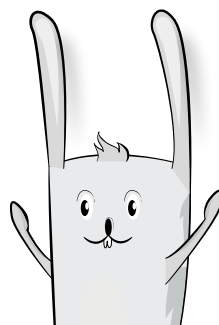




Gniezno

# Royal Trail

Guide





## Dear Tourist!

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As you probably know, one of the greatest treasures of our country is its centuries-old history and culture. The best way to tap into these wonderful gifts of the past is to visit places where you can directly encounter the heritage of our forefathers. A trip to Gniezno is a perfect opportunity to do that. It is a city where a thousand years of tradition are interwoven with the present. Here, history is all around you and you can experience it with all your senses. The First Capital of Poland is a special place, because this is where the Polish state was created.

According to medieval sources, Gniezno was the main centre of power of the Piast dynasty as early as the 10th century. This is also where first five kings of Poland were crowned: Bolesław the Brave, Mieszko II, Bolesław the Bold, Przemysł II and Wenceslaus II. Our Royal Trail is dedicated to them and to a dozen important events in the history of Gniezno. We believe that exploring it will be an excellent opportunity not just to learn history at first hand, but also to enjoy an unforgettable walk through our beautiful city.

Welcome to the historical heart of Poland!

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Rzeczpospolita  
Polska



SAMORZĄD WOJEWÓDZTWA  
WIELKOPOLSKIEGO

Unia Europejska  
Europejski Fundusz  
Rozwoju Regionalnego



**Project title:** Developing the Piast Trail - a Key Heritage Trail in the Greater Poland Voivodeship

**Project objective:** Preservation, Protection, Promotion and Development of the Piast Trail – the Cultural Heritage of the Greater Poland Region

**Beneficiary:** Wielkopolska Organizacja Turystyczna (Greater Poland Tourist Organisation)





## Dear Visitors,

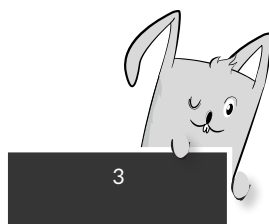
Gniezno has been a national and international tourist destination for many years, mainly due to the historical heritage of the First Capital of Poland: it boasts such monuments as our Cathedral with its Gniezno Doors first and foremost, as well as centuries-old churches and the impressive collections to be found in the local museums.

Today, we offer you a completely new tourist product designed to guide you around places of interest in our beautiful city and to inform you about important moments in its history.

We believe that history is worth learning. It is our common treasure to be discovered and appreciated. The map that will lead you to this rare treasure is the Royal Trail of Gniezno. We hope you have a wonderful time discovering its fascinating mysteries.

### **Mayor of Gniezno**

*Tomasz Budasz*



# Why is Gniezno the first capital city of Poland?

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The word "stolica" ("capital" in Polish) is etymologically convergent with the word "stolec", meaning "seat". Thus, the capital city is the seat authorising a privileged group or individual to exercise power.

Originally, in pre-Christian times, power was assumed by a ruler who identified himself with a thunder-wielding god, establishing and guarding the order of the world. The ruler's seat was to be shaped in a manner reflecting beliefs concerning the structure of the world. It often included a throne made of stone that the ruler sat on during public meetings.

Upon the adoption of Christianity, this ideology of power was reshaped, and the ruler's seat was to be modelled after the heavenly kingdom. Thus, the ruler became a judge, a follower, a governor and a servant of Christ Pantocrator - a judge, teacher and master. The rulers from this period are thus depicted as judges on a throne, accompanied by a sword bearer, who holds an unsheathed sword.

Thrones of Christian rulers of the early Middle Ages did not resemble stone seats. Iconography of this time presents low seats, sometimes with footstools, often with legs and arms stylised to resemble feet and heads of beasts of prey. A throne like this could be put wherever the ruler was supposed to seat.

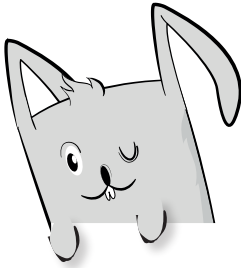


Was it also found in Gniezno? Yes and no. The concept of Gniezno as a capital city is complicated by the concept of a *rex ambulans*, or a "wandering ruler". During the times of Mieszko I and Bolesław I the Brave, there was no specific capital city - the capital was where the prince "sat" at the time. This early Piast ruler constantly travelled around his lands, followed by his court and *druzina*.



The situation changed in the year 1000 because of the famous Congress of Gniezno.

The young emperor Otto III came to Gniezno to pray at the grave of the martyr that he had got to know personally in around 995. The martyr was, of course, Adalbert, bishop of Prague, depicted by chroniclers as Otto's "friend".



The missionary, killed in Prussia by order of the local assembly for promulgation of Christian faith, and buried in Gniezno, was selected by Otto III to become the patron of the restored Roman Empire.

During his visit to Gniezno, the young emperor was greatly impressed by the power and wealth of the Piast dominion. He crowned Bolesław I the Brave symbolically with his own diadem and presented to him a very valuable and symbolic gift - a copy of Sancta et Crucifera Imperialis Lancae, or the so-called spear of saint Maurice, containing a nail used during the execution of Jesus Christ. To express his thankfulness, the prince gave the emperor a relic of bishop Adalbert - his arm - and 300 armed horsemen.



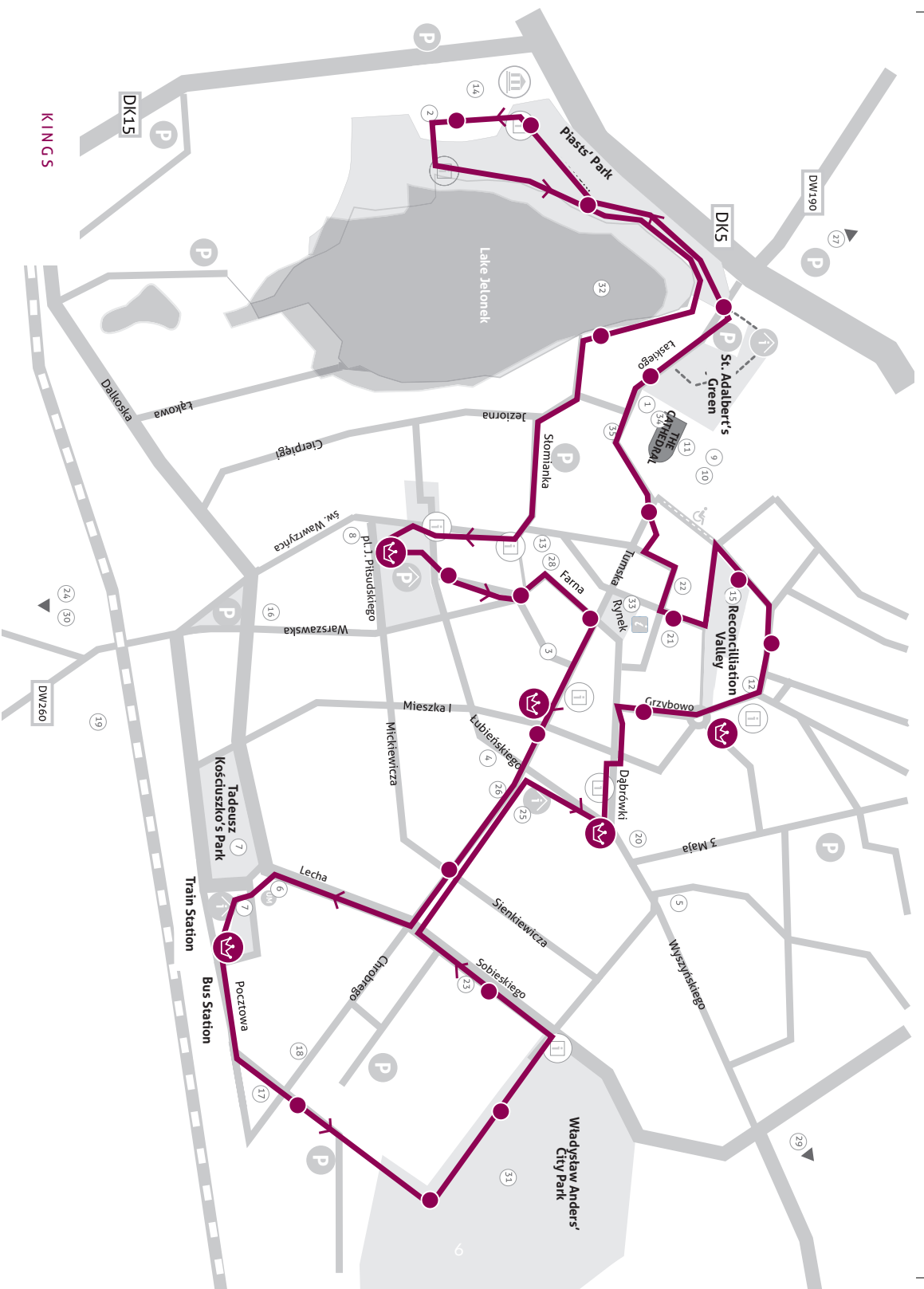
However, the most significant result of the Congress was establishment of Gniezno as an archdiocese, subordinate only to the Holy See.



The fact that Bolesław I the Brave was considered to be the "brother and partner of the Empire" a "friend and ally of the Roman nation" and an independent ruler, able to establish dioceses and thus build the state structure on the basis of church organisation, allowed the Polish prince to seek the Polish throne, at the same time turning Gniezno into a seat of bishops and the place of coronation of five Polish kings.



Originally a pre-Christian seat of power, turned into the central gord of the state of Piasts, then an archdiocese and the place of coronation of kings of Poland - Gniezno rightly calls itself the First Capital City of Poland.





## Bolesław I the Brave (967-1025)

### PERSONALITY TRAITS:

warlike, courageous, impetuous, religious.

### REIGN:

992-1025



CORONATION  
IN

**1025**

Gniezno

*Because in Bolesław's times, every knight and every woman at the court, instead of linen or woollen clothing, wore coats made of expensive materials, and skins, even the most valuable and new, were never worn by his courtiers without a lining made of expensive fabric and without golden fringes. In his times, gold was as common as silver [is today], and silver was as cheap as straw.*

Gallus Anonymus,  
*Chronica Polonorum*, circa 1113-1116

Bolesław I the Brave was the first crowned ruler of Poland - exceptionally mighty and rich, as we can read in the chronicles from those times. For Gniezno, he was a special sovereign - during his reign, the status of the city changed greatly, as it became the main military, religious and political centre of the Piast dynasty.

The political significance of Gniezno during the reign of Bolesław the Brave was strengthened particularly due to the martyrdom of bishop Adalbert of Prague. Bolesław supported the future saint's mission of evangelisation in Prussia, and after his death, he ransomed his remains and buried him in the church of Gniezno (since the year 1000 a cathedral). This eventually led to a meeting with emperor Otto III, who decided to establish an archdiocese in Gniezno during the so-called Congress of Gniezno.

In addition, Bolesław was declared to be a friend of the Holy Roman Empire and the Emperor's "brother and partner", which was considered to be the greatest possible privilege at the time. All this gave the Piast ruler a status allowing him (after many years of efforts) to become a king, making Gniezno the Polish centre of power.

### SEE ALSO:

- 1 The statue of Bolesław I the Brave
- 2 The statue of Bolesław I the Brave and Mieszko I

### NEARBY:

- 3 Old City Hall



Download the mobile  
app and "Chase  
the Rabbit!"



