



Płock). Published in Warsaw in 1827, the book includes a picture depicting **the sarcophagus** in the Royal Chapel of Płock Cathedral. The following is an excerpt from the preface to the book: 'Formerly the royal capital cities, Cracow, Poznań, Kalisz and Warsaw, the Kingdom of Poland, as well as Vilnius, Lithuania, pride themselves on the tombs of the monarchs who ruled Poland. Historical events developed in such a way that Płock can pride itself on one, too.'

The Stanisław Małachowski Grammar School is where **the Płock Scientific Society**, established by Kajetan Morykoni and Bishop Adam Prażmowski on 3 June 1820, had its seat at the beginning of its existence. It was on the initiative of the members of this society that the Public and School Museum of the Province of Płock was founded in 1821. Today, this is **the Mazovian Museum in Płock**, which is believed to be the oldest public museum in Poland.

The museum is famous for its collection of Art Nouveau items, which is the largest in Poland. It also houses some Chopin's memorabilia, including a bronze cast of the design of a monument to the composer.

The monument itself stands in Łazienki Park in Warsaw. Designed in 1908, the cast (on a scale of 1:8) was produced by a casting shop in Rome in 1922. The production of the cast was supervised by master sculptor Wacław Szymanowski himself. Also, the museum's collection includes a 1910 oil painting which depicts Chopin playing the piano.

Consecrated in 1144, **Płock Cathedral** was what particularly interested Chopin. His curiosity about it was aroused by its Royal Chapel, in which the black marble sarcophagus (designed by Zygmunt Vogiel) with the remains of two Polish rulers – Ladislaus Herman and Boleslaus the Wry-Mouthed – was placed in 1825. Built between 1126 and 1141, the Cathedral

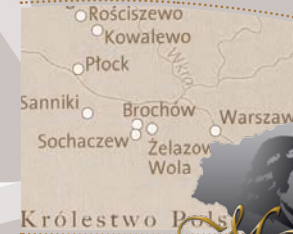


'Mazurka – Chopin playing the piano' by Feliks Michał Wyrzykowski, 1910

Miniature cast of a monument to Chopin designed by Wacław Szymanowski (Mazovian Museum collection)



Płock Old Market Square. Modern picture stylised as a 19th-century painting by Stanisław Pluciennik



Bibliography:
„Kronografia Płocka”, book I, Mazovian Museum in Płock, 1989;
„Dzieje Płocka”, book II, Płock Scientific Society, 2006;
„Płockanie z mami i niecierpi”, book II, Płock Library, 2007;
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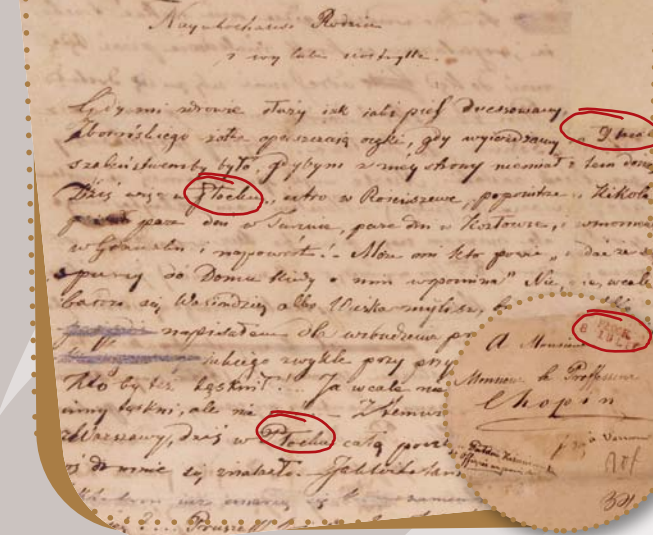
Basilica was rebuilt in the Renaissance period (1531-1534) and renovated between 1900 and 1903.

Located in front of the Cathedral, the former Benedictine abbey and the remains of the Mazovian Princes' Castle is the seat of **the Diocesan Museum**, which contains about twenty thousand exhibits, including the earliest examples of writing, e.g. a 12th-century Płock Bible. An interesting thing here is that the museum houses a Romantic piano which was used in the making of Aleksander Ford's well-known film titled *Młodość Chopina* (Chopin's youth) in 1951.

