



**TOURIST  
GUIDE**



**Mazovia.**  
heart of Poland



**MAZOWIECKA  
REGIONALNA  
ORGANIZACJA  
TURYSTYCZNA**

**Publisher:** Mazovian Regional Board of Tourism  
ul. Nowy Świat 27/2, 00-029 Warszawa, www.mrot.pl  
tel.: 22 877 20 10, fax: 22 877 22 70

**Authors of the guidebook:** Daniel Sukniewicz, Piotr Marczak

**Coordination:** Renata Konewecka

**Assistant:** Adam Jasiński

**Subject Matter Consultant:** Dr Szymon Drej, Museum of the Battle of Grunwald

**Editing Consultant:** Magdalena Walusiak

**Photography:** Krystyna Falkowska, Paweł Fabijański, Daniel Sukniewicz  
Foto Studio S. Wiraszka, Mazovian Regional Board of Tourism, Polish  
Board of Tourism, City Hall in Ostrów Mazowiecka, Hotel Zamek\*\*\*  
Dom Polonii in Pułtusk, Euro Pilot Sp. z o.o.

**Drawings:** Wojciech Wólkowski, Grzegorz Bakera – reconstruction of the castle in  
Ciechanów

**Translation:** Lacrosse experts in translation  
Justyna Home – translator, Nicholas Paxford - editor

**Design, Drafting and Editing:** Euro Pilot Sp. z o.o.  
ul. Konarskiego 3, 01-355 Warsaw  
www.europilot.com.pl

*Warsaw, 2023*

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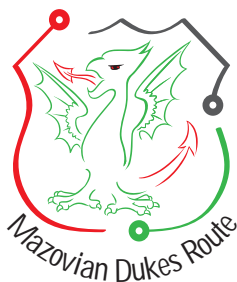


**REGIONAL PROGRAMME**  
NATIONAL COHESION STRATEGY

**Mazovia.**  
heart of Poland

**EUROPEAN UNION**  
EUROPEAN REGIONAL  
DEVELOPMENT FUND





**MAZOVIA.** Today, it is the heart of Poland. At the time of the formation of the Commonwealth, it was its own state for more than three centuries. The centre of the region is the bustling metropolis of Warsaw, surrounded by towns, villages and landmarks yet to be fully explored. Curious travellers will discover in the region a number of mysterious castles and manors, historic churches and quaint little towns, as well as former battlefields and diverse landscapes that have been attracting film makers to the area for many years now. Mazovia is one big reservoir of historical, cultural and natural wealth. All you have to do is stand at its boundaries and say the magic words: Mazovia, open sesame! And then follow the route of your choice.

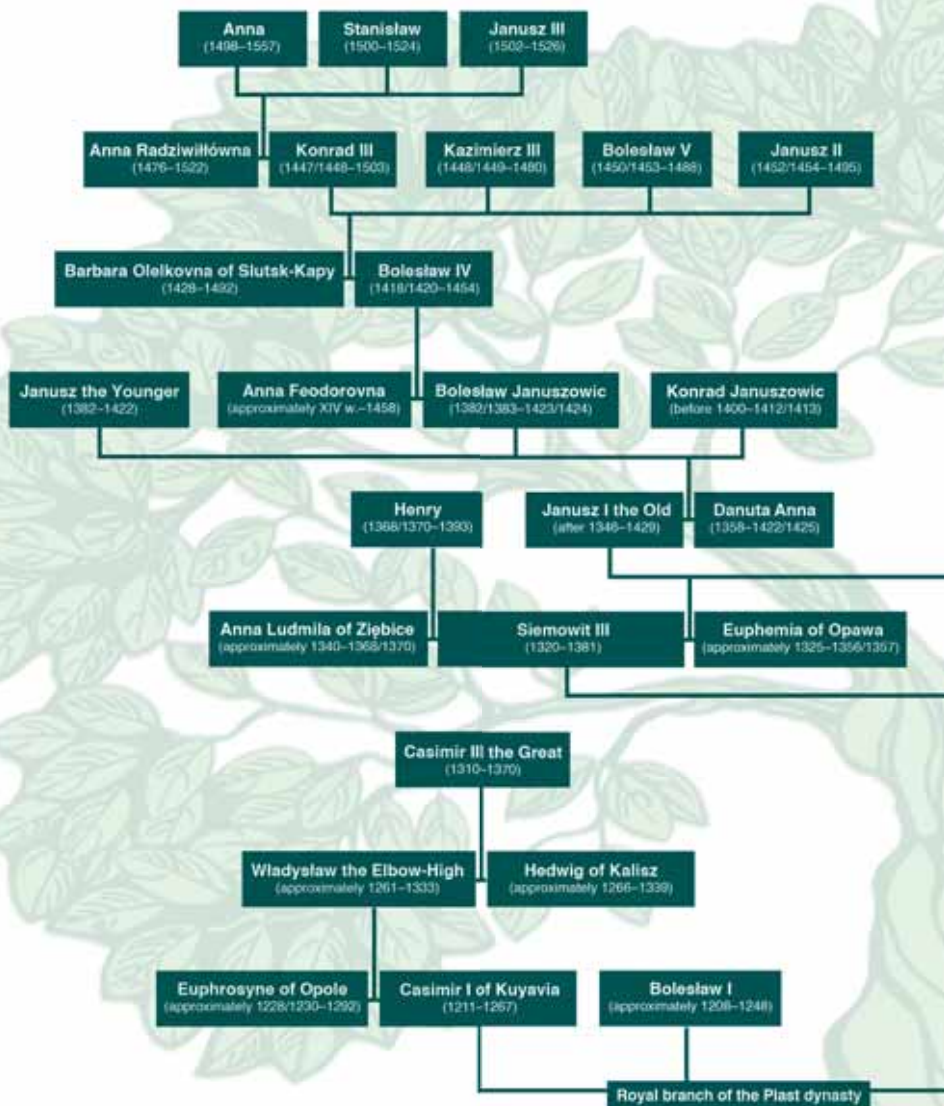
Here is **THE DUKES OF MAZOVIA ROUTE** – where you can travel back in time to the Middle Ages, when Mazovia gained importance and prosperity thanks to the wisdom and ambition of its rulers. The progenitor of the Mazovian branch of the Piast dynasty was Konrad of Mazovia. The story of the dynasty he originated speaks of three centuries in which a civilisation was built across virtually unspoiled territory. The dukes founded more than a hundred towns and built castles and churches in a style known as Mazovian Gothic, which have become a permanent fixture in the history of art. Mazovia's past also involves some shocking family histories (one of which became an inspiration for Shakespeare), legends about the treasures of the Knights Templar and an incredible invention that helped secure the victory of the Polish and Lithuanian army, assisted by Mazovian units, in the Battle of Grunwald.

The Dukes of Mazovia Route is one of several remarkable routes that will enable you to discover Mazovia. It is also worth exploring the others. The Chopin Route follows in the footsteps of one of the world's greatest composers, who spent half of his life in Mazovia. The Battle of Warsaw 1920 Route is a travel back in time and space proving that the battle that took place more than a century ago is considered one of the most crucial in the history of Europe. Mazovia in films (*Mazowsze na filmowo*) is an extraordinary adventure following the footsteps of Polish cinema, actors and outstanding directors.

More information on the routes can be found under the following link: [www.mazowsze.travel](http://www.mazowsze.travel)

#### WYVERN – A SYMBOL OF THE DUKES OF MAZOVIA

The two-legged dragon known as a wyvern was featured in the duchy's seals and flags from 1329 until the fall of the Duchy of Mazovia in 1526. Mazovia was the sole place in continental Europe where a dragon came to symbolise power, much like in King Arthur-Era England, while elsewhere in Christendom the dragon signified evil. Could the wyvern have come to Mazovia from the British Isles? There is the possibility that the coat of arms was brought over by Magnus, son of England's King Harold, killed in the Battle of Hastings. It is presumably his tomb that was uncovered in Czersk near the ruins of the Church of St. Peter and Paul.



**Konrad I of Mazovia**  
(1187-1247)



**Siemowit I**  
(1215-1292)

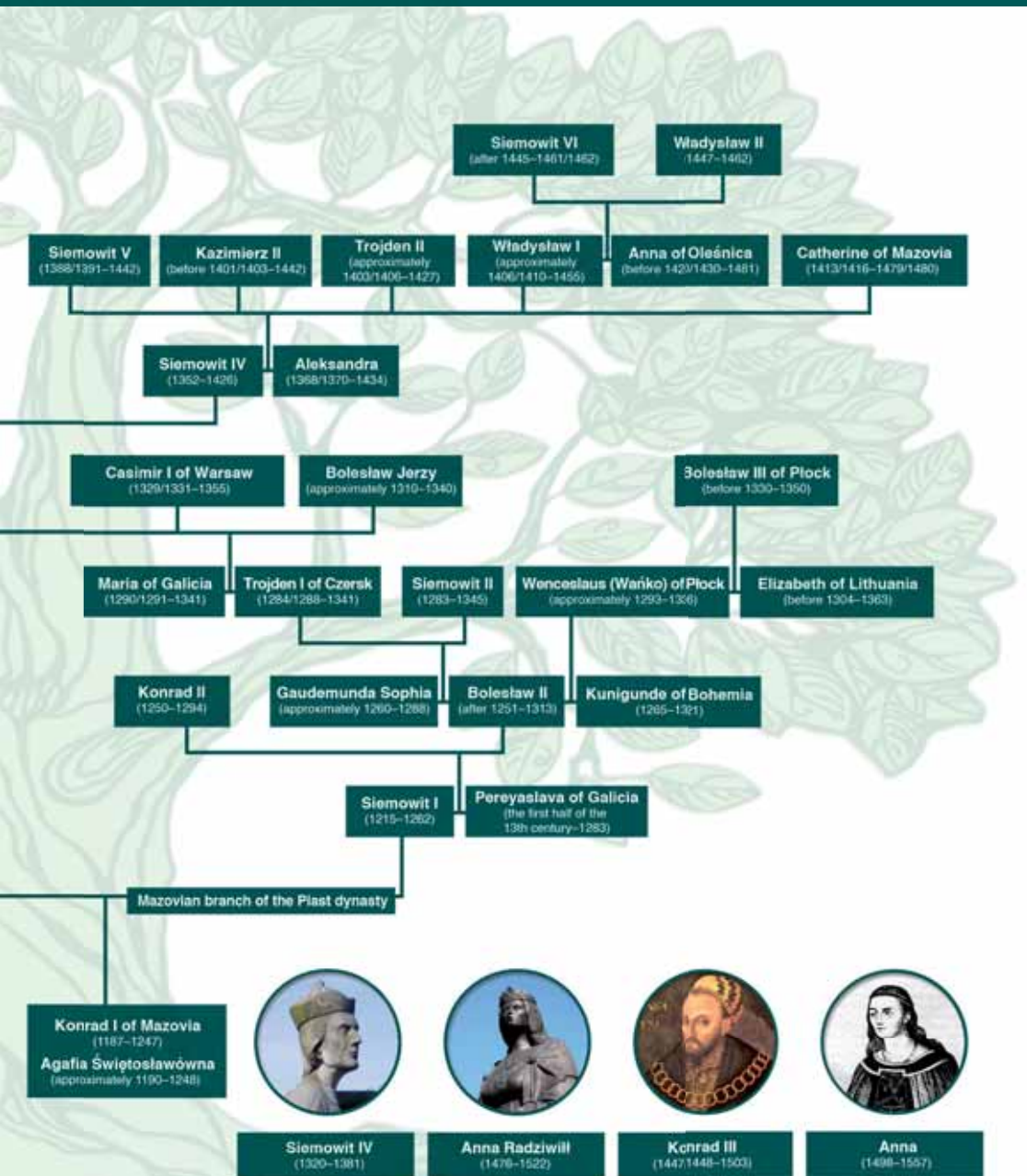


**Władysław the Elbow-High**  
(approximately 1261-1333)



**Casimir III the Great**  
(1310-1370)

# Primary branch of Mazovia's rulers





# Mazovia's 300 years of independence

## key dates

### Around the year 1200

a grandson of Boleslaw Wrymouth, Konrad of Mazovia (1187/1188-1247) becomes the sovereign Duke of Mazovia and Kuyavia. He shares the provinces, which were the legacy of his father, Casimir the Just, with his brother Leszek the White.

### 1228

Mazovia sees the arrival of the first members of the Teutonic Order. In the first year, there were only two. In light of the difficult situation along the northern border and having practically lost the Chelmno Land to Prussia, Konrad of Mazovia is forced to enter into an agreement with Hermann von Salza, the Grand Master of the Teutonic Order. In return for solving the Prussian crisis, the Teutonic Knights receive the Chelmno Land from Konrad of Mazovia. The Order successfully deals with Prussia. Their last bastion falls in 1283, i.e. half a century after the conquest began.



### 1138



Prince Boleslaw Wrymouth dies in Sochaczew. He leaves behind a will in which, as noted by Gallus Anonymus, *to prevent any civil wars, feuds or conflicts that might erupt after his death, he divided the Kingdom of Poland, which up until then he ruled single-handedly as its sole duke and monarch, among his four sons.* He assigns to the eldest son supreme power and the royal throne at Wawel. The sovereign Duchy of Mazovia will later emerge from one of the provinces into which Poland was divided.

### 1247

After the death of Konrad of Mazovia, Mazovia is divided between his two sons, Boleslaw I and Siemowit I. A year later, after the death of Boleslaw, all of the land is taken over by Siemowit I, who rules until 1262, when he is killed during a Lithuanian and Ruthenian attack, most likely by his brother-in-law. Siemowit's sons, Konrad II and Boleslaw II, split Mazovia between themselves. The former rules in Eastern Mazovia with its capital in Czersk, the latter in the western part with its capital in Plock. Boleslaw II then takes control over the entire duchy for 19 years after the heirless death of his brother.

1313

Duke Bolesław II dies. On his deathbed, he divides Mazovia among his three sons, Siemowit II, Trojden and Wenceslaus of Płock. From this moment on, the Duchy will be divided into provinces and partially feudally dependent on Czech rulers, and then on the king of Poland for nearly 60 years. Unification and independence of the Duchy are not brought about until the succession of Trojden's son, Duke Siemowit III, who is considered to be one of Mazovia's most brilliant rulers.

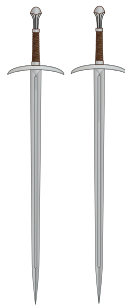


1370

King Casimir the Great dies heirless as the last member of the Piast dynasty on the Polish throne. Following a feudal contract between the king and Duke Siemowit III, Mazovia becomes united and sovereign once again. The sovereign status of Mazovia was reflected in Duke Siemowit III's refusal to participate in the coronation of Louis of Hungary as king of Poland. Siemowit III divides the duchy between his two sons, giving Eastern Mazovia, with its capital in Czersk, to Janusz and Western Mazovia, with its capital in Płock, to Siemowit IV. This division was in effect until Mazovia was finally incorporated into Poland.

### At the turn of the 14th and 15th centuries

the Duchy of Mazovia is at its peak, and its rulers are among the key players on the political scene in this part of Europe. Taking advantage of the interregnum following the death of Louis I of Hungary, Siemowit IV attempts to secure the Polish throne for himself. To accumulate the funds needed to fight for the crown, he mortgages part of Mazovia to the Teutonic Order. Eastern Mazovia, ruled by Duke Janusz, plays an important part in preparing for the Battle of Grunwald.



1454

Bolesław IV, a grandson of Duke Janusz, dies during a hunting trip. He leaves behind his young sons in his Eastern Mazovian domain. A year later, after the passing of his cousin Władysław I, who reigned in Western Mazovia and also left behind young heirs, the Duchy of Mazovia had no adult heir to the throne.

1462

The Płock branch of the Dukes of Mazovia, who ruled the western part of Mazovia, dies out. Within a matter of several months, Mazovia witnesses the heirless passing of the young sons of Władysław I, 16-year-old Siemowit VI and his 14-year-old brother, Władysław II. Polish king Casimir Jagiellon, taking advantage of their deaths and his rights as the feudal lord, annexes onto Poland the first lands in Mazovia: the lands of Rawa and Gostynin. By the end of the 15th century, subsequent Polish rulers incorporate the remaining lands in Western Mazovia into the Commonwealth.

1524-1526

A short, two-year time frame sees the death of Stanisław (1524) and Janusz III (1526), who were the last two Dukes of Mazovia ruling the eastern part of Mazovia. Their land is incorporated into Poland. To this day, the circumstances of the dukes' death are mysterious. Some even suspected it was double murder that put an end to the Duchy of Mazovia.





- 1 Jazdów – A hunting manor belonging to the Dukes of Mazovia
- 2 Plac Trzech Krzyży – commemoration of mediaeval hermits
- 3 Church of St. Anna – a Bernardine church
- 4 Royal Palace – residence of the Dukes of Mazovia
- 5 St. John's Cathedral – burial place of the Dukes of Mazovia
- 6 City walls – one of the first fortifications of this kind in Poland
- 7 House in the Square, known as the house of the Dukes of Mazovia
- 8 Zakroczym Street (ul. Zakroczymska) – northern part of the Zakroczym Route (Trakt Zakroczymski)





## Warsaw in the era of the Dukes of Mazovia

Warsaw was established around the year 1300 by Duke Bolesław II, a grandson of Konrad of Mazovia. The oldest part of Warsaw, which, in the early 14th century covered the area of today's Old Town, was surrounded by an embankment, and the first brick buildings were: the City Tower (Wieża Grodzka) adjacent to the castle, the Gate Tower (Wieża Bramna) (so-called Crane Tower (Wieża Żuraw)) and two gates leading into town: the Kraków Gate (Brama Krakowska) and the New Town Gate (Brama Nowomiejska). What is known today as St. John's Cathedral used to be a wooden church, and the house of the town mayor was located in the market square. In 1406, Warsaw replaced Czersk as the capital of Eastern Mazovia. In the same year, the dukes established a new town behind the city walls of Old Warsaw, known as New Warsaw. And while Old Warsaw had a mermaid in its coat of arms (even though it looked more like a harpy than a beautiful maid with a sword), New Town was given a different coat of arms, featuring a maid with a unicorn.



### Warsaw Tourist Information Centres

- pl. Defilad 1, 00-901 Warszawa  
[www.warsawtour.pl](http://www.warsawtour.pl)
- pl. Konesera 2, 03-736 Warszawa  
[www.warsawtour.pl](http://www.warsawtour.pl)
- pl. Zamkowy 1/13, 00-262 Warszawa  
<http://wcit.waw.pl>

### LAST DUKES OF MAZOVIA

In a matter of a year and a half (1524-1526), the Warsaw castle saw the childless death at a young age of the last two Mazovian dukes, Stanisław and Janusz III. Their death marks the end of the dynasty of the Dukes of Mazovia, who ruled for more than 300 years. The death of the two dukes, particularly Janusz, is being questioned to this day. Even before the death of Janusz III, two people were convicted and brutally executed (by slow-burning over fire for four hours) for attempting to poison the duke. It was suspected that the poisoning had been ordered by Katarzyna Radziejowska. The voivode's beautiful daughter is believed to have done it to take revenge on the two Mazovian rulers for rejecting her advances. Others suspected that Radziejowska was instructed to act by Bona Sforza herself, for whom it would have been convenient for the Mazovian dynasty to extinguish so that Mazovia could be incorporated into Poland. To dispel these dangerous rumours, King Sigismund the Old appointed a special board of investigators, who clarified the situation during a session of the Sejm (the lower house of the Polish parliament). Upon examining the deceased duke, doctors found that *he left this world and died not through human intervention but by the will of God Almighty*. The cause of the deaths was ascribed to the poor health of the two dukes, who were prone to tuberculosis, excessive drinking and leading a lavish lifestyle. However, in 1953, when archaeologists uncovered the remains of the Mazovian rulers, it turned out that they did not look frail at all. Janusz, in particular, had a bulky, muscular physique, with a protruding chest and a so-called "double backbone".



St. John's Cathedral, the tomb of the last Dukes of Mazovia: Janusz III and Stanisław

## 1 JAZDÓW

Brother-in-law murdered

Near today's Ujazdów Castle, there was a hunting manor belonging to the Dukes of Mazovia dating back to the 13th century. On 24 June 1262, it became the site of tragic events. Lithuanian and Ruthenian troops, led by Mindaugas, invaded Mazovia and entered the fortified city in which the then-ruler of Mazovia Siemowit I, the son of Konrad of Mazovia, was staying with his son Konrad II. The invaders killed Siemowit I in front of little Konrad and captured the child. Another twist to the story is the fact that Siemowit was most likely killed by Shvarn, the Duke of Halych Ruthenia, who was his wife's brother.



Ujazdów Castle was built in the former village of Jazdów. That era is commemorated in the address of the residence, ul. Jazdów 2.

The castle now houses the Centre for Contemporary Art, <https://u-jazdowski.pl>

## 2 PLAC TRZECH KRZYŻY

The hut of the three hermits

The name Three Crosses Square (Plac Trzech Krzyży) derives from three legendary hermits who lived there at a time when what is now Warsaw was an impenetrable forest. Duke Siemowit I once reportedly witnessed the hermits help animals. When asked why they were doing it, they said life is empty if you do not help others. The duke then decided to help the virtuous men by sending them an array of gifts. However, this brought misfortune on them. Robbers, thinking that the duke was hiding his treasures in the forest hut, attacked and killed the hermits.



One of the crosses in the square, which commemorates the Ujazdów Calvary, established by King Augustus II the Strong

## 3 CHURCH OF ST. ANNA

Bernardine monks in Warsaw

The church was founded by Duchess Anna Feodorovna, the daughter-in-law of Janusz the Old and mother of Duke Bolesław IV. She also brought the Bernardine monks from Krakow to the church. The church was consecrated in December 1454, a few months after the tragic death of her son, following which the duchess ruled in Mazovia on behalf of her young grandsons. The tombstone of another Duchess Anna, the mother of the last Dukes of Mazovia, originally graced the church interior. It was commissioned by her son Stanisław and unfortunately has not survived to the present day.



The chancel in the Church of St. Anna has retained its Gothic features to this day.



