

'POWER TO THE FAMILY.' THE MILITARY OBLIGATIONS OF OLD PRUSSIANS IN WARMIA IN THE CONTEXT OF THEIR FAMILY TIES (13TH AND 14TH CENTURIES)

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Abstract

The article deals with the main types of social and military relations between the indigenous people and the new landlords that formed in the times of building and reinforcing the rule of the Teutonic Order in Warmia, a part of Prussia. These included military action and the military obligations of the indigenous people and their descendants in the 13th and 14th centuries. The issue is discussed in the context of the family ties of the Old Prussians. In the era of the conquest, and when building the territory of the Teutonic Order in Prussia, family rule over possessions was reinforced at the expense of other social relations. From the article, it is clear that the military potential of the Diocese of Warmia was supported mainly by the indigenous people, who were granted Kulm law and received other privileges. It also seems that Old Prussians not only fought alongside the Order (knights of the Old Prussian origin, small freemen, *equites Prutheni*), but also led the army of the diocese as bishopric *vogts*.

KEY WORDS: Old Prussians, Old Prussian warriors, *equites Prutheni*, Diocese of Warmia, Warmia, Teutonic Order in Prussia.

Anotacija

Straipsnyje nagrinėjami svarbiausi socialiniai ir kariniai santykiai tarp vietos gyventojų ir naujųjų žemių valdytojų, kurie formavosi kuriant ir įtvirtinant Vokiečių ordino valdžią Varmijoje, vienoje iš Prūsijos dalių. Tai apima karinius veiksmus ir karinius įsipareigojimus, duodamus vietos gyventojų ir jų palikuonių XIII–XIV a. Šis klausimas nagrinėjamas senųjų prūsų šeimų ryšių kontekste. Prūsų užkariavimo ir Vokiečių ordino teritorijos Prūsijoje kūrimo metu šeimos valdžia per nuosavybę buvo stiprinama kitais socialiniais santykiais. Iš straipsnio aiškėja, kad Varmijos vyskupijos karinis potencialas daugiausia rėmėsi vietos gyventojais, kurie buvo gavę Kulmo teisę ir kitų privilegijų. Taip pat aiškėja, kad vietos gyventojai (prūsų kilmės riteriai, smulkūs laisvieji, *equites Prutheni*) ne tik kovodavo Vokiečių ordino pusėje, tačiau ir vesdavo Varmės vyskupo kariuomenę kaip vyskupo fogtai. PAGRINDINIAI ŽODŽIAI: senprūsiai, senprusių kariauinkai, *equites Prutheni*, Varmijos vyskupija, Varmija, Vokiečių ordinas Prūsijoje.

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The conquest of the Old Prussian lands by the Teutonic Order, with significant support from the European nobility, continued for over 50 years (1233 to 1283).¹ It is probably impossible to provide a simple answer to the question what the main reason for the defeat of the Old Prussians was. It could have been the worse armour and weapons, an insufficient number of warriors, or poor tactics; or it could have been too many traitors, who collaborated with the Order against their tribesmen. The pressure on the Old Prussians to change, as well as the military capabilities of the Order, should also be included here, and all these factors should be taken together. Presenting the question as a wide generalisation, it may be said that the cultural, political and military potential of the Old Prussians at the time of the conquest was not enough to resist the multiple pressures on their world. In spite of this, the potential turned out to be so noteworthy that in the following centuries, the new landowners turned it into a crucial element of the defence system of their domains, by adapting the existing social organisation to their own needs.

The article discusses one particularly interesting issue necessary to an understanding of the deep cultural change taking place in Prussia at the time of the conquest: the shaping of new military relations within the Teutonic leadership, and the influence these had on the position of the family in the social space of the new society. While the military aspect of the Old Prussians' share in the structures of the new social organism has already been described quite well in literature on the subject, the issue of relations between the new social and political order and the so-called deep structures, which include family ties, has not yet been discussed. The relatively short space does not allow us to present and analyse the wide spectrum of issues that emerge here; the aim is to sketch a map of the problem, rather than to formulate final conclusions.

An analysis of social and cultural relations in the area of the Warmian dominium makes a good training ground for researchers of the discussed problem. The Diocese of Warmia stood out from the other two by its large size, its central location in the domains of the Teutonic Order, its degree of independence from the Order, and most of all by the fact that to a large extent its military potential was based on the indigenous people.² The proportion of Old Prussians among the inhabitants of

¹ EWALD, Albert L. *Die Eroberung Preußens durch die Deutschen*. Bd. 1–4. Halle, Saale, 1875–1886; ZAJĄCZKOWSKI, Stanisław. *Podbój Prus i ich kolonizacja przez Krzyżaków*. Toruń, 1935; JASAS, Rimantas. *Didysis prūsų sukilimas*. Vilnius, 1959; ПАШУТО, Владимир. Борьба прусского народа за независимость (до конца XIII в.). *История СССР*, 1958, № 6, с. 54–81; KWIATKOWSKI, Krzysztof. Die „Eroberung Preußens“ durch den Deutschen Orden – ihr Bild und ihre Wahrnehmung in der Literatur des Deutschen Ordens im 14. Jahrhundert. In *Kryžiaus karų epocha Baltijos regionu tautų istorinėje sąmonėje. Mokslinių straipsnių rinkinys*. Sud. Rita Regina TRIMONIENĖ, Robertas JURGAITIS. Šiauliai, 2007, p. 131–168.

² PTAK, Jan. Prusowie w siłach zbrojnych biskupstwa warmińskiego. *Roczniki Humanistyczne*, 1990, r. 38, z. 2, s. 7.

the Diocese of Warmia was 50%, and in the southern part it was up to 75%.³ At almost half the people conscripted into the army in Chełmno Land, the Old Prussians formed a majority in the army of the diocese, made up of landowners, as well as part of the army fielded by the cities of Warmia.⁴ The chronology of the issues discussed in the article goes from the 13th to the end of the 14th century.

The article uses mostly diplomatic (documentary) sources, texts of land endowments to Old Prussians published in the *Codex diplomaticus Warmiensis*⁵ (1231–1400), and in *Preußisches Urkundenbuch*. In the latter publication, the Treaty of Dzierzgoń (or Christburg) is of particular importance, since it is an agreement negotiated by a papal legate, Jacob of Leodium, between Old Prussian neophytes (of Pomezania, Warmia and Natangia) and the Teutonic Order from 17 February 1249.⁶ The importance of this document for understanding the dynamics of the social changes cannot be overestimated, and it seems that researchers have not so far made any serious attempts at its social interpretation.

