

ARTYKUŁY I MATERIAŁY

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ACCOUNTS OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH ADOPTING SACRED PAGAN PLACES THROUGHOUT FORMER PRUSSIA IN THE MIDDLE AGES

Słowa kluczowe: ziemie pruskie, diecezje, Kościół katolicki, pogańskie miejsca kultu, Romowe, adaptacja

Schlüsselwörter: Preußenland, Diözesen, katholische Kirche, heidnische Kultusorte, Romowe, Adaptation

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The 13th century witnessed the conquest of the pagan Prussian tribes by the Teutonic Order. Already on 29 July 1243 in the Italian town of Anagni, the papal legate Wilhelm of Modena executed the order of Pope Innocent IV to divide the Prussian lands into four dioceses: Chełmno, Pomezanian, Warmian and Sambian. Christian ideas were gradually spread across the conquered lands: churches were built and parishes were established, forcing the Prussians to accept a new system of beliefs. According to a Prussian chronicler, Peter of Dusburg, the Prussians worshipped the Sun, the Moon and stars, lightning bolts, birds, quadrupedal animals, even toads. They also saw groves, fields and waters as sacred to such an extent that they would not dare to cut down trees growing there, farm a certain piece of land or fish in specific reservoirs¹. Prussian beliefs were in a similar manner described by a 15th century chronicler known as Erasmus Stella. He wrote about them worshipping trees such as an oak and oak woods as well as believing that deities lived in them. Such trees were not cut down as they were used for religious cult². It is widely believed that in addition to sacred fields, forests, waters or hills Prussians had their main cult centre called a Romuva (Polish – Romowe).

¹ Petrus de Dusburgk, *Chronica terrae Prussiae*, ed. by: J. Wenta, S. Wyszomirski, in: *Monumenta Poloniae historica*, seria II, t. 13, Cracoviae, p. 52: "Prutheni notitiam Dei non habuerunt. [...] pro deo coluerunt, scilicet solem, lunam et stellas, tonitrua, volatilia, quadrupedia etiam usque ad bufonem. Habuerunt etiam lucos, campos et aquas sacros, sic quod secare aut agros colere vel piscari ausi non fuerunt in eisdem".

² Erasmi Stellae, *Libnothani de Borussiae antiquitatibus libri duo*, in: *Scriptores rerum Prussicarum*, hrsg. von T. Hirsch, M. Töppen, E. Strehlke (SRP), Bd. 4, Leipzig 1870, p. 294: „Praecellentes arbores ut robora, quercus, Deos inhabitare dixerunt, ex quibus sciscitantibus responsa reddi audiebantur; ob. Id nec huiusmodi arbores caedebant, sed religiose ut numinum domos colebant”.

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Romuva

The location of this legendary place of cult still raises many doubts. The first to mention Romuva was the abovementioned Peter of Dusburg. He pointed out that in Nadruvia there was a place called Romowe, which owed its name to the Roman capital. A person called Kriwe lived there – he was worshipped by Prussians, Lithuanians and other Baltic tribes just like the Pope. Furthermore, when describing the fights between Teutonic Knights and the Lithuanians in his chronicle, Dusburg mentions that in 1294 Ludwik von Liebenzell, Ragnit's Commander, attacked Aukštaitija, which belonged to Lithuanian lands. During this invasion, the Romene village, which was sacred according to Lithuanian beliefs, is said to have been burnt down. The Ragnit Komtur captured and killed all its inhabitants³. There were also other medieval chroniclers that mentioned Romuva, such as Nicolaus Jeroschin and Jan Długosz. The first of them repeated the information written down by Peter of Dusburg⁴. Długosz – probably also rephrasing Dusburg – provided that a Kriwe resided in the Romuva and the name itself was derived from the city of Rome. In 1015, Romuva, Balga as well as Radzyń were to be conquered by King Bolesław I the Brave⁵. Assuming this information is true, the place should be located in the western or south-western parts of Prussia.

The interest in Romuva was revived in the modern period, chiefly due to the work of Simon Grunau, a Dominican monk. In his chronicle, he mentioned that the Prussians had their most sacred place called *Ryckoyot*. A big oak tree grew there and it was a place of worship of three deities: Patollo, Potrimpo and Perkūnas. This place was located by Grunau in the town of Patollen (later Groß Waldeck) in Natangia⁶. The name *Ryckoyot* is certainly of Prussian origin and was derived from the word *rikis*⁷. In modernity, in addition to descriptions, there appeared also iconographic depictions of Romuva. Caspar Hennenberger was the first to present them in his work dated 1584, followed by Christoph Hartknoch a hundred years later⁸. The pictures feature an oak tree with depictions of the three deities mentioned before, the tree being additionally surrounded by a fence. For many years, researchers tried to point to the place where Romuva could be located. Apart from

³ Petrus de Dusburgk, *Chronica terrae Prussiae*, p. 212.

⁴ Nicolaus von Jeroschin, *Kronike von Pruzinlant*, in: SRP, Bd. 1, hrsg. v. T. Hirsch, M. Töppen, E. Strehlke, Leipzig 1861, p. 348: *in dem lande Nadrowe. Di stat di hiz Romowe und was nach Rome genant*.

⁵ Jan Długosz, *Roczniki czyli kroniki sławnego królestwa polskiego*, Warszawa 1961, pp. 286, 350.

⁶ S. Grunau, *Preussische Chronik*, Bd. 1, Leipzig 1876, pp. 94, 348; J. Leo, *Dzieje Prus. Z braniewskiego wydania roku 1725 przełożył bp Julian Wojtkowski*, Olsztyn 2008, p. 18.

⁷ *Elbing Vocabulary*, in: *Old Prussian written monuments*, ed. by: L. Palmaitis, Kaunas 2007, no 404, rikis – 'lord', also 'lordship'.

⁸ C. Hennenberger, *Kurtze und wahrhaftige Beschreibung des Landes zu Preußen*, Königsberg 1584, p. 7; C. Hartknoch, *Alt- und neues Preussen, oder preussischer Historien zwei Theile*, Frankfurt-Leipzig 1684, p. 116.

