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# Religious Tourism vs. Sacred Space Experience: Conflict or complementary interaction?

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Contemporary religious tourism, which in many cases is incorrectly identified with the phenomenon of pilgrimage, has developed in recent years as a separate form of migration and activity in the tourism space. However, in the literature of the subject, there is a large variety of problem perspectives, depending on the viewpoint chosen by the given author and the scientific discipline that he/she represents. The most frequently occurring problem is the terminological ambiguity regarding the concepts of 'religious tourism' and 'pilgrimage'. The aim of this article is to draw attention to the diversity of understanding of the sacred space presented by its users, as well as the relations between non-religious aspects (*profanum*) of a sacred place and the essence thereof – the *sacrum*. The authors have attempted to answer the questions of whether the contemporary experience of sacred spaces affects (and how) the experience of the *sacrum* and whether or not the elements of *profanum* stand in opposition to the perception of sanctity of the pilgrimage site; as well as to attempt forming an analytical look at the importance of the terms in question in light of the contemporary research on traveling to sacred sites, and to draw attention to the manner of perceiving such a site through the form of migration and stay in the given place.

**Key Words:** religious tourism, pilgrimage, sacral space, interpretation

## **Introduction, objective and methodology**

Religious tourism or the act of pilgriming? Travels to places of worship or known pilgrimage centres have been undertaken since time immemorial. The phenomenon of pilgriming is considered to be the oldest form of migration for non-economic purposes, and its shape, development and changes in functioning in the space for years have been the subject of investigation for researchers from all over the world, including Olsen, Timothy, Jackowski, Soljan, Barbato, Bremer, Cohen, Griffin, Różycki, Duda, Trono. (after: Olsen *et al.*, 2018). Contemporary religious tourism, which in many cases is incorrectly identified with the phenomenon of pilgrimage, has developed in recent years as a separate form of migration and activity in the tourism space. However, in the literature of the subject, there is a large variety of problem perspectives, depending on the viewpoint chosen by the given author and the scientific discipline that he/she represents. The most frequently occurring problem is the terminological ambiguity regarding the concepts of 'religious tourism' and 'pilgrimage'. Many authors reflect on the range of meanings and the mutual interactions of these terms: (inter alia: Robinson, 2002;

Jackowski, 2010; Wilkońska, 2010; Różycki, 2016; Puścaśu, 2015; Olsen & Timothy, 2006; Roszak, 2015; Mróz 2017).

The aim of this article is to draw attention to the diversity of understanding of sacred space presented by its users, as well as the relations between non-religious aspects (*profanum*) of a sacred place and the essence thereof – the *sacrum*. The authors have attempted to answer the questions of whether the contemporary experience of sacred spaces affects (and how) the experience of the *sacrum* and whether the elements of *profanum* stand in opposition to the perception of sanctity of the pilgrimage site? In addition, the authors undertook an analysis of the perception of sacred space in the context of tourism and the interpretation of the pilgrimage site. The intention of the authors is to attempt an analytical look at the importance of the terms in question in light of the contemporary research on traveling to sacred sites and to draw attention to the manner of perceiving such a site through the form of migration and stay in the given place.

In order to achieve the proposed research, the authors applied the method of social analysis (questionnaire surveys among users of the religious tourism space) combined with a review of literature and a critical approach to it. The theses on the increasingly common convergence of motivations for religious travels stated in the study have been confirmed by the analysis of new trends in tourism (including tourism of a religious nature), which indicate the need to experience the place, get in contact with elements of heritage, the sense of authenticity, education and multi-sensory experience. In this context, conceptually, modern religious tourism is increasingly closing the gaps between the phenomena of pilgrimage and spiritual experiences. As Różycki described it (2016: 8) more and more often, pilgrimage becomes a tourist trip, while tourism becomes a pilgrimage. Although such a statement may seem somewhat exaggerated, in the contemporary space of religious and cultural tourism, a clear penetration of these attitudes can be clearly observed.

## **On the concept of the sacralisation of space**

### *Tourist space as an element of landscape*

The concepts of space and landscape are among the most exploited elements describing the broadly understood activity of tourism. At the same time, these concepts are characterised by multidimensionality and multithreading, thus make it difficult to unequivocally determine their perception and to identify suitable research methods. This challenge is influenced by the, inter alia, exceptional diversity of the scientific disciplines that treat landscape as a research object. Landscape is the subject of disciplines such as: geography, history, ecology, economics, psychology, sociology as well as theology and philosophy (after: Kulczyk, 2013:9-11). In studies on tourism (including cultural and religious ones), the concept of landscape (along with three others – space, environment and site) occurs as one of the most important elements characterising the functionality of the tourism space (inter alia: Kowalczyk & Kulczyk, 2008; Kulczyk, 2013:14; Włodarczyk, 2014:25-35, Duda, 2014:35-49).

