

„TURYZM” 1992, z. 1

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## THE TOURISTIC FUNCTION OF TORUŃ

## LA FONCTION TOURISTIQUE DE TORUŃ

## FUNKCJA TURYSTYCZNA TORUNIA

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Toruń is distinguished as one of the eight large Polish tourist centres (Przybyszewska-Gudelis, Iwicki 1973). It is also one of six tourist places in the first category, i.e., towns with a high concentration of tourist attractions with a majority of those anthropogenic qualities regarded as being of international importance and of paramount national importance (Lijewski, Mikułowski, Wyrzykowski 1985).

Toruń is known as one of Polish cities with a great abundance of monuments, and it is the more interesting as it is the birth-place of Nicholas Copernicus — the famous Polish astronomer (1473—1543).

Toruń is the point of intersection of some important routes. The European route which connect Scandinavian countries with the areas of Central Europe and South-Eastern Europe cross the city, and also the route leading from Western Europe to the Masurian Lakes — the region of two thousand lakes, very attractive especially for tourists coming from Germany, France and Italy. The routes and railways leading from the Polish Baltic coast and the lake districts to Central and South Poland, cross in Toruń.

Present-day Toruń is inhabited by more than 200,000 people. The city was developing especially intensively from the year 1960 until 1980. The investments in the textile, clothing, chemical and electrotechnical industries stimulated its contemporaneously important function in national economy. Apart from its industrial and administrative functions, Toruń is the capitol of the county.

Toruń is an important cultural centre and also the seat of the Nicholas Copernicus University and many secondary schools. A function connected with the city for many years is its tourist industry arising from cognitive qualities of Toruń, the qualities which are recognized in Poland as well as other countries.

What distinguishes Toruń from the urban point of view is its specific spatial structure. The old centre of the city is encircled by the area which is free from buildings. This area was relatively recently built over with the new buildings. Outside of this area there is the old residential and industrial area of original suburbs. The last external area of the city is the new residential area and the area of industry and communication. Nowadays the spatial growth of the town is going on through enlargement of the external area and through the replacement of substandard buildings in the area of old suburbs. It is a kind of rejuvenation of the city. A particular place in the plan for Toruń is reserved for the old centre which until quite lately fulfilled all the functions of the city. Some of these functions were purposely eliminated recently. The industrial function of the city was eliminated almost completely. At present its residential and administrative functions are being successively reduced. At the same time one can observe the establishment of some local service workshops in the new residential units. They do not discredit the former importance of the service function of the centre. The function of Toruń which can be fulfilled almost exclusively by its central part is its touristic function.

## 2. THE BASIS OF THE TOURISTIC FUNCTION OF TORUŃ

The basis of the touristic function of Toruń is the unique town centre which is unique in every respect. This centre consists of the Old Town, established in 1233, and the New Town, established in 1264, integrated in 1454 and preserved to the present day within nearly the same area and in the same urban configuration. The peculiarity of the integrated urban configuration of the old Toruń and the new Toruń is its distinct isolation from the other parts of the present-day city. The spaces situated outside the city-walls, which were free from buildings for ages, are now green areas for recreation and practicing sports. Some tourist-service activities are localized in these spaces and some more places are designated to be built with similar functions.

Among the buildings of the Old Town are many well-preserved Gothic, Renaissance, Baroque and Secession structures. They are valuable

not only because of their form and exterior decorations, but also because of the events connected with the life of former inhabitants of the city. On the Architectural Record of Monuments and Buildings of Toruń, or rather its medieval part, 344 monuments are mentioned. Five of them are classed among the monuments of the „O” category, 33 in the first category and the others among the monuments of the third category. About one hundred of these buildings are recognized as structures which are attractive for the average tourist, twelve of them are classed as very attractive and alone they stimulate the tourist traffic to Toruń — Fig. 1.