Chronicae terrae Prussiae by Peter of Duisburg⁷ has also brought a lot to the issue. The work by the Teutonic chronicler is the fullest 'account' of events in the 13th century, as it was written soon after they happened, most likely in 1326. When writing his chronicle, the author to a large extent used oral accounts by people who had participated in these events (including, most likely, the indigenous people), and their descendants.

1. The Family: 'For or even Against'

The military activities of the Old Prussians played a key role in shaping the relations between the indigenous people and the landlords (the Order and the bishops) at the time of the conquest of the Old Prussian lands and the building of the territory of

³ RÖHRICH, Victor. Die Besiedlung des Ermlandes mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der Herkunft der Siedler. *Zeitschrift für die Geschichte und Altertumskunde Ermlands*, 1926, Bd. 22, S. 264.

⁴ PTAKE, Jan. *Wojskowość średniowiecznej Warmii*. Olsztyn, 1997, s. 95.

⁵ *Codex Diplomaticus Warmiensis oder Regesten und Urkunden zur Geschichte Ermlands* (hereafter, CDW). Bd. I: *Urkunden der Jahre 1231–1340*. Hrsg. von Carl P. WOELKY, Johann M. SAAGE. Mainz, 1860; Bd. II: *Urkunden der Jahre 1341–1375 nebst Nachträgen*. Mainz, 1864; Bd. III: *Urkunden der Jahre 1376–1424 nebst Nachträgen*. Hrsg. von Carl P. WOELKY. Braunsberg, 1874.

⁶ *Preußisches Urkundenbuch. Politische Abtheilung* (hereafter, PUB). Bd. I: *Die Bildung des Ordensstaats*, 1. Hälfte. Hrsg. von Rudolf PHILIPPI. Königsberg, 1882, S. 158–165, Nr. 218; ПАШУТО, Владимир. Христбургский (Кишпоркский) договор 1249 г. как исторический источник. *Проблемы историко-краеведения*, 1959, вып. 7, с. 357–390; DOBROSIELSKA, Alicja; RADZICKI, Bogdan. Die Prußen und der Konflikt des Universums in der Zeit der Eroberung. *Zeitschrift für Ostmitteleuropa-Forschung*, 2016, Bd. 65, Hf. 3, S. 321–344.

⁷ PETRUS de Duisburgk. *Chronica terrae Prussiae* (Monumenta Poloniae historica, nova series, t. XIII). Ed. Jan WENTA, Stanisław WYSZOMIRSKI. Cracoviae, 2007.

the Teutonic Order.⁸ Obviously, whether they were directed for or against the invaders was important. The Old Prussians proved their military abilities to the Teutonic Knights many times, by fighting both against them and on their side.⁹ That complex social and cultural situation has been widely discussed in other publications, and I would like only to refer to those previous findings here.¹⁰

A relatively frequent historiographic narration antagonising the Old Prussians and the Teutonic Order *in toto* does not absolutely reflect the complexity of the cultural situation in Prussia in the 13th century. While avoiding getting into detailed analyses, some key themes may be presented here: the increasing conflict between supporters of social change and conservatives;¹¹ the intensification of cultural contacts with the neighbouring Poles, Pomeranians and Normans on one side, and the Lithuanians on the other); the cultural 'affair' of some Old Prussians with Christianity (mostly Bishop Christian's activity). All this means that the cultural and political range of inhabitants of the Prussian lands does not form a single block in the 13th century that was used fully by the Teutonic Order.

The skilful use of the pressing social ambitions of various indigenous groups that broke up traditional family ties (a kind of Medieval conflict management) in a relatively short time made the new landlords a fundamental guarantee of the social order, to satisfy the basic social needs of security and significance. The whole process, which would naturally require wider discussion, had a certain result that is particularly interesting. It seems that the role of the family increased in Old Prussian society at the expense of other social relations, a result of the aforementioned cultural change.

It is worth remembering here a particular aspect of the story by Peter of Duisburg about how converted Old Prussians bonded (changed sides) with the Teutonic Knights. If the fact that the Teutonic chronicler pays attention mostly to so-called high-born ones (although not only), which is absolutely no surprise, is accepted, then

⁸ KWIATKOWSKI, Krzysztof. *Zakon niemiecki jako „corporatio militaris”*. Cz. I: *Korporacja i krąg przynależnych do niej. Kulturowe i społeczne podstawy działalności militarnej zakonu w Prusach (do początku XV wieku)*. Toruń, 2012, s. 366–397, 431–445; KWIATKOWSKI, Krzysztof. *Grundlagen des Militärdienstes im Deutschen Orden in Preußen (vom 13. bis Anfang des 15. Jahrhunderts)*. In *Beiträge zur Militärgeschichte des Preußenlandes von der Ordenszeit bis zum Zeitalter der Weltkriege* (Tagungsberichte der Historischen Kommission für ost- und westpreußische Landesforschung, Bd. 25). Hrsg. von Bernhart JÄHNIG. Marburg, 2010, S. 25–53; KWIATKOWSKI, Krzysztof. *Kulturelle Bedingungen der militärischen Aktivität im Spätmittelalter: der Fall des Preussen(landes) unter der Herrschaft des Deutschen Ordens (I)*. *Ordines Militares: Yearbook for the Study of the Military Orders*, 2013, Bd. 18, S. 105–180.

⁹ DOBROSIELSKA, Alicja. *Opór – oportunistyczny – współpraca. Prusowie wobec zakonu krzyżackiego w dobie podboju* (Monumenta Literaria Prussiae, Seria C: Monografie, nr. 7). Olsztyn, 2017, s. 61–86.

¹⁰ DOBROSIELSKA, Alicja. *Uwagi o współpracy Prusów z zakonem krzyżackim w dobie podboju (1230–1283)*. *Rocznik Działdowski*, 2014, t. 9, s. 81–99.

