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of years<sup>27</sup>. At first they used an identical set of flint tools, deriving from the Janisławicka complexes. The feature distinguishing them from the Mesolithic assemblages, while differentiating them from each other, was ceramics. The characteristic way of forming of pots (with the point and round base), technological features and ornamentation are in practice the only cultural determinants<sup>28</sup>.

In the discussed, Subboreal phase, there were changes in the forest communities due to natural factors as well as human activities in this period. With the reduction of the presence of the elm and then also of the ash and linden and the increase in the share of the oak and hazel, the expansion of the hornbeam and beech also began. The vegetation approached that of the potential contemporary one<sup>29</sup>.

The Neolithic cultures were dominant in today's southern and central Poland. In the immediate vicinity of the Omulew and Orzyc interfluve, the area of the Mława Hills and the Ciechanów Upland, reached the tribes of the Funnel Beaker culture<sup>30</sup>. Neolithic settlements did not enter the area of the Mazurian Plain nor the Kurpie Region. The sites of the eastern group of this culture are located in the area of the so-called Old Mazovia to the northeastern boundaries of the Ciechanów Upland, as well as in the area of the middle Narew valley. The area north and east of the Orzyc bend, in the middle of the Subboreal phase, is still the domain of the para-Neolithic cultures. The natural environment of the primeval forest, especially the poor soils and the compact forest cover, did not favor the land-based economy of the garden system and breeding of the cattle, pigs and goats and sheep<sup>31</sup>.

<sup>27</sup> At the same time, from the south the Plain area enter the first farmers representing the production economy. (W. Borkowski, B. Matraszek, S. Sałaciński, *Mazowsze w epoce kamienia*, [In:] *Starożytne Mazowsze*. Pułtusk 2006, pp. 15-17).

<sup>28</sup> E. Kawalkowa, *Specyfika fizjografii w okolicach Ostrołęki...*, pp. 17–29. These features, among others, include: strong admixture of sand, as well as the presence of grasses, crushed granite and broken shells. The most famous sites with Mesolithic tools and ceramics are Ostrołęka-Czeczotka, Ostrołęka Wojciechowice, Kurpiewskie-Miezejewo, Gmina Lelis. Features of the Niemen culture are visible in the material from sites in Otok, Gmina Ostrołęka, Pianki, Gmina Zbójna and Witowy Most, Gmina Baranowo In the north of Puszcza Kurpiowska, we meet sites of the Narva culture, and in the immediate vicinity the complexes of the Niemen culture, among others: Młynarze, Gmina Różan, Woźna Wieś, Gmina Rajgród, Budki, Gmina Chorzele, Sielc Nowy, Gmina Krasnosielec, Sypniewo, Gmina loco and Szła, Gmina Przasnysz. (W. Borkowski, Z. Miecznikowski, *Początki osadnictwa na terenie pogranicznym północnego Mazowsza...*, p. 20; E. Kawalkowa *Pradzieje Równiny Kurpiowskiej...*, p. 92).

<sup>29</sup> M. Ralska-Jasiewiczowa, op. cit., pp. 118–119.

<sup>30</sup> It is one of the most important indigenous agricultural formations of the European Lowlands, created in the middle of the 5th millennium BC, covering the area from the North German Lowlands to the upper Bug.

<sup>31</sup> The funeral rite of the Funnel Beaker culture was of the megalithic type. The dead were buried in stone-earthen graves in shape of trapezes or elongated triangles, the burial chambers of which were laid out of stone plates. Pottery vessels, flint knives, axes and shaft-hole axes were placed into the graves as burial goods. Archaeological finds of this

The late Neolithic phase, defined in the Middle European Plain by the emergence of the Globular Amphora culture tribes, coincides with the period of dry climate fluctuations, which led to deepening of deforestation and displacement to the north of compacted forest complexes in favor of steppe and forest steppe. Such transformations favored the pastoral and pastoral-hunting economy, represented by the groups using characteristic spherical vessels<sup>32</sup>. This shepherds reached the area of the Ciechanów Upland and Międzyrzecze Łomżyńskie at the end of the 4th millennium BC. They grazed cattle and half-wild pigs. They used river valleys to grow cereals, while not despising hunting and fishing. This made the Late Neolithic population of the Globular Amphora culture to be more willing to enter the Mazurian Plain, although this was probably not a long-term presence. But there is no evidence of Globular Amphora culture settlements in the Kurpie Plain<sup>33</sup>.

In the Neolithic period, the representatives of the Funnel Beaker and Globular Amphora cultures ventured into the river valleys of Puszcza Kurpiowska, perhaps in search of amber or for hunting purposes<sup>34</sup>. Single finds of the Neolithic flint axes and shaft-hole axes, without the context of ceramics, in surface survey, strongly exclude more permanent settlement, even in the more fertile river valleys.

The last phase of the influx of Neolithic people from the south is called from the way of decorating pottery vessels – the Corded Ware culture<sup>35</sup>. Very little is known about the economy of these tribes. Besides of some evidences of plant cultivation on a few of the sites, most of the remnants shows a pastoral-nomadic lifestyle. Traces of these peoples are found both in the area of the Mława Hills and

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culture come, among others, from: Rostków, Gmina Czernice Borowe, Rycice, Gmina Chorzele and Romanowo, Gmina Maków Mazowiecki (W. Borkowski, Z. Miecznikowski, *Początki osadnictwa na terenie pogranicznym północnego Mazowsza...*, p. 21).

<sup>32</sup> The characteristic funeral rite of this culture belongs also to the megalithic type. The dead were buried with burial goods in stone boxes dug into the ground. Beside the characteristic pottery vessels, flint tools and axes with carefully polished blades were placed into graves.

<sup>33</sup> Archaeological sites of the Globular Amphora culture have been discovered, among others, in Rembielin, Gmina Chorzele, Sielc Nowy, gm. Krasnosielc, Gąsewo Nowe and Szczeglin, Gmina Sypniewo, Makowica, Gmina Maków Mazowiecki, Ulatowo-Zalesie, Gmina Krzynowłoga Mała, Grudusk, Gmina loco and Budy Rządowe, Gmina Jednorzec (Ibidem, pp. 21–22).

<sup>34</sup> Single items of the Funnel Beaker and Globular Amphora cultures originate from Czarnia, Gmina loco, Łyse, Gmina loco, Lipnik, Gmina Łyse, Nasiadek, Gmina Lelis, Ostrołęka, Jazgarka, Gmina Kadzidło, Orzoł, Gmina Baranowo and Bandysie, Gmina Myszyniec (E. Kawalkowa, *Pradzieje Równiny Kurpiowskiej...*, p. 99; W. Borkowski, Z. Miecznikowski, *Początki osadnictwa na terenie pogranicznym północnego Mazowsza...*, pp. 21–22; W. Borkowski, *Najstarsze zabytki archeologiczne gminy Kadzidło...*, p. 18).

<sup>35</sup> In the middle of the third millennium BC in the area of the European Plain appeared tribes using ceramics decorated with rope imprints. The dead were first buried beneath the barrows and then in flat cemeteries, equipped with pottery vessels, flint axes, knives and arrowheads, and stone axes.

Ciechanów Upland as well as the Mazurian Plain<sup>36</sup>. The episodic expeditions of the End Neolithic representatives of the Corded Ware culture reached the area of Puszcza Kurpiowska, which is confirmed by the finds of the battle axes of this culture<sup>37</sup>. In the literature has been hypothesised the woodland cattle and pig breeding, in the glades in river valleys, realised by the representatives of the Corded Ware culture<sup>38</sup>. However, pollen diagrams from pseudo-meanders in Leśna Góra-Łęg Starościński and Kurpiewskie-Miezejewo, Gmina Lelis do not show the presence of plants related to the breeding<sup>39</sup>.

The younger Subboreal phase was marked by the cooling and drying of the climate. Within the mixed forests the share of hornbeam and alder was clearly reduced. Less rainfall was favorable for drying of sandy soils and increasing the share of pine and oak forests in the composition of the forest, as well as the decrease of the groundwater level, leading to the drying and overgrowing of the oxbow lakes and lakes<sup>40</sup>. At that time, the first groups of the Trzciniec culture<sup>41</sup>, representing already the Bronze Age, came to the area of the Kurpie Plain. Along with them appear in the northern Mazovia, the first not numerous bronze products: bracelets, armlets, pendants. The most important change concerns the burial ritual. At first the skeletal funeral rite was dominating, but gradually disseminated the cremation custom, which for several millennia, has spread throughout most of Europe.

