



THE TEUTONIC MANOR IN BENOWO (POLAND), ITS ORIGIN, HISTORY AND SIGNIFICANCE IN THE LIGHT OF HISTORICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT: This paper deals with the history of the former Teutonic manor in Benowo (German name: Bönhof) in relation to its spatial arrangement. The first part presents the source historical messages relating to this place and an attempt is made to read them again based on the relevant available research by historians and archaeologists regarding the beginnings of the activity of the Teutonic Order in the Prussian land. The available archival cartography concerning the location of the manor house is also described. The following section presents new findings related to the use of modern land registration techniques - aerial and satellite photos and LIDAR airborne laser scanning. The result of the research is the indication of the character and shape of the buildings and the exact location of some of the objects included in the farm buildings, as well as the formulation of a hypothesis regarding the land forms existing in their immediate vicinity.

KEY WORDS: Benowo, analysis, Teutonic, manor

1. Introduction

The direct reason for taking up the subject of the former Teutonic court in Benowo (Bönhof) were the observations made with the use of contemporary techniques of land registration - aerial and satellite photos and LIDAR airborne laser scanning. The image of the location of the site of the former Teutonic mansion obtained with their help brought many hitherto unknown observations enabling the architectural analysis of the spatial shape of this complex, as well as the re-interpretation of the already known historical records about it.

The issue of the Benowo manor farm has already been historically preliminarily developed, and the content in this field presented in this article is largely based on existing studies. This text attempts to show the history of the place and the traces of buildings found on it in the context of the history of the region and location. Some publications on this subject, e.g. F.W.F. Schmitt or B. Schmid are over a hundred years old. Many of the facts presented in them remain valid to this day, but it should be borne in mind that the authors of these works did not have the technology that became crucial for finding material traces of what they attempted to describe. Due to the controversies appearing in the publications of historiographers and interpretations that are doubtful from today's perspective, it was also necessary to refer to the content of medieval sources of the Teutonic Knights, known from scripts prepared in the 19th and 20th centuries, such as: *Das Marienburger Ämterbuch*, *Das Marienburger Tresslerbuch der Jahre 1399-1409*, *Das Ausgabebuch des Marienburger Hauskomturs für die Jahre 1410-1420*, as well as copies of Teutonic acts contained in *Preussisches Urkundenbuch*.

The work also refers to the current state of archaeological research, which does not go beyond the initial field exploration. The available historical cartographic materials from the 16th century to the beginning of the 20th century were also analyzed.

A more accurate exploration of the area of the former Teutonic farm in Benowo will certainly bring much more information that will enrich the knowledge not only about the manor complex itself. They are also important in the history of the formation of the Teutonic commandries and their administration in the Prussian land, as well as the functioning of the Teutonic State, also at its early stage.

2. Historical background - Prussian, Teutonic, Polish and German settlements

The vicinity of Benowo has certainly been a place of numerous human settlements since prehistoric times. This is indicated by numerous settlement traces scattered around the village, as well as settlements located in places convenient in terms of defense. From time immemorial, the lands east of the Osa, Vistula and Nogat rivers have been inhabited by Baltic tribes, especially the Old Prussians (Prusai). The region between these three watercourses was called Pomesania, and this name, derived from the reconstructed Prussian word **Pomedjan*, meant a wooded country.

Pomezania, similarly to the neighboring Prussian lands: Pomezania, Sasinia, Galindia, Barcja, Warmia and others, stretching further east to the area of Yotvingia, was marked in the past by numerous strongholds. Many of them have been preserved to this day due to their inaccessible

location and durable architectural forms. Earth embankments forming a closed ring with a projection resembling a polygon with rounded tops, or a regular circle or oval (see gords in Tolkmicko, Stary Dzierzgoń, Mysłęcín, Weklice) or - in the case of promontory settlements - a rampart protecting the access to the inhabited part surrounded on other sides by a natural barrier - a river valley or lake water (see gords in Elbląg-Drewnik, Siwiałka) is a very characteristic spatial element of a Prussian gord (Burgwall), visible to this day in the topography of the region. Due to the lack of a historical legacy that could have been left by the Old Prussians civilization that was once present here, they now, thanks to their material culture, complement the knowledge derived from scarce, mostly Teutonic, written sources. These gords indicate the spread of the Prussian culture, as well as its penetration and merging with the culture of other Baltic peoples.

Since the mission of St. Wojciech (Adalbert) at the turn of the 11th century, the lands of Eastern Pomerania and Prussia became an area of Christianization activity. Eastern Pomerania (Pomerelia) was under the rule of the Pomeranian dukes, who generously supported the development of the Catholic Church in their lands. Thanks to the significant endowments made by the Pomeranian dukes Sobiesław and Sambor the First for the benefit of the Cistercians, a convent in Oliwa (Oliva) was founded in 1186. In contrast to Pomerania, the Prussian lands since the martyrdom of Bishop Wojciech had been a bastion of resistance against the new religion, and the Old Prussians successfully avoided both accepting Christianity and submitting to the suzerainty of the feudal lords.

It was not until the beginning of the thirteenth century that historiography reported the first successes in the field of Christianization of the Prussian tribes. Christian, who came from the Cistercian Order, was appointed a missionary bishop by the Holy See in 1216, and in 1218 he was titled Bishop of Prussia. Probably, this term indicating the territory was not yet synonymous with the precisely defined boundaries of the bishop's jurisdiction. For all the time, Prussia remained an area where the power of Christian origin was not established, and the native inhabitants of these lands hiding in the backwoods plundered the newcomers. Christian was therefore installed in his missionary diocese, whose seat was in Zantyr, near today's Benowo.