# Mieszko II Lambert

## (990-1034)



### PERSONALITY TRAITS:

enlightened, pious, wise, brave, uncompromising.

### REIGN:

1025-1031

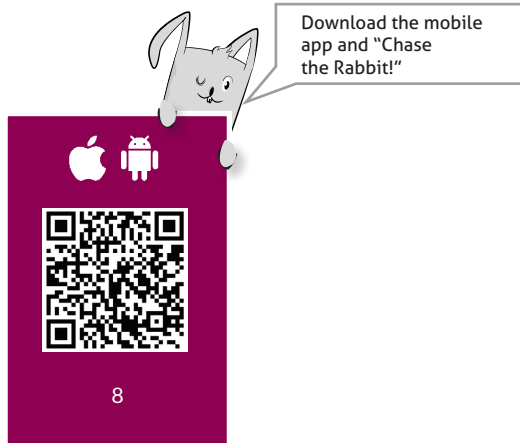
*Your goodness and pure nobleness of your habits. Everyone agrees that you are like a husband to widows, like a father to orphans, an unyielding defender of the poor and the needy, that you never scorn the paupers and flatter the magnates, but judge everyone justly and fairly....*

Excerpt from a letter of Matilda  
of Swabia to Mieszko II,  
circa 1025-1028

Mieszko II Lambert, the second son of Bolesław I the Brave, was crowned after his father's death in 1025 by archbishop Hippolytus at the cathedral of Gniezno.

Mieszko's reign was extraordinarily turbulent. His father's territorial gains - Moravia, Upper and Lower Lusatia and Cherven Cities were lost as a result of invasions by the Czech prince Bretislav and German emperor Conrad II. The country's internal affairs were not going well, either. The king's position, undermined by lost wars, was additionally endangered by dynastic disputes, as his right to the crown was contested by Mieszko's brother, Bezprym. As a result, Mieszko II was forced to flee the country and he renounced the throne in 1032.

However, the king's uncompromising character and extensive political influence allowed him to regain his power quickly and unite the country, although its territory was reduced.



# Bolesław II the Bold (1042-1081)



## PERSONALITY TRAITS:

bold, generous, proud, warlike, impetuous.

## REIGN:

1058 -1079



CORONATION  
IN

1076

Gniezno

*Our king and lord! Seeing my poverty and my destitution, and your glory and your majesty, I made a comparison: how dissimilar happiness and poverty are, and I sighed heavily in my sorrow!" And then says the generous king: "If you are sighing because of your poverty, you have just found in King Bolesław a comforter in your misery. Enjoy, then, the riches, which you admire so much, and what you can carry shall be yours!*

Gallus Anonymus, *Chronica Polonorum*

Bolesław II the Bold was the first-born son of Casimir the Restorer. He was very much committed to international affairs and did a lot to strengthen the position of Poland in the region. An impetuous and uncompromising man, he often interfered with dynastic disputes of his neighbours. His army often invaded Hungary, Russia and Bohemia, usually with success. In his internal affairs, Bolesław II contribu

ted to the development of the church, for instance restoring the archbishop's cathedral in Gniezno and the seat of the diocese in Poznań, which had fallen as a result of attack by the Czechs. He also restored Poland's independent monetary policy by introducing silver denar coins.

His attempts to centralise power and long-term absence from the country led to the fall of Bolesław II the Bold. The conflict started as a dispute between the king and the bishop of Kraków, Stanislaus, who criticised reorganisation of the church structure. The conflict emboldened opposition on the part of the nobles against the king, and they hatched a plot to overthrow him. In unexplained circumstances the Bishop was sentenced and executed. Bolesław II was forced to flee the country and seek refuge in Hungary, where he stayed until his death.

## NEARBY:

- 4 MOK - Gniezno Cultural Centre

## SEE ALSO:

- 5 Holy Michael the Archangel's Church



Download the mobile app and "Chase the Rabbit!"



## Przemysław II (1257-1296)



### PERSONALITY TRAITS:

ambitious, wise, far-sighted, a good strategist.

### REIGN:

1295-1296



*Almighty God Himself returned the symbols of victory to the Poles.*

A sign on the royal seal of Przemysław II,  
circa 1295 - 1296

Przemysław II was a son of the Duke of Greater Poland, Przemysław, and Elizabeth, daughter of Silesian prince Henry.

The young prince was an active politician, planning to strengthen his power and unite the land of the Piast dynasty. In 1283, the newly elected archbishop of Gniezno, Jakub Świnka, became his counsellor. The archbishop wholeheartedly supported the idea of a united Kingdom, which surely influenced the future king's policy.

Przemysław II entered into a coalition with the princes of Pomerania and Kuyavia. He engaged in the struggle for the key region of Lesser Poland, and he managed to take over Kraków in 1290. However, unable to keep the city, he finally left, taking the royal regalia with him to Gniezno.

When after the death of the prince of Gdańsk, Mestwin, Przemysław took over rule of Pomerelia, his position strengthened substantially. This was confirmed by his coronation in Gniezno on June 26, 1295, celebrated by archbishop Jakub Świnka. It was the first coronation of a Polish king in more than two centuries, and although the rule of Przemysław II lasted only nine months (after which he was murdered by mercenaries), it was of great significance, because it was reminiscent of the Polish Kingdom and provided a major impetus for unification of the disintegrated state.

### NEARBY:

- 6 City Hall
- 7 Parks by the Railway Station



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# Wenceslaus II

## (1271-1305)

### PERSONALITY TRAITS:

enlightened, warlike, religious, resolute,  
a good diplomat

### REIGN:

1300-1305



CORONATION  
IN

1300

Gniezno

*A ruler who owned almost all of the land in our neighbourhood.*

Piotr of Żytawa, *Chronicle of Zbraslav*,  
first half of the 14th century

At the end of the period of disintegration of Poland, in the year 1300, the Czech king Wenceslaus II was crowned at the cathedral of Gniezno as a king of Poland. This was a result of military and diplomatic successes of this ruler. In 1291, he conquered Lesser Poland, expelling Władysław I the Elbow-high from the Sandomierz lands, and he managed to win the favours of the nobles of Greater Poland to gain control over this region as well.

Wenceslaus II had great organizational skills: he reformed the Polish administration introducing the office of a starosta, he changed the monetary policy (the so-called Groschen reform) and he substantially increased state revenue. His reign, aimed at restoration of order in the country by taking a firm stand against the plague of thievery and banditry, was also associated with repressive measures against his political opponents, which met with strong resistance and led to an uprising under the command of Władysław I the Elbow-high.

### NEARBY:

8 St. Lawrence's Church



Download the mobile  
app and "Chase  
the Rabbit!"





1

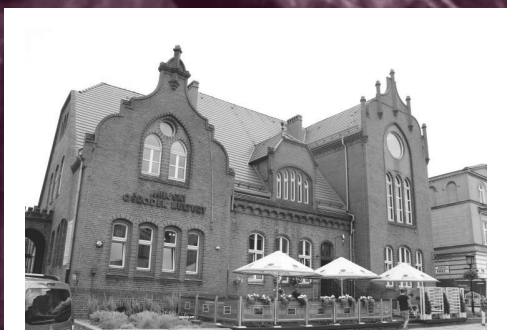
THE STATUE OF  
BOLESŁAW I  
THE BRAVE



3

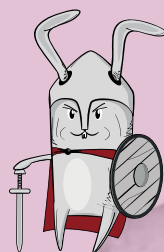
OLD CITY HALL

**2 THE STATUE OF BOLESŁAW I  
THE BRAVE AND MIESZKO I**



**4**

**MOK - G涅ZNO  
CULTURAL CENTRE**





5

**HOLY MICHAEL  
THE ARCHANGEL'S CHURCH**



6

**CITY HALL**



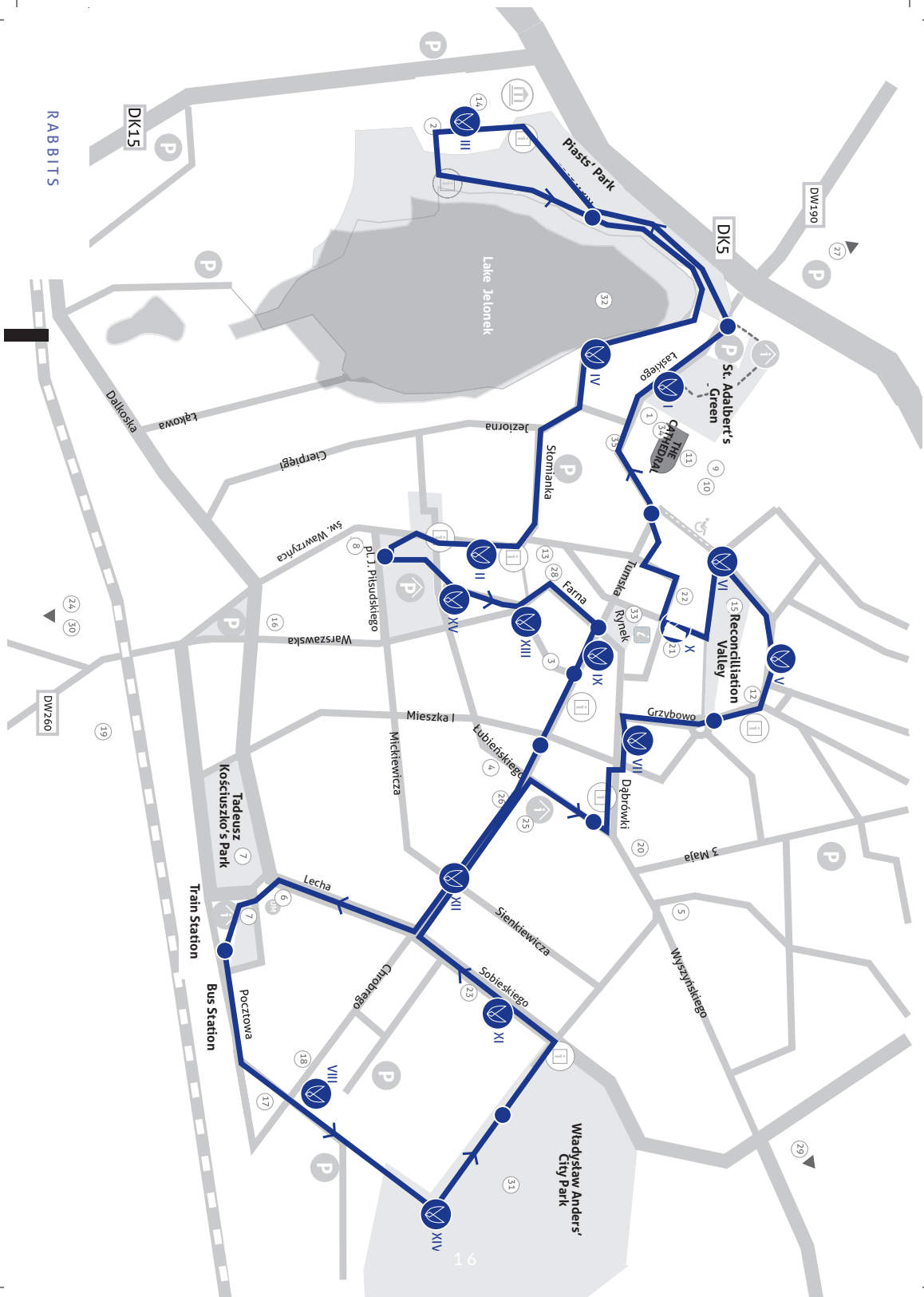
8

SAINT LAWRENCE'S  
CHURCH



7

PARKS BY THE RAILWAY STATION



## I Piast Warrior

### NEARBY:

- 9 Museum of Archdiocese
- 10 St. George's Church
- 11 Lech Hill

In the times of the Piast dynasty, a prince's warrior was a perfectly trained and armed fighter, a member of his so-called "druzhdina". These warriors defended the land of their rulers and participated in their campaigns. A problem associated with having armed forces of this kind was the need to maintain them, which, in turn, made it necessary to fight almost constantly in order to obtain further spoils.