Having left the Cathedral, Chopin went to **the post office**, expecting some letters from his family. The post office was located at 274 Warszawska Street (present-day 13 Kościuszki Street). The Royal Postal Service had been in existence in Płock since the beginning of the 18th century. In 1796, it became a supreme postal unit (Post Amt) organised on the pattern of the Prussian postal service, which was used all over the Prussian-occupied territory. Since the condition which the post office in Warszawska Street was in left a lot to be desired, the authorities of the postal service bought a new building in Dominikańska Street (present-day 1 Maja Street) in 1829.

Chopin collected some letters and mailed one to his family at the post office in Warszawska Street on 6 July 1827. On the envelope, or rather on the fourth page of his letter (it was customary to fold sheets of paper into envelopes), there is the following stamp: PŁOCK 8 IULI.

Having left Płock, Fryderyk Chopin went to **Rościszewo**. Since he was too young to travel on his own outside the Kingdom of Poland, Chopin was accompanied by Ksawery Zboiński, Antoni Sierakowski and Ignacy Dembowski during his journey to Gdańsk. Chopin visited the region of Mazovia again in 1828. He spent his summer holidays in **Sanniki**, where he stayed at the Pruszk family's manor house.



Fryderyk Chopin's autograph letter to his family written in Kowalewo on 6 July 1827. It consists of two 241x191mm sheets of paper; three pages are filled with writing, and there is the address on one of them. The letter is included in the collection of the Fryderyk Chopin Museum in Warsaw [M/3]. Chopin's biographers knew nothing of its existence for a long time. Also, they used to mix up the dates of Chopin's stay in Płock (1825 vs. 1827). After the composer's death, the letter had been kept in both his parents' and sisters' houses for 58 years before it was finally discovered. It was in poor condition; its upper right corner (i.e. the one with the date) was missing and some of the lines had got damp and were indecipherable. The letter was printed for the first time in the *Echo Muzyczne* magazine on 22 August 1885.

Kowalewo, Friday

*My beloved parents and dear sisters,
As I feel in much better health and Mr Zboiński has almost fully recovered from jaundice, I simply cannot fail to tell you of our going to Płock. So, we are visiting Płock today and, tomorrow, we are heading for Rościszewo. On Sunday, we are going to Kikół. Next, we are staying in Turzno and Kozłowo for a couple of days. Finally, we are arriving in Gdańsk and, later, coming back home! [...] Yet, there are no letters from Warsaw; I am going to turn the post office in Płock upside down to find them. [...] I am extremely curious about everything here. [...] I am also going to Płock to buy some food. It seems that I am going to receive no letters from you now as you are bound to find it difficult to address your letters to the appropriate post offices. Still, I will write to you as often as possible so that you know where I am and which post offices you should address your letters to. Mr Zboiński says that you can address them to Toruń, Schwetz and Kozłowo so that they are delivered there before we get there. [...]*

I wanted to send you, my dear sisters, my new waltz but I have no time to compose as we are already leaving. It is 8.00 a.m. (we never get up before 7.00 in the morning). The air is fresh, the sun is shining and he birds are chirping. There is not a brook here, but there is a pond, in which some frogs are croaking beautifully! [...]

Sincerely yours,

F. Chopin



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The photos were taken by Halina Pluciennik, Marek Czański, Adam Łukawski, Cezary Dziecielski and Dariusz Krakowiak. Some of the photos come from the archives of the Mazovian Museum in Płock and Płock Library. 'Mail coach' – a watercolour by Piotr Michałowski. On the cover: an 1833 portrait of Fryderyk Chopin by Gottfried Engelmann and an 1822 picture of Płock Cathedral by Aleksander Majerski. Translation by Michał Pankowski



PŁOCK
city on
the Chopin Trail

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PŁOCK

a weekend full of excitement and positive energy

Plock was the first city which Fryderyk Chopin visited during his journey to Gdańsk in July 1827. Aged 17 at that time, he decided to explore this city and see its monuments, in which he was keenly interested. Written in Kowalewo near Plock, the composer's letter to his family which he mailed at the post office in Plock is what proves his presence in this city.

