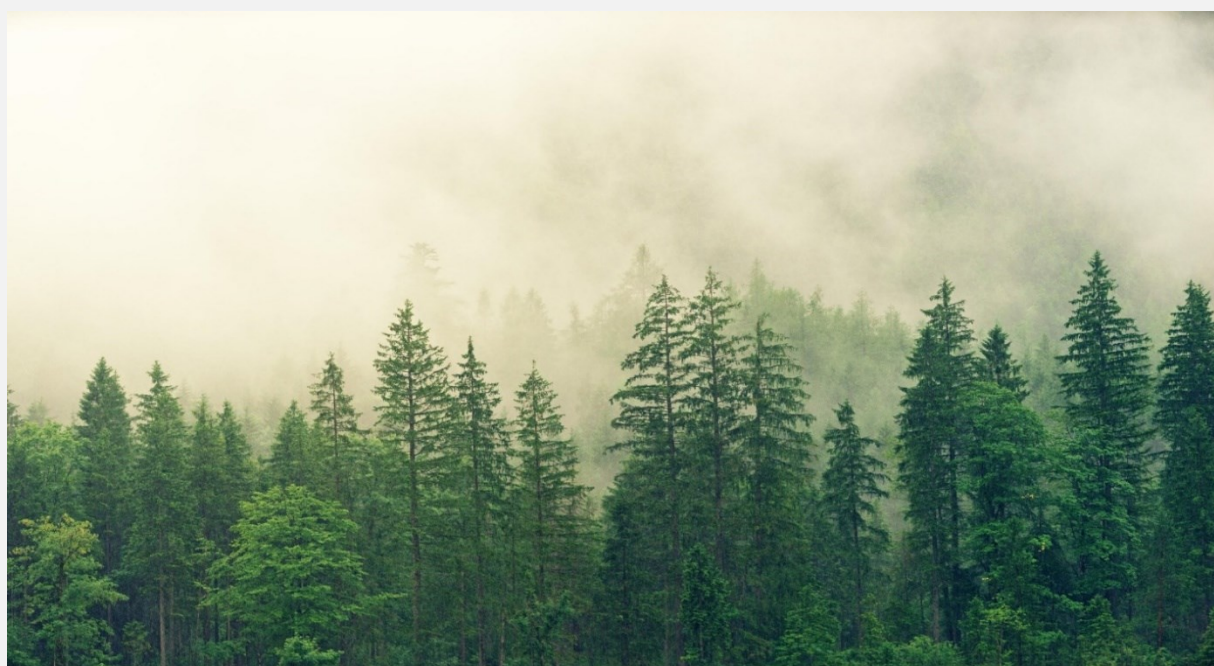


TOURISM FOR SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

PROCEEDINGS OF THE INTERNATIONAL SCIENTIFIC
CONFERENCE

18-19 MAY 2023, BULGARIA



AVANGARD PRIMA
2023

TOURISM FOR SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

INTERNATIONAL SCIENTIFIC CONFERENCE (ONLINE)
18-19 MAY 2023, BULGARIA

ORGANIZER

"ST. CYRIL AND ST. METHODIUS" UNIVERSITY OF
VELIKO TURNOVO, BULGARIA
TOURISM DEPARTMENT AT FACULTY OF ECONOMICS



CO-ORGANIZER

BULGARIAN ACADEMY OF SCIENCES
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF GEOPHYSICS,
GEODESY AND GEOGRAPHY, SOFIA,
BULGARIA



PARTICIPANTS

from Bulgaria (28), Brazil (28), Serbia (17), Italy (16), Romania (9), Turkey (9), Cyprus (7), Hungary (6), Kazakhstan (4), Moldova (4), South Africa (4), South Korea (4), Spain (3), Azerbaijan (2), Bosnia and Herzegovina (2), China (2), Nigeria (2), Poland (2), Argentina (1), Belarus (1), India (1), Jordan (1), Philippines (1), Portugal (1), UK (1), Uruguay (1)