As noted by, the likes of Liszewski (2007) or Włodarczyk (2009; 2014), the analysis of tourism space, understood as a part of geographical space in which the tourism phenomenon occurs, should be conducted from a multi-aspect dimension, using different conceptual and cognitive categories. These categories cover various spheres of human functioning, including the geosphere (values and attractions of the

space perceived in the context of the natural environment), the techno-sphere (including tourist development and accessible transportation), socio-sphere (interpersonal relations, relational approach to landscape and space) and noosphere (covering the sphere of thoughts and actions of the human intellect, the metaphorical approach to space as well as religious and spiritual needs) (Włodarczyk, 2014:26). In the context of our considerations relating to religious tourism and sacred space, it is this last criterion that seems to have a special meaning in the perception thereof and in the determination of the boundary between *sacrum* and *profanum*.

One of the most important features distinguishing tourism space from other types of space is a human being and their active role in shaping the landscape. As far as we are able to imagine a geographical space without the anthropogenic impact on the environment, tourist space without human participation cannot be delimited. The range of tourism space, as well as its boundaries, depends on the interaction between a human being (a tourist, a pilgrim) and the site being visited, or - more broadly - the cultural landscape. The forms of tourist (or recreational) activity and human behaviour in the space, additionally allow for its division, classification and typology.

### *Sacred and religious space in the context of the cultural landscape construal*

As noted by Łysiak (2010:14), the basic features of any space are its measurability, perceivability and value. For each community, space has a cultural aspect and forms an important element of it. In addition, it has a symbolic and cultural dimension and emotional characteristics. There is no doubt, however, that the perception of space and the nature of communication between its elements and users (tourists) determines the functions of the cultural landscape, at the same time affecting its significance for the tourist. Diversity, degree of education and functions in the so-called 'cultural code' of the natural and anthropogenic environment elements additionally affect the nature of the landscape, giving it an individual, often spiritual, dimension. In the context of landscape perception, an extremely significant factor determining its perception in the sacred categories is the presence of visual markers referring to the religious character of space – sacral buildings (churches, monasteries, chapels or others), symbolic spaces, places of worship (sacred mountains, wells, springs or places related to important events of religious nature, revelations) etc..

Sacred space often referred to as 'holy space', is defined as the result of the individualisation of landscape perception and its nature, the religious and historical, social, geographical and cultural (see Łysiak, 2010:14-22; Duda, 2016:119-136). However, this notion should only refer to a specific, precisely defined fragment of the real space in which tourism and religious migration phenomena occur (travel motivated not only by spiritual aspects but also by the cognitive or cultural ones). Should therefore the sacred space be identified with the religious one? According to the authors, not always, and only in a certain functionally, semantically and perceptually limited scope, as demonstrated below.

Religious tourism, as well as, to a certain extent, pilgrimage, takes place in a specific and defined geographical space, which is part of the broadly comprehended cultural landscape. The scope of influence and the shape thereof are of dynamic nature and are the result of changes in the motivation, behaviour and needs of the tourist. As noted by Duda (2016:123-124) sacred space (in the context of religious tourism) may be: of a universal nature (where the tourist comes into contact with the broadly comprehended phenomenon of religiosity); a broad concept (tourist's interest in religion, both in the aspect of faith as well as the history, art or symbolism); a narrow one (religious motive is dominant, but assumes the existence of other secondary motifs) or; a specialist one (the closest to the notion of 'pilgrimage', where the most important and often the sole motive of travel is the desire to commune with the *sacrum*).

#### ***Perception of the sanctuary as the most prominent element of 'sacred space'***

Almost up to the end of the twentieth century, religious studies were dominated by the approach to sacred space as static, existing and given, which determines the structure of reality. It was most often described as the 'seat of power' and the place where the *sacrum* was manifest, and as a contrasting juxtaposition to the space of *profanum* (concept especially promoted by Eliade) (after: Niedźwiedź, 2017:192). Particular attention was paid to the concept of so-called 'holy places' (Olsen & Timothy, 2006:25-35). Although the phenomenon of pilgrimage results both from the need to practice faith as well as a certain willingness to wander and translocate (Różycki, 2016: 21), a purpose is required to fully meet these needs, which is usually referred to as a place believed to be sacred, a sanctuary or other object of worship or piety.