This was not a period favorable to the expansion of agriculture and the Early Bronze Age groups, which penetrated the Kurpie Plain, could not rely on the agricultural model of the economy<sup>42</sup>. Probably the people, who settled on the edge

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<sup>36</sup> Presence of the products of the Corded Ware culture was found at the sites in: Rostków and Obrębiec, Gmina Czernice Borowe, Kęsocha, Gmina Dzierzgowo, Krasnosielc Nowy, gm. Krasnosielc, Małowidz and Lipa, Gmina Jednorożec (W. Borkowski, Z. Miecznikowski, *Początki osadnictwa na terenie pogranicznym północnego Mazowsza...*, p. 22).

<sup>37</sup> The ceramic remains of this culture were found in the villages of Zabrodzie and Przyszań Gmina Olszewo Borki. Fragment of a flint dagger of this culture comes from the locality Kurpiewskie-Miezejewo, Gmina Lelis, and two stone axes from Ostrołęka (E. Kawalkowa, *Specyfika fizjografii w okolicach Ostrołęki...*, p. 21; Eadem, *Pradzieje Równiny Kurpiowskiej...*, p. 10, 101).

<sup>38</sup> E. Kempisty, *Neolityczne kultury strefy leśnej w północnej Polsce...*, p. 175.

<sup>39</sup> K. Wasylikowa, *Antropogeniczne zmiany roślinności w holocenie*, [In:] *Człowiek i środowisko w pradziejach*. Eds. J.K. Kozłowski, S.K. Kozłowski. Warszawa 1983, p. 57.

<sup>40</sup> Ibidem, p. 59.

<sup>41</sup> In Mazovia, the first half of the 2nd millennium BC is considered to be the beginning of Early Bronze settlement. Its full development coincides with the period from 1500 to 1300 BC (J. Dąbrowski, *Epoka brązu w północno-wschodniej Polsce*. Białystok 1997, p. 88).

<sup>42</sup> On the basis of surface survey and a few archaeological excavations, it seems that they preferred the same settlement conditions as their Mesolithic and para-Neolithic predecessors.

and within the forest were hunting, gathering and fishing<sup>43</sup>. From the earlier Mesolithic and para-Neolithic formation they distinguished themselves with a cremation ritual and occasional use of bronze tools. In the ceramics of the Trzciniec culture groups can be found a reference to the ornament and technology of the earlier period<sup>44</sup>. Cremation is an obvious cultural determinant of the Bronze Age and was a permanent feature of the Trzciniec culture that it remained even after the change of the way of farming<sup>45</sup>. The settlements of the Trzciniec culture, dating to this period, were limited essentially to the dunes in the Narew valley, near the estuaries of Omulew, Rozoga and Szkwa rivers<sup>46</sup>. Sporadic trips of small groups up river valleys can't be excluded<sup>47</sup>. The gradual disappearance of the Trzciniec culture in this area was a consequence of cultural and social transformations, which resulted in its transition into a local group of the Lusatian culture<sup>48</sup>.

Lusatian culture developing at the turn of the 13th into the 12th century BC, was part of a large complex of the Urnfield cultures. From the very beginning, the

<sup>43</sup> It was different in the area of the Ciechanów Upland and the Mława Hills, where there was more fertile soils and agriculture could develop. The sites of Trzciniec culture were found, among others, in: Ulatowo-Dąbrówka and Skierkowizna, Gmina Krzynowłoga Mała, Wola Błędowska, Gmina Baranowo and Romanowo Gmina Maków Mazowiecki (W. Borkowski, Z. Miecznikowski, *Początki osadnictwa na terenie pogranicznym północnego Mazowsza...*, pp. 22–23).

<sup>44</sup> There is lack of analyses of flint assemblages for this region, nevertheless, a strong influence of Neolithic cultures of the forest zone is visible (E. Kawałkova, *Specyfika fizjografii w okolicach Ostrołęki...*, p. 23). Used are tools made by splitting and polishing technique (endscrapers, knives, sickles, pestles, arrowheads, shaft-hole axes, axes, blades) as well as made from organic materials ones (pendants of shells, pins and awls of bone) and of bronze: spiral bracelets, armlets and rings with disks and small axes and spearheads. Occasional small silver and gold items appear. Pottery with granite admixture, surface smoothing of the vessels and ornamentation show relations to earlier cultures from this region. The most numerous are hand-made, tulip-shaped vessels with a cymoid profile, thickened and faceted lips (J. Dąbrowski, *Kultura trzciniecka na Mazowszu i Podlasiu*, [In:] *Problemy przeszłości Mazowsza i Podlasia*, Vol. III. Ed. M. Dulicz. Warszawa 2005, pp. 61–66).

<sup>45</sup> It is interesting to observe traces of ocher in one of cremation graves at a Trzciniec site in Kurpiewskie-Mieżejewo, Gmina Lelis (E. Kawałkova, *Specyfika fizjografii w okolicach Ostrołęki...*, pp. 23–24). Sprinkling of grave with ocher was a common practice during the Mesolithic and occurred in the Neolithic cultures of the forest zone as a Mesolithic heritage.

<sup>46</sup> Studies of settlement concentration in this region indicate the presence of large permanent settlements surrounded by a number of small, short-lived camps. The best recognised site of this culture is located in Kurpiewskie-Mieżejewo, Gmina Lelis (E. Kawałkova, *Pradzieje Równiny Kurpiowskiej...*, pp. 111–113).

<sup>47</sup> In the area of Gmina Łyse, traces of the Trzciniec culture were discovered, among others, in the villages of: Dudy Puszczańskie, Serafin, Dęby, Łyse (W. Borkowski, *Najstarsze osadnictwo gminy Łyse* [in print]).

<sup>48</sup> J. Dąbrowski, *Kultura trzciniecka i łużycka na Mazowszu*, [In:] *Starożytne Mazowsze*. Ed. M. Zieleniewska-Kasprzycka. Pułtusk 2006, pp. 25–27.

population of the Lusatian culture, due to extent of their inhabited territory, did not form a single society. The basis of the phenomenon lies in the diversity of the cultural background. In the northeastern Mazovia, a part of the Lusatian complex were constituting the Trzcinec population groups<sup>49</sup>.

In the Late Bronze Age (9th–8th century BC), both in the area of the Mazurian Plain, north of Puszcza Kurpiowska, and south of it, in the Ciechanów Upland, a significant increase in the number of sites is observed<sup>50</sup>. This might be connected with the population growth but is limited in the south to the Orzyc river valley. The area of Puszcza Kurpiowska was long beyond the reach of the Lusatian settlement, which does not exclude sporadic penetration along the river valleys<sup>51</sup>. Despite the aforementioned diversity, the basic cultural features in the entire area of the Lusatian culture occurrence were very similar. The most important are: the burial ritual and the presence of flat cemeteries with burials in cinerary urns. The remains of the deceased, after burning the bodies at the stake, were buried in clay pots covered with lids. As equipment were added also smaller vessels, probably filled with food or other gifts<sup>52</sup>.

Agriculture and animal husbandry was the mainstay of the economy of the Lusatian culture population, while in the area of the Kurpie Plain, mainly in the river valleys, and in the smaller islands of the better soils, the agriculture of the garden type<sup>53</sup>. Vessels used in the household were generally less careful made than the grave pottery. From bronze made were mainly axes, sickles, knives, awls, hooks, needles and chisels. As weapon were used bows and arrows with bronze, bone and flint arrowheads and spears. There were inhabited open settlements<sup>54</sup>, and in the south, in the later period also the hillforts.

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<sup>49</sup> M. Mogielnicka-Urban, *Kultura łużycka na Mazowszu i Podlasiu*, [In:] *Problemy przeszłości Mazowsza*, Vol. III. Ed. M. Dulinicz. Warszawa 2005, pp. 67–91

<sup>50</sup> G. Orlińska, *Cmentarzysko kultury łużyckiej w Cichowie*, *Archeologia Żywa* (Warszawa) 2005, Vol. 10, No. 4, pp. 8–10

<sup>51</sup> The colonization of dense forest complexes had mostly an insular character and was limited to enclaves with more fertile soils. In the area of Warmia and Mazuria, the population of Lusatian culture arrived only in the 9th century BC, wandering, among others, the valley of Orzyc, Omulew, Szkwa and Pisa rivers. These settlers set out from the area of Międzyrzecze Łomżyńskie (M. Hoffmann, *Osadnictwo Równiny Mazurskiej w I tysiącleciu p.n.e. i jego relacje z osadnictwem Równiny Kurpiowskiej*, [In:] *Kurpiowszczyzna. Identyczność – odmienność*. Ed. W. Chmielewski. Ostrołęka 2000, pp. 32–33).

