

a flood, the district was visited by Empress Victoria (the wife of Frederick II) who was very popular with Poznań residents and well known for her charity work.

The turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century brought a number of positive developments. As restrictions on new construction were lifted, a number of grand tenement buildings, which housed stores, were built around the central square in the remarkable eclectic and Art Nouveau styles which lend the place a unique appearance to this day. The life of the residents concentrated around local Polish organizations. Despite urban development, which continued over the years, and the construction of the Warsaw route across the district in the 1960s, the area retained its 19<sup>th</sup>-century feel and a magical air amidst the bustling modern metropolis of Poznań.

### KOMANDORIA

Located in close proximity to Śródka was a settlement which Mieszko III the Old received from his father, Bolesław Wrymouth along with Poznań. Around 1170, the Duke founded a hospital there which served the residents of Wielkopolska and offered shelter to passing travelers. He placed this institution (Poland's oldest of its kind) in the hands of the Order of Saint John. At the turn of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, the monks erected a Romanesque church on a small hill and dedicated it to their patron saint John. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the shrine became an established destination of official processions originating at Śródka's Saint Margaret Church. Much as the name of its district, the picturesquely located church of Saint John Outside the Wall is a reminder of the historic presence of the Order and its Commander in this part of Poznań.

### 1 CHURCH OF SAINT JOHN OF JERUSALEM OUTSIDE THE WALLS

Erected by the Order of Saint John, this sacral building is believed to be one of Poland's oldest brick shrines. Built in the Romanesque style, the church was slowly converted to the Gothic convention. Today, the distinctive aerial cupola of its steeple corresponds perfectly with the landscape of Lake Malta. "Outside the wall" is a reference to the Church's location on the outer side of the Medieval town's defensive wall.

### 2 SAINT JAMES' WAY

Marked with the scallop shell emblem, Saint James' Way leads to the remote Spanish town of Santiago de Compostela, the site of the tomb of Saint James the Greater, one of the twelve apostles. Poznań is only crossed by a mere embranchment of this first European Cultural Route. In the Middle Ages, the route was frequented by pilgrims who may well have sought shelter in the hospital erected here by Mieszko III the Old in an area owned by the Knights of Malta.

### 3 THE FORMER REFORMIST MONASTERY

The Reformists, who were a chapter of the Franciscan Order, settled here in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century and built a church and a monastery on a hill in the north-eastern part of Śródka. The friars devoted themselves to ministerial service and assumed the eminent post of Cathedral preachers. They engaged in long and difficult negotiations with the Head of Saint John's Order in an attempt to have Śródka expanded. After a wave of order closures in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Reformists' buildings were converted to a military hospital for Napoleon's soldiers and subsequently turned into Poland's first teacher's training college. Finally, by a decision of the German King Frederick William III,



The Royal-Imperial  
Route in Poznań

**ŚRÓDKA AND KOMANDORIA** are the starting points of the Royal-Imperial Route. Located near a crossing over the Cybina River on the historic trade road, the towns were a popular layover of merchants and pilgrims on their way to Gniezno and Giecz. A number of architectural, social and cultural projects carried out in the Urban Regeneration Program have sought to restore this magical and somewhat forgotten area of Poznań.

**THE ROYAL-IMPERIAL ROUTE** is a tourist product designed for all willing to learn about the history, tradition and culture of the site at which Poland began. A millennium of historical ups and downs, the intertwining fates of nations and the interweaving of cultures have produced today's Poznań, a city which offers a wide range of tourist attractions.

**DO NOT MISS** this vibrant town made for tourists, Poland's only city which will receive you both royally and imperially!

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The Royal-Imperial  
Route in Poznań



View of Ostrówek Street from Cybina Bridge (1880)

