

PRACE GEOGRAFICZNE, zeszyt 111

Instytut Geografii i Gospodarki Przestrzennej UJ
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Jerzy Groch

(1948-2000)

Jerzy Groch was born in Cracow on 22 March 1948. From 1966-1971 he studied geography at the Jagiellonian University, graduating as Master of Science in Economic Geography. His Master's thesis was titled *The problems of spatial management and tourist movement in the village of Zawoja*, under Professor Antoni Wrzosek. From 1972 to 1979 he worked in the Department of Population Geography, Settlement and Agriculture under Professor Karol Bromek. At that time his research interests focused on settlement issues. It should be stressed that he also participated actively in collective works regarding settlement in the areas of planned water reservoirs within the Carpathians. Then he expanded his interests to the issues of spas and tourism, and as a result was employed in the Department of Tourism Geography, whose director was Professor Jadwiga Warszzyńska. In 1981 he was conferred a Doctor's degree on the basis of his dissertation *The use of urban space in health-resort-based towns – Szczawnica and Krynica* (his promoter was Professor K. Bromek). In 1992 he was conferred the title of *doctor habilitatus*. The subject of his habilitation thesis was *Diagnostic research concerning Polish health resorts using the methods of multidimensional comparative analysis*.

Jerzy Groch was for many years the Scientific Secretary at the Institute of Geography of the Jagiellonian University; in 1993-1996 he was the Vice-Director of the Institute.

He was a member of numerous scientific societies and organisations, including the Committee of Geographic Sciences of the Polish Academy of Sciences, the Polish Committee for Physical Planning of the Polish Academy of Sciences and the Polish Geographic Society.

Jerzy Groch passed away on 26 June 2000. The Institute has lost a talented, highly regarded specialist in the geography of tourism and health resorts.

Research and didactic activity

In the early years of his research activity, Jerzy Groch focused on the issues of rural settlements, especially recreational architecture. Later, the main subjects of his research gradually evolved towards the issues in the borderline between tourism and settlement, regarding the spatial structures of land use in tourism and spa functions. The result of the extended and in-depth research area, and of the introduction of new methodological concepts led to diagnostic studies concerning the appropriate use of space in localities of spa functions (i.e. Szczawnica and Krynica – doctoral thesis). The continuation of his research work, especially the perfection of methodology, and, finally the use of multidimensional analysis allowed him to define and then to assess the functional and spatial structure of Polish spas (habilitation thesis).

The subjects of his research, whether they be monographic works and devoted to one area, included matters related to tourism in various parts of the Carpathians. Noteworthy is his contribution as a co-author an extensive monographic study prepared by a multi-disciplinary team of researchers from the Jagiellonian University *Karpaty Polskie. Przyroda, człowiek i jego działalność* (ed. UJ 1995)

The period of transition in the 1990s significantly influenced the extension of his research subjects connected with the functioning of tourist and spa localities. A significant role is played by the analysis of the processes of organisational and spatial transformations and property ownership.

In discussing Jerzy Groch's research output one cannot neglect his significant involvement in regional studies in the context of tourism. His significant contribution to the highly regarded academic manual *Geografia Turystyczna Świata*, published by the PWN Scientific Publishers (5 editions) is especially noteworthy. In the field of regional/general geography, he was a co-editor of several volumes of the *Przeglądowy Atlas Świata* (published by Fogra).

He maintained extensive international contacts with research centres with his scientific specialty. He participated in numerous conferences, and was a co-organiser of international meetings of researchers in Poland. In 1991 he participated in the International Congress organised by the European Community in Châtel-Guyon-Vichy, devoted to the development of health resorts in the united Europe. He has had research scholarships in the Universities in Freiburg, Osanbrück, Bochum, Clermont-Ferrand, Brno, as well as a British Council scholarship in London (Department of Geography University College, London) and the DAAD scholarship in Munich (Institut für Wirtschaftsgeographie der

Universität München). He gave lectures during his scholarships and was a speaker at conferences. He was an active member of international research associations – Leisure Studies Association (LSA) and World Leisure and Recreation Association (WLRA).

He laid special stress on didactic activity, He participated in developing a curriculum of the specialty “the geography of tourism”. Most of his activities were devoted to this area. His lectures, seminars, as well as field activities were generally appreciated. He has promoted 36 Masters of Science. He could communicate well with students; he was friendly but demanding.

When he passed away, the Institute has lost a likable person and an outstanding academic teacher.

Włodzimierz Kurek