Many researchers in the geography of religious and cultural tourism arena, such as Griffin, Różycki, Jackowski, Olsen and Duda note dynamically occurring variations in the perception of this phenomenon, as well as the 'holy places' themselves, including sanctuaries or large pilgrimage centres. Places are treated not solely as the quasi-punctual elements that are components of space (after: Kulczyk, 2010:17-18), but above all as objects of a high semantic load. There is a specific connection between the place and the destination – a specific goal to be achieved, planned and envisaged by the tourist (pilgrim) before undertaking the travel. The concepts of developing a sanctuary as a dynamic destination of religious travel was developed in the studies of, among others Ambrósio (2007:84-88). Contemporary anthropology is inclined towards the viewpoint of

*sanctuary as a destination of peregrination, perceived as a dynamic structure, constantly created, formulated or negotiated, and even contested in polyphonic activities, experiences and discourses of its various users* (Niedźwiedź, 2017: 192). xxx

#### ***Religious tourism space and construing the *sacrum* in the space function context***

There are many indicative factors suggesting that tourism as a phenomenon of migration and translocation in free (or simply the most accessible) time, was born out of the phenomenon of pilgrimage. This is indicated by numerous researchers and experts on the subject (see Jackowski, 2010:17-31), who even define journeys of a religious nature as the main cause and the driving force for tourism. Consequently, the understanding of *sacrum* in the tourism space is therefore a return to the authentic reality of the geographical space, perceived as an element of the landscape. There are even views that clearly separate the essence of the journey itself (as a form of *profanum*, necessary to achieve the *sacrum*) from the purpose of the journey, which is to commune with holiness. Ambrósio (2007:84) distinguishes three essential stages in pilgrimage, which very well illustrate the concept of the *sacrum* as the function of space. These are: 1) the moment of departure, symbolising the desire to achieve spiritual goals and preparing oneself for meeting with the *sacrum*, 2) reaching and visiting the sanctuary to hear the Word of God and receive the sacraments and 3) the return trip suggesting the missionary role of every human being, so the spiritual message bears fruit in everyday life (after: Różycki, 2016:29-30).

The religious tourism space is a much broader concept that transcends the essence of pilgrimage. Its meaning refers directly to the differentiated understanding of religious tourism itself, which the world literature describes in many ways. The simplest, but also the most general definition of religious tourism was shaped by Boris Vukonić (1996:36-37), who described it as

*a journey to places of spiritual significance along with the provision of services for the visitors.*

At the same time the author indicated two types of holy places – sanctuaries and other pilgrimage sites. However, it is difficult to fully agree with this, especially in the context of the original forms of wandering for religious reasons, the participants of which would never call themselves ‘tourists’. It seems that the most important criterion distinguishing the phenomenon of pilgrimage and its religious, spiritual dimension from a journey, the form of which takes on a slightly more secular character is the motivation to undertake a journey. Such a differentiation is shared by many authors (such as Ostrowski (1999), Soljan (2007:295), Jackowski (2010:19-20), Duda (2014:35-49), Różycki (2016:14-15)). Between the extremes of the *sacrum* and *profanum*, there is a great variety of motives for undertaking journeys, which sometimes take the form of a spiritual pilgrimage, and on some occasions, a touristic or a touristic-cultural journey.

In contrast to pilgrimage,

*religious tourism will therefore be called such a form of migration to holy places, in which the religious (spiritual) motivation does not play a superior role and does not determine the demeanours or nature of the sojourn* (Olsen, Trono & Fidgeon, 2018:2-3).

However, religious tourism is an important element of travel, often synonymous with cognitive or cultural motivation, whereas the degree of spiritual commitment in each of these forms may vary depending on the level of piety, frame of one's mind, environment and other factors. Travels that lack religious motivations (or where they are scarce) cannot be defined as the religious tourism, regardless of how many (if any) sacred objects are included in the agenda of such a trip. We will rather identify this as form a cultural, sightseeing or a cognitive tourism. Many people travel to holy places not only for religious reasons but are led by the desire to find out about cultural heritage objects or architectural attractions. In special cases, a particular interest may be observed in visitors to experience religious art, its symbolism and

meaning for the spiritual or religious development of the society inhabiting the visited region. According to the authors, however, it is incorrect to classify this form of travel as religious tourism. The nature of the activity and its specific subject, however, allows the inclusion of such a form as *religion-focused cultural tourism* or *sacral heritage tourism*.

