



## **NEWSLETTER 10/2023**

<b>In the search of the essence of Warmia</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Trail of Holy Warmia and its surroundings</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Frombork – the seat of the Chapter</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Braniewo – the oldest town in Warmia</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Lidzbark Warmiński – the former capital of bishops</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Olsztyn – the centre of the region</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Reszel - a member of Cittaslow</b>	<b>11</b>

## In the search of the essence of Warmia



Fot. Robert Wróbel

Warmia probably took its name from the Old Prussian tribe of the Warmians. Their main centre was located near present-day Frombork. The history of the land began in 1245, when the papal legate William, the bishop of Modena, issued a document by which four new dioceses of Chełmno, Pomezania, Sambia and Warmia were created in the territories conquered in Prussia by the knights of the Order of the Hospital of the Blessed Virgin Mary of the German House in Jerusalem. The term "Diocese of Warmia" itself, with its capital in Braniewo, first appeared in the nomination of its first bishop, Anselm, issued in 1250 by the Pope Innocent IV. Its boundaries were initially described very generally. They were not finally established until the spring of 1375. From 1350 the capital of the bishopric was Lidzbark Warmiński. From its establishment, Warmia, as an autonomous ecclesiastical domain (the remuneration of its Ordinary), was under the political authority of the monastic state. After the defeat of the Teutonic Knights in the Thirteen Years' War, under the provisions of the Second Peace of Torun in 1466, it became a part of the Polish monarchy, although it still remained a largely independent political entity. In 1772, as a

result of the first partition of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, the land came under Prussian and later German rule. Then its history as an ecclesiastical principality ended, but not the history of Warmia, which in time became the mainstay of Poles in the area. In 1945 it once again found itself within the borders of the Republic of Poland. Until the partitions, the people of Warmia had two masters: the reverend bishop residing in Lidzbark and the Venerable Warmia Cathedral Chapter, formed by sixteen canons and established in 1260 with its headquarters in Frombork. They exercised secular and ecclesiastical authority here. The Ordinary had precedence, if only because he administered a larger territory than the chapter - seven of the ten units into which the lands were divided. He also represented them politically both in Rome and in Cracow. However, the Prince-Bishop was also always chosen from among the Frombork canons. From 1479, however, due to the chapter's agreements with the monarch, it could already be only a canon nice to the king, and from 1513 it was practically the Polish ruler who indicated who among them would become the Ordinary of Warmia. And since the domain was one of the most important and best endowed, it was an object of desire for many clergymen. Over the course of nearly eight centuries of history, there were more than fifty lords of the diocese. Mostly they were Poles and Germans, but there was also a Silesian, a Czech, a Hungarian and an Italian. They were mostly prominent figures, famous as politicians, lawyers, administrators. People of science and the pen. Patrons of the arts, protectors of artists. Among them, members of royal families, future cardinals, primates and even the Pope - Holy Father Pius II.

The panorama of the eighteenth-century Warmia meant primarily gentle, picturesque hills covered with forests and valleys filled with lakes, marshes, peat bogs crisscrossed by streams. There are winded roads among them, shaded by rows of lindens, oaks, ash trees leading through Warmia towns and villages. And these places were cut off from the green background of forests in a thousand shades and the colourful mosaic of farmland and meadows primarily by the red of Dutch bricks and tiles, brought to this land by the first German settlers, brought here by the Teutonic Knights. Urban houses and country cottages were built from them. They were also used to erect the other structures - the towers of temples and bishop's and chapter castles. An essential complement to this landscape were roadside crosses, diverse in form, pedestals with crowning figures of Christ, Mary and saints and shrines. These elements of small sacred architecture were usually surrounded with tall trees, in which researchers trace the pre-Christian worship of idols living among their leaves and belief in their powers. To this day they are an architectural symbol of Warmia. They could have been found practically everywhere: along roads, at crossroads, in forests, in fields, in villages, towns, on private properties and by

farms. These visible signs of God's presence were meant to protect against evil forces, and were therefore places of religious worship. And, like church towers, they also marked the routes of pilgrimages of the Warmia people heading for local shrines and temples. The identity of this land was determined by the faith of its inhabitants, especially since 1525 when Warmia became a Catholic peninsula cutting into the Protestant land of Albrecht Hohenzollern's Lutheran Prussia. Not long ago, he had been the Grand Master of the Order of the Virgin Mary. In the second half of the 19th century, the German authorities undertook various measures aimed at the national and confessional unification of their country. The Warmia people were attached to their Catholic religion. The religion was the strongest bond uniting this small community subjected to harassment as part of the anti-Catholic policy of Kulturkampf. In Polish lands it was associated with the stronger Germanization policy. The consequences of these actions were the resistance and unification of the entire Polish population in a peaceful struggle against Germanization. Historians have called these years in the history of Warmia the period of its national awakening. It was reinforced by the pronouncement of the Gietrzwałd Apparitions, which took place in the summer of 1877. "Since the Most Holy Virgin spoke to the children of Warmia in Polish, it is a sin if anyone renounces the native language as a gift of God," wrote Andrzej Samulowski, a folk poet, educational and social activist living in Gietrzwałd.

