Research Article

Anna Pytasz-Kołodziejczyk*

The aquatic resources of the royal lands in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania in times of the last Jagiellonians (in view of legal norms)

<https://doi.org/10.1515/openps-2019-0005>

received December 28, 2018; accepted July 30, 2019.

Abstract: In the 13th and the 14th century, grand dukes had the exclusive right to dispose of aquatic resources of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and they kept it up to the 15th century despite the distribution of rights to royal aquatic resources which lasted since the reign of Vytautas. Aquatic resources of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania could be used not only by their heritable owners and lessees, but also by local people who were allowed to fish ducal lakes and rivers by virtue of the customary law.

Since the second decade of the 16th century, grand dukes became more and more interested in the economic productivity of royal land of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, and in particular in the exploitation of the aquatic resources. It was mainly caused by the increasing financial needs of the Lithuanian treasury connected with the Muscovite-Lithuanian wars and the economic activities of Queen Bona and Sigismund II Augustus. The monarchs signed legal regulations, which concerned their royal land in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. These regulations provided better management of the royal land and protected fish from excessive catch.

Keywords: aquatic resources, legal regulations, the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, protection, use, Jagiellonians.

1 Introduction

In the 13th and the 14th century, grand dukes had the exclusive right to dispose of aquatic resources of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and they kept it up until the 15th century despite the distribution of rights to royal aquatic resources which had lasted since the reign of Vytautas. Aquatic resources of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania could be used not only by their heritable owners and lessees, but also by local people who were allowed to fish ducal lakes and rivers by virtue of the customary law. Numerous rich-in-fish lakes and rivers had been exploited by local people “for ages”.

The customary right to exploit rivers and lakes impeded the management of fish resources which enforced the creation of numerous restrictions and bans in the 16th century. The economic significance of aquatic resources increased in those days, however, and the number of people entitled to fish in rivers and lakes of the discussed area, increased as well.

First attempts to regulate the issues connected with the exploitation of aquatic resources, especially in terms of proprietary rights, were made in the *First Statute of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania* which came into power in 1529 in Vilnius. The *Forest Law Act* from 1567 introduced the regulations on the use of the royal lakes and rivers. The Act also regulated issues of fish protection, especially during their period of spawning.

Since the second decade of the 16th century, grand dukes became more and more interested in the economic productivity of royal land of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and, in particular, in the exploitation of the aquatic resources. It was mainly caused by the increasing financial needs of the Lithuanian treasury connected with the Muscovite-

*Corresponding author: Anna Pytasz-Kołodziejczyk, University of Warmia and Mazury in Olsztyn, Faculty of History and International Relations, Olsztyn, Poland, E-mail: anna.kolodziejczyk@uwm.edu.pl

Lithuanian wars and the economic activities of Queen Bona and Sigismund II Augustus. The monarchs signed legal regulations, which concerned their royal land in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. These regulations provided better management of the royal land and protected fish from excessive catching.

2 Discussion and results:

The scientific research on the history of Grand Duchy of Lithuania in the Jagiellonian era, being conducted nowadays in the Polish scientific community as well as among foreign historians, does not place particular emphasis on the economic history of this country. Until recently, the forms of exploiting the natural resources of the geographical environment of Lithuania remained on the margin of their interest. Although in Polish historiography the use of primeval forest resources have been analysed, aquatic resources have not been taken into consideration¹. Evidently, they were one of the essential elements of the environment, which were the basis of the settlement and economic activity of the inhabitants of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. This specific role of hydrographical structure in shaping the forms of human activity is widely accentuated in contemporary historiography, taking into account the changes of the geographical environment caused by human activity.

Aquatic resources of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, but only with reference to Braslav and Dzisna counties, have been thoroughly discussed by Otto Hedemann in a classic paper *Primeval forests and waters*, Vilnius 1934. Although it contains remarks on the general situation in Lithuania, many aspects require updating due to the discovery of newer sources and research methods. The only scientist whose papers concerned the aquatic resources of Grodno region solely from the hydronymic/onomastic point of view, was Knut-Olof Falk, who has undertaken the publication of extremely valuable sources regarding the history of the region, including *Regestr spisania jezior* from 1569. The lakes of the former western Grodno region in the limnological sense have been described by Bazyli Czczuga and Alfred Lityński, who relied on the *Regestr spisania jezior*.

