=19), both private and public, believe that the archaeological knowledge of the region can be a feature of great value to the tourist market, e.g., as a differentiating factor of the destination (n=1). Nonetheless, some respondents (n=6) noted that it is a resource and not a product, a resource which they believe is currently under exploited and which may become an important element for tourism development in the region, although this will depend on the sensitivity towards archaeology of the people in decision-making positions (n=3), the investment made (n=2) and the use of this knowledge according to the tourism demand rather than scientific interest, i.e., archaeological tourism products should not be "too scientific" (n=3). Five respondents stated that the archaeological knowledge may come to leverage future developments, namely in cultural tourism.

However, nearly half of the stakeholders (n=15) argued that archaeological knowledge should not be used for the development of tourism products *per se*, rather it should be used to supplement other products existent in the region. As a matter of fact, tourists who come looking for archaeology also have other interests (n=4), so it is a matter of interweaving the knowledge into these products and services. The stakeholders' interest in the valuation of archaeological knowledge is based on their concern in enhancing their own business or activity. Thus, archaeology is seen as a way to supplement what already exists, creating new business opportunities and expanding current activity. Some relevant examples of archaeological heritage in the complementary context were mentioned, such as the Archaeological Complex of Perdigões (which is used as a complement to wine tourism), the Dark Sky Alqueva (which uses some megalithic monuments for star gazing sessions), or the S. Cucufate ruins in Vidigueira.

• Value of archaeology for local people

Nearly one third of the stakeholders (n=9) said that there is a general "feeling" that archaeology is an important part of the regional cultural heritage and identity. However, some warned of conflicts that frequently take place and the need for awareness and dissemination of archaeological practice and results. The most common case is that of farmers which come across archaeological remains on their land, destroying them without notifying the authorities so as to not lose the piece of land for cultivation. Some resentment towards archaeologists was identified, based on the lack of knowledge and understanding about archaeology's value and working methods, and these conflicts may hinder tourism development based on the archaeological heritage.

Group 3. Operationalization of archaeological knowledge

• *Ex-situ* archaeological tourism

With regard to the use of archaeological knowledge for the development of creative tourism products, some stakeholders (n=4) seemed confused by the fact that the archaeological remains found were made inaccessible. Nevertheless, the need to develop innovative products with a strong emphasis on creativity was referred (n=2), as was done for example in the Dark Sky Alqueva project.

Several suggestions were made concerning the kind of product that could use this archaeological knowledge in theme development. These were: musealization and exhibitions (n=14), ICT and digital restitution of the findings (n=8), creation of related labels for regional products (e.g., olive oil, wine, cheese) (n=8), arts and handcrafts inspired

by the findings (n=5), touristic routes that convey the new archaeological knowledge at other sites which remain visitable (n=5), themed events (i.e., Neolithic/Archaeological festival) (n=5), nautical themed activities (i.e., archaeological regatta) (n=2), projects for children (i.e., archaeological games) (n=2), theatre plays (n=1) and a theme park (n=1).

- Promotion of archaeological tourism

Several suggestions were made for promoting this kind of product, namely through the internet and social networks, which are free, newspapers and local radio stations, or through flyers and posters, or word-of-mouth.

The organization responsible for the tourism promotion of the Alentejo argued that marketing of the Alentejo destination should be taken as a whole, and that it cannot be done for the Alqueva alone because the larger the destination, the more visibility it has. This promotion should be done in an integrated way, that is, cross-marketing distinct businesses and products. According to this organization, isolated marketing has no impact, rather it must be massive in order to effectively reach the consumer. This interviewee supported the use of opinion-makers as an inexpensive way to advertise, with great impact, although journalists do not typically write about the archaeological heritage, and that opinion-makers for this kind of heritage should therefore be academics.

Two stakeholders indicated the need to assess and be aware of current market trends in order to understand what kind of product may have the highest value. The tourism authorities did point out that tourism is a business which requires the commodification of a resource in order for it to become a tourism product. In the process of product structuring - an activity that is the "most alluring but at the same time extremely frustrating" (regional tourism business association) – it is critical to keep in mind that the quality, success and sustainability of the tourism product depends on its consumption and demand by tourists.

These tourist expectations were commented in several interviews. Some (n=6) reported that it is essential to provide good content to tourists, who have made an investment in their holidays, in order to meet their expectations, because their satisfaction will determine the quality of their experience and their potential return in the future. A tour operator maintains that it is his duty to tell a good story to tourists and offer them something that allows them to understand the territory in an amusing way, even if this means he has to romanticize or "put a frill here or there that didn't even happen exactly like that but that strikes the tourist" (local tour operator).

