The Estate of Łachwa of Prince Nicholas Christopher Radziwiłł (1549-1616)

A Contribution to the Study of the Historical Geography and Economy of Southern Byelorussia

BY

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The estate of Łachwa,¹ in southern Byelorussia (Polesie), was one of the largest private estates in that part of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. On the basis of a number of documents found in the Radziwiłł Archive of the Main Archive of Ancient Acts (AGAD) in Warsaw, it is possible to reconstruct the early composition of that estate, and its location on the administrative map of the Grand Duchy. Furthermore, it is also possible to establish with some degree of precision when the centre of that estate, the village of Łachwa, became a town. Finally, the surviving documents make it possible to comment on the general character of the economy of the Łachwa estate.

I

The earliest history of the estate of Łachwa, in central Polesie, cannot be reconstructed accurately, because of the lack of relevant documents.² It is certain, however, that Łachwa, similarly to Nieśwież and Ołyka, passed into the hands of the Radziwiłłs by means of the marriage of Anna (or Hanna) Kiszka to Jan Radziwiłł, Prince Nicholas Christopher's grandfather. This acquisition, initially, did not carry with it complete hereditary rights. Rather, between 1533 and 1588, most of the estate was shared by the Radziwiłłs with their relatives, the Kiszkas [własność niedzielna]. The estate was formally divided into two parts on March 23, 1588.³ In order to obtain a full picture of what Prince Nicholas Christopher owned in Łachwa, it is necessary to investigate what was in his hands before 1588, and what he owned after that date.

The earliest available specific information on Prince Radziwiłł's Łachwa is given in a document dated October 28, 1577. This is a tax receipt issued by Szczęsny Welaminowicz Rutski, the collector (poborca) of the county (powiat) of Nowogródek, to Wojciech Pierszko, a representative of Prince Nicholas Christopher. The receipt is for taxes paid for the defence of the state, from Nieśwież and from other estates belonging to it: Lipsk, Łachwa and Szack ('... do toho zamkhu nesvizhskoho nalezhachikh, to iest z Lipska, z Lakhvy i Shatska ...').⁴ Unfortunately, the document does not specify what the estate of Łachwa consisted of in 1577. The receipt mentions by name only two of Łachwa's villages: Kormyż and Hocka Łuka. These two villages were ap-
'Lachwa, Wielcze, between provide Starosta dymy. The rest of Lachwa is represented by 261 dymy plus 27 and two parts of służby (in Czuczewicze). The next surviving document shedding some light on the territorial composition of Lachwa was issued in 1581. This is the register of the wloka survey of Prince Nicholas Christopher’s share in Lachwa. It lists the names of seven villages, their cultivated area (in włoiki and morgi), the number of households (dymy) in each place, and the financial obligation to the Prince from each morga of land. The villages mentioned are: Lachwa, Horodziec, Wiczyn, Oziernica, Sinkiewicze, Sitnica, and Wielcze. The total cultivated area comes up to 155 włoiki and 12 1/2 morgi, with 198 peasant households. This figure, however, does not include Czuczewicze, which was not surveyed, and villages adjacent to it.

Tax receipts for the years 1582 and 1583, besides giving some information about the economic structure of Lachwa belonging to Prince Radziwiłł, provide some additional information about the extent of the estate. In them, the tax collector of Nowogródek, Wasyl Zienkiewicz Tichiński, acknowledges the receipt of payment from the Prince’s administrator (namiestnik) in Lachwa, Wawrzyniec Kiernożycki, from 284 households (dymy) and from 53 3/5 sułaby (including 2 belonging to the Orthodox church). The receipts also show that nothing was paid from 11 dymy which had become deserted. It is somewhat surprising that the two receipts state that there are no ‘measured włoiki’ in Lachwa (‘... volok vymeronykh net tolko ot slu­zhob z dymov...’), and that the tax is collected from sułaby and dymy. After all, Wawrzyniec Kiernożycki, the Prince’s official in Lachwa, to whom the receipts were made out, also signed the register of the wloka survey in 1581. Perhaps it was more convenient, for tax purposes, to continue with the old system of dymy and sułaby.