Grunau pointing to Patollen in Natangia, other historians often paid attention to toponyms with the *rom* morpheme. One of the proposals was the Rummy village in the Szczytno district near the border with Warmia. This view became widely accepted in source literature as a result of the activity of Caspar Schütz. This researcher assumed that the Prussian centre of cult, Romuva, was located in Galindia⁹. However, it seems that the issue of Romuva being located in Rummy appeared in source literature as late as in the 16th century thanks to cartography. In 1542, Henry Zello developed a map of Prussia where, apart from many other villages, that cosmographer also included Rummy – *Rom*¹⁰. Another suggestion was presented by Johannes Guise, who made an inventory of historical defence objectives on Prussian lands in the years 1826-1828. He pointed to Romankowo and Rygarby near Sępólno¹¹. For both locations, he noticed defence arrangements that he tied to the old Prussian cult. The name “Rygarby”, recorded in 1437 as *Rickegarbon*¹², is a combination of Prussian *ricks* – “lord” and *garben* – “mountain.” According to Guise, it was where the old *Rickoito*¹³ was located. Johannes Voigt claimed that the main Romuva was probably in Romehnen in Sambia¹⁴. The village of Romehnen (Rumbow) was first mentioned in documents in 1347¹⁵. Among other potential places, Voigt suggested: Rohmau near Tapiau, Romitten (near the Prussian Eylau), Romansgut (near Heiligenbeil), Romlau (near Kreuzberg), Romanuppen in Nadruvia upon Auxienne, or the Rominta river. Faced by so many possible locations, Voigt concluded that each Prussian land had its own religious centre called a Romuva¹⁶. Today, it is difficult to assess whether all of these places were important places of worship for pagan Prussians. Perhaps some of them functioned even at the time when Prussia was already Christian. Praetorius recalled that in Nadruvia upon the river Auxienne was a place to which only the priest had access. It was probably in the vicinity of Romanuppen upon Auxienne. In source literature, this place is identified with the Romuva described by Peter of Dusburg¹⁷. In Patollen, Natangi, pagan worship practices were probably still practiced as a monastery was established there in the 1370s.

⁹ C. Schütz, *Historia rerum Prussicarum*, Danzig 1599, p. 3: *in der grossen Eichen zu Rickoyoth oder Romowe in Galinder Land gelegen*.

¹⁰ J. Szeliga, *Rozwój kartografii Wybrzeża Gdańskiego do roku 1772*, Wrocław 1982, pp. 36–44.

¹¹ Museum für Vor- und Frühgeschichte, Preußischer Kulturbesitz (MVF PK), Guise Zettel, 233a, 233b: Schanze Romowa, Romowe.

¹² *Das Grosse Zinsbuch*, hrsg. von P. G. Thielenn (GZB), Marburg 1958, no 216.

¹³ MVF PK, Guise Zettel, 239b.

¹⁴ J. Voigt, *Geschichte Preussens*, Bd. 1, Königsberg 1827, p. 180.

¹⁵ *Urkundenbuch des Bisthums Samland*, hrsg. v. C.P. Voelky, H. Mendthal, Leipzig 1905, no 372.

¹⁶ J. Voigt, op. cit., p. 181, footnote 2.

¹⁷ W. Friederici, *Ueber die Lage Romow's oder Romowe's, des Oberpriestersitzes im heidnischen Preussen*, Altpreußische Monatsschrift (AM), Bd. 13, 1876, p. 250.

Christianisation of pagan Prussians

Christianisation progressed along with the conquest of the Prussian lands. Old Pagan places of worship were most often destroyed. In some cases, however, they were replaced by the new cult. The Church then tried to build a more impressive temple in such a location¹⁸. Already while signing the Treaty of Christburg on 7 February 1249, the Prussians promised to decorate the interiors of built churches in such a way making them more appealing than pagan places of worship in the woods. The Prussians were committed to the reconstruction of churches before the Whitsunday – *Pentecosten*. They also guaranteed that annual sacrifices to the Kurke deity including the fruits of their land as well as all other deities not being the Creator of Heaven and Earth shall be put to an end¹⁹. However, even after the conquest by the Teutonic Order and establishing a network of parishes by the bishopric, some areas still bore the mark of pagan worship. At the end of 14th century in Warmia, Bishop Heinrich III Sorbom exhorted the Prussians and newly baptised to attend Mass on each Sunday and on holidays, unless they are charged with guarding the lands or performing any other duty to the benefit of their superiors. In 1425, the Sambian Bishop Michael Junge cautioned the Prussians not to perform any pagan rituals in the forests and groves under the penalty of being deprived of Christian burial. He also warned them not to baptise their children again in rivers and give them names other than those given at Christian baptism. The Sambian Bishop called to the Prussians to abandon performing pagan rituals for their deceased, not to invoke demons in woods or their houses, not to organise sacrificial feasts, along with cease to sacrifice animals to demons. In the above cases, the punishment took the form of deprivation of Christian burial²⁰. Christianity, however, in the longer term used the local religious tradition associated with places of paganism, hijacking the power established among their inhabitants. It was chiefly expressed in building churches there, making them take over some of the traditions of those ancient cult places. Several examples from the neighbouring Polish lands may be quoted here by virtue of analogy. This practice may be referred to some “sacred” mountains, such as Ślęża and Łysa Góra, on which monasteries were erected²¹. Christianity entailed a lot of new interpretations and re-evaluations of ancestral traditions. Nevertheless, it failed to completely eradicate the pagan

¹⁸ M. Kosman, *Zanik pogaństwa w Prusach*, Komunikaty Mazursko-Warmińskie (KMW), nr 1, 1976, p. 22.

¹⁹ *Preussisches Urkundenbuch* (PUB), hrsg. von A. Philippi, Bd. I/1, Königsberg 1882, no 218: *Et promiserunt omnes predicti, quod dictas ecclesias edificabunt adeo honorabiles et decoras, quod plus videbuntur delectari in oracionibus ac oblationibus factis in ecclesiis quam in silvis.*

²⁰ A. Radzimiński, *Kościół w państwie zakonu krzyżackiego w Prusach 1243-1525*, Malbork 2006, pp. 95–100.

²¹ P. Urbańczyk, *Władza i polityka we wczesnym średniowieczu*, Wrocław 2008, p. 169. According to Długosz, monastery of Saint Cross on Łysa Góra was founded in 1006. Jan Długosz, *Roczniki czyli kroniki*, pp. 327–329.

legacy, which survived in the form of individual rituals. It may be illustrated by Góra Chełmska near Koszalin, which used to be a crucial place for pagan Pomeranians²². In the Middle Ages, a church was built on its top. This hill also lied on the pilgrimage route from Gdansk and Prussia to Rome²³. Another important place of pagan worship in Pomerania were there areas near Oliwa, where relics of the old beliefs are still visible in names of places, such as: “Czarcie Wzgórze” and “Diabelski Kamień”²⁴. In the vicinity, a Cistercian monastery was founded in 1178²⁵.