University Church of St. Anna,  
ul. Krakowskie Przedmieście 68



At a time when Mazovia was not yet part of Poland and the dukes' messengers from Czersk were more common in Warsaw than royal messengers from Krakow, today's Krakowskie Przedmieście was known as Przedmieście Czerskie. It was part of Mazovia's most important route, the Zakroczym Route, which connected the two most important centres of power in the duchy: Czersk and Plock.

## 4 ROYAL CASTLE

Residence of the Dukes of Mazovia

The oldest residence of the dukes was a wooden court erected on the site of today's castle, and the first brick building was the City Tower, preserved to this day on the cellar and ground floor levels. The Gothic cellars were also built during the dukes' reign. However, much like the interior of the City Tower, they cannot be accessed by tourists exploring the castle along the

designated routes. The cellars, where museum classes are now held for students, are part of the duke's Palace (*Curia Maior*) erected in the early 15th century by Duke Janusz the Old. It was a rectangular brick structure, whose south-eastern corner towered over a massive slope. The western façade featured shallow, ogival cavities crowned with ornamental detail.



Royal Castle in Warsaw – Museum. The Residence of Kings and the Commonwealth.

Plac Zamkowy 4

[www.zamek-krolewski.pl](http://www.zamek-krolewski.pl)



The City Tower – the oldest brick structure in the Royal Castle

During the reconstruction of the castle in the years 1971-1974, the façade overlooking the Grand Courtyard was recreated in a way that most closely resembled the original Gothic façade of the Grand Court. The castle complex also included two other buildings: the *Curia Minor*, which was the residence of the Mazovian duchesses, and the *Palatium*, where the duke's chancery was located. In August 1526, following the death of the last Dukes of Mazovia and upon the arrival of King Sigismund the Old in Warsaw, the Warsaw castle became known as the Royal Castle.



The restored façade of the former court of Duke Janusz as seen from the courtyard of the Royal Castle

## 5 ST. JOHN'S CATHEDRAL

Resting place of the rulers of Eastern Mazovia

The cathedral was erected in the second half of the 14th century in place of a wooden church. Its crypt is home to the tombs of Duke Janusz and his grandson Bolesław IV. In the side aisle, you will find the only original tombstone of the Dukes of Mazovia, the sarcophagus of Duke Stanisław and Janusz III, commissioned by their sister, Anna (pictured on page 8). After the death of her brothers, when she became the only living descendant of the Mazovian Piasts, Anna had to rely on the financial support of the king of Poland, Sigismund the Old. The treasure vault of the duchy was almost empty and her brothers had even sold their sister's jewels before they died.



Archcathedral Basilica of the Martyrdom of St. John the Baptist in Warsaw, at ul. Świętojańska 8



There is a bear sculpture at the entrance to the Jesuit Church adjacent to St. John's Cathedral. It is believed that one of the dukes, owing to his physique known as the Bear, turned to stone when he saw his beloved marry a different man.



The façade of the cathedral only resembles the Gothic style – there is a concrete structure underneath the brickwork.

## 6 CITY WALLS

Warsaw Fortress

To improve the city's defensive capabilities, in the mid-14th century, the earth rampart was replaced with brick walls. The next stage in the construction of the city walls came during the reign of Duke Janusz I the Old. Erected in stages, the walls closing off the town covered an area of more than 8.5 hectares. They had a full length (along Podwale and Mostowa streets and the Vistula Slope) of approximately 1,200 metres. Only three towns in Mazovia were surrounded by the city walls: Warsaw, Płock and Pułtusk.

## 7 HOUSE OF THE DUKES OF MAZOVIA

Pagan customs in central Warsaw

The house located on the corner of the Old Town Square and Narrow Danube Street (ul. Wąski Dunaj) is known as the house of the Dukes of Mazovia. There is a story about how the house came to be. Legend has it that during the construction process, which was proving to be exceptionally challenging, Duchess Danutė of Lithuania, a Lithuanian raised in the pagan tradition, decided to turn to animal sacrifice in an effort to speed up the works. She ordered the chief bricklayer to capture a black cat and bury it alive in the foundations of the house. The works then moved forward quickly and the house was completed shortly thereafter.



Was a black cat really buried in the house's foundations?



The Royal Well in Traugutt Park.

near what is now Traugutt Park, there is a potable water well known as the Royal Well. Legend has it that when Duke Siemowit I got lost in the woods on a hunting trip, a golden-antlered deer led him to a water spring located in that very spot. The spring soon became famous for its crystal-clear waters. Water from the spring was enjoyed in Warsaw's foremost homes, the duke's court and the royal court. In the 18th century, King Stanislaw August ordered a water tower to be built over the spring.



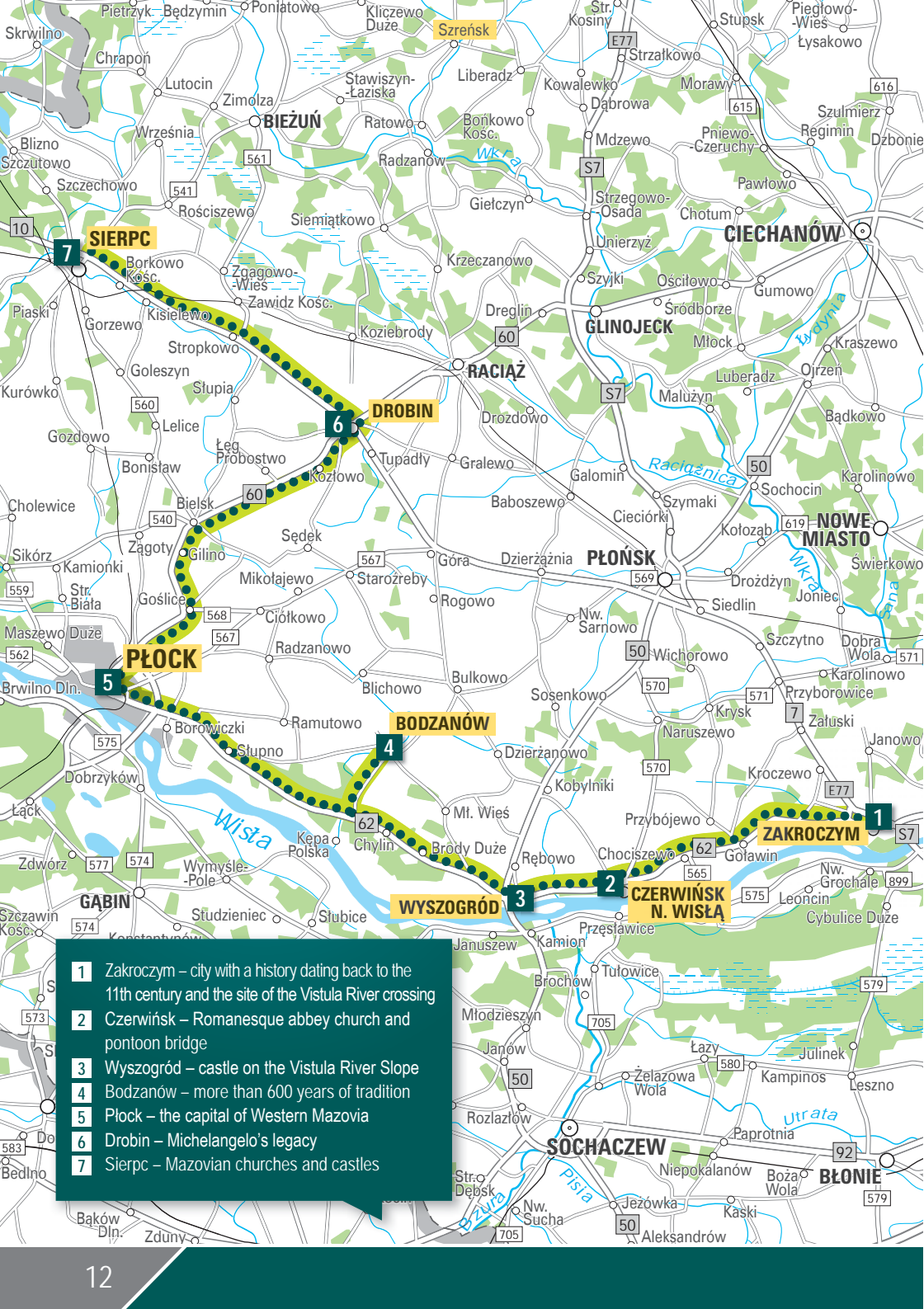
### BEAUTIFUL MERMAID OR SCARY HАРY: WHAT IS WARSAW'S REAL COAT OF ARMS?

The oldest known representation of Warsaw's coat of arms is found on the seals on the documents of the City Council from 1400 and 1402. They are currently deposited with the State Archive in Toruń. The triangular coat of arms depicts a creature with a curly-haired human head, a human torso that morphs into a bird torso and a long, snake-like tail and clawed paws. Add wings to complete the image and what you have is a creature that is more like a harpy, known from Greek mythology, than the mermaid seen on statues that can be found in Warsaw. This is especially true given the curls featured on the coat of arms, as harpies were known for their beautiful hair.

## 8 ZAKROCZYM STREET

Northern part of the Zakroczym Route

Zakroczym Street (ul. Zakroczymska) is part of the route whose name is preserved in the name of the street. After New Town was established, the route became a frontage of the New Town Market Square. On the extension of Zakroczym Street,



- 1** Zakroczym – city with a history dating back to the 11th century and the site of the Vistula River crossing
- 2** Czerwińsk – Romanesque abbey church and pontoon bridge
- 3** Wyszogród – castle on the Vistula River Slope
- 4** Bodzanów – more than 600 years of tradition
- 5** Płock – the capital of Western Mazovia
- 6** Drobin – Michelangelo's legacy
- 7** Sierpc – Mazovian churches and castles



## Route of Konrad of Mazovia – Western Part

Let us take you on a trip around Northern Mazovia, the birthplace of the Duchy of Mazovia. This is where Duke Konrad established his first fortified cities. The capital of the Duchy was Płock, which to this day has the highest number of monuments related to the history of the Dukes of Mazovia. The Vistula River was the main route for the transport of goods at the time. One time, even a pontoon bridge was floated down the river. The pontoon bridge was the secret weapon of King Władysław Jagiełło and it allowed the Polish army, supported by the Mazovian knights, to cross the Vistula River, take the Teutonic Knights by surprise and secure a brilliant victory in the Battle of Grunwald. The bridge was assembled in Czerwińsk, at the foot of a Romanesque church which survives to this day.

In this part of Mazovia, it is worth visiting the sites of former watchtowers of the Duchy. You can see Mazovia's most precious Renaissance-era tombstone, in a style reminiscent of Michelangelo's, and wonder at a mysterious pagan symbol preserved, of all places, in the wall of a Catholic church.

### KONRAD OF MAZOVIA

Konrad of Mazovia (1187/1188–1247), who was regarded by his contemporaries as a brute and a tyrant, and went down in history as the man who brought the Teutonic Knights to Poland, laid the foundation for a strong Duchy of Mazovia, which survived for as many as three hundred years. By bringing in the Teutonic Knights, he protected the northern border of Mazovia against attack by the Prussians, who had ravaged the area in the past. Mazovia's northern border with the Teutonic Order, finally established in the mid-14th century, lasted longer than the Duchy of Mazovia and the State of the Teutonic Order. The same border separated Poland from Prussia as late as before the Second World War. While they played a negative role in Poland's history, the Teutonic Knights did bring considerable improvements to Mazovia: cities were established under Teutonic law and churches were built in the Teutonic style. The Teutonic State also offered loans to help boost trade in Mazovia.

## 1 ZAKROCZYM

### Watchtower on the Vistula River

Zakroczym is located on a high bank of the Vistula River, in some places up to 25 metres high, with picturesque gorges along the river. The city's coat of arms commemorates events that took place in Zakroczym when Mazovia was ruled by dukes.

Legend has it that when brave knight Junosza was on the way to his own wedding, a white lamb crossed the path of the wedding procession. The knight took it as a good omen and, as it soon turned out, he was right. The wedding procession then encountered Teutonic troops. Brave Junosza slaughtered all of the brethren



Zakroczym's coat of arms

and, still covered in the enemy's blood, arrived at the altar to meet his bride. In honour of this feat, Zakroczym was given a coat of arms of a white lamb against a blood-red background.

### Teutonic Knights in Zakroczym

Is there some truth to the story? The Teutonic Knights did in fact reach Zakroczym, but for non-military reasons. In June 1335, in Zakroczym's main square, the great-grandsons of Konrad of Mazovia, Dukes Siemowit II and his brother Trojden, renewed the agreement with the Grand Master of the Teutonic Order, Dietrich von Altenburg. The alliance ensured that Mazovia would be protected against... Poland. The dukes feared that King Casimir the Great, who was consolidating the Polish lands after the feudal fragmentation, would try to forcefully annex Mazovia as well. Should the king attempt a military effort, the Teutonic Knights would fight against him on Mazovia's side.

Other important decisions were also made in Zakroczym. It was in Zakroczym that Duke Janusz the Old announced a set of laws for the Mazovian lands, and that is where Mazovian assemblies (sejmiki) were held.

### Zakroczym's fortresses

In the north-eastern part of town, on Czubajka Hill, archaeologists uncovered the Duchy's watchtower. The fortified city existed from the 11th century until the 14th century and is believed to have been named Czuwatka. Another, now non-existent, Zakroczym stronghold that existed during the era of the Dukes of Mazovia was the castle. 17th-century images depict wooden buildings lining the rectangular courtyard. The only thing that has survived are the historic cellars, over which a contemporary manor house was built.

The now-700-year-old market square used to feature a well, available for use by travellers journeying along the Zakroczym Route. There are plans to restore the well's superstructure. Also located in the market square is the Gothic Church of Exaltation of the Holy Cross, which harkens back to the times of Mazovia's greatness.



[www.zakroczym.pl](http://www.zakroczym.pl)



The route that connects Czersk and Plock owes its name to Zakroczym, the site of the Vistula River crossing. It was located near what is now a bridge on national road 7. After crossing the river and before arriving in Zakroczym, travellers were faced with a challenging temptation, the Utrata (Ruin) Inn, whose name stems from the fact that time spent at the inn had led many a traveller to financial ruin. Today, it is one of the most scenic beaches on the Vistula River. The route from Utrata to Zakroczym runs along picturesque gorges. The proximity of Zakroczym's market square was heralded by the sight of two hills separated by a narrow path. Atop one of the hills was the Czuwatka watchtower, while on the other – the Church of St. Barbara.



## 2 CZERWIŃSK

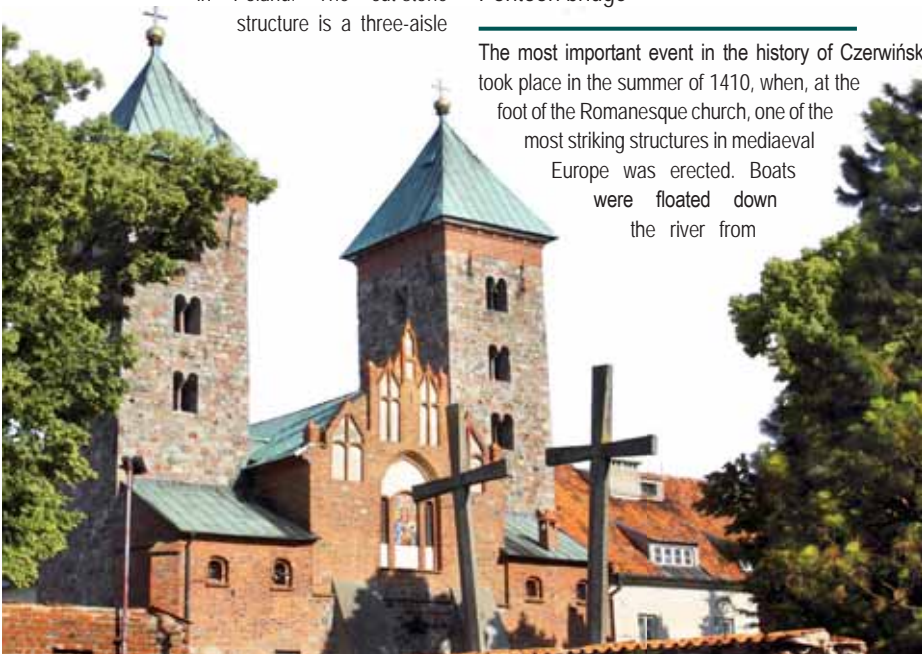
### Secrets of the Romanesque abbey

Dragons and sword marks on the Romanesque portal, a mysterious tombstone, the Knights Templar and the secret weapon of King Władysław Jagiełło, used in Czerwińsk, which allowed for a true Blitzkrieg by the army led by the king... The Romanesque abbey still holds a number of mysteries.

### A jewel of Romanesque architecture

The Romanesque Church of Annunciation to the Blessed Virgin Mary was a very important place for the Duchy of Mazovia. This is evidenced by the favours granted to it by many of its dukes, starting with Konrad of Mazovia. Despite numerous reconstructions, the church has retained its Romanesque features and remains one

of the most unique monuments in Poland. The cut-stone structure is a three-aisle



Czerwińsk Abbey

basilica with two towers, a transept and a chancel. The main aisle was connected to the side aisles by semi-circular apses. Preserved in the vestibule is a unique Romanesque portal from the mid-12th century. The portal used to mark the path of entry to the church. The vestibule was added at a later stage. The portal was partly restored in the 20th century. Also preserved are the original doors with Romanesque fittings and the dents in the portal above the door, which, according to legend, first appeared after Jagiełło and Vytautas tried to sharpen their swords there before going to battle with the Teutonic Knights. The south chapel retains portions of the frescoes, presumed to date back to the first half of the 13th century, when Mazovia was ruled by Duke Konrad of Mazovia. The preserved fragments depict a scene from the *Last Judgment*. It is the largest collection of Romanesque frescoes in Poland. Other parts of the church feature portions of Gothic, Renaissance and Baroque-era paintings.

### Pontoon bridge

The most important event in the history of Czerwińsk took place in the summer of 1410, when, at the foot of the Romanesque church, one of the most striking structures in mediaeval

Europe was erected. Boats were floated down the river from

Kozienice, and then connected by a shared deck. Thus a pontoon bridge was formed which enabled speedy crossing for the troops led by King Władysław Jagiełło on their way to battle the Teutonic Knights. In Czerwińsk, Jagiełło's troops joined forces with the Mazovian units led by Duke Janusz the Old, and with Lithuanian and Ruthenian troops, who had been secretly brought over by Duke Vytautas without alerting the Order's spies. Before attacking the Teutonic Knights, the military forces were concentrated in areas controlled by Janusz, Duke of Mazovia, who had a sovereign foreign policy, even though he had paid homage to the King of Poland.

The bridge allowed Jagiełło to administer a blow to the very heart of the Teutonic State, where the Teutonic Knights were not expecting to be targeted. The structure, supported on 150 boats, only took half a day to assemble in Czerwińsk. The army marched for three days (from 30 June to



Does Czerwiński Abbey house the tomb of Duke Konrad II? Relying on earlier accounts, Jan Długosz wrote that the duke died in June 1294 and was buried in Czerwińsk. In the 1950s, a mysterious tombstone was discovered in the church. The tombstone is now displayed in the north chapel. The figure presented on the tombstone is very blurry. All you can see is her outline and her headgear, which may just as easily be an abbot's mitre and a knight's helmet. None of the original tombstones of the Dukes of Mazovia survive today except for the sarcophagus of the last Dukes, Janusz III and Stanisław, which is located in the Cathedral of St. John in Warsaw. The others were destroyed over the years. If the Czerwińsk tombstone was in fact the tombstone of Duke Konrad, this would most certainly be a sensational discovery. However, the majority of the archaeologists seem to favour the theory that it is the tombstone of one of the abbots of the Czerwińsk monastery, and the duke himself, while he did die in the abbey, was in fact buried in Warka.



The capital of a Romanesque column

3 July 1410), during which time the river was crossed by 18,000 horsemen, 4,000 infantry and 8,000 supply wagons. The entire operation went very smoothly and took the Teutonic Knights by surprise. After the army had passed over it, the bridge was floated down the river to today's Ciecchocinek, where the troops returning from Grunwald crossed the river again.

### Mystery of the Knights Templar

The Order's records mention the arrival in Czerwińsk of a massive fleet under the flag of the Knights Templar. The fleet arrived in Czerwińsk after the dissolution of the Order and execution of its Grand Master by King of France Philip the Fair. The King wanted to find the treasure of the Knights Templar but he never did. As a result of grants from the Dukes of Mazovia, the Knights Templar were known to have three commanderies in Mazovia. One of them was located on the bank of the Bug River in Wyszków. What was the purpose for the arrival of the Knights Templar in Czerwińsk? The Order's records note that the Teutonic Knights were provided room and board by the abbot, for which he was generously compensated. Is this where they left some of their treasures? This mystery has yet to be solved.



### 3 WYSZOGRÓD

#### Castle on the Vistula River Slope

The town's name means "high town" and dates back to a time when Konrad of Mazovia had a fortified watchtower built on a tall embankment on the Vistula River, known today as Castle Mountain.

The convenient location on the Vistula River ensured the city's growth. The city had a port and traded in cloth, grain and wood products. The Dukes of Mazovia lived in Wyszogród from the 13th century. In 1313, Wyszogród witnessed the death of a grandson of Konrad of Mazovia, Duke Boleslaw II. After his passing, the duchy was divided into three provinces.

A testament to the dukes' legacy is the religious complex built for the Franciscans. The church, initially in a Gothic style, was erected in 1406 with the funding provided by Duke Janusz I. Unfortunately, the castle erected in the second half of the 14th century did not survive. Its walls were uncovered by archaeologists on Castle Mountain.



Receptacle with an image of Perun from the The Vistula River and Wyszogród Land Museum collection

from the example of King Casimir the Great, he helped transform the architecture in his duchy from wood to brick. He also focused on consolidating the laws and divided the state into new administrative units called lands. Wyszogród was the capital of one of these.

