Frank Mordel and Barbara Kosmider

Compiled by Michael E. Byczek
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Michael E. Byczek's 5x-great-grandparents were Joseph (Józef) Mordel and Margaret (Małgorzata) Mikolaj. Joseph's parents were Frank (Franciszek) and Barbara Mordel, who lived in Płowki. He was born in 1779 when the village was served by the Chełmce Catholic Parish. Płowki became part of the Broniewo Parish shortly afterward.

There appears to have been only one Frank and Barbara Mordel family in the records of both parishes. They were from Płowki. Barbara had a brother named Thomas (Tomasz) Kosmider. It is presumed that they were full siblings, rather than half-siblings with different paternal surnames. Therefore, for genealogy purposes, Barbara's maiden name was Kosmider.

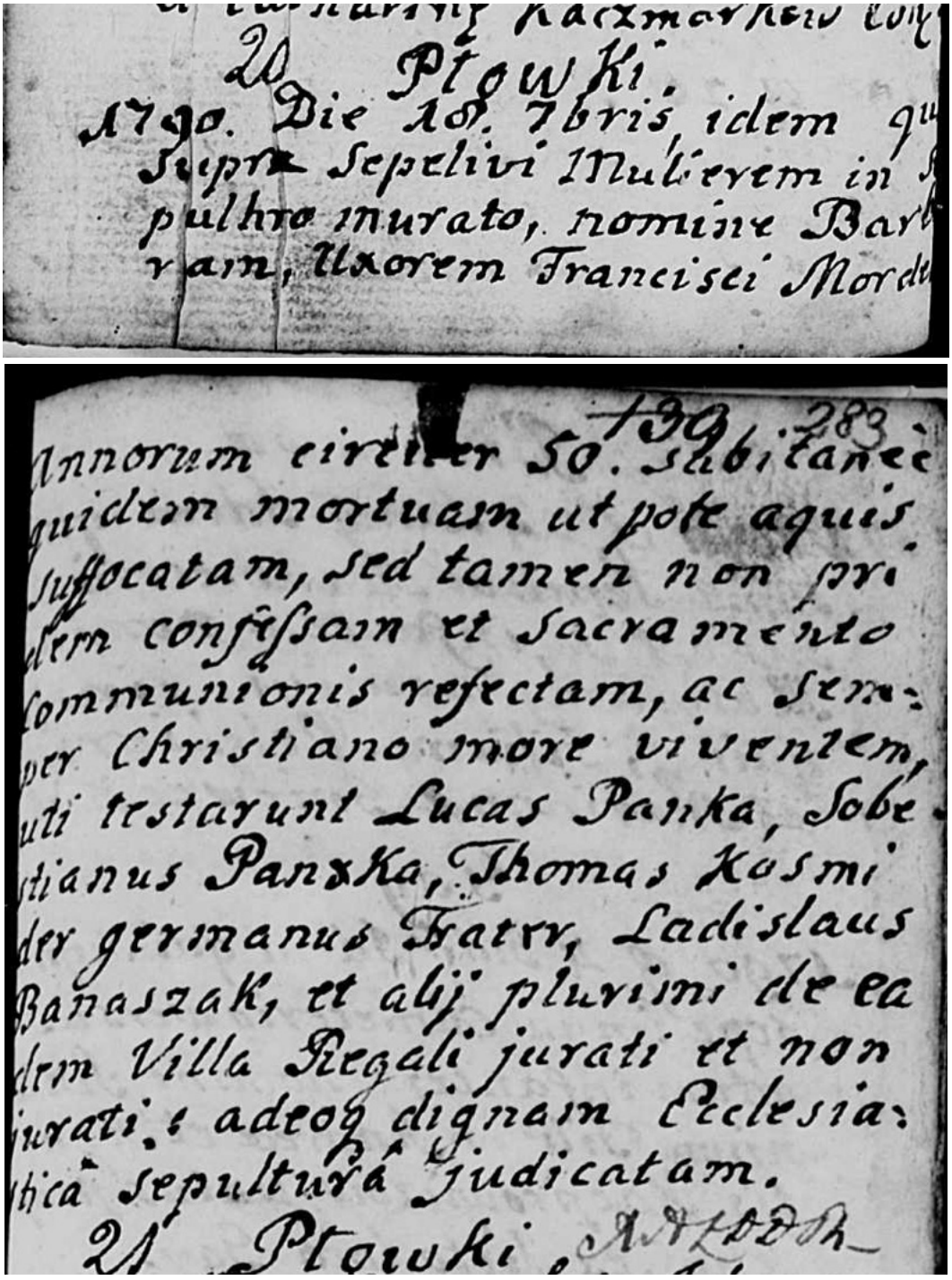
Frank Mordel and Barbara Kosmider had three known children, all born in Płowki.

Child	Birth
Marianna	1775
Joseph (Józef)	1779
Barbara	1781

Their son Joseph married Margaret (Małgorzata) Mikolaj around 1806. They are Michael E. Byczek's 5x-great-grandparents.

Barbara (Kosmider) Mordel passed away in 1790 while living in Płowki (Broniewo). The death record appears to indicate accidental drowning, although it does not provide enough information to fully understand what happened. The language of the death record suggests that Barbara Mordel was rescued from the water and lived long enough to receive the sacraments. The death record provided an estimated year of birth as 1740. Barbara's brother Thomas Kosmider was a witness to the death record. Hopefully, he conducted his own inquiries to determine what happened to his sister. It appears that Barbara Mordel was buried in a brick crypt, which may have indicated she or her family held a prominent status in the parish.

Frank Mordel passed away in 1815, also in Płowki (Broniewo). It is unknown whether he remarried after Barbara's death. The death record provided an estimated year of birth as 1745.


20 Płowki.
1790. Die 10. 7bris, idem qu
Supra Sepelivi Mulierem in
pulhro murato, nomine Bar
ram, Uxorem Francisci Mord
Annorum circiter 50. habitanc
quidem mortuam ut pote aquis
suffocatam, sed tamen non pri
ebem confessam et sacramento
Communionis refectam, ac sem
per Christiano more viventem,
uti testarunt Lucas Panka, Sebe
stianus Panzka, Thomas Kosmi
der germanus Fratr, Ladislaus
Banaszak, et alij plurimi de ea
dem Villa Regali jurati et non
jurati: adeoq dignam Eccles
stica Sepultura judicatam.
21 Płowki,

1790 Death record of Barbara Mordel
Płowki (Broniewo)

2. English Translation

Płowki [Broniewo Parish]

1790. On the **19th day of September [1790]**, I the same as above [priest] buried a woman in a brick crypt (*in pulchro murato*), named **Barbara**, wife of **Franciszek Mordel**, approximately **50 years of age** [born ~1740], who died rather suddenly, being as it were **suffocated by water** [drowned], but nevertheless having confessed shortly before and refreshed by the Sacrament of Holy Communion, and always living in a Christian manner, as testified by **Łukasz Panka**, **Sebastian Panka**, **Tomasz Kosmider**, her own brother (*germanus frater*), **Władysław Banaszak**, and many others from the same royal village (*Villa Regali*), sworn and unsworn: and therefore judged worthy of ecclesiastical burial.

AI translation (Google Gemini)

- **Social Status and Affluence:** Being buried in a brick crypt (*in pulchro murato*) indicates that Barbara and the Mordel family held a position of relative prominence, respect, or financial standing within the village of Płowki and the Broniewo parish, as crypt burials were typically reserved for individuals of higher status or those who contributed significantly to the parish community.
- **Circumstances of Death and Canonical Inquiry:** Because Barbara died suddenly by drowning (*"aquis suffocatam"*), Church authorities in the 18th century would typically investigate sudden or accidental deaths to rule out suicide (self-destruction), which under strict canon law could bar a deceased person from receiving consecrated, ecclesiastical burial. JPG
- **Proof of Last Rites and Consecrated Burial:** The explicit testimony from witnesses—including her brother Tomasz Kosmider and local villagers—certifying that she had confessed shortly before or during the event, received Holy Communion, and lived a pious life was legally and religiously necessary. This testimony satisfied the parish priest that her death was accidental rather than self-inflicted, allowing her to be officially judged worthy of a proper Christian burial with full ecclesiastical rites inside a brick crypt. JPG + 1

- **Not a Routine Weekly Confession:** The word *non pridem* in Latin translates to "not long ago" or "shortly before." In this context, it does not refer to a routine weekly habit, but rather to the immediate administration of the Sacrament of Penance (Confession) and Viaticum (Holy Communion) on her deathbed.
- **The Sequence of Events:** You read the sequence correctly—it strongly implies that she did not die instantly upon entering the water. Instead, she survived the initial submersion long enough to be pulled out, remain conscious or regain lucidity, and receive the last rites from a priest before passing away.
- **The Legal and Canonical Purpose:** This specific detail was meticulously recorded by the priest to protect the burial. Under strict canon law of the era, individuals who died suddenly without the sacraments—especially through accidents like drowning, which could arouse suspicion of suicide or despair—faced complicated hurdles regarding consecrated burial. Proving that she was lucid enough to confess and receive communion "shortly before" death legally cleared her for a proper Christian burial.

AI-assisted analysis (Google Gemini) of specific terminology in Barbara Mordel's death record.

Based on 18th-century parish record terminology, burial practices, and rural Polish context (specifically Kujawy around 1790), the Latin phrase `in pulchro murato` (more accurately transcribed in standard archival Latin as `in sepulchro murato` — *in a walled/masonry tomb or crypt*) refers to a **masonry vault built below ground** within or beneath the church, or inside a cemetery vault structure.

It does **not** mean a modern, standalone above-ground mausoleum on the surface.

1. Below Ground vs. Above Ground

- **Subterranean Masonry Vaults (Most Common):** In 18th-century Poland, a *sepulchrum muratum* was almost universally a brick-lined or stone-walled underground chamber beneath the floor of the parish church (or beneath a specific side chapel), or an underground brick vault dug into consecrated cemetery soil.
- **The "Walled" (*Murato*) Distinction:** Standard rural burials involved digging a simple earthen grave where the coffin rested directly against the soil. A "walled" tomb meant the pit was lined on all sides and arched overhead with mortared red brick or masonry.
- **Above-Ground Mausoleums Were Rare in Villages:** Standalone, above-ground mausoleum buildings with visible external doors were typically reserved for high nobility (*szlachta*) or wealthy urban patrons on major estates, rather than rural parish churches or smaller village chapels like those in Broniewo or Płowki.