The best available, although far from complete, information on Prince Nicholas Christopher’s holding in Lachwa, shortly before the formal division of the estate between the Prince and Jan Kiszka, the Starosta of Samogitia, is provided in the summary of income from Prince Radziwiłł’s estates of June 1587. The ‘Summary of 1587’ itemizes the income for the following villages comprising the estate of Lachwa: Lachwa, Horodziec, Wiczyn, Oziernica, Sinkowice, Sitnice, Wielcze, Czuczewicze, Kormyż, Hocka Łuka. The significant difference between this list and that in the ‘Register of the wloka survey of 1581’ is that the latter document includes Czuczewicze and the two adjacent villages of Kormyż and Hocka Łuka. Unfortunately, this document, similarly to the ones considered earlier, does not provide adequate information on the total area of the estate, nor on the Prince’s actual holdings in each of the villages belonging to it. In short, it is not possible to delimit Radziwiłł’s Lachwa on the basis of surviving pre-1588 materials.

Lachwa’s legal status was altered in March of 1588, with the
formal division of the estate between Prince Nicholas Christopher Radziwiłł and Jan Kiszka. Agreements of this nature were quite common throughout the Grand Duchy of Lithuania at that time. They marked a steady movement towards individual property, a prerequisite of a more efficient use of land in a developing market-orientated economy. The document sanctioning the division of Łachwa into two parts recalled the time when the estate was held equally between the two families: 'Imienie nasho... v povietie novohrodskom lezhashchoie nazvanoie Laffa... z produkov nasyhkh pravom pryrozhonym zarovno nalezhachooie...'. Then it assigned to Jan Kiszka the villages of Horodziec (later the town of Kożanogródek), Wiczyn, Dworzec, a part of Oziernica (Jeziernica), Mała Łachewka (later Łachówka), Sienkiewicze, Sytnica, Wilcza, and Zaslucze. The villages of Kormyż and Hocka Łuka were to be divided later. This document apparently formalized a de facto situation which had existed in the area much earlier—an east-west division of the original estate. It seems quite certain that Radziwiłł never had a claim to the villages of Wołuta and Dworzec, and that Kiszka, in turn, never had a share in the villages of Sinkiewicze, Sytnica, or Wilcza.

Prince Nicholas Christopher's only territorial acquisition in the area of Łachwa consisted of parts of the villages of Maleszewo, Siemiośćcicze, and Jurkowicze. The three villages did not form a compact whole, their lands still governed by the archaic system of służby, spread on both sides of the Nowogródek-Pińsk county boundary. Prince Radziwiłł leased all of Maleszewo, Siemiośćcicze, and Jurkowicze, between 1583 and 1587. In 1601, he purchased the part of the three villages (approximately one third of the whole) belonging to Krzysztof Moniwid Dorohostajski.

The best approximation of what the estate of Łachwa consisted of in 1616, the year of Prince Nicholas Christopher Radziwiłł's death, can be made on the basis of an inventory of the estate made in 1626. The document lists the following place-names: the town of Łachwa, and the villages of Lubaczyn, Jeziernica, Luboń, Mała Łachewka, Wilcza, Maleszewo, Siemiośćcicze, Zaslucze, Jurkowicze, Sytnica, Sinkiewicze. Czuczewicze with adjacent villages is considered a separate estate (własć); however, its very inclusion in the inventory of the estate of Łachwa clearly indicates its close association with that estate. The 'estate' of Czuczewicze consisted of the two villages of Czuczewicze (later Wielkie Cz. and Małe Cz.), Krasna Wola, Hocka Łuka, and Borowiki. As is readily apparent, several place-names mentioned in the 1626 inventory did not appear in the document formalizing the division of the estate in 1588. Of these Maleszewo, Siemiośćcicze, and Jurkowicze, as was already noted, correspond to areas bought in 1601. Czuczewicze was not included in the 1588 document because its legal status was apparently not the same as the rest of the estate of Łachwa. Borowiki was the name assigned to the Radziwiłł share of Kormyż. Łachwa, mentioned as a town in 1626, and not as a village, as in the 1588 document, gained its new status probably in the early 1590s.
three place-names not mentioned in the pre-1626 documents already examined are: Lubaczyn, Luboń, and Krasna Wola. These three villages could quite possibly have been settled by Radziwiłł, and they possibly did not constitute a part of the traditional area of Łachwa considered 'common' property with the Kiszkas. The village of Luboń is first mentioned in the Łachwa documents in 1589. Lubaczyn and Krasna Wola are not mentioned in any existing pre-1626 documents, although it is probable that they existed earlier. In short, the estate of Łachwa presented in the inventory made in 1626 probably approximated very closely the territorial composition of the estate at least a decade earlier.

