

Eric G.E. Zuelow, *A History of Modern Tourism*. (London: Palgrave, 2015). 304 p. ISBN 978-0-23036964-1.

The tourism industry is booming, but how did one of the largest industries of the world take shape? More than just economically important, leisure travel plays a vital role in defining who we are. Tourism as we know it was shaped by modernity and helped to create the modern world. This is the main argument in *A History of Modern Tourism*, written by Eric Zuelow, associate professor of European History at the University of New England, USA. *A History of Modern Tourism* is not only the first handbook on tourism history; it also outlines the importance of tourism for historical research. Zuelow, editor and writer of several works on tourism history and editor-in-chief of *Journal of Tourism History*, describes more than two hundred years of tourism history. With an emphasis on the interplay of leisure travel with political, economical, social and cultural factors, the author successfully shows the importance of researching the history of tourism and leisure travel.

How much modern tourism is intertwined with multiple developments of the modern age, for example the invention of steam power and the creation of aircraft, is shown through a historical journey of leisure travel from the eighteenth century to the present day. In ten chapters Zuelow describes how modern tourism was born and became a central component of the modern world. Beginning as an expression of wealth during the Grand Tour, travel evolved in the second

half of the eighteenth century under the influence of Romanticism into a longing for escape, according to Zuelow still one of the key elements of travel today. This development in combination with a new approach to consumption would eventually lead to the consumer revolution in which travel became the ultimate goal: travel was and still is about consuming.

New technology was an important factor in the creation of modern travel but changing notions of the individual were influential as well. Leisure travel brought forward ideas about collective identity, common cultural characteristics and distinctions relative to other groups. For example, the post-war consumer culture stimulated by the post-war economic boom made travel from the 1960s a way to express individuality and to reflect self-defined difference. Tourists search authentic experiences, often through an escape to a past that was invented or imagined. At the same time travel became a way to stimulate community building, through a sense of shared past and nostalgia. In one-way or another, tourism and travel became more and more a way to express yourself and to determine who you think you are. However, by describing the long-term history of tourism, Zuelow shows that the idea of the vacation as necessary for self-development was already well established during the interwar years and even before. Tourism in the age of empires and interaction with 'the other' forced the European traveller to seek self-understanding. Another example is the interaction of tourists with their guidebooks in the nineteenth century, which demonstrated the paradox between the search for specific places in travel and the social prestige gained from seeing something different and the demonstration of individualism.

The main purpose of the author is to give an overview of tourism history and to summarize earlier research on this subject. In *A History of Modern Tourism* the historical development of tourism is shown through mostly secondary sources. However, the rich body of secondary sources Zuelow used for his work is too Eurocentric, with a strong focus on Great Britain. As a consequence some parts of *A History of Modern Tourism* are more a history of British modern tourism, with no or randomly chosen anecdotes about other (mostly Western European) countries, especially in the first four chapters. Although the Grand Tour, package trips and trips to the seaside might have been unique British phenomena in the beginning, a description of these developments in other countries and from other perspectives is lacking. To his credit, Zuelow does admit the Eurocentric focus in the introduction of his work, but the missing research still makes his argumentation and rectilinear description of the development of tourism sometimes too one-sided. In a positive way, this can also be seen as an opportunity and encouragement for historians to develop research with another focus than Britain or (Western-) Europe, for example the development of tourism in the Soviet Union in the context of (communist) modernity or Zuelow's own suggestion of researching the connection between tourism and empire.

Another problem of the research on which Zuelow based *A History of Modern Tourism* is the strong nationalistic focus of former research within tourism history. Nevertheless, Zuelow manages to successfully combine the intersection of local and global events, for example the invention of automobiles and its influence on mass tourism and the individualization of travel. This development created a demand for better and more roadways in America and Europe, but also led to the global identification of France with great cooking through the Michelin books, as well as a pig-shaped BBQ restaurant as roadside attraction somewhere in the United States. Zuelow, aware of the nationalistic focus of his sources, also makes a strong case for a transnational approach in tourism history, to see new connections and complexities that might otherwise be missed. This is especially the case in the linkage between politics and tourism that Zuelow underscores throughout his work, for example the desire of the United States to distinguish themselves explicitly from Europe by creating a distinctly American tourism during the nineteenth century. In the chapter on the interwar years Zuelow describes the further politicization of leisure in the twentieth century, when travel was thought beneficial for the health of the population, was used to teach citizens about the nation and formed a showcase for modernity. The use of tourism as a political tool would remain during the postwar years and in the following chapter Zuelow also points out suggestions for further, transnational research, for example the relationship between travel, international politics and the United Nations.

Vividly written and illustrated with many anecdotes *A History of Modern Tourism* is a useful handbook for undergraduate courses on the history of modern tourism. But the work can also be recommended to a non-academic public with an interest in history and tourism. For specialists in the field of tourism history, a more theoretical approach and overview of the latest debates about – for example – heritage studies would have been of added value. Zuelow adopts the theories of the famous sociologist John Urry from the 1990s, referring to the tourist gaze, but the author never explicitly explains the theoretical framework of tourism studies. Theories about the interaction between tourism and heritage are absent as well, for example the heritage debates that started in the 1980s and the foundation of critical heritage studies, an association whose founding manifesto about heritage and heritage studies corresponds well with Zuelow's plea for a more global and non-Western approach of tourism studies.

Unavoidable when writing a handbook is the simplification of some historical developments, but more disturbing are some small flaws throughout the book, for example in the last chapter about mass tourism when the author refers to the rock opera *Tommy* to show criticism on the British holiday camps that flourished during the end of the 1960s. The Who did not release their rockopera *Tommy* in 1975 as is stated, but in 1969. Not an actual mistake, but a regrettable ending of

a wonderful book is the conclusion of *A History of Modern Tourism*. By suddenly writing about terrorism and plane crashes, Zuelow tries to show the risks of contemporary travelling, questioning how the context of today could influence the tourism industry of tomorrow. However, car-accidents are still far more common than flight-accidents. And if it is necessary to mention twentieth-first century developments in tourism, why not mention the influence of Airbnb, stunt flights or vlogs? The conclusion would have been better if Zuelow had stuck to emphasizing and summarizing the main argument of his book: how tourism was shaped through specific historical contexts and was influenced by multiple factors, such as world politics and technology.

Notwithstanding some imperfections and missed opportunities, *A History of Modern Tourism* successfully provides a clear overview of tourism history, an overview that did not exist before. By showing how broad tourism history actually is, Zuelow demonstrates that tourism history is a suitable subject for future inter- and multidisciplinary research. Tourism can also be researched in the field of heritage, memory, postcolonial, and urban studies and from a social, cultural or economical perspective. The relationships between Empire and tourism or the creation of a European identity through tourism are examples of this. With great enthusiasm, vivacious anecdotes and valuable suggestions for further (transnational and global) research Zuelow encourages the reader to dive deeper into the history of tourism. This makes *A History of Modern Tourism* an essential publication for putting the history of modern tourism back on the research agenda for historians.

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