



Rotary

Club
Kraków Wawel



Rotaract



Klub Kraków-Wawel

KRAKÓW

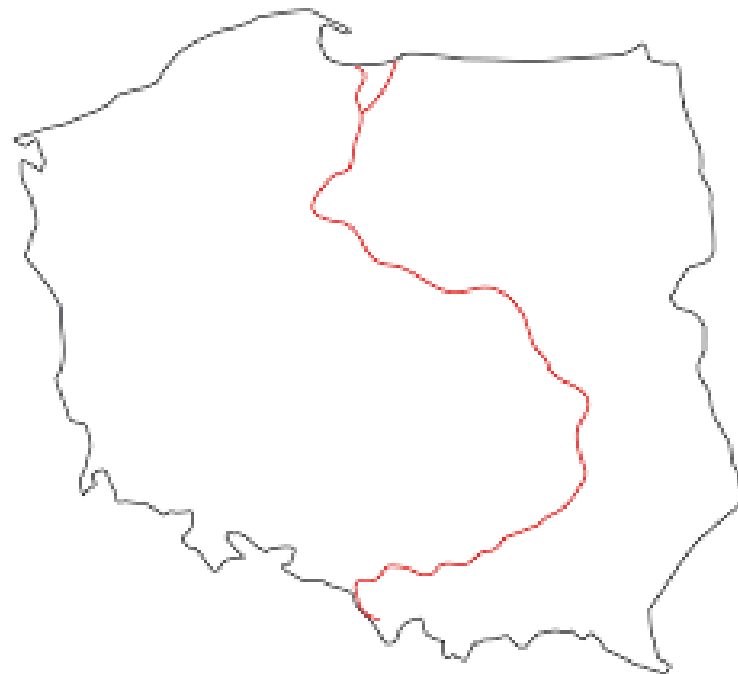
through the centuries



POLAND

To understand the heart and soul of the city it is necessary to learn its history. For a start some facts about our country - Poland. Looking at the current map of Europe, Poland is located in the geographic middle of the continent (between the Ural mountains and Portuguese ocean shore).

Our neighbor countries from west to east are Germany, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Ukraine, Lithuania, and the Russian „island” called Kaliningrad Zone. The territory of Poland is almost the same as New Mexico state in the USA – 312.697 km².



The main river Wisła (Vistula) with its characteristic „S” shape (read: "Solidarity") for centuries was our „trade highway”. Along its banks from South to the Baltic Sea, cities such as Kraków, Warszawa, and Gdańsk (known as the “Polish window on the world”) have grown.

KRAKÓW



Poland's population reaches 38 mln citizens in the country and about 18 mln abroad (over 9 mln in the USA). Kraków is the capital city of “Lesser Poland”, one of 17 voivodeships. Kraków is also the second biggest city in Poland, with a population of over 1 mln citizens. This number includes 60 thousand legal immigrants, and around 200 thousand refugees from Ukraine. Add to that c.a. 100 thousand students from outside of the city.

Kraków as the prime tourist attraction in Poland was visited by 14 mln tourists in 2019.

The city delights everyone with its magic, poetry, paintings, and music... Opera House, Philharmony, Theaters, Jazz Clubs, and as many as 35 museums invite guests every day.

Interested in art? „Lady with Ermine” by Leonardo da Vinci, some Rembrandt, Netscher, or Bouts - paintings in Czartoryski Muzeum are really worth contemplating. Allow Rotarians of the World the opportunity to visit.



KRAKÓW

Kraków fascinates us with the extraordinary atmosphere of its streets, squares, cafes, gardens, and below all of that - cellars, in which many of the best restaurants and bars are located. Kraków offers about 200 different small and medium hotels and Over 500 restaurants are ready to serve cuisines from every corner of the world (26 of them with Michelin stars).

Comfortable accessibility by air travel (with over 8 mln passengers passing through Balice airport in 2019), highways, and railways open the way to the city.



WIELICZKA



The Wieliczka Salt Mine is located in the western part of the Subcarpathian salt deposits, the age of which is estimated at about 14 million years. These deposits were formed in the Miocene, in the Baden age, during the disappearance of the Paratethys Sea, which became a closed sea with a high degree of salinity.

The reason for the closure was the cooling of the climate 14 million years ago. This caused the development of glaciers, which in turn lowered the level of the oceans by about 40-50 m. At that time, the Paratethys was connected to the oceans via the Mediterranean Sea through straits in the area of today's Slovenia, between the Alps and the Dinaric Alps.

The lowering of the ocean level and tectonic movements caused the Paratethys to be cut off. The Baden crisis occurred in the sea, similar to the later Messina crisis in the Mediterranean Sea.