The Monastery of the Holy Trinity in Patollen

Among those places suggested to perform the role of Romuva in the past, only Patollen (later Groß Waldeck) is an example of adapting a pagan worship place by the Church. It lies to the north of Domnau. According to Simon Grunau, the Monastery of the Holy Trinity in Patollen was a sacred place for the Prussians called *Ryckoyot*. A big oak tree grew there and served as a place of worship of three deities: Patollo, Potrimpo and Perkūnas. The Grand Master Winrich von Kniprode entrusted the construction of a monastery to Marshall Heinrich. It was built by Peter Nagel²⁶. Mathaeus Praetorius also mentioned that an oak three worshipped by pagan Prussians and dedicated to their divine trinity grew there. This place was destroyed and a monastery of Augustinian Hermits, dedicated to the “real” Holy Trinity, was erected in its place²⁷. Hennenberger mentioned that the above monastery was in the past located in Podollen and was founded on the site of the Prussian Romuva. A devil’s oak was said to grew there – *Teuffeltsche Eiche*, dedicated to: Patollo (Pickollus), Perckun and Potrimpus²⁸. Hennenberger marked the monastery of the Holy Trinity (*Trifalgkeit*) on his map of Prussia dated 1576, where he represented it in a form of a miniature drawing²⁹. In view of the fact that the income of the monastery was not sufficient enough to cover its own needs, Pope Alexander

²² A. Kuczkowski, *Słowiańskie „święte” góry na terenie ziem polskich we wczesnym średniowieczu. Próba zarysowania problematyki*, *Slavia Antiqua*, nr 48, 2007, pp. 97–124.

²³ R. Kubicki, *Pielgrzymki w testamentach mieszczan elbląskich w XV-początkach XVI w.*, in: *Z dziejów średniowiecza. Pamięci Profesora Jana Powierskiego (1940–1999)*, ed. by: W. Długokęcki, Gdańsk 2010, pp. 181–184.

²⁴ E. Choińska-Bohdan, *W poszukiwaniu głównego ośrodka kultu przedchrześcijańskiego na Pomorzu Gdańskim*, in: *Z otchłani wieków Pomorza Gdańskiego*, Gdańsk 1998–1999, pp. 153–154.

²⁵ *Codex Pomeraniae diplomaticus*, hrsg. von K. Hasselbach, J. Rosengarten, Bd. 1, Greifswald 1862, no 46. Another date of founding – 1186 according to Błażej Śliwiński, quotes Cistercian annals from Denmark: *Kronika oliwska*, Malbork 2008, p. 11.

²⁶ S. Grunau, *Preussische Chronik*, Bd. 2, Leipzig 1889, p. 348.

²⁷ M. Praetorius, *Deliciae Prussiae, oder Preussische Schaubühne*, Bd. 2, Vilnius 2004, p. 714.

²⁸ C. Hennenberger, *Erclerung der preussischen grössern Landtaffel oder Mappen*, Königsberg 1595, pp. 464–466.

²⁹ C. Hennenberger, *Prussiae, das ist des Landes zu Preussen, welches das herrichste Theil ist Sarmathiae Europae eigentliche und warhafftige Beschreibung*, Königsberg 1576.

VI at the request of the prior approved the suggestion to join to monastery's estates two churches in Abswangen and Allmenhausen. In 1524, the monastery in Patollen was destroyed and plundered during military operations. It shared the fate of several other monasteries in Heiligenbeil, Gerdauen and Wehlau that also suffered during the war³⁰. After secularising the Duchy of Prussia, the destiny of monasteries seemed like a foregone conclusion – they were to be liquidated. After the expulsion of the monks from the monastery of the Holy Trinity in 1528, Donatus Lubari became a parish priest in Almenhausen, with a branch in Abschwangen. In 1536, duke Albrecht granted the monastic estates to Baron Georg Kittlitz. Later on, the only remainder of the monastery in Groß Waldeck was the name of the local inn, which was called Klosterkrug³¹. It cannot be excluded that the area located between Domnau and Groß Waldeck was, during pagan times, an area of the sacrum. Between the two locations was a village called Perkappen³², which was probably a combination of the words Perkun *and* ape³³. Perkappen lay upon a small Groß Waldecker Mühlenfließ river³⁴ that flew near the place where the monastery of the Holy Trinity had been located. Carl Beckern mentioned a certain Devil's Stone (Teufelstein) located a quarter of a mile north of Domnau. It had three rectangular recesses, which probably were the relic of a sacrificial bowl. This stone is related to a legend quoted by Beckern³⁵.

Święta Siekierka (Heiligenbeil)

The vicinity of Heiligenbeil was an important place of cult for the Prussians. A sacred oak tree grew there and the eternal fire burnt so as to consume offerings such as threshed grain, e.g. wheat, and other foods, e.g. honey, milk. Also first sheaves of harvested crops were burnt there. According to the legend, the first Bishop of Warmia, Anselm, ordered cut down the oak worshipped by the pagans. The attempt failed as the axe that bounced off from the oak – to the joy of the Prussians – hit the lumberjack. Then the Bishop himself ordered to drill a hole inside the trunk, set it on fire and knock the tree down in this way.³⁶ This event affected the later name of the place: *heiligen* – sacred, *beil*, Prussian *bile* – axe³⁷. It is also

³⁰ S. Grunau, *Preussische Chronik*, Bd. 2, pp. 389–390; J. Leo, op. cit., p. 23.

³¹ *Scriptores rerum Warmiensium* (SRW), hrsg. von J. M. Saage, C. P. Woelky, Bd. 1, Braunsberg 1866, p. 423, footnote 178.

³² F. Schroetter, *Karte von Ost-Preussen nebst Preussisch Litthauen*, Berlin 1796–1802.

³³ Elbing Vocabulary, no 62.

³⁴ *Meßtischblatt* Nr 1590, Domnau, 1:25 000, 1937.

³⁵ C. Beckern, *Merkwürdige Steine in Ost- und Westpreussen*, AM, Bd. 96, 1893, p. 383.

³⁶ C. Hartknoch, *Alt- und neues Preussen*, pp. 118, 413–414.

