Magiczny Kraków

The meeting with Prof. Andrzej Chwalba during Kraków Fortress Days is behind us

2022-11-27

On Saturday 10th September, we met Professor Andrzej Chwalba – a historian and the author of *Festung Krakau. Kraków w cieniu twierdzy* [*Fortress Kraków. Kraków in the Shadow of the Fortress*] – in the Museum of Photography MuFo at ul. Rakowicka 22a in order to talk about the multifaceted fortress heritage in Kraków.

The meeting with Prof. Chwalba took place during the inauguration of Kraków Fortress Days held as a part of this year's anniversary edition of European Heritage Days. From 10th to 18th September, Kraków inhabitants were jointly discovering the secrets of the Kraków Fortress, thereby becoming familiar with the exceptional heritage of the fortification architecture of Kraków.

The fortress buildings are often situated within housing estates or near busy thoroughfares, but not everybody knows about their military origin. Many of them have been adapted to new functions. They serve as seats of cultural and educational institutions, museums, libraries, universities, health care facilities, sports centres or as space for private companies. Many of them, particularly those situated on hills, are enclaves of peace and greenery and offer panoramic views of Kraków. They are historic sites, and their renovation and adaptation is financed on a large scale by such entities as the Krakow City Commune (with the addition of EU funds) or the Social Committee for the Restoration of Kraków Monuments.

Bogdan Zalewski, whose voice is heard every day from Fort 2 'Kościuszko' (where the RMF FM radio station is located), talked to Andrzej Chwalba about the construction of Austrian fortifications and about the bittersweet symbiosis of Kraków inhabitants and Austro-Hungarian soldiers.

The meeting with Prof. Andrzej Chwalba was organised by the City of Kraków, the Museum of Photography and Wydawnictwo Literackie.

The programme of Kraków Fortress Days can be found **HERE**. The Kraków Fortress project is carried out by the Kraków City Commune.

About *Festung Krakau*:

A popular radio station broadcasts from Fort Kościuszko, the audience enjoys concerts in Fort Kleparz, Fort Skała houses an astronomical observatory, and Fort Krzesławice is the seat of a cultural centre. However, most of the approximately 100 facilities comprising the former Kraków Fortress arouse interest mainly among lovers of the history of the military. It is a pity because the complex is a phenomenon on a European scale.

In his latest book, Andrzej Chwalba describes Kraków surrounded with a crown of Habsburg walls in comparison to other European fortress cities (Antwerp, Breslau, Vilnius) while emphasising its uniqueness due to the rich cultural and historical heritage of the former capital.

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About the author:

Prof. Andrzej Chwalba (born 1949) – a historian, the deputy president of the Polish Historical Society, and a vice-president of the Jagiellonian University (1999–2005). An expert in the history of the 19th and 20th century, Polish–Russian relations, and the history of Kraków. The author of over 30 books and the winner of numerous awards. He is the founder of the International Congress of Polish History.