<sup>52</sup> Wheat, barley, millet and rye were grown, as well as flax, hemp and poppy. Known were turnips, peas, broad beans and lentils. To work in agriculture were used tools of flint, bronze and iron, wooden plows, stone querns and pestles. Cattle, pigs, goats and sheep were bred. It was hunted for deer, bison, wild boar and roe deer.

<sup>53</sup> We find traces of Lusatian culture, among others, in the area of today's Łyse commune in the villages of Dęby, Zalas, Piątkowizna, Łyse, Tyczek Kolonia and Serafin (W. Borkowski, *Najstarsze osadnictwo gminy Łyse...*).

<sup>54</sup> Open settlements are both, large villages with a few hundred years of residence with houses of post construction and short-lived seasonal camps with shallow pithouses with

In the period from the 6th to the 2nd century BC, from north the region of Puszcza Kurpiowska was penetrated by population groups of the West Baltic Barrow culture<sup>55</sup>. They were the ancestors of the Baltic people, inhabiting, among others, the Mazurian Plain in historical times. Their presence, on the basis of very fragmentary pieces of ceramics was recorded in the middle courses of Omulew, Szkwa and Orzyc rivers<sup>56</sup>. An exception is a permanent settlement in the area of Chorzele (Rembielin – “Łysa Góra”), lying at the point of the Orzyc valley crossing, as part of a trade route from the south through the Mława Hills towards the Sambian Peninsula<sup>57</sup>.

From the middle of the 5th century BC, there begins to form another cultural unit, identified with the Germanic tribe of Vandals – the Przeworsk culture<sup>58</sup>. In the period between the second and the first century BC, it reaches the area of northern Mazovia without entering with its compact settlement into the area of Puszcza Kurpiowska. The interfluvium of Orzyc and Omulew rivers to the left bank of Rozoga river in the period of Roman influences (1st century BC – 4th century BC) is a strip of deserted area between the compact reach of the Przeworsk culture from the south, the Bogaczewska culture from the north, and the eastern group of the Przeworsk culture in the east. The northernmost sites of the Przeworsk culture are located in the area of Gmina Kadzidło in the localities of Todzia and Dylewo, dating back to the 2nd–3rd centuries AD<sup>59</sup>. In the area of northern Narew tributaries, only a few sites from the above mentioned period were discovered as result of the surface survey, being grouped in the area of Ostrołęka and the lower Pisa river and Skroda river. They are probably the result of single migrations of

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walls made of wattle and plastered with clay (T. Węgrzynowicz, *Kultura lużycka na Mazowszu wschodnim i Podlasiu*, Materiały Starożytne i Wczesnośredniowieczne (Warszawa) 1973, Vol. II, pp. 37–38).

<sup>55</sup> Ł. Okulicz, *Kultura kurhanów zachodniobałtyjskich we wczesnej epoce żelaza*. Wrocław–Warszawa–Kraków 1970.

<sup>56</sup> W. Borkowski, Z. Miecznikowski, *Początki osadnictwa na terenie pogranicznym północnego Mazowsza...*, pp. 27–30.

<sup>57</sup> This trail crosses the area of Puszcza Kurpiowska. Its presence is confirmed by the Celtic imports at the mentioned site (Ł. Okulicz, *Sprawozdanie z badań cmentarzyska z wczesnej epoki żelaza w Rembielinie, powiat przasnyski*. Rocznik Olsztyński 1975, Vol. 11, pp. 205–209). The amber was not only of Baltic origin but also was mined in Puszcza Kurpiowska. Its end users were the Celtic trading posts in Silesia.

<sup>58</sup> T. Dąbrowska, *Mazowsze w młodszym okresie przedrzymskim*, [In:] *Starożytne Mazowsze*. Ed. M. Zieleniewska-Kasprzycka. Pułtusk 2006, pp. 39–55.

<sup>59</sup> J. Andrzejowski, *Cmentarzysko kultury przeworskiej w Todzi, gmina Kadzidło, województwo ostrołęckie, stanowisko 2*. Wiadomości Archeologiczne (Warszawa) 1993–1994, Vol. LIII, Issue 2, pp. 101–126.

small human groups into the primeval forest from the area of the evident settlement's concentration between rivers Orz and Narew<sup>60</sup>.

The economy of the population of the Przeworsk culture was based on agriculture and cattle breeding. Cultivated were: rye, oats, barley and millet, and wheat and legumes on fertile soils, as well as cannabis and flax. Very important for economic development in the period of Roman influences was the metallurgy. The presence of rich bog iron ores in the valleys of the Kurpie Plain might have been a motive force for expeditions undertaken by both, the population of the Przeworsk culture from the south and the south-east as well as the representatives of the culture of Western Baltic Barrows and the Bogaczewska culture from the north.

A separate episode in the history of the region was migration of the Germanic (Gothic) tribes, representing the Wielbark culture, which probably took place through the river valleys of Puszcza Kurpiowska to the area of Międzyrzecz Łomżyński in the 2nd–4th century AD<sup>61</sup>.

The sites related to the early presence of the Slav population in the Puszcza Kurpiowska area are relatively few. Their precise dating based on archaeological material is not possible. Excavations of selected sites would be required. On the basis of the sources from the nearest neighborhood, it should be noted that into the region of Puszcza Kurpiowska, the Slav population may have been sporadically penetrating since the 11th century AD<sup>62</sup>. The visible development of the settlement on the left bank of the Narew river occurred only in the 11th and 12th centuries, when there were already existing castles in Łomża, Wizna and Ostrołęka<sup>63</sup>. However, this period belongs already to the historical stage in the development of settlement in the area of the Zagajnica (Kurpiowska) Puszcza.

Looking at the entire prehistoric period of inhabiting the human community in Puszcza Kurpiowska, I come to the conclusion that the model of economy developed by the hunters and gatherers of the end of the Middle Stone Age, however shockingly it sounds, with minor modifications survived until almost contemporary times. The forest life described in the ethnographic works of the

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<sup>60</sup> In the described area archaeological objects from the period of Roman influence were found in several localities of the Łyse municipality: Serafin, Łyse, Zalas, Piątkowizna (W. Borkowski, *Najstarsze osadnictwo gminy Łyse...*).

<sup>61</sup> It is witnessed by the presence of a barrow cemetery in Uśnik, Gmina Śniadowo.

<sup>62</sup> From the early Middle Ages, in the area of Międzyrzecz Łomżyński there is known a settlement concentration along the right bank of Orz: settlement in Goworówek, Gmina Goworowo, the existing since the 8th century settlement in Wojsze, Gmina Czerwin, dating back to the VI–VII century, and settlements in environs of the hillfort in Chmielew-Świerże. Another concentration existed in the area of lower Róż a tributary of the Narew with a settlement called Czartoria (M. Dulnicz, *Najważniejsze problemy archeologii wczesnego średniowiecznego Mazowsza*, [In:] *Starożytne Mazowsze*. Ed. M. Zieleniewska-Kasprzycka. Pułtusk 2006, pp. 75–102).

<sup>63</sup> E. Kowalczyk, *Granice Mazowsza w średniowieczu. Ocena stanu badań*, [In:] *Problemy przeszłości Mazowsza i Podlasia*, Vol. III. Ed. M. Dulnicz. Warszawa 2005, pp. 167–172.

nineteenth and early twentieth centuries<sup>64</sup>, of course with some modifications, could serve as canvas for the reconstruction of post-Mesolithic communities in the Kurpiowska Plain. Along the river valleys into this area undertook expeditions representatives of succeeding archaeological cultures from the south and north, trying to implement economic models characteristic of neighboring, or migrating in search of more suitable ecumenes, or possibly entering the forest for commercial purposes. They were going through or stayed. However, there was no full acculturation of the inhabitants of the forest backwoods. This may be one of the elements of the sense of separateness and pride of Kurpie people of their own past – today's inhabitants of the Forest<sup>65</sup>.

