



## Kraków. The Host City: Stories Episode 6: First dormitories (bursa) and inns (L'Auberge)

2021-12-22

**Jagiellonian University was founded on 12 May 1364 by King Casimir III the Great and its charter was renewed in 1400 by Władysław Jagiełło, making it the oldest university in Poland and one of the oldest in Europe. The Studium Generale, as the university was then called, consisted of three faculties: liberal arts, medicine, and law.**

In 1397 the university structure was completed by the formally established theological faculty. The oldest and main university college was called the Royal, and later the Major (Collegium Maius). In the 15<sup>th</sup> century two more colleges were founded – the College of Law (Collegium Iuridicum) and the College of Philosophy (Collegium Minus). It was also a period of an increased influx of students and baccalarius (teachers) to Kraków, which positively affected the development of the first accommodation facilities, such as dormitories. Interestingly, students were obliged to live in dormitories during their studies and residents were prohibited by law from renting accommodation to students. In his *History of the Cracow University of Technology* from 1900, Klemens Bąkowski observes that *'In French and English colleges, young people received, apart from board and lodging, some monetary support, which in medieval Latin was called bursa, hence the name of their dwellings. They were established based on charitable bequests'*. Initially the dormitories were located on Kanonicza and Wiślna Streets. The first dormitory, 'Królewsko-Jagiellońskie' (on the corner of Wiślna and Gołębia Streets), was founded by Jan Isner in 1409 for poor students and junior lecturers from Lithuania and Rus. It is worth mentioning that in the 15<sup>th</sup> century there were about 3,000 students in the city, most of them coming from outside the former Polish capital (probably 5% of the students came from Kraków). In the following centuries, due to the establishment of universities in this part of Europe, the number of foreign students decreased. Cardinal Zbigniew Oleśnicki founded another dormitory, 'Jerusalem', in 1454, which together with the 'Philosophers' dormitory founded 17 years later by Bishop Jędrzej Noskowski, was located in the building of the Collegium Novum. Also in 1471, the 'Lawyers' dormitory, more often called 'Długosz' after the name of its founder, Jan Długosz, was established by St. Peter's Church. In years to come, the following dormitories were established: 'Sisini' (1614) and 'Śmieszkowicz' (1646) as well as such dormitories in which students supported themselves with their own funds – 'Majętnych' (Wealthy), 'Węgierska' (Hungarian), 'Niemiecka' (German), 'Czeska' (Czech) and 'Muzyczna' (Musicians).

The 15<sup>th</sup> century also marked the beginnings of the Kraków hotel industry – the period when the first inns were established in Kraków. One of the most popular was the Pod Białym Lwem' (*Under the White Lion*) inn on Saint Anna Street, where aristocrats, scholars and artists stayed for the night. Another such establishment, where guests stayed for the night and were provided with food, was 'Kamionka' (*Stoneware*) near Kleparz (the name comes from material used to construct the building – remember, in the Middle Ages, this was not a popular material).

In the following centuries accommodation in Kraków developed, resulting in new inns and in guesthouses with stables, which evolved into the first hotels and restaurants. Have any of them survived to the present day? Yes, but you will read about it in the next episodes of our series, to which we cordially invite you.



**Magiczny  
Kraków**

Photo source: Postcard from Krakow, ca. 1901 (Publisher: Salon Malarzy Polskich)