2. Church Interior vs. Cemetery Vault

Depending on local parish custom in 1790, a *sepulchrum muratum* usually meant one of two places:

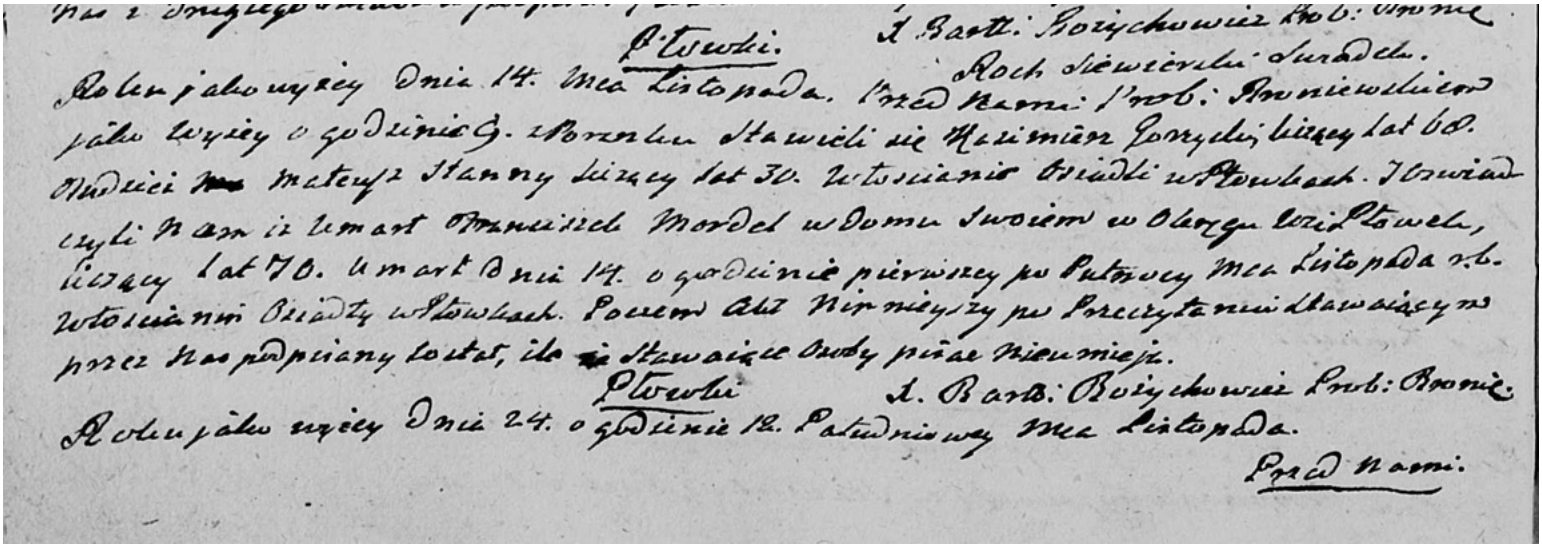
1. **Underneath the Church Floor:** Parish churches across Kujawy frequently featured underground brick vaults constructed beneath the aisle, nave, or chancel. Important parishioners, church donors, or respected local families were buried in these lower brick crypts beneath floor flagstones.
2. **An Underground Family/Parish Vault:** If located outside in the parish burial ground, it was a brick-lined subterranean vault sealed above with a stone slab or brick cap.

3. Why This Phrase Was Written

The priest noted *in sepulchro murato* alongside the details of her drowning and last rites for a specific reason:

- **Distinction in Burial Status:** Lying in a brick-lined vault was a visual and administrative mark of respect, separating a proper, honorable Christian burial from an unceremonious grave.
- **Permanent Protection:** A brick crypt ensured the physical coffin was enclosed within a solid structure, protecting the deceased from dirt collapse and distinguishing it from standard earthen pits.

AI-assisted analysis (Google Gemini) about the “brick crypt” used for Barbara’s burial



1815 Death record of Frank Mordel
Płowki (Broniewo)

2. English Translation

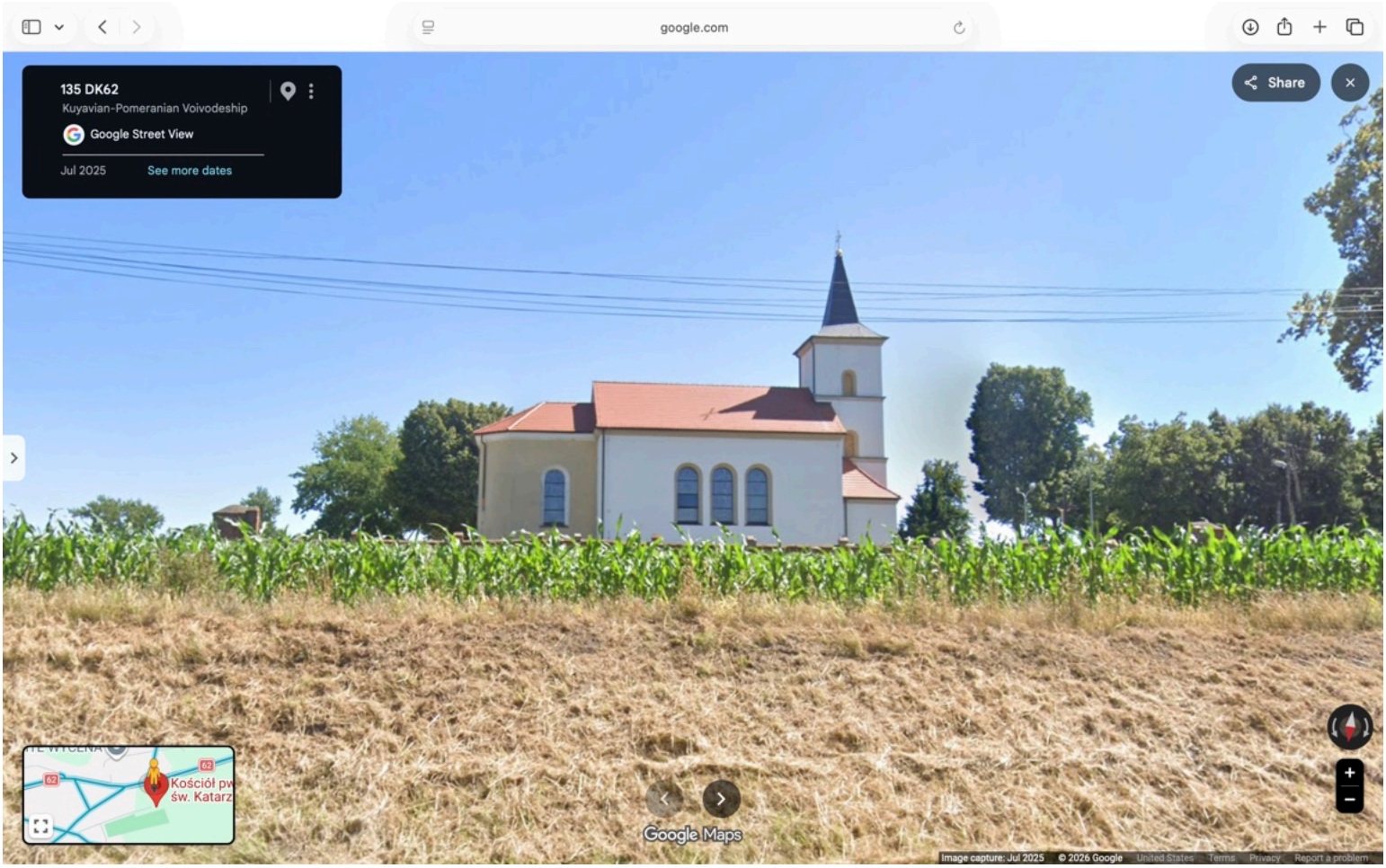
Płowki [Broniewo Parish]

In the year as above, on the **14th day of the month of November** [1815]. Before Us, the Pastor of Broniewo as above, at 9:00 in the evening, appeared **Kazimierz Gorzycki**, 60 years of age, and **Mateusz Stanny**, 30 years of age, both settled peasant farmers (*włościanie osiadli*) residing in Płowki. And they declared to Us that **Franciszek Mordel** died in his house in the area of the village of Płowki, **70 years of age** [born ~1745]. He died on the **14th day of the month of November of the current year** at 1:00 after midnight, a settled peasant farmer residing in Płowki. Whereupon this Act, after being read aloud to the declarants, was signed by Us, as the appearing persons do not know how to write. —

[Signed] **Fr. Bartłomiej Borychowicz, Pastor of Broniewo**

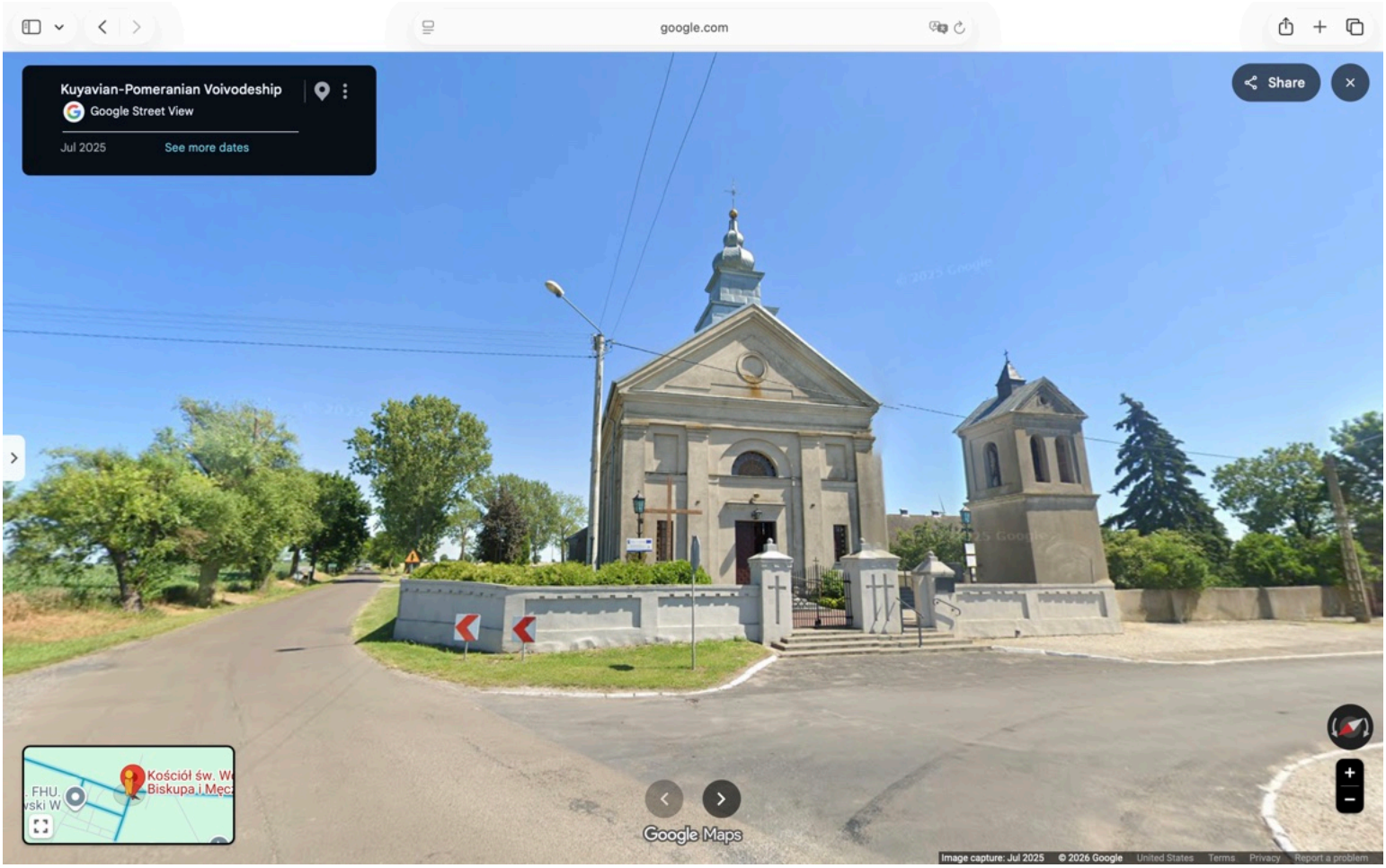
Roch Siewierski, Witness

AI translation (Google Gemini)