### ŚRÓDKA

The ducal settlement and the Cathedral (today's Cathedral Island) were once surrounded by an array of satellite towns. One of them, Śródka, was a town whose weekly Wednesday fair lent the settlement its name (*środa* is Polish for Wednesday). Although the exact time of its establishment is unknown, historical records suggest that the town acquired its urban features as early as the mid-13<sup>th</sup> century. A major role in the history of Śródka was played by friars. In 1231, Władysław Odonic, the Duke of Wielkopolska, presented the charming local Saint Margaret's Church to a Dominican monastery. The presence of the monks afforded Śródka many privileges, one of which was its esteemed position among major fair towns. Soon afterwards, however, the Dominican monks moved to the left bank of the Warta. They were driven away by the town's terrain features which hampered growth and Śródka's unfortunate location between the land of the Order of Saint John and the town of Ostrówek. In 1253, Duke Przemysław I set up a new town on the left bank of the river. His son Przemysław II, who was subsequently crowned the king of Poland, surrendered Śródka to the rule of the local Bishopric. Ever since then, the town was relegated to the role of the Cathedral's supplier. It found it ever harder to compete with Poznań which would always overshadow it. In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the orders of the Reformists and the Philipines established their residence in Śródka. It is during that time that magnificent monastery buildings which remain to this day, and Saint Kazimierz Church, were erected. The Philipines, whose monastic rule barred them from any non-educational pursuits, failed to satisfy the cultural aspirations of Śródka residents. This further undermined their position which had been compromised since the decision by Przemysław II. In 1800, Śródka was incorporated into Poznań. Under the rule of the Prussians, who controlled this part of the then partitioned Poland, the city was turned into a powerful stronghold. This did not improve the fate of the district which ended up incorporated into the fortified zone. As Śródka had long been plagued by fires and floods, a ban on new construction near the fortified walls turned out to be particularly painful. In 1888, in the aftermath of

**Śródka**  
**and Komandoria**  
The magic of 19<sup>th</sup>-century Poznań



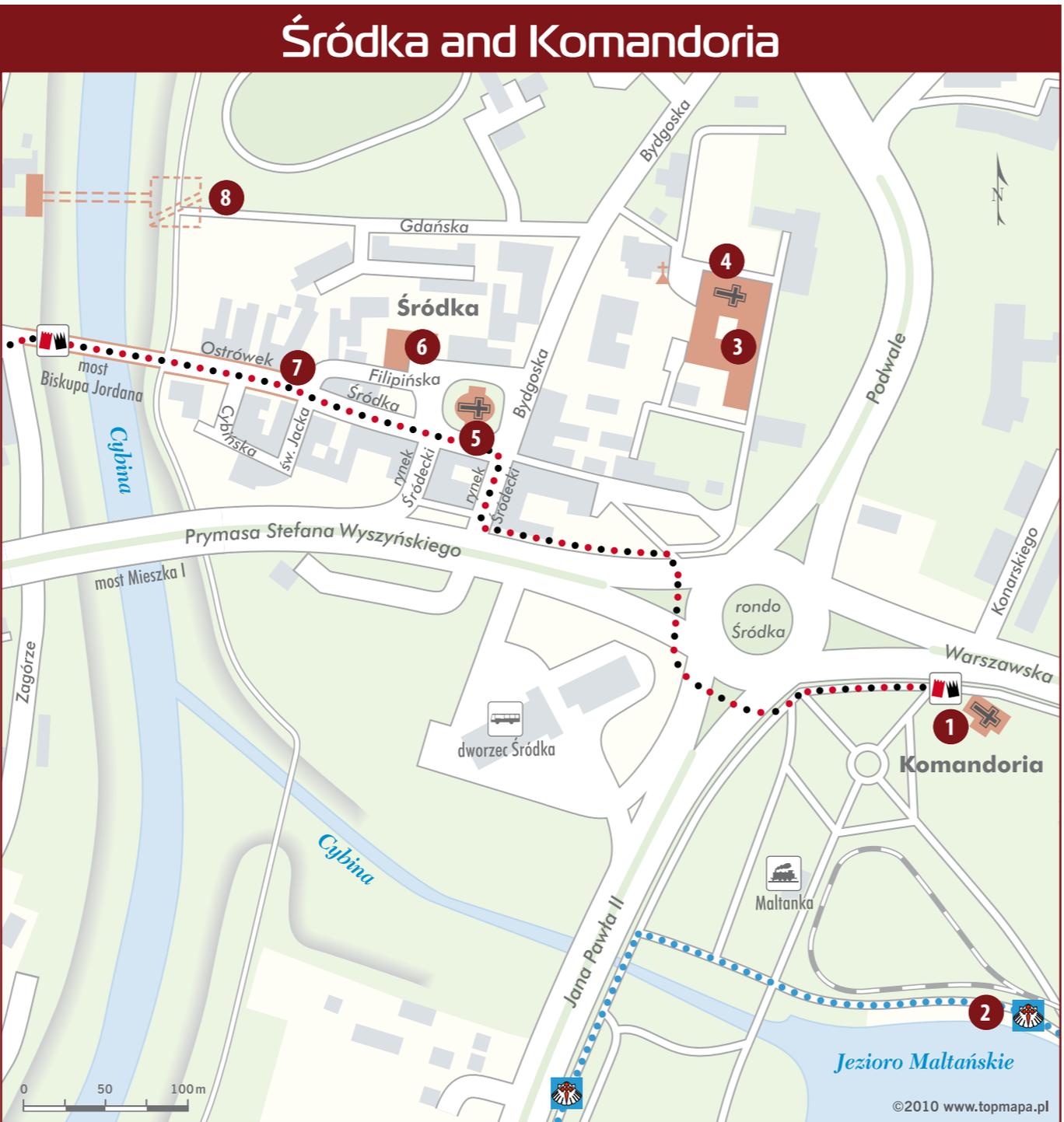
they ended up serving as the Royal Home for the Deaf and Mute. In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, Śródka's first public clock was placed on the building's façade. Today, the role of the former institution has been taken over by the Educational Centre for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing.