We learn about Zantyr as the capital of the diocese and the location of the cathedral from a document dated April 11, 1240, containing the purview of Bishop Christian's complaint to Pope Gregory IX against the Teutonic Knights, who, after imprisoning the bishop by the Old Prussians, took over his former seat by force. As a result of the takeover, the Zantyr became the location of the new Teutonic commandry. The appearance of the knights of the Order of the Blessed Virgin Mary of the German House in the lands of Pomezania was undoubtedly a breakthrough event in the history of the region, translating into many far-reaching changes in its political relations with neighboring lands. From then on, the future State of the Teutonic Knights began to form, covering the conquered Prussian lands.

In the second half of the 13th century, a division was formed between the Dzierzgoń (Christburg) and Zantyr commanderies. The appearance in 1251 of the first Teutonic commander of Zantyr on the pages of history is associated with the need to explain what lands he was subject to. The later transformation of the Zantyr commandery into the Malbork commandery allows us

to claim that the territories of both were, at least to some extent, related to each other. From the period 1255-1280, no documents confirming land grants or location in the area of Sztum (Stuhm) issued by the commander from Dzierzgoń or from Zantyr have survived. This state of affairs makes it possible to assume that the lands in the vicinity of Benowo could belong to both the one and the other *Komthurei*. Finally, in 1331, the Sztum vogt was assigned to the Malbork (Marienburg) commandery, and at the same time, the Benowo manor was probably located as the seat of the order's administration office and received its name, preserved to this day¹.

This grange, although its building structure has not survived to this day, was an important object in the structure of the Teutonic State. From the moment of its establishment, it was the seat of the office of the Master Forester (Waldmeister), as a result of which it was the only manor farm directly under the management of the Malbork commandery. The Master Forester in Benowo was listed in the hierarchy of offices presented in "Das Ausgabebuch des Hauskomthurs" at a fairly high position - the ninth position among all commandery officials².

The farm in Benowo was mentioned in the above document under the date 1376. It was one of the most important institutions dealing with the provisioning of the Malbork Castle and the Malbork Komtura. The supplies gathered here were stored in order to provide food for the fighting knights of the Order during the war, so Benowo played an important role both during the great war between the Teutonic State and Poland and during the Thirteen Years' War. The fact that the vicinity of Benowo, especially during the second conflict, became a theater of military operations is indirectly confirmed by messages, for example, about the siege of the church in nearby Zantyr. These conflicts contributed to the decline of the farm's splendor, so that in 1565 it was recorded that it was deserted and no agricultural land or pastures belonged to it³.

During the Polish rule, granaries and the apartment of the village administrator, two innkeepers and two fishermen, as well as a forester, were built above Benowo. Thus, Benowo was transformed from a Teutonic farm into a peasant village⁴.

The vicinity of Benowo is also marked by many remnants of the Polish-Swedish war of 1626-1629, waged over the mouth of the Vistula. The battles that took place here are evidenced by quite numerous ramparts, preserved in the area covered with forests.

In the following centuries, the landform of Benowo changed in such a way that over time the village completely moved a few hundred meters to the east of its original location. The new areas were clearly more favorable due to the lower risk of flooding. Indications on historical maps, which refer the name of the village "Benowo" to the original location of the Teutonic mansion, appear for the last time at the beginning of the 19th century. The historical record informs about

¹ Semrau A, *Die Orte und Fluren im ehemaligen Gebiet Stuhm un Waldamt Bönhoff (Komturei Marienburg)*, Elbing: Seide, 1928, p. 1.

² Ziesemer W., *Das Ausgabebuch des Marienburger Hauskomthurs für die Jahre 1410-1420*, Königsberg: Thomas & Oppermann, 1911, p. 10.

³ Schmid B., *Die Bau- Und Kunstdenkmäler des Kreises Stuhm*, Danzig: L. Saunier, Provinzial-Verband des Westpreussens, 1909, p. 254.

⁴ Ibidem.

the great flood that took place in 1829. It was not the only flood in the history of the village, as flood embankments were often broken. The historian M. Töppen counted as many as fifty of them in the area of the lower Vistula in the period of one half of the 16th century. Damage from flooding in Benowo was recorded in 1676 and 1786. However, it was the flood of 1829, which brought complete destruction to the belongings of the inhabitants of Benowo, which resulted in the decision to rebuild the village in a new place⁵, far from the former Teutonic farm buildings. This is visible on the maps created from the beginning of the 19th century, which, thanks to the use of trigonometric measurements, were an accurate representation of the presented area, and on which the transfer of the entire village by several hundred meters to the east was documented. Thus, the former Teutonic farm was destroyed and deserted as a result of the Thirteen Years' War. Then, in its place, a village functioned for several centuries, constituting a new foundation, and later the place was transformed into a fragment of an agricultural field. The memory of the location of the Teutonic manor was already in the 19th century an almost completely unclear issue, and all traces from the perspective of the researchers of the time seemed to be largely obliterated. Although today there is no doubt as to where the manor was located, some interpretative ambiguities have arisen around this matter, which the author intends to be rectified by this text, at least to some extent.

3. The farm in Benowo in the light of historical facts

Against the background of the above facts from the history of the region, let's try to trace the fate of the farm. We should begin by capturing the first dated information about Benowo in historiography.

