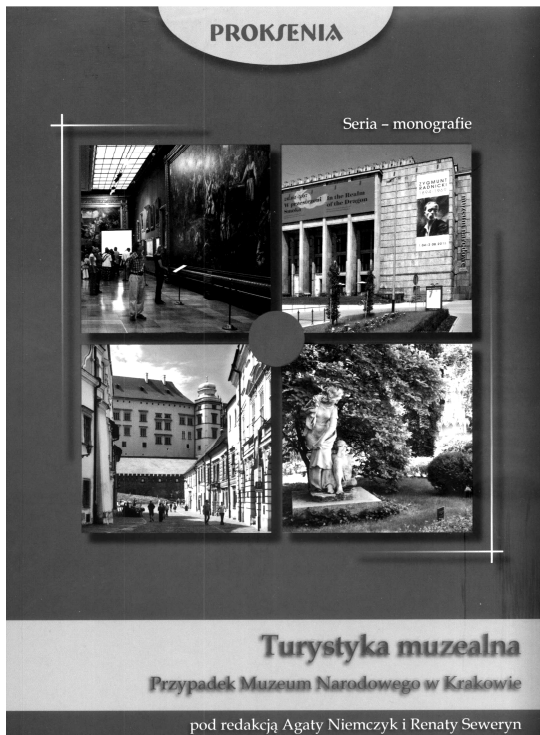


# REVIEW

*Tourism* 2015, 25/2



## *TURYSTYKA MUZEALNA. PRZYPADEK MUZEUM NARODOWEGO W KRAKOWIE*

*[MUSEUM TOURISM: A CASE STUDY OF THE NATIONAL MUSEUM IN KRAKÓW],*

AGATA NIEMCZYK  
and RENATA SEWERYN (eds.),  
Proksenia, Kraków 2015,  
pp. 211

The book entitled 'Museum Tourism: a Case Study of the National Museum in Kraków' published in 2015, is a collaborative work written by lecturers from the Faculty of Tourism at Kraków University of Economics as part of a series of monographs about tourism. The authors' main aim is to analyse the phenomenon of museum tourism. They decided to achieve this through tasks concerning Kraków museums (e.g. analyzing their potential, identifying the significance of museums as regards the number of arrivals to the city, and establishing a brand for Kraków museums). In accordance with the title and goals set, the publication consists of two distinct parts: the first presents the theoretical dimension and the second the empirical aspects of the issue, the latter containing an analysis of the results of research undertaken. The book consists of seven chapters and has 211 pages, including a bibliography and tables of contents.

The first part starts with a chapter dedicated to a description of cultural tourism and museum tourism (Chapter 1). The authors present here the essence of cultural tourism, list its forms and define museum tourism pointing to the relationship between tourism and culture, as well as its interdisciplinary character

and function. This part is in the form of a discussion with authors of other publications on similar topics whose opinions and definitions they provide. The authors believe that isolating museum tourism is purely theoretical because it is complementary to other forms of cultural tourism and in itself is an interdisciplinary phenomenon. The contents of this chapter seem essential for an understanding of the rest (it sorts out concepts and explains relations).

The next chapter presents museums as institutions of culture in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> c (Chapter 2). A large part is devoted to the concept of museums, their features and constituent elements, i.e. buildings, exhibits and presentation. The description includes the purposes of founding museums and their resulting functions. The chapter ends with a long, but incoherent list of various types of museum (quoted from GUS – the Central Statistical Office) and quasi-museums. Considering the title of this chapter, it should include at least a brief reference to the concept of culture, as well as some information about cultural institutions, the role of the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage, the National Institute of Museology and Protected Collections, and the International Council of Museums.

There is also no information regarding the legal foundation of the organisation of museums, apart from the Act of 1996 (e.g. the act on organizing and conducting cultural activity - 1991, and the 'museum statute'). These issues concern the organization and system of museums in Poland, so it seems necessary to include them in this chapter. One may also have some reservations as to the sub-chapter on changes to the aims and functions of museums over time. The authors describe the changes very generally, do not assign them to specific periods while the history of museums from the 18<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> c. is not presented.