### **Journeys undertaken to experience the *sacrum***

The concept of the *sacrum* is considered one of the most important concepts in defining and distinguishing religion. This idea was shaped in the French sociological school at the beginning of the 20th century. Its significance is emphasised and clarified when it is analysed in opposition to the term *profanum*, carrying the opposite meaning. Durkheim, Otto and Eliade had the greatest influence on the initiation and shaping of the concept (Zdybicka, 1978:199). The concept is used especially in the domain of sociology, and the notion in the context of this discipline took the place of construing God as the central idea with *sacrum* and religion as the distinguishing characteristics.

Understanding and experiencing the *sacrum* has evolved over the centuries and depends on cultural, geographical and religious conditions. Already in antiquity, despite the unfavourable geopolitical conditions, there were many Christians who wanted to go to the Holy Land to be in places sanctified by the presence and acts of the Saviour. Examples of Egeria and Saint Hieronim may serve as examples. Egeria was a devout woman who, at the end of the fourth century, visited Palestine, not only to see the holy places, but also to pray and contemplate excerpts of the Bible in each of them (Iwaszkiewicz, 2010:118-199). In turn, Saint Hieronim not only saw the value of staying in places sanctified by the life of Christ, but even stated that every Christian erudite should visit the Holy Land, just like a Greek philosopher should visit Athens, and a Latin culture enthusiast – Rome (Ożóg, 2012:90).

During the Middle Ages, efforts aimed at obtaining salvation were dominated by two factors: the cult of relics and the desire to obtain indulgences. Many thousands of pilgrims set out on trails to personally touch the remains of the saints (Roszak, 2018). Of particular importance from this point of view was Rome as a place of exceptional accumulation of the remains of saints and other material traces of them (Manikowska, 2008:270-271). At the same time, a very frequent motive for setting out on a pilgrim trail was

the desire to obtain indulgences, extremely desirable in the medieval manner of understanding the 'economy of salvation' (Manikowska, 2008:229).

In Islam, the obligatory pilgrimage to Mecca (*hajj*) is one of the pillars of faith. It is a legal obligation to visit it at least once in one's lifetime. The course of such trip is hedged with very detailed regulations that persons going to Mecca should be acquainted with and observe, under pain of assuming the pilgrimage to be null and void. Fulfilling the seven duties - *wajibat* - is of particular importance, but completing over thirty rituals is recommended (Osuchowska, 2010: 99–100). Every year, millions of participants take part in the pilgrimage: in 2018, it was over 2,300,000 people (KoSA, 2019).

A specific form of pilgrimage is the trips to the Holy Land organised by pilgrimage agencies. They use modern means of transport (flight by plane, traveling by bus) and their programmes focus on the spiritual experience of staying in particular places associated with biblical history. The relevant fragments of the Bible are read in such places, and where possible, services are also held in important places (Robek, 2003).

A phenomenon that can be considered a peculiar Polish phenomenon is walking pilgrimages organised to the Jasna Góra sanctuary in Częstochowa from all major cities of the country. The organisers are clergymen representing various dioceses and religious orders. The participants track for a few or a dozen days, covering up to 600 km, taking part in prayers, reflections and listening to specially prepared teachings. Due to the formation program implemented during the course of the journey, this pilgrimage movement was designated as a 'retreat on the way'. At the beginning of the 21st century, the total number of participants in these pilgrimages was approx. 200,000 people (Kras, 2000: 6).

As an example of a completely different kind of wandering undertaken in order to experience the *sacrum* is the annual 'Run for the Wall' - a trip undertaken by American motorcyclists to the monument of the Vietnam War victims in Washington. This is an example of so-called secular pilgrimage, during which

*... they confront memories of their combat experience and the death of comrades, as well as feelings of survivor guilt, and their own struggles and suffering since their return from the war. The physical difficulties and dangers of*

*the journey also contribute to its distinction as pilgrimage, as these not only heighten its psychological impact, but also recreate (to some extent) the dangers and hardships of combat, as well as the sense of camaraderie* (Dubisch, 2008:305).

