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Reviews and discussions

Deutscher Historischer Städtatlas, Nr. 5: Dortmund,
Hrsg. Peter Johanek, Jürgen Lafrenz, Thomas Tippach, Münster 2018
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Historical geography is a relatively new discipline in Belarus, its age being equal to the age of the independent state of Belarus; it dates back to the early 1990s and the researcher Mikhail Spirydonau. While working at the Institute of History of the Academy of Sciences of Belarus on the monograph entitled ‘Subordination of the peasantry in Belarus (15–16th c.)’, which saw the light of day in 1993, he set out to compile a corpus of data about settlements existing in this period. The result of this work was the map ‘Belarus at the end of the 16th c.’ (in the scale 1:1,000,000) attached to the aforementioned work. On the back, an academic comment with a list of settlements was printed (there are 1925 on the map within the territory of the present day Belarus). In the comment, it was noted that due to the scale used, the map did not include all settlements known to the author.

In the same place, it was also noted that all the names were provided “by default” in the Ruthenian (Old Belarusian) language. A brief comparison with the sources suggests, however, that they had been adapted to the rules of the contemporary Russian language, in which the monograph was written (this concerns, in particular, ignoring hard – non-palatalized – consonants). Considering the recipient, the idea of a map in a language which is no longer used is debatable, nevertheless this is what the author insisted on.

Another problem which appeared already at that time and was discussed in the comment was the distinction between types of settlements. This concerns primarily cities and towns. In the Belarusian language (as well as in Russian), contrary to Polish, the word town is not used to mean a small city, it is a different type of settlement. It can be debated whether this was the case in the 16th century, because in the sources quite many settlements are called interchangeably in either way. At the same time, it is clear that by towns mainly trade-craft settlements without city rights were meant. The problem is that in the Grand Duchy many cities (including big ones) also did not have such rights. In this context, selection of the settlement type becomes a problematic issue. The author adopted a solution according to which cities were considered as capitals of provinces and districts as well as “some other settlements of the urban type important for economic, administrative, military and religious reasons”. Another issue concerns distinguishing between

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1 As the scope of historical geography is very broad, here I will discuss only historical maps published in the period of the last nearly thirty years, which are results of historical-geographical research, as well as those included in historical works of various types. For research on historical geography in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania in various countries, see: G. Błaszczyk, Geografia historyczna Wielkiego Księstwa Litewskiego. Stan i perspektywy badań, Poznań 2007. For research at the Institute of History of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus, see: В.Н. Темушев, Развитие историко-географических исследований в Институте истории НАН Беларуси (1929–2009 гг.), Минск 2009, p. 557–561.


3 The first version of the map in a smaller scale was printed in 1990: Франциск Скорина и его время: энциклопедический справочник, Минск 1990 (the map ‘Belarus in the middle of the 16th c.’, scale: 1:2,500,000).
rural settlements: villages, village complexes inhabited by yeomanry, manor houses, folwarks. Spiridonau abandoned the distinction, marking mainly villages. As we can guess, this was done mainly for the sake of clarity of the map.

The last issue which should be addressed here concerns administrative borders. As later works by Spiridonau suggest, he marked their courses on the map using "The Listing of Districts and Borders"5, which, according to his findings, was completed as early as 15656. Secondly, we know that delimitations of specific districts were used: Brest, Ashmyany, Pinsk (the privilege with the delimitation was printed out by the researcher) and Navahrudak (the privilege was also printed out)7, although in the case of the borders of Ashmyany, these data had not been considered in full. Also various sources from the 16th century had been consulted for data on administrative affiliation of specific settlements. ‘The Listing of Districts and Borders’ is, however, too general, while in practice the courses of the districts and Borders’ is, however, too general. As opposed to the map discussed above, the type of property was marked (state, aristocracy, Orthodox and Catholic Church) and they had been prepared in colour. In the case of the district of Lida, Catholic and Orthodox churches were marked. In the second volume (1994), a general map ‘Belarus at the end of the 16th c.’ was printed (without marking the property and with a smaller number of settlements shown)10. The publisher of the encyclopaedia, in spite of the opposition of the author of the maps, who cited the principle of historism11 (apparently understood too broadly), published all the maps with Belarusian spelling. After the publication of the last volume, the publisher found it necessary to print all the maps included in the encyclopaedia separately in the form of an appendix entitled “The Atlas of the History of Belarus”12.