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<sup>64</sup> E.g. I. Baranowski, *Łukasz Kościeszka-Zaluski i jego „Najstarszy opis Puszczy Kurpiowskiej”*. Ziemia 1911, Vol. II, No. 16; A. Chętnik, *Życie puszczańskie Kurpiów*. Warszawa 1971.

<sup>65</sup> The separateness of the area of Kurpiowska Plain has been lasting very long. In archaeological terms almost to the present day. Only administrative actions, deforestation, firing of river valleys (actions of Mazovian Duchy of the one, and the Teutonic Order on the other side) limited the range of Puszcza Kurpiowska and introduced a new type of economy (E. Kowalczyk-Heyman, *Dzieje granicy mazowiecko-krzyżackiej między Pisą a źródłami Biebrzy*. Warszawa 2013, pp. 39–51).

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## SUMMARY

The Kurpie Plain has its own specific physiographic characteristics. From the Paleolithic to the early Middle Ages, it was a convenient route to move groups of people, both in the north-south and east-west direction. Due to the very unattractive soil conditions, the forest was treated as a temporary or seasonal exploitation area. The territory of the Kurpie Plain, originally formed as a result of the Riss Glaciation (Warta Stadial) and transformed during the Baltic glaciation through the formation of a large sandur area with elements of earlier moraine. The oldest sites in Puszcza Kurpiowska can be certainly attributed only to the second half of Dryas III and the beginning of the pre-Boreal period (11th/10th millennium BC). Looking at the entire prehistoric period of inhabiting the human community in Puszcza Kurpiowska, I come to the conclusion that the model of economy developed by the hunters and gatherers of the end of the Middle Stone Age, however shockingly it sounds, with minor modifications survived until almost contemporary times.

## STRESZCZENIE

W obrębie Mazowsza północno-wschodniego występuje szereg mniejszych regionów geograficznych, wśród których Równina Kurpiowska posiada swoją istotną specyfikę. Od paleolitu aż po czasy wczesnego średniowiecza stanowiła dogodny szlak przemieszczania się grup ludności. Większość wędrowców nie pozostawała na tym obszarze dłużej. Z uwagi na bardzo nieatrakcyjne warunki glebowe puszcza traktowana była jako obszar eksploatacji czasowej lub sezonowej. Dolinami rzek na obszar ten zapuszczali się przedstawiciele kolejnych kultur archeologicznych z południa i północy, w poszukiwaniu dogodniejszych ekumen, ewentualnie zapuszczając się na teren puszczy w celach handlowych. Jedynie w epoce kamienia na obszarze Równiny Kurpiowskiej permanentnie gospodarowały grupy ludzkie zajmujące się łowiectwem, zbieractwem i rybołówstwem. W okresach związanych z gospodarką wytwórczą: rolnictwem i hodowlą teren ten był rejonem ścierania wpływów kulturowych, idących z różnych kierunków. To spowodowało, że na obszarze pierwotnej Puszczy Kurpiowskiej rytm rozwojowy nie odpowiadał przemianom na ziemiach sąsiednich. Model gospodarki wypracowany przez łowców, zbieraczy schyłku środkowej epoki kamienia, z niewielkimi modyfikacjami przetrwał do czasów niemal nam współczesnych. Dopiero działania administracyjne, odlesienia, wypalanie dolin rzecznych ograniczały stopniowo zasięg Puszczy Kurpiowskiej i wprowadzały nowy typ gospodarowania. Nie dochodziło jednak do pełnej akulturacji mieszkańców mateczników puszczańskich. Może to być jednym z elementów poczucia odrębności i dumy z własnej przeszłości dzisiejszych mieszkańców puszczy – Kurpiów.

**Key words:** Kurpie Forest, prehistory, archaeological cultures, archaeological sites, findings

**Słowa kluczowe:** Puszcza Kurpiowska, prahistoria, kultury archeologiczne, stanowiska archeologiczne, znaleziska































































































World War II, quite numerous land properties. The beginning of the settlement dates back to the 11th–13th centuries and it was the so-called first Mazovia colonization.

Particularly favorable for Ostrołęka were the years 1526–1563. The beginning was the incorporation of the Duchy of Mazovia lands to the Crown<sup>6</sup>. Ostrołęka was back then one of the important towns in the north-east Mazovia, located on the Warsaw–Vilnius route, and it was the capital of the largest county in Łomża region. Trade and craft developed well, the inhabitants' wealth increased. By the Omulew River, a trade resort was established, in which a mill, brewery, a sawmill and a fulling mill ("folusz") were located<sup>7</sup>. Ostrołęka was given new, very advantageous privileges from Polish rulers – Zygmunt Stary, Zygmunt August, Stefan Batory and August III<sup>8</sup>. In 1563 there were approximately 2 thousand inhabitants and 337 houses in Ostrołęka<sup>9</sup>. Zofia Niedziałkowska, the author of the monograph on Ostrołęka, when describing the years 1526–1563 in the history of the town, used an expression "the golden age of Ostrołęka"<sup>10</sup>. Similar "golden ages" were noted in the nearby towns of Mazovia, i.a. Łomża and Ostrów<sup>11</sup>. Unfortunately, their up-and-coming development was drastically interrupted by fires, epidemics, wars with the Swedish, the so-called "Deluge", and the first northern war, so the second half of the 17th century and the first half of the 18th century were really unfavorable for all Mazovian towns, including Ostrołęka. It influenced the rapid, five times' decrease in the number of the inhabitants from 2 thousand in 1563 to 400 in 1676<sup>12</sup>.

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6 In 1524, Stanisław, the Duke of Mazovia, died and in 1526 his brother, Janusz. Joining Mazovia to the Crown took place by the decision of the Mazovia parliament in Warsaw in 1529, legitimized by the Piotrków Privilege (27 December, 1529), and eventually solving the Mazovia case in 1537.

7 Fulling mill was a machine for fulling cloth.

8 Particularly important was the privilege of Zygmunt III dated 15 March, 1597, according to which i.a.: "[...] Ostrołęka's townspeople, when being townspeople, not peasants, were not used for peasant works, with letters from the Starost they went, hay and other things delivered, or they should not go to the manor, again the Starost, in order not to require beer from townspeople, he took the belonging fines from the townspeople in decent time on St. Martin Day, he allowed cutting dry wood, not used on beehives, he let the Mayors take the punishment called «bykowie»".

9 *Dzieje Mazowsza za panowania książąt przez F. Kozłowskiego*. Warszawa 1858, p. 394.

10 Z. Niedziałkowska, *Ostrołęka. Dzieje miasta*. Ostrołęka 2002, p. 50.

11 A. Dobroński, in his monograph on Ostrów *Dzieje Ostrowi Mazowieckiej do 1914 r.*, when writing about the town in the 16th–17th centuries, entitles one of the chapters "Golden Age" of Ostrów.

12 A rapid decrease in population was noted in actually all the Polish towns and cities, including, and perhaps even particularly, Mazovia. For instance, in Łomża, the decrease in population at that time was from 3300 to 300, in Nowogród from 1800 to 150, in Kolno from 1600 to 100, in Pułtusk from 3000 to 350, and in Różan from 2000 to 100. So, as we can see in the data, the towns in the neighbourhood of Ostrołęka and Ostrów noted even greater population loss, because from nearly tenfold (Pułtusk) to twentyfold (Różan). As

The turn of the 17th and the 18th centuries, and then the 18th century was the time of significant progress in the development of Ostrołęka, which could be reflected in the number of inhabitants. In 1777, there were 279 houses in Ostrołęka but the vetting carried out in this town in January 1792, together with the first personal as well as property census, and the street names, showed that in the town and the suburbs there were 1,480 inhabitants and 359 properties (in Ostrów in the same year there were 130 houses and 867 people). When comparing these numbers to the 1676 figures, we can note an almost 400% growth in the population of Ostrołęka, whereas in Ostrów it was 90%. Further in time, Ostrów again outnumbered Ostrołęka but approximately only in the half of the 19th century. "A town built up with wooden houses", – that is how Zofia Niedziałkowska, a conscientious researcher of Ostrołęka, described it at the end of the 18th century – "out of which only 25 were «decorated» with brick chimneys, gave an impression of a big, quite neat village. The central part was a spacious compact square. From the corners of the square, in the middle of which there was an also wooden town hall, the main streets were coming out at right angles. 3 imposing buildings in the town are 2 churches and a monastery"<sup>13</sup>.

