

## = Battle of Grunwald =

The Battle of Grunwald , First Battle of Tannenberg or Battle of ?aliris , was fought on 15 July 1410 during the Polish ? Lithuanian ? Teutonic War . The alliance of the Kingdom of Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania , led respectively by King W?adys?aw II Jagie??o ( Jogaila ) and Grand Duke Vytautas ( Witold ; Vita?t ) , decisively defeated the German ? Prussian Teutonic Knights , led by Grand Master Ulrich von Jungingen . Most of the Teutonic Knights ' leadership were killed or taken prisoner . Although defeated , the Teutonic Knights withstood the siege of their fortress in Marienburg ( Malbork ) and suffered minimal territorial losses at the Peace of Thorn ( 1411 ) ( Toru? ) , with other territorial disputes continuing until the Peace of Melno in 1422 . The knights , however , would never recover their former power , and the financial burden of war reparations caused internal conflicts and an economic downturn in the lands under their control . The battle shifted the balance of power in Eastern Europe and marked the rise of the Polish ? Lithuanian union as the dominant political and military force in the region .

The battle was one of the largest in Medieval Europe and is regarded as the most important victory in the histories of Poland , Belarus and Lithuania . It has been used as a source of romantic legends and national pride , becoming a larger symbol of struggle against foreign invaders . During the 20th century the battle was used in Nazi and Soviet propaganda campaigns . Only in recent decades have historians moved towards a dispassionate , scholarly assessment of the battle , reconciling the previous narratives , which differed widely by nation .

## = = Names and sources = =

### = = = Names = = =

The battle was fought in the territory of the monastic state of the Teutonic Order , on the plains between three villages : Grünfelde ( Grunwald ) to the west , Tannenberg ( St?bark ) to the northeast , and Ludwigsdorf ( ?odwigowo , Ludwikowice ) to the south . W?adys?aw II Jagie??o referred to the site in Latin as in loco conflictus nostri , quem cum Cruciferis de Prusia habuimus , dicto Grunenvelt . Later Polish chroniclers interpreted the word Grunenvelt as Grünwald , meaning " green forest " in German . The Lithuanians followed suit and translated the name as ?aliris . The Germans named the battle after Tannenberg ( " fir hill " or " pine hill " in German ) . Thus there are three commonly used names for the battle : German : Schlacht bei Tannenberg , Polish : Bitwa pod Grunwaldem , Lithuanian : ?alirio m??is . Its names in the languages of other involved peoples include Belarusian : ????? ???? ?????????????? , Ukrainian : ????????????????? ?????? , Russian : ????????????????? ?????? , Czech : Bitva u Grunvaldu , Romanian : B?t?lia de la Grünwald .

## = = Historical background = =

### = = = Lithuanian Crusade and Polish ? Lithuanian union = = =

In 1230 the Teutonic Knights , a crusading military order , moved to Che?mno Land and launched the Prussian Crusade against the pagan Prussian clans . With support from the pope and Holy Roman Emperor , the Teutons conquered and converted the Prussians by the 1280s and shifted their attention to the pagan Grand Duchy of Lithuania . For about 100 years the Knights raided Lithuanian lands , particularly Samogitia , as it separated the Knights in Prussia from their branch in Livonia . While the border regions became an uninhabited wilderness , the Knights gained very little territory . The Lithuanians first gave up Samogitia during the Lithuanian Civil War ( 1381 ? 1384 ) in the Treaty of Dubysa . The territory was used as a bargaining chip to ensure Teutonic support for one of the sides in the internal power struggle .

In 1385 Grand Duke Jogaila of Lithuania agreed to marry Queen Jadwiga of Poland in the Union of

Kreva . Jogaila converted to Christianity and was crowned as the King of Poland ( Władysław II Jagiełło ) , thus creating a personal union between the Kingdom of Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania . The official Lithuanian conversion to Christianity removed the religious rationale for the order 's activities in the area . Its grand master , Conrad Zöllner von Rothenstein , supported by the Hungarian king , Sigismund of Luxemburg , responded by publicly contesting the sincerity of Jogaila 's conversion , bringing the charge to a papal court . The territorial disputes continued over Samogitia , which had been in Teutonic hands since the Peace of Raciąż in 1404 . Poland also had territorial claims against the Knights in Dobrzyń Land and Danzig ( Gdańsk ) , but the two states had been largely at peace since the Treaty of Kalisz ( 1343 ) . The conflict was also motivated by trade considerations : The knights controlled the lower reaches of the three largest rivers ( the Neman , Vistula and Daugava ) in Poland and Lithuania .

