

BRAZILIAN CULTURAL HERITAGE AND ITS POTENTIAL FOR PROVIDING TOURIST EXPERIENCES THROUGH INTERPRETATION

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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses how interpretation of an artwork can contribute to intensifying heritage tourism experiences, based on an examination of the altarpiece of the former convent of Santo António do Carmo of Olinda, which was designed to promote Catholic triumphalism. The objective is to present the first level of artwork interpretation and highlight the importance of disseminating information about works of art, thereby providing a fuller understanding of their potential role in enhancing heritage tourism's value. This qualitative, exploratory study included on-site visits and documentary research on the altar's interpretation. The results suggest that interpretation about artistic objects is important, including key elements such as artistic movements (i.e. chronology), materials used, functions, artwork commissions, artistic affiliations and a brief corresponding description. The findings support the conclusion that interpretation makes tourist attractions more appealing and contributes to tourism development, as well as promoting interest in heritage and strengthening its value.

Keywords: Altarpiece, Art, Olinda, Potential, Cultural and Heritage Tourism.

JEL Classification: N96, D60, D83, M53

1. INTRODUCTION

Contemporary tourism increasingly relies on creating memorable, unique experiences (Coelho, Gosling & Almeida, 2018). One way of experiencing unique realities is through culture. According to Richards (2018), culture and tourism have always been inextricably linked so that cultural aspects motivate tourism and tourism in turn generates culture. Many people regularly invest time in cultural heritage tourism, seeking out new experiences and absorbing knowledge contributing to cultural, intellectual, personal or academic development.

Visits to religious buildings, especially when they are part of historical centres protected by various organisations, reflect visitors' interest in discovering the buildings' history. Tourists also seek to unveil issues related to built heritage including those, among others, of a chronological, artistic, religious, iconographic and architectural nature. Obtaining information to answer these questions has become an essential part of satisfying tourists, the maintenance of cultural heritage tourism and, consequently, the preservation of heritage.

Melo and Cardozo (2015: 1060) point out that 'cultural tourism guided by the action of visitation and knowledge of cultural heritage has an educational meaning'. However,

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tourism activities must be planned as part of heritage education projects so that tourists can effectively acquire knowledge. Heritage by itself is not a tourism asset if it is not visited and appreciated, and, for heritage to be appreciated, interpretations must be offered. One of the main roles of interpretation is to enhance tourists' experiences and satisfaction (Wearing, Archer, Moscardo & Schweinsberg, 2006). According to Wearing, Edinborough, Hodgson and Frew (2008: 3), 'interpretation is a communication tool that is used to facilitate the way visitors engage with the places they visit.' Knudson, Cable and Beck (1995) list six objectives of interpretation:

- To increase visitors' understanding of heritage
- To communicate messages related to cultural and historical processes
- To involve people in history through experiences of cultural environments
- To influence the public's behaviours and attitudes towards the preservation of cultural heritage and people's respect for cultural environments
- To provide enjoyable and meaningful experiences
- To increase the public's understanding and support of heritage management

Interpretation is effective if it enables visitors to make connections between the information being given and their own knowledge and experience (Ham, 1992; Wearing et al., 2008). Therefore, previous travel experiences and individuals' own encyclopaedic knowledge influence the way interpretations are understood and experiences are created (Jennings & Nickerson, 2006).

The first step in providing heritage interpretation is to understand the meaning and functions of the heritage in question. To research adequately these aspects, empirical knowledge must be compiled before the heritage can be easily interpreted. The first step of interpretation should involve research and deal with knowledge generated by specialists in the specific object of interest (e.g. art historians, historians and architects in the case of works of art or built heritage). Information on this first interpretation level thus involves a high degree of expertise, which can be useful to tourists who seek high-level heritage interpretation. However, this level may not be suitable for most tourists, who are interested in heritage but who are not specialists. In this case, the second step in interpretation is provided by tour guides, brochures or books in tourists' own language in order to make the interpretation accessible and more interesting to visitors. When no type of interpretation is provided, fewer tourists tend to visit heritage sites, and these visitors do not value the sites fully.

The present paper provides an empirical study of an example of a work of art that does not attract tourists' attention or receive the appreciation it deserves due to a lack of freely available information. The art object is an altarpiece made between the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries and located in a chapel in the Church of the Convent of Santo Antônio do Carmo in Olinda, in the State of Pernambuco, Brazil. This altar is rarely noticed even though Olinda has been declared a World Heritage Site by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO).

