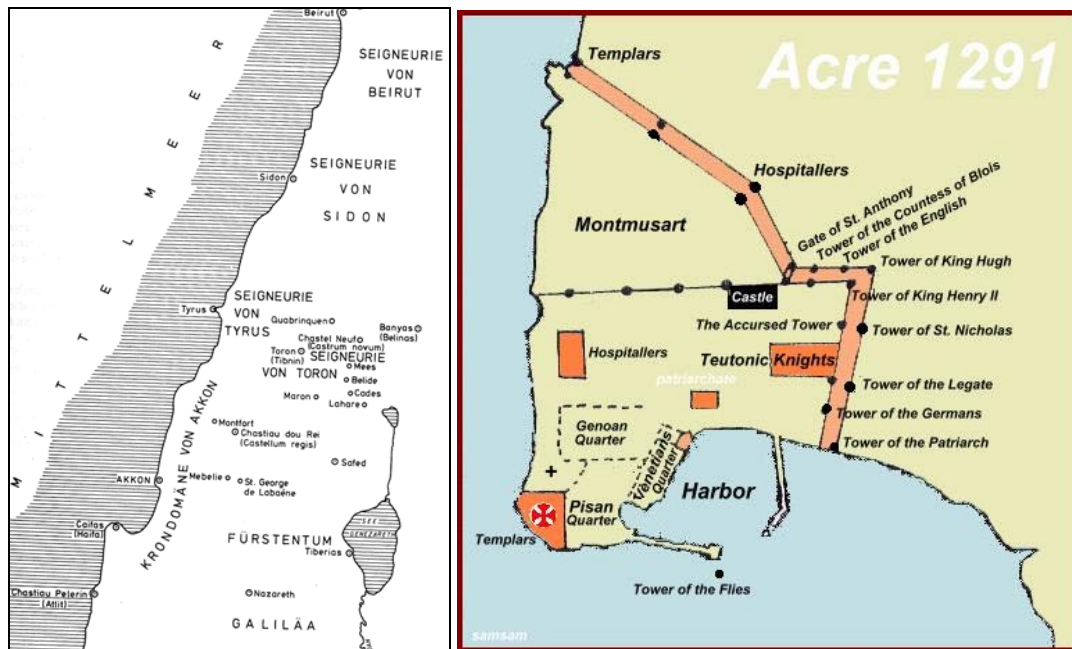


Headquarters of the Teutonic Knights



- Acre (1192–1291)**
- Venice (1291–1309)**
- Marienburg (1309–1466)**
- Königsberg (1466–1525)**
- Mergentheim (1525–1809)**
- Vienna (1809 -)**



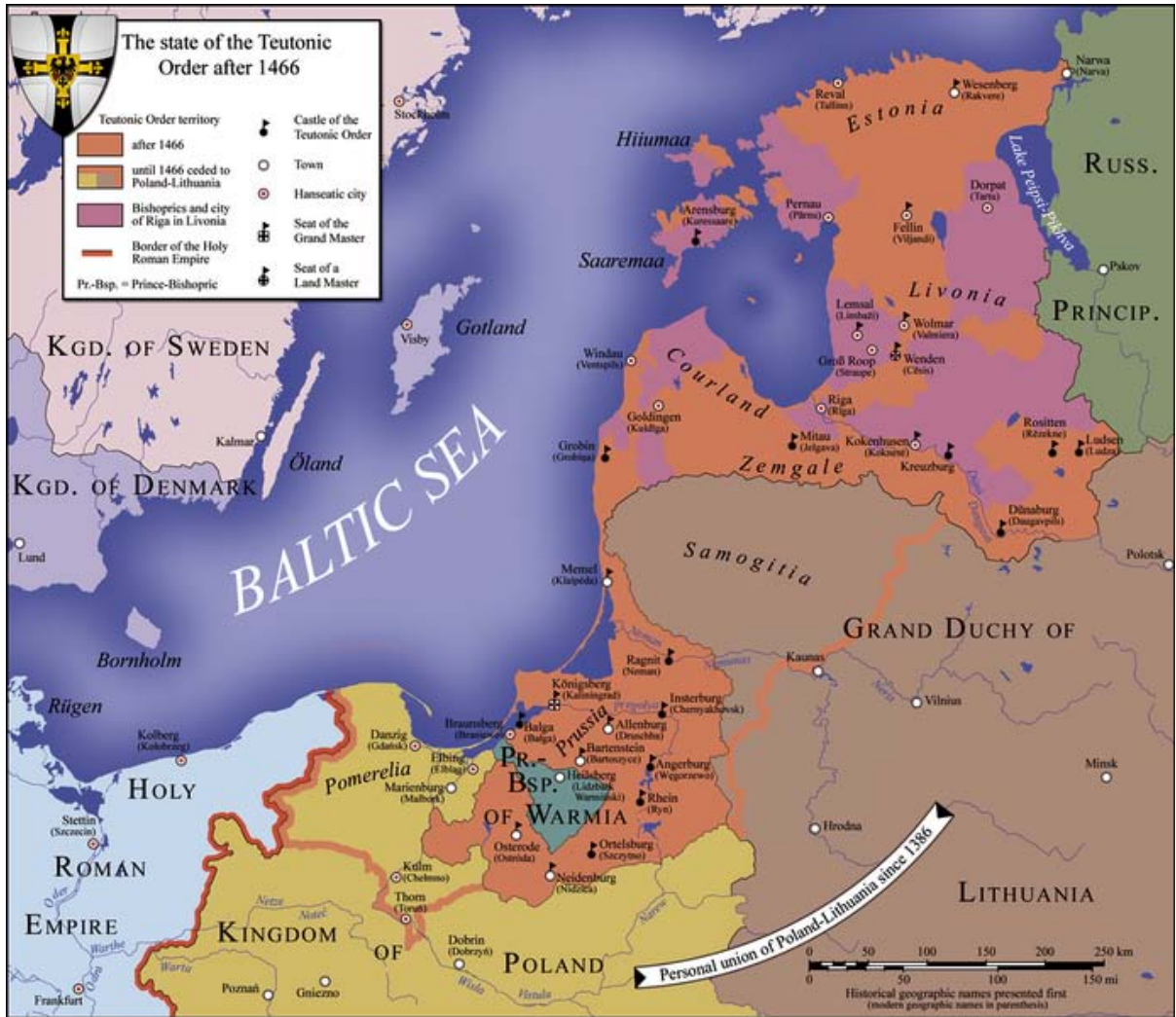
Acre was captured by Crusaders in 1104 in the First Crusade and became a chief port of the kingdom of Jerusalem. The Christians lost Jerusalem and Acre to the forces of Saladin in 1187. But the Third Crusade led by Richard I of England recaptured Acre in **1191** and became base of operations and the capital of Kingdom of Jerusalem. For most of the next hundred years, the religious orders, including the Teutonic Knights had their headquarters in Acre, from which they made crucial decisions on military and diplomatic efforts. In **1292**, the Muslim forces of the Egyptian Mamluks sieged Acre. The fall of Acre signaled the end of the Jerusalem crusades with no effective crusade to recapture the Holy Land afterwards. After the fall of Acre, the Teutonic Knights moved their headquarters to **Venice** for 18 years before they founded a new headquarters.