= = = War , truce and preparations = = =

In May 1409 an uprising in Teutonic @-@ held Samogitia started . Lithuania supported it and the knights threatened to invade . Poland announced its support for the Lithuanian cause and threatened to invade Prussia in return . As Prussian troops evacuated Samogitia , Teutonic Grand Master Ulrich von Jungingen declared war on the Kingdom of Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania on 6 August 1409 . The Knights hoped to defeat Poland and Lithuania separately , and began by invading Greater Poland and Kuyavia , catching the Poles by surprise . The Knights burned the castle at Dobrin ( Dobrzyń nad Wisłą ) , captured Bobrowniki after a 14 @-@ day siege , conquered Bydgoszcz ( Bromberg ) and sacked several towns . The Poles organized counterattacks and recaptured Bydgoszcz . The Samogitians attacked Memel ( Klaipėda ) . However , neither side was ready for a full @-@ scale war .

Wenceslaus , King of the Romans , agreed to mediate the dispute . A truce was signed on 8 October 1409 and was set to expire on 24 June 1410 . Both sides used this time to prepare for war , gathering troops and engaging in diplomatic maneuvering . Both sides sent letters and envoys accusing each other of various wrongdoings and threats to Christendom . Wenceslaus , who received a gift of 60 @, @ 000 florins from the knights , declared that Samogitia rightfully belonged to the knights and only Dobrzyń Land should be returned to Poland . The knights also paid 300 @, @ 000 ducats to Sigismund of Hungary , who had ambitions regarding the Principality of Moldavia , for mutual military assistance . Sigismund attempted to break the Polish ? Lithuanian alliance by offering Vytautas a king 's crown ; Vytautas 's acceptance would have violated the terms of the Ostrów Agreement and created Polish @-@ Lithuanian discord . At the same time , Vytautas managed to obtain a truce from the Livonian Order .

By December 1409 Władysław II Jagiełło and Vytautas had agreed on a common strategy : Their armies would unite into a single massive force and march together towards Marienburg ( Malbork ) , capital of the Teutonic Knights . The Knights , who took a defensive position , did not expect a joint attack and were preparing for a dual invasion ? by the Poles along the Vistula River towards Danzig ( Gdańsk ) and the Lithuanians along the Neman River towards Ragnit ( Neman ) . To counter this perceived threat , Ulrich von Jungingen concentrated his forces in Schwetz ( Świecie ) , a central location from where troops could respond to an invasion from any direction rather quickly . Sizable garrisons were left in the eastern castles of Ragnit , Rhein ( Ryn ) near Lötzen ( Giżycko ) , and Memel ( Klaipėda ) . To keep their plans secret and mislead the knights , Władysław II Jagiełło and Vytautas organised several raids into border territories , thus forcing the knights to keep their troops in place .

= = Opposing forces = =

The precise number of soldiers involved has proven difficult to establish . None of the contemporary sources provided reliable troop counts . Jan Długosz provided the number of banners , the principal unit of each cavalry : 51 for the knights , 50 for the Poles and 40 for the Lithuanians . However , it is unclear how many men were under each banner . The structure and number of infantry units (

pikemen , archers , crossbowmen ) and artillery units is unknown . Estimates , often biased by political and nationalistic considerations , were produced by various historians . German historians tend to present lower numbers , while Polish historians tend to use higher estimates . The high @-@ end estimates by Polish historian Stefan Kuczyński of 39 @, @ 000 Polish ? Lithuanian and 27 @, @ 000 Teutonic men have been cited in Western literature as " commonly accepted " .

While less numerous , the Teutonic army had advantages in discipline , military training and equipment . Their heavy cavalry was among the best in Europe . The Teutonic army was also equipped with bombards that could shoot lead and stone projectiles . Both forces were composed of troops from several states and lands , including numerous mercenaries ; for example , Bohemian mercenaries fought on each side . The knights also invited guest crusaders . Twenty @-@ two different peoples , mostly Germanic , joined them . Teutonic recruits included soldiers from Westphalia , Frisia , Austria , Swabia and Stettin ( Szczecin ) . Two Hungarian nobles , Nicholas II Garay and Stibor of Stiboricz , brought 200 men for the Knights , but support from Sigismund of Hungary was disappointing . The Polish Crown 's troops included seven Ruthenian banners .