³⁷ Elbing Vocabulary, no 533.

worth mentioning that the first recorded in the name of this town was *Heylgenstat* – that is, the “Holy City.”³⁸ Caspar Stein in the second half of the 17th century noted that was a hill dedicated to the deity of *Gurcho* (Kurcho) near Heiligenbeil. There was to be a stone on which the Prussians sacrificed meat, milk and fish to his name³⁹. Heiligenbeil was a famous place of worship for pagan Prussians. Especially during the modern times legends and descriptions of this location began to circulate. According to Maciej Strykowski, it was the main place of worship-Romuva, which was destroyed by Bolesław I the Brave in 1015.⁴⁰ In turn, Praetorius wrote that, according to some, the name Heiligenbeil comes from the axe used to murder Saint Adalbert⁴¹. In the years 1826-1828, Joahann Guise visited the area near Heiligenbeil and noted two defence structures: over the Banówka River-*Banau* and another one in the *Heiligenwald* forest⁴². Beckern concluded that between Heiligenbeil and a church village Kirchendorf (destroyed in 1462) a sacrifice stone was located in the area of a Prussian sacred forest, near the place where river Jarft flew into Banówka⁴³. According to tradition, near Heiligenbeil upon the river Jarft in the village of Gedilgen one of the first churches in tribal Warmia was supposed to exist. In a document dated 1249, the temple in Jedun is featured on a list of churches the Prussians were supposed to build before Whitsunday⁴⁴. The village in 1437 was known under the name of Yoduthen⁴⁵. In 1370, Grand Master Winrich Kniprode built and endowed the monastery of the order of St. Augustine near Heiligenbeil⁴⁶. According to Grunau, this monastery was destroyed during the war in 1524.⁴⁷ Source literature does not provide the exact location of this monastery. 19th century descriptions remark that it was east of the town, near the Latainer Berg upon the Jarft river⁴⁸.

³⁸ PUB, Bd. II, hrsg. von M. Hein, E. Maschke, Königsberg 1932, no 704.

³⁹ Quote after: A. Mierzyński, *Źródła do mytologii litewskiej*, Warszawa 1892, p. 81: *In oppido Heiligenbeil mons, in quo stetit olim quercus sacra et idolum Gurcho, a Masoviis Prutenis donatum, pro deo esculentorum ac potulentorum variis sacrificiis, perpetuo igne, primitiis frumentorum, mellis lactis et piscium in saxis combustorum, diu cultum.*

⁴⁰ M. Strykowski, *Kronika Polska, Litewska, Źmudzka i wszelkiej Rusi*, t. 1, Warszawa 1846, pp. 142–143. Strykowski said, that thi happened in 1017 r., but this date is in inconsistency with Jan Długosz Chronicle.

⁴¹ M. Praetorius, *Deliciae Prussicae*, Bd. 2, p. 638

⁴² H. Crome, *Verzeichnis der Wehranlagen*, Prussia, Bd. 33, 1939, p. 265.

⁴³ C. Beckern, *op. cit.*, p. 392.

⁴⁴ PUB, Bd. I/1, no 218.

⁴⁵ GZB, no 161.

⁴⁶ *Die Chronik Wigands von Marburg*, in: SRP, Bd. 2, Leipzig 1863, p. 568: *Magister Wýnricus consensu preceptorum construxit in honorem Dei, virginis Marie et salutem Christi fidelium claustrum ante opidium vulgariter Hilgebyl, in quod statuid fratres mendicantes ordinis sancti Augustini, libris, ornatibus, calicibusque dotavit et litteris confirmavit.*

⁴⁷ According to Andrzej Radziwiński in 1520. A. Radziwiński, *Kościół w państwie zakonu krzyżackiego w Prusach 1243-1525*, Malbork 2006, p. 107.

⁴⁸ Winckler, *Die Festen der Vorzeit im Ermland*, Zeitschrift für die Geschichte und Altertumskunde Ermlands (ZGAE), Bd 2, 1863, p. 652.

Łąki Bratiańskie

The legend claims that a miraculous painting of the Virgin Mary presented itself to children shepherding cattle in Łąki. It floated down the Drwęca river, surrounded by the light, and stopped three times along the way. Allegedly, the cattle fell to its knees upon this vision⁴⁹. In this place, Blessed Mary appeared in front of John from Sandomierz, who built the castle of Bratian. With this intention in mind, he built a church which gained fame due to the miraculous statue of Virgin Mary with a child in her arms and became a place of pilgrimage. According to German researchers, the church in Łąki was to be erected by Filip von Cleberg, a Bratian Advocate, in the years 1400-1401. In 1639, Paweł Działyński founded a monastery near the old church, where he installed Reformers from Nowe Miasto. In 1881, the church burnt down. However, the miraculous figure was saved and moved to a church in Nowe Miasto. In 1884, the building of the monastery was also consumed by flames⁵⁰. On the basis of the visit of Olszowski, the Chełmno Bishop, in the years 1667-1672, it is possible to conclude that in Łąki near Bratian was a place sacred for the Prussians, devoted to goddess Maiume⁵¹. Though it is not a widely known deity, it has been often indicated that Łąki were also a place of worship of Pergrurbia. According to Maciej Strykowski, this was the god of herbs, vegetables and grasses. During his holiday, the roofs were «majone» that is decorated with green branches, leaves or flowers⁵². The Prussians celebrated two holidays each year. The first took place in the spring, when they began to plow their fields — they called the feast of Pergruba, in honour of the god they believed to grant plants, shrubs and other plants. The second festivity was held after the harvest in honour of Kurke⁵³. In the vicinity of Łąki Bratiańskie, a hydronym draws attention - it is the name of the river Wel, flowing into Drwęca in this area. Source literature quoted this name for the first time in 1257, when the duke Casimir of Łęczyca founded a church of the Holy Trinity in the Lubawska land upon the river Wel-*fluvium Wel*⁵⁴. The location of this church is not specified, so Łąki Bratiańskie are still a possibility. The name of this river, Wel, relates to deities appearing on Baltic and Slavic mythologies. The latter worshipped a god names Weles. Balts prayed to Velnias or Veles, a deity that was diminished to the role of the devil in the

⁴⁹ *Słownik geograficzny Królestwa Polskiego i innych krajów słowiańskich*, ed. by: F. Sulimierski, B. Chlebowski, W. Walewski, t. 2, Warszawa 1881, p. 175.

⁵⁰ W. Korycka, *Z przeszłości miast i osiedli*, in: *Nowe Miasto Lubawskie. Z dziejów miasta i powiatu*, ed. by: Z. Witkowski, Olsztyn 1963, p. 212.

⁵¹ G. Białuński, *O zasiedleniu ziemi lubawskiej w okresie przedkrzyżackim w świetle źródeł pisanych i toponomastycznych*, Pruthenia 2008, t. 4, p. 307.

⁵² M. Strykowski, op. cit., pp. 145–148.

⁵³ J. Leo, op. cit., p. 32.

⁵⁴ PUB, Bd I/2, hrsg. von A. Seraphim, Königsberg 1909, no 31.

course of Christianisation. For Baltic tribes, spirits of the dead were called Wele⁵⁵. It is probable that the name of the city Wehlau, situated in the place the Łyna river flows into Pregoła, is derived from the names of these deities. In 1349, a monastery was built here as well⁵⁶.

