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**Virtual excursion to Malbork
or Crash course of the history of Prussia, Poland
with references to the history of
Near/Middle-East**

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research worker (retired), rower (retired), (still)
keen cyclist etc...
(BUT not trained historian)**

Bachotek 2017

St Adalbert of Prague & the origins of Poland



Bohemian missionary and Christian saint.

Martyred in his efforts (some 200km from here) to convert the Baltic Prussians to Christianity.

Body (cleverly) ransomed by Bolesław Chrobry (king of Poland) and buried in Gniezno (near Poznań).

Gniezno was transformed from obscure place at the end of Christian world and stained by (pretty recent) pagan rites into 1st class religious center famous of relics of well-known martyr/saint.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Adalbert_of_Prague

Crash course of the history of Prussia



Bachotek is at the borderline between Prussia and Mazowsze (one of historical parts of Poland except Greater Poland, Lesser Poland Lesser Poland (Kraków) and

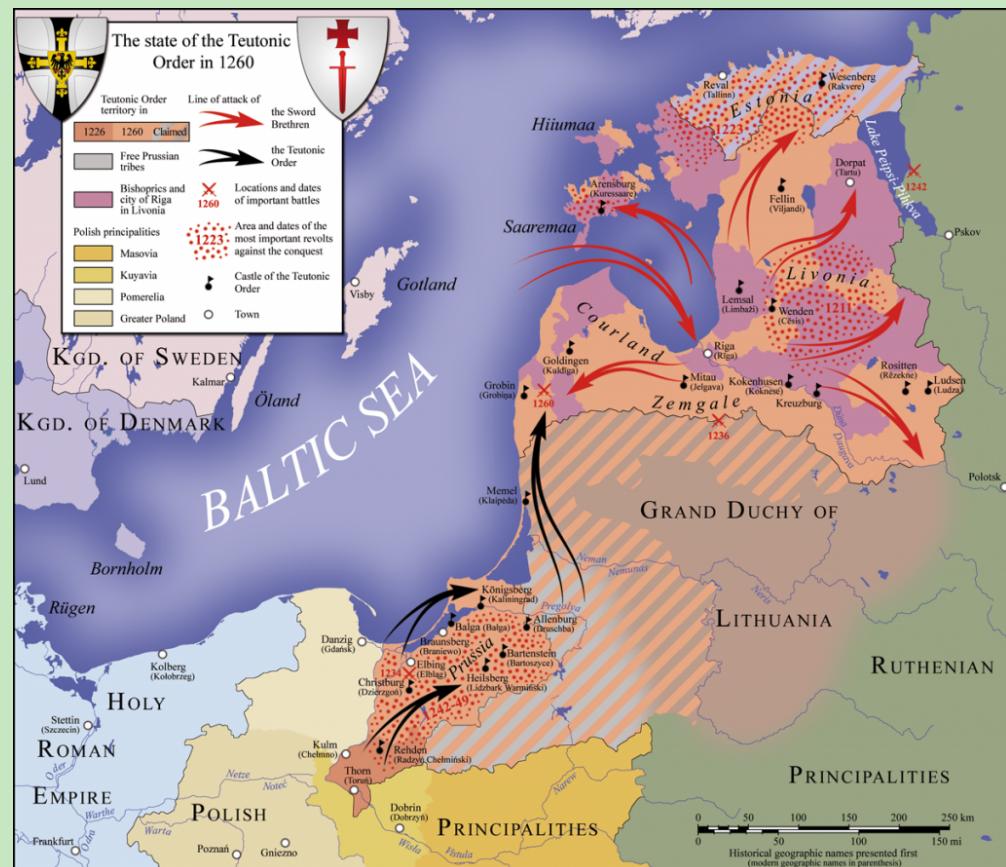
BTW: Poland capitals in chronological order: Poznań/Gniezno, Kraków, Warszawa shows also chronological order in which Poland was enlarged.

SideNote: Recovered or Regained Territories aka *Ziemie Odzyskane*: official propaganda term for *eastern parts of pre-war Germany that became part of Poland after World War II*.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Recovered_Territories

Crusaders and Knight Orders

Several religious military orders were formed in the Holy Land during the Crusades
Templars
Hospitallers
Teutonic Knights



The Teutonic Knights or the Teutonic Order of the Hospital of St. Mary in Jerusalem, were known in Poland as Krzyżacy on account of the black cross they wore on their white coats. Established in 1190 to protect German pilgrims in the Holy Land, the order was later transformed in order to fight heretics.