¹¹ DOBROSIELSKA, Alicja; RADZICKI, Bogdan. *Między Cholinun a Rzymem. Zmiana jako autopojeza systemu społecznego Prusów*. *Pruthenia. Pismo poświęcone Prusom i ludom bałtyjskim*, 2013, t. 8, s. 7–57.

the information that they often convert as whole families, not as single men, reveals the key question:

A lot of noble and significant men of Warmia, seeing that God fights on the brethren's side, repented, and with all their home and servants, moved to the brethren on Balga.¹² Similarly, Russigene the Yotvingian came to the commander of Balga wishing to participate in a Christian service, which was refused. As he learned the reason for the refusal, he was baptised with his family. Also, nobles from Skalowia, Surbantz, Swisdeta and Swedeta, converted to Christianity with all their families and servants, abandoning their hereditary demesnes.¹³

It should be noted that these were not houses or their representatives who came to the Order, but Old Prussian families (or the heads of those families first). Old Prussian families deciding to be baptised and converting to the side of the invaders might have resulted from the military roles they played in pagan times. Before the conquest, there were particular families and their neighbours in the territorial commonwealth that fought together (not the houses, which were scattered over various territorial units). A basic Old Prussian territorial unit was called a *pulka*, which corresponds to the Slavic *pułk*, a regiment in the army.¹⁴ It enjoyed great independence in the tribal structure. This is confirmed by the course of the fighting with the Order, when small lands led military action separately, and even decided to resume the war in spite of the tribe making peace.¹⁵

The aforementioned accounts of conversions (they are most likely interpretations of someone else's tales) may suggest some things that are necessary to an understanding of the dynamism of social and cultural change in Old Prussian society. Firstly, the fact that families entered 'the new world' individually indicates a deconstruction of the traditional system of social relations. This state can definitely be described as an anomy, which is characterised by the lack of a stable concept of social order, structures of social recognition, and the construction of the world of meanings. Insecurity, a lack of stable points of reference, entails social dissonance and confusion. The alternative 'new world', with its strong validation, should then be perceived as an attractive possibility, and migrating to it as a solution which is in the best interest; and here appears the question, who? An individual? A small family group? A house? A tribe? An analysis of the chronicle provides grounds to accept the hypothesis that conversion to Christianity was decided on by larger social structures, up to a tribal

¹² PETRUS de Dusburgk. Op. cit., Lib III, cap. 21.

¹³ Ibid., Lib III, cap. 188.

¹⁴ BIAŁUŃSKI, Grzegorz. *Cognati czy agnati? Przyczynek w sprawie rodu u pogańskich Prusów. Pruthenia. Pismo poświęcone Prusom i ludom bałtyjskim*, 2014, t. 9, s. 199.

¹⁵ DŁUGOKĘCKI, Wiesław. Prusy we wczesnym średniowieczu (IX–XIII wiek). In *Bruno z Kwerfurtu. Osoba – dzieło – epoka*. Red. Marian DYGO, Wojciech FAŁKOWSKI. Pułtusk, 2010, s. 22.

level, and it did not necessarily entail automatically becoming a supporter of the Order. However, the number of accounts showing the role of the family at the time of the conquest and consolidation of the Order's leadership should not go unheeded.

2. The New Law and the Fate of the Family

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In the domains of the Teutonic Order, only those who received endowments from new landlords were freemen with full rights and immovable land assets. Obtaining land privileges was particularly important to the indigenous people: now it was the Order and the bishops who decided on the social status of the indigenous people and their wealth. The new landlords confirmed demesnes, and bestowed new ones on the Old Prussians; and, what is crucial here, only land that was obtained in that way could be inherited and be passed on to descendants. A draft of a document written in the presence of witnesses was proof of obtaining the privilege. In it, not only were the size and the site of the land defined, but also the possibilities to use pastures, forests, lakes and rivers, and ore and minerals. Most of all, it included the rights and obligations of its recipient or recipients, including military obligations; fulfilling them was an indispensable condition of possessing land in the domains of the Teutonic Order. Out of a total of 307 donations in Warmia in the 13th and 14th centuries that have been preserved until today in which military obligations are mentioned, as many as 217 (71%) refer to Old Prussians. This includes almost 50 endowments to indigenous people as group recipients. They are closely related people (close family, relatives), usually fathers and sons, brothers, or uncles and nephews.

Regardless of the number of recipients of an endowment, the text usually includes a reference to family ties, either in the form of providing the name of the father of the recipient of the document¹⁶ or the name of the house-family.¹⁷ It can be assumed, aided by an analogy with ownership relations in Poland in the era of the Piast kings, that before the conquest, the lands of the Old Prussians were a house property, not an individual one, as we would understand it today. It was 'property of the common hand', which means that every member of the house community was the owner of all the land, even if he only used a plot of it.¹⁸ A neighbourhood community, which included particular families and neighbours, decided on the use of pastures, forests, lakes and rivers.¹⁹

¹⁶ Cf. 'Curthi, Symon frater suus et Tarpi': *CDW*, I, Nr. 62.

¹⁷ Cf. the Kirsini family: 'Doybe, Smyge, Sauge et Conradus dicti Kirsini': *CDW*, I, Nr. 64; SIKORSKI, Dariusz A. *Instytucje władzy u Prusów w średniowieczu (na tle struktury społecznej i terytorialnej)*. Olsztyn, 2010, s. 221–222.

¹⁸ WYROZUMSKI, Jerzy. *Dzieje Polski piastowskiej (VIII wiek–1370)*. Kraków, 1999, s. 50.

¹⁹ BIAŁUŃSKI, G. *Cognati czy agnati...*, s. 199.

Endowments to Old Prussians based on Prussian law (*ius hereditarium, ius Pruthenicum, ius hereditarium Pruthenicum*) and Kulm law (*ius culmiensis*) have been preserved for the time and area under discussion. German settlers in the domain of Warmia obtained endowments only according to Kulm law and Magdeburg law. As has already been mentioned, the beneficiary was obliged to provide military service to the donor. It is worth noting that the authorities also expected military service from Old Prussians who were not given land, unlike the case of incoming Germans.

Let us now take a closer look at the specificity of the endowments according to Kulm and Prussian law. Recipients of land according to Kulm law were granted larger lands than in the case of beneficiaries of Prussian law. They quite often had greater or lesser jurisdiction over the people on their land. They formed a social stratum of lieges (*feodales*).²⁰ They descended both from Old Prussians and Germans. Old Prussians who received endowments based on Kulm law, and through this were introduced to the stratum of knights (*Ritter, Erbarleute*), were called 'great freemen' (in German *Großes Freies*).²¹ The members of this group had a clear path to a career in the domains of the Teutonic Order. It is hard to estimate the number of indigenous people and their descendants in the stratum of lieges, since many of them had Christian names, the privileges seldom stressed that they were Old Prussians, and even more seldom that they were descendants of them, but we can still find examples.

What deserves attention here is the fact that Old Prussians were not only recipients of the oldest preserved endowments in Warmia according to Kulm law, from the first half of the 1280s, but also that these gifts were given to people who were related to each other. In 1282, an endowment in the field of Marim (Perwilty) was given to two brothers, Wargin and Napergannus,²² as to Poytun and his brother Sassin, but here together with Poytun's son, who was called Stygots, whose privilege included half the Marim field and the small field of Speriti.²³ In 1284, a donation of half the Baldingis field was given to Trumpe and his nephew, who was called Nassencepis (the Trąbki domain).²⁴ An endowment of Kiersiny and Posady, which was granted to the brothers Doybe, Smyge, Sauge and Conradus, called the Kirsini,²⁵ dates from the same year.