Summarising the examples cited, it should be noted that as far as pilgrimage is concerned, the internal experience is an important element. What is necessary to classify an event as a pilgrimage takes place in the internal sphere, on the spiritual plane. The remaining experiences remain in the background in these cases.

### **Religious tourism versus sacred space experience. Research on perception of the *sacrum***

Extensive literature on tourism as well as cultural, religious and even theological aspects draws attention to difficulties in the unequivocal identification of the needs of travellers to sacred places, as well as the motivations that inspire them to undertake such journeys. The definition 'religious motive' is extremely complex and is often treated as a compilation of many factors oscillating around the *sacrum* theme. As noted by Różycki (2016:228), Kaelber (2006:49-63) or Olsen *et al.* (2018:4-5), each person perceives holiness differently, and therefore, religious motives can be understood in different manners. Despite significant conceptual differences, resulting mainly from the motivation for undertaking a trip, religious tourism is still identified with pilgrimage. The *sacrum* sphere increasingly penetrates the *profanum* (Roszak, 2017:151). The pilgrim undertaking a trip with strictly religious motives is not only an involved participant of ceremonies, church services or religious acts, but also a keen observer of the surrounding reality, keen to broaden their knowledge of faith, religion, culture and history. (Duda, 2019, *in edition*). Therefore, what are the expectations of visitors to holy places from the sacred space being experienced and the perception of the *sacrum* itself? Does the *genius loci*, a unique and elusive atmosphere, directly connected with individual contact with the *sacrum* accompanying pilgrimages and the presence in the spiritual and religious centre, needs interpretation? Does a pilgrim heading for a sanctuary or another destination in relation to his/her spiritual needs, expect services or supports in understanding the place that tourism in a broad sense offers? Differences in the interpretation of religious and sacral space inspired the authors to undertake empirical research studies in this domain and to attempt to address these nagging questions.

**Table 1. Results of the survey research conducted with pilgrims / tourists travelling to sacred places**

What do you expect/look for when visiting a place that is considered sacred?	
<b>Tourists</b> (religious motives as well as the cognitive ones, cultural or other)	<b>Pilgrims</b> (main, often only religious motives, other secondary ones in a negligible scope)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– elements of the religious heritage of the region (91% of responses)</li> <li>– preserved elements of local traditions, piety, faith and demeanours (72% of responses)</li> <li>– contact with art, culture and religious tradition (69% of responses)</li> <li>– spiritual tranquillity, silence, individual prayer and contact with the sacrum (42% of responses)</li> <li>– religious events, celebrations or traditional ceremonies (32% of responses)</li> <li>– authenticity, elusive atmosphere of the place (18% of answers)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– spiritual tranquillity, prayer and contact with the sacrum (91% of responses)</li> <li>– spiritual experience of the sacrum, direct relationship with God (88% of responses)</li> <li>– religious events, ceremonies and traditional celebrations (39% of responses)</li> <li>– contact with the authenticity of the place and the characteristic <i>genius loci</i> (29% of responses)</li> <li>– contact with history, religious traditions, symbolism, music and language (19% of responses)</li> </ul>
(source: own study)	

## Methodology

The research included a sample of 500 persons, tourists and pilgrims visiting holy places and Christian sanctuaries throughout Europe (incl. Częstochowa, Santiago de Compostela, Fatima, Lourdes, La Salette, Altötting, San Giovanni Rotondo, Mariazell, Assisi and others). Out of the many questionnaire questions, one of them specifically concerned the respondents' expectations towards the given object – what are the expectations when visiting a place of a sacral nature and what elements are we looking for when heading to places of this type? Answers differed depending on the motives of visitors – tourists and pilgrims (answers are listed in Table 1).