It is not without reason that this land, always faithful to God and the Catholic Church, has earned the honorable title of Holy Warmia - as Polish Pope John Paul II said during his visit to Olsztyn in 1991.

However, there is no landscape without people. The identity of the region is created primarily by the people who live here. The visitors were amazed by the Warmia way of family life, the cult of work, neatness, orderliness, thriftiness, attention to the aesthetic decoration of the village and its surroundings, and true devotion to the Catholic Church.



## Trail of Holy Warmia and its surroundings



fot. Marcin Kierul

"Warmia has always been faithful to God and the Catholic Church, deserving the honorable name of Holy Warmia" - Pope John Paul II said of this land. Evidence of this holiness is its heritage of sacred architecture, which consists of cathedrals, minor basilicas, churches, sanctuaries and wayside shrines. They mark the paths of the Warmia's pilgrimages of supplication. But Holy Warmia is also place associated with the lives and activities of such prominent figures as Jan Dantyszek, Stanislaw Hosius, Marcin Kromer or Ignacy Krasicki. They also include Nicolaus Copernicus, the reverend canon of the Warmia Cathedral Chapter in Frombork. Following in the footsteps of their lives and activities are sixteen "stations" of the Route of Holy Warmia, places to which it is worth going for a while or for a little longer to learn about the history of the bishopric of Warmia and various events of religious, historical and legendary nature. The first station is Bałdy, the Gates of Warmia, through which successive Warmian bishops came to their diocese from Warsaw. Then there are: Gietrzwałd - the Polish Loudres, the current capital of the region - Olsztyn,

Głotowo, where the Warmia Cavalry is located, Dobre Miasto, Lidzbark Warmiński - the Warmia Wawel, the historical capital of the duchy, Stoczek Klasztorny - commemorated by the stay of the interned Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński, Bisztynek, Reszel, Częstochowa of the North - Święta Lipka, Tłokowo, Krosno, Chwałęcín, Pieniężno and Frombork - the tourist pearl of the region. The route ends in Braniewo - the first historical capital of the region.

However, when discovering the charms of Warmia, it is also worth seeing off the main, beaten paths. Delve into Warmia by side roads, through a corridor formed by rows of roadside trees, to reach places less obvious often hidden somewhere among the hills and forests, but certainly worth a closer look. They too, make up the Trail of Holy Warmia, although they lie in its "vicinity." These less obvious places are another sixteen "stops." They are the old towns of Warmia: Barczewo, Biskupiec, Jeziorany, Orenta and Olsztynek, located on the other side of the former border - already Masuria, the part of Olsztyn County, as well as villages and settlements offering peace and beauty contained in the landscape, architecture and history: Bartag, Brąswałd, Ełdyty Wielkie, Jonkowo, Klebark Wielki, Kurki, Kolno, Międzylesie, Płoskinia, Sząbruk and Świątki. It is worth looking for a place for yourself here. Warmia is full of charm, spiritual harmony and a little nostalgic. one of a kind, unique.



## Frombork – the seat of the Chapter



fot. Sebastian Stawiński

The centre of power, including secular power, was Frombork, the seat of the cathedral chapter. The Gothic cathedral together with the bishop palace were erected between 1329 and 1388 on the hill overlooking the Vistula Lagoon. The cathedral was enlarged, in the course of time it turned out to be a real architectonic pearl. The Cathedral Hill was surrounded by walls and towers. Nicolas Copernicus lived there. The renowned astronomer died in Frombork in 1543. The Frombork cathedral, with its numerous altars, epitaphs and interesting exhibits has become a memorial place of distinguished representatives of the Warmia Church. The collection of six cardinals' hats and the tiara, which we can admire in the cathedral, bring back the memories of Warmia bishops who later became cardinals and the Italian, Enea Silvio Piccolomini, who temporarily achieved the bishopric of Warmia. In fact, Piccolomini did not arrive in Warmia and in 1458 he became Pope Pius II.

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

## Braniewo – the oldest town in Warmia



Punkt Informacji Turystycznej MBP w Braniewie

Braniewo was known as Athens of The North. It is situated upon the river Pasłęka, which flows into the Vistula Lagoon. It was founded by the bishop Anzelm in 1254 and it is undoubtedly the oldest town in Warmia. Braniewo was the seat of Warmia bishops until 1340. In 1565 Stanislaus Hosius brought Jesuits to the town and opened the first Jesuit seminary and college in Poland. In 1578 a papal school training priests to work in Protestant countries was established. Eleven years later a newly-opened publishing house started to print theological texts by order of the bishop and the Chapter, as well as school course books. In 1818 the prestigious tertiary school Liceum Hosianum was opened in Braniewo. It is also worth noticing that since the 14th century Braniewo was a member of the Hanzeatic League and it had its own privateer fleet consisting of two-masted ships and barges, which reached every European port.

