



# Streets of Warsaw named after foreign geographical features

An example of the use of exonyms in the city space

Maciej Zych

# Streets of Warsaw

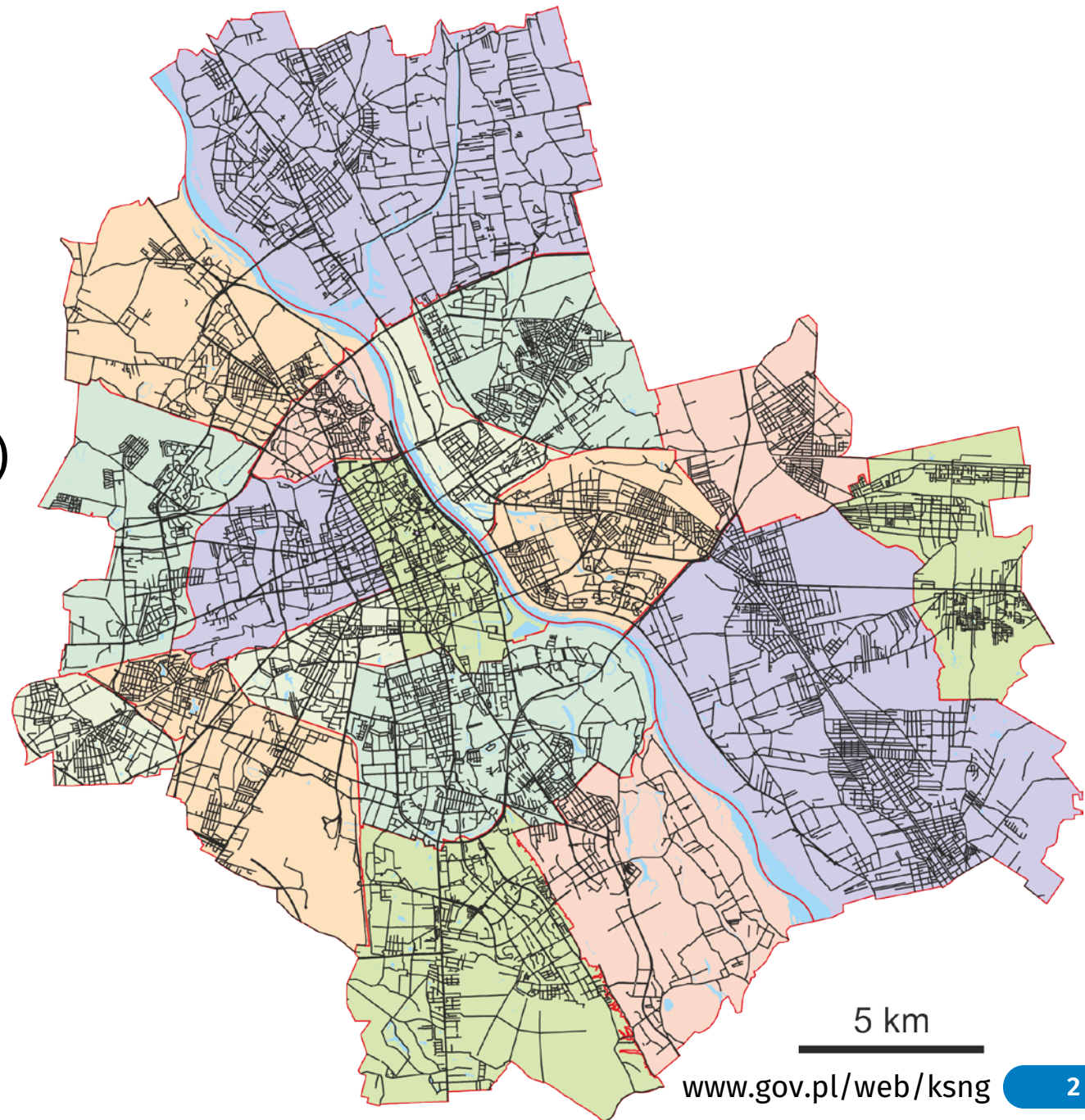
City area: 517 km<sup>2</sup>

City population: 1,863,000

Named streets, squares, and other similar objects (as of October 7th, 2022)

– **5,659:**

- 5,189 streets (Polish: *ulica*)
- 55 avenues (Polish: *aleja, aleje*)
- 6 boulevards (Polish: *bulwar*)
- 72 squares (Polish: *plac*)
- 106 roundabouts (Polish: *rondo*)
- 9 bridges (Polish: *most*)
- 84 pedestrian roads (Polish: *pasaż, aleja, alejka*)
- 140 green squares (Polish: *skwer*)





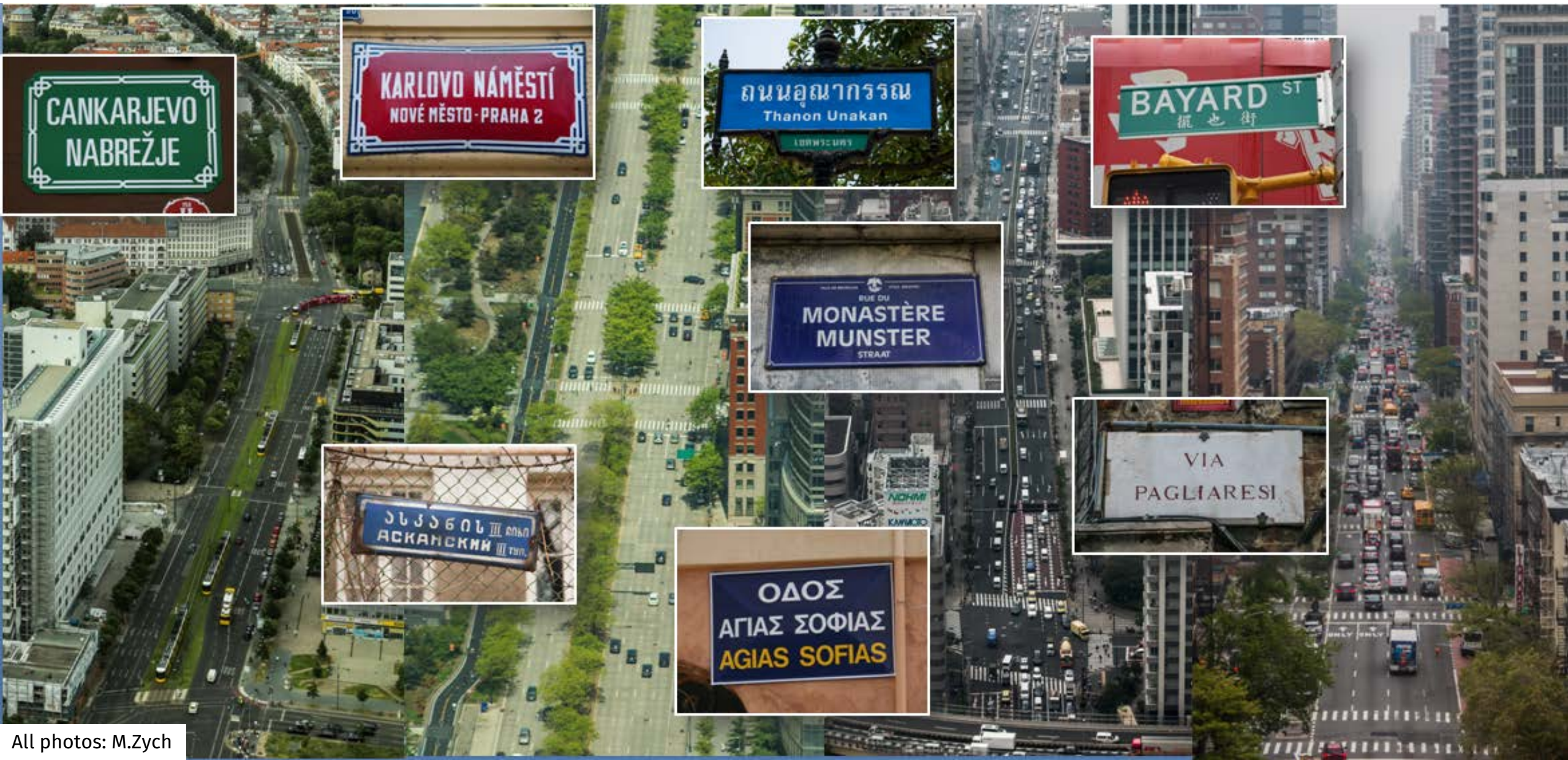
# Streets named after foreign geographical features



All photos: M.Zych



# Street in cities





# History of street names 1

The earliest street names had real-meaning motivation, i.e. they reflected relation of the name with the course of the street:

- **topographic names** – street name reflecting the location of the street, its shape, function or features (e.g. *Źródłowa* [spring], *Mostowa* [bridge], *Krótką* [short], *Krzywa* [crooked], *Ładna* [pretty]),
- **directional names** – beginning of the road to the locality or object after which the street is named; roads connecting with the locality or object after which the street is named
- **localize names** – streets named after the object that is located next to it or near it
- **names from groups of people** who lived on the street, including professional groups (e.g. *Piekarska* [bakers], *Rycerska* [knights], *Dominikańska* [Dominicans])

# History of street names 2

**Commemorative names** and **symbolic names** were developed later

Commemorative names include:

- names commemorating people, including groups of persons (e.g. *Jerzego Waszyngtona* [George Washington], *Powstańców Warszawy* [Warsaw insurgents])
- names commemorating historical events (e.g. *1 Maja* [1 May], *Niepodległości* [independence], *Bitwy Warszawskiej 1920 r.* [Battle of Warsaw 1920], *Wiosny Ludów* [Spring of Nations])

Symbolic names include:

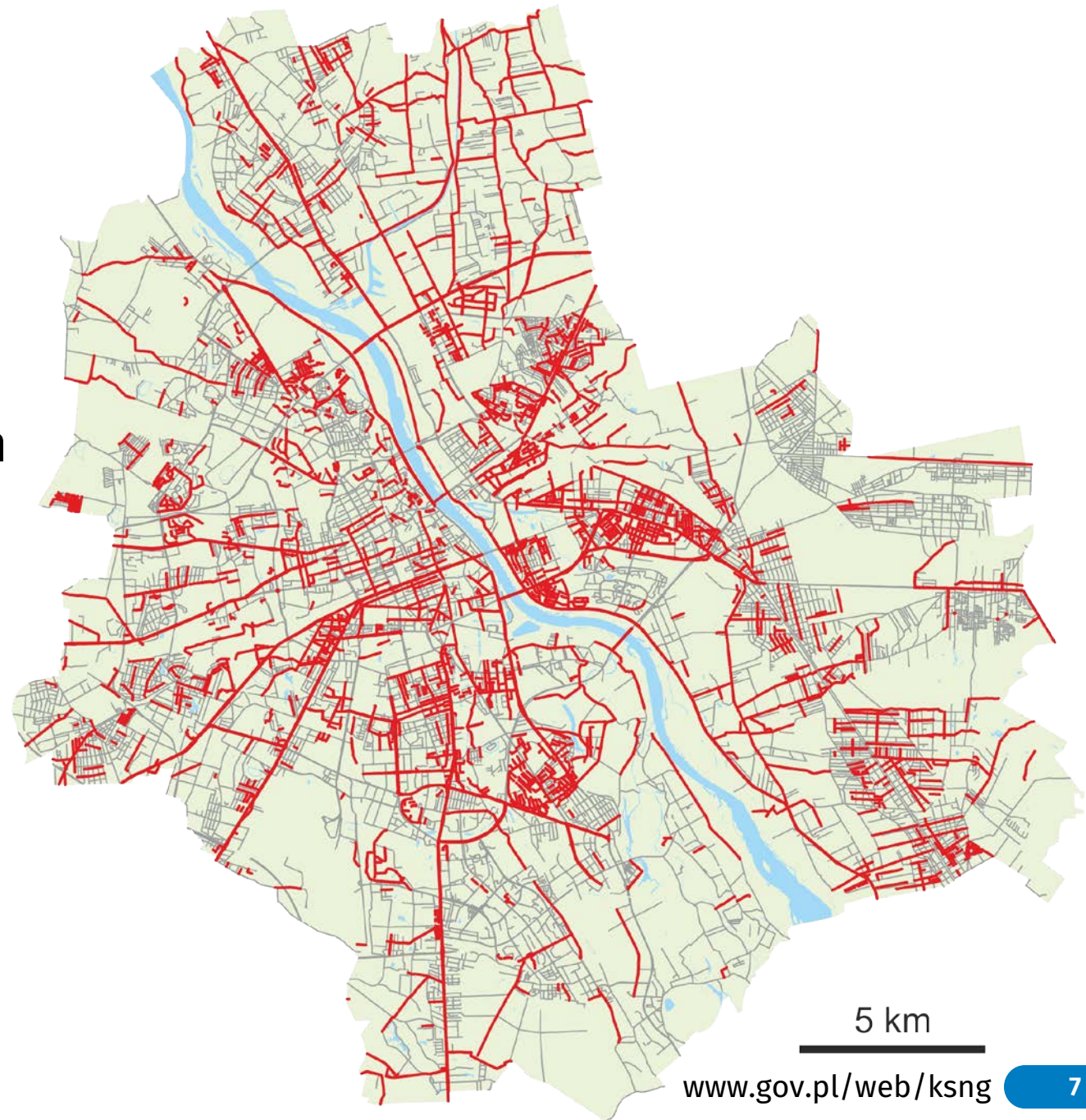
- names of animals
- names of plants
- geographical names (not topographically motivated)
- cultural names (products of human hands and mind, e.g. *Piwna* [beer], *Stalowa* [steel], *Naukowa* [science], *Koncertowa* [concert])
- names of phenomena (e.g. *Deszczowa* [rainy], *Księżycowa* [moony], *Wiosenna* [spring])
- names related to the army (e.g. *Pułkowa* [regiment], *Saperów* [sappers], *Armatnia* [cannon])
- related to literary and other works (e.g. *Hamleta* [Hamlet], *Odysei* [Odyssey], *Czerwonego Kapturka* [Little Red Riding Hood], *Czterech Pór Roku* [The Four Seasons])
- abstract names and other names