## Findings

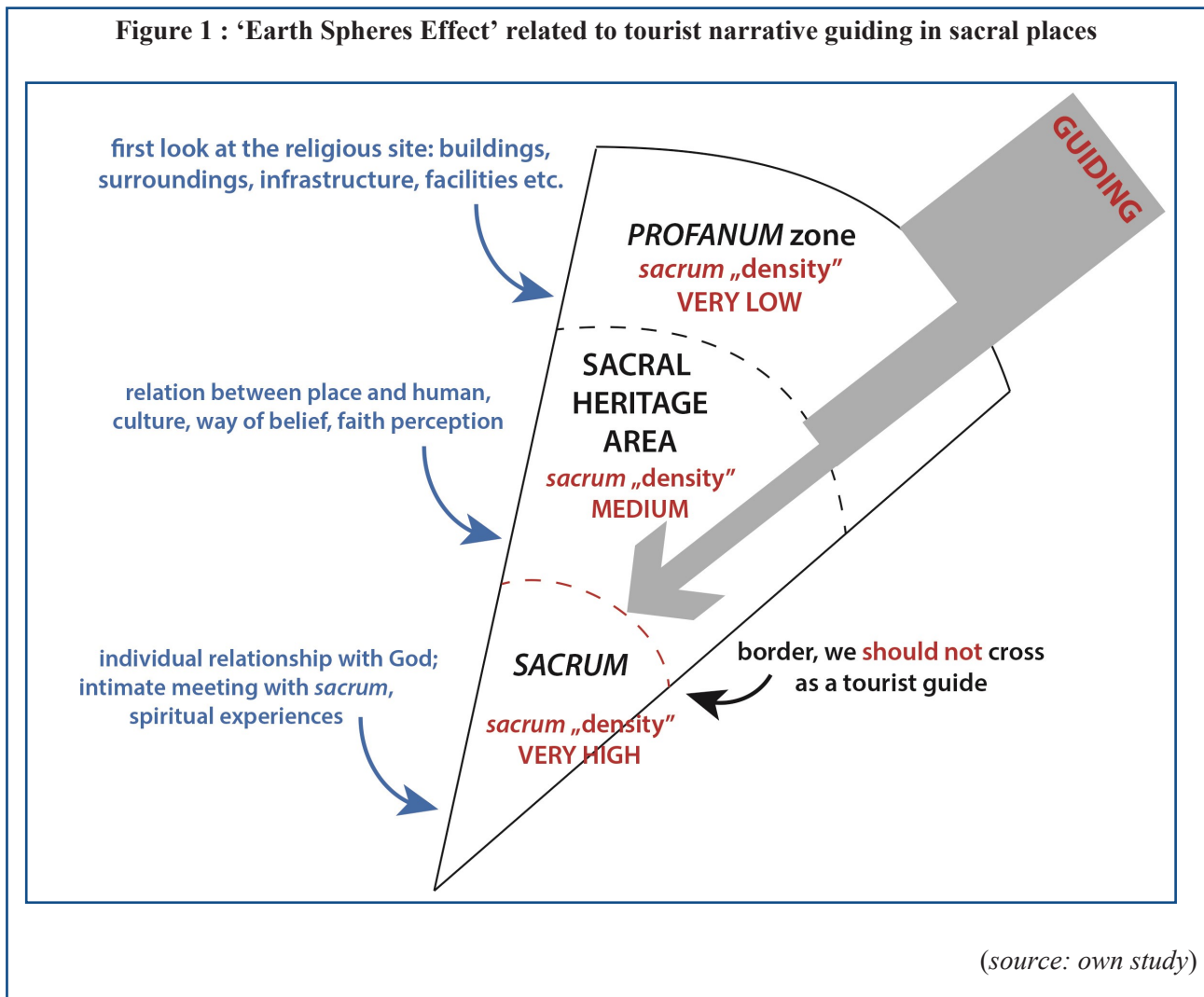
The results clearly indicate differences in the perception of the *sacrum* and sacral space among people traveling to sacred places for strictly religious purposes (pilgrims) and those who – aside from the religious significance – see the remaining values of the place (historical, cultural, social or touristic). In spite of this, the already mentioned mutual penetration of attitudes and the blurring of the sharp border between religious tourism and classic pilgrimage may be observed. As many as 40% of respondents classified as religious tourists indicated spiritual tranquillity, individual prayer and direct contact with the *sacrum* as one of the most sought-after elements in the sacred tourism space. Just over 30% out of this group also expect participation in a religious event, celebration or ceremony. Among the declared pilgrims who reached the sacred places primarily for religious and spiritual

reasons, almost 20% also expected to engage with the non-religious sphere of the sanctuary – its historical, cultural and tourist aspects. Almost 1/3 of them (29% of responses) indicated a willingness to experience the *genius loci* of the place, which is not always identified with the sacral nature of the object or place.