Therefore, it is evident that scientists have not been particularly interested in the very important issue of the use of the aquatic resources in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and their impact on the economic activity conducted there in the Jagiellonian era by the representatives of the dynasty and other private landowners. The need to deal with this subject was very visible, especially with regard to increasing scientific enquiries leading to recognizing and understanding the mutual influence of humans and environment.

The analysis of legal regulations concerning the exploitation of aquatic resources of the royal lands in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania in the 16th century is not a frequently mentioned subject. Although historians studying the Grand Duchy of Lithuania have repeatedly characterised its legislation, they have not actually analysed it in terms of the exploitation, administration and protection of the aquatic resources².

Some more attention has been devoted to the above-mentioned regulations in relation to the reign of Sigismund II Augustus (with numerous references to the decrees during the reign of Sigismund I the Old) by Władimir I. Piczeta in his monographs. Writing about economic reforms of the grand dukes, this researcher has discussed the general outlines of *Ustawa na voloki* of 1557 and *Ustawa leśna* of 1567³. He has also examined the previous economic acts of the years 1514–1534, placing emphasis on their influence on the changes in the functioning of royal lands as far as management

1 A. Kołodziejczyk [A. Pytasz-Kołodziejczyk], *Primeval forests in Podlasie, their settlement and division in 15th and 16th centuries*, in: *Grand-Ducal primeval forests in the northern Podlasie and western Grodno region in the 15th and 16th century (division, administration, forest and water services)*, edited by J. Śliwiński, Olsztyn 2007, pp 193-248.

2 J. Bardach, *The Statutes of Lithuania in their Legal and Cultural Environment*, in: idem, *On Former and Recent Lithuania*, Poznań 1988, pp 9–71; J. Bardach, *Studies on the System and Legislation of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania of the 14th–17th cent.*, Warsaw 1970; J. Jurginis, *Litovskij Statut – pamjatinik istorii prava i kultury Wielikogo Knjażestwa Litovskogo*, in: *Pierwyj litovskij Statut 1529 g*, Wilno 1982, pp 14–19; K. Avižonis, *Lietuvos Statutai*, in: idem, *Rinktiniai raštai*, t. 2, Rzym 1978, pp 3–170; S. Lazutka, *Litovskij Statut – feodalnyj kodeks Wielikogo Knjażestwa Litovskogo*, Wilno 1973; K. Jablonskis, *Lietuvos valstybės ir teisės istorija nuo XIV a. pabaigos iki XVI a. vidurio*, Wilno 1971; W. T. Paszuto, *Obrazowanie litowskiego gosudarstwa*, Moskwa 1959; M. Lubawskij, *Oblastnoje dielenie i miestnoje upravljenje Litovsko-russkogo gosudarstva ko vremeni izdania pierwago Litovskago Statuta*, Moskwa 1892; idem, *Oczerk istorii Litovsko-russkogo gosudarstva do Lublinskoj unii wkluczitielno*, Moskwa 1910; M. F. Władimirskij-Budanow, *Oczerki po istorii litovsko-russkogo prava*, t. 12, Kijów 1889–1890; T. Czacki, *On Lithuanian and Polish Laws, their Spirit, Sources, Connection and Things Included in the First Statute of Lithuania Issued In 1529*, vol. 1–2, Warsaw 1800–1801.

3 W. I. Piczeta, *Agramaja reforma Sigizmunda Awgusta w Litovsko-Russkim gosudarstwie*, part 2, ed. 2, Moskwa 1958, pp 183–214; pp 263–268.

and the exploitation of dependent population are concerned. However, he has not been particularly interested in those changes with regard to water resources in the Grand-Ducal lands until the 16th century. Similarly, although not in detail, the Jagiellonian economic reforms since 1514 have been described by Władysław Pocięcha in his dissertation about Queen Bona⁴.

It is also worth mentioning that historiography generally lacks comprehensive analysis of the economics of aquatic resources in Grand-Ducal royal lands. Some references to *Ustawa na voloki* and fishery in the Grand Duchy have been made in the third volume of Aleksander Jabłonowski's monumental work, issued at the beginning of the 20th century, but they have only related to Podlasie in the 16th century⁵. From this perspective, the Grodzieńszczyzna region, specifically Perstuńska and Przelomska Primeval Forests, although mainly in the context of one of the sources – *Regestr spisania jezior J.K. Mości, ku niewodnictwu Grodzieńskiemu i Przelomskiemu należących* of 1569 – has been described by Knut Olof Falk⁶. The topic of the lakes of the former Grodzieńszczyzna region, although mainly in the limnological aspect, has been covered in the works of Bazyli Cieczuga and Alfred Lityński⁷. Undoubtedly, it is impossible to ignore the materials composed by Jerzy Wiśniewski in which, along with the description of the development of the settlement in former Podlasie and Grodzieńszczyzna, there are also numerous references to the aforementioned issues⁸. Fish farming in royal lands of Podlasie (mainly in the Knyszyn district) has recently been discussed by Józef Maroszek⁹.