Antón, Camarero and Garrido (2018) have already pointed out that works of art and historical objects located in museums, for example, can be a means of offering consumers memorable experiences, especially in terms of value creation through heritage tourism. The cited authors state that museum visitors participate in a three-stage co-creation process: before, during and after the visit. The knowledge gained during visits is of fundamental importance to enabling this co-creation. Nonetheless, many churches do not offer visitors the information about their unique pieces of art that could enrich tourists' experiences. What could be a remarkable, direct interaction with these objects becomes a superficial or even uninteresting visit.

This paper seeks to highlight the importance of disseminating information about artwork, thereby promoting greater recognition of interpretations' potential role in increasing tourists' appreciation of cultural tourism. The concrete example in question reveals the value of the first level of artwork interpretation, decoding and contributing to knowledge about this altarpiece, which has proven to be of interest to visitors especially when its magnificence and artistic value are made clear. On a more practical level, this paper focuses on drawing the attention of heritage management organisations to the lack of information and interpretation on artwork such as altarpieces and the various artistic features that accompany them.

This paper is divided into six sections. The first is the introduction, followed by the methodology applied to strengthen the empirical validity of the research conducted. The third section addresses issues related to art as a tourist motivation. The fourth section presents the object under study: the altar in the Church of the Convent of Santo Antonio do Carmo in Olinda. The fifth section discusses the dialogue between the art object and spectators, while the final section discusses the conclusions and limitations, as well as offering suggestions for future research.

2. METHODS

The study was based on on-site experiences in various churches in Brazilian historical cities, which led to the realization that altarpieces and the various artistic elements connected to them are the main reason tourists are interested in these buildings. These observations underlined the aesthetic, architectural and liturgical importance of this type of heritage for cultural tourism. In the churches visited, a lack of information was seen to contribute to a lack of interest in works of art, especially when they are not magnificent enough to attract unprepared visitors' attention.

The research was based on a case study with a special focus on the piece of art titled 'Retábulo dos Prenúncios do Triunfalismo Católico' (Altarpiece of the Foreshadowing of Catholic Triumphalism). This altar is located in the church of the former convent of Santo António do Carmo, in the city of Olinda, Pernambuco, Brazil. The study sought to gain a comprehensive understanding of this work of art based on on-site observations, experiments and photographs that uncovered the reality of the phenomenon under study (Yin, 2013). Observation is a research tool that has been used effectively in research on historic sites and heritage tourism (Wijayanti & Damanik, 2018).

In addition, the present study included observations in churches of Brazilian historical cities to confirm whether the organisations responsible for altarpiece art and associated artistic elements ensure these liturgical, aesthetic elements are given sufficient visibility. Altarpieces can attract visitors from different parts of the world. Thus, an exploratory, qualitative study was carried out, as already mentioned, based on on-site experiences. The case study of the Carmo Church's altarpiece in Olinda proceeded with a characterisation supported by written sources in order to highlight the significance of this work of art by deepening the existing knowledge about this form of art. The results have implications for how the information about these artistic objects should be presented to the public to promote their appreciation of this altarpiece and stimulate dialogues between the work and visitors. Ultimately, these findings support the further development of cultural and/or heritage tourism in the World Heritage Site in question.

3. ART AS A TOURIST MOTIVATION

Tourism has increasingly become a key factor in economic development worldwide. Cultural and/or heritage tourism exists because of humanity's desire to see and learn about cultures in different parts of the world (Richards, 2018). Cultural heritage is vast, encompassing a wide range of tangible and intangible resources that are already exploited by tourism providers or that could become tourism products (Gmelch & Kaul, 2018).

Art has involved people in various fields and different forms of artistic expression. Brazilian cities such as Olinda (Pernambuco), Salvador (Bahia), Ouro Preto and Diamantina (Minas Gerais), whose historic centres have been declared World Heritage Sites by UNESCO, offer a wide range of heritage, comprising a limitless artistic universe. The religious buildings, especially those in the interior, offer a wide range of architectural and sculptural riches in harmony with each other, including canvas, ceiling and stucco paintings and large sculptures (i.e. images), among other elements.

An examination of the different types of tourism reveals that many are directly or indirectly related to art. Historical tourism exists because travellers are interested in monuments created in the past such as churches, museums, convents and ruins (Smith, 1989). These monuments represent the memory and identity of different peoples and reveal their history.