In fact, at the same time, in exactly the same year (1993), first maps of specific districts at the end of the 16th century were printed, as prepared by Spiridonau in the ‘Encyclopaedia of the History of Belarus’9. In the total of six volumes of the encyclopaedia, maps of all the districts of the Grand Duchy overlapping in whole or in part with the present-day territory of Belarus were printed (with details marked only for this territory). As opposed to the map discussed above, the type of property was marked (state, aristocracy, Orthodox and Catholic Church) and they had been prepared in colour. In the case of the district of Lida, Catholic and Orthodox churches were marked. In the second volume (1994), a general map ‘Belarus at the end of the 16th c.’ was printed (without marking the property and with a smaller number of settlements shown)10. The publisher of the encyclopaedia, in spite of the opposition of the author of the maps, who cited the principle of historism11 (apparently understood too broadly), published all the maps with Belarusian spelling. After the publication of the last volume, the publisher found it necessary to print all the maps included in the encyclopaedia separately in the form of an appendix entitled “The Atlas of the History of Belarus”12.

8 This is demonstrated by Andrei Radaman on the example of the border between the voivodships of Brest and Navahrudak (attempts at separation of the districts of Pinsk and Navahrudak): A.A. Radaman, Да проблемы вычынення мяжаў Навагрудскага і Пінскай палатумаў Велікага княства Літоўскага, Рускае і Жамойцкагаў г. палава XVI ст., in: Фомуціна стагоддзя на архівах. Зборнік архівных матэрыялаў і матэрыялаў архіўных аркі, Мінск 2000, р. 109–126.
10 М.Ф. Спірыдонов, "Атлас гісторыі Беларусі ад старажытнасці да нашых дзён (дада 6-томнай "Энцыклапедыі гісторыі Беларусі")", Мінск 2000, p. 93.
11 М.Ф. Спірыдонов, Беларусь XVI в. на історыяных картах, in: Картаўцы і картавае архітэктурнае абоўляванне, рэд. М. П. Касюк і др., Мінск 2000, p. 93.
As Viktar Ciemushau aptly notes, this is not an atlas in the proper sense of the word, but just a mechanical collection of maps. However, this was the title under which it was re-published separately from the encyclopaedia. All the maps (districts and the general map) were then re-published many times in other encyclopaedias and reference books. Here, we can notice a tendency of the publishing houses to improve the technical quality, but at the same time to decrease the number of settlements shown.

Several maps by Spirydonau were published in local history books of the `Memory' series. Noteworthy are those where the number of settlements is bigger than on the maps mentioned above. The first is the `Navahrudak region at the end of the 16th c.' This is a map of a part of the Navahrudak district of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, limited to the present-day area of Navahrudak. The number of settlements is far greater here than in the map of the Navahrudak district in the encyclopaedia; it also comprises churches, broken down into Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant. At the bottom, it has been noted that the map was developed on the basis of the `Chronicles of settlements of the Navahrudak region', i.e. history of individual settlements located towards the end of the volume prepared also by Spirydonau (unfortunately, this edition did not include citations). The second map is the `Minsk region at the end of the 16th c.' This is a map of the estates of Wasil Ciszkie-wicz (Tyszkie-wicz) and his sons in 1570, which features an appendix (a list of the estates), but, unfortunately, is illegible (printed in insufficient scale). The second one is a map of the estates of Jan Hlebo-wicz and his sisters in 1583, appended to the work on Zaslavy.