The last Jagiellonians, due to increasing possibilities of economic exploitation of their lands and financial needs of the Treasury of the Grand Duchy, started to place emphasis on better management, protection and use of natural resources of Lithuania. In relation to aquatic and forest resources, Sigismund I Old, inspired by the activities of Queen Bona, started to depart from their current use, focused mainly on maintaining the hunting royal privileges. At that time, the considerable potential of the Lithuanian waters and forests was discovered. That activity was continued by Sigismund II Augustus, whose reign was during a period of economic transformation of the Grand-Ducal lands in Lithuania.

Similarly to the forest, numerous and rich in fish rivers and lakes of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania from the past were exploited by the local population. They were available not only to their hereditary or hired tenants, but also to the local population on the basis of the aforementioned inputs. In return, they gave part of their catch to the grand duke („hospodar”) - in the form of a fish tribute, a so-called fishing (fish) grove. This form of obligation is already recorded by sources in the 14th century and it was permanent, since it was still borne in the 16th century. However, it should be noted that, unlike hunting restrictions, the rulers did not specify the species of fish that could be fished and indicated the type of tools accepted for fishing. They were allowed to fish only for their own needs, using small fishing tools (eg fishing). In spite of everything, the fountains complicated the proper management of fish resources, enforcing special fortifications and prohibitions, multiplying especially in the 16th century.

Subject to the grand duke, boyars, the Church and towns also benefited from the law of fishing as part of grand-ducal assignments. There were frequent cases of granting such privileges for merits, known since the times of Duke Witold. Cities that received the right to fish in certain areas along with municipal privileges often gathered occupational fishermen - urban fishermen. For example, during the lustration carried out in Podlasie in 1576, seven fishermen were

4 W. Pocięcha, *Queen Bona (1494–1557). Times and People of the Renaissance*, vol. 3, Poznań 1958, pp 51–55, 69–74.

5 A. Jabłonowski, *Podlasie*, in: *Historical Sources*, vol. 17, part 3: *Poland of the 16th Century Geographically and Statistically*, vol. 6, part 3, Warsaw 1910, pp 160–164.

6 „Regestr spisania jezior J.K. Mości, ku niewodnictwu Grodzieńskiemu i Przelomskiemu należących 1569 r.”, in: K. O. Falk, *The Waters of Wigry and Hucianska. Toponomastic study*, parts 1, 2, Uppsala 1941, pp 1–11; the text of „Regestr” is also included in: K. O. Falk, *The Register of Lakes...of 1569*, „Acta Baltico-Slavica”, 1976, vol. 10, pp 92–99.

7 B. Cieczuga, *The Quatercentenary of Writing the Register (1569–1969) and the meaning of this dokument for the limnology*, „Białostoczczyzna”, 1970, vol. 10, pp 335–345; A. Lityński, *The Lakes of Suwalki and the fish inhabiting them in the light of data in the document of the 16th century*, „The Archive of Fishery Hydrobiology”, 1935, vol. 9, pp 123–124.

8 J. Wiśniewski, *The History of Settlement in Sejnenski District from 15th do 19th Century*, in: *Materials to the History of Sejnenska Land*, Białystok 1963, passim; idem, *The History of Settlement in Suwalki District from 15th to mid 17th century*, in: *The Studies and Materials to the History of Suwalki Region*, Białystok 1965, passim; idem, *The History of Settlement in Augustów District from 15th to the end of 17th century*, in: *The Studies and Materials to the History of Augustów Lake District*, edited by J. Antoniewicz, Białystok 1967, passim; idem, *The Settlement of Eastern Białystok Region: the origins, development, differentiation and ethnic shifts*, „Acta Baltico-Slavica”, 1977, vol. 11, passim.