First of all, a certain inaccuracy resulting from the appearance of the name "Benowo" in the privilege of the commander of Dzierzgoń, Luther of Braunschweig for the nearby village of Postolin, dated 1300 or 1310, which is known from a copy made in the 18th century and included in the land and mortgage register of Sztum Domain Office⁶, should be corrected first of all. Domain Office. This would be the first historical mention of Benowo. A thorough analysis of the content of the copy of the document showed, however, that the original (if it existed at all) was a forged script, probably based on original Teutonic documents. This is indicated by many inconsistencies in the text. In example, among the people mentioned in the document: the exhibitor and the witnesses, people who could only appear in 1316 were presented⁷. Arthur Semrau comments on the above that the hoax could have taken place during the Polish rule

⁵ Szolkwiewicz M., *Monografia wsi i parafii Benowo. Studia Elbląskie*, V/2003, 2003, p. 32.

⁶ Grundbuch des Domänenamts Stuhm, Band I nr. 33 der Königlich-Preussischen Regierung Marienwerder – Land and Mortgage Register of the Stuhm (Sztum) Domain Office, Vol. I, No. 33 Marienwerder (Kwidzyn) Regency. This register is known to the author only from information given in other sources. Therefore, the assessment of the credibility of the message is based solely on the authority of Bernard Schmid and the facts provided by him.

⁷ Schmid B., *Die Bau- Und Kunstdenkmäler des Kreises Stuhm*, Danzig: L. Saunier, Provinzial-Verband des Westpreussens, 1909, p. 304.

(1466-1772), because there was no possibility of verifying a wrong entry with archival resources. It should also be pointed out that at the time of the alleged publication of the above document, Postolin was under the authority of the commandery in Malbork, so the privilege should not have been issued by the commander of Dzierżon⁸⁹. Based on the above-mentioned dubious source text, the information contained in it was given as a fact by Friedrich Wilhelm Ferdinand Schmitt in his work *Geschichte des Stuhmer Kreises: im Auftrage der Kreisstände verfasst* from 1868¹⁰, and after him it is repeated by Fr. Michał Szolkiewicz in *Monograph of the village and parish of Benowo*¹¹. However, these messages should be rejected as unreliable in the light of the above explanation.

Going further in time in search of the first information about Benowo, we come across another doubt. It is related to the appearance of a Master Forester named Hensel in the location documents of Kończewice (Kunzendorf) from 1338 and Pogorzała Wieś (Wernersdorf) from 1340 as a witness. As we know, the seat of the Forester's Office was in Benowo¹²¹³, but the documented mention stating it by name appears in the sources later than the Forester's Office. Bernard Schmid, trying to interpret these facts, stated that during the location of the mentioned villages, Benowo allegedly remained unrelated to the Żuławy (Werder) villages, so the seat of the Master Forester was, in his opinion, the farm in Mątowy Małe (Klein Montau) - at the same time, Schmid derived ex silentio the provenance of the Mątowy farm as older than documented in the sources, pointing to its location connection with Zantyr¹⁴. Meanwhile, the statement that Benowo could not have been the seat of the Forester's Office as early as 1338, and that it was not a location associated with villages located in Żuławy is not, in the opinion of the author of these words, sufficiently justified, on the contrary, there is a credible positive interpretation for such a statement, which this text may explain in part.

A valuable source of information about Benowo is a document from the Malbork archive, published in the form of a script in the early 20th century under the title "Das Marienburger Ämterbuch". There are given, with the addition of dates, further descriptions of the offices of the Malbork Commandery together with material inventories for the indicated years. It is here, under the date 1376, that the name of Benowo is mentioned for the first time along with the statement that in the farm buildings there were three heaps without eleven (169) horses and two heaps without eight (112) oxen¹⁵. In addition, the local granaries stored significant amounts

⁸ Ibidem.

⁹ Semrau A., *Die Orte und Fluren im ehemaligen Gebiet Stuhm un Waldamt Bönhoff (Komturei Marienburg)*, Elbing: Seide, 1928, p. 116.

¹⁰ Schmitt F. W. F., *Geschichte des Stuhmer Kreises: im Auftrage der Kreisstände verfasst*, Thorn: Selbstverlag des Kreises, 1868, p. 208.

¹¹ Szolkiewicz M., *Monografia wsi i parafii Benowo. Studia Elbląskie*, V/2003, p. 11.

¹² Ziesemer W., *Das Marienburger Ämterbuch*, Danzig: Kafeman, 1916, pp. 59-63.

¹³ Schmid B., *Die Bau- Und Kunstdenkmäler des Kreises Stuhm*, Danzig: L. Saunier, Provinzial-Verband des Westpreussens, 1909, pp. 253-254.

¹⁴ Schmid B., *Die Bau- Und Kunstdenkmäler des Kreises Marienburg*, Danzig: A. Kafemann, 1919, pp. 191- 192.

¹⁵ Ziesemer W., *Das Marienburger Ämterbuch*, Danzig: Kafeman, 1916, p. 59.

of cereals and malt. This gives grounds to conclude that at that time one of the main livestock breeding centers was located here, as well as the supply base of the Malbork castle, which required the existence of quite extensive building structures.

The descriptions of the inventory of the Benowo farm presented in *Das Marienburger Ämterbuch*, which are dated for selected dates between the farthest dates: 1376 and 1442, show us a picture of a substantial farm that was run here. Pigs were raised here, as well as sheep and goats. Inventories from the following years indicate that grain, various food products, as well as kitchen and household appliances used to prepare dishes were stored in the buildings here. The description from 1399 mentions the individual parts of the farm by name. The cattle yard (a complex of cowsheds and probably a slaughterhouse) is detailed, as well as a kitchen, a bakery and a bathhouse.