Lipy near Lubawa

Prussians returning from pilgrimages to Łąki Bratiańskie stopped also in lime groves near Lubawa, where they rested and held religious rites. According to legends, after the adoption of Christianity by the local population, the bishop known as Christian saw the Madonna under a lime tree worshipped by pagan Prussians. Therefore, he decided to build a church in this place. The lime tree was reportedly cut down by the bishop himself as the locals would not dare to raise a hand on it. The church in Lipy had a small wooden figure of Virgin Mary, which was famous for its miracles. The church burnt down in 1862, with a new temple erected on its foundations eight years later⁵⁷. Our Lady of Lipy is considered to be a patron of good harvest and health. The unity of Prussian ideas about female deities incarnated in lime trees and accessories of Marian devotion is clearly visible, so it is a direct adaptation of pagan beliefs to Catholic worship.⁵⁸ Lime trees are almost as important as oak trees in the Prussian system of sacred trees. Caspar Hennenberger and Mathaeus Praetorius were among those who wrote about sacred lime trees worshipped by them. The researchers mentioned a certain lime tree worshipped in Skalowia, in the village of Schackuhnen, upon the Rusna river⁵⁹. In Slavic beliefs, the lime was also associated with the cult of the Virgin Mary. Mazowians adopted a saying that lime trees are “holy” because the Blessed Virgin lives in them⁶⁰. All this indicates that, at the time of the Christianization, lime trees started to be associated with the worship of the Mother of Jesus⁶¹. According to Mircea Eliade, it is not possible to discuss “the cult of a tree” in the strict sense as the very tree was never the subject of veneration, but rather that what “appeared” through the tree, what it contained and what it meant. There is no such thing as the cult of the tree itself, this representation always underlies a spiritual plane.

⁵⁵ A. Gieysztor, *Mitologia Słowian*, Warszawa 2016, pp. 137–145.

⁵⁶ PUB Bd. IV, hrsg. v. H. Koepfen, Marburg 1960, no 496.

⁵⁷ W. Korycka, op. cit., p. 21.

⁵⁸ J. Powierski, *Bogini Kurkō i niektóre aspekty społeczno-gospodarcze wierzeń pruskich*, in: idem, *Prussica. Artykuły wybrane z lat 1965–1995*, t. 1, Malbork 2003, pp. 135–136.

⁵⁹ C. Hennenberger, *Erclerung der preussischen grössern Landtaffel*, p. 416, M. Praetorius, *Deliciae Prussiae*, Bd. 3, Vilnius 2006, p. 108.

⁶⁰ K. Moszyński, *Kultura duchowa Słowian*, cz. 2, Kraków 1934, p. 533.

⁶¹ A. Gieysztor, op. cit., p. 220.

A tree with its periodic regeneration was the embodiment of the sacred power in the circle of life⁶².

Prątnica

Prątnica is a village located 6 km southeast of Lubawa. There is a church founded in 1330. In the lower part of the northern wall, right next to the entrance to the temple, there is a horizontal granite sculpture, a so-called “Prussian baba.” This is a stone statue of approx. 2.1m in length and maximal width of approx. 0.5 m. Only the front part of the sculpture is visible. It is possible to clearly distinguish the face with eyes, a nose, a chin and lips, but the body of the statue is completely flat. It was probably smoothed out, which erased the original shapes. The placement of a pagan sculpture in a horizontal position might have symbolised the imprisonment of a pagan idol beneath the feet of the Christian God. Apart from a symbolic dimension, such an action could indicate a certain ideological transfer affecting the imagination of the Prussians. It revealed the impotence of their old gods and thus became a warning to those who would dare to oppose Christianity⁶³.

Source information does not confirm the *in situ* location of the statue in Prątnica in the exact place where the medieval church was built. It may have been transported from neighbouring areas. There were several places of former pagan Prussian worship near Prątnica. About 6 km north of Prątnica lies the Lipy village, where the bishop’s visitation in the 17th century confirmed the existence of a place of Prussian worship. Also, on the south-eastern areas of the Prątnica area a place of pagan *sacrum* may have been located. There is a lake called Zwiniarz-Swiner (1324-1349) as well as village known as Zwiniarz-Swiner (1336)⁶⁴. Grzegorz Białuński claims that the toponym *swiner* may indicate the “holiness” of the area⁶⁵. Also, a little further to the south-east, in the vicinity of Rumiany, it is possible to spot several toponyms listed in the sources dated at the beginning of the 14th century, whose names suggest the existence of places of worship, possibly the legendary Romuva, such as: the Struga river – *fluvius Ramnite* (1303), *Romnycz* (1338) flowing into the Rumiany lake – *lacu Roman* (1303), along with the village of Rumiany – *Romano* (before 1341) and Rumienica – *Romyncze* (1336)⁶⁶. In the past, moving a stone sculpture of the pagan Prussians, the so-called Potrimpus which

⁶² M. Eliade, *Traktat o historii religii*, Warszawa 2009, p. 280.

⁶³ S. Szczepański, „Baba pruska” z Prątnicy – kamienny świadek triumfu chrześcijaństwa, *Echa Przeszłości*, 2004, t. 5, pp. 25–31.

⁶⁴ PUB Bd. IV, no 500, no 505.

⁶⁵ G. Białuński, *op. cit.*, p. 305.

⁶⁶ *Codex diplomaticus Prussicus*, Bd. 2, hrsg. von J. Voigt, Königsberg 1842, no 45; G. Białuński, *op. cit.*, p. 309.

was to be found in the Pachoły village (German Pacholen) near Dzierzgoń, had already taken place. It was then to be put in the wall of the monastery in Dzierzgoń⁶⁷. Unfortunately, the sculpture did not survive to this day and it is possible to learn about it only from modern iconography⁶⁸.