# Street named after geographical features

Names of 1,381 streets, squares, and other similar objects come from the names of geographical objects, which constitutes 24.4% of all street names in Warsaw.

This includes names of:

- 1333 streets
- 7 avenues
- 16 squares
- 8 roundabouts
- 5 bridges
- 4 pedestrian roads
- 8 green squares

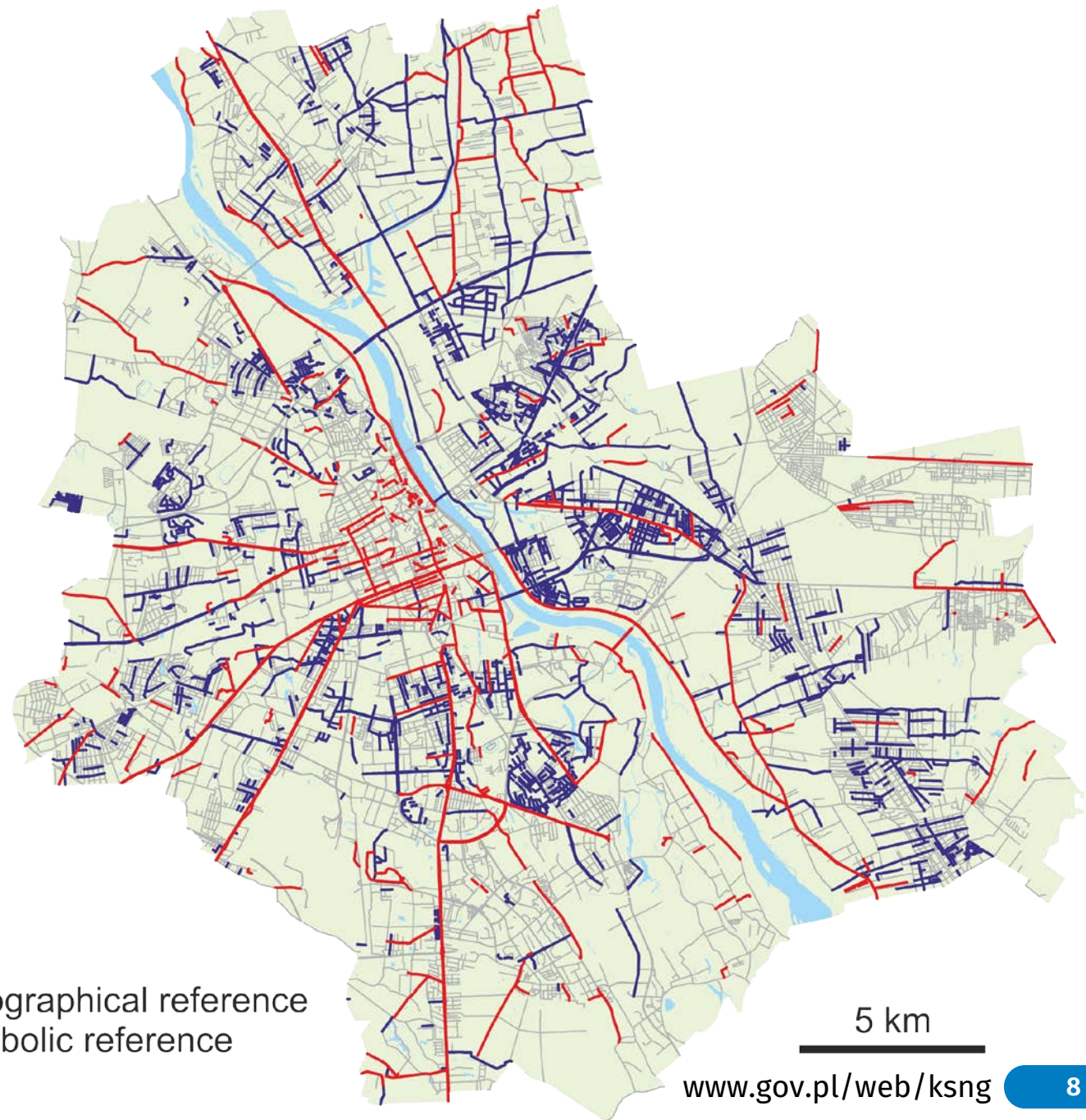




# Types of names

Street names derived from the names of geographical features can be divided into two main groups:

- names with a topographical reference
- names with a symbolic (or commemorative) reference

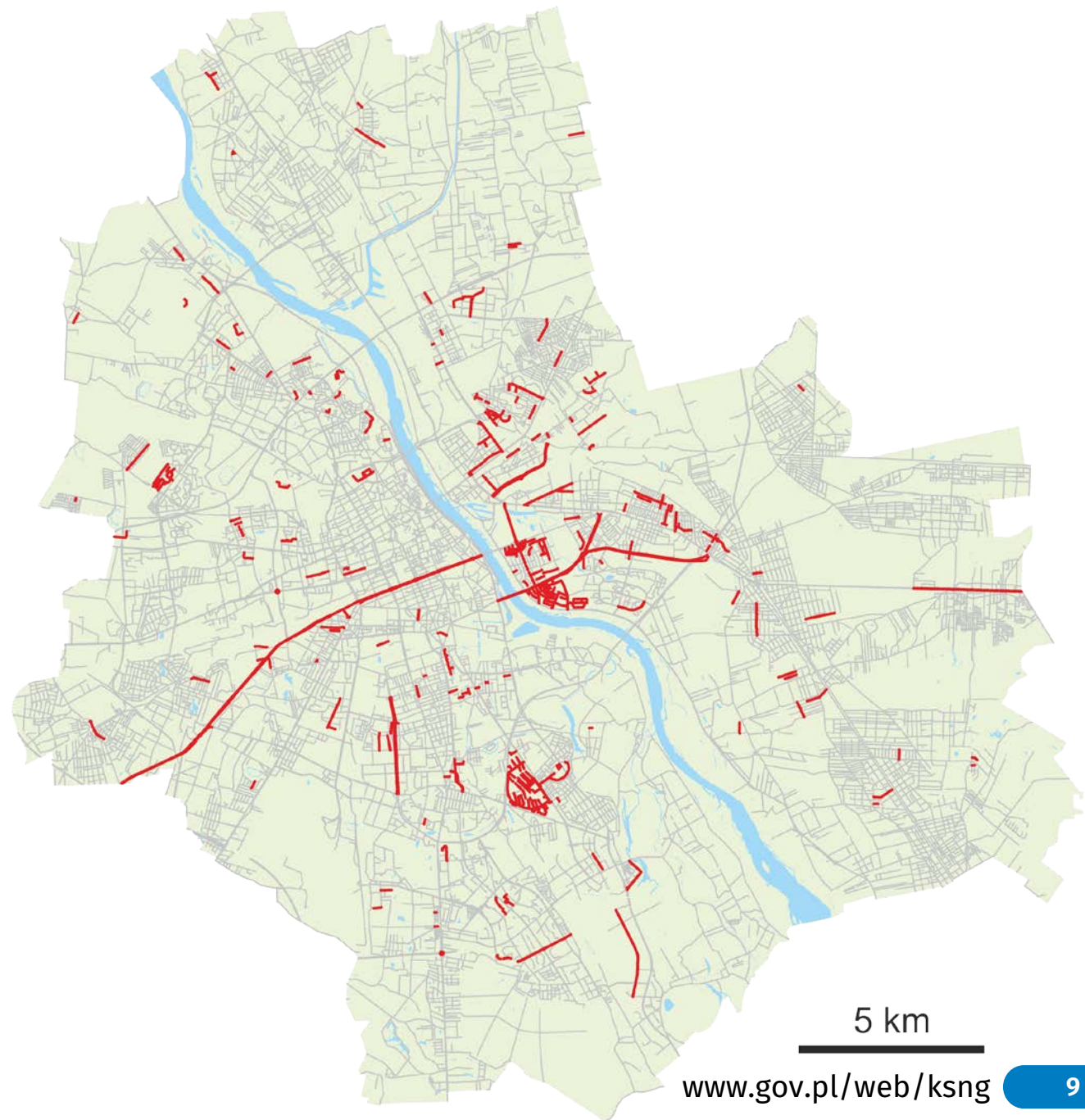




# Analyzed names

Names of 254 streets, squares, and other similar objects come from the names of foreign geographical features, which constitutes 4,5% of all street names in Warsaw.

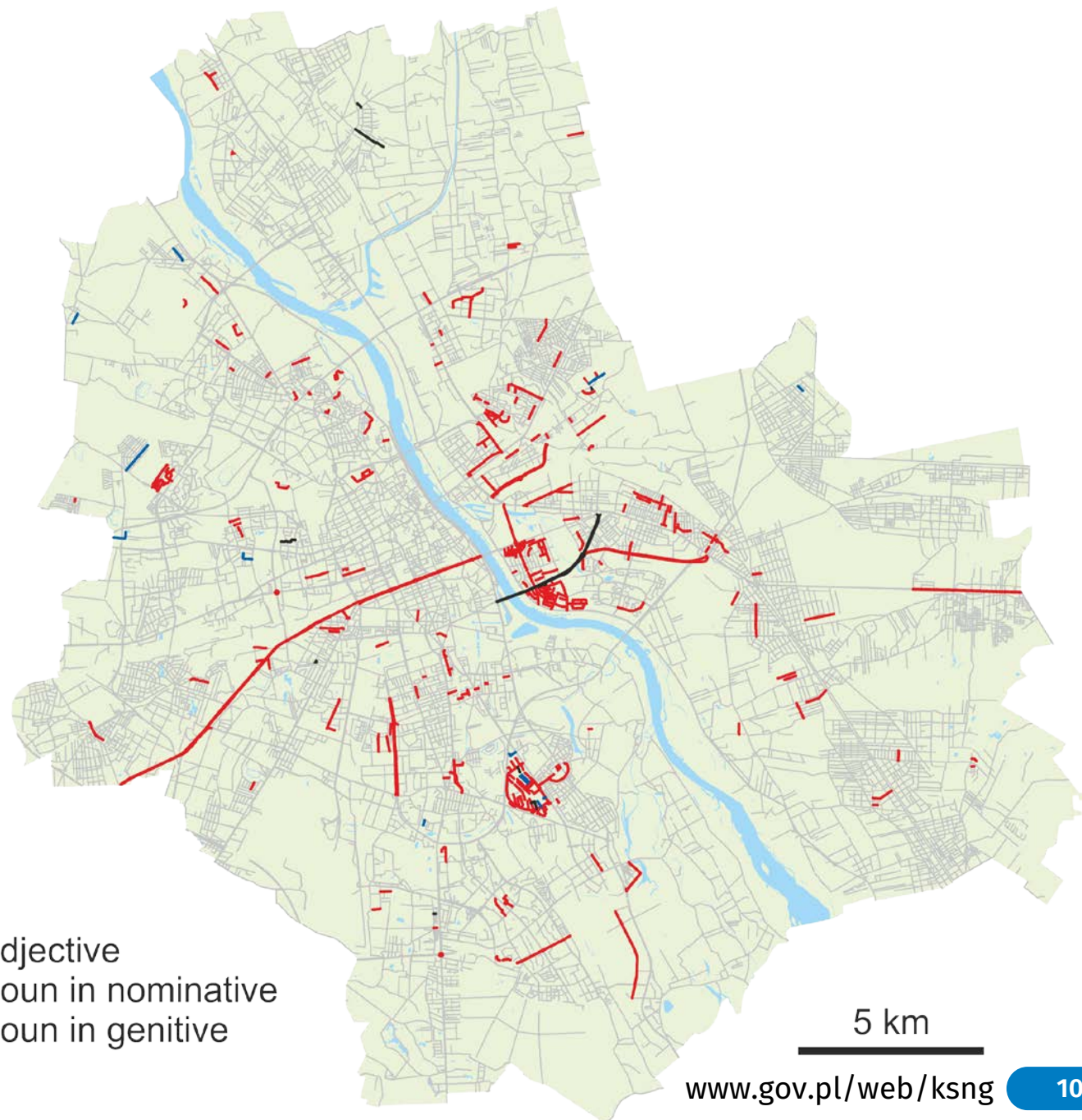
- This includes names of:
  - 238 streets
  - 3 avenues
  - 4 squares
  - 2 roundabouts
  - 7 green squares



