
Grzegorz Białuński

SETTLEMENT IN THE SOUTH-EASTERN STATE
OF THE TEUTONIC ORDER IN PRUSSIA AFTER
THIRTEEN YEARS' WAR (1466–1525)

Słowa kluczowe: osadnictwo, państwo zakonu krzyżackiego w Prusach, wielka puszcza

Schlüsselwörter: Besiedlung, Deutsche Ordensstaat in Preussen, Grosse Wildnis

Keywords: settlement, State of the Teutonic Order in Prussia, great wilderness

This article seeks to recapitulate the existing knowledge on the subject defined in the title. It focuses solely on a selected area of south-eastern Prussia, the so-called great wilderness (Grosse Wildnis in German)¹.

Research landscape

The first significant researcher who explored the subject of settlement in this area was M. Toeppen. His work *Geschichte Masurens* is a detailed and competent source on the settlement in times of the Teutonic Order, taking into account the wide spectrum of the political and socio-economic conditions of this area under the Teutonic Order's rule². Kętrzyński's work is consciously one-sided; it illustrates settlement and societal processes in Masuria from the perspective of Polish settlement only³. The indisputable advantage of both works was the wide use of the source base and the first accurate illustration of settlement processes, of the Polish settlement in particular.

¹ The studied area includes seven prussian districts – Starostei (Pol. starostwa) (after 1525 r.): Ryn district, Giżycko district, Pisz district, Elk district, Straduny (Olecko) district, Węgorzewo and zelkowo (Neuhoff) districts. Between 1466 and 1525 it was the area of Königsberg Commandry (Węgorzewo / Angerburg district), Brandenburg Commandry (Giżycko / Lötzen and Straduny / Stradunen districts) and Bałga Commandry (Ryn / Rhein, Elk / Lyck and Pisz / Johannsburg districts). After 1477 Rhein and Lyck district was linked in newly established Rhein Commandry.

² M. Toeppen, *Geschichte Masurens*, Danzig 1870. Polish edition: M. Toeppen, *Historia Mazur*, Olsztyn 1995, translated by: M. Szymańska-Jasińska, ed. by: G. Jasiński.

³ W. Kętrzyński, *O ludności polskiej w Prusiech niegdyś krzyżackich*, Lwów 1882.

Research into settlement processes was relaunched in the 1930s. Two synthetic publications on settlement deserve a mention here: first and foremost, an excellent work by K. Kasiski (however, concerning only the period until 1410)⁴ and its less successful continuation by K. Riel on settlement in the State of the Teutonic Order in Prussia in 1410–1466⁵. So far there has been no overall analysis of the settlement in Prussia after the Thirteen Years' War. Independently of syntheses, there have been many fragmentary publications or works limited to one administrative unit. Two publications seem noteworthy; one by O. Barkowski on the settlement in the circuits of Ryn and Straduny until the 18th century. The author gave a detailed illustration of the foundation of individual settlements but neglected the legal and social transformation as well as the origin of the settlers⁶. Its publication coincided with the release of a comprehensive work by F. Grigat which illustrates the settlement in the area of Mamry (the circuit of Węgorzewo⁷). Two other works, one by Ch. Moczarski about the Elk⁸ area and the other by R. Seeberg-Elverfeldt on the settlement in the area of Pisz, are accurate but have quite a general character⁹.

The post-war research complemented the data for the circuits of Pisz and Elk. Unfortunately, both B. Gebauer's work on the origins of settlement in the circuit of Elk, edited by W. Hubatsch, and H. Koch's publication on the settlement in the circuit of Pisz have remained unpublished¹⁰. The latter was supplemented by H.L. Hoffmann-Bagienski's source work on ancillary settlements in the area of Pisz¹¹. The remaining works regarding this subject were based largely on the past achievements; syntheses by W. Chojnacki, K. Górski and H. Wunder deserve a mention here¹². It was only recently that G. Białuński published new, detailed

⁴ K. Kasiske, *Die Siedlungstätigkeit des Deutschen Ordens im östlichen Preussen bis zum Jahre 1410*, Königsberg 1934.

⁵ K. Riel, *Die Siedlungstätigkeit des Deutschen Ordens in Preussen in der Zeit von 1410–1466*, *Altpreuussische Forschungen* (further: AF, 1937, Jg. 14, pp. 224–267).

⁶ O. Barkowski, *Beiträge zur Siedlungs- und Ortsgeschichte des Hauptamtes Rhein*, *Altpreuussische Forschungen*, 1934, Jg. 11, pp. 197–224; idem, *Quellenbeiträge zur Siedlungs- und Ortsgeschichte des Hauptamtes Stradunen-Oletzko*, AF, 1936, Jg. 13, pp. 183–223.

⁷ F. Grigat, *Die Besiedlung des Mauerseegebietes im Rahmen der Kolonisation Ostpreussen*, Königsberg 1937; W. Schibilla, *Siedlungsgeographie des Mauerseegebiets*, Königsberg 1933 (manuscript).

⁸ Ch. Moczarski, *Der Kreis Lyck, ein ostpreussischer Wirtschaftsraum*, Königsberg 1938; printed again in: *Sudauen. Blätter zur Heimatgeschichte des Kreises Lyck*, Hagen 1968, Folge 5.

⁹ R. Seeberg-Elverfeldt, *Der Verlauf der Besiedlung des ostpreussischen Amtes Johannsburg bis 1818*, *Altpreuussische Forschungen*, 1934, Jg. 11, pp. 39–62.

¹⁰ B. Gebauer, *Die Entwicklung der Siedlungslandschaft in Süd- Ostmasuren (Kreis Lyck), unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Siedlungsgenese. Ein Beitrag zur Kulturlandschaftsordnung im deutschen Osten*, Göttingen 1959 (manuscript); H. Koch, *Die Geschichte der Besiedlung des Kreises Johannsburg*, Universitäts Bibliothek Münster, sygn. U 656 (manuscript).