Święta Lipka

The first piece of information about Święta Lipka comes from 1340. It was the year when voght Heinrich von Luter executed two land rights, one 6 “Hufen” and the other 28 “Hufen” large, in the area of Barcja (*in terra Barthen*) near Dejnowa lake (*Denow*)⁶⁹. The first land right document included the remark that the area where the settlement was founded was dangerous because of the pagans – *propter paganos, et dei inimicos, qui sunt valde ibidem timendi*. However, it seems that there are more symptoms pointing to the fact that a pagan sanctuary existed there even before the Order conquered these lands. Święta Lipka is located near the Dejnowa lake, with its first recorded name *Denow* (1340) testifying the cult-related role of this water reservoir. George Gerullis claims that the name of the lake is related to the following expressions: *Daina, Dainawa, Dainis*, so ritual songs and dances, which is also confirmed by the Russian linguist Vladimir Toporov⁷⁰. In Lithuanian and Latvian *daina* means “song.” The meaning of the hydronym *Denow* may presumably be tied to “a ritualistic dance with singing.”⁷¹ Between Święta Lipka and Reszel, in the Warmian Bishopric, lies a village of Ramty, recorded in 1389 as *Ramboten*⁷². Names such as *Rombhota* were related to sacred trees which were unusually integrated with each other⁷³. In this situation, it may be presumed that the area created a larger sacred zone, covering the forest near today’s Ramty and the Dejnowa lake with its centre in Święta Lipka. According to Caspar Stein, between Rastenburg and Reszel grew an enormous lime tree dedicated to the Blessed

⁶⁷ S. Szczepański, *Wczesnośredniowieczna rzeźba z Dzierzgonia, tzw. „Potrimpos”, w kontekście interpretacji oraz staropruskich wierzeń*, KMW nr 3, 2015, pp. 387–407.

⁶⁸ MVF PK, Guise-Zettel, PM-IXa 00048a.

⁶⁹ *Codex diplomaticus Warmiensiis oder Regesten und Urkunden zur Geschichte Ermlands* (CDW), hrsg. von C. P. Woelky u. J. M. Saage, Bd. 1, Mainz 1860, no 305, no 306. See also: *Johannis Plastwici, Chronicon de vitis Episcoporum Warmiensium*, in: SRW, Bd. 1, pp. 67–68, footnote 34. In my opinion investiture of the 28 „Hufen” refers to Pilec village, and 6 „Hufen” pertain to fields around of Święta Lipka, the confirmation of which is the mention about the pagans. The place where it Dajna river flows out, in 1340 was not yet colonised.

⁷⁰ G. Gerullis, *Die altpreussischen Ortsnamen*, Berlin-Leipzig 1922, s. 27; B. H. Toporov, *Прусский язык. Словарь А-Д*, Москва 1975, p. 290.

⁷¹ A. Vanagas, *Lietuvių hidronimų etimologinis žodynas*, Vilnius 1981, p. 79.

⁷² CDW, Bd. 2, Mainz 1864, no 497 – Ramothen (1374); CDW, Bd. 3, Leipzig 1874, no 229; V. Röhrich, *Die Kolonisation des Ermlandes*, ZGAE, Bd 21, 1923, pp. 279–280.

⁷³ M. Praetorius, *Deliciae Prussiae*, Bd. 3, pp. 108–110; C. Hartknoch, op. cit., p. 291.

Virgin, which was there for a very long time – *tilia Ramos quedam d. Mariae dedicata, quae antiquitus ibi stetit*⁷⁴. Its relationship with the former pagan worship has also been known to modern historiography⁷⁵. According to father Jan Leo, there was a heavily branched lime tree in Święta Lipka, exceptionally appreciated by God and beloved by Mary. The tree was supposed to be a house of God, a ladder built to reach Heaven so that angels can descend bringing God's grace and ascend taking human prayers and vows with them⁷⁶.

Święta Lipka has been a place of pilgrimage since the 15th century. Early source literature from 1473 confirms the acts of pilgrimage. At that time, the priest Matthias of Śluzowo lamented that the believers from the Płock diocese made pilgrimages to Święta Lipka, although it was not yet endowed with indulgences⁷⁷. A chronicler Lucas David wrote that, being a small boy, he participated with his mother in a pilgrimage to Święta Lipka. Lucas David describes how pilgrims placed meat on scales as a sacrifice – with specific intentions in mind. He cited an example of a small German boy who was sat at one side of the scales, while the meat was put on the other end until its weight exceeded the weight of the boy. Thus, it was believed that the sacrifice in Święta Lipka would heal the German boy⁷⁸. This place has its own legend. A prisoner sentenced to death was given by Virgin Mary a piece of wood to carve out her statue. He was pardoned and put the sculpture on the first lime tree he saw along the road from Rastenburg to Reszel. Any attempt to move it to the church in Rastenburg ended with the statue returning to that place on its own. News about good graces granted to pilgrims spread, which resulted in a growing influx of pilgrims. On the basis of the oldest iconographic data, it is believed that the chapel was made of brick and enclosed the trunk of the lime tree with the figure. In 1519, the Grand Master Albrecht von Hohenzollern accompanied by the Sambian Bishop Georg von Polentz visited Święta Lipka. In 1526, the same Duke Albert banned all pilgrimages and ordered the destruction of the chapel. To scare people away, gallows were constructed there. The Prince-Bishop of Warmia, Szymon Rudnicki, bought the former pilgrimage site from the Protestants. Since 1639, the area was the property of the Frombork Chapter under the auspices of the Jesuits, so in 1640 regular pilgrimages to Święta Lipka began⁷⁹.

⁷⁴ A. Mierzyński, op. cit., p. 62; J. Powierski, op. cit., p. 136.

⁷⁵ E. Tidick, *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Kirchen-Patrosinien im Deutschordenslande Preußen bis 1525*, ZGAE, Bd. 22, 1926, pp. 361–362.

⁷⁶ J. Leo, op. cit., pp. 24–25.

⁷⁷ J. Hochleitner, *Przydrożne pomniki kultu religijnego Świętej Lipki i okolic*, Studia Angerburgica t. 11, 2006, p. 78.

⁷⁸ L. David, *Preussische Chronik*, hrsg. E. Hennig, Bd. 1, Königsberg 1812, pp. 151–152.

⁷⁹ J. Hochleitner, op. cit., p. 79.

