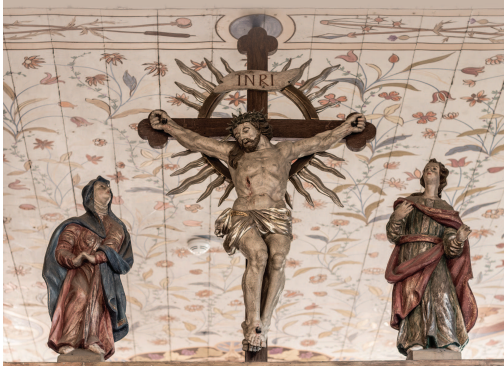




WOODEN HERITAGE OF THE ARCHDIOCESE OF GNIEZNO



Almost 80 wooden historical objects in nine churches have been renovated and have undergone maintenance as a part of European Union subsidy in the regions of the Archdiocese of Gniezno. We would like to encourage you to see the effects of work of a team which consisted of 60 people who have been engaged in preservation and promotion of cultural heritage.



WOODEN HERITAGE OF THE ARCHDIOCESE OF GNIEZNO

St. Adalbert who appears in the logo is the patron saint of the Archdiocese of Gniezno. His attributes are objects made of wood: a cross and an oak with a spear with which he was killed during his mission to christianize Prussia in 997.

[WWW.DREWNIANEZABYTKI.PL](http://www.drewnianezabytki.pl)

WANT TO LEARN MORE?

- check the website: www.drewnianezabytki.pl or www.bozaiskra.pl/gniezno
- download the guidebook from the website: tab Materials to download
- download the application on your mobile phone (Android/iOS): *Wooden Heritage of the Archdiocese of Gniezno* or *The Divine Spark* (you will also find historical objects from the Dioceses of Bydgoszcz and Kalisz).

In each of the churches included in the project, one can find materials for people who are blind or visually impaired (texts in the braille alphabet and tactile pictures).

WANT TO SEE MORE?



DIVINE SPARK

Enter the website www.bozaiskra.pl and plan your trip around the Archdioceses of Gniezno and the Dioceses of Kalisz and Bydgoszcz.

The Divine Spark is a project for tourists which presents wooden historical buildings and objects from the perspective of the artists' and artisans' talent and the perspective of the faithful for whom the works of art were intermediaries for the pleas and prayers.

The publishing house has been established as a part of the project *Renovation and maintenance of wooden historical objects of the Archdiocese of Gniezno for creation of new educational and cultural offer*, financed from the Operational Programme Infrastructure and Environment (Priority axis VIII Protection of cultural heritage and development of cultural resources, Action 8.1) Protection of cultural heritage and development of cultural resources).

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CIENIN KOŚCIELNY. CHURCH OF ST. CATHERINE OF ALEXANDRIA

AMBO MEANS 'ELEVATION'

Not many elements in church have lost their function in the process of technological development and which have been abandoned completely in modern churches – such an element is a pulpit (Polish *ambona* from Latin *ambo* – "elevation"). It served preachers to proclaim the word of God and to deliver sermons. It was put on a pillar or the rood screen, in a place between *sacrum* (chancel) and *profanum* (nave) considerably high above the floor so that the voice of priest reached the farthest corners of the church. A priest delivered sermons from the pulpit in mother tongues, he interpreted the Bible and explained it for the faithful (the official language of the holy mass was Latin).

The pulpit in the parish church in Cienin Kościelny has an unusual form. The doors in the rood screen lead to the pulpit and inside steps go up to the elevation.

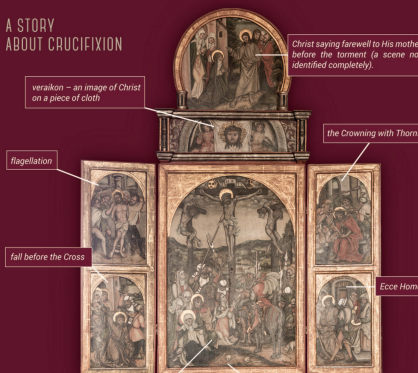
The basket of the pulpit has been decorated with bas-reliefs of images of the four Evangelists with their attributes (Mark with a lion, Matthew with a man, Luke with an ox and John with an eagle) and the image of Jesus Christ – with an open book with Greek letter alpha and omega which symbolize beginning and end.

