

# Crash course in 10 slides of the history of Powisle with references to the history of Near/Middle-East

Kwidzyn/Powiśle/Poland 2018

## St Adalbert of Prague & the origins of Poland (X century)



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](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Adalbert_of_Prague)

# Crash course of the history of Prussia (X–XVII century)



Kwidzyn is at the borderline between Prussia and Mazowsze which is one of historical parts of Poland with Warsaw as its capital (the two other are Greater Poland/Poznań and Lesser Poland/Cracow)

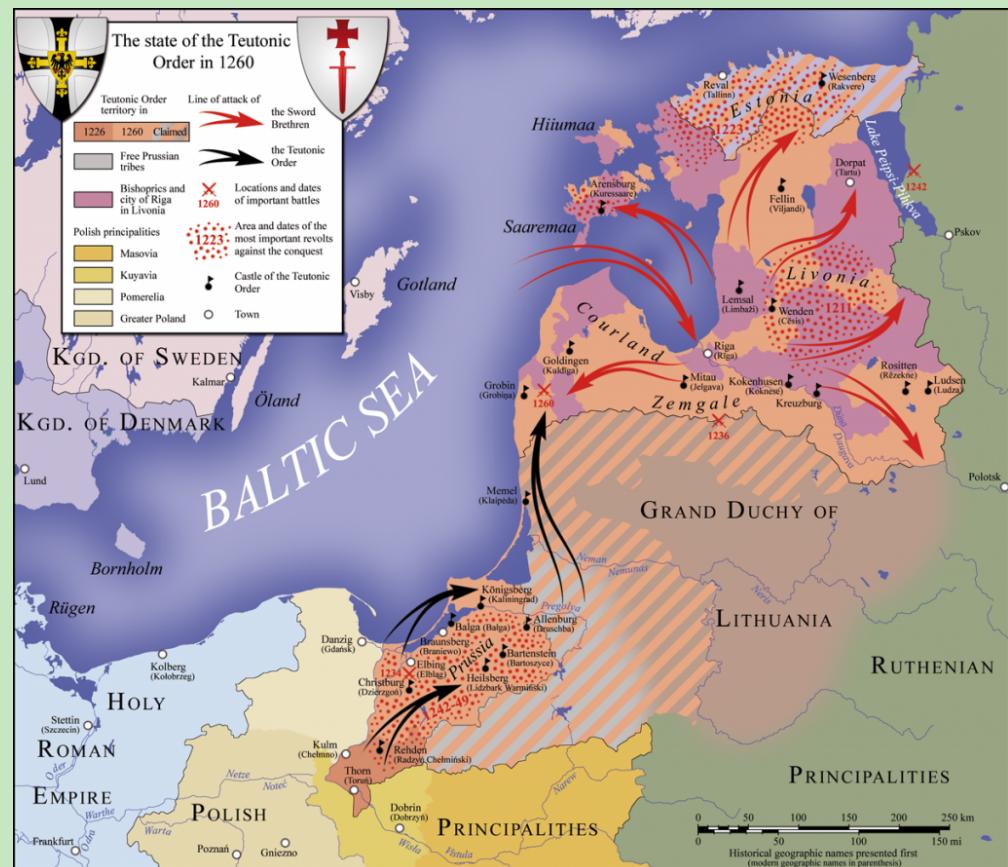
Till XVI century Poland enlarged to the east while loosing its western territories. After World War II Poland regained territories which although historically (often only historically with 90% population German) Polish were for years part of pre-war Germany (sometimes for centuries).

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](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Recovered_Territories)

# Crusaders and Knight Orders (XIII–XV century)

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

## 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)

## Ołędrzy (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 Pastek (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 (cf Harrison Ford in Witness), 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 (XX century)



**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).

**Thank you**