Druzhdinas of Mieszko I and Bolesław I the Brave - the first historic rulers of Poland - were famous for their extraordinary fighting and organisational skills. Today, historical re-enactments of the warriors' battles can be watched during the Festival of Slavic Culture "Royal Coronation", organised every year during the last weekend of July at the nearby St. Albert's Green.

## II City Councillor

### NEARBY:

- 13 The old city walls
- 28 Church of the Holy Trinity

Most probably Gniezno was given its city privileges based on so-called Magdeburg rights in 1239, which marked the beginning of dynamic development of the city on Maiden Hill.

The city was ruled by councillors - members of the city council, who came from among the richest and most respected inhabitants of the city. Their seat was the magnificent city hall, which had once overlooked the market square. An outline of its foundations, marked by red brick, can still be seen on the modern flagstones of the city's main square.

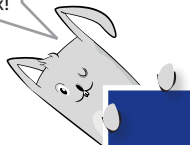
## III Rich Merchant

### NEARBY:

- 14 Bolesław Chrobry (Bolesław I the Brave) High School and Museum of the Origins of the Polish State

16th century was a period of flourishing growth of Gniezno, as the city gained in importance in international trade between the East and the West. In 1537, the city's weigh house was rebuilt, and the cloth hall and the market hall were built. Gniezno fairs played a key role in organisation of trade in the city. Two major fairs were organised on the basis of royal charters, on April 23 and August 24. The April fair tradition is still observed today: every year, on the City's Name Day (April 23), St. Adalbert's Fair is held.

But actually, why the rabbits?  
Watch out, now for some  
serious talk!



The selection of the guiding character on the Trail is based on the phonetic similarity of the Polish word "król" - king to "królik" - rabbit.

## IV Fireman

Gniezno has suffered painfully from many fires.

The first major fire came in 1503.

In 1613, the biggest fire in the city's history to date destroyed almost all buildings, including the city hall, trade halls, the parish church and the synagogue. Another enormous conflagration engulfed the city in 1819, and the devastation was so huge that it led to a thorough reconstruction of Gniezno's urban layout.

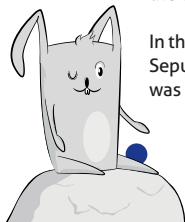


## V Physician

NEARBY:

12 St. John the Baptist's Church

In the years 1708-1720, the inhabitants of Gniezno were decimated by a major outburst of the plague. It was believed to be caused by so-called "bad air". No cure was known - the only way to counteract it was the quarantine of the ill. The rich - the clergy, noblemen and townsmen escaped to their estates, located outside the city.



In the nearby monastery of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre, during the Middle Ages a hospital was located.

## VI Napoleon

NEARBY:

15 Reconciliation Valley

On November 3, 1806, the French army of emperor Napoleon Bonaparte entered the city of Gniezno.

The period of Napoleon's army's stay in Poland gave its inhabitants hope for regaining independence after many years of living under partitions. In 1807, the Duchy of Warsaw was established, and Gniezno found itself within its boundaries. On April 14 of the same year, members of the city's municipal council were elected, and the city hall was decorated with the coat of arms of Poland - the White Eagle.

Legend has it that Napoleon stayed overnight in one of nearby tenement houses. It may have happened during his trip to the East in 1812.



## VII Bricklayer

### SEE ALSO:

- 16 Tenement House in Warszawska Street – the Freemasonry Trail

The years 1820-1824 were a period of reconstruction of the city after the fire. The urban layout of Gniezno was changed, for instance, exposing the view of the cathedral from the market. Many tenement houses were made of brick, including the new city hall building. Particularly noteworthy are the traces of freemasonry, which once flourished in the city - proven today by freemasonry symbols, decorating front elevations of the city's tenement houses.

## VIII Railwayman

### NEARBY:

- 17 Railwaymen's Houses in Pocztowa Street
- 18 Fire Station – former Jewish cemetery

### SEE ALSO:

- 19 Railway Roundhouse

In 1875, at the newly constructed railway station along the rail route connecting Gniezno and Toruń, an locomotive shed was built - a depot and a workshop for repair and maintenance of locomotives.

The locomotive shed, which was built in several stages, is one of the most interesting facilities of this type in Poland. It has a water tower of 1905, and also the only wooden coal crane in Europe. In the immediate vicinity there is also a station for a narrow-gauge railway, which once connected Gniezno and Powidz Lake.

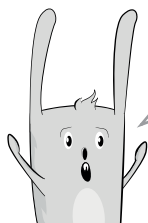
Since 2010, Gniezno has hosted the "Steam Days" in May - an event to promote the history of the facility.

## IX Liqueur Taster

### SEE ALSO:

- 20 Former factory of Bolesław Kasprowicz

In 1888, the Factory of Vodka and Liqueur was established in Gniezno by Bolesław Kasprowicz. Until the 1930s, it was famous throughout Europe for its high-quality liqueurs. Promoting its products on the internal market, Kasprowicz's enterprise used the popular patriotic and national symbols. Brand names such as "Zagłoba" or "Soplica" had very positive connotations for Polish buyers, which led to increase in sales. It is worth noting Kasprowicz's commitment to Gniezno's social affairs. He was a well-known philanthropist and a founder - among others - of a secondary school for girls. As a patriot, he became involved in organisation of the Greater Poland Uprising, in which his son, Piotr, fought as a soldier. In 1919, Bolesław Kasprowicz became the Polish president of the city of Gniezno.



I'M HOPPING TO  
THE SCRIBE RABBIT!

## X Scribe

### NEARBY:

- 21 Church of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary and St. Anthony

- 22 Court Building

Through the ages, Gniezno had many scribes, charged with the task of writing and rewriting books. They very likely came from the nearby monastery of Franciscan Grey Friars. Few people know that a famous writer of the Enlightenment, Ignacy Krasicki, was also an archbishop of Gniezno and a primate of Poland. Known mainly for his excellent fables and morality plays, he was a true Enlightened Man, writing poems, satires, poetry and novels.

## XI Prussian Soldier

### NEARBY:

- 23 The old 49th Infantry Regiment barracks

### SEE ALSO:

- 24 The old 12th Prussian Dragoon Regiment barracks

The most interesting structures from the period of the Partitions include the military barracks, built in the 1870s on Sobieskiego Street. Only one of the three identical buildings of the complex has been preserved today (the remaining buildings were destroyed during the Second World War). The barracks were once occupied by Prussia's 46th Infantry Regiment.

On December 27, 1918, the Greater Poland Uprising started. When Gniezno joined the Uprising a day later, the main task of the city's inhabitants was to take over the barracks. They managed to do it on the same day - a squad of Polish insurgents took control of the Prussian military facility, capturing the weapons and supplies stored there.

## XII Greater Poland Insurgent

### NEARBY:

- 25 Our Lady Queen of Poland's Church

- 26 Main Post Office

### SEE ALSO:

- 27 Acropolis of Heroes

On December 28, 1918, Gniezno was freed from Prussian rule. The inhabitants of the city thus joined the Greater Poland Uprising, which was one of the few successful uprisings in Poland's history. After liberating the city, the squads formed in Gniezno repelled the Prussian troops coming from Bydgoszcz during the battle of Zdziechowa.

The graves of insurgents who fell, among others, in that battle, are located at an eminent spot on the antique St. Peter and Paul's cemetery (so called Acropolis of Heroes).

## XIII Driver

NEARBY:

28 Church of the Holy Trinity

In the year 1919, brothers Maksymilian and Klemens Waberski established a factory for carts, carriages and wagonettes in Gniezno. Three years later, a car workshop was established, repairing cars of the American Ford and Lincoln makes.

In 1926, the Szczepański brothers opened in Gniezno a branch of the Poznań transport company "Auto". The first line was established, connecting Gniezno with Witkowo and Powidz.

## XIV Hockey Player

SEE ALSO:

29 Alfons Flinik City Stadium

Few people know that Gniezno has great traditions in... field hockey.

Stella sports club (its name meaning "a star"), established in Gniezno in 1915, has enjoyed numerous successes. The club's hockey section was created in the 1930s. Its pre-war traditions were successfully continued after 1945, which is proven, among other things, by the winning of the Polish championships in 1947. The hockey clubs of Gniezno have trained as many as 22 Olympic competitors.

## XV Speedway Rider

SEE ALSO:

30 Colonel Franciszek Hynek City Stadium

Since its introduction to Gniezno in 1948, speedway racing has been the city's most popular discipline. The first speedway club in Gniezno - SKS Start - was established in 1952. In 1980, the speedway riders from Gniezno won the bronze medal in the Team Championships of Poland. The club has trained many medallists of Poland, Europe and the world.

I'M HOPPING TO  
THE TRAIL'S MAP!