Bernhard Schmid believed that the descriptions of the construction works carried out in 1416 on the buildings in Benowo indirectly prove the damage that affected the farm during the Great War of 1410. The presumed construction or reconstruction of the church in Benowo in this period is described later in this article. Among the accounts of the Malbork commandery there is an accounting entry for the construction of a house in Benowo *daz husz zum benhoffe*¹⁶, which was to begin in the week following Laetare Sunday, i.e. two weeks before Easter, and lasted until the Sunday before St. Lawrence on August 10, 1416. This building was to be erected in the timberframe technology. What draws attention, however, is the use of the name *hus* = *Haus*, referring to the building erected in Benowo. It should be borne in mind that this word usually meant a religious house - a place where knights and dignitaries of the Order's State were expected to stay. It would be a mistake to regard such an object as certainly only a dwelling house on a farm¹⁷.

The last description of the inventory of the manor farm in the book of offices, dating from 1442, begins with the mention of the paraments of the chapel operating here: a chasuble with paraments, a portable, liturgical utensils and candlesticks were kept there. The above message is credible, but it certainly does not refer to the very beginnings of the chapel's functioning. The commander's book of accounts *Das Ausgabebuch des Hauskomthurs* mentions the ongoing construction of the church in 1416, and this message is placed under the heading "Beenhoff"¹⁸. The above-mentioned publication, however, casts doubt on this record in terms of linking the location of the renovated church with the farm in Benowo. Perhaps the matter concerned a building located in Malbork, and only building material was prepared at the seat of the forest office¹⁹. Bernhard Schmid, however, assumed on the basis of the note quoted above that already in 1416 carpenters repaired the church in Benowo, which was dedicated to St. Nicholas *an*

¹⁶ Ziesemer, W., *Das Ausgabebuch des Marienburger Hauskomthurs für die Jahre 1410-1420*, Königsberg: Thomas & Oppermann, 1911.

¹⁷ Schmid B., *Die Bau- Und Kunstdenkmäler des Kreises Stuhm*, Danzig: L. Saunier, Provinzial-Verband des Westpreussens, 1909, p. 254.

¹⁸ Ziesemer W., *Das Ausgabebuch des Marienburger Hauskomthurs für die Jahre 1410-1420*, Königsberg: Thomas & Oppermann, 1911, p. 237.

¹⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 376.

*Senthe Niclos Kirchen czu Benhoff*²⁰. It is possible, therefore, that already in 1416, the liturgy was celebrated here in a sacred building erected especially for this purpose, dedicated to Saint Nicholas.

The location of Benowo was additionally important due to the fact that it was located in the immediate vicinity of the bridge connecting the two banks of the Liwa River, formerly known as the Old Nogat. This crossing was used by those coming from the east to get to the nearby ferry across the Vistula River, which led to Walichnowy. Confirmation of these facts can be found in the book of the treasurer of Malbork²¹, and on the maps of the area, where the bridge near the location of the former manor house is still visible at the beginning of the 19th century.

The very location of the former Teutonic mansion in Benowo also requires explanation, which today does not raise doubts, but was not obvious in the past. Due to the fact that the period of magnificence of the mansion under the rule of the Teutonic Knights in the second half of 14th century and the first half of The 15th century ended with the Thirteen Years' War, and the subsequent period of Polish rule brought the collapse of the former assumption, the memory of the exact location of the once large manor farm in space disappeared for some time.

Misleading information about the location was given by F.W.F. Schmitt mentions that the Benowo manor is the same manor which was later called Rudniki (Rudnerweide)²² - under this name there is a village located north-west of the place of interest to us. However, such an indication was unjustified by the same author, which was reproached by a regionalist, priest Michał Szolkiewicz²³, who, following the indication of Bernhard Schmid, presented as the correct location of the former Benowo manor an elevation lying on the right bank of the Old Nogat, on the way to Biała Góra, explaining extensively that in the colloquial language this place is called *Kukrzycki*. It is enough to explain that the word "kukrzycko" means as much as a former habitat, a place once inhabited. Fr. Szolkiewicz also argues that the locally established ending of the word "-ski" betrays the Prussian origin of this name, making it similar to other Prussian toponyms²⁴.

In the western part of *Kukrzycki*, there are relics of a farm that existed there even in 1906. In addition to the house and outbuildings, there was a windmill there at that time, belonging to a certain Reimer²⁵, and after World War II, these properties belonged to Jan Mieczkowski, and in 1964 they were purchased by Julian Pryjomski. Currently, on the site of the former manor house (excluding the site of a recently existing settlement) there are no buildings or visible traces of them, but the land is a fragment of an arable field.

²⁰ Schmid B., *Die Bau- Und Kunstdenkmäler des Kreises Stuhm*, Danzig: L. Saunier, Provinzial-Verband des Westpreussens, 1909.

²¹ Joachim E., *Das Marienburger Tresslerbuch der Jahre 1399-1409*, Königsberg: Thomas & Oppermann, 1896.

²² Schmitt F. W. F., *Geschichte des Stuhmer Kreises: im Auftrage der Kreisstände verfasst*, Thorn: Selbstverlag des Kreises, 1868, p. 198.

²³ Szolkiewicz M., *Monografia wsi i parafii Benowo. Studia Elbląskie*, V/2003, p. 12.

²⁴ Ibidem, pp. 7-8.

²⁵ Schmid B., *Die Bau- Und Kunstdenkmäler des Kreises Stuhm*, Danzig: L. Saunier, Provinzial-Verband des Westpreussens, 1909, p. 254.

The currently existing village of Benowo is a completely new development, established in the 19th century, and the direct reason for its creation was the extensive destruction of the existing buildings. The new village does not have a layout characteristic of medieval locations, being a complex of unordered buildings scattered at the intersection of roads leading to Malbork, Sztum, Postolin and Kwidzyn. There are no buildings older than those from the period of the foundation.

