

Legends of Lublin and Lutsk





Leszek Czarny Dream

This story took place at a time in which Poles and Lithuanians were not very fond of each other. Lithuanian tribes attacked Lublin region again and again, plundering the villages and towns. The terrified inhabitants of Lublin sent a message to the prince of Krakow, Leszek Czarny, to deal with the Lithuanians. The prince could not leave his subjects unattended, so he gathered the army and marched to help the dwellers of Lublin.

Lithuanians did not want to cross swords with Leszek's powerful army, so when they found out about the approaching army, they just ran away.

Instead of his opponent, the prince came across destroyed houses and sad Lublin inhabitants. The journey from Krakow was long and the prince was tired. Since he had no one to fight with, he decided to take a nap. He found a large oak tree under which he fell asleep.

And when he dreamt about pleasant things, although quite insignificant, a dignified figure in armor shining like rays of the sun came to him in his dreams. The figure also had wings, it looked straight into the eyes of the prince and spoke:

– Leszek! Leszek!

The Prince recognized that the Archangel Michael was standing in front of him. He was a little frightened, but he humbly asked:

– Yes?

– Get up! Take hold of the sword! And follow the enemy! Now, now, now!

The Archangel himself told him to follow the Lithuanians. Leszek Czarny could not disobey. He took his army and dashed. And he caught up with them! And defeated them! Nice, nice, nice to hear!

And then the prince returned to the oak, where he dreamt the prophetic dream, and worshiped God. Leszek ordered the Saint Michael the Archangel church to be built in the place where the tree was, and the wood of an extraordinary oak was used to carve an altar to the temple.

Unfortunately, today we cannot not see neither the church nor the altar. We can still, however, visit the Po Farze square. According to the rumor, people apparently still have extraordinary dreams there... if somebody is able to fall asleep there.





Viper

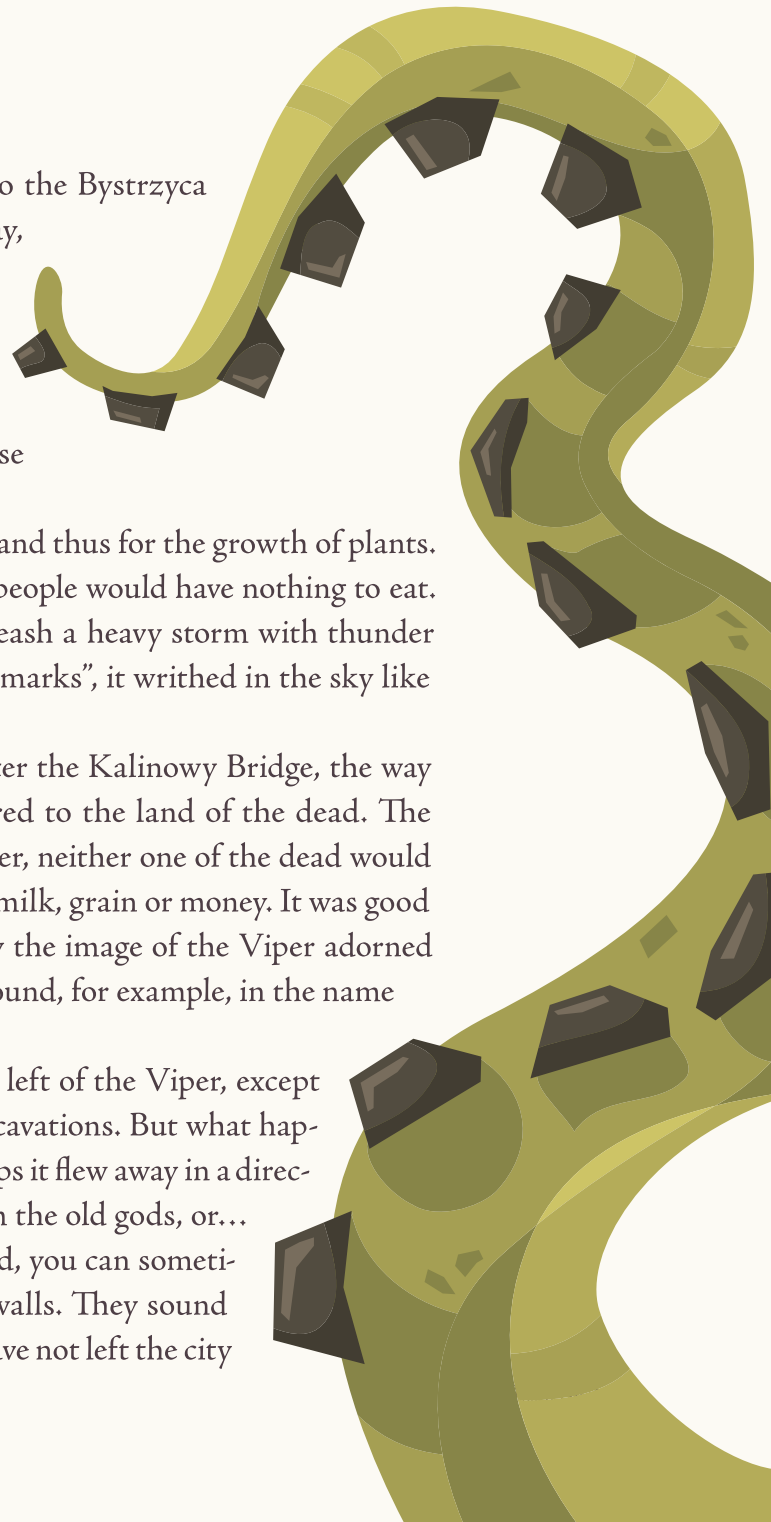
An oak grove grew where the Lublin hills descend into the Bystrzyca river valley, and a peculiar creature lived inside. Today, we would call it a dragon, but it was called a Viper in ancient times. Apparently it had three heads, two paws, powerful wings and a tail ending with a sharp and very poisonous spike. The menacing look made people afraid of him, but they nevertheless brought it sacrifices, because it had very important tasks.