Tourists coming to Toruń pay attention first of all to the monumental Gothic buildings of the Old Town: the Town Hall and the churches: Virgin Mary's, St. John's and St. James'. These structures dominate the panorama of the town. The fragments of fortifications including defensive towers and the gates: Sw. Ducha, Mostowa and Żeglarska, are also valuable and visually attractive. The most famous defensive tower is the so-called Leaning Tower. The other structures of high architectural and historic qualities are: the house in which Nicholas Copernicus was born in 1473 and the ruins of Teutonic fortress destroyed by the burghers in 1454. The well preserved merchants' houses and the great number of granaries are the oldest buildings in Poland, and they are also the relics of the economic splendour of the city. The architecture of old Toruń is dominated by Gothic brick-buildings. Owing to this the panorama of the city, especially seen from the other side of the Vistula River, offers a really unusual view.

In 1861 museum collections began in Toruń. The great number of thematic exhibitions in the seven museums present the most valuable of the 100,000 exhibits accumulated in all the collections. Particularly valuable and attractive is the collection of works of art and artistic handicraft of the XIIIth, XIVth, and the XVth centuries. The most important place among them is reserved for sculpture, painting, and glass-painting.

The historically oldest part of Toruń has been successively renovated, including appropriate conservation, for many years. The main purposes of the renovation were:

- improvement of the urban profile of this part of the city in order to expose its original attributes;
- restoration of the architecturally and historically proper character of the monuments;
- formation of the functional structure of the down-town area which would link with tradition, but which would be also convenient for the inhabitants of Toruń and also for tourists.

The celebration of the anniversaries of three important events in



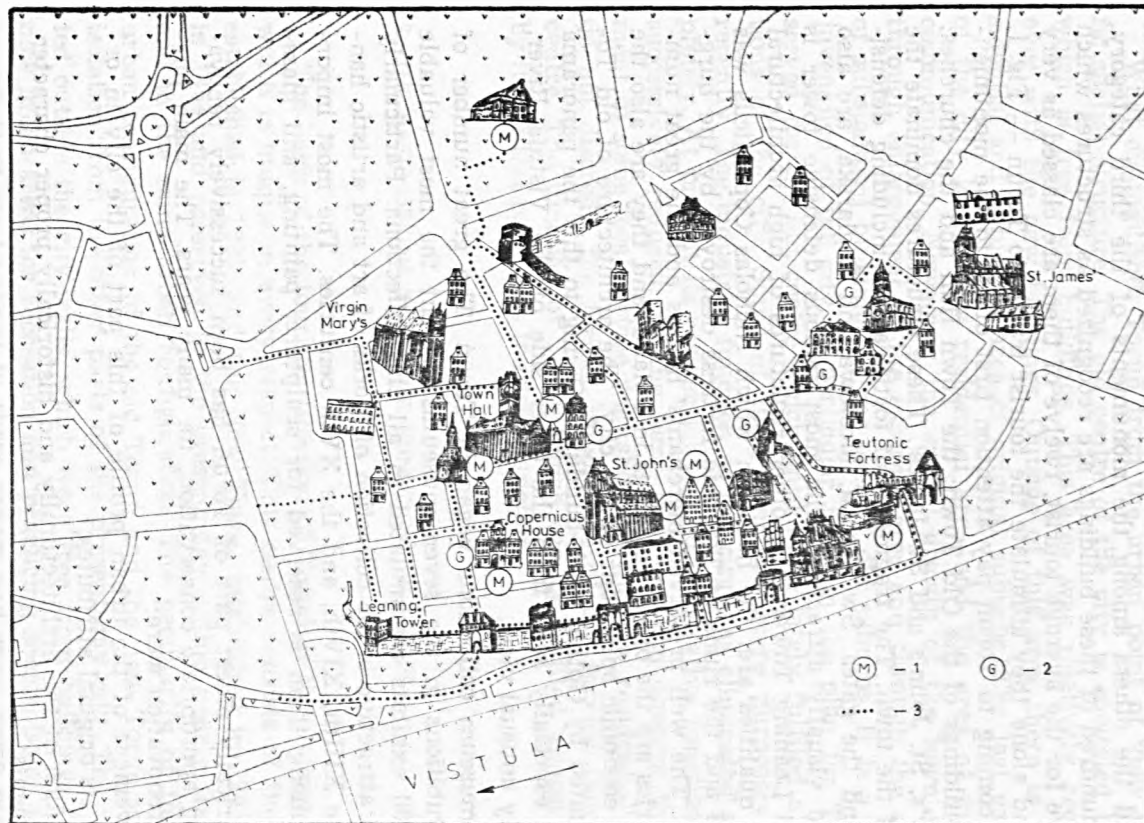


Fig. 1. The most valuable architectural and historical monuments of Toruń

1 — museums; 2 — art galleries; 3 — the main routes taken by tourist visiting of the Old City