12

ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST'S  
CHURCH



10

ST. GEORGE'S CHURCH

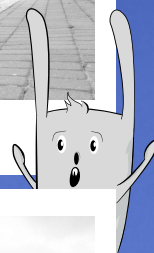
11

LECH HILL



13

THE OLD CITY WALLS



14

BOLESŁAW CHROBRY HIGH SCHOOL  
AND MUSEUM OF THE ORIGINS OF  
THE POLISH STATE



15

RECONCILIATION VALLEY





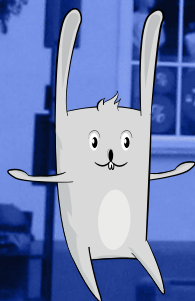
17

RAILWAYMEN'S HOUSES  
IN POCZTOWA STREET



16

TENEMENT HOUSE  
IN WARSZAWSKA  
STREET





18

**FIRE STATION – FORMER  
JEWISH CEMETERY**



19

**RAILWAY ROUNDHOUSE**

20

**FORMER FACTORY  
OF BOLESŁAW  
KASPROWICZ**





**21** CHURCH OF THE ASSUMPTION OF  
THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY  
AND ST. ANTHONY



**22** COURT BUILDING



**23** THE OLD 49TH INFANTRY  
REGIMENT BARRACKS







**24** THE OLD 12TH PRUSSIAN  
DRAGOON REGIMENT BARRACKS



**25** OUR LADY QUEEN  
OF POLAND'S CHURCH

**26**

MAIN POST OFFICE



27

ACROPOLIS OF HEROES



28

CHURCH OF  
THE HOLY TRINITY





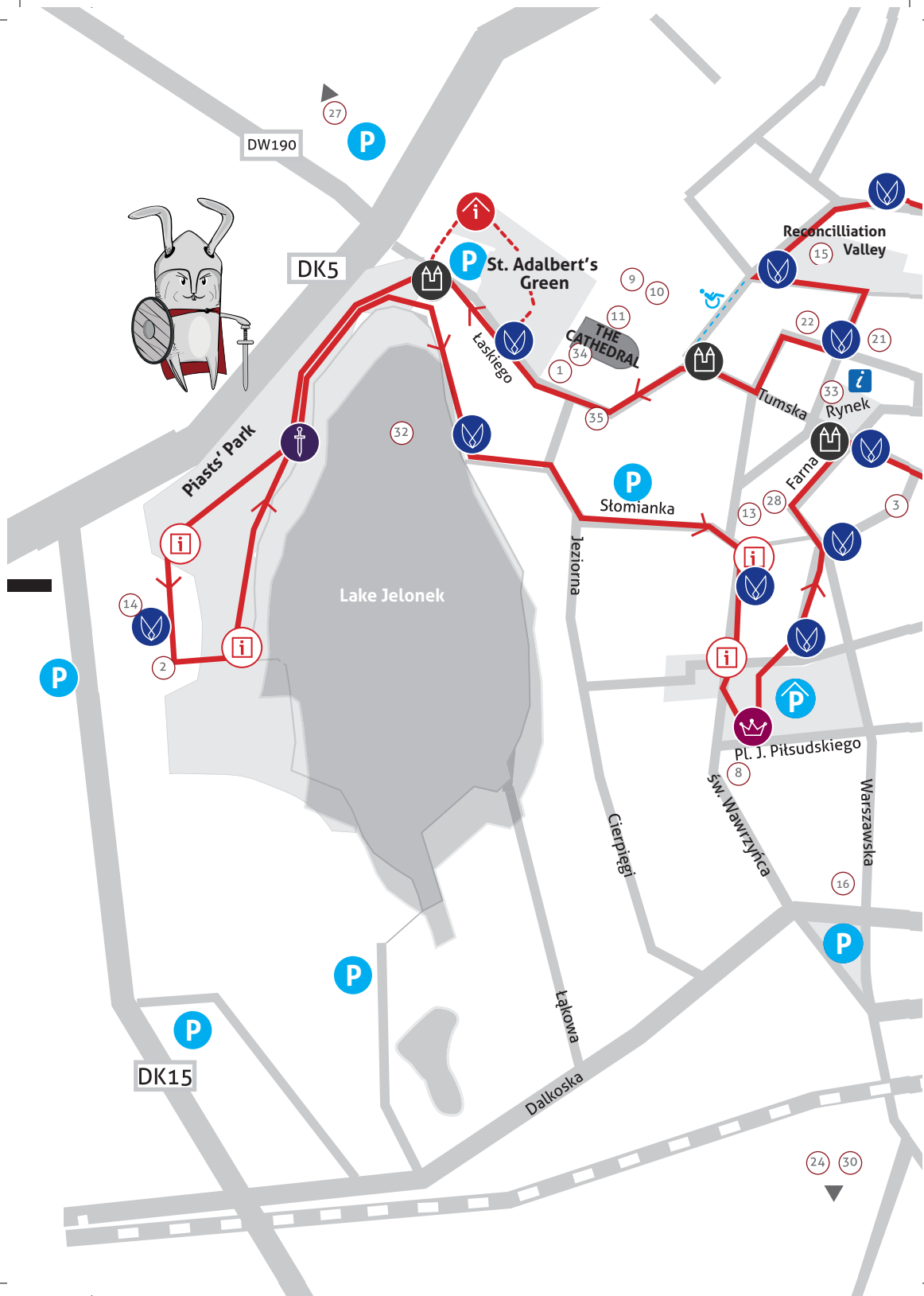


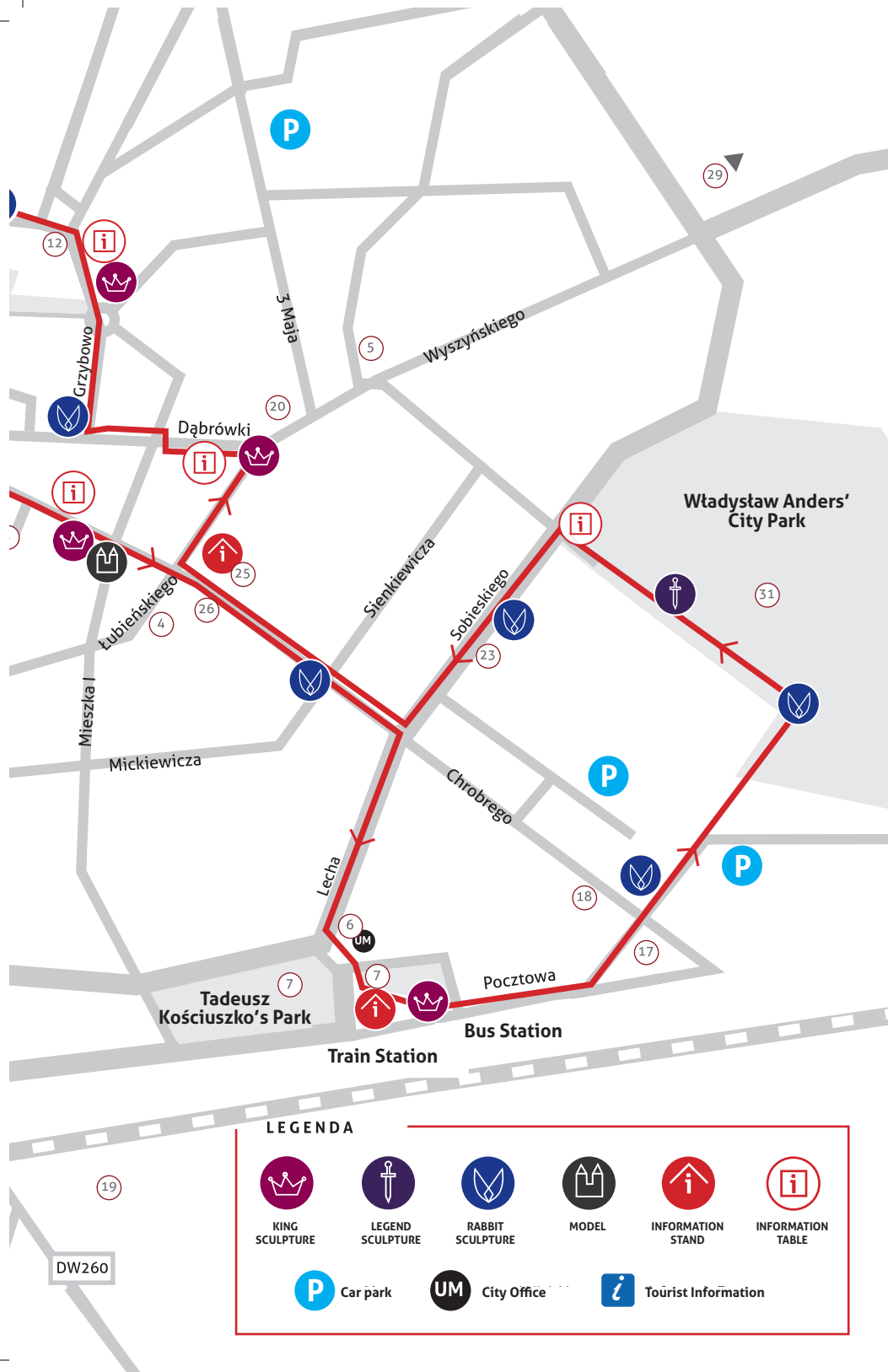
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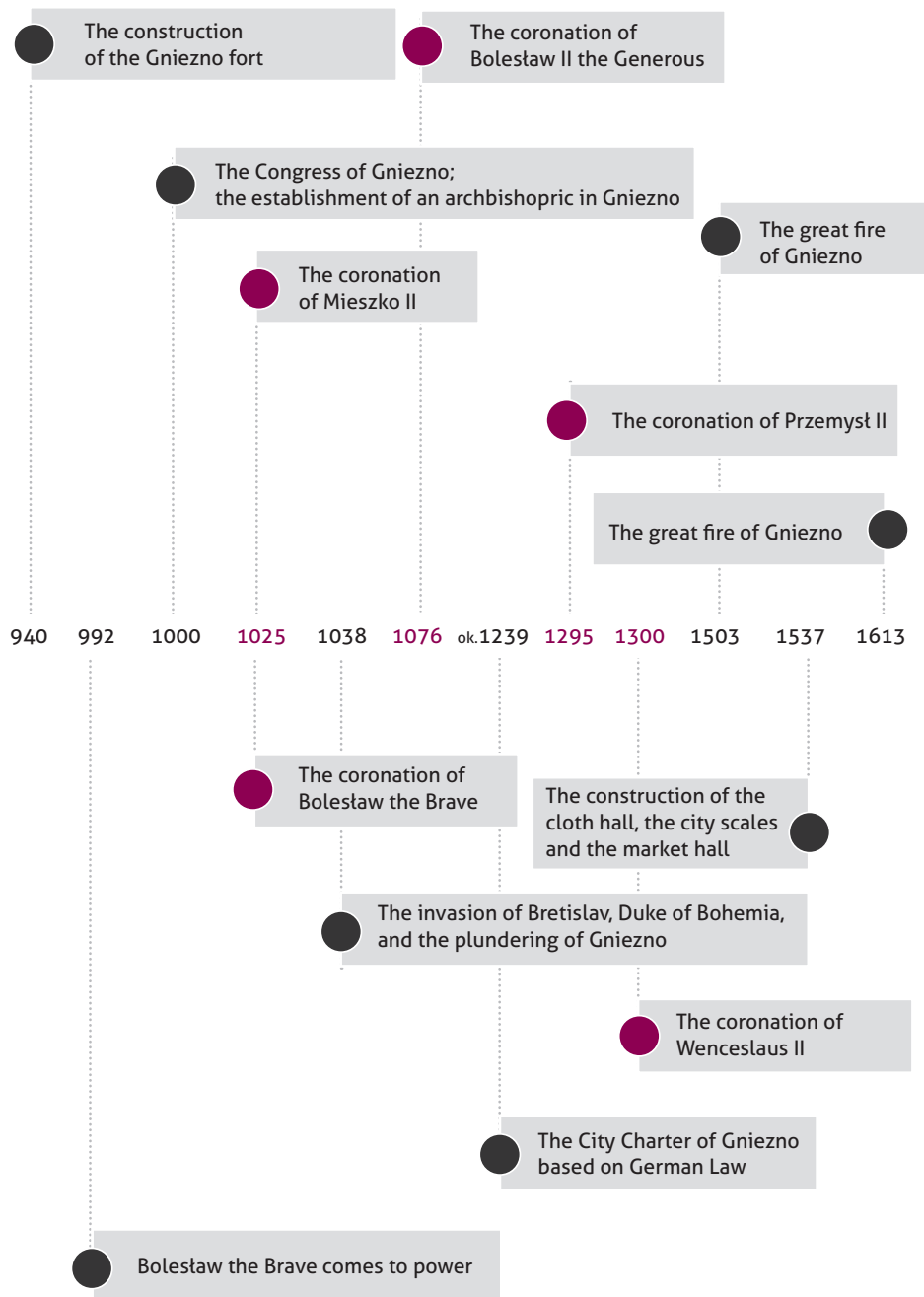
**ALFONS FLINIK  
CITY STADIUM**