Unfortunately, Spirydonau did not manage to publish all the findings he had collected in the course of his research and presented on maps. Only individual maps were published with lists of settlements prepared with reference to some sources, specifically army censuses of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and the books of the Lithuanian Metrica. These works can be used for further studies on the administrative division and population of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. Still, the significance of the works of Spirydonau as the father of Belarussian historical geography is grand. It was him who has laid the foundation for further development of the discipline, presenting his own method of creating maps and commented settlement lists. Historical-geographical knowl-

14 Атлас гісторыя Беларусі ад стараўніцкіх да нашых дзеі, Мінск 2006.
15 For a list of these maps, see: М.Ф. Спіродонав, Беларусь, п. 94; Памяць старога, п. 410–429.
16 Памяць: гісторыка-дакументальная хроніка Навагрудскага раёна, п. 118–119 (map), 526–556 (settlements).
edge about the Grand Duchy of Lithuania after the Union of Lublin is nowadays largely based on his maps.

Returning to the ‘Encyclopaedia of the History of Belarus’, one should also mention maps of another pioneer of historical geography, Viachaslau Nasievich. Firstly, the entry ‘Grand Duchy of Lithuania’ was supplemented with two maps showing the establishment and the territorial developments of this state: ‘Grand Duchy of Lithuania in the 13th–first half of the 14th c.’ and ‘Grand Duchy of Lithuania in the 14–15th c.’ The former presents the process of establishment of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania according to his theory, the latter – the period of its greatest territorial advancement, when it spread “from one sea to another”. Secondly, several maps by this scholar show specific starosties (estates) of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania\(^2\), which is related to his interest in local history.

Nasievich also wrote for the book series ‘Memory’ and some of his chapters were supplemented with maps. These maps show (with breakdown into estates) the territories of the present-day regions of: Horki – in the middle of the 17th century\(^2\), Luninyts – at the end of the 16th (with Orthodox churches marked) and at the end of the 17th century (with Orthodox and Uniate as well as Catholic churches marked together with the number of houses in each settlement)\(^3\), Kruhare in the 16–17th and at the end of the 18th – beginning of the 19th century (temples marked regardless of denomination and the number of houses in each settlement in the last quarter of the 18th century)\(^2\), Dokhysty and others. These chapters and the accompanying maps have citations, so in this respect they can be considered as academic. Apart from these works, this scholar made attempts to complete a scientific reconstruction of the borders of some feudal principalities (estates), specifically of the Principality of Drutsk in the 14–15th century\(^2\), Principality of Lukoml at the beginning of the 15th century\(^2\) and Minsk in the 12–15th century\(^2\).

Another important project completed in 2002 in collaboration with historians is the ‘National Atlas of Belarus’\(^2\). The chapter ‘History’ of the atlas contains a variety of new maps, including maps devoted to the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. To us, of interest are mainly the maps: ‘Establishment of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, Ruthenia and Samogitia, second half of the 13th–14th c.’ and ‘Grand Duchy of Lithuania in the 15th–first half of the 16th c.’ by Viachaslau Nasievich (in the scale 1:5,500,000), ‘Belarus in the second half of the 16th c.’ by Mikhail Spiridonau (in the scale 1:1,500,000) and ‘Belarus in the second half of the 18th c.’ by Yauhien Anishchanka (scale 1:1,500,000)\(^3\).

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\(^2\) I will not list all of them, all the more so because Grzegorz Błaszczyk has already done it: G. Błaszczyk, Geografia, p. 93.


\(^2\) В.Л. Насевіч. У складзе Вялікага княства Літоўскага (XIV–XVI стст.), in: Старонкі гісторыі Беларусі, рад.: М.П. Касцюк et al., Мінск 1992, p. 83–104. Here two diagram maps were published: of the Principality of Drutsk and surroundings in the 14–15th century and a more detailed map of the estates of Drutsk (untitled), mistakenly related to the preceding article.

\(^2\) В.Л. Насевіч. У складзе Вялікага княства Літоўскага, 4, 1992, p. 83–104. Here two diagram maps were published: of the Principality of Drutsk and surroundings in the 14–15th century and a more detailed map of the estates of Drutsk (untitled), mistakenly related to the preceding article.