It was this creature that was responsible for the rain, and thus for the growth of plants. If it were not for the Viper, grain would not grow, and people would have nothing to eat. However, when it was in a bad mood, it could also unleash a heavy storm with thunder and lightning. Hence, lightning was said to be “serpent marks”, it writhed in the sky like a real viper.

Another important task of the Viper was to look after the Kalinowy Bridge, the way along which, according to ancient Slavs, souls wandered to the land of the dead. The Viper took care that no one of those who live would enter, neither one of the dead would leave. It could also help people, bringing them gifts like milk, grain or money. It was good to have such a creature as a friend. Perhaps that is why the image of the Viper adorned many tenement houses in Lublin, and its name can be found, for example, in the name of Żmigród Street [Vipertown Street].

Today, there is no oak grove. There is also not much left of the Viper, except sculptures, names and a few bones found during the excavations. But what happened to the ancient reptile? No one really knows. Perhaps it flew away in a direction known only to itself when people turned away from the old gods, or...

...apparently, when you roam the Lublin underground, you can sometimes hear strange knocks and hissing from behind the walls. They sound as if something big was moving past. The Viper might have not left the city at all, but simply hid deep, deep underground.





Bernardine church

Would you like to find a wallet full of money on a street that would include a piece of paper with the words: “The money is yours – spend as much you want”? The dream is beautiful, but rather impossible, right? Well, not really...

This story took place during the construction of a Bernardine church. Despite the fact that the work was smooth, and whoever was able to help did, there was a time when money for further construction was gone. The church was deserted and cats warming in the sun could be found where workers were once busy doing their job. This situation troubled the inhabitants of Lublin, but no one knew where to get additional funds. There were more and more opinions that only a miracle could help complete the construction.