Situated at the top of a high escarpment, Plock is a city on the Chopin Trail, which goes through the region of Mazovia. This ancient capital of Mazovia attracts visitors not only with its rich history and great monuments, but also with music with which it resounds. While fine choral works were composed by Eugeniusz Gruberski and Wacław Lachman in Plock at the end of the 19th century, a number of concerts as well as the Monodic Music Festival, Plock Choral Music Festival and Summer Music Festival are organised in this city today. The Plock Symphony Orchestra concerts with many famous musicians such as Kevin Kenner, a world-famous pianist. What may be of particular interest to music lovers is the so-called fiddle from Plock, i.e. a 16th-century folk fiddle which was discovered during excavations carried out in Plock. Included in the collection of the Mazovian Museum in Plock, it is the oldest string instrument among those found in Europe. Plock has a lot to offer its visitors. They are cordially invited to do some sightseeing in this centuries-old city, which is pervaded with a unique atmosphere...

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PŁOCK OLD TOWN



THE LEGEND:

- 1 CATHEDRAL BASILICA OF THE ASSUMPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY
- 2A DIOCESAN MUSEUM – FORMER BENEDICTINE ABBEY AND THE REMAINS OF THE MAZOVIAN PRINCES' CASTLE WITH TWO TOWERS
- 2B DIOCESAN MUSEUM – THE BUILDING FROM THE BEGINNING OF THE 20TH CENTURY
- 3 PŁOCK SCIENTIFIC SOCIETY
- 4 NARUTOWICZ SQUARE
- 5 'DOM POD TRĄBAMI'
- 6 GUARDHOUSE
- 7 DISTRICT COURT
- 8 ZIELIŃSKI LIBRARY
- 9A MAZOVIAN MUSEUM
- 9B MAZOVIAN MUSEUM – GRANARY
- 10 TUMSKA STREET
- 11 GRODZKA STREET
- 12 STANISŁAW MAŁACHOWSKI GRAMMAR SCHOOL
- 13 DIVINE MERCY SHRINE
- 14 OLD MARKET SQUARE
- 15 CITY HALL
- 16 'DARMSTADT HOUSE'
- 17 PARISH CHURCH OF ST BARTHOLOMEW
- 18 CATHEDRAL AND MONASTERY OF THE MARIANITE OLD CATHOLIC CHURCH
- 19 CHURCH OF ST DOMINIC
- 20 WŁADYSŁAW BRONIEWSKI'S FAMILY HOUSE
- 21 REMAINS OF THE 14TH-CENTURY DEFENSIVE WALLS
- 22 'KAMERA PRUSKA'
- 23 REGISTRY OFFICE
- 24 THE ZOO
- 25 AMPHITHEATRE
- 26 LAKE SOBÓTKA
- 27 PLEASURE BOAT HARBOUR
- 28 MOTOR BOAT HARBOUR
- 29 'CIUCHCIA TUMSKA'

Great men in Plock

The summer of 1827 was when Fryderyk Chopin visited Plock. At the time, he was a seventeen-year-old student at Warsaw School of Music, where he was taught by Professor Józef Elsner, who referred to his musical talent as 'an exceptional ability'. In April 1827, Chopin's youngest sister called Emilia died of tuberculosis at the age of 14. Ksawery Zboiński, their father's friend, was Emilia's godfather, and it was the Zboiński family's manor house in Kowalewo near Plock that Chopin stayed at for several days on his way to Gdańsk. It follows from Chopin's letter to his family that the host, i.e. Ksawery Zboiński, felt obliged to show the young composer around the local area. Thus, Chopin's journey to Gdańsk started in the historic city of Plock. They drove into Plock from the north in Zboiński's open carriage. Chopin's host knew the city very well because his ancestors and relatives – Ignacy Zboiński (the voivode of Plock), Maksymilian Sierakowski and Franciszek Zboiński – had been the castellans of Plock for many years. Hence, Ksawery Zboiński, a historian by profession, acted as a guide to Chopin.



