

## KRAKOW, A METROPOLIS OF TOURISM AND SPIRITUALISM

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**Abstract.** The architecture and art of Krakow has clear traces of the influence of Rome, Byzantium, as well as the theological thought of the Greeks, Greek Catholics, Orthodox Christians, Protestants and adherents of Judaism. Currently, the two main monotheistic traditions of the East and the West remain connected in the works of Nowosielski, as well as in the form of one of the newest and largest churches. It is similar in Lviv, which remains an important part of the myth of Galicia. The myth itself remains a nostalgic memory of the past in the everyday life of Krakow, adding to its already substantial attractiveness to tourists. The third metropolis, Vienna, was once the place that used to establish the standards that the other two tried to emulate. Lviv will, quite soon, just like Vienna and Krakow, become an important hub of mass tourism, which is why the adaptation of its city center to the mass movement of tourists needs to be done carefully, so that its picturesque and unique nature will not be lost.

**Key words:** metropolitan Krakow, the myth of Galicia, spirit, tourism.

Motto:

*Everything which I have accomplished in painting afterwards was, even though it might have been seen as a sort of departure, influenced by that first contact with the icons at the Lviv museum.*

*J. Nowosielski  
(Czerni, 2011)*

### 1. Introduction

When we say that Krakow is a metropolis, a lot of people say that this statement is not true, reminding us of the definition of a metropolis, which states that it is a city which has over 1 million inhabitants. Currently (in 2015), the population of Krakow within its city limits does not exceed that number. This is why it does not meet this requirement in the strictly arithmetical sense. Another group of people think that if a city plays an important and unique part that has an influence that far exceeds that of its immediate region, then that city should be called a metropolis. Furthermore, if the city is attractive, then it should be called a metropolis. In the case of Krakow, its attractiveness can be confirmed by looking at the sheer number of tourists who visit it every year, which has exceeded 10 million [1], surpassing such well known cities like Venice or Barcelona. Furthermore, the citizens of the city are not protesting against this, as those of Barcelona do. When we take into account the fact that the city has a substantial amount of historical monuments, in addition to possessing that one unique trait that puts it right in the league of metropolises like Rome, Constantinople or Jerusalem – it is that certain spiritual quality which makes it a goal of religious pilgrimage. Krakow is becoming a city of prayer. The planned World Youth Day of 2016 is to be held in the city from which the Saint John Paul II traveled to Rome, and who is still present in the minds of not only the Catholics of the two denominations – the eastern and the western, but also among people who are indifferent to religion. The tradition of Krakow is filled with elements of Byzantium (the chapel of the Holy Cross at the Wawel Cathedral) and Rome (the “Il Gesu” of Krakow – the Church of St. Peter and St. Paul), as well as elements that combine both traditions in the form of the modern works of Nowosielski [2], in addition to the presence of Judaism (Kazimierz) and even Islam, although the latter is expressed not in the manner of temples, but rather a historical house [3] (Długa street). This constant broad stream of theological thought and the coexistence of the traditions of the East – the Greek, Greek Catholic [3], Russian Orthodox [5],



**Fig. 1.** The interior of the Remuh synagogue, Kazimierz in Krakow

with the West – the Evangelical [6] and especially Roman Catholic, the most visible and the most actively present in the current spiritual tradition of the city [7]. Some of the newest projects among the temples of Krakow, like the one being part of the Saint John Paul II Center, have an architectural form and interior design that is reminiscent of the eastern traditions [8]. Krakow is also an important academic city, with the second highest number of university students in the country [9], which makes it appear as an attractive city not only because of the opportunities it provides in terms of education, but as a potential job market for the alumni of the country's universities.