²⁰ ZDRÓJKOWSKI, Zbigniew. *Zarys dziejów prawa chełmińskiego 1233-1862*. Toruń, 1983, s. 19; РОГАЧЕВСКИЙ, Александр. *Кульмская грамота - памятник права Пруссии XIII в.* Санкт-Петербург, 2002; РОГАЧЕВСКИЙ, Александр. *Очерки по истории права Пруссии XIII-XVII вв. по материалам рукописных собраний Берлина и Санкт-Петербурга*. Санкт-Петербург, 2004, с. 58-92.

²¹ *Państwo zakonu krzyżackiego w Prusach. Władza i społeczeństwo*. Red. Marian BISKUP, Roman CZAJA. Warszawa, 2008, s. 177-230; BISKUP, Marian; LABUDA, Gerard. *Dzieje zakonu krzyżackiego w Prusach. Gospodarka - społeczeństwo - państwo - ideologia*. Gdańsk, 1988, s. 288-296, 303-321, 448-456.

²² CDW, I, Nr. 59.

²³ Ibid., I, Nr. 60.

²⁴ Ibid., I, Nr. 66.

²⁵ Ibid., I, Nr. 64.

The bestowed land could be inherited by legitimate successors. The Order introduced the possibility of inheritance by children of both sexes, and also by unmarried daughters, which was guaranteed by Kulm law. This was contradictory to the Old Prussian rules of inheritance of immovable goods after death that had been applied so far. It was noted in the Treaty of Dzierzgoń that previously it was only sons who could be heirs.²⁶

As for the military obligations of landowners according to Kulm law, the *Ritterdienst*, or horse-rider service with the appropriate weaponry, was most important. In order to perform it, the recipient of an endowment had to appear in person, or send a competent proxy every time when needed by the landlord. According to Kulm law, landowners of more than 40 łans had to perform heavy infantry service (armoured knight) with no fewer than three horses. The owners of smaller lands had to appear on the battlefield in light armour with one horse.²⁷ That was the resolution of Kulm law, and it was basically obeyed in the area under the Order. However, in Warmia, there was practically no heavy infantry service; there is only one known case.²⁸ This means that all the recipients of documents according to Kulm law were committed to light infantry service. Their participation in a quest undertaken by the knights outside the lands of the domains of the Teutonic Order was limited to a defined time. These conditions applied to all recipients of endowments according to Kulm law; there was no ethnic differentiation.

The Old Prussian endowments according to Kulm law were no different to those that were granted to German settlers with regard to their general conditions.²⁹ The indigenous people and their descendants who had received lands according to Kulm law were obliged, like other recipients of this law, to average one or two duties, both during the conquest and afterwards. Basically, this was an obligation independent of the amount of land possessed. The brothers Wargin and Napergannus, who were given an endowment in the field of Marim (Perwilty) in 1282, had to field one horse-riding service,³⁰ like Doybe, Smyge, Sauge and Conradus, called the Kirsini, the recipients of the endowment of Kiersiny and Posady.³¹ The remaining horse-riding services in land bestowed according to Kulm law are exceptional: for example, from 35 łans in Worłaky, four services were appointed;³² similar to the 130 łans obtained in 1359 by four brothers, members of the Old Prussian family of Tungen.³³

²⁶ *PUB*, Bd. I, 1. Hälfte, S. 158–165, Nr. 218.

²⁷ LUCIŃSKI, Jerzy. Przywilej chełmiński z 1233 r., jego treść oraz dzieje jego postanowień. In *Studia Culmensia Historico-Juridica czyli Księga pamiątkowa 750-lecia prawa chełmińskiego*. T. 1. Red. Zbigniew ZDRÓJKOWSKI. Toruń, 1990, s. 84–85.

²⁸ *CDW*, III, Nr. 175; PTAK, J. Prusowie..., s. 14.

²⁹ POLLAKÓWNA, Marzena. *Osadnictwo Warmii w okresie krzyżackim*. Poznań, 1953, s. 70–71.

³⁰ *CDW*, I, Nr. 59.

³¹ *Ibid.*, I, Nr. 64.

³² *Ibid.*, II, Nr. 5.

³³ *Ibid.*, II, Nr. 290.

It was also required for the recipients of endowments according to Kulm law to participate in building new fortifications and repairing old ones (*municiones nouas construedas et antiquas reparandas*,³⁴ *nouarum municionum construcciones, veterum reparaciones, indaginum secciones et emendaciones*). They also had to pay a special fee to maintain guards on the borders of the diocese (*custudiales*),³⁵ and a tribute in grain (*Pflugkorn*) for the diocese of Warmia.³⁶

A recognition rent was an additional common obligation of these landowners. It was paid in wax and money, and amounted to one pound of wax and one Cologne denarius. Paying it meant recognition by the authorities. The amount of rent was connected with the amount of horse-riding duties to which the beneficiary of Kulm law was committed. If the land was charged with two duties, the amount of rent usually also doubled, and was two talents of wax and two denarii (*duo talenta cere et duos denarios Colonienses, uel eorum valorem*).³⁷

From the Old Prussian point of view, Prussian law was as important as Kulm law. It was described in sources as Prussian law (*ius Pruthenicum*), or hereditary Prussian law (*ius hereditarium Pruthenicum*). The second name indicates a crucial value of that legislation: the regulation of hereditary rules. The law was not written in the same form as Kulm law. The Treaty of Dzierzgoń is accepted as its foundation, and its detailed regulations could be found in land endowments. Lands were given according to this law mostly to indigenous people (although there are cases of endowments to Lithuanians and Poles³⁸). The recipients of these gifts are described in sources as 'small freemen' (in Prussian *tallokinikis*, in German *kleine Freie, gemeine Freie*)³⁹.

What is interesting is the large amount of land bestowed according to Prussian law in Warmia at the time of the conquest, as well as its collective and relative recipients. In 1261, four Old Prussians, the brothers Szinten, Pisz, Pogononie and Azorwirt (*Assorwirt*), received an endowment of 40 łans where the River Drwęca flows into the River Pasłęka.⁴⁰ However, a group of recipients receiving a land privilege did not necessarily mean common management. Szinten and Pisz were given 20 łans on one side of the river, and the two other brothers the same amount on the opposite side.⁴¹ Also, the brothers Curthi, Tarpi and Symon were given altogether 50 łans

³⁴ Ibid., II, Nr. 82.