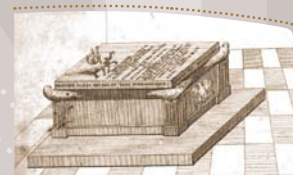
'Panorama of Tumskie Hill and the entryway into the city from Radziwie' by Andrzej Karszowiecki, 1813 (Mazovian Museum collection)



'Widok Miasta Plocka od wsi Radziwie' by Edward Tumanowicz, 1822 (Mazovian Museum collection)



'Cathedral and Clock Tower' by Aleksander Majerski, 1822 (Mazovian Museum collection)



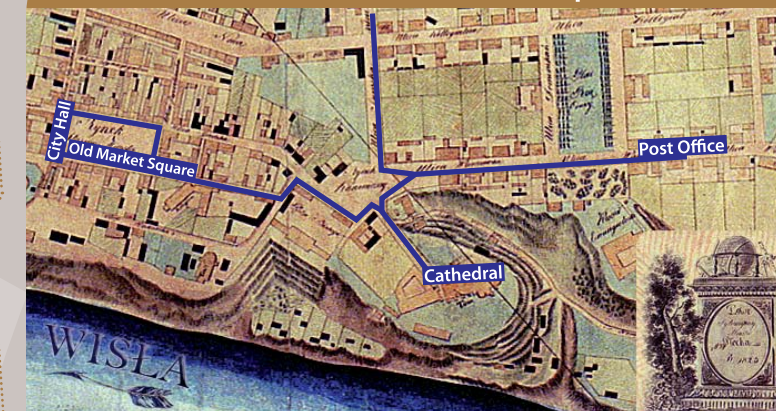
The sarcophagus in the Royal Chapel – one of the pictures in W. Gawarecki's book titled 'Tombs of Polish Kings in Plock, 1827' (Plock Library collection)

PŁOCK, city on the Chopin Trail

behind the former Dominican monastery and the other one was situated in front of the head office of the Committee of the Province of Plock. Chopin began his sightseeing tour of Plock in the Old Market Square, where the classical City Hall – designed by Jakub Kubicki, who also redesigned the Belvedere in Warsaw – had just been built. What attracted the young composer's attention was the Church of St Bartholomew, located in the immediate vicinity of the City Hall. The oldest parish church in Plock, it was founded by King Casimir the Great and consecrated by Bishop Clemens in 1356. Originally a Gothic church, it was rebuilt in late Baroque style in 1723. Walking towards the Cathedral, Chopin and Zboiński must have gone past Plock Province School (now the Stanisław Małachowski Grammar School), where only male students were taught. A co-founder of the Plock Scientific Society, Kajetan Morykoni was the principal of this school at the time. He also co-founded the School Mercy Society, which provided the poorest students with financial support. Ksawery Zboiński must have outlined



PŁOCK OLD TOWN on an 1823 street plan



Fragment of Ludwik Mahna's 1823 street plan of Plock; the blue line shows where Chopin probably took his walk.

In the 1820s, Plock had a population of 10 thousand. Florian Kobyliński, the chairman of the Committee of the Province of Plock, was in charge of the city administration at that time. It was in the second decade of the 19th century that an expanded spatial layout of the city, with the classical City Hall built between 1824 and 1825, was designed and the Old Market Square together with a dozen or so streets were paved. In 1827, there were 484 houses in Plock. While 127 of them were made of wood, the remaining ones were either brick or half-timbered houses. Moreover, there were 485 craftsman's workshops in Plock at that time. Also, the inhabitants of Plock could take a stroll in two public parks; one of them was situated

the history of this centuries-old school to Chopin. Dating back to 1180, it is the oldest secondary school in Poland. Originally, it was attached to the Benedictine Collegiate Church of St Michael. Next, it was run by regular canons and Jesuits until 1773, when it was took over by the Commission of National Education. A teacher and linguist who was later to become the vice-chancellor of Warsaw University, Wojciech Szwekowski was on the staff of the school at the very beginning of the 19th century. Wincenty Hipolit Gawarecki, a local historian, was one of the distinguished students of the school; Chopin may have read Gawarecki's book titled 'Groby Królów Polskich w Plocku' (Tombs of Polish Kings in