



Kraków the Host City: Stories - Episode 2: First Business Meetings

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The first business trips were associated with politics, diplomacy and trade. Since Krakow as a capital of Poland was a significant political scientific, cultural and commercial centre, the first traces of the development of business tourism can be found in the history of the city.

The city was located on the territory marked by many trade routes, such as: the salt route, the Sub-Carpathian route, the Hanseatic route and the water route on the Vistula River. This is why numerous merchants set off for their trips to Krakow. It is interesting to note that the first mention in the City Council records of annual Krakow fairs appears as early as 1310, later to be extended to the spring fair (so-called St Adalbert's fair, the 24th of April) and the autumn fair (so-called St Michael's fair, the 10th of October). The fair lasted 14 days and added quite a new factor to the revival of retail trade: merchants, guilds and traders were brought together. The fame of the fairs has survived until modern times, although the forms in which they are held nowadays are somewhat transformed.

Another example of a business trip to Kraków, probably the first congress, may be the meeting of European monarchs on 22-27 September 1364, initiated by King Casimir III the Great. The congress was attended, among others, by Emperor Charles IV, Kings Louis the Hungarian, Peter I of Cyprus and the following princes: Rudolf IV the Founder Duke of Austria, Siemowit III of Mazovia, Vladislaus II of Opole, Bolko II the Small, Duke of Świdnica, Bogislav V Duke of Pomerania and his son Kasimir of Słupsk, Brandenburg Margraves Louis VI the Roman and Otto V the Lazy. A ceremonial feast crowning the congress of rulers is far better known nowadays as prepared by the Krakow city council and Mikołaj Wierzynek. Local dishes, truly royal service and exquisite gifts for the distinguished guests all contributed to the notion of hospitality the Małopolska Region is famous for. This first feast was an inspiration for the paintings by Jan Matejko, Józef Simmler and Bronisław Abramowicz, whose work can be admired in the National Museum in the Cloth Hall (Sukiennice), whereas the culinary tradition has been cultivated by the 'Wierzynek' restaurant. In the next episode we shall present the first conferences held by the most prominent scientific institutions of Krakow. Details to follow shortly...

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