³⁵ POSCHMANN, Brigitte. Bistümer und Deutscher Orden in Preußen, 1243–1525. Untersuchung zur Verfassung- und Verwaltungsgeschichte des Ordenslandes. *Zeitschrift für die Geschichte und Altertumskunde Ermlands*, 1962, Bd. 30, Hf. 2, S. 279.

³⁶ BISKUP, M.; LABUDA, G. Op. cit., s. 299, przyp. 41.

³⁷ CDW, I, Nr. 89. Cf. Ibid., Nr. 71, 85, 96, 166; II, Nr. 295.

³⁸ CDW, I, Nr. 208.

³⁹ WEBER, Lotar. *Preussen vor 500 Jahren in culturhistorischer, statistischer und militarischer Beziehung nebst Special-Geographie*. Danzig, 1878, S. 291.

⁴⁰ CDW, I, Nr. 42.

⁴¹ Ibid.

on the fields of Bogathenis of Kercus (Bogatyńskie and Krzykały). Two were given 30 łans, and Tarpi was given 20 łans.⁴² Henryk, the Bishop of Warmia, moved most of the land owned by one of the brothers, Curthi, to Kulm law, in recognition of his merits in defending the Christian faith.⁴³ This indicates the possibility of changing from Prussian law to the more favourable Kulm law, and the simultaneous possession of land by the family according to both laws.

In the later period, the 14th century, endowments according to Prussian law were much smaller, usually two to six łans, or the same amount of aratra,⁴⁴ although there are endowments of eight or ten to 15 łans,⁴⁵ or 20 to 24 łans.⁴⁶ They often had collective recipients. These were often people who were related to each other in various degrees, usually brothers, for example Gunthero Sambe and Johann,⁴⁷ brothers and their descendants, as Sande and Gunto together with Premoke, Winico and Tuorine,⁴⁸ or an uncle and his nephew, such as Thoranis and Hanconi.⁴⁹ The endowments received by Old Prussians, including collective ones, were often situated next to each other, forming settlements. The largest objects of this kind in Warmia included (17 farms and 17 military services), Bartązek (16 farms and 16 military services), Jedzbark (nine farms and 11 military services), Swobodna (eight farms and eight military services).⁵⁰

Similarly, as in the case of Kulm law, lands obtained according to Prussian law were hereditary. Prussian law was equally favourable in that respect, at least at the beginning of the building of the territory of the Teutonic Order. In this case, heirs extended to unmarried daughters. In the Treaty of Dzierzgoń, it was written: 'If someone departs this world having a son or a daughter that has not yet been married, or both, they will inherit after him. If he has neither a son nor a daughter, but still has a father and a mother, they will inherit after their dead son. If he has neither a son nor a daughter, nor a father nor a mother, but his son's son is alive, he will inherit after his grandfather. Then, if he does not have any of the mentioned descendants, but he has a brother, the brother will inherit after him. If the brother, dying before, leaves a son, the son is to inherit after his dead uncle.'⁵¹

Despite allowing unmarried daughters to inherit, the Treaty of Dierzgoń also limited the range of heirs to close family, or alternatively the closest relatives. Previous inheritance

⁴² Ibid., I, Nr. 62.

⁴³ Ibid., I, Nr. 77.

⁴⁴ POLLAKÓWNA, Marzena. Zanik ludności pruskiej. In *Szkice z dziejów Pomorza*. T. 1. Red. Gerhard LABUDA. Warszawa, 1958, s. 180.

⁴⁵ Cf. *CDW*, II, Nr. 111, 112, 151; III, Nr. 249, 18, 252.

⁴⁶ Cf. *CDW*, II, Nr. 347, 304.

⁴⁷ Ibid., II, Nr. 251.

⁴⁸ Ibid., II, Nr. 304.

⁴⁹ Ibid., II, Nr. 338.

⁵⁰ PTAK, J. *Wojskowość...*, s. 27–28.

⁵¹ *PUB*, Bd. I, 1. Hälfte, S. 158–165, Nr. 218.

entitlements included a much wider range of kin (much more distant family). In pagan times, land inheritance did not include only close family (in a line according to the proximity of the relation).⁵² Family authority over the land was visibly strengthened. The social role of the family was reinforced at the expense of other social relations.

The possibility to inherit lands bestowed on Old Prussians by the new lords in the event of no legal heirs was also an important issue. If there were no close relatives, described in detail in the Treaty of Dzierżoń, the lands of the Old Prussians went to the Order. As it is written: 'Those neophytes agreed in the presence of one and others mentioned before that if one of them or their descendants dies and does not leave any offspring belonging to any of the heirs mentioned before, then all their immovables will be transferred to the master of the mentioned brethren, their order and other lords, under whom those neophytes remain, as well as movables, unless the neophytes decide upon it in any other way during their life or when facing death.' In Warmia, in the event of no legal male descendants, Old Prussian lands were transferred to the bishop or the chapter of Warmia, depending on their situation. Thus, the new landlords released Old Prussian families from their collective house relations, setting out new rules of inheritance and limiting the range of kin according to canon law.⁵³ There is no information in written sources about what happened to property in the event of there being no male descendant among Old Prussians during pagan times.⁵⁴ However, it can be speculated that it became the property of the whole group of kin, or the relatives had the right of pre-emption according to proximity law (*ius proximitatis*), as for their Polish neighbours in the Piast era.⁵⁵ In the domains of the Teutonic Order, the possible agreement of all relatives with the right to inherit to alienate land belonging to the family was not necessary.

Most likely, the resolutions of the Treaty of Dzierżoń were not kept up in all the territory under the Order's rule, as the Old Prussians organised an uprising in 1260–1274.⁵⁶ According to Reinhard Wenskus' findings, the treaty was obeyed in Pomezania,⁵⁷ and possibly in Warmia. According to customary Old Prussian law, noted down in the 14th century, called Pomezania law (*Iura Prutenorum*), inheritance by both sexes was dropped. The widow and unmarried sisters could manage

⁵² MODZELEWSKI, Karol. Liber homo sub tutela nobilis. In *Kościół, kultura, społeczeństwo. Studia z dziejów średniowiecza i czasów nowożytnych*. Red. Stanisław BYLINA, Ryszard KIERSNOWSKI, Stefan K. KUCZYŃSKI, Warszawa, 2000, s. 302–303, 307–308.

⁵³ BIAŁUŃSKI, G. *Cognati czy agnati...*, s. 199–200.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ ŁOWMIAŃSKI, Henryk. *Studia nad dziejami Wielkiego Księstwa Litewskiego*. Poznań, 1983, s. 235–236; BIAŁUŃSKI, G. *Cognati czy agnati...*, s. 193.