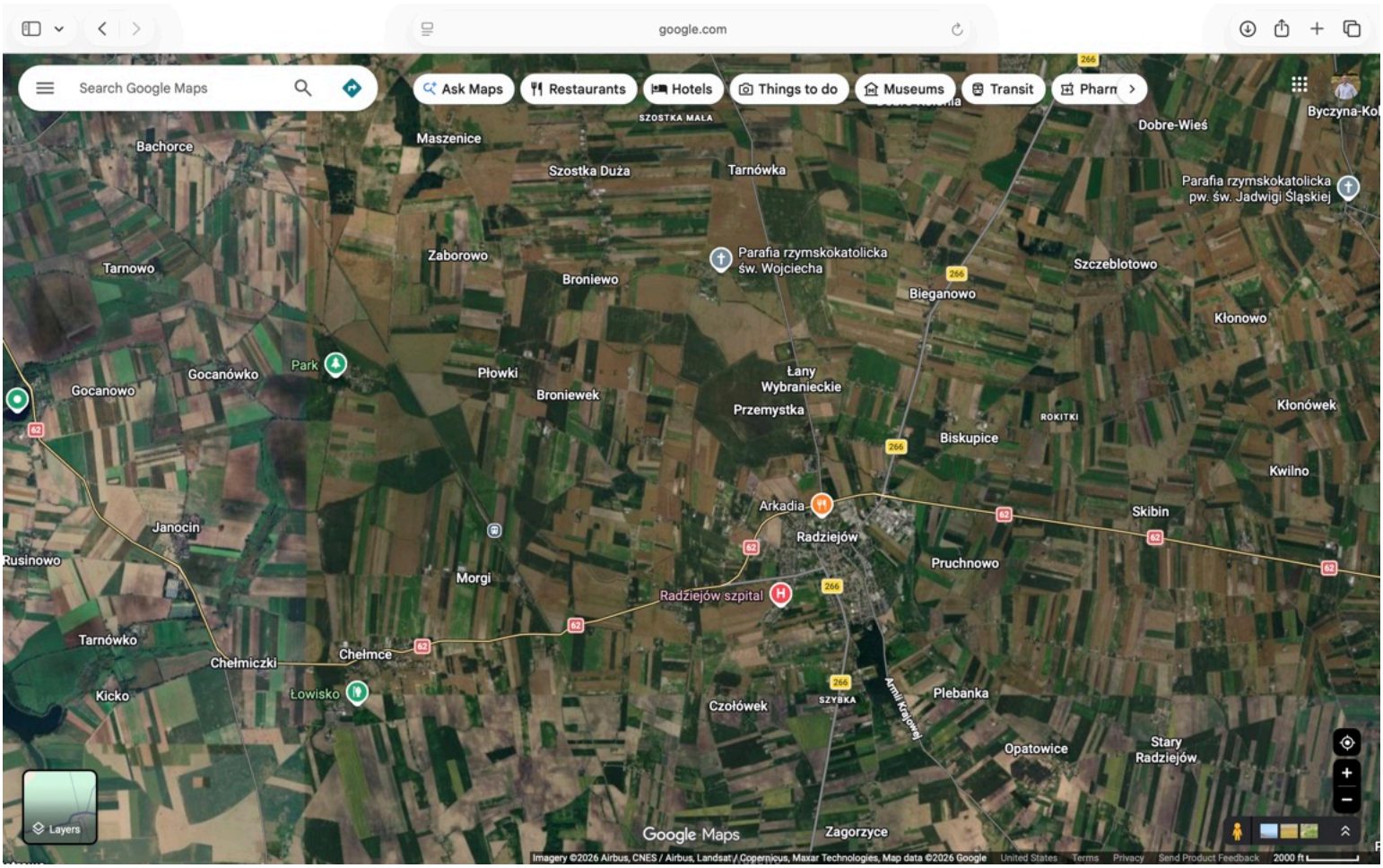
Present-day Catholic Church in Chełmce
Church of St. Catherine of Alexandria

Source: Google Maps (Street View)



Present-day Catholic Church in Broniewo
Roman Catholic Parish of St. Adalbert

Source: Google Maps (Street View)

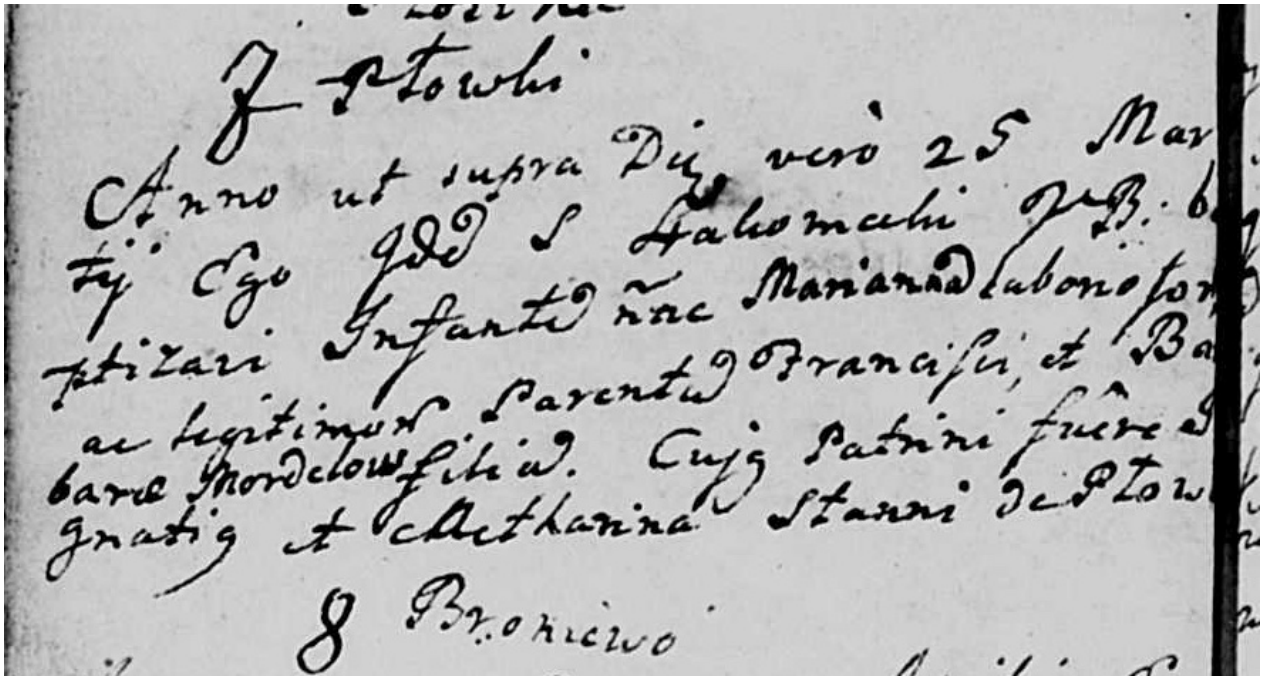


Płowki is in the middle of the image left of Radziejow
Chełmce is in the lower left corner
Broniewo is above Płowki

Source: Google Maps

Children of Frank Mordel and Barbara Kosmider

Representative documents are shown below.



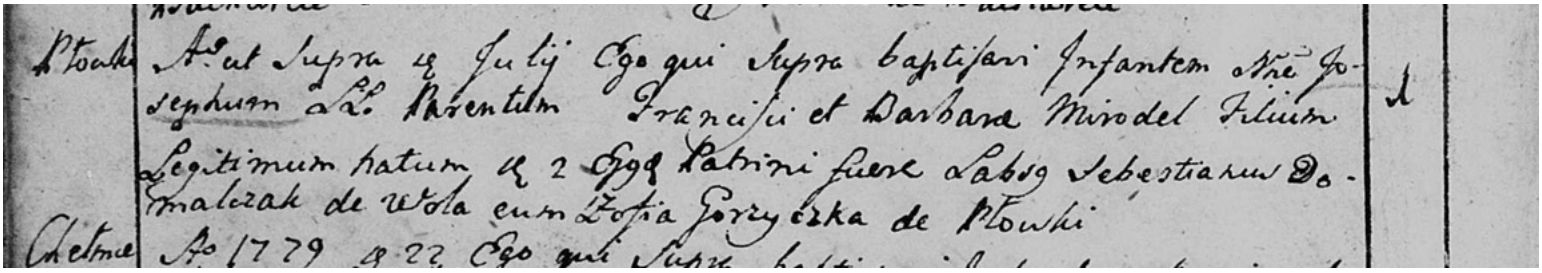
1775 Baptism of Marianna Mordel
Płowki (Broniewo)

2. English Translation

No. 7. From Płowki [Broniewo Parish] JPG

In the year as above [1775], on the **25th day of March**. I, the same as above, Stanisław Hałomski, Mansionary of Broniewo, baptized an infant named **Marianna**, daughter of the laboring (*laboriosi*) and lawful parents **Franciszek** and **Barbara Mordel**. Her godparents were Ignatius (?) Gnatis and Katarzyna Stanny from Płowki. JPG + 2

AI translation (Google Gemini)



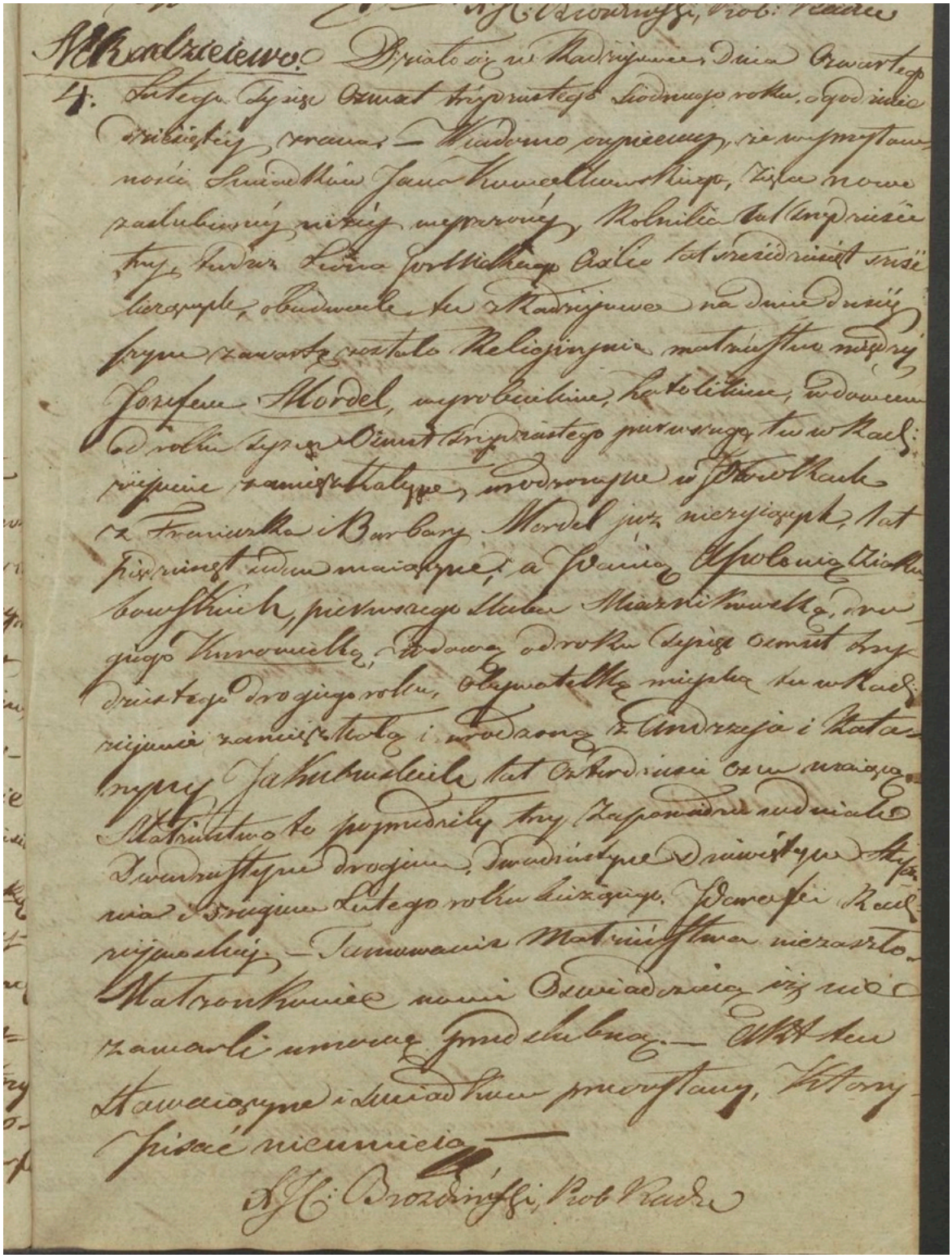
1779 Baptism of Joseph Mordel
Płowki (Chełmce)