#### Mysterious receptacle at the Vistula River and Wyszogród Land Museum

Monuments uncovered by archaeologists on Castle Hill can be seen at the Vistula River and Wyszogród Land Museum. The collections also include exhibits related to boat building and fishing near the Vistula River, and there is also a unique clay receptacle found by archaeologists in the village of Drwały, a settlement existing before Wyszogród was established. The receptacle dates back more than 1,300 years and contains a schematic representation of pagan god Perun – a lightning-casting horseman.

Although it is in vain to look for majestic towers of the stronghold, which once crowned the Castle Hill, it is worth going up to the Hill's top using specially prepared steps and from there admire the panorama of the surroundings. Another attraction offered in Wyszogród is a water taxi cruise on Poland's largest river.



[www.wyszogrod.pl](http://www.wyszogrod.pl)  
The Vistula River  
and Wyszogród Land Museum ul. Rynek 1  
<https://muzeumplock.eu/oddzialy/muzeum-wisly-w-wyszogrodzie>

#### Who built the castle in Wyszogród?

Until recently, the construction was credited to King Casimir the Great, who, in the 14th century, incorporated part of Mazovia into Poland for 20 years. Archaeologists verified this theory. However, according to the latest findings, the castle in Wyszogród was most likely erected by Duke Siemowit III, who is considered to be the greatest ruler among the Dukes of Mazovia. Siemowit consolidated Mazovia, divided by his grandfather, Boleslaw II, and drawing

### 4 BODZANÓW

600 years of tradition.

A testament to the city's rich history is the square laid out by the Dukes of Mazovia in 1351, along with the historic Gothic church and a tradition that has been in place for 600 years now.

On the Moltawa River, at the foothills of the market square established on a tall slope, lies the border that separated

Mazovia for 150 years. In the west lay the Duchy of Płock, ruled by the descendants of Duke Siemowit IV, whereas in the East was the Duchy of Czersk and Warsaw, controlled by King Janusz I and his heirs. Bodzanów owes a tradition that has been in place for 600 years now to Duke Janusz. In 1415, he established a Pentecost fair. This fair, called the Norbertine Fair, is still held to this day, and every year the market is visited by merchants, craftsmen and also knights. The dukes' legacy is also commemorated by a 15th-century brick church located in the main square. It is an aisleless church, enclosed on three sides, without a designated chancel. The church was built with Gothic brick, using black stones and water wheels.



[www.bodzanow.pl](http://www.bodzanow.pl)

## 5 PŁOCK

Capital of the Western part of the Duchy of Mazovia

**The historic centre of Płock is marked by Tumskie Hill. This is where the city's history began in the 10th century, when Mieszko I erected his fortress on the high hill overlooking the Vistula River. It is likely that on Tumskie Hill, the rebel Mieclaw ruled for a short period of time. He was a self-appointed ruler of Mazovia, who tried to establish an independent pagan state. It was there that Duke Władysław Herman ruled Poland and from the time of Konrad of Mazovia, Tumskie Hill was the residence of the Dukes of Mazovia.**



Interior of the cathedral basilica in Płock – view from the chancel

## ! CAPITAL OF THE DUCHY, THE CITY OF PŁOCK

The name inscribed on the signpost at the town threshold is not related to the Dukes of Mazovia, but to the reign of Duke Władysław Herman and his son Bolesław Wrymouth, who went down in history for dividing Poland into provinces. After dividing the country among his sons, Zbigniew and Bolesław III Wrymouth, Duke Władysław Herman settled in Płock, retaining control of all of Poland. Thus, in the late 11th century, Płock served as the capital. The reminders of that era are: a segment of the wall of the Romanesque palace (preserved in the wall of what later became a castle near the Clock Tower), a statue of Duke Bolesław Wrymouth and the spectacle that can be seen every day at noon in the Old Market Square. When the clock strikes 12:00, the figure of Duke Władysław Herman appears in the city hall tower and knights his son Bolesław Wrymouth.

Where the Dukes of Mazovia are buried

The first cathedral in Poland was erected in 1144. Over the years, it was destroyed by invaders and disasters on many occasions. Reconstructed after each and every one of these, it is now a mixture of various architectural styles. The church houses a copy of the famous bronze Płock door, the original of which was created in the mid-12th century.

Płock Cathedral is the largest resting place for the Mazovian rulers, and it documents nearly 250 years of sovereign rule in Mazovia. Sources state that the following figures were laid to rest in the crypt of Płock Cathedral: Konrad of Mazovia (died in 1247), his grandson Bolesław II and great-grandson Wencelaus of Płock, known as Wańko, his son Bolesław III, as well as another great-grandson of Konrad of Mazovia, Siemowit III, his brother Casimir and sons Siemowit IV and Henry, who was the bishop of Płock.



**ALTAR OF THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS**

The statue of Christ and kneeling saints: Dominic and Margaret Mary Alacoque were carved out of Carrara marble in 1913. The tympanum features a mosaic made in Venice as an identical copy of the famous 5th-century Good Shepherd Mosaic in Ravenna.



**ALTAR OF OUR LADY OF MAZOVIA, THE CATHEDRAL'S PATRON SAINT**

One of the oldest altars in the cathedral, completed in the first half of the 17th century. The image of Madonna with Child has been revered for many generations. Above it, there is a Latin inscription that reads: *Monstra te esse Matrem* (Show yourself to be a mother). Numerous votive offerings indicate worship of the Virgin Mary.



**CHAPEL OF THE MOST BLESSED SACRAMENT**

The central part of the chapel features a Neo-Renaissance altar with a tabernacle, completed in 1900 with the use of multicoloured marble and gilded bronze.

**CHANCEL**

The Neo-Renaissance main altar was designed by Szyller and completed in late early 20th century. Please note the choir stalls flanking the altar and the bishop's throne, together with the gilded throne chair, which is considered to be a masterpiece. The walls feature multicoloured polychromes depicting scenes from the life of the Virgin Mary.

**CRUCIFIXION ALTAR**

The cathedral's oldest altar, completed in 1600, which uses contrasting marble and alabaster. The central part features statues of Christ on the Cross as well as Virgin Mary and St. John.

**CHAPEL OF ST. SIGISMUND**

Altar designed by Szyller, made of multi-coloured marble in 1913. Above it is a stained-glass window depicting St. Sigismund – king, martyr, patron saint of Plock and the cathedral, made in 1956. The chapel was destroyed during a bombing in September 1939.

**ALTAR OF ST. STANISLAW KOSTKA**

An early-Renaissance altar completed in the early 20th century. The bas-relief in the centre depicts the vision of Madonna with Child that appeared to the ailing Stanislaw.

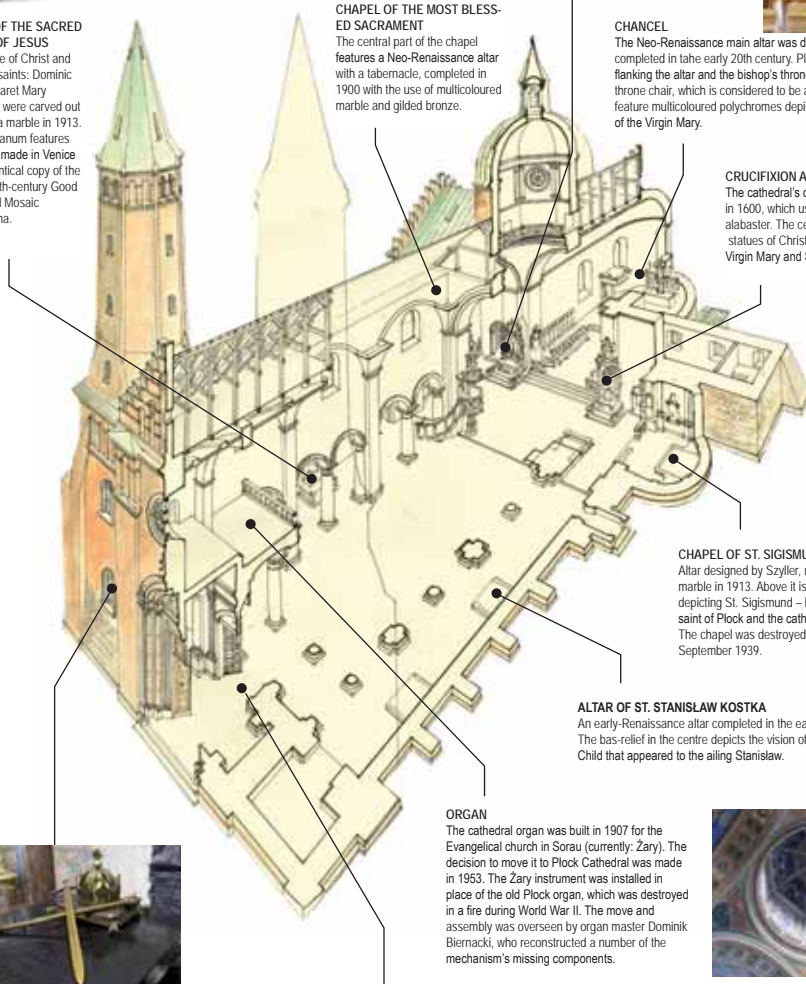
**ORGAN**

The cathedral organ was built in 1907 for the Evangelical church in Sorau (currently: Żary). The decision to move it to Plock Cathedral was made in 1953. The Żary instrument was installed in place of the old Plock organ, which was destroyed in a fire during World War II. The move and assembly was overseen by organ master Dominik Biernacki, who reconstructed a number of the mechanism's missing components.



**POLYCHROME**

The concept of the polychrome dates back to the early 20th century. Never before had the walls of the cathedral been covered with paintings. The artist was Władysław Drapiewski, and he worked on the polychrome prior to World War I, during the interwar period and after World War II.



**ROYAL CHAPEL**

The chapel is located under the north tower. It is the final resting place of the rulers of Poland and numerous Dukes of Mazovia. The remains of Władysław Herman and Bolesław Wrymouth are housed in a black marble tomb adorned with an alabaster eagle and royal insignia, while their ashes have been placed underneath the chapel's flooring.



**PLOCK CATHEDRAL DOOR**

The door was crafted in the mid-12th century in Magdeburg and intended for the cathedral in Plock. The original door is housed at the Holy Wisdom of God Cathedral in Veliky Novgorod, Russia. Plock Cathedral is home to an identical copy of the door, which was officially consecrated in 1982. The timing or circumstances of the removal of the original door have not been explained, but this is not the only mystery surrounding it. Each part of the door illustrates the Story of Salvation, so why is there an image of a centaur, admittedly unrelated to Christianity, in the bottom left-hand corner?



The Plock Diadem – according to one theory, this is the crown of Konrad of Mazovia

Also buried there were the sons of Siemowit IV: Casimir II and Władysław I, as well as the latter's sons: Siemowit VI and Władysław II, and the last duke to rule in the Plock Land, before it was annexed by Poland in 1495 – Janusz II. Half of the dukes who ruled Mazovia were buried in Plock. Where should we look for their tombs? In the 19th century, explorers entered the crypt of Plock Cathedral in search of the remains of Bolesław Wrymouth and his father Władysław Herman. They reportedly identified Bolesław because of his disfigured nose. The remains of the rulers who controlled all of Poland from Plock were transferred to a special sarcophagus that can now be viewed at the Royal Chapel. At that time, the remains of the Dukes of Mazovia were also discovered. They were not provided a separate sarcophagus. Instead, they were placed under the flooring at the feet of Poland's rulers. They remain there to this day.

## Castle or former abbey building?

Plock Castle was built by King Casimir the Great. In the mid-14th century, he incorporated the western part of Mazovia into Poland for 20 years. He took over in 1350, after the heirless death of the Duke of Plock, Bolesław III. The area was reinstated to Mazovia after the king's death in 1370. Casimir had promised to return it to Duke Siemowit III, the then-ruler of Eastern Mazovia, if he did not have a male heir. Though married four times, the king never had a son. He was the last member of the royal branch of the Piasts, and after his death the Polish throne was taken over by King Louis of Hungary.

Two towers survive from the former castle: the Noblemen's Tower (Wieża Szlachecka) and the Clock Tower (Wieża Zegarowa), as well part of the walls. The remnants are not even referred to as a castle but merely as a former abbey building. In the 16th century, the castle became the seat of a Benedictine order, and after the partitions of Poland it was converted into a seminary. Housed in one of its wings is the Museum of the Diocese (ul. Tumskie 3), which brings together the most valuable monuments associated with the Dukes of Mazovia: a gold paten and goblet, founded by Konrad of Mazovia and a Plock diadem, which is considered a crown by some historians. The paten features Konrad himself, his wife Agafia, and their two sons, Casimir (father of Władysław the Elbow-High) and Siemowit I.



Reconstruction of a mediaeval castle on Tumskie Hill



## MAZOVIAN KNIGHTS

In Western Mazovia, there remained, or are mentioned in literature, knights' residences and settlements established not only by the dukes themselves but also by their knights. It was Mazovian magnates who built the castles in Sierpc and the fortified tower in Drobin, which was recently tracked down by archaeologists. The magnates left behind magnificent tombstones in the Drobin parish church, built a fortified settlement in Biezuń, which today boasts an 18th-century manor of the Zamoyski family, and built the castle in Szeřeńsk.

The first owner of Sierpc was Jaśko Plik, a knight also known as Mazur and mentioned by Henryk Sienkiewicz in his novel *Teutonic Knights*. He received Sierpc as an offering from Duke Siemowit IV. Together with another of the duke's knights, Abraham

Socha, he became famous as the first pilgrim from Mazovia to journey to the shrine of the apostle St. James in Santiago de Compostela. Sierpc's later owners, the Sierpcski family, were castellans, starosts and voivodes. After the annexation of Mazovia by Poland, the most prominent member of the family, Andrzej, became a trusted member of the court of King Sigismund the Old, and served as a flag bearer at his funeral. Drobin's owners, the Kryskis, were castellans and voivodes for the Dukes of Mazovia, and after Mazovia was annexed by Poland, they had important roles in the Jagiellonian court. A similar career path in the court of Jagiełło's descendants was followed by the Szeřeńskis, the owners of Szeřeńsk, which, in the Middle Ages, was the capital of one of the lands comprising the Duchy of Mazovia – the Zawkrze Land.

## 6 DROBIN

### Michelangelo's legacy in the heart of Mazovia

**In 1444, when King Władysław of Varna was killed in the battle of Varna, and Mazovia was still a vast duchy, but one that was feudally dependent on Poland, Drobin became the property of the Kryski clan. It owes its major landmarks to them.**

Drobin was bought by Ninogiew Kryski, an important figure of the duke's court, the castellan of Czersk and Warsaw, and later the voivode of Plock. He served the last role during a time when the Duchy of Mazovia was in crisis and part of Western Mazovia, minus the Plock Land, was annexed by Poland.

His son Jan, the Plock canon, founded a church in the main square in Drobin. However, he encountered some problems with the construction process. Sources claim that in order to complete the church, he had to break off the agreement with the first contractor, who was unable to build the vaulted ceilings, and entrusted the completion of the church to other contractors. They performed the work faultlessly, for as we can see, the Gothic body of the church survives to this day.

Its interior contains some true jewels of religious

The paten and the goblet were the duke's votive offerings to Plock Cathedral for the murder of Canon Czaplą. The canon, who had raised his sons, offended Konrad by forcing Casimir to conduct a policy that conflicted with the interests of his father. One remarkable case of misconduct involved Duchess Agafia, who ordered the body of the dead canon to be re-hanged. Because of this, a spell was cast over the Duchy. In order to have it annulled, Konrad had to give the Łowicz Land to the archbishops of Gniezno.

The diadem that is now found on the so-called Herma of St. Sigismund is made of gilded silver and composed of 14 pieces. Scholars believe that it was intended for rulers from the Arpad dynasty, and Konrad of Mazovia took possession of it in the 13th century. It is the oldest preserved Polish crown. The Diocese Museum also took possession of the Plock Bible from the 12th century.



[www.turystykaplock.eu](http://www.turystykaplock.eu)  
Tourist Information Centre at  
ul. Stary Rynek 8  
tel. +48 24 367 19 44

architecture, i.e. Renaissance-era tombstones difficult to find anywhere else in Mazovia. They depict a distant descendant of Ninogńiew, Wojciech Kryski, an outstanding representative of Polish Renaissance, the king's envoy, a linguist and a lover of ancient culture, who died at a young age. Above the sculpture of the deceased Wojciech, the artist has portrayed his mourning parents, Paweł and Anna. The other side of the altar features similarly executed representations of the last members of the Kryski lineage: Stanisław, Małgorzata and Piotr.

The older tombstone appears to imitate the tombstone made by Michelangelo for Pope Julius II. The prototype made by the Italian master is located in Rome's Church of San Pietro in Vincoli. Did someone in Drobin copy the work of the great Renaissance-era sculptor, who went down in history as the creator of the *Last Judgment*, or did Michelangelo himself visit Mazovia at some point? The Drobin tombstone uses a similar layout, and the figure of Anna Kryska, Wojciech's mother, is preserved with the same gesture as the woman depicted on the Pope's tombstone. She also has a man's leg, copied from the legs of Moses, which Michelangelo carved on the tombstone of Pope Julius II. The Pope's tombstone is not a typical example of Italian sepulchral art. It will remain a mystery why the tombstone, as unique and not typical of Michelangelo's body of work as it was, became the inspiration for the creator of the tombstone in Drobin.



Tombstone of Wojciech Kryski

## 7 SIERPC

City of four churches  
and two castles

**Sierpc was a border town. The Dobrzyń Land and the Chełmno Land were located on the west bank of the Skrwa River, which runs near the town. The Chełmno Land, although it originally belonged to Konrad of Mazovia, was soon captured by the Prussians. When Konrad handed it over to the Teutonic Knights, he was no longer its rightful owner. Since the arrival of the first knight-monks dressed in white mantles with black crosses on them in 1228, it became the birthplace of their state.**

### The churches of Sierpc

Located along Mazovia's border, Sierpc is one of the region's oldest towns. The surviving Church of St. Vitus, St. Modest and St. Crescentia on Farna Street is not the first church to be located there. Although the single-aisle Gothic church with a four-story tower was built in three phases from the 14th century until the first half of the 16th century, its name indicates that it may have been preceded by an earlier structure. The Saints: Vitus, Modest and Crescentia were worshipped in the 11th century. Afterwards, their importance declined. Legend has it that Poland's first church was built here in 1003, at the site of pagan rituals. However the theory that the church was actually built later is also supported by the Romanesque fragments discovered in the walls of the chancel and a mysterious solar symbol carved into the wall of the tower. To this day it is unclear why a symbol of a pagan cult was inscribed on the walls of a Christian church.

The largest historic architectural complex in Sierpc is the convent and church of the Virgin Mary located on Mount Loreť. The first wooden structure was erected in 1483, at the site of an apparition experienced by a young seminarian during the plague that decimated the town. He saw the Virgin Mary, who told him that the plague would pass if people prayed zealously. The current church was completed in 1513. In the late 16th century, a sepulchral





Monastery in Sierpc

chapel of the founder's granddaughter, Ursula of Lviv, was added as an extension to the church.

The most valuable historic object in the church is the Gothic sculpture of Virgin Mary with Baby Jesus from the late 14th century, known as Our Lady of Sierpc. It is situated on the main altar and unveiled for each service. It is the oldest, continuously-revered religious site in Mazovia.

Two other churches in Sierpc were also in existence during the Duchy of Mazovia era: the 15th-century Church of the Holy Spirit, where the unwell were tended to in the Middle Ages (Chopin Square – pl. Chopina) and the 15th-century Church of the Holy Cross (in the so-called Sierpc Forest), which has been in a state of disrepair for the past 200 years.

### The castles of Sierpc

Two castles were erected in Sierpc. We are still only aware of the existence of one of the castles through mentions in historical documents. In the oldest one, dating back to 1322, Duke of Mazovia, Wenceslaus of Płock, known as Wańko, trades lands with Bishop of Płock Florian, it is noted that Sierpc will be surrounded by walls and a castle will be built there. However, as is often the case with construction projects, this one also remained on the drawing board for a long time. It took nearly two hundred years for the construction to be completed. Another document concerning the subject dates back to the mid-14th century and mentions the existence of a curia in Sierpc. This, presumably, means a fortified manor, and not quite a castle. The latter was

not established until the annexing of the Płock Land, where Sierpc was located, by Poland (1495), and was not paid for by the dukes but by Mazovian magnates from the Sierpski family. It was located near the parish church. At the time, the city was divided between two brothers, Prokop and Feliks of Sierpc, wealthy and influential Mazovian knights. Archaeologists suspect that since one of them (Prokop) built a castle in his part of town, the other did not want to be outdone and also built a stronghold on his side. It was supposed to resemble the royal tower in Piotrków Trybunalski. Archaeologists tracked it down when they discovered the 500-year-old foundations during work on a building known as Kasztelanka.



