



Dukes of Mazovia Trail

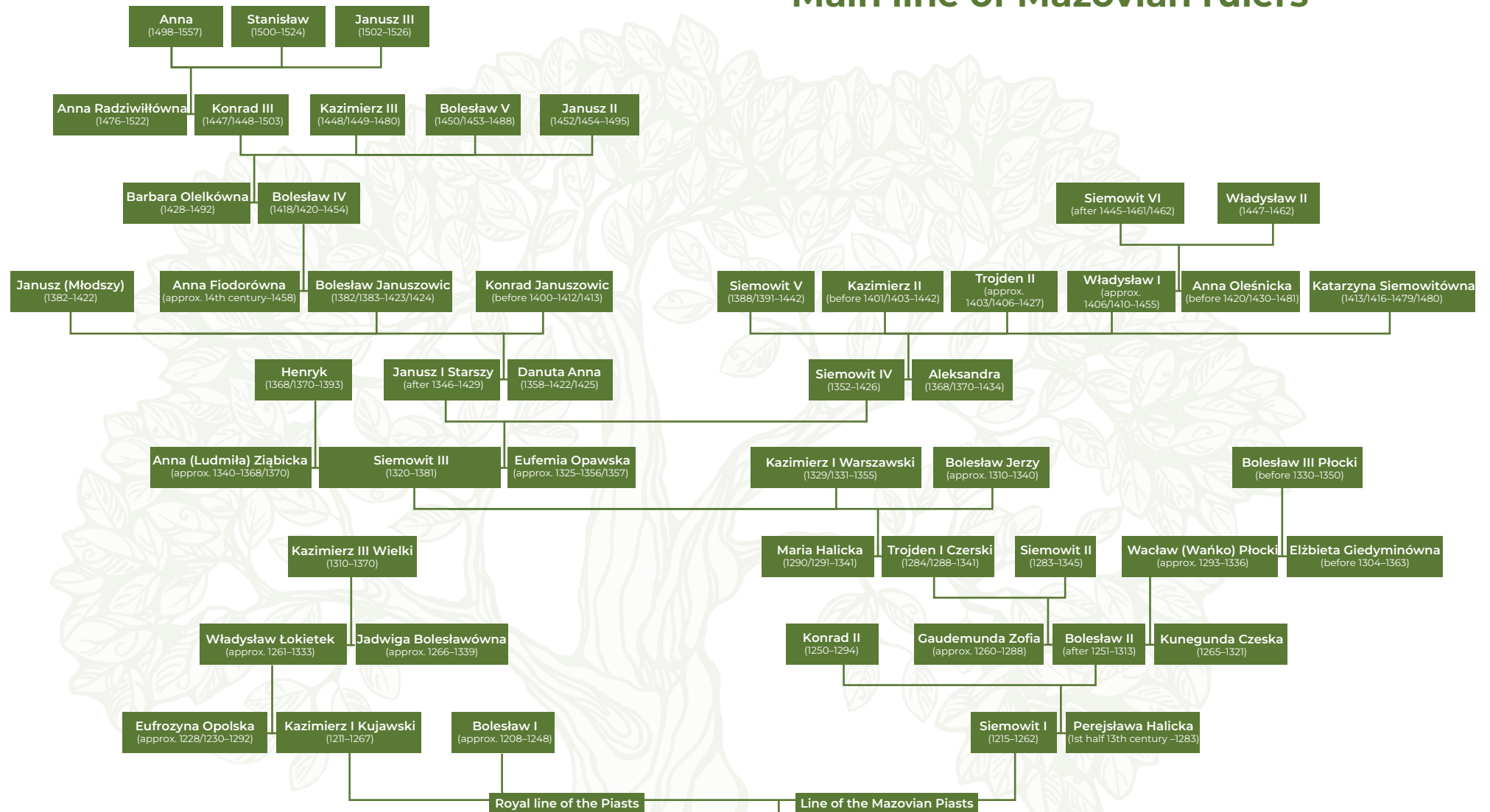
Mazovia. Today – the heart of country. During the formation of the Kingdom of Poland, it was a separate state for over three centuries. As the region's epicentre, the capital presents an enchanting melange of attractions and contrasts, with famous monuments as well as a business city that touches the clouds. Around it stretches an equally extraordinary land, with alluring landscapes of fields, meadows, and forests, picturesquely interwoven with the meander of blue rivers. It is an ideal destination for long or short bicycle trips, family kayaking, and forest hikes. A journey through Mazovia is a true adventure, its route marked by medieval castles, noble manors, churches of many faiths, fields of great battles and landscapes whose diversity has attracted filmmakers over the years. This world is a vast treasury of history, culture, and nature. Simply stand at its borders and say the magic words: Mazovia, open sesame! And then follow your chosen route.

Here lies the Dukes of Mazovia Trail – a journey to the Middle Ages, when Mazovia grew stronger thanks to bold and ambitious rulers. The progenitor of the Mazovian line of the Piasts was Konrad I of Mazovia. The history of the dynasty he began is a tale of three centuries during which a civilization was built despite heated disputes and fierce combat. The Dukes of Mazovia founded more than a hundred towns, built castles and endowed churches whose style, known as Mazovian Gothic, is now permanently etched in the history of art. The history of Mazovian rulers also includes heart-wrenching family stories (one of them inspired Shakespeare!) and legends of Templar treasures and... an extraordinary invention that contributed to the Polish-Lithuanian army's victory at the Battle of Grunwald, supported by contingents of Mazovian banners.

The Trail of the Mazovian Dukes is one of several thematic routes by which you can discover Mazovia's heritage. It is worth getting to know them all. The Chopin Trail follows the footsteps of one of the world's greatest composers. The 1920 Battle of Warsaw Trail is a journey through time and space proving that the battle from over a century ago is rightly considered one of the most important in European history. Mazovia on Screen is a proposal for travellers and cinema lovers alike, while Industrial Mazovia offers a wealth of attractions associated with narrow-gauge railways, old factories, power plants and hydrotechnical installations.

Detailed information about Dukes of Mazovia Trail can be found on the website mazowsze.travel.

Main line of Mazovian rulers



Konrad I Mazowiecki (1187–1247)



Siemowit
(1215–1262)



Władysław Łokietek
(approx. 1261–1333)



Kazimierz III Wielki (1310–1370)



Konrad I Mazowiecki
(1187–1247)

Agafia Świętosławówna
(approx. 1190–1248)



Siemowit IV
(1320–1381)



Anna Radziwiłłówna
(1476–1522)



Konrad III
(1447/1448–1503)



Anna
(1498–1557)



300 Years of Independent Mazovia

Chronology

Year 1138



Duke Bolesław Krzywousty (Wrymouth) dies in Sochaczew. He leaves a testament in which – as Gallus Anonymus wrote – *he divided the Kingdom of Poland, which until then he*

alone had been the sole ruler and monarch, among his four sons, in order to prevent civil war, skirmishes and dissension that might break out after his death. He entrusted the supreme authority to the eldest. From one of the provinces into which Poland was divided, the independent Duchy of Mazovia would emerge after some years.

Around 1200

The grandson of Bolesław Krzywousty – Konrad I of Mazovia (1187/1188–1247) – becomes the independent Duke of Mazovia and Kuyavia. He divides the districts, the inheritance from his father Kazimierz II Sprawiedliwy (Casimir II the Just), with his brother Leszek I Biały (the White).

Year 1228

The first Teutonic Knights arrive in Mazovia – in the first year, only... two. Konrad I of Mazovia, forced by a troubling situation on the northern border and having practically lost Chełmno Land to the Old Prussians, concludes an

agreement with Hermann von Salza – Grand Master of the Teutonic Order. In exchange for resolving the Prussian problem, the Teutonic Knights are granted Chełmno Land for their use by Konrad I of Mazovia. The Order effectively destroys the Old Prussians. Their last bastion falls in 1283 – half a century after the start of the conquest. At the same time the Teutonic Knights forge the so-called Kruszwica privilege of 1230 to appropriate Chełmno Land, and later Dobrzyń Land, as their own. Instead of defending Mazovia, they become a threat to the whole of Poland.



Year 1247

Mazovia, after the death of Konrad I of Mazovia, is divided between his two sons: Bolesław I and Siemowit I of Mazovia. A year later, after Bolesław's death, all the lands are taken over by Siemowit I of Mazovia. He rules until 1262, when he is killed during a Lithuanian and Ruthenian raid. Siemowit's sons, Konrad II and Bolesław II, divide Mazovia in half. The former rules in eastern Mazovia based in Czersk, the latter in the western part headquartered in Płock; following his brother's death without heirs, the latter takes possession of the entire duchy for 19 years.

Year 1313

Duke Bolesław II dies. On his deathbed he divides Mazovia between his three sons: Siemowit II, Trojden (who became ruler of the Duchy of Czersk) and Waclaw of Płock.



From that point the duchy would be divided into districts and fiefs partly dependent on the rulers of Bohemia, and later on the King of Poland, for almost 60 years. Its reunification and independence would be achieved only by Trojden's son – Siemowit III, Duke of Mazovia – regarded as the most outstanding of the Mazovian rulers.

intensive settlement policy and granting town charters to numerous towns. In foreign policy he cooperated with the Kingdom of Poland. At the Battle of Grunwald he stood shoulder to shoulder with Władysław II Jagiełło and Witold, bravely fighting the Teutonic Knights.

Year 1454

On a hunting trip Duke Bolesław IV of Mazovia is killed – the grandson of Duke Janusz. He leaves behind his underage sons in the eastern Mazovia he governed. When, a year later, his cousin Władysław I, who had ruled western Mazovia and likewise left child heirs, dies, the Duchy of Mazovia has no adult heir to the throne.

Year 1370

Kazimierz Wielki (Casimir the Great) dies childless – the last representative of the Piast dynasty on the Polish throne. As a result of a feudal agreement between the king and Siemowit III, Duke of Mazovia, Mazovia once again becomes united and independent. A sign of Mazovia's autonomy is the refusal of Siemowit III, Duke of Mazovia, to take part in the coronation of Louis I of Hungary as King of Poland. Siemowit III, Duke of Mazovia, divides the duchy between his two sons – Janusz I the Old, who receives eastern Mazovia with its capital in Czersk, and Siemowit IV, Duke of Mazovia, who receives western Mazovia with its capital in Płock. This division endured until Mazovia was finally incorporated into Poland.

Year 1462

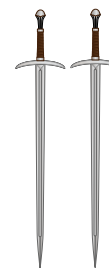
The Płock line of the Dukes of Mazovia, which held power in western Mazovia, dies out. Within a few months the childless sons of Władysław I – the 16-year-old Siemowit VI and his 14-year-old brother Władysław II – die young. The Polish king Kazimierz Jagiellończyk, taking advantage of their deaths and the sovereign rights due to him, incorporates the first Mazovian lands into Poland: Rawa and Gostynin. By the end of the 15th century successive rulers of Poland incorporate the remaining lands of western Mazovia into the Polish Crown.

1524–1526

Within two years Stanisław (1524) and Janusz III of Mazovia (1526) die at a young age – the last remaining two Dukes of Mazovia to rule eastern Mazovia. Their lands are incorporated into Poland. Thus, the final incorporation of Mazovia into the Kingdom of Poland is completed. The deaths of the dukes then, as now, are shrouded in mystery; some even suspected a double murder intended to bring an end to the Duchy of Mazovia.

At the turn of the 15th century

The Duchy of Mazovia reached its pinnacle of power, and its rulers became some of the most important players on the political stage in this part of Europe. Siemowit IV, Duke of Mazovia, taking advantage of the interregnum after the death of King Louis of Hungary, attempted to win the crown of Poland. Janusz I the Old concentrated on developing his duchy, pursuing an





Warsaw of the Dukes of Mazovia

Warsaw was founded around the year 1300 by Duke Bolesław II, grandson of Konrad I of Mazovia. The oldest part of Warsaw, which in the early 14th century stood on what is now the Old Town, was surrounded by a rampart, and the first masonry buildings were the Grodzka Tower on the site of the castle, the Gate Tower (the so-called Crane Tower) and the

two gates leading to the town: Krakowska and Nowomiejska. On the site of today's St John's Cathedral stood a wooden church, while on the market square was the house of the town reeve, who administered the stronghold. In 1406 Warsaw replaced Czersk as the capital of eastern Mazovia. In the same year Duke Janusz I the Old founded a new town outside

THE LAST DUKES OF MAZOVIA

At the Royal Castle in Warsaw, within the space of a year and a half (1524–1526), the last two Dukes of Mazovia – Stanisław and Janusz III of Mazovia – died childless in their youth. With their deaths the dynasty of the Dukes of Mazovia, who had ruled for over 300 years, became extinct. Doubt still remains over the deaths of both dukes, and especially regarding Janusz. Even before the death of Janusz III of Mazovia, two people were convicted and cruelly executed (burned for four hours over an open fire) for attempting to poison the duke. It was suspected that Katarzyna Radziejowska had ordered the administration of the poison. Supposedly the voivode's beautiful wife sought to take revenge in this way on the two Mazovian rulers for having rejected her charms. Others suspected, however, that Radziejowska acted on the orders of Queen Bona herself, for whom the extinction of the Mazovian dynasty and the incorporation of Mazovia into Poland would have been advantageous. To dispel dangerous rumours, King Sigismund I the Old (Zygmunt Stary) appointed a special 'investigative commission' which clarified the matter during sessions of the Sejm. Having examined the body of the deceased duke, the physicians declared that he had not fallen by human hand, but had departed this world and died by the will of Almighty God. The cause of death was ascribed to the poor health of both dukes, to succumbing to consumption (tuberculosis), and also to excessive drinking and a dissolute way of life. However, when in 1953 archaeologists discovered the remains of the Mazovian rulers, it turned out that they did not look frail at all – Janusz III of Mazovia was of a powerful, muscular build, had a prominent chest and an exceptionally strong spinal column.



📍 St John's Archcathedral, the sarcophagus of the last Dukes of Mazovia: Janusz III of Mazovia and Stanisław of Mazovia

the city walls of Old Warsaw – New Warsaw. And just as Old Warsaw featured a mermaid on its coat of arms (though she more resembled a harpy than a beautiful maiden with a sword), the New Town received a different coat of arms – depicting a maiden with a unicorn.

📍 Tourist information points in Warsaw

Warsaw Tourist Information Centre

Palace of Culture and Science,
(entrance from Emilii Plater Street)
Plac Defilad 1
phone: +48 503 033 720
warsawtour.pl

📍 **Warsaw Tourist Information Centre**

Plac Zamkowy 1/13
phone: +48 22 635 18 81
wcit.waw.pl

1 JAZDÓW

Raid and beheading of Siemowit I of Mazovia

In the 13th century, in the vicinity of today's Ujazdowski Castle, stood a hunting manor belonging to the Dukes of Mazovia. On 24 June 1262 a tragedy occurred there. Lithuanians and Ruthenians under the command of Mendog raided Mazovia and

forced their way into the stronghold where the ruler of Mazovia at that time, Siemowit I of Mazovia, son of Konrad I of Mazovia, was staying with his son Konrad II. The raiders killed the father before the eyes of the young Konrad, and took the child captive. The beheading of Siemowit I of Mazovia was probably ordered by Ostafiy Konstantynovich of Ryazan. Siemowit I of Mazovia was the only Mazovian duke who did not receive a formal funeral. After his tragic death, his body was probably burned by pagans.

📍 Ujazdowski Castle was built on the site of the former settlement of Jazdów.

A memento of that period is the residence's address – 2 Jazdów St.

The castle is the home of the **Centre for Contemporary Art**, u-jazdowski.pl

2 PLAC TRZECH KRZYŻY

(Three Crosses Square)

The Hut of the Three Hermits

Some link the name of the square to a legend about three hermits who lived here when the area where Warsaw now stands was covered by an impenetrable forest. It is said that Duke Siemowit I of Mazovia once witnessed the hermits helping some animals. When the



📍 St Anne's Church

duke asked why they did this, they replied that life without helping others is empty. The duke therefore decided to help the holy men, sending them various gifts. This brought misfortune upon them. Bandits, thinking the duke was hiding his treasures in the forest hut, attacked the hermits and killed them.

3 ST ANNE'S CHURCH

The Bernardine Friars in Warsaw

The church was founded by Duchess Anna Fiodorówna – daughter-in-law of Duke Janusz I the Old and mother of Duke Bolesław IV of Mazovia – who also brought in Bernardine friars from Kraków. The church was consecrated in December 1454, a few months

When Mazovia was not yet part of Poland, and ducal envoys from Czersk arrived in Warsaw more often than royal ones from Kraków, today's Krakowskie Przedmieście was called Przedmieście Czerskie. It was part of Mazovia's most important route – Trakt Zakroczyński, which connected the two most important centres of ducal power of the time: Czersk and Płock.



📍 Grodzka Tower – the oldest masonry structure of the Royal Castle

after the tragic death of the duchess's son, at a time when she ruled Mazovia on behalf of her underage grandsons. The church contained the tomb of another Duchess Anna – the mother of the last Dukes of Mazovia – commissioned by her son Stanisław, but it has not survived to the present day.

4 ROYAL CASTLE

Seat of the Dukes of Mazovia

The oldest ducal residence was a wooden manor erected on the site of today's castle, while the first masonry building – preserved to this day in its cellar and ground-floor sections – is the Grodzka Tower. The Gothic cellars also recall the era of the Dukes of Mazovia. Unfortunately, like the interior of the Grodzka Tower, they are inaccessible to tourists visiting the castle by the designated routes. The cellars, in which museum classes for pupils are now held, are part of the ducal palace (Curia Maior) erected in the first years of the 15th century by Duke Janusz I the Old. It was a rectangular brick structure whose south-eastern corner rose above a massive escarpment. The western façade was adorned with shallow, pointed-arch niches finished with ornamentation. During the



📷 The cathedral's façade only resembles a Gothic one – beneath the bricks there is a concrete structure.

reconstruction of the castle in 1971–1974 the elevation on the side of the Great Courtyard was restored to closely resemble the original Gothic façade of the Great House (Dom Duży). The complex also contained other buildings: Curia Minor, where the Mazovian duchesses resided, and the Palatium, which housed the duke's chancellery. In August 1526, after the death of the last Dukes of Mazovia, when King Sigismund I the Old came to Warsaw, the Warsaw castle came to be known as the Royal Castle.

📍 **Royal Castle in Warsaw – Museum
Residence of the Kings and the Kingdom**
Plac Zamkowy 4
zamek-krolewski.pl

5 ST JOHN'S ARCHCATHEDRAL Necropolis of the rulers of eastern Mazovia

The cathedral was constructed in the second half of the 14th century on the site of a wooden stronghold church. In its crypts lie the graves of Duke Janusz I the Old and

At the entrance to the Jesuit Church adjacent to St John's Archcathedral stands a sculpture of a bear. According to legend, this is one of the dukes, called the Bear because of his stature, who was turned to stone in that form when he saw the woman he loved marry another man.

his grandson Bolesław IV of Mazovia. A side aisle features the only surviving original tomb of the Dukes of Mazovia – the sarcophagus of Duke Stanisław and Janusz III of Mazovia, installed by their sister Anna Radziwiłł. After the brothers' deaths, when Anna became the last descendant of the Mazovian Piast line, she had to accept financial support from the King of Poland, Sigismund I the Old.

📍 **Archcathedral Basilica of the
Martyrdom of St John the Baptist**
8 Świętojańska St.

6 CITY WALLS Warsaw Fortress

To bolster the city's defences, in the mid-14th century the city's earthen ramparts were replaced with brick walls. The next stage of construction of the city walls took place during the reign of Duke Janusz I the Old. Built in stages, the walls enclosed an area of the city measuring over 8.5 ha. Their total length – along Podwale Street, Mostowa Street and the Vistula escarpment – was about 1,200 m. Only three towns in Mazovia were surrounded by walls: Warsaw, Płock and Pułtusk.