¹¹ H. L. Hoffmann-Bagienski, *Die Dienstgüter des Amtes Johannsburg*, Hamburg 1992; F. J. Maciejewska, *Geneza, rozwój i przemiany sieci osadniczej regionu piskiego od XIII wieku do 1988 roku*, Olsztyn 1995.

¹² W. Chojnacki, *Osadnictwo polskie na Mazurach w XIII–XVIII w.*, in: *Szkice z dziejów Pomorza*, v. 2, Warszawa 1959, pp. 5–33; H. Wunder, *Siedlung und Bevölkerung im Ordenstaat, Herzogtum und Königreich Preussen (13.–18. Jahrhundert)*, in: *Ostdeutsche Geschichts- und Kulturlandschaften*, Th. 2: *Ost- und Westpreussen*, hrsg. von M. Rothe, Köln 1987, pp. 67–98, K. Górski, *Początki kolonizacji polskiej w Prusach*, Strażnica Zachodnia,

monographies on settlement and societal processes in this area¹³. These works provide a reference for the present synthesis.

Overview of settlement after Thirteen Years' War

In the pre-Teutonic period the area was inhabited by Prussian tribes. However, only few traces of their settlement remain; these include emplacement ruins and nomenclatures. This is due to the depopulation of the area which the Teutonic Knights conducted after the conquest; they went as far as to call it "the great wilderness" (Grosse Wildnis). Teutonic settlement developed initially only in the western part of the order's new dominion¹⁴. In the area which would later become Masuria, settlement began in the 14th century. Until 1410 settlement processes were initiated to colonize the areas of Węgorzewo, Ryn and Giżycko, while the areas of the castle in Pisz (1346) and the castle in Elk (constructed late, ca. 1398) remained uninhabited. Respectively, there were four new settlements near the castle in Węgorzewo and three near the castles of Giżycko and Ryn each. What draws attention is the prevalence of ancillary settlements (Dienstgüter), or small quasi-knight's properties – belonging to the so-called freemen (Freie) who were obliged to perform military service – over peasant tenement villages. This was due to the fact that the newly established state required defence forces. Initially the owners of those settlements were not distinguished as freemen or noblemen, although this social group was far from homogeneous. It was divided into common freemen (gemeyne Freie), knights and noblemen (Ritter, Erbarleute). The first group, significantly larger than the others, later gave rise to the group of freemen, or the so-called small freemen (kleine Freie). From the other group emerged noblemen (Adel) and the so-called great freemen (grosse Freie)¹⁵.

At the time when colonisation was being extended onto Masuria, the State of the Teutonic Order saw a decreased influx of Germans, which meant their participation

R. 12, 1933, no 4, pp. 549–563; idem, *Z dziejów żywiołu polskiego w Prusiech od 1525 r. do 1772 r.*, Jantar, 1939, R. 3, pp. 1–12. See also: K. Conrad, *Der Deutsche Orden und sein Landesausbau in Preußen*, in: *Deutscher Orden 1190–1990*, hrsg. von U. Arnold, Lüneburg 1997, pp. 83–106; J. Małek, *Migracje ludności niemieckiej, polskiej litewskiej na ziemię pruskie w XIII–XVI wieku*, Komunikaty Mazursko-Warmińskie (further: KMW), 2003, no 4, pp. 431–441; B. Jähnig, *Siedlungsgeschichte Masurens vom Mittelalter bis in die neuere Zeit*, in: idem, *Vorträge und Forschungen zur Geschichte des Preußenlandes und des Deutschen Ordens im Mittelalter. Ausgewählte Beiträge zum 70. Geburtstag am 7. Oktober 2011*, hrsg. von H.J. und B. Kämpfert, Münster 2011, pp. 366–378.

¹³ G. Białuński, *Osadnictwo regionu Wielkich Jezior Mazurskich od XIV do początku XVIII w. – starostwo leckie (giżyckie) i ryńskie*, Olsztyn 1996; idem, *Siedlungswesen im Bereich der Großen Masurischen Seen vom 14. bis 18. Jahrhundert – Ämter Lötzen und Rhein*, Hamburg 2005; idem, *Przemiany społeczno-ludnościowe południowo-wschodnich Prus Krzyżackich i Książęcych do 1568 r.*, Olsztyn 2001; idem, *Kolonizacja „Wielkiej Puszczy” (do 1568 roku) – starostwa piskie, elckie, straduńskie, zelkowskie i węgoborskie (węgorszewskie)*, Olsztyn 2002; idem, *Bevölkerung und Siedlung im ordensstaatlichen und herzoglichen Preussen im Gebiet der „Grossen Wildnis” bis 1568*, Hamburg 2009.

¹⁴ K. Kasiske, op. cit., passim.

¹⁵ G. Białuński, *Przemiany*, pp. 201–218, 226–234; M. Biskup, G. Labuda, *Dzieje zakonu krzyżackiego w Prusach. Gospodarka – społeczeństwo – państwo – ideologia*, Gdańsk 1988, pp. 303–305, 309–311.

in the settlement processes was diminishing as well. It was particularly noticeable in the area discussed herein. Research into the amts of Ryn and Giżycko has shown that people of Prussian origin prevailed, some of them indigenous, some of them having immigrated into the area as part of internal colonisation. The Polish community was still negligible at that time. The first Poles who did distinguish themselves inhabited the area of the Pisz castle; they were beekeepers originating from Masovia, who explored the wilderness and then established the first settlements there¹⁶.