ROCK RIDDLE: ANALYSIS OF THE ITACOATIARAS DO INGÁ - PARAÍBA FOR THE PROMOTION OF HERITAGE TOURISM

Lis Vieira Araújo Silva Franco¹

Federal University of Pernambuco, Brazil

Elídio Vanzella²

Unifuturo, Brazil

Abstract: *Listed in 1944, the Itacoatiaras do Ingá represent one of the most incredible rock heritages in Brazil and the World. Of still quite unknown origin, the Itacoatiaras represent one of the most mysterious heritages from Paraíba, arousing the interest of the academic community. In this context, it is understood that archaeological heritage comes into the spotlight, referring to all the elements that evidence the past, whether of natural or cultural origin. Linked to this, there is heritage tourism, an important segment for the promotion of these assets, increasing the economic axis and also acknowledging the history and culture inherent in the region. From these aspects, the present research aimed to diagnose the development of heritage tourism in the city of Ingá, through qualitative methods including local interview and participant observation, revealing the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT matrix), obtaining results that demonstrate that it is a destination that is still unprepared to meet tourist demands, but that has great potential to be explored.*

Keywords: *Heritage Tourism, Archaeological Heritage, Tourist Destination*

INTRODUCTION

Heritage assets establish a direct bond with tourism. The correlation between these two fields has suffered from the influence of globalization which was responsible for attracting visitors and inducing the development of tourist destinations (Lehtimäki et al., 2008). The search for meaningful and more authentic experiences with the culture of communities is the main motivation that arouses travelers' interest (Timothy, 2011). Concurrently, the increase in heritage tourism leaves the goods vulnerable to becoming subject to depreciation (Alvarez et al., 2016), and in order to guarantee protection and perseverance, heritage requires the supervision of specialized organizations.

¹Lis Vieira Araújo Silva Franco, Master's Student, Postgraduate Program in Hospitality and Tourism, Federal University of Pernambuco, Brazil, lisvieira.academico@gmail.com (Corresponding author)

ORCID ID: 0000-0003-4703-7444.

²Elídio Vanzella, Ph.D., Decision Models in Health (Statistics), Professor at Unifuturo and Advisor in the Florida Christian University Master of Education Program in USA, Coordinator at GCET (Cultural and Tourism Studies Group), Brazil, elidiovanzella@gmail.com

ORCID ID: 0000-0002-6217-4722.

To further understand and protect heritage, the goods are classified into categories that vary from their nature. Framing the object of study (the Itacoatiaras do Ingá), this research will approach archaeological heritage, which according to the Council of Europe (2002) refers to all remains and objects and any other traces of natural or cultural phenomena from past times, whether situated on land or underwater.

In Brazil, heritage listing, carried out by the Instituto do Patrimônio Histórico e Artístico Nacional (IPHAN), began in the 1940s, having the Itacoatiaras do Ingá, as the first monument of rock art recognized as a heritage good in the country. Listed in the Book of Fine Arts and the Book of Historical Heritage, the unique inscriptions are considered symbols of human genius and creativity, but for many decades have represented an unsolvable mystery due to the little evidence of human remains found. These assets have great value and represent a useful opportunity to understand the social-cultural relations of the peoples who previously inhabited the regions.

Despite these facts, the monument has been facing negligence when it comes to its preservation and tourist promotion, considering its high potential. In this sense, this study aims to diagnose the development of heritage tourism in the city of Ingá, through a SWOT matrix, proposing a reflection on the destination as a historical-cultural foundation of Paraíba.

The development of studies related to the Itacoatiaras do Ingá is important, not only for their theoretical character, developing the little knowledge that has been achieved so far but also for their practical relevance, considering that the Itacoatiaras, since 2015, have been indicated to UNESCO's Heritage List, which could bring countless benefits for the preservation of the monument, as well as in the development of the Ingá destination.

ITACOATIARAS DO INGÁ

Located in the Agreste region of Paraíba, the Itacoatiaras do Ingá represents one of the greatest archaeological treasures of Brazil. The word "itacoatiara" from Tupi-Guarani (linguistic family of native peoples), means "writing or drawing on rock" and it has been used as a synonym of rock engraving (IPHAN, n. d.).

Given its archaeological importance, the rock has been one of the first lithics monuments to be recognized as heritage by the IPHAN in the country. Registered under the process nº 330-T-43, Inscription nº 234 from the Historical Book and Inscription nº 301 from the Fine Arts Book on May 29, 1944, the monument has been the object of research in many fields (IPHAN, 2013).