Group 4. Realms of the experience in archaeological tourism (4E)

This question was made to ascertain the respondents' point of view about the kind of experience that an archaeological tourism product should provide. Of the 35 stakeholders interviewed, three did not answer this question. In Table 1 we can see the number of times each realm was graded in position 1, 2, 3 or 4 in the order of significance (where 1=most relevant and 4=least relevant).

The results show a clear gap between the first two realms (Educational and Esthetic) and the latter two (Escapist and Entertainment).

The Educational and Esthetic realms were the most chosen in the first place by the stakeholders. Those who chose the Educational realm first (n=16) stated that archaeological tourism products should primarily provide a chance to acquire new knowledge, regardless of the depth, and that the search for new knowledge is part of the expectations of those who are interested in these kinds of products.

Figure 1. Ranking of the realms of experience
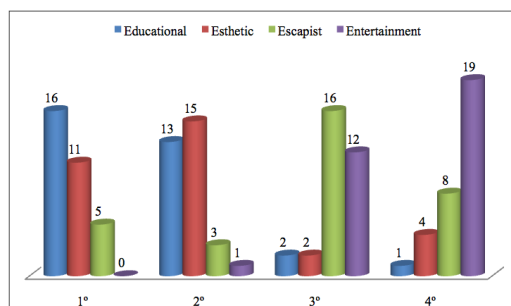
Source: by the stakeholders

On the other hand, those who chose the Esthetic realm first (n=11) argued that stimulation of the senses has to be part of the product – any tourism product – be it in the way it is structured and marketed or e.g. in the adrenalin it can create, because only then will it be able to stand out from the remaining offer and attract tourists regardless of their expectations or, for instance, their age.

The Escapist and Entertainment realms were more often placed in the 3rd and 4th places.

Those who mentioned the Escapist realm in first (n=5) argued that archaeological tourism should give people a different experience from their normal daily routine, and that "if the tourist is looking to feel the destination we should not give them too much information" (tourism entrepreneur). Others commented that archaeology is a door to

the past that has potential to provide an immersive experience that transports tourists into another era, allowing them to escape from their own. Two stakeholders rejected the idea of tourism as a way to escape the daily routine, arguing that the knowledge obtained in these activities should be useful in their day-to-day life.

No interviewee chose the Entertainment realm first. Those who commented on this realm mentioned archaeology's potential for performances and shows, i.e. theatre plays, although it is clear from the results that this kind of event done only as entertainment is less important, in the view of local stakeholders, and more difficult to link to archaeological heritage.

7. Discussion

The results from the interviews show that, contrary to expectations (Marujo, 2005; Turismo de Portugal, 2007), the Alqueva dam has not brought major changes to the regional tourism industry. While it is clear that the dam has altered the landscape, and that the dam and the Great Lake have become indisputable elements of interest to anyone visiting the region, however, according to stakeholders, it is far from being a destination ready for tourist consumption (Brandia Central, 2009). The increase in the number of people who visit the region is understandable given the extensive media coverage involving the dam project and construction, but, as stakeholders argue, these excursionists do not effectively contribute to short term tourism development.

Low tourism demand is directly related to the lack of supply of products and services. The emergence of the Amieira Marina is very relevant, and their supply of houseboats has become an important product for the region. However, considering the potential of the Great Lake and the expectations surrounding the dam, it falls short. Nonetheless, the success of this project indicates that it is possible to bring vigour to the region's economic fabric with small business projects more adequate to the local needs and reality, while simultaneously addressing a tourist needs.

The knowledge obtained from rescue archaeology intervention is, alongside the Great Lake, one of the main resources that the Alqueva dam project made available in the region. However, the results indicate that this knowledge, scientifically relevant as it may be, is not acknowledged as a valuable resource for tourism development because stakeholders are unaware of its existence and potential. To make it available for tourism purposes, a dissemination platform is required that can go beyond academic circles and inform local communities and tourism stakeholders, thus allowing them to acknowledge its potential and find the best way to convey this knowledge to tourists through the provision of products and services. Moreover, this platform should involve both the archaeological experts and the promoters of construction works responsible for environmental impact studies in order to stimulate communication and knowledge transfer between all the players allowing collaborative and well-targeted action.