The miracle came along at night with a mighty storm that broke over the city. Lightning blazed across the sky, illuminating empty streets and dark windows. At one moment the guardians watching the town hall saw something very strange in the light. A cart with two oxen stood in the middle of the market. This was unusual because from sunset all gates were closed and no one could enter the city, especially such a large cart. Anyway, there was no one at the cart.

There was a large chest on the cart. The servants decided to take it off and carry it to the town hall, and then take care of the oxen, but the cart mysteriously disappeared ... as if it never existed. Only the chest full of precious coins and jewels remained. A letter was also found inside, addressed to Jakub Kwanty, a city councilor, who offered the lands for the construction of the church. An anonymous letter read that the entire treasury was dedicated to complete the Bernardine church.

Thanks to the mysterious chest, the church was completed, and it was easier for the inhabitants of Lublin to believe in miracles from then on.





Tree of the Holy Cross

The tree of the Holy Cross on which Jesus himself died was found in the fourth century. Then it was divided into smaller fragments so that more people could experience its wonderful power. The largest of the existing fragments went to Poland in the fifteenth century.

It came to Lublin together with the Kiev bishop Andrzej. The bishop stopped at the Dominican church only for the night, but when he went on his way, strange things began to happen. Horses stopped behind the city walls and did not want to go any further. Requests, threats, even a whip did not help. The animals did not budge. The bishop resigned and returned to the city hoping that he would be able to set out the next day. However, the situation was the same on the following day. The horses did not want to go any further!

Andrzej understood that the relic had decided to stay in Lublin. The tree of the Holy Cross remained protected by the Dominicans. Or the Dominicans might have been under the care of the Tree of the Cross, as since the relic appeared in Lublin, miracles began to happen. People were healed, fires in the city were extinguished, and when the Cossack army attacked Lublin, angelic corps with fiery swords descended to stand on the city walls.

Once they even tried to steal the relic, but the unlucky thief experienced the same fate as Bishop Andrzej – his cart stopped just outside the city. The repentant thief returned to the city, gave the relic back, and founded the Holy Cross church as penance.

During World War II, when bombs burst out of German aircrafts onto the city, a procession carrying the relic set off from the Dominican church. Apparently, the parts of the city that it went through were left unscathed by the air raids.

Unfortunately, in 1991, someone broke into the church and took the sacred object. Only a small piece from the Holy Cross Tree which was crushed during cleaning remained. Although it is not known what happened to the relic, it may be comforting that it still protects Lublin. As it cannot be taken out of the city, right?





Stone of misfortune

When you walk along Jesuicka Street, be careful not to touch the stone of misfortune lying there.

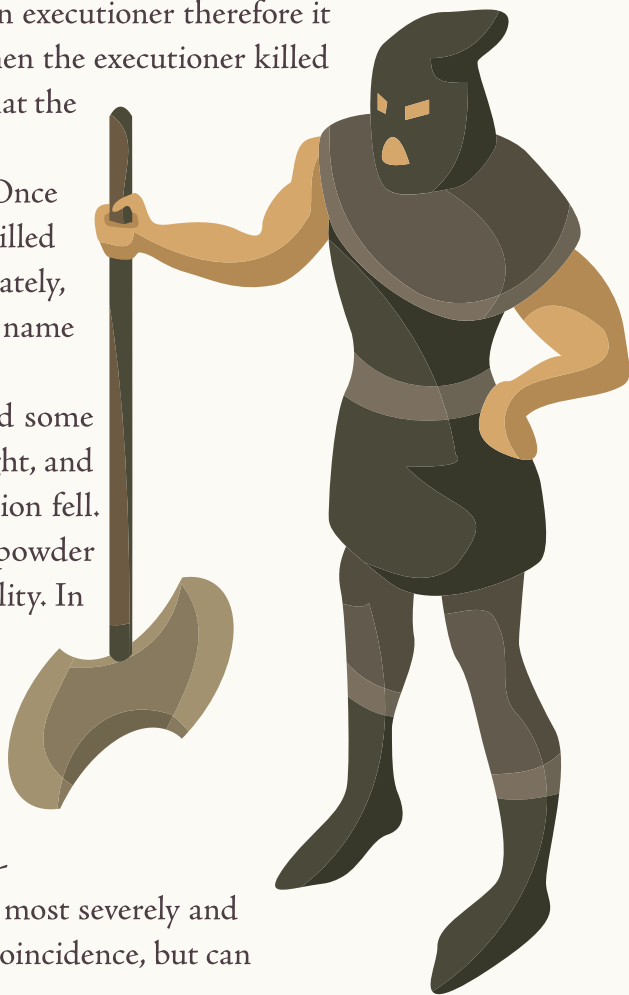
In olden times, this stone served as a support for the ax of an executioner therefore it saw many a head rolling on the Lublin pavement. However, when the executioner killed an innocent person one day – and it was done with such force that the ax went into stone – the real, black history of the object began.