9 J. Maroszek, *The Borderland of Lithuania and the Crown in the plans of king Sigimund Augustus. From the History of Realisation of Monarchal Thought between Niemen and Narew*, Białystok 2000, p. 281; idem, *The Valley of Nereśl in the Past*, „Białostoczczyzna”, 1997, no. 2, pp 3–19; idem, *The Valley of Biebrza in the Past till the end of 18th cent.*, „Białostoczczyzna”, 1995, no. 1, pp 1–21.

registered in the city of Narew, and at Tykocin, and it was reported that the number of fishermen amounted to almost thirty people. These were not the only cities in the region where we meet such fishermen.

Rivers and lakes were also largely directly exploited within the territory of the grand duchesses. A special group within the dependent population was used for this purpose - ospreys (terns, fishermen). In addition to fishing for the rulers, they also caught fish for their needs and for sale, but then, in exchange, they contributed tribute in fish or money to the grand-ducal treasury.

Their duties also included keeping all fishing equipment in good condition and controlling large-water reservoirs to protect against poaching. Fishermen were subject to the supremacy of the grand duke's ("hospodar") tenants. When they fished seine (meaning a large net with two wings with a span of up to 200 m, leading to a sack-shaped net), they were supervised by a duke's official or fishing master called "niewodniczy" (master of the seine). The subjects from the grand-ducal lands were also used for fishing service.

The changes mentioned above, carried along with the beginning of the 16th century, have caused that the current forms of obtaining fish have become inadequate. It was necessary to introduce in the technical scope available at that time, modern management, use and protection of natural water resources of the Grand Duchy with regard to hospodar property and to ensure the development of pond economy. The latter enabled the acquisition of fish in areas lacking lake water and deriving income from it.

On one hand, it was organized, on the one hand, where it was possible for environmental reasons, economic units called non-wards, were tasked to conduct fisheries management in lake waters with the aim of making the greatest profit. Non-practitioners included lake groups, and their exploitation was directed by non-miners - not fishermen anymore, but grand duke's officials. In Podlasie, poor in lake waters, there were no such units, however, they functioned in the Grodno region - they were Grodno and Przemyśl poviats.

In the Grodno inheritance in the mid-16th century, more than seventy fishermen were working, among whom there were fishing masters called "garmistrz" (they had the ability to determine the lake depths - that is, places favorable for fishing with a seine). These fishermen fished out several hundred tons of fish in the Grodno region, bringing significant profits to the last Jagiellonians.

In addition to fishermen working for the Grodno inheritance, the separate fishermen also fished for the needs of the foreman ("starosta") of Grodno, and employed hired laborers, whose services were also used.

In the 16th century, the nobility in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania became rich on trade in wood and grain. At the same time, the demand for food, including freshwater fish, was increasing. To satisfy the demand for restrictions on fishing in rivers or lakes, it was only possible by organizing fishponds. The increase in their number was particularly evident in Podlasie in private estates. Trouts, carp and others were bred in ponds.

Economic reasons, identical to those that caused restrictions on forest exploitation, were also introduced in relation to rivers and lakes in large-ducal estates.

Grand-Ducal legislation to the extent described in this article included two groups of legal regulations. Firstly, decrees – acts and constitutions determining the economic exploitation of these resources, within the hospodar's ownership in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. Secondly, general legal regulations, connected with the ownership and protection of lakes, ponds and rivers, included in the First and Second Statute of Lithuania at that time¹⁰.

The first one of the aforementioned economic regulations of the Jagiellonians was *Ustawa pisana dla wszystkich dworów Wileńskiego powiatu, tak i Trockiego* of 28th March 1514¹¹. Sigismund I Old, in reaction to poor economic health of the Grand-Ducal Treasury, issued an ordinance assumedly disciplining the hospodar tenants within the range of handing over the income, payable to the ruler due to the ownership of land estates – manors.

As follows from the ordinance, until that year, Sigismund I Old did not actually receive any additional income from the Vilnius and Trock counties since taking over the reign in Lithuania¹². The ordinance changed that state of affairs by determining precisely the functioning of the estates under the management of the tenants as well as the amount and type of income from the estates, which belonged to the ruler.

10 *Pirmasis Lietuvos Statutas. Tekstai senaja baltarusiu, lotynu ir senaja lenku kalbomis*, edited by S. Lazutka, I. Valikonyte, E. Gudravicius, part 1, Vilnius 1991; *Statut Wialikaga Kniastwa Litouskaga 1566 goda*, edited by T. I. Dounar, U. M. Satolin, Ja. A. Juho, Minsk 2003.