⁵⁶ *PUB*, Bd. I, 2. Hälfte. Hrsg. von August SERAPHIM. Königsberg, 1909, S. 157–159, Nr. 204.

⁵⁷ WENSKUS, Reinhard. Über die Bedeutung des Christburger Vertrages für die Rechts- und Verfassungsgeschichte des Preußenlandes. In WENSKUS, Reinhard. *Ausgewählte Aufsätze zum frühen und preußischen Mittelalter*. Hrsg. von Hans PATZE. Sigmaringen, 1986, S. 391–412.

the land during their lifetime.⁵⁸ In Warmia, land inheritance bestowed according to Prussian law was limited only to male heirs, although the bishop sometimes allowed descendants of both sexes (*utriusque sexus*) to inherit land.⁵⁹

The recipients of endowments according to Prussian law, in spite of having much smaller lands, less favourable conditions for inheritance and judicatory entitlements, had higher or equal military obligations to those who owned land according to Kulm law. They were also obliged to pay tribute and recognition rent, and to participate in building new fortifications and repairing old ones.

Old Prussian settlements were often equal to those of Kulm law, but altogether, their inhabitants had to perform several times more military service. It is particularly worth noting the large amount of horse riders they were obliged to field. Regardless of whether the land was two aratra,⁶⁰ three aratra,⁶¹ three łans,⁶² eight łans,⁶³ or 15 łans,⁶⁴ their owners were obliged to provide one horse-riding service. Contrary to the owners according to Kulm law, the service of 'small freemen' was not limited in time and territory. They could also be obliged to serve outside the borders of the Diocese of Warmia, or even outside the lands of the Order.⁶⁵ In cases of collective endowment recipients, the principals did not define which one of them had to perform the duty.

3. *Equites Prutheni*

There was a separate category of Prussian people, called Prussian riders (*equites Prutheni*), among the recipients of endowments according to Prussian law in the Diocese of Warmia.⁶⁶ The notion appears in a text written in the 1340s,⁶⁷ and refers only to the indigenous people. Joining that group was promotion for subjected people. *Equites* had special rights, and were mostly obliged to do military service. It is most likely that they lived with their families in places where villages were located or planned according to Kulm law.⁶⁸

⁵⁸ *Iura Prutenorum* (Towarzystwo naukowe w Toruniu, Fontes, 53). Wyd., tłum. Józef MATUSZEWSKI. Toruń, 1963, cap. 36, 75.

⁵⁹ *CDW*, II, Nr. 107.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, I, Nr. 184.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, II, Nr. 275.

⁶² *Ibid.*, II, Nr. 185.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, II, Nr. 14.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, II, Nr. 308.

⁶⁵ PTAK, J. *Prusowie...*, s. 8.

⁶⁶ *CDW*, II, Nr. 138, 139, 159, 198, 280, 318, 383; III, Nr. 58, 60.

⁶⁷ PTAK, J. *Wojskowość ...*, s. 31.

⁶⁸ WUNDER, Heide. Struktura społeczna Zakonu Krzyżackiego i ludności państwa zakonnego w Prusach. In *Rola Zakonu Krzyżackiego w podręcznikach szkolnych Republiki Federalnej Niemiec i Polskiej Rzeczpospolitej*

Old Prussians in that group were given collective land endowments as men of kin: brothers, uncles' sons, fathers with sons, uncles and nephews, grandparents with grandsons; for example, Nadrawen, Astioten and Nakaipen,⁶⁹ Tungen and his son Maches,⁷⁰ Sanglaw and his uncle Bandeko.⁷¹ The recipients of endowments to *equites* sometimes also included members adopted by families, stepsons, for example, Treno and his stepson Albert.⁷² There are also examples of privileges obtained by the father-in-law and a son-in-law, for example, Nodops and his son-in-law Merun.⁷³ Endowments to that group often contained an entry on the integrity of the land or possible reimbursement in the form of land of equal size or greater.⁷⁴ Riders in Warmia were also given a guarantee that when a village was located in their territory according to Kulm law, they would become its inhabitants, retaining their possessions and rights.⁷⁵

As far as possession of land was concerned, the situation of that group was only a little different from the situation of Old Prussian peasants. They had small parcels of land of several łans, mostly bestowed according to Prussian law. However, *equites Prutheni* were freed from peasants' burdens, material provisions, and work. They were not limited in the right to move, and could bear arms. As for jurisdiction, they were not subject to the *schultheiß*, but only to people who managed military issues: the chapter or diocese *vogt*. As these posts were also often held by indigenous people, they were directly accountable to 'their own people'.

It was crucial that the families of *equites* lived close to each other, and that out of their small farms of two or four łans, they were obliged to provide one horse-riding duty, like the owners of large land areas bestowed according to Kulm law.⁷⁶ It is most likely that *equites Prutheni* had the possibility to win additional resources as mercenary warriors. As sources show, the owners of lands bestowed according to Kulm law did not have to perform military service in person. They could field other armed people in their place.⁷⁷ If land bestowed according to Kulm law bore the obligation of fielding several horse-riding services, even if the owner took part in person, he always had to be accompanied by other armed men. We can stipulate here that in such a situation, apart from the rest of the family, duties could be performed by people hired for money, including *equites Prutheni*.⁷⁸

Ludowej. Red. Marian BISKUP. Wrocław, Warszawa, Kraków, 1976, s. 20–21; POLLAKÓWNA, M. *Osadnictwo...*, s. 54–69; PTAK, J. *Wojskowość...*, s. 31–32.

⁶⁹ CDW, II, Nr. 44.

⁷⁰ Ibid., I, Nr. 287.

⁷¹ Ibid., II, Nr. 64.

⁷² Ibid., II, Nr. 372.

⁷³ Ibid., I, Nr. 226.

⁷⁴ Ibid., II, Nr. 45.

⁷⁵ Ibid., II, Nr. 198.

⁷⁶ POLLAKÓWNA, M. *Osadnictwo...*, s. 63.

⁷⁷ CDW, II, Nr. 199: 'debeant [...] per se uel per alium [...] deseruire'.

⁷⁸ PTAK, J. *Prusowie...*, s. 14.