[www.sierpc.pl](http://www.sierpc.pl)

We recommend visiting the Mazovian Village Museum located in Sierpc  
[www.mwmskansen.pl](http://www.mwmskansen.pl)

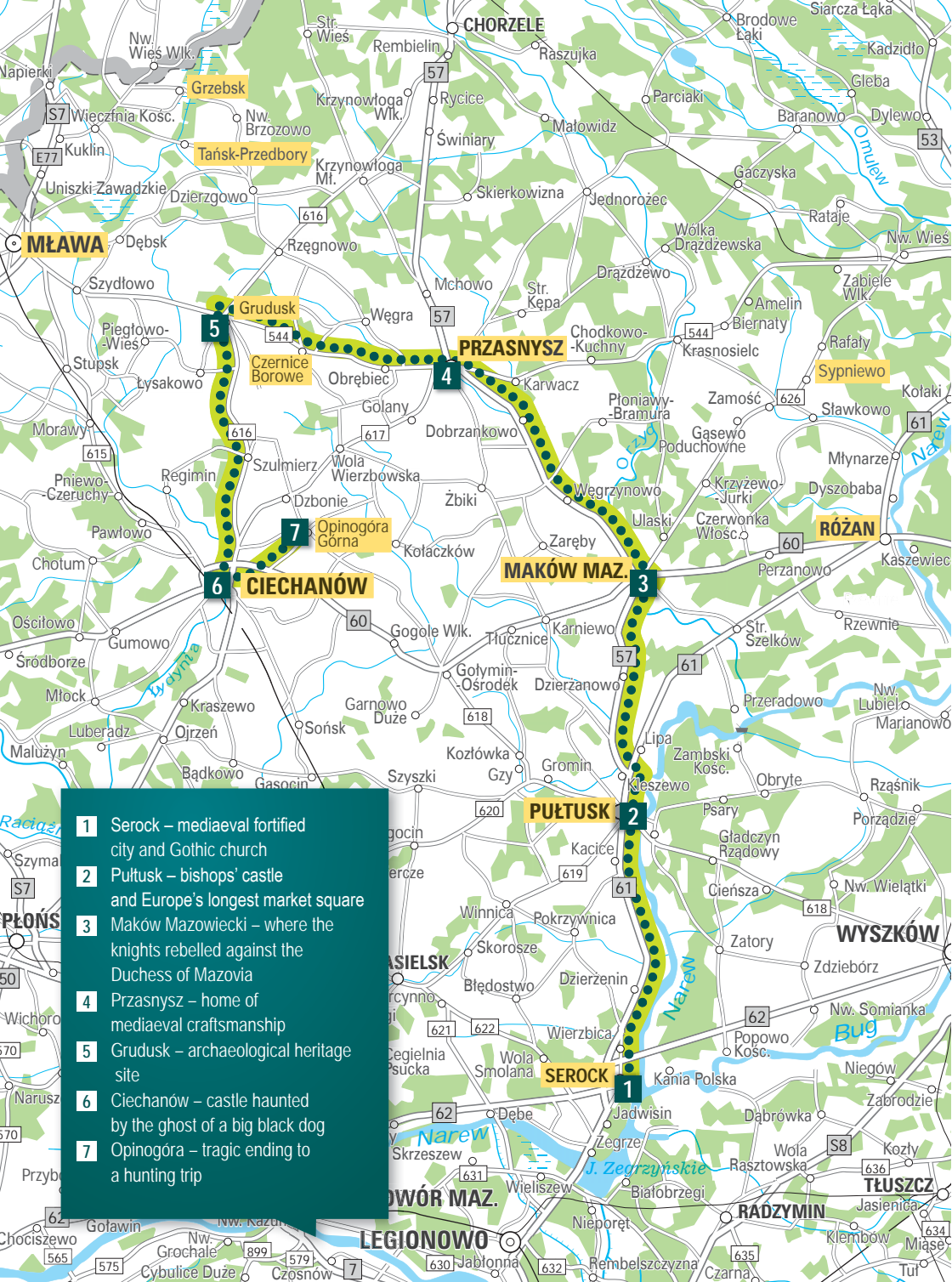
In the area

## SZREŃSK

Szreńsk, a town located less than 40 km away from Sierpc towards Mława, is home to the ruins of a palace erected in place of a 16th-century castle belonging to Felix of Szreńsk. It is also worth visiting the centre of town, with its Gothic parish church. The highlight of the church is the Pieta, a 15th-century sculpture characteristic of Mazovian religious art, which is a unique monument that reflects the distinct influence of French art.



Pieta in the church at Szreńsk



- 1** Serock – mediaeval fortified city and Gothic church
- 2** Pultusk – bishops' castle and Europe's longest market square
- 3** Maków Mazowiecki – where the knights rebelled against the Duchess of Mazovia
- 4** Przasnysz – home of mediaeval craftsmanship
- 5** Grudusk – archaeological heritage site
- 6** Ciechanów – castle haunted by the ghost of a big black dog
- 7** Opinogóra – tragic ending to a hunting trip



## Route of Konrad of Mazovia – Eastern Part

The northernmost regions of Mazovia separated Poland from areas inhabited by pagan Prussians. The castles and fortified cities that survive to this day are a reminder of the battles that took place in the border region. This area

also saw a growth in trading, and the settlements popping up around the market places developed into prosperous cities. Magnificent Gothic churches are a vivid reminder of the golden age of northern Mazovia.

### VOIVODE KRYSTYN, BLINDED AT THE REQUEST OF DUKE KONRAD

Since the beginning of the reign of Duke Konrad, the Mazovian land was continually attacked by the Prussians, a Baltic tribe inhabiting the area of modern-day Masuria. The Prussians attacked Mazovian cities and settlements, burning them down and killing the people. The attackers were challenged by the Mazovian Duke's voivode former mentor, Krystyn. The voivode created an effective defence system using the fortified cities built in the northern parts of Mazovia, such as Grudusk and Grzebsk. He was able to stop the attacks by the Prussians, which won him the admiration of the knights and earned him the nickname of Mazovia's Shield.

However, the year 1217 saw a number of tragic events, the consequences of which were felt by the Polish territory for centuries to come. Konrad of Mazovia captured Krystyn. He captured him, had him

blinded and then killed. To this day it is not clear what caused the duke to act in this bizarre and rather unreasonable fashion. Was it the allegations targeting Krystyn or the duke's envy of the admiration that the Mazovian knights gave to their voivode?

After Krystyn's death, his intricate defence system fell apart and the Prussian attacks only intensified. Konrad, now having to make an effort to defend Mazovia's northern border, was unable to stop the attacks. Neither the crusades he mounted, the Christianisation efforts he funded nor the military Order of Dobrzyń he established brought any results whatsoever. Ultimately, the situation in northern Mazovia and the loss of the Chełmno Land forced him to bring in the Teutonic Knights. The killing of one man sentenced the Polish territories to having a neighbour that determined the policy of the country's rulers for the next few centuries.

## 1 SEROCK

Watchtower where the dukes collected tolls

**Serock, established opposite the confluence of the Bug and Narew Rivers, was one of the more important towns in Mazovia in the Middle Ages. Near the town ran two important trade routes: one from Ruthenia to Greater Poland (Wielkopolska) and Pomerania (Pomorze), and the other from Lesser Poland (Małopolska) to Prussia. The Mazovian Dukes and the city residents, taking advantage of the convenient location, benefited from trade, collecting tolls at the customs chamber.**

The settlement known as Barbarka

The customs chamber was located next to the watchtower, known today as Barbarka, which was built in the 11th century and existed until the 13th century. The fortified city was protected by wood, stone and earth fortification, and access to it was hindered by deep gorges. During an excavation, archaeologists discovered pieces of broken pottery and animal bones. The primary

occupations of the city's residents involved agriculture, fishing and horn craft.

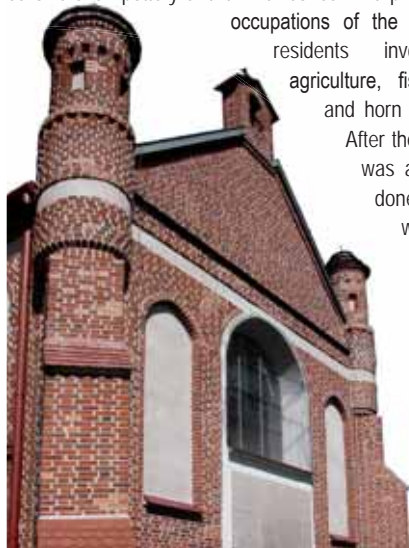
After the city was abandoned, it was

used as a cemetery. The Chapel of St. Barbara was built there in the 17th century. Today, the hill that used to house the fortified city has been turned into a scenic lookout, from which a panorama of the Zegrze Reservoir can be viewed.

Near the fortified city, in an area that used to be a trading settlement, a town was established and in 1417 it received town privileges from Duke Janusz I the Old. The street grid including the market square and city hall in the centre was laid out by the duke and survives to this day.

*Time flies, death is pressing...*

Serock is home to one of Mazovia's most extraordinary landmarks. Last Dukes of Mazovia: Stanisław and his younger brother Janusz III founded a Gothic church here, which was originally named the Church of St. Wojciech and is now the Church of the Annunciation to the Blessed Virgin Mary. The single-aisle church is located on a high slope above the Zegrze Reservoir. The façade featured a unique solar clock with a rhyming inscription: *Remember that time flies, death is pressing and eternity awaits*. This adage fits in perfectly with the life stories of the last rulers of sovereign Mazovia. Even though the dukes founded the church, they were unable to ever worship at it, as it was completed after their tragic death and Poland's annexation of Mazovia. In its place there is now a new clock with the following inscription: *Tempus Fugit* (time flies).



Church of the Annunciation to the Blessed Virgin Mary in Serock



[www.serock.pl](http://www.serock.pl)

## 2 PUŁTUSK

The Venice of Mazovia

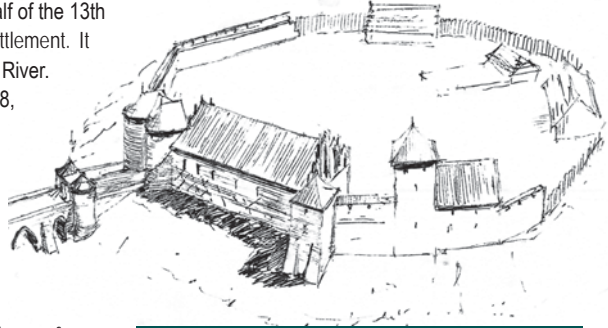
The island is home to the castle of the bishops of Plock, the longest market square in Europe and lined with picturesque tenement houses. Two kilometres away from Pułtusk the Narew River splits, embracing the oldest part of town with its waters. Quaint bridges have been built across the Narew to connect the island with the mainland.

## Mystery hiding beneath the castle's courtyard

On the hill on which the castle of the bishops of Płock is located, archaeologists uncovered the remnants of a wooden fortified city whose condition was just as good as the more famous one in Biskupin. In Pułtusk, explorers found preserved structures of houses and segments of streets paved with wooden beams. The houses had an area of up to 20 square metres, with clay threshing floors, heated with clay furnaces. The fortified city was established in the first half of the 13th century, on the site of a burnt-down settlement. It was built on a high hill above the Narew River. It survived for less than 150 years. In 1368, it was burned down by the Lithuanians during one of their forays into the Duchy of Mazovia. After the Teutonic Knights helped eliminate the Prussian threat, they themselves became the enemy whose attacks most often ravaged the Mazovian territories.

When the city was burned down, the bishops of Płock, who owned Pułtusk, decided to have a brick

castle built in its place. It all started with a stone tower, which had already been in place in the city burned down by the Lithuanians. The castle was rebuilt a number of times. Its current look dates back to the 17th century. Its mediaeval origins are confirmed by two cylindrical towers guarding the bridge connecting the castle with the market square. Today, the castle houses Dom Polonii, famous for the traditional Old Polish cuisine served at the castle restaurant and for the Narew landing, offering gondola tours around Pułtusk's Old Town.



Rendering of Pułtusk Castle in the Middle Ages



### DUKES TO BISHOPS

Bishops of Płock played important roles in the court of the Dukes of Mazovia, were actively involved in the policies of the Duchy and in some cases, the dukes themselves served as bishops.

Bishop Andrzej Noskowski, whose statue greets visitors to the collegiate church in Pułtusk, was the chancellor to the last Dukes of Mazovia. The founder of that collegiate church, bishop Paweł of Giżyce, was the regent when the Dukes of Mazovia were minors. He served in this role at the same time in both parts of the Duchy: in Western Mazovia after the death of Duke Władysław I and in Eastern Mazovia after the death, one year earlier, of Duke Bolesław IV.

Mazovia's history also includes dukes who became bishops of Płock. One of them was Henry, the youngest son of Duke Siemowit III. The duke had his mother strangled as he suspected her of infidelity, and Henry

was given away to be raised by a poor family. However, when the boy grew up, he proved to resemble his father so much that the latter reinstated him and offered him the office of the bishop of Płock. However, Henry was in no rush to become a priest. He fell in love with the sister of Vytautas, Grand Duke of Lithuania, and married her, abandoning the clergy. Nearly a century later, another duke decided to become bishop of Płock. It was Casimir III, brother of Duke Konrad the Red, father of the last Dukes of Mazovia. He competed for the office of bishop with a candidate supported by the king of Poland. In order to win it, he gained the support of Frederick III, the emperor of the House of Habsburg, and his appointment as the bishop of Płock was approved by the Pope himself. Casimir was able to enjoy the hard-fought-for bishophood for only nine years. He died in 1480 in Płock, where he is buried.



Pultusk Castle

### Pultusk's most treasured monument

Adjacent to the castle is the market square, believed to be the longest in Europe. In the middle is a Gothic and Renaissance tower from the turn of the 15th and 16th century. It represents the remainder of the old city hall. The 30-metre-high brick tower has a square base, but the body of the tower is a polygon in the upper sections. The seventh floor offers a panoramic view of the entire city. One of the greatest tourist attractions in Pultusk is the underground tourist route.

The historic cellars located under the town hall host the Pultusk Town Hall exhibition presenting the history of the municipality over the course of history. The market square, opposite the castle, is home to another one of the city's



City hall tower in the main square in Pultusk

landmarks – a Gothic collegiate basilica founded by bishop Paweł of Giżyce in 1449. The church, rebuilt a number of times, is famous for its barrel vaults adorned with multicoloured polychrome. The painted detail consists of several hundred stylised flower and plant bouquets and human busts. The mid-16th century reconstruction effort was led by Giovanni Battista of Venice. The basilica houses unique utensils, such as Gothic goblets, of which the oldest dates back to the 1470-1480.



[www.pultusk.pl](http://www.pultusk.pl)

Tourist Information Centre  
ul. Rynek 43, tel. +48 23 692 51 32

### 3 MAKÓW MAZOWIECKI

Where the knights rebelled against the Duchess of Mazovia

The town received town privileges from Duke Janusz I. According to legend, his head was immortalised in the town's coat of arms. However, sceptics view it as the head of a man from the Highland region and an error on the part of heraldists who confused Maków Mazowiecki and Maków Podhalański.

#### Public bath, fairs and Gothic church

The residents of the mediaeval Pultusk valued cleanliness. The city had public baths that also served the court. Once a week it was used by the duke's staff. Proceeds from the remaining days of its use and from the town's textile cutting place went towards the development of the city, which also benefited from the fairs. In the late 15th century, three fairs were held in the city, and one of them was a three-day affair. The residents' wealth allowed them to found an impressive Mazovian

Gothic church. The construction of the Corpus Christi Church was initiated in 1490 by Stanisław Lipnicki, the vicar of Maków and canon of Płock. The church, which survived to this day, is a reminder of the golden age of Maków. The bell tower next to it is less than one hundred years old. It replaced an older, 16th-century free-standing bell tower that collapsed in the 1920s.



Corpus Christi Church in Maków Mazowiecki

### The Duchess of Mazovia takes shelter in Maków's castle

Maków was once home to a fortified manor of the Dukes of Mazovia, which did not survive. It was located close to town, on the left, higher bank of the Orzyc River (near today's Warsaw Street (ul. Warszawska)). In 1518, it was the site of a series of tragic events. The manor, where Duchess Anna Radziwiłł was staying with her eldest son Stanisław, was under attack by rebellious Mazovian magnates who had grown tired of the Duchess's rule. After the death of her husband, Konrad III the Red, who was nearly 30 years her senior, in 1503, Anna ruled the Duchy on behalf of her young sons, Stanisław and Janusz III. She was considered energetic and unyielding. When her son Stanisław reached an age at which he could take over and the duchess did not relinquish the power, some of

the Mazovian knights rebelled against the female rule. While the manor was not conquered, and Stanisław backed his mother up, the rebels accomplished their goal: Anna handed power over to her son. However, it was merely a formal handover, because up until her death in 1522 she had the deciding vote in all matters concerning the duchy.



[www.makowmazowiecki.pl](http://www.makowmazowiecki.pl)

### The local area

## RÓŻAN

The town, built at the intersection of routes from Toruń to Grodno and from Warsaw to Königsberg, received city privileges in the late 14th century. In the 15th century, the city was home to a castle, a bridge over the Narew River and as many as six churches. Only one of them, the Gothic Church of St. Anna, survives to this day. The bridge is a modern-day structure and there is no trace of the castle in the area.

### The local area

## SYPNIEWO

Remnants of the mediaeval fortified city have survived in a private property outside the city, along the approach from Maków. The fortified city was established at the turn of the 9th and 10th century. Its existence in such distant past is supported by the silver denarius coin of Roman Emperor Otto and his wife Adelaide, issued in 911 and found near the city well, which was commissioned around the year 915. Even though the city burned down in the 11th century, the surrounding settlements were also inhabited during the time when the Mazovian territory was ruled by the dukes. Church documents mention the existence of a Church of St. Lawrence in the town, which... vanished in a hole in the ground. That may have been one of the oldest churches in Mazovia.

## 4 PRZASNYSZ

City of craftsmen and brewers

In the Middle Ages, Przasnysz was the third-largest city in Mazovia. It was famous for its oxen trade and for the excellent beer sold to Prussia. Przasnysz had the highest number of brewers in all of Mazovia.

*Big city, famous for its oxen fair*

The city hall could not be the heart of a town famous for its beer. In the Middle Ages, in the middle of the market square, in place of today's city hall built in the 17th century and restored in 2013, there was an inn. Although, according to legend, Konrad of Mazovia had ordered the founding of the town, Przasnysz did not receive city privileges until 1427, during the reign of Duke Janusz I the Old. One hundred years later, the city's nearly 700 houses were homes to approximately 5,000 people. In the market square, near the inn, was the municipal weigh house, later replaced by the wooden city hall that preceded the current city hall building. Next to it were craftsmen's stalls and butchers' stalls. The city held three fairs at which Przasnysz's craftsmen sold their wares. The various guilds brought together as many as five hundred craftsmen. The atmosphere of the Middle Ages and the era of the craftsmen is revived during the annual Old Polish Fair, held in the market square in May, and the exhibition at the Museum of History, which is located in the renovated city hall.



Przasnysz monastery



### A MYSTERY GUEST

Long ago, when today's Przasnysz was merely a wild forest, a miller named Przasnyk lived on the River Węgiełka, which cuts across today's town. One night, a mysterious stranger knocked on his door. He was exhausted from roaming the impenetrable wilderness alone for many hours. The miller took him in, offered him bread and honey and allowed him to stay the night, despite not knowing who the guest was. Imagine his surprise when the next morning armed troops appeared outside his door and the mysterious wanderer turned out to be Duke Konrad of Mazovia himself. To show his gratitude, the duke *knighted Przasnyk, granted him goods and to commemorate his lucky rescue from Przasnysz forest, he approved the settlement of a town named Przasnysz, named after the miller, in that area*, as recounted by a priest, Father Józef Osiecki, who published the story in 1880.

### Two Gothic churches

Two of the churches in Przasnysz, both related to St. Stanisław Kostka, date back to the Middle Ages. The Gothic parish church (located at ul. św. Wojciecha), built in the late 15th century, is the oldest church in town. Next to the church is a free-standing bell tower from the turn of the 15th and 16th century. St.

Stanisław Kostka was baptised at that church. In the same church, in the north chapel adjacent to the main aisle, is the final resting place of his parents, Jan – the Zakroczym castellan and Małgorzata nee Kryśka. The second church in Przasnysz, the Church of St. James and St. Anna (ul. 3 Maja) – part of the monastery of the Bernardines (now Passionists) is one of the last Gothic structures to be built in Poland. It was founded by St. Stanisław Kostka's brother Paweł, the castellan of Zakroczym.



## Where was the manor of the Dukes of Mazovia?

As the Dukes of Mazovia enjoyed hunting in the area's forests, they used to have a hunting manor in town. Its foundations are most likely located under the current building located at ul. Świerczewo, where even after World War II there was a starost's (head or governor) manor known as Ant. The manor was to be built on the Węgierka River, in place of an old mill where miller Przasnyk, the legendary founder of Przasnysz, used to live.



[www.przasnysz.um.gov.pl](http://www.przasnysz.um.gov.pl)

## 5 GRUDUSK

Reconstructed fortress

The site of the mediaeval fortified city later became Mazovia's first archaeological heritage site. The city was surrounded with a palisade. It is also guarded by the large figures of mediaeval warriors. The cottages of mediaeval craftsmen were recreated in the city's courtyard.

From the 9th to the 13th century, on a hill known as the Green Mountain (Zielona Góra), there was once a fortified city that was a crucial point on the trade route from Ruthenia towards the Baltic Sea. It was also an

important link in the chain of fortified structures that protected northern Mazovia from

Prussian invasions. The city was burned down

twice: the first time, in the mid-11th century, and again in the early 13th century.

The fire that broke out in the mid-11th century is linked by historians to



Guardian of the archaeological heritage site in Grudusk

the riots that occurred in Mazovia when Casimir the Restorer, son of Mieszko II, tried to placate the rebellion caused by Masław, his father's former cup-bearer. Masław tried to establish Mazovia as an independent duchy based on a pagan tradition. The burning-down of the city in the early 13th century may be related to the destruction of the defence system for Northern Mazovia after the death of voivode Krystyn.



[www.grudusk.com](http://www.grudusk.com)

The local area

## CZERNICE BOROWE

The enormous Gothic church, located in the middle of the village on an artificial mound, was built around 1514, in place of an earlier church that existed in the 14th century. Legend has it that the church was built where its founder killed a large deer and found a golden cross between its antlers.

The local area

## TAŃSK-PRZEDBORY

In the forest near the early mediaeval fortress, about 1 kilometre away from the village, individual stones from a mysterious burial ground have been preserved. From the 11th to the 13th century, in many parts of Mazovia and neighbouring Podlasie, on hilltops, far away from churches but close to towns, people buried their deceased loved ones in tombs whose walls were made of large boulders. Burial grounds like the one in Tańsk are known among archaeologists as the stone-walled burial grounds of Mazovia. It is certain that no ordinary mediaeval Mazovians were buried there. So who was buried there? Probably not Christians.

The local area

## GRZEBSK

Grzebsk was home to an early-mediaeval city, one of Mazovia's castellanies mentioned in the Mogiło counterfeited of 1065 as *Grebescio*. The rampart of the stronghold survives to this day.

## The local area

## MŁAWA

Mława was a town in the Duchy of Mazovia bordering lands owned by the Teutonic Order. Trials were also held there, during which border disputes were settled. The Municipal Park (entrance on the ul. 3 Maja side) features a fountain that represents the legendary character, Mława, a wise woman to whom the city owes its name.