MUSIC IS PRAYER

According to St. Augustine, "the one who sings, prays twice". Complementary to the Word of God proclaimed from the pulpit is liturgical singing in which all faithful should participate. Pipe-organs, organ cases and music gallery are indispensable elements of church. They are on the opposite side of the main altar which allows the sound of the organs to "float" above the heads of the faithful, to fill the space and complete celebrations. Organs create a sublime and solemn atmosphere and they enhance the mystery of the mass.

MŁODOJEWÓ: CHURCH OF ST. NICHOLAS

A STORY ABOUT CRUCIFIXION



variation – an image of Christ on a piece of cloth

flagellation

fall before the Cross

The main painting is the scene of "The Crucifixion of Christ" with two thieves.

The triptych was created in 1581-1582 (Dates are put in different places of the painting).

Christ saying farewell to His mother before the torment (a scene not identified completely).

the Crowning with Thorns

Eccle Homo

ŁADEK: CHURCH OF ST. NICHOLAS THE BISHOP

Date of construction 1760-1777

CHRIST WHO SUFFERS

Wooden historical artworks as elements of furnishings are also found in churches made of stone. A beautiful processional cross attracts attention in the church of St. Nicolas in Ładek.

The sculpture which presents the dramatic moment of Christ's death was created 500 years ago. Unknown artist focused on the details of the crucified body. The hands which carry the body's weight are very stretched; muscles and tendons are depicted in great detail. Maybe by referring to the viewers' imagination, the artist wanted to emphasize Christ's suffering? He poured his own emotions into the sculpture by devoting himself to hard work with chisel and wood.

The figure of Christ, which has been saved from oblivion recently, is today a part of the processing cross that accompanies the citizens of Ładek during many ceremonies, eg. it leads Resurrection and Corpus Christi processions.



The acronym *HNRI* put of the cross means: *Iesus Nazarenus Rex Iudeorum* – "Jesus of Nazareth Jewish King"

Christ's tunic (so called *perizonium*) was presented in different ways during ages. In the Middle Ages it was very short, draped with a knot on the side.

Date of construction 1748-1802



PENSIVE CHRIST

Pensive Christ image is first and foremost a depiction of human nature of God deprived of supernatural perfection, who is sad and lost in thought over the cruelty of men. The iconography had become common in folk art – sculptures were put in small chapels by country roads which served for local, folk religious practices. In the old days, Pensive Christ was a commonplace element of the countryside.



The sculpture shows Christ who is sitting and contemplating, with his head supported by a hand. Some read this depiction as a figure of Christ waiting for crucifixion just after the torment, to which the Crown of Thorns and the marks of flagellation indicate. Another, more general interpretation states that this is a symbolic summary of the whole Passion.

The figure of Pensive Christ was made in the Gothic style from wood almost 500 years ago.

THE LEGEND OF ST. NICHOLAS

One of the most common patron saints of churches is St. Nicolas – we can find his image also on a feretory (a portable religious painting painted on both sides, in decorative frames which is held during processions) from Ładek. The oldest record of St. Nicolas says that he lived in the turn of the 3rd and 4th centuries and that he was a bishop of Myra. He became famous for his miracles and help for the poor. His parents were noble, rich and religious. When he grew up, he renounced women, entertainment, politics and trade and he devoted himself to piety.

St. Nicolas is thought to be the saint who helps in every need – that's why so many churches are dedicated to him.

After his parents' death Nicolas gave his money away. He advocated for victims, and aided the poor. He is presented with three marbles which can be attributed to a legend of the three neighbour's three daughters. The neighbour was punished by God for his greed and he lost his wealth so he didn't have a dowry for the daughters. He wanted to sell them to a brothel. Then St. Nicolas decided to save the girls and he threw bags with money through windows. Only when the third daughter collected the money did the neighbour decide to learn who is so generous and when he discovered the truth, ashamed, he thanked Nicolas.



Date of construction 1780



The triptych from St. Nicholas church in Młodojewo is an outstanding and unique work of art. The name means that it consists of three main elements: the central one with the painting of Christ crucified and side movable wings covered on both sides with paint decorations. Usually the triptych is opened apart from Easter period when the wings are closed to present the scenes connected with Resurrection.