7 TOWNHOUSE OF THE DUKES OF MAZOVIA Pagan customs in the centre of Warsaw

The house standing on the corner of the Old Town Market Square and Wąski Dunaj Street is called the Townhouse of the Dukes of Mazovia. As legend has it, during the construction of the house, which was



📷 Was a black cat really buried beneath the foundations of the tenement?

progressing exceptionally slowly, Duchess Danuta Anna – the wife of Janusz I the Old, a Lithuanian raised in the pagan tradition – decided to make a blood sacrifice to speed

A BEAUTIFUL MERMAID OR A FEARSOME HARPY – WHAT IS WARSAW'S TRUE COAT OF ARMS?

The oldest known depiction of Warsaw's coat of arms can be found on seals in city council documents from 1400 and 1402. They are currently held in the State Archives in Toruń. On the triangular heraldic shield a figure is depicted with a human head and locks curling along its sides, a human torso merging into a bird's, and a long, serpentine tail with clawed limbs. If wings are added to the whole, one obtains a creature whose appearance is closer to the harpy known from Greek mythology than to the mermaid from the monuments that stand in Warsaw today. This is shown especially by the curls of the heraldic likeness – harpies were described as fair-haired creatures.

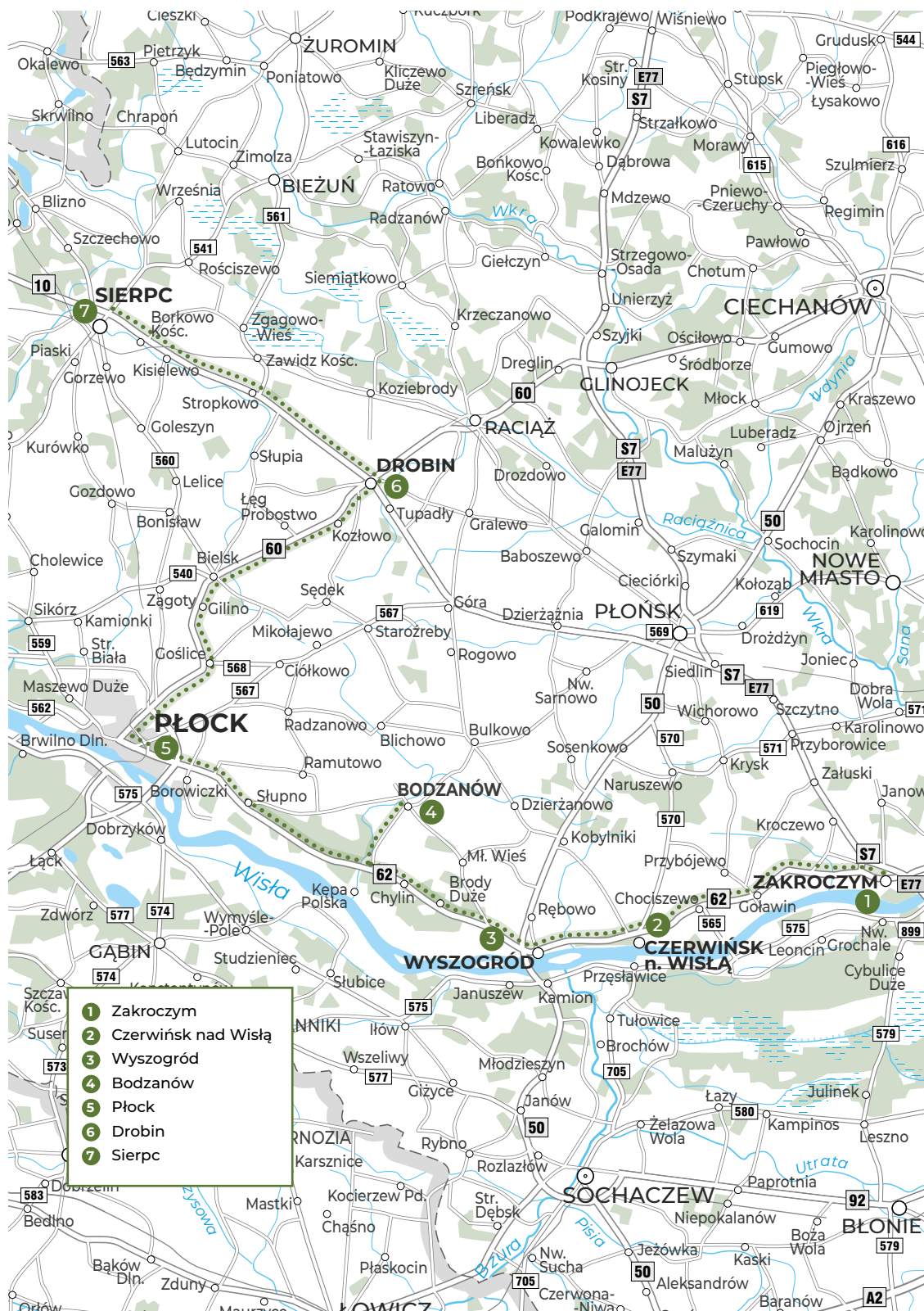


📷 Royal Spring in Traugutt Park

up the work. The master mason therefore caught a black cat and walled it up alive in the house's foundations. Work proceeded briskly and soon the townhouse was finished.

8 ZAKROCZYMSKA STREET Northern section of the Zakroczymski Route

Zakroczymska Street is part of the route of the same name. After the founding of the New Town the route became the frontage of the New Town market. On the extension of Zakroczymska Street, in the vicinity of today's Traugutt Park, lies a drinking-water source, the so-called Królewski Zdrój (Royal Spring). According to legend, when Duke Siemowit I of Mazovia lost himself in the forest while out hunting, a stag with golden antlers led him to the spring that flowed at that very spot. The little spring quickly became famous for its crystal-clear water. It was drunk in the finest Warsaw houses, at the ducal court, and also at the ducal manor. In the 18th century King Stanisław August ordered the construction of a water-collection structure over the spring.



Route of Konrad I of Mazovia – western section

Join us on a trip through northern Mazovia, the cradle of the Duchy of Mazovia. It was here that Duke Konrad I of Mazovia founded the first strongholds. The capital of the duchy was Płock, which to this day remains the city with the largest number of monuments associated with the Dukes of Mazovia. The Vistula then served as the main transport route for floating goods. On one occasion it even carried... a pontoon bridge – King Władysław II Jagiełło's secret weapon, which enabled the Polish army, supported by the Mazovian knighthood, to cross to the other bank of the Vistula, surprise

the Teutonic Knights' forces and achieve a brilliant victory in the Battle of Grunwald. The bridge was assembled in Czerwińsk, at the foot of the Romanesque Abbey Church in Czerwińsk nad Wisłą that still stands today. In this part of Mazovia it is worth visiting places where ducal watch posts once stood, seeing the most valuable Renaissance tomb in Mazovia modelled on the work of Michelangelo, and the mysterious pagan symbol that has been preserved... in the wall of a Catholic church.

DUKE KONRAD OF MAZOVIA

Konrad I (1187/1188–1247) from the beginning of his reign concentrated on expansion toward the Prussian lands. However, the duke's expansionist policy provoked increased resistance from the Old Prussian pagan tribes, which organised an effective defence and then switched to offence, posing a serious threat to his lands. In 1226, wishing to secure the northern borders of his duchy, Konrad I of Mazovia invited the Teutonic Order to Mazovia. Initially they were to support the struggle against the Old Prussians, but from 1242 the duke was already in disputes with them over lands and influence. Was Konrad I of Mazovia unaware of their activities in Hungary?



📷 Church of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross in Zakroczym

1 ZAKROCZYM

Outpost on the Vistula

Zakroczym sits on the high bank of the Vistula, reaching 25 m in places and picturesquely cut by ravines. Events that took place here at the times when Mazovia was ruled by the Dukes of Mazovia are commemorated in the town's coat of arms. Legends say that while the valiant knight Junosza was riding to his wedding, a white lamb ran out in front of the procession. The knight took it as a good omen and, as it soon turned out, he was right. The valiant Junosza slew all the brothers of the Order and, still with traces of his enemies' blood, arrived before the altar where his bride was already waiting. In honour of this feat Zakroczym received a coat of arms: a white lamb on a field as red as blood.

The Teutonic Knights in Zakroczym

Is there a grain of truth in the legend? The Teutonic Knights did indeed reach Zakroczym, but for purposes other than military. In June 1335 the grandsons of Konrad I of Mazovia, Dukes Siemowit II and his brother Trojden, renewed an agreement with the Grand Master of the Teutonic Knights, Dietrich von Altenburg, on the market square in Zakroczym. This pact

guaranteed Mazovia's safety. The Mazovian dukes did not wish to share the fate of their half-brother Wacław, who, under pressure from the Luxembourgs and the Order, rendered feudal homage to the Crown of Bohemia. Fearing a similar step being taken with regard to themselves, they maintained amicable relations with the Teutonic Knights. Other important decisions were also made in Zakroczym. It was here that Duke Janusz I the Old promulgated a code of laws for the Mazovian lands, while the local parish church hosted the Mazovian regional assemblies (sejmik).

Fortifications of Zakroczym

In the north-eastern part of the town, on Czubajka Hill, archaeologists uncovered a ducal guard post. The stronghold existed from the 11th to the 14th century and was probably called Czuwatka. Another Zakroczym fortress that no longer exists but dated to the times of the Dukes of Mazovia was the castle. 17th-century illustrations depict its wooden buildings surrounding a rectangular courtyard. Only the historical cellars have survived, upon which a modern manor house was built. The 700-year-old market square used to feature a well – the former ducal spring, from which travellers could draw water while journeying along the Zakroczym Route. A reconstruction of the well's above-ground superstructure is currently planned. By the market there is also the Gothic

The route that ran from Czersk to Płock took its name from Zakroczym, where the Vistula could be crossed. It was located not far from today's bridge on national road no. 7. After the crossing, before reaching Zakroczym, travellers faced a temptation hard to resist – the Utrata inn, whose name came from the fact that for many a stay there led to financial ruin. Today one of the most picturesque beaches on the Vistula can be found here. The stretch from Utrata to Zakroczym led through picturesque ravines. The approach to the Zakroczym market was heralded by the sight of two hills separated by a narrow path. On one stood the Czuwatka guard post, and on the other a church.



📷 Church of the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Church of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, a reminder of the ducal splendour of Mazovia.

zakroczym.pl

2 CZERWIŃSK NAD WISŁĄ

Secrets of the Romanesque abbey

Dragons and traces of swords on the Romanesque portal, a mysterious grave slab, the Templars and a secret weapon of King Władysław II Jagiełło, which – used in the Abbey Church in Czerwińsk nad Wisłą – enabled the army commanded by the king to carry out a true blitzkrieg... The Romanesque abbey conceals many secrets.

A pearl of Romanesque architecture

The Romanesque Church of the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary was a very important site in the Duchy of Mazovia. This is evidenced by the privileges granted to it by successive dukes, beginning with Konrad I of Mazovia. Despite numerous reconstructions, the church has retained features of Romanesque architecture and is one of the most valuable monuments in Poland. It is a three-aisled basilica built of cut stone blocks, with two towers, a transept and a presbytery. The central nave and the side aisles were connected by semicircular apses.

A unique Romanesque portal dating from the mid-12th century remains in the narthex; it once served as the entrance to the church, while the narthex is a later addition. The portal was partially reconstructed in the 20th century. The original doors with Romanesque metal fittings have also been preserved, as have the nicks on the portal above the doors, which, according to tradition, were made when Władysław II Jagiełło and Witold sharpened their swords here before the expedition against the Teutonic Knights. In the southern chapel fragments of frescoes have survived, probably originating from the first half of the 13th century, when the Duchy of Mazovia was ruled by Konrad I of Mazovia. The preserved fragments depict numerous scenes from the Old and New Testaments. This is the largest ensemble of Romanesque paintings in Poland. In other parts of the church fragments of Gothic, Renaissance and Baroque paintings have also survived.

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 extraordinary structures of medieval Europe was constructed. Boats were floated down the Vistula from Kozienice and then joined to make one deck forming a pontoon bridge



📷 Capital of a Romanesque column

Is there a tombstone of Duke Konrad II in the Abbey Church in Czerwińsk nad Wisłą? Jan Długosz, referring to earlier accounts, wrote that the duke died in June 1294 and was buried in Czerwińsk. In the 1950s a mysterious grave slab was discovered in the church, which is now displayed in the north chapel. The figure depicted on the slab is virtually illegible. Only its outline and a head covering can be seen, which could be either an abbatial mitre or a knight's helmet. To the present day none of the original tombs of the Dukes of Mazovia have survived, apart from the sarcophagus of the last dukes, Janusz III of Mazovia and Stanisław, which lies in St John's Archcathedral in Warsaw. The others were destroyed over the centuries. If the slab from Czerwińsk were to prove to be the tomb of Duke Konrad II, it would undoubtedly be a historical sensation. Most scholars, however, favour the theory that it is the tomb of one of the abbots of the Czerwińsk monastery, and that the duke, although he died in the Abbey Church in Czerwińsk nad Wisłą, was buried in Warka.

and enabling the troops commanded by King Władysław II Jagiełło to cross rapidly on their way to battle the Teutonic Knights. In Czerwińsk Jagiełło's units joined with the Mazovian banners commanded by Janusz I the Old and with the Lithuanian-Ruthenian contingents that Duke Witold had secretly brought in to keep them hidden from Teutonic spies. The concentration of forces before the expedition against the Teutonic Knights took place on lands ruled by the Mazovian duke Janusz, who – although he had paid feudal homage to the King of Poland – pursued an independent foreign policy. The bridge gave Jagiełło the opportunity to strike at the very heart of the Order's state, where the Teutonic Knights did not expect an attack. The structure, supported on 150 boats, was assembled in Czerwińsk in just half a day. The army's march lasted three days (from 30 June to 3 July 1410), during which 18,000 cavalry, 4,000 infantry and 8,000 wagons with supplies crossed the river. The entire operation was carried out with extreme efficiency and took the Teutonic Knights by complete surprise. After the army had crossed, the bridge was floated down to the area of present-day Ciechocinek, where the troops returning from the Battle of Grunwald recrossed the river.

The Riddle of the Templars

In the monastic books there is a mention of a great flotilla of boats under the banners of the Templars reaching Czerwińsk via the Vistula. The flotilla arrived at Czerwińsk after the suppression of the Order and the execution of its Grand Master by King Philip IV of France (Philip the Fair). The king coveted the Templars' treasure, but he never found it. In Mazovia, the Templars probably possessed three commanderies, assisted by grants from the Dukes of Mazovia. One was located on the Bug River at Wyszaków. Why did the Templars come to Czerwińsk? The monastic records note that the knight-brothers were entertained by the abbot, whom they repaid generously. Could it be that they left part of their treasure here? This mystery still remains unsolved.

czerwinski.pl



📷 Museum of the Middle Vistula and the Land of Wyszogród

3 WYSZOGRÓD

Castle on the Vistula escarpment

The name of the town means 'high stronghold'. It was here that Konrad I of Mazovia ordered a defensive outpost to be erected on an elevation above the Vistula – today called Castle Hill (Góra Zamkowa). Its convenient location ensured the town's development. There was a port; cloth, grain and wooden products were traded. From the 13th century Dukes of Mazovia resided in Wyszogród. In 1313 the grandson of Konrad I of Mazovia, Duke Bolesław II, died here, and after his death the duchy was split into three districts. A testament to the ducal legacy is the Franciscan ecclesiastical complex. The church, originally Gothic, was built in 1406 thanks to funds from Duke Janusz I the Old. Unfortunately, the castle constructed in the second half of the 14th century has not survived. Its walls were unearthed by archaeologists on Castle Hill.

Who built the castle in Wyszogród?

The construction of the castle was until recently attributed to King Casimir III the Great, who in the 14th century attached part of Mazovia to Poland for 20 years. Archaeologists have revised this theory. According to the latest findings, the castle in Wyszogród was probably built by Siemowit III, Duke of Mazovia, regarded as the

most outstanding Mazovian ruler of the 14th century. Siemowit reunited Mazovia, which had been divided by his grandfather Bolesław II, and, drawing inspiration from the actions of King Casimir III the Great, transformed his duchy from 'wooden' to 'walled'. He also set about unifying the law and introduced a division into new territorial units called lands. Wyszogród was the capital of one of them.

The mysterious vessel in the Vistula Museum

The artefacts uncovered by archaeologists on Castle Hill can be viewed at the museum of the Middle Vistula and the Wyszogród Land. The collections include exhibits related to Vistula boatbuilding, fishing, and a unique clay vessel discovered by archaeologists in

📷 Vessel depicting Perun from the collections of the Museum of the Middle Vistula and the Wyszogród Land



the village of Drwały – a settlement that preceded the founding of Wyszogród. The vessel dates from 1,300 years ago and bears a schematic depiction of the pagan god Perun – a rider on horseback who hurls lightning bolts. Although the majestic towers of the fortress that once crowned Castle Hill are now nowhere to be seen, it is worth ascending to its summit via the specially built steps to admire the surrounding panorama. Another attraction that Wyszogród offers is a trip by water tram on the Vistula, the queen of Polish rivers.

 **Museum of the Middle Vistula and the Wyszogród Land**, 1 Rynek St.
muzeumplock.eu/oddzialy/
muzeum-wisly-w-wyszogrodzie

4 BODZANÓW

A tradition that has endured for 600 years

Evidence of its rich history is the market square laid out by the Dukes of Mazovia in 1351, the historic Gothic church, and a tradition that has endured for 600 years. On the Mołtawa River, at the foot of the market founded on a high escarpment, ran the border that for 150 years divided Mazovia. To the west lay the Duchy of Płock, ruled by the descendants of Siemowit IV, Duke of Mazovia, and to the east the Czersk–Warsaw Duchy, where Duke Janusz I the Old and his successors reigned. Bodzanów owes its 600-year tradition to Duke Janusz I the Old. In 1415 he established the Norbertine Fair for Pentecost, a custom that has survived to this day, and every year offers the chance to meet merchants, craftsmen, and even... knights (The Norbertine Fair / Jarmark Norbertański) in Bodzanów's market square. The ducal legacy is also recalled by the brick church from the 15th century that stands by the market. It is single-nave building, closed on three sides, without a separate presbytery. The church was built of Gothic brick with the use of fieldstones and mill wheels.

bodzanow.pl



 Interior of the Cathedral Basilica in Płock

5 PŁOCK

The capital of the western part of the Duchy of Mazovia

The historic centre of Płock is Tumskie Hill. Here the history of the city began in the 10th century, when Mieszko I built a defensive stronghold on the high hill above the Vistula. From Tumskie Hill Miecław – a self-proclaimed ruler of Mazovia who tried to create a state independent of Poland based on the pagan faith – probably reigned for a short time. From here Duke Władysław Herman ruled all of Poland, and from the time of Konrad I of Mazovia the Dukes of Mazovia held power.

Where were the Dukes of Mazovia laid to rest?

The first place of worship was erected on the site of the present cathedral around the 11th century. It was repeatedly destroyed by invaders and disasters. Rebuilt each time, today it is a mixture of various architectural styles. The present cathedral contains a copy of the famous Płock Doors, made of bronze, originally manufactured in the mid-12th century. The Płock cathedral is the largest

PŁOCK CATHEDRAL



ALTAR OF THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS

The figures of Christ and the kneeling saints Dominic and Margaret Mary Alacoque were carved in 1913 from Carrara marble. The tympanum contains a mosaic made in Venice, a faithful copy of the famous 5th-century Good Shepherd mosaic from Ravenna.