In the village, one of the few known artifacts from earlier times (perhaps the only one) is a stoup composed of two granite elements standing next to the Catholic parish church. It has a form typical for the region, having a significant number of analogies in numerous medieval post-Teutonic churches in the area. It comes from the church in Kończewice, from where it was moved to its present location shortly after the construction of the neo-gothic church in Benowo²⁶.

4. Historical cartography

Reaching out to older cartographic sources, we will not obtain much information about the manor house, its location and surroundings. The famous map by Henneberg does not include the location of Benowo at all, giving only localities in the vicinity (e.g. Tychnowy), of which Zantyr, located at the fork of the Vistula and the Nogat, is particularly noteworthy, marked with the symbol "Mons arcis vastatae".

On the map entitled "Tractuum Borussiae circa Gedanum et Elbingam ab incolis Werder appellati (...)" from 1659 by O.I. Gotha, (Fig. 1.) Benowo (written Binhof) is presented as a village located on an undescribed tributary of the Vistula (probably the Liwa River, otherwise known as the Old Nogat). Among the surrounding towns, some were distinguished by their location and name, and among them Zantyr was clearly marked with the note "Arx vastatae". Looking towards the flow of the Vistula waters, we see that Benowo comes first, then Zantyr, and then Biała Góra. Then, in order, already at the shore of the Nogat, which separates from the Vistula in this area, there is a place referred to as "Broucke" - from german *Brücke*, a bridge. In the version of the same map from later years, these areas are presented without mentioning the location of Zantyr, whose location has indeed been forgotten and has not yet been discovered.

²⁶

Schmid B., *Die Bau- Und Kunstdenkmäler des Kreises Marienburg*, Danzig: A. Kafemann, 1919, p. 100.



Fig. 1 A fragment of O.I. Gotha map, 1659

The analysis of another historical map (Fig. 2.), measured in the years 1796-1802 and published by Schrötter with the use of trigonometric measurement, allows us to conclude that an incomparably higher degree of accuracy of the drawing reconstruction of the terrain was obtained in relation to the previously created maps. The indications of Schrötter's map give a new light on the issue of exploring the vicinity of Benowo. First of all, the center of the village buildings is shown in the place of the former Teutonic mansion as several compact blocks of buildings. The whole of this former system is located near the Old Nogat (Liwa), on the course of which there is a bridge and a ferry marked on the map.

Reymann's Special-Carte map (Fig. 3.) shows the effects of the 19th-century relocation of Benowo's buildings to the areas east of the location of the former manor house. In the place where the village used to be, there is a symbol for the village, but there is no name associated with it. The inscription Bönhof is located next to the symbols of buildings located where Benowo is now.

A valuable historical message is also the Messtischblatt map (Fig. 4.), which has a high degree of accuracy (1:25000). Based on the version from 1889, it can be seen that in the place we are interested in, a road system is visible, which today does not exist in this shape, which still coherently corresponded with the unpreserved shape of the buildings of the previously existing farm in this place. A coherent road system, shaped on a square plan, is characteristic, indicating the size of the former manor complex, perhaps resulting from the existence of a square inside the buildings. The places with two entrances to the site are visible. This layout was a direct relic left over from the village that was located here after the collapse of the previously existing medieval manor farm.

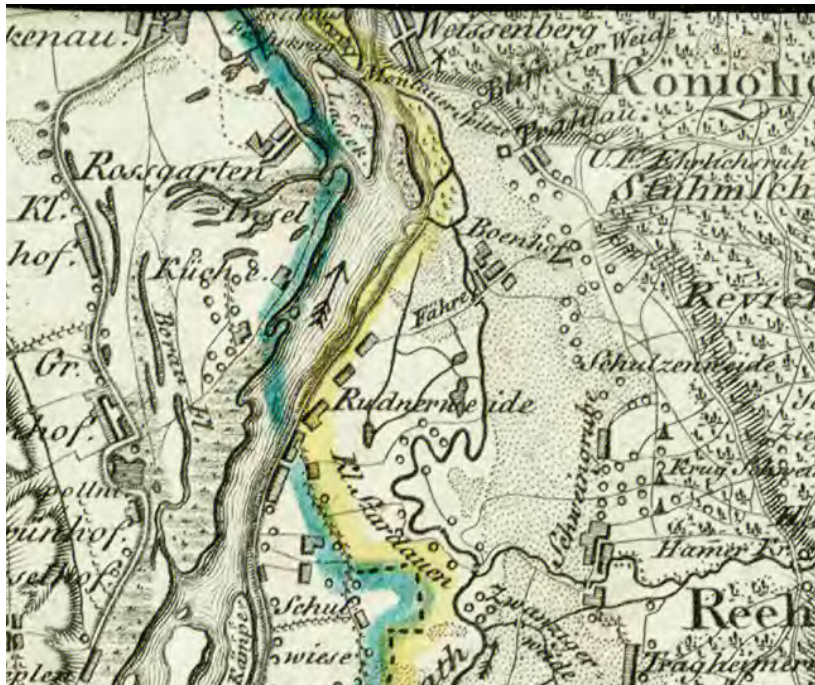


Fig. 2 A part of Schrötter map (1796-1802) showing village Benowo (described Boenhof) in its former place



Fig. 3 A fragment of Reymann's map (1st half of 19 c.). Benowo is located in its new place. Former location is marked on a map, but not described anymore – see the red arrow