Cultural tourism, according to Richards (2001), is associated with resources that have been expanding over time. Baudrihay (1997) reports that cultural tourism evokes to people's memories and provides a testimony to their past. Cultural tourism is a way to access cultural heritage that represents history, culture and given societies' way of life (Moletta & Giodanich, 2000). Petreman (2013) further refers to various art forms as a tourist motivation. In addition, Richards (1996) suggests that cultural tourism is peoples' movement away from their usual place of residence because of an interest in cultural attractions, in order to assimilate cultural information and experiences. The latter cited author more recently stated that cultural tourism is one of the most important segments of tourism (Richards, 2013). Silberberg (1995) also refers to cultural tourism as the displacement of people whose motivation is to experience historical, scientific or lifestyle features offered by communities, regions, groups or institutions.

Heritage tourism in turn represents travellers' interest in a set of material or natural goods considered culturally important. Currently, heritage tourism contributes to a deeper awareness of heritage values, which represent the historical legacy of societies. According to Richards (2009), heritage tourism can be viewed as 'quality tourism' that leads to a greater appreciation of diverse destinations and, in particular, of cultural tourism destinations. Furthermore, cultural tourism relies more on destinations' cultural features than on weather conditions, thus solving the problem of weather-related seasonality.

Religious tourism can also represent visitors' heritage-related cultural motivations or a combination of heritage and religious or just religious motivations. Depending on their motivations, tourists can visit pilgrimage sanctuaries or religious tourism attractions (Nolan & Nolan, 1992). Silva (2011) found that religious tourism may be related to cultural tourism. Despite being closely related to religiosity, this type of tourism can combine cultural tourism with leisure activities (Ostrowski, 2000).

The relationship between tourism and art (i.e. heritage) is quite clear. The promotion of dialogues between tourists and artistic objects is fundamental to visitors' experience and appreciation of destinations. However, observations conducted in various churches in Brazilian cities found that many churches provide no encouragement of this type of dialogue. More specifically, the altarpieces lack information. Visitors enter, admire and contemplate the altars' Baroque splendour, especially when they mix gilded wood with canvas paintings or painted stucco, but most visitors cannot find enough information to know what they

are contemplating and thus do not fully value these works of art, ending up with poor experiences.

According to Murta and Albano (2005), little attention is paid to what visitors need regarding information about places being visited. The cited authors argue that much needs to be done to improve tourists' experiences: stimulate a closer look, motivate curiosity and lead visitors to discover each place's charm. Tourists seek to find specificities in the places they visit, but their experiences are mainly visual (Murta & Albano, 2005) but mostly without any real understanding of the works of art on display. Therefore, the present study sought to motivate the organisations responsible for heritage and tourism to promote relationships between visitors and the objects being contemplated.

4. CHURCH OF SANTO ANTÓNIO DO CARMO IN OLINDA

The church of the former convent of Santo António do Carmo (see Figure 1), one of whose altarpiece was the focus of this case study, is located in the city of Olinda, in the State of Pernambuco, Brazil. It was formerly a convent of the Carmelite Order, with construction beginning in 1589 (Instituto do Patrimônio Histórico e Artístico [IPHAN], 1999). When the first Carmelite friars arrived in Brazil in 1580, they were housed in a hermitage dedicated to St. Anthony and St. Gonçalo, so the convent was unusually named 'Santo António do Carmo'. The order arrived in Brazil through this city (Oliveira & Ribeiro, 2015), but, in 1630, Olinda was sacked and burned by the Dutch, who destroyed various buildings (Dias, 2008). During this fire, the church and convent of Santo António do Carmo was heavily damaged. When Pernambuco was returned to Portugal in 1654, the convent was restored, and further restoration campaigns were conducted during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (IPHAN, 1999). In 1820, the convent's abandonment left it in ruins, and part of its assets disappeared. What was left of the convent was restored after some demolition work and consecrated again for religious services in 1915 (IPHAN, 1999).

Figure 1. Church of the former Convent of Santo António do Carmo de Olinda



Source: Ariadne Pignaton

Of the original convent, only part of the cloister portico, a side door, some parts of the foundations and the church remain standing, so fortunately the church was not destroyed. Notably, because Olinda is a city that has been well preserved over time as it has been protected by various organisations. The federal government has worked through IPHAN and the state government considers the city a National Monument, while UNESCO declared it a Historical and Cultural Heritage Site in 1982 (UNESCO, <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/189/>). The historic centre has been taken care of in urban transformations, preserving its original layout and buildings, among which is the Church of the Old Convent of Santo António do Carmo.