The map which accompanies this article illustrates the effects of the foregoing discussion. The result which was obtained is somewhat imprecise, largely because of the fragmentary nature of the source material. AGAD's cartographic collection of the former Nieśwież Radziwiłł Archive includes no map of the whole nor of any substantial part of the Łachwa properties. Therefore, the map included with this article is a summary result of 16th- and 17th-century boundary data plotted on small-scale 19th-century Russian and 20th-century Polish military mapping.

II

The administrative status of Łachwa in the latter part of the 16th century was not definitely established. Before the reform of 1565-6 Łachwa was a part of the county (powiat) of Nowogródek. The administrative reform created a number of new territorial divisions in the Grand Duchy. One of these, the województwo of Brześć, or more precisely, its eastern powiat of Pińsk, partially overlapped with the southern territories of the województwo of Nowogródek. The problem was created by the issuing of two conflicting royal charters, one for Nowogródek, and the second for Pińsk. The Nowogródek charter, dated 30 April 1565, stated that the boundary of that powiat should reach the bridge on the river Jasiłda, one Lithuanian mile (7.7 km) from Pińsk. The document for Pińsk, issued on 28 January 1566, described the northern boundary of that powiat as: '...ot Turova u vierkh reki Prypjeti zaimuiuchy Lakhvie i Khotienichy i Vyholoshu bolotami i u Oziero Svietskoie etc.' Since most of his major estates were located in the county of Nowogródek, Prince Nicholas Christopher Radziwiłł continued to recognize the exclusive jurisdiction of Nowogródek over Łachwa with regard to payment of taxes and all other legal matters. Apparently, the Prince preferred to deal with the Nowogródek administration, because his wealth and influence in that county was much greater than in Pińsk. His consistent disregard for the equally legitimate claims of Pińsk led to protracted legal proceedings in the Lithuanian Tribunal. The matter was settled in 1600 by King Sigismund III. The royal decision recognized the Pińsk-Nowogródek boundary as following the Prypeć and Bobryk rivers. The document further stipulated that Chotynicz and Rozdziałowicze should belong to Pińsk, and Kamień, Łunin, and Łachwa
to Nowogródek. Łachwa continued as a part of the powiat of Nowogródek well into the 17th century.29

III

The centre of the Łachwa estate, the village of Łachwa, became a town sometime between 1588 and 1593. The agreement between Prince Radziwiłł and Jan Kiszka for the division of the estate, signed in March 1588, referred to Łachwa as a village (solo).30 However, a document dated 23 February 1593 speaks of Łachwa as a town (mesto) and of its inhabitants as townspeople (meshchanie).31 After 1593, Łachwa is consistently referred to as a town. Thus, a tax receipt for 1596 describes Łachwa as a town paying the tax from 7 houses in the town-square, 60 street houses, and 20 poor dwellings (chatupy niedzne), 2 craftsmen, 4 tenants without cattle, 4 vendors, and one mill-wheel.32 The first princely charter for the town of Łachwa dates from 29 January 1608.33 It lists the various responsibilities of the townspeople with regard to transportation service, honey tribute, fishing, support of the Orthodox church (cerkiew) in Łachwa, and various emergencies.

IV

Due to the marshy, wooded character of the terrain, the economy of the estate of Łachwa differed considerably from that of the other estates of Prince Nicholas Christopher. Apparently, grain farming played a relatively small role in the economy of the estate. The 1587 ‘summary of income’ listed only cash and honey tribute from Łachwa.34 It made no mention of tribute (dziakto) in rye, oats, geese, and chickens, the usual income from other Radziwiłł estates. Fishing, because of the great number of rivers, rivulets, and lakes was important.35 Another major part of Łachwa’s economy was connected with the forest. It provided the building material, the fuel, and the honey required by the manor and the local inhabitants. Hunting was also important in the estate of Łachwa. A special regulation on hunting in the forests of Łachwa was issued in 1608.36 It did not restrict hunting, but it obliged the hunter to turn in most of his kills to the Prince. Lynx, elk, deer, boar, and bear all belonged to Radziwiłł, without compensation to the hunter. Fur-bearing animals, such as wolf, fox, and marten could be taken freely, but the Prince’s official reserved the right to purchase the skins in accordance with a detailed pre-established price list.37 Smaller game was not mentioned in the hunting ordinance. Evidently, it was so plentiful that it did not require special regulation. Money obtained from hunting probably helped many of Łachwa’s subjects in the payment of their annual cash tribute to the Prince. All in all, hunting may have played a major role in the economy of this land of forests and swamps.
# Toponymy of Łachwa and its region