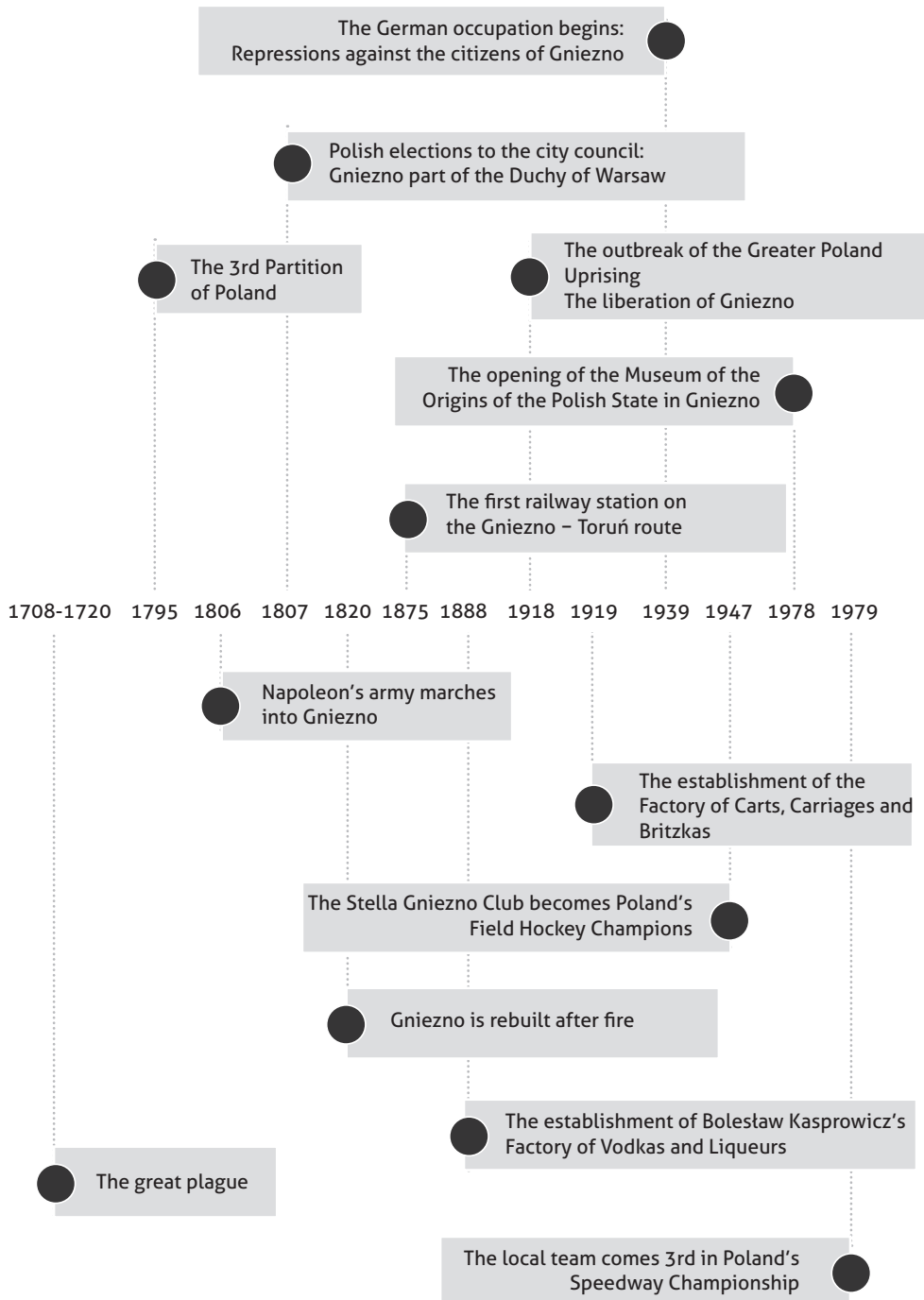
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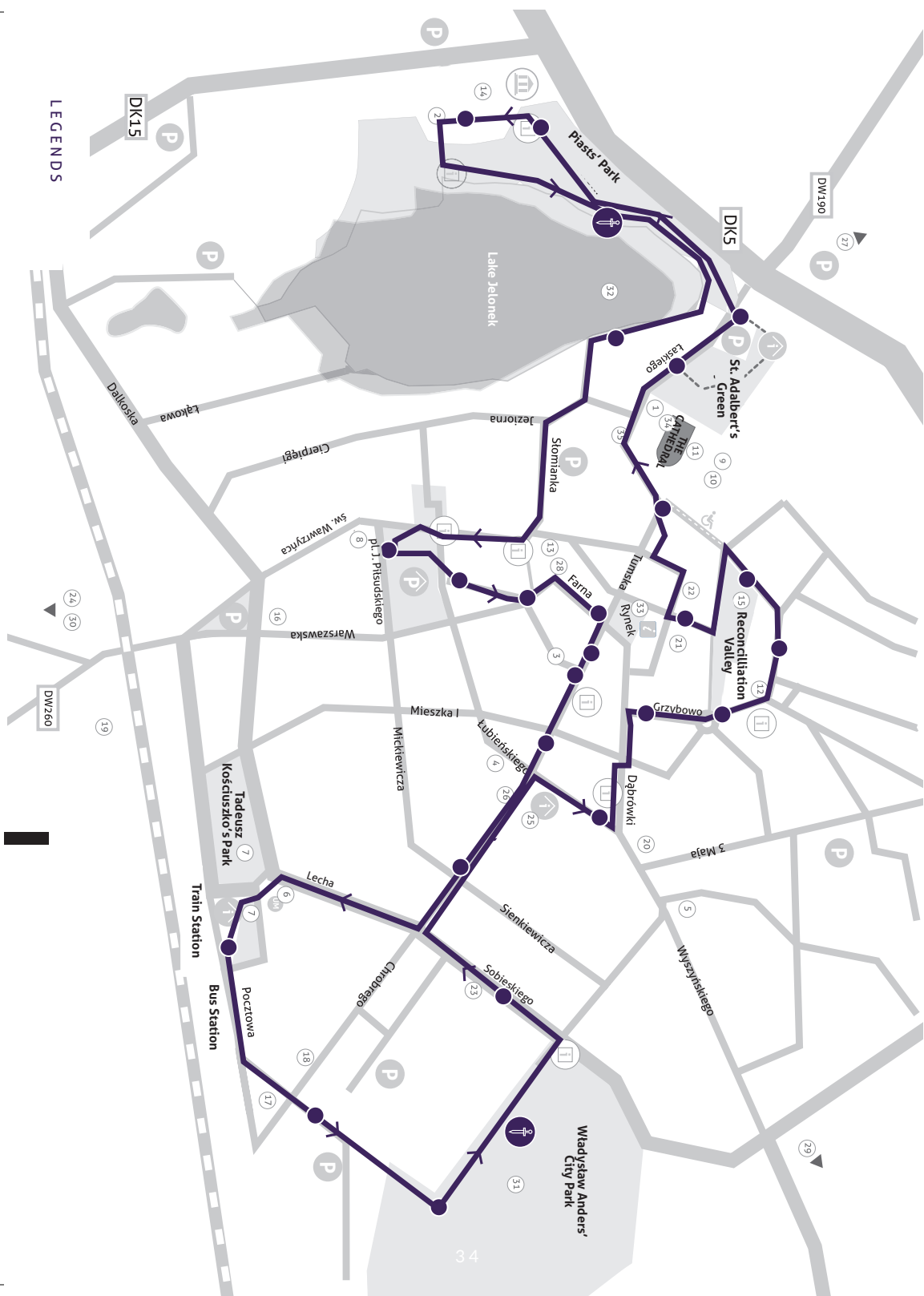
**COLONEL FRANCISZEK  
HYNEK CITY STADIUM**











LEGENDS

DK15

DK5

DW190

DW260

Train Station

Bus Station

Tadeusz Kościuszko's Park

Pocztowa

Lecha

Chrobrego

Mickiewicza

Mieszka I

Lubińskiego

Sobieskiego

Sienkiewicza

Grzybowa

Dąbrowski

Rynek

Farna

Tuniska

Stomianka

Jeziorna

Cierpięgi

Łąkowa

Dalkoska

3 Maja

Wyzwolskiego

Władysław Anders' City Park

Reconciliation Valley

St. Adalbert's Green

Piast's Park

Lake Jeloniek



# The Legend of Piast the Ploughman

## (dynastic legend)

### HEROES:

Piast the Ploughman, Rzepka (Rzepicha), Siemowit, two wanderers, prince Popiel.

### MIEJSCE AKCJI

the city of Gniezno, the ploughman's hut.

The original version of this legend can be found in the *Chronica Polonorum* by Gallus Anonymus. The chronicler described mysterious visitors, who came to the gord of Gniezno to see the ancient rite of hair clipping of the sons of prince Popiel. However, the prince, full of contempt, tells them to get away from the gord's gates. They find shelter in the house of a poor ploughman, Piast, and his wife Rzepka.

The wanderers are captivated by Piast's hospitality. It turns out that the hosts are also about to celebrate the same rite of their son. Miraculously, food served during Piast's feast seems to replenish itself endlessly, while at Popiel's court, the plates quickly become empty. The hosts thus invite the prince and his guests to join them and receive them generously.

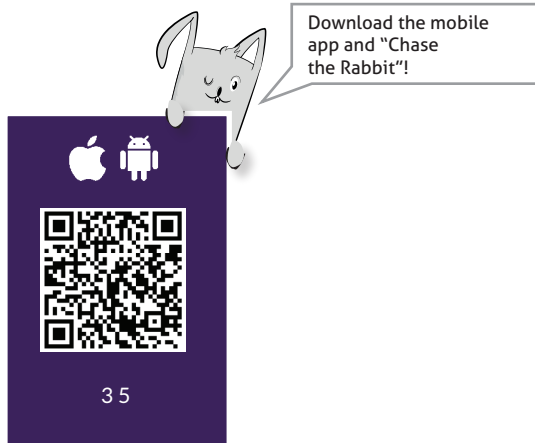
The wanderers agree to perform the hair clipping ritual and they name the boy Siemowit, which means "the master of the tribe" and serves as a good omen for his future fate.

In fact, Siemowit grows up to become the prince of Gniezno, while the mad and cruel prince Popiel meets his miserable end, eaten by mice. So, the good heart and hospitality of the poor ploughman and his family gave rise to the mighty dynasty of Piasts - the first rulers of Poland.

The nature of the dynastic legend is worth noting - as it justifies the rule of a family. A good ruler is one who feeds others (Piast - a ploughman, provider, according to one of acknowledged academic theories), and a bad ruler who destroys instead of feeding others - turning the land to ashes (the word "Popiel" may come from Polish "popiół", meaning "ash").

### SEE ALSO:

31 Władysław Anders' City Park



# The legend of Lech

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HERO:

Lech and his family

SETTING:

Gniezno, Lech Hill

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One of the oldest written sources, describing the legend of Lech, is the Chronicle of Greater Poland of the 13th century by an unknown author.