**Fig. 2.** The interior of the basilica of St. John Paul II in Łagiewniki

## 2. What we are left with from those olden years – the myth of Galicia and the yearning for the landscapes of Lviv

Krakow is becoming a true hot spot of international tourism. In 2014, the city was visited by 2 650 000 foreign tourists, with many of them coming from Ukraine. Krakow also came in first place in the ranking of preferred travel destinations of the Zoover [10] website. The statistical data for the year 2015 is not available yet. The city is still far more attractive to domestic tourists, the number of which rose to 4 600 000 in 2014 – nearly twice as much as the number of foreigners. Taking into account the many different factors which make the city attractive to the various social groups, the issue of nostalgia is one of the most important – it is tied to the rich and intriguing local history of the city. One of the strands of this history is without a doubt the myth of Galicia [11], in particular the once-strong ties the city had with the other two important cities of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy: Vienna and Lviv. When compared to these cities, Krakow was a rather small city during the period of its inclusion in the Austrian Empire. Nevertheless, the dynamic cultural and intellectual exchange that took place at that time, in addition to the newly developing economic ties have caused the local populace to become aware of their higher needs – that of possessing the proper education, and attending spectacles at operas and theatres in Vienna and Lviv. The alumni of the universities of the three cities also chimed into the cooperation, aiding in the continuation of contact. The myth of Galicia is currently an interesting cultural phenomenon [12], which has led to a rise in interest in the history of not only the aforementioned three great cities, but acting as a catalyst for maintaining cooperation and tourism among the smaller towns of Ukraine, Austria and Poland. The field of the arts is especially active in this regard: the graphic arts, theatre and literature are full of examples of the fascination with phenomena that are taking place, with artistic styles and works of art that were once forgotten, but are now the prized possessions of many a gallery or museum. The most well known artists here include the avant-garde painters like Jerzy Nowosielski or Tadeusz Kantor, whose paintings and plays have become inscribed into the cultural landscape of Krakow and many other cities around the world, in a manner similar to that of the other members of the “Krakow Group”. The mutual permeating between the cultures of the east and the west has resulted in the creation of works which bridge the gaps between divided groups – something which will probably be appreciated by the wider audience only after some time has passed. For the time being it fascinates a small group of scholars, arts critics and those with a passion for such things. The artistic and theological thought contained within the paintings of Nowosielski, the theatric and sculptural

forms of Kantor – a publically exhibited in both catholic and orthodox churches, museums and private collections in every city of Galicia, allowing those who are interested the ability to combine their reading of the many published works on the subject with personal and direct contact with the artworks themselves. Cities, as Zipser writes [13], can be divided into the picturesque and those worthy of painting, while he himself, being born in Lviv, embodies a symbol of a creative flow of ideas between architecture, literature [14], ideas and landscapes – both those that he knew from his childhood and those that he got to know later, under different conditions and different skies. The myth of Galicia makes itself evident in the everyday life of Krakow – as a nostalgic remembrance of the olden times by the older generations, while to the younger – in the form of a tourist attraction worth seeing, with numerous references in the names of restaurants (for instance: the Imperial Royal Brewery), or the portraits of Franz Joseph hanging on the walls. In high culture, the motifs that can be identified as truly belonging to Galicia can be found in the plays of Kantor, works of both art and literature. In terms of urban planning, many of the buildings that were erected during the Austrian occupation survive to this day, typically adapted for educational purposes (the buildings of the Krakow University of Technology were formerly the barracks of Arch-prince Rudolph, built in the years 1871-7). The system of fortifications that was built around the Krakow fortress became one of the most interesting landscape complexes. Sadly, not all of the forts have survived in excellent condition. Nevertheless, the transportation infrastructure from the era became the framework for that of the entire modern city, forming the backbone of modern housing developments. This is why when we ask the inhabitants of the metropolis about where they would prefer to live, they often point to the areas of the city with nearby parks, open spaces and easy access to services, particularly regarding education and culture. Such preferences are typical of the inhabitants of metropolitan cities, where the need to consume is regulated only by what's in stock at the supermarket.

