

**Resenha de “Turismo e patrimônio cultural. Interpretação e qualificação”**

**Review of “Tourism and cultural heritage. Interpretation and qualification”**

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**Resumo:**

Nesta recensão crítica, apresento uma análise sumária de um livro brasileiro com reflexão teórica sobre a Interpretação, que demonstra de forma apurada a filosofia, os princípios e as técnicas desta arte de comunicação e apresentação do património. O livro apresenta a tradição intelectual norte-americana de Interpretação do Património como modelo para a sua implementação no Brasil.

**Palavras-chave:** turismo patrimonial. interpretação do património cultural. Brasil.

**Abstract**

In this critical review, I present a summary analysis of a Brazilian book with a theoretical reflection on Interpretation, which shows in a very refined way the philosophy, principles and techniques of this art of heritage communication and presentation. The book shows

the USA intellectual tradition of Heritage Interpretation as a model for their implementation in Brazil.

**Keywords:** heritage tourism. interpretation of cultural heritage. Brazil.

## **BOOK REVIEW**

ROBERTA COSTA, Flávia. Turismo e patrimônio cultural. Interpretação e qualificação. São Paulo: SENAC-SESC, 2014. 251 p.

This book focuses on the adequacy of cultural heritage communication for visitors and the influence of the interpretation model on the awareness of cultural heritage conservation and the acquisition of knowledge by tourists. The book fills a large gap, the near non-existence of canonical texts on cultural heritage interpretation in Portuguese and specially in Brazil. But its value is even greater because it represents a dialogue between cultural heritage and tourism mediated by the techniques and principles of interpretive and interactive communication associated with heritage education and the satisfactory experience of the visitor.

The book is structured as follows: it begins with a brief presentation of the problem, then the first part focuses on a brief historical analysis of cultural tourism and its relationship with cultural heritage, the second part focuses on interpretive communication, updating the work of Freeman Tilden in dialogue with other leading authors in heritage interpretation; the book concludes with final considerations and appendices with normative texts and international declarations on interpretation. The most important to know about this book is that presents a renovation of the heritage interpretation paradigms for Portuguese readers.

From the book's "Presentation" onwards, the author defends the need to articulate restoration with the interpretation of cultural heritage to improve conservation. This book is the result of a master's thesis, the author confesses, and has the mission of responding reflectively and technically to the popularization of the search for historical-artistic heritage. To this end, it will show throughout its text a dialogue with the work of Freeman Tilden, firstly, and Beck and Cable, secondly.

### **Part I.**

The first part of the work begins with a historical analysis of tourism that begins with the European Grand Tour and its social function of educating the elites. Here, she will present tourism in tension with conservation and conservationists, who distrust the touristic and economic valuation of cultural heritage, and who, according to the author, can converge.

### **Part II.**

The second part emphasizes interpretive communication as a paradigm that has become institutionalized in cultural tourism, something evidenced by UNESCO's international declarations and conventions. This second part adopts a philosophical perspective, articulated with a technical and operational vision, very useful for its use and application by any interpreter or guide.

Interpretation is presented as an intermediation between tourist-cultural attractions (e.g., museums) and visitors, unmotivated by learning, oblivious to the reality that is intended to be communicated in an uninviting and unconventional way. This

critical view observes visitors intimidated by the educational conditions of these attractions and their heritage content, which is only geared towards curious visitors willing to learn and think about the world. Furthermore, it also sees "mindless" visits to inanimate or static, labyrinthine exhibitions, without a conceptual line, and which overload the visiting experience with a large amount of information. Visitors are diverse and may differ in their interest in the content, fatigue, motives (e.g., educational or recreational), attention span, and familiarity with previous, sometimes not very positive, cognitive maps. Considering this, the author proposes a method of interpretive communication of cultural heritage.

And what is interpretive communication? Interpretive communication is a mediation that presents intellectual, attitudinal, and emotional connections to raise the interest of audiences and better connect them with the meanings of cultural and natural heritage. It is not about giving information or formal instruction, but it is associated with heritage education and intercultural and intersocial translation. Its origin is attributed to the national parks of the USA (e.g., Yosemite Valley, Yellowstone National Park), considered a philosophy (effort of understanding), a method, and an application, with the aim of improving the information service to visitors. And in its creation, they highlight names such as John Muir, Enos Mills, Freeman Tilden, and others. At this point in her work, the author reviews the main authors and technical and academic works on interpretation produced in the Anglo-Saxon world (especially the United States) since the 19th century and addresses the institutionalization of the "interpretation" model in different Western geopolitical contexts (e.g., ICOMOS).

Following this, the book highlights the classic and contemporary principles of interpretation, explaining the changes in focus and adaptations to the new digital and consumer society of the 21st century, in a dialogue with authors such as Mills, Tilden, Beck, and Cable. An added value of this dialogue is its transposition and dissemination in Portuguese of the philosophical and theoretical principles of Anglo-Saxon heritage interpretation. In this sense, the author argues that interpretation is a technique and an art of provoking, not instructing, and connecting better with the visitor.

In the last part of the publication, the author analyzes the media, supports, and interprets experiences most appropriate to each sociocultural context and situation.

### **Critical comments.**

In summary, this publication, now in its second edition, represents an important contribution to the dissemination of heritage interpretation techniques within the Lusophone world. Among the publication's weaknesses are: a) the lack of dialogue with key authors in heritage interpretation such as Jorge Morales Miranda, Susan M. Pearce, Sam Ham, David Larsen, or Nimit Chowdhary; b) the almost exclusive focus on cultural tourism and somewhat less on museums, which it openly criticizes by their poor interpretive communication; c) the lack of "success" examples from the Ibero-American world, with some Brazilian exceptions; d) the interpretive bias towards cultural tourism as almost solely heritage tourism. Finally, this book serves as a guide for beginning the valuable task of heritage interpretation with a focus on communication and visitor education.

### **AGRADECIMENTOS**

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