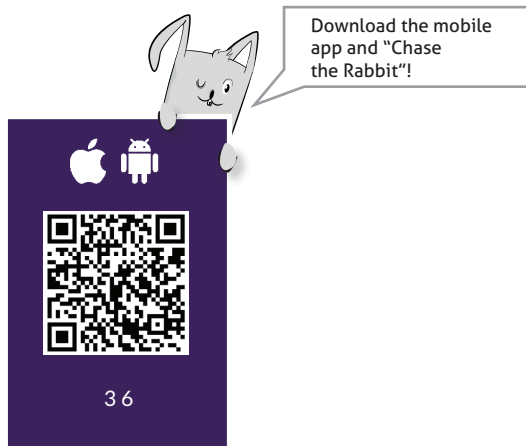
It tells us about the legendary beginnings of Gniezno - the future capital of the state of Poland. According to the chronicler, Lech was one of the three sons of the ruler of Panonia - a province of the Roman Empire, located between the Sava and Danube rivers. One day the three brothers went in search of land which they could take over and rule. The legend does not tell us the names of Lech's brothers or their fate. Were they Czech and Rus, according to the most popular version of the legend? It is not as obvious as it might seem. Getting get back to our hero Lech, he wandered for a long time through the vast forests until he came to a beautiful land with fertile soil and full of animals, at the base of a great hill. He then told his companions: "Let's build a nest here". "A nest" meant "the seat of the tribe".

In later interpretations, the meaning of this word was presented in various ways, for example as an eagle's nest - Lech supposedly saw an eagle taking flight, but this interpretation goes beyond the original text of the legend.

Putting aside the etymological disputes, the "nest" (polish: "gniazdo") established by Lech became the stronghold (city) of Gniezno, and the country, which he ruled became Lechia, that is Poland.

NEARBY:

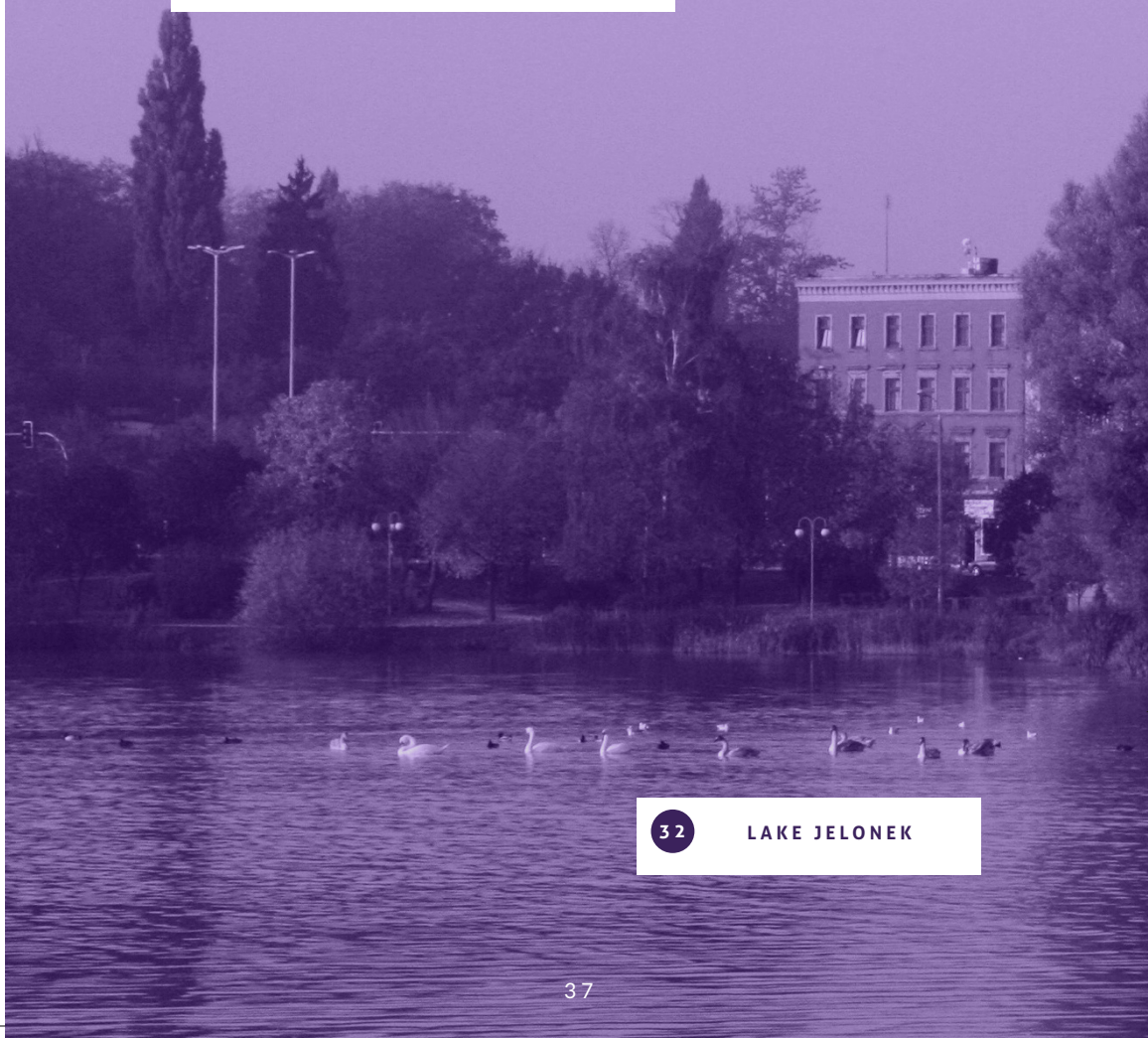
32 Lake Jelonek





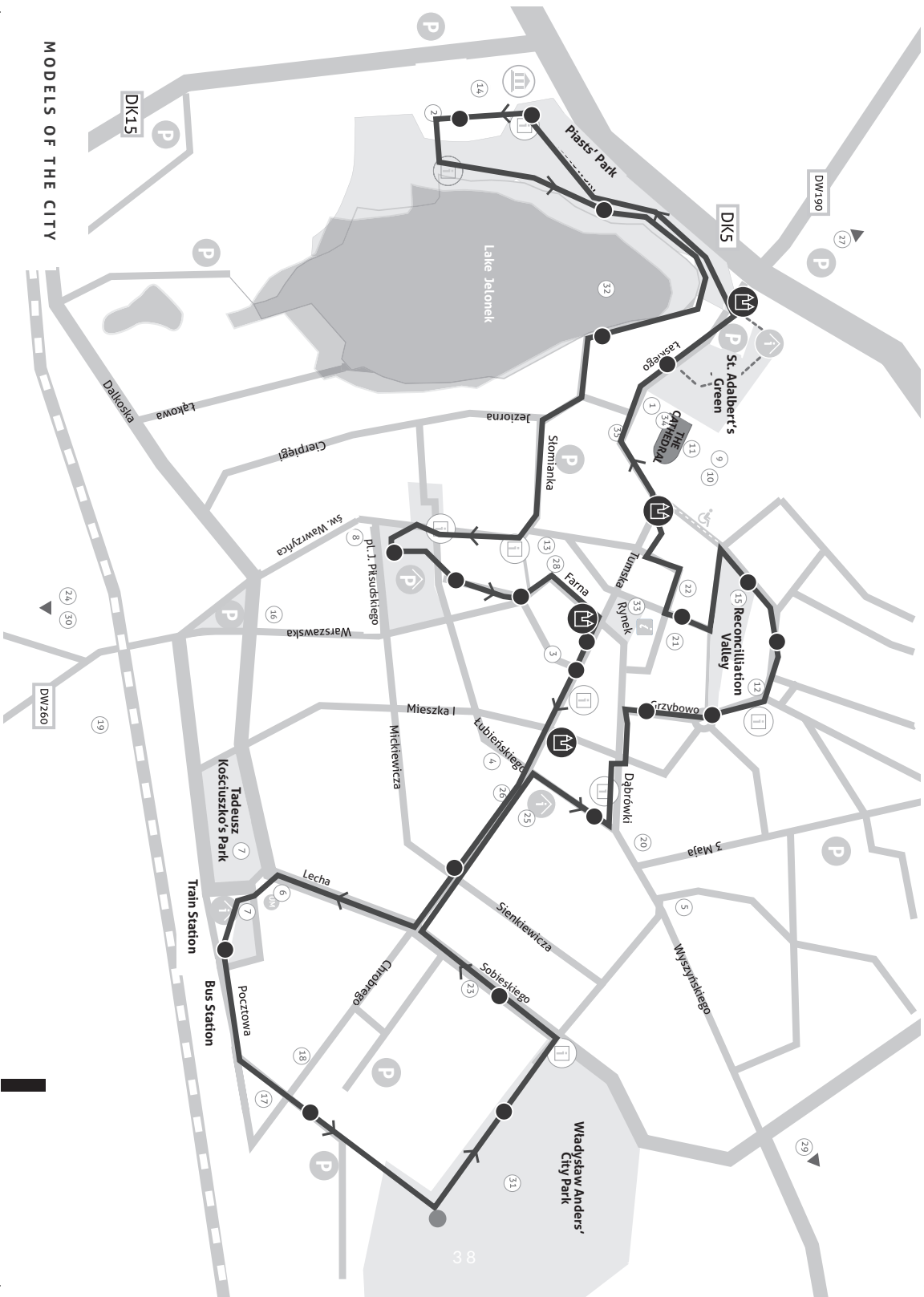
31

WŁADYSŁAW ANDERS'  
CITY PARK



32

LAKE JELONEK



## Medieval borough. Model

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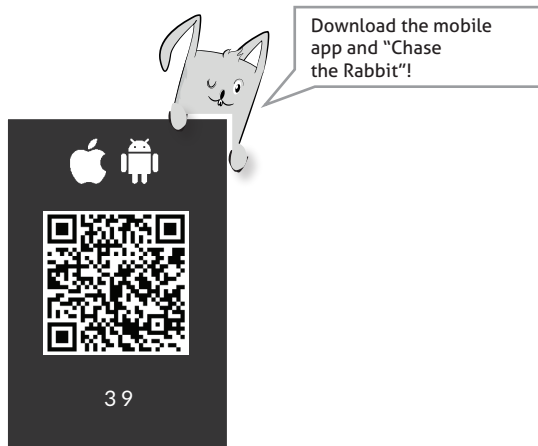
Gaining city privileges based on so-called Magdeburg law in the Middle Ages was associated with inflow of settlers, who contributed to its significance and wealth, receiving various privileges in exchange. The inflow of settlers and the associated socio-economic transformation meant that the city's existing buildings had to be adapted to meet the new needs and function - based on the model of German cities. This was usually started by marking the boundaries of the new city and individual land plots. Then the market square was laid out, to become the central place of municipal power and trade, and then - streets and land plots for settlers.

Particular importance was attached to planning of trade facilities, such as market stalls or craftsman shops. Polish cities distinguished under Magdeburg law led to development of the bourgeoisie and substantial changes in the social structure of the state.

Gniezno's borough rights were granted by the prince of Greater Poland, Władysław Odonic. The most probable date of its commencement is the year 1239. The act marked the beginning of dynamic growth of the city on the Maiden Hill.