The jagged stone was retired and abandoned at Rybna Street. Once a woman was carrying soup for her husband, she stumbled and spilled it on the stone. Dogs came and began to lick the food. Unfortunately, animals mysteriously die in mysterious circumstances. Thus, the name of this place was created – Dog Hill.

Then everyone who was to deal with the stone encountered some misfortune. Some died in a horrible way, others lost their eyesight, and the houses of those who wanted to use the stone for construction fell. Apparently it was used in the foundations of a Russian gunpowder warehouse. It is not difficult to guess what happened to the facility. In 1919, it exploded with a loud bang.

The inhabitants of Lublin could see the terrible impact of the stone of misfortune also during the Second World War. When a procession with the relic of the Holy Cross Tree wandered around the city, protecting the residents, the stone drew German bombs upon itself. The surroundings of the Trinitarian Gate, where this unfortunate object was, were bombed the most severely and greatest number of people were killed there. Some say it was a coincidence, but can you believe them?

Therefore, it is better to repeat the warning: if you walk along Jezuicka Street and you come upon stone with a deep gap from the ax, please beware...





Semi-circular tower

A building called the Semi-circular Tower or the Gothic Tower stands near the Krakowska Gate. It is a remnant of the medieval defense system of the city. The building owes its name to the fact that it looks as if someone built a regular tower, and then cut it through the middle and took half of it away. As a result, we can see how it looks from the inside.

In the Middle Ages, this building had one more peculiar function. Candlesticks were produced there – candles that accompanied the lives of Christians throughout their spiritual path, and also had a great magical power – when placed in a window, they could protect against lightning during a storm or keep evil spirits far away from house.

Lublin experienced several fires in its history, the causes of which were different. It is said, that the city was once even burned down due to... pancakes. And despite the fact that the Semi-circular Tower has often suffered in the fires, it never became the direct cause. Who knows, maybe this was due to the candles produced there.

As for the ghost story, some say that one of the candlestick makers (called Joachim) fell in love with a townswoman who lived near the Krakowska Gate. In order to find the way to her on dark nights, he stole the candles produced in the Semi-circular Tower and walked along the streets of Lublin in their light. This sacrilege could not end well. It is not entirely known what happened to Joachim. It is known that today, on dark nights, you can sometimes encounter a false glow between the Semi-circular Tower and the Krakowska Gate. Joachim is repenting his theft unwisely committed for love.





City clockmaker with a drunken face

The clock on the Krakowska Gate was one of the most important devices owned by the city. First of all because it was the only clock in Lublin for a long time. It measured the time for the townspeople, setting the time of work and rest, informing about dates of meetings. It was important, therefore, that the clock measured time very, very accurately.

As stories tell us, Mr. Lutowski was responsible for the clock on the Krakowska Gate. The man was known better for drinking booze and causing scandals rather than for his meticulousness. His drunken screams were often heard from the clock tower. Lutowski was yelling on his wife and children, and when they were not at home, he shouted at the clock. Sometimes he threw a bottle at it or slammed the device here and there. It made the clock measure the time as it wished. Sometimes at noon it showed one o'clock, and sometimes eleven o'clock. Sometimes it stroke quarters instead of full hours, and it didn't strike full hours at all. Sometimes it operated too fast and sometimes too slowly.