# Grammatical categories

- adjectives – 230 street names (90.6% of the analyzed streets with geographical names), e.g. **ulica Barcelońska** [Barcelona], **ulica Meksykańska** [Mexico], **ulica Himalajska** [Himalayas]
- noun in nominative – 13 street names (5.1% of the analyzed streets), e.g. **ulica Balaton**, **ulica Narwik** [Narvik], **ulica Parnas** [Mount Parnassus]
- noun in genitive – 11 street names (4.3% of the analyzed streets), e.g. **rondo Tybetu** [Tibet], **aleja Stanów Zjednoczonych** [United States], **ulica Majorki** [Mallorca]

— adjective  
— noun in nominative  
— noun in genitive

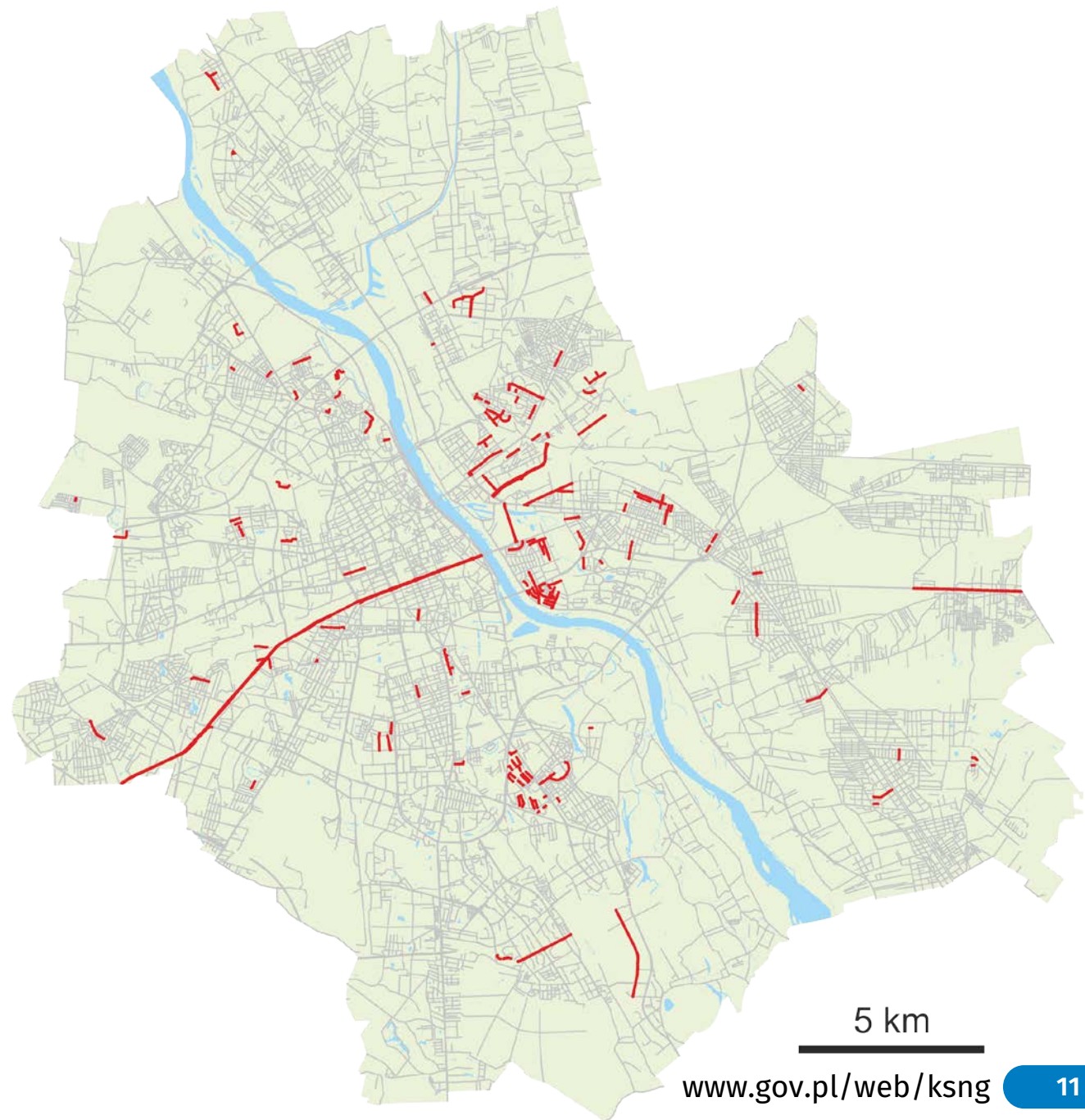




# Types of features 1

The majority of street names refer to names of towns, villages and their parts: 137 street names, i.e. 53.9% of all names, e.g.:

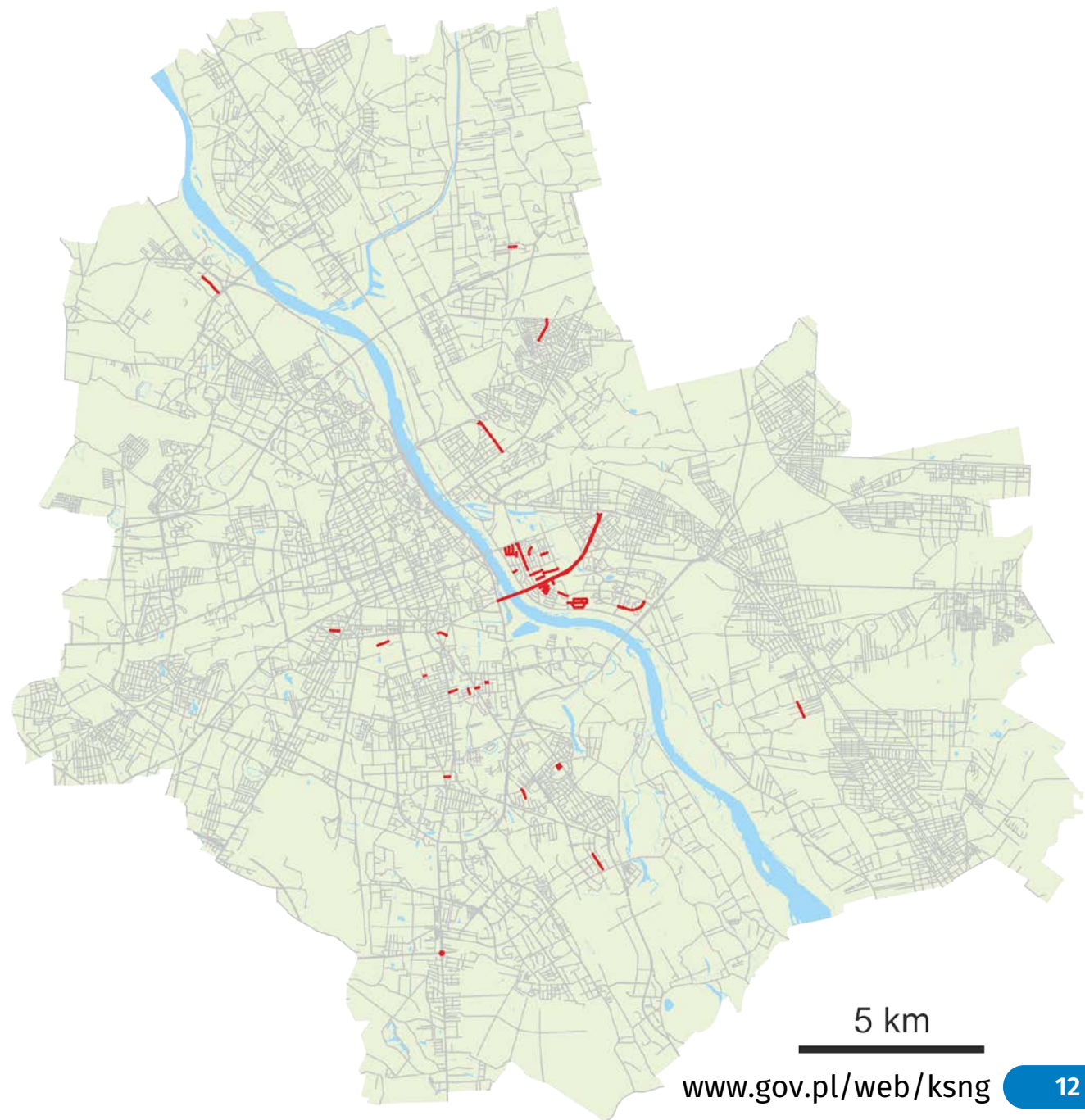
- **ulica Batumi** [Batumi]
- **ulica Drezdeńska** [Dresden]
- **ulica Genewska** [Geneva]
- **ulica Koszycka** [Košice]
- **ulica Londyńska** [London]
- **ulica Szegedyńska** [Szeged]
- **skwer Teherański** [Tehran]
- **ulica Wileńska** [Vilnius]



# Types of features 2

Street names refer to names of countries and territories: 43 street names, i.e. 16.9% of all names, e.g.:

- **ulica Argentyńska** [Argentina]
- **ulica Bułgarska** [Bulgaria]
- **ulica Gibraltarska** [Gibraltar]
- **ulica Kanadyjska** [Canada]
- **ulica Libijska** [Libya]
- **ulica Rumuńska** [Romania]
- **ulica Turecka** [Turkey]
- **ulica Węgierska** [Hungary]

