



# Klaipėda

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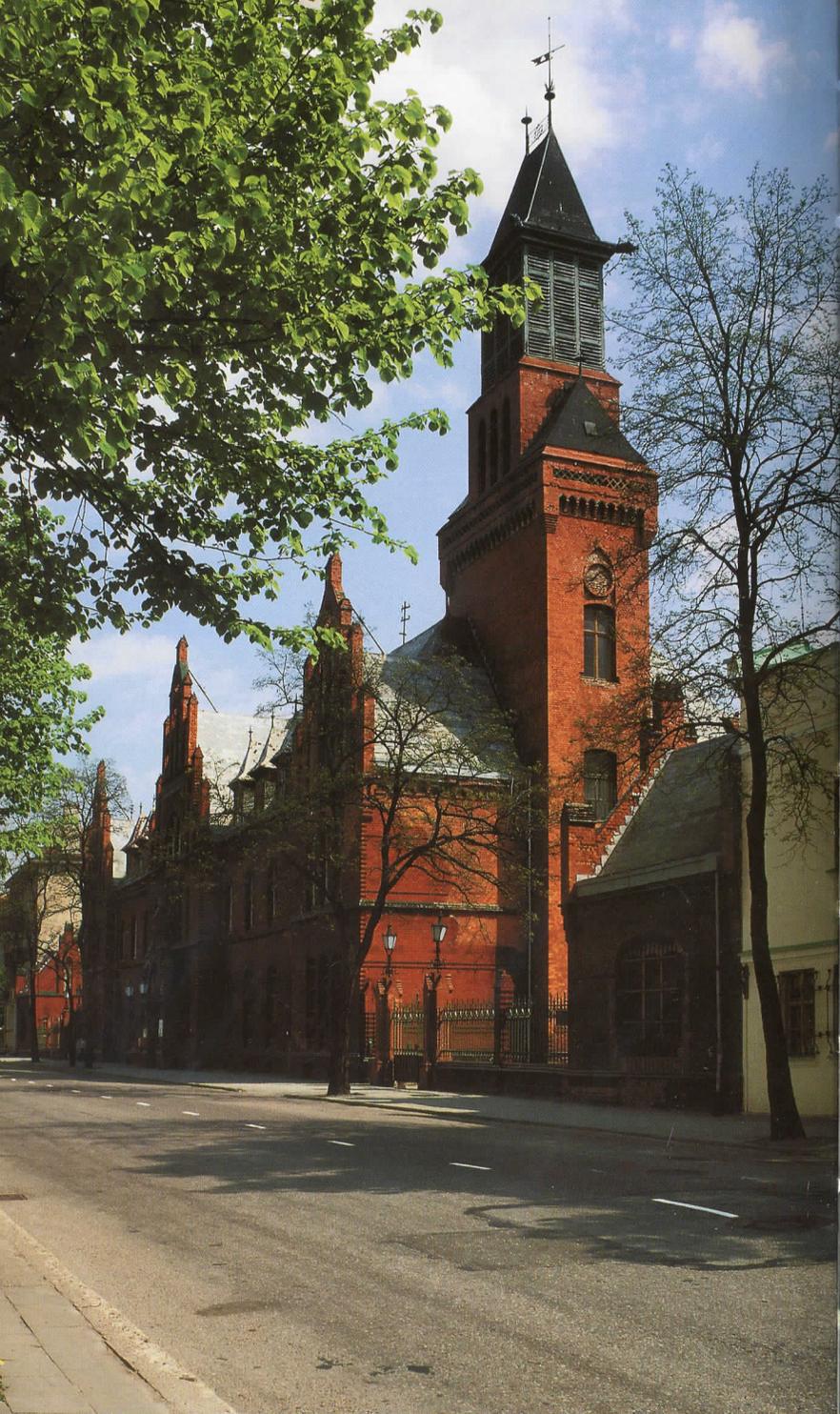


1. Theatre
2. Monument to Simon Dach
3. Castle Museum
4. Fachwerk house, Sukilėlių St. 19
5. Jono Hillock
6. The History Museum of Lithuania Minor
7. Art Exhibitions Palace
8. Old post office
9. Museum of Smithery
10. Restaurant "Memelis"
11. Biržos Bridge
12. Karlo Bridge
13. Sailboat "Meridians"
14. Town Hall, royal residence
15. Musical Theatre and the Philharmonic Society
16. Building of the Savings Bank
17. Administration of the History Museum of Lithuania Minor
18. Clock Museum
19. Central Post Office
20. Arts Faculty of the University
21. Picture Gallery, P. Domšaitis' Gallery
22. M. Mažvydas' sculpture park
23. Orthodox Church of All Saints
24. Pedagogical Faculty of the University
25. Railway station
26. Church of Mary, Queen of Peace
27. Church of St. Joseph the Labourer
28. Cabin cruiser quay