Due to Lutowski's antics, the residents of Lublin were never sure whether the time on the clock was correct. Since then, time seems to flow differently in Lublin, and the city's residents do not attach so much importance to it. Who knows, maybe that is why life in Lublin is better?

Lutowski's lifestyle was terrible, in effect he did not live for very long. Despite the fact that after his death, the new clock conservator did not drink much vodka, the clock sometimes seemed to be drunk and showed the incorrect time. It was even said that it was the spirit of Lutowski that returned to his clock and set the hands.

Despite the fact that the clock has a new mechanism and timing as it should, today you can hear tapping and screaming at the Krakowska Gate at night. The inhabitants of Lublin say that Lutowski came back from the underworld. It is not known whether he wants to play with the clock again, or is just looking for a full bottle.



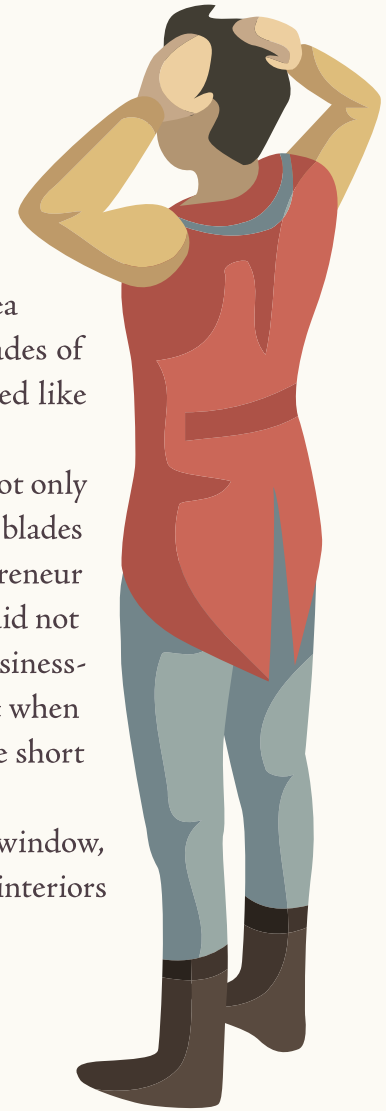


Boczarski and a mill

The palace at 13 Bernardyńska Street had many owners. For some time it belonged to the king of Poland, John III Sobieski (the name of the building used today stems from him). In the nineteenth century, the palace fell into the hands of Dominik Boczarski who came up with a genius idea to build a mill in the palace tower... and a rather unusual mill – the blades of the windmill were placed horizontally. As a result the entire tower looked like a huge helicopter.

Unfortunately, this particular idea turned out to be a complete flop. Not only that the windmill did not spin at all, when a storm came, it also smashed the blades into splinters and scattered them across the street. The unlucky entrepreneur decided to rebuild the mill, in which he invested all his savings, but that did not help his interests either – Boczarski went bankrupt. The failure of the businessman was known all over the city, and his name was even there in a proverb: when someone was unlucky in business, it was said that “he wound up with the short end of the stick, just like Boczarski did with his mill”.

When we stand in front of Sobieski’s palace on a moonless night, in the window, we might see the silhouette of Boczarski’s ghost, who wanders around the interiors of the palace, trying to find a way to save his business...