Dessin 1. Monuments historiques et d'architecture de Toruń ayant la plus grande valeur

1 — musées; 2 — galeries d'art; 3 — principaux itinéraires touristiques de la Vieille Ville

Toruń's history marked the particular stages of this renovation. The 500th anniversary of the Peace of Toruń, which ended the victorious 13-year-war between the Crown and Teutonic state to which the town belonged, was celebrated in 1966. On the strength of that peace Toruń was incorporated into the Kingdom of Poland; it was the beginning of the city's economic progress. The most important date in the process of the renovation of the city was the year 1973, when the 500th anniversary of the birth of Nicholas Copernicus, the most famous citizen of Toruń, was celebrated. An equally important event in this process was the year 1983 — the 750th anniversary of the establishment of Toruń as a town (1233).

The work of renovation started in 1957 and it comprised among other things the conservation and the refurbishing of the most valuable monuments. In many cases they were adapted to their new, mainly cultural, functions and were also opened for sightseeing. Many quarters of the Old City were renovated. After renovation many buildings changed their former functions, which were mainly residential, and received new tenants. Industrial establishments were almost entirely removed from the down-town area. The residential utilisation of the old buildings is being progressively reduced. At the same time the standard of the flats in these buildings is improving. The medieval structure of the majority of the buildings occupying the Old City has resulted in the process of renovation being technologically complicated, expensive and prolonged. But at the same time this process has brought to light the touristic qualities of the city. The morphology of Toruń made it possible for a ring-road to be built round the Old City. This allowed the removal of the tram lines from the centre and also brought a reduction in car traffic, the modernization of the streets and their opening for pedestrian traffic. The south part of the ring-road was built on the riverside of the River Vistula. At the same time the river side area was rebuilt and recreation areas created there. Similar recreation areas (some parks, areas for practicing sports and games, some touristic facilities and an ethnographical park) were set out to the north and west of the Old City — Fig. 2.

The main purpose of the renovation of the Old City is the preservation of its cultural heritage. It increases the cognitive value of the city and creates the basis of its touristic functions. The most important element of this basis is tourist facilities. The growing cognitive value of the city and also the fact that many guests were expected to come during the year of the 500th anniversary of Nicholas Copernicus' birth, showed the necessity of the new investments in the tourist facilities. New hotels which need considerable space were localized immediately