**4 SAINT KAZIMIERZ CHURCH**

The Church of Saint Kazimierz (a prince in the Jagiellonian dynasty, the patron saint of Lithuania and, temporarily also of Śródka) was erected to the detailed guidelines laid down by the Reformists, who followed a strict monastic rule. The building was given a single nave, a vestry placed behind its altar and an upstairs choir area. The builders gave up the idea of adding a tower. As the church was set on a slope which turned out to be prone to landslides, the building was supported with side buttresses. Today, the shrine is owned by the Polish Catholic Church. A small chapel of Christ Suffering was also set on the hill which, as the story has it, marks the very spot where Christianity was first taught in Poland.

**5 CHURCH OF SAINT MARGARET THE MARTYR**

This brick shrine dates back to the 14<sup>th</sup> century (and most likely replaced a previous wooden parish church). The building featured a remarkable cascading gable, an adjacent



The Royal-Imperial Route map	church	coach terminal
Saint James' Way	chapel	station of the Maltanka tourist rail line

# Śródka and Komandoria

massive tower, a magnificent vaulted ceiling and an architecturally odd entryway in the form of an ornamental gate adorned with a Latin quote from The Book of Genesis. A chapel dedicated to Saint Philip Neri was added in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. The chapel was built on the initiative of the local curate fascinated with the Saint's teachings. It was thanks to the curate's efforts that Śródka was selected as the site for Poland's first Philippine Order congregation. Most of the furnishings in the church building date back to Philippine times. The only older remnants are two Virgin Mary paintings: Virgin Mary on a Half-Moon, formerly an object of worship, and the depiction of Mother of God and Angels Performing Music. Saint Margaret Church towered over Śródka's irregularly-shaped square for long centuries. Its immediate surroundings featured craftsmen's workshops, small stores, the Philippine House and, presumably, a city hall, the seat of Śródka's mayor.

**6 FORMER HOUSE OF THE PHILIPPINE CONGREGATION**

The rules of this order of priests founded by Saint Philip Neri stood in contrast to those which bound the Reformists. The Philippines leant toward a joyous interpretation of the faith and engaged heavily with the lay society. Their oratory was a meeting place used to debate religious issues and sing. The monks were also involved in education, hence they were placed in charge of the Poznań seminary. The friars remained in Śródka for ca. 150 years starting in the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century. Their congregation house was erected in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. A hundred years later, an identical east wing was added with great attention to detail. It is difficult today to tell which of the wings is older.

**7 OSTRÓWEK STREET**

The name of this street is a reference to this once unusual town. In the 13<sup>th</sup> century, Ostrówek, then a small island on the fork of the Cybina River, belonged to the Poznań Chapter of the Clergy. When Ostrówek received its city rights from Władysław of Varna in 1444, it was made up of a single street lined with over a dozen households. Despite its small size, the town prided itself on having its own mayor and a city council. Ostrówek lost its independent status in 1800 when, together with Śródka and Cathedral Island, it was incorporated into Poznań's administrative limits. Cathedral Island was accessible from Ostrówek by the Śródka Bridge, also known as the Cybina Bridge, on which a toll was charged for passage. After a long campaign by Śródka residents, an iron bridge replaced the wooden structure in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The next bridge, made of steel, was crossed by the tracks of tram line number 6. The bridge was dismantled following the construction of a major express route across Śródka. It was not restored until 2007 when the district received the Bishop Jordan Bridge named after the first bishop of Poland.

**8 HERITAGE CENTER OF CATHEDRAL ISLAND**

A plan has now been approved to erect a Heritage Center of Cathedral Island on the site of the 19<sup>th</sup>-century Cathedral Lock Gate which once formed a part of a ring of fortifications around Poznań. The facility is expected to showcase the millennium-long history of Cathedral Island. Its building will be connected with the Lock's bridgehead across the Cybina, the only remaining part of the former fortifications. The location will lend the Centre an exceptional symbolic significance as a perfect starting point for a time journey of discovery into the history of this oldest part of Poznań "in which Poland began".