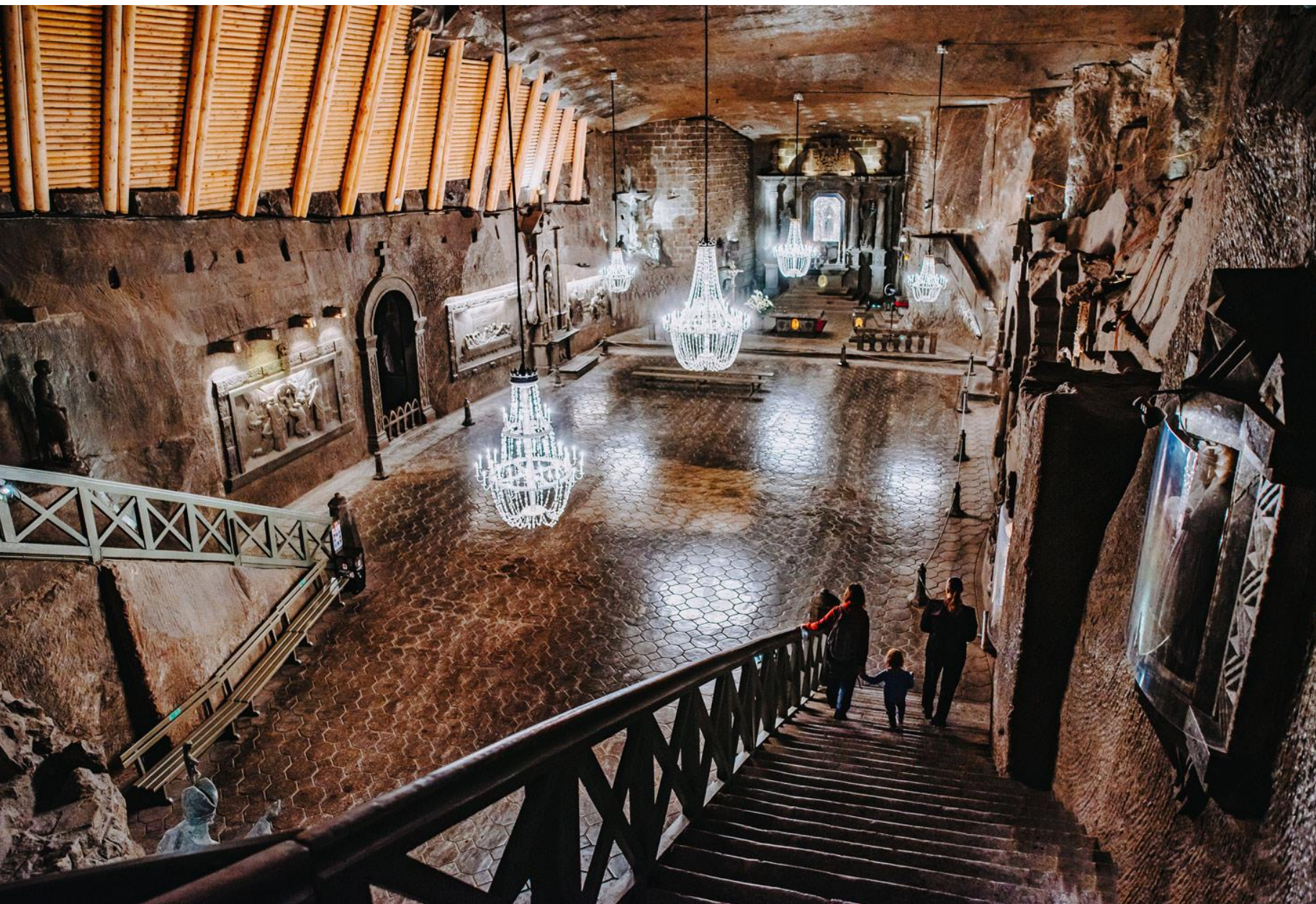
WIELICZKA



The mine is characterized by a unique microclimate, which consists of – in addition to high humidity and sodium chloride content – a constant temperature (approx. 14–16 °C), pressure, ionization and high potassium, magnesium and calcium content in the air. It is conducive to rehabilitation sessions for people with upper respiratory tract diseases conducted at a depth of 135 meters, in the Wessel Lake chamber.

The Krakow Salt Mine Museum was established in the mine in 1951. Its founder and long-time director was Professor Alfons Długosz. The Krakow Salt Mine together with Bochnia mine are the only mining facilities in the world that have been continuously operating from the Middle Ages to the present, allowing for tracing the development of hard salt and brine extraction in individual historical eras. The oldest part of the Wieliczka mine located today, where rock salt was extracted using mechanical methods, is the area surrounding the Goryszowski shaft, dating back to the second half of the 13th century.

WIELICZKA



The Chapel of St. Kinga houses the relics of St. Kinga; it is an underground temple, measuring approx. 54 m in length, approx. 18 m in width and approx. 12 m in height. The chapel is located 101 meters underground and is one of the biggest attractions of the Wieliczka mine. The floor is carved in a uniform salt block, and the chandeliers are made of salt crystals.

The chapel contains bas-reliefs illustrating events from the pages of the New Testament (including the Flight into Egypt, the Twelve-year-old Christ teaching in the temple, the Last Supper) and a Christmas nativity scene. The main altar, carved by miner Józef Markowski, consists of the main sculpture - St. Kinga and two side ones - St. Joseph and St. Clement. Since 1999, the chapel has housed a salt monument to John Paul II, carved by miner sculptor Stanisław Anioł.

WIELICZKA



The Underground Tourist Route of the Wieliczka mine was created at the turn of the 18th and 19th centuries. About a million tourists a year visit the approx. 3 km route consisting of 20 chambers, located at depths from 64 to 135 meters (levels I-III). There are approx. 800 steps to climb along the route. Part of the route is adapted for wheelchairs. The tour lasts approx. 2-3 hours. On the official website of the monument, you can take a virtual tour of the facility.



WIELICZKA



In 1976, the mine was entered into the national register of monuments. Two years later, it was entered by UNESCO on the first World Heritage List. In 1989, the Wieliczka Salt Mine extended the List of World Heritage in Danger, from which it was removed in 1998. Since 1994, it has also been a monument of Polish history.

On June 30, 1996, the exploitation of the deposit was completely stopped.

In 2007, the Wieliczka Salt Mine was recognized in the "Rzeczpospolita" plebiscite as one of „The Seven Wonders of Poland”, winning the largest number of votes.

The Gala Evening during 2021 Rotaract European Meeting took place in Chamber Warsaw in Wieliczka's Salt Mine.