The majority of Ostrołęka's inhabitants at that time were farmers, quite many were craftsmen. A comprehensive and consistently implemented plan of organizing towns and cities, primarily the royal ones, resulted in a clear economic recovery as well as changed the appearance and living conditions of the inhabitants. Ostrołęka then went down in Polish history because of its active participation in the Bar Confederation, the 1794 "black procession" in Warsaw and the Kościuszko Uprising (Madaliński's army marching out of Ostrołęka towards Cracow and a six-month defense of the town against Prussian troops).

The beneficial for Ostrołęka decisions of the partitioning Prussian authorities were related to a new administrative division because a large Ostrołęka County was established; it belonged to the Płock department, in a newly formed Province of New East Prussia (Neu-Ostprussen), which incorporated the areas of three former counties of Ostrołęka, Nur and Ostrów. It was an enormous county of approximately 1500 km<sup>2</sup> with as many as seven towns: Ostrołęka, Ostrów, Andrzejewo, Brok, Czyżew, Myszyniec and Nur.

The period of the autonomous Kingdom of Poland in the years 1815–1830, and particularly the last decade, was a successful time for Polish economy. Industry was developing and there was an increase in the population of towns, including Ostrołęka. As a result of the authorities' protective policy, various actions were taken in order to expand and rebuild towns. For that purpose, a special City Commission was established in 1820. The number of Ostrołęka's inhabitants increased significantly from 1195 people in 1810 and about 2000 in 1820 to 3030

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a consequence of the population loss, Ostrów became the most populated town in the region, slightly ahead of Ostrołęka.

13 Z. Niedziałkowska, *Zarys historyczny miasta Ostrołęki do 1945 r.* Ostrołęka 1989, p. 16.

inhabitants in 1827, so within a dozen or so years there was a nearly threefold growth in the number of residents<sup>14</sup>. In the classification of the cities in Mazovia in terms of population Warsaw kept the lead (131 484 inhabitants) ahead of Płock, Kutno, Maków and Pułtusk (each had over 4,000 residents). Ostrołęka, with 3,030 people, was eleventh. Continuing the demographic aspect, it must be stated that after the November Uprising Ostrołęka noted a catastrophic decrease in the number of inhabitants, which was a consequence of mainly two reasons. The first one was the damage during the Polish-Russian war and, particularly, in the battle of Ostrołęka on 26 May, 1831. The artillery attacks and the fire caused the loss of over a half of all the houses, the most magnificent buildings, i.e. the parish church, the monastery and the Bernardine church were also destroyed, as well as a just-started construction of a factory and an artisan settlement. The second reason was a raging cholera epidemic, which claimed many lives not only among the Tsarist and Polish army but also among the civilian population of the town.

The year 1866 was the time of important administrative decisions of Russian authorities, but less favorable to Ostrołęka. New governorates were established, including the Governorate of Łomża. Ostrołęka County was seriously reduced as it no longer incorporated the areas of Ostrów and Nur Counties, therefore the importance of the town itself significantly decreased.

At the end of the 19th century, there was an economic growth of Ostrołęka caused mainly by two circumstances. The first one was gaining and expanding important road and railway connections, and the second was building large new barracks and forming a military garrison. There was an important trade route leading through Ostrołęka at that time: Warsaw–Ostrołęka–Łomża–Suwałki–Petersburg. Also, Ostrołęka gained three railway connections (to Łapy through Śniadowo, to Pilawa through Tłuszcz and to Małkinia through Ostrów). On the other hand, the significance of the Narew water route decreased. Moreover, building a railway involved locating a Tsarist garrison in Ostrołęka. For the Russian army needs – regardless of the previously existing so-called Benedon barracks – there were new barracks built in Wojciechowice, along the road to Łomża. The construction lasted from 1892 to 1900 and, in total, there were 21 military objects built. Three regiments were quartered there- The 5th Niżegordzki Dragoon Regiment, The 6th Głuchowski Dragoon Regiment and The 21st

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14 I. Gieysztorowa, A. Zahorski, J. Łukasiewicz, *Cztery wieki Mazowsza*. Warszawa 1968, p. 303, Annex: *Ludność miast mazowieckich*; A. Dobroński, op. cit., p. 57; The data concerning the number of inhabitants in Ostrołęka differ from the findings of Z. Niedziałkowska (*Ostrołęka. Dzieje miasta...*, p. 149, 153), according to whom in 1826 Ostrołęka had 2562 inhabitants (1337 men and 1225 women), out of which in the town itself there were 1506 people (783 men and 723 women), but in 1829 – 2883 inhabitants, including 1720 people in the town.

Muromski Infantry Regiment as well as the 10th Battalion of Sappers, the Divisional Staff of the 6th Infantry Division and the command of the 1st Brigade<sup>15</sup>.

World War I and intense German-Russian fighting taking place here in 1915 caused enormous losses in the town's economy<sup>16</sup>, which was followed by a transfer of various goods to Russia (machines, devices, livestock and equipment) and an absolute confiscation policy of the German occupant.

Ostrołęka in the inter-war period was an agricultural town due to the inhabitants' professions and it reflected in their appearance. So, as Henryk Samsonowicz, an outstanding Polish historian, rightly stated in the preface to the publication on Mazovian towns: "[...] apart from craft and trade, services (well-known was the Mazovia beer, and, from some time ago, also booze in Mazovia taverns), they were inhabited by farmers, gardeners and cattle breeders. Townspeople-farmers is a profession and a social type known around Europe, but in Mazovia it was particularly frequent"<sup>17</sup>.

According to the first census in 1921, the population in Ostrołęka was 9 145 and in 1931 there were 13 341 inhabitants. Thus, the number of residents was clearly lower than in Łomża (22 014 inhabitants in 1921, 25 065 in 1931) as well as in nearby Ostrów (13 425 people in 1921, 17 600 in 1931). However, the percentage of the population growth in the decade between the censuses (1921–1931) was the highest in Ostrołęka as it reached 45,8% whereas in Ostrów 28% and in Łomża it was only 15%<sup>18</sup>. At the end of the inter-war period the population in Ostrołęka in 1937 was 13 500<sup>19</sup> and in September 1939 there were approximately 14 thousand inhabitants, in Ostrów the number of residents before the outbreak of the war fluctuated around 18 thousand and in Łomża the population was about 28 thousand.

Similarly to the situation before the war, as well as during the inter-war period, a significant influence on the town's life had the army. It concerned both the economic and cultural sphere. In Ostrołęka it was The 5th Regiment of Zaslav Uhlans stationing in the town since 26 May, 1921 and The 12th Mounted Artillery Division (both units were located in Wojciechowice in former Tsarist barracks). The benefits related to economic issues were mainly the sales of food and industrial goods to the army as well as providing various services. Due to orders

15 A. Dobroński, *Walory wojskowe guberni łomżyńskiej przed I wojna światową*. Rocznik Białostocki 1976, Vol. XII, pp. 247–248.

16 For instance, damages of buildings reached about 75% and they were one of the greatest in the entire Kingdom of Poland.

17 H. Samsonowicz, *Introduction*, [In:] *Mazowieckie miasteczka na przestrzeni wieków. Wybrane zagadnienia rozwoju gospodarczego, społecznego i kulturowego*. Ed. A. Stawarz. Warszawa 1999, p. 8.

18 The results of the censuses in 1921 and 1931, own calculation. For example, at the same time, the number of Łomża inhabitants increased from 22 014 to 25 100, so barely by 14%.

<sup>19</sup> Z. Niedziałkowska, *Kronika najważniejszych wydarzeń z dziejów miasta Ostrołęki*. Ostrołęka 1989, s. 27.

from the army, such craftsmen as shoemakers, tailors, saddlers, blacksmiths and builders did well. A positive influence was also on local farmers who provided the army units with agricultural products – potatoes, bread, vegetables, fruit, dairy products and meat for the soldiers as well as feed for horses<sup>20</sup>. Even bigger was the influence in the patriotic-cultural and sports sphere, and here there was the main difference between the impact of the Tsarist army in the previous years and the Polish army, because the Polish army organized numerous patriotic and historical celebrations with the participation of the town's inhabitants. Apart from celebrating national holidays, such as the 3rd May, the 11th November and the 15th August (the Polish Army Day), it was first of all a regiment holiday for The 5th Regiment of Zaslów Uhlans on 23 September, i.e. an anniversary of a victorious battle of Zaslów in 1920. The 5th Regiment owned two rooms for the screening of films and a platoon of trumpet players, but it was particularly distinguished by sports activity, especially horse-riding.