Poland brought mercenaries from Moravia and Bohemia . The Czechs produced two full banners , under the command of Jan Sokol of Lamberk . Serving among the Czechs was possibly Jan ?i?ka , future commander of the Hussite forces , who , according to some historians , might have lost an eye . Alexander the Good , ruler of Moldavia , commanded an expeditionary corps . Vytautas gathered troops from Lithuanian , Ruthenian ( modern Belarus and Ukraine ) and Russian lands ? one , 36 and 3 banners , respectively . The three Russian banners of Smolensk regiments were part of Lithuanian army , due to Smolensk being part of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania during the period of 1387 ? 1514 . The Smolensk regiments were under the command of Władysław II Jagiełło 's brother Lengvenis , while the contingent of Tatars of the Golden Horde was under the command of the future Khan Jalal ad @-@ Din . The overall commander of the joint Polish ? Lithuanian force was King Władysław II Jagiełło ; however , he did not directly participate in the battle . The Lithuanian units were commanded directly by Grand Duke Vytautas , who was second in command , and helped design the grand strategy of the campaign . Vytautas actively participated in the battle , managing both Lithuanian and Polish units . Jan Długosz stated that the low @-@ ranking sword bearer of the Crown , Zyndram of Maszkowice , commanded the Polish army , but that is highly doubtful . More likely , marshal of the Crown Zbigniew of Brzezie commanded the Polish troops in the field .

= = Course of the battle = =

= = = March into Prussia = = =

The first stage of the Grunwald campaign was the gathering of all Polish ? Lithuanian troops at Czerwinsk , a designated meeting point about 80 km ( 50 mi ) from the Prussian border , where the joint army crossed the Vistula over a pontoon bridge . This maneuver , which required precision and intense coordination among multi @-@ ethnic forces , was accomplished in about a week , from 24 ? 30 June 1410 . Polish soldiers from Greater Poland gathered in Poznań , and those from Lesser Poland , in Wolbórz . On 24 June 1410 Władysław II Jagiełło and Czech mercenaries arrived in Wolbórz . Three days later the Polish army was already at the meeting place . The Lithuanian army marched out from Vilnius on 3 June and joined the Ruthenian regiments in Hrodna . They arrived in Czerwinsk on the same day the Poles crossed the river . After the crossing , Masovian troops under Siemowit IV and Janusz I joined the Polish ? Lithuanian army . The massive force began its march north towards Marienburg ( Malbork ) , capital of Prussia , on 3 July . The Prussian border was crossed on 9 July .

The river crossing remained secret until Hungarian envoys , who were attempting to negotiate a peace , informed the Grand Master . As soon as Ulrich von Jungingen grasped the Polish ? Lithuanian intentions , he left 3 @, @ 000 men at Schwetz ( ?wiecie ) under Heinrich von Plauen and marched the main force to organize a line of defense on the Drewenz River ( Drwica ) near

Kauernik ( Kurz?tnik ) . The river crossing was fortified with stockades . On 11 July , after meeting with his eight @-@ member war council , W?adys?aw II Jagie??o decided against crossing the river at such a strong , defensible position . The army would instead bypass the river crossing by turning east , towards its sources , where no other major rivers separated his army from Marienburg . The march continued east towards Soldau ( Dzia?dowo ) , although no attempt was made to capture the town . The Teutonic army followed the Drewenz River north , crossed it near Löbau ( Lubawa ) and then moved east in parallel with the Polish ? Lithuanian army . The latter ravaged the village of Gilgenburg ( D?brówno ) . Von Jungingen was so enraged by the atrocities that he swore to defeat the invaders in battle .