2. English Translation

Płowki [Chełmce Parish]

In the year as above [1779], on the **4th day of July** [July 4, 1779]. I, who am above, baptized an infant named **Józef**, legitimate son of the laboring parents **Franciszek** and **Barbara Miodel** [Mordel], born on the 2nd of the same [month]. His godparents were the laboring **Sebastian Domałczak** from Wola along with **Zofia Gorzyńska** from Płowki. JPG

AI translation (Google Gemini)



1837 Marriage of Joseph Mordel and Apolonia Jakubowski
Radziejów Parish

The village where the marriage was listed is illegible

English Translation

Sikorzewo No. 4

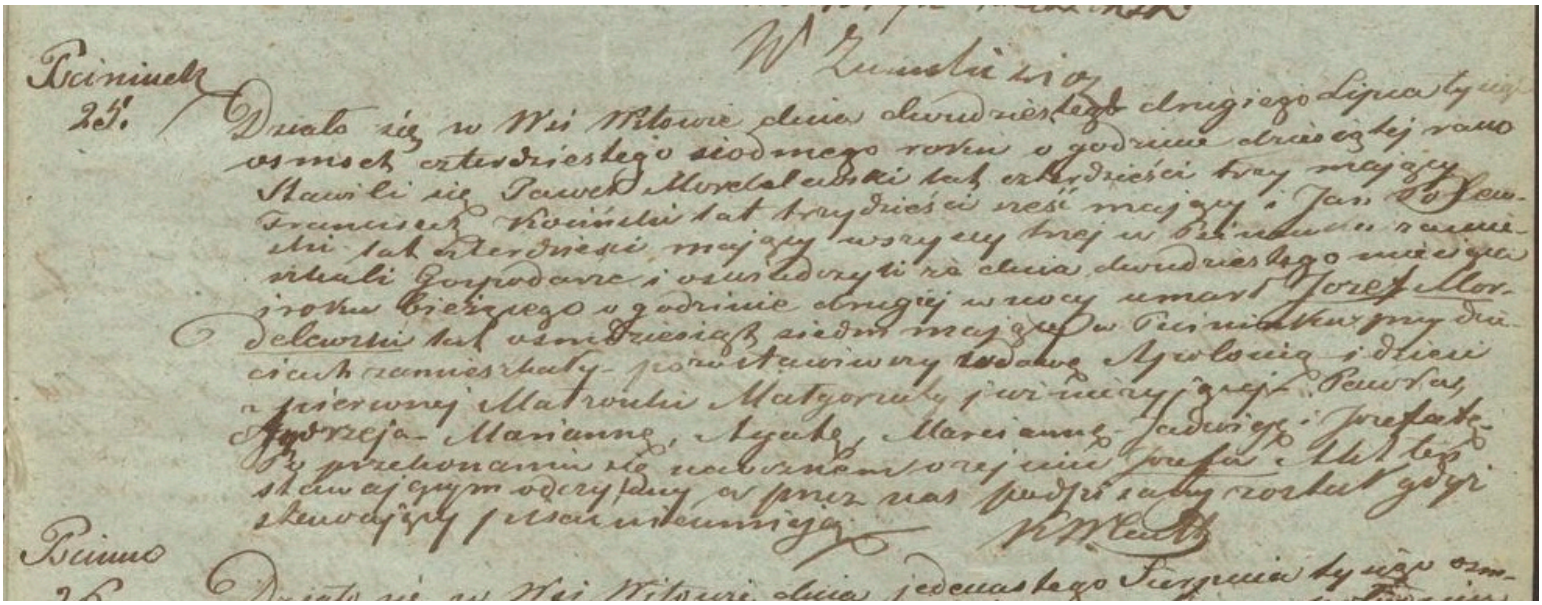
It took place in Radziejów on the **4th day of February, 1837**, at 10:00 in the morning [February 4, 1837]. We make it known that in the presence of witnesses **Jan Kawczyński**, son-in-law of the bride named below, a farmer, 33 years of age, and **Leon Grobliński**, a carpenter, 66 years of age, both from Radziejów, on this day a religious marriage was contracted between: JPG

- **Groom: Józef Mordel**, a day-laborer (*wyrobnik*), Catholic, widower since the year **1831**, residing here in Radziejów, born in **Piotrków** [Piotrków Kujawski] to the deceased couple **Franciszek** and **Barbara Mordel**, **57 years of age** [born ~1780]; JPG
- **Bride: Mrs. Apolonia née Cichowska**, by her first marriage **Marnikowska**, by her second **Surowiecka**, a widow since the year **1832**, a town citizen residing here in Radziejów, born to **Andrzej** and **Katarzyna Jakubowski**, **48 years of age** [born ~1789] . JPG

This marriage was preceded by three banns on the 22nd and 29th days of January and the 2nd day of February of the current year in the Parish of Radziejów. No impediments to the marriage arose. The newlyweds declared that they did not enter into a prenuptial agreement. This Act was read aloud to the declarants and witnesses, who do not know how to write. — JPG + 3

[Signed] **Fr. J. K. Brzeziński, Pastor of Radziejów** JPG

AI translation (Google Gemini)



1847 Death of Joseph Mordel
Pscininek (Witowo)

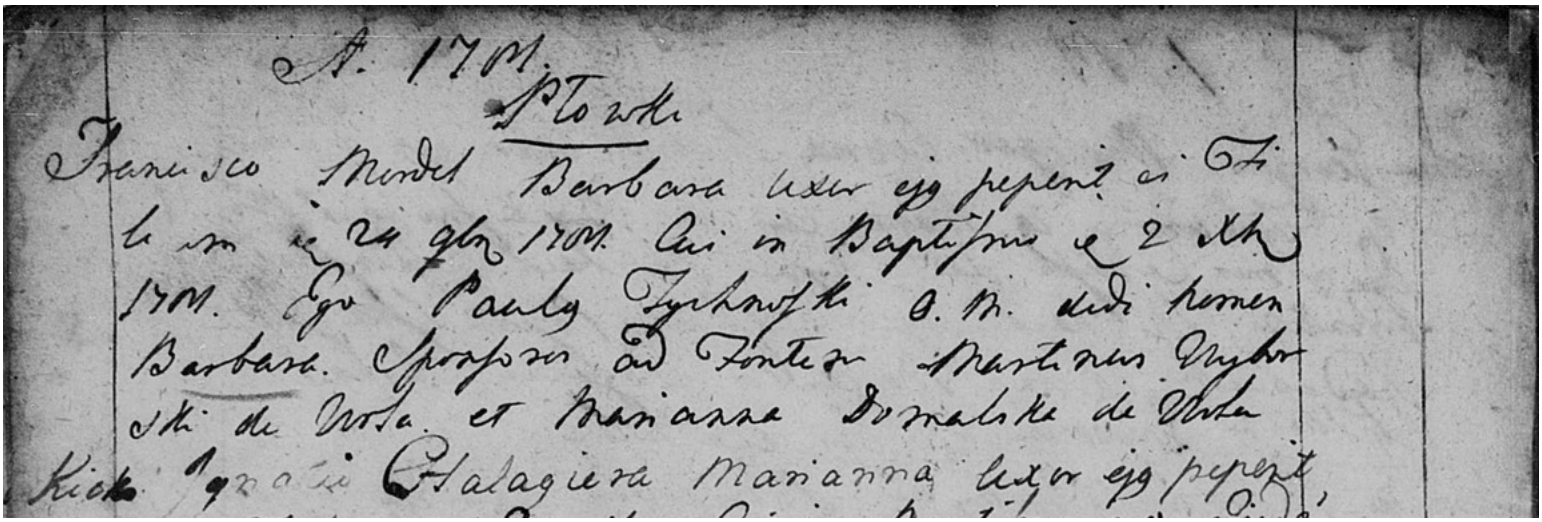
English Translation

Psininek No. 25 [Recorded at Witowo Parish]

It took place in the Village of Witowo on the **22nd day of July, 1847**, at 10:00 in the morning [July 22, 1847]. There appeared **Paweł Mordelski**, 43 years of age, **Franciszek Kociński**, 36 years of age, and **Jan Sołtysiak**, 40 years of age, all three farmers residing in Psininek, and declared that on the 20th day of the current year [July 20, 1847] at 2:00 in the night, **Józef Mordelski** died, **87 years of age** [born ~1760], residing in Psininek living with his children, leaving behind his widow **Apolonia** and children from his first wife **Małgorzata**, deceased: **Paweł**, **Andrzej**, **Marianna**, **Agata**, **Marcianna**, **Jadwiga**, and **Józefata**. After eyewitness verification of the death of Józef, this Act was read aloud to the declarants, and was signed by Us, as the declarants do not know how to write. —

[Signed] **Fr. M. [Leśniewski]**

AI translation (Google Gemini)



1781 Baptism of Barbara Mordel
Płowki (Chełmce)

2. English Translation

Płowki [Chełmce Parish]

Franciszek Mordel, Barbara his wife, gave birth [on] the **24th day of September 1781.** Who [the child] in Baptism on the **2nd day of October 1781.** I, Paulus Tychowski... gave the name **Barbara.** Sponsors at the Font were **Marcin Grybski** from Wola, and **Marianna Domałska** from Wola. JPG + 3

AI translation (Google Gemini)

Kosmider Families of the Broniewo and Chełmce Parishes

Barbara Mordel's death record identified her brother as Thomas (Tomasz) Kosmider. Church records confirm that there was a Thomas Kosmider household in Płowki. This appears to be the only person with that name in either parish. Therefore, it is presumed to have been Barbara Mordel's brother. Representative documents are shown below to cross-reference members of their family.