4.1 Altarpieces: A Brief Characterisation

The convent buildings included a church for the friars' spiritual practices. This sanctuary was equipped with altarpieces and the equipment needed to perform liturgical rites. The altarpieces were an extremely effective way to evangelise the local population as the altars played a vital role in the community's religious experiences at a time when most people were illiterate. Because liturgical acts were performed in front of the altarpieces, they had different functions: narrative or didactic images, reliquaries, eucharistic celebrations and various devotional, iconographic themes meant to draw the public's attention to relevant subjects.

A particularly significant eucharistic function was the Solemn Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament during Continual Prayer (i.e. 40 hours in Holy Week ending in the Easter communion, as well as the fourth Sunday of each month). The consecrated host was exhibited at the top of the altarpiece's Throne of Mercy in the main chapel, in a custody or monstrance. The altarpieces' functions were often narrative or didactic, explaining biblical episodes – usually on painted canvas – and showing relics such as saints' bones or belongings. The patron saint was placed in the altarpieces' central niche and the images of secondary devotional importance in other niches.

4.2 Altarpiece of the Foreshadowing of Catholic Triumphalism

The altarpiece of the Foreshadowing of Catholic Triumphalism (see Figure 2) of the former Convent of Santo António do Carmo in Olinda is located in a chapel (see Figure 3) below the high choir on the gospel side (i.e. the left side when facing forward) in the Church. This altarpiece survived intact despite adversities over the time, such as the Dutch setting fire to the convent, the restoration campaigns in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, abandonment in the nineteenth century and the work done in the twentieth century. The chapel (see Figure 3) that houses this altarpiece is not covered in gilded wood, and the chapel does not have canvas or stucco paintings. However, it contains the altarpiece, which was created between around 1580 to around 1621 and which is one of only a few instances of this type of altarpiece in Brazil. In addition, most surviving altarpieces of the same period were made of wood (Pignaton, Alcoforado & Alcoforado, 2017).

Figure 2. Altarpiece of the Foreshadowing of Catholic Triumphalism of the Carmo Church in Olinda



Source: Ariadne Pignaton

Figure 3. Chapel located below the high choir of the church of the Convent of Santo António do Carmo in Olinda



Source: Ariadne Pignaton

Marble and limestone are associated with works commissioned by more educated elites with greater financial resources, so more artists worked in wood than stone. This altarpiece was of the more expensive type and sought to promote triumphalism in the Catholic Church, after the period of greater restraint that succeeded the Council of Trent (1545–1563). This council was convened by Pope Paul III and held in Trento, Italy, becoming synonymous with Catholic reform or the Counter-Reformation. The Council of Trent sought to respond to the Protestant Reformation, and one of the direct consequences was the formal recognition of religious orders. The Catholic Church found this step necessary to counteract the Reformation's claims.

As mentioned previously, altarpieces meet the general population's liturgical needs and have different functions. The altarpiece under study has a devotional function. Currently, this liturgical element of the Carmo Church presents three images that probably once displayed the patron saint in the niche of the central branch (i.e. the intercolumn space) and figurative paintings in the lateral areas (i.e. intercolumn spaces), probably following a theme requested by those who commissioned this work of art. This specific artistic movement usually used paintings in altarpieces, and the altarpiece in question has frames included in the side sections (i.e. spaces between columns), indicating that it might possibly have had paintings in these spaces.

Due to a lack of documentation, the artist responsible for the work has not been identified. The documentation remaining from this period is extremely small, so little information is available about the professionals who drew the sketches (i.e. the blueprints) and those who sculpted the altarpieces, especially because at that time artists did not sign their works. In the sixteenth century in Brazil, the first altarpieces were sent over from the Lisbon metropolis, but, with the growing demand and the high costs of transporting these objects, churches began to use skilled labour imported from Portugal and later the local workforce (Lameira, 2016).

4.3 Characteristics of Artistic Movement Associated with the Altarpiece: A Contribution to Knowledge about Altarpiece Art

The artistic movement that sought to promote Catholic triumphalism lasted from approximately 1580 to 1621, which in Brazil is called 'mannerism'. This was a renewal movement guided by the Catholic Church's triumphalist attitudes after the Council of Trent (1546–1563). In this artistic period, wood was the most common material, but the altarpiece under study was created in limestone, as previously mentioned. Images of idealised shapes began to be combined with panels of figurative paintings (Lameira, 2007). Most likely, the altarpiece under study had this type of panel in its lateral sections (i.e. intercolumn spaces).