The triptych is not a common painting that depicts the Crucifixion. Its artistic style connects two epochs: late Middle Ages and the Renaissance. The form of the triptych is typical for the late Gothic and also the way the figures were painted and their styling were created in the Gothic aesthetics. However, the landscape in the background, the use of perspective, Mary Magdalene's and the horseman's robes are Renaissance elements. Presumably, those figures are the founders. Additionally, the depiction of the founders in the same size as the rest of the figures in the painting is an innovation (in comparison to Gothic).

Unusual is also the way of presenting scenes of the Passion of Christ as a story, a tale with a message told by an anonymous artist. Through his work, the artist engages the viewer in a dialogue by including symbolic content and by referring to the viewer's erudition, knowledge and sensitivity (eg. dates, the figures of thieves, skulls). The works displays the artist's expression and skills, but it also conveys history – the obvious, mainstream one and the symbolic one found between brushstrokes. Undoubtedly, the divine spark had given the artist his talent thanks to which a mere piece of wooden plank turned into extraordinary work of art.

WRZEŚNIA: CHURCH OF THE HOLY CROSS

Date of construction 1667 (1646)

AN ESCAPE FROM THE PLAGUE

The erection of the church in Lipka is connected with a miraculous spring. The tradition of healings attributed to it is emphasized by the pictures of saints in the church: Rosalia and Roch who guarded from the plague and infectious diseases.



St. Roch lived in the 13th and 14th centuries and was born in Languedoc. As his mother prayed for a child, he was born with a cross-shaped birthmark on his chest. He gave all the money he inherited to the poor and he helped in a hospital in Rome. He became famous during his lifetime due to miraculous healing; however, he fell sick with the plague himself. When he returned to Languedoc, he was considered a spy and captured. Probably his jealous uncle was behind it. Roch died after being captured and put to jail and he was recognized by the local people thanks to the birthmark. On the body there was a piece of paper which said that those who asked St. Roch for help in the time of plague would be healed. St. Roch is the guardian of the sick, hospitals, prisoners.



St. Rosalia was a virgin and a hermit who lived in the 12th century in Palermo. She was born in a wealthy family where she grew up in Christian faith. The name Rosalia got her closer to God – *rosa* means love to fellow men and to God, and *lily* stands for purity and devotion to God. The saint declined the proposition of marriage to a young man from a rich family and she escaped to a cave near Palermo, where she led a hermit's life, full of prayers and mortification. She died at thirty-one.



LUBOWO: CHURCH OF ST. NICHOLAS

Date of construction
1660

SACRUM AND PROFANUM

Some elements of furnishings in wooden churches had symbolic functions in dividing the spheres of *sacrum* and *profanum*. Undoubtedly, the roof beam was one of them but it is also worth to pay attention to a balustrade because it has not been preserved in many churches. The balustrade was put on the chancel's steps where the faithful kneel while taking Communion. It is the element of the church's furnishings where the faithful come close to redemption by accepting the Holy Sacrament.

The balustrade consists of decorative balusters. It is crowned with a stylized flowery ornament with a capital in a form of head (this way a stylized caryatid – a column in a shape of a woman the form of which dates to Antiquity – was made). All the experience and knowledge was conveyed in this wooden work by an anonymous woodcarver.



PRIVATE ALTAR

An object which stands out from wooden historic monuments is an altar from a side chapel built in 1720 and made of larch wood. Its founders were the Lutomski family, the owners of the village Lubowo.

Presumably the altar was an expression of gratitude and served for private prayer. Probably putting of St. John of Nepomuk's figure here – a martyr who died because he didn't want to break the seal of confession – was not accidental. He was the patron saint to whom the most secret pleas, requests and thanksgiving were entrusted. The altar in the chapel, erected as a votive offering, thanksgiving, is a place of concentration and silent, inner prayer.

The symbol of the Eye of Providence surrounded by a halo with golden rays.



The fabric is clipped by a crown which is held by angels called puttos.

Characteristic for this altar is a draped, silvered fabric in its centre, called palamentum.