Gietrzwałd

In 1877, a maple tree growing next to the church in Gietrzwałd became the place of revelation of the Mother of God, who appeared in front of two girls. On the 100th anniversary of this event, Bishop Józef Drzazga issued a decree approving the cult of the revelations, not excluding their supernatural nature⁸⁰. Many, however, indicate that this place was sacred long before. It is possible to find proof of the cult of Virgin Mary in Gietrzwałd already in the second half of the 16th century. It is demonstrated through the custom of decorating her icon, located in a side altar of the temple, with a veil. Later on, the image was moved to the main altar, which proves the growth of the cult. A report from a visit dated 1680 informs about the act of exposing the image of Virgin Mary during the octave of the Nativity of Mary, so the feast day for the church. It should be considered that in the 16th-18th centuries the Marian sanctuary in Gietrzwałd was not a typical pilgrimage church, however, the cult of the Virgin Mary was lively there⁸¹. The church in Gietrzwałd was first mentioned in the sources in 1352 - 5 "Hufen" were reserved to satisfy its needs⁸². However, it is not possible to exclude the relationship of this place with the nearby Giłwa lake (Rentyńskie) and with the pagan cult of Prussians. Its earlier name - *Gilbing* - may be spotted in the written formula of commencing the Prussian district court *lura Pruthenorum* prepared by free Prussians from the Olsztynek area - "Gąę ten nasz pruski sąd głęboko jak *Gilbing*, wysoko jak dąb, mocno jak kamień, czy to będzie słuszne czy niesłuszne"⁸³ [Eng. I commence our Prussian court as deeply as *Gilbing*, as high as an oak, as strongly as a stone, whether it be right or wrong]. This lake is present in the sources dated 1346 and later.⁸⁴ Its name comes from the word *gilus*, which means "deep."⁸⁵ Jan Powierski points out that the core expression in the words of the oath means "depth." On this basis, he concludes this particular lake had a sacred role. Therefore, an assumption may arise that the local archaic cult centre found its continuation in the Marian cult in Gietrzwałd located near the Giłwa lake. It would not be the only example of a rebirth of folk Christian worship on site of the former pagan⁸⁶ cult. The words

⁸⁰ S. Achremczyk, Warmia, Olsztyn 2011, pp. 383-384.

⁸¹ A. Kopiczko, *Ustrój i organizacja diecezji warmińskiej w latach 1525-1772*, Olsztyn 1993, pp. 189-190.

⁸² CDW, Bd. 2, no 179.

⁸³ *Iura Pruthenorum*, ed. by: J. Matuszewski, Toruń 1963, pp. 60-61: *Ich hege diese unser Preussische ding tiff als Gilbing, hoc hals ein Eichelbaum, fest als ein sten, es sey recht oder unrecht.*

⁸⁴ CDW, Bd 2, no 68: *lacubus Gilbes* - 1346; CDW, Bd. 2, no 179, no 180: *lacubus Gilbde* 1352.

⁸⁵ V. Mažiulis, *Prūsų kalbos etimologijos žodynas*, Vilnius 2013, p. 239, gillin, gilus; W. Smoczyński, *Słownik etymologiczny języka litewskiego*, Wilno 2007, p. 178: gilus,

⁸⁶ J. Powierski, *Drugi tom słownika języka pruskiego*, in: idem: *Prussica*, t. 1, p. 392; P. Kawiński, *Organizacja pogańskiej przestrzeni sakralnej Prusów na tle osadnictwa w okresie plemiennym - przykład Pomezanii, Pogezanii i Warmii, Pruthenia* t. 6, 2011, p. 108.

of the oath of the Prussians, including an oak tree (sacred tree), a stone (symbol of endurance) and the Gilbing lake, make it possible to presume that it was a water reservoir of religious importance. Already Mircae Eliade pointed to the existence of a triptych consisting of a tree, an altar and a stone. A stone was the epitome of durability and indestructibility. A tree, with its periodic regeneration, was the embodiment of the sacred power in the circle of life. Places where water complemented the landscape expressed hidden opportunities, their seeds or purification. This “microcosmic landscape” in time was limited to only one, to the most important of these elements - the tree. According to the old beliefs, a tree was the axis of the world. It was a bridge between Heaven, Earth, and even Hell⁸⁷. Therefore, an assumption may arise that the local archaic cult centre found its continuation in the neighbouring Gietrzwałd. It would not be the only example of establishing folk Christian cult in a place where pagans used to gather for worship.

Lidzbark Warmiński-Heilsberg

Many premises point to the fact that in some places of the Warmian bishopric churches were built in places of pagan worship. Among such examples, apart from the above Gietrzwałd, it is possible to mention: Lidzbark Warmiński-Heilsberg, Świątki – *Heilgental* (1347), Dywity – Dywidzkie lake – *Dewythen* (1348) or Pluty – *sanctus nemus* (1325)⁸⁸. In this context, Lidzbark Warmiński, the capital of the dominion of the Warmian Prince-Bishop, deserves special attention. The German name of Lidzbark Warmiński-Heilsberg – most likely came from a sacred hill located in the surrounding area. Based on source literature and a field query, the author hypothesises that this place was Krzyżowa Góra. According to the first mention dated 1390, there existed a certain “ancient” hill near Pilnik, owned by bishops – *quique mons antiquitus fuit et est de proprietate nostra et ecclesie nostre Warmiensis*⁸⁹. The term used to describe the hill – *antiquitus* – indicates that in the past it was an important place for the Prussians. A document dated 1431, which transfers additional lands from the bishop’s possession to the benefit of the town, mentions a cross placed on a hill near Pilnik– *mons ubi crux lokata*⁹⁰. Krzyżowa Góra is a land elevation that dominates over the surrounding area. The Prussians may have made a link between tall hills and the world of the gods. In modern times, a chapel was located on Krzyżowa Góra – *capella sanctae crucis*⁹¹. It was

⁸⁷ M. Eliade, op. cit., pp. 281–283.

⁸⁸ R. Klimek, *Miejsca kultu Prusów na Warmii biskupiej*, KMW, nr 3, 2015, pp. 365–386.

⁸⁹ CDW, Bd. 3, no 243. See also: J. Ptak, *Wojskowość średniowiecznej Warmii*, Olsztyn 1997, p. 144.

⁹⁰ CDW, Bd. 4, no 365.

⁹¹ *Monumenta Historiae Warmiensis, Quellen zur Kultur- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte des Ermlands*, Bd 4, hrsg. von V. Röhrich, A. Poschmann, Braunsberg 1915, p. 115.

also marked as the *Kreuzkirche* on a map of Warmia by Frederick Enders in 1755⁹². Even the 19th century Polish literature refers to Lidzbark Warmiński as the Sacred Mountain⁹³. In 1350, the Prince-Bishop of Warmia, Jan of Meissen, moved his capital to Lidzbark Warmiński. It is rather unlikely that by doing so he wanted to further Christianise another place of pagan Prussian worship; however, erecting a church in that location quite early on may suggest such an approach.

Conclusions

With the development of Prussian settlements in the 14th-15th century, even though more and more churches and parishes were established, a portion of Prussian society still, mostly in secret, worshipped their old gods. It seems that some of those places were over time adopted by the Church and the pagan deities were replaced by Christian faith. From the 11th century and throughout the Middle Ages, Western Europe was marked by the rapid development of the Marian cult. Numerous sanctuaries have been built, often on the site of old Pagan⁹⁴ cult centres. Over time, the Marian cult arrived to Prussia, where ancient pagan places of worship were often converted to match Christian needs. Such a transformation took place in, amongst other places, Święta Lipka, at least from the 15th century. Outside Warmia, an analogous example is the village of Lipy near Lubawa. It appears that Christianity, initially destroying pagan symbols, in the longer term used the local religious traditions related to places sacred to pagans. In this way, it started to gain more and more of the power established among the local people. It was chiefly expressed in building churches in those places, superseding some of the traditions of those ancient cult places⁹⁵.