After 1410 colonization was extended onto eastern Masuria and the hitherto forgotten areas of the castles of Pisz and Elk. After 1466 new settlements were established in the following amts: in Pisz as many as 77, in Elk – 9, in Węgorzewo – 11, in Ryn – 28 and in Giżycko – 9. Elk and Pisz were granted town rights in 1435 and 1451 respectively, which shows that the scale of colonisation in eastern Masuria was significant. However, those towns failed to develop as they were supposed to, which leads to the assumption that the number of settlers was smaller than expected. One of the obstacles was undoubtedly Thirteen Years' War between Poland and the Teutonic Order (1454–1466). Granting ancillary settlements to freemen prevailed, especially in south-eastern Masuria. Until 1454 the amt of Pisz witnessed the foundation of as many as 69 ancillary settlements, in comparison with only six tenement villages (although the circuit of Ryn had only three). Tenement villages were inhabited by peasants who were obliged to pay rent and perform free work on a farm owned by Teutonic knights (szarwark)¹⁷.

The period was marked by significant ethnic transformations, especially in the ratio of the Poles to the Prussians as the population of German origin was becoming less dominant. The number and significance of the Polish community had risen sharply, reaching a half-and-half ratio with the Prussian community, and was still growing while the latter was beginning to dwindle. Poles began to prevail in the southern State of the Teutonic Order and ca. 1450 they were already a majority in the area of Pisz, to the extent that the vassal's oath presented to Grand Master Ludwik von Erlichshausen was written in Polish. In addition to those three nations occasionally there were others, such as Ruthenians and Lithuanians, mainly in northeastern Masuria¹⁸.

Settlement after Thirteen Years' War and its outcome

During Thirteen Years' War (1454–1466) colonisation practically ceased; the first settlements were not established until 1465 in the amt of Pisz. After the war settlement was particularly active in eastern Masuria: settlements were established

¹⁶ G. Białuński, *Kolonizacja „Wielkiej Puszczy”*, pp. 21–25.

¹⁷ G. Białuński, *Osadnictwo*, pp. 27–55; idem, *Kolonizacja „Wielkiej Puszczy”*, pp. 21–37, 76–79, 112–113, 166–174.

¹⁸ G. Białuński, *Osadnictwo*, p. 79–88; idem, *Przemiany*, pp. 50–60.

in the following amts: in Pisz – 38 (as many as 16 until 1471), in Ełk – 102, in Ryn – 28, in Giżycko – 28. Settlement was less active in the northern part of this area – in and around Węgorzewo only 4 settlements were established (for details see Table 1). Eventually, colonisation was extended into the border regions of the State of the Teutonic Order; it was the eastern part of the amt of Giżycko, which was to become the starostwo of Straduny (later starostwo of Olecko), where several dozen settlements were established simultaneously (54 to be more precise)¹⁹. In total, as many as 254 new settlements were founded in the studied area, therefore nearly 400 towns and villages including those established earlier. The circuit of Ełk was colonised entirely. Colonisation continued in the next period, especially in the northern part of the district of Straduny and the eastern part of the district of Węgorzewo, and even extended onto the remaining uninhabited lands in the starostwo of Pisz, Ryn and Giżycko.

After the Thirteen Years' War many received free properties, which together with the so-called ploughmen's villages accounted for nearly 80 per cent of all the new settlements. Towards the end of the Teutonic Order's rule in Prussia, the studied area (which was ca. 6,500 km large at that time ²), had more than 21,000 inhabitants in total, a significant rise from the initial 5,000 (see Table 2). The average population density stood at slightly more than three people per km ². However, the situation in the districts varied considerably, ranging from less than one person in the district of Węgorzewo to more than 11 people per km² in the district of Ełk.

Table 1 The number and type of settlements in individual districts created in the years 1465–1525

District	Tenement villages	Freemen's villages	Ploughmen's villages	Other	Total (including those existing ca. 1525)
Giżycko	15	12	–	1	28 (39)
Ryn	12	15	–	1	28 (58)
Pisz	1	37	–	–	38 (115)
Ełk	8	49	45	–	102 (111)
Straduny	6	44	1	3	54 (58)
Węgorzewo	1	3	–	–	4 (15)
Total	43	150	46	5	254 (396)

Source: own calculations.

¹⁹ G. Białuński, *Kolonizacja „Wielkiej Puszczy”*, pp. 113–128.

Table 2. The area and population of the individual districts

District	1466	1519/1525	Area in ^{km} 2
Giżycko	500	2000	ca. 550
Ryn	1120	3000	ca. 1250
Pisz	2010	5400	ca. 1300
Ełk	425	6605	ca. 600
Straduny	345	2862	ca. 1400
Węgorzewo	640	1245	ca. 1400
Total	5040	21112	ca. 6500

Source: own calculations.

Ethnic transformations

The period following 1466 witnessed a significant dominance of the Polish community. This was due to a massive influx of Masovian population, both peasantry and small noblemen (in total, the estimated number of Polish settlers who arrived in the area at that time stood at 20,000-25,000)²⁰. The end of the State of the Teutonic Knights saw a surge of internal colonization by the descendants of the first Masovian settlers. Internal colonisation was less intense in the first phase of this period as the war had caused the population to diminish. This situation made it only easier for new settlers from the outside to colonise the area. The share of small noblemen of Masovia was particularly significant, as evidenced by family names carried over directly from the vicinity of Wąsosz, Kolno and Grajewo to the area of Pisz, Ryn and Ełk; these include: Cwaliny, Rostki, Kurzątki, Konopki, Lipińskie, Czyprki²¹. It was the last period when the Prussian community was still a significant part of the colonisation movement. More and more noticeable was the influx of Lithuanians, Ruthenians (who were quickly Polonised outside the district of Węgorzewo) and Germans, who usually inhabited tenement villages and settlements in castle areas (Giżycko, Węgorzewo, Ryn, Ełk, and Pisz).