= = = Battle preparations = = =

In the early morning of 15 July 1410 both armies met in an area covering approximately 4 km<sup>2</sup> ( 1 @.@ 5 sq mi ) between the villages of Grunwald , Tannenberg ( St?bark ) and Ludwigsdorf ( ?odwigowo ) . The armies formed opposing lines along a northeast ? southwest axis . The Polish ? Lithuanian army was positioned in front and east of Ludwigsdorf and Tannenberg . Polish heavy cavalry formed the left flank , Lithuanian light cavalry the right flank and various mercenary troops made up the center . Their men were organized in three lines of wedge @-@ shaped formations about 20 men deep . The Teutonic forces concentrated their elite heavy cavalry , commanded by Grand Marshal Frederic von Wallenrode , against the Lithuanians . The Knights , who were the first to organize their army for the battle , hoped to provoke the Poles or Lithuanians into attacking first . Their troops , wearing heavy armor , had to stand in the scorching sun for several hours waiting for an attack . One chronicle suggested that they had dug pits that an attacking army would fall into . They also attempted to use field artillery , but a light rain dampened their powder and only two cannon shots were fired . As W?adys?aw II Jagie??o delayed , the Grand Master sent messengers with two swords to " assist W?adys?aw II Jagie??o and Vytautas in battle " . The swords were meant as an insult and a provocation . Known as the " Grunwald Swords " , they became one of the national symbols of Poland .

= = = Battle begins : Lithuanian attack and retreat = = =

Vytautas , supported by a few Polish banners , started an assault on the left flank of the Teutonic forces . After more than an hour of heavy fighting the Lithuanian light cavalry began a full retreat . Jan D?ugosz described this development as a complete annihilation of the entire Lithuanian army . According to D?ugosz , the Knights assumed that victory was theirs , broke their formation for a disorganized pursuit of the retreating Lithuanians and gathered much loot before returning to the battlefield to face the Polish troops . He made no mention of the Lithuanians , who later returned to the battlefield . Thus D?ugosz portrayed the battle as a single @-@ handed Polish victory . This view contradicted Cronica conflictus and has been challenged by modern historians . Starting with an article by Vaclaw Lastowski in 1909 , they proposed that the retreat was a planned , strategic maneuver borrowed from the Golden Horde . A false retreat was used in the Battle of the Vorskla River of 1399 , where the Lithuanian army was dealt a crushing defeat and Vytautas himself barely escaped alive . This theory gained wider acceptance after the discovery and publication of a German letter by Swedish historian Sven Ekdahl in 1963 . The letter , written a few years after the battle , cautions the new Grand Master to look out for false retreats of the kind that were used in the Great Battle . Stephen Turnbull asserted that the Lithuanian retreat did not quite fit the tried formula of a false retreat . Such a retreat was usually staged by one or two units ( as opposed to almost an entire army ) and was swiftly followed by a counterattack ( whereas the Lithuanians returned late in the battle ) .

= = = Battle continues : Polish ? Teutonic fight = = =

While the Lithuanians were retreating , heavy fighting broke out between Polish and Teutonic forces

. Commanded by Grand Komtur Kuno von Lichtenstein , the Teutonic forces concentrated on the Polish right flank . Six of von Wallenrode 's banners did not pursue the retreating Lithuanians , instead joining the attack on the right flank . A particularly valuable target was the royal banner of Kraków . It seemed that the Knights were gaining the upper hand , and at one point the royal standard @-@ bearer , Marcin of Wrocimowice , lost the Kraków banner . However , it was soon recaptured and fighting continued . Władysław II Jagiełło deployed his reserves ? the second line of his army . Grand Master Ulrich von Jungingen then personally led 16 banners , almost a third of the original Teutonic strength , to the right Polish flank , and Władysław II Jagiełło deployed his last reserves , the third line of his army . The melee reached the Polish command and one Knight , identified as Lupold or Diepold of Kökeritz , charged directly against King Władysław II Jagiełło . Władysław 's secretary , Zbigniew Oleśnicki , saved the king 's life , gaining royal favor and becoming one of the most influential people in Poland .

= = = Battle ends : Teutonic Knights defeated = = =

At that time the reorganized Lithuanians returned to the battle , attacking von Jungingen from the rear . The Teutonic forces were by then becoming outnumbered by the mass of Polish knights and advancing Lithuanian cavalry . As von Jungingen attempted to break through the Lithuanian lines , he was killed . According to Cronica conflictus , Dobiesław of Oleśnica thrust a lance through the Grand Master 's neck , while Długosz presented Mszczuj of Skrzynno as the killer . Surrounded and leaderless , the Teutonic Knights began to retreat . Part of the routed units retreated towards their camp . This move backfired when the camp followers turned against their masters and joined the manhunt . The knights attempted to build a wagon fort : The camp was surrounded by wagons serving as an improvised fortification . However , the defense was soon broken and the camp was ravaged . According to Cronica conflictus , more Knights died there than on the battlefield . The battle lasted for about ten hours .