Great achievements were also made in education. Apart from primary education (general), there were junior-high schools – female and male, which were then merged in 1932, as well as a sewing school for girls and an Artisan and Industrial School for boys. Jewish education was also developing well. However, due to serious underdevelopment from the period of the annexations and war as well as not completely universal teaching (reaching about 70% in 1930), it was not possible to completely eliminate illiteracy, although it decreased significantly (e.g. in Ostrołęka, in the years 1921–1931, from 30% to 20%). The development of education was followed by the development of readership, which was proved i.a. by creating networks of libraries. They were built near cultural and educational associations, cultural institutions and schools, and in 1936 the Municipal Public Library was opened in Ostrołęka. There were two cinemas – a private one, “Uciecha”, which belonged to the Lendowie family, and the other in Dom Kolejarza (The Railwayman's House) at the station.

In conclusion, it may be stated that inter-war Ostrołęka was a town which was the center of administration, trade and service for the county, without much chance of becoming a bigger center on its own merits.

During the occupation, Ostrołęka County was divided into three parts. The Town of Ostrołęka and northern communes were incorporated to the Third Reich, in Ciechanów Region, southern communes of the county to the General Government and some of them were incorporated to the Soviet Union.

Significant changes, whose effects can be seen until the present day, happened after World War II, starting from the turn of the 40s and the 50s. Ostrołęka was freed of German occupation during the so-called summer operation of the Red

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20 J. Dziewirski, J. Kijowski, H. Maćkowiak, *5 Pułk Ułanów Zaslowskich* (2nd ed. improved and expanded). Ostrołęka 1994, p. 86.

Army in 1944, under the codename “Bagration”<sup>21</sup> on 6 September, 1944. The post-war beginnings of Ostrołęka were really difficult. Actual recovery of normal life in the town happened only at the turn of January and February 1945, as within several months (September 1944 – January 1945) the life in Ostrołęka almost completely ended. Soviet soldiers took control over the town and on the other side of Narew there were Germans, permanent shooting and bombing took place, and the people were expelled mainly to nearby communes.

World War II, and especially the months from the beginning of September 1944 to the half of January 1945, caused enormous damage of the town and the county, including mainly the areas on the Narew River. Figuratively speaking, there were no unspoiled buildings in Ostrołęka, and many were completely burnt or demolished. In comparison to the situation in 1939, the general damage of Ostrołęka reached about 55%, and in the financial aspect, it was approximately 15–20 million pre-war zlotys<sup>22</sup>. Although war damage in Ostrołęka during World War II was much lower in percentage terms than during World War I (85%), it was still one of the biggest, not only in Mazovia but also in the entire country. Industrial plants in the town and the county, only few and not too big, completely collapsed. Entirely destroyed were i.a. two power plants, brick factories, sawmills and a watermill.

There were also major overall losses in population. According to estimated statistical data, in 1945 there were 7 950 inhabitants in Ostrołęka<sup>23</sup>, thus the decrease in population during the occupation was approximately 7 thousand (almost 50%). It happened as a result of various reasons, and the most important was the decline in Jewish population<sup>24</sup>. During the first post-war years, an increase in population was noted, e.g. in Ostrołęka from about 9 279 inhabitants in 1946 to 10 745 at the end of 1947, mainly because of the returns from the war, camps and compulsory works. Over the following several years there was stagnation in number of inhabitants<sup>25</sup>. As there was no work in Ostrołęka, some inhabitants emigrated mainly to the Recovered Territories but also to Warsaw and other urban centers. According to estimated data, 349 families and 1091 people had left

21 The name of the operation “Bagration” derives from the surname of a Russian commander, Piotr Bagration (1765–1812), Georgian duke, general of the Tsarist army, renowned in the Napoleonic Wars in 1805, 1806–1807 and 1812, who fell at the battle of Borodino.

22 Bigger damage in Warsaw Voivodeship was only in Maków Mazowiecki (85,6%), The National Archives of the Capital City of Warsaw (APW), The Warsaw Provincial Office (UWW), War Compensation Department, sign. 40.

23 *Powszechny Sumaryczny Spis Ludności dated 14.II.1946 r.* Warszawa 1947, p. 25.

24 Before the war, out of approximately 15 000 inhabitants (1939), 1/3, so 5 000, were Jewish.

25 In 1945, the population in Ostrołęka was 7 950, increasing to 9 279 in 1946 and to 10 745 in 1947, whereas in 1949 it was about 10 600, in 1949 approximately 10 500, in 1950 – 10 409, in 1950 – about 10 700, and only in 1951 it exceeded the number of 11 000.

Ostrołęka by 31 January, 1946<sup>26</sup> (12% of the town's population). That decrease in population was slightly compensated by the returns of repatriates from the Soviet Union. In the years 1947–1951, there was basically no population growth in Ostrołęka (10 745 in 1947 and 10 700 in 1951), in the years 1952–1960 it was several hundred persons per year. It is also worth noting that, in terms of demography, the pre-war number of inhabitants in Ostrołęka was reached only in 1960 (15 216).

The first post-war years were dedicated to rebuilding the town after a damaging war. At the beginning of February 1945, municipal and county authorities, established in the southern part of the county, returned to Ostrołęka. The town hall, churches, shops, craft workshops and apartments were rebuilt. Within a few months all four primary schools and three secondary schools were opened, health care and social care were organized, sports and cultural activities started. Political parties, youth, union and social organizations started their functioning.

Particularly important for the development of Ostrołęka and having great impact on its future were the decisions made by central state and party authorities, concerning the objectives and then the implementation of the 6-Year Plan (1950–1955). As part of industrializing the country and equalizing the differences in economic development of Poland (well-developed Poland “A” on the left side of the Vistula and poorly-developed Poland “B” on the right side), the decisions to build a cellulose and paper factory as well as an electrical power and heating plant were made<sup>27</sup>.

It was related, among other things, to the necessity of expanding the cellulose and paper industry, which declined in over 50% during the war, and at the same time to a deepening shortage of paper, cardboard and packages. Thus, the central authorities made a decision to build from scratch big cellulose and paper conglomerates. The first one was supposed to be the Ostrołęka's Cellulose and Paper Factory. The initiative to build it started with the authorities of Ostrołęka, but the decision carried a political and economic aspect. Building a paper factory in Ostrołęka together with an electrical power and heating plant was treated as an experimental field for other designed factories of this type (Kwidzyń, Świecie on the Vistula River). What determined its location was the weak industrialization of this region, labor force surpluses, the abundance of water, raw materials and

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26 The Archives of the Capital City of Warsaw and Warsaw Voivodeship (APW), the Warsaw Provincial Office (UWW), the Information and Propaganda Office (UI i P), sign. 478; Further on the resettlement action from the Ostrołęka County to the Recovered Territories in: J. Kijowski, *Przesiedlenia ludności Kurpiowszczyzny na Ziemię Odzyskane po II wojnie światowej ze szczególnym uwzględnieniem powiatu ostrołęckiego (pogranicze mazursko-kurpiowskie)*. Olsztyn–Ostrołęka 1998, pp. 92–104.

27 Initially, it was supposed to be a power plant only for the needs of the cellulose and paper factory, later it turned into an electrical power and heating plant for the town and the region's needs.

railway connections. The construction was located in the Wojciechowice district, on the area of former Tsarist, then Polish barracks. The conglomerate was designed mainly according to foreign documentation and was aimed at producing different kinds of paper, cardboard, boxes, cellulose and paper bags. The factory was commissioned in 1959 (the first stage). It was equipped with the latest, at that time, on a European and global scale, machines and production devices.

The second stage of building the factory lasted from 1961 to 1966. It was mainly the time of constructing and starting-up the pulp mill, which took place in 1966 and resulted in opening the Ostrołęka's Cellulose and Paper Mills (OZCP). After a complete start-up in 1967, there were approximately 2600 people working in the factory, and an estimated annual value of OZCP production was 2,3 billion zlotys.