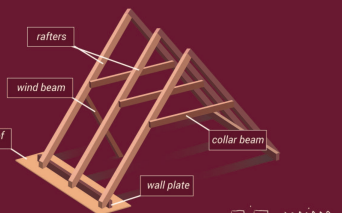
On the sides of the fabric there are figures of the Mother of God and St. John of Nepomuk.

WALISZEWO: CHURCH OF ST. CATHERINE

Date of construction
1759

ARTISTRY OF CARPENTRY

Rafters are elements present in every building, integral to the construction. They are often underestimated witnesses of history which can provide them new information on a building's story. A rafter roof with collar beam support in the church in Waliszewo is the evidence of that.



Carpenters used woodworking signs, which were graphic marks of construction elements. This allowed to fix the elements in a proper place. Sometimes a date was put – not only in reference to the date of construction of the church but also as a mark of its renovations – and the worker's signature.

MOTHER BOWED WITH GRIEF APPALLING

The date of construction is confirmed by the date put of the roof beam – 1759. This place has a special meaning, it's just below the vault between the chancel and the main nave which stands for a symbolic connection of *sacrum* of the chancel and *profanum* – the nave. The Polish name *belka tęczywa* refers to rainbow which links heaven and earth (English "roof beam" refers to its role: it supports a large cross at the entrance to the chancel).

Draped robes entwine calm, static figures whose expression is shown mainly by the tilting of their heads. Their poses don't exactly convey sadness and pain after losing the loved one but rather reverent and grief. The figures symbolize reflection on the human life, maybe on its destiny. The wooden sculptures express experience and focus which accompanied the anonymous artist who was unmistakably inspired by "the divine spark" seen in those works of art.

A Crucifixion Group, which was created in the first quarter of the 18th century, was put on the roof beam. It is the oldest structure, older than the church itself. It points to a former, older church in the place of which a new building was erected.



Mother bowed with grief appalling, must thou watch, with tears slow falling, Through my heart, thus sorrow risen, must that cruel sword be driven, as foretold – O holy One, 13th century Latin song Stabat Mater Dolorosa



SOKOLNIKI: CHURCH OF ST. STANISLAUS THE BISHOP MARTYR

Date of construction
1682-1712

THE MURDER OF THE BISHOP

The church is Sokolniki is characterized by a beautifully painted interior. Polychromies were made in 1787 by Ignacy Ocaszalski. A fragment of the painting shows "The Martyrdom of St. Stanislaus" to whom the parish is dedicated to. St. Stanislaus, whose name means "become famous", was born in 1030 in the village Szczepanowo. From the chronicle of the annalist Wincenty Kadubek we learn that the bishop was in conflict with the king Bolesław the Bold; he criticized the king's attitude towards the subjects, he rebuked the king and asked the king to come to his senses. He was sentenced to martyr's death by having his limbs cut off. According to the chronicler, the hot-headed king killed the disobedient clergyman by himself and cut his body to pieces with a sword.

Over time the cult of St. Stanislaus developed and the bishop was thought to be the patron saint of Poland. The legend of his limbs miraculously fused together with the body had gained special importance. He was considered to be a symbol of the permanence of the state, which united after the feudal fragmentation. Probably for the canonization of the saint Wincenty of Kiełca wrote a hymn "Gaiude, Mater Polonia prole fecunda nobili" (Rejoice, oh Mother Poland, rich in noble offspring) – the song tells about the bishop's service, his martyrdom and miracles which took place after his death.



INOWROCLAW: PARISH CHURCH OF ST. NICHOLAS

Date of construction
15TH CENTURY

MYSTICAL CHRIST

In the centre of the Baroque side altar in the church of St. Nicholas there is a figure of the Crucified Christ which is almost 400 years older than the altar itself (it is dated to the half of the 14th century). It was adorned with the cityscape of Jerusalem made of silvered metal sheet with ornamental asymmetric flower motifs also made of metal sheet. The elements were added as recently as the beginning of the 20th century.