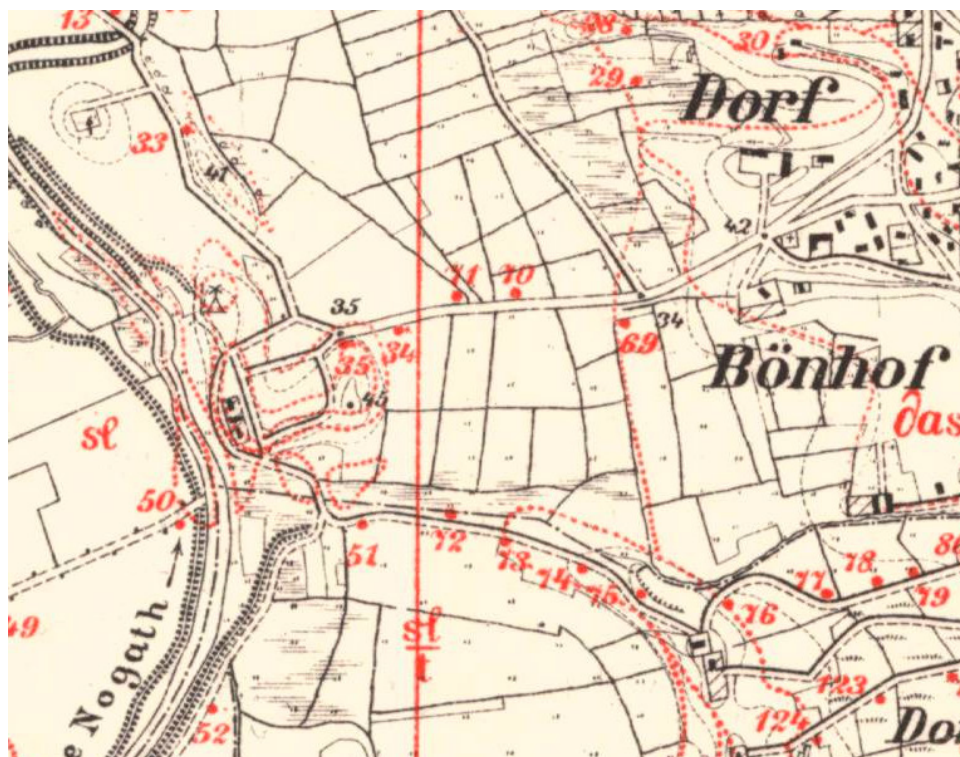


Fig. 4 A fragment of precise Messtischblatt map (1889) showing the remains of road system in place of former manor and village

5. Archaeological research in the location of the former manor house

Archaeological finds on the site of the former Benowo farm were reported as early as the beginning of the 20th century. The discovered items were stored in the city museum in Toruń. The nature of the artifacts found there indicated their 16th-century or only slightly older origin²⁷.

In the location we are interested in, there are two recorded archaeological sites, included in the register of monuments. Waldemar Heym found in one of these places in the years 1933-1935 nineteen fragments of ceramics: a clay vessel, bricks and tiles, which were then dated to the 14th-16th century. The area was then surveyed on in September and October 1986, when Sławomir Marcysiak found here relics of a medieval settlement from the 14th-15th centuries (23 fragments of ceramics) and from the 16th-17th centuries (2 fragments of ceramics).

Preliminary archaeological and architectural research in the location of the former Teutonic farm Benowo was also carried out in the years 2002-2004²⁸. The author of this article has not accessed

²⁷ Schmid B., *Die Bau- Und Kunstdenkmäler des Kreises Stuhm*, Danzig: L. Saunier, Provinzial-Verband des Westpreussens, 1909, p. 254.

²⁸ Chęć A., Gancewski J., *Urząd Leśniczego w Państwie zakonu Krzyżackiego – funkcjonowanie i znaczenie dla gospodarki*. *Echa Przeszłości*, 10, 2009, p. 65.

the reports of these studies. Based on the information contained in the text "Interior design in Teutonic manor farms based on historical sources (on the example of Mątowy and Benowo)", it can be stated that the archaeological research carried out at that time did not allow for a precise determination of the spatial shape of the manor farm. It was not possible to provide the location of the chapel²⁹ or other rooms mentioned in the farm inventories from 1376-1442³⁰.

6. Satellite photos and LIDAR scanning of the location of the former manor house

Modern technical means provide us with supplementary information on the former shape of the space of the former manor farm. Useful indications are obtained using aerial and satellite photos as well as LIDAR airborne field scanning.

Satellite and aerial photos of the area from 2019 and 2022, thanks to the vegetation features visible on the farmland covering the area of the former Teutonic mansion, indicate the presence of substantial buildings in this place. Due to the considerable size of their projections, it can be safely assumed that the creation of these objects is related to the activity of the Teutonic State in this place, confirmed by sources. The traces visible in the south-eastern part should probably be combined with the source confirmation of the existence of residential buildings, a religious house (Ordenshaus) and a chapel or church in this place. The southern wing, the outline of which is very legible, had dimensions of 70x12 m, and the eastern wing, not so clearly marked, was probably about 60 m long. Moreover, there is a trace of a building or a group of buildings, which once stood in the middle of the entire complex. Interpretation of the function of this object solely on the basis of traces of the projection would be doubtful by all means, the relic visible in the photos allows us to assess its dimensions as 15x25 m. The trace of a long building located in the northern part of the manor complex is also characteristic. Its dimensions: 94x15 m and the proportions of the projection indicate almost unambiguously that it was a barn or cowshed, comparable to the one located in another Teutonic farm in Mątowy Małe³¹, 11.5 km away from the site of the former manor house in Benowo.