| Polish             | Byelorussian                      |
|--------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Borowikł           | Baraviki                          |
| Chotynicze         | Chatyničy                         |
| Chrystybołtów      | Chryścibalavičy                   |
| Czernczyce         | Čenčičy                           |
| Czuczewicze        | Čučavičy                          |
| Dawidgródek        | Davyd-Haradok                     |
| Dworzeck           | Dworec                             |
| Hocka Luka         | Hock                              |
| Horodzlec (by mid-1590s: Kożanrődek) | Kożan-Haradok                 |
| Jezierńica         | Azjarnica                         |
| Jurkowicze         | Jurkavičy                         |
| Kamień             | Kamień                            |
| Krasna Wola        | Čyrvonaja Vola                    |
| Kupieczycze        | Kupliciéy                         |
| Kormyź             | Kormůž                            |
| Lenin              | Lenin                             |
| Lubaczyn           | Lubačyn                           |
| Luboń              | Luboň                             |
| Ludzieńiewicze     | Ludzianievičy                     |
| Łachwa             | Łachva                            |
| Ługi               | Łuhi                              |
| Łunin              | Łunin                             |
| Małaszewo          | Malešava                          |
| Mała Łachewka      | Łachaǔka                          |
| Pińsk              | Pinsk                             |
| Pohost             | Pahost Zaharodskî                   |
| Puzicze            | Puzičy (?)                        |
| Rozdziałowicze     | Raździaĺavičy                     |
| Sliemłośnicze      | Sliamłośčičy                      |
| Sinkiewicze        | Sinkievičy                        |
| Starobin           | Starobin                          |
| Statyczew          | Stytyčava                         |
| Stawek             | Stavok                            |
| Sytnica            | Sytnica                           |
| Turów              | Turaũ                             |
| Wiczyn             | Vičyn                             |
| Wilica             | Višča                             |
| Woluta             | Vieluta                           |
| Zaslucze           | Zaslučy (?)                       |

### Rivers

| Polish          | Byelorussian |
|-----------------|--------------|
| Bobryk          | Bobryk       |
| Cna             | Cna          |
| Horyń           | Haryń        |
| Jasiołda        | Jasielďa     |
| Łań             | Łań          |
| Morocz          | Morač        |
| Pina            | Pina         |
| Prypeć          | Pryplač      |
| Sluč             | Sluč         |
| Styr             | Styr         |
| Viatlica        | Viatlica     |
NOTES:

1. For reasons of personal convenience, I have used modern Polish spelling of geographical and family names. Modern Byelorussian forms are provided for place- and river-names included on the map which accompanies this article. I wish to thank Mr J. Dingley for his assistance with the English transcription of some of the Byelorussian geographical place-names listed in the table accompanying the map.

2. See for example the confusing account in Jan Jakubowski, ‘Czy istnieli kniaziowie nieświeyscy?’, Ateneum Wileński, r. I, 1923, p. 5.

3. Archiwum Główne Akt Dawnych – Archiwum Radziwiłłów [hereafter cited as AGAD-AR], XXII, Teka 86: ‘Łachwa: Akty ściągające się do dziedzictwa’, no. 6.

