

## Warsaw, Staszic Palace



Antonio Corrazzi, a famous Italian architect who lived in Warsaw between 1818 and 1841, built the Staszic Palace – where we meet during BMC 8 - in 1820 - 1823 after the designs. During that period he designed and constructed several important public buildings in Warsaw and a few of them still exist. He took concepts for his designs from the Italian Renaissance of XVI century, which is reflected in monumental facades, arcades and Corinthian

columns. The facades are elegantly decorated with bas-reliefs of scenes from Greek mythology.

The Palace has been founded by Stanisław Staszic (1755-1826), an outstanding personality of his times in Poland. A priest and philosopher, writer and distinguished politician, he was also a known scientist in geology and a promoter of industrial and mining development of the country. All that in difficult times when three powerful neighbours subjected Poland to occupation and partition: Russia, Prussia and Austria. By the stimulation of the economic and scientific life on the territory belonging previously to the Polish Kingdom, Staszic and other intellectuals of various political orientations tried to assure the survival of Polish national identity, fighting against russification and domination of all three occupants. Stanisław Staszic offered the Palace to the Society of the Friends of Science that was established in 1800. He was elected the President of the Society in 1808 and remained at this function until his death.

Among the leading personalities of these times in the Society were: S.B. Linde (encyclopedist and linguist), O. Kopczyński (grammarian and educationist), J. Ursyn Niemcewicz (writer and politician) and many others. Their portraits may be found on the walls of the first floor corridors of the Palace. After the unsuccessful uprising in Poland against Russia in 1831 the Society was dissolved by the Russian Tsar in 1832 because of its increasing role in maintaining and developing Polish patriotism. The Warsaw Scientific Society, founded in 1907, and by other institutions and societies, later continued this tradition some of them also situated in the Palace. Between 1858 and 1890 in the Staszic Palace various schools were located but later it was transformed into an Orthodox church for Russian army and for their civil servants.

After the First World War when Poland has been restored as an independent state in 1918, the Staszic Palace was again transformed into a public building, where until 1939 the Warsaw Scientific Society and the Academy of Technical Sciences were located.

When Germany attacked Poland in September 1939 the Staszic Palace was badly damaged by the air raids. Later it was completely burnt in 1944 in the fighting during the Warsaw Uprising. Architect Piotr Biegański, who not only restored its initial facades and interiors, but also added new wings extended along Swietokrzyska Street executed its reconstruction in 1945-1950. Since 1951 the Staszic Palace is the seat of the Polish Academy of Sciences. It hosts the institutes of Philosophy, Sociology, Studies on the Literature, History of Science, etc.