

Nathaniel D. Wood (2010)

Becoming Metropolitan. Urban Selfhood and the Making of Modern Cracow

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The "Age of Great Cities" erupted in East Central Europe in the last quarter of the 19th century as migrants poured into imperial and regional capitals. For citizens of places like Cracow, discovering and enacting metropolitan identities reinforced their break from a provincial past while affirming their belonging to "modern European civilization." Strolling the city streets, sipping coffee in cafes, riding the electric tram, and reading the popular press, Cracovians connected to modern big-city culture. In this lively account, Wood looks to the mass circulation illustrated press as well as to supporting evidence from memoirs and archives from the period to present Cracow as a case study that demonstrates the ways people identify with modern urban life. Wood's original study represents a major shift in thinking about Cracovian and East Central European history at the turn of the century. Challenging the previous scholarship that has focused on nationalism, Wood demonstrates that, in the realm of everyday life, urban identities were often more immediate and compelling. *Becoming Metropolitan* will appeal to scholars and students of urban history and the popular press, as well as to those interested in Polish history, Eastern European history, and modern European history.

(From the publisher's website)