About Basia and Rudnicki

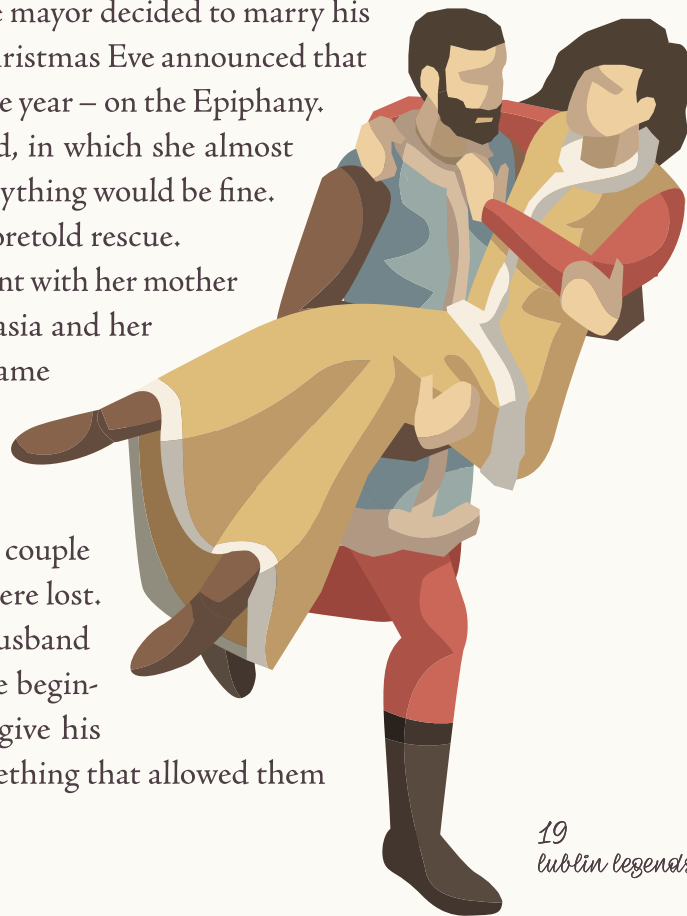
The mayor of Lublin, Sebastian Konopnica, was a man known for his savings and tenacity. He had a beautiful daughter, Basia, whom many young men fancied. Konopnica was hopeful regarding the girl. The father wanted her to marry Hanus, the son of neighbors, to multiply their ancestral wealth and strengthen their position in the city.

Unfortunately, after the father's efforts, Basia's heart was stolen by a young nobleman Jan Rudnicki. His curled mustache and hot blood made women fall for him – Basia was no exception. The unique thing was that Rudnicki liked her too. They fell in love at first sight, but the mayor, Konopnica, did not want to hear about the poor nobleman as a son-in-law. In order to get Rudnicki out of Basia's head, the mayor decided to marry his daughter off to Hanus as soon as possible and on Christmas Eve announced that the engagement would be held at the beginning of the year – on the Epiphany.

Basia wrote a letter full of despair to her beloved, in which she almost said goodbye to him. Rudnicki assured her that everything would be fine. The days passed, however, inexorably and nothing foretold rescue.

On the day of the engagement, Basia, as always, went with her mother to church. Not days but hours were left between Basia and her proposal and she lost hope. However, Rudnicki came after the mass. Basia thought that he wanted to beg for her hand for the last time, but he did something else. He took her in his arms, threw her onto a cart, and then rushed the horses! The cart with the young couple disappeared in the blizzard and all traces of them were lost.

And then they returned to Rudnicki's estate as husband and wife. It was difficult for the young couple at the beginning, because old Konopnica did not want to forgive his daughter's disobedience. Fortunately, they had something that allowed them to survive the greatest adversities – true love.





Jagietto chapel

King Władysław Jagiełło often traveled between Lithuanian Vilnius and Polish Krakow. No wonder that he regularly visited the Lublin castle. There, he received deputies, he organized feasts there, of course, he prayed in the local chapel. However, the chapel at the castle differed from those that the king knew from Russian Orthodox churches. It was modest, and no murals decorated its walls.

This fact was often mentioned by the deputies of the East who were accustomed to beautiful icons painted in their temples from the ground to the ceiling. The king, who understood eastern customs perfectly said that Lublin deserved the most beautiful chapel in Poland. So he sent messengers to find a master who would take on the creation of paintings for the castle chapel. The messengers traveled from monastery to monastery, viewing the most beautiful frescos and looking for the best painter.

