

Rezension

Eric G. E. Zuelow: *A History of Modern Tourism.*

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Tourism is one of the most important branches of economy worldwide today. According to a report of the UN World Tourism Organization, the tourism industry was worth 1.4 trillion US dollars in 2013. Leisure travel contributes about 9 percent of the GDP worldwide and is responsible for one out of eleven jobs globally. 1087 million tourist arrivals were registered. However, the history of tourism sometimes still is a “wallflower”, as German historian Rüdiger Hachtmann stated in his “Tourismus-Geschichte” from 2008. Eric Zuelow agrees with this opinion by pointing out that his historical synthesis of tourism from Early Modern Times onwards, based on research by historians, sociologists, economists, anthropologists, geographers, and literary scholars would not have been possible even a few years ago, because the relevant literature simply was not developed enough. Still the narrative remains Eurocentric (and North America centric), whereas regions like Asia have received precious little historical treatment.

Zuelow’s book is a concise overview of tourism history during the last 400 years based on the state of the art in research. The author refers to the relatively wide definition of tourism by Rudy Koshar (2000) which describes this phenomenon as “any practice arising from an individual’s voluntary movement between relatively permanent ‘settledness’ and an extended moment of leisured displacement” (p. 9). In this sense, tourism in antiquity and the Middle Ages bears only first traces according to this modern definition, e.g. when Greeks and Romans traveled to historical sites and ruins even or when Christians, Muslims or Buddhists went on a pilgrimage, generating a travels economy of its own. However, as Zuelow states, the primary reason was religion, not consumption or leisure (ibid.). What is missing in his overview is the aspect of leisure-bound spa travel during both antiquity and the Middle Ages.

The chapters of the book are arranged chronologically. Chapter 1 examines the rise of the Grand Tour, having its roots in changing political needs and in

the challenge of educating young aristocrats. During the sixteenth century, European states engaged in new forms of diplomacy and it was necessary to educate young men to meet new demands. At the same time, it was necessary to reinforce the identity of a landed aristocracy relative to the rest of the population.

Chapter 2 explores changing ideas about aesthetics, the sublime and the beautiful. Europeans long viewed oceans and mountains with anxiety and concern, however the development of scientific thought, Dutch efforts to reclaim land from the sea and to prevent flooding, and the work of a new school of landscape painters all helped to spawn new notions of the Earth and unique ideas about how the response to this world impacted health and well-being.

Chapter 3 focuses on the evolution of steam power, taking a specific look at the development of railways and transatlantic steamers. This new technology made travel more affordable, at least on land, and considerably faster. It opened up new destinations to visit and created opportunities for those who would not previously have been able to afford even the shortest of holidays.

Chapter 4 looks at some of the new types of travel made possible by steam locomotion. It describes the origin of package tours, the importance of spas in the development of waterside holidays as well as in connecting health with tourism, and describes the rise of the seaside as a major vacation destination.

Chapter 5 covers the evolution of guidebooks and postcards while also looking at the implications of tourism on landscapes, histories, and the built environment. Technology did not diminish as a major force behind the particular way in which tourism grew and changed.

New transportation technologies and the development of vast global empires made tourism a worldwide affair. Chapter 6 not only illustrates the globalization of tourism but also reflects the reality that leisure was increasingly useful as a means of showing difference. Tourists and tourism developers could use travel as a way of presenting a particular narrative of self to others during an age of both nationalism and global imperialism. It was a development that would have long-term implications on the politics of tourism around the world.

By the dawn of the twentieth century, tourism was a large industry. Chapter 7 looks at the rise of bicycles, automobiles and airplanes, showing how each exerted a major influence on the continued expansion of leisure travel.

Chapter 8 highlights how the three major types of political ideologies that vied for dominance during the twentieth century – communism, fascism, and democracy – endeavored to employ tourism as a path toward success.

Finally, Chapters 9 and 10 discuss developments after World War II. Tourism specifically became a worldwide concern motivated by both political and

economic considerations, as well as becoming a veritable mass enterprise that involved people from all across the developed world and which made almost every corner of the globe a viable destination for escape. Zuelow points out how tourism moved from a geographically limited concern to become almost universal and how leisure travel changed from being the purview of a very few to being the obsession of nearly all.

Zuelow definitely succeeds in showing how people grew to see themselves and their planet differently and the contexts in which that change took place. It is a very readable introduction with a large endnote section (pp. 185–238). However, the large bibliography makes one weakness of this book become evident: The whole overview is based only on literature in English. The absolute lack of publications in German and only one in French in a bibliography of more than 30 pages, must make some results and trends in European travel history remain completely underexposed, such as the Alps as a motor for tourism (only mentioned briefly on p. 40) or travels throughout the world related to scientific interest. Both phenomena became essential for the development of tourism also on a global scale. Nevertheless, Zuelow has written an important book encouraging further study of tourism, both on a global scale as well as more locally.