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THE HISTORY OF ARCHITECTURE AND ART AND HOW IT IS SEEN BY TOURISTS

Abstract: The article presents the relation between the presence of works of art (buildings, sculptures, paintings) at different locations in the world, and tourism. The main theoretical and practical questions include the following: How important is knowledge of the history of art for seeing works of art? What other factors make modern travellers visit places where they can find these works of art?

Key words: tourism, architecture, painting, history of art.

Interest taken in architecture or, generally, art, has been motivating travel since ancient times. In the 2nd c. BC, a Greek poet, Antipater of Sidon, made a list of the works of art which he considered worth seeing. Today, we call them the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World; none were natural. Antipater's list originally included the necropolis in Giza (especially the Great Pyramid, erected as the tomb of the pharaoh Cheops), the Hanging Gardens of Babylon, the Temple of Artemis in Ephesus, the Statue of Zeus at Olympia sculpted by Phidias, the Tomb of King Mausolos in Halicarnassus (the word 'mausoleum' comes from his name), the statue of the sun god in Rhodes (known as the Colossus of Rhodes), as well as the Ishtar Gate in Babylon (later replaced by the Lighthouse of Alexandria on the Island of Pharos at the entrance to the port). After Antipater's death, other sites were added to the list: the statue of Asclepius in Epidauros, and the Colossi of Memnon in Western Thebes. Ancient wanderers and travellers visited these places in order to admire the enormous, unique sculptures by renowned artists who they had heard of before. In this way, buildings and sculptures were either the direct object of travel or were admired 'by the way' during other trips; although at the same time contemporaries were using them in accordance with their original purpose. Antipater's list may be considered as an archetypical ranking of sites to be visited for their artistic quality, while at the same time they may be treated as a kind of reference point when describing modern journeys for travellers guided by similar motivations. The logic behind this comparison is

confirmed by the fact that three sites from Antipater's and his contemporaries' lists – the pyramids in Giza, the Ishtar Gate and the Colossi of Memnon – still exist and are visited by large numbers of tourists.

Travelling in Europe, inspired by a willingness to find about the art of the past, became increasingly common again in the late 16th c. It was popularized by the idea of a grand tour which stimulated tourism particularly strongly among the higher social classes in Europe, especially in the second half of the 18th and throughout the 19th c. (BUZARD 2002, CHANEY 2000, TOWNER 1985). Young people, usually British aristocrats and later also from the most affluent groups of the American bourgeoisie, visited various cities and regions of the 'Old Continent'. The cultural model of that time required experiencing works of art (buildings, paintings, sculptures) personally; it was seen as indispensable to shape one's artistic taste, and enabled a sensitivity to beauty to be developed. The grand tour broadened the minds of those who participated in it, strengthened their interest in ancient culture, and at the same time was the crowning of their classical education. Before setting out on a journey, they studied classical Greek and Latin, read descriptions of the sites which they were going to visit, as well as European literature from various periods. They were thus thoroughly prepared for the journey, and their stay at chosen places on the continent verified what they had imagined on the basis of that reading and systematic learning. On their return home, young aristocrats had notebooks filled with commentaries, sketch books with drawings, diaries, and above all a profound

interest in art with a need to be in touch with it all the time. Researchers estimate the number of grand tour participants in the 19th c. at over 20,000 young and rich men and women. (CHANEY 2000, TOWNER 1985).

Today, grand tour participants would be referred to as cultural tourists, while in those times their background made them the social elite. They may be seen as a model group, as regards preparation for an educational trip whose important element is the context of the history of art. They not only looked at, but also analysed the features of the sites they saw, drew them to record their impressions and personal feelings, which they also scrupulously put down in their diaries. The journey was an empirical verification of the theoretical knowledge which they had been acquiring long before and again after they returned home, and it additionally acquired an artistic dimension. In this model of tourist journeys, the history of art was an integral part of forming the traveller's personality.

The legacy of the grand tour, i.e. journeys during which the traveller's major aim was to experience art, can be also found in contemporary tourist behaviour. Research into motivation and the distribution of destinations and programs, point to art as its main purpose. The human heritage, especially buildings, is one of the most important assets of many locations, mostly cities, where it is a distinctive element of the tourist product.