HISTORY

Kraków we can admire today was built slowly, but systematically through centuries. Just like with Rome, we say here that „Kraków wasn't built in one day”. The current shape of Kraków was created by the connection of four separate cities, founded by four different „investors” - kings, emperors, and party leaders.

New Kraków 1257

Prince Bolesław V Wstydliwy (called "Shy")

Kazimierz City 1335

King Kazimierz III Wielki (called "The Great")

Podgórze City 1784

Emperer Josef II Habsburg

Nowa Huta district 1949

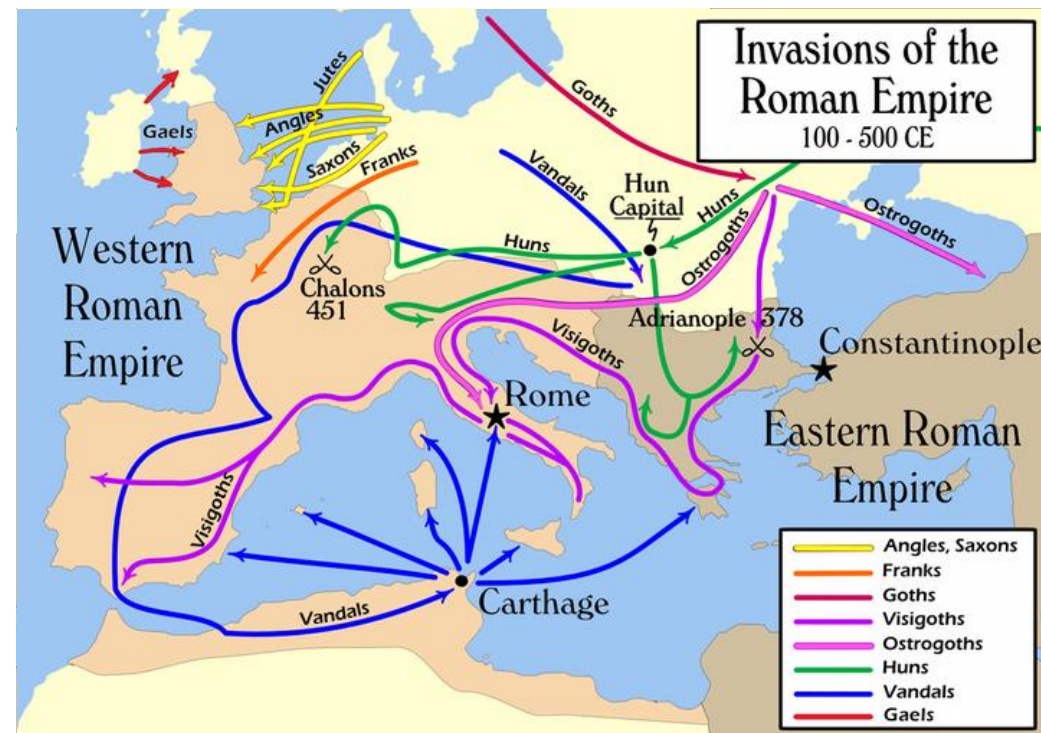
Communist party

To see the beginning we have to go back in time, so let's start a Time Machine and set off to „The Magical Mystery Tour”



HISTORY

V – VI



During the time of the Rome Empire's domination every country north of the Alps and the Carpathian Mountains was named „Barbarian territory”. The most dangerous for Western Rome Empire were German tribes who finally conquered the Thousand Years Empire. Some Germans settled then in Northern Italy, Southern France, and Spain. The area of nowadays Poland was slowly depopulated. Few groups of Celts were militarily weak and probably moved west.