The archaeological site of Ingá has more than 300 symbols carved in igneous rock, and it is considered one of the sites with the most detailed and deep carved representations in the world (IPHAN, n. d.). Due to the great number of figures, scientists divide the site into eleven sets. The most important one is known as the "vertical panel" which is delimited by a 114 capsular concave forming a line that, according to the local guide, could represent the horizon line (dividing the sky and the ground) or a calendar. The figures belonging to this panel are divided into 5 categories (phallic, anthropomorphic, phytomorphic, zoomorphic, and cosmogonic representations) (BRITO, 1988). It is important to highlight that the figures from Ingá Rock are considered abstract and for this reason they cannot be precisely asserted.

The second panel is called the "upper slab" and has cosmogonic representations such as constellations, comets, and some rounded shapes that could indicate the sun. The other panels are called "marginal panels" and during the winter season, they keep under the water due to the Ingá River crossing.

Many theories were developed trying to explain what the figures represent, which techniques were involved, who designed them, and their purposes, however little is known about their origins so far. The official inquiries about the Itacoatiaras do Ingá only started in the XX century resulting in many theories in an attempt to contextualize and interpret what was been carved on the rock. Ranging from extraterrestrial beings to Phoenicians and even Egyptians, the Itacoatiaras do Ingá remains a mystery and it is up to us, researchers, to develop more research aiming to feed the scientific knowledge about it.

METHODOLOGY

In order to enable this study, a descriptive-exploratory approach was chosen contemplating a bibliographic review and local data collection which brought the current heritage scenario of the Itacoatiaras do Ingá. The data collection in Ingá took place on March 25, 2023, and was carried out by local diagnosis through participant observation as a visitor (Flick, 2009) at the Itacoatiaras do Ingá, and a semi-structured interview with a representative agent from the heritage site. The interview was audio recorded in 30 minutes, but the interviewee's name was preserved for ethical reasons.

Both observation and interview were based on the 7 A's of tourist destinations (Kashyap, 2020):

- **Ambience/Atmosphere:** refers not only to physical/structural aspects but also to socio-cultural environment.

- **Attraction:** refers to the resources that motivate people to visit a destination.
- **Accessibility/Transport:** refers to the means to reach the attraction.
- **Activities:** refers to all the tourist activities to promote a good experience for the visitors.
- **Amenities/Ancillary Services:** refers to all the products, services, and facilities provided there.
- **Authenticity:** refers to the attraction characteristic of being genuine in tangible aspects, equally to its essence perceived through knowledge and information.
- **Availability of Packages:** refers to the possibility of becoming an offer inside of the tourism market.

From the data collected, a SWOT matrix was developed, to highlight the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of the Ingá destination.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In order to introduce the discussion, it is important to outline the current tourist context of the Itacoatiaras do Ingá, which will support the information of the first of the 7 A's proposed by Kashyap (2020). Compared with the description brought by Brito (2007), the asset did not demonstrate a huge infrastructural progression since 2007. Despite the lack of investment, the rock has been suffering from natural causes, such as temperature dilatation and rock desquamation, which were certainly responsible for the loss of many symbols.

The rock is also located in the main course of the Ingá River, and during the flood period, the Itacoatiaras are immersed, making them more prone to erosion. During the dry period, visitation is allowed and (sometimes) guided by tourism professionals. A fragile delimitation was built so that visitors do not get so close or even touch the rock, however, it is notable that there is a lack of supervision, which gives freedom to the people who often climb the rock to take pictures.

It is certain that in Brazil, heritage tourism started to be promoted a little while ago (Wassilowsky, 2013). Comparing the visitors' behavior in the Itacoatiaras do Ingá versus in Stonehenge in England (which presents some inquiry similarities about its origin), it is perceived a different treatment marked by an infrastructure that guarantees the protection of the heritage, in line with the numerous facilities aimed at catering to the tourist (Chippindale et al., 2014). It is important to highlight that the Itacoatiaras do Ingá are not yet World Heritage by UNESCO, but it is primordial to analyze these aspects to understand the attribution of values

and what impacts it can cause on the heritage assets in the long term.

