

## ANNOTATIONS

**BRÝDL, Miroslav – BOŠTÍK, Martin: *Nezouvat, prosím! Vyprávění emeritního litomyšlského starosty Miroslava Brýdla o jeho životě a moderní architektuře*. Litomyšl, Regionální muzeum v Litomyšli, 2022. 302 s.**

The publication *“Please don’t take shoes off! Narrative of the Mayor Emeritus of Litomyšl Miroslav Brýdl about his life and modern architecture”* is a joint work of the former mayor of Litomyšl and the historian from the museum in this city Martin Boštík, who recorded the memories of M. Brýdl. The title of the publication is based on the fact that after their experience of visit in Denmark, the Brýdl’s guests do not take off their shoes.

The autobiographical publication contains a foreword by art critic Petr Volf and 12 chronologically arranged chapters introducing the personality. His life is presented in turn – his family, childhood and youth, studies, military, work experience, building a relationship with architecture and art, important friendships and inspirations, through the interest of the communist regime in this personality to the beginnings of political involvement and various interesting facts from his life (sometimes serious, sometimes funny). It is interesting to trace the influence of historical events on Brýdl’s life – the “Prague Spring” (1968), the occupation by Warsaw Pact troops, the period of normalisation and the “Velvet Revolution” (1989). The emphasis in the book is on the period after 1989, when Litomyšl became the centre of modern architecture under Brýdl’s care. There is also a description of his private life and his political and cultural activities during this period, including issues of privatisation, economic transformation, the beginning of business, etc. Brýdl passed through several political parties. Special chapters are devoted to significant events in his life – one of them is his friendship with Ladislav Horáček, the Litomyšl Portmoneum (with unique room paintings by Josef Váchal) and the establishment of the restoration school (now a branch of the University of Pardubice). Another one is the controversial statue of Zdeněk Nejedlý, which is so controversial that this year it received a special book by Martin Boštík. The following chapter presents Brýdl’s view on the now almost legendary visits of President Václav Havel (1993), seven Central European presidents (1994) and the Spanish royal couple (1995). The preparation, visit and many interesting facts accompanying these visits are described. His relations with important personalities of the time are also recalled – from Václav Havel, through Tomáš Halík, Pavel Tigrid, Jan Stráský to Václav Klaus and a number of prominent architects. Brýdel’s work in regional politics (he was deputy governor and member of the Pardubice Region Council responsible for

culture and monument care) and his life after his political career is also described. There are also descriptions of his awards, but also of his failures and, for example, of allegations of fictitious crimes against him. The book also includes an editorial note where Martin Boštík introduces the reader to the process of creating the work. The entire publication is then accompanied by an annotated bibliography, offering the reader the necessary regional and historical context. The book is supplemented by rich visual (photographs) and textual appendices (speeches, thank-you notes, invitations, letters, congratulations, etc.).

Miroslav Brýdl is a peculiar man, but he has undoubtedly contributed to the development of his town. Moreover, the publication touches on the recent past with many overlaps into the present (the mayor of Litomyšl today is Daniel Brýdl, the son of the personality under review). However, the authors have dealt with this situation with honour. This is a readable publication, written with humour and, where necessary, with seriousness. Moreover, it is a frank confession. It should be emphasized that Litomyšl, by publishing this book, has gained a valuable record of its recent past, and for future historians it is undoubtedly a unique source. M. Brýdl is said to be satisfied if the reader finishes his memoirs and says, “but yes, that’s not bad” (p. 217). I am of the opinion that the publication will meet this standard without any problems and will aspire to a higher rating.

Miroslav Jireček