[www.mlawa.pl](http://www.mlawa.pl)

## 6 CIECHANÓW

## Unconquered stronghold

The walls of the massive Gothic castle, built by Duke Siemowit III, which features two towers, the east prison tower and the west arsenal tower, have dominated the skyline of the city for more than six centuries. It was Mazovia's largest stronghold, which was never conquered as long as there were knights inside it.

## Black dog guarding the dukes' treasures

According to legend, Ciechanów Castle is haunted by a formidable black dog. The dog is allegedly an evil knight whom the duke's alchemist turned into an animal. Those who are not afraid of the beast may be led by it to a secret chamber where many years ago the treasures of the Dukes of Mazovia were hidden. Legend has it that the dog may be easily found on the second story of the western tower, where the wall contains a piece of plasterwork that strongly resembles a dog, including a dog's snout, paws and tail.

Were treasures really hidden in the castle many centuries

ago? Janusz I, son of Duke Siemowit III, turned the massive Gothic stronghold, established as an imitation of the strongholds built by the Crusaders in the Holy Land, into a residence. He built a palace known as *Curia Mayor*, of which only some of the cellars remain. Duke Janusz was in power at a time when the Duchy of Mazovia was at its peak of growth and prosperity. Perhaps some of these riches were hidden in the castle's dungeon?

## What the archaeologists discovered in the castle's courtyard

Before undertaking the revitalisation of the castle, as a result of which a new building was created between the towers, in place of the so-called Small House, comprehensive archaeological efforts were carried out in the castle's courtyard. While the archaeologists did not encounter any trace of a secret chamber with the dukes' treasures, they did uncover remnants of the fortified tower and the walls of the city that was located on the site of today's castle. The city, and the tower – which at the time was the ultimate place of defence – were built by Duke Konrad II, grandson of Konrad of Mazovia, nearly 100 years before the castle was built. An axe used in the construction works 700 years ago was found buried deep in the ground. It may have been used to sharpen the pales used in the palisade that prevented access to the city.



Reconstruction of Ciechanów Castle – the castle in the 14th century



## CONSPIRACIES, POISONINGS, A DRAGON AND 300 YEARS OF MAZOVIAN INDEPENDENCE

The towers of Ciechanów Castle house the first exhibition about the history of the Duchy of Mazovia. On the eight stories of the castle's towers, visitors can come face-to-face with the dukes, duchesses, knights, ghosts, the Teutonic Knights and the first-ever committee of inquiry in the Polish territories, appointed by King Sigismund the Old to investigate the mysterious death of the last Duke of Mazovia.

The exhibition in the Castle of the Dukes of Mazovia in Ciechanów is the first place in Poland where the 300-year history of sovereign Mazovia, from the time Konrad of Mazovia brought over the Teutonic Knights until the heirless death of the last Dukes of Mazovia, is told. Films, stories, characters and decorations from the era, as well as scenes of mediaeval Ciechanów depicted in the windows – all this makes a visit to the castle a true journey back in time.

## Where the legendary figure of Ciechan arrived with his beloved

At the time the city was built, what is now the castle in Ciechanów was yet another stronghold: the fortress on Farska Mountain (Farska Góra). According to legend, it was established by Ciechan, a knight who fled his family home with his beloved, a beautiful maid named Dobroniega. He chose exile because his father was forcing him to marry an unattractive yet wealthy neighbour. The city was built during a time when Christianity had not yet reached Mazovia. It is possible that a pagan temple was located in the vicinity. This is partly supported by the tradition which links the name of Farska Mountain to the name of the pagan god Swarożyc, rather than a parish church (fara), as may have been concluded. Before Duke Janusz I granted city privileges to the settlement and designated the market square in its present location, the area near Farska Mountain was the centre of Ciechanów. Surviving to this day are two Gothic

churches: the parish Church of the Birth of the Blessed Virgin Mary (at ul. ks. Ściegiennego) and the Church of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, which was a former monastery of the Augustinians, founded by Duke Siemowit III and his wife Eufemia.



<https://www.umciechanow.pl>,  
<https://zamekwciechanowie.pl>  
Zamek Książąt Mazowieckich,  
tel. +48 23 672 40 64

## 7 OPINOGÓRA

Tragic ending to a hunting trip

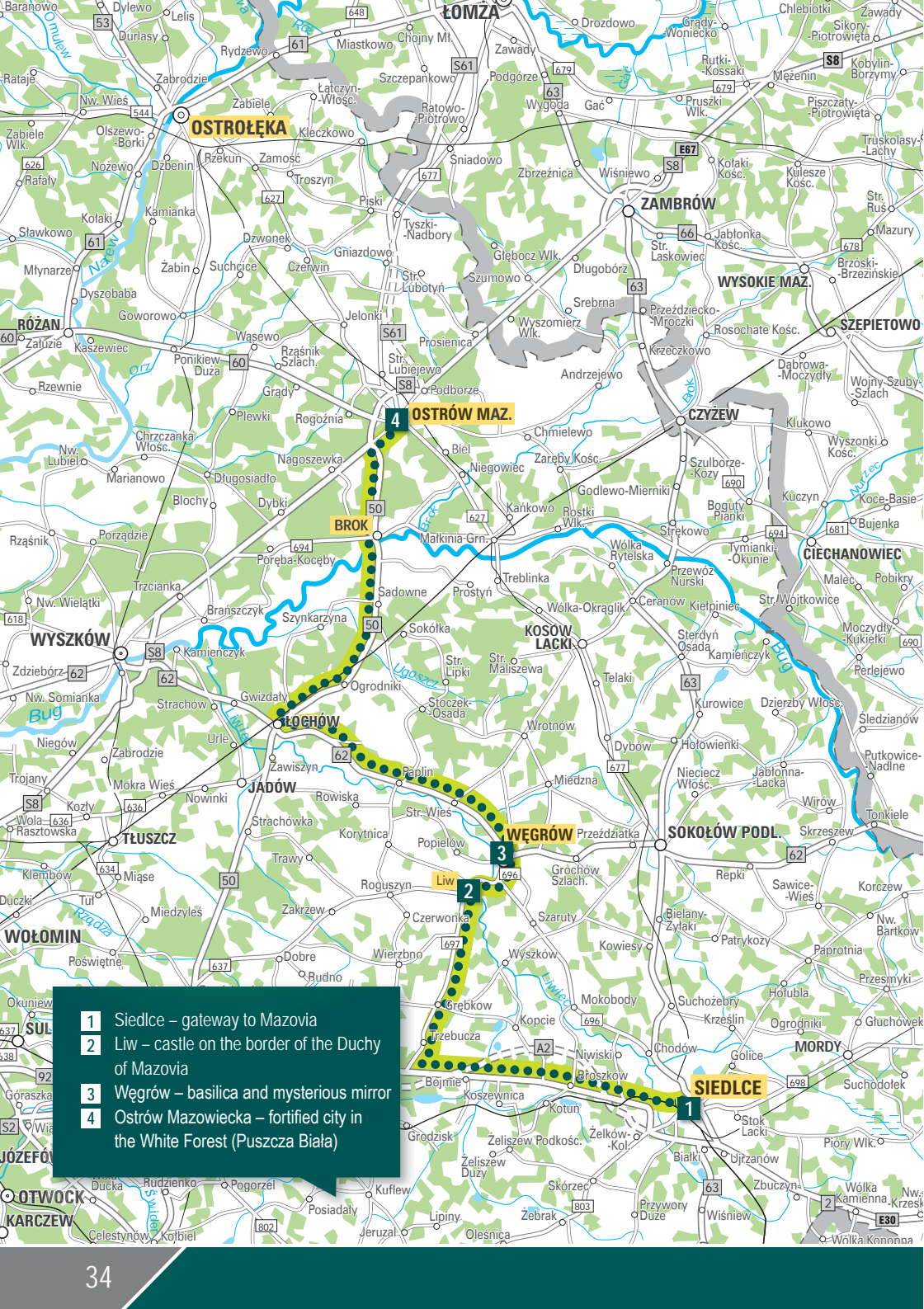
**Opinogóra, famous for the Krasieński's palace, in which a Museum of Romanticism is now located, is also the site of the tragic death of one of the Dukes of Mazovia.**

The history of Opinogóra dates back to the 15th century, when Duke Bolesław IV, grandson of Janusz I, had a hunting manor built there. Bolesław controlled the eastern part of the Duchy of Mazovia, with its capital in Warsaw. He carried on his grandfather's policy of settling towns and ensuring the growth of trade. He also claimed entitlement to the Polish throne after the death of Władysław of Varna in 1444. He was also a big fan of hunting. During one of his trips, he came face-to-face with a large wild boar. The beast proved stronger than the duke and the young ruler died from the injuries sustained during the incident. It is believed that the manor where Duke Bolesław died was located at the site of today's rebuilt Krasieński Manor. The poet himself (Krasieński) paid his respects to the tragic death of the duke. He ordered a stone crucifix with a plaque commemorating the Duke of Mazovia to be placed at the foot of the hill on which the palace is located.



[www.muzeumromantyzmu.pl](http://www.muzeumromantyzmu.pl)

Statue to commemorate Bolesław IV



- 1** Siedlce – gateway to Mazovia
- 2** Liw – castle on the border of the Duchy of Mazovia
- 3** Węgrów – basilica and mysterious mirror
- 4** Ostrów Mazowiecka – fortified city in the White Forest (Puszcza Biała)



## Route of Duchess Anna and the last Dukes of Mazovia

In the mid 15th century, the Lithuanian territories began less than 90 kilometres east of Warsaw. The Liwiec was the border river. Liw Castle, built on the west bank of the river, was a border stronghold of the Dukes of Mazovia, whereas Węgrów, located on the east bank of the river, while established by the Dukes of Mazovia, was in fact a Lithuanian town. Siedlce, located at the intersection of three regions, Mazovia, Lesser Poland (Małopolska) and Lithuania, served as a sort of gate through which Eastern influences infiltrated Mazovia.

In the north, where the historic region of Mazovia stretched almost as far as today's Białystok, wild beekeepers and tarmakers inhabited the farthest corners of the wild forest. The settlement established in the White Forest became a thriving town thanks to the city privileges granted to it by the Dukes of Mazovia. Today, Ostrów Mazowiecka has a statue of Duchess Anna, who helped the city grow, and a replica of the statue in the place believed to have once been a hunting manor belonging to the Dukes of Mazovia.

### DUCHESS ANNA RADZIWIŁŁ (1476–1522)

Daughter of the Grand Chancellor of Lithuania, Mikołaj Radziwiłł, aunt to Barbara Radziwiłł, she was the first Mazovian ruler not to hail from a duke's family. Since the 1503 death of her husband, Konrad III the Red, she almost single-handedly ruled the Duchy of Mazovia for nearly 20 years. She secured for her sons, Janusz III and Stanisław, a confirmation of the hereditary right to the entire region of eastern Mazovia. She opposed Stanisław's relationship with Katarzyna Radziejowska and had her removed from the Mazovian court. This gave historians reasons to suspect that the untimely death of the Duchess was the revenge of Katarzyna, who was determined to enter the duke's family at all costs.

## 1 SIEDLCE

### Gateway to Mazovia

While Siedlce is not located in what was historically Mazovia, but in Lesser Poland, in the former Sandomierskie Voivodship, it is an important stop on the Route of the Dukes of Mazovia.



St. Francis In Ecstasy, painted by El Greco

Siedlce, first mentioned in a document written by Cardinal Zbigniew of Oleśnica, was located at the intersection of three regions. In the Middle Ages, it was a true melting pot of cultures and nationalities, with Mazovia to the north, Lesser Poland to the south and Ruthenia to the east and south-east. Ruthenia's territories were later

incorporated into the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. Ruthenians journeyed through today's Siedlce en route to Podlasie. This area is also where trails from the Duchy of Mazovia ran to Halych Ruthenia and the Belz Land, which were under the rule of the Dukes of Mazovia in the 14th and 15th century. Eastern influences were noticeable both in the dress of the dukes and knights

of Mazovia and in the rulers' family relationships. Most of them married duchesses hailing from Ruthenia and Lithuania.

Today, the city's main landmark is an 18th-century Neoclassical palace and park complex, built on the site of the former wooden manor. The oldest church in town is the Church of St. Stanisław, founded by Kazimierz and Izabela Czartoryski. The highlight of the collection of the Diocesan Museum located at ul. bpa Świrskiego is the only painting by El Greco, a leading figure of mannerism, housed in Poland.



[www.pttkiedlce.pl](http://www.pttkiedlce.pl)

Tourist Information Centre  
ul. K. Pułaskiego 7, tel. +48 535 068 593

## 2 LIW

### Fortress on the border

The fortified castle, reminiscent of the castle in Trakai, Lithuania, was set in a picturesque location on the Liwiec River and was used to protect Mazovia's eastern border. It was also there that the independence of the Duchy of Mazovia from Poland was defended until the very end.

The first mention of the fortified city on the Liwiec appears in a 1304 document by Bolesław II of Mazovia.



Palace of the Ogińskis in Siedlce



### LIWIEC VALLEY ROUTE

From Kaluszyn onwards, the Dukes of Mazovia Route overlaps the Liwiec Valley Route. It runs along the former trade route through Grodzisk, Liw, Węgrów all the way to Łochów. Points of interest along the route include unique architectural landmarks and stunning scenery. The same route can also be covered by kayaking down the Liwiec River. The village of **Sucha** near Grębków on the **Kostrzyń**, a tributary to the Liwiec River, is home to the Museum of Wooden Architecture of the Siedlce Region. The highlight of the heritage site is a larchwood manor dating back to the year 1743, which once belonged to Liw's castellan Ignacy Cieszkowski. Parts of original paintings have been preserved in the garden-facing rooms of the Baroque manor. Another point of interest is an 1860 cottage, in which priest Stanisław Brzóska, the last guerilla leader of the January Uprising, was believed to have hidden. Segments of the rampart of a large fortified city dating back to the 11th century have survived on a tall slope over the Liwiec River just outside Liw. The

impressive 5-hectare property is often compared to Wawel. The beauty of the surrounding area can be admired from a scenic outlook on the rampart. According to local tradition, this was where the Polish territories ended.

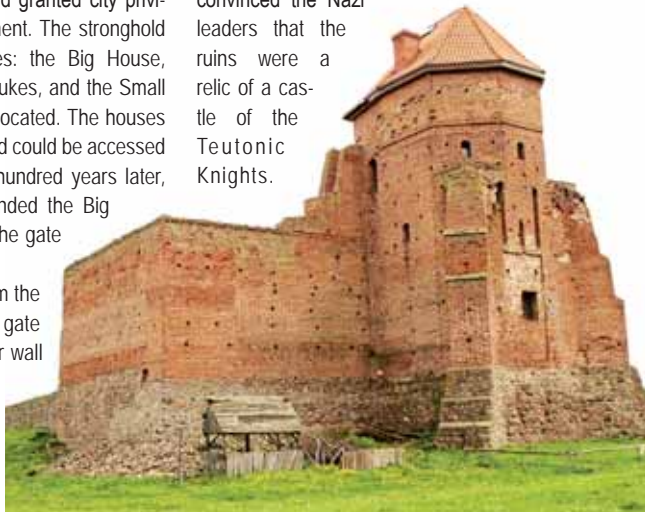
The village of **Starawieś** near Węgrów is home to a 19th-century palace that would appear to be more at home in England than Mazovia. Built in the 16th century, the residence was ordered to be rebuilt a few centuries later in the then-popular English neo-Gothic style by Duke Sergiusz Golicyn. The palace gate has four crenellated pillars. The palace's external façades with the overhanging octagonal towers in the corners are also crenellated. The southeast corner features a three-story octagonal tower with crenellations.

It is worth making a stop in **Łochów** to take a look at the palace designed by a leading 19th-century architect, Bolesław Paweł Podczaszyński, and in the village of **Gwizdały** to see the only museum of whistles in Poland.

In the early 15th century, Duke Janusz I built a castle on the site of the fortified city and granted city privileges to the neighbouring settlement. The stronghold comprised two parallel structures: the Big House, which was the residence of the dukes, and the Small House, where utility rooms were located. The houses were connected with a rampart and could be accessed through a protruding gate. One hundred years later, Duchess Anna of Mazovia expanded the Big House and added extensions to the gate and the rampart.

What has survived to this day from the old Gothic castle is a monumental gate tower, a segment of the perimeter wall and the starost's manor built in the 18th century on the site of the Small House. Believe it or not, the castle in Liw was saved from destruction and demolition by the Germans. During World War II, Polish archaeologist

Otto Warpechowski convinced the Nazi leaders that the ruins were a relic of a castle of the Teutonic Knights.



Liw Castle



### LAST BASTION OF SOVEREIGN MAZOVIA

At Liw Castle, ten years after the Duchy's lands were incorporated into Poland, Anna of Mazovia, sister of the late heirless dukes Janusz and Stanisław, objected to the order of the King of Poland, who demanded that she yield to him the Mazovian lands she was controlling.

After the death of her brother Janusz III, Anna effectively ruled Mazovia for six months. She surrendered the land to King Sigismund the Old only after the King arrived in Warsaw to attend the funeral of the last Duke of Mazovia. Even though the King incorporated Mazovia into Poland, he left some of the lands, e.g. the Liw Land, to Anna, but only provisionally until she got married. After the wedding, the duchess was to return

them to the king of Poland. Among Anna's suitors was Wilhelm von Brandenburg. There were also plans to marry her off to future king Sigismund Augustus, but ultimately the duchess married Stanisław Odrowąż. Even though she did get married, she was not willing to relinquish the lands that had been in her family for centuries. The duchess took shelter in Liw Castle, the construction of which she had commissioned earlier, and did not allow the king's messengers into the fortress. After having a string of insults slung at them, the messengers had to return to Kraków empty-handed. It was not until 1537 that the Duchess was forced to bow down before the king and waive her rights to Mazovia, after which she left the Duchy altogether. This put an end to the history of the sovereign Duchy of Mazovia, independent from the Kingdom of Poland.

The ruse worked, and the occupier even started to rebuild the tower. Today, the castle houses an Armoury Museum with an extensive collection of arms from the



Reconstruction of Liw Castle in the Middle Ages

### 3 WĘGRÓW

A basilica and a mysterious mirror

Established in the 14th century, Węgrów obtained city privileges in 1441, when the Duchy of Mazovia and Lithuania were competing to win Podlasie. It was meant to reinforce the dukes' control of Podlasie but it was soon claimed by Lithuania.

Five years after the city received city privileges, Duke Bolesław IV forfeited Podlasie and afterwards Węgrów became part of Lithuania. However, messengers of the Dukes of Mazovia still travelled through the area because Węgrów was located along the Great Lithuanian Trail, which connected Warsaw and Vilnius.

The heart of Węgrów is the Basilica of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary and of St. Peter, Paul and Catherine, located in St. Mary's Square (Rynek Mariacki). The basilica owes its current look to Jan Dobrogost Krasieński, who built it in the early 18th century from a design drafted by architect Tylman van Gameren. The basilica is located on the site of an earlier church, founded in 1414 by Piotr Piliłk, marshal to Duke of Mazovia Siemowit IV. The sacristy houses one of the most mysterious known artefacts in Poland – a 17-kilogram dulled mirror made from a gold and silver alloy, broken



[www.liw-zamek.pl](http://www.liw-zamek.pl), [www.liw.pl](http://www.liw.pl)





Twardowski's mystery-shrouded mirror

into three pieces. The Latin inscription on the frame states that *this mirror was used by Twardowski to entertain others by performing magic tricks, but it has since been re-purposed to serve the Lord*. It is alleged that before his death, a famous German wizard, sorcerer and alchemist named Du-

rentius (or "hard", twardy in Polish), who was remembered in the Polish tradition as Mr Twardowski, gave the mirror to bishop Franciszek Krasieński. He sacrificed it in church as a votive offering. However, the mirror is positioned in such a way that no one can see their own

reflection, as the mirror could show them their future or even... the devil. At least this is what the legend claims. Also worth seeing in Węgrów are the monastery and the post-reformation church (at ul. Kościuszki 27). Its interiors house magnificent Baroque sculptures, frescoes and the tombstone of Jan Dobrogost Krasieński. The crypt holds mummified remains from more than 250 years ago.



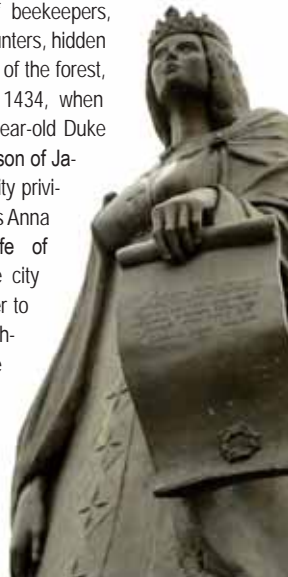
[www.wegrow.com.pl](http://www.wegrow.com.pl)

#### 4 OSTRÓW MAZOWIECKA

City of Duchess Anna

Ostrów Mazowiecka owes its name not to an island (ostrów is Polish for island), like other Polish towns named Ostrów, but to a primitive beekeeper's ladder called "ostrowa", used in the olden days by the inhabitants of the White Forest to gather honey from beehives.