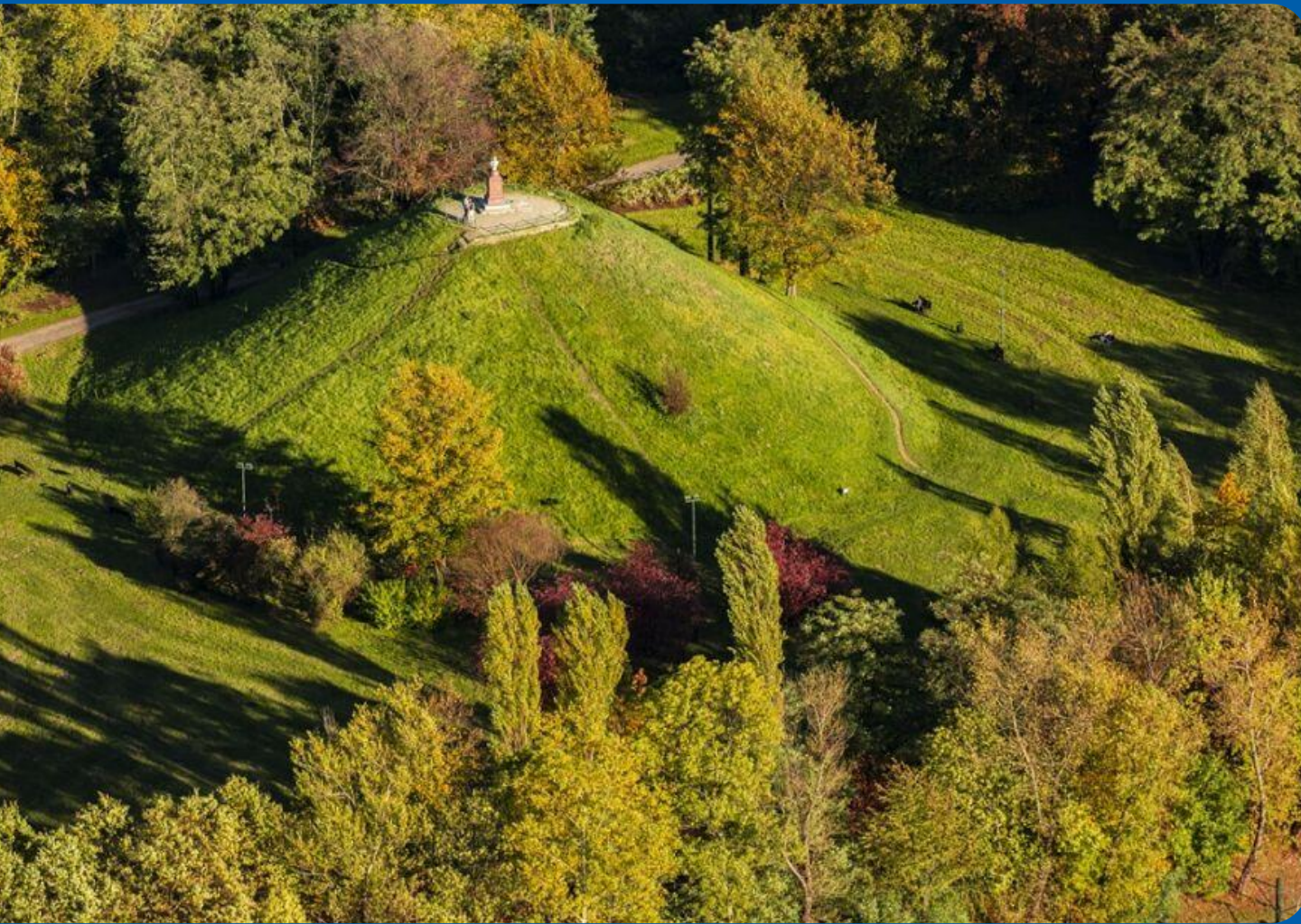
VII – VIII

The flood of Slavic tribes from distant India and Caucasus regions covered Eastern and Middle Europe territory. The southern territory of Poland was settled by the tribe called Wiślanie, from the name of the Wisła river. Their legendary Lord Krak built the castle on the rocky hill called Wawel, and the wooden settlement has grown at its feet.

The etymology of the name „Kraków” probably came from his name. The Wiślanie tribe left us two very visible monuments that stand proudly until this day – artificial mounds „Krakus” and „Wanda”. Slavens cremated the bodies and stored their ashes in the clay pots, on the top of the mounds. These mounds were also used to establish their time calendar.



MOUNDS



Wanda

Krakus



HISTORY

X

At the end of the X century Northern-West Slavian tribe called Polanie, led by prince Mieszko I, started to incorporate their neighbors into the new country called Poland. About the year 990, Mieszko the First with his army reached Kraków with a „friendly visit” and took this area under his protection.



XI – XIII

The City expanded rapidly as a trade center and became the capital of one of Poland's major principalities in 1138. At the beginning of the XIII century, half of the world was ruled by the empire of the Great and cruel Dżyngis Khan, from China to Moscow and Kyiv in the West.

Dżyngis Khan's grandson, Batu Khan made the next step and ordered to attack Poland and Hungary. In 1241 an unstoppable Mongolian army conquered and burned off the wooden Kraków. Wawel castle and St. Andrew church were the only surviving buildings.

The sudden death of Batu Khan released us from the total catastrophe. The Mongolian army retreated from the territory of Poland. Sixteen years later, in **1257** Prince Bolesław V Wstydliwy (called “the Shy”), decided to locate a completely new modern city under the Magdeburg law.

The Central Square Market (200x200m - the largest in middle ages Europe) and streets adjacent to it were surrounded by stone/brick defense walls, towers, and deep moats. The urban shape of the Old City remains unchanged until today.

