

CUBER – KREJEWSKA

Requested by “P&K Albertson.”

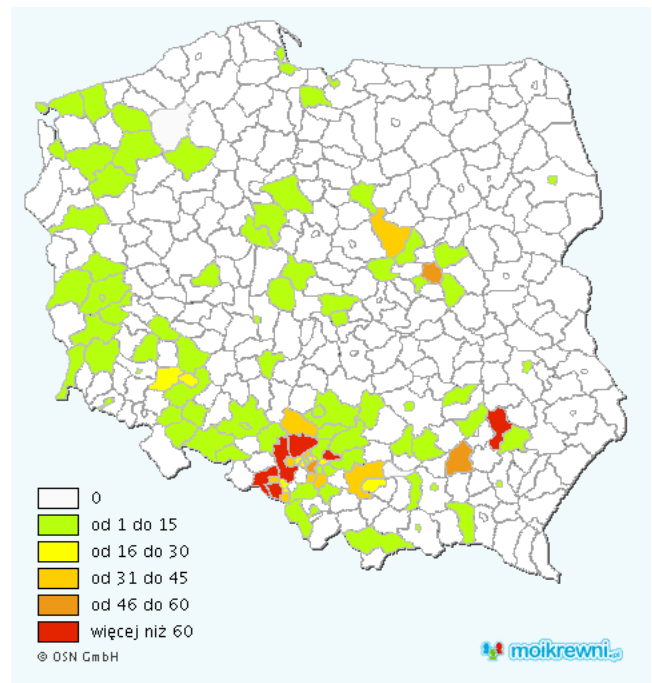
Analysis by: William F. “Fred” Hoffman <wfh@langline.com>, for UPGS 2008

In Polish **Cuber** is pronounced roughly “TSOO-bare.” The data available at the Moikrewni Web site for the masculine version (<http://www.moikrewni.pl/mapa/kompletny/cuber.html>) shows that as of 2002 there were 1,838 Polish citizens who went by this name. As the map at right shows, they were scattered all over, but with some significant concentration in south central to southwestern Poland, in the region we call *Silesia*, Poles call *Śląsk*, and Germans call *Schlesien*. The largest numbers were in the counties of Wodzisław Śląski (210), Tarnowskie Góry (130), Gliwice (93), and Racibórz (79)—all marked in red on the map in south central Poland. The only other “red” county was Stalowa Wola (53), in southeastern Poland. So the name is not found exclusively in Silesia, but it tends to show up most often in that area.

Professor Rymut mentions this name in his book *Nazwiska Polaków* [The Surnames of Poles]. He give 1734 as the date of the name’s first known appearance in Polish records, but of course it could have been around much earlier, and just never happened to be recorded in any surviving document. Rymut says it can come from the dialect term *cuber*, “a large wooden tub,” or from the German personal name *Zuber*. Germans pronounce Z the same way Poles pronounce C, like our “ts.” So German *Zuber* and Polish *cuber* are pronounced the same.

A book Rymut recommended as especially good on German surnames, *Duden Familiennamen* by Rosa and Volker Kohlheim, gives three derivations for *Zuber*. It can come from the Germanic root that appears in modern German as *Zuber* and *Zober*, a term for a large, two-handled wooden tub, and could have referred to one who made or sold or used such tubs. (I’m fairly certain the dialect Polish word *cuber* was borrowed from this German word.) It can also refer to family origin in places called *Zuben*, which exist in the Baden-Württemberg area and also in Switzerland. Or it can refer to the name of a place the family lived that came from *Zube*, an Alemannic term for a flowing stream that got its water from mountains. So a family named *Zuber* could have been “the wooden, two-handled tub guys,” or “the ones from Zuben,” or “the ones from Zube.” Without detailed research into the family history, there’s no way to know for sure which derivation applies in that particular family’s case.