Contemporary cultural tourism in cities is one of the most dynamic areas of their economic life. It has been flourishing all over the world since the mid-1980s, as a result of constantly growing human mobility, rapid developments in transport (especially air and rail), as well as the fact that travelling, even over long distances, has become much easier (the common availability of cheap airlines and a large number of charter flight connections). The consequence is a growing tourist use of cities which have become a kind of muster station for tourism in a region (location of airports, railway stations). Stays in cities are usually short, they usually last 2-3 days and there is a wide variety of ways in which tourists spend their time. The stay includes both cognitive and educational elements (sight-seeing), as well as shopping and entertainment. The tourist attractiveness of cities lies above all in the concentration of sites to see within a relatively small area, and in the possibility doing various activities which are impossible in every day life due to limited free time (BUCZKOWSKA & MIKOS VON ROHRSCHEIDT, ed. 2009).

Tourist statistics show enormous numbers of tourists all over the world, visiting regions and sites with historical sites, visiting museums and enjoying themselves, especially in theme parks. These are the

strongest attractions for modern tourists. The global economic crisis, that began in 2008 and is slowly being overcome, has not really affected tourism. We are still travelling a lot, more than ever before. In 2010, the World Tourism Organization recorded an increase in the number of tourist arrivals by 6.6% in comparison to previous years. The most visited countries are France, the USA and China (55.7 m visitors), followed by Spain. We may also observe a growth in global tourism indexes: in 2011 - by 4.6% in comparison to the previous year, in 2012 - by 4.3% (www.unwto.org).

By putting together the 52 most visited places in the world we may observe a strong domination of two kinds of sites: theme parks and historical sites (<http://www.travelandleisure.com/articles/worlds-most-visited-tourist-attractions>, October 2011). The latter are situated in cities which confirms what was said earlier (Table 1) while those put on this list come from different historical periods and cultures. They also have different value as regards the world artistic heritage. We may even risk saying that the high status of some sites is surprising. Of those ranking highest - Notre Dame Cathedral or the Forbidden City in Beijing - there are no doubts because of their value and uniqueness, but the choice of the third - Sacré Coeur Basilica in Paris, an eclectic building situated in Montmartre in Romanesque-Byzantine style, built at the turn of the 20th c., is controversial to say the least. Another interesting feature is the presence of four museums exhibiting not only art from different historical periods, but also works of contemporary and modern art.

Table 1. The hierarchy of sites related to the history of art and architecture: the 52 sites most frequently visited by tourists in 2011

Name of site	Location	Number of visitors
13. Notre Dame Cathedral	Paris, France	13,650,000
15. The Forbidden City	Beijing, China	12,830,000
17. Sacré Coeur Basilica	Paris, France	10,500,000
21. Zocalo Square	Mexico City, Mexico	10,000,000
26. Great Wall of China	China	9,000,000
29. Louvre Museum	Paris, France	8,500,000
32. The Opera building	Sydney, Australia	7,400,000
35. Eiffel Tower	Paris, France	6,700,000
36. Lincoln Memorial	Washington, USA	6,042,000
39. Royal Palace	Versailles, France	5,900,000
40. British Museum	London, Great Britain	5,840,000
44. Metropolitan Museum of Art	New York, USA	5,216,000
46. Colosseum	Rome, Italy	5,113,000
49. Tate Modern	London, Great Britain	5,000,000

Source: based on <http://www.travelandleisure.com/articles/worlds-most-visited-tourist-attractions>, October 2011 (23.10.2013).

Table 2. World museum rankings by number of visitors: 2011

	Museum	City	Country	Number of visitors
1	Musée du Louvre	Paris	France	8,880,000
2	Metropolitan Museum of Art	New York	USA	6,004,254
3	British Museum	London	Great Britain	5,848,534
4	National Gallery	London	Great Britain	5,253,216
5	Tate Modern	London	Great Britain	4,802,287
6	National Gallery of Art	Washington	USA	4,392,252
7	National Palace Museum	Taipei	Taiwan	3,849,577
8	Centre Pompidou	Paris	France	3,613,076
9	National Museum of Korea	Seoul	South Korea	3,239,549
10	Musée d'Orsay	Paris	France	3,154,000
11	Museo del Prado	Madrid	Spain	2,911,767
12	State Hermitage Museum	Petersburg	Russia	2,879,686
13	Museum of Modern Art	New York	USA	2,814,746
14	Victoria & Albert Museum	London	Great Britain	2,789,400
15	Museo Reina Sofia	Madrid	Spain	2,705,529

Source: <http://www.theartnewspaper.com/attfig/attfig11.pdf>, *The Art Newspaper*, No. 234, April 2012.

The significant role of architecture and art collections in the spatial distribution of contemporary tourism is presented in Table 2.