SMILTYNĖ and KOPGALIS

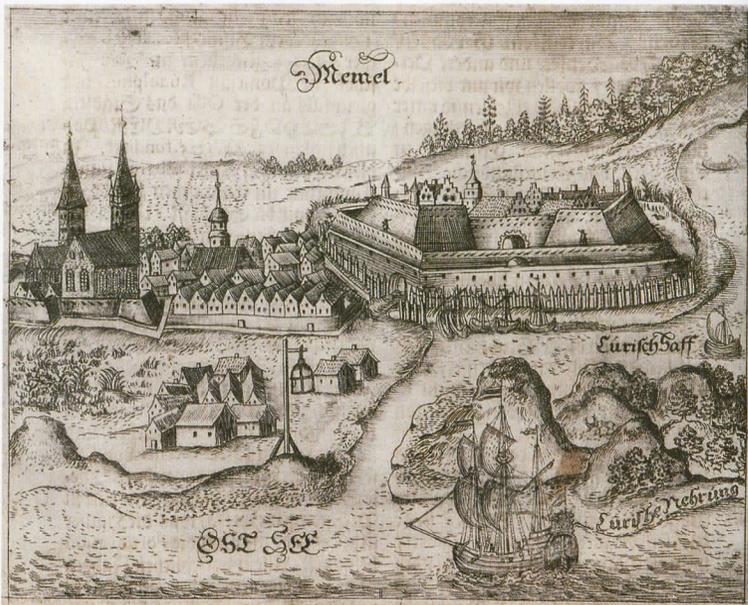
29. Cemetery
30. Kurhaus
31. Yacht club
32. Nature Museum
33. Sea Museum and Dolphinarium
34. Fisherman's ethnographic homestead
35. Exhibition of early boats

	main street
	street
	pedestrian trail
	bicycle trail
	residential area
	forest, park
	cemetery
	railway, station
	bus station
	ferry
	hospital, clinic
	museum, gallery
	Catholic or Orthodox church
	castle
	monument
	hotel
	tourist information
	lookout site
	object number



Klaipėda is the third largest city in Lithuania and its sole port, an important centre of transport, industry, commerce and culture. The city was founded more than 750 years ago and is the oldest in Lithuania and one of the oldest cities on the eastern shore of the Baltic Sea, several years older than Königsberg and half a century younger than Riga. The landmarks of Klaipėda – cranes lined up at the piers of the harbour – have been a stable dominant of the city for one century; before that time its silhouette was shaped by windmills and church spires. However, first of all, a castle was built on this site.

**The mediaeval city.** The beginning of the city was a castle built in 1252 according to the agreement between the Livonian Order and the Curonian bishop, which was called Memelburg. The castle served a strategic function: it allowed controlling the important land route going through the Curonian Spit and the mouth of the Curonian lagoon. The name of the castle is derived from the name of the Nemunas river: knights of the Order assumed that they were building a castle on the lower reaches of the Nemunas (German *Memel*), as they considered the Curonian lagoon its extension. In the long run, the abbreviation of the Memelburg Castle – Memel – came to designate also the city growing around it; Germans still call it Memel. Unlike Germans, Lithuanians call the city Klaipėda. The name of Klaipėda (*castrum Memel alias Klawppeda*) was first mentioned in 1420 in the letter of negotiations between Vytautas and the German Order. Johann Heinrich Zedler in his *Great Complete Universal Lexicon of All Arts and Sciences* (1739) writes that Memel, called Klaipėda by the Curonians, is a strong border fortress and a city at the Curonian lagoon. The exact origin of this placename has not been established: it is related with a swampy landscape and the phrase *klaipė pėdas* (twisted one's feet), and linguist Kazimieras Būga derived it from the Lithuanian word *kleipas* (*kliepas*) and Latvian (Curonian) *klaips* (bread). Hence, *klaip-ėda* could mean a castle to which a toll was paid. Other existing versions are rather doubtful.