### 3. The Sounds and Tastes of Vienna: Musikverein, Sachertorte, Beisl [15]

Vienna, the third metropolis, which once set the standards for the other two: Lviv and Krakow, perhaps still does so today. The ability to travel in a fast and comfortable manner by rail from these two cities to that which was once their capital is now a thing of the past, however road and air transport have improved substantially. Some older citizens of Krakow still reminisce of the times when one used to travel to Vienna in order to experience the “sacrum” of the Musikverein, the sweetness offered at Sacher’s, in addition to the “profanum” of the Prater, along with a visit to one of the Beisl or to one of the coffee shops. In terms of administration and planning, Vienna was the place of origin for practices which turned out to be quite effective in a wide number of scenarios, especially in terms of spatial planning. The cadastral map is still in wide use, while modern urban planning practice still references the experience obtained during the development of the master plan of Vienna. The housing policy of the city, which has for long been one of the most successful in the world, can easily serve as a great example to other municipal authorities. The effective Viennese policies in terms of keeping the historical substance of the city center in good technical condition through continuous maintenance can be viewed as a sort of stretched out revitalization, without the need to resort to sudden bursts of wide and sweeping one-off projects, which often lead to irreversible changes to the social structure – replacing the old one with a new, yet artificial structure, mostly in the form of transforming an area from a residential complex into an office park, without the qualities that allow it to be used by the local community. In terms of modern architecture, many of its buildings remain in the memory of persons who take an interest in the matter, especially those by Hundertwasser, which can be described as a joyful manifest of an artist who was not an architect, but a painter, and which can be viewed as a certain form of protest directed against the wholly glass and concrete nature of today’s anonymous architecture. Other,



Fig. 3. Krakow. The myth of Galicia

bolder projects include the modern redesigns of public spaces, especially those located in much frequented areas, like the direct vicinity of the Stephansdom (Haas Haus), the cubist form of the new building within the Museums Quartier (Museum Moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig Wien), or those which show us the possible directions of revitalizing post-industrial areas, which have distinguishing stylistic properties, and turning them into residential areas (the Gasometers). In terms of large scale engineering projects, Vienna can proudly boast about the Donaukanal, its network of highway bypasses, or its rail transport network, including the design by Zaha Hadid or the ongoing expansion of the existing Underground.

#### 4. The Center of Krakow – A Cultural Park or A “Cult” Place For Tourists?

In times of the “Iron Curtain”, the ability to travel to cities that were on its eastern side by Westerners was quite difficult, but thanks to the development of cheap airlines, cities like Krakow and Lviv, which are attractive to tourists both in terms of architecture and culture in general, have become much more accessible. This development has resulted in Krakow becoming a place that is easy to get to from the majority of large cities, whilst the hotel and restaurant owners in Prague have raised their prices due to increasing tourist traffic, making Krakow a more affordable destination. Since then, a steady rise in short-stay tourism has been observed in the city. The massive amount of tourist traffic forces the city center to change its functional profile, which seems only natural when looking at it through the prism of the law of supply and demand. This process, however, leads to a reduction in the number of permanent residents in those parts of the city which are frequented most. It is important to rearrange the functional profile of an area in a proper manner, which should be done through a process of evolution, rather than revolution. The complete commercialization of the city center can lead to it becoming a certain “pseudo-Disneyland” for tourists, which is easily “consumable” by those with low expectations, while at the same time perverting the atmosphere and the function of the city center itself in a manner which makes it no longer recognizable by its inhabitants. The center of Krakow is filled with interesting places to see, but it is the inhabitants that create the unique feel which makes or breaks the intellectual quality of a city center. This feel is, of course, imperceptible to a tourist who stays there for only three days to drink some cheap beer. But it makes it possible for persons with a certain amount of refinement to actively participate in cultural events that are accessible in various languages.



**Fig. 4.** The “Disneylandization” of Krakow

The entirety of the available cultural program is, sadly, limited to those tourists who fully understand the Polish language. This is why it is especially important to increase the role played by music and the graphical arts, which can be fully appreciated without the need to understand a foreign language. The content itself is usually universal enough to be understood right away and with the right accessibility and presentation, can be served to tourists instead of the typical cheap beer – like small bites of culture, which could potentially entice some tourists to return again – not as ravenous consumers, but those who seek a bit of culture in their lives. This type of tourism is far more desirable to most cities that have a rich culture and have the means to propagate it. In terms of spatial management, it requires the common effort of the inhabitants in order to transform the dominating residential functional profile into a service-based one. It is imperative to provide the proper conditions for persons who nevertheless wish to live in areas that are frequented by large numbers of tourists, which is not easy to tolerate in day to day situations due to the immense discomfort that this entails. Converting too much space into service areas or offices is not conducive to the long term development of city centers. When a certain threshold in their share of the space of a given area is reached, a process of slow self-destruction automatically initiates itself. The mutual competition between the same types of

