

LITERARY TOURISM IN CELJE: EXPLORING THE FAMOUS WRITER ALMA MAXIMILIANA KARLIN AND HER TRACKS IN CELJE

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Abstract Literary Tourism is a part of Cultural Tourism, and relates to the concepts of Heritage and Cultural Tourism. Expert and scientific articles outside Slovenia can provide case studies that show the importance of Literary Tourism. The following paper draft is talking about Literary and Cultural Tourism and their connection. We are also representing the famous writer Alma Maximiliana Karlin, who was born in Celje and spent the last years of her life back in Celje. Alma Maximiliana Karlin was a famous world traveller, poet and collector. She was born in 1889 in Celje and died in 1950, also in Celje. When she was thirteen years old Karlin went through hard orthopaedic operations and began to overcome her pain with the study of languages. For the purpose of this draft paper we visited Celje, which was Alma's birthplace, and an exhibition of Alma Maximiliana Karlin which talks about her life and travelling around the world. The exhibition is located in Celje Regional Museum.

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Introduction

Literary Tourism has a number of dimensions, as the definition above suggests. Tourists enjoy visiting birthplaces, burial sites, museums, literary trails and other sites associated with authors or literary creations. William Wordsworth's cottage, Thomas Hardy's birthplace and Shakespeare's tomb are all popular visitor destinations in the UK. Tourists also enjoy attractions with more generic literary associations, such as Jamaica Inn on Bodmin Moor in Cornwall, or the guided literary pub tours of Edinburgh.

The purpose of this writing is to study, define and understand the term Literary Tourism, and its connection to Celje and its famous writer, Alma Maximiliana Karlin. The first part describes Literary and Cultural Tourism. The second part describes the literary figure Alma Maximiliana Karlin and her memorial tracks in Celje. The last part of the paper describes our personal travel experience to Celje and our visit to the Alma Maximiliana exhibition.

Literary and cultural tourism

Literary Tourism is part of Cultural Tourism and relates to the concepts of Heritage and Cultural tourism. In professional and scientific publications published outside Slovenia, case studies point to the importance of Literary Tourism as market gaps and, above all, address the presence and pervasiveness of Literary Tourism in the world.

To understand Literary Tourism better we must first understand the concept of Heritage and the definition of Cultural Tourism (Spevan, 2015, p. 95).

Hazler () provided a definition of heritage: "In the broadest sense, heritage is everything that has happened in the past that we have experienced, seen, done, built and designed. Heritage is not only castles, churches, houses and haystacks, it is also Slovene minorities, religion, music, customs and habits, artistic expression, knowledge and the whole spiritual world that has kept us recognisable in a large family of European nations and nationalities".

The Cultural Tourism Development Strategy defines Cultural Tourism in Slovenia: Cultural Tourism is connected with the tangible and intangible cultural heritage and their contemporary phenomena forms, with traditions, with former and still living creators; Cultural Tourism is included in the broadest sense of the word and is also the culture of being and behaviour of all the people in the tourist area as part of his journey. It also includes (on the site of the visited area) a cultural landscape, as well as food supply, books, the state of education, the educational structure of the population - even political ones of the regime in the country - in short, it is a colourful conglomerate of everything that arouses in the visitor an image of a visited place as a reflection of a place of its own specific, perhaps even unique, past and present culture (Cultural Tourism Development Strategy, 2009).

The main topics of Cultural Tourism are education, history and archeology, architecture and art, natural sights, and beauties and religion.

Literary Tourism is a subcategory of Cultural Tourism that deals with the study of places that are connected with literary works and with the lives of literary creators. Literary Tourism has developed as a kind of religious pilgrimage, but today, we can talk about several types of Literary Tourism (Jurinčič, 2016, p. 248).

Who was Alma Maximiliana Karlin?

She was born in the Styrian town of Celje (now part of Slovenia) in what was then the Austro-Hungarian Empire, as the daughter of Jakob Karlin, a major in the Austro-Hungarian Army, and Vilibalda Miheljak, a teacher. Her father died when she was eight years old. After completing her secondary education in Graz, she travelled to London, where she studied languages. She learned English, French, Latin, Italian, Norwegian, Danish, Finnish, Russian, and Spanish. In later years, she also studied Persian, Chinese, and Japanese. She also spent six months in Paris, where she attended various languages courses at the Sorbonne (Celje regional museum, b.d.).

At the outbreak of World War I in 1914, Karlin had to move to Sweden and Norway, since she was considered an unwanted person in the United Kingdom for being an Austrian-Hungarian citizen. It was in Scandinavia that she met the Swedish writer Selma Lagerlöf, who was so impressed by Karlin and her writing that she proposed her for a Nobel Prize (Celje regional museum, b.d.).