CHAPEL OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

In the centre of the chapel stands a Neo-Renaissance altar with a tabernacle, made in 1900 from polychrome marbles and gilded bronze.

ALTAR OF OUR LADY OF MAZOVIA, PATRONESS OF THE CATHEDRAL

Made in the first half of the 17th century, it is one of the cathedral's oldest altars. The image of the Virgin Mary with Child has been venerated for many generations. Above it, a Latin inscription reads: *Monstra te esse Matrem* (Reveal yourself as our Mother). Numerous votive offerings testify to the cult of the Virgin Mary.

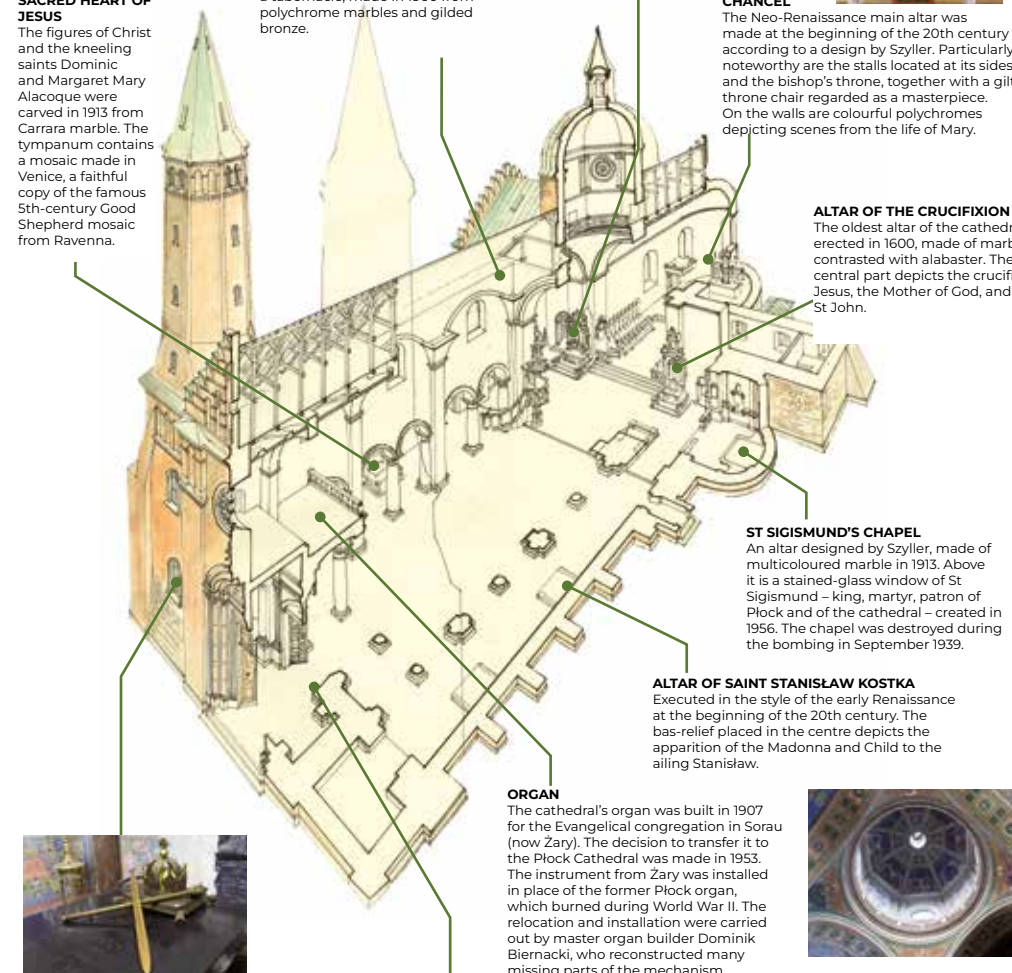


CHANCEL

The Neo-Renaissance main altar was made at the beginning of the 20th century according to a design by Szyller. Particularly noteworthy are the stalls located at its sides and the bishop's throne, together with a gilt throne chair regarded as a masterpiece. On the walls are colourful polychromes depicting scenes from the life of Mary.

ALTAR OF THE CRUCIFIXION

The oldest altar of the cathedral, erected in 1600, made of marble contrasted with alabaster. The central part depicts the crucified Jesus, the Mother of God, and St John.



ST SIGISMUND'S CHAPEL

An altar designed by Szyller, made of multicoloured marble in 1913. Above it is a stained-glass window of St Sigismund – king, martyr, patron of Płock and of the cathedral – created in 1956. The chapel was destroyed during the bombing in September 1939.

ALTAR OF SAINT STANISŁAW KOSTKA

Executed in the style of the early Renaissance at the beginning of the 20th century. The bas-relief placed in the centre depicts the apparition of the Madonna and Child to the ailing Stanisław.

ORGAN

The cathedral's organ was built in 1907 for the Evangelical congregation in Sorau (now Żary). The decision to transfer it to the Płock Cathedral was made in 1953. The instrument from Żary was installed in place of the former Płock organ, which burned during World War II. The relocation and installation were carried out by master organ builder Dominik Biernacki, who reconstructed many missing parts of the mechanism.



ROYAL CHAPEL

The chapel is located beneath the north tower. It is the resting place of the rulers of Poland and several Dukes of Mazovia. The remains of Władysław Herman and Bolesław Wrymouth lie in a black marble sarcophagus decorated with an alabaster eagle and royal insignia; the ashes of the dukes lie beneath the chapel floor.



PŁOCK DOORS

The Płock Doors were created in the mid-12th century in Magdeburg for a cathedral. The original set is now housed in the Cathedral of Holy Wisdom in Veliky Novgorod, Russia. The cathedral features a faithful copy, solemnly consecrated in 1982. When and why the doors were removed remains unclear; however, this is not the only mystery connected with them. The individual panels depict the history of the Salvation, so why does the figure of a centaur, unrelated to Christianity, appear in the lower right field?



POLYCHROME DECORATION

The idea of decorating the cathedral with polychrome dates back to the beginning of the 20th century. Never before had the cathedral walls been covered with murals. The author of the entire work is Władysław Drapiewski, who worked on the polychrome decoration before World War I, in the interwar period, and after World War II.

THE DUCAL CAPITAL CITY OF PŁOCK

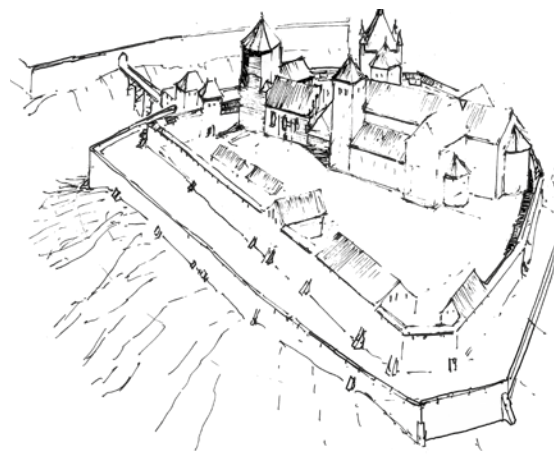
The name that appears on the sign before the entrance to the city is connected with the period of the rule of Duke Władysław Herman and his son Bolesław Wrymouth (Krzywousty), who is remembered in history for dividing Poland into districts. After splitting the country between his sons Zbigniew and Bolesław Wrymouth, Duke Władysław Herman settled in Płock as the senior duke of all Poland. Thus, at the end of the 11th century Płock served as the state capital. Relics from those times include: a fragment of the Romanesque palatium wall (preserved in the wall of a later castle near the Clock Tower), a monument to Duke Bolesław Wrymouth, and a spectacle that can be seen every day at noon on the Old Town Market Square. When the clock strikes noon, the figure of Duke Władysław Herman appears on the town hall tower and knights his son Bolesław.

necropolis of Mazovian rulers, documenting almost 250 years of rule in independent Mazovia. Historical sources mention that in the crypts of the Płock cathedral, the following were laid to rest: Konrad I of Mazovia, who died in 1247, his grandson Bolesław II, and his great-grandson Wacław Płocki called Wańko, his son Bolesław III, as well as another great-grandson of Konrad I of Mazovia, Siemowit III, Duke of Mazovia, his brother Kazimierz and the sons of Siemowit IV, Duke of Mazovia – Siemowit IV and Henryk, who was bishop of Płock. Also buried here were the sons of Siemowit IV – Kazimierz II and Władysław I – as well as the latter's sons, Siemowit VI and Władysław II, and the last duke who ruled over the Płock lands before they were incorporated into Poland in 1495, Janusz II. Half of the dukes who ruled in Mazovia were buried in Płock. But where exactly should we look for their graves? In the 19th century, researchers entered the crypts of the Płock cathedral, searching for the remains of Bolesław Wrymouth and his father,

Władysław Herman. They allegedly recognised Bolesław by his deformed nose. The remains of the rulers who governed all of Poland from Płock were moved to a special sarcophagus, which can be seen today in the Royal Chapel. At that time, the bones of the Mazovian dukes were also discovered. They were not given a special sarcophagus, however, but were placed under the floor at the feet of the rulers of Poland. They remain there to this day.

A castle or a former monastic building?

The Castle of the Mazovian Dukes in Płock was built by King Casimir III the Great. In the mid-14th century he assumed control of the western lands of Mazovia for a period of 20 years after the childless death of the Płock duke Bolesław III. These lands returned to the rule of the Dukes of Mazovia after the king's death in 1370. Casimir had promised them to Siemowit III, Duke of Mazovia, provided he did not beget a male heir. The king, though married four times, did not live to see a son. With him the royal Piast line ended, and King Louis I of Hungary assumed authority in Poland. From the former castle two towers have survived: the Noble Tower and the Clock Tower, together with a fragment of the perimeter walls. These remains are not even called a castle, but an abbey. In the 16th century the castle became the seat of the Benedictines, and after the partitions it served as a diocesan seminary. The wing now houses the Diocesan Museum (3 Tumskie Street), which contains the most valuable artefacts connected with the Dukes of Mazovia: a silver paten and chalice founded by Konrad I of Mazovia and the Płock diadem, regarded by some historians as his crown. The paten depicts Konrad I of Mazovia himself, his wife Agafia, and two sons: Kazimierz (father of Władysław I the Elbow-high/Łokietek) and Siemowit I of Mazovia. The paten and chalice were the duke's votive offering to the cathedral in Płock in atonement for the killing of Canon Czaplą. The canon, the tutor of his sons, incurred Konrad I of Mazovia's displeasure by urging Kazimierz to pursue policies contrary to his father's interests. The



Reconstruction of the appearance of the castle on Tumskie Hill in the Middle Ages

particularly outrageous act of Duchess Agafia, who ordered the body of the slain canon to be rehanged, has gone down in history. For this deed a curse befell the duchy. To have it lifted, Konrad I of Mazovia had to cede the land of Łowicz to the Archbishops of Gniezno. The diadem, which is currently on the so-called herm of St Sigismund, is made of gilded silver and consists of 14 fragments. Scholars believe it was intended for the rulers of the Árpád



Płock Diadem – according to one hypothesis, it is the crown of Konrad I of Mazovia.

dynasty and in the 13th century fell into the hands of Duke Konrad I of Mazovia. It is the oldest preserved Polish crown. The Diocesan Museum also houses the Płock Bible from the 12th century.

Tourist Information Centre

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turystykapllock.eu

MAZOVIAN KNIGHTS

In the surviving sources from Mazovia – or mentioned in sources – residences of the Mazovian knights and foundations established not only by the dukes themselves but also by their knights. Powerful Mazovian families erected, among others, the castles in Sierpc, the defensive tower in Drobin (recently discovered archaeological traces), the complex of buildings in Biezuń (today an 18th-century Zamoyski manor house stands there) and the castle in Szreńsk. Traces of the presence of Mazovian magnates also include magnificent tombs in the parish church in Drobin. The first owner of Sierpc was the knight Jaśko Pilik called Mazur, mentioned in 'The Teutonic Knights' by Henryk Sienkiewicz. He received Sierpc as a gift from Siemowit IV, Duke of Mazovia. He won fame, together with another ducal knight, Abraham Socha, for being the first pilgrim from Mazovia to journey to the tomb of St James the Apostle in Santiago de Compostela. Subsequent owners of Sierpc – the Sierpski family – were castellans, starosts and voivodes. The most outstanding member of the family, Andrzej, after Mazovia had been incorporated into Poland, became a trusted courtier of King Sigismund the Old, and served as standard-bearer at his funeral. The owners of Drobin – the Kryski family – were castellans and voivodes of the Dukes of Mazovia, and after Mazovia's incorporation into Poland they held important positions at the court of the Jagiellons. A similar career path at the court of the descendants of Jagiełło was followed by the Szreński family – owners of Szreńsk – which in the Middle Ages was the capital of one of the lands of the Duchy of Mazovia – the land of Zawkrze.

6 DROBIN

Michelangelo's Legacy in the Heart of Mazovia

In 1444, following the death of King Władysław of Varna in battle – and at a time when Mazovia remained a powerful duchy, albeit a Polish fief – Drobin came into the possession of the Kryski family. It is to them that the town owes its most significant historical monuments. Drobin was purchased by Ninogniew Kryski – a prominent figure at the ducal court who served as the castellan of Czersk and Warsaw, and later as the Voivode of Płock. He held the latter office during a period when the Duchy of Mazovia was already in crisis and a portion of western Mazovia – though not the Płock region – had been incorporated into Poland.

His son Jan, a canon of Płock, funded the construction of a church near the market square in Drobin. However, the project faced difficulties; historical records indicate that to complete the church, Jan had to terminate the contract with the initial builder – who lacked the skill to construct the vaults – and entrust the remaining work to other craftsmen. These men executed the task flawlessly, as evidenced by the fact that the church's Gothic structure has survived to this day...

Inside are some true pearls of sacred architecture – Renaissance tombs unique throughout Mazovia. They depict a distant descendant of Ninogniew – Wojciech Kryski, an outstanding representative of the Polish

Renaissance who died young, a royal envoy, a scholar of languages and a lover of classical culture. Above the sculpture of the recumbent Wojciech the artist depicted his grieving parents: Paweł and Anna. On the other side of the altar are similarly executed likenesses of the last members of the Kryski family: Stanisław, Małgorzata and Piotr. The older of the tombs appears to be a work imitating the tomb made by...Michelangelo for Pope Julius II. The original by the Italian master is in Rome in the church San Pietro in Vincoli. Did someone in Drobin copy the work of the great sculptor of the Renaissance, who went down in history as the creator of the Last Judgment, or did Michelangelo himself once visit Mazovia? On the Drobin tomb a similar composition was used, and the Anna Kryska carved on it – Wojciech's mother – is frozen in an identical gesture to the woman depicted on the pope's tomb. She also has... a masculine leg – fashioned on the model of the legs of Moses, which Michelangelo sculpted on the tomb of Pope Julius II. The papal tomb is atypical for Italian sepulchral works. It remains a mystery why precisely it, unique in Michelangelo's oeuvre, inspired the maker of the tomb in Drobin.

7 SIERPC

A town of four churches and two castles

Sierpc was a border town. On the western bank of the Skrwa River flowing near the town lay the Dobrzyń and Chełmno lands. By granting these territories to the Old Prussians, Konrad I of Mazovia effectively created a state that proved dangerous to his Duchy of Mazovia and to the Kingdom of Poland, and which from the 17th century entertained plans for the partitions of Poland, ultimately, by the late 18th century, becoming one of the partitioning powers...

The churches of Sierpc and ...

Sierpc, located on the fringes of Mazovia, is one of the region's oldest towns. The surviving Church of Saints Vitus, Modestus and Crescentia on Farna Street is not the first

church to have stood on this site. Although the single-nave Gothic church, with its four-storey tower, was built in three phases between the fourteenth century and the first half of the sixteenth century, its dedication suggests that it succeeded an earlier place of worship. Saints Vitus, Modestus and Crescentia were widely venerated in the eleventh century, but their cult later declined. According to legend, the first church was built here in 1003 on the site where pagan rituals had previously been performed. Evidence of the church's earlier origins also comes from Romanesque fragments discovered within the walls of the chancel and from a mysterious solar symbol carved into the tower wall. To this day, it remains a mystery how a symbol associated with pagan worship came to be carved into the walls of a Christian church. Sierpc's largest historic architectural complex is the monastery and the Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary, situated on Loret Hill. The original wooden church was built in 1483 on the site of an apparition experienced by a young seminarian during the plague that devastated the town. He saw the Virgin Mary, who foretold that the plague would end if the people prayed with sincere devotion. The present church was completed in 1513. At the end of the sixteenth century, a funerary chapel for the founder's granddaughter, Urszula Lwowska, was added to the church. The church's most valuable treasure is the late fourteenth-century Gothic sculpture of the Madonna and Child, known as Our Lady of Sierpc, which stands on the high altar, is unveiled during every Mass, and is renowned for the graces attributed to it. Two other churches in Sierpc also date back to the time of the Duchy of Mazovia: the fifteenth-century Church of the Holy Spirit (Plac Chopina), where the sick were cared for in the Middle Ages, and the fifteenth-century Church of the Holy Cross, which has stood in ruins for the past two hundred years in the area known as Sierpecki Borek.

...the castles of Sierpc

Two castles were built in Sierpc. Until now, only one's existence has been mentioned in

old documents. The oldest, dating from 1322, in which the Mazovian duke Wacław Płocki, called Wańko, exchanged lands with the bishop of Płock Florian, stated that Sierpc would be encircled with walls and a castle would be built there. However, as is often the case with building projects, this too remained solely at the planning stage for a long time. Two centuries would pass before these plans came to fruition. Another document mentioning the topic dates from the mid-15th century and mentions the existence of a curia in Sierpc – presumably a defensive manor, though not yet a castle. This was not erected until after the Płock lands, where Sierpc was situated, were incorporated into Poland (1495), and it was no longer an undertaking of the dukes but of Mazovian magnates from the Sieprski family. It was located not far from the parish church.