11 „Ustawa pisana dla wszystkich dworów Wileńskiego powiatu, tak i Trockiego”, in: M. Liubawskij, *Oblastnoje dielenije, Priloženija*, no. 23, pp XIX–XXI.

12 *Ibidem*, p. XIX.

Among these regulations, there are also two connected with aquatic resources. Firstly, the ruler decided that the tenants should check the number of beaver guards in the tenancies. In the places where there are too many of them for the purpose of the beaver protection, the unnecessary ones should be settled on land (“na wroce osaditi”) and charged annually with threescore of penny¹³. One of the reasons for this decision was undoubtedly the desire to protect the population of beavers from excessive yield. Moreover, he demanded that all the income from the lakes go to the Treasury. The tenants were allowed to fish only for their own needs¹⁴.

The next regulation – the act for Samogitian land from 21st October 1529 – was issued by Sigimund I Old with regard to the disastrous economic situation of the dependent population in the royal estates in Samogitia¹⁵. Along with the regulations concerning the general functioning of the estates in Samogitia (tax burden, labour, permissions of Grand-Ducal officials and economic recommendations connected with the economics of the estates) in relation to aquatic resources it was decided necessary for every subject to pay two pennies (“niewodnicze grosze”) in return for permission to fish in the hospodar’s lakes¹⁶. The date of charging was set for Christmas every year. It was also pointed out that this income would only serve the ruler and his successors¹⁷.

Attempts to regulate the problems connected with waters exploitation, especially in the context of the right to property, were made in the *First Statute of Lithuania*, adopted in parliament in Vilnius 1529¹⁸. *The First Statute* provided in this respect several regulations, included in two articles – article eight: “O prawach ziemskich, graniczach, miedzach i o kopach” and article nine “O łowjeh, puszczach, bartne drzewo, jeziora, bobrowe gonj, sokole gniazda i o chmieliszczach”, translating the existing state of affairs into law¹⁹. Naturally, those articles could not cover all the aspects of the cases resolved in Grand-Ducal courts. They concerned only the most important issues, being under the competence of the grand duke officials. This chapter lays down the legal proceedings in case of disputes connected with land ownership. In relation to aquatic resources, the procedures in the case of disputes about unlawful seizure of lakes or beaver harvesting were agreed on. In court, both parties were supposed to call eighteen witnesses each. Among those, the judges then chose six witnesses per party, who along with the parties took the oath, regarding the subject of a dispute²⁰.

Article twelve of chapter eight of the *First Statute of Lithuania* discussed the procedures in case the river was the common border of the estates. In case it changed its course, the former bed of the river was supposed to remain the border. The landlord who lost in that way the free access to the river, was allowed to use half of the river (along the border), to fish. However, if one of the landlords changed the course of the river by digging out the new bed, he had to repair the damage and turn the river into its old course. Moreover, he had to compensate for any other damage, such as destroyed beaver lodges²¹.

In the *Second Statute of Lithuania* from 1566 it was added that the catch taken from the border river belonged to the river-banks of both landlords. It was also pointed out that if the river washed out some sand and thus made the river-bank wider (“brzegu przyczyni”), that additional part of land should belong to the owner of the respective river-bank²².

Article 13 from chapter eight of the *First Statute* regulated the rules of the use of the river (or its fragment) along with the river-bank belonging solely to one estate. If the landlord left some mills on the land or built ponds flooding the neighbour’s mill, he would have to drain the water under supervision of the grand duke’s official (“wiż” – spy) and compensate the damage. If in similar circumstances the hay was sunk, the only solution would be to give different hay in

13 Ibidem, p. XX.

14 Ibidem.

15 „Konstytucja korolja jego miłosti Żikgimonta wsim poddanym tiwunstw ziemli Żomojtskoje uczynienaja”, in: *Lietuvos Metrika. Knyga Nr. 25 (1387–1546). Užrašymų knyga 25*, D. Atanavičius, A. Baliulis, Vilnius 1998, no. 77, pp 133–137. The Act was also printed in: *Akty odnosiaszczesja k istorii zapadnij Rossij, sobrannyje i izdannyje archeograficeskoju komissieju*, t. 2, 1506–1544, Sanktpetierburg 1848, pp 199–203, where the editor gives the date of „8 ili 20 janwaria 1529 god”. At the same time in his comments on page 203 he informs that in the documents of the Lithuanian Metrica there are two dates, 8th January and 21st October 1529, determining the date of this document, see ibidem, p. 203.