4. AGAD-AR, XXIII, Teka 87: ‘Łachwa: Kwity’.

5. Ibid.

6. Ibid.

7. AGAD-AR, XXIII, Teka 88: ‘Łachwa: Rozmaitości’, ‘Reistr pomiary i morgowania ziemi siół włości Łachewskiej A’ 1581’.

8. Ibid. Place-names here are spelled as in the cited document.

9. In the 15th century Czuczewicze was associated with Nieśwież (see my ‘The Niaswiż Estates’, p. 54). Apparently it passed into the hands of the Radziwiłłs together with Nieśwież, a little earlier than Łachwa. However, the adjoining villages of Hocka Łuka and Kormyz were acquired together with Łachwa. This is probably why Czuczewicze gradually came to be associated with the estate of Łachwa, a little closer to it than Nieśwież, although still quite inaccessible because of extensive swamps and forests between the Łuń and the Cna Rivers. In the early 17th century, Czuczewicze and several villages south of it constituted a subdivision of the estate (as in the inventory of Łachwa from 1626: AGAD-AR, XXV, no. 2162).

10. AGAD-AR, XXIII, Teka 87: ‘Łachwa: Kwity’.

11. See note 7.

12. AGAD-AR, XI, Koperta 84 (formerly doc. no. 383): ‘Zebranie sumatim wszystkich dochodów imion niektórych Jasnie Oswieconego Xlazecia Pana Mikolaia Chrzistopha Radziulilla, w roku terazniejysym tysiancplencset osmdziesiat slodnym diebus mensis Junijs prawione’.

13. On common property (utazość niedzielna) in the Grand Duchy see: Juliusz Bardach, ‘Niedział w statutach litewskich na tle praktyki’, Studia z ustrój i prawa Wielkiego Księstwa Litewskiego XIV-XVII w., Białystok, 1970, pp. 113-73 (especially p. 170).

14. AGAD-AR, XXIII, Teka 86: ‘Łachwa: Akta ściągające się do dziedzictwa’, no. 6.

15. AGAD-AR, XXIII, Teka 88: ‘Maleszów: Rozmaitości’, no. 4; and ‘Summary of 1587’, p. 91.

16. AGAD-AR, XXIII, Teka 88: ‘Maleszów: Akta ściągające się do dziedzictwa’.

17. AGAD-AR, XXV, no. 2162. This is the earliest available complete inventory of the estate. Unfortunately, the document is badly preserved and certain portions of it are practically illegible.

18. Ibid. The place-name Borowiki is followed by the note ‘z Kormyż’. This would indicate that Borowiki was the name given to the part of Kormyż which was assigned to Radziwill following the division of Hocka Łuka and Kormyż in 1588.

19. See note 9.

20. See note 18.

21. See the discussion later in this article.

22. AGAD-AR, XXIII, Teka 86: ‘Łachwa: Akta nańa na grunta wsi łachewskiej Lubonia’, no. 1. This document is a letter from Prince Nicholas Christopher to Wawryniec Kiernożycki, his official in Łachwa, requesting him to hand over Luboń to Mikołaj Turczyn for life (probably in exchange for a gift or loan of money to the Prince).
23. Information on the northern, western, and the southern boundaries is contained in the following sources: Archeograficzski sbornik dokumentow otnosjałcych się k
istorii Severozapadnej Rusi, vol. IX, pp. 84-5; Replika Prokuratora Jeneralnego
Massy funduszów J. O. Kieżwiczki Józef Stanisław Radziwiłłowy (Józefa Karczewskiego
adwokata sądu głównego ltt. Wilen.) w sprawie z J. O. Kieżwiczka Antonin
Radziwiłłiem Wielkorządcą Poznańskim co do oddziału Ordynacji, częście II.
pp. 100-7; the Radziwiłł-Klisza agreement of 1586 formalizing the division of Łachwa
(AGAD-AR, XXIII, Tekla 86).

Maleszewo, Siermiłoszczyce, and Jurkowicze present a special problem because their
lands were not surveyed and were only partially owned by the Prince. The eastern
boundary follows Jan Jakubowski's delineation of the boundary between the Princi-
pality of Słuck and the pre-1566 county of Nowogródek (Wielkie Księstwo Litewskie
w połowie XVI wieku; część północna, Lwów 1927). Of some help in drawing the map
was also an inventory of Łachwa made about 1672 (AGAD-AR, XXV, no. 2161). It
should be emphasized that most of the outside boundaries of the estate of Łachwa
had very little meaning in the 16th and the 17th centuries since most of the area
was occupied by swamps and forests.