The data concerning tourism presented in Tables 1 and 2, clearly shows how important getting acquainted with works of art is in contemporary cultural tourism. At this point, we should stop and think why tourists visit museums and art collections. Is this an element of the educational canon, like in the times of the grand tour, or rather a need to find out about human heritage? It is certainly not easy to answer these questions. Mass cultural tourism is positive and a natural outcome of development, globalization in particular. Having the opportunity to travel easily, people want to visit many places which they have heard or read about. On the face of it, this is largely similar to the tradition of travelling in grand tour style. However, if we look closely at the model and conditions of contemporary travel, we will notice substantial differences between the two (KACZMAREK, STASIAK & WŁODARCZYK 2010).

For many contemporary tourists, the real motivation to visit a city is not their particular interest in Antiquity, the Middle Ages or the Renaissance, or the architecture, painting and sculpture of those historical periods. People travel where works of art are found *in situ*, or where they are exhibited, because they know that others do so. Globalization popularizes a model of cultural behaviour which is directly reflected in spatial behaviour, i.e. in the tourist use of space. The mass character of tourism, resulting from easy access to many locations within a short time, encourages superficial cognition (DE BOTTON 2010, TABUCCHI 2012). Stays are usually short, the sites are chosen because seeing them is an element of some 'model' which has to be 'ticked off' a list in a given country or region, as

well as in order to simply spend a part of one's free time in a pleasant way. Contrary to the grand tour tradition, for a large majority of contemporary tourists this model is not an effect of doing thorough research before going on a journey. Today, the directions of travel, and especially the sites visited at individual destinations by mass tourists, are suggested by printed or online guides.

The majority of mass tourists look at a work of art without deeper reflection; they do not think of the message the artist tried to convey; they do not reflect on its status or value in the context of the times in which it was created. Knowledge of artistic detail is superficial; very often only the name of the work itself is known, and not the name of the artist. Remembering the visited sites means above all documenting one's own presence there ('me in front of a painting, sculpture or building...'). The picture is placed almost immediately on the internet where it functions timelessly, accessible to all who have already seen the work and to those who are going to see it in the future. We deal here with a particular form of consumption in the approach to the history of art as an important tourist asset all over the world. As a mass phenomenon, consumption makes a product available to everybody, thus building a superficial, simplified cultural model of global artistic heritage. Naturally, it would be an overstatement to say that all travellers perceive the works of art they see in the same way, as individual perception always depends on the personal qualities of the observer. However, the conditions in which this perception takes place are extremely important. Crowds at a given location (especially if this is a museum) have a significant influence on the interaction between the tourist and the work of art, large numbers of people, noise, commotion and sounds

disturb the concentration and individual reflection which might accompany the contemplation of a work of art.

The question arises whether we still have a chance to experience artistic heritage in an individualized way. Are we not witnesses to a constantly growing conflict between art heritage preservation and the increasingly common desire to see it? Do we not face a problem which cannot be satisfactorily solved – how to limit access to art in a free society? Are such limitations justifiable? Can we divide people into those who are ‘worthy’ of contact and those who are motivated only by the will to ‘tick’ one more site off the ‘must see’ list? What criteria should be adopted and what mechanisms should be applied to introduce them in practice? These slightly provocative questions show the many aspects of the history of art in the context of modern tourism. In the grand tour period, tourists were divided according to their social status, directly reflected in their incomes and education. Social stratification was a distinctive feature of the 19th c. British and American societies, where the participants of the grand tour mainly came from. Nowadays, though social stratification still exists all over the world, the chance to travel is much greater; travelling is popular because it has become cheaper and more ‘democratic’. Global mass tourism should not be viewed as a negative phenomenon only because it involves a large number of tourists, as it is not synonymous to low social status.

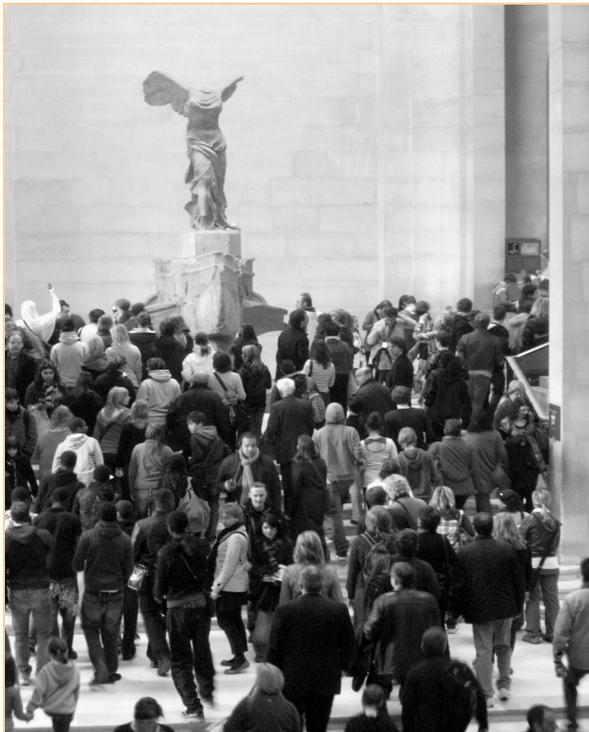


Photo 1. Nike of Samothrace at the Louvre, in May 2012 (author's photo)