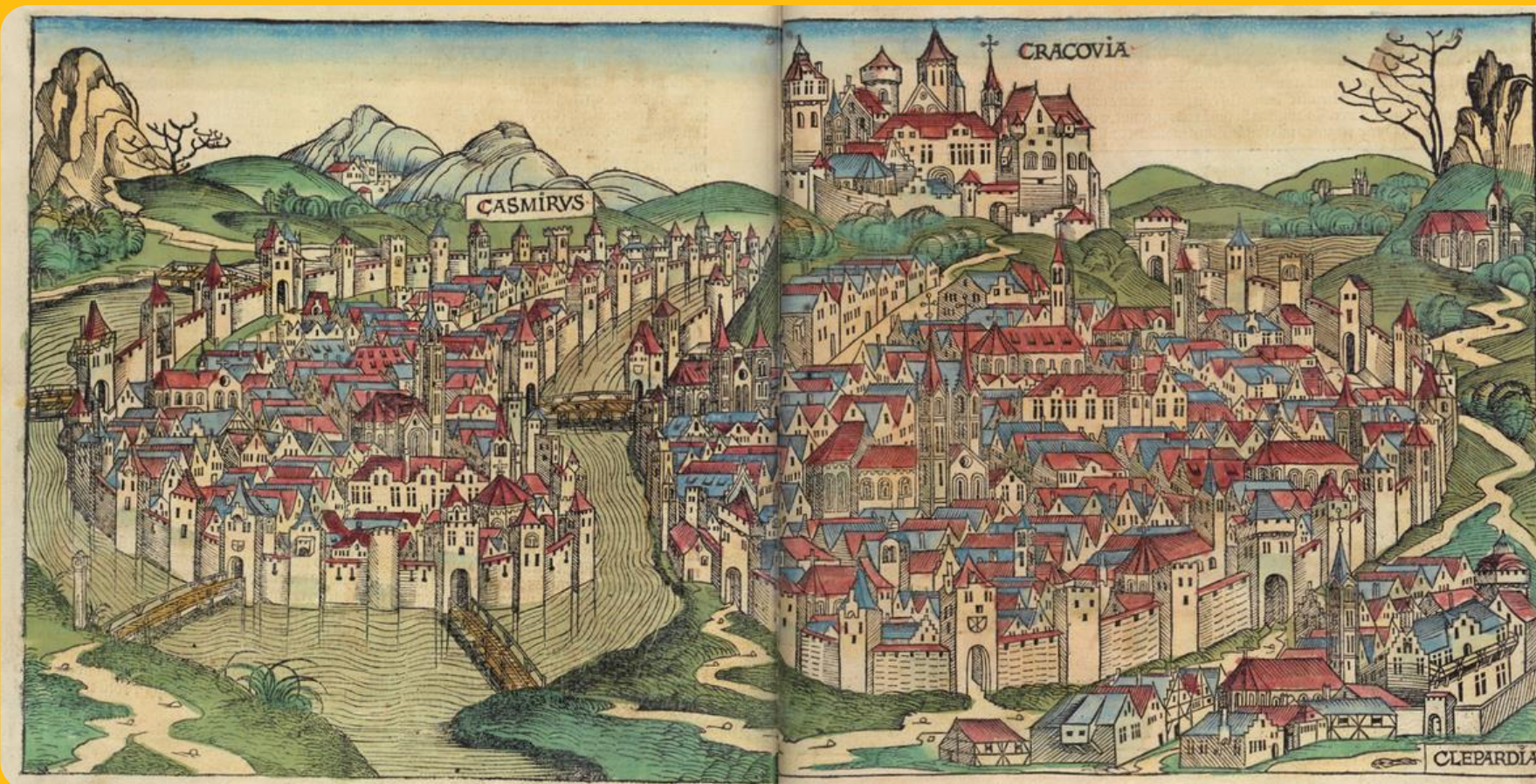


HISTORY

XIV

King Władysław I Łokietek (called “the Elbow-high”) reunited Poland in 1320 after a long „district breakdown”. He was crowned in Wawel cathedral and established Kraków as the official capital of Poland. In 1335 king Kazimierz III Wielki (called “the Great”) decided to locate a separate city on the other side of the Wisła river prong, in the close neighborhood of Kraków. This branch of the river doesn’t exist anymore, it was cut off and covered in the XIX century. The main intention for this expensive investment was the military protection of Kraków. The city of Kazimierz (called from the king's name) was formally incorporated into Kraków in the year 1800.

The biggest and the most deadly pandemic, called „the Black Death” killed over 40% of the European population (40 mln citizens) from 1346 to 1350. The rat fleas that carried the virus were transported from China by Italian ships. This pandemic avoided only one country – Poland. King Kazimierz III ordered very early to close the gates of the towns and boundaries of the country.

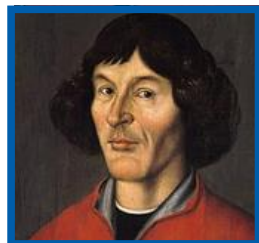


HISTORY

The same king Kazimierz the Great founded the university in Kraków in 1364. In this part of Europe, the only university that is older is Prague (1348). In Germany, Austria, and Hungary universities were opened later.

The oldest building from the XIV century - Collegium Maius and other ones like **Collegium Novum** are exemplary Kraków architectural pearls.

Some of the world-renowned students who graduated from Jagiellonian University are:



XV century
Nicolaus Copernicus
"Stopped the Sun,
Moved the Earth"



XVI century
King Jan III Sobieski
Defeated Turkish army
and defended Vienna



XX century
Roman Polański
Movie director



XIX century
Ignacy Łukasiewicz
Father of global oil
industry



XIX century
prof. Karol Olszewski and
prof. Zygmunt Wróblewski
The kings of low
temperatures



XX century
Krzysztof Penderecki
Composer



XX century
Karol Wojtyła
Pope John Paul II



XX century
Wisława Szymborska
poet (Nobel Prize 1996)



HISTORY

XV

After the huge fire disaster in 1494 king, Jan Olbracht issued an edict to move out all Jews to the eastern part of Kazimierz City. It was partly humanitarian action, supported by the king's treasury. Poland through the centuries was a very liberal country so many Jews and protestants were settled. There were mostly refugees from western Europe. All minorities were strongly protected by the king's law. In 1939 a quarter of the city population, (about 68 thousand) were Jews. Today this number is awfully low and we know very well why!

XVI

The Polish-Lithuanian Union was one of the strongest and biggest countries in Europe from the XVI-XVII centuries. Kraków as a capital city was located in the southwestern corner of this huge country – close to the safest boundaries with the Czech and Hungary Kingdoms. King Zygmunt I Stary (called “The Old”) married a princess of Milan and Bari–Bona Sforza in 1518.