16 „Konstytucja korolja jego miłosti Żikgimonta”, p. 135.

17 Ibidem.

18 *Pirmasis Lietuvos Statutas*, p. 219.

19 Ibidem, p. 219–257.

20 Ibidem, p. 219.

21 Ibidem, p. 227.

22 *Statut Wialikaga Kniastwa Litouskaga 1566 goda*, p. 165.

return. If the person who suffered the damage did not agree to such compensation, his right to a different compensation would be withdrawn.

When building a causeway stretching to somebody's river bank, which would sink the hay or damage the pond, it would be possible – in accordance with the *First Statute* – to dig it up with no punishment: “bo nikto ni ma bes dozwozenia ku cudzemu brzegu grobliej zasypować ani stawu zaimać”²³. The 1566 *Second Statute* (article sixteen) confirmed those provisions²⁴.

Article 14 of the *First Statute of Lithuania* predicted the proceedings in the case of the suspicion that someone wanted to unlawfully build a pond by somebody else's bank or sink somebody's hay. In that situation the location should be checked in the presence of a spy (“wiż”) and the right to property should be determined under special guarantee (“zaruka”) ²⁵.

Chapter 9, article 3 of this *Statute*, guaranteed the landlord free use of the lakes even if the forest surrounding his lake did not belong to him²⁶. He could even take wood to make fish troughs during the wintertime for pulling nets (dragnets). However, he was not allowed to make any other damage to somebody else's forest. Article 5 also states that for net (dragnets) fishing (“powłóczenie”) in somebody's lake in one's own forest, one must pay the lake owner compensation for the fish and an additional fine to the grand duke's (“hospodar's”) treasury²⁷. Article 8 specified those provisions. A certain fine was determined, for seine fishing in the lake, pond or pool, damaging or burning the mill as well as digging up the causeway. It amounted to 12 Lithuanian pennies (plus additional damage compensation)²⁸. In the *Second Statute of Lithuania* a provision was added that the person who is a victim of an accident during the river transport, is liable to be rescued and repair the damage on somebody's riverbank with no charges to be paid²⁹.

In the fundamental and discussed repeatedly work *Ustawa na wołoki hospodara Korola Jeho Miłości* from 1 April 1557, the issues of standing and running waters exploitation were described quite extensively³⁰.

Among the 49 articles of the Act there were regulations concerning pond building and exploitation, building the mills and their exploitation in the royal lands of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania³¹.

The ruler ordered the officials (“wradnicy”), to finish their field works in autumn and spring, to build ponds and pools. They were supposed to allocate up to 20 three scores pennies (charge for diggers and construction workers) from the earnings coming from fish, selling cattle and farm produce. If the amount of money was not sufficient, the assessors decided on increasing it, after discussing it with the Grand Duke – “hospodar”³².

Fishing and draining the ponds, was allowed only by the ruler. The local official (“wradnik”) was entitled to every tenth fish of this catch, apart from which he was not allowed to fish, even for his own needs³³.

In a few of the following articles of the act they discussed beaver harvesting (article 32), which was supposed to be done by beaver guards for the Grand Duke (“na hospodara”), being given every 5 beavers or “po czerewie ot každogo bobra”³⁴. The right to use rivers and lakes (article 33) for the grand duke's people (but only for them, as stated in the article 48 of this act³⁵) to fish in rivers and lakes with: “kryha”, hand line, dragnet, trammel net, “obór” and other small nets. However, it was prohibited to damage weirs, which impoverished fish stocks, especially during spawning.

23 *Pirmasis Lietuvos Statutas*, p. 229.

24 *Statut Wialikaga Kniastwa Litouskaga 1566 goda*, pp 165–166; 172–173.

25 *Pirmasis Lietuvos Statutas*, p. 229.

26 *Ibidem*, p. 245.

27 *Ibidem*, p. 249.

28 *Ibidem*, p. 251.

29 *Statut Wialikaga Kniastwa Litouskaga 1566 goda*, pp 169–170.

30 „Ustawa na wołoki hospodara korolja jego miłości wo wsiem Wielkom Kniazstwie Litowskom. Leta Bożeho Narożenia 1557, miesiaca apriela 1 dnia”, in: *Litowskaja Metrika. Knigi publicznych diet*, t. 1, in: *Russkaja Istoriceskaja Biblioteka*, t. 30, Juriew 1914, col. 542–586. „Ustawa na wołoki” was also printed twice in the early 19th century. See: “Ustawa na wołoki hospodara Korola Jeho Miłości from 1557”, in: J. Jaroszewicz, *The Image of Lithuania in terms of its civilisation from the earliest times until the late 18th century*, Vilnius 1844, pp 229–275; 1557 aprielia 1, oktabria 20, i 1558 maja i ijunia 20. *Ustawy o upravljenji Korolewskich wołostiej, s dopomnitelnymi k nim statjami*, pp 72–91 (in which „The Act” was divided into 57 articles).