Building the Ostrołęka's Cellulose and Paper Factory was closely related to constructing Elektrociepłownia Ostrołęka (the Electrical Power and Heating Plant Ostrołęka). It was also located in Wojciechowice, which was going to become an industrial district of Ostrołęka in the future. The construction of Elektrociepłownia Ostrołęka, which lasted over three years, ended on 21 July, 1956. The first boiler OP-100 was also placed in service, followed by others. Elektrociepłownia Ostrołęka (later Zespół Elektrowni Ostrołęka) together with the Cellulose and Paper Factory (later Ostrołęka's Cellulose and Paper Mills) created a new industrial landscape in Ostrołęka and changed the inhabitants' lives. At the same time, there were also established: a worker cooperative "Narew" and "Przyszłość", the District Cooperative Dairy (Okręgowa Spółdzielnia Mleczarska), the National Machinery Center (Państwowy Ośrodek Maszynowy). In trade, there was the Popular Grocers Cooperative "Społem" (Powszechna Spółdzielnia Spożywców "Społem"), the Urban Retail Trade (Miejski Handel Detaliczny) and agricultural cooperatives (Municipal Cooperatives "Samopomoc Chłopska").

Due to the fact that since 1956 the electrical power and heating plant had been functioning and since 1959 – the Ostrołęka's Cellulose and Paper Factory (OFCiP), and the number of their employees was increasing, it also influenced the rise in the town's population. For instance, in 1955, Ostrołęka was inhabited by 12 105 people and Ostrów by 12 705<sup>28</sup>, so basically the number of inhabitants in the two towns was equal, then Ostrołęka gradually but successively started to outnumber Ostrów.

Another impetus towards the economic development was given in 1968. At that time, in accordance with a resolution of the Council of Ministers, the implementation of a development plan, prepared by a work group of Sub-regional Plan of the city of Warsaw and Warsaw Voivodeship, called "The Principles of Warsaw Region Development until 1985", was started. The plan assumed creating spatial arrangement, working against an influx of people to Warsaw and its

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28 M. Bartniczak, *Podziały administracyjne w powiecie Ostrów Mazowiecka*, [In:] *Ostrów Mazowiecka. Z dziejów miasta i powiatu...*, p. 305.

suburban zone, as well as establishing strong sub-regional centers. It was assumed that five sub-regional centers would be functioning (Warsaw, Płock, Siedlce, Ciechanów and Ostrołęka centres), and particularly rapidly developing were supposed to be the capitals of those sub-regions, thus also Ostrołęka. The second stage of the industrialization of Ostrołęka started at that time and, as it turned out later, it was the largest investment programme in the whole history of the town, and, most importantly, it was almost entirely implemented<sup>29</sup>. The most important investments in Ostrołęka completed within the years 1968–1975 were: Power Plant “B”, Meat Factory, Sand and Lime Plants, Cellular Concrete Plants “Prefabet”, Factory of Large-Panel Building Elements, a greenhouse conglomerate and a powdered-milk factory. In general, the investment costs in Ostrołęka in the years 1960–1975 were 10 billion zlotys, half of which was spent during the five-year period of 1970–1975<sup>30</sup>. The investments were carried out by large companies, such as: Warsaw Company of Power Station Construction and Industry “Beton-Stal”, Warsaw Industrial Construction Company “Kablobeton”, Mounting Power Plants and Industrial Devices Company “Energomontaż Północ”, “Elektrobudowa”, as well as an Italian company “Techno-Petropol” (the construction of the powdered-milk factory).

Industrializing Ostrołęka influenced the population growth of the town, which reached 22 160 inhabitants in 1970<sup>31</sup> so, within 15 years, the number of residents in Ostrołęka increased by over 10 thousand (about 45%), whereas in Ostrów the population was 15 010, so it increased by nearly 1700 (about 14%).

A further distinctive deepening of the difference between Ostrów and Ostrołęka, both in terms of economic development and population, took place in the period of 1975–1998. By the decision of central authorities, changes in administrative division of the country were made, from three-stage to two-stage (municipalities, voivodeships), liquidation of counties and creating 49 voivodeships instead of the 16 existing so far. The capital of one of the newly-established voivodeships was Ostrołęka, which increased the importance of the town. Ostrołęka did not carry out any significant industrial investment at that time, though, as it was the second half of Gierek’s rule and, because of the necessity to repay the loans (whose interest rates, in fact, rapidly increased from about 7% to 21%), the investment boom in the country finished. On the other hand, housing and accompanying building in Ostrołęka were developing rapidly, which actually had impact on the town’s population growth. Ostrołęka, during its “voivodeship”, grew in the number of inhabitants from approximately 28 000 in 1975 to 55 271 in 1998, so the population actually doubled within less than a quarter of a century. The

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29 Planned but not implemented at that time investments in Ostrołęka were: i.a. building a shredding mill and a granary, a textile and clothing factory, a factory of precast units for industrial construction as well as a factory using bark from OZCP.

30 J. Kijowski, *Dzieje Ostrołęki 1944–2000*. Ostrołęka 2002, p. 480.

31 Ibidem, p. 688, Annex No. 10: *Ludność Ostrołęki w latach 1945–2000*.

number of inhabitants of Ostrów at that time increased by a little more than 38% (from 16 000 to about 22 000).

Political and economic transformation at the turn of the 80s and the 90s of the 20th century was quite lenient for Ostrołęka. The biggest workplaces remained, e.g. Ostrołęka Cellulose and Paper Factory and Ostrołęka Power Station, the others were transformed and only a few were closed down.

To sum up, a number of general comments. A few centuries long history of Ostrołęka was and is related to Mazovia, the central district of Poland, additionally “honored” with the capital of the country – Warsaw. Ostrołęka went through difficult years (wars, fires, epidemics) as well as good ones. It went down in the history of the region and the country for many times, mainly due to political and military events, less frequently economic. The central authorities’ decisions influenced such situation as they decided to “make Ostrołęka happy” by carrying out two investments of significant importance: the electrical power and heating plant as well as the Ostrołęka’s Cellulose and Paper Factory, and then other investments crowned with the promotion of the town to the capital of the voivodeship. Happiness, however, did not last long, less than a quarter of a century, but the advantage remained.

Long was also the list of planned projects which were never completed. Some of them were: building in Ostrołęka a windmill with a milling quality of 150 tonnes per 24 hours and a granary of 20 thousand tones capacity, a factory of precast units for industrial construction, a textile and clothing factory (mainly to employ women), a plastic parts factory and a factory using bark from OZCP.

Investment costs for Ostrołęka in the years 1970–1975 reached 5 billion zlotys, whereas the last two five-year periods, i.e. 1960–1970, were in total almost 4 billion zlotys. Industrializing Ostrołęka was so fast and extensive that other aspects of social and economic life, i.a. housing and accompanying building, education and culture as well as healthcare, fell far behind. Several big construction companies were brought to Ostrołęka, including “Beton-Stal”, “Kablobeton” and Ostrów Construction Company. At the opportunity of constructing the production sites, there were other facilities built: a post office, a sports stadium, Dom Sportowca (Sportsman’s House) and a bus depot.

Industrializing Ostrołęka increased the number of the town’s inhabitants. In 1970, the population in Ostrołęka was already 22 160<sup>32</sup>. So, within 15 years, there had been an increase in population by over 10 thousand people (approximately 45%).

One of the characteristics of the Kurpie region development was the concentration of industrial investments, and then the production sites, in Ostrołęka itself, almost entirely excluding the county’s area, so a peculiar “Ostrołęka-centricity”. Apart from Communal Cooperatives “Samopomoc Chłopska”, the only factories located outside the town were: Dzięwiarska Spółdzielnia Pracy (Knitting

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32 Ibidem.

Worker Cooperative) “Pełta” in Myszyniec, which was a branch of the Cooperative from Pułtusk<sup>33</sup>, Zakłady Przemysłu Torfowego (Peat Industries) in Karaska (Municipality of Kadzidło) and Zakłady Cegły Silikatowej (Silicate Brick Factory) in Kruki (Municipality of Olszewo-Borki). Ostrołęka County varied from other nearby counties because, e.g. in Maków County, the production sites were not only in Maków but also in Różan, in Ostrów County – in Małkinia, and in Przasnysz County – in Chorzele.