In 1919, she returned home, to Celje, then already part of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. Almost immediately she started raising money for another journey. To this purpose, she opened a language school in Celje, where she taught up to ten hours a day, while her spare time was spent in painting and writing. On 24 November, 1919, she took off again, this time on a nine-year-long journey around the world. She visited South and North America, the Pacific Islands, Australia, and various Asian countries. In January, 1928, at the request of her dying mother, Alma Karlin returned home, herself exhausted by physical illness and deep depression. She never travelled again. She devoted most of her time to writing. Around 1934, she started developing a keen interest in the study of Theosophy. In the later years, especially during World War II, she became close to Roman Catholicism (Celje regional museum, b.d.).

According to the data collected so far, the complete works of Alma Maximiliana Karlin comprises twenty-four published books, more than forty prose works of novels, stripes, articles, poems (preserved in a manuscript), notes and drawings. She has written in German and also some articles in English for English speakers (Celje regional museum, b.d.).

The house where Alma Maximiliana Karlin spent the last years of her life

Alma's house stands above Pečovnik, on the left bank of the Savinja River, right on the footpath to Grmada and Celje hut, which is so much loved by hikers. Conservation consultant and Ethnologist Bozena Hostnik estimates that, in terms of appearance, it was probably built in the late 19th century, but, based on its construction and design in the Franciscan Cadastre of 1825, it is likely to have been erected earlier. It was built as a top-notch stone cottage on a slope where vineyards used to be. The shaded northern part was built of interlocking willow and mud, and the two-story roof was covered by a beaver. On the east side, a smaller wooden log house was originally erected next to the house, which was later demolished.

According to Hostnikova, the house is a remarkable historical landmark and memory of the famous woman. From the point of view of the conservation profession, interior painting above the windows and paintings in imitation are extremely valuable. The paintings were made by Gammelín some time in the 1960s (Celje regional museum, b.d.).

The house where Alma Maximiliana Karlin was born

Another track is where Alma's birthplace stood. It's on Ljubljana Road at the city walls. The house was demolished during World War II, in late 1945. Today, we see a commemorative plaque on this place, which reads: "In the house that stood in this city, along the city walls, was born Alma Karlin, a world traveller and writer, 1889 – 1950.

Alma Maximiliana Karlin Exhibition

Alma M. Karlin's exhibition, located in the city centre, is an extensive ethnographic collection of things (booklets, postcards, souvenirs, clothing, rocks, insects, nuts ...) that Alma Karlin sent and finally brought back from her trips. The exhibition is on display at the Celje Regional Museum.

Travel experience

Alma, as a girl, was considered different in her environment and was not accepted, and so it was for the rest of her life, and decades after her death. She was the victim of misunderstandings, rumours, envy, the inexperience of researchers, and fear, as recent research shows; those who tried to portray her as insane and diminish the importance of her work were, at the same time, controlling her and observing her life. Serious scientific research and the background to many of the constructs associated with it have crucially contributed to the crystallisation of this remarkable, world-class woman, this stunning human destiny that inspires and challenges a growing circle of people.

The exhibition of Alma Maximiliana Karlin in the Celje Regional Museum

The exhibition and the journey and life review begin in 1919 with the last night in Genoa before leaving for Peru, where it then began its journey. She observed the everyday life of the people living there, and realised that the next day everyone would continue their routine life, with a distant horizon waiting for her.

This is followed by a chronological overview of the trip, which also symbolises the globe at the centre of the showroom, which shows the places she visited. The introduction of each of the important points on the journey is accompanied by a brief description, a photograph, and some of the items in the rich travel collection. In addition to the content on the billboards, you can also watch a documentary about her and browse through her works and works about her.

Among them we can see a mysterious statue, which she obtained in 1920 in Peru. As she wrote in the travelogue, one of her students gave her "an old Inca treasure, the devil as he called it, which his wife feared." Alma named him Malik, and three years later, when she arrived in China, she learned what the statue represented. In Beijing, she met Dr. Ferdinand Lessing, German linguist, Ethnologist and Sinologist; in a travelogue she says, "I have to mention that my idol Dr. Lessing, a well-known German Archaeologist who was in China at the time, recognized Li Tieguai in a sculpture made of tallow." She learned that Li Tieguai, like the correct spelling of his name, represented one of the eight Daoist immortals. She had been carrying the statue for six years, from Peru to Java. She arrived in Jakarta in September 1926 and experienced a "complete collapse"; exhausted from malaria. She relied on journalistic fees and letters of recommendation, which did not happen. She sent the sculpture home and attributed special powers to him. He inspired her to write, and became the central character of the novel *Der Götze (Malik)*, after which her friend handed it over to the Celje Municipal Museum, and it was discovered accidentally during an inventory of the Asian Collection after more than 50 years of being stored in a wooden crate in a depot. where it was ranked for unknown reasons.



Figure 1: Exhibition of Alma Maximiliana Karlin

Source: Lupše, December 2019

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