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\(^2\) В.П. Насевич, Род князей Друцкіх у гісторыі Вялікага княства Літоўскага (XIV–XVI стст.), in: Старонкі гісторыі Беларусі, рад.: М.П. Касцюк et al., Мінск 1996, p. 26–41. It was noted that the chapter was prepared using materials of Mikhail Spiridonau; most likely this refers also to the first of the two maps.

\(^2\) Idem. У складзе Вялікага княства Літоўскага, 4, 1992, p. 83–104. Here two diagram maps were published: of the Principality of Drutsk and surroundings in the 14–15th century and a more detailed map of the estates of Drutsk (untitled), mistakenly related to the preceding article.
second map by Nasievich presents the state with internal division into viceroyalties, autonomous lands-viceroyalties and appanage principalities. The map by Spirydonau is his old map, but reworked on an entirely new technological level and with division of estates according to the property type (which earlier was the case only with district maps) and, again, in the Ruthenian language. It appears, however, that this map of administrative divisions and settlements has been unnecessarily combined with the Livonian War and Cossack incursions from the end of the 16th century (and the arrows showing the incursions have also been selected rather poorly). The map by Anishchanka shows also the division into districts and the property type. The administrative division, however, has not been shown clearly, as the voivodships are not differentiated from districts (marked with borders of the same type). Secondly, the course of borders in many places is doubtful. Most probably, the author attempted to “join” the estates within the borders of some districts so that their parts are not shown within the borders of the neighbouring ones. Such an approach, however, is not justified. For example, the border between the voivodships of Navahrudak and Minsk on the Neman is older than the borders of the estates on its banks and corrections thereto are unnecessary. In general, the problem requires close scrutiny, because in each specific case it could be different: there existed divided estates, but theoretically it could happen that the borders differed from those established at the time of the reform in the 16th century. It is also necessary to establish the borders, whenever possible, of “cross-border” estates, which in turn allow to accurately establish the administrative borders. Moreover, it seems unlikely that throughout the whole second half of the 18th century the status of a city was enjoyed only by capitals of districts, as shown on the map (with the exception of, it seems, only Mahilyow, but not settlements as large as, for example, Slutsk, which was counted among towns). As a result, the level of urbanisation in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania on the map sharply contrasts with the situation in neighbouring Poland (and Russia), where many more cities are marked.

In 2005–2006, one more encyclopaedia written in Belarusian saw the light of day — ‘The Grand Duchy of Lithuania’ (in 2 volumes; new edition in 3 volumes in 2007–2010; hereinafter we use this last edition). Many entries and much content were copied from the ‘Encyclopaedia of the History of Belarus’; the same happened to the maps. All maps by Spirydonau (districts and general) and Nasievich (starosties and a slightly modified map of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania in the 13th–first half of the 14th century) were carried over. The map ‘Grand Duchy of Lithuania in the middle of the 18th c.’ by Anishchanka is, in fact, a simplified version of his map from the ‘National Atlas of Belarus’. Also, new maps of the economies (estates serving directly the king) of Brest, Mahilyow, Hrodna and Vitsyebsk by Anishchanka were included in addition to ‘Lithuania in the middle of the 13th c.’ by Nasievich (with break-down into Lithuanian territories on the basis of archaeological cultures) and Ciemushau (‘Grand Duchy of Lithuania in 1345–1430’34, ‘Changes to the eastern border of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania at the end of the 15th—the first 1/3 of the 16th c.’35, ‘Upper Oka Principalities at the end of the 13th—beginnings of the 16th c.’36, ‘Prin-
cipality of Volkonà37, District of Homyel in the Grand Duchy of Moscow in 1500–153738). The article ‘Neuburg family estates’ was supplemented with the map ‘Neuburg family estates in the second half of the 17th–first half of the 18th c.’ by Andrei Matsuk and Ciemushau39. This map in a larger scale was appended to the monograph by Matsuk ‘Struggles of magnate parties in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania (1711–1763)’40.