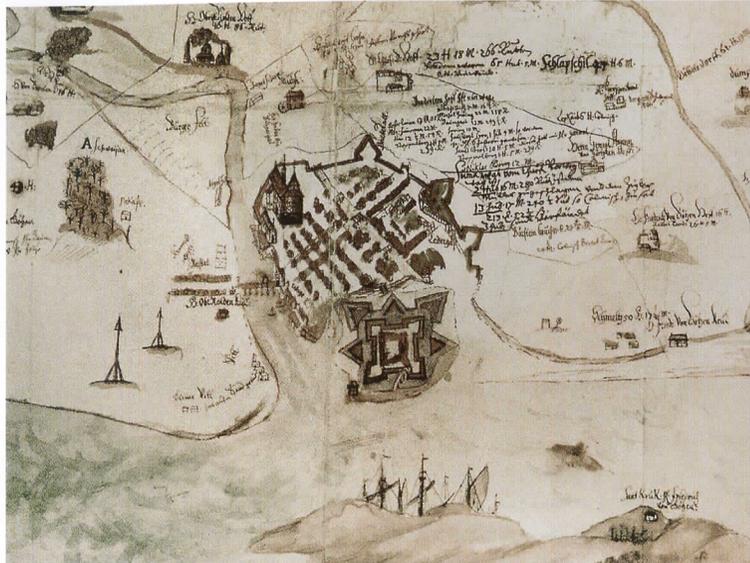


Panorama of Klaipėda. From Ch. Hartknoch. *Old and New Prussia*. 1684

The founding of the castle was supposed to fulfil a beautiful vision of a thriving city-to-be, in which a bishop's residence and several churches were going to be built. In 1254, Klaipėda was granted the law of Lübeck, which opened a nice prospect of a sea trade city. However, in the Mediaeval Ages Klaipėda did not become either a flourishing port, or an important regional centre. It was a small settlement at the castle: at the turn of the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries it had 25 citizens' domains. The city did not have industrial support, which could be formed only if the state of the Teutonic Order had annexed Samogitia. But this did not happen, with the exception of a small episode when Vytautas and Jogaila conceded Samogitia to the Order. Then the Order took efforts to spur the city's development, began large-scale constructions, but the Samogitians, like so many times before, ravaged Klaipėda.

After the Battle of Grunwald, when the territorial claims of Lithuania and the Teutonic Order were solved by the Peace of Mölln (1433), Klaipėda seemed to acquire a hope for peaceful life. Unfortunately, the Thirteen-Year War (1454–66) destroyed this hope: Klaipėda was ravaged by both the Samogitians and the fleet of the competing port of Gdansk (Danzig). Neither did the situation improve after the end of the war – for almost a decade Klaipėda was a citadel of sea pirates and gave shelter to the ships of the Order plundering trade boats. In 1475, in the hope of reviving the impoverished city, Klaipėda was granted the law of Kulm. Paradoxically, till that time, Klaipėda, at least theoretically exercising the law of Lübeck granted to a sea trade city, did not become a full-fledged port city, and when it began to arrange its life according to the law of Kulm designed for a land city, it gradually acquired some features of a port.

The crucial 16<sup>th</sup> century. In 1525, the state of the Teutonic Order became the Duchy of Prussia. This gave the beginning to a long period of peace, which made a positive influence on the development of Klaipėda. The merchant class became firmly established: having accumulated some funds, they began to build sea ships and used them for sea trade. In 1597, merchants received the guild rights. In the 16<sup>th</sup> century cobblers, bakers and tailors had their guilds in Klaipėda. It created a sound basis for the formation of the citizen class, and its members were elected to the city council – the main administrative and legal institution in the city.



Map of Klaipėda. Middle of the 17<sup>th</sup> c.

Significant changes took place in the field of culture as well: in 1525, the Reformation took root in the Duchy of Prussia. The German and Lithuanian Evangelical schools and a Lithuanian school were established in Klaipėda. In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, Valentin Dach, a relative of the Klaipėda-born German poet of Lithuanian descent Simon Dach, worked as a teacher in a church school. Incidentally, the poet's father, a translator at the Klaipėda Castle and court, could speak Lithuanian fluently. Several priests of the Lithuanian church contributed to the nurturing of Lithuanian culture, and most prominent among them were the author of the first original Lithuanian church hymn Mikalojus Blotnas (1530–87), historian and ethnographer Matthaues Praetorius (1635–1707), and the author of a hymnbook Lazarus Sengstock (1562–1621). Klaipėda attracted people of other nationalities – Dutch, English and Scottish. The Reformation was an important precondition that helped to form the multicultural tradition of Klaipėda, most distinctly defined by a large variety of religious confessions: Evangelical Lutherans, Mennonites, Anglicans and Judaists. Catholics were not numerous – they had a prayer house served by