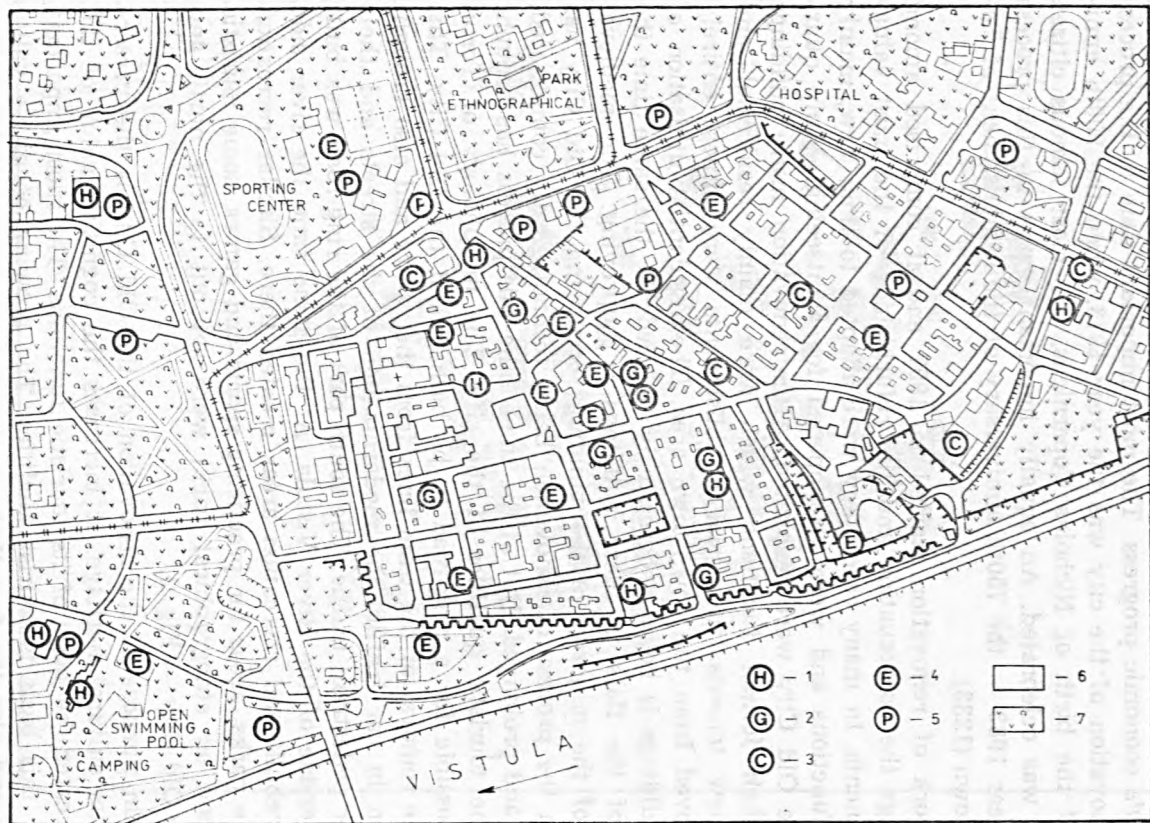


Fig. 2. Touristic services in the central part of Toruń

1 — hotels; 2 — gastronomic services; 3 — theatres and cinemas; 4 — entertainments; 5 — car parking; 6 — built-up areas; 7 — open areas

Dessin 2. Services touristiques au centre de Toruń

1 — hôtels; 2 — services gastronomiques; 4 — théâtres et cinémas; 4 — divertissements; 5 — parkings pour automobiles; 6 — espaces bâtis; 7 — espace non-bâtis

next to the old centre. Many tourist facilities (information centres, souvenir-shops, restaurants, café-rooms, museums etc.) were situated in the buildings of the Old City. Although in the past many activities directly connected with the servicing of tourist traffic were undertaken, the city was very often insufficiently prepared to receive all those tourists who arrived. Problems connected with the tourist infrastructure and associated services was the main factor which restricted the touristic function of Toruń.

### 3. TOURIST TRAFFIC IN TORUŃ

Visitors were already coming to get to know Toruń in the latter part of XIX century. After 127 years of Prussian annexation, when the city returned to the Polish Republic and became the capital of Pomerania, an increase of interest in Toruń took place. Although no statistics of the tourist traffic from that period are known<sup>1</sup>, it is possible to conclude on many grounds that it existed. In the cultural and touristic journals appearing at that time one can find much information about the city. Plans of the city and guide-books were published. Toruń was visited by a great number of groups of children and young people and also by groups of people travelling along the Vistula River. For these groups the city was an important staging point. Visitors arriving at Toruń could be entertained in 19 hotels (Wilgat 1939).

After World War II the number of tourists arriving in Toruń successively increased. The greatest number of tourists arrived in the seventies — 400,000—500,000 tourists a year. In 1973, the year of 500th anniversary of Nicholas Copernicus' birth, Toruń was visited by 700,000 tourists. In the eighties, under the circumstances of social and economic crisis, the number of tourists arriving in Toruń was reduced to 150,000—200,000 persons a year.

Tourists traffic in Toruń is marked by some specific characteristics. They arise on the one hand from the particular touristic qualities of this city, on the other from its touristic arrangement. The main purpose of tourists' visits to Toruń is the study of the cultural heritage of the former inhabitants of Toruń and Pomerania. They come to see the places connected with important events of Polish history — for example, the place of birth of Nicholas Copernicus — the author of an important change in European culture. The kind of touristic qualities

<sup>1</sup> Data exists on visitors coming to the health-resorts and for holiday (Leszczycka 1939).



which is mentioned above is of great importance in the education process of children and young people, and this is the reason why many groups of young tourists visit Toruń.