services, like hotels, leads to the emergence of generally detrimental factors to other types of businesses. The form of the buildings themselves is also important – the more authentic it is and the higher the quality of the surrounding public spaces – the better. Pseudo-modern architectural styles quickly go out of fashion and instead of attracting – they repel, which is why the areas where the tourists appear the most should not look like supermarkets adorned with advertisements for virtually anything that can be sold! The tourists already have such sights in their own countries and do not want to see them in a place to which they have travelled for a completely different purpose than shopping. Due to the character of the city as a destination of pilgrimages, it is important to differentiate the various types of services by the level of their accessibility. The creation of areas which offer services that are easily accessible and widely popular with the common tourist or pilgrim is needed as much as the providing of exclusive, high-quality services for the affluent. When designing the adaptation of common areas, we should also take into account the needs of disabled persons, which, in light of the aging of the European population, are slowly becoming a more and more important factor. In order to properly harness the attractiveness of a city, it is necessary to provide it with a well functioning transport system that places an emphasis on rail transport which can connect the city with its airport. This system should incorporate and be in tune with pedestrian walkways, which in turn should be completely unhindered by vehicular traffic. This solution greatly increases the safety of walking tourists and the city's inhabitants in the city center. Great care should also be taken when considering bicycle traffic and the entire spectrum of electricity-powered vehicles – they often appear in large numbers in predominantly pedestrian zones and can reach relatively high – and dangerous – speeds.



**Fig. 5.** Lisbon. A ride in one of the old tram cars is perceived as one of the most important tourist attractions



**Fig. 6.** Krakow. The center devoid of permanent inhabitants outside of the working hours of the local businesses

As tourist traffic increases, so do the potential profits of all sorts of businesses that are located in pedestrian zones – on the condition that these businesses have made the necessary preparations. These include matters of both logistics and personnel – the staff needs to be able to communicate in at least one of the popular foreign languages. We can currently make limited forecasts regarding the directions that the transformation of the city of Lviv is going to take, based on our experience with similar cities. It seems that there is still time – time to prepare in order not to make the same mistakes that have been made in Krakow and other Polish cities.

## 5. Plans Regarding The Future of the Krakow Metropolis

The current stage of planning regarding the Krakow metropolis is not yet as impressive as many would want it, nevertheless, we can observe slow and steady progress in that regard. When we examine the matter on the urban scale, we can see that the city is not yet entirely covered with approved zoning plans. The state of affairs for the end of 2015 in regards to this is the following [16]: over half of the city does not have a zoning plan in effect – most of the time there is either no plan at all, or one is currently in development (51), while 48,1 % of the area of the city is covered by enforced zoning plans (136 plans in effect).



Fig. 7. Areas with an approved and implemented zoning plan – December 2015

The historical city center, within its borders as delineated according to its entry on the UNESCO World Heritage Site List, has been turned into the Old Town Cultural Park, an act which established detailed provisions and regulations for the area, ranging from guidelines on shaping the architectural form of newly designed buildings to the quality of public spaces. Another, third edition of the Spatial Development Conditions And Directions Study was approved in July 2014, encompassing the area of the city within its current administrative limits. It needs to be highlighted that the Study is not a zoning plan, it is only a document that is an “official internal directive”, serving the City Council to coordinate its urban planning endeavors. On the regional scale, there is the Spatial Plan of the Małopolskie Voivodship, which has not been changed since 2003, with its provisions being mostly outdated due to the dynamic conversion of the spatial structure of the areas under the direct influence of the metropolis. Work on updating the plan has been ongoing since 2009. The Landscape Act, approved by the central government in 2015, will surely cause some of the provisions of the various zoning plans to be changed, which means further delaying their approval, leaving their respective areas unregulated. Furthermore, the ongoing discussion regarding the meaning and rank of the metropolis, as well as attempts at outlining Metropolitan Functional Areas, will surely influence the views on the matter of their establishment. Attempts at tackling this problem are going to result in new ideas on the regulations governing the spatial development of the most dynamically developing parts of the settlement structure around Krakow, as well as other metropolitan cities. In the near future, especially in light of the coming end of the financial support from the European Union's development funds, we can expect to see shifts in both the economy and the approach to spatial planning. In the event that a profound shift in development goals does not occur, the socio-demographic conditions will affect the speed with which spatial structures change – in terms of quality, quantity and time. In the case of the Krakow metropolis, we can observe a positive development trend in relation to other cities, which causes the need to provide more residential space in the city. In smaller cities, especially those located a considerable distance away from metropolitan complexes, we observe the opposite – the number of inhabitants is steadily declining, which is causing difficulty in the functioning of local authorities and the resultant increase in the costs that municipal authorities must pay for technical and social infrastructure. This is a troubling phenomenon, as the increase of living costs in cities – where there is already considerable difficulty in finding employment and the mean wages are substantially lower – causes the widespread migration of employable persons. The result is that the mean age of the population of smaller towns is quickly rising, causing the detrimental effect of a rising economic pressure which pushes the most industrious individuals to migrate to metropolises or even other countries.