Analysing the answers and differences in the perception of the place, one more important question referring to the function of the sacred space and its relation with visitors must be posed here – whether the pilgrim or religious tourist needs help in interpreting the sacred space in the form of a tourist guide or other professionally prepared educator / interpreter? Analyses of the sacred space in this respect have for years been the subject of scientific research by the authors. However, it is worth mentioning that such a need is indicated by nearly 30% of pilgrims and 80% of religious tourists (Duda, 2019, *in edition*). It is thanks to the guide's narration that changes take place in the perception of place and the experiencing of positive (or negative) emotions. Within delicate, almost intimate subjects such as matters of faith, religion or spiritual experience, an appropriate storytelling process and referring to the essence of the place, in a non-imposing way, may be the key to the successful perception of the place and ultimately of the overall visit.

The specificity of the sacral (religious) space and its very delicate structure results in the situation where the construal of the pilgrimage site requires the guide to demonstrate great skills in interpersonal relations and a broad knowledge in the subject of religious studies, symbolism and culture sciences (Oleksowicz, 2018).

Figure 1 : 'Earth Spheres Effect' related to tourist narrative guiding in sacral places



The guide's narration should describe the reality in a well-balanced manner but should not impose on the pilgrims who arrived into the place in order to pray. The construal of the *sacrum* belongs to the individual predisposition of the visitor and constitutes a space to which the *profanum* is not admitted. This phenomenon has been schematically presented in Figure 1, where the provision of the guide's narrative in the interpretation of sacred space is compared to the passage of seismic waves within the Earth. The closer to the *sacrum* sphere, the more its influence decreases, and the interpretation of the place is determined by the individual's contact with sanctity.

### Conclusions from the analyses undertaken

Sacred space is one of the most important elements of the religious tourism space and religious landscape, constituting the subject of interest for tourists and pilgrims. Its functioning, shape and boundaries are the result of the influence of both the elements of the *sacrum* and the broadly understood *profanum*. Is it

possible to indicate the range of influence of these two factors then? Are the limits of construing the *sacrum* of a spatial nature, or rather a functional and even mental one? Answers to these types of questions (as far as they are clearly defined), however, should be sought on the borderline of knowledge within the fields of theology, sociology, psychology, geography, history and knowledge of culture. Tourism geography combined with religious studies allowed the authors to outline the research problem and to put forward a thesis regarding the differences in experiencing sacred space by its users, depending on the motivation of the undertaken journey and the religious commitment.

The results of the research showed the complexity of this process and pointed to the presence of certain bridges linking the understanding of the *sacrum* in the touristic space of the sacred site. One of the bridges is an adequate interpretation of the place, referring on one hand to its characteristics, religious and spiritual values, and to its significance as an element of the religious and cultural heritage of the region on the



other. Skilful combination of these elements in no way interferes with the characteristics of the place, its unique *genius loci*. As research has shown, such a combination is even a desirable element of the sacral tourism space for both tourists and strictly religiously motivated pilgrims (Table 1). In many cases, full understanding of the *sacrum* involves the use of an appropriate narrative, the origins of which derive from the tradition of the *profanum*. Excellent examples of this type of dependency can be observed in many pilgrimage sites around the world, e.g. in places referred to as sacred mountains (Sacro Monti – in Italy or Święta Góra Polanowska in Pomerania, Góra Kalwaria in Kalwaria Zebrzydowska etc.). Experiencing the *sacrum* in these places is also associated with knowledge about the Kalwarian traditions in Europe, their origins and their symbolism.

The elements of *the profanum* therefore, have their impact on the character of the sacral space, as well as the manner of understanding and perceiving the *sacrum* itself. This impact does not necessarily mean negative implications and conflict between those seemingly two different worlds. Yet, the specificity of the religious tourism space, as well as the sacral space understood within it, requires a skilful combination of spiritual experiences with the development (both infrastructural and that of the substantive nature) of the site. The limits of influence between these elements may be of a spatial nature and clearly marked on-site (example of the Sanctuary in Fatima, where the *sacrum* is separated from the service and accompanying elements by a properly marked green belt), as well as functional or the substantive one (example of Częstochowa, where the tourist guide service ends at the entrance to the sanctuary, and the boundaries of interpretation depend on the substantive preparation for performing the function of a guide in relation to the sacral objects).