Further analyzing the tourist infrastructure, high concrete walls were built surrounding the archaeological site aiming to avoid vandalism and unattended access. The restaurant that once was run by Mr. Renato Alves (BRITO, 2007) has been replaced by the Natural Museum of Ingá, which shares the same space with the Tourism Office of Ingá. There, a coffee shop and souvenir store were improvised providing the minimum support for visitors. Taking the urban area of Ingá, the conditions are not different. Regardless of the basic infrastructure, Ingá does not have many exclusive facilities for tourism (accommodations and restaurants), which contributes to the decrease in demand for the Itacoatiaras do Ingá.

Highlighting "Attraction", Ingá is exclusively visited by the Itacoatiaras do Ingá. The singularity presented in the carved symbols attracts people who are intrigued by the mystery, as the interviewee revealed: "The beauty of Ingá is linked to the enigma". On the other hand, the lack of evidence about "who", "when", "how" and "why" is responsible for developing educational tourism, which is a modality that involves the movement of students, professors, and researchers having the main objective of inquiring and promoting knowledge (OMT, 2003; MILAN, 2007).

Heading on to "Accessibility/Transport", it is possible to state that when it comes to tourist signaling on the road, people can easily go unnoticed, thus missing the entrance to the city of Ingá. The highway (BR 230), on the other hand, began to be repaired, which offers a smooth trip. To reach Ingá, most of the people use their private vehicle (usually a car, motorcycle, and even bike) due to the lack of tour packages, which will be addressed further on. When it comes to "Activities" neither the city, nor the heritage site, promotes events that could potentially encourage tourism.

As mentioned earlier, the region does not have much infrastructure for the development of tourist activity. According to the interviewee, Ingá presents an inadequate urban situation perceived through malfunction and bad distribution of water and electricity, however in the matter of healthcare, the city offers an infrastructure capable of attending to the needs of neighboring cities. Concerning tourism, restaurants are simple, and accommodations are more aimed at an adult audience. Security is reserved for the care of the population itself. When asked about the absence of structure to serve the tourist public, the interviewee answered: "It does not result in a vote", referring to the lack of government interest in promoting tourism. The population itself, despite using the name "itacoatiara" for the most varied enterprises, does not see the tourist activity as a source of income, and has little notion of the heritage wealth for the

world.

By contrast, authenticity is the main strength of the Ingá heritage site. Despite its archaeological originality, visitors can have contact with the authentic piece. In this aspect, Timothy (2011) brings a reflection on the importance of heritage authenticity within tourist activity. For the author this characteristic is important to develop a genuine tourist experience, which brings positive results, not only for the site, in managerial matters, but also for the whole culture that has been represented through the goods. Nevertheless, the Itacoatiaras do Ingá is a site very questionable facing the lack of concrete evidence about it, so, as has been mentioned earlier, the mystery also becomes a product, and to make it more salable, fake information is commonly disseminated without proven evidence.

Finally, Ingá is not the first destination when it comes to tourism in Paraíba. Heritage tourism in the state competes with “sun and beach” tourism, even during the low season (when the beaches are not as fetching as during the summer). There are a few tour packages that encompass the countryside and only one of the big receptive companies of Paraíba has an itinerary visiting the site as one of the official packages. The tour entitled “Mysteries and History of Paraíba” starts in the morning with a visit to the Itacoatiaras do Ingá (figure 1), followed by a city tour in Campina Grande. Even though the tour package is always promoted, it does not happen frequently as other destinations, justified by the company as having a low demand.

Figure 1. The Itacoatiaras do Ingá



Source: The author, 2023

Considering such aspects, it was possible to identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of the Ingá destination. To better illustrate these categories, a SWOT matrix was developed (figure 2).

Figure 2. SWOT matrix applied to the destination Ingá

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heritage uniqueness; • Historical and cultural wealth yet to be discovered; • Contact the original monument. • Location relatively close to the capital of Paraíba; • Preserved environmental wealth. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of governmental investment in protecting the monument; • Lack of tourist infrastructure; • Low demand for packages that include this attraction; • Lack of investment in national research on archaeological findings.
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential to become a World Heritage Site carried by UNESCO; • International market promotion; • Job creation and socioeconomic development; • The attraction can be included in various tourism segmentations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natural degradation due to weather and water course issues; • Political conflicts involving heritage management; • Risk of vandalism due to lack of security.