Other features of this period present in this altarpiece are triangular pediments, circles inscribed in rectangles, columns with a differentiated lower third and ornamentation with geometric elements. The attic or upper part of the altarpiece offers a tripartite solution with a triangular pediment interrupted by a cross – another typical feature of this artistic period.

5. DIALOGUES BETWEEN ARTISTIC OBJECTS AND VISITORS

On-site visits and observations revealed that the altarpiece is an unusual work of art so that visitors without training in the relevant areas (e.g. art history and heritage) cannot understand its real value. Communication needs to occur between this work of art and tourists. Technical devices can facilitate communication, allowing messages to pass between senders and receivers, in this case between the artistic object and visitors.

Sanctuaries (i.e. convents and churches) must impart knowledge, disseminate heritage, encourage research and meet tourists' expectations in order to attract new visitors. This change in attitudes and values can contribute to tourists' increased awareness of the world, and visits to sanctuaries can become important experiences with affective and emotional characteristics (Lord & Piacente, 2014). Visitors will have opportunities to gain new knowledge and get a real sense of altarpieces' value by using their observation skills enhanced by established forms of communication.

Altarpieces as artistic, aesthetic and architectural objects can generate discovery, understanding and dialogue with tourists. These works of art function as a primary means of communication and, when accompanied by secondary media, support visitors' encoding of messages.

For communication to be effective, the first steps are to define which information is relevant, which means should be used and who will be the messages' recipients.

The resulting communication needs to be succinct but effective so that it can reach both the broader public and those trained in the relevant fields (e.g. art students, researchers and heritage experts). Information transmitted in a summarised form will reach a larger audience since many people have the habit of skimming through texts. Thus, the initial information presented needs to stimulate visitors' interest.

For the communication process to develop efficiently, a multidisciplinary team of specialised professionals needs to be involved. Art historians or heritage experts prepare the information, and designers or marketing experts shape the way this message is given to the public. According to Murta and Albano (2005), well-presented information, besides revealing meanings, reaches emotions. Good interpretations of tourism sites are paramount, especially if these attractions are based on culture. Table 1 summarises essential information about the altarpiece of the Foreshadowing of Catholic

Triumphalism in the church of Olinda's Carmo Church, which, if placed close to this work of art, will facilitate more dialogues between the altarpiece and tourists.

Table 1. Information on the altarpiece of the Foreshadowing of Catholic Triumphalism of Carmo Church in Olinda

Altarpiece of the Church in the Convent of Santo António do Carmo	
Description	This is a work of art constructed at the end of the sixteenth century and the early seventeenth century. Few other altarpieces remain from this period in Brazil. The art object may have been finished in Brazil, but the altarpiece may have been transported from Portugal to Brazil on a ship. Because of the material's weight, it is likely that it was more likely constructed completely on-site by an artist from Portugal. Working with stone required specialists as at that time more artists worked with wood.
Religious Order/Sponsorship	The superior of the Order of Carmel should, whenever possible, be suggested as the sponsor.
Chronology/Period	The art object was created somewhere between 1580 and 1621.
Uses/Functions	Its primary function is devotional enhancement based on three iconographic themes that helped the faithful focus on these subjects.
Complementary Artistic Elements	The altarpiece includes three images in perfect condition: Saint Thérèse, Saint John Paul II and Saint Inês. This art object formerly included a picture of an idealised figure in wood in the centre and paintings in the intercolumn panels (i.e. spaces between columns) in the lateral areas.

Artistic Movement	The altarpiece's artist sought to promote Catholic triumphalism (i.e. mannerism).
Production/Artist	The artist has not been identified due to a lack of documentation. One hypothesis is that the artwork was done by a Portuguese artist.
Materials	The altarpiece is carved in limestone.

Source: Own Elaboration

Important information is often missing because of a lack of documentation as many documents have been lost over time. In this specific case, the sponsor, artist and exact date of the work's execution could not be identified. Some altarpieces, especially from the eighteenth century, were complemented by various artistic elements including, among others, gilded carving, figurative tiles that narrate biblical episodes, *cachotos* with paintings covering the chapel or entire nave's ceiling and stucco paintings on the ceiling or chapel walls. When these elements appear, they should be mentioned and properly and succinctly identified.