This very rich princess came to Kraków with Italian architects, painters, and cooks who brought her delicious Italian cuisine. Renaissance-style buildings, including the new Wawel castle, Sukiennice, and many others gave Kraków the surname: „The most Italian city outside of Italy”



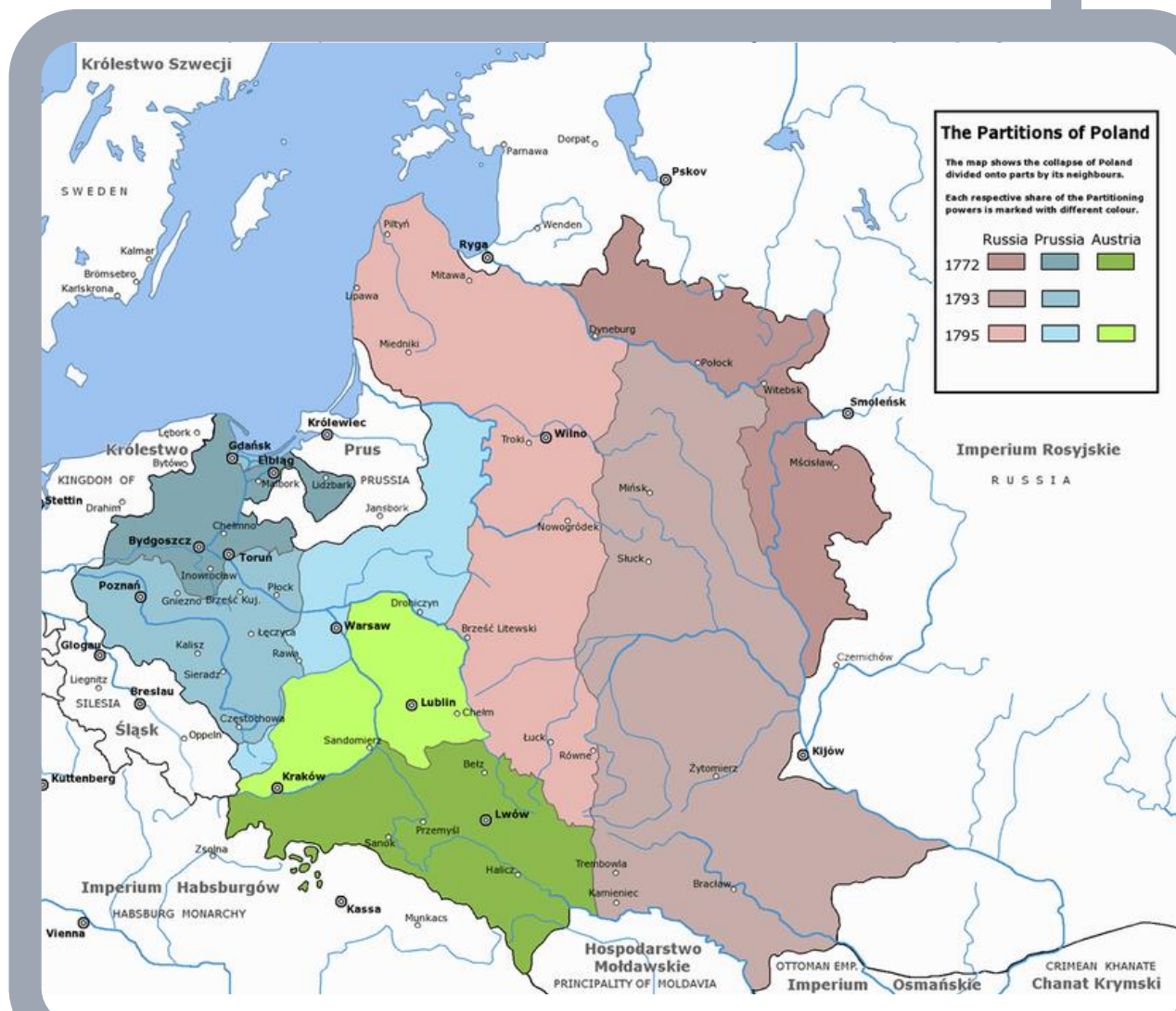
HISTORY

XVII

King Zygmunt III Waza moved out from Kraków to Warsaw in 1609. He did not leave any single written edict about formal capital relocation. He was one of the elected kings, originally Swedish and as we used to joke, the reason why he moved to Warsaw is that it was closer to Stockholm. Warsaw became his residential city and the state administration was slowly moved to the new „Capitol”. Kraków formally still stood as the city, in which kings (except the last one) were crowned and Wawel cathedral was their resting place.

XVIII

In the second part of the XVIII century three neighboring empires: Russia, Prussia, and Austria, parted Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in three steps. After the first partition in 1772, the boundary between Poland and Austria was moved to the Wisła river. Austrian emperor Joseph II Habsburg (the next rich investor) ordered the building of a new Austrian metropolis on the opposite side of the river in front of Kraków and the city was called Podgórze. This city with its port was to compete with Polish Kraków. Podgórze was formally incorporated into Kraków in 1915.