When they reached Łuck, they came across master Andrei, called Rusin, whose icons were so beautiful that the soul began to pray from the very sight of them. They gave him a proposal to create paintings for the king himself, promising a generous salary. Master Andrei agreed and he went to Lublin along with his helpers.

The Master worked for two years, filling the walls and vaults with images of angels and saints. Day and night, in the heat and frost, Andrei and his helpers worked without interruption until the work was ready. When the king and his guests finally got to see the interior of the chapel, they were dumbfounded. Some of the most beautiful paintings seen by the human eye were created in the Lublin Castle. Master Andrei created a miracle there.

Between the scenes from the Bible and the lives of the saints, Jagiełło spotted something that took his breath away from his royal breasts. He saw himself kneeling in front of Mary and the Child. The Holy Virgin and her Son blessed the king. In another painting, Jagiełło appeared again, in full armor, riding a white horse towards Lithuania. The king was so impressed with the interior of the chapel that he paid Andrei twice as much money as he promised. The Master from Łuck proved that he was not only a great painter, but also knew his clients well.

To this day you can see what Andrei created in the Lublin castle. And it is really worth it!





Cloister of Trinitarians

And since we're talking about Łuck...

It was a dark, rainy night when a mysterious wanderer knocked at the gates of a Bernardine monastery. He traveled from a distance and knew that he would not be able to reach the gates of Łuck. So he decided to ask the monks for accommodation. However an old porter who opened the gate refused. He only gave the traveler a loaf of bread and a glass of beer, so that he would not go on hungry.

The stranger ate and drank and went further to the nearby church of St. Michael, where trinitarian brothers (the Order of the Holy Trinity) resided. The building was poor, but the monks welcomed the wanderer with open arms.

– There will always be some space with our Father for everyone! – they used to say.

The Trinitarians dealt with the liberation of Christians from Turkish Jassir, so they knew perfectly well how to care for weary travelers. They took care of the stranger who had stayed at their modest premises for three days.

It turned out that the wanderer was Paweł Majkowski, a high-ranking and rich official who gave several tributes to his trinitarians for the hospitality and made sure that the St. Michael church became the property of the order. He also donated large sums to build a monastery dedicated to the Holy Trinity.

Majkowski himself stayed in the monastery and lived in it until his death. He did not forget about the Bernardines. He sent them a loaf of bread every week, and also a keg of beer once a month.





Fire!!!

There are, however, more unlucky orders in the area of Łuck. Such is definitely the order of Brigidine Sisters which contributed to the great fire of the entire city. It is not known exactly where the fire came from. When the flames overwhelmed the entire roof, no one asked about it. Whoever could, grabbed a bucket and ran to save the sisters. And this is where a problem arose.

Well, the statute of the Brigidine Sisters' congregation forbade men from entering the monastery. Despite the fact that the entire monastery was in flames, the sisters did not let firefighters or men who were there to help them inside.

The monastery was burning, but that was not the end. The fire occupied the neighboring buildings, and the subsequent ones caught fire from them, and soon the entire city was on fire. Despair overwhelmed its inhabitants, and only the mother superior of the order was calm, seeing the sign of the approaching end of the world in the heat raging over the city.

If you can say something good about the fire, it is only that the fire of the Monastery of Brigidine Sisters destroyed the statute of the Monastery that caused Łuck to suffer its terrible fate along with the monastery. That's what the spiteful claimed at least.





Three windows

Where did Karaims come from – we do not really know. Some say that at first they lived in Turkey, others that Egypt was their country of origin, and others saw their beginning in Jerusalem. It is known, however, that they appeared in our lands around the 13th century. They were considered very wise people. “Karaim” means “someone who reads”. No wonder that they were very respected for their knowledge and were often placed on par with the nobility.

They also took part in the battle of Grunwald as soldiers of prince Witold. As a reward for the services, the prince called the Karaim Elders together and said:

– I would like to reward you for your merits. I do not have the money, so do not ask for gold.