[www.it.braniewo.pl](http://www.it.braniewo.pl)



## Lidzbark Warmiński – the former capital of bishops



arch. Michał Misztal

The first bishop capital was Braniewo. In 1341 the bishop Herman of Prague moved the capital to Orneta for a short period. Starting from 1350, however, the most significant town in Warmia was Lidzbark Warmiński (for the next 445 years). The town was a seat of the central bishopric administration and since bishops also held secular power Lidzbark Warmiński was a place of gathering of the Warmia assembly representatives, who made law. It was here that lawsuits took place, cultural life flourished and diplomatic meetings were organized. The great development of Lidzbark between the 16th and the 18th century was undoubtedly stimulated by 17 Polish bishops – renowned representatives of the arts and science. The most remarkable names include Stanisław Hozjusz, Marcin Kromer, Jan Stefan Wydźga, Andrzej Chryzostom Załuski, Szymon Rudnicki, Teodor Andrzej Potocki, Krzysztof Andrzej Jan Szembek, Adam Stanisław Grabowski and, of course Ignacy Krasicki – the prince of poets, one of the most talented Polish and European writers of the epoch, who resided and created his most splendid works here for several decades.

[www.lidzbark.muzeum.olsztyn.pl/](http://www.lidzbark.muzeum.olsztyn.pl/)

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

## Olsztyn – the centre of the region



arch. Urząd Miasta, fot. Marcin Kierul

In the mid of the 14th century a fortified castle was erected in the bend of the river Łyna, then a settlement started to develop nearby. In 1353 the settlement was granted civic rights. This is how Olsztyn, situated among forests and lakes, was founded. Within the defensive walls the Gothic Saint Jacob cathedral was built, the church of great significance and rich history, visited by the Pope John Paul II in June 1991. One of the greatest residents of the Olsztyn castle was Nicolas Copernicus. Throughout the years the town was plundered by enemies and destroyed by fires and epidemics several times. In February 1807 French emperor Napoleon Bonaparte came to Olsztyn, chasing the Russian Army. The development of Olsztyn, falling on the second half of the 19th century, was considerably stimulated by the creation of the railway network in 1872 and by the setting up the governmental district in 1905. In 1945 Varmia came back to Polish state and since then Olsztyn has been the capital of the province of Warmia and Masuria. The town was for many years the seat of Warmia bishops, since 1992 it has been the place of residence of archbishops and at present also the capital of the Varmia Metropolis. In 1999 the biggest tertiary school in

northern Poland was created in Olsztyn – The University of Warmia and Masuria.

[www.visit.olsztyn.eu/](http://www.visit.olsztyn.eu/)

[www.muzeum.olsztyn.pl/](http://www.muzeum.olsztyn.pl/)



## Reszel - a member of Cittaslow



arch. Urząd Gminy Reszel

Reszel is the first town in Poland which has joined the international network of cities with good living standards Cittaslow. A small climatic town with buildings resembling the buildings of Italian towns is conducive to relaxation and detachment from everyday life. The medieval layout of streets and attractive monuments provide a specific atmosphere and a breath of history for Polish and foreign tourists, who, especially in the summer season visit Reszel in large numbers.

Reszel has had a very rich history. As early as 1241, on the site of a former Prussian settlement, the Teutonic Knights erected a wooden castle, which was destroyed and rebuilt during next Prussian uprisings. From 1254 it belonged to the Bishops of Warmia. Next to it a town was located, which in 1337 was granted Chełmno city rights. In the second half of the 14th century in place of the wooden castle, a brick castle was built, in which there was the seat of the bishop's districts. Until the partitions, Reszel was located in an autonomous area subordinate to the bishops of Warmia. In 1772 it came under the Prussian partition. In 1806 the city was largely destroyed by fire. Lying off the main transportation routes and devoid of railroads (it gained a rail connection in

1908) Reszel began to decline. In 1939, the town had a population of 5100. As a result of II World War, 30% of the town was destroyed. After the war it was rebuilt. There is a legend associated with the town about one of the last, or perhaps last person to be burned at the stake. The victim was Barbara Zdunk accused of repeatedly setting fires in the city. By the verdict of the Prussian court in Reszel on June 22, 1808 despite the rehearing of the case by the House of Justice in Königsberg, Ministry of Justice in Berlin and finally the Prussian king, Barbara Zdunk was burned at the stake on August 21, 1811, on the so-called gallows hill by the road leading to Korsze.

The medieval street layout dates back to the period before the WW2.

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