24. Jakubowski, op.cit., pp. 7 and 14, and map.

25. Mentioned in AGAD-AR, XXIII, Tekla 87: 'Łachwa: Rozmaitości'; 'Wypis z Xiąg Ziemi-
skich Pińskich acykowania listu rozgraniczenia Powiatu Nowogródzkiego od Pińskiego
dat. 1602'.

26. AGAD-AR, XXIII, Tekla 87: 'Łachwa: Rozmaitości', pp. 48-65. 'Widimus z ksiąg głów-
nych Trybunalskich odprawowanych w Nowogródku (28 Nov., 1596)'.

27. AGAD-AR, XXIII, Tekla 87: 'Łachwa: Rozmaitości' contains dozens of pages of
documents relating to these matters. They provide adequate material for a separate
study of legal proceedings.

28. 'Pochinalucli ot ustia reki Sluchi u Pripet, Pripetiu u horu azh do ustia reki Bobrka,
Bobrkom u horu azh do toho mesta hdle rechka Bobrok pochinalet ...' (AGAD-AR,
XXIII, Tekla 87: 'Łachwa: Rozmaitości', pp. 127-33).

29. The administrative status of a small portion of Radziwiłł's estate of Łachwa: Male-
szewo, Siermiłoszczyce, and Jurkowicze, remained unclear in the early 17th century.
The Prince acquired hereditary rights to a part of these villages in 1601, after
the royal decision on the Nowogródek-Pińsk boundary was already issued. The purchase
document refers to these settlements as lying in both (!?) Nowogródek and Pińsk.
However, the only surviving tax receipt for these three villages, from 1622, indicates
that they belonged administratively to Pińsk (AGAD-AR, XXIII, Tekla 88: 'Maleszów:
Akta ściagającej się do dziedzictwa'). On the other hand, a tax receipt for what
appears to be the entire estate of Łachwa, from 1624, was issued by Samuel
Maskiewicz, the tax collector of Nowogródek (AGAD-AR, XXIII, Tekla 87: 'Łachwa:
Kwity').

Interestingly enough, the 1613 edition of the Radziwiłł Map of Lithuania shows
Łachwa within the confines of the powiat of Pińsk. This may very well be another
piece of evidence that the work on the famous Radziwiłł Map was completed much
earlier than 1613 — at least before the royal decree of 19 April 1600 on the delineation
of the Pińsk-Nowogródek boundary.

Much remains to be done on the evolution of administrative boundaries in the
Grand Duchy of Lithuania, following the reform of 1565-6. The latest contribution,
the map of 16th-century Byelorussia by M. F. Spiridonov, included in the 12th volume
of the Byelorussian Soviet Encyclopedia (Minsk, 1975), is a considerable improvement
on the earlier Polish and Russian works. Nevertheless, his delineation of the Pińsk-
Nowogródek boundary appears to be substantially incorrect.

30. See note 14.

31. AGAD-AR, XXIII, Tekla 87: 'Akta miejskie Łachewskie', 'Wypis z ksiąg grodzkich
zamku pińskiego pod datą 26 Feb. 1593'.

32. AGAD-AR, XXIII, Tekla 87: 'Łachwa: Kwity', no. 4 (signed by Adam Poczepowski, tax
collector of Nowogródek).

33. AGAD-AR, XXIII, Tekla 87: 'Akta miejskie Łachewskie', 'Ustawa Mieszczanom Ła-
chowskim według Inwentarza Xcia Msc Pana Wolewody Wilenskiego Panom Dzier-
żawcom teraźniejszym i napotem będącym podana Roku 1608 Mscia January 29 dnia' (available only in copies dated 1668 and 1727).

34. See note 12.

35. Fishing was especially important in villages along the Prypeć. Several surviving inventories of the villages of Maleszewo and Siemiłożcicze (1576, 1583-5, 1599, 1600) detail the peasants' fishing obligations (AGAD-AR, XXIII, Teka 88: 'Maleszów').

36. AGAD-AR, XXIII, Teka 88: 'Łachwa: Rozmaitości' (document signed by Andrzej Skorulski in Nieśwież, May 15, 1608).

37. Ibid. '... za wilka dobrego kopa groszy
za wilka podłego 40 groszy
za lisa dobrego 24 groszy
za lisa podłego 16 groszy
za kuncję dobrą 24 groszy
za kuncję średnią 15 groszy
za kuncję podłą 12 groszy...'