This settlement of beekeepers, lumberjacks and hunters, hidden away in the depths of the forest, became a city in 1434, when the then-fourteen-year-old Duke Boleslaw IV, grandson of Janusz I, granted it city privileges. However, it is Anna Radziwiłł, the wife of Konrad, whom the city residents remember to this day. The duchess authorised the town to hold four fairs per year and one market per week. From then on, because of its



Statue of Duchess Anna in Ostrów Mazowiecka



#### MASTER TWARDOWSKI AND THE GHOST OF BARBARA RADZIWIŁŁ

At the request of King Sigismund Augustus, Twardowski the magician was to invoke the spirit of Barbara Radziwiłł, the king's late wife. Legend has it that it appeared in a mysterious mirror. The sorcerer asked the king not to touch the spirit as that would bring a series of calamities upon him. However, once the king saw Barbara, he could not help giving her a hug. The spell was broken, the mirror shattered and the king and Twardowski were plunged into a world of misfortunes. Sigismund Augustus died soon thereafter in Knyszyn, while Twardowski was abducted from an inn called Rome (Rzym) in Mystki (located near Wysokie Mazowieckie) by devils. It is believed that he had sold his soul by signing a contract with a stipulation that his soul could only be taken in Rome. Some claimed, however, that Twardowski was captured not by devils but flesh-and-blood humans. Twardowski did not in fact invoke the spirit of Barbara, but tricked the king by making a lady-in-waiting who looked very much like her appear instead. To keep the matter under wraps, the masterminds of the hoax captured Twardowski.

convenient location along trade routes, Ostrów began to prosper from trade. The Duchess is commemorated by a statue dedicated to her (plaza near ul. 3 Maja), which is one of only two statues of the former rulers of Mazovia (the other one, in Gostynin, commemorates Duke



### HISTORIC SETTLEMENT AND A DEATHLY AFFAIR

The year 1392 saw an event without which the historic victory in the Battle of Grunwald would not have been possible. The feuding King of Poland, Jagiello, and his cousin Vytautas concluded a settlement targeting the Teutonic Order. According to some historians, this agreement was concluded at the hunting manor of the Dukes of Mazovia in Ostrów Mazowiecka. The settlement was reached with substantial help from Mazovian rulers. A year before its conclusion, King Władysław Jagiello requested the help of Henry, the bishop of Płock, the youngest son of Duke Siemowit III and the stepbrother of the dukes – each ruling a part of the split Duchy, (Eastern and Western Mazovia) – Janusz and Siemowit IV. Henry went on a delicate mission to see Vytautas, who was then staying with the Teutonic Knights. He was supposed to convince him to bury the hatchet with Jagiello. The bishop exhibited extraordinary negotiation skills. Not only did he convince Vytautas to meet with his cousin, but he was so persuasive that Vytautas, abandoning the Teutonic Knights, his then-allies, burned down two of their castles... However, the bishop's charm did not work on Vytautas only. It also touched his sister, Rymgajla, who, due to her great beauty, was called "the gorgeous" by chroniclers. Rymgajla and Henry fell in love. The bishop abandoned the clergy and the office of bishop of Płock and married Rymgajla. The relationship did not turn out well for Henry, who died suddenly six months after the settlement was concluded. Some suspected that Rymgajla had poisoned her husband. Perhaps she realised too late that she should not have married a clergyman...



Reconstruction of the fortified city of the Dukes of Mazovia

Siemowit IV) located in Mazovia. Another reminder of the duchy era is a reconstruction of the City of the Dukes of Mazovia, to be found in the Jordan Recreation Area. It was built in the historic location of the hunting manor of Duke Janusz I, from which the dukes set out on their hunting trips.



[www.powiatostrowmaz.pl](http://www.powiatostrowmaz.pl), [www.ostrowmaz.pl](http://www.ostrowmaz.pl)

Tourist Information Centre  
ul. 3 Maja 68, tel. +48 29 645 71 01

### The local area

## BROK

### City of the bishops of Płock

The history of the small town, located in Bug Landscape Park, dates back to the era of Konrad of Mazovia. The document issued by the duke in 1203 mentions a fortified city with a church and the eighteen villages that belong to it. Even though it was located in the Duchy of Mazovia, Brok was owned by the bishops of Płock at the time. The late-Gothic church of St. Andrew the Apostle dates back to the Middle Ages. The stunningly situated ruins of a 17th century palace where future king of Poland Michał Korybut Wiśniowiecki received his education are a reminder of the era of the bishops of Płock



[www.brok.pl](http://www.brok.pl)



Church in Brok

## OSTROŁĘKA

### Fortified city on the Narew

The fortified city, whose rampart survives to this day at the confluence of the Omulew and Narew Rivers, up until the 13th century was a bastion defending Mazovia against attacks from the north. In 1373, Duke Siemowit III granted city privileges to Ostrołęka, and several dozen years later his son, Duke Janusz I, founded the parish church. The church is still in existence (located at ul. Farna), but only its chancel has retained its Gothic features. It owes its current look to a reconstruction effort that took place in the mid-17th century.



[www.ostroleka.pl](http://www.ostroleka.pl), [www.kurpiowskipark.pl](http://www.kurpiowskipark.pl)



### HISTORICALLY, THE REGION OF MAZOVIA STRETCHED FAR OUT TO THE EAST

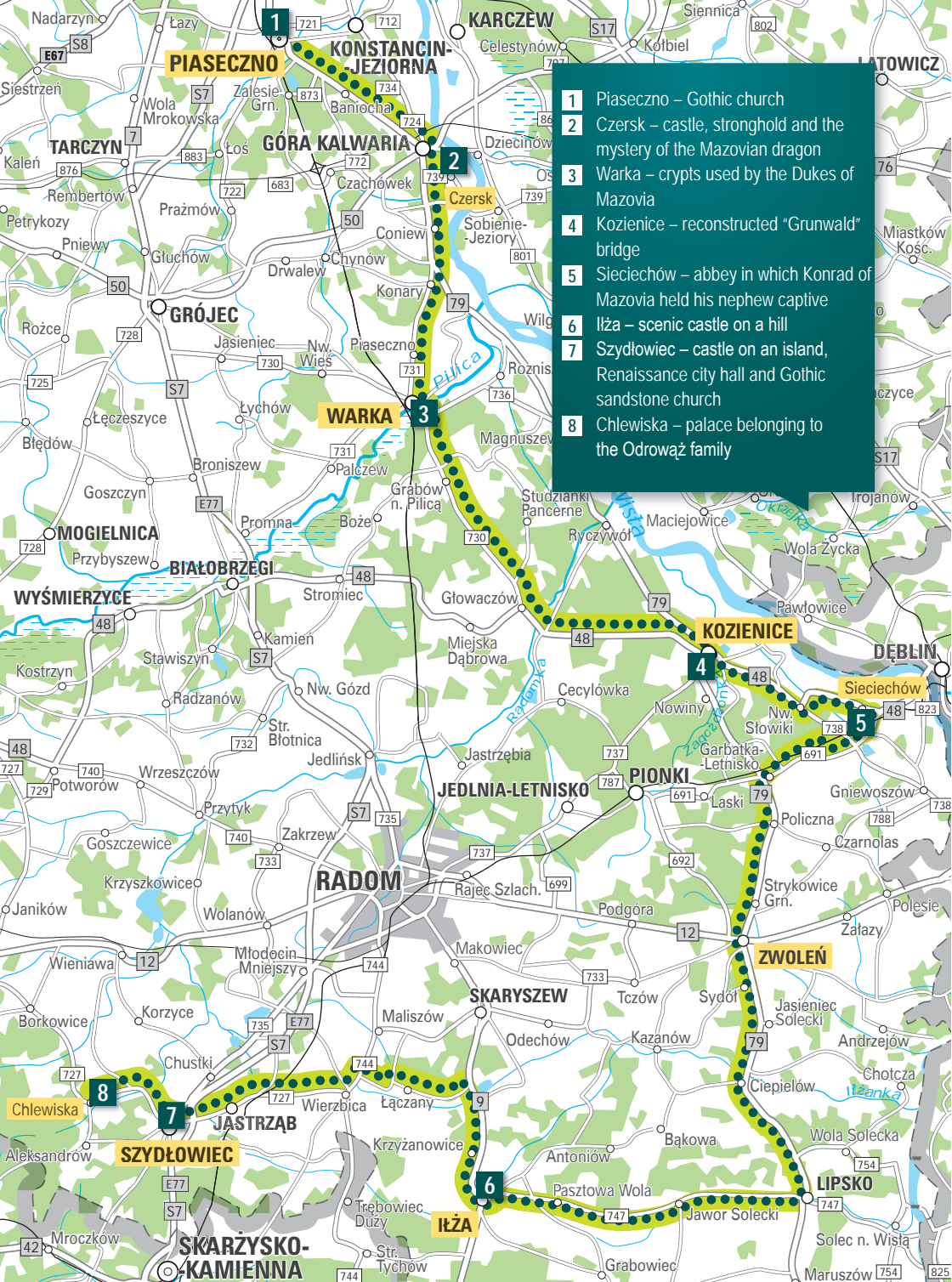
The historical area of Mazovia, while less expansive in the south than it is now, as the Pillica River was its border, had its eastern portion stretching further into today's Podlasie. Cities located in today's Podlaskie Voivodship, such as Nowogród, Łomża or Wizna, were part of the Duchy of Mazovia throughout its existence. The easternmost town founded by the Dukes was Mielnik, located right on the modern-day border with Belarus.

Atop Siemowit Hill (Wzgórze Siemowita), as it is known, in the scenic area now known as the Kurpie Archaeological Heritage Site (Skansen Kurpiowski) in Nowogród, there was once a fortified city of the Duchy. In the 14th century, it was replaced with a small castle, which has not survived to the present day. Today, the heritage site offers visitors an opportunity to admire the wooden architecture and culture of the people of Kurpie. The Kurpie Land was established when Mazovia was ruled by the Dukes. The Green Forest (Puszcza Zielona) was a haven for the defiant. Some had committed certain wrongdoings, others were escaping serfdom, others still were hiding in the woods, finding them safer than borderland settlements.

In Łomża, the last Dukes of Mazovia, Stanisław, Janusz III and their sister Anna, founded a cathedral, which is now considered one of the city's most treasured landmarks. The church, completed after their death, was the last thing they founded.

The stronghold in Wizna (city known as the Mountain of Queen Bona Sforza (Góra Królowej Bony)) was one of the most important strongholds in Mazovia guarding the lands bordering Lithuania and the Teutonic Order. Incidentally, even though it was located in the far-eastern part of Mazovia, the city was always closely linked to the Płock Land.

For a period of time, the Dukes of Mazovia also controlled territories that were part of Podlasie proper. The name of the area itself is believed to derive from the phrase "po lachy" (the name of a Polish tribe) and it originally denoted the border between the Ruthenian and Polish duchies. The Dukes of Mazovia strived to incorporate Podlasie into their domains. Flags featuring both an eagle and a dragon were hung in the cities of Drohiczyń, Suraż, Tykocin and Bielsk Podlaski. The lands were the subject of a dispute with Lithuania and ultimately, when Duke Bolesław IV surrendered them to Lithuania in 1446, they became part of it. From then on, the Liwiec River separated Mazovia and Lithuania, and Liw Castle became the border watchtower.



- 1 Piaseczno – Gothic church
- 2 Czersk – castle, stronghold and the mystery of the Mazovian dragon
- 3 Warka – crypts used by the Dukes of Mazovia
- 4 Koziencice – reconstructed “Grunwald” bridge
- 5 Sieciechów – abbey in which Konrad of Mazovia held his nephew captive
- 6 Iłża – scenic castle on a hill
- 7 Szydłowiec – castle on an island, Renaissance city hall and Gothic sandstone church
- 8 Chlewiska – palace belonging to the Odrowąż family



## Route of Duke Janusz

Why was a dragon included in the coat of arms of the Czersk Land? What was the favourite beer of the Dukes of Mazovia? You can find answers to these questions by travelling around southern Mazovia. Here, on the Pillica River, was the border of the Duchy of Mazovia. Lesser Poland (Malopolska) began past a vast forest, where you were more likely to encounter wild animals than humans, a remainder of which is Kozienice Forest. Even though these areas belonged to the kings of Poland, the Dukes of Mazovia also made their mark on them. In Kozienice, a pontoon bridge was built in collaboration with Duke Janusz, which allowed Jagiełło to cross the Vistula River onto the land owned by the Teutonic Order. In Sieciechów, Konrad of Mazovia held his political opponents captive. The fate of the Duchy was decided in Szydłowiec Castle, and at Iłża. Those who dare explore will be rewarded with the treasures hidden away in the castle's dungeon.

Janusz I the Old (1346-1429) was one of the greatest rulers among the Dukes of Mazovia. He was known as the Casimir the Great of Mazovia. He ruled the Eastern part of the Duchy. He established 24 towns, including Przasnysz, Ciechanów, Łomża, Zakroczym, and New Warsaw, or today's New Town. In 1406, Duke Janusz moved the capital of his part of the Duchy from Czersk to Warsaw. He ensured that the new capital was protected by city walls and expanded the castle in Warsaw. He also had castles built in Czersk and Liw, and ordered the massive stronghold in Ciechanów to be converted into a residence for himself and his court. The area near Czerwińsk in his Duchy was the scene of the concentration of the joined Polish and Lithuanian military forces making their way to Grunwald. Duke Janusz was also the first knight to congratulate Władysław Jagiełło on his victory over the Teutonic Order.

## 1 PIASECZNO

City of Mazovian duchesses

The Gothic church and market square are vivid reminders of the rich history of the city. A beautiful park exists in the area that was once the site of the dukes' manor. Only a handful of linden trees have survived from the grand, tree-lined route leading to the residence of Mazovia's rulers.

The city owes its growth in the Middle Ages to Mazovian Dukes, Janusz I the Old, who established the city under Chelmo law in 1429, and to Anna, wife of Duke Konrad III the Red, who granted her approval in 1513 for the city to hold fairs and markets. This decision had immense consequences for Piaseczno and trading in the Piaseczno's market square continued up until 1964. A modern-day reminder of the golden age of the Mazovian branch of the Piast dynasty is the Church of St. Anna, located in the market square. Around the year 1350, Duke Siemowit III founded the first wooden church in this area. In 1458, Duchess Anna, mother of Duke Boleslaw IV, granted land to the parish and founded the church once again. The church, which was the



Church of St. Anna in Piaseczno



### STRONG RULE OF THE WEAKER SEX

The male line of descendants of the Mazovian branch of the Piast dynasty was plagued with deaths at an early age. Boleslaw IV died at the age of 34 and his son Konrad the Red – at the age of 55. They both left behind two young heirs (minors) to the throne. In these times, mothers and wives, acting as regents on behalf of their grandsons or sons, would take control over the Duchy. After the death of Boleslaw IV, this role was performed first by his mother Anna, and then by his wife Barbara. Both duchesses went down in history by founding churches, such as the Church of St. Anna in Warsaw and Piaseczno. An even greater influence on the growth of Mazovia is attributed to the reign of Anna Radziwiłł, widow of Duke Konrad III and, after the Duchy was incorporated, her daughter Anna of Mazovia. By granting the privilege of holding fairs and markets, the two duchesses contributed to the economic growth of Eastern Mazovia.

oldest church in Piaseczno, was burned down in a fire that broke out in 1526, which was the year the territories of the Duchy of Mazovia were incorporated into Poland. The construction of a new stone church did not commence until the mid-16th century. The single-aisle church was repeatedly destroyed, rebuilt and renovated. The eastern façade features a recess with a late-Baroque sculpture of St. John of Nepomuk. The main body of the building rests on buttresses. In the 1960s, the church was rebuilt in a neo-Gothic style and segments of a 1555 polychrome were discovered near the main altar, on the northern and eastern wall of the chancel. The pieces depict scenes from the New Testament. The former presbytery next to the church has been converted into a Regional Museum and now houses relics and artefacts related to Piaseczno.



[www.piaseczno.eu](http://www.piaseczno.eu)

## 2 CZERSK

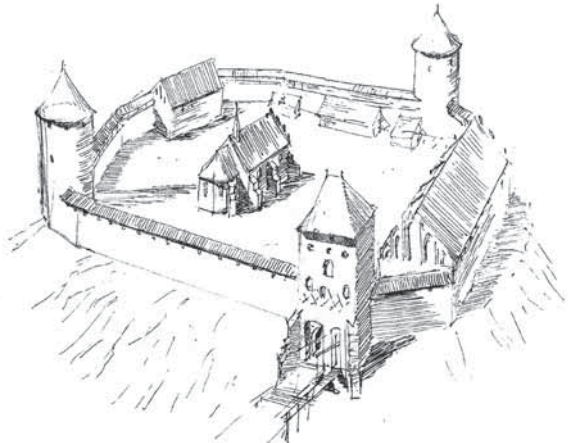
### Castle of the green dragon

During the reign of the Dukes of Mazovia, **Czersk was, next to Plock, the largest centre of political power in Mazovia and the capital of its eastern part.** Today it is a small village. The komes of the Czersk stronghold in the 11th century was Magnus, presumed to be the son of Harold II, King of England. It is possible that the tomb discovered by archaeologists during an excavation in the area of the city church was in fact his tomb.

### Mazovia's military centre

In the 11th century, when Plock was considered the capital of Mazovia, Czersk was its military centre. What is now a castle was once a fortified city with a settlement outside the city walls. In the mid-14th century, it grew into a city,

and the current Millennium Square (Plac Tysiąclecia) became its market square. The mediaeval urban layout, featuring the market square and the streets radiating from it, has survived to the present day.



Reconstruction of Czersk Castle in the Middle Ages



### DID AN ENGLISH PRINCE ONCE REIGN IN CZERSK?

During excavation efforts in 1966, archaeologists discovered an unusual tomb in the area of the city church. The tomb must have belonged to a wealthy warrior. The remains were in a three-metre-long wooden coffin with iron casings. There was a gold ring on the finger of the left hand of the deceased; a sword and a spear were placed alongside his body, and a water bucket for his horse was at his feet. Since the discovery was made, there has been a discussion about whether these could be the remains of the son of the last King of England to reign before the Norman conquest – Magnus Haroldson. In 1066, the fields outside Hastings were the site of a bloody battle between English knights led by King Harold and Norman knights led by William the Conqueror. The English lost the battle, King Harold was killed, and his sons had to flee to save their lives. Their names soon disappeared from English chronicles, but the name

of the youngest one, Magnus, appeared in Gallus Anonymus's chronicle. The oldest Polish chronicler makes mention of a komes of Warsaw and then Mazovia by the name of Magnus, and refers to him as a duke. Indirect proof that the person he is referring to is Magnus Haroldson (aside from the name) may be offered by the fact that Magnus's sister married the ruler of Kievan Rus', which indicates a close relationship between the rulers of England and the rulers of the eastern borderlands of Europe. Komes Magnus resided in Czersk. According to legend, he is associated with the establishment of the town of Magnuszew. He may also be the person responsible for bringing to Mazovia the heraldic symbol of the two-legged dragon, the wyvern. The wyvern adorned the family coat of arms of Magnus, coming from a long line of rulers in the Kingdom of Wessex. There is a legend that treasure is hidden away somewhere in Czersk Castle's dungeon. It is allegedly guarded by a dragon.

## Capital of Eastern Mazovia

The Dukes of Mazovia expanded the Czersk stronghold. Czersk was where Duke Konrad I of Mazovia kept his rival, Duke of Silesia Henry the Bearded, imprisoned. The poor wretch was locked up in a special chest, with only his head and limbs sticking out. This was how Konrad of Mazovia tried to coax political concessions out of his prisoner. It was not until Hedwig, wife of the Silesian duke, pleaded with the ruthless Konrad to free her husband that the former finally gave in. Eastern Mazovia was ruled from Czersk by Konrad II, grandson of Konrad of Mazovia. The city was also the capital during the era of Duke Trojden, the founder of the dynasty that reigned in all of Mazovia until its incorporation into Poland in 1526. Trojden, as the ruler of Czersk, introduced to the Mazovian heraldry the image of the two-legged green dragon, set against a white shield, i.e. the wyvern, which is why the Mazovian dragon is sometimes called the Czersk dragon.



Czersk Castle

## Duke Janusz builds a castle

The last duke to rule from Czersk was Janusz I. He went down in its history for ordering a stone castle to be built in place of the fortified city. Preserved to this day are large segments of the perimeter wall with a gate tower and the western and southern towers. In the courtyard, archaeologists discovered traces of the foundations of the duke's residence, known as the Big House, and an area with a preserved city church.

Duke Janusz also made another decision that affected Czersk even more – he moved the capital of Eastern Mazovia to Warsaw, a city that was developing more rapidly, thus causing Czersk to slowly fall into oblivion.



[www.zamekczersk.pl](http://www.zamekczersk.pl)  
[www.gorakalwaria.pl](http://www.gorakalwaria.pl)

## 3 WARKA

### Beer and dukes' crypts

The city has been associated with beer since the reign of the Dukes of Mazovia. The beverage **gained so much favour that in 1478, Bolesław V stipulated that the beer delivered to the duke's manor in Warsaw can only come from Warka. It is still not clear if the city's name derives from the word "warzyć" (to cook or brew) or the word "warownia" (stronghold).**

The history of Warka starts in...  
 Old Warka

Before beer brewing even started in Warka, there was a fortified settlement on a high slope above the Pillica River, in a place located 3 kilometres away from today's market square, now known as Old Warka. It was an important trade centre upon crossing the Pillica River. The rampart of the stronghold survives to this day. Duke Siemowit I most likely brought the Dominicans to Old Warka. When the river bed shifted, the people of Warka resettled to a new location and the monastery followed them.

How many dukes were buried in the crypt of the Dominican monastery?

The monks built a new monastery building in today's market square, in the place where the fire station is located. The monastery's crypt became the final resting place of the Mazovian rulers. Among those buried there were Trojden, the Duke of Czersk, who confirmed the granting of city privileges to Warka in 1321,



and Trojden's brother Siemowit II, who ruled the Duchy of Rawa, as well as Duchess Danutė of Lithuania, wife of Duke Janusz I, who died 100 years later. It is also possible that Warka's Church of the Dominicans is also the final resting place of another duke, Konrad II, who died in Czerwińsk in the late 13th century.

### Piotr Wysocki moves the remains of the Dukes of Mazovia

The church of the Dominicans did not survive. In the 19th century, it was so dilapidated that the remains of the Dukes of Mazovia were moved to a newer church in 1859. The ceremony was solemn and patriotic. The change of the dukes' burial place was inspired by Piotr Wysocki, the man who led the revolt of officer cadets and caused the outbreak of the November Uprising. The remains of the Dukes of Mazovia were laid in the crypt of the 17th-century Baroque Franciscan Church of Our Lady of the Scapular, where they remain to this day. Warka is also home to another church associated with the Dukes of Mazovia. The Church of St. Nicholas the Bishop (at ul. Farna) was built on the site of a former wooden church founded by the former rulers of Mazovia.