Social groups and types of settlements

The society of medieval and modern times was divided into estates i.e. peasants, the nobility, the clergy and the bourgeoisie. Of course it was barely a model breakdown, which, as is often the case, permitted certain derogations. One of them

²⁰ H. Gollub, *Masuren. Ostpreussische Landeskunde in Einzeldarstellungen*, Königsberg 1934, pp. 110–111.

²¹ G. Białuński, *Przemiany*, pp. 77–96.

was the Prussian class of the so-called freemen, who were ranked between the nobility and peasants, and the class of ploughmen, ranked between freemen and peasants²². The area in question did not possess any functioning town (granting town rights to Elk in 1435 and Pisz in 1451 proved to be a failure) and therefore no representatives of the bourgeoisie.

Peasants (Bauern in German) inhabited tenement villages (Zinsdörfer) or villages belonging to szarwarks (Scharwerksdörfer). It means they either paid a predefined rent, or (very rarely) performed labour instead (on a szarwark i.e. in the form of serfdom). Peasants were not true owners of the land; they kept it in acquisitive emphyteusis. Hence, peasant villages belonged either to the order (the vast majority) or to a private owner (a freeman or a knight). In general, peasants paid the rent and worked on a szarwark at the same time. Tributes depended on the size of fields belonging to peasants. In the 15th century peasants were supposed to work on average 14 days per year.

A peasant farm covered the area of 0.5-3 fiefs, while in szarwark villages the rent was initially at the level of 0.5-1 grzywna (a medieval monetary unit). There were also tributes in kind: usually one wiertel (ca. 14 litres) or two of wheat and rye, together with a goose or two hens. Those were often complemented by a bushel (ca. 55 litres) of oat and a wiertel of wood gathered from three fiefs. Of course, tributes varied as far as individual components were concerned. From the 15th century on peasants also performed obligatory military service; not every single one of them, though. Those selected for the military duty were later called the chosen ones (Wibranzen), usually from one to four peasants per village.

Freemen (Freie in German) were a typically Prussian social layer. Their roots go back to the conquest of Prussia by the Teutonic order; it was then that the order granted small estates in return for military service (the so-called ancillary settlements Dienstgüter). Initially there were no major differences between freemen and the developing nobility; besides, some freemen later became part of the latter. What largely contributed to the collapse of freemen was the fragmentation of their property, which further weakened their economic situation. This only downplayed their importance and with time made it impossible for them to perform military service. This, in turn, led the authorities to expand duties towards Teutonic farms (szarwark), even against the privileges of freemen. What eventually doomed freemen was their complete exclusion from political life in the 16th century.

They were the most numerous social group in the study area. In source literature they were referred to either as Freye or ziemianie in Polish. Freemen who resided in private settlements were called tenants (Lehnmänner).

²² To learn more on this topic see: M. Toeppen, op. cit., pp. 133-146, 191-196; W. Kętrzyński, op. cit., pp. 250-283; G. Białuński, *Przemiany*, pp. 141-255.

Freemen were usually granted a farm sized from several to over ten fiefs. However, their estates underwent a significant fragmentation over time. Even the former freemen's settlements began to be referred to as villages (Freyendörfer). Not all farmers were obliged to serve on a szarwark; it depended on the provisions included in the founding document of a given settlement. Similarly, not everyone was obliged to donate the so-called plough corn (Pflugkorn). Its amount was determined based on the size of an entire farm and not just on the number of fiefs (as was in the case of peasants), which was much more profitable for freemen. Freemen were obliged to perform military service with a horse and armour. This concerned only selected ones, usually several dozen from each district. Labour performed on a szarwark was varied; for instance, it could consist in providing horse wagons, participating in hunting, or working on fortified constructions. Some freemen were exempt from labour on a szarwark by paying an appropriate fee, usually of several grzywna, called Freygeld.

Towards the decline of the State of the Teutonic Order in Prussia the nobility started to become more distinct as a social layer. At the same time, freemen's properties underwent fragmentation as their social and economic position started to decrease. It is worth noting the reasons for the division of ancillary settlements into those belonging to noblemen and freemen. Promotion was granted to those settlements which were exempt from labour on a szarwark (constructing and renovating castles); those were not divided among freemen.

The highest social standing belonged to the nobility (Adel), who were in fact the former chivalry (*Ritterschaft*). Access to the noble estate depended on the following factors: owning free, hereditary property of a considerable area governed by a nobleman approved by a higher authority, as well as being exempt from fortification works (which was equivalent to exemption from serving on a szarwark). Noblemen's estates comprised properties of an area from several to several dozen of fiefs. The primary responsibility which derived from owning a property was serving as a knight (usually one military service per 40 fiefs). The nobility received higher and lower jurisdiction within their estates. They were also exempt from rent, labour on a szarwark and other burdens. Moreover, they were authorised to hunt and extract wood from forests belonging to the order, to fish in nearby lakes and to extend patronage over the church; they also gained the right of running independent taprooms and beer brewing. Noblemen organised farm work in their estates; the rest of the land was given to peasants, who, as subjects and crofters, worked on their master's farm on principles identical to those applying earlier to work on a farm belonging to the order. However, details concerning burdens on this area remain unknown.

At that time freemen as a social class were represented by the so-called ploughmen (Plunger). In source literature they were first referred to as such in 1519 (Oratschen)²³. However, the first ploughmen's villages were recorded as early as in the 1470s. Nearly all of them were created under the Teutonic Order's rule; after that period only two new ones were founded. In 1525, there were as many as 46 ploughmen's villages, all except for one located in the amt of Ełk. In total, ploughmen accounted for 18 per cent of the entire population of this amt and owned 26 per cent of the area's arable land.