The eldest and wisest of the Karaims bowed to the prince and replied:

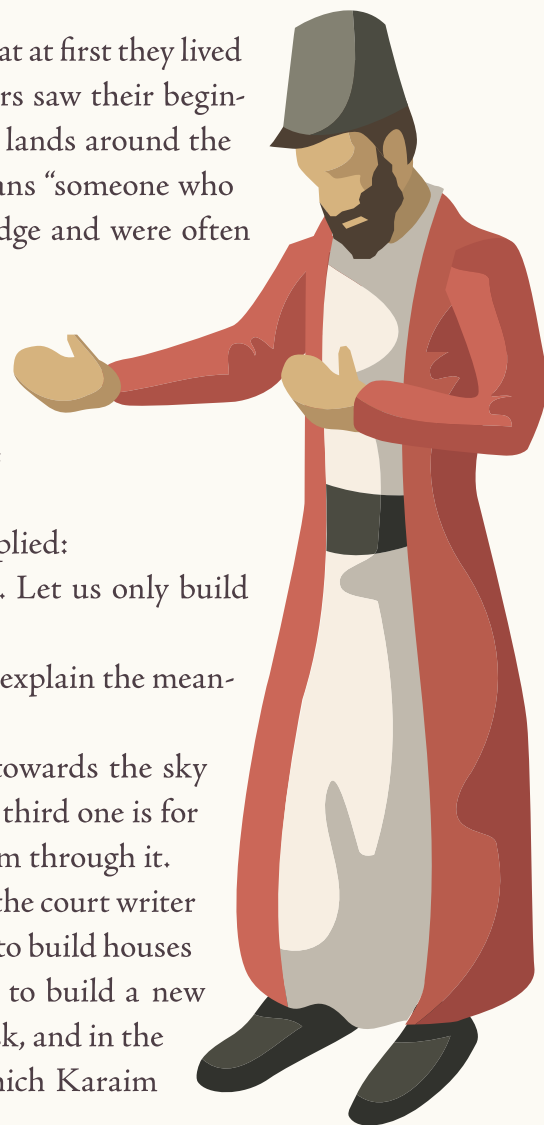
– Our Lord! We dare not ask for money or for great privileges. Let us only build houses that will have three windows facing the street.

Witold was surprised by this request, so he asked the old man to explain the meaning to him. Karaim bowed for the second time and said:

– Our Lord! One window will be for our God. We will look towards the sky through it. Through the second we will look at our great ruler. The third one is for us to always see our guests approaching our house and to invite them through it.

Witold smiled slightly and nodded appreciatively. He summoned the court writer and dictated a resolution to him in which the Karaims were allowed to build houses with three windows facing the street. From that time, they began to build a new type of houses. The entire Karaimska Street was established in Lutsk, and in the surrounding towns it was very easy to recognize the houses in which Karaim people lived.

Who can guess – what made them stand out?





TEXTS: Mateusz Świstak

ILLUSTRATIONS: Bartłomiej Zaborski

TYPOGRAPHIC DESIGN AND COMPOSITION: Tomasz Smółka

ISBN 976-98-73251-8-22

COPYRIGHT: Lublin City Office, Lublin 2019

Lublin City Office
plac Króla Władysława Łokietka 1
20-109 Lublin
east.lublin.eu

PRINT: Drukarnia Akapit
ul. Węglowa 3
20-481 Lublin

EDITION: 12 000



This brochure has been produced with the financial assistance of the European Union, under the ENI CBC Programme Poland–Belarus–Ukraine 2014–2020. The contents of this brochure are the sole responsibility of Municipality of Lublin and under no circumstances can be regarded as reflecting the position of the European Union, the MA or the Joint Technical Secretariat of the ENI CBC Programme Poland–Belarus–Ukraine 2014–2020

PL-BY-UA
2014-2020

Financed by
the **European Union**