The tourism offer of museums nowadays and in the past is the topic of the next chapter (Chapter 3) where a lot of space is devoted to the theory of the tourism product, including that of museums. The authors describe briefly selected museums from all over the world (the choice based on *travelin.pl* seems a little controversial), and present some Polish museums in a general way. This part ends with a presentation of current tendencies and trends as regards museums. The chapter has a strong cognitive component, contains a lot of up-to-date information and examples from Poland and other countries, but at the same time it is too multifaceted and chaotic. Some themes are loosely interconnected by the use of the term 'offer' (e.g. a classification of museums according to the way in which they are funded which was discussed in the previous chapter), other issues are missing (e.g. concerning museum activity, there is no mention of organized lessons, workshops or events). Moreover, the contents of the chapter concern mainly the current situation; references to 'yesterday' are seriously limited and there is no reference to what happened in between 'yesterday' and 'today'.

The last chapter of the first part (Chapter 4) is dedicated to Kraków museums as a tourism attraction. After a short theoretical introduction, the authors include tables presenting museums according to types of collection; this is followed very briefly by a description of the divisions of the National Museum in Kraków and Wawel Royal Castle. The final subchapter presents tourism in Kraków with respect to motivations for visiting the city (c. 40% pointed to sight-seeing). Considering the content and the source of data (survey analysis), it seems that the latter issue should not have been included in the chapter presenting a general discussion (it should rather open the part devoted to research). Unfortunately, the existing layout did not allow for a comprehensive description of the potential of Kraków museums, which was one of the objectives. The presented content does not show, for instance, the common advantage of Kraków museums relative to the special character of individual establishments. There is no reference to other Polish cities, either. As a result, it

has not been confirmed that Kraków is an exceptional city as regards museums.

Closing this review of the first part of the book, it should be mentioned that it was based on a wide range of literature and other source materials which can be seen in numerous references and an impressive bibliography placed at the end of the book. The text is a compilation of knowledge from various disciplines which certainly makes it noteworthy.

The second part has a different character. It should be treated as a detailed case study based on a diagnostic survey in 2014 of 605 respondents visiting the city and branches of the National Museum in Kraków. Research methodology is presented in a separate chapter (Chapter 5), where apart from the aim, object and scope of the study, the authors present the respondents with respect to its demographic and social features (having taken care of proportionality and the representative character of the sample). It was the basis for defining the respondents' profile. They were asked questions concerning their stay in Kraków, their opinions about the museum offer of the city and some personal details. It is regrettable that a model of the questionnaire has not been attached which would tell the reader more about the way the questions were formulated or about the range of possible responses. Considering the results that were obtained, one might wonder why some respondents were under 18 and what percentage of those visiting the city in organized groups was. Unfortunately, the description of the research methodology does not provide any information.

The research results are presented in the next two chapters (Chapters 6 and 7): 'consumer behaviour' (e.g. the factors attracting people to Kraków, the length and frequency of stays, trip companions) and the 'recognizability' and attractiveness of the National Museum in Kraków' (e.g. knowledge about the museums, sources of information, and the strengths and weaknesses of the museums). In both cases, the structure and layout of the content are similar, dominated by graphic elements - tables and figures - illustrating the results and the relation between the responses and

- demographic and social features ( $\chi^2$  tests defining significance levels). Limiting the commentary which explains the results has a slightly negative effect. Consequently, the content sometimes seems overwhelming, and the reader concentrates mainly on figures and percentages. A much better and more interesting part is Chapter 7, where an explanation of the results through the literature or

- regularities was attempted. Moreover, the authors presented a slightly broader background, referring to other museums in Kraków, though they did not make any comments on where the strengths and weaknesses

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of National Museum branches lay. The main criticism concerns the editing side. The small range of colour and the poor quality of figures give them an unattractive look.

Evaluating the publication as a whole, we should appreciate both its theoretical and practical dimension. The authors manage to draw the readers' attention to many aspects of museum tourism as well as show who its participants are, what expectations they have, and how they behave. It seems that the research conducted in Kraków (the city with the oldest National Museum in Poland) should encourage other academic centres to make an attempt to verify and develop this

discussion with regard to other National Museums in Poland. However, when planning such a work, it is necessary to precisely set out the range of the content of individual parts (so that the content is not repetitive but complementary) and take care of its composition, so that it does not give an impression of a collection of articles on the same topic, but a homogenous and well-thought out whole.

Regardless of the various critical remarks presented above, the book is worth recommending both as a basis for discussion on cultural and museum tourism and as source material.

**Beata Krakowiak**

University of Łódź

Institute of Urban Geography and Tourism Studies

*Translated by Ewa Mossakowska*

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