It is worth noting that ploughmen's obligations differed from military service. In their case, each service unit was expected to provide a man, a horse and a set of draught animals (rather than an armour). One service unit corresponded to 15 fiefs of land, half a unit to 7.5 fiefs, and, accordingly, two service units to 30 fiefs. The most complete description of the ploughmen's obligations was preserved in one of the books of the castle and dates back to mid-16th century²⁴: "(...) Ploughmen – each one has 15 fiefs, which makes one service unit; they have no founding rights, only purchase letters. Their obligation is to plough the farm fields to prepare them for winter and spring crops, perform all kinds of construction work on a farm, erecting field fences, mowing grass from one morga, then collecting and transporting it to the Castle of Ełk. They shall [also] donate one bushel of wheat and one bushel of rye per one dym²⁵ as well as a pound of wax per each service unit. They also provide $\frac{3}{4}$ of a wagon of wood per each service unit, and if that is not sufficient, they should provide two wagons from each dym²⁶".

Ploughmen were classified as small freemen, who, in lieu of military service, were required to perform ploughmen's service. Their social and economic position was similar to that of freemen, although the social mentality of the time would have it that they stood a little lower. Ploughmen without founding rights had their own property but they were governed by the simplified Magdeburg law²⁷.

Village magistrates, innkeepers and millers also belonged to freemen. All of them were listed in tribute letters side by side with freemen. In tenement villages those endowed with special privileges were village magistrates (Schulze). One village magistrate was not the rule; their number depended on how many farms there were in a village. There was usually one magistrate per 20 farms. Village magistrates performed military service, one from each administrative unit; those who

23 Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Berlin, XX. Hauptabteilung (GStAPK), Ordensbriefarchiv nr 22935.

24 GStAPK, Ostpreussische Folianten, no 119, f. 87.

25 Term „dym” should be understood like one farm. To learn more on this topic see: H. Łowmiański, *Zaludnienie państwa litewskiego w wieku XVI. Zaludnienie w roku 1528*, Poznań 1998, pp. 131–132.

26 W. Kętrzyński, *O ludności polskiej*, p. 265.

27 G. Białuński, *Bevölkerung*, pp. 377–382.

did not, had to pay about 3 grzywna of rent, called Freygeld. They were required to pay a levy called plough corn (Pflugkorn), namely one bushel of wheat and the same amount of rye. Village magistrates were in charge of jurisdiction in villages; they also supervised a szarwark and kept order in the area. All in all, their social standing was comparable to that of freemen.

Those innkeepers (Krüger) who had inherited their taverns (often under a separately granted privilege) also enjoyed a high social position. Taverns were subject to rent (Krugzins), and the so-called plug money (Zapfengeldt) was derived from those who sold own-produced beverages. The amount of rent varied considerably: from several to several dozen grzywna and hens (capons, to be more precise). Land ownership meant that innkeepers were also required to pay rent and serve on a szarwark, although usually they could be exempt from the latter by paying a fee, the so-called Freygeld. On rare occasions innkeepers had other duties, such as supplying horse wagons.

There were also millers (Müller), but only those who owned an inherited mill (often granted with a separate privilege) along with several fiefs of land could be classified as high-ranked citizens. Their obligation was to pay rent (up to several grzywna per year); some of them also provided donations in kind – an animal for fattening or a chicken. Millers were also required to serve on a szarwark; however, it usually consisted only in manual labour, without supplying draught animals. To this group belonged also owners of ironworks (forges), who paid a relatively high rent or donated specific iron products.

Initially beekeepers (Beutner, Biener) formed a considerable group as well. Among them were professional beekeepers who performed their duties on the same basis as service on a szarwark. They had to install a specific number of beehives per year, for which they received a corresponding remuneration. Honey had to be donated entirely to the order authorities, except for small amounts for domestic or professional use. Honey and wax were also paid for, and the remuneration was defined in a privilege. Beekeepers often came from other social groups, such as peasants or freemen; however, they treated it as a supplementary job. For beehives installed in the forest, beekeepers were subject to forest rent (Heydezins); for beehives installed in gardens, they paid beekeeping rent (Bartenzins). At least half of the produced honey had to be donated to the authorities, who paid a predefined price to beekeepers. The same referred to wax.

The clergy were an important, even if small social group. Parish priests usually received four fiefs of land as remuneration on the area of their parish. In addition, all social groups were obliged to contribute to the maintenance of priests and churches in the form of a tithe and other, such as service donations. Their responsibility was

to attend to the spiritual needs of community members, celebrate masses and administer sacraments. Some parish priests were aided by another clergyman, a curate.

The poor enjoyed personal freedom and accounted for quite a percentage of the population; they included smallholders, paid workers and the so-called “loose workers” (Gärtner, Instleute, Losleute). Smallholders, in addition to their own homes, owned small plots of land called enclosures. Both of these properties were subject to rent, but it was only half (or less) of what peasants had to pay. These people were employed to perform paid work on public or private estates. Paid workers did not own homes or enclosures; they were accommodated in rooms in their employers’ houses. They were employed for a season to perform specific work. Those who resided there over a longer period of times were referred to as room tenants (Kammerleute).

Smallholders often established separate settlements, the so-called enclosure villages, e.g. Ryn, Okartowo, Pisz, Wola near the castles of Węgorzewo and Giżycko.

This social landscape is complemented by servants and trade apprentices (Gesinde). They were employed on farms belonging to the order, the nobility, or to the others. The person in charge of a farm was the courtman (Hoffmann) and his wife (Hoffmutter); there were also farmhands (Knecht), shepherds (Hirte), girl and boy servants (Mägde, Margell, and Dienstjunge), etc.