Church of Our Lady of the Scapular in Warka



[www.warka.pl](http://www.warka.pl)

Tourist Information Centre  
ul. K. Pułaskiego 24, 05-660 Warka  
tel. +48 48 667 22 67

## 4 KOZIENICE

The place where Władysław Jagiełło's secret weapon was built

A remote corner of the forest right on the border with the Duchy of Mazovia, an abundance of wood and the fact that the local Zagożdżonka River was a tributary of the Vistula River – all these factors played a role in selecting Koziénice as the location for building King Władysław Jagiełło's "secret weapon", to be used against the Teutonic Knights.

In 1409, during a meeting with his cousin Vytautas, King Władysław Jagiełło decided to build a "secret weapon" that would increase his chances of victory against the Teutonic Knights. This weapon was a pontoon bridge that would enable the troops to quickly cross the Vistula River at a spot where the Teutonic Knights would not expect a crossing to occur, and to attack the enemy where it least expected it. Koziénice was supposedly the site of the assembly of the pontoon bridge. Jagiełło was very familiar with that area. The settlement, which dates back to the 13th century, when it was granted to the Norbertines of Plock,



### BEER FROM WARKA SAVES A NUNCIO'S LIFE

The Golden Age is associated with the 15th and 16th century, an era in which the city prospered through trading its beer, which was widely known and well-respected in Europe at the time. An excellent example of the worldwide popularity of the Warka beverage is the story of nuncio and future pope Clement VII, who fell seriously ill upon returning to Rome from Poland. As he lay on his deathbed, he longingly repeated the words *birra di warka*, thinking back to the beer that he had come to enjoy. Imagining that he was asking an obscure saint for support, the clergymen gathered by his bedside began to pray: *Santa Birra di Warka...* Hearing that, the ill nuncio burst out laughing so hard that the throat ulcer responsible for his illness erupted and the nuncio made a full recovery.



### THE MOST EXTRAORDINARY BRIDGE IN MEDIAEVAL EUROPE

The bridge was built in utter secrecy over a six-month period. Craftsmen built 150 boats that were 5 metres long, 1.5 metres wide and approximately 1 metre deep, as well as a 500-metre-long deck over which the troops were to cross the river. The construction process was supervised by Radom starost, Dobrogost Czarny of Odrzywół, and the main contractor of the structure was master carpenter, Jarosław. At the time, pontoon bridges were an engineering marvel not known in Western Europe. In the Middle Ages, when an army wanted to cross a river, it had to find a ford. The areas suitable for such crossings were well-known to both parties to the conflict, so the enemy forces could easily make it more difficult to cross the river. The pontoon bridge made it possible to quickly cross the Vistula River, stun the opponent and accelerate the military efforts, making it a true Blitzkrieg.

became a popular place for Polish kings to stay during hunting trips. King Władysław Jagiełło also stayed on numerous occasions at the hunting manor, which was located on the site of today's palace.

The bridge was being built in close cooperation with Duke Janusz I, who controlled the eastern part of Mazovia, which stretched at the time all the way to the Radomka River, almost reaching the outskirts of Koźienice. Finished segments of the bridge were



Statue of Władysław Jagiełło in Koźienice

floated down the Vistula River to Czerwińsk, through an area controlled by Janusz. There, the knights led by King Władysław Jagiełło crossed the Vistula River. Today, a reminder of these extraordinary events is the statue of Władysław Jagiełło inspecting the assembly process and two spans of the reconstructed bridge (Palace Park at ul. Parkowa).



[www.kozienice.pl](http://www.kozienice.pl)  
Tourist Information Centre  
ul. Warszawska 29, tel. +48 731 877 337

## 5 SIECIECHÓW

Mystery of the residence of Mazovia's most powerful magnate

Chronicler Gallus Anonymus wrote that, between **Sandomierz and Plock, no stronghold was more significant than Sieciechów. The settlement was the first one in Mazovia to receive city privileges.** Today, it is a small municipality neighbouring a post-Benedictine monastery complex.

The name of the town comes from the name of count palatine Sieciech, from the Starża-Toporczyk family, who was an influential administrator of the court of Duke Władysław Herman. The town, which is still a site for archaeologists, went down in history as the place where political opponents were held captive. Among those held captive in Sieciechów were Zbigniew, the first-born son of Władysław Herman, and Grzymisława, imprisoned by Konrad of Mazovia in 1233, widow of his brother Leszek the White, and their young son Bolesław the Chaste, who was Konrad's rival for the throne in Kraków. Inside the town, Sieciech built a monastery for the Benedictines, who arrived there from France in the 11th century. The abbey existed there until the mid-13th century. When the Vistula's riverbed shifted, the town was abandoned as it was no longer important strategically. The monks left the monastery in the city and moved to a municipality now known as Opactwo (Abbey), which boasts an original complex of post-Benedictine monastery

buildings. Although the buildings date back to the 18th-19th century, they were built on foundations that date back to the Middle Ages.



[www.sieciechow.pl](http://www.sieciechow.pl)  
[www.izbasieciechow.pl](http://www.izbasieciechow.pl)

### The local area

## ZWOLEŃ

According to local tradition, the place where, since the mid-19th century, there has been a shrine erected on the site of the former Church of St. Anna (ul. Wojska Polskiego), used to mark the end of Czersk Way, as it was known. Records confirm that indeed, at the turn of the 13th and 14th century, the land in which Zwolen was established one hundred years later may have been associated with Czersk and was the southernmost part of the Sieciechów Castellany. Today, the city's key landmark is the cemetery of the Kochanowski family in the crypt of the Church of Exaltation of the Holy Cross (at ul. Wyszynskiego 30). It is also worth visiting the Regional Museum.



[www.zwolen.pl](http://www.zwolen.pl)

## 6 IŁŻA

Unconquered stronghold  
of the Bishops of Kraków

Before the castle that now towers over the city was built, Duke Konrad was at the foot of the hill on which it was built, leading the Mazovian knights towards Kraków. Could it be that the spirit of the Duke of Mazovia still wanders around these parts? **The later magnates of the Iłża castle exhibited similar pugnacity and stubbornness. Particularly towards their feudal lords in Kraków.**

Segments of walls, bastions and a tall tower located on top of a hill from which the surrounding areas can be admired have survived to the present day. These are the remains of the former seat of the bishops of Kraków. The castle was built by bishop Jan Grot in the mid-14th century. The dignitary was trusted both by Władysław the Elbow-High and by his son Casimir the Great. However, a conflict broke out between the bishop and Casimir, and the angry king sent out troops to take over the castle in Iłża. But, the stronghold was not conquered and after the unsuccessful siege, the royal troops had to retreat from Iłża.

The bishop and his knights presumably hid in the tower, which is the oldest part of the stronghold. He was not the only owner of the castle to appreciate its defensive features. Legend has it that a cruel princess staked out traders' carriages from the tower's window, over time turning Iłża into a den of robber barons. The stolen goods were then hidden in the castle's dungeon. However, one day, the duchess accidentally leaned too far out of the window and fell to her death, taking with her the secret burial place of the treasures.



[www.ilza.pl](http://www.ilza.pl)



Ruins of the castle in Iłża

## 7 SZYDŁOWIEC

City where the fate of sovereign  
Mazovia was decided

**Located in the Sandomierz Land, Szydłowiec did not belong to Mazovian rulers, but it was this city that witnessed some important decisions that affected the fate of sovereign Mazovia.**

**SZYDŁOWIEC MAGNATES**

It is believed that King Sigismund the Old liked to play poker with the Szydłowski brothers. During one of their games, the king put two kings on the table, claiming he had three of a kind, the third king being himself. However, it was Krzysztof of Szydłowiec who stole the pot by flashing two jacks and explaining that he had four of a kind, as the remaining two were him and his brother Mikołaj...

Mikołaj Stanisław of Szydłowiec (1480–1532) – courtier of King John Albert, Vice-Treasurer of the Crown, starost of Radom.

Krzysztof of Szydłowiec (1467–1532) – brother of Mikołaj, Vice-Treasurer of the Crown, Grand Chancellor, castellan of Kraków. During the reign of Sigismund the Old, he was in charge of the foreign policy of the Kingdom of Poland. Like the king, he was in favour of incorporating Mazovia into Poland. As the starost of Sochaczew and Gostynin, Krzysztof managed the lands of Mazovia incorporated earlier into Poland.

**Renaissance castle**

It is presumed that it was at Szydłowiec Castle that King Sigismund I the Old, together with Mikołaj and Krzysztof of Szydłowiec, determined the policy to be undertaken with respect to sovereign Mazovia. The castle, located on an artificial island, was built in the 15th century by Stanisław Szydłowiecki, marshal of the court of the Kingdom of Poland. The residence was expanded by his son Mikołaj. The two-story, three-winged structure was made almost entirely of Szydłowiec sandstone. One of the oldest elements of the castle is the gate tower, supported by corner buttresses. Its ground floor features a Gothic cross vault. Currently, Szydłowiec Castle houses Poland's only Museum of Folk Instruments, which boasts a unique collection of instruments, ([www.muzeuminstrumentow.pl](http://www.muzeuminstrumentow.pl)), and a community centre ([www.sckzamek.pl](http://www.sckzamek.pl)).

**Gothic church...**

The main square in town, the Grand Market Square, features the parish Church of St. Sigismund the King.

The Gothic, oriented church was made of Szydłowiec sandstone. The church was founded by Stanisław and Mikołaj Szydłowiecki. The aisle in the chancel contains a tombstone of the latter, and the northern wall of the chancel features a late-Gothic polyptych from 1509.

and one of the most beautiful city halls in Poland

The central part of the market square is the city hall, which is the town's main landmark and the seat of Szydłowiec's authorities. The building, erected in the early 17th century, is one of the best preserved late-Renaissance monuments in Poland. Built on a rectangular plan, it has a small tower at each corner and a larger tower in the eastern part. A very unique point of interest is the whipping post complete with mascarons, located in front of the city hall. It is one of the few structures of this kind in Poland.



[www.szydlowiec.pl](http://www.szydlowiec.pl)

Tourist Information Centre

Rynek Wielki 5, +48 483 262 054



Parish church in Szydłowiec

## 8 CHLEWISKA

### Residence of the Odrowąż family



Palace belonging to the Odrowąż family in Chlewiska

Chlewiska, located near Szydłowiec, is well-known for its fortified palace belonging to the Chlewiska branch of the Odrowąż family. Chlewiska was the first place of exile of the last female ruler of Mazovia, Anna, wife of Stanisław Odrowąż. After the feud with King Sigismund I the Old and upon waiving every right to her properties, the rebellious duchess and her husband had to leave Mazovia. A fortified palace, called a castle, is the legacy of the former owners of Chlewiska, the Odrowąż familia. It was probably built in the late 15th century. The palace now houses the Manor House SPA hotel.



[www.manorhouse.pl](http://www.manorhouse.pl)

The local area

## RADOM

Radom is located in what has historically been considered Lesser Poland (Małopolska). When Mazovia was ruled by Konrad of Mazovia, his brother Leszek the White had one of his residences in Radom. This ruler was the founder of the oldest church there, the Church of St. Wenceslaus, who is depicted in one of the stained glass windows.

Surviving near the church is the rampart of a mediaeval fortified city known as Piotrówka, which is to be converted into the Archaeological Heritage Site of the Mleczna River Valley (Park Archeologiczny Doliny Rzeki Mlecznej). Radom was once the site of a castle built by Casimir the Great. Part of the castle still survives and you can see segments of the so-called Grand House, incorporated as part of the wall surrounding the vicarage of the Church of St. John.



[www.cit.radom.pl](http://www.cit.radom.pl)

Tourist Information Centre  
ul. Rwańska 16, tel. +48 48 36 20 536

The local area

## GRÓJEC

Grójec, historically known as Grodziec, is considered to be one of the oldest settlements in southern Mazovia. The castellum existed here back in the 11th-12th century, but no traces of it have yet been found. In 1419, Duke Janusz I the Old gave Grójec city privileges under Chelmno law. A reminder of the golden age of Mazovia is the parish Church of St. Nicholas. The construction of the Gothic church, initiated by Duke Janusz I the Old, began in the late 14th century. Initially, it was a single-aisle church made of brick and black stones. In 1520-1530, it was expanded, and the Chapel of St. Anna was added in that same century. Inside, it is worth seeing the sandstone baptismal font, where, according to records, preacher and writer Piotr Skarga was baptised.

The local area

## TARCZYN

Tarczyn's prosperity in the Middle Ages is largely owed to its convenient location along the trade routes from Radom to Warsaw and Zakroczym. The market square boasts an original Gothic church built in the first half of the 16th century.



- 1 Błonie – fortified city and Romanesque church
- 2 Kampinos – where the dukes set out on hunting trips
- 3 Brochów – unique fortified church
- 4 Sochaczew – castle on the Bzura River
- 5 Giżyce – Gothic church
- 6 Sanniki – palace on the site of the duke's manor
- 7 Gostynin – castle with a dungeon in which the prisoners were devoured by a monster



## Route of the Siemowits

Western Mazovia has preserved the rich heritage of the Dukes of Mazovia and the unsolved mysteries they have left behind. In the fortified city of Blonie, archaeologists discovered Mazovia's oldest fortified stone tower. The city could have been the capital of all of Mazovia. Both the Dukes of Mazovia in the Middle Ages and the kings of Poland later on liked to go hunting in Kampinos Forest (Puszcza Kampinoska). Brochów boasts a remarkable fortified church surrounded by a rampart, and in Sochaczew, on a hill overlooking the Bzura River, you will find the ruins of a castle built by the Dukes of Mazovia. Giżyce remembers the era of Bishop Paweł of Giżyce, who ruled the entire Duchy of Mazovia as a regent. Sanniki was home to a hunting manor that saw the death of the older of the last Dukes of Płock, which sealed the incorporation of the first lands of the Duchy of Mazovia into Płock. Did he die as a result of being poisoned? The castle in Gostynin was the preferred residence of Duke Siemowit IV. According to legend, the castle's dungeon was once troubled by a monster that devoured the convicts serving their sentences there. The Western Mazovian territory did not end at the boundary of today's Mazowieckie Voivodship. The dukes also owned Łowicz, even though it was managed by the Archbishops of Gniezno, and Rawa Mazowiecka. The castle in Rawa was the scene of an event so dramatic that it inspired Shakespeare to write one of his tragedies.

### SIEMOWIT III AND SIEMOWIT IV – OUTSTANDING RULERS OF MAZOVIA

The former is considered one of the most brilliant leaders of Mazovia, while the latter attempted to win the Polish throne, competing against Władysław Jagiełło.

Siemowit III (1320-1381), son of Trojden, inherited half the Duchy of Czersk, and after less than thirty years of demarche, he added to his domain the remaining lands of Mazovia, and after the death of King Casimir the Great, he restored independence to Mazovia. The duke also codified Mazovian case law, which resulted in the so-called Sochaczew Statutes.

Siemowit IV (1352-1426), younger son of Siemowit III and brother of Janusz I, was almost elected King of Poland by some of the knights. His election was thwarted only by Lesser Poland (Małopolski) magnates, who did not favour the Duke of Mazovia. As a result, Siemowit decided to abduct Queen Hedwig to secure the coveted throne through marriage. When the plan failed, the duke mounted an armed intervention. He relinquished this idea only in light of the 1385 Polish-Lithuanian Union, under which the Great Duke of Lithuania, Jagiełło, agreed to become King of Poland. In return for waiving his rights to the Polish throne, Siemowit IV obtained for Mazovia the Belz Land, located in Ruthenia. The agreement was sealed by the marriage of the Duke of Mazovia to Jagiełło's beloved sister Alexandra.

## 1 BŁONIE

The city that was supposed to be the capital of Mazovia

The fortified city of Blonie was an important element of Mazovia's defence system. It was one of the main residences of Duke Konrad of Mazovia and his son Siemowit. It is possible that it was being groomed to serve as the capital of the entire Duchy.

Capital of Mazovia on Bald Mountain (Łysa Góra)

In the north-eastern part of town, on Bald Mountain, a fortified city was built in the 12th century. During the reign of Konrad of Mazovia, it was one of the main residences of the duke. In its northern part, atop a conical mound, the duke built a fortified tower made of stone, to be used as a hiding place for the residents of the stronghold in the event of an enemy invasion. However, the rampart, the fortified tower and the Utrata River all proved insufficient in thwarting attacks. The stronghold was destroyed in the second half of the 13th century, most likely by Lithuanians, who invaded Mazovia in 1262, killing Duke Siemowit I and abducting his older son Konrad. After the duke's death, his successors did not resume the idea of establishing Blonie as the capital of their state.

The grandson of Konrad of Mazovia looks after the Romanesque Church of the Holy Trinity

However, Blonie, conveniently located along the trade routes, did not lose its importance. After being released from captivity, the son of Siemowit, Duke Konrad II, made efforts to expand the church built in the mid-13th



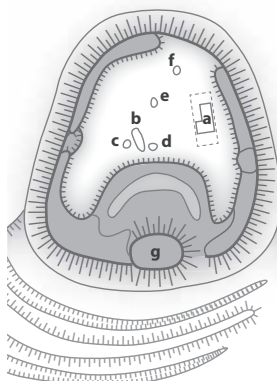
Remnants of the fortified city of Blonie and a site plan as per the drawing of T. Kiersnowska – one of the best preserved strongholds in Mazovia.



THE CITY WHERE KONRAD OF MAZOVIA MAY HAVE MADE THE DECISION TO BRING IN THE TEUTONIC KNIGHTS

In the fortified city in Blonie, aside from remnants of the oldest fortified tower in Mazovia, archaeologists also discovered portions of a large oblong residential building erected in the first half of the 13th century. Next to the structure, there is evidence of an old goldsmith's workshop. Not every city at the time had these types of craftsmen. The average dwellers of mediaeval Mazovia could not afford to buy the jewellery and ornaments he created. Those were typically ordered by dukes and knights. Therefore, it is possible that the large residential building was the duke's court, where the Dukes of Mazovia, Konrad of Mazovia and his son Siemowit, frequently stayed. It is possible that during a stay in Blonie, Konrad of Mazovia, looking from the rampart towards the northern border of his Duchy, at the time under attack from the pagan Prussians, decided to send messengers over to the Grand Master of the Teutonic Order, Hermann von Salza.

century. Despite all the damage sustained over the course of the centuries, the roof and vault portion of the church has not changed. It is currently a three-aisle,



- a. duke's manor
- b. goldsmith's workshop
- c. small cellar
- d. food storage cavern
- e. smokehouse
- f. horn softening facility
- g. site of former fortified tower





Portrait of Konrad II at the Church of the Holy Trinity

## Katarzyna Radziejowska serves a deadly treat

The first stage in the decline of sovereign Mazovia played out in Blonie market square. In 1524, the last Dukes of Mazovia, Stanisław and Janusz III, attended a feast in Blonie. At the dinner table, Stanisław was served a dish specially made for him, and, according to accounts, prepared by Katarzyna Radziejowska: capon drizzled with Malvasia vinegar. A day after consuming this delicacy, Stanisław died. Was he poisoned or was his body, accustomed to Polish alcoholic beverages, not able to tolerate Malvasia, which was the term used at the time to refer to sweet wines imported from the faraway island of Crete?



[www.blonie.pl](http://www.blonie.pl)

### The local area

## RADZIEJOWICE

The beautiful park, with its scenic lakeside location, is the setting of a Neoclassical palace and a small Neo-Gothic castle. Although small, the castle holds



### KATARZYNA RADZIEJOWSKA – RADZIEJOWICE'S FEMME FATALE

Great controversy surrounds the death of the last Dukes of Mazovia: Stanisław in 1524 and his brother Janusz two years later. It was commonly believed that the young, strong dukes had been poisoned. Their death was attributed to the beautiful Katarzyna Radziejowska, daughter of the castellan of Sochaczew, Andrzej Radziejowski, who was a member of the dukes' court. The suspected poisoner had allegedly had a love affair with Duke Stanisław. It is believed that the ambitious Katarzyna had had her eyes on the duke's crown. However, due to pressure from his mother, Duchess Anna, Stanisław gave up on his plans to marry her. The scorned Katarzyna presumably poisoned the duke's

mother in 1522, and two years later poisoned her lover. The last Duke of Mazovia Janusz III died suddenly in 1526. He also had an affair with Katarzyna, whom he visited in his home town of Radziejowice, after she had been banished from the Mazovian court. However, he broke it off after the death of his brother Stanisław. Mazovian noblemen accused Katarzyna of causing this death as well. It is believed that Katarzyna administered the poison through trusted accomplices. However, doctors examining the duke's corpse found no evidence of poison and the king issued a special statement in which he noted that the dukes died of natural causes. However, the official version did nothing to dispel the rumours and for centuries onwards, Katarzyna Radziejowska was and still is believed to have poisoned the last Dukes of Mazovia.



Neo-Gothic "castle" in Radziejowice

many centuries' worth of history. It was built on the site of a former 15th-century manor. Preserved to this day are segments of the rampart, dating back to the Middle Ages; they are a reminder of the former residence of the Radziejowski family. They were an *ancient and wealthy family*, wrote Bartosz Paprocki, famous 16th century heraldist, about the Radziejowski family. *Earlier, they served as senators of the Duchy of Mazovia, received high-profile posts from the dukes and then the kings, with Andrzej serving as the castellan of Sochaczew.* That same Andrzej had a daughter, Katarzyna, who is remembered in the history of the Duchy of Mazovia as a figure suspected of poisoning its last rulers.



[www.radziejowice.pl](http://www.radziejowice.pl)

The local area

## CHLEBνια

The small village of Chlebnia, near Grodzisk Mazowiecki, is home to the remnants of a fortified city that existed in the 11th-13th century. It may have protected Błonie's southern entrance. The rampart surrounding the town was 300 metres long.

## 2 KAMPINOS

White Town in the dukes' forest

The first mention of **Białe Miasto (White Town)**, known today as Kampinos, dates back to 1377. The name derives from the white sand dunes.

Dukes of Mazovia stayed in Kampinos during hunting trips in the forest. In 1414, the settlement received city privileges and Czeszek of Kocięcin became its mayor. Mazovian rulers were not the only ones to enjoy hunting in the Kampinos Forest. King of Poland Władysław Jagiełło was also known to chase after wild game around those parts.