Another important joint project with participation of quite a large group of researchers from various institutions is the ‘Great Historical Atlas of Belarus’. The atlas is scheduled for release in four volumes, to date three have seen the light of day. The period of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania has been split in this edition between the first and second volume41. The editor-in-chief of the atlas is Nasievich, who (together with Ciemushau) is also the author of basic maps located in the first volume: ‘Establishment of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, 1245–1315’, ‘Territorial developments of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania in the times of Gediminas and Algirdas, 1315–1377’, ‘The biggest territorial advancements of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania in the times of Vytautas, 1392–1430’ as well as his ‘Belarusian lands in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, 1440–1470’. It shows land estates with breakdown into state, Catholic and Orthodox church and privately-owned (with the last category split according to the origin and denomination of the owners). The history of the borders is presented on the map by Ciemushau ‘Relations of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania with the Grand Duchy of Moscow and the Crimean Chanate, 1487–1537’. It also features maps showing the distribution of municipal self-governments and basic denominations (the network of parishes and monasteries; the maps of the distribution of Catholic and Orthodox churches believers were prepared by Rascislau Baravy).

The general map ‘Belarusian lands in the 16th c.’ prepared by Nasievich and Spirydonau consists of 51 sheets in the scale 1:300,000. The introduction states that the basis for the creation thereof were data of Spirydonau, both printed and from the researcher’s card file (currently stored at the Institute of History of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus – D.V.) in addition to the database of the research project ‘Data corpus from historical geography of Belarus 10th–16th c.’ carried out under the supervision of Spirydonau in 1993–1995. As regards the borders of estates, here the basis were the results of research of Nasievich (partially printed, see above). Within the territory of Belarus, 4306 settlements are marked, i.e. two times as many as on the well-known map of Spirydonau42. The following are also marked: type of property, presence of self-government in cities (with the date of issuing the privilege) and Catholic and Orthodox churches (with the year of the first mention).

Firstly, it can be said that the majority of estate borders are arbitrary and have been marked approximately, which is best seen thanks to the large scale. In many cases the sources make it possible to establish their factual course, including using the retrospection method. Obviously, this huge task cannot be completed within the

38 Ibidem, p. 184.
40 A. Мацук, Барацьба магнацкіх групаку і ВКЛ (1711–1763), Мінск 2014.
42 В.Л. Насевіч, Беларуская землі ў XVI ст., ін.: Вялікі гістарычны атлас Беларусі, т. 1, р. 96–97.
The same is true for the borders of voivodships and districts, which has already been mentioned in the case of Spirydonau’s map. Since its publication, the situation has not changed much, unfortunately. Here, the borders have been shown differently than in Spirydonau’s map, but given the lack of scientific research, we can only guess the reasons for the discrepancies. Secondly, the map marks manors houses and folwarks as villages. It seems that distinguishing between these types of rural settlements would be worthwhile.

In the historical-geographical index of this map, there is information about the names of settlements being written in the contemporary Belarusian language, in the language of the sources (Ruthenian), territorial affiliation with some estates, the owner as of 1567, the first mention, administrative affiliation back then and now. The lack of citations makes it impossible to consider all this great work as strictly scientific, because only part of the data used had been introduced earlier; the publication is oriented rather towards popular science. The same is true for the first mentions of temples and presence of self-government – not knowing where these pieces of information come from, it is difficult to analyse the contents of the edition.

The publication of the first volume of the atlas generated a heated debate. Aleh Latyshonak and Hienadz Siemianchuk claimed that the atlas did not deserve its name and the money had in fact been wasted. Critical remarks concerned primarily other parts of the first volume than the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. As regards the latter, the reviewers’ objections were caused primarily by the fact that the population and network of parishes of Podlachia have been presented poorly on the general map and maps showing denominations43. This remark is right, because to date Podlachia has been thoroughly researched; this precisely is the case where works of other historians should have been consulted. Be that as it may, a large portion of these remarks were debatable, which was used by the authors of the maps (Nasievich and Ciemushau) in their responses. In general, the review was rather impolite, therefore the discussion did not go well; only Ciemushau attempts in his response to draw attention to genuine problems with preparation of the maps and the conditions of work on the atlas (including interference with original maps of the authors)44.