Colonisation and law

Since the beginning of the colonisation the Teutonic Order granted specific rights to residents; those comprised the Prussian law, the Kulm law and the Magdeburg law. In the period studied in this paper it was the Magdeburg law in its simplified form that enjoyed the most popularity, especially in granting land to freemen. In the case of tenement villages the Kulm law prevailed; it was rarely used for freemen’s property (see Table 3).

Table 3 Law granted in founding privileges in 1466–1525

Law	Tenement villages	Freemen’s villages (including those of the nobility)	Total
Prussian	–	1	1
Kulm	27	12 (1)	39
Magdeburg (simplified)	5	179 (3)	184
Magdeburg (for both sexes)	–	21 (6)	21
Total	32	213	245

Source: own calculations.

Granting land based on the law of Prussia and the so-called hereditary law (which was identical to the former) can only be found in the district of Ryn at the turn of the 14th and 15th century (Salpik, Bałowo, Głąbowo)²⁸. After Thirteen Years' War only one instance of granting land based on this law can be found, and it did not concern a new settlement any more. In 1495 a certain Jan Kurzătko was granted additional property in Salpik, on the same legal basis as the main privilege: in all probability the Prussian law. The land in question was the size of four morga and was supposed to "help" the servants of the farm; in return, the owner had to donate four bushels of oat and supply hay for the horses in the castle²⁹. Prussian freemen continued to live in Salpik and Głąbowo, but the properties in Bałowo were taken over by the noble family of Sixtins and had their law changed to the Magdeburg law for both sexes. The Prussian law limited the succession to sons only. Part of owners' obligations was to pay the so-called recognition fee (to have their authority recognised), a tithe and a plough crop, serving on a szarwark, performing military service and working on fortifications' construction. Prussian freemen were granted jurisdiction over their own subjects. They could also sell their property provided that they notified their master and were granted his consent.

An advantage of the Kulm right was that men and women were eligible for succession on equal terms. Owned property could be freely encumbered or sold, with the reservation that the performance of duties towards the master continued. The Kulm law also provided that fees and other obligations resulting from land ownership were not an excessive burden for settlers. The basic fee was a small recognition rent, as a symbol of submission to sovereignty and jurisdiction of an authority. The fee was usually one Cologne fenig (or five Kulm fenig) and one pound of wax deducted from the entire property. Moreover, property holders subject to this law paid tribute in rye and performed military service. Land granted on the basis of the Kulm law was allodial, meaning that it was exempt from serfdom. Another benefit of this law was the possibility to introduce a self-government with a jury and a magistrate (or a judge) presiding over it. The Kulm law dominated in the first period of Teutonic colonisation. Until Thirteen Years' War land and villages were granted almost exclusively on the basis of this law. During the period in question it was no longer so popular, with the exception of tenement villages.

The Magdeburg law, in turn, was used mainly in granting land to freemen and knights. According to its provisions only sons were entitled to succession but the privilege was granted also to collateral male relatives (descendants of the first owner). This would be later referred to as the simplified Magdeburg law. The owner paid the recognition rent, a tribute in cereal, and was obliged to perform

²⁸ G. Białuński, *Przemiany*, pp. 147–148; W. Kętrzyński, *op. cit.*, pp. 250–255, 283–289.

²⁹ G. Białuński, *Osadnictwo*, pp. 69–70.

military service. Land granted on the basis of this law was a feudal property. In the 15th century another version of this law gained popularity; it was known as „law for both sexes”. It meant that women could succeed to property; however, only in the case when there were no male successors. If there were no descendants at all, the land was granted to the ruler. Such properties could be sold or encumbered, provided that the authorities consented to it. It was the Magdeburg law that dominated in Prussia towards the end of the State of the Teutonic Order.

The law applying during settlement processes did not have great influence on social diversity; however, it did have impact on succession. The Kulm law guaranteed succession rights to both men and women, therefore it protected against escheat (transferring property to the authorities in lack of male heirs). The Magdeburg law, with the alterations concerning succession, was gaining popularity with settlers as it protected the estate against fragmentation, encouraged by the Kulm law (under which married daughters could succeed to the estate).

Finally, a few remarks on land ownership. Land granted on the basis of the Magdeburg law was feudal, and on the basis of the Kulm law – allodial. Tenement peasants held farms on hereditary terms; however, only one chosen son („the most decent one”) could succeed to it. This form of land ownership by peasants is referred to as emphyteusis, or perpetual lease without property rights. Those peasants held land on terms of limited ownership; they could encumber it with debt or mortgage but could not sell it without their master’s consent. Hereditary lease was therefore only a subordinate form of ownership.

Organisation of settlement

Colonisation policy was defined and executed by a commander. Methodically planned, the colonisation began in the western territories of the state and continued further east until reaching the great wilderness. The commanders of Królewiec, Brandenburgia, Bałga and Ryn were responsible for colonisation in the studied area. However, in most cases it was potential founders and voluntary settlers who first came to a local official of lower rank – a pfleger. They discussed the basic terms of a foundation: the site, the purchase cost, the exemption period (up to 20 years), the amount of rent and other tributes, the scope of privileges (such as fishing, milling, beekeeping, hunting) and the type of law which would govern the settlement; this would become an outline of a future privilege (Handfeste), usually issued by a commander, or the grand master himself after a successful foundation. The founder invested his estate to purchase land and then brought settlers

to colonise it. He was the only person responsible for it. The foundation area was measured by a geometrician: first, the size of a village; then, three niwa (a land division unit), required by the three-field system used during that time (division into spring cereal, winter cereal and set-aside), and finally the number of land units per peasant. Units were allocated at random, hence their Latin name sors, "fate". In addition to arable land, common areas were allocated for pastures and meadows. Later, forests were grubbed and the obtained wood was used to build houses and farm buildings, in a specific location and order (e.g. along one road). Another step was to arrange space in individual division units. The founder was usually granted 1/10 of the area; moreover, he was exempt from labour and tributes and was appointed community leader with the right to bequeath the title. One of his duties was to perform military service and keep order in the village; this included exercising lower jurisdiction and collection of tributes³⁰.