It is evident that policies which aim to increase the economic development of areas that are the farthest from the area influenced by metropolises can lead to nullifying the trend of the degradation of smaller towns. This can be made possible by promoting a pro-regional economic policy, which involves improving transportation and communication infrastructure. This in turn allows jobs to be located away from metropolises, thus causing a more positive economic environment for the residents of smaller towns. The result of this approach can lead to a more harmonious development of larger areas, rather than just the metropolises. They can keep this development sustainable and reduce the growing developmental disproportions, which seem to be inevitable at this stage of the free market economy.

## **6. Conclusion**

It is important to keep those in power conscious of the future shape of the public spaces of the city of Lviv – their adaptation and tailoring to the needs of the expected tourist traffic should be done properly, instead of chaotically, so that the greatest qualities of the city itself can be preserved – its picturesque and unique nature.

The development of the municipal transport system should be preceded by an in-depth study of the role of the tram in a city's landscape – not in the manner in which it can be made the most efficient at the cost of everything else. The example of Lisbon, where the city preserved its historical tram cars, indicates that this can be a deciding factor in establishing a unique and readily identifiable quality which can increase the attractiveness of a city to tourists. Everyone that's been to Lisbon wanted to ride one of its old trams, even though they are reportedly plagued by pickpockets.

Work needs to be initiated on the establishment of a cultural park, with its borders encompassing at least the city center of the city, which has been put on the UNESCO World Heritage Site List in 1998. The area should also be provided with a spatial development plan which can establish proper rules regarding the shaping of public spaces and architectural forms. This should in turn be preceded by the development of spatial studies which can allow for the introduction of planning regulations in regard to the proper management of the historical substance of the city.

The expected dynamic development of the Lviv metropolis in the future, as well as the estimated rise of the importance of its historical city center should be accompanied by a well thought out and properly prepared system of policies regarding the improvement of the quality of its public spaces, the technical and aesthetic condition of its buildings and that of the transport system. In terms of functional changes, the expected flight of permanent residents from the city center should be prevented, as it will bring about a rapid decrease in the share of residential spaces in the area.

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*Богуслав Подгальянський*

## КРАКІВ – МЕТРОПОЛІЯ ТУРИЗМУ ТА САКРАЛЬНОСТІ

***Анотація.** Архітектура та мистецтво Кракова мають чіткі сліди впливу Риму, Візантії, а також теологічного мислення греків, греко-католиків, ортодоксальних християн, протестантів та юдеїв. Сьогодні дві монотейстичні традиції Сходу та Заходу залишаються поєднаними у творчості Новосельського у формі одного з найновіших та найбільших храмів. Подібне можна спостерігати і у Львові, який залишається важливою частиною міфу про Галичину. Сам міф залишається ностальгічною пам'яттю про минуле у повсякденному житті Кракова, роблячи свій внесок у важливу атрактивність міста для туристів. Третя метрополія, Відень, колись була місцем, що встановлювало стандарти, яких два попередні міста намагались дотримуватись. Львів достатньо скоро, як Відень та Краків, стане важливим місцем масового туризму. З цієї причини важливо адаптувати міський центр до масового руху туристів. Це має бути зроблено надзвичайно обережно, аби не втратити дивовижну та унікальну природу цього міста.*

***Ключові слова:** метрополійний Краків, міф Галичини, дух, туризм.*