When the message is conveyed in a simple way, it becomes a flexible tool to reach all types of members of the public, ensuring everyone is treated equally. This form of communication integrates the cultural features in question and calls for everyone involved in the process to share and participate – from professionals to visitors. Interdisciplinary cooperation in the communication process will make it more successful, thus satisfying tourists' wishes.

As a result, the art objects in question will attract more people, contributing to heritage sites' financial livelihood. This information's dissemination will attract more attention and allow a greater appreciation of altarpieces as art, making room for further sustainable development of tourism in this area. The proper use of heritage resources based on quality criteria provides better heritage education and more interest in practicing cultural and/or heritage tourism.

Good interpretations give tourists a broader understanding of heritage and culture by stimulating new visits or encouraging visitors to extend their stay. To invest in providing information is to value tourism products (Murta & Albano, 2005: 10):

The appreciation of . . . urban and natural environment[s], history, knowledge and cultural practices contributes to product diversification, opening markets for different tourist niches. In the case of Brazil, besides beaches and magnificent leisure places, we have much more to offer our visitors in the fields of ecotourism, cultural and rural tourism. To make travel a truly cultural experience, however, we need to develop the preservation and interpretation of our cultural assets, translating their meaning . . . [for] those who visit them. Rather than informing, . . . interpretation aims to convince people of the value of their heritage, encouraging them to conserve it.

Through informative panels, altarpieces can be better interpreted and valued. Information visualisation can stimulate memory and induce attitudes favouring heritage protection. According to Murta and Goodey (2005), 'interpreting is an act of communication.' To interpret heritage is to enhance visitors' experience through information that discloses art objects' history and cultural characteristics.

6. CONCLUSION

This paper contributes to knowledge and to heritage management by providing an art historian's first level of artwork interpretation of a cultural tourism asset in a UNESCO

World Heritage Site. On the other hand, this study highlighted the role of artwork as a potential actor in increasing the value of cultural tourism products. In addition, the above discussion sought to emphasise how interpretation contributes to knowledge about art pieces, in general, and, more specifically, altarpieces that have proven to be the object of interest over time.

Initially, the present study of the Carmo Church in Olinda found that visitors look much more at the altarpieces made of gilded wood due to the material's splendour and the large dimensions of these works and that tourists pay little attention to a smaller altarpiece made of limestone. The latter is, however a work of art from the movement that promoted Catholic triumphalism, of which few examples can remain in Brazil. Because no detailed information is offered about these works of art, visitors cling to visual aspects and stop contemplating art objects of immense historical value.

Thus, the lack of dialogue between these objects and tourists, which could be achieved through interpretation, leads to disinterest in this artwork. In contrast, suitable interpretation on works of art, especially the altarpiece in question, would allow tourists to gain more knowledge, which facilitates the co-creation process (Antón, Camarero & Garrido, 2017). Notably, when co-creation exists between visitors and the heritage sites visited, the sites are more widely recommended to other potential tourists, attracting attention to the artwork and contributing to the sites' financial sustainability.

According to Lord and Piacente (2014), visits to sanctuaries (e.g. convents and/or churches) can become important experiences with affective and emotional dimensions. These experiences are enhanced when historic sites disclose their heritage to the public, encouraging further research, meeting visitors' expectations and thus attracting new visitors. However, the present research found that most sanctuaries do not fully take advantage of their altarpieces' potential value or of the various artistic elements associated with them in the same spaces, which represent a wide range of heritage features. Therefore, these findings suggest that multidisciplinary projects need to be carried out by specialised professionals, in which art historians, for example, prepare the information and marketing professionals determine how best to disclose this to the public.

Finally, this paper highlighted the value of appreciating altarpiece art as a tool with great potential for enhancing the long-term development of cultural and heritage tourism. A correct use of quality heritage interpretation includes providing visitor education and stimulates further interest in cultural and heritage tourism.

This qualitative research included observations and a case study of the altarpiece of the Foreshadowing of Catholic Triumphalism in the Carmo Church of Olinda. Future studies need to include examining more examples in order to obtain a fuller characterisation of visitors' access to information on altarpieces in Brazilian historical cities. Experimentation techniques could also be used to analyse co-creation in tourists' visits to churches and other historical sites, with and without detailed information.

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