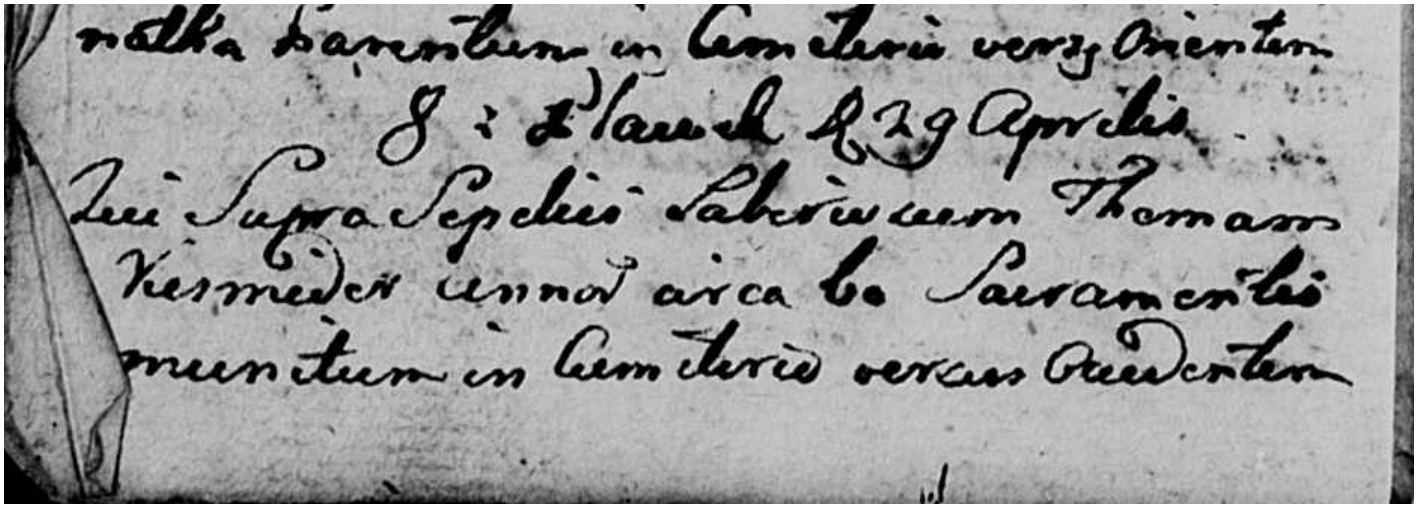
The godmother for one of Thomas Kosmider's children was Marianna Kosmider from Szostka (Broniewo). It remains unclear how many women (married and unmarried) were named Marianna who were old enough to serve as a godmother. One set of representative records are shown below. There was a Stanley (Stanisław) and Marianna Kosmider family who lived in Szostka.

Analysis of records for the Stanley and Marianna Kosmider family show that one of the godmothers of their children was Agnes (Agnieszka) Kosmider. Likewise, it is unclear how many women had that name. There was a Casimir (Kazimierz) and Agnes Kosmider family from Płowki. Representative records about their family are shown below.

It is unknown whether or how Stanley and Casimir Kosmider were related to Barbara (Kosmider) Mordel and her brother Thomas, but their documented connections to Płowki is a strong indication that they were probably relatives.

The estimated years of birth for these Kosmider families, derived from death records, is listed below.

Thomas	1739
Barbara	1740
Stanley	1745
Casimir	1759

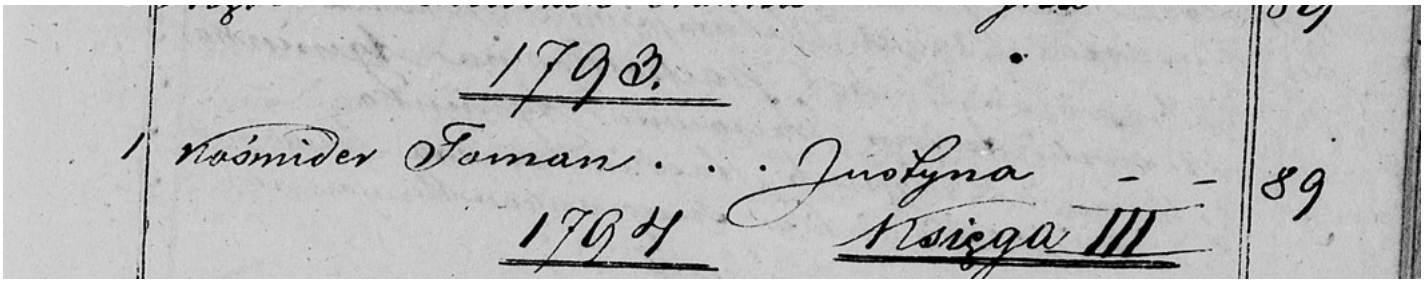


1799 Death of Tomasz Kosmider
Płowki (Broniewo)

2. English Translation

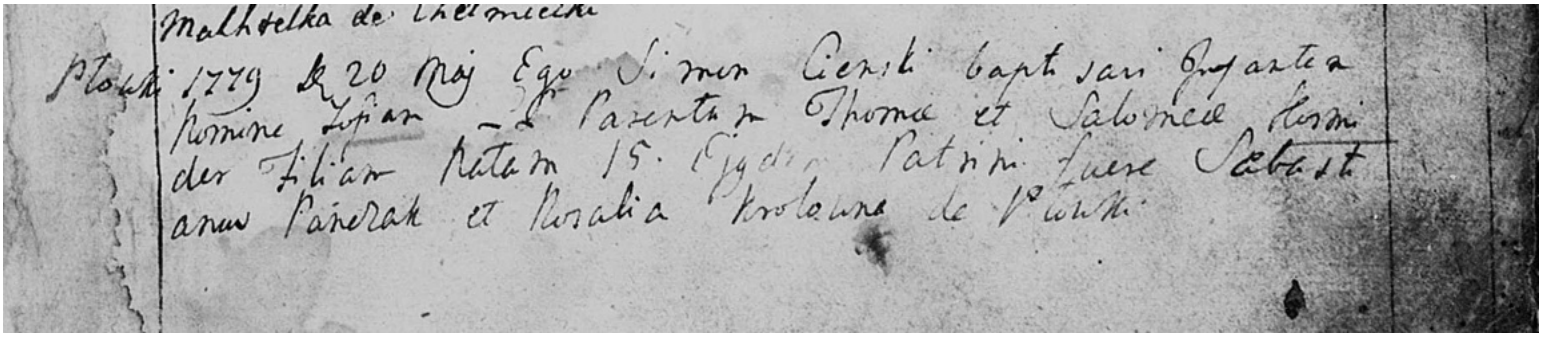
On the **29th of April [1799]**, I, the same as above, buried the laboring **Tomasz Kosmider**, approximately **50 years of age** [born ~1749], fortified with the sacraments, in the cemetery towards the east.

AI translation (Google Gemini)



Index of the 1793 Marriage of Tomasz Kosmider and Justyna (maiden name not provided) (Broniewo)

Thomas Kosmider's first wife Salomea Kosmider probably died between 1790 and 1793.



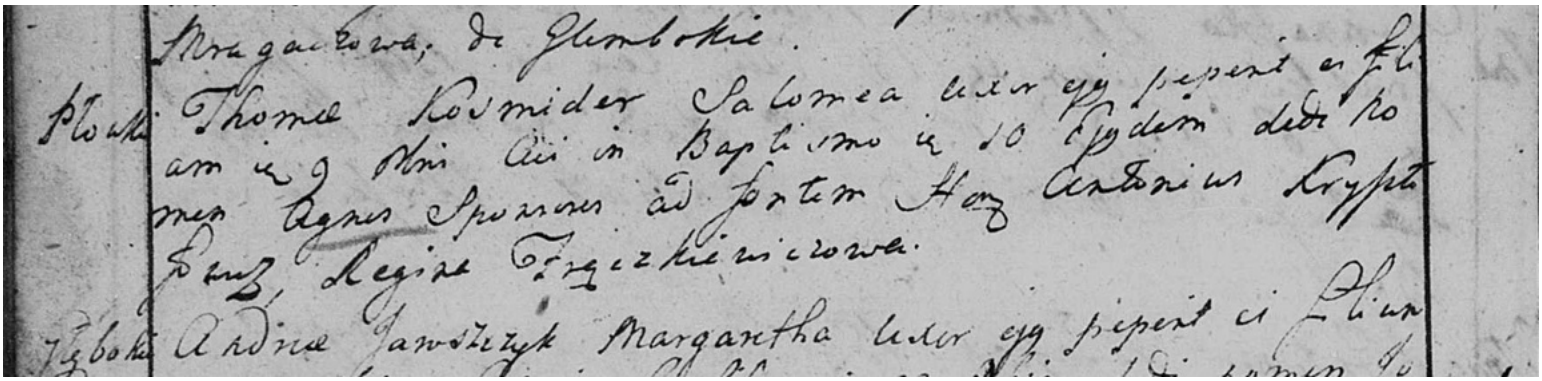
1779 Baptism of Zofia Kosmider
Płowki (Chełmce)

2. English Translation

Płowki [Chełmce Parish]

1779 on the 20th day of May [May 20, 1779], I, Szymon Cierlicki, baptized an infant named **Zofia**, daughter of parents **Tomasz and Salomea Kosmider**, born on the 15th of the same [month]. Her godparents were **Sebastian Pańczak** and **Rosalia Król** from Płowki.

AI translation (Google Gemini)



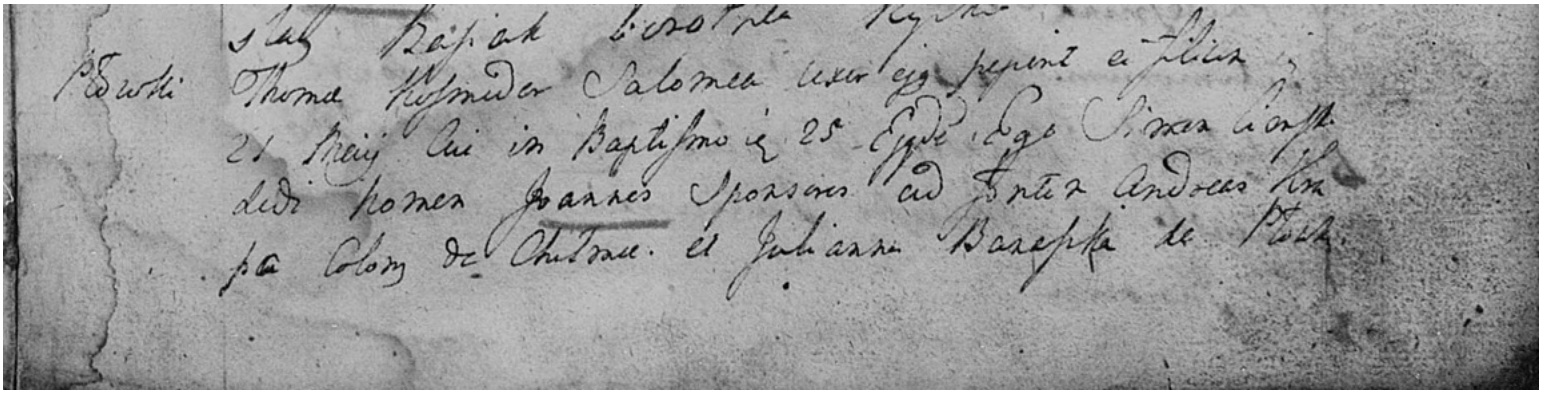
1780 Baptism of Agnieszka Kosmider
Płowki (Chełmce)

2. English Translation

Płowki [Chełmce Parish]