Most tourists coming to Toruń stay in the city only for a few hours. They need such a time to visit the most valuable monuments of the town. Toruń is very often visited by tourists en route to the other places. This makes it difficult to estimate the real scale of tourists' visits. An estimate is possible only by using information about the number of tourists using the service of tourist offices, the number of tourists conducted by guides etc. The record of people coming and spending some time in hotels is not suitable for this kind of estimate. Most tourists visiting Toruń travel in groups. It is estimated that the number of tourists who travel individually comprises only 20—25 per cent of the total number of tourists.

The kind of touristic attractions of Toruń — the qualities of its architecture and urban profile and also its geographical situation — determines the seasonal character of the tourist traffic. The tourist season in Toruń starts usually in May and ends in September. Outside this period tourist traffic is distinctly less and in the winter period it nearly disappears.

Tourist traffic in Toruń is typified by a distinct spatial concentration in the city. It concentrates mainly in the streets of the old centre where the most valuable monuments and museums, visited by tourists during short stays, are situated — Fig. 1. The place which is situated outside of the Old City, but which is very often visited by tourists, is the complex of buildings of the Nicholas Copernicus University. It was built on the occasion of the 500th anniversary of the birth of Nicholas Copernicus', the patron of the university.

#### 4. THE ECONOMIC ASPECT OF THE TOURISTIC FUNCTION OF TORUŃ

The touristic attraction of Toruń and the size of tourist traffic seem to show that the economic effect of the touristic function of the city is considerable, and it is an important source of the town's income and also a source of its inhabitants', earnings. The general analysis of this problem shows that these earnings are less than could be expected. The fundamental reason for the low receipts from the servicing of tourist traffic is the insufficient development of the tourist service both in respect of its limited scale and its standard. Because of the modest tourist service a large number of tourists do not stay in Toruń for more than a few hours. The number of hotels in the city is insufficient, and



it is not possible to relax after visiting all the monuments and museums, because there are insufficient venues like night-clubs, cinemas, pubs, coffee-gardens etc. Toruń needs many new facilities, especially small facilities — for example small hotels, boarding houses, varied catering businesses which would offer their services to wealthy and less wealthy tourists. The development of the tourist infrastructure especially in the old centre, would prolong the tourist season, change the transit character of tourist traffic, and change its hitherto existing structure, i.e., it would increase the number of individual tourists. It is justifiable to expect that the developing supply of services will bring due economic profits. Up to present the economic effects of Toruń's touristic function seem to be highly disproportionate to the effects in the sphere of cultural and educational influence on society.

#### 5. FINAL REMARKS

The urban, architectural, historic and other qualities of Toruń place the city among those towns very well equipped to fulfil touristic functions. Toruń fulfils this function and as such it is mentioned among the other functions of the city. Sometimes it is even distinguished as the function of the first rank. Considering such determinants of this function as the general touristic attractiveness and the size of the tourist traffic, it is possible to compare Toruń with the most important Polish cities as Cracow, Gdańsk, Poznań, Wrocław etc. In a sense the touristic function of Toruń can be taken as a determinant of the high position of this city in aspect of other Polish cities. At the same time this function is at present the secondary function and it does not bring any significant benefits, especially economically. It is a paradox that the large sums of money spent on the renovation of old Toruń, which considerably add to the city's attractiveness, are refunded by tourism only on a limited scale. The essential development of tourist service in Toruń should be strongly connected with the further renovation of the old centre. A close integration of the interests of tourism and national culture is in this instance the desirable and the best solution.

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Wpłynęło:  
30 października 1991 r.

## RÉSUMÉ

Dans l'espace touristique de la Pologne, la ville de Toruń est perçue comme un centre chorographique (Przybyszewska-Gudelis, Iwicki 1973) ou comme une ville chorographique à l'importance internationale, suprême dans le cadre du pays (Lijewski, Mikułowski, Wyrzykowski 1985). Toruń est l'une des villes les plus riches en monuments d'urbanisme et d'architecture. C'est aussi la ville natale de Nicolas Copernic (1473—1543). Toruń d'aujourd'hui compte 200 000 habitants environ. C'est la capitale de la voïvodie, le centre industriel et culturel du pays.