The Teutonic Knights attributed the defeat to treason on the part of Nikolaus von Renys ( Mikołaj of Ryśk ) , commander of the Culm ( Chełmno ) banner , and he was beheaded without a trial . He was the founder and leader of the Lizard Union , a group of Knights sympathetic to Poland . According to the Knights , von Renys lowered his banner , which was taken as a signal of surrender and led to the panicked retreat . The legend that the Knights were " stabbed in the back " was echoed in the post @-@ World War I stab @-@ in @-@ the @-@ back legend and preoccupied German historiography of the battle until 1945 .

= = Aftermath = =

= = = Casualties and captives = = =

The defeat of the Teutonic Knights was resounding . About 8 @, @ 000 soldiers were killed and an additional 14 @, @ 000 taken captive . According to Teutonic payroll records , only 1 @, @ 427 men reported back to Marienburg to claim their pay . Of 1 @, @ 200 men sent from Danzig , only 300 returned . According to different sources , some 200 or 400 brothers of the Order were killed , including much of the Teutonic leadership ? Grand Master Ulrich von Jungingen , Grand Marshal Friedrich von Wallenrode , Grand Komtur Kuno von Lichtenstein , Grand Treasurer Thomas von Merheim , Marshal of Supply Forces Albrecht von Schwartzburg , and ten of the komturs . Markward von Salzbach , Komtur of Brandenburg ( Ushakovo ) and Heinrich Schaumburg , voigt of Sambia , were executed by order of Vytautas after the battle . The bodies of von Jungingen and other high @-@ ranking officials were transported to Marienburg Castle for burial on 19 July . The bodies of lower @-@ ranking Teutonic officials and 12 Polish knights were buried at the church in Tannenberg . The rest of the dead were buried in several mass graves . The highest @-@ ranking Teutonic official to escape the battle was Werner von Tettinger , Komtur of Elbing ( Elbląg ) .

Polish and Lithuanian forces took several thousand captives . Among these were Dukes Konrad VII

of Oels ( Oleśnica ) and Casimir V of Pomerania . Most of the commoners and mercenaries were released shortly after the battle on condition that they report to Kraków on 11 November 1410 . Only those who were expected to pay ransom were kept . Considerable ransoms were recorded ; for example , the mercenary Holbracht von Loym had to pay 150 kopas of Prague groschen , amounting to more than 30 kg ( 66 lb ) of silver .

= = = Further campaign and peace = = =

After the battle , the Polish and Lithuanian forces delayed their attack on the Teutonic capital in Marienburg ( Malbork ) , remaining on the battlefield for three days and then marching an average of only about 15 km ( 9 @. @ 3 mi ) per day . The main forces did not reach heavily fortified Marienburg until 26 July . This delay gave Heinrich von Plauen enough time to organize a defense . Władysław II Jagiełło also sent his troops to other Teutonic fortresses , which often surrendered without resistance , including the major cities of Danzig ( Gdańsk ) , Thorn ( Toruń ) , and Elbing ( Elbląg ) . Only eight castles remained in Teutonic hands . The besiegers of Marienburg expected a speedy capitulation and were not prepared for a long siege , suffering from lack of ammunition , low morale and an epidemic of dysentery . The Knights appealed to their allies for help , and Sigismund of Hungary , Wenceslaus , King of the Romans , and the Livonian Order promised financial aid and reinforcements .

The siege of Marienburg was lifted on 19 September . The Polish & Lithuanian forces left garrisons in the fortresses they had taken and returned home . However , the Knights quickly recaptured most of the castles . By the end of October only four Teutonic castles along the border remained in Polish hands . Władysław II Jagiełło raised a fresh army and dealt another defeat to the Knights in the Battle of Koronowo on 10 October 1410 . Following other brief engagements , both sides agreed to negotiate .