The importance and functions of the sacred space in shaping the cultural landscape of the region depends on many factors, which include its attractiveness, scope of influence in a religious context and authenticity. Contemporary tourist facilities meet the needs and desires of tourists and pilgrims. Each co-user of the touristic sacral space utilises its development and the same services. As noted by Olsen (2006:104-116) or Bremer (2006:27-28), this difference in the interpretation of meanings makes the sites contrast with each other on the internal plane, and the factor determining the attractiveness of the place itself is the *sacrum*. It is for this *sacrum* a pilgrim, or an ordinary tourist, leaves his / her place of residence, in order to

finally reach the holy site using various forms of travel. Therefore, it is not only the most important factor deciding on undertaking a religious trip (pilgrimage) and selecting a place of communing with holiness, but it also constitutes the core of the produce of offer in the tourist context. We are therefore in a position to state that the *sacrum*, apart from its main spiritual function, also determines the tourist attractiveness of a given site. This is all the more important, since contemporary tourism (including the religious tourism) is increasingly moving away from the classic 'sightseeing' function, passively watching and learning about attractive places from the perspective of sightseeing, in favour of experiencing places and engaging tourists in authentic experiences related to the space.

### Practical implications

Considering the detailed analysis of the subject and the results of social researches, as well as taking into account the considerable arbitrariness in the use of terminology regarding sacred space, religious tourism and pilgrimage, we consider it appropriate to clearly separate the naming of activities functioning in the domain of travelling to holy sites. It is necessary to consistently apply a clear and strict significant separation of travel, which, depending on the motivation and perception of the sacred space, is called pilgrimage or religious tourism trip. The relationship between the user of the space and its characteristics, in the context of experiencing and communing with the *sacrum*, should be regarded as the key criterion for their differentiation.

At the same time, it seems necessary to consistently use and even promote the term 'religious tourism', which will not denote a 'pilgrimage of an inferior type' or 'pilgrimage of a secular nature', but will constitute a definition of a targeted tourist product focused on a specific recipient profile – willing to learn about the famous temples, places of miracles and revelations, graves of saints, places of worship of saints and holy persons, their history, traditions and art. Differences between the organisation of events within the fields of religious tourism and pilgrimage must be clearly applied primarily in shaping structures and agendas of these events. Tourist trips, by their nature, require greater amounts of time dedicated to sightseeing, getting to know sacred places, and experiencing cultural impressions. Pilgrims, however, should be given more time for prayer, participation in the liturgy, as well as for their own meditations and reflections.

It is likely that in many cases there will be doubts as to which category the given event should be assigned to. If the approved agenda of the event does not resolve the issue unequivocally, it seems reasonable to adopt the following rule: if the participants travel to a place they have never known, never been to, it is safe to assume such an event bears the hallmark of tourism.

The consistent application of the postulated distinction seems to lie in the best interest of organisers of trips to holy places. Among the reasons for such an approach, the most important are:

- directing the offer to more precisely defined groups of recipients;
- the possibility of a better adjustment of the event agenda to the expectations of clients, also in the field of the optional services (in the case of a tourist event it will be advisable to organise culinary, entertainment and leisure events, pilgrims are more likely to accept a proposal to participate in adoration or a meditative concert);
- tour operators are less exposed to risk of receiving complaints and claims related to the fact that the product offered does not meet the clients' expectations;
- consistency of the offered agenda and legibility of the offer submitted by the operator. In the case of a pilgrimage, the presence of the following type of item in the agenda will not be sufficient: 'it is possible to participate in the service' or 'celebrate Mass during your leisure time'. Conversely, the tourist will not be left idle when some members of the group go to church for an hour;
- rationalisation of expenses incurred by the organisers - events called pilgrimages may by definition assume cheaper accommodation and less sophisticated provision propositions. It is logically valid to assume the rule that the pilgrim is satisfied with a more modest accommodation and culinary base. The tourist is accustomed to a higher standard of services, even at higher costs;
- more rational use of human resources - in many cases, one guide is enough to lead an event of a precisely defined profile, while often on pilgrimage, the guide, driver and clergy are involved, and the ranges of their actions are not clearly defined, or even, collide with each other.

The published documents of the Catholic Church talk about the basic criterion that must be met in order for the organised event to be called a pilgrimage. This

criterion is the necessity of taking part in it by clergy approved by the appropriate authority (Sacra Congregatio Concilii, 1936), (KEP, 1994). It seems that the issue deserves a thorough rethinking and adaptation to contemporary realities. Experience shows that the mere presence of a priest does not guarantee the presence of the truly spiritual aspect of the given event - this will be guaranteed by its agenda that adequately interprets the concept of a pilgrimage.

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