²⁹ Chęć A., *Wystrój wnętrz w folwarkach krzyżackich na podstawie źródeł historycznych (na przykładzie Mątów i Benowa)*, [in:] *Archaeologia Historica Polona*, 14, 2002, p. 246.

³⁰ Ibidem, p. 248.

³¹ Schmid B., *Die Bau- Und Kunstdenkmäler des Kreises Marienburg*, Danzig: A. Kafemann, 1914, p. 194. The farm building in Mątowy Małe has not been preserved except for a fragment of one wall made of medieval finger bricks. However, Schmid describes it as an object with dimensions of 134 m x 12.6 m, the thickness of the walls was even 95 cm. The Messtischblatt map from the beginning of the 20th century shows its length m in a characteristic proportion to the small width of the building.



Fig. 5 Aerial view of former manor location shows the traces of its former development due to contrasting vegetation features (June 2019)

The analysis of vegetation features around the area of the former grange allows us to conclude that it was surrounded by a moat, which may have been filled with water in the past. Currently, it is buried, but the trace visible from the bird's eye view clearly defines the area of the manor house.

Other extremely interesting facts result from the analysis of the terrain in the area of the former Benowo manor house. It turns out that the clearly outlined, regular layout of the Teutonic buildings reconstructed on the basis of traces visible in aerial and satellite photographs fits into the shape of the hill called Kukrzyski, whose massif clearly contrasts with the surrounding Żuławy lowland. This convergence of spatial forms and their uniqueness in the context of the terrain of the surroundings allows us to conclude that the manor house in Benowo was situated on a hill which is an anthropogenic landform.

This hill is located on the marshy area of the plain Żuławy, formed there, in the Lower Vistula Valley as a result of natural conditions, in the immediate vicinity of the shore of the Old Nogat, now called Liwa. Its dimensions are approx. 296x220 m, and the cross-sectional profiles show a slight decrease in ordinates in the northern part. The central part of the hill is slightly recessed in relation to the surrounding massif. These small height differences of a few meters are barely perceptible to the naked eye in the field. Accurate measurement, however, reveals them in a significant way. The contour of the hill has a shape similar to a polygon with rounded corners.

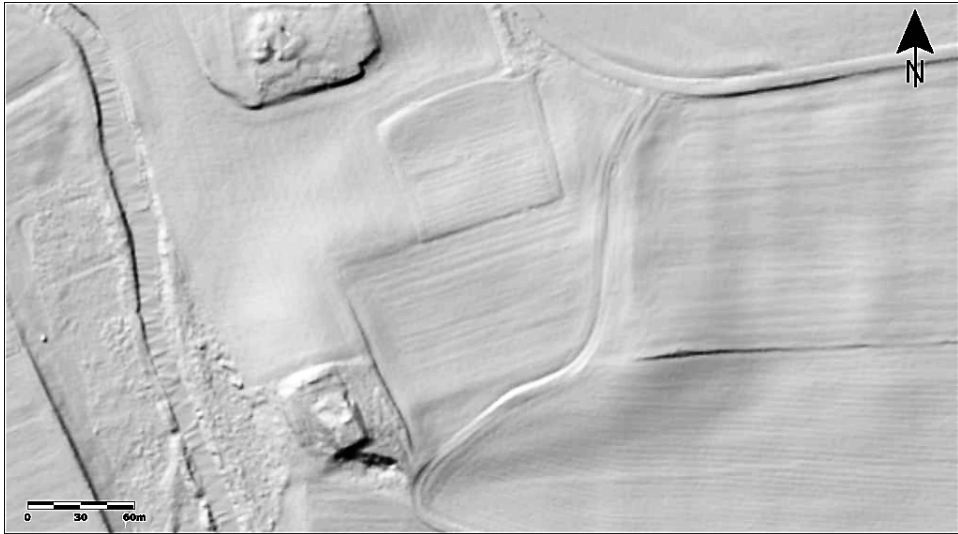


Fig. 6 LIDAR airborne field scanning show the shaping of the gord in area of former manor location. A gord-shaped form can be observed

A cursory comparison of the terrain of the farm in Benowo to other Teutonic farms in the Malbork commandery, such as in the nearby Mątowy Małe, or in Lasowice or Szaleniec, allows us to notice its uniqueness consisting in the existence of a huge earth embankment, which stands out among the flat terrain of the surrounding lands. It is all the more intriguing that the function performed by the manor farm located here was not defensive by definition. Hence, most farms were located directly in the Żuławy lowland.

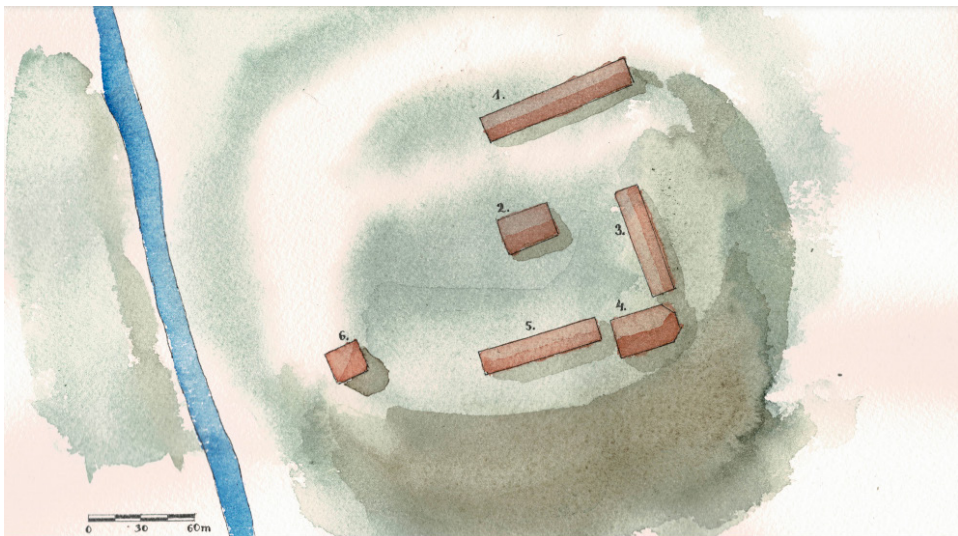


Fig. 7 Hypothetical graphic interpretation of the former development of a historical Teutonic manor in Benowo. 1 - barn, 2 - unidentified building, 3 - outbuilding (?), 4 - supposed location of the chapel, 5 - residential building, 6 - unidentified building