In the case of ancillary settlements the founding procedure was similar; however, the freeman did not bring peasants with him, but rather colonised and organised the area on his own, sometimes with the help of paid workers (smallholders) and apprentices. When vast areas of land (several dozen fiefs) were granted, a newly founded village could even have its own servants or private ancillary properties inhabited by the so-called tenants. The primary responsibility of freemen and knights was military service, which they often transferred to their tenants.

In the period after Thirteen Years' War there were instances of granting land without the founding privilege, mainly in the case of ancillary settlements, and especially ploughmen's villages in the district of Elk, occasionally also in the case of tenement villages (e.g. in the district of Giżycko and Ryn³¹). On such occasions, a lower official of the order presiding over the given administrative unit usually issued only the so-called purchase letter (Kaufbrief). There were cases, however, when even that document was missing. Individual cases of granting land to inhabitants without privileges can be found in the area of Pisz at the beginning of the 16th century. Two settlements had no privileges whatsoever, and ten settlements had only purchase letters without any specified foundation law. Later on, all those settlements were subject to the simplified Magdeburg law and classified as freemen's villages³². In the district of Pisz, unlike the ploughmen's villages in the district of Elk, all the landowners were obliged to perform military service. Such was the case with all settlements of this type in other districts.

30 W. Długokęcki, *Spółczesność wiejskie*, in: *Państwo zakonu krzyżackiego w Prusach*, ed. by: M. Biskup, R. Czaja, Warszawa 2008, pp. 460–461.

³¹ G. Białuński, *Siedlungswesen*, pp. 47–48, 56, 60.

³² G. Białuński, *Kolonizacja „Wielkiej Puszczy”*, pp. 52–53.

* * *

Settlement after the Thirteen Years' War played a very important role in the studied area. It was a period of a very intensive establishment of new settlements. Only one historical period, namely the rule of Prince Albrecht (1525–1568) seems more successful in this respect, especially the year 1540 and those immediately following it. Of ground-breaking importance was also an intensive influx of Polish-speaking population. For centuries this fact shaped the ethnic landscape of this part of Prussia, which would later become Masuria.

Grzegorz Białuński, *Osadnictwo w południowo-wschodniej części państwa zakonu krzyżackiego po wojnie trzynastoletniej (1466–1525)*

Streszczenie

W artykule podjęto próbę podsumowania aktualnej wiedzy na temat osadnictwa w południowo-wschodniej części państwa Zakonu Krzyżackiego w latach 1466–1525. Autor skupia się wyłącznie na wybranym obszarze Prus, tzw. Wielkiej Puszczy (Grosse Wildnis). W artykule została omówiona problematyka kolonizacji i zasiedlenia, a także towarzyszących tym procesom przemianom etnicznym i demograficznym, omówiono uczestniczące w nich grupy społeczne i prawo stosowane w czasie kolonizacji, jakim objęci byli osadnicy.

Osadnictwo na obszarze Wielkiej Puszczy po wojnie trzynastoletniej odegrało bardzo ważną rolę nie tylko w kontekście omawianego terytorium, ale też państwa krzyżackiego. Był to okres bardzo intensywnego tworzenia nowych osad. Przełomowy był również intensywny napływ ludności polskojęzycznej, która przez kolejne stulecia kształtowała krajobraz etniczny i kulturowy tej części Prus, która później stała się Mazurami.

Grzegorz Białuński, *Die Besiedlung des südöstlichen Teils des Ordensstaates Preußen nach dem dreizehnjährigen Krieg (1466–1525)*

Zusammenfassung

Im Beitrag wurde ein Versuch unternommen, das bisherige Wissen über die Besiedlung des südöstlichen Teils des Ordensstaates in den Jahren 1466–1525 zusammenzufassen. Der Autor konzentriert sich auf das ausgewählte Gebiet in Preußen, die sog. Große Wildnis. Im Beitrag wurden außerdem Probleme der Kolonisation und der Besiedlung besprochen, darüber hinaus wurden auch die Prozesse der ethnischen und demographischen Wandlungen, die darin beteiligten sozialen Gruppen und das während der Kolonisierung angewandte Recht in Bezug auf die neuen Siedler präsentiert.

Die Besiedlung der Großen Wildnis spielte eine wichtige Rolle nach dem dreizehnjährigen Krieg nicht nur in Bezug auf das besprochene Gebiet, sondern auch in Bezug auf den gesamten Ordensstaat. Es war Zeit einer intensiven Bildung neuer Siedlungen. Bahnbrechend war auch der Zustrom der polnischen Bevölkerung, die jahrhundertlang die ethnische Kulturlandschaft dieses Teils Preußens bildete, der später Masuren genannt wurde.

Übersetzt von Alina Kuzborska

prof. dr hab. Grzegorz Białuński
Wydział Prawa i Administracji
Uniwersytet Warmińsko-Mazurski w Olsztynie
Faculty of Law and Administration
University of Warmia and Mazury in Olsztyn
grzegorz.bialunski@uwm.edu.pl

Primary sources

Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Berlin, XX. Hauptabteilung:
Ordensbriefarchiv no 22935.
Ostpreussische Folianten no 119.

Studies

Barkowski O.

1934. *Beiträge zur Siedlungs – und Ortsgeschichte des Hauptamtes Rhein*, Altpreussische Forschungen, Jg. 11, pp. 197–224.