Source: The author, 2023

CONCLUSIONS

From the collected data, it was possible to draw a diagnosis of the Ingá destination for the promotion of heritage tourism, demonstrating that the region is still in the initial phase of tourist activity development.

Analyzing the Itacoatiaras do Ingá as the main attraction of the destination, the immense historical-cultural potential is at serious risk of getting lost, due not only to irresponsibility and negligence in their management but also to natural matters. In this way, the possibility of becoming a World Heritage Site listed by UNESCO represents a profitable opportunity to guarantee its preservation and perpetuation for the next generations.

Another aspect that should also be taken into account is the little involvement of the local population concerning heritage and, as seen in other research on heritage tourism in Paraíba (Franco and Vanzella, 2022), it is an extremely important factor, not only developing a tourist destination in general but also because they are very valuable historical remnants for understanding the occupation of human beings in the region.

Considering the statements and reflections raised during this research, it can be concluded that the objective of diagnosing the development of heritage tourism in the city of Ingá was achieved, obtaining results that demonstrate that it is a destination still unprepared to meet tourist demands, but that has great heritage potential to be used. Despite being consistent, the study has limitations that can be explored in the development of projects aimed at planning heritage tourism for the destination.

The Itacoatiaras of Ingá represent one of the greatest geniuses of the occupants of northeastern Brazil and for this reason, it is important to promote measures that can protect it.

REFERENCES

- Alvarez, M. D., Go, F. M., & Yüksel, A. (2016). *Heritage Tourism Destinations Preservation, Communication and Development*. CABI.
- Brito, G. (1988). *Viagem ao Desconhecido: os segredos da Pedro do Ingá*. Brasília.
- Brito, V. (2007). *A Pedra do Ingá: Itacoatiaras na Paraíba*. João Pessoa: JRC.
- Chippindale, C., Gosden, C., James, N., Pitts, M., & Scarre, C. (2014). New era for Stonehenge. *Antiquity*, 88, 644–657. <http://antiquity.ac.uk/ant/088/ant0880644.htm644>
- Council of Europe. (2002). *ARCHAEOLOGICAL HERITAGE THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE INITIATIVES AND THE VALLETTA CONVENTION (1992) Tracking down the traces to understand the present*.
- Flick, U. (2009). *An introduction to qualitative research*. Sage Publications.
- Franco, L. V. A. S., & Vanzella, E. (2022). *Paraiba starts here: Analysis of tourism potential of the Atalaia de Forte Velho Watchtower-Paraiba*. Applied Tourism.
- IPHAN (2013) *Bens Culturais Tombados: Paraíba*. João Pessoa: Superintendência Estadual da Paraíba.
- Portal IPHAN (n.d.), *Itacoatiaras do Rio Ingá*, viewed April 2023, <http://portal.iphan.gov.br/pagina/detalhes/824>
- Kashyap, H. (2020). TOURIST DESTINATION-ELEMENTS AND LIFE CYCLE. *EGyanKosh*.
- Lehtimäki, M., et al. (2008). *Cultural Heritage and Tourism: Potential, Impact, Partnership and Governance*. Department of Cultural Heritage under Ministry of Culture of Lithuania.

- MILAN, P. L. (2007). “*Viajar para aprender*”: *Turismo pedagógico na Região dos Campos Gerais – PR*. Centro de Educação Balneário Camboriú, Programa de Pós-graduação em Turismo e Hotelaria
- OMT (2003). *Organização Mundial do Turismo – Turismo Internacional: uma perspectiva global*. Porto Alegre: Bookman.
- UNESCO (n.d.), World Heritage Convention, viewed April 2023, <https://whc.unesco.org/>
- Timothy, D. J. (2011). *Cultural Heritage and Tourism An Introduction*. Channel View Publications.
- Wassilowsky. A. H. (2013). *Arqueología y desarrollo en América del Sur: de la práctica a la teoría*. Ediciones Uniandes - Universidad de los Andes.