7. The existence of the gord

Based on the observation of the area made at the site of the former Teutonic mansion in Benowo using LIDAR scanning and aerial photos, it can be concluded that there was previously a stronghold in the place of the Teutonic settlement activity. Its earth structure, typical of the Prussian period, before the appearance of the Teutonic knights in Pomerania, has been preserved. Despite the transformations that made the shape of the settlement illegible by bare eye, it is possible to reconstruct the original form of the settlement thanks to the use of modern observation methods.

The thing that goes beyond the discussion of the Teutonic manor to some extent is an attempt at historical-architectural interpretation of the earth embankment on which the manor was founded. The image generated on the basis of airborne laser scanning allows us to conclude that we are dealing with a formation created as a result of human activity. It can be concluded that this form is earlier in relation to the later medieval buildings located within it. The redevelopment of the area of the former stronghold by the Teutonic Knights for the needs of a manor-farm, and then transforming it into a peasant village would be an extremely interesting historical phenomenon, indicating the special role of this site of establishing the medieval statehood in Pomerania at an early stage of the functioning of the Teutonic state.

The characteristic round shape of the projection, the outlines of moats and embankments visible in the satellite image, the location near the river, as well as the terrain recorded using laser scanning - these are the characteristics of Prussian settlements, the examples of which are listed in the introduction to this article. They allow the identification of the relics preserved in Benowo as another object of this type. The indications visible in the aerial photographs would be complemented by thorough archaeological research carried out in this place.

In this context, it is surprising that during the archaeological inspections already carried out, no traces that could indicate the spatial forms of the former development of this area have been found so far. Quite precise indications of the location of places of former buildings now allow for more targeted searches during possible archaeological research.

8. Conclusions - the need for legal protection of preserved historical values

The outline of the spatial arrangement of the Teutonic manor house in Benowo, which is drawn on the basis of the analysis of vegetation features in the place of its former location, is undoubtedly an important impetus in determining the history of Benowo as the seat of the Teutonic Forester's Master. Its shape has so far remained in the sphere of conjecture, which was justified by quite extensive descriptions of the inventories related to the functioning of the office in this place. Currently, it is possible to determine in a more precise way where the individual parts of the manor house listed in the source records were located, such as: the chapel, the religious house, the kitchen, the bathhouse, the bakery, the livestock buildings along with the cattle yard.

In view of the above, a hypothesis can be put forward about the existence of a gord, which was later adapted as the location of the Teutonic manor buildings and the seat of the Forestry Office.

Such an assumption, however, raises many issues that go far beyond the scope of this article. Probably some of them will be explained in the near future.

At the present stage, it can be assumed that the credibility of such a hypothesis is sufficient to place the area of the former Teutonic manor house, as well as the settlement, under conservation protection. This area is currently used as an arable field, which in a long-term process effects with the erosion of soil layers constituting visible relics, although at the moment it does not contribute to their significant devastation. A much greater threat is the lack of effective legal protection in this location. In the area of the embankment (former stronghold) there are two archaeological sites included in the provincial records of archaeological monuments (województwa ewidencja zabytków archeologicznych – Archeologiczne Zdjęcie Polski)^{32,33}, which do not cover the entire complex, and the location of these sites is not included in the study of conditions and directions of spatial development of the commune (studium uwarunkowań i kierunków zagospodarowania przestrzennego gminy)³⁴. There is also no local spatial development plan for the area.

It should be stated that the area of the former Teutonic mansion and the settlement in Benowo is currently not protected in any way against possible destruction of the relics of the former development preserved in it. In the author's opinion, it is desirable to introduce conservation protection by including the object in the register of archaeological monuments.

At this point, the author would like to express his gratitude to **Prof. Robert Hirsch and Dr. Piotr Samól (Gdańsk University of Technology)** for their generous and selfless help in developing the issue presented in this article. Thanks to their dedication, the writer of these words had the opportunity to undertake the scribal effort in a truly reliable and scientific way. Thank You both Gentlemen.

³² Marcysiak S., *Karta Ewidencji Stanowiska Archeologicznego, Benowo, gm. Ryjewo, nr stanowiska w miejscowości: 3; nr stanowiska na obszarze: 1*, 1986.

³³ Marcysiak S., *Karta Ewidencji Stanowiska Archeologicznego, Benowo, gm. Ryjewo, nr stanowiska w miejscowości: 1; nr stanowiska na obszarze: 2*, 1986.

³⁴ Piskorska A., *Studium uwarunkowań i kierunków zagospodarowania przestrzennego, załącznik nr 1, nr 2, nr 3 do uchwały nr XLII/295/10 Rady Gminy Ryjewo z dnia 27 kwietnia 2010 r. w sprawie uchwalenia studium uwarunkowań i kierunków zagospodarowania przestrzennego gminy Ryjewo*, 2010, pp. 109-110.

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