Salomea, wife of Tomasz Kosmider, gave birth to a daughter on the **9th day of October 1780**. Who [the child] in baptism on the 10th of the same [month] was given the name **Agnieszka** [Agnes]. Sponsors at the font were the honorable **Antonius Kryptek** and the honorable **Regina Trgandkiewiczowa.** JPG + 2

AI translation (Google Gemini)



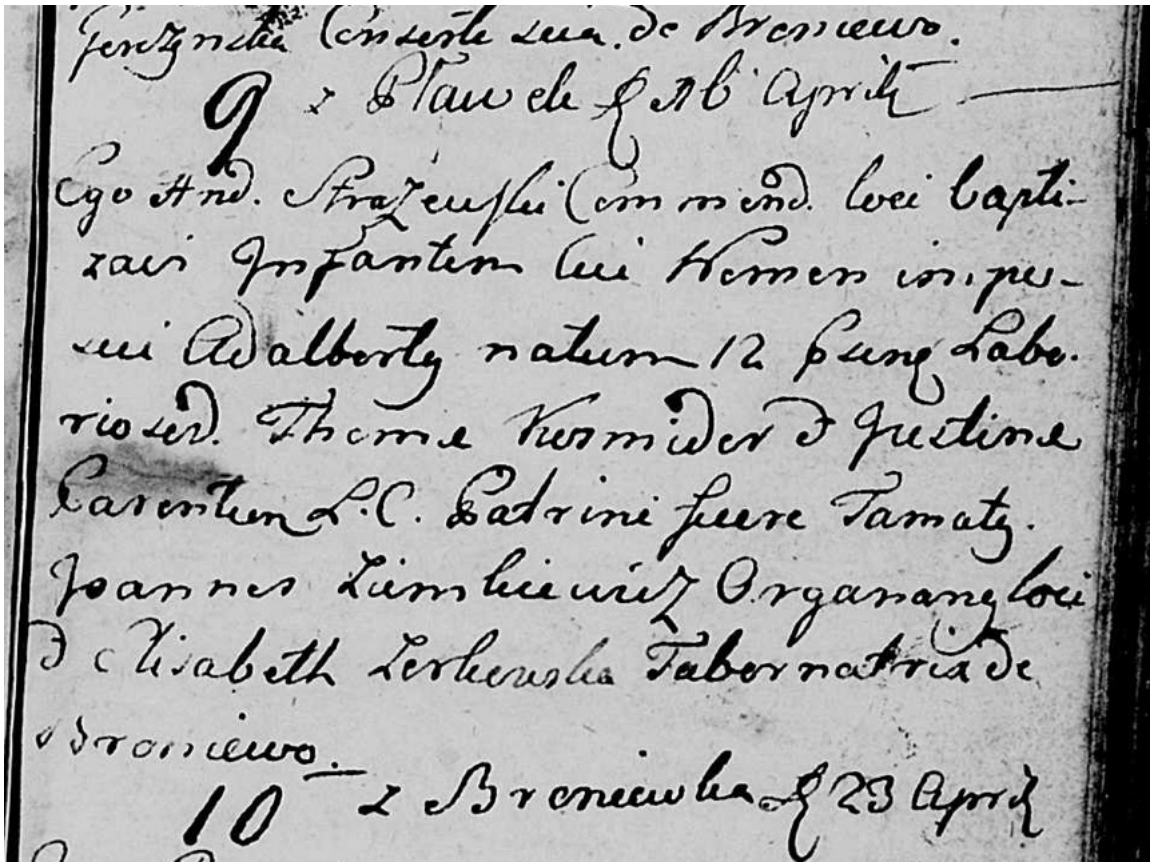
1783 Baptism of Jan Kosmider
Płowki (Chełmce)

2. English Translation

Płowki [Chełmce Parish]

Salomea, wife of Tomasz Kosmider, gave birth to a son on the **21st day of May [1783]**, who in baptism on the 25th of the same [month]. I, Szymon Cierlicki, gave the name **Jan (Joannes)**. Sponsors at the font were **Andrzej Kępa**, settler (*colonus*) from Chełmce, and **Juliana Banaszka** from Płowki. JPG

AI translation (Google Gemini)



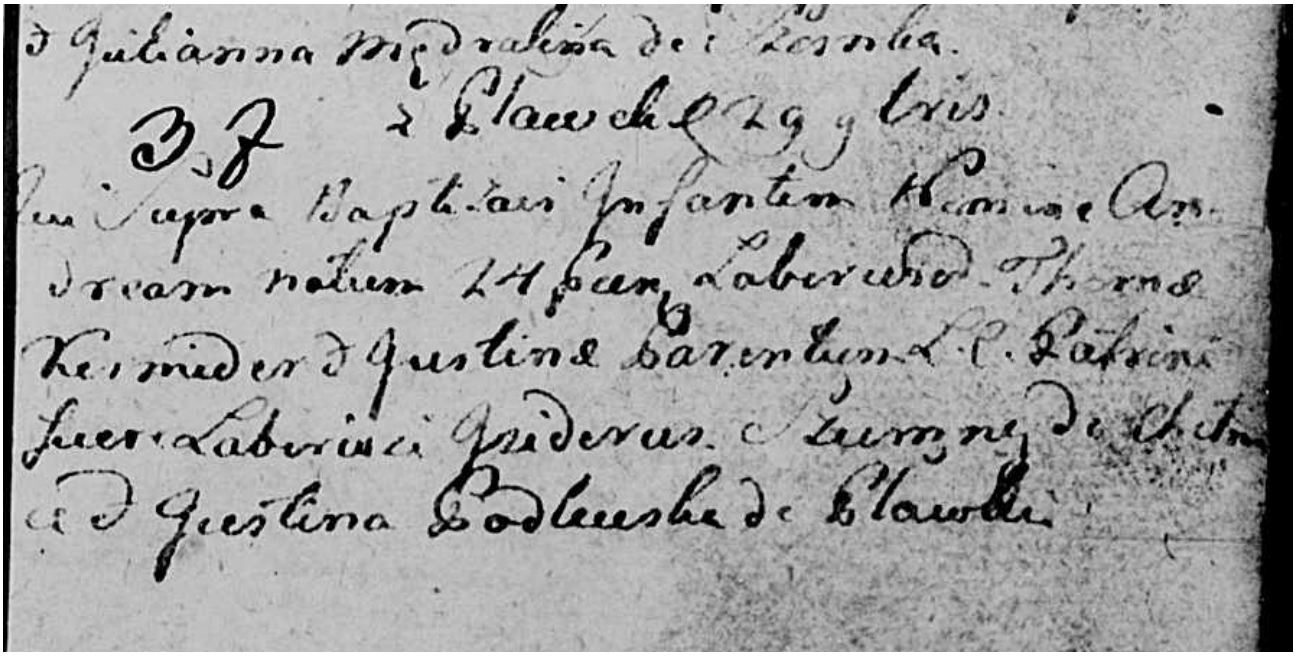
1795 Baptism of Wojciech Kosmider
Płowki (Broniewo)

English Translation

From Pławki, April 14

I, Andrzej Strakowski, local commissioner [priest], baptized an infant to whom I gave the name **Wojciech (Adalbert)**, born on the 12th of this month, legitimate child of the laboring **Tomasz Kosmider** and **Justyna**, lawful spouses. Godparents were the honorable **Jan Ziembkiewicz**, local organist, and **Elżbieta Terkowska**, laboring woman from Broniewo. JPG + 1

AI translation (Google Gemini)



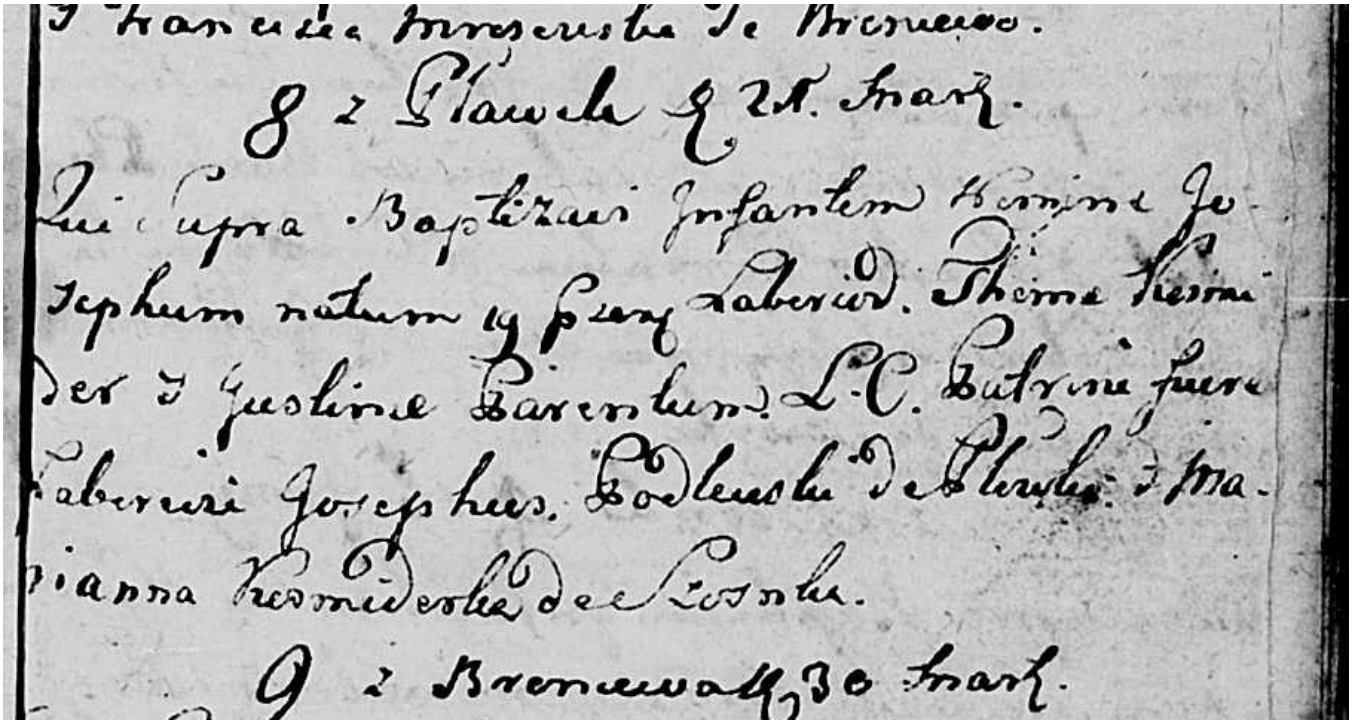
1796 Baptism of Andrzej Kosmider
Płowki (Broniewo)

English Translation

From Pławki, November 29

I [the same as above] baptized an infant named **Andrzej (Andreas)**, born on the 24th of this month, [child] of the laboring **Tomasz Kosmider** and **Justyna**, lawful parents. Godparents were the laboring **Izydor Szymański** from Chełmce, and **Justyna Bodlewska** from Pławki. JPG + 1

AI translation (Google Gemini)



1799 Baptism of Józef Kosmider
Płowki (Broniewo)

It looks like the godmother is Marianna Kosmider (slightly illegible)