Art is a permanent element of human cognition and at the same time a permanent component of a tourist product. It is of lasting importance, as it records human knowledge, feelings, desires and relations among people. In human history, forms of art have been changing, alongside the reasons why people want to have contact with artists and their work. Initially, it was a local phenomenon, occurring in the same community where it was created. Then, it widened, as experiencing art involved travel which enabled people to see the works of art created in other places (Antiquity, Middle Ages, Modern Times). Currently, we may speak of the global influence of art because contemporary mobility allows them to get to know any culture whose art products are accessible all over the world. As a result of these changes we may differentiate between the ways in which art has been interpreted and understood, and identify different categories of tourists, depending on the way they experience art and on their knowledge of its history (Table 3). Tourists show certain types of cognitive behaviour and corresponding forms of travel.

Table 3. Categories of tourists according to the relation between how they experience art and their knowledge of the history of art

x	WORD, THOUGHT	PHOTOGRAPH
EXCLUSIVE	discoverers	connoisseurs
MASS	learners	‘box-tickers’

Source: author.

Travel is divided into exclusive tourism, accessible only to some, and mass tourism – common, popular, accessible to nearly everyone. On the other hand, in terms of cognition, two types of behaviour are identified: ‘word, thought’ – experiencing things on the basis of knowledge gained earlier requiring preparation, and in direct contact with the work of art evoking reflection, and searching for explanations. The ‘photograph’ approach is more spontaneous and comes down to experiencing the work of art through its physical proximity. The spectator (tourist) concentrates on documenting his/her presence at a given site. A photograph is a ‘touch’, a direct contact, and joy in itself. Impressions and reflections appear only after the journey and are experienced, in a way, retrospectively. The former approach is more analytical, reason-based, while the latter – more emotional and spontaneous. They are both valuable, because any encounter with art ennobles us. The adopted criteria have allowed the author to identify four categories of tourists.

The category of 'discoverers' refers to exclusive tourists who precede direct contact with a work of art by methodical preparation; they study the history of art, and the journey itself is an empirical verification of their theoretical knowledge. The feelings stirred by direct contact with the work are based on an analysis using the knowledge the tourist has gained. 'Discoverers' find new things and experiences, compare them to what they have read about in literary works, and sort out their impressions according to the 'I see – I analyse – I synthesize' pattern. This category includes both the grand tour travellers of the past, and today's well-educated tourists who meticulously prepare their journeys. It may be stated that to a certain extent they make a fresh evaluation of works of art, through their knowledge and emotions.

Mass tourists included in the category of 'learners' are travellers who, despite not being so thoroughly prepared theoretically as 'discoverers', are also motivated by the will to verify popular knowledge about art which they usually possess after reading various guidebooks. The 'learners' are interested in works of art as an attractive, new element in their learning about the world. Direct contact awakens their desire to obtain more detailed information about the sites they see, and this encourages them to explore available sources further.

The third of the categories consists of mass tourists for whom looking at works of art means fitting into a current global cultural model. They can be called 'box-ticking' tourists because they travel to many places, look at all the buildings, sculptures and paintings which 'must be seen' there, as others (neighbours, friends, colleagues, family) have already seen them. They immortalize their 'encounter with a work of art' by using the camera as a tool recording their presence, and their direct, nearly physical contact. The 'box-ticking' tourists are global consumers of a universal product of art.

The last category includes tourists defined as 'connoisseurs'. They are exclusive tourists whose journeys

are motivated by contact with art based on careful observation or even contemplation *in situ* of selected works of art and buildings. Visits are carefully planned, the places thoughtfully selected, and the reasons for choices are highly individualized. The sites chosen as the purpose of travel are of special importance to this group of tourists. The aim of the visit is not only to look at a work or verify knowledge of it. It is rather contemplation of art, perceiving it through one's own experiences and the reflections evoked in the observer.

The proposed categories of tourists, in the context of their knowledge of the history of architecture and art, are not mutually exclusive. Each of us is sometimes a discoverer, sometimes a learner or connoisseur, or a 'tick-box' tourist. Every contact with art ennobles people, evokes emotions, and is thought-provoking. As a creation of the human mind, art has a strong influence on emotions and feelings; it leaves a trace on the human psyche and personality, even though it is not realized.

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