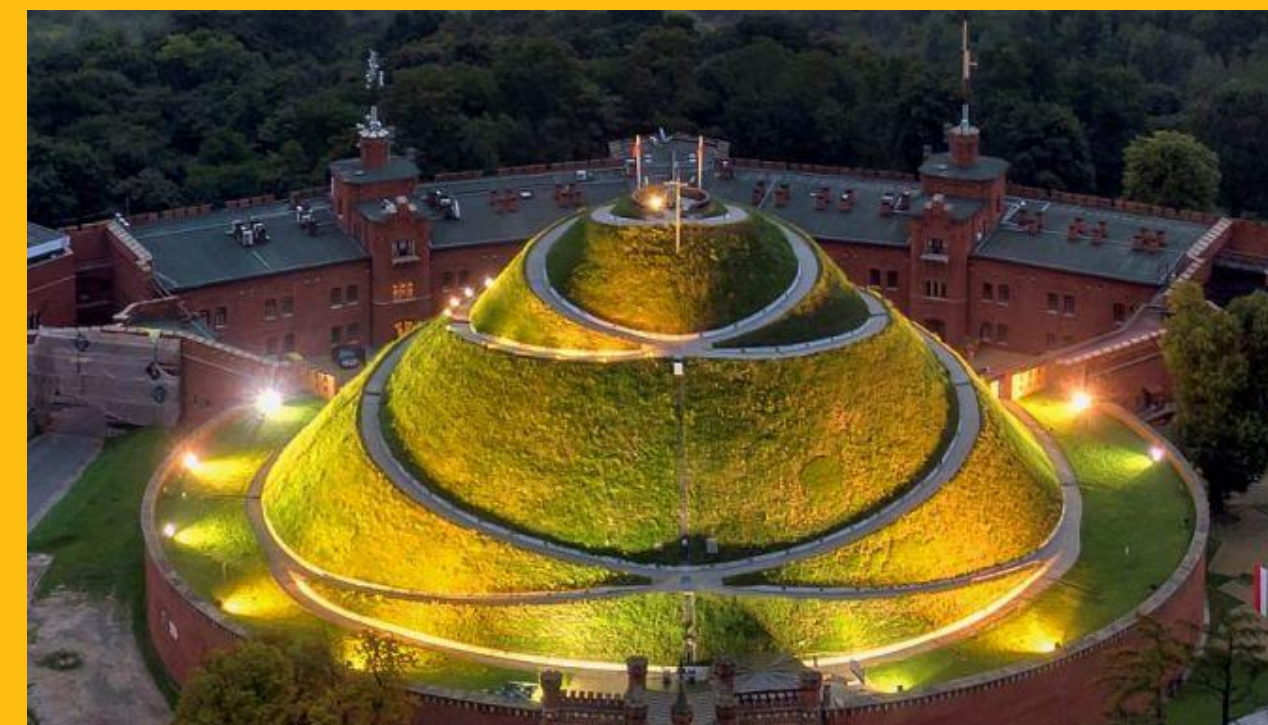
HISTORY

XIX



At the beginning of this century, Napoleon Bonaparte conquered almost the whole of Europe and established for Poles, as his strong allies, a new country called „The Duchess of Warsaw”. Kraków was part of this country for 8 years – from 1807 – 1815. It was a short breeze of freedom. In 1810 city councils decided to demolish defense walls and fill up all moats, with only one exception. Part of the northern walls with 4 towers and Barbican survived so we can admire them today.

The ring-shaped garden, called „Planty” was planted as a green shelter around the Old City. In 1812 Napoleon attacked Russia and that was his downfall. Following Napoleon's defeat, the Congress of Vienna (1815) created the quasi-independent Free City of Kraków with an area of 1164 km² and population of 146 thousand (1846), controlled by the Russian and Austrian Empires. General Tadeusz Kościuszko, a hero of Poland and the USA died in 1817 in Switzerland. To keep his memory alive, in 1820 Kraków citizens built the memory mound in the same shape as the mounds from VII /VIII centuries.



HISTORY

The Kraków uprising against its neighbors in 1846 failed, so the City was annexed once more to the Austrian Empire. The distance from Kraków to the Russian border was only 15 km and it was not safe in case of the incoming war. Emperor Franz Josef ordered to build the strong fortress, surrounding the city with 3-belts of military objects – 176 forts, shelters, and warehouses.

10 thousand Austrian soldiers, from the garrison of Kraków, helped to stop the Russian offensive at the beginning of the I World War in December 1914, just at the gates of the city. Thanks to that, Kraków survived this time without any significant damage.



XX



Just after the I World War, in 1918 Poland regained its independence, unfortunately with a changed border. In Europe only Portugal and Spain were lucky, their boundaries stayed exactly the same, since the XV century. Renewed Poland was united from 3 different parties (post-Russian, Prussian, and Austrian ones) and started to develop with full energy.

The first Rotary clubs were chartered in 1931 RC Warszawa and followed it RC Łódź (1933) and RC Kraków (1934). Unfortunately, after 21 years of Poland's independence, two powerful states – Hitler's Germany and Soviet Russia shook hands, and after 1 month, the war split Poland for the 4th time in our history.

HISTORY

XX

On the morning of September 1st, 1939 German army attacked Poland from the West, North, and South, and 17 days later Soviet army hit us from the East.

We had no chance to survive at all. Nine months later France capitulated also after just 1 month of war... German's 5 years of occupation of Poland is a „Dark Card” in Kraków's history.

Two examples, from many others, can illustrate the drama of this time:

6.IX.1939

„Sonderaktion Krakau” - the insidious arrest of 184 university professors. Hitler's torturers sent them into the concentration - Sachsenhausen camp. Twenty of them lost their lives

3.III.1941

„Jews Ghetto” - Germans surrounded part of the Podgórze district by walls. They removed all Jews from Kazimierz and other parts of the city, and moved them to their „New Destiny”. We all probably know that the Jews didn't stay in the Ghetto till the end of the war, and how their story ended.



HISTORY

Hitler lost the battle of Stalingrad and many others so war moved to the West across our country. Fortunately, Kraków survived once more, except for bridges over the Wisła river and some buildings. The Germans had a plan to blow up Wawel castle but luckily failed to complete it. After the end of II World War on the 8th of May 1945 Poles woke up in a completely different country with new boundaries, drawn personally by Stalin's hand – behind the „Iron Curtain”. For us, addicted to freedom and independence, it was a great shock.



The Polish government and communist party leaders, inspired by Josef Stalin, decided to locate and construct the huge steel foundry 15 km (!) from the city center. Russian technology from the 30' was an ecological catastrophe for the old town and its citizens. New foundry, served by 30.000 employees, needed new housing estates for them and their families. Well designed district in the post-socialistic urban style was called Nowa Huta.