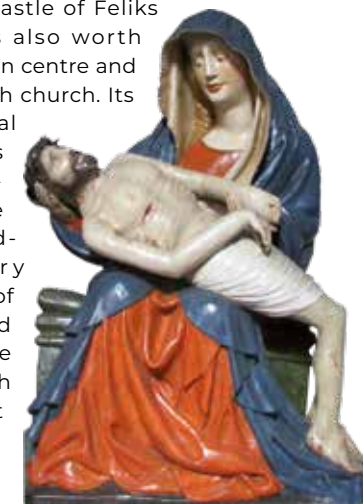
Mazovian Village Museum

64 Gabriela Narutowicza St., 09-200 Sierpc
mwmskansen.pl

in the area

SZREŃSK

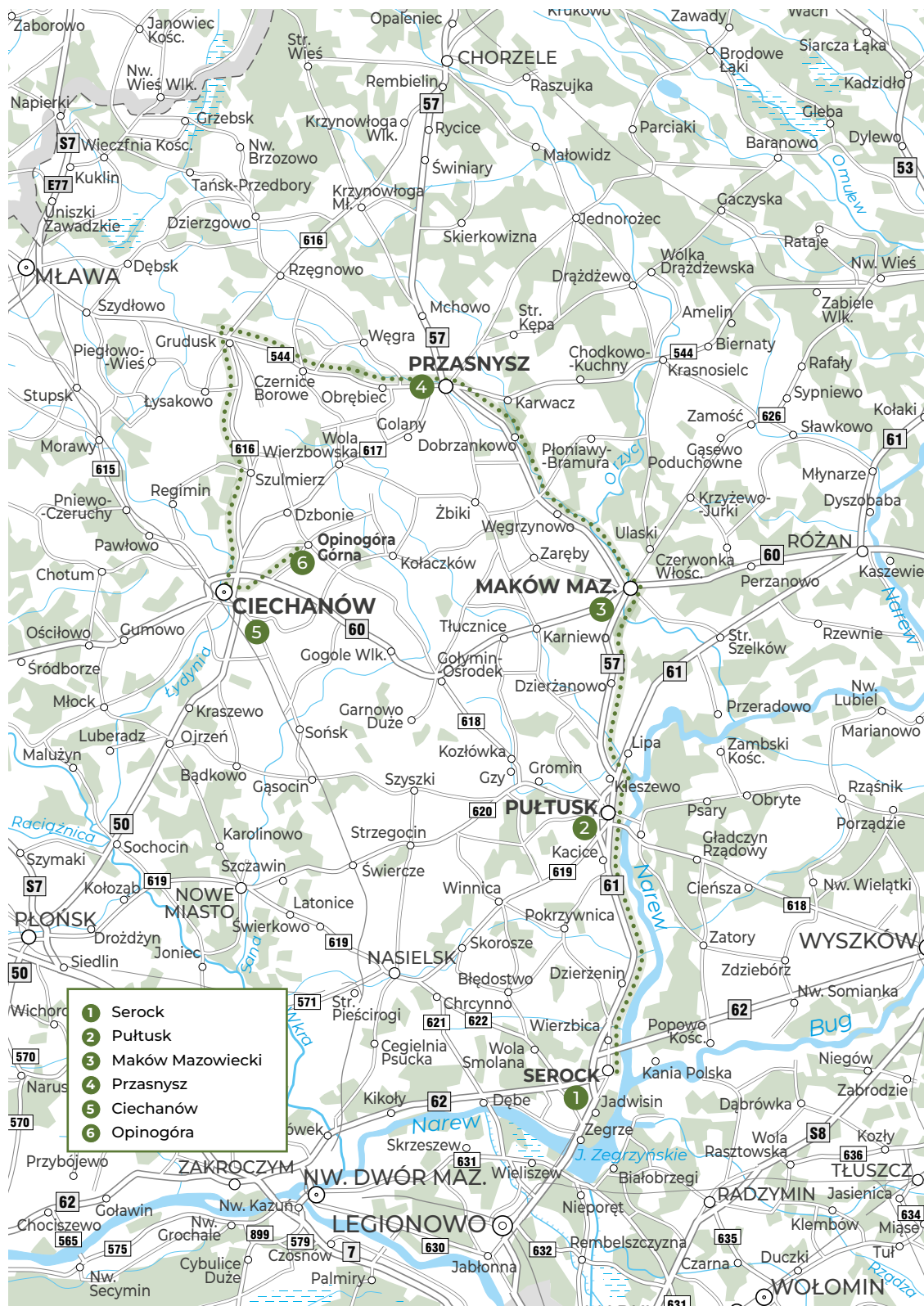
In Szreńsk, a locality situated less than 40 km from Sierpc in the direction of Mława, lie the ruins of a palace built on the site of the 16th-century castle of Feliks Szreński. It is also worth visiting the town centre and its Gothic parish church. Its key ornamental element is a pietà – a sculpture from the mid-15th century characteristic of Mazovian sacred art, a unique monument with clear French art influences.



 Pietà in the church in Szreńsk

 Tomb of Wojciech Kryski





Route of Konrad I of Mazovia – eastern section

The northern borderlands of Mazovia separated the Polish lands from territories inhabited by the pagan Old Prussians, and later the Teutonic Order. The castles and strongholds that have survived to this day testify to the battles once fought on the frontier. Trade also flourished in this area,

and settlements that sprang up around marketplaces developed into prosperous towns. Impressive Gothic churches stand as reminders of the golden age of northern Mazovia.

THE STORY OF VOIVODE KRYSTYN, WHOSE EYES DUKE KONRAD ORDERED TO BE GOUGED OUT

From the outset of Konrad I of Mazovia's reign, the land of Mazovia was harried by raids by the Old Prussians, a Baltic tribe inhabiting the areas of present-day Warmia and Masuria. The Old Prussians attacked Mazovian strongholds and settlements, burning them to the ground and slaughtering the inhabitants. Krystyn, the Mazovian duke's voivode and previously his tutor, stepped up to fight the invaders. The voivode, using strongholds erected on the northern frontiers of Mazovia, including Grudusk and Grzebsk, created an effective system of defense. He managed to stop the Old Prussian raids, thereby winning the admiration of the knights and the epithet 'Shield of Mazovia'. However, 1217 was stricken by tragic events that would continue to affect the Polish lands for centuries. Konrad I of Mazovia captured Krystyn. He imprisoned him, had his eyes gouged out, and then put him to death. To this day it is not known what provoked this strange and illogical behavior on the part of the duke. Were the slanders levelled against Krystyn to blame, or perhaps the duke's jealousy of the admiration with which the Mazovian knights regarded their voivode?



📷 Church of the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Serock

1 SEROCK

A guardhouse where the dukes levied tolls

Serock, founded opposite the confluence of the Bug and the Narew, was one of the most important strongholds in Mazovia during the Middle Ages. Important trade routes ran alongside: one from Ruthenia to Greater Poland and Pomerania, and another from Lesser Poland to Prussia. The Dukes of Mazovia and the town's inhabitants, taking advantage of Serock's opportune location, grew wealthy from trade by collecting tolls at the customs station.

The stronghold called Barbarka

The customs station was located by the guard post, today called Barbarka, which was built back in the 11th century and existed until the 13th century. The stronghold was protected by wooden, stone, and earthen fortifications, and access to it was considerably hindered by deep ravines. During archaeological excavations fragments of broken clay vessels and animal bones were found. The inhabitants of the stronghold were involved in agriculture, fishing, and horn-working. When the stronghold was abandoned, its site was used as a cemetery. In the 17th century a chapel

dedicated to St Barbara was built here. Today the hill – the site of the former stronghold – has been adapted as a picturesque viewpoint from which Zegrze Reservoir can be admired. Next to the stronghold, where a market settlement had previously stood, a town grew, to which in 1417 Duke Janusz I the Old granted town rights. To this day the street layout designed by the duke has been preserved, with a market square and town hall in the centre.

Time flies, death pursues...

Serock stands one of the most priceless monuments of Mazovia. Here, the last Dukes of Mazovia, Stanisław and his younger brother Janusz III of Mazovia, founded a Gothic church, originally of St Adalbert and now of the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary. The single-nave church is situated on a high escarpment above Zegrze Reservoir. The façade once featured a unique sundial with this inscription: *Heed this: time flees, death pursues, eternity waits*. This maxim aptly applies to the fate of the last rulers of independent Mazovia. Although the dukes founded the church, they were not granted the opportunity to pray in this sanctuary. It was completed only after their tragic deaths and Mazovia's incorporation into Poland. Today there is a new clock, bearing the inscription: *Tempus Fugit* (Time flies).

serock.pl

2 PUŁTUSK

In Mazovia's Venice

The Castle of the Bishops of Płock, the longest market square in Europe, and the picturesque tenement houses that surround it lie on an island. Two kilometres before Pułtusk the Narew River splits, surrounding the oldest part of the town with its waters. Picturesque footbridges span the Narew, connecting the island with the mainland.

The secret hidden beneath the castle courtyard

On the hill where the castle of the bishops of



📷 Pułtusk Castle

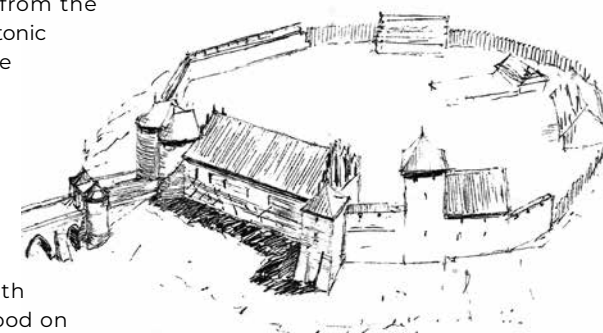
Płock stands, archaeologists discovered the remains of a wooden hillfort that has survived in a state comparable to the well-preserved and famous Biskupin. Excavations in Pułtusk revealed house structures and fragments of streets paved with wooden logs. The houses' floorspace measured up to 20 m², and featured floors of compacted clay, and were heated by clay stoves. The stronghold was established in the first half of the 13th century on the site of a previously settlement that had burnt down. It was built on a high hill above the Narew. It survived for nearly 150 years. In 1368, during one of the expeditions against the Duchy of Mazovia, it was burned by the Lithuanians. Once the threat from the Prussians had subsided, the Teutonic Knights themselves became the enemy whose raids most frequently laid waste to the lands of Mazovia.

When the stronghold burned down, the bishops of Płock – the owners of Pułtusk – decided to construct a brick castle in its place, starting with a walled tower that already stood on the site of the stronghold burned by the Lithuanians. The castle was rebuilt many

times. It acquired its present form in the 17th century. Its medieval roots are evidenced by two cylindrical towers guarding the bridge leading from the market square. Today the castle contains the House of Polonia, renowned for its Old Polish cuisine served in its castle restaurant and for its marina on the Narew River, from which visitors can take a gondola trip around Pułtusk's old town.

The most precious monument in Pułtusk

The castle adjoins a market square considered the longest in Europe. In its centre stands a Gothic-Renaissance tower



📷 Visualization of the castle in Pułtusk from the Middle Ages

WHEN DUKES BECAME BISHOPS

The bishops of Płock held important offices at the court of the Dukes of Mazovia, played an active role in the duchy's politics, and sometimes even the dukes themselves were bishops... Bishop Andrzej Noskowski, whose monument stands in front of the collegiate church in Pułtusk, was chancellor of the last Dukes of Mazovia. The founder of the same collegiate church, Bishop Paweł Giżycki, was regent during the minority of the Mazovian dukes. He served in that capacity at the same time in both sections of the duchy: in western Mazovia after the death of Duke Władysław I and in eastern Mazovia after the death of Duke Bolesław IV, deceased a year earlier. History also mentions Mazovian dukes who became bishops of Płock. One of them was Henryk, the youngest son of Siemowit III, Duke of Mazovia. However, Henryk was not inclined towards the priesthood – he fell in love with the sister of the Grand Duke of Lithuania Witold and married her, abandoning the clerical state. Almost a century later, another duke decided to become bishop of Płock. He was Kazimierz III, brother of Duke Konrad Rudy (the Red) – father of the last Dukes of Mazovia. He competed for the bishop's mitre against a candidate supported by the King of Poland. To obtain it he secured the support of the Emperor of Germany Frederick III of Habsburg, and his election as Bishop of Płock was confirmed by the pope himself. Kazimierz enjoyed that hard-won bishopric for only nine years. He died in 1480 in Pułtusk, where he was also buried.

from the turn of the 16th century, which is a remnant of the former town hall. The brick tower is square at the base and polygonal in its upper reaches; it stands 30 m in height. From the seventh storey one can admire the panorama of the whole town. A major attraction is underground Pułtusk. In the

historic cellars beneath the town hall the 'Ratusz pułtusk' exhibition is presented, showing the history of the magistracy over the centuries. On the side of the market square opposite the castle stands the town's other priceless monument – a Gothic collegiate basilica founded in 1449 by Bishop Paweł Giżycki. This repeatedly rebuilt church is famous for its barrel vault featuring colourful polychrome decoration. The painted decoration consists of several hundred stylised floral and plant bouquets and human busts. The rebuilding carried out in the mid-16th century was overseen by Giovanni Veneziano, who went on to become a burgher of Płock and establish an architectural and stonemason's workshop there. The basilica contains unique furnishings, including Gothic chalices, the oldest of which dates from 1470–1480.

Tourist Information Point

43 Rynek St., Pułtusk,
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3 MAKÓW MAZOWIECKI

Where knights rebelled against a Mazovian duchess

The town was granted its town rights by Duke Janusz I the Old. Legend has it that his head was immortalized in the town's coat of arms. Skeptics, however, interpret it as the head of a highlander and a mistake by heralds who confused Maków Mazowiecki with Maków Podhalański...

Bathhouse, fairs and Gothic church

The medieval inhabitants of Maków cared about personal hygiene. There was a bathhouse in the town that also served the needs of the residence. One day per a week it was used by the ducal household. The revenues from its use on the remaining days, as well as from the town's cloth-shearing workshop, were invested in the town's development, which also grew richer thanks to fairs. At the end of the 15th century, three fairs were held in the town, one of which lasted two days. The wealth of



 Corpus Christi Church in Maków Mazowiecki

the inhabitants was such that an impressive church was built in the Mazovian Gothic style. The construction of the Church of Corpus Christi in 1490 was initiated by Stanisław Lipnicki – the parish priest of Maków and a canon of Płock. The church, which has survived to the present day, is a reminder of Maków's golden age. The belfry located next to it is less than 100 years old. It was constructed on the site of an older, 16th-century version, also freestanding, which collapsed during the 1920s.

The Mazovian duchess finds shelter in the castle at Maków

In Maków there was a defensive manor belonging to the Dukes of Mazovia, which has not survived to this day. It stood beside the town, on the left, higher bank of the Orzyc River (in the vicinity of today's Warszawska Street). In 1518 dramatic events took place there. The manor, where Duchess Anna Radziwiłł (Duchess of Mazovia) was staying together with her elder son Stanisław, was attacked by rebellious Mazovian magnates who had grown tired of the duchess' rule. After her husband's death in 1503 – Konrad III, called the Red, who was almost 30 years her senior – Anna exercised actual power in the duchy on behalf

of her underage sons – Stanisław and Janusz III of Mazovia. She was regarded as energetic and steadfast. When her son Stanisław came of age, and the duchess did not relinquish power to him, some of the Mazovian knights rose in rebellion against being ruled by a woman. Although they failed to seize the manor, and Stanisław sided with his mother, the rebels achieved their aim: Anna surrendered power to her son. However, this turned out to be a mere formality for until her death in 1522 she retained the decisive voice in the affairs of the Duchy.

makowmazowiecki.pl

in the area

RÓŻAN

The town, situated at the crossroads of routes leading from Toruń to Grodno and from Warsaw to Königsberg, was granted town rights at the end of the 14th century. In the 15th century, a castle stood here, a bridge crossed the Narew and one could pray in as many as six churches. To this day only one of them has survived – the Gothic St Anne's Church. The bridge is modern, and there is no trace of the castle.

in the area

SYPNIEWO

The remains of a medieval stronghold have survived on the grounds of a private farm outside the town, on the side of the road from Maków. The stronghold was established at the turn of the 10th century. Evidence of its early existence is provided by a silver denarius of Emperor Otto and Empress Adelaide, struck in 991, found near the stronghold's well, which was put into use around 915. Although the stronghold burned down in the 11th century, the surrounding settlements were also inhabited during the period when the Mazovian territory was ruled by the Dukes of Mazovia. Ecclesiastical documents mention that on the site of the stronghold stood the Church of St Lawrence, which supposedly... sank into the ground. Perhaps it was one of the oldest churches in Mazovia.



📷 Monastery in Przasnysz

4 PRZASNYSZ

A town of craftsmen and brewers

In the Middle Ages, Przasnysz was the third-largest town in Mazovia. It was famed for the oxen trade and for its fine ale, which was sold to Prussia. Across Mazovia, Przasnysz had the most brewers.

A great town, famed for its oxen fair

In a town famous for its beer, the central point could not be the town hall. In the Middle Ages, in the centre of the market square, on the site of today's town hall, built in the 17th century and restored in 2013, stood... a tavern. Although according to legend the town was founded on the order of Konrad I of Mazovia, Przasnysz received town rights only in 1427 during the reign of Duke Janusz I the Old. A hundred years later the town had nearly 700 houses, with about 5,000 inhabitants. On the market square, next to the inn – later replaced by a wooden town hall, the predecessor of the present one – stood the town weigh-house, and nearby were craft stalls and butchers' stalls. Three annual fairs were held in the town, where Przasnysz craftsmen sold their goods. There were as many as five hundred of them in various guilds. The medieval era and the craftsmen are commemorated by the annual Old Polish Fair, which takes place on the market square in May, and by an exhibition in the Historical Museum, housed in the restored town hall.

Two Gothic churches

Two medieval churches remain in Przasnysz, both associated with St Stanisław Kostka. The Gothic parish church (Św. Wojciecha Street), built at the end of the 15th century, is the town's oldest sanctuary. Next to the church looms a free-standing bell tower from the turn of the 16th century. St Stanisław Kostka was baptised in the church. Here, in the north chapel adjoining the main nave, his parents

THE MYSTERIOUS GUEST

'In times when forest covered Przasnysz, by the Węgiełka River that flows through the present town lived a miller named Przasnyk. One night a mysterious stranger knocked at the door of his cottage. He was exhausted and had been wandering alone for many hours through the wilds. The miller took him under his roof, fed him bread and honey, and provided lodging, although he did not know who his guest was. Imagine his astonishment when the next morning armed men arrived at his cottage, and the unknown traveller proved to be none other than Duke Konrad I of Mazovia. *'The latter, as a token of his gratitude, ennobled Przasnyk, granted him estates, and, to commemorate his fortunate rescue in the Przasnysz forest, issued a charter to found there a town that would be called Przasnysz, after the miller.'* wrote Father Józef Osiecki, who published the legend in 1880.

also lay in eternal rest: Jan – castellan of Zakroczym, and Małgorzata of the Kryski family. The other Przasnysz church, the Church of St James and St. Anne (3 Maja Street) – part of the Bernardine monastery (now of the Passionists) – is one of the last Gothic structures erected on Polish lands. Its founder was St Stanisław Kostka's brother, Paweł, castellan of Zakroczym.

Where was the manor of the Dukes of Mazovia?

In the town was a hunting manor belonging to the Dukes of Mazovia, who liked to hunt in the local woods. Its foundations probably lie beneath the building that now stands on Świerczewo Street, where the district governor's manor, known as Ant, still stood after the Second World War. The manor is believed to have been built on the Węgiełka River at the site of a mill where Przasnysz's legendary founder – Przasnyk the miller – lived.

przasnysz.um.gov.pl

in the area

CZERNICE BOROWE

The large Gothic church in the middle of the village, on an artificially raised mound, was built around 1514 to replace a previous version from the 14th century. Legend has it that the church was erected where its founder killed a great stag and found a golden cross between its antlers.

in the area

TAŃSK-PRZEDBORY

In a grove near an early-medieval hillfort, about a kilometre from the village, some single stones from a mysterious cemetery have survived. From the 11th to the 13th centuries, in many places in Mazovia and neighbouring Podlasie, on hilltops, far from churches yet close to strongholds, the dead were placed in graves whose walls were constructed of large stones. Cemeteries such as the one in Tańsk are referred to by Mazovian archaeologists as stone-lined

cemeteries. They certainly did not contain any ordinary inhabitants of medieval Mazovia. Who, then, was buried there? It is unlikely that they were Christians.

in the area

GRZEBSK

An early medieval stronghold stood here – one of the Mazovian castellanies mentioned in the so-called Mogilno forgery of 1065 under the name Grebesco. The ramparts of the fortress have survived to this day.

in the area

MŁAWA

This was a Duchy of Mazovia border town situated in the Zawkrze region. Courts were held here, during which border disputes were resolved. In the town park (entrance from 3 Maja Street) there is a fountain depicting the legendary Mława – a wise woman to whom the town owes its name.

mlawa.pl

5 CIECHANÓW

The unconquered stronghold

The walls of the mighty Gothic castle raised by Siemowit III, Duke of Mazovia, and expanded by his son Janusz I the Old, featuring two towers – the eastern was a prison and the western an arsenal – have dominated the town for more than six centuries. It was the most powerful fortress in Mazovia and never conquered – so long as knights protected its walls.