Notions on Prussian riders in sources appear in the context of the intensive colonisation of the southeastern part of the diocese (the 1340s and 1350s) and the dangers from the Lithuanians. Thus, the literature on the subject connects the formation and operation of *equites Prutheni* with the need to provide sufficient military powers to the diocese.⁷⁹ In the opinion of the landlords, the indigenous people were particularly predisposed towards military service (*more equitum comunium pruthenorum*).⁸⁰ At the same time, *equites* were often perceived as a manifestation of Old Prussian conservatism and settlement continuum.⁸¹ It is difficult to answer the question, whether, by forming the group of Prussian riders, the landlords referred directly to the system of management and defence that functioned in the Old Prussian lands before the conquest. It seems that in the 1340s, changes in the social and economic system of the domains of the Teutonic Order were quite advanced when compared to the situation before the conquest. Nevertheless, descendants of the Old Prussians in the second and third generation who lived in villages located according to Kulm law or in areas where they would be located used the chance to improve the economic situation and social position of their families as *equites Prutheni*.

4. Old Prussians and their Descendants in the Military Leadership and the New Administration

For Old Prussians, obtaining gifts of land made it possible for them and their descendants to join the knighthood, and hold various offices in the domains of the Teutonic Order, including those connected with military activities. The new landlords guaranteed the indigenous people the right to join the knighthood as early as the Treaty of Dzierzgoń, which wrote that those who originated in the stratum of the high born and were legitimate children could apply to join the knighthood (*Et quod illi ex ipsis neophitis qui sunt vel erunt ex nobilii prosapia procreatii, accingi possunt cingulo militarii*).⁸² They had to show bravery in battle. Chronicles provide numerous examples of Old Prussians participating in raids on Lithuania.⁸³ The ceremony of knighting was a popular event concluding almost every raid.⁸⁴ It was most likely for merit in fighting the Lithuanians that Nadraw, the owner of Trękus, was knighted.⁸⁵ Knights

⁷⁹ PTAK, J. *Wojskowość...*, s. 31–32.

⁸⁰ *CDW*, II, Nr. 138.

⁸¹ ŁOWMIAŃSKI, H. *Op. cit.*, s. 180; POLLAKÓWNA, M. *Osadnictwo...*, s. 56–63.

⁸² *PUB*, Bd. I, 1. Hälfte, S. 158–165, Nr. 218.

⁸³ PREKOP, Dariusz. *Wojna zakonu krzyżackiego z Litwą w latach 1283–1325*. Bydgoszcz, 2004, s. 57–58, 101, 127–128, 152.

⁸⁴ WIGAND von Marburg. *Chronik*. In *Scriptores rerum Prussicarum*. Bd. 2. Hrsg. von Theodor HIRSCH, Max TOEPPEN, Ernst STREHLKE. Leipzig, 1863, S. 600: '*et tandem repatriant, novemque ibidem faciunt milites honore dignos*'.

⁸⁵ RÖHRICH, Victor. *Geschichte des Fürstbistums Ermland*. Braunsberg, 1925, S. 210.

could use the title of *milites*. This was an honorary distinction of much importance in Medieval society. According to the rules of courtly life in Lidzbark Warmiński, *milites* sat together with the bishop at meals at the most prestigious top table; '*omnes phoedales*' took their places at the second table.⁸⁶ This title was something to take pride in, for example, for the Old Prussian called Merun, who had his land in Maruny.⁸⁷

The *vogt* of the Diocese was the highest lay office in the Diocese of Warmia, and the whole army answered to him. The Old Prussian called Brulando was the first documented diocese *vogt* (1280). The office was also held by Rapoto (1287), and later by Otto von Russen (1305-1313), who descended from Old Prussians.⁸⁸ The last was Juncer's son, an Old Prussian who probably received his land quite early, in 1288, like his son for renewal of a lost privilege.⁸⁹ A burgrave, the manager and commander of a castle, was another office that was held by Old Prussians. At the same time, it happened that burgraves were army commanders, in particular of territorial units. In the chapter castle of Olsztyn, the position of burgrave was held by Mikołaj Kunras de Kyrpeyn, who descended from Old Prussians. In 1375, he was given ten łans near Olsztyn, according to Prussian law, most likely as recognition of services he performed.

Conclusions

It often happens that what is wrong in one situation is the perfect choice in another. It seems that this was the situation in Old Prussian lands in the 13th and 14th centuries. It is obvious that the Old Prussians who fought against the Teutonic Order and its supporters at the time of the conquest lost, but their military potential, like that of who changed side, was used to build and reinforce the Order's rule.

The only way to be free and possess land that could be passed to offspring was to get an endowment from the new landlords. Land endowments based on Kulm law were more favourable, but at least in the 13th century Prussian law was not much worse. The indigenous people were often given collective, group endowments. These were received by family members: usually fathers and son or brother. Endowments to more distant relatives, such as uncles and nephews, are less frequent (single endowments). The issue of collective land inheritance requires separate research; however, the rule of the family over the land was reinforced significantly. New landlords freed

⁸⁶ PTAK, J. *Wojskowość...*, s. 24.

⁸⁷ *CDW*, III, Nr. 25.

⁸⁸ PTAK, J. *Wojskowość...*, s. 95; BIAŁUŃSKI, Grzegorz. Uwagi o karierze Prusów w państwie krzyżackim. *Studia z dziejów średniowiecza*, 2015, nr. 19, s. 21.

⁸⁹ POLLAKÓWNA, M. *Osadnictwo...*, s. 71.

Prussian families from collective kinship ties, setting up new rules of inheritance and limiting the range of heirs according to canon law.

A group of related people holding one endowment did not necessarily mean common land management. It happened that landlords divided the land between the recipients of the privilege, marking clearly how much was given to each of them. What also always connects recipients of the endowment were military obligations. This is particularly visible in the case of Old Prussian warriors, called *equites Prutheni*. Their main duty was military service, not limited in time or area, which was different to the knights' duty. They had small land endowments for families, usually situated close to each other.

Small areas of land that were bestowed on Old Prussians, when compared to German settlers, probably did not result from their weaker managing abilities, but from the need to develop the military potential of the diocese. The landlords needed military support from the Old Prussians at the time of the conquest, and later during their struggles with the Lithuanians. It is possible to find examples of Old Prussians not only fighting at the Order's side (knights, small freemen, *equites Prutheni*), but also managing the army of the diocese as *vogts* of the diocese.