TODAY

Our Time Machine Tour is slowly pulling back and we return to the present days. There is an old adage - „The past is another country”. Perhaps few nations on Earth manifest this more vividly than Poland and its cultural capital Kraków. Nowadays Kraków has still strategic, economic, historical, and geopolitical significance and continues to grow. Take a look at one example – 350 international outsourcing and start-up companies like Ernst & Young, Deloitte, Lufthansa, and Pricewaterhouse Coopers employed 91.000 of Krakow's citizens. According to Tholon Services Globalization Index (2019), Kraków takes 6th place in the list of “Best places to locate business service centers.”



TODAY

Take a look at how Kraków helps its citizens in the field of improving their living conditions:

There are five natural reserves around the city, one of them is known as the Polish Jurassic Highland. Tens of nature routes are available within the reach of the city's public transport.

Six sewage purification plants (the modern one opened in 2010) process 100% of the sewage produced by the city. High technology waste incineration plant (opened in 2017) takes care of non-recyclable waste. Electric energy produced by this plant covers the power intake of Kraków's tram system.

The city helped citizens to close down all coal-fired boilers and connect to the ecological heating systems. Using solid fuels for heating and in fireplaces is prohibited since September 2019. The city also limited, step by step, access for vehicles to the Old City, Kazimierz, and other zones.

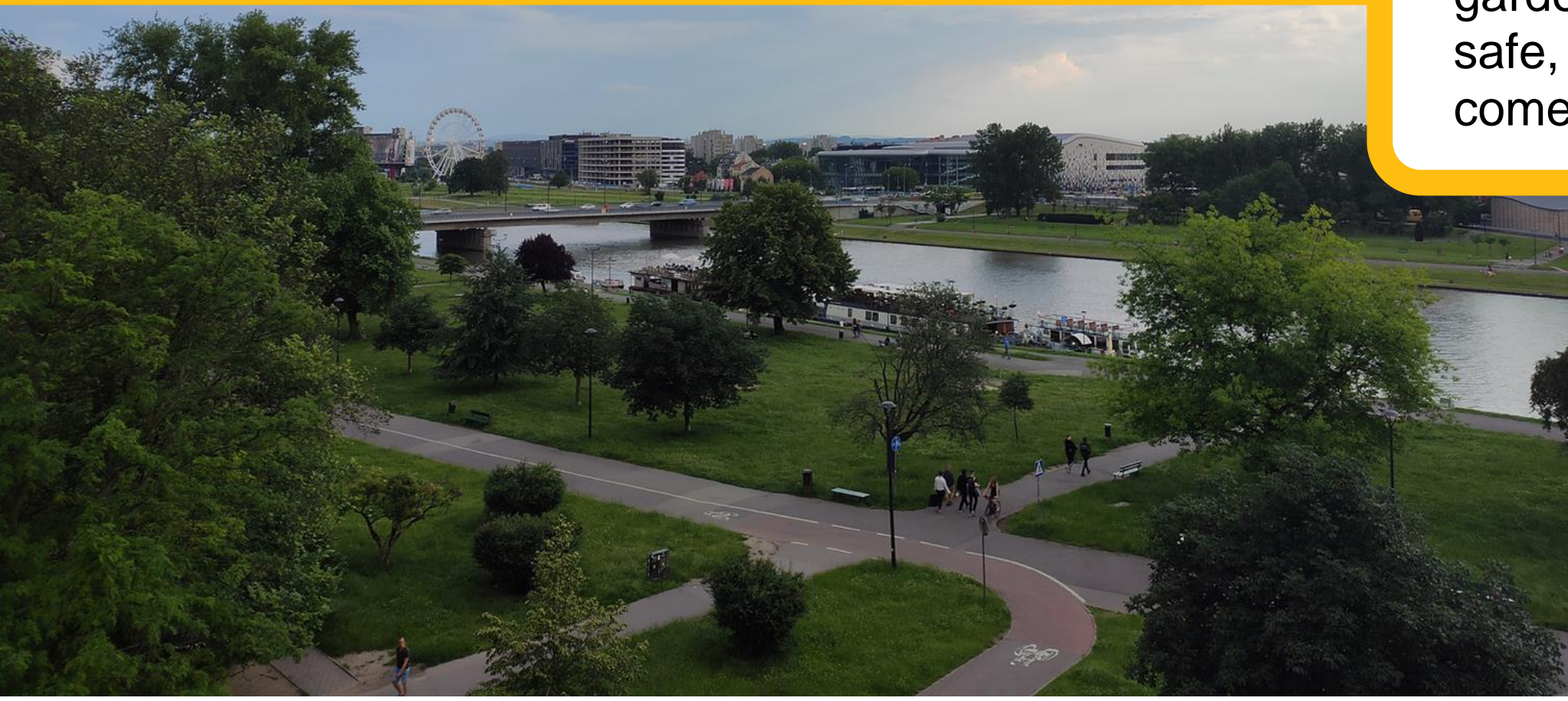


TODAY



The city transportation system is also „ECO”, with an electric tram system and electric and hybrid buses.

Kraków is located in the top 10 of the “Greenest Cities in Europe” list, with its Planty belt, 40 parks, and dozens of gardens. Kraków is also known for being quite clean and very safe, which everyone can judge for themselves once they come.





Rotary

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Rotaract



Finally, we would like to invite you once more
to our historical and modern City.

WELCOME TO
KRAKÓW



WELCOME TO KRAKÓW



Text Development : Marek Wcisło (RC Kraków-Wawel)

Corrections: Jagoda Zmarz (RAC Kraków-Wawel)

Graphic Design: Jagoda Zmarz (RAC Kraków-Wawel)