The Peace of Thorn was signed in February 1411 . Under its terms , the Knights ceded the Dobrin Land ( Dobrzyń Land ) to Poland and agreed to resign their claims to Samogitia during the lifetimes of Władysław II Jagiełło and Vytautas , although another two wars – the Hunger War of 1414 and the Gollub War of 1422 – would be waged before the Treaty of Melno permanently resolved the territorial disputes . The Poles and Lithuanians were unable to translate the military victory into territorial or diplomatic gains . However , the Peace of Thorn imposed a heavy financial burden on the Knights from which they never recovered . They had to pay an indemnity in silver , estimated at ten times the annual income of the King of England , in four annual installments . To meet these payments , the Knights borrowed heavily , confiscated gold and silver from churches and increased taxes . Two major Prussian cities , Danzig ( Gdańsk ) and Thorn ( Toruń ) , revolted against the tax increases . The defeat at Grunwald left the Teutonic Knights with few forces to defend their remaining territories . Since Samogitia became officially christened , as both Poland and Lithuania were for a long time , the Knights had difficulties recruiting new volunteer crusaders . The Grand Masters then needed to rely on mercenary troops , which proved an expensive drain on their already depleted budget . The internal conflicts , economic decline , and tax increases led to unrest and the foundation of the Prussian Confederation , or Alliance against Lordship , in 1441 . This in turn led to a series of conflicts that culminated in the Thirteen Years ' War ( 1454 ) .

= = Legacy = =

= = = Poland and Lithuania = = =

The Battle of Grunwald is regarded as one of the most important in the histories of Poland and Lithuania . In the history of Ukraine , the battle is better associated with Vytautas the Great , who stood as the leader of Eastern Orthodox Christianity at that time . In Lithuania the victory is synonymous with the grand duchy 's political and military peak . It was a source of national pride during the age of Romantic nationalism and inspired resistance to the Germanization and

Russification policies of the German and Russian Empires . The Knights were portrayed as bloodthirsty invaders and Grunwald as a just victory achieved by a small , oppressed nation .

In 1910 , to mark the 500th anniversary of the battle , a monument by Antoni Wiwulski was unveiled in Kraków during a three @-@ day celebration attended by some 150 @,@ 000 people . About 60 other towns and villages in Galicia also erected Grunwald monuments for the anniversary .

About the same time Nobel Prize @-@ winner Henryk Sienkiewicz wrote the novel The Knights of the Cross ( Polish : Krzyżacy ) , prominently featuring the battle in one of the chapters . In 1960 Polish filmmaker Aleksander Ford used the book as the basis for his film , Knights of the Teutonic Order . A museum , monuments and memorials were constructed at the battlefield in 1960 . The battle site is one of Poland 's official , national Historic Monuments , as designated October 4 , 2010 , and tracked by the National Heritage Board of Poland . The battle has lent its name to military decorations ( Cross of Grunwald ) , sport teams ( BC Żalgiris , FK Žalgiris ) , and various organizations .

An annual battle reenactment takes place on 15 July . In 2010 a pageant reenacting the event and commemorating the battle 's 600th anniversary was held . It attracted 200 @,@ 000 spectators who watched 2 @,@ 200 participants playing the role of knights in a reenactment of the battle . An additional 3 @,@ 800 participants played peasants and camp followers . The pageant 's organizers believe that the event has become the largest reenactment of medieval combat in Europe .

The Battle of Grunwald is commemorated on the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier , Warsaw , with the inscription " GRUNWALD 15 VII 1410 " .

= = = Germany and Russia = = =

The Germans generally saw the Knights as heroic and noble men who brought Christianity and civilization to the east . In August 1914 , during World War I , Germany won a battle against Russia near the site . When the Germans realized its propaganda potential , they named the battle the Battle of Tannenberg , despite it having actually taken place much closer to Allenstein ( Olsztyn ) , and framed it as revenge for the Polish ? Lithuanian victory 504 years earlier . Nazi Germany later exploited the sentiment by portraying their Lebensraum policies as a continuation of the Knights ' historical mission .

Due to the participation of the three Smolensk regiments , Russians saw the battle as a victory of a Polish ? Lithuanian ? Russian coalition against invading Germans . Chronicler Jan Długosz praised the Smolensk banners , who fought bravely and were the only banners from the Grand Duchy of Lithuania not to retreat . In Soviet historiography , the Battle of Grunwald was styled as a racial struggle between Slavs and Germanics . The Teutonic Knights were portrayed as the medieval forerunners of Hitler 's armies , while the battle itself was seen as the medieval counterpart to the Battle of Stalingrad .

In William Urban 's summary , almost all accounts of the battle made before the 1960s were more influenced by romantic legends and nationalistic propaganda than by fact . Historians have since made progress towards dispassionate scholarship and reconciliation of the various national accounts of the battle .