### NEARBY:

33 Medieval Main Square buildings outlines



## Stages of Gniezno Cathedral development. Model

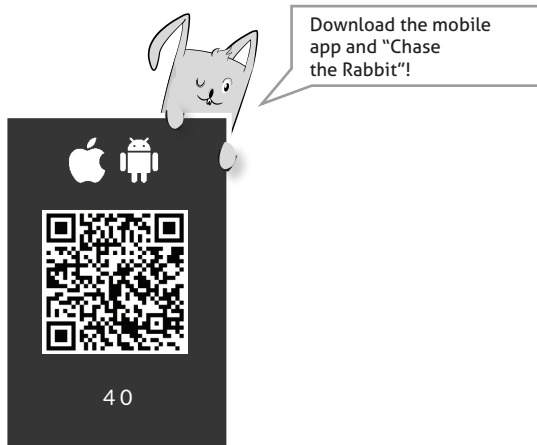
The beginnings of the cathedral go back to the 10th century, the period of reign of Mieszko I. At the time a small rotunda church was erected within the gord. In the year 1000, the gord's church of Gniezno was elevated to the status of an archcathedral church, thus becoming the most significant temple in the country. This exceptional change of status was possible thanks to St. Adalbert - a priest, who went from Gniezno to the pagan Prussia on an evangelisation mission. He was killed there, becoming a martyr for his faith. When Bolesław I the Brave ransomed his body, he buried it in a church, which became a destination of pilgrimage for the entire Christian world. In this way, the great visit to Gniezno in the year 1000 of the deeply religious emperor Otto III became not only a political act, but also an act of faith.

In 1038, during the invasion by the Czech prince Bretislav, the temple was destroyed and its valuable relics, including the body of St. Adalbert - stolen.

Rebuilt in Romanesque style in the year 1064, almost one hundred years later it gained its most valuable treasure - Gniezno Doors, funded most probably by Mieszko III the Old. The cathedral frequently underwent subsequent reconstruction in various architectural styles, and after the Second World War gothic character was finally restored to its nave.

SEE ALSO:

34 Gniezno Doors



# Lech's Hill - castle complex. Model

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In the 10th century Gniezno was one of the so called central gords of the Piast rule, alongside Ostrów Lednicki, Poznań, Giecz and Grzybowo. Central gords were many, however a document named "Dagome Iudex" uses the term "The State of Gniezno" for the Piast domain, thus indicating its superior role.

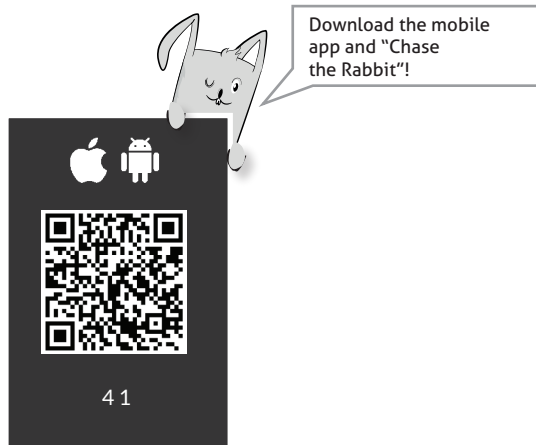
At the site of a pre-Christian cult - under today's church of St. George - relics of a monumental stone structure were found, bearing resemblance to a sacrificial altar and a grave-mound, around which the first stronghold of Gniezno was built in the first half of the 10th century. Its mighty defensive walls were made of soil and timber. The walls could have been as much as 30 meters wide. The area of the embankment was 6800 square meters (which is almost as much as the size of a modern full-size football pitch). In the second half of the 10th century, another part was added to the original stronghold - a small

ducal fort on the top of Lech Hill with grounds covering an area of approximately 3500 square meters. At the turn of the 11th century and in the early 11th century, the third and the fourth part - a settlement at Jelonek lake - were fortified. They occupied an area three times larger than that today's Market Square in Gniezno, and housed mainly craftsmen.

In the later period of Middle Ages, in the place where the early-Piast palatial residence was located in the northern part of the gord a castle was erected. Today in this area there is the building of the Museum of the Archdiocese.

## NEARBY:

35 [Archbishop's Palace](#)

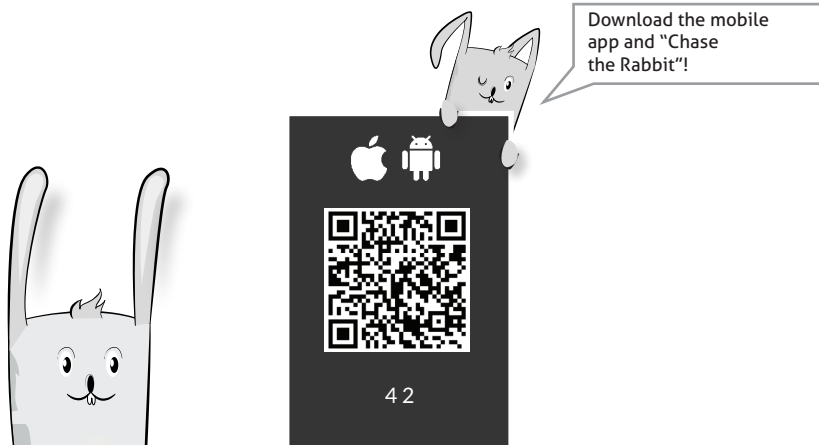


## City Centre - contemporary urban layout. Model

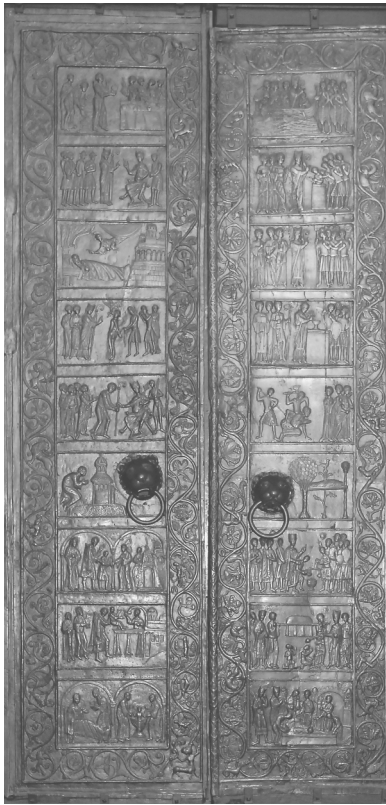
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During the night of May 27-28, 1819, a tragedy occurred in Gniezno. Most of the city was consumed by fire, in particular the market square area, with about 250 buildings destroyed. Reconstruction took many years. The urban layout of the city was thoroughly modernised. A new grid of wide streets was designed and new land plots were outlined. New buildings were made of brick; some of the old ones, which survived the disaster, were demolished, including the old city hall. As a result of this reconstruction, the view of the cathedral from the market was exposed. The land on Lech Hill, belonging to the chapter - previously constituting a separate town - was thus united with the city. New street names were given. At the main street, named

after Frederick William III of Prussia - Friedrich-strasse (now Bolesław I the Brave Street), a new city hall was built. Reconstruction of the city, although often criticised in our times as not sufficiently well thought-out, was one of the largest urban undertakings in the history of Gniezno, leading to its further development and demographic growth.







34

GNIEZNO DOORS

33

MEDIEVAL MAIN  
SQUARE BUILDINGS  
OUTLINES



35

ARCHBISHOP'S PALACE

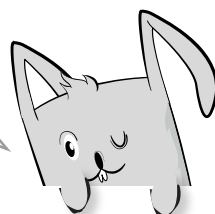


# Museum of the Origins of the Polish State in Gniezno

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The main focus of the Museum is the preservation of the heritage of the Polish Middle Ages and the history of Gniezno and its region. It has archaeological, art, historical and archive collections. Apart from its permanent exhibitions, to which new objects are regularly added, the Museum also organises various multi-themed temporary exhibitions presenting objects from the ancient period, the Middle Ages and the modern era, up until the present day. Fans of new technologies will enjoy the Museum's mobile application presenting a model of Gniezno's early medieval fort in glorious 3D and Augmented Reality.

SEE ALSO

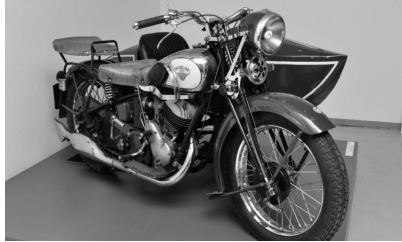


# Museum of Technical Culture in Gniezno

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The Museum presents temporary exhibitions of old motorcycles and other bygone technical objects. Its exhibits are renovated with particular care to preserve their original condition and to make them fully operational.

The Museum is located on the site of the historical barracks of the 12th Dragoon Regiment.



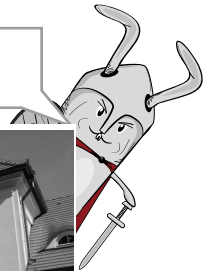
# Museum of Archdiocese

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Located on the Lech Hill, near the cathedral, the Museum is the inheritor of the cathedral treasury. Chalices, pyxes, monstrances, paxes, bishop rings, as well as paintings, numerous sculptures, and ancient textiles are the foundation of the exhibition.



REALLY WORTH  
A TRY!



# Index:

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## 1. The statue of Bolesław I the Brave

This monument, dedicated to the first ruler to be crowned king of Poland, is located between ulica Jana Łaskiego (Jan Łaski Street) and the Cathedral. The creator of the sculpture, put up in 1985, is Jerzy Sobociński who based his design on a pre-war monument by Marcin Rożek that was destroyed in 1939 during the German attack on Poland.

## 2. The statue of Bolesław I the Brave and Mieszko I

The monument, designed by Józef Kopczyński, was officially unveiled on 4 September 1978 at the inauguration of the school year.

The monument was placed on the west bank of Lake Jelonek, in the yard of the Museum of the Origins of the Polish State and Bolesław Chrobry High School. From here, you can enjoy a magnificent view of the Old Town.

## 3. Old City Hall

The building now houses a Registry Office, as well as offices and session halls of the City Council of Gniezno. Designed by Schildner and built in 1830 in the Classicist style, it was extended in 1899 and 1916.

Since its modernisation in 2017 and 2018, it has also been functioning as a cultural centre.

## 4. MOK - Gniezno Cultural Centre

The City Culture Centre is located in the 19th century building of the former Gniezno Masonic lodge called the Hexagon of the Immortalised One.

Since its foundation in 1954, the Centre has actively created and supported a host of cultural initiatives in the city.

## 5. Holy Michael the Archangel's Church

The church was erected in the 13th century on the site of a former motte-and-bailey. The Neo-Baroque tower was added in 1900.

At the entrance to the chancel, there is a beautiful Gothic baptismal font. In a side vestibule, you can see a cross from the 16th century.

## 6. City Hall

This building was erected for officials of the Landratsamt, or the Prussian county authorities, in the years 1898 – 1900. In 1902, it was extended with a new wing housing the County Savings Bank.

At present, it houses the City Hall and the Mayor of Gniezno.

## 7. Parks by the Railway Station

The Tadeusz Kościuszko's Park was established in the first decade of the 20th century. There are two monuments in its grounds: one commemorating the victims of World War II (in the centre of the park) and another dedicated to Seamen at the junction of two streets: Lecha and Kościuszki. A system of German bunkers is also located in the park. The smaller, Eastern section, in 2013 was named after The President of Poland in exile, Ryszard Kaczorowski.

## 8. Saint Lawrence's Church

This is one of the oldest structures in the city. A document issued by King Bolesław the Pious in 1255 mentions a wooden parish church. The present church, including its tower, was erected in the 16th century, restored in 1817 and extended in 1896 and 1936.

## 9. Museum of Archdiocese

(described on page 45)

## 10. St. George's Church

This church was probably built as early as the 10th century on a site of ancient pagan worship. The sculpture on the facade of the building – made by Marcin Rożek in 1936 – shows the patron of the church fighting a dragon.

Originally, the temple functioned as a part of a palatium - the palas church. At present, it is a rectory church of the Theological Seminary.