In 1226 the Teutonic Knights came to Chełmno in Poland, invited by Duke Konrad I of Mazovia to convert the pagan Prussians.

They conquered Prussia, exterminated the locals and founded a state with Malbork as its capital

Map of Teutonic Knights castles (in Poland)



Top-tier:

- Malbork/Marienburg
- Kwidzyn/Marienwerder
- Frombork/Frauenberg*

2nd-tier:

- Gniew/Mewe
- Sztum/Stuhm
- Lidzbark Warmiński/Heilsberg
- Reszel/Rössel

- ## 3rd-tier:
- Radzyń Chełmiński/Reden
 - many others

Other:

- many

Nearest castles



Radzyń Chełmiński
Kurzętnik

Most interesting castles

The Castle of the Teutonic Order in Malbork is the largest castle in the world by surface area, and the largest brick building in Europe.

In 1278 the Teutonic Knights started to build a castle and an adjacent town on a high Nogat bank.

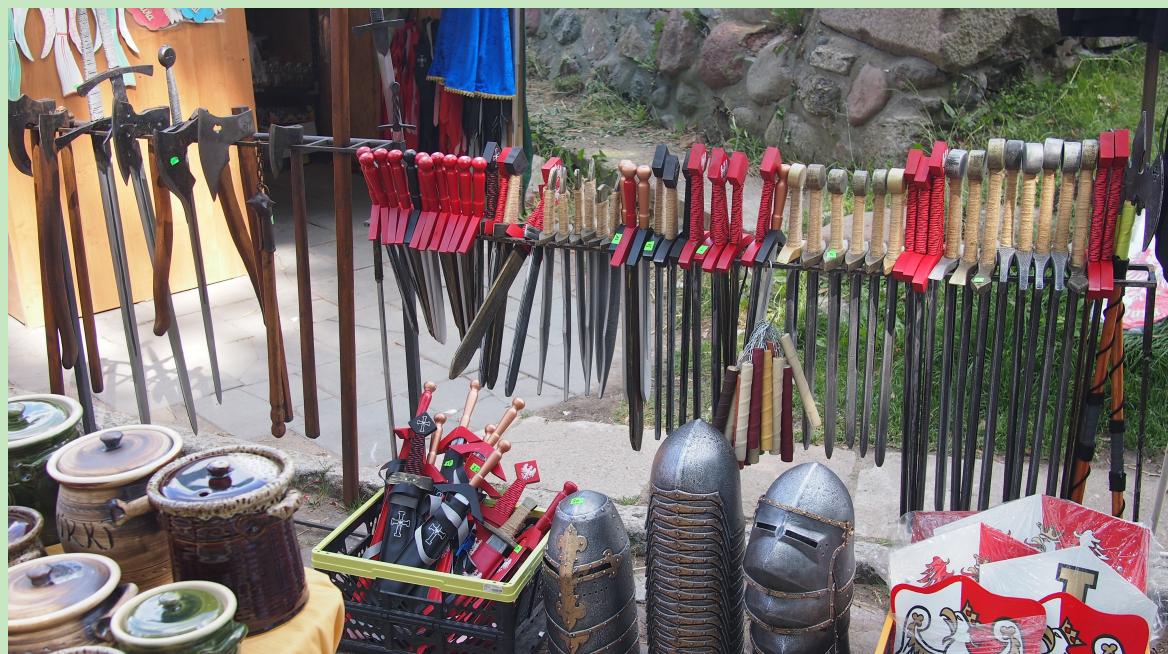
In 1309, the Grand Master transferred his headquarters from Venice to Malbork

Never captured by the enemy but 2 times bought (from the hands of the Teutonic Knights' unpaid mercenaries)



Kwidzyn/Marienwerder – no castle except extensive latrine tower (aka Danzker) but interesting places to see: cathedral, and burial place of 3 “unlucky” Grand Masters: Werner von Orseln (murdered), Ludolf Koenig von Wattzau (abdicated) and Heinrich von Plauen (overthrown).