The wooden Church of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary dates back to the age of the Duchy of Mazovia. The current church, built in the style of Polish Baroque in 1733-1782, made from pinewood sourced from the Kampinos Forest, is located on the site of the former mediaeval church. Worth noting inside the church are the beautiful altars and the revered 17th-century image of the Madonna with Child – Our Lady of Kampinos. Opposite the church are two oak trees, designated as natural monuments and known as Fryderyk Chopin and Stefan Wyszyński.



[www.kampinos.pl](http://www.kampinos.pl)



Church in Kampinos



## KAMPINOS FOREST – HUNTING GROUNDS FOR THE DUKES OF MAZOVIA

In 1451, Duke Władysław I of Płock granted the castellany of Sochaczew, together with Kampinos, to his wife Anna. When King Casimir Jagiellon incorporated the Sochaczew Land into Poland, together with the forest region, the dukes controlling the eastern part of Mazovia, Janusz II and his brother Bolesław IV, objected to his decision. It is unclear whether they were protesting the loss of the entire Sochaczew Land, or the loss of a good hunting spot. Up until 1476, i.e. until these territories were annexed by Poland, the Kampinos Forest belonged to the Dukes of Mazovia. It derives its name from

the village of Kampinos. In remote corners of the woods, the rulers often went hunting for big game: deer, boar and elk. They also received proceeds from logging and leasing the forest areas against payment. There was also substantial demand for so-called mast pines, i.e. tall and straight pines used for building ships. Settlements did not start appearing in the forest until late: records mention Kampinos in 1377, Wilków in 1420 and Wiejca in 1489. After this territory was incorporated into Poland, Kampinos Forest became royal domain, i.e. the proceeds obtained from its use would go to the Polish treasury.

[www.kampinoski-pn.gov.pl](http://www.kampinoski-pn.gov.pl)



Remnants of the stronghold in Zamczysko

### The local area

## ZAMCZYSKO STRONGHOLD

As you make your way through Kampinos Forest, do consider visiting the "Zamczysko", an area under strict protection, where you will find traces of a mediaeval, 13th-century stronghold. The cylindrical cone protected by the rampart was surrounded by a moat. The role of the stronghold was to defend the trail that ran

through the forest and to serve as a watchtower during Lithuanian and Ruthenian attacks in the 13th century. It may have been one of the strongholds preventing access to Błonie from the north. It was destroyed in a fire presumably started by the invaders. Visiting the medieval stronghold hidden among the forest is facilitated by a system of comfortable and easy accessible wooden paths and observation decks.

## 3 BROCHÓW

The most remarkable fortified church in Mazovia

The small village of Brochów is famous for its **fortified church**, where the parents of Frederic Chopin got married and Frederic himself was baptised. The modern-day church was built on the site of a church that, according to legend, was built in the early 12th century.

In 1551, following an order from Warsaw wojski Jan Brochowski, of the Prawdzic Coat of arms, construction began on a new church, to be located on the site of the former church. The reconstruction effort was carried out by the excellent architect, Giovanni Battista

of Venice. The construction process took 10 years and the church was officially consecrated in 1596. After being destroyed by the Swedes in the 17th century, the church was rebuilt in 1662-1665 by its then-owner Olbracht Adrian Lasocki, starost of Wyszogród.

The church is a three-aisle basilica. The chancel is closed with an apse above which a tower is positioned. This architectural design is practically unique in Poland. Two cylindrical towers were placed on the western side. At the main aisle level, a two-story tunnel gallery with embrasures stretches around the church,



Church in Brochów

connecting the three towers. The entire complex was surrounded by a rampart with proto-bastions. The basement level houses the surviving tombs of the Lasockis, who owned the village.



[www.brochow.pl](http://www.brochow.pl)  
[www.brochow-parafia.pl](http://www.brochow-parafia.pl)

#### 4 SOCHACZEW

City where  
the history of sovereign Mazovia began

The walls of the castle next to the Bzura River have witnessed historic events. It was here that, in 1377, Duke Siemowit III adopted the **Sochaczew Statutes**, an example of the first-ever codification of case law in Mazovia. In 1410, the Polish army marched past the stronghold en route to Grunwald, and four years later, the Sochaczew market square was the place where Zawisza the Black, one of the most famous knights in the Kingdom of Poland, declared war on the Teutonic Order. The history of sovereign Mazovia began with the death of **Duke Bolesław the Wrymouth in Sochaczew**.



#### SOCHACZEW STATUTES

The statutes adopted at the castle during an assembly of the dukes were the oldest written body of laws in Mazovia. In 1377, Siemowit III summoned to Sochaczew all of Mazovia's voivodes, castellans, judges and ensigns. Together with his sons, Janusz and Siemowit IV, as well as Mazovia's magnates, he adopted and codified a collection of laws for all of Mazovia, consisting of 17 articles that regulated both criminal and civil matters. Before that, court rulings were made on the basis of case law, church law, German law or through trial by ordeal.

## Boleslaw the Wrymouth divides Poland into provinces

In 1138, Duke Boleslaw III the Wrymouth died at the Benedictine Monastery of the Holy Trinity in Sochaczew. His death and his will, drafted in advance, contributed to the emergence of sovereign Mazovia. Had the duke not divided Poland among his sons, Mazovia could not boast about its three centuries of independence. The site of the former monastery is now marked with a commemorative cross.

## Siemowit III builds a castle on the Bzura River

Near the area where a monastery was once located, on a high cliff over the Bzura River, segments of the castle's rampart have survived. The earliest settlements on Castle Hill (Wzgórze Zamkowe) date back to the 12th century. In the first half of the following century, Duke Konrad of Mazovia built a wood-and-earth stronghold. The settlement grew rapidly due to its convenient location near an intersection of trade routes. In 1286, the city was burned down. It is not clear when exactly Sochaczew obtained city privileges. Most likely, it happened in the 13th century, and certainly before 1324. As a result of efforts on the part of Duke Siemowit III, in the second half of the 14th century, a stone Gothic castle was built there, which served

as the duke's residence. The polygonal structure was made of brick and black stones. The residence as a whole was composed of the rampart and wooden internal structures.

## Archaeologists solve the mysteries of the castle

The surviving ruins are the remnants of an early-Baroque castle from the early 17th century. However, as a result of archaeological efforts, traces of earlier structures built by Duke Siemowit were discovered. The castle was expanded in the second half of the 15th century by Duchess Anna of Oleśnica, mother of the tragically deceased last Dukes of Plock, who ruled in the Sochaczew Land until 1476, and subsequently by Krzysztof of Szydłowiec, who was one of Sochaczew's starosts after the incorporation of the Sochaczew Land into Poland. In recent years, the castle's ruins have been examined by archaeologists, and they are currently being restored and rebuilt. The "Nasz Zamek" (Our Castle) Association has undertaken to examine and rebuild this most precious of Sochaczew's landmarks.



[www.sochaczew.pl](http://www.sochaczew.pl)

[www.naszzamek.pl](http://www.naszzamek.pl)



Ruins of the castle in Sochaczew

## 5 GIŻYCE

Small town, big politics

**The owner of Giżyce, Bishop of Plock Paweł Giżycki, controlled all of Mazovia in the mid-15th century.**

Bishop and Politician

This small town was the setting for very important decisions affecting the entire Duchy of Mazovia. All this was due to bishop Paweł Giżyce, of the Gozdawa Coat of arms (1400-1463), who became the regent in Eastern Mazovia after the death of Duke Bolesław IV (1454) and also the regent in Western Mazovia after the death of Duke Władysław I (1455). The bishop was an avid supporter of Mazovia's independence and after the death of Władysław of Varna, he began to lobby for one of the Dukes of Mazovia to become King of Poland.

Bishop and Builder

The bishop went down in history not only as a politician but also as a builder. Because of him, Pultusk gained a basilica, and his tiny home village of Giżyce gained two buildings: a Gothic church and a fortified manor. The single-aisle Gothic Church of the Apostles St. Peter and Paul was established in 1439. The Neo-Baroque

altar is adorned with the wondrous image of Our Lady of Giżyce. What is now a palace and park complex of the Suski family was once a fortified manor built in 1439. The existing tower was erected over the foundations of an old tower built by the bishop of Giżyce.

## 6 SANNIKI

550 years ago in Sanniki

Traces of a manor were discovered in the park, next to the 18th-century palace at which Frederic Chopin had been known to stay. It is possible that this was a former residence of the Dukes of Plock, where a series of tragic events unfolded 550 years ago.

Sleighs for the Dukes of Plock

The first mention of Sanniki dates back to the 14th century. The name of the city derives from the Polish word for sleigh ("sanie"), made and delivered by the residents to the duke's manor in Plock. Historical records mention that, at the time, the settlement had a church and a hunting manor for the Dukes of Mazovia ruling the western part of the Duchy, the so-called Plock Mazovia.



Palace in Sanniki – seat of the Frederic Chopin European Centre for Arts



## WERE THE PLOCK DUKES POISONED?

On New Year's Eve of 1461, sixteen-year-old Duke Siemowit VI died heirless in Sanniki. Such a sudden death gave rise to speculation that he may have been poisoned. Accusations were made against Sochaczew Castellan Gotard of Rybno, who had fallen into conflict with the Duke of Plock. Scholars are sceptical of the poisoning theory. If Siemowit's death was pure coincidence, fate certainly turned out to be cruel for the Mazovian Piasts.

When Siemowit's younger brother, Władysław II, died two months later, the Duchy of Plock lost its last male heir to the throne. The land of Western Mazovia was being claimed by Polish King Casimir

Jagiellon, referring to his entitlement thereto as the feudal lord of the deceased dukes. The late dukes' aunt, Duchess Catherine, daughter of Siemowit IV, tried to defend those territories, which were at risk of seizure by Poland. For a brief period of time, she had full power as a ruler, which was remarkable in the context of the Middle Ages. She also mounted an armed foray into the castle in Rawa Mazowiecka to fill it with knights who were loyal to the Mazovian court. However, as a result of pressure from the king, the Rawa and Gostynin Lands were incorporated into Poland. Consequently, the dukes controlling Eastern Mazovia managed only to hold on to the land of Plock, Zawkrze and Wizna.

## A near-sensation in the world of archaeology

During an excavation in the park surrounding the palace in October 2011, the archaeologists made a stunning discovery: they had uncovered part of the foundations of the structure and part of the base of a furnace, and the stone corner bore traces of a wooden beam. All evidence suggests that these are the remnants of a manor in which the owners of Sanniki lived before they built the palace that survived to this day. The manor was built on an artificial hill, possibly an older building. Was the older building the former manor of the Dukes of Mazovia? If it turns out that the recently-discovered manor was built atop a structure erected by the rulers of Mazovia, it will cause a stir in the world of archaeology. This is because no one has yet discovered a duke's hunting manor in Mazovia. These types of manors, as we know from written records, were located in various municipalities, and the dukes, who were avid hunters, often went into the woods to chase after wild game.



[www.sanniki.pl](http://www.sanniki.pl), [www.ecasanniki.pl](http://www.ecasanniki.pl)  
Tourist Information Centre  
ul. Warszawska 142, tel. +48 24 268 11 08

## 7 GOSTYNIN

Rebuilt castle, giant frog and ghost of a Russian tsar

Until recently, a church stood in the place of a castle built by Duke Siemowit IV. Now, the castle has been rebuilt and the old tower is haunted by the ghost of a Russian tsar.

### The story of Bald Mountain

The story of Gostynin began in a place known as Bald Mountain (Łysa Góra). A fortified city was built on the small stretch of land between the Czarne and Kocioł lakes. The city was then expanded by Duke Konrad of Mazovia. The stronghold, located on the border of Mazovia and Kuyavia and near



Statue of Siemowit IV in Gostynin's market square



### CASTLE HAUNTED BY THE TSAR'S GHOST

The castle, destroyed in the late 18th century and converted into an Evangelic church, after reconstruction in 2009 became a castle once again. Out of the original structure, only a segment of the rampart and the tower survived. The tower includes a dungeon in which prisoners were once kept. According to oral accounts, the fate of those prisoners was terrible. They were allegedly, one-by-one, being devoured by a beast reminiscent of a large frog. When it ran out of prisoners to eat, it looked for prey in the town. Does this story contain the slightest grain of truth? Allegedly, the monster's hide, displayed on the city gate, was seen in 1656 by Erik Dahlberg, quartermaster of the

Swedish army and later his field marshal. *An awful, terrifying beast that we all looked at in great astonishment*, he wrote in his journal. Dahlberg immortalised a number of Polish towns and castles in his drawings. However, he did not draw the castle in Gostynin or the scary creature hanging on its gate.

The castle's tower also holds another mystery. It is believed that you can find the ghost of tsar Vasili Shuyskiy of Russia. The tsar was the only Russian monarch to ever pay homage to a Polish king. It was during the Time of Troubles, when Polish troops took over the Kremlin. After coming to Poland, he and his entire family moved into Gostynin Castle. That is also where the entire family died. Plague is believed to have been the cause of their death.



Gostynin Castle

the trade routes, played an important strategic role. In the late 18th century, Gostynin became the subject of a dispute between Konrad's grandsons: Boleslaw II and his brother Konrad II, who were engaged in a civil war in Mazovia for 15 years. The latter did not make a good name for himself in the history of Gostynin. In 1286, he conquered and burned down the city.

### Father and son build a stronghold in a different location

The new stronghold was established south of Bald Mountain. Siemowit III, the first Duke of Mazovia to use the title of Duke of Gostynin, had a fortified wooden tower built on the site of today's castle. His son Siemowit IV built new fortifications. The four-sided walls are reinforced with buttresses at each corner. An entry gate has survived in the eastern curtain wall. The castle became the favourite residence of the duke, who granted city privileges to Gostynin in 1382. Centuries later, the city's residents expressed their gratitude to their ruler by erecting a statue of him in the market square that he had designed.





## The local area

RAWA  
MAZOWIECKA

The octagonal tower rising above the city is a remnant of a Gothic castle built in the 14th century. The structure was probably founded by Duke Siemowit III. The stronghold, built on a quadrilateral plan, was intended to defend the southern border of Mazovia against enemy attack. It is possible that one of the tragic events that unfolded in Rawa Castle inspired William Shakespeare to write *The Winter's Tale*.



[www.rawamazowiecka.pl](http://www.rawamazowiecka.pl)



#### THE WINTER'S TALE AT RAWA CASTLE

Alongside many virtues, Duke Siemowit III had two vices: he was very jealous and impulsive. When his wife, who was 23 years his junior, became pregnant, the duke, suspecting infidelity, had her locked up in the tower of Rawa Castle. When the duchess gave birth to a son, Siemowit had the wife strangled and gave the son up to a poor family living in a village just outside Rawa Mazowiecka. Young Henry was taken in by his stepsister, who raised him in her manor in Słupsk. When Henry grew up, he returned to his father's court. Because of the striking resemblance between the two, Siemowit accepted him as his son and procured the office of bishop of Płock for him. These tragic occurrences, described by Jan of Czarnków in his chronicle, probably became the inspiration for Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale*. The English playwright merely changed the location and nationality of the main protagonists.

## The local area

## ŁOWICZ

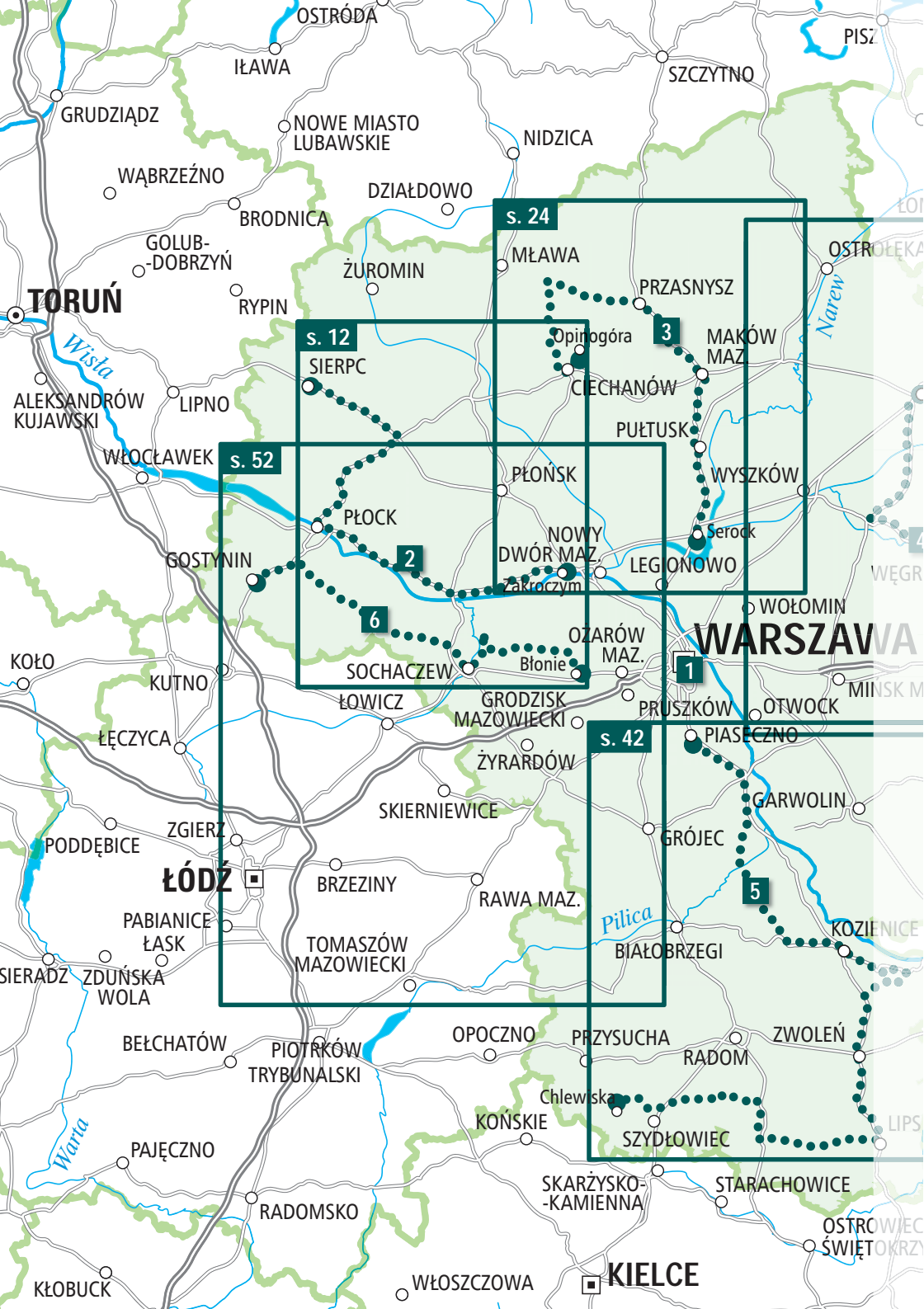
Although Łowicz and the surrounding areas were located within the boundaries of the Duchy of Mazovia, they belonged to the archbishops of Gniezno. In 1242, Duke Konrad of Mazovia issued a so-called "grand privilege" to the archbishops of Gniezno, where the Łowicz properties were called the castellany. In the 13th century, Łowicz was granted city privileges, and in the next century, Archbishop Jarosław Bogoria Skotnicki built a castle there. He also received immunity from Duke Siemowit III, which guaranteed full independence of the lands from the Dukes of Mazovia. The archbishop made only two concessions in favour of the duke: he agreed to pay one forfeit of gold per year, to emphasise the duke's titular superiority over Łowicz, and allowed the duke to retain the right to hunt for aurochs in the local forests.



[www.lowicz.eu](http://www.lowicz.eu)



Castle in Rawa Mazowiecka



**TORUŃ**

**ŁÓDŹ**

**WARSZAWA**

**KIELCE**

s. 52

s. 12

s. 24

s. 42

2

6

3

1

5

4

SIERPÓC

PŁOCK

GOSTYNIN

SOCHACZEW

KUTNO

ŁĘCZYCA

PODDĘBICE

PABIANICE

ŁASK

BELCHATÓW

PAJĘCZNO

KŁOBUCK

ŁOWICZ

BRZESZYN

TOMASZÓW MAZOWIECKI

PIOTRKÓW TRYBUNALSKI

RADOMSKO

OPOCZNO

KOŃSKIE

WŁOSZCZOWA

GRODZISK MAZOWIECKI

SKIERNIEWICE

RAWA MAZ.

Chlewska

SKARŻYSKO-KAMIENNA

MŁAWA

Opinogóra

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ŁÓWICZ

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ŻYRARDÓW

SKIERNIEWICE

RAWA MAZ.

Chlewska

SKARŻYSKO-KAMIENNA

PRZASNYSZ

PUŁTUSK

PUŁTUSK

LEGONÓW

Serock

PRUSZKÓW

GRÓJEC

BIAŁOBRZEGI

Przysucha

SZYDŁOWIEC

MAKÓW MAZ.

WYSZKÓW

Serock

PIASECZNO

GARWOLIN

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KOZIENICE

LIPS

OSTROWIEC ŚWIĘTOKRZY

GRUDZIĄDZ

WĄBRZEŻNO

GOLUB-DOBRZYŃ

BRODNICA

LIPNO

WŁOCŁAWEK

ALEKSANDRÓW KUJAWSKI

KOŁO

KUTNO

ŁĘCZYCA

PODDĘBICE

PABIANICE

ŁASK

BELCHATÓW

PAJĘCZNO

KŁOBUCK

NOWE MIASTO LUBAWSKIE

RYPIN

ŻUROMIN

DZIAŁDOWO

ŁAWA

OSTRÓDA

NIDZICA

SZCZYTNO

PISZ

ŁÓDŹ

WĘGR

MIŃSK M

LIPS

OSTROWIEC ŚWIĘTOKRZY



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REGIONAL PROGRAMME  
NATIONAL COHESION STRATEGY

Mazovia.  
heart of Poland

EUROPEAN UNION  
EUROPEAN REGIONAL  
DEVELOPMENT FUND



Project entitled "Tourist routes showcasing the cultural heritage of Mazovia", co-funded by the European Union from the European Regional Development Fund, as part of the Regional Operational Programme of the Mazowieckie Voivodship for 2007-2013, Priority 6.2 Tourism

[www.mazowsze.travel](http://www.mazowsze.travel)