

CITY OF RUINS – COMMENTARY BY HISTORICAL CONSULTANTS:

„Warszawa1939.pl” Foundation was invited to participate in the project *A Flight Over the Destroyed Warsaw* at the beginning of 2009 by Piotr Śliwowski, the Head of the Historical Section at the Warsaw Rising Museum. Intrigued by the idea of creating a film recreating the sight of the destroyed Warsaw as seen in spring 1945 from the plane flying by the same route as the Liberator planes did during the Warsaw Rising, we began collecting materials that were to become reference resources for Platige Image studio.

In accordance with the assumptions the city was to be „built” on an orthophoto map made in 1945, while its appearance was to be created basing on numerous photos taken after the Second World War that recorded war destruction, specifically on over 600 Soviet aerial photos. Among the iconographic materials that we recovered and that became the basis for creating 3D models of specific Warsaw tenement houses by the graphic artists at Platige Image there were post-war aerial photos published in various books and magazines, post-war photos taken by photographers standing in front of the destroyed buildings as well as pre-war photos depicting Warsaw..

Among the key elements that needed to be decided on in the initial stage of the project was, among others, finding descriptions and colour photos, in order to establish the colours of the city, the degree of tree-covered areas and to establish which buildings and landmarks stand out from the cityscape visible from the plane, which in turn was confronted with the bird’s-eye view photos of contemporary Warsaw.

The result was the selection of several tens of buildings and city areas that had to be depicted in great detail; among them there were such places as Powiśle, the Zamkowy Square, the Old Town and the neighbourhood of the Krasińskis’ Square and Miodowa Street. Particular attention was devoted to recreating the area of the destroyed Warsaw Ghetto and characteristic buildings: St Augustine’s Church, the Gęsiówka camp and the ruins of the Pawiak fortress.

When working on the project, having assessed the stages of creating the animation, we proposed adding some more characteristic objects.

Preparing the iconography that would enable recreating the bridges blown-up by the Germans and the temporary pontoon bridges was yet another challenge.

A total of several thousands of photos were used for the production of the project.

Krzysztof Jaszczyński

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