The second volume of the ‘Great Historical Atlas of Belarus’ starts with a map by Spirydonau ‘Grand Duchy of Lithuania in 1569 after the creation of Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth’, edited by Ciemushau. This is an old map by Spirydonau with some borders corrected (e.g. voivodships around Bykhaw). It is not clear, however, why it differs so much from the general map from the first volume (for example, western and southern borders of the Vitsebsk district, eastern borders of the district of Hrodna, northern-eastern borders of the district of Rechytsa, affiliation of the Valozhynskaya and Lipiczanskaya forests, and others). Then, follows a selection of maps on wars and uprisings in the 16th–18th century. The administrative borders change slightly depending on the author; it is visible, for instance, on the maps by Anishchanka (‘Grand Duchy of Lithuania on the eve of the partitions of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, 1740s–1760s’, ‘Belarusian Lands in 1772–1793’). Here, again, there are no differences with respect to the borders of voivodships and districts. From among other maps included in the volume, we can mention ‘Demographic losses of the districts of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania


between 1650 and 1667’ (prepared by Viachaslau Nasievich based on the data of Józef Morzy), ‘Municipal self-government in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania in the second half of the 16th–first half of the 18th c.’ (prepared on the basis of the entry ‘Magdeburg rights’ in the encyclopaedia ‘Grand Duchy of Lithuania’, so these data are incomplete), ‘Density of population of the districts of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania in the third quarter of the 18th c.’ (the author, Nasievich, refers to his own methodology)\(^45\). Maps on denomination show monasteries of various denominations (Catholic with breakdown into orders), schools, seminars; only Protestant churches have been shown. Most likely this is related to the fact that all other temples have been marked on the general map.

The general map ‘Belarusian lands at the end of the 18th c.’, created by Nasievich and Anishchanka, shows 17,348 settlements on the territory of the present-day Belarus. This presentation is not exhaustive (slightly less than half of the total number, in fact) – even such a large scale (1:300,000) did not allow for presentation of everything. The map is based on various data, mainly from archives (audits of economies and starosties, house tax tariffs, descriptions of parishes, property inventories, materials from General survey (Rus. Генеральное межевание)) and others.

In the preparation of the atlas, the issue of differentiation between cities and towns appeared once again, therefore this topic was touched upon twice in articles explaining the maps. The publisher of the atlas decided to stick with their own criteria thereof, which consisted in a settlement meeting at least three out of six conditions: being the capital of an administrative unit, a centre of a large estate, having self-government formed according to the Magdeburg rights, having city-like fortifications, presence of parishes of at least three Christian denominations and no fewer than one monastery\(^46\). These are extremely complex criteria, not used in the practice at that time. It reflects reluctance to accept the legal approach and the fact of a settlement having city rights as the criterion decisive of the city status; instead, a quantitative approach characteristic of the Soviet Union can be witnessed. An attempt has been made to distinguish between rural settlements (settlements of yeomanry were presented separately) but combining villages with folwarks is, in my opinion, a poor solution. One positive fact is that the publisher found it necessary to stick with the historical forms of the settlement names, disregarding foreign influence and the current situation with names in the Belarusian language.

I do not intend to write a review of all historical-geographical publications, but to offer a very general overview of such publications featuring historical maps. Therefore, I shall also discuss the works of two scholars whose main area of activity are geographical-historical issues.

One of them is Viktar Ciemushau, who was the first scholar to create maps entirely on his own on the basis of the newest necessary software. His research interests concerned primarily the Grand Duchy of Moscow. Then, while working at the Institute of History of the Academy of Sciences of Belarus, he was concerned with the history of the Moscow-Lithuanian border and his second major interest was historical geography of the territory of Belarus before the Union of Lublin. In 2009, his book about the land of Homel\(^47\) was published; then he planned to

\(^{45}\) В.Л. Насевич, Сацыяльна-эканамічнае развіццё, ін.: Вялікі гістарычны атлас Беларусі, т. 2, п. 42.

\(^{46}\) Ібід., Я. Анішчанка, В.Л. Насевич, Беларускія землі ў канцы XVIII ст., ін.: Вялікі гістарычны атлас Беларусі, т. 2, п. 68–69.