1936. *Quellenbeiträge zur Siedlungs- und Ortsgeschichte des Hauptamtes Stradunen-Oletzko*, Altpreussische Forschungen, Jg. 13, pp. 183–223.

Białuński G.

1996. *Osadnictwo regionu Wielkich Jezior Mazurskich od XIV do początku XVIII w. – starostwo leckie (giżyckie) i ryńskie*, Olsztyn.

2001. *Przemiany społeczno-ludnościowe południowo-wschodnich Prus Krzyżackich i Książęcych do 1568 r.*, Olsztyn.

2002. *Kolonizacja „Wielkiej Puszczy” (do 1568 roku) – starostwa piskie, elckie, straduńskie, zelkowskie i węgoborskie (węgorzewskie)*, Olsztyn.

2005. *Siedlungswesen im Bereich der Großen Masurischen Seen vom 14. bis 18. Jahrhundert – Ämter Lötzen und Rhein*, Hamburg.

2009. *Bevölkerung und Siedlung im ordensstaatlichen und herzoglichen Preussen im Gebiet der „Grossen Wildnis” bis 1568*, Hamburg.

Biskup M., Labuda G.

1988. *Dzieje zakonu krzyżackiego w Prusach. Gospodarka – społeczeństwo – państwo – ideologia*, Gdańsk.

Chojnacki W.

1959. *Osadnictwo polskie na Mazurach w XIII–XVIII w.*, [in:] *Szkice z dziejów Pomorza*, t. 2, Warszawa, pp. 5–33..

Conrad K.

1997. *Der Deutsche Orden und sein Landesausbau in Preußen*, [in:] *Deutscher Orden 1190–1990*, hrsg. von U. Arnold, Lüneburg, pp. 83–106.

Długokęcki W.

2008. *Spółeczeństwo wiejskie*, [in:] *Państwo zakonu krzyżackiego w Prusach*, ed. by: M. Biskup, R. Czaja, Warszawa, pp. 460–494.

Gebauer B.

[1959]. *Die Entwicklung der Siedlungslandschaft in Süd- Ostmasuren (Kreis Lyck), unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Siedlungsgenese. Ein Beitrag zur Kulturlandschaftsordnung im deutschen Osten*, Göttingen (manuscript).

Gollub H.

1934. *Masuren. Ostpreussische Landeskunde in Einzeldarstellungen*, Königsberg.

Górski K.

1933. *Początki kolonizacji polskiej w Prusach*, *Strażnica Zachodnia*, R. 12, nr 4, pp. 549–563.

1939. *Z dziejów żywiołu polskiego w Prusiech od 1525 r. do 1772 r.*, *Jantar*, R. 3, pp. 1–12.

Grigat F.

1937. *Die Besiedlung des Mauerseegebietes im Rahmen der Kolonisation Ostpreussen*, Königsberg.

Hoffmann-Bagiński H. L.

1992. *Die Dienstgüter des Amtes Johannsburg*, Hamburg.

Jähnig B.

2011. *Siedlungsgeschichte Masurens vom Mittelalter bis in die neuere Zeit*, w: idem, *Vorträge und Forschungen zur Geschichte des Preußenlandes und des Deutschen Ordens im Mittelalter. Ausgewählte Beiträge zum 70. Geburtstag am 7. Oktober 2011*, hrsg. von H.J. und B. Kämpfert, Münster.

Kasiske K.

1934. *Die Siedlungstätigkeit des Deutschen Ordens im östlichen Preussen bis zum Jahre 1410*,

Königsberg.

Kętrzyński W.

1882. *O ludności polskiej w Prusiech niegdys krzyżackich*, Lwów.

Koch H.

[n.d.]. *Die Geschichte der Besiedlung des Kreises Johannisburg*, Universitäts Bibliothek Münster, sygn. U 656 (manuscript).

Łowmiański H.

1998. *Zaludnienie państwa litewskiego w wieku XVI. Zaludnienie w roku 1528*, Poznań.

Maciejewskiej F.J.

1995. *Geneza, rozwój i przemiany sieci osadniczej regionu piskiego od XIII wieku do 1988 roku*, Olsztyn.

Małek J.

2003. *Migracje ludności niemieckiej, polskiej i litewskiej na ziemie pruskie w XIII–XVI wieku*, Komunikaty Mazursko-Warmińskie, nr 4, pp. 431–441.

Moczarski Ch.

1938. *Der Kreis Lyck, ein ostpreubischer Wirtschaftsraum*, Königsberg.

1968. *Der Kreis Lyck, ein ostpreubischer Wirtschaftsraum*, [in:] *Sudauen. Blätter zur Heimatgeschichte des Kreises Lyck*, Folge 5, Hagen.

Riel K.

1937. *Die Siedlungstätigkeit des Deutschen Ordens in Preussen in der Zeit von 1410–1466*, *Altpreussische Forschungen*, Jg. 14, pp. 224–267.

Schibilla W.

[1933]. *Siedlungsgeographie des Mauerseegebiets*, Königsberg (manuscript).

Seeberg-Elverfeldt R.

1934. *Der Verlauf der Besiedlung des ostpreussischen Amtes Johannisburg bis 1818*, *Altpreussische Forschungen*, Jg. 11, pp. 39–62.

Toeppen M.

1870. *Geschichte Masurens*, Danzig 1870.

1995. *Historia Mazur*, translated by: M. Szymańska-Jasińska, edited by: G. Jasiński, Olsztyn.

Wunder H.

1987. *Siedlung und Bevölkerung im Ordenstaat, Herzogtum und Königreich Preussen (13.–18. Jahrhundert)*, [in:] *Ostdeutsche Geschichts – und Kulturlandschaften*, Th. 2: *Ost- und Westpreussen*, hrsg. von M. Rothe, Köln 1987, pp. 67–98.