A black dog guards the duke's treasure

According to legend, we might encounter a menacing black dog at the Castle of the Mazovian Dukes (Ciechanów). It is said to be an evil knight whom the royal alchemist turned into an animal. Whoever does not fear the beast will be shown a secret chamber where the treasures of the Dukes of Mazovia were hidden centuries ago. Word has it that the dog is more likely to be encountered on



📷 Reconstruction of the Castle of the Mazovian Dukes (Ciechanów) – appearance in the 14th century

the second floor of the western tower, where a patch of plaster on the wall... bears a striking resemblance to a dog – you can make out muzzle, paws and a tail... Were treasures really hidden in the castle centuries ago? The mighty Gothic fortress, whose layout was modelled on fortresses built by the crusaders in the Holy Land, was turned into a residence by the son of Siemowit III, Duke of Mazovia – Janusz I the Old. He raised a palace called Curia Mayor, but only part of the cellars remains. Duke Janusz I the Old ruled at a time when the Duchy of Mazovia had reached the peak of its scope and wealth. Perhaps some of the treasures were hidden in the castle dungeons?

What archaeologists discovered in the castle courtyard

Before the castle was revitalised and, among other things, a new structure was built between the towers, comprehensive archaeological excavations were performed in the castle courtyard, at the site of the so-called Small House (Dom Mały). Although the archaeologists found no trace of a secret chamber containing the dukes' treasures, they uncovered the remains of a defensive tower and the ramparts of the stronghold that once occupied the site of the castle. The stronghold and the tower – then the last line of defence – had been built almost a century before the castle by Duke Konrad II, grandson of Konrad of Mazovia. Among the remains of the construction work carried out some 700 years ago was an axe buried deep in the

ground, possibly used to sharpen the stakes for the palisade that protected the approach to the stronghold.

Where the legendary Ciechan settled with his beloved

At the time the stronghold was being built, there was another fortified site on the site of the present-day castle in Ciechanów: a hillfort on Farska Góra. According to legend it was founded by the knight Ciechan, who fled his family home with his chosen one, the beautiful Dobroniega. He had to choose exile when his father tried to force him to marry an unattractive but wealthy neighbour. The stronghold was built at a time when Christianity had not yet reached Mazovia. Perhaps a pagan temple stood beside it. This is indirectly suggested by a tradition that links the name Farska Góra with the name of the pagan god Swarożyc, and not, as one might think,

INTRIGUE, POISON AND A DRAGON: 300 YEARS OF INDEPENDENT MAZOVIA

The towers of the Castle of the Mazovian Dukes (Ciechanów) host the first exhibition devoted to the history of the Duchy of Mazovia. Across the eight storeys of the castle towers you come face to face with dukes, duchesses, knights, ghosts, the Teutonic Knights and... the first investigative commission in the history of the Polish lands appointed by King Sigismund the Old to investigate the mysterious death of the last of the Dukes of Mazovia. The exhibition at the Castle of the Mazovian Dukes (Ciechanów) is the first place in Poland to recall the 300-year history of independent Mazovia – from the Bolesław Wrymouth's feudal division to the heirless death of the last Dukes of Mazovia. Films, stories, characters and period decorations, and views of medieval Ciechanów from the windows – all of this makes a visit to the castle a real journey into the past.



📷 Museum of Romanticism in Opinogóra

with a parish church. The environs of Farska Góra, before Duke Janusz I the Old granted the settlement town rights and established the market square in its present location, lay at the centre of Ciechanów. Two Gothic churches remain here to this day: the parish Church of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Ks. Ściegiennego Street) and the Church of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary – the former Augustinian monastery founded by Siemowit III, Duke of Mazovia, and his wife Eufemia.

📍 Castle of the Mazovian Dukes

1 Zamkowa St., Ciechanów
zamekwciechanowie.pl

6 OPINOGÓRA

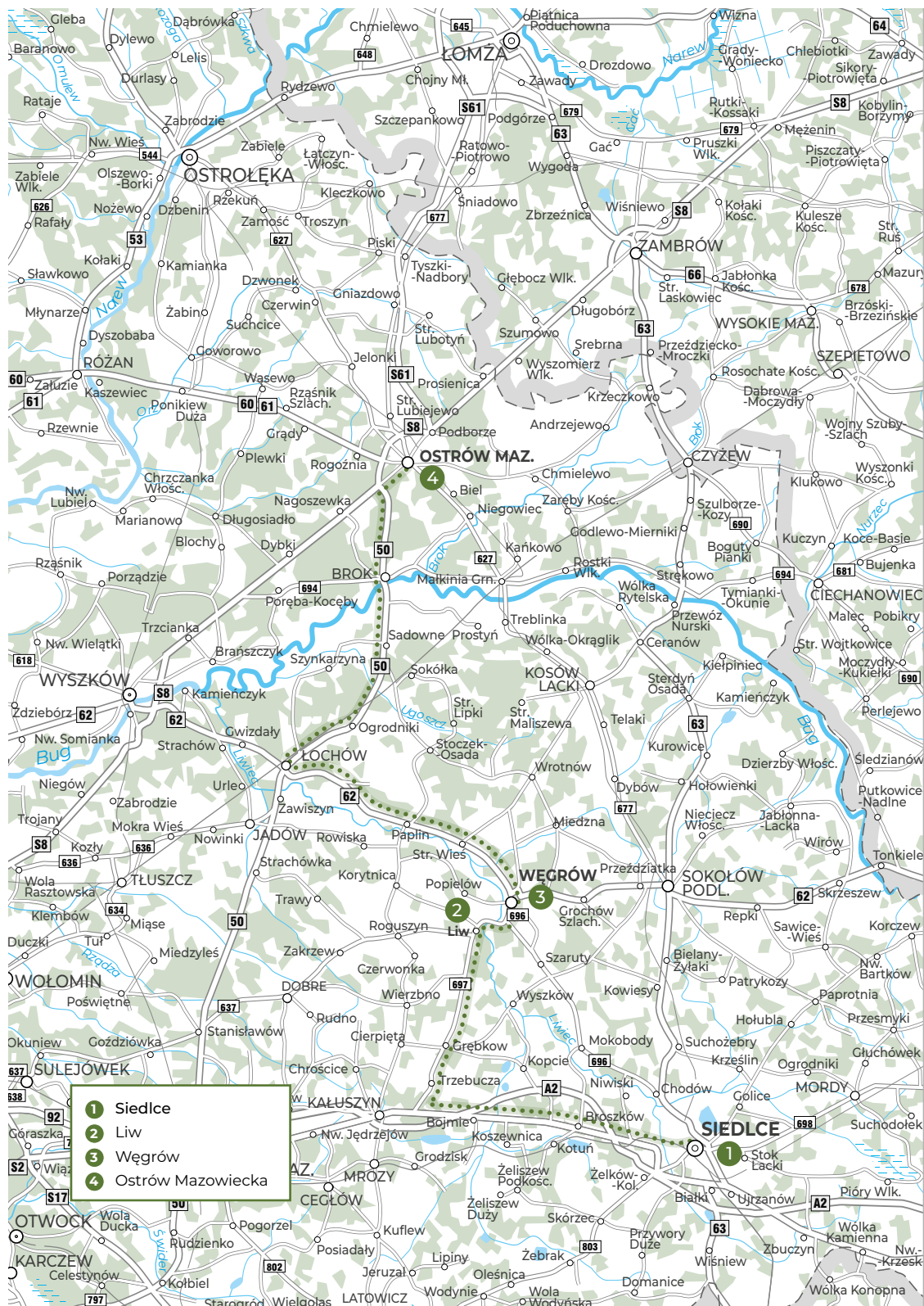
Duke and King-elect of the Kingdom of Poland

Opinogóra, renowned for the Krasiński Family Palace, which now houses the Museum of Romanticism, is also the site of the tragic death of one of the Dukes of Mazovia. The origins of Opinogóra date back to the 15th century, when Duke Bolesław IV of Mazovia, the grandson of Janusz I the Old, ordered a hunting manor to be built on this site. Bolesław ruled the eastern part of the Duchy of Mazovia with its capital in Warsaw. He continued his grandfather's policy. He founded

towns, promoted trade, and was conditionally elected to the throne of the Kingdom of Poland after the death of Władysław Warneńczyk in 1444. Kazimierz Jagiellończyk, wishing to obtain privileges for Lithuania, refrained from accepting the Polish Crown. The magnates, to break the impasse, convened an assembly at Piotrków to elect a king. There were two candidates: Sigismund of Hohenzollern and Bolesław IV. Although the Hohenzollern initially enjoyed greater support, a speech by Jan of Czyżów tipped the balance in favour of the Piast duke: 'It is not fitting to choose a German as king when there still lives our own line of dukes [...] and it would be better if the Kingdom of Poland [...] were restored to its rightful hereditary rulers.' As a result, Bolesław emerged victorious. The duke loved hunting, which passed into legend. He shared this passion with the entire line of Dukes of Mazovia. Bolesław IV of Mazovia died on 10 September 1454 in Opinogóra aged 33. The manor where Duke Bolesław breathed his last was likely where the rebuilt Krasiński manor stands today. The poet himself honoured the prematurely departed duke. At the foot of the hill on which the palace stands, he ordered a stone cross with a plaque to be erected in honour of the Mazovian duke.

📍 Museum of Romanticism in Opinogóra

9 Zygmunta Krasińskiego St., Opinogóra
muzeumromantyzmu.pl



Route of Anna Radziwiłł (Duchess of Mazovia) and the last of the Dukes of Mazovia

In the mid-15th century the territory of Lithuania began just under 90 km east of Warsaw. The border river was the Liwiec. Built on its western bank, Liw Castle was the border fortress of the Dukes of Mazovia. Siedlce, lying at the crossroads of three lands – Mazovia, Lesser Poland and Lithuania – was the gateway for influences from the east entering Mazovia.

In the north, where historic Mazovia extended almost to present-day Białystok,

beekeepers and charcoal burners lived in the forest wilderness. The settlement founded in Puszcza Biała, thanks to privileges granted by the Dukes of Mazovia, became a flourishing town. Today in Ostrów Mazowiecka stands a monument to Duchess Anna, who contributed to its development, and at the site where, according to tradition, the hunting manor of the Dukes of Mazovia stood, stands a replica.

DUCHESS ANNA RADZIWIŁŁ (DUCHESS OF MAZOVIA) (1476–1522)

Daughter of the Grand Chancellor of Lithuania Mikołaj Radziwiłł, aunt of Barbara Radziwiłł, she was the first Mazovian ruler not from ducal lineage. After the death of her husband Konrad III the Red in 1503 she exercised real power in the Duchy of Mazovia for almost 20 years. For her sons – Janusz III of Mazovia and Stanisław – she secured confirmation of their hereditary right to all of eastern Mazovia. She also opposed Stanisław's marriage to Katarzyna Radziejowska, expelling her from the Mazovian court. This gave rise to suspicions that the Duchess's premature death was an act of revenge by Katarzyna, who had been determined to enter the ducal family at all cost.



📍 Siedlce, Ogiński Palace

1 SIEDLCE Gates of Mazovia

Although Siedlce is not located in historic Mazovia but in Lesser Poland, on the lands of the former Sandomierz Voivodeship, it nevertheless constitutes an important point on the Trail of the Mazovian Dukes. Siedlce, first mentioned in a document written by Cardinal Zbigniew Oleśnicki, lay at the meeting point of three lands. In the Middle Ages it was a true melting pot of cultures and people. To the north was Mazovia, to the south Lesser Poland, and to the east and southeast the Ruthenian lands, a significant



🖼️ The Ecstasy of Saint Francis by El Greco

part of which was ruled by the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. Ruthenians migrated through the area of present-day Siedlce to the lands of Podlasie. This was also a route from the Duchy of Mazovia to Halych Ruthenia and to the land of Belz, which in the 14th and 15th centuries were under

the rule of the Mazovian dukes. Eastern influences were discernible both in the attire worn by Mazovian dukes and knights and in the familial ties of the rulers. Most of them were bound by marriage ties to duchesses originating from Ruthenia and Lithuania. Today the town's showcase is the Neoclassical palace-and-park complex from the 18th century, built on the site of an earlier wooden manor. The oldest church in the town is the Church of St Stanisław, founded by Kazimierz and Izabela Czartoryscy. The Diocesan Museum on Świrskiego Street houses Poland's only painting by El Greco, one of the foremost exponents of Mannerism.



📍 Bench of Aleksandra Ogińska

📍 **Tourist Information Centre**
7 K. Pułaskiego St., Siedlce
phone: +48 535 068 593
pttksiedlce.pl



📍 Knights' Tournament at Liw Castle

2 LIW Border guard post

The stronghold on the left bank of the Liwiec was constructed in the early 15th century by Duke Janusz I the Old. His intention was to control the river crossing and the eastern border of the Duchy of Mazovia. The structure was built on an artificially raised mound secured with wooden piles, but the period of Anna Radziwił's rule (Duchess of Mazovia)

The Armoury Museum offers a variety of museum lessons for children and young people, introducing them to, among other things, chivalric culture, knowledge of historical weaponry, heraldry, medieval games, and the history of money. The castle regularly hosts themed events, including Museum Night (May), the Humanitas Festival: Science, Art, Experience (June), the 'In the Castle Kitchen on the Trail of the Dukes of Mazovia' Festival (July), the Duchess Anna's Ring Knights' Tournament (August), National Reading and European Heritage Days (September).

– a century after Duke Janusz I the Old – is considered the castle's heyday. As the widow of Konrad III the Red, Anna Radziwił (Duchess of Mazovia) had already proved herself an effective administrator, builder and defender of Mazovia's independence. She governed the castle and the Liw land in 1502–1522. During that time she carried out an expansion and modernisation of the fortress. She decided to raise the perimeter walls and to equip them with a covered walkway for the guards. She also had the original tower rebuilt as a modern, three-storey gate tower and expanded the castle's principal residential building (the so-called Great House), enhancing not only the comfort but also the prestige of the residence.

📍 **Liw Castle**
2 S. Batorego St., Liw
liw-zamek.pl



📍 Liw Castle

THE LAST BASTION OF INDEPENDENT MAZOVIA

It was at Liw Castle, ten years after the Duchy of Mazovia's lands had in fact been incorporated into Poland, that Anna Mazowiecka – sister of the deceased, childless dukes Janusz and Stanisław – defied the will of the King of Poland, who demanded that she hand over to him the Mazovian lands she administered. Anna Radziwiłł, Duchess of Mazovia, following the death of her brother Janusz III of Mazovia, exercised de facto rule over Mazovia for six months. She yielded the land to King Sigismund I the Old only when he arrived in Warsaw for the funeral ceremonies of the last duke of Mazovia. The king, although he incorporated Mazovia into Poland, left Anna part of the lands, including, among others, the land of Liw, but only provisionally until she remarried. After her wedding, the duchess was to hand them over to the King of Poland. Wilhelm Hohenzollern sought Anna's hand, and there were also plans to marry her to future king Sigismund II Augustus, but in the end the duchess married Stanisław Odrowąż. Although she married, she did not intend to relinquish the lands that had remained in her family for centuries. The duchess took refuge in Liw Castle, which she had previously had extended, and did not admit the royal envoys into the stronghold. Showered with insults, they had to return to Kraków empty-handed. It was only in 1537 that the duchess was forced to humble herself before the king and renounce her rights to Mazovia, after which she abandoned the territory of the duchy. Thus the history of the Duchy of Mazovia's independence from the Polish Crown finally came to an end.

LIWIEC RIVER VALLEY TRAIL

From Kałuszyn the Trail of the Mazovian Dukes coincides with the Liwiec Valley Trail running along an old trade route through Grodzisk, Liw, Węgrów to Łochów. In the village of **Sucha** near Grębków there is the Museum of Wooden Architecture of the Siedlce Region. The main feature of this open-air museum is a larchwood manor from 1743 that once belonged to the castellan of Liw, Ignacy Cieszkowski. Inside the baroque manor fragments of the original paintings have been preserved. Another attraction of the open-air museum is a cottage from 1860, where priest Stanisław Brzóska, the last partisan commander of the January Uprising, is believed to have hidden. On the high escarpment of the Liwiec River stand the remains of the ramparts of a large stronghold from the 11th century. Covering an impressive 5 hectares, it has often been compared to Wawel in Krakow. In the locality of **Starawieś** near Węgrów stands a 19th-century palace whose appearance would suit the landscape of England more than Mazovia. The residence was built in the 16th century but a few hundred years later Duke Sergiusz Golicyn had it rebuilt in the then-fashionable English Neo-Gothic style. The palace gate featured four pillars crowned with crenelation. The external façades of the palace, with overhanging octagonal turrets at the corners, were also finished with crenelation. In the southeast corner there is a three-storey octagonal tower with battlements. On the route between Starawieś and Łochów, in **Paplin**, stands a wooden manor built in the 18th century for the Glinek family. It subsequently passed into the hands of the Garczyński family. In 1764 the manor was visited several times by Stanisław Antoni Poniatowski, the future King of Poland. It is worth stopping off at **Łochów** to view the palace designed by the leading 19th-century architect Bolesław Paweł Podczaszyński, while the village of **Gwizdały** boasts Poland's one and only museum ... of whistles.

📷 Manor in Paplin



📷 Minor Basilica in Węgrów

3 WĘGRÓW

The basilica and the mysterious mirror

Founded in the 14th century, Węgrów received town rights in 1441. Five years later, Duke Bolesław IV of Mazovia renounced Podlasie and from that time Węgrów joined Lithuania. Envoys of the Dukes of Mazovia nevertheless continued to visit, for the Great Lithuanian Route ran through Węgrów, connecting Warsaw with Vilnius. The heart of Węgrów

stands the Basilica of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary and St Peter, St Paul, St Andrew and St Catherine, standing on Mariacki Market Square. The present basilica was rebuilt in 1703 after a fire during the Great Northern War. The interior walls are decorated with frescoes painted by the eminent Italian artist Michelangelo Palloni in 1708. The church stands on the site of an earlier edifice founded in 1414 by Piotr Pilik, marshal of Siemowit IV, Duke of Mazovia. The sacristy contains one of

Master Twardowski and the ghost of Barbara Radziwiłł

At the behest of King Sigismund Augustus, Master Twardowski is believed to have summoned the spirit of Barbara Radziwiłł, the ruler's deceased wife. According to legend, she appeared in a mysterious mirror. The master warned the king not to touch the apparition, as misfortune would befall him. However, when the king saw Barbara, he could not resist embracing her. The spell was broken, the mirror shattered, and misfortunes fell upon both the king and Twardowski himself. Sigismund Augustus died soon afterwards in Knyszyn, while Twardowski was carried away from Rome Inn in Mystki (near Wysokie Mazowieckie) by... devils. Legend has it that he had previously sold his soul to the devil, a pact which contained the provision that his soul would only be surrendered in Rome. Some, however, claimed that Twardowski was not taken away by devils at all, but by ordinary flesh-and-blood people. In reality, Twardowski had not summoned Barbara's spirit, but had arranged for a lady-in-waiting who bore a striking resemblance to her to take her place. To prevent the deception from coming to light, those who had orchestrated the hoax abducted him.