One should note, however, that the archaeological knowledge in itself is not a tourism product. It is a resource, and as such requires some breaking down before it can be developed as business (Pereiro, 2009). The use of this knowledge for tourism purposes should take into account, among other aspects, the particular needs of the industry and the expectations of tourists looking to visit the region. In this case, it is up to the tourism stakeholders to convert this scientific knowledge into something that can be assimilated and interpreted by someone who is not an expert in archaeology – the tourist, who is on leisure and holiday – keeping in mind that the value of the tourism experience depends not only on the scientific accuracy of the facts but, most importantly, in the emotions that this experience stirs in the tourist (Holtorf, 2007; Richards, 2011a; Waitt, 2000). Furthermore a great deal of creativity and innovation in the planning, product engineering and marketing is necessary in order to differentiate these products from conventional archaeological tourism, frequently associated with a small niche of archaeologists on their holidays (Holtorf, 2007). It may be useful to start a pilot project showing how a collaborative development can evolve and offer adequate results.

Archaeological tourism in the Alentejo is primarily associated with the Megalithic period and activities that have as a central element the megalithic monuments. In a creative tourism framework, we propose to go beyond these monuments, this tangibility, taking archaeology to other contexts and transmitting this knowledge through innovative and unusual formats. This will enable the creation of an entirely distinct tourism offer in the region which may also benefit from and support the existing megalithic tourism products and services.

According to the results of this study, the development of tourism products and experiences based on archaeological knowledge should provide an experience of personal transformation by means of learning and/or stimulation of the senses of tourists. This is supported by Pine and Gilmore (1998) for whom products that involve a greater degree of participation should focus on learning and transmitting knowledge. For example, in a replica of a Neolithic burial chamber, the opportunity for

tourists to engage in seemingly real archaeological excavations allows them to instruct themselves on the method and techniques of archaeological practice while simultaneously discovering the lifestyle and culture of Neolithic communities.

The more passive product can, *e.g.*, provide an opportunity for the vacationer to simply feel to the place. A cromlech visitor who appreciates immerging in the spirituality of the place can see this experience enriched with knowledge about the value or the social function of the monument to Neolithic populations. In another case, the experience of contemplating the night sky among menhirs can be enriched if you understand the worldview of the Neolithic communities and how their lives were governed by the stars. Moreover, replication by digital means, *e.g.* by installing a "digital cave", enables a highly immersive experience.

However, the key issue is the product customization and personalization by the tourists, *i.e.*, the experience should be tailored as to correspond to their expectations. In this sense, tourists must feel that they can choose between an experience that transmits the knowledge in an academic way or in an imaginative way, for example. In the case of a Neolithic burial chamber replica that allows tourists to excavate and keep as souvenirs some artefacts placed there beforehand, the veracity and authenticity of the findings are not as important, rather the value of the experience is placed on the chance to dig immersed in the environment of an archaeological site. This makes it possible to use the acquired knowledge concerning the funerary practices to provide an immersive experience of archaeology without the need to actually present the real human remains unearthed during the salvage excavations.

Finally, it should be stressed that in creative tourism it is easier to create a supply of products and services than it is to ensure demand (Tan *et al.*, 2013), a fact also stressed by the tourism authorities of the Alentejo. The introduction of creative archaeological tourism products in the market must happen gradually, respecting regional dynamics and complementing existing products and resources with the new archaeological knowledge. In this sense, we believe the findings of this study may assist in the strategic management of the Alqueva tourism destination and product planning in light of the new trends of creative tourism and experience economy (Coccossis, 2009; Morgan *et al.*, 2009; Oh *et al.*, 2007).

8. Conclusion

It is generally agreed that never in the history of Portuguese archaeology have there been such important empirical findings in terms of volume, geographical area studied and scientific knowledge generated as the venture carried out in the Alqueva region (Fabião, 2002).

This study shows that not much has changed in relation to the tourism experience in the region since the construction of the Alqueva dam and the filling of the reservoir. However, it is shown that the knowledge obtained from the rescue archaeology intervention can add to the current tourist experience. Since some of the existing tourism products already deal with archaeological sites, namely megalithic monuments, it is likely that the Alqueva's new archaeological knowledge will have to be progressively integrated into the market through selected products, bringing gradual change in the overall tourism experience and also convincing local entrepreneurs and institutional stakeholders of the potential of creative archaeological tourism in the region. Nevertheless, given the fact that the archaeological excavations are recent and most of the findings remain unpublished and unknown to the general public, including the local communities and tourism stakeholders, one cannot expect that the regional tourism industry will benefit from this heritage in the short term, as understandable also from the information collected in the here presented exploratory study.

Acknowledgements

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