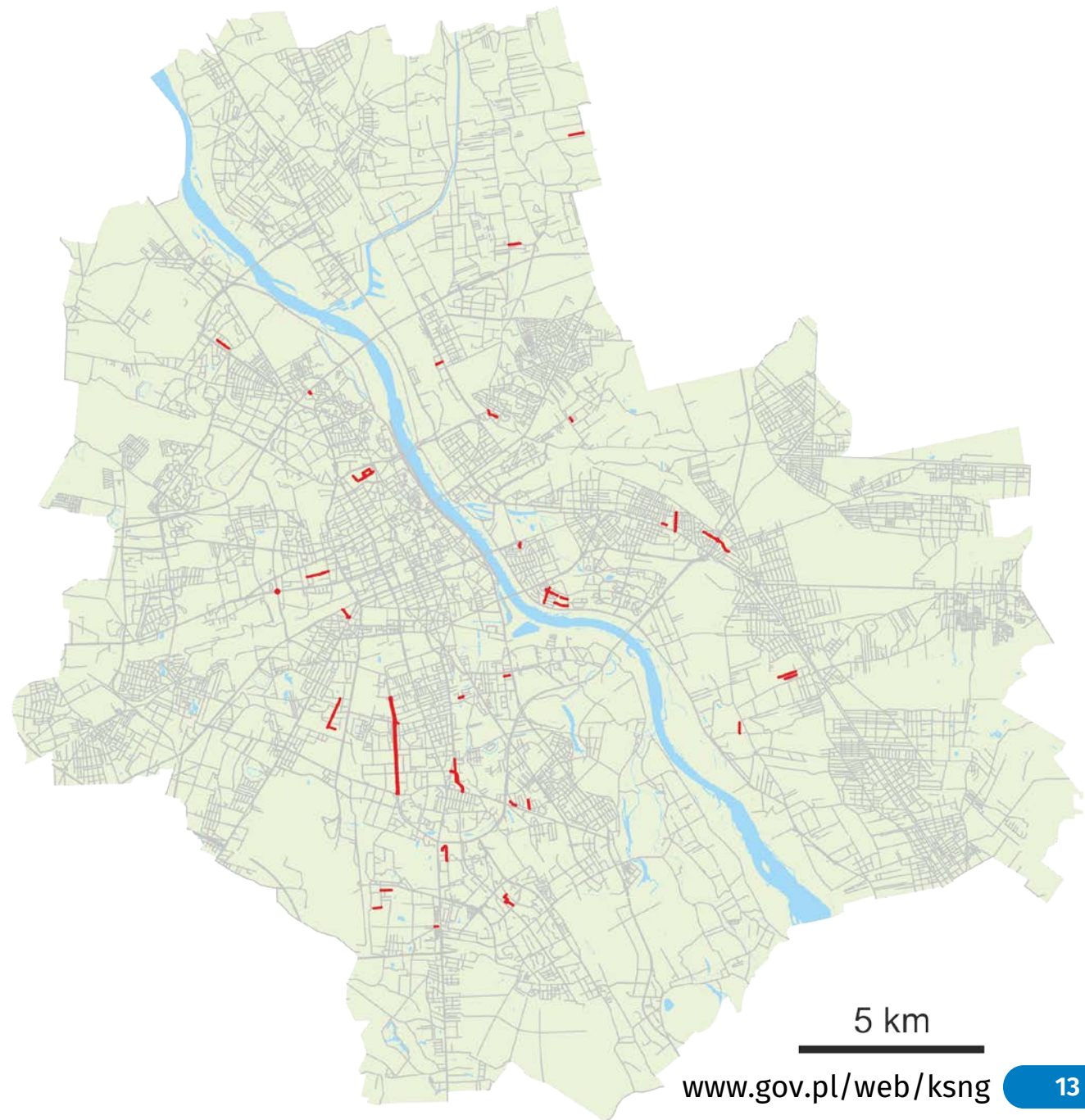




# Types of features 3

Street names refer to names of lands and regions: 35 street names, i.e. 13.8% of all names, e.g.:

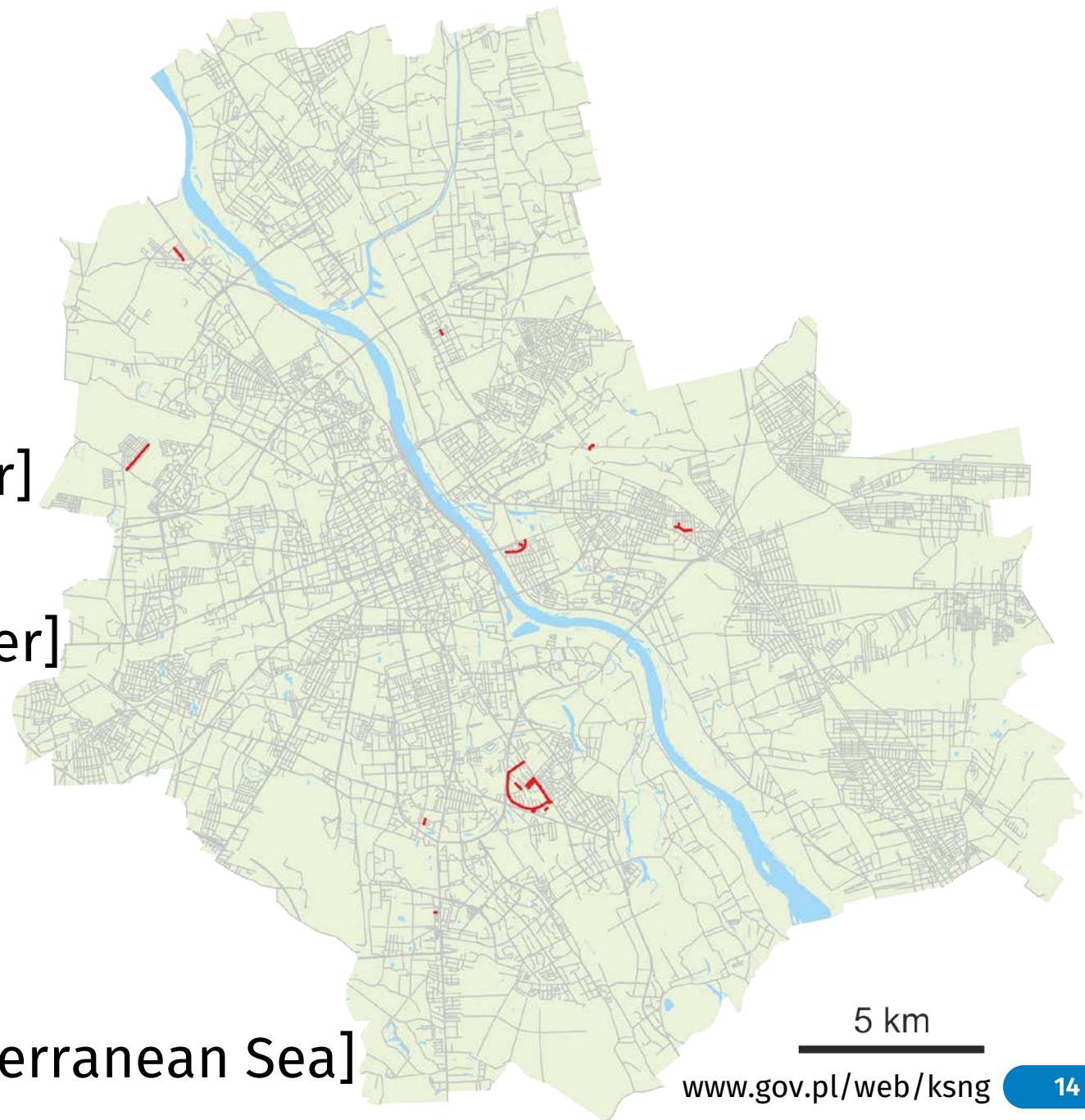
- **ulica Alzacka** [Alsace]
- **ulica Katalońska** [Catalonia]
- **ulica Lapońska** [Sameland]
- **ulica Morawska** [Moravia]
- **ulica Nubijska** [Nubia]
- **rondo Tybetu** [Tibet]
- **ulica Wołoska** [Wallachia]
- **ulica Zaporoska** [Zaporizhzhia]



# Types of features 4

Street names refer to names of water features (river, lakes, seas):  
15 street names, i.e. 5.9% of all names, e.g.:

- **ulica Berezyńska** [Berezina River]
- **ulica Dźwińska** [Daugava River]
- **ulica Elsterska** [White Elster River]
- **ulica Balaton** [Lake Balaton]
- **ulica Narocz** [Lake Narach]
- **ulica Adriatycka** [Adriatic Sea]
- **ulica Czarnomorska** [Black Sea]
- **ulica Śródziemnomorska** [Mediterranean Sea]

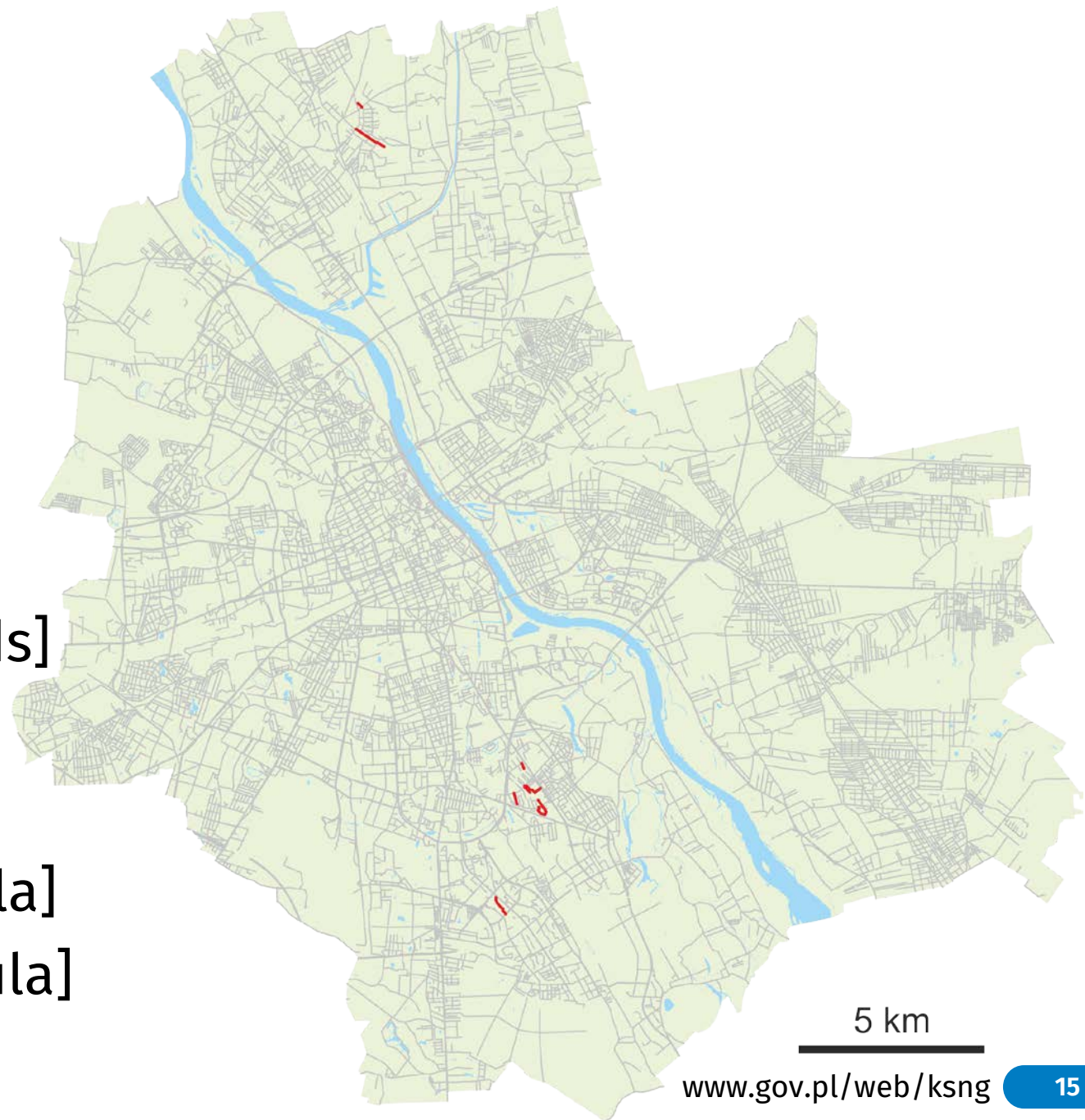




# Types of features 5

Street names refer to names of islands, peninsulas and capes:  
10 street names, i.e. 3.9% of all names, e.g.:

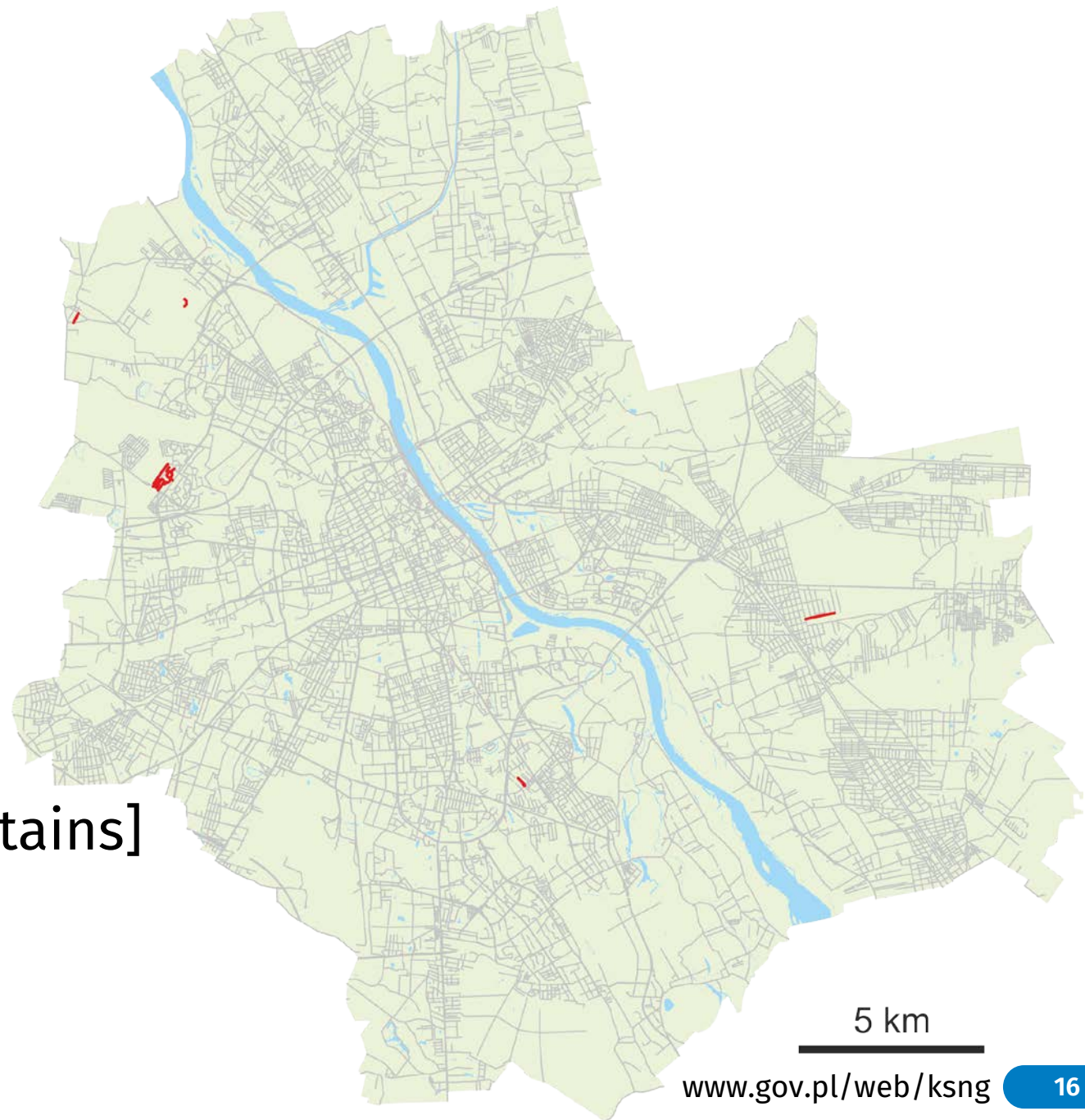
- **ulica Capri** [Carpi]
- **ulica Cypryjska** [Cyprus]
- **ulica Hawajska** [Hawaiian Islands]
- **ulica Korsykańska** [Corsica]
- **ulica Majorki** [Mallorca]
- **ulica Iberyjska** [Iberian Peninsula]
- **ulica Krymska** [Crimean Peninsula]
- **ulica Arkony** [Cape Arkona]



# Types of features 6

Street names refer to names of mountains: 8 street names, i.e. 3.1% of all names, e.g.:

- **ulica Alpejska** [Alps]
- **ulica Andyjska** [Andes]
- **ulica Apenińska** [Apennines]
- **ulica Dynarska** [Dinaric Alps]
- **ulica Himalajska** [Himalayas]
- **ulica Kaukaska** [Caucasus Mountains]
- **ulica Parnas** [Mount Parnassus]
- **ulica Pirenejska** [Pyrenees]

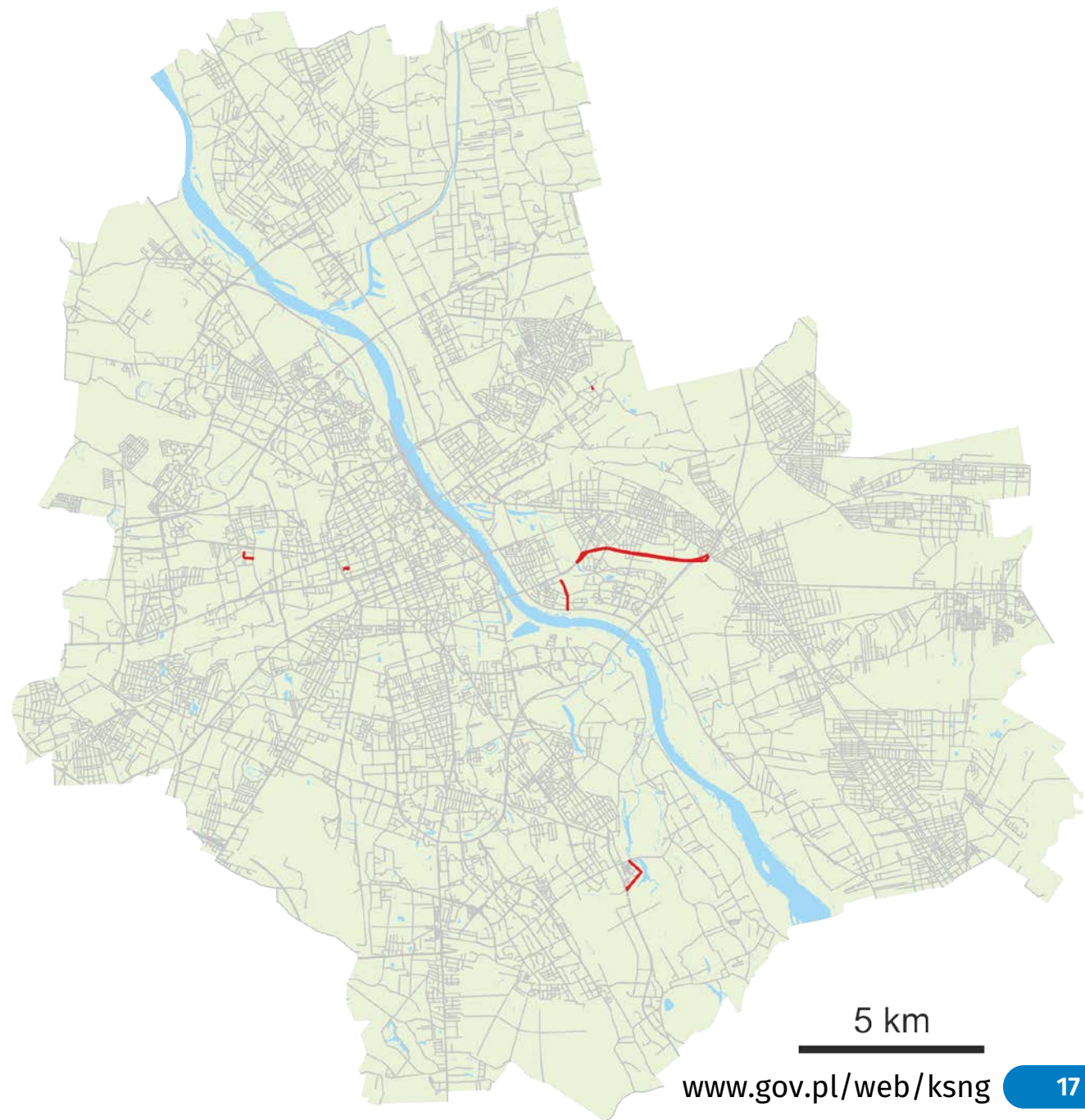




# Types of features 7

Street names refer to names of other features: 6 street names, i.e. 2.4% of all names, e.g.:

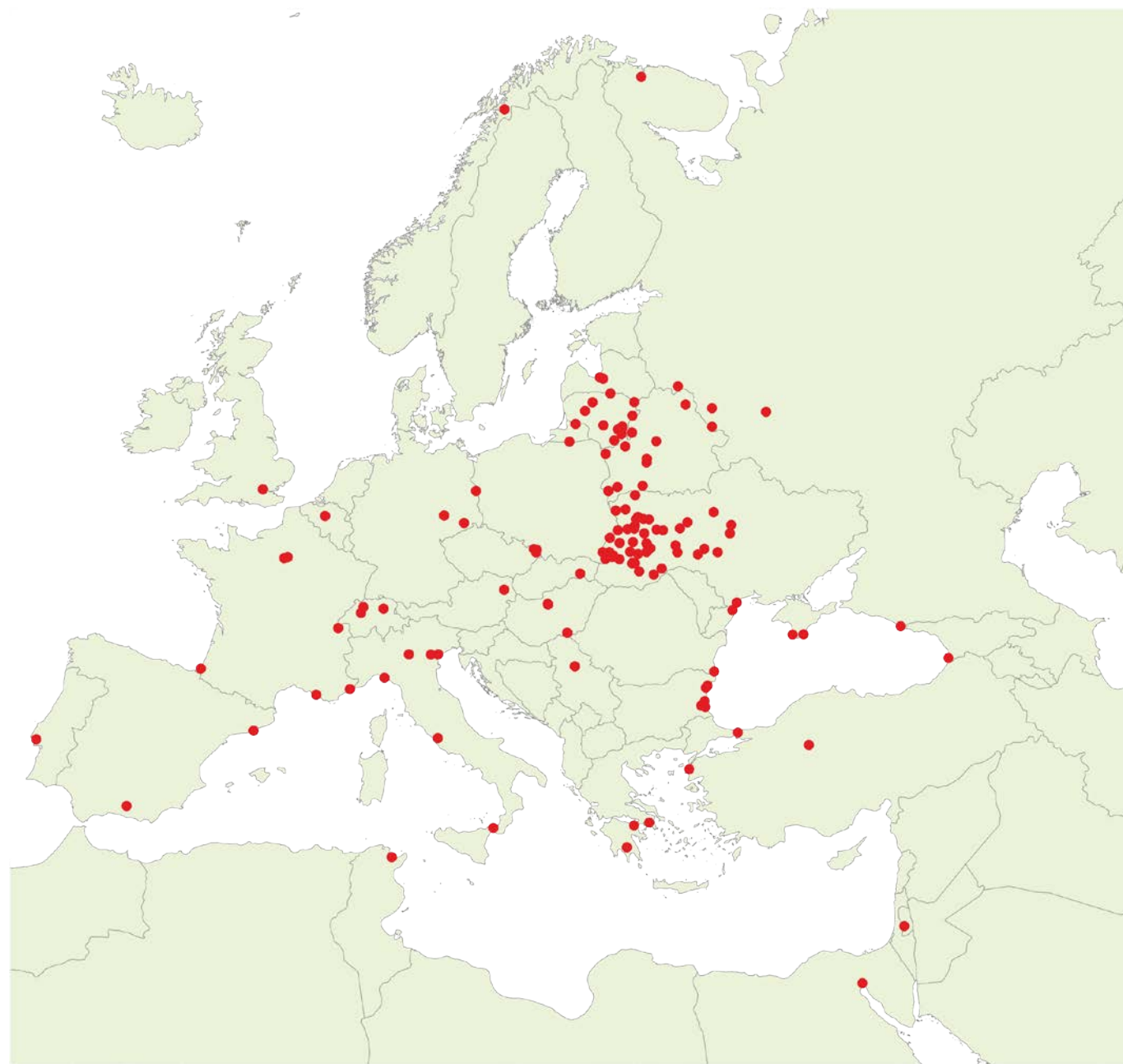
- **ulica Afrykańska** [Africa]
- **ulica Europejska** [Europe]
- **plac Europejski** [Europe]
- **ulica Monte Cassino** [Montecassino Abbey]
- **ulica Ostrobramska** [Aušros vartai – the gate in Vilnius]
- **plac Ostrej Bramy** [Aušros vartai]



# Location of features

211 street names refer to features located in Europe. Of these, 129 street names refer to cities, towns and villages in Europe, e.g.:

- **ulica Ateńska** [Athens]
- **ulica Grodzieńska** [Hrodna]
- **ulica Lwowska** [Lviv]
- **ulica Marsylska** [Marseille]
- **ulica Portofino** [Portofino]
- **skwer Ryski** [Rīga]
- **ulica Wiedeńska** [Vienna]
- **plac Wileński** [Vilnius]
- **ulica Złotych Piasków** [Golden Sands]

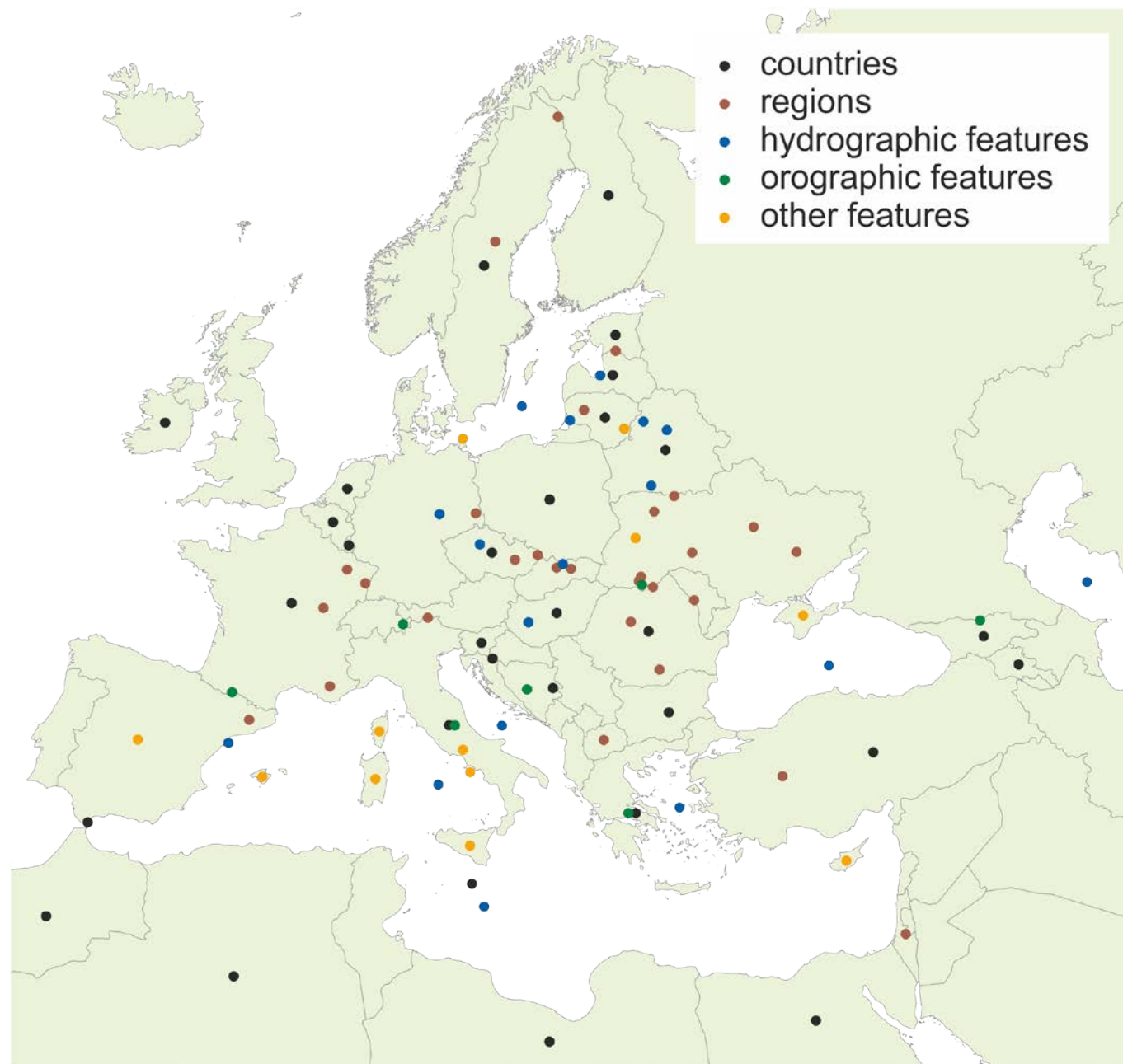




# Location of features

82 street names refer to other features from Europe:

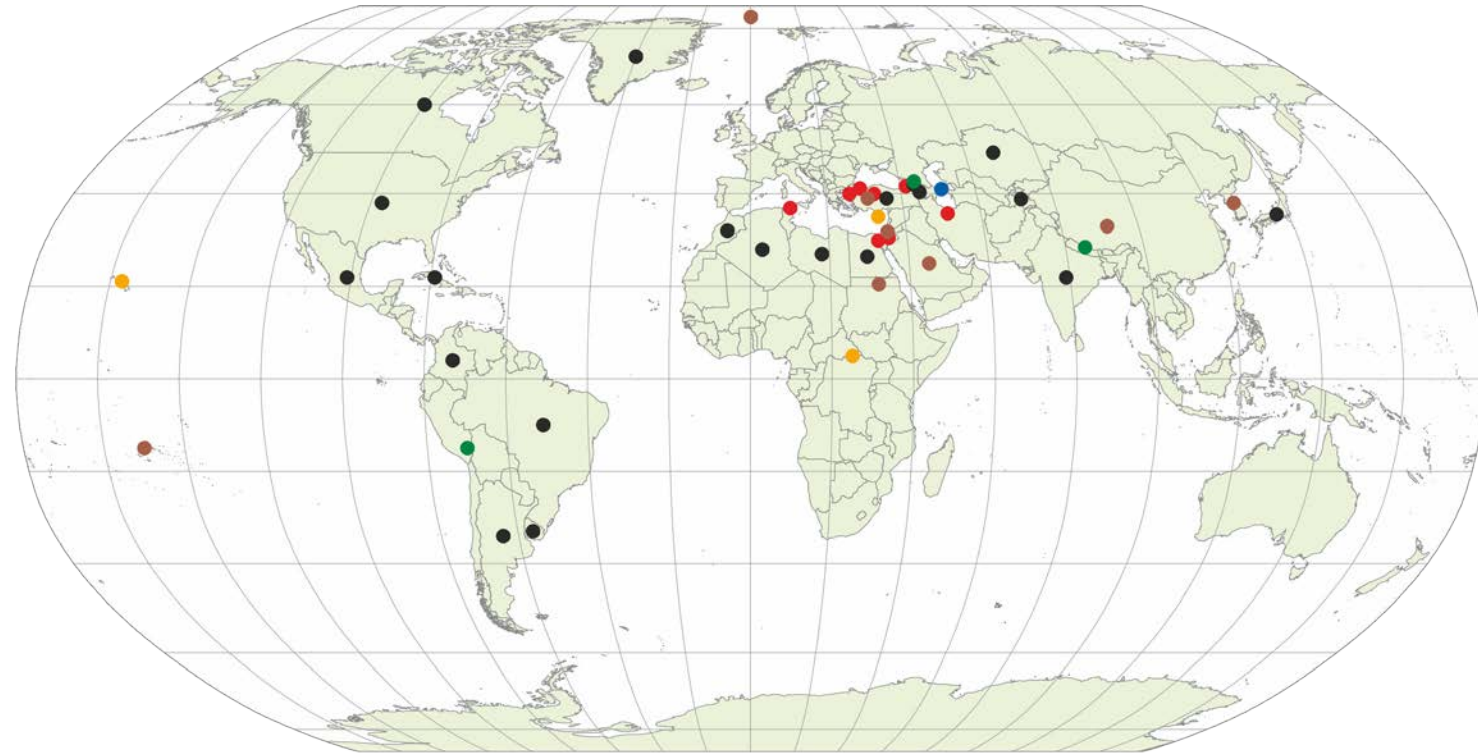
- 23 streets named after countries, e.g. **ulica Łotewska** [Latvia], **skwer Chorwacki** [Croatia]
- 27 streets named after regions, e.g. **ulica Prowansalska** [Provence], **ulica Tyrolska** [Tyrol]
- 14 streets named after water objects, e.g. **ulica Egejska** [Aegean Sea], **ulica Ebro** [Ebro – river]
- 5 streets named after landform objects, e.g. **ulica Alpejska** [Alps]
- 13 streets named after other objects, e.g. **ulica Sycylijska** [Sicily], **ulica Arkony** [Cape Arkona]



# Location of features

43 street names refer to features located outside Europe:

- 8 streets named after cities, e.g. **ulica Sueska** [Suez], **ulica Batumi** [Batumi]
- 20 streets named after countries, e.g. **ulica Libijska** [Libya], **ulica Indyjska** [India]
- 8 streets named after regions, e.g. **ulica Nubijska** [Nubia], **ulica Arktyczna** [Arctic]
- 1 street named after water objects – **ulica Kaspijska** [Caspian Sea]
- 3 streets named after landform objects, e.g. **ulica Andyjska** [Andes]
- 3 streets named after other objects, e.g. **ulica Hawajska** [Hawaiian Islands]



- localities
- countries
- regions
- hydrographic features
- orographic features
- other features



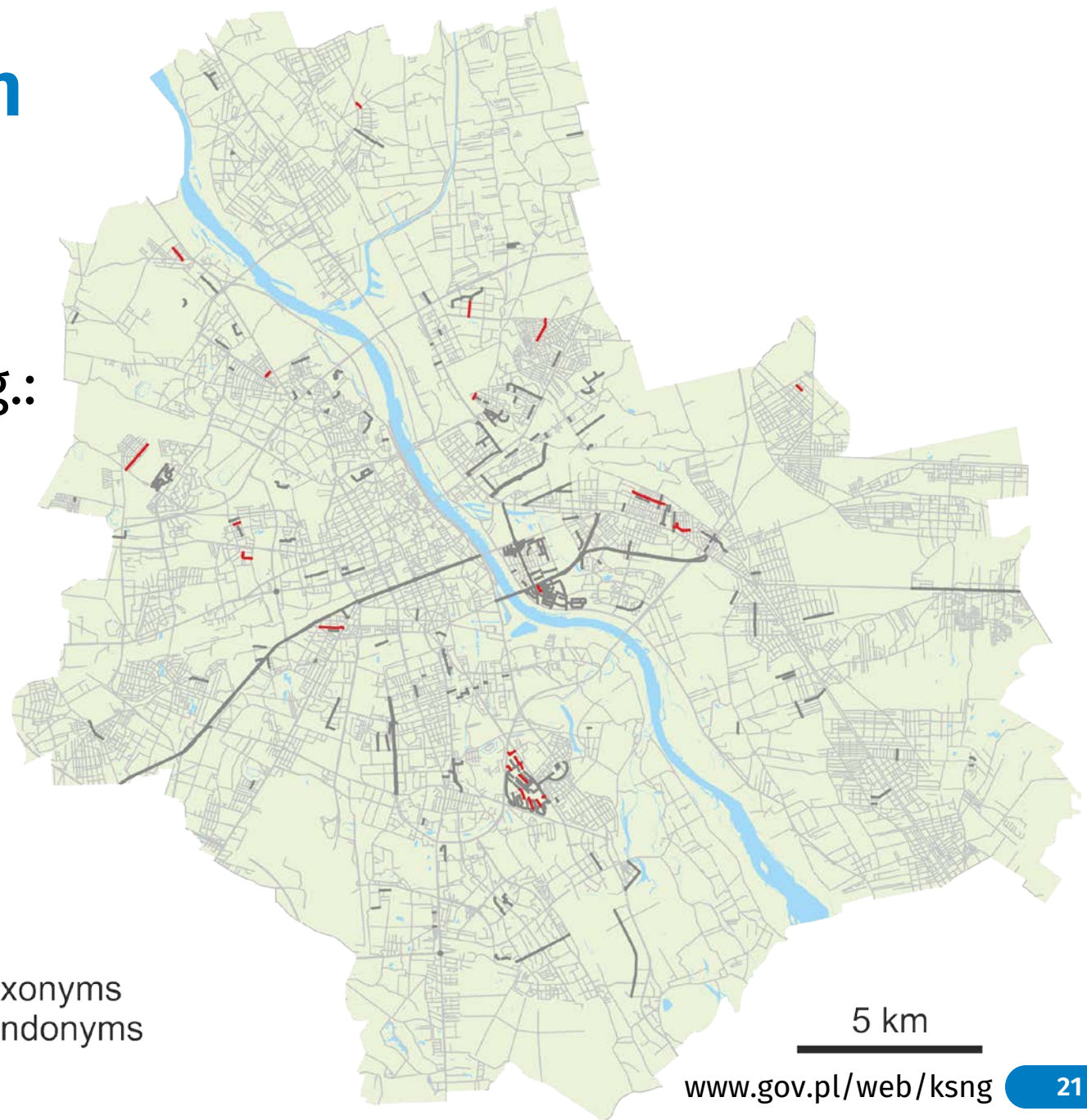
# Exonyms and endonyms in street names

Street names with exonyms: 231

Street names with endonyms: 23, e.g.:

- **ulica Barska** [Bar]
- **ulica Burgaska** [Burgas]
- **ulica Capri** [Capri]
- **ulica Gibraltarska** [Gibraltar]
- **ulica Maltańska** [Malta]
- **ulica Portofino** [Portofino]
- **ulica Rapperswilska** [Rapperswil]
- **ulica Sozopolska** [Sozopol]

— exonyms  
— endonyms

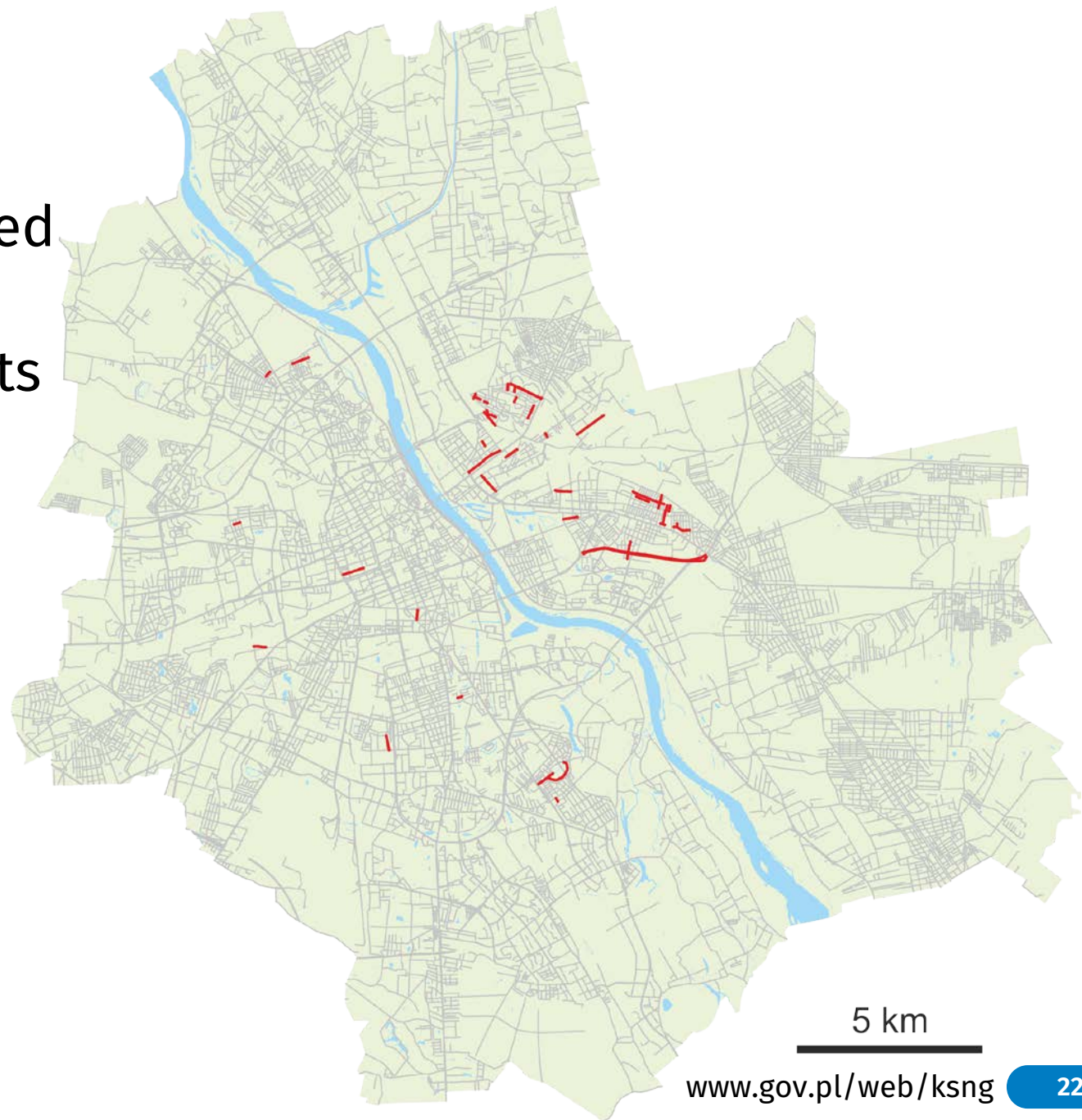


# Street names before WW2

114 out of 254 analyzed names existed before World War II.

38 of these names referred to objects located then in Poland, e.g.:

- **ulica Brzeska** [Brest]
- **ulica Grodzieńska** [Hrodna]
- **ulica Lwowska** [Lviv]
- **ulica Pokucka** [Pokuttia]
- **ulica Styrska** [Styr]
- **ulica Trocka** [Trakai]
- **ulica Zbaraska** [Zbarazh]

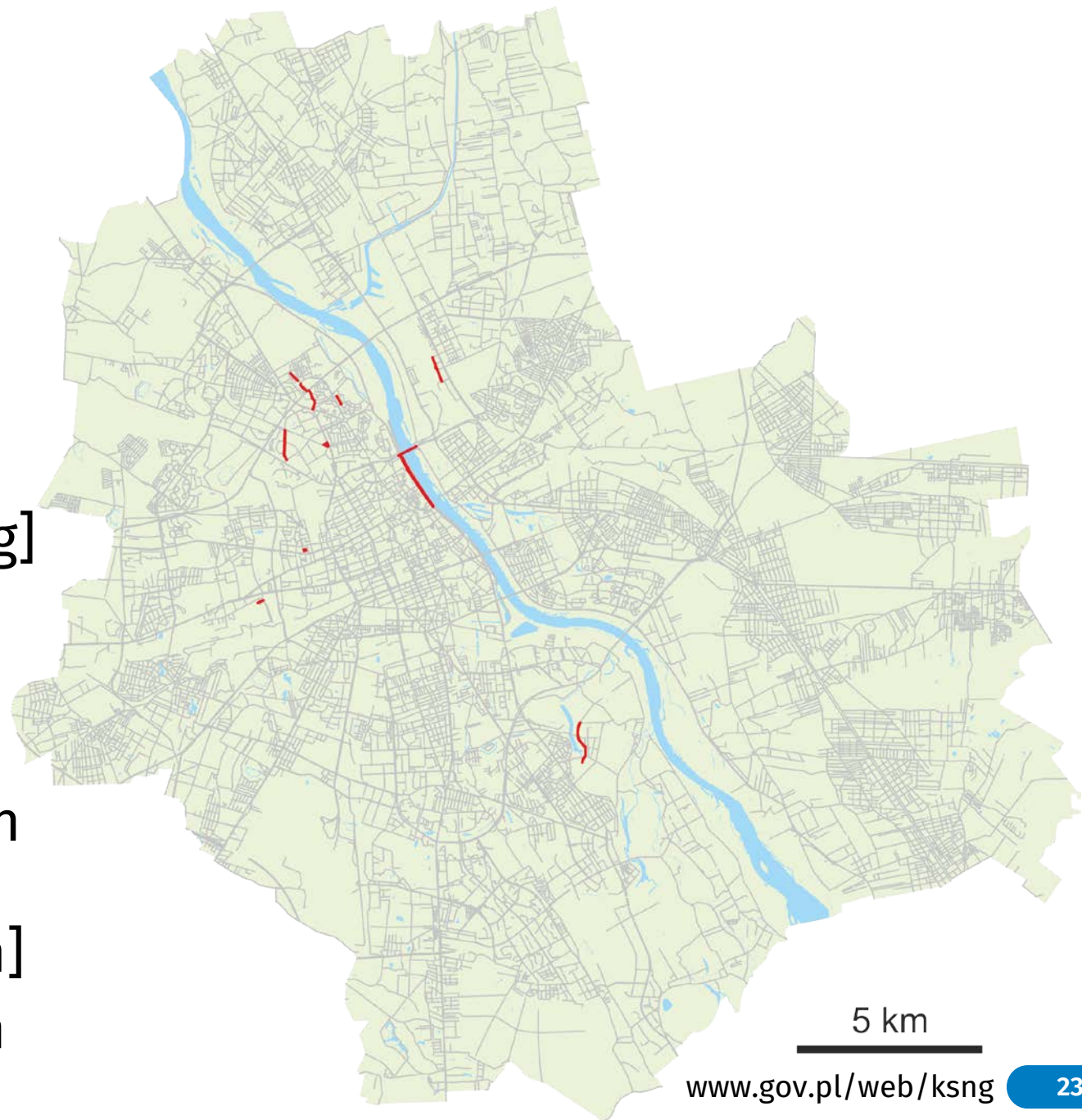




# Street names befor WW2

10 of names referred to objects located then outside Poland, and now within its borders, e.g.:

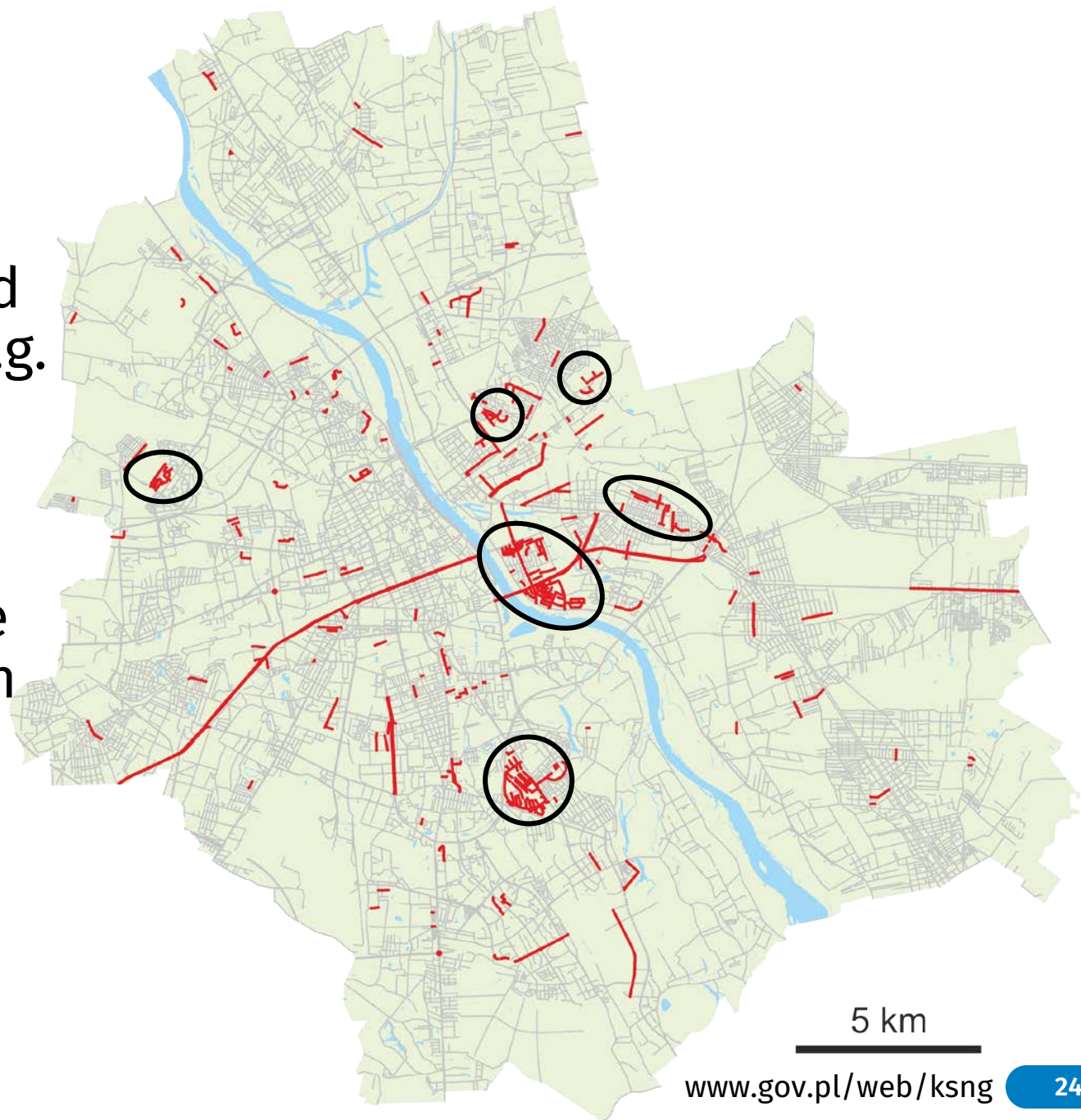
- **ulica Bytomska** [Bytom, then Beuthen]
- **ulica Elbląska** [Elbląg, then Elbing]
- **ulica Gdańska** [Gdańsk, then Danzig]
- **ulica Oliwska** [Oliwa, then Oliva]
- **plac Grunwaldzki** [Grunwald, then Grünfelde]
- **plac Opolski** [Opole, then Oppeln]
- **ulica Wschowska** [Wschowa, then Fraustadt]



# Nests of names

Nest of names – groups of streets located close to each other, named according to one type of names (e.g. after the names of birds, flowers, poets, names related to music, mountains, forests, etc.)