The Malbork castle



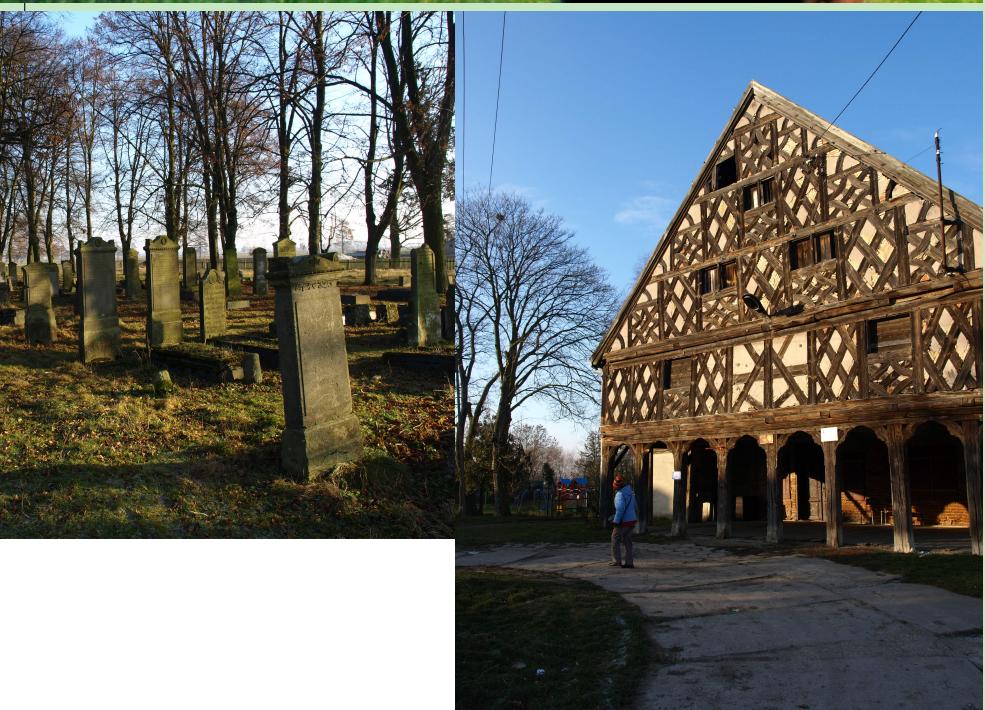
Other worth seeing places (nearby)



- Gutenberg Bible and magnificent cathedral in Pelplin (no Castle sorry)
- Regional Museum / cathedral at Kwidzyn/Marienwerder
- Führerhauptquartier Wolfsschanze at Kętrzyn/Rastenburg
- Kanał Elbląg-Ostróda/Elbing-Osterode canal
- Frombork (Copernicus)
- Grunwald/Tannenberg (If you are not a pacifist and has free time around 15 July :-) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gLr58r41AV0>
<http://www.cda.pl/video/15606869>

SideNote: strong anti-German propaganda during communist era (partially understandable due to atrocities of war) as counterbalance to not-so-warm attitude of average Pole towards our official ally (#SovietUnion)

OWSP SideNote: Olędrzy (aka Netherlands in Zulawy)



The first Dutch settlers arrived in Prussia 300 years before the Mennonites, invited there by Teutonic Order to dry the swamp lands. They founded Pasłek (aka Preußisch Holland, XIII)

Many Dutch people decided to leave their homeland due to persecution of the Catholic Habsburgs in 16th century. They were mostly Mennonites.

Their daily life, similar to American Amish, was simple and crude, in line with the virtues of modesty and economy.

Mennonites did not integrate with the rest of the inhabitants of Zulawy, living in their villages by the rules, which were imposed on them by their religion.

At the end of XVIII century most of them fled to Russia (Ukraine). Used by 3Rd Reich propaganda (pioneers at the east). Thus considered Germans, (remains) fled from Żuławy after 1945...

<http://www.polenvoorndernederlanders.nl/>

Crash course of modern history of Prussia



So where all those German gone?

to Germany (1945–47) as a result of Allies agreement to ultimately resolve the problems by separating divided nations (the process is now reversed?)

And who lives here now?

Poles from all corners of Poland (Poland isn't so homogenous as it may looks like)

Poles experience differs depending on the regions. Despite frequent wars Poles from Mazowsze/Lesser Poland and part of Greater Poland live there for generations while those from former German territories/border territories arrived there pretty recently from all parts of Poland (usually East).

SideNote: My father's grandfather was a Pole who married pure German widow (whose husband was German too) with 3 children. They had 3 more children...

So I am second generation half/refugee here with at least 1/16 German Blood.

Live is not black-and-white :-)

Thank you