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„GALIMYBĖ ŠEIMAI“ – SENŲJŲ PRŪSŲ KARINĖ PRIEVOLĖ VARMIJOJE ŠEIMŲ RYŠIŲ KONTEKSTE XIII–XIV AMŽIAIS

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Santrauka

Pasitelkus istorijos šaltinius ir istoriografiją, straipsnyje nagrinėjamas senprūsių karinio įsipareigojimo Vokiečių ordino užkariautoje Varmijos žemėje (Varmijos vyskupijos ribose) klausimas. Šio klausimo sprendimas sietinas su vietos prūsų šeimų ryšiais su Vokiečių ordino struktūromis XIII–XIV a. Vokiečių ordinui vykdam Prūsijos užkariavimą, taip pat steigiant savo valdžios struktūras Prūsijoje, karinis bendradarbiavimas ir kiti kariniai veiksmai buvo pagrindiniai santykiai tarp vietinių žmonių ir naujųjų valdovų. Straipsnyje pristatomas tyrimas rodo, kad Varmijos vyskupijos karinio potencialo pagrindą sudarė daugiausia vietos kilmės gyventojai. Senprūsiai ar / ir jų palikuonys sudarė beveik pusę iš žemės savininkų sudarytos Varmijos vyskupų kariuomenės: viena jų dalis atvykdavusi į kariuomenę iš kaimų / gyvenviečių, turėjusių Kulmo ir Prūsų teises, o kita dalis buvo surenkama iš Varmijos vyskupijos savivaldžių miestų, turėjusių magdeburginių miestų Kulmo teisės atmainą. Pabrėžtina, kad Varmijos vyskupija iš kitų Prūsijoje įsteigtų vyskupijų išsiskyrė dydžiu, savo pozicija Vokiečių ordino valdose, savarankiškumu nuo Ordino ir tuo, kad jos karinis potencialas didžiąja dalimi buvo grindžiamas vietos žmonėmis. Tyrimėtojų skaičiavimai rodo, kad senųjų prūsų gyventojų Varmijos vyskupijoje buvo 50 proc. visos populiacijos, o pietinėje dalyje beveik 75 proc.

Prasidėjus Prūsijos užkariavimui ir įsitvirtinus Vokiečių ordino valdžiai Prūsijoje, vienintelis būdas, suteikiantis galimybę vietos diduomenei ir kitiems prūsams disponuoti laisve bei turėti žemės, kurią vėliau būtų galima perduoti palikuonims, buvo iš naujųjų valdovų gaunama sankcija / privilegija, paprastai siejama su karine tarnyba Vokiečių ordinui. Už atliekamą karinę tarnybą vietiniai žmonės gavo teisę paveldėti ir disponuoti turėtomis ar naujai įgytomis žemėmis bei laisvėmis, remiantis Kulmo teise ir Prūsijos įstatymais. Seniausios tokio pobūdžio privilegijos, kuriose aptariamos Kulmo teisės vietiniams gyventojams, žinomos iš XIII a. 8-ojo dešimtmečio. Vėliau senieji prūsai taip pat pagal Kulmo teisę gaudavo valdyti žemės sklypus, dažniausiai be teisės šią žemę paveldėti, mainais už tai turėdami atlikti karinę tarnybą Vokiečių ordino kariuomenėje ir vykdyti kitus, dažniausiai gerokai didesnius, karinės prievolės įsipareigojimus. Iš 307 žinomų apdovanojimų, užrašytų XIII ir XIV a. Varmijoje, kuriuose paminėti kariniai įsipareigojimai, 217 (71 proc.) buvo skirti senprūsams. Pabrėžtina, kad daugeliu atvejų vietiniai gyventojai gavo grupinį žemių dovanojimą pagal Kulmo ir Prūsijos įstatymus. Tokios žemės buvo suteikiamos vyriškosios lyties šeimoms nariams: dažniausiai tėvui ir sūnams, broliams, bet pasitaikydavę atvejų, kai žemės buvo suteikiamos ir kitiems giminaičiams – dėdėms ir sūnėnams bei moteriškosios lyties atstovėms. Žmonių grupėms suteikiamos privilegijos nereiškė bendro žemės valdymo, nes konkrečios žemės būdavo išdalijamos tarp konkrečių gavėjų šeimų, žemių ribas ar jų pobūdį nurodant konkrečioje privilegijoje. Visas gavėjų šeimas, be santuokos bei kitų šeimyninių ryšių ir bendros dovanojimo privilegijos, siejo kariniai įsipareigojimai Vokiečių ordinui. Pagal Prūsijos įstatymus, iš grupinio dovanojimo gavėjų Varmijos vyskupijoje buvo išskirta senųjų prūsų kilmingųjų kategorija, turinti tam tikras specialias teises ir karinius įsipareigojimus Vokiečių ordinui. Tokia išskirtųjų prūsų kategorija vadinosi prūsų raiteliais (lot. *equites Prutheni*), kilimo iš senosios prūsų bendruomenės, gyvenę kaimiškose apylinkėse pagal Kulmo teisę. Jie atliko raitelio funkciją Vokiečių ordino kariuomenėje. Taip pat buvo reikalaujama, kad pagal Kulmo įstatymą žemių gavėjai, neįeinantys į *equites Prutheni* kategoriją, dalyvautų statant naujus įtvirtinimus ir remontuojant senuosius. Jie taip pat turėjo mokėti specialų mokestį už sargybinių išlaikymą (išstatymą) vyskupijoje ir pristatyti duoklę grūdais Varmijos vyskupui.

Maži žemės sklypai, kuriuos senprūsiai gaudavo kartu su sunkia karinės prievolės našta, reikė ne mažesnio ekonominio potencialo galimybes vietos gyventojams, palyginti su atvykėliais iš Vokietijos įvairių sričių, gaudavusiais kur kas didesnius žemės sklypus, bet jų prievolę vykdyti karinę tarnybą ir jų polinkį karybai. Nauji valdovai reikalavo vietinių gyventojų karinės paramos ne tik užkariaujant Prūsiją, bet ir XIII a. antrojoje pusėje prasidėjus kovoms su lietuviais. Varmijos šiaurės rytų dalyje intensyvus kolonizavimas prasidėjo ne anksčiau kaip XIV a. 4-ajame dešimtmetyje, o ekonominę plėtrą šioje vyskupijos dalyje lydėjo tuo pačiu metu plėtojamas karinis potencialas – maždaug tuo laiku ir buvo suformuota *equites Prutheni* grupė.

Žemės dovanojimas seniesiems prūsams atvėrė galimybę jiems ir jų palikuonims kreiptis dėl riterio diržo, t. y. tapti riteriais, užimti oficialias tarnybas Vokiečių ordino valdų Prūsijoje administracijoje, įskaitant tarnybas, tiesiogiai susijusias su karine veikla. XIII a., taip pat ir XIV a., vietinių prūsų galima rasti tarp *militēs*, miestų ir kaimiškųjų vietovių tarėjų bei kitų svarbiausių pareigūnų, o tarp jų ir atsakingų už vyskupo teritorijos gynybą – Varmijos vyskupo fogtų.