As I say, I strongly suspect the Polish name *Cuber* was borrowed from German *Zuber*. Many German words made their way into the Polish language, especially in areas like Silesia that had always had sizable German populations. We often run into Poles whose names are actually of German linguistic origin. After all, imagine that of your 128 immediate ancestors, maybe 127 were Poles and only one was German. But if that one happened to be a male in direct line of descent, you might end up with his name, even though your ancestry was more than 99% Polish! Surnames can be deceptive.



Map showing the distribution of the surname **Cuber** as of 2002.

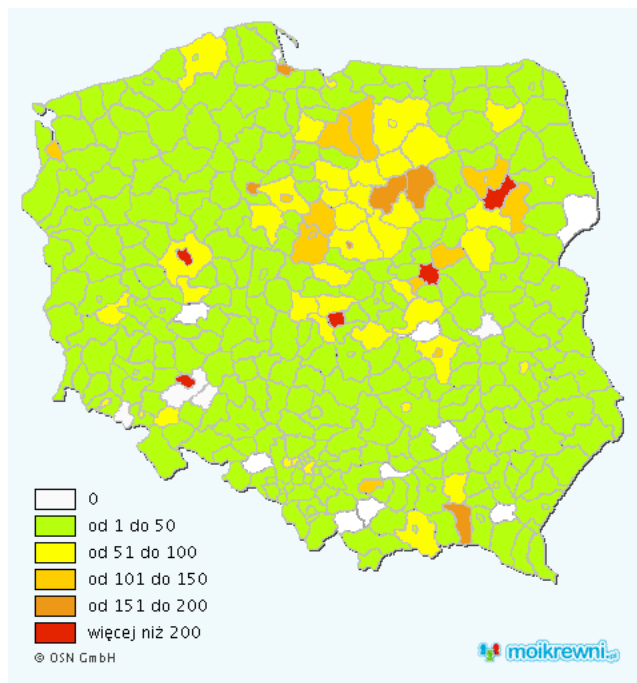
As for **Krejewska**, that would be the traditional feminine form of the surname **Krejewski**, pronounced roughly “cray-EFF-skee.” But that name has apparently died out in Poland. Neither the Moikrewni site, with 2002 data, nor the site <http://www.herby.com.pl/indexslo.html>, with 1990 data, shows any Polish citizens going by either form of the name.

It could be the name was misspelled at some point, and the original form was not **Krejewski**. I should point out, however, that Prof. Rymut lists a great many names in which an *-a-* in standard Polish was modified to *-e-* in northern Polish. He does not list *Krejewski*, but under surnames beginning with *Kraj-* he lists such forms as *Krej*, *Kreja*, *Krejanowicz*, and so on—northern Polish variants of names that would appear as *Kraj*, *Kraja*, *Krajanowicz*, etc.

That being said, it is plausible that *Krejewski* was a northern Polish variant of **Krajewski**, a name pronounced roughly “krah-YEFF-skee” that is very much alive modern Poland. The Herby.com.pl site showed 25,784 Polish citizens by that name (including females named **Krajewska**) as of 1990. The Moikrewni site shows 13,343 *Krajewskis* and 14,278 *Krajewskas*. They lived all over the country, with no particular concentration in any one area. I have pasted in the map for the masculine form at right; it’s available online at <http://www.moikrewni.pl/mapa/kompletny/krajewski.html>. The feminine version can be found at <http://www.moikrewni.pl/mapa/kompletny/krajewska.html>.

Rymut says the name *Krajewski* appears in Polish records as early as 1387, and indicates family origin in or near any of a number of villages with names such as *Krajewice*, *Krajewo*, *Krajowice*, *Krajów*, etc. There’s no way to tell from the surname alone which place the surname refers to in a given family’s case. Only research into the family history might shed light on that, by establishing exactly where in Poland the family came from, and thus allowing you to focus on a place nearby with a name beginning *Krajew-* or *Krajow-*.

I have no way of knowing whether **Krejewski** was a northern Polish version of this **Krajewski** that has since died out. It could be the name was originally something quite different, and it has been mangled past recognition. But it is plausible to suggest this connection, and it might give you something to work with.



Map showing the distribution of the surname **Krajewski** as of 2002.