Christ Crucified represents a stylistic form of so called mystic type. Not uniform in style, sculptured in such a way that in some places is incorrect in regard to human anatomy (eg. the pattern of ribs is not accurate), it shows a special moment. It is the moment of agony shown by a falling head with a subtle voice of pain and the weight of body supported by hands which are tense with visible tendons. The connection of suffering and acceptance of inevitable destiny, peace which emanates from the tortured body is linked with need for presentation of the human nature of Christ – suffering and reconciled with his sacrifice.



POPOWO KOŚCIELNE: CHURCH OF ANNUNCIATION TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

Date of construction
1660

SARMATIAN TRADITIONS

We can find an image of St. Stanislaus also in the church in Popowo Kościelne – it can be found on the side altar. Here (as in Sokolniki) an artist transferred the historical scene from the 11th century to his times – into the 17th century. The bishop is shown here in typical clergyman's clothes but the rest of the figures are wearing Sarmatian clothing typical for 17th century noblemen.

A Polish Sarmatian was a warrior, his character traits were courage, manhood and also freedom. He should fight to defend the country and Christian faith. Sarmatism as one of the schools of thought and artistic trends of Polish Baroque is an untypical phenomenon. In the church in Popowo Kościelne one can notice its influence in coffin portraits put on the walls made at the end of the 17th century and on many portraits of founders presented in Sarmatian clothing.

According to an 11th century legend Stanislaus the bishop of Cracow planned to build a church. He bought a piece of land from a knight called Piotrow, who soon died. Stanislaus was accused on taking the land unlawfully. A court was called and the trial began. Because Stanislaus couldn't prove his innocence, he resurrected the deceased Piotrow so that he could testify. This way the accusation was lifted and St. Stanislaus regained his honour.

The church was founded in 1629 by Stanisław Zagórski, a burgrave of Nakło. Perhaps it was his or the following owners' of the village initiative to add a benefactor's lounge (for the founder) above the vesty. This location emphasized the special position of the noblemen, the aristocracy, who attended the mass separated from the commoners, very close to the sacrum area.



Sarmatian clothing was very grand, rich and colourful. It consisted of a caftan tied with a belt, on which a robe called kontusz was worn. Shawar pants were put on legs. Characteristic for a Sarmatian were a mustache and a beard, a trimmed head with a lock of hair left on its top.

Reltable – a kind of an altarpiece. These were usually paintings, sculptures or gold objects, or elements which imitated architectural details put in decorated frames.

In the centre there is a painting of the Mother of God with Child and at the bottom the scene of St. Stanislaus the Bishop's murder was painted. The composition of the scene was copied from the wall polychromy and changed slightly by adding witnesses of the event – standing men in Sarmatian clothing and a dismembered body of the bishop above the group of figures.

Gates on the left and the right sides of the altar allow to walk around (this solution is repeated on stone churches which possessed an ambulatory).



Images of Moses and Aaron in laurel wreaths are put above the gates.

Tabernacle – a reference to a tent where the Israelites kept the Ark of Covenant (Latin tabernaculum – tent), a richly decorated cabinet used for keeping of consecrated Hosts – the central point of a church.

HOW THE ALTAR WAS BUILT

Most important elements of the church's furnishings are the main altar and a tabernacle inside it. Due to the easiness of processing, the cost and the material's availability they were made of wood. The process of the creation of an altar can be divided into stages. The most important is the collection of the material, wood has to be seasoned properly. The next stage is the removal of knots and the elimination of all roughness. Then on a polished surface a mixture of adhesive-chalk is spread, which is later decorated with ornaments and everything is polychromed, that is painted.

BAPTISM IN THE JORDAN RIVER

Indispensable equipment of Catholic church is a baptismal font. The one in the church in Inowrocław is made of wood. It represents a goblet type baptismal font – its original elements are a bowl with a cover, the pillar and the foundation. A sculpture representing the scene of Christ's baptism performed by John the Baptist was put on the font.

The Gospel by St. Mark says: "John wore clothing made of camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. And this was his message: "After me comes the one more powerful than I, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. I baptize you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit." At that time Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. Just as Jesus was coming up out of the water, he saw heaven being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. And a voice came from heaven: "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased."

In St. Nicholas church in Inowrocław Jan Kasprowicz, one of the greatest Polish poets, was baptized in 1860. He glorified the beauty of the landscape of the Kuyavia region where he was born, and parts of his poems were written in a stylized regional dialect.