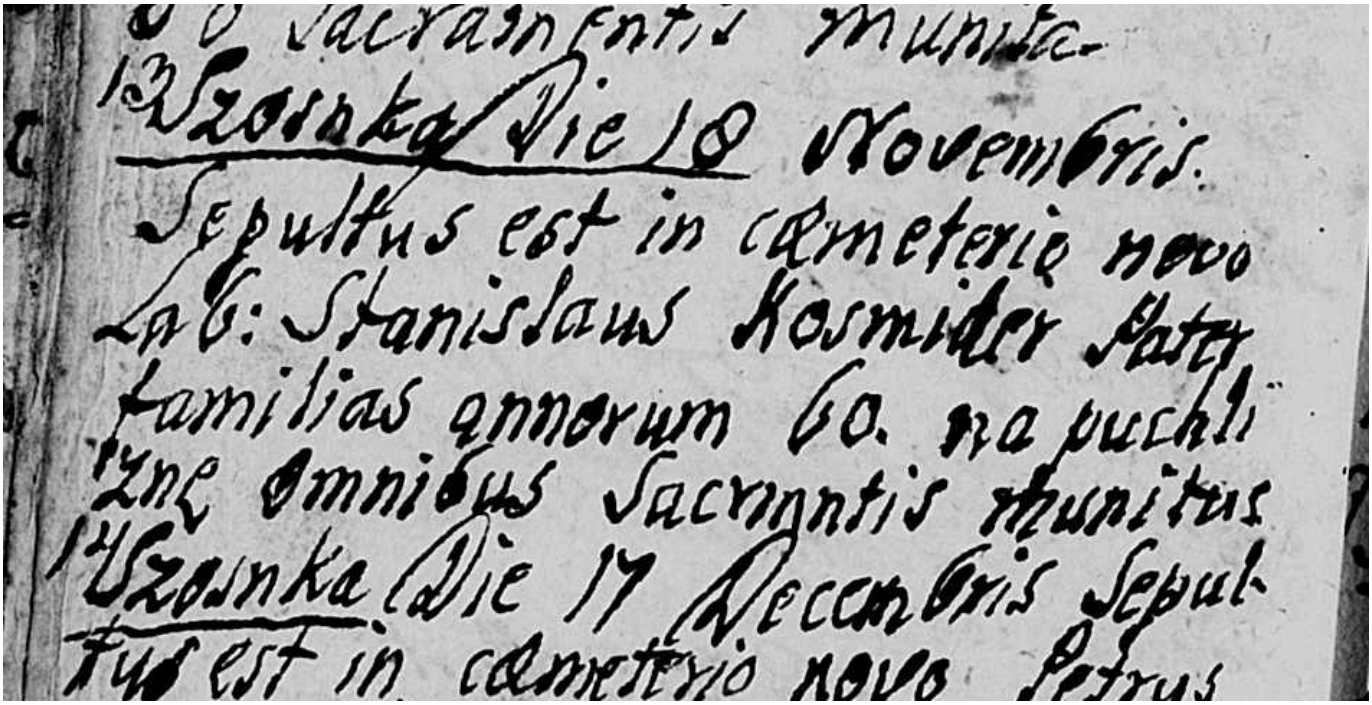
English Translation

From Pławki, March 25

I, who am above, baptized an infant named **Józef (Josephus)**, born on the 19th of this month, legitimate child of the laboring **Tomasz Kosmider** and **Justyna**, lawful parents. Godparents were the laboring **Józef Bodlewski** from Pławki, and **Marianna Kosmider**.

JPG + 1

AI translation (Google Gemini)



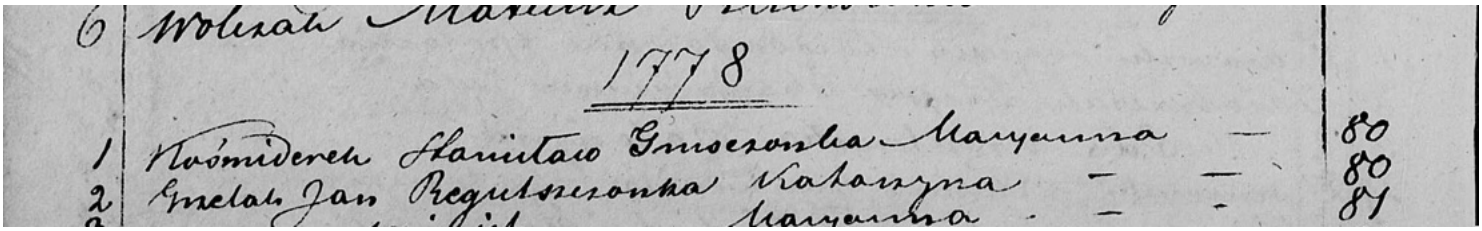
1805 Death of Stanley Kosmider
Szostka (Broniewo)

English Translation

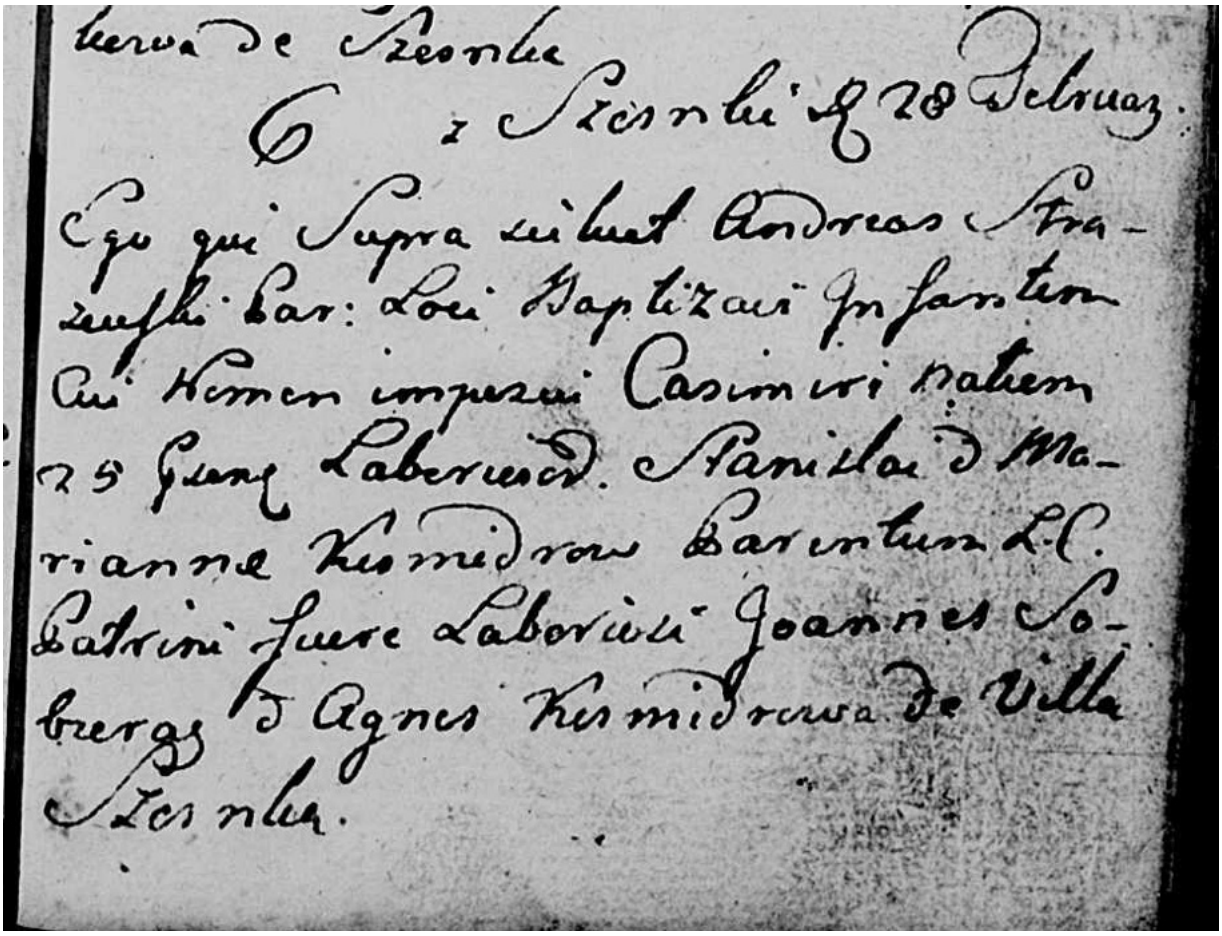
Szosnka, November 18 [Year implied ~1810s/1820s based on register context]

Buried in the new cemetery is the laboring **Stanisław Kosmider**, head of household (*pater familias*), **60 years of age**, [died] of dropsy (*na puchliznę*), fortified with all the Sacraments.

AI translation (Google Gemini)



Index of the 1778 Marriage of Stanley Kosmider and Marianna (maiden name slightly illegible) (Broniewo)



1796 Baptism of Kazimierz Kosmider
Szostka (Broniewo)

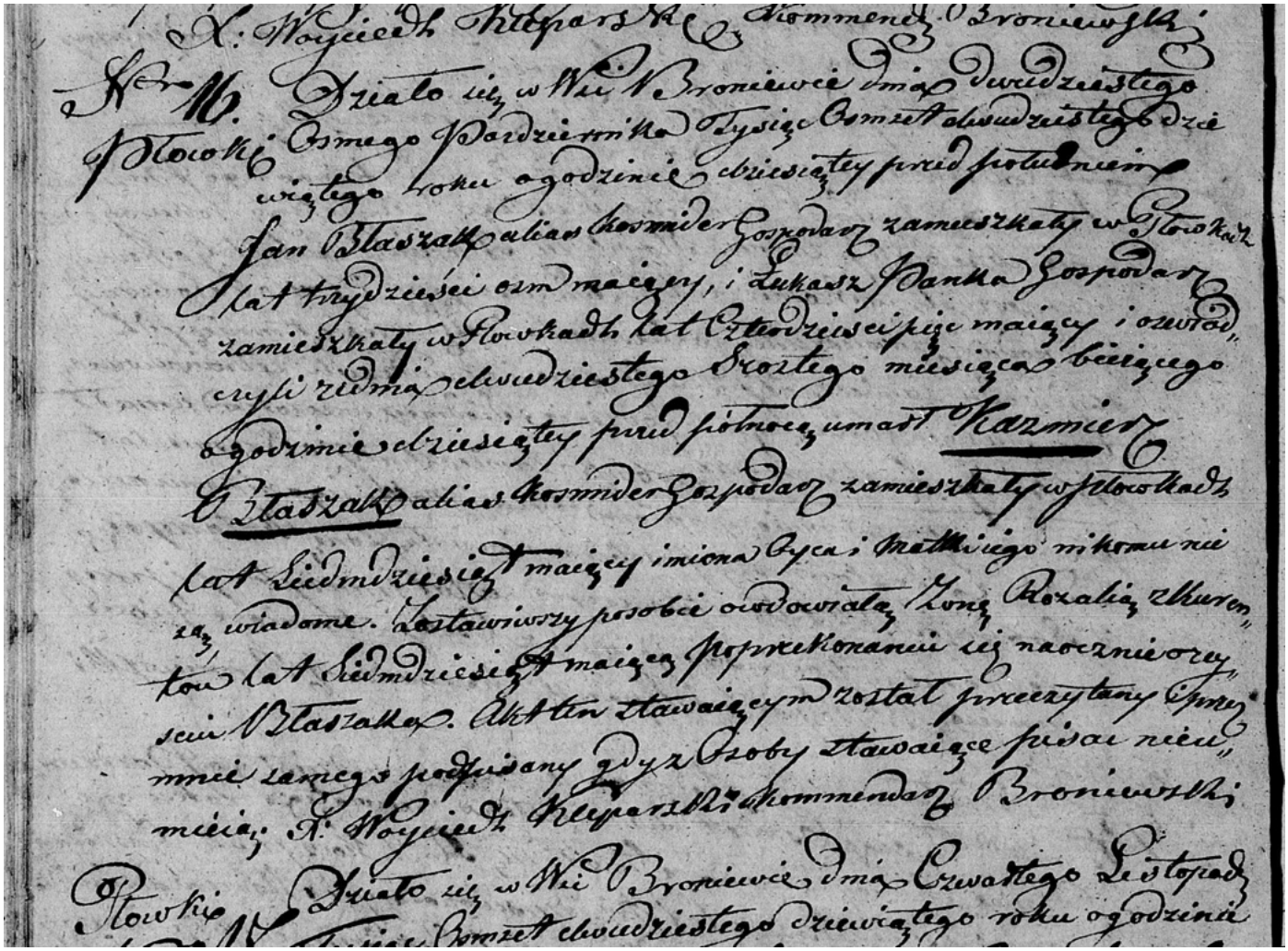
The godmother was Agnes Kosmider

English Translation

From Szosnki, February 28

I, the same as above, namely Andrzej Strakowski, local pastor, baptized an infant to whom I gave the name **Kazimierz**, born on the 25th of this month, [child] of the laboring **Stanisław and Marianna Kosmider**, lawful spouses. Godparents were the laboring **Jan Soburg** and **Agnieszka Kosmider** from the village of Szosnki.