📷 Monument to Duchess Anna of Mazovia

the most mysterious artefacts known from the Polish lands – a tarnished mirror made of a gold-and-silver alloy, weighing 17 kg, cracked into three pieces. A Latin inscription on its frame proclaims: Twardowski once entertained others by performing feats of magic with this mirror, but that it has now been turned to the service of God. It is said that before his death a famous sorcerer – German mage and alchemist Durentius, that is Twardy, remembered in Polish tradition as Mr. Twardowski – gave the mirror to Bishop Franciszek Krasiński, who then offered it as a votive gift to the church. The mirror, however, hangs so that no one can see their reflection in it, for otherwise one might glimpse one's future, or even... the devil. In Węgrów it is also worth visiting the post-Reformation monastery and church



📷 Twardowski's mirror, shrouded in an aura of mystery

(27 Kościuszki Street). Its interiors contain exquisite Baroque sculptures, frescoes and the tomb of Jan Dobrogost Krasiński. In the crypt lie mummified burials over 250 years old. An interesting exhibition presenting the history of Węgrów has been installed in the recently opened underground chambers.

wegrow.com.pl

4 OSTRÓW MAZOWIECKA The town of Anna Radziwiłł (Duchess of Mazovia)

Ostrów Mazowiecka owes its name not to an island, like other well-known Ostrów from the Polish lands, but to a primitive beekeepers' ladder called an 'ostrowa', which the former inhabitants of the White Forest (Puszcza Biała) used to harvest honey from bees. A settlement of beekeepers, woodcutters and hunters hidden in the forest became a town in 1434, when the then 14-year-old Duke Bolesław IV of Mazovia – grandson of Janusz I the Old – granted it town rights. However, it is Anna Radziwiłł (Duchess of Mazovia) – the wife of Konrad, son of Bolesław – who is remembered by the town's inhabitants



📷 Reconstruction of the Dukes of Mazovia's stronghold

to this day. The duchess granted the town the right to hold four annual fairs and one weekly market. From then on, conveniently located on trade routes, Ostrów began to grow rich. The duchess is commemorated by a monument (in the square on 3 Maja

Street) – one of only two monuments to the former rulers of Mazovia that stand today on Mazovian soil. The second, located in Gostynin, commemorates Siemowit IV, Duke of Mazovia. Another reminder of ducal times is the reconstructed Stronghold of the Dukes

A HISTORIC ACCORD AND A DEADLY ROMANCE

In 1392 an event occurred without which the historic victory in the Battle of Grunwald would not have been possible. King of Poland Władysław II Jagiełło and his cousin Witold, who had hitherto been at odds, concluded a pact against the Teutonic Knights. According to some historians this accord was struck at the hunting manor of the Dukes of Mazovia in Ostrów Mazowiecka. The settlement was reached with the significant involvement of the Mazovian rulers. One year before its conclusion, King Władysław II Jagiełło sought the help of Henryk, bishop of Płock, the youngest son of Duke Siemowit III and the half-brother of the rulers of the duchy, then divided into two parts (east and west): Janusz I the Old and Siemowit IV, Duke of Mazovia. Henryk set out on a delicate mission to Witold, who was staying with the Teutonic Knights. He was to persuade him to reconcile with Władysław II Jagiełło. The bishop displayed extraordinary negotiating skill. Not only did he persuade Witold to meet his brother, he was so convincing that Witold, abandoning the Teutonic Knights – his former allies – burned down two of their castles... Witold was not the only one to succumb to the bishop's charm. His sister Ryngała – whom chroniclers, on account of her exceptional beauty, called wondrous – was not immune either. Ryngała and Henryk fell in love. The bishop renounced his clerical status and the bishopric of Płock and married Ryngała. This union did not turn out well for Henryk, who died unexpectedly six months after the agreement was concluded. Some suspected Ryngała of having poisoned her husband. Perhaps, in hindsight, she felt she should not have married a clergyman...



📷 St Andrew the Apostle's Church in Brok

of Mazovia in Ogródek Jordanowski. It stands on the site where, according to tradition, the hunting manor of Duke Janusz I the Old once stood, from which the dukes set forth on hunts.

Tourist Information Point
68 3 Maja St., Ostrów Mazowiecka
phone: +48 29 645 71 01
powiatostrowmaz.pl
ostrowmaz.pl

in the area

BROK Stronghold of the bishops of Płock

The history of the town located within Nadbużański Landscape Park dates back to the times of Konrad I of Mazovia. In a document issued by the duke in 1203 a defensive stronghold with a church and eighteen villages belonging to it is mentioned. Even then, although it lay within the Duchy of Mazovia, Brok was the property of the bishops of Płock. The late-Gothic parish Church of St Andrew the Apostle survives from the Middle

Ages. A reminder of the rule of the bishops of Płock is the picturesquely situated ruins of a 17th-century palace, where, among others, the future King of Poland Michał Korybut Wiśniowiecki was educated in his youth.

brok.pl

in the area

OSTROŁĘKA Stronghold on the Narew

A fortified stronghold, whose ramparts have survived to this day at the confluence of the Omulew and the Narew, served as a bastion protecting Mazovia from raids from the north until the 13th century. In 1373 Siemowit III, Duke of Mazovia, granted town rights to Ostrołęka, and several decades later his son, Janusz I the Old, founded the parish church. The church exists to this day (Farna Street), but only its chancel has retained Gothic features. It owes its present appearance to a reconstruction that took place in the mid-17th century.

ostroleka.pl



📷 Church of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary and St Nicholas in Ostrołęka

HISTORICAL MAZOVIA EXPANDED FAR TOWARDS THE EAST

Although historical Mazovia extended less far south than it does today, ending at the Pilica River, in the east (on the right bank of the Bug River) it extended deep into what is now Podlasie. Towns that today lie within the Podlaskie region – Nowogród, Łomża and Wizna – were part of the Duchy of Mazovia throughout its entire existence. The easternmost town founded by the Dukes of Mazovia was Mielnik, situated directly on the current border with Belarus. On so-called Siemowit's Hill, within the picturesque Kurpie Open-Air Museum in Nowogród, there once stood a ducal stronghold. In the 14th century, a small castle was built on its site, but it has not survived to the present day. Today at the open-air museum visitors may admire the wooden architecture and culture of the Kurpie people. The Kurpie region itself also took shape during the period when Mazovia was ruled by the dukes. The Green Forest (Puszcza Zielona) was a place where those who defied the authorities sought refuge. Some had sins on their conscience. Some had fled serfdom, while others were hiding in the forests because they seemed safer than settlements located in the borderlands.

In Łomża the last Dukes of Mazovia – Stanisław, Janusz III of Mazovia, and their sister Anna – established a church that would become one of the town's most priceless monuments. The church, completed after the deaths of the Mazovian rulers, was their final foundation. The fortress at Wizna (the stronghold known as Queen Bona's Hill) was one of the most important Mazovian strongholds guarding the frontier with Lithuania and the Teutonic Order. Paradoxically, although the stronghold lay in the far east of Mazovia, it was associated with the Land of Płock. For a time the territories of Podlasie proper had also fallen under the rule of the Dukes of Mazovia. This area's is said to derive from the term 'po lachy' and originally meant the frontier between the Ruthenian and Polish duchies. The Dukes of Mazovia sought to incorporate Podlasie into their domains. Standards bearing an eagle and a dragon flew over the strongholds in Drohiczyn, Suraż, Tykocin, and in Bielsk Podlaski.



Duke Janusz's Trail

What is the origin of the dragon depicted in the coat of arms of the land of Czersk? Which beer did the Dukes of Mazovia most enjoy drinking? You can find answers to these questions by travelling through southern Mazovia. The Duchy of Mazovia ended here too, at the Pilica River. Beyond boundless forests, where you would be more likely to encounter a wild animal than a person, and whose remnant is today's Kozienice Forest, Lesser Poland began. Although these lands belonged to the Polish kings, the Dukes of Mazovia also left their mark on them. In Kozienice, with the cooperation of Duke Janusz I the Old, a pontoon bridge was built that enabled Władysław II Jagiełło to cross the Vistula into the lands of the Teutonic Order. In Sieciechów, Konrad I of Mazovia imprisoned his political opponents. The fate of the Duchy hung in the balance at Szydłowiec Castle, and in Iłża treasures hidden in the castle dungeons still await explorers to this day.

1 LIW Border fortress

A fortified castle situated on the picturesque Liwiec River, similar to the one at Trakai in Lithuania, guarded the eastern frontier of Mazovia. It was also here that the last attempts were made to defend the Duchy of Mazovia's independence from the rulers

of Poland. The first mention of a stronghold on the Liwiec dates from a document issued by Duke Bolesław II of Mazovia in 1304. At the beginning of the 15th century, Duke Janusz I built a castle on the site of the stronghold and granted town rights to the settlement that had sprung around it. The fortress consisted of two parallel buildings: the Great House (Dom Duży) – the ducal residence – and the Small House (Dom Mały), which contained the utility rooms. The buildings were connected by defensive walls, and access to the interior was gained via a projecting gatehouse. A century later, Duchess Anna of Mazovia expanded the Great House and raised the height of the gatehouse and defensive walls. Of the former Gothic castle remain the monumental gate tower, a fragment of the perimeter walls, and the Starost's Manor, built in the 18th century on the site of the Small House. During the Second World War, the Germans planned to demolish Liw Castle and use the bricks to build the labour and extermination camp at Treblinka. The medieval monument was saved at great personal risk by the Polish archaeologist Otton Warpechowski, who convinced Ernst Gramms, the German district governor of Sokołów and Węgrów counties, a man who had spread a reign of terror among the local population, that these were the ruins of a Teutonic Order castle. The deception succeeded, and the



Janusz I the Old (1346–1429) was one of the most outstanding Dukes of Mazovia. He was called the Casimir the Great of Mazovia. He ruled the eastern part of the duchy. He founded 24 towns, including Przasnysz, Ciechanów, Łomża, Zakroczym, and also Nowa Warszawa, that is 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 secured with city walls, and he also expanded the Warsaw castle. He also constructed the Castle of the Mazovian Dukes (Czersk) and Liw Castle, and turned the powerful fortress in Ciechanów into a ducal residence. It was within his duchy, near Czerwińsk, that the combined Polish-Lithuanian army assembled before marching to Grunwald. It was also Duke Janusz who became the first knight to congratulate King Władysław Jagiełło on his victory over the Teutonic Order.



📷 St Anne's Church in Piaseczno

occupiers even began restoring the tower. Today, the castle houses the Armoury Museum, with a rich collection of weapons dating from the 15th to the 20th century.

📍 **Liw Castle**
S. Batorego St., Liw
liw-zamek.pl

2 PIASECZNO

The town of the Mazovian Duchesses

The town's rich history is recalled by the Gothic church and the market square. On the site of the former ducal manor there is a lovely park. Only a few linden trees remain of the avenue that once led to the residence of the rulers of Mazovia. The town owed its medieval development to the Dukes of Mazovia: Janusz I the Old, who in 1429 granted the town its charter under Chełmno law, and Anna, the wife of Duke Konrad III the Red, who in 1513 granted the town the right to hold fairs and markets. This decision was of enormous importance for Piaseczno, and trade at the Piaseczno market continued uninterrupted until 1964! The heyday under the Mazovian Piasts is today represented by St Anne's Church situated on the market square. Around 1350

Siemowit III, Duke of Mazovia, founded the first wooden place of worship on this site. In 1458 Duchess Anna, mother of Bolesław IV of Mazovia, endowed the parish with land and re-established the church. The oldest church in Piaseczno met its end in a fire that broke out in 1526, the same year the duchy's lands were incorporated into Poland. Construction of a new masonry church did not begin until the mid-16th century. The single-nave building was several times destroyed, rebuilt and renovated. On the eastern elevation there is a niche with a late Baroque statue of St John Nepomucen. Buttresses ensure structural support. In the 1960s the church's Gothic design was restored, and near the main altar, on the northern and eastern walls of the presbytery, fragments of polychrome paintings from 1555 were uncovered. They depict scenes from the Gospels. Just a few steps from the church, the building that formerly housed the presbytery now hosts Piaseczno Museum – a small but

THE IRON HAND OF THE FAIRER SEX

A recurring feature of the last male descendants of the Mazovian line of the Piasts was death at a young age. Bolesław IV of Mazovia died at 34, and his son Konrad Rudy at 55. Both left underage heirs to the throne. The reins of government in the duchy then fell to their mothers and wives, who exercised regency on behalf of their grandsons or sons. After the death of Bolesław IV this authority was first exercised by his mother Anna, and then by his wife Barbara. Both duchesses are remembered in history for founding churches, including St Anne's in Warsaw and in Piaseczno. Anna Radziwiłł (Duchess of Mazovia), widow of Duke Konrad III, and – after the incorporation of the duchy – her daughter Anna Mazowiecka both exercised an even greater influence on the development of the Mazovian lands. Both duchesses, by granting privileges to hold fairs and markets, contributed to the economic development of eastern Mazovia.



📷 Tournament at the Castle of the Mazovian Dukes in Czersk

modern and beautifully designed institution. The exhibition includes elements related to the Dukes of Mazovia – a must-see stop on any visit!

piaseczno.eu
muzeumpiaseczna.pl

3 CZERSK

Green Dragon Castle

Czersk, today a small village, was in the time of the Mazovian dukes, alongside Płock, the largest centre of power in Mazovia and the capital of its eastern part. In the 11th century, the comes of the Czersk stronghold was Magnus – probably the son of King Harold II of England. It is possible that archaeologists discovered his grave during excavations carried out at the site of the stronghold church

Mazovian military centre

In the 11th century, when Płock was regarded as the capital of Mazovia, Czersk was its military centre. Where the present castle now stands, a fortified stronghold was constructed with an adjoining settlement. In the mid-14th century it transformed into a town, and what is now Plac Tysiąclecia became the market square. To this day the medieval urban layout

has been preserved, with a market square that is roughly rectangular and streets radiating from its corners.

The capital of eastern Mazovia

The Dukes of Mazovia expanded the Czersk stronghold. Here Duke Konrad I of Mazovia imprisoned his rival, the Silesian duke Henry the Bearded. The unfortunate man was locked in a special chest from which only his limbs and head protruded. Konrad I of Mazovia wanted to force political concessions from his prisoner. Only the Silesian duke's wife, Jadwiga, begged the cruel Konrad I of Mazovia to release her husband. From Czersk the rule over eastern Mazovia was exercised by Konrad I of Mazovia's grandson – Konrad II. The stronghold was also the seat of Duke Trojden – the founder of the dynasty that ruled all of Mazovia until its incorporation in 1526. As ruler of Czersk, Trojden introduced the wyvern into Mazovian heraldry – a green two-legged, winged dragon on a white shield. For this reason, the Mazovian dragon is also sometimes referred to as the Żmij Czerski (the Czersk Wyvern).

Duke Janusz builds a castle

The last duke to rule from Czersk was Janusz I the Old. He is remembered for ordering

a brick castle to be raised on the site of the stronghold. Its construction was completed in 1410. Substantial fragments of the perimeter walls have survived to our times, including the gate tower and the western and southern towers. Traces of the foundations of the ducal residence – the so-called Great House – and relics of the stronghold church were uncovered in the courtyard. Duke Janusz also made another decision even more important for Czersk – he transferred the capital of eastern Mazovia to Warsaw, a city which, although much younger than Czersk, was developing vigorously. The duke himself, together with his wife Anna Danuta, daughter of Lithuanian Grand Duke Kiejstut, was immortalised by Henryk Sienkiewicz in the pages of the novel *The Teutonic Knights*. It was at Anna Danuta's court that Danuśka served as a lady-in-waiting; she was the beloved of Zbyszko of Bogdaniec. Both the duke and his wife liked to spend time in Czersk, as evidenced by the number of documents signed by Janusz I the Old in Czersk. Both also enjoyed long lives, and their marriage was one of the longest-lasting dynastic unions.

DID AN ENGLISH PRINCE RULE CZERSK?

During excavations in 1966 at the site of the stronghold church, scientists discovered an unusual grave that must have belonged to a powerful warrior. The remains lay in a three-metre wooden coffin bound with iron. On the finger of the deceased's left hand there was a gold ring, beside the corpse lay a sword and a spear, and at his feet an iron-bound bucket. Since the discovery a debate has been continuing as to whether this might be the burial of Magnus Haroldson, son of the last king of England, Harold II, before the Norman conquest. In 1066 a bloody battle was fought on the fields near Hastings in which the ranks of English knights commanded by King Harold clashed with Norman knights led by William the Conqueror. The English lost the battle, King Harold fell, and his sons fled for their lives. Their names quickly vanished from the English chronicles; only the name of the youngest – Magnus – appears in the chronicle of... Gallus Anonymus. The first Polish chronicler mentions a comes of Wrocław and later of Mazovia named Magnus, referring to him as a duke. An indirect indication that this may have been Magnus Haroldson (apart from the identical name) is the fact that Magnus's sister married the ruler of Kievan Rus', suggesting close links between the rulers of England and the eastern lands of Europe. The comes Magnus resided in Czersk, and legend associates him with the founding of the town of Magnuszew. He may also have been the person who brought the heraldic symbol of the two-legged dragon – the wyvern – to Mazovia. Magnus's family coat of arms, inherited from a dynasty that had ruled the Kingdom of Wessex for centuries, was the wyvern itself. In Czersk there is a legend of treasures that lie somewhere in the dungeons beneath the castle. Supposedly they are guarded by... a dragon.

Czersk's later history – rise and fall

The descendants of Duke Janusz continued to extend the castle by, among other improvements, raising its towers. However, Czersk did not peak in terms of growth until after the extinction of the Mazovian Piast line and the incorporation of Mazovia into the Polish Crown. Administration of Czersk passed to Queen Bona, the wife of King Sigismund I the Old, who received the castle and the town as her dowry estate. The queen managed her domains in a remarkably modern way, establishing workshops that produced, for example, high-quality cloth, as well as breweries and mills. She planted vineyards on the southern slopes of the castle hill and laid out gardens on the fertile land surrounding the castle. In the castle courtyard, she commissioned the construction of an imposing residence known as the Parys Palace, named after its builder. Her departure for Italy – associated with the legend of the pearls she supposedly lost in her haste and of the White Lady who searches for them on moonlit nights among the castle ruins – marked the beginning of Czersk's decline. A century later, the Swedish Deluge brought tragedy, inflicting

extensive damage on both the town and the castle. Despite attempts at reconstruction, commemorated today by the Neo-Gothic bridge spanning the dry moat, Czersk never regained its former glory. The occupying powers completed its destruction by dismantling the buildings within the castle courtyard and sections of the defensive walls. The remaining lofty towers still dominate the picturesque landscape of the Vistula River valley, recalling the days of Czersk's former splendour.



Czersk Castle

Plac Tysiąclecia 16, Czersk
zamekczersk.pl

4 WARKA

Beer and ducal crypts

This town has been associated with beer since the reign of the Dukes of Mazovia. They became so fond of this beverage that in 1478 Bolesław V stipulated that beer for the ducal manor in Warsaw could only be delivered from Warka. To this day there is debate whether the town's name derives from the verb 'warzyć' (to brew) or from the word 'warownia' (fortress / stronghold).

The history of Warka began in... Old Warka

Before beer was ever brewed in Warka, on a high escarpment above the Pilica, at a site located 3 km from today's market square and now called Old Warka (Stara Warka), there once stood a defensive settlement. It was an important trading centre at a crossing of the Pilica. Earthworks – remnants of the hillfort – have survived to this day. Probably Duke Siemowit I of Mazovia brought the Dominicans to Old Warka. When the river changed its course, the inhabitants of Warka established a settlement in a new location, and the convent moved with them.

How many dukes are buried in the crypts of the Dominican monastery?