## 11. Lech Hill

This hill is the oldest part of Gniezno. Archaeological findings suggest that it used to be a site of pagan worship. In the 10th century, an early church was built here that was elevated to the rank of cathedral in the year 1000. It is the shrine of St. Adalbert, whose life story is told by the famous Gniezno Doors. The cathedral on Lech Hill was the coronation site of the first five kings of Poland and is one of the most precious monuments of Polish architecture.

#### 12. St. John the Baptist's Church

This is often described as the oldest, the smallest and the most beautiful church in Gniezno. It was erected in the mid 14th century at the same time as the Gothic Cathedral and has only one nave.

The chancel features an original polychrome Fresco-secco from the time of the construction of the church.

#### 13. The old city walls

At the end of the 13th century or at the beginning of the 14th century, the city was surrounded by defensive walls. Their circumference was 850 m and they included three gates: Cathedral Gate (or Poznań Gate), Toruń Gate and Pyzdry Gate (or Warsaw Gate). The only part of the walls that has been preserved to this day is near Stroma Street, next to the Church of the Holy Trinity.

#### 14. Bolesław Chrobry (Bolesław I the Brave) High School and Museum of the Origins of the Polish State

Bolesław Chrobry High School [Z] is the oldest secondary school in Gniezno. It has a long and proud history. The school belongs to the Association of the Oldest Polish Schools as it dates back to 1863 when the Prussian authorities approved the establishment of the Higher City School for Boys with German as the official language (the building of the present Vocational Training Centre Mieszka I Street). In 1978, the school was moved to the newly built Modernist complex on J. Kostrzewskiego street.

#### 15. Reconciliation Valley

This park is situated in a valley stretching between two hills – Virgin Mary Hill (Market Square) and St. John's Hill, otherwise known as Teutonic Knights' Hill. During celebrations to mark the 1000th anniversary of the Congress of Gniezno, representatives of five states planted commemorative oak trees here, symbolising Europe in the process of unification.

#### 16. Tenement House in Warszawska Street – the Freemasonry Trail

This is one of several buildings in Gniezno bearing Masonic symbols. It lies on the Freemasonry -Tourist Trail.

#### 17. Railwaymen's Houses in Pocztowa Street

Residential buildings erected in the years 1906 – 1910 for railway workers.

#### 18. Fire Station – former Jewish cemetery

The current Fire Station is located on the site of the former Jewish cemetery. A plaque in Hebrew, English and Polish, which was placed on the side of the station in 2008, commemorates the 19th century Jewish cemetery which was damaged during World War II and bulldozed in 1945.

#### 19. Railway Roundhouse

Situated on Składowa Street, extended in the years 1872 – 1945, The Railway Roundhouse complex is the largest in Europe.

#### 20. Former factory of Bolesław Kasprowicz

Founded in 1888, this famous alcohol manufacturing company was one of the first Polish factories of this kind on Prussian territory. It was known for its beverages bearing patriotic Polish names (e.g. Soplica).

#### 21. Church of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary and St. Anthony

The church (with a former oratory of the Franciscan Clarist Order) and the Franciscan monastery are situated on Virgin Mary Hill. In the Middle Ages, this monastic and church complex combined buildings for both Franciscan monks and nuns. The Franciscan brothers were brought to Gniezno in 1259 on the initiative of Duke Bolesław the Pious and his wife, blessed Jolenta. The sisters of Saint Clare were invited by Przemysł II.

The walls of this early Gothic church date back to around 1270, though the church has been altered many times since its construction.

#### 22. Court Building

This historic building by the Berlin architects Hermann and Shultze was erected in 1878–1881 [Z] in the so-called "Rundbogenstil" or Arcade Style, which was then popular all over Prussia.

#### 23. The old 49th Infantry Regiment barracks

The building, including two other identical ones (destroyed during World War II), was built by the invading Prussians in 1872. Until the outbreak of the Greater Poland Uprising, the 49th Infantry Regiment (the 6th Pomeranian Regiment) of the Prussian army was stationed here.

During the September Campaign of 1939, it was the headquarters of the Poznań Army and their command centre for the defence of Poland.

#### 24. The old 12th Prussian Dragoon Regiment barracks

These historic buildings used to be the barracks of the 12th Prussian Dragoon Regiment. The barracks were built in the years 1889–1892.

After Poland regained its independence, the 17th Lancer Regiment was stationed here till 1922, followed by the 17th Light Artillery Regiment.

A cartoon illustration of a grey cat with large eyes, looking up and to the left. A speech bubble originates from the cat, containing the text 'THERE'S PLENTY OF IT!'.

THERE'S PLENTY  
OF IT!

#### 25. Our Lady Queen of Poland's Church

This church was built in the 19th century as an evangelical church according to a design by W. Schildner under the patronage of King Frederick IV of Prussia. Its decorative door is covered with images of angels, designed by Karl Friedrich Schinkel. It is now a Catholic garrison church.

#### 26. Main Post Office

Erected in 1890, the Neo-Gothic building of the post office is situated at the junction of Chrobrego (Bolesław the Brave) and Łubieńskiego streets.

#### 27. Acropolis of Heroes

Located in St. Peter's Cemetery in Gniezno, this site commemorates the fallen insurgents of the Greater Poland Uprising of 1918-1919. It consists of 52 graves arranged in a circle, and a Modernist monument unveiled in 1933.

#### 28. Church of the Holy Trinity

Apart from its sun dial and precious stained glass windows, the church is famous for its beautiful late Baroque pulpit in the shape of a boat dating from the second half of the 18th century. The church used to be a meeting place for fraternities, guilds, and farmers.

#### 29. Alfons Flinik City Stadium

The field hockey stadium, with its artificial surface, is located in the Tysiąclecia Housing Estate. Built in April 1999, it has 1,000 seats. This is where clubs Stella Gniezno and Start 1954 Gniezno play their matches. The patron of the stadium is Alfons Flinik – a hockey champion from Gniezno who competed at the Olympic Games twice and won the Polish Championships 14 times. Next to the Stadium an indoor sporting arena with 1200 seats is located.

#### 30. Colonel Franciszek Hynek City Stadium

The speedway stadium in Gniezno was built in the 1950s on the site of a hippodrome from the 1920s that used to host, among other things, the Polish Horse Riding Championships. The historic main stand, which has been preserved to this day, is a remnant of the old hippodrome.

At present, the stadium has 9,662 seats, artificial lighting and it meets the requirements for holding international FIM and Ekstraliga. It has hosted, among other events, the finals of the U21 World Championships and the Speedway World Cup semi-finals.

#### 31. Władysław Anders' City Park

Władysław Anders City Park is a historic park located between four streets: Konikowo, Sobieskiego, Parkowa and aleja Marcinkowskiego. It dates back to 1798 when a green was established on the site of a former Jesuit garden.

#### 32. Lake Jelonek

This picturesque lake surrounds the Old Town to the West. It is situated next to Piastowski Park, with its rich collection of trees, paths and areas for outdoor activities (street workout spots).

#### 33. Medieval Main Square buildings outlines

The red bricks on the surface of the Market Square Main Square [Z] mark the outline of buildings that stood here before the great fire of 1819.

#### 34. Gniezno Doors

The Gniezno Doors were cast in bronze in the 1170s or 1180s for Gniezno Cathedral. Their 18 scenes or sections tell the story of the life and martyrdom of St. Adalbert. Alongside the carved columns from Strzelno this is the most precious work of Romanesque art in Poland.

#### 35. Archbishop's Palace

Residence of the metropolitan archbishops of Gniezno and the primates of Poland from 1830, altered in 1928. During his visits in years 1979 and 1997 the pope saint John Paul II stayed there.



# Worth seeing

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## **The Trail of Saints and Blessed**

It comprises locations connected with figures crucial for Catholic Church. The following temples belong to its route: Church of the Holy Trinity, Archangel Michael's Church, Saint Lawrence's Church, Church of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary and St. Anthony, as well as the building of the Archbishop's Palace.

## **The Freemasonry Trail**

Referring to the activity of Freemasons in Gniezno, the route entails the building of The City Culture Centre, the tenement house in Warszawska Street 26, CAS Largo as well as the tenement house in Dąbrówki Street (former Under the Lion Pharmacy).

## **The Multicultural Trail**

It comprises the spots which commemorate Poles, Jews and Germans who once lived in Gniezno and cooperated in the social and cultural area. The following locations belong to the trail: the former Jewish Cemetery (Kościuszki Street), the former Evangelical Cemetery, Virgin Mary Queen of Poland Church and the former synagogue next to the Musical School, The Park of Three Cultures.

## **The City Name Day Celebration, St. Adalbertus' Fair**

The Name Day of Gniezno is celebrated annually, on April 23, the St. Adalbertus' Day, who is the city's and Poland's patron saint. At the nearest weekend, aside from traditional catholic celebrations connected with St. Adalbertus, a flamboyant fair is organised.

## **The Royal Arts Festival**

The leitmotiv of the festival is the exploration of the six states of cultural matter (music, visual arts, literature, theatre, photography and film). Since 2015 its formula has been extended to cover the entire summer holidays - from mid June to mid August. Since that time the Festival has been hosting several dozen of various cultural events (and not only!).

## **Royal Coronation**

The "Royal Coronation" Slavic Culture Festival is one of the most recognised events of the Gniezno Royal Arts Festival. Every year, on the last weekend of July, the square in front of the Cathedral turns into an early medieval fort with historical reconstructions, workshops, stalls, shows and many other tourist attractions.

## **„Offeliada" Short Film Festival**

The November celebration of short film in the First Capital of Poland. The aim of the Festival, organised since 2007, is to present Polish independent cinema in combination with a number of accompanying events: workshops, exhibitions, lectures or concerts.

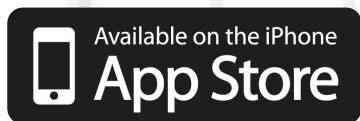
## **The Christmas Fair**

Christmas carols and pop hits, stands full of Christmas trinkets and the ever-present scent of Christmas dishes and mulled wine - all this awaits the locals and tourists who will pay a visit to Gniezno Market Square during the first half of December. The time of the Fair, which has been organised since 2014 is not fixed, however it usually starts around December 6.



# Mobile app "Król i Ka GOń"

("Chase the Rabbit")



## Chase the Rabbit



Hi, I'm Chase, Chase the Rabbit.  
And I am extraordinary.

First of all, I'm very good-looking.  
Second, I've got a pretty name.

And third, as a rabbit, I will help you find other rabbits hopping  
across the historic city of Gniezno.

Each and every one of them has an interesting story to tell, so  
they're really worth catching.

And you can immediately share the news with your friends on  
Facebook



But let's start from the beginning.

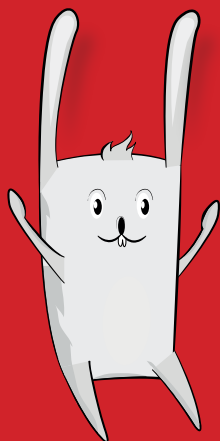
Download the app "Królka GOń" ("Chase the Rabbit"!) on your  
smartphone for free.



You can do it via Google Play or the App Store.  
All you need is WiFi and Internet access.

I'll be there to tell you what to do next.  
Don't waste any more time.  
I'm waiting for you!





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"The Development of the key trail of cultural heritage in Greater Poland Voivodeship

"The Piast Trail".

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



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Gniezno 2018