When the Margrave of Brandenburg invaded Pomerelia in 1308, the Polish duke hired the Teutonic Knights to defend the City of Gdańsk (Danzig) against the Brandenburg troops. However, the Teutonic takeover of Danzig when Poland did not pay up. Disregarding the Polish claims, the Order purchased from Brandenburg the rights to most of Pomerelia. The Treaty of Soldin, signed in **1309** by the Margrave of Brandenburg and the Teutonic Knights, gave the latter control of the lower Vistula, a direct access to the Baltic Sea through Danzig, and a continuous route into the Holy Roman Empire. The same year the treaty was signed, the order's headquarters were moved from Venice to **Marienburg (Malbork)**. The treaty was repeatedly questioned by Poles, resulting in a Polish-Teutonic War.





Königsberg (now called Kaliningrad, Russia) became the next place for their headquarters from 1466 to 1525. Königsberg used to be the residence of the marshal, one of the chief administrators of the monastic state of the Teutonic Knights. The city joined the Hanseatic League in 1340 and developed into an important port for the southeastern Baltic region, trading goods throughout Prussia, the Kingdom of Poland, and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. Although the knights suffered a crippling defeat in the Battle of Grunwald (Tannenberg), Königsberg remained under the control of the Teutonic Knights throughout the Polish-Lithuanian-Teutonic War. Livonian knights replaced the Prussian branch's garrison at Königsberg, allowing them to participate in the recovery of towns occupied by Jogaila's troops.

The Prussian Confederation rebelled against the Teutonic Knights in 1454 and sought the assistance and got the support of Poland. The Grand Master fled from the crusaders' capital at Castle Marienburg to Königsberg in 1457. When western Prussia was transferred to victorious Poland in the Second Peace of Thorn (**1466**), which ended the Thirteen Years' War, Königsberg became the new capital of the reduced monastic state, which became a fief of the Crown of the Polish Kingdom. The grand masters took over the quarters of the marshal.

Through the preachings of the Bishop of Samland, Königsberg became predominantly Lutheran during the Protestant Reformation. In 1525, Grand Master Albert of Brandenburg converted to Lutheranism, secularised the Teutonic Knights' remaining territories in Prussia and became Duke of Prussia as a vassal of Poland. Soon after, the Order lost Livonia and its holdings in the Protestant areas of Germany.



The Order moved its headquarters to **Mergentheim**, Germany in **1525**. When Napoleon Bonaparte ordered its dissolution in 1809, the Order lost its last secular holdings. The Order further moved its headquarters to **Vienna** in **1809** and continued to exist as a charitable and ceremonial body. It was outlawed by Adolf Hitler in 1938, but re-established in 1945 and still functions today.