The friars raised a new monastery building on today's market square, where the fire station stands. The monastery's crypts became



📷 Franciscan Church of Our Lady of the Scapular in Warka

a necropolis for the Dukes of Mazovia. Trojden, ruler of Czersk, who confirmed Warka's town rights in 1321, was buried there. Trojden's brother – Siemowit II, who ruled the Duchy of Rawa – and Duchess Danuta Anna, who died 100 years later, the wife of Duke Janusz I the Old, were both laid to rest there. Perhaps in Warka's Dominican church another duke,

HOW WARKA BEER SAVED THE NUNCIO

The 'Golden Age' of Warka fell in the 15th and 16th centuries, when the town grew wealthy on the beer trade, a valuable commodity in Europe at that time. The best testimony to the world renown of Warka's drink is the story of the Papal Nuncio, the later Pope Clement VII, who, after returning from Poland to Rome, fell gravely ill. Lying on his deathbed, he deliriously murmured *birra di Warka*, remembering the beer he had come to relish. The clergy gathered at the legate's bedside, thinking he was invoking an unknown saint, began to pray: Santa Birra di Warka... Hearing this, the patient laughed so loudly that an ulcer in his throat – the cause of his illness – burst, whereupon the Nuncio quickly recovered.

Konrad II, who died in Czerwińsk at the end of the 13th century, was also buried.

Piotr Wysocki transfers the bones of the Dukes of Mazovia

Unfortunately the Dominican church has not survived. In the 19th century it fell into such a state of ruin that in 1859 the remains of the Dukes of Mazovia were moved to a newer church. The ceremony was solemn and patriotic in character. The transfer of the dukes' burial site was initiated by Piotr Wysocki, the same man who, on a November night in 1830, led the conspiracy of the officer cadets and sparked the November Uprising. The remains of the Dukes of Mazovia were placed in the crypts of the 17th-century baroque Church of the Franciscan Friars of Our Lady of the Scapular, where they remain to this day.

Tourist Information Point

24 K. Pułaskiego St., Warka
phone: +48 48 667 22 67, warka.pl

5 KOZIENICE

Where Władysław II Jagiełło's secret weapon was built

An isolated spot in the forest bordering the Duchy of Mazovia, an abundance of timber and the fact that the local river Zagożdżonka flows into the Vistula made Kozienice the perfect place to build King Władysław II Jagiełło's 'secret weapon' against the Teutonic Knights. In 1409, at a meeting with his cousin Witold, King Władysław II Jagiełło decided to construct a 'secret weapon' that would boost their chances of defeating the Teutonic Knights. This weapon would be a pontoon bridge that would afford the knights a rapid crossing of the Vistula at a place where the Teutonic Knights would not expect it. Kozienice was chosen as the construction site. Jagiełło knew the area well: the settlement was a popular royal hunting ground, and the king had often stayed in the hunting manor that then stood where the present palace now stands. The bridge was built in close cooperation with Duke Janusz I the Old, who ruled the eastern



 Monument to Władysław II Jagiełło in Kozienice (Palace Park)

part of Mazovia, which at that time stretched as far as the Radomka River that flowed almost to the outskirts of Kozienice. The completed sections of the bridge were floated down the Vistula to Czerwińsk through territory governed by Janusz. There the knights led by King Władysław II Jagiełło crossed the Vistula. Today a monument of Władysław II Jagiełło inspecting the construction commemorates these extraordinary events.

Tourist Information Point

29 Warszawska St., Kozienice
phone: +48 731 877 337
kozienice.pl

THE MOST EXTRAORDINARY BRIDGE IN MEDIEVAL EUROPE

The bridge was built in great secrecy over the course of half a year. Craftsmen made 150 boats approximately 5 m long, 1.5 m wide and approximately 1 m deep, and also a deck half a kilometre long over which military units were to cross. The construction was supervised by Dobrogost Czarny of Odrzywół, the starost (governor) of Radom, and the chief builder was master carpenter Jarosław. A pontoon bridge at that time was a technical marvel unknown in Western Europe.

6 SIECIECHÓW

The secrets of the residence of Mazovia's most powerful nobleman

The chronicler Gallus Anonymus wrote that between Sandomierz and Płock there was no stronghold more significant than Sieciechów. The settlement was the first in Mazovia to receive town rights – in 1232. Today it is a small locality, neighbouring a former Benedictine monastic complex. Its name derives from the name of Palatine Sieciech of the Starża-Toporczyk family, an influential administrator of Duke Władysław Herman's court. The stronghold, whose remains archaeologists continue to search for, went down in history as a place where political opponents were imprisoned. Here Zbigniew, the firstborn son of Władysław Herman, was detained, and in 1233 Konrad I of Mazovia imprisoned Grzymiśława, the widow of his brother Leszek I the White, with her underage son Bolesław Wstydlivy (the Chaste), who rivalled Konrad I of Mazovia for the throne in Kraków. At the Sieciech stronghold Sieciech constructed a monastery for Benedictines brought from France in the 11th century. The abbey existed there until the middle of the 13th century. When the Vistula changed course, the stronghold was abandoned.

sieciechow.pl

in the area

ZWOLEŃ

According to tradition, the place where a wayside shrine has stood since the mid-19th century, on the site of the former Church of St Anne, marked the end of the so-called Czersk Route (Droga Czerska). Documents confirm that, in fact, at the turn of the 14th century, the lands where Zwoleń was founded a century later may have been connected with Czersk and formed the southernmost territories of the Sieciechów castellany. Today, the town's most important monument is the Kochanowski family necropolis in the crypt of the Church of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross.

zwolen.pl



 Iłża Castle

7 IŁŻA

The unconquered fortress of the bishops of Kraków

Before the castle that now towers over the town existed, at the foot of the hill upon which it was later built, Duke Konrad I of Mazovia led the Mazovian knights on their march towards Kraków. Could the spirit of the Mazovian duke be haunting the surrounding lands? The later lords of Iłża Castle exhibited a similar pugnacity and stubbornness, especially toward their suzerains in Kraków. Fragments of walls, bastions and a lofty tower of the former hilltop headquarters of the bishops of Kraków survive to this day, offering views of the surrounding area. The castle was built in the mid-14th century by Bishop Jan Grot. The prelate enjoyed the trust of both Władysław I the Elbow-high and his son Casimir III the Great. However, when a conflict arose between the bishop and Casimir, the enraged king sent his knights to capture Iłża Castle. The fortress nevertheless remained unconquered – after an unsuccessful siege, the royal troops were forced to withdraw 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 qualities. Legend has it that once a cruel duchess watched for merchant wagons from the tower, having turned Iłża into a den



📷 Castle and Museum of Folk Musical Instruments in Szydłowiec

of robber-knights. She hid the plundered treasures in the castle dungeons. Once, unwittingly, the duchess leaned out too far

THE LORDS OF SZYDŁOWIEC

It is said that King Sigismund the Old liked to play poker with the Szydłowiecki brothers. During one such game the monarch put two kings on the table, claiming he had three kings because the third was himself. However, it was Krzysztof Szydłowiecki who took the pot, laying down two jacks and explaining that it was a four of a kind, because the other two were himself and his brother, Mikołaj... Mikołaj Stanisław Szydłowiecki (1480–1532) – courtier of King John I Albert, Grand Treasurer of the Crown, starost of Radom. Krzysztof Szydłowiecki (1467–1532) – brother of Mikołaj, Court Treasurer of the Crown, Grand Chancellor, castellan of Kraków. During the reign of King Sigismund the Old he directed the foreign policy of the Kingdom of Poland. Like the king, he was a proponent of incorporating Mazovia into Poland. Krzysztof exercised authority in the Mazovian lands previously incorporated into Poland – he was starost of Sochaczew and of Gostynin.

and fell, taking to the grave the secret of where she had hidden the treasures.

ilza.pl

8 SZYDŁOWIEC

The city where the fate of independent Mazovia hung in the balance

Located in the land of Sandomierz, Szydłowiec did not belong to the Dukes of Mazovia, yet it was in this town that decisions were made that sealed the fate of independent Mazovia.

Renaissance castle...

It was probably in Szydłowiec Castle that King Sigismund I the Old, together with Mikołaj and Krzysztof Szydłowiecki, decided on their policy towards an independent Mazovia. The castle, situated 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 extended by his son Mikołaj. The two-storey, three-winged building was almost entirely constructed of Szydłowiec sandstone. One of the oldest elements of the castle is the gate tower supported by corner buttresses. The ground floor features a Gothic cross vault. Today Szydłowiec Castle houses the only Museum of Folk Musical Instruments in Poland, with unique collections, as well as a cultural and sports centre.

...Gothic church...

On the town's main square – the Great Market Square – stands the parish church of St Sigismund the King. The Gothic, east-oriented church was built of Szydłowiec sandstone. The founders were Stanisław and Mikołaj Szydłowiecki. In the presbytery nave lies the tombstone of the second of them, while on the north wall there is a late-Gothic polyptych from 1509.

...and one of the most beautiful town halls in Poland

In the central part of the market square stands the town hall – the town's calling card and the local authorities' building. Constructed at the beginning of the 17th century, it is one of the best-preserved late Renaissance monuments in Poland. With a rectangular layout, it has a turret at each corner and a larger tower on the eastern side. The pillory with mascarons located in front of the town hall is also of interest and is one of only a few such structures in the country.

📍 Tourist Information Point

Rynek Wielki 5, Szydłowiec
phone: +48 483 262 054
szydlowiec.pl

9 CHLEWISKA

Seat of the Odrowąż family

Located near Szydłowiec, Chlewska is famous for the fortified palace of the Odrowąż family. Chlewska was probably the first place of exile for the last ruler of Mazovia – Anna, whose husband was Stanisław Odrowąż. The headstrong duchess, after a conflict with King Zygmunt Stary (Sigismund I the Old) and renouncing all rights to her estates, was forced to leave Mazovia together with her husband. From the former owners of Chlewska, the Odrowąż Family, there remains a fortified palace known as the castle. It was probably built at the end of the 15th century. Today the palace houses the Manor House SPA (manorhouse.pl).

in the area

RADOM

Radom lies in the historical region of Lesser Poland. During the period when Konrad I of Mazovia held power in Mazovia, Radom was the site of one of the residences of his brother, Leszek I the White. He was the ruler who founded the oldest church – St Wenceslaus Church, where he is also depicted on one of the stained-glass windows. Not far from the church stand the surviving ramparts of the early-medieval stronghold Piotrówki, which form part of the archaeological park in the valley of the Mleczna River.

📍 Tourist Information Centre

16 Rwańska St., Radom
phone: +48 48 360 0610, cit.radom.pl

in the area

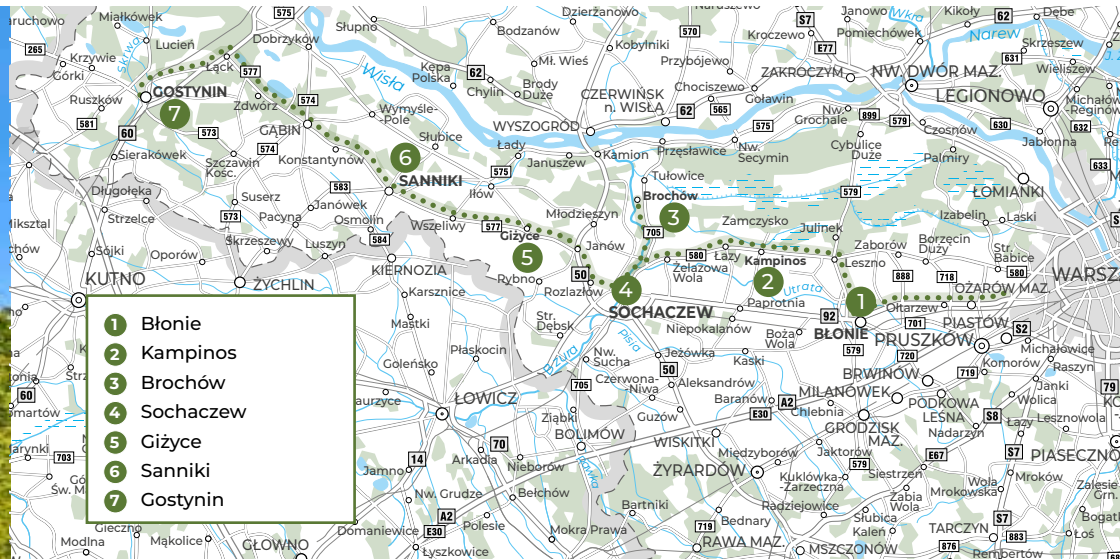
GRÓJEC

Grójec, formerly called Grodziec, is considered one of the oldest settlements in southern Mazovia. A castellan's stronghold existed here as early as the 11th–12th century, however so far no traces have been found. In 1419 Duke Janusz I the Old granted Grójec Chełmno law. The parish Church of St Nicholas recalls the heyday of Mazovia. The construction of this Gothic structure was initiated at the end of the 14th century by Duke Janusz I the Old. Originally, it was a single-nave building constructed of brick with fieldstones incorporated into its walls. In the years 1520–1530 it was extended; in the same century the chapel of St Anne was also added. Inside it is worth seeing the sandstone baptismal font, where, according to tradition, Piotr Skarga was baptised.

in the area

TARCZYN

Tarczyn owed its prosperity in the Middle Ages to its favourable location on the trade routes from Radom to Warsaw and Zakroczym. A Gothic church built on the market square in the first half of the 16th century still stands to this day.



Route of the Siemowits

Western Mazovia preserves the rich legacy of the Dukes of Mazovia and unresolved mysteries they left in their wake. At the site of the stronghold in Błonie, archaeologists discovered the oldest stone defensive tower in Mazovia. Perhaps this stronghold was meant to be the capital of all Mazovia. In the Middle Ages, Puszcza Kampinowska (Kampinos Forest) was a hunting ground for Mazovian rulers and, later, for the kings of Poland. Brochów boasts

a unique fortified church surrounded by a wall, and in Sochaczew on the hill above the Bzura lie the ruins of a castle raised by the Dukes of Mazovia. Giżyce commemorates Bishop Paweł Giżycki, who, as regent, ruled over the entire Duchy of Mazovia. In Sanniki stood a ducal hunting manor where the elder of the last Dukes of Płock died. His death is said to have accelerated the incorporation of the first lands of the Duchy of Mazovia into the Duchy

SIEMOWIT III, AND SIEMOWIT IV – OUTSTANDING RULERS OF MAZOVIA

The former is regarded as one of the greatest rulers of Mazovia, while the latter made attempts on the Polish throne, competing with Władysław II Jagiełło. Siemowit III, Duke of Mazovia (1320–1381), son of Trojden, inherited half of the Duchy of Czersk; within less than thirty years he annexed the remainder of the Mazovian lands to his domains, and after the death of King Casimir III the Great he restored Mazovian independence. The duke also codified Mazovian customary law, resulting in the so-called Sochaczew statutes. Siemowit IV (1352–1426), the younger son of Siemowit III and brother of Janusz I, was almost elected King of Poland by part of the nobility. Only magnates from Lesser Poland, hostile to the Mazovian duke, blocked this choice. Siemowit then resolved to abduct Queen Jadwiga in order to win the coveted throne through marriage. When the plan was foiled, the duke launched a military campaign. He gave up only in the face of an invasion by the Margrave of Brandenburg, Sigismund of Luxembourg, husband of Jadwiga's elder sister, Maria, who was devastating and plundering western Mazovia. In exchange for renouncing his claims to the throne in Kraków, Siemowit IV secured the Belz land in Ruthenia for Mazovia. The agreement was sealed by the marriage of the Mazovian duke to Władysław II Jagiełło's beloved sister, Alexandra.

of Płock. Was his death caused by poison? The castle in Gostynin was the favourite residence of Siemowit IV, Duke of Mazovia. It is said that once a monster prowled the castle dungeon, devouring the prisoners held there. Western Mazovia did not end at the border of today's Mazovian Voivodeship. The dukes also ruled Łowicz – although entrusted to the administration of the archbishops of Gniezno – and Rawa Mazowiecka. At the castle in Rawa an event occurred so dramatic that it inspired Shakespeare to write one of his tragedies.

1 BŁONIE

The stronghold that would be the capital of Mazovia

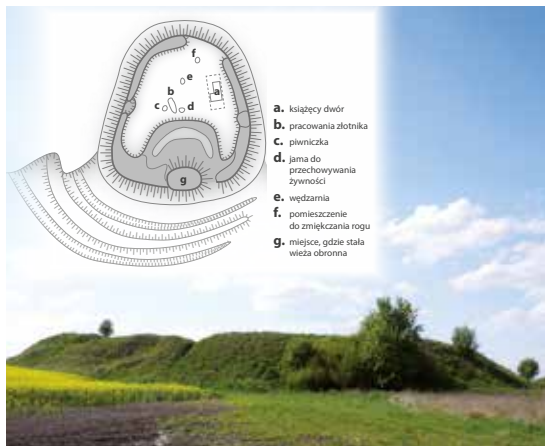
The stronghold in Błonie served as an important point in the defensive system of Mazovia. It was one of the main residences of Duke Konrad I of Mazovia and his son Siemowit I of Mazovia. It may have been intended as the capital of the entire Duchy of Mazovia.

The Capital of Mazovia on Łysa Góra

On Łysa Góra, in the north-eastern part of the town, a stronghold was built in the 12th century. During the rule of Duke Konrad of Mazovia, it was one of the principal ducal residences. In its northern part, on a conical

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

At the site of the stronghold in Błonie, in addition to the remains of the oldest defensive tower in Mazovia, archaeologists also discovered fragments of a large rectangular residential building constructed in the first half of the 13th century. Next to the building they found traces of a goldsmith's workshop. Such a craftsman could not be found in every stronghold. Ordinary inhabitants of medieval Mazovia could not afford the ornaments he made, which were mainly commissioned by dukes and knights. Perhaps, then, the large residential building was a ducal court, where the Dukes of Mazovia – Konrad I of Mazovia and his son Siemowit – often stayed. It is possible that it was while staying at Błonie that Konrad I of Mazovia, gazing from the ramparts towards the northern border of his duchy, which was being attacked by the pagan Old Prussians, made the decision to send envoys to the Grand Master of the Teutonic Order, Hermann von Salza.



☞ Remains of the stronghold in Błonie and site plan according to the drawing by T. Kiersnowska – one of the better-preserved hillforts in Mazovia

mound, the duke erected a stone defensive tower, where the inhabitants of the stronghold could take refuge in the event of enemy attack. The ramparts, brick defensive tower and the Utrata River proved insufficient obstacles for the invaders. The stronghold was destroyed in the second half of the 13th century, probably by the Lithuanians, who invaded Mazovia in 1262, killed Duke Siemowit I and abducted his elder son, Konrad. After the duke's death, his successors abandoned the idea of making Błonie the capital of their state.

The grandson of Konrad I of Mazovia cares for the Romanesque Church of the Holy Trinity...

Conveniently situated on trade routes, Błonie did not, however, lose its importance.



☞ Portrait of Konrad II in the Church of the Holy Trinity

Duke Konrad II, son of Siemowit, when he returned from captivity, took care of the development of the church raised in the mid-13th century. Despite damage incurred over the centuries, the building's roof and vaulting have remained unchanged. It is currently a three-nave, oriented basilica preserving Romanesque and early Gothic elements. The side aisles and part of the main nave feature Gothic cross-ribbed vaults. The single-bay presbytery, on the other hand, boasts a late-Gothic crystalline vault from the 16th century. An especially valuable historic monument is the portrait of Duke Konrad II. A settlement grew up beside the church, to which, in 1380, Duke Janusz I the Old granted town rights. A reminder of the ducal foundation is the market square, retaining its medieval urban layout to this day.