\(^{47}\) В.Н. Темушев, Гомельская земля в конце XIV–первой половине XVI в. Территориальные трансформации в пограничном регионе, Москва 2009. What is meant is the Homel estate of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania (end of 15th century), later a district of Moscow (beginning of 16th century) and a starosty of Lithuania in the middle of the 16th century. On the side,
deal with the estates of the Dnieper region, around the Dvina and then to move on to the central territories of the present-day Belarus.

Unfortunately, these plans were thwarted by the untimely death of the scholar in 2011 (he passed away after a severe illness at the age of 36). Already after his death, in 2013, in Russia, his monograph devoted to the war between Moscow and Lithuania of 1486–1494 was published (chronology suggested and justified by the scholar).

A year later, his monograph was published in Belarusian, featuring both research on the wars and monograph was published in Belarusian, 16th century, and a new edition of the work on the land of Homyl

In 2016, this work was published in Russian. In addition, quite many articles on historical-geographical topics were published, mainly concerning the history of the border, and some of them were supplemented with maps created by the scholar. Apart from that, Ciemushu created many maps for other scholars. It is not possible to list all of them here.
Anyway, it will be difficult for Belarusian and other historians concerned with the Grand Duchy of Lithuania to achieve, in the near future, the quality of research of the history of the border and borderland and the technical level of historical maps presented by Ciemushau.

One of his maps, which he did not manage to finish on his own, was a map of the Polask voivodship in the middle of the 16th century as an appendix to the new edition of the revision of this voivodship in 1552 together with the commented geographical index (the system for identification of settlements developed by Ciemushau deserves particular attention). As a result of finishing the work started by this author, it was possible to locate many more settlements than on the maps of the ‘Great Historical Atlas’ and older and it was done only based on the aforementioned revision with information from sources from the first half of the 16th century added.

The second prominent researcher of historical geography among Belarusian historians is Andrei Miacielski, the author of the great work “The Principality and Voivodship of Mstsislaw in the 12–18th c.”. In his monograph on the Principality of Mstsislaw, the author traces back the history of the principality from its creation as an appanage principality until the period after the transformation into a voivodship and existence in such a state until the first partition of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and its annexation by Russia. Miacielski devotes his attention primarily to the territorial developments of the Principality of Mstsislaw, delineation of its borders and then investigation of borders, settlement and population of the Mstsislaw voivodship. The author studies population of the principality and the voivodship in general, stopping at the levels of cities, towns and villages. In particular, it should be noted that he had researched religious life of the principality and the voivodship and studied the situation of Orthodox, Catholic, Uniate churches as well as the spread of Judaism. The monograph contains quite a lot of maps, which, however, have not been prepared according to the current technical quality standards. Nevertheless, all the maps are legible, therefore this is not a major fault. The work has been written on the basis of a huge number of sources, primarily from archives, including cartographic sources. It contains numerous tables which present the collected data on the first mentions or foundation of settlements, their locations and the relevant citations (the same is the case for all temples). Here, there are many more settlements than on the previous maps of Belarusian lands in the 16th century. In this respect, this is a model work and it can

54 They are black-and-white maps. “Principality of Mstsislaw in the 14th–beginning of the 15th c.”; “Principality of Mstsislaw in the 15th c.”; “Principality of Mstsislaw at the beginning of the 16th c.”; “Settlements of the Principality of Mstsislaw in the 15th c.”; “Settlements of the Vovodeship of Mstsislaw in the 16th c.”; “Settlements of the Voivodship of Mstsislaw in the 17th c.”; “Temples of the Vovodeship of Mstsislaw in the 18th c.”; “Cites and towns of the Vovodeship of Mstsislaw in the 18th c.”; “Temples in the 15–16th c. on the territory of the Principality and Voivodship of Mstsislaw”; “Temples mentioned on the territory of the Voivodeship of Mstsislaw in the 18th c.”; “Uniate temples on the territory of the Voivodeship of Mstsislaw in the 18th c.”; “Catholic temples on the territory of the Voivodeship of Mstsislaw”, “Synagogues on the territory of the Voivodeship of Mstsislaw in the 18th c.”