Le centre de la ville, unique en son genre, constitue la base de la fonction touristique de Toruń. Il se compose de la Vieille Ville moyenâgeuse, fondée en 1233 et de la ville Neuve, fondée en 1264, maintenues jusqu'à nos jours dans les limites et les dispositions urbaines presque inchangées. L'aménagement du vieux centre garde plusieurs monuments de l'architecture gothique, de renaissance, baroque et d'art nouveau. Particulièrement attrayants du point de vue du tourisme sont: l'hôtel de la vieille ville, trois églises, les murs, les beffrois et les portes de ville, les ruines du château des chevaliers teutoniques, les maisons des citoyens, les greniers à blé. Dans les musées, les expositions des collections amassées depuis 1861 ont une grande valeur touristique. Particulièrement intéressantes sont les expositions de la sculpture moyenâgeuse, de la peinture et de l'artisanat.

Le mouvement touristique à Toruń a ses traits spécifiques. C'est un mouvement chorographique de courte durée, saisonnier et organisé en groupes. Dans les années soixante-dix il embrassait 400—500 mille touristes par an; dans les années de la crise sociale et économique 150—200 mille touristes arrivaient chaque année à Toruń. La grandeur et les traits de ce mouvement sont déterminés par les possibilités des services touristiques. La base de couchage, l'offre gastronomique et l'infrastructure de culture et de divertissement sont bien modestes. Jusqu'à présent, les effets

économiques de la fonction touristique de Toruń sont minimales. L'aménagement touristique de la ville doit être lié au processus de la restauration architectonique et urbaniste de la partie moyenâgeuse de la ville, processus créant dans une grande mesure les bases de la fonction touristique de Toruń.

Traduit par Lucjan Kowalski

## STRESZCZENIE

W przestrzeni turystycznej Polski Toruń wyróżniany jest jako wielkie centrum krajoznawcze (Przybyszewska-Gudelis, Iwicki 1973) bądź jako miejscowość krajoznawcza o znaczeniu międzynarodowym i najwyższym znaczeniu krajowym (Lijewski, Mikułowski, Wyrzykowski 1985). Miasto jest jednym z najzasobniejszych w zabytki urbanistyki i architektury, jest rodzinnym miastem Mikołaja Kopernika. Dzisiejszy Toruń zamieszkuje około 200 tys. mieszkańców. Jest on znaczącym w kraju ośrodkiem przemysłowym, kulturalnym, stolicą województwa.

Podstawą funkcji turystycznej Torunia jest unikalne pod względem poznawczym jego śródmieście. Stanowią je średniowieczne Stare Miasto — założone w 1233 r. i Nowe Miasto — założone w 1264 r., zachowane do czasów współczesnych w niemalże nie zmienionych granicach i układach urbanistycznych. W zabudowie starego centrum zachowały się liczne obiekty architektury gotyckiej, renesansowej, barokowej, a także secesyjnej. Szczególnie atrakcyjne pod względem turystycznym są: ratusz staromiejski, trzy kościoły, mury, baszty i bramy miejskie, ruiny zamku krzyżackiego, domy kupieckie, kamienice mieszczańskie, spichlerze. Walorem turystycznym są także ekspozycje muzealne kolekcji gromadzonych w Toruniu od 1861 r. Szczególnie atrakcyjne są ekspozycje średniowiecznej rzeźby, malarstwa i rzemiosła.

Ruch turystyczny do Torunia odznacza się specyficznymi cechami. Jest to głównie ruch krajoznawczy, krótkopobytowy, sezonowy i zorganizowany w grupach turystycznych. Jego rozmiary w latach siedemdziesiątych szacowano na 400—500 tys., a w latach kryzysu społeczno-gospodarczego na 150—200 tys. turystów rocznie. Obecne cechy i rozmiary ruchu determinuje sfera usług turystycznych. Niewystarczająca jest baza noclegowa, skromna jest oferta gastronomiczna i infrastruktura kulturalno-rozrywkowa miasta. Ekonomiczna efektywność funkcji turystycznej Torunia jest, jak dotąd, niewielka. Turystyczne zagospodarowanie miasta winno być skojarzone z procesem architektoniczno-urbanistycznej restauracji jego średniowiecznej części, procesem w znacznej mierze kreującym podstawy funkcji turystycznej Torunia.