Katarzyna Radziejowska cooks up a deadly dish

On the market square in Błonie the first act was played out that would lead to the fall of independent Mazovia. In 1524 the last Dukes of Mazovia, Stanisław and Janusz III of Mazovia, attended a feast in Błonie. The banquet table was graced by a dish prepared especially for Stanisław, reportedly made by Katarzyna Radziejowska: capon dressed with malmsey vinegar. The day after consuming this specialty, Stanisław died. Was he poisoned, or perhaps his body, accustomed to Polish drinks, could not tolerate malmsey, as the sweet wines imported from distant Crete were then called?...

blonie.pl

in the area

RADZIEJOWICE

In a beautiful park, picturesquely situated beside a pond, stand a Classical palace and a Neo-Gothic castle. This small castle conceals the centuries-old history of the estate. It was built on the site of an earlier 15th-century manor. Fragments of walls dating from the Middle Ages have survived to this day and constitute remnants of the former seat of the



☞ Neo-Gothic 'small castle' in Radziejowice

Radziejowski family. 'They were an ancient and wealthy family,' wrote the famous 16th-century herald Bartosz Paprocki, 'they were formerly senators in the Duchy of Mazovia, they often held significant offices under the dukes and later under the kings, for example Andrzej was castellan of Sochaczew.' That same Andrzej had a daughter named Katarzyna, who went down in the history of the Duchy of Mazovia as the one suspected of poisoning its last rulers.

radziejowice.pl

KATARZYNA RADZIEJOWSKA – FEMME FATALE FROM RADZIEJOWICE

The death of the last Dukes of Mazovia – Stanisław in 1524, and two years later his brother Janusz – sparked enormous controversy. It was widely believed that the young and vigorous dukes had been poisoned. The beautiful Katarzyna Radziejowska, daughter of the castellan of Sochaczew, Andrzej Radziejowski, who had been at the ducal manor, was accused of their deaths. The alleged poisoner was believed to have been romantically involved with Duke Stanisław. The ambitious castellan's daughter supposedly dreamed of a ducal crown. Stanisław, however, withdrew from matrimonial plans under the influence of his mother, Duchess Anna. The vindictive Katarzyna was alleged to have poisoned the duke's mother in 1522, and two years later her beloved. In 1526 the last Duke of Mazovia, Janusz III of Mazovia, died suddenly. He too was said to have had an affair with Katarzyna, whom he visited in family Radziejowice after she had been expelled from the Mazovian court. However, he broke off the trysts when his brother Stanisław died. The Mazovian nobility therefore accused Katarzyna of causing his death as well. The castellan's daughter was said to have administered the poison with the help of trusted accomplices. Physicians who examined the duke's body, however, found no traces of poison, and the king issued a special edict stating that the dukes had died of natural causes. Nevertheless, the official version did not dispel the rumours, and for centuries Katarzyna Radziejowska was regarded as the poisoner of the last Dukes of Mazovia.

in the area

CHLEBNIA

In the small village of Chlebnia near Grodzisk Mazowiecki stand the remains of a stronghold from the 11th–13th centuries. It may have secured access to Błonie from the south. The rampart around the stronghold ran 300 m.

2 KAMPINOS

Białe Miasto (White Town) in the Ducal Forest

The first mention of Białe Miasto (White Town), today's Kampinos, dates from 1377. The name derives from the white sandy dunes found in the area. The Mazovian dukes stopped in Kampinos during hunting expeditions in the forest. In 1414, the settlement was granted town rights, and Czesław of Kocięcin became its mayor. The rulers of Mazovia were not the only ones who enjoyed hunting in the Kampinos Forest; King Władysław Jagiełło of Poland also eagerly pursued game in these woodlands. The wooden Church of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary recalls the era of the Duchy of Mazovia. The present church, built in the style of Polish Baroque



📷 Church in Kampinos

KAMPINOS FOREST – A HUNTING GROUND 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 in 1476 King Casimir Jagiellon incorporated the land of Sochaczew along with the forested areas into Poland, the dukes ruling the eastern part of Mazovia – Janusz II and his brother Bolesław V – protested his decision. It is not known whether they were more concerned about losing the entire land of Sochaczew or perhaps about losing their hunting ground... Until 1476, in other words up to the moment these lands were incorporated into Poland, Puszcza Kampinoska was the property of the Dukes of Mazovia. It took its name from the village of Kampinos. In the forest depths Mazovian rulers were fond of hunting big game: deer, wild boar and elk. Income also came from timber cutting and from leasing out forest lands for a fee. The so-called mast pines, long and straight trees used for shipbuilding, were also in great demand. Settlements in the forest began to appear late: in 1377 Kampinos is mentioned in documents, in 1420 – Wilków, and in 1489 – Wiejca. After these lands were incorporated into Poland, the Kampinos Forest became royal property, i.e. the revenues from its use fed the state treasury.

between 1733 and 1782 from pines felled in the surrounding forest, stands on the site of an earlier medieval church. Inside, visitors can admire beautiful altars and the venerated 18th-century image of the Madonna and Child known as Our Lady of Kampinos. Opposite the church grow two oak trees designated as natural monuments: Fryderyk Chopin and Stefan Wyszyński.

kampinos.pl

in the area

ZAMCZYSKO STRONGHOLD

While crossing the Kampinos Forest, it is worth visiting the strictly protected 'Zamczysko' area that bears traces of an early medieval hillfort from the 13th century. A conical mound protected by ramparts was encircled by a moat. The stronghold guarded a route running through the forest and also served as a watch post during Lithuanian–Ruthenian raids in the 13th century. It may have been one of the hillforts defending access to Błonie from the north. It was destroyed by a fire probably started by the attackers. It is now easy to visit this stronghold hidden in the forest via a convenient system of wooden paths and viewing terraces.

3 BROCHÓW

The most interesting fortified church in Mazovia

The small village of Brochów is famous for its fortified church, where Fryderyk Chopin's parents were married, and where he himself was baptized. The present church stands on the site of another place of worship which, according to legend, was established at the beginning of the 12th century. In 1551, on the initiative of the Wojski of Warsaw (Latin: tribunus), Jan Brochowski of the Prawdzic coat of arms, construction began on a new church on the site of the former sanctuary. The rebuilding was carried out by the distinguished architect Giovanni Battista Veneziano. Construction lasted 10 years, and a solemn consecration took place in 1596. Destroyed in



📷 Basilica of St John the Baptist and St Roch in Brochów

the 17th century by the Swedes, the church was rebuilt in 1662–1665 by the then owner, Olbracht Adrian Lasocki, starost of Wyszogród. The church is a three-aisled basilica. The chancel is closed by an apse, above which rises a tower. This architectural solution is virtually unique in Poland. Two cylindrical towers were built at the western end. Around the church, at the level of the central nave, runs a two-storey tunnel gallery with loopholes, connecting the three towers. The entire complex was enclosed by a defensive wall with proto-bastions. The crypts preserve the tombs of the Lasocki family, the owners of the village.

brochow.pl

brochow-parafia.pl

4 SOCHACZEW

Where the history of independent Mazovia began

The walls of the castle on the Bzura have witnessed some important events indeed. It was here that in 1377 Siemowit III, Duke of Mazovia, established the Sochaczew statute, the first codification of customary law in Mazovia. In 1410 the Polish army marched past the fortress's walls toward Grunwald, and four years later one of the most famous knights of the Kingdom of Poland – Zawisza Czarny (the

Black) – stood exactly in Sochaczew's market square and declared war on the Teutonic Order. The whole history of independent Mazovia began with the death of Duke Bolesław Wrymouth in Sochaczew...

Bolesław Wrymouth divides Poland into duchies

In 1138 Duke Bolesław Wrymouth died in the Benedictine monastery of the Holy Trinity in Sochaczew. His death, as well as his last will and testament, contributed to the emergence of an independent Mazovia. Had the duke not divided Poland among his sons, Mazovia would not have enjoyed three centuries of independence. On the site where the monastery once stood there is now a commemorative cross.

Siemowit III raises a castle on the Bzura River

Castle walls still stand not far from the site where a monastery once stood, on a high hill above the Bzura. The origins of settlement on the castle hill date back to the 12th century. In the first half of the following century Duke Konrad I of Mazovia raised a timber-and-earth stronghold. The settlement grew rapidly due to its location at the crossroads of trade routes. In 1286 the stronghold burned down. It is not known exactly when Sochaczew received town rights, but it

SOCHACZEW STATUTES

The statutes adopted at the castle during the gathering of the dukes formed the oldest written collection of laws in Mazovia. In 1377, Siemowit III summoned the voivodes, castellans, judges and standard-bearers of Mazovia to Sochaczew. Together with his sons, Janusz and Siemowit IV, and the realm's nobles, he adopted and committed to writing a body of law common to all of Mazovia – 17 articles regulating criminal and civil matters. Previously, court verdicts had been based on customary law, canon law, German law, or so-called trials by ordeal.



 Ruins of the castle in Sochaczew

was probably still in the 13th century, and definitely before 1324. On the initiative of Siemowit III, Duke of Mazovia, after the middle of the 14th century a masonry Gothic castle was built, which served as a ducal residence. The polygonal building was constructed of brick and fieldstone. The entire residence consisted of defensive walls and wooden internal buildings.

Archaeologists uncover the castle's secrets

The ruins preserved to this day are the remains of an early Baroque castle from the beginning of the 17th century. However, archaeological research uncovered traces of earlier buildings raised by Duke Siemowit. The castle was extended in the second half of the 15th century by Duchess Anna Oleśnicka, mother of the tragically deceased last Dukes of Płock, who governed the Sochaczew land until 1476, and later by Krzysztof Szydłowiecki, who was one of the Sochaczew starosts after the Sochaczew land had been incorporated into Poland. In recent years the castle ruins have undergone archaeological investigation and are currently being conserved and reconstructed. The project to analyse and rebuild Sochaczew's most valuable monument has been undertaken by Stowarzyszenie 'Nasz Zamek' (Our Castle Association).

sochaczew.pl

5 GIŻYCE

Small town, big politics

The owner of Giżyce, the Bishop of Płock, Paweł Giżycki, exercised rule over the entire territory of Mazovia in the mid-15th century.

Bishop turned statesman

This small village was the setting for decisions that had a profound impact on the fate of the entire Duchy of Mazovia. Much of this was due to Bishop Paweł Giżycki of the Gozdawa coat of arms (1400–1463), who, following the death of Duke Bolesław IV in 1454, served as regent of eastern Mazovia and, after the death of Duke Władysław I in 1455, of western Mazovia too. The bishop was a staunch advocate of Mazovia's independence and, following the death of King Władysław of Varna, grew strongly in favour of placing one of the Mazovian Dukes on the Polish throne.

Bishop turned builder

The bishop has gone down in history not only as a statesman but also as a builder. Pułtusk owes him its basilica, while his small native village of Giżyce owes him two buildings: a Gothic church and a fortified manor house. The Gothic single-nave church dedicated to the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul was founded in 1439. A Neo-Baroque altar adorns the



 The Fryderyk Chopin European Arts Centre in Sanniki

miracle-working image of Our Lady of Giżyce. On the grounds of the present Suski palace-and-park complex stood a fortified manor built in 1439. The tower that still exists stands on the foundations of the former tower raised by Bishop Giżycki.

6 SANNIKI

The History of the Site – The Mazovian Dukes

The first written historical records referring to the existence of the Sanniki estate date from 1299. They mention a hunting manor belonging to the Dukes of Mazovia that stood in the settlement at that time; these dukes governed the western part of the Duchy – Płock Mazovia, as it was called. The Sanniki section of the Trail of the Mazovian Dukes has a history that stretches far beyond the period when the Siemowits lived here.

From settlement to administrative centre

The origins of Sanniki are connected with the organisation of service settlements in the 11th–12th centuries. Sanniki was one of only four settlements in the Polish lands whose inhabitants supplied sledges for the needs of the ducal manors. After the division of Poland into provinces, Sanniki became part of the Mazovian province, which under the rule of Duke Konrad of Mazovia became

a separate duchy, governed by successive generations of his descendants. During the divisions of the duchy, Sanniki, located in the Land of Gostynin, was associated with its western part – Płock Mazovia – and its rulers. Three dukes named Siemowit were particularly connected with Sanniki. During the rule of Duke Siemowit IV, in the first half of the 14th century, Sanniki was granted local administrative rights and began transforming from a service settlement into one governed

A CRIME AT THE MANOR

The last of the Siemowits – Siemowit VI, nephew of Siemowit V – died at the ducal manor in Sanniki. Two months later, at the ducal residence in Płock, his brother Władysław II, two years his junior, passed away. As Jan Długosz recorded in his chronicle, both were most likely poisoned. Their childless deaths brought about the extinction of the dynasty that ruled the Mazovian lands of Płock. Thus the lands belonging to it were taken over by the King of Poland, Casimir Jagiellon. These incidents at the manors in Sanniki and Płock set in motion a series of events that ended 64 years later with the full incorporation of all Mazovia into Poland.



View of the excavations and foundations of the unearthed manor in Sanniki



Gostynin Castle

by German law. During the reign of his son, Duke Siemowit V, whose authority was limited to the lands of Rawa and Gostynin, Sanniki became a ducal residence and a parish centre.

Hidden under earth

During the restoration of the palace and park complex and archaeological excavations carried out in the park, archaeologists made a sensational discovery in October 2011: fragments of the foundations of a building and part of the base of a stove were uncovered, while traces of a wooden beam were found on a stone corner. The research revealed that these were the remains of a manor house dating from the turn of the 18th century. The manor was situated on an artificial mound, possibly built upon an older structure. Perhaps on a manor that previously stood here belonging to the Dukes of Mazovia? An exhibition entitled *'What Came Before the Palace? The Archaeology of the Sanniki Park'* was designed in cooperation with the State Archaeological Museum in Warsaw based on the results of excavations carried out in 2017. The exposed relics of the stone foundations of the 17th-century manor can be seen near the main entrance to the palace. Meanwhile, artefacts recovered during the excavations are on display in an attic in the Sanniki palace specially adapted for this purpose.

A window on the past

The exhibition combines traditional displays with various forms of multimedia visualisations: films, holograms and animations. It also includes elements designed to engage the younger visitors – for example, a model of an archaeological trench with replicas of artefacts that they can uncover themselves. The exhibition shows an interior styled as one of the rooms of an eighteenth-century manor, but you can only peer into it... through the keyhole. Alongside is a visualisation of the various incarnations of the dwellings of successive generations who inhabited the Sanniki estate.

Visualization of the former manor house in Sanniki

An integral part of the exhibition in the palace attic is the outdoor display immediately in front of the palace, where visitors can view the remains of the 18th-century manor house's foundations. Written sources, together with other official records, have made it possible to reconstruct the building's external appearance.

Tourist Information Point

142 Warszawska St., Sanniki
phone: +48 24 268 11 08, ecasanniki.pl

7 GOSTYNIN

A rebuilt castle, a giant frog and the ghost of the Russian tsar

Not long ago, a church stood on the site of the castle once built by Siemowit IV, Duke of Mazovia. Today the castle has been rebuilt, and the old tower is haunted by the ghost... of a Russian tsar.

On Łysa Góra

The history of Gostynin began with a place called Łysa Góra. On the isthmus between the Czarne and the Kocioł lakes, a stronghold was established, later expanded by Konrad I of Mazovia. The fortress, located on the border of Mazovia and Kuyavia and on trade routes, had major strategic significance. At the end of the 13th century, Gostynin became the subject of a dispute between the grandsons of Konrad I of Mazovia: Bolesław II and his brother Konrad II, who waged a civil war in Mazovia for 15 years. The latter did not go down well in the history of Gostynin. In 1286 he captured and burned down the stronghold.

Father and son build a fortress in a new location

A new stronghold was established south of Łysa Góra. Siemowit III, Duke of Mazovia, the first Mazovian ruler who used the title Duke of

Gostynin, ordered a wooden defensive tower to be raised on the site of today's castle. His son, Siemowit IV, Duke of Mazovia, built new fortifications. The quadrangular walls were reinforced at the corners with buttresses. An entrance gate was located in the eastern curtain wall. The castle became the duke's favourite residence; in 1382 he granted Gostynin town rights. The townspeople, centuries later, repaid their ruler by installing a monument to him on the market square he had commissioned.

gostynin.pl

A castle haunted by the tsar's ghost

The castle, destroyed at the end of the 18th century and converted into an Evangelical church, became a castle again after its reconstruction in 2009. Of the original building only a fragment of the walls and the tower remain. Beneath the tower there is a dungeon in which prisoners were once kept. If oral tradition is to be believed, those inmates suffered a dreadful fate. They are said to have been devoured by a monster resembling a giant frog. When it didn't have enough prisoners for food, it would scour the town for victims. Is there any grain of truth in this story? Supposedly the skin of the monster displayed on the town gate was seen in 1656

by Erik Dahlbergh – quartermaster of the Swedish army, later its field marshal. ‘A vile, dreadful beast which we all viewed with great astonishment,’ he wrote in his journal. Dahlbergh immortalised many Polish towns and castles in his drawings; however, he did not sketch the castle in Gostynin nor the creature hanging on its gate. The castle tower conceals another mystery. Legend has it that the ghost of Tsar Vasily IV Shuysky still haunts the castle. He was the only Russian monarch ever to pay homage as a vassal to a Polish king. This took place during the Time of Troubles, when Polish forces occupied the Kremlin. After arriving in Poland, Vasily and his family took up residence at Gostynin Castle, where they all died. According to tradition, they succumbed to an epidemic..

‘THE WINTER’S TALE’ AT THE CASTLE OF THE DUKES OF MAZOVIA (RAWA MAZOWIECKA)

Siemowit III, Duke of Mazovia, alongside his many virtues also had two faults – he was a jealous and violent man. When his wife, 23 years his junior, became pregnant, the ruler, suspecting infidelity, had her locked in the tower of the Castle of the Dukes of Mazovia (Rawa Mazowiecka). When the duchess gave birth to a son, Siemowit ordered his wife to be strangled, and the child was handed over to a poor family from a village near Rawa Mazowiecka to be raised. The young Henryk was cared for by his half-sister and brought up at her manor in Słupsk. When Henryk grew up, he returned to his father’s manor, and because of the strong resemblance, Siemowit acknowledged him as his son and secured for him the bishopric of Płock. These tragic events, recorded in the chronicle of Janko of Czarnków, probably provided the inspiration for Shakespeare’s *‘The Winter’s Tale’*. The English playwright merely changed the setting and the nationality of the main characters.

in the area

RAWA MAZOWIECKA

The octagonal tower looming over the town is a remnant of a Gothic castle built in the 14th century. The founder of the building was probably Siemowit III, Duke of Mazovia. The purpose of the fortress, built on a quadrilateral plan, was to protect the southern border of Mazovia from hostile raids. One of the tragic events that took place at Rawa Castle may have inspired William Shakespeare to write *‘The Winter’s Tale’*.

rawamazowiecka.pl

in the area

ŁOWICZ

Although Łowicz and the surrounding lands lay within the Duchy of Mazovia, they belonged to the archbishops of Gniezno. In 1242 Duke Konrad I of Mazovia issued the so-called ‘great privilege’ to the archbishops of Gniezno, in which the Łowicz estates were referred to as a castellany. In the 13th century Łowicz received town rights, and in the following century Archbishop Jarosław Bogoria Skotnicki constructed a castle. From Siemowit III, Duke of Mazovia, he also obtained immunity guaranteeing the full independence of the lands from the authority of the Dukes of Mazovia. The archbishop made only two concessions to the duke: he agreed to pay an annual payment of one gold grzywna (a medieval unit of weight) to underscore the duke’s nominal authority over Łowicz, and he also allowed the duke to retain the right to hunt aurochs in the surrounding forests.

lowicz.eu