AI translation (Google Gemini)



1829 Death of Casimir Błaszak with an alias of Kosmider
Płowki (Broniewo)

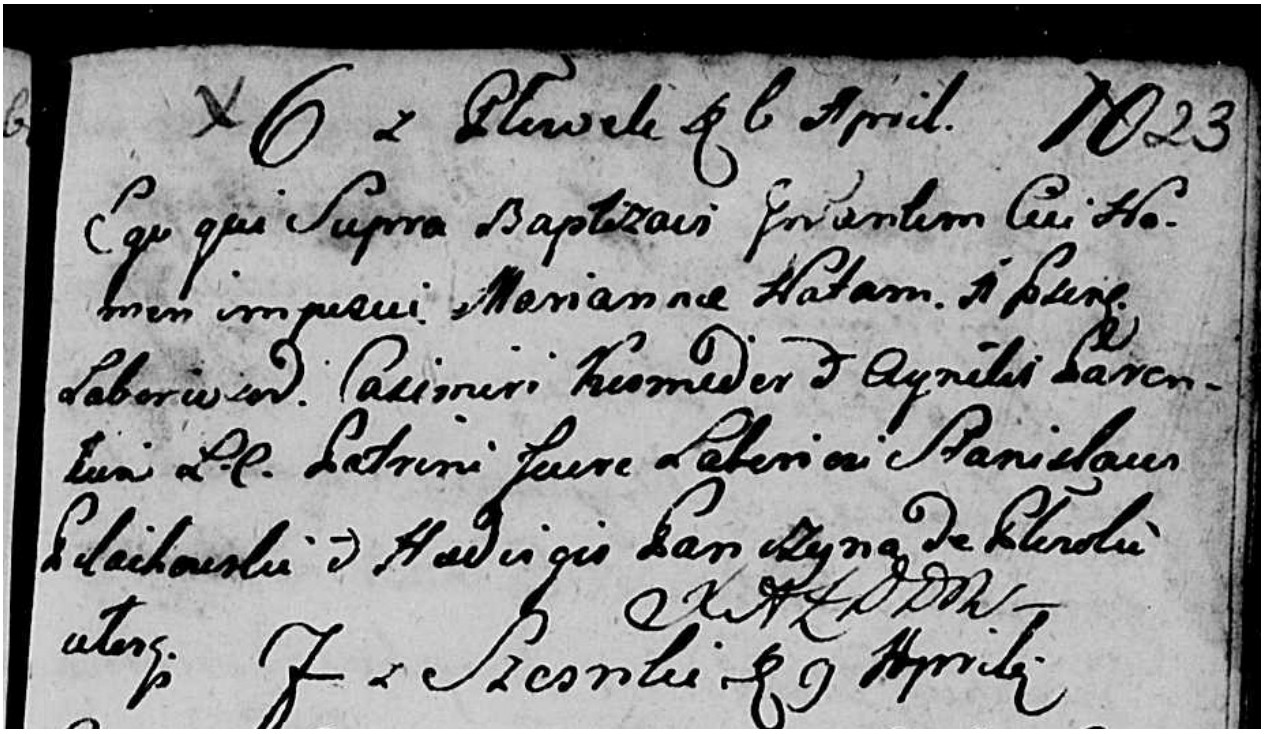
This death record is not verified, given the presence of an alias.
There appears to have been only one Casimir and Rosalie Kosmider family in the parish.

2. English Translation

Płowki No. 16. — This happened in the village of Broniewo on the **28th day of October in the year 1829**, at 10:00 in the morning. There appeared **Jan Błaszak alias Kosmider**, farmer (*gospodarz*), residing in Płowki, 38 years of age, and **Łukasz Panka**, farmer, residing in Płowki, 45 years of age, and they declared that on the **26th day of the current month [October 26, 1829]** at 10:00 before midnight, **Kazimierz Błaszak alias Kosmider**, farmer residing in Płowki, passed away at **70 years of age** [born ~1759]. The names of his father and mother are unknown to anyone. He left behind a surviving widow, his wife **Rozalia née Kurant**, 70 years of age. Having visually verified the death of Błaszak, this act was read to the declarants and signed by Us alone, as the appearing persons do not know how to write. —

[Signed] **Rev. Wojciech Kleparski, Administrator of Broniewo**

AI translation (Google Gemini)



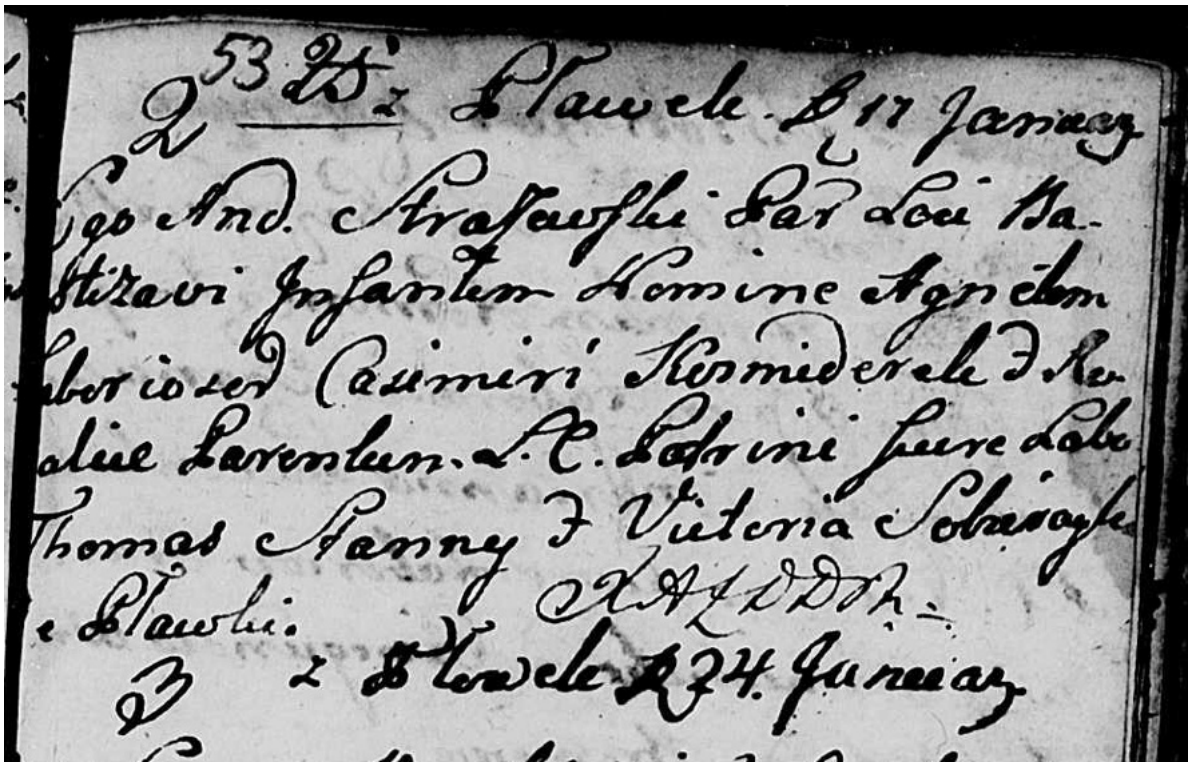
1796 Baptism of Marianna Kosmider
Płowki (Broniewo)

2. English Translation

No. 16, from Pławki, on the 6th day of April [1796]

I, the same as above, baptized an infant to whom I gave the name **Marianna**, born on the 5th [of this month], child of the laboring **Kazimierz Kosmider and Agnieszka (Agneta)**, lawful spouses. Godparents were the laboring **Stanisław Szcichowski** and **Jadwiga Barszcz**, both from Pławki.

AI translation (Google Gemini)



1805 baptism of Agnieszka Kosmider
Płowki (Broniewo)

2. English Translation

From Pławki, on the 11th day of January [1805]

I, Andrzej Strakowski, local pastor, baptized an infant named **Agnieszka (Agnes)**, [child] of the laboring **Kazimierz Kosmider and Rozalia**, lawful spouses. Godparents were the laboring **Tomasz Stanny** and **Wiktoria Soborayka** from Pławki.

AI translation (Google Gemini)

Additional Information

Michael E. Byczek, an Illinois attorney and managing real estate broker, has compiled original records for genealogy since 1992. Research and analysis have been published on family websites for over 30 years. A project to compile comprehensive digital, print, and video documentaries for every direct blood ancestor began in September 2024 for accurate online genealogy.

Frank Mordel and Barbara Kosmider are Michael E. Byczek's 6x-great-grandparents. Their son Joseph Mordel (5x-great-grandfather) married Margaret Mikolaj in about 1806. Their daughter Hedwig Mordel (4x-great-grandmother) married Vincent Nowakowski in 1827 in Radziejow. Their son John Nowakowski (3x-great-grandfather) married Catherine Kocinski in 1857, also in Radziejow. Their daughter Victoria Nowakowski (2x-great-grandmother) married Joseph Piotrowski in 1876, also in Radziejow. Their daughter Margaret Piotrowski (great-grandmother) married Joseph Bykowski in 1907 in Witowo prior to settling in Chicago, IL. Their son Roman Bykowski (grandfather) arrived in the United States when he was three years old. The family lived in the Bucktown neighborhood of Chicago. Roman married Antoinette Murzynowicz/Marynowski in 1936 at St. Stanislaus Kostka in the Pulaski Park neighborhood. Their daughter Betty A. Bykowski (mother) married Michael M. Byczek in 1974 at St. Helen's on Augusta and Oakley. They have two children. Michael E. Byczek is the eldest and was born in the Bridgeport neighborhood.

Google Maps

Kuyavian-Pomeranian Voivodeship in north central Poland (Radziejów County):

- Broniewo is a village in the administrative district of Gmina Radziejów
- Stare Płowki is a village in the administrative district of Gmina Radziejów [It is presumed that Stare Płowki and Płowki are the same village]
- Chełmce is a village within Inowrocław County and Gmina Kruszwica

Revision History:

10/27/2026
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