31 „Ustawa na wołoki”, col. 558–559.

32 *Ibidem*, col. 558.

33 *Ibidem*, col. 559.

34 *Ibidem*, col. 576.

35 *Ibidem*, col. 584–585.

Unfortunately, article 40, which had been planned to be devoted entirely to lakes exploitation, was not developed. In original documents of *Lithuanian Metrica* 7 lines were left empty³⁶. Nowadays, it is difficult to investigate why it was omitted. Presumably the issues connected with lakes required further improvement, which was not completed even in “*Dopelnienije i isprawlienije of Ustawa na wołok*” of September 1557, inspired by Piotr Chwalczewski comments³⁷.

Regulations concerning the entering the Grand Duke's rivers and lakes were also included in *Ustawa krola jego mci lesniczem...* of 27th February 1567³⁸.

In conclusion, it is essential to emphasise that since the second decade of the 16th century the grand duke became more and more interested in the economic efficiency of royal lands in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, including the exploitation and protection of aquatic resources. The reason for this situation was the increasing financial needs of the Lithuanian Treasury due to the Moscow wars as well as the economic activities of Queen Bona and Sigismund II Augustus. Legal regulations, signed by the rulers and regarding the Lithuanian estates owned by them, not only show increasing diligence in making sure the estates functioned properly, but also in fair management on the part of the officials.

References

Akty odnosiaszczesja k istorii zapadnij Rossij, sobrannyje i izdannye archeograficeskoju komissieju, t. 2, 1506–1544, Sanktpetierburg 1848. (in Russian)

Avižonis K., *Lietuvos Statutai*, in: idem, *Rinkiniai raštai*, t. 2, Rzym 1978. (in Lithuanian)

Bardach J., *The Statutes of Lithuania in their Legal and Cultural Environment*, in: idem, *On Former and Recent Lithuania*, Poznań 1988.

Bardach J., *Studies on the System and Legislation of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania of the 14th–17th cent.*, Warsaw 1970.

Czacki T., *On Lithuanian and Polish Laws, their Spirit, Sources, Connection and Things Included in the First Statute of Lithuania Issued In 1529*, vol. 1–2, Warsaw 1800–1801.

Czczuga B., *The Quatercentenary of Writing the Register (1569–1969) and the meaning of this dokument for the limnology*, “Białostoczczyzna”, 1970, vol. 10.

Downar-Zapolskij M. F., *Oczerki po organizaciji zapadno-russkago krestjanstwa w XVI wiekie*, Kijew 1905, Priłożenija, no. 40. (in Russian)

Falk K. O., *The Register of Lakes...of 1569*, „Acta Baltico-Slavica”, 1976, vol. 10.

Falk K. O., *The Waters of Wigry and Hucianska. Toponomastic study*, parts 1, 2, Uppsala 1941.

Jablonskis K., *Lietuvos valstybės ir teisės istorija nuo XIV a. pabaigos iki XVI a. vidurio*, Wilno 1971. (in Lithuanian)

Jabłonowski A., *Podlasie*, in: *Historical Sources*, vol. 17, part 3: *Poland of the 16th Century Geographically and Statistically*, vol. 6, part 3, Warsaw 1910.

Jaroszewicz J., *The Image of Lithuania in terms of its civilisation from the earliest times until the late 18th century*, Vilnius 1844.

Jurginis J., *Litovskij Statut – pamjtnik istorii prava i kultury Wielikogo Knjažestwa Litovskogo*, in: *Pierwyj litovskij Statut 1529 g*, Wilno 1982. (in Russian)

Kołodziejczyk A. [Pytasz-Kołodziejczyk A.], *Primeval forests in Podlasie, their settlement and division in 15th and 16th centuries*, in: *Grand-Ducal primeval forests in the northern Podlasie and western Grodno region in the 15th and 16th century (division, administration, forest and water services)*, edited by J. Śliwiński, Olsztyn 2007.