serve as an example of how works of this type should look and according to what principles they should be prepared. Lastly, we should also mention the publication series of the castle museum in Mir devoted to famous families of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania of Ruthenian origin. The maps of land estates have been prepared in the form of appendices to the monographs of the families of Ilińcz and Drucki Horski. Furthermore, the source text edition of documents from the history of Mir, the castle and the county of Mir is supplemented with a map of the county in the 16–19th century. The person responsible for the preparation of these maps is Dzmitry Vitsko. Other maps of this author include: ‘Forest of Naliboki, Dzyerawnaya and Khatava of Karol Stanisław Radziwiłł in 1778’ – as a supplement to the article by Dzmitry Kryvasheyeu about the forest of Naliboki which belonged to princely family Radziwiłł in the 16–18th century (in cooperation with the author of the article). To summarise, we can conclude that historical cartography is developing with difficulty in Belarus. In spite of the significant number of prepared and published individual maps and atlases, we are still lacking works in historical geography that would study and justify borders in the period of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and present the settlement of that period. This is a particularly important task, because this is the most important period, covering over 500 years of the history of Belarus. This is the period when the majority of the present-day cities were founded and the settlement network was established.

Necessary steps in this direction have already been taken by such researchers as Spirydonau, Nasievich, Ciemushau, Miacielski and others; quite a lot of data have been introduced into academic debate concerning the history of borders and population of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. The most desirable direction of research is currently believed to be the typical disquisition covering the history of a certain administrative unit, i.e. the district from the moment of its creation until its liquidation at the end of the 18th century. Through study of population and borders of specific estates (in particular neighbouring with the border districts), it will be possible to attain this goal. The work which is the closest to this model is the monograph by Miacielski on the Principality and Voivodship of Mstsislaw.

Translated by Paulina Waclawik
Аналогічныя працы па гісторыі Беларусі: ад старонейкамі да навішых дзяў (дадатак да 6-томнай "Археалагічнай гісторыі Беларусі"), аўтар текста А.І. Языкоўчык, склад. Г.Р. Шыкунова, А.У. Языкоўчык, Мінск 2004.


In Belarus, the historical geography is a relatively new and slowly developing discipline. It is widely acknowledged that its founder was Mikhail Spirydonau as he was the author of the first, published in 1993, detailed map of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania after signing the Union of Lublin, as well as the maps of particular districts. It was he who laid the foundations of the discipline and his maps are at the core of entire body of the geohistorical knowledge on The Grand Duchy of Lithuania.

In the following years, the researchers Viachaslau Nasievich, Viktar Ciemushau, Andrei Miacielski and others had introduced into the scientific literature a great amount of data on the history of borders and population of the GDL, though the article only lists those works which contain maps or other cartographic editions. A number of historical atlases were also published, the most important of which is the ‘Great Historical Atlas of Belarus’ edited by Nasievich. The eastern border of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania in the 14th until the first half of the 16th century was the subject of studies by Ciemushau. Currently, despite a great number of elaborated and published maps and atlases, the publications still lack works on historical geography, which would tackle and justify the administrative borders of the GDL and which would depict its settlement network. Such works present a great challenge, as this most important period covers over half of the millennium of Belarusian history.

A typical disquisition on the history of a particular administrative unit, which is a district, since it origins until its end in the 18th century is seen as the most desirable scientific approach to the topic. It can be achieved by studying the population and the borders of particular estates (the ones at the borders of the neighbouring districts in particular). The work which is the closest to this model is the monograph by Miacielski on the Principality and Voivodship of the Principality and Voivodship of Mstsislaw.

Keywords: historical map, administrative border, district, population, settlements, historical atlas

Dzmitry Vitsko – the editor of “Arche” magazine (Minsk, Belarus). His scientific interests include the military and political history of the end of the 17th and the beginnings of the 18th century as well as the historical geography of Grand Duchy of Lithuania (e-mail: zmiejavik@gmail.com)