Robert Klimek, *Adaptacja pogańskich miejsc świętych przez Kościół katolicki na obszarze dawnych Prus w średniowieczu*

Streszczenie

W XIII w. nastąpił podbój pogańskich plemion pruskich przez zakon krzyżacki. Już 29 lipca 1243 r. we włoskim mieście Anagni na polecenie papieża legat Wilhelm z Modeny dokonał podziału obszaru ziemi pruskiej na cztery diecezje: chełmińską, pomezzańską, warmińską i sambijską. Sukcesywnie na podbitych obszarach Kościół szerzył idee chrześcijaństwa: budowano kościoły, zakładano parafie, narzucając Prusom nową wiarę. Prusowie za święte uważali gaje, pola i wody do tego stopnia, że nie odważyli się w nich wycinać drzew, ani

⁹² J. Enders, *Tabula geographica episcopatum warmiensem in Prussia*, Elbing 1755; J. Cary, *A new map of the Kingdom of Prussia*, London 1799.

⁹³ *Słownik geograficzny Królestwa Polskiego*, t. 5, 1884, p. 220.

⁹⁴ J. Cheleni, H. Branthomme, *Boże drogi. Historia pielgrzymek chrześcijańskich*, Warszawa 1996, p. 129.

⁹⁵ P. Urbańczyk, op. cit., Wrocław 2008, p. 181.

uprawiać ziemi, ani łowić ryb. Powszechnie uważa się, że oprócz wymienionych miejsc świętych Prusowie mieli swoje centrum kultu zwane Romowe. Nie można wykluczyć, że tego typu centrum mogło występować na obszarze każdego z plemion. Jedno takie centrum kultu miało się znajdować w Patollen (późniejsze Groß Waldeck). Miał się tam znajdować dąb poświęcony trójcy bóstw: Patollowi, Potrimpusowi i Perkunowi. W drugiej połowie XIV w. wielki mistrz Winryk Kniprode zlecił budowę klasztoru pw. Świętej Trójcy. Klasztory powstały także w innych potwierdzonych źródłowo miejscach kultu, np.: w Świętej Siekierce, czy Łąkach Bratiańskich. Na innych miejscach kultu budowano kościoły. Takim szczególnym miejscem jest Święta Lipka, gdzie mamy potwierdzenie obrzędów pogańskich w XIV w., prawdopodobnie również w Gietrzwałdzie.

Wraz z rozwojem osadnictwa na ziemiach pruskich w XIV-XV w., mimo, że powstawało coraz więcej kościołów i parafii, to jednak część Prusów dalej, najczęściej w ukryciu, oddawało cześć dawnym bóstwom. Najwyraźniej niektóre z takich miejsc z czasem były adoptowane przez Kościół, a dawne pogańskie bóstwa zastępowano chrześcijańskimi. Najwyraźniej chrześcijaństwo, niszcząc w pierwszej akcji symbole pogańskie, w dłuższej perspektywie korzystało jednak z lokalnej tradycji sakralnej, związanej ze świętymi miejscami pogaństwa. W ten oto sposób zawłaszczało utrwaloną wśród miejscowej ludności moc. Znajdowało to wyraz przede wszystkim we wznoszeniu w tych zaadoptowanych miejscach kościołów, które przejmowały część tradycji dawnych kultów.

Robert Klimek, *Die Adaptation der heidnischen heiligen Orte auf den ehemaligen preußischen Gebieten durch die katholische Kirche im Mittelalter*

Zusammenfassung

Im 13. Jh. wurden die heidnischen preußischen Stämme durch den Deutschen Orden unterworfen. Bereits am 29. Juli 1243 führte der päpstliche Legat Wilhelm von Modena in der italienischen Stadt Anagni die Teilung der preußischen Gebiete in vier Diözesen durch: Kulm, Pomesanien, Ermland und Samland. Die Kirche verbreitete die Ideen des Christentums auf den eroberten Gebieten sukzessiv: es wurden Kirchen gebaut und neue Gemeinden gegründet, wobei den Prußen der neue Glauben aufgezwungen wurde. Die Prußen hielten manche Haine, Felder und Gewässer für heilig, so dass sie es nicht wagten, hier Bäume zu fällen, Boden zu bestellen und Fische zu fangen. Es ist allgemein bekannt, dass die Prußen außerdem ihr Kultuszentrum, Romowe, hatten. Es ist nicht ausgeschlossen, dass solche Zentren auf jedem Stammesgebiet existierten, eines davon gab es in Patollen (später Groß Waldeck). Dort sollte sich eine Eiche befinden, die dem Göttertrias: Patollos, Potrimpus und Perkunos gewidmet wurde. In der zweiten Hälfte des 14. Jh. ließ hier der Hochmeister des Deutschen Ordens Winrich von Kniprode das Kloster der Heiligen Dreifaltigkeit erbauen. Die Kloster entstanden auch an anderen durch die Quellen bewiesenen ehemaligen Kultusorten, z.B. in Święta Siekierka (Heiligenbeil) oder in Łąki Bratiańskie (Königlich Lonk). An anderen Kultusstätten wurden die Kirchen errichtet. Ein besonderer Ort war Święta Lipka (Heilige Linde), wo die heidnischen Rituale noch im 14. Jh. verzeichnet worden waren, möglicherweise betraf dies auch Gietrzwałd (Dietrichswalde).

Zusammen mit der Besiedlung der preußischen Gebiete im 14. und 15. Jh., mit dem Bau der neuen Kirchen und der Entstehung der neuen Gemeinden wurden von einem Teil der Prußen die alten Götter heimlich angebetet. Offensichtlich wurden manche Orte mit der Zeit von der Kirche adaptiert und alte heidnische Götter durch christliche ersetzt. Ersichtlich war, dass das Christentum in der ersten Aktion die heidnischen Symbole vernichtet hatte, später aber nutzte es die lokale sakrale Tradition aus, die mit den heidnischen Kultusstätten verbunden war. Auf diese Weise wurde die von der örtlichen Bevölkerung festgehaltene Kraft übernommen. Das manifestierte sich dadurch, dass an diesen adaptierten Orten Kirchen erbaut wurden, die einen Teil der tradierten alten Kulte übernommen hatten.

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