Lazutka S., *Litovskij Statut – feodalnyj kodeks Wielikogo Knjažestwa Litovskogo*, Wilno 1973. (in Russian)

Litovskaja Metrika. Knigi publicznych diet, t. 1, in: *Russkaja Istoriceskaja Biblioteka*, t. 30, Juriew 1914. (in Russian)

Lietuvos Metrika. Knyga Nr. 25 (1387–1546). Užrašymų knyga 25, D. Atanavičius, A. Baliulis, Vilnius 1998, no. 77. (in Lithuanian)

Lityński A., *The Lakes of Suwalki and the fish inhabiting them in the light of data in the document of the 16th century*, “The Archive of Fishery Hydrobiology”, 1935, vol. 9.

Lubawskij M., *Obłastnoje dielenie i miestnoje upravljenje Litovsko-russkago gosudarstva ko vremieni izdania pierwago Litovskago Statuta*, Moskwa 1892. (in Russian)

Lubawskij M., *Oczerk istorii Litovsko-russkago gosudarstva do Lublinskoi unii wkluczitielno*, Moskwa 1910. (in Russian)

Maroszek J., *The Borderland of Lithuania and the Crown in the plans of king Sigimund Augustus. From the History of Realisation of Monarchal Thought between Niemen and Narew*, Białystok 2000.

³⁶ Ibidem, col. 581.

³⁷ Ibidem, col. 585–590.

³⁸ „Ustawa krola jego mci lesniczem w Wielkim Xięstwie Lithewskim. Roku 1567, februaria dnia 27, w Knyszinie, z rozkazania kr[ola] jego mci, pana naszego m[ilościwego], dana iesth nauka panom lesniczem, jako sprawowac się maią na lesnictwach y urzędziech swoich”, in: *Litovskaja Metrika. Knigi publicznych diet*, t. 1, in: *Russkaja Istoriceskaja Biblioteka*, t. 30, Juriew 1914, col. 622–628. See also: *Liesnoj ustaw*, in: M. F. Downar-Zapolskij, *Oczerki po organizaciji zapadno-russkago krestjanstwa w XVI wiekie*, Kijew 1905, Priłożenija, nr 40, pp 101–105; „Ustawa leśna z 1568”, „Athenaeum”, 1844, vol. 6, pp 7–8 (where the editor gave the incorrect date of the act).

- Maroszek J., *The Valley of Biebrza in the Past till the end of 18th cent.*, „Białostoczczyzna”, 1995, no. 1.
- Maroszek J., *The Valley of Nereśl in the Past*, „Białostoczczyzna”, 1997, no. 2.
- Paszuto W. T., *Obrazowanie litowskiego gosudarstwa*, Moskwa 1959. (in Russian)
- Władimirskij-Budanow M. F., *Oczerki po istorii litowsko-russkogo prawa*, t. 12, Kijów 1889–1890. (in Russian)
- Piczeta W. I., *Agrarnaja reforma Sigizmunda Awgusta w Litowsko-Russkim gosudarstwie*, part 2, ed. 2, Moskwa 1958. (in Russian)
- Pirmasis Lietuvos Statutas. Tekstai senaja baltarusiu, lotynu ir senaja lenku kalbomis*, edited by S. Lazutka, I. Valikonyte, E. Gudravicius, part 1, Vilnius 1991. (in Lithuanian)
- Pociecha W., *Queen Bona (1494–1557). Times and People of the Renaissance*, vol. 3, Poznań 1958.
- Statut Wialikaga Kniastwa Litouskaga 1566 goda*, edited by T. I. Dounar, U. M. Satolin, Ja. A. Juho, Minsk 2003. (in Lithuanian)
- „Ustawa leśna z 1568”, „Athenaeum”, 1844, vol. 6.
- Wiśniewski J., *The History of Settlement in Augustów District from 15th to the end of 17th century*, in: *The Studies and Materials to the History of Augustów Lake District*, edited by J. Antoniewicz, Białystok 1967.
- Wiśniewski J., *The Settlement of Eastern Białystok Region: the origins, development, differentiation and ethnic shifts*, „Acta Baltico-Slavica”, 1977, vol. 11.
- Wiśniewski J., *The History of Settlement in Sejnenski District from 15th to 19th Century*, in: *Materials to the History of Sejnenska Land*, Białystok 1963.
- Wiśniewski J., *The History of Settlement in Suwalki District from 15th to mid 17th century*, in: *The Studies and Materials to the History of Suwalki Region*, Białystok 1965.