Several such nests also occur in the case of streets named after foreign geographical features.





# Nests of names – Saska Kępa

51 streets named after foreign geographical features (names from 1920s, 1970s and 1980s), e.g.:

- **ulica Ateńska** [Athens]
- **ulica Czeska** [Czechia]
- **ulica Francuska** [France]
- **ulica Grecka** [Greece]
- **ulica Lizbońska** [Lisbon]
- **ulica Peszteńska** [Pest]
- **aleja Stanów Zjednoczonych** [United States]
- **ulica Wersalska** [Versailles]





# Nests of names – Stegny

35 streets named after features from the Mediterranean basin, including the Black Sea (names from 1970s, 1980s and 1990s), e.g.:

- **ulica Barcelońska** [Barcelona]
- **ulica Czarnomorska** [Black Sea]
- **ulica Egejska** [Aegean Sea]
- **ulica Kartaginy** [Carthage]
- **ulica Korsykańska** [Corsica]
- **ulica Nicejska** [Nice]
- **aleja Sardyńska** [Sardinia]
- **ulica Warneńska** [Varna]

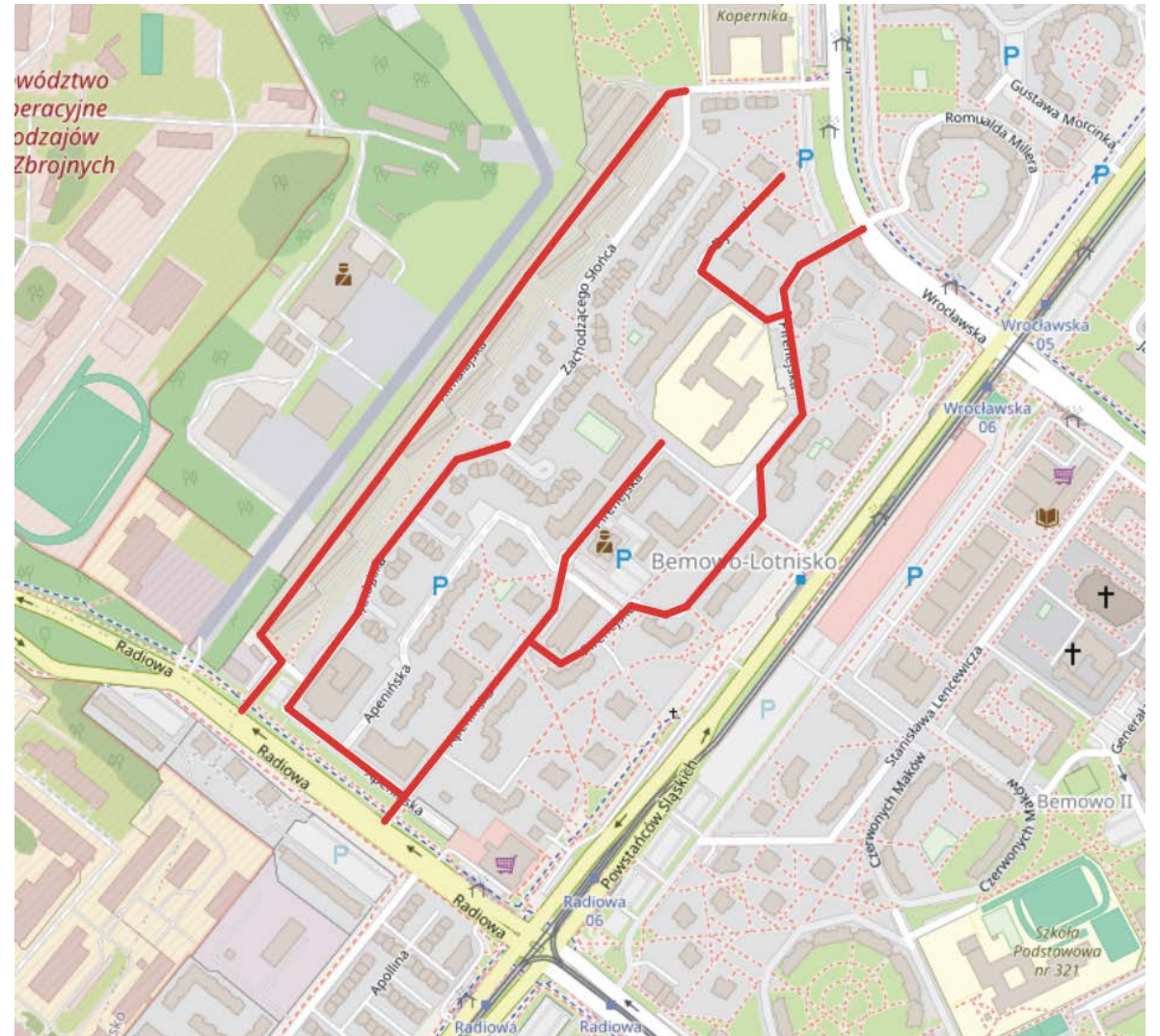




# Nests of names – Bemowo-Lotnisko

5 streets named after mountain ranges (names from 1980):

- **ulica Andyjska** [Andes]
- **ulica Apenińska** [Apennines]
- **ulica Dynarska** [Dinaric Alps]
- **ulica Himalajska** [Himalayas]
- **ulica Pirenejska** [Pyrenees]





# ulica Inflancka [Livonia Street] (1770)

- country road leading to the manor estate of the Bishop of Livonia, created around 1750
- named Inflancka [Livonian] in 1770, due to Ostrowski's function





# Aleje Jerozolimskie [Jerusalem Avenues] (18th c.)

- 1774 – a short-lived Jewish settlement called Nowa Jerozolima [New Jerusalem] was established outside the city limits
- Country road running next to it was called Droga Jerozolimska [Jerusalem Road]
- Crossing in the city embankment at the end of this road was called Rogatki Jerozolimskie [Jerusalem Tollgate]
- 1823-24 – a wide, straight road was laid out connecting the tollgate with the Vistula River and named ulica Jerozolimska [Jerusalem Street], then renamed „avenues”





# Aleje Jerozolimskie [Jerusalem Avenues] (18th c.)





# ulica Wileńska [Vilnius Street] (1860)

- 1860 – street was marked out
- built next to the Dworzec Petersburski [Saint Petersburg Railway Station] (opened in 1863), initial station of the Warsaw-Petersburg Railway
- railway connected Warsaw, among others, with Vilnius – street name reflects this fact





# ulica Litewska [Lithuania Street] (1877)

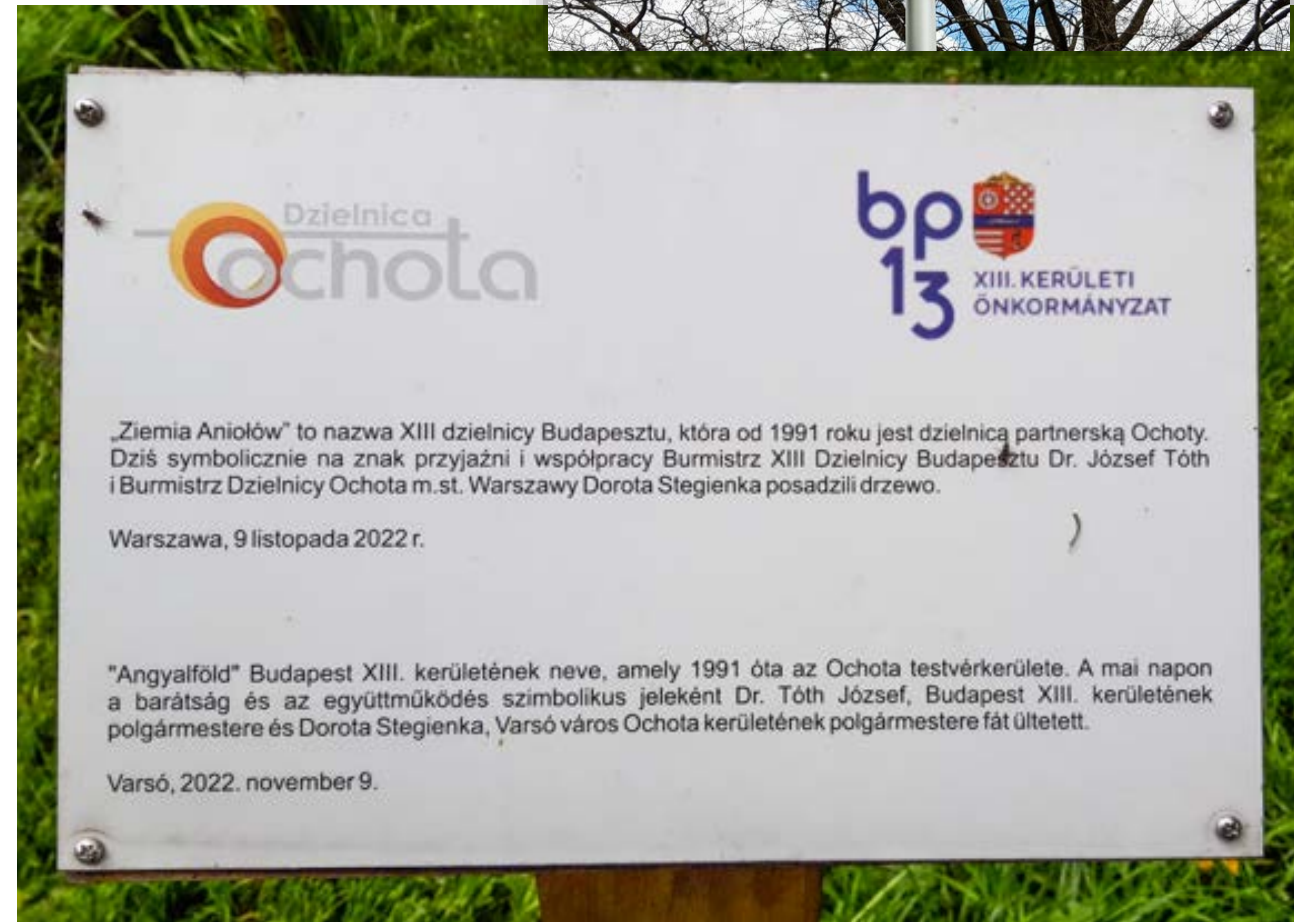
- created and named in 1877
- located next to the so-called Lithuanian Barracks, where a Russian infantry regiment called Lithuanian Life Guard Regiment stationed.





# skwer Ziemi Aniołów [Angels Land green square] (2021)

- 1991 – 13th District (Budapest) and Ochota (Warsaw): twin districts
- 2019 – Ochota park in Angyalföld
- 2021 – skwer Ziemi Aniołów in Ochota (Hungarian name Angyalföld translated into Polish)





COMMISSION ON STANDARDIZATION OF GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES OUTSIDE THE REPUBLIC OF POLAND  
affiliated to the Surveyor General of Poland

# Thank you

**Maciej Zych**

*Chair of the Commission on Standardization of Geographical  
Names Outside the Republic of Poland*