

THE LEGEND OF THE WARSAW MERMAID



There are many legends surrounding the Warsaw Mermaid, symbol of this historic city on the Vistula River. According to one legend, the security of the medieval city of Warsaw was defended by a manly and noble Griffin. Once when the Griffin sailed with Vistula River boatmen to the Baltic Sea, he met a beautiful Mermaid. They fell deeply in love and the Mermaid swam with them back to Warsaw. From then on, the Griffin and the Mermaid watched over the townspeople together. When the Swedes attacked Warsaw, the valiant Griffin was mortally wounded by the enemy and died. His companion, the brave Mermaid, seized sword and shield, and fought heroically in defense of the embattled city. The grateful Varsovians were so smitten with the courageous Mermaid that they placed her image on their city's coat of arms—a fitting companion to the city's mottoes: *Contemnit procellas* (It defies the storms) and *Semper invicta* (Always invincible).