Following the industrial development, the number of Ostrołęka’s inhabitants grew rapidly. In 1960, the population was 15 216, increasing within over 10 years until 1970 by about 50% and reaching the number of 22 160, and then, within the next five years (1970–1975), the population growth was almost identical to the one in the previous decade, i.e. by nearly 6 thousand people, reaching 28 040.

Significant changes also took place in the demography of the county. Following the population growth in the town, the number of inhabitants in communes systematically decreased. In 1970, the overall population in the county was 90 000, including 22 000 in Ostrołęka and 68 000 in villages, but in 1975 the total number of inhabitants was 94 600, including 28 000 in the town and 66 600 in villages. Thus, along with the population growth in the town by nearly 6 000 people, the number of rural inhabitants decreased by 2 000 people. Population loss was noted in every commune. The major “cause” of the decrease in the number of rural inhabitants was Ostrołęka’s industry which absorbed workforce, but still, next to a relatively big group of peasants-workers, more and more workers settled in the town within occupational, cooperative and individual building schemes. With some simplification, it can be stated that the town’s population growth equals the number of inhabitants “taken over” from communes, natural growth and persons from outside the county. In terms of demography, my obligation is to mention two more factors, one positive – reduction in mortality (particularly infants) and negative – decrease in natural growth.

Industry development was accompanied by numerous economic and social phenomena, both positive and negative. Thus, for instance, labor force surpluses, mainly in the northern part of Ostrołęka County, with poor soil of the Green Forest, were successfully managed. Plus, a relatively numerous category of peasants-workers was created. Combining farming and working in industry had impact on the irregularity of work and low workforce productivity in factories. Agricultural production, trade and services did not keep pace with the industrial development. The extent to which Ostrołęka was equipped with technical infrastructure was not sufficient. Summing up the period after World War II, it must be admitted that the years 1945–1998 were one of the best or even the best years in the entire 644-year history of the town, being a kind of the second “Golden Age” in its history.

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33 Worker Cooperative “Pełta” in Myszyniec was established in the middle of the 70s, using the premises after railway workshops of a closed narrow gauge railway.

An important role in the history of the town played the Narew River, one of the longest rivers in Poland<sup>34</sup>. It was pointed out by prof. Adam Dorobiński in the Introduction to a publication titled *Narew w dziejach i współczesności Mazowsza i Podlasia* (The Narew in the history and the present times of Mazovia and Podlasie), in which he wrote: “[...] The Narew River, along with the valley, determined the direction of settlement but also joined various tribes and, in later centuries, ethnic groups, nationalities, religions with their different culture and customs. This river decided on the career of boroughs and towns, had a significant impact on defining trade routes on land, contributed to the development of some crafts and branches of industry, influenced municipal or urban engineering, it was also used to mark borders in administrative divisions and war planning”<sup>35</sup>.

The meaning of the Narew River in the history of Ostrołęka was also described in the same publication by Jerzy Kijowski in his article *Rola Narwi w dziejach Ostrołęki oraz mosty ostrołęckie* (The role of the Narew in the history of Ostrołęka and Ostrołęka’s bridges). Between the 14th and the 19th centuries, it was a positive function (waterways transport, protection from enemies, fishing, building watermills), with hardly any threat of flooding (numerous oxbows, forests and marshes absorbing excess water). In the 20th century, the fact of the town’s location on the river caused major damage in both world wars because the Narew River was the borderline between two enemies. It had, however, a positive impact on the decision to build the electrical power and heating plant as well as the paper and cellulose factory because the abundance of water was one of the main arguments for building those plants.

It is rather difficult to assess the economic situation of Ostrołęka in the latest years, i.e. since 1999 until the present day, because a short time distance from those events does not allow their complete objective assessment, but some conclusions and reflections may be already drawn. Nowadays, the pace of Ostrołęka’s development is unfortunately poor. No new investments are undertaken (apart from the investments within Stora Enso Company), residential construction, especially multi-family housing, has basically stopped, more and more young educated inhabitants of the town are looking for a place for themselves in nearby Warsaw or in much further European countries, and only new supermarkets, megastores and other shopping malls pop up like mushrooms. The railway nod in Ostrołęka has actually collapsed. One of the most concrete facts of this collapse is the demographic data, which clearly indicate the stagnation of Ostrołęka. In the years 1998–2000, the population of Ostrołęka basically remained stable, or even increased a little (in 1998 – 55 271, 1999 – 55 511, 2000 – 55 658) and since 2001

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34 The Narew River, the 5th largest river in Poland (after the Vistula, the Oder, the Bug and the Warta), nearly 450 km long. It flows out of marshy areas of the Białowieża Forest in Belarus and it has a basin of approximately 75 thousand km<sup>2</sup>.

35 A. Dobroński, *Introduction*, [In:] *Narew w dziejach i współczesności Mazowsza i Podlasia*. Eds. A. Dobroński, W. Grębocka. Łomża 2004.

the number of inhabitants has been gradually decreasing (in 2001 – 55 390, in 2005 – 54 543, in 2010 – 53 390, and in 2012 – 52 877). Two factors influenced and have influence on that situation: lower natural growth and negative migration balance (the natural growth in Ostrołęka and the county was systematically increasing during the post-war period, reaching almost 20 per mils, and nowadays it has dropped to only a few per mils). It was a result of, among other things, the loss of Ostrołęka's "voivodeship", which was not only a failure in prestige but also meant specific economic and social losses. The most significant was the decrease in employment by about 5 thousand people, who so far worked in widely understood voivodeship administration. At the same time, in the recent years, we may notice economic slowdown of the town and the decrease in population. The amount of the funds spent by the town on investments can be given as an example. In 2010, it was approximately 60 million, in 2015 – 20 million, and in 2016 – barely 9 million (3% of the budget). In the Ostrołęka county budget, for instance, annually about 30-40% was allocated for investments (in 2014, 36% of the budget funds was spent). Relatively big – but safe and in accordance with regulations – was also the indebtedness of Ostrołęka because, in the recent years, it oscillated around 100 million zlotys (in 2015 – 108 million, in 2016 – 99 million). Certain signs of improvement in investments occurred in the 2017 budget of Ostrołęka, mainly due to external funds on building voivodeship roads running through the town.

On the other hand, school and sports premises have improved, a new hospital has been put into use (after "only" 25 years from the beginning of the investment!), a water park, a mausoleum of the November Uprising, new public buildings, e.g. the College of Public Administration, the Marshal Office and municipal buildings. The number of churches has also increased (from three to six), banks (from three to approximately thirty), cars, streets, pavements, but the number of bike paths, unfortunately, remains steady. The educational attainment rates have significantly increased, the percentage of people with higher education is growing systematically and the percentage of people without secondary education is decreasing at a similar pace. We have two higher-education institutions – one private (School for Higher Education in Public Administration), the other social (Higher School of Economy and Sociology), unfortunately no public ones.

The most important problems to be solved are creating new workplaces, which would have impact on decreasing unemployment rates, actually quite low right now – about 8–10%, building a bypass road of the town with the third bridge on the Narew River, building a road to Warsaw through Goworowo – Wyszaków, improving road condition, building bike paths, decreasing pollution and developing the areas by the Narew.

Conclusively, some reflections, comparisons and generalizations. Let us begin with Ostrołęka's location and its role over the centuries, particularly in relation to the surrounding areas. It was basically a leading role all the time. Ostrołęka was, both formally and actually, the center of the region. Formally, it was the seat of

Ostrołęka County, with the borders of the county actually remaining the same. The exception was the period from the partitions of Poland to 1866, when the county included three former counties (of Ostrołęka, Ostrów and Nur) as well as the years 1975–1998, when the Ostrołęka County was dissolved but the voivodeship of Ostrołęka was established. All the major industrial factories, institutions, schools, especially secondary, were located in Ostrołęka, and since 1976, also higher education, a hospital, cultural and sports centers.

Comparing Ostrołęka to nearby towns, mainly from north-east Mazovia, varied over the centuries. Let us first refer to Łomża. For several centuries it was superior to Ostrołęka, as the capital of Łomża Land, which used to include, among others, Ostrołęka County, later the capital of the governorate (1866–1915). Additionally, in 1925, occurred the ecclesial dependence of the Ostrołęka parish on a newly-established Łomża Diocese. Therefore, Łomża has actually always outnumbered Ostrołęka in terms of population. In the period of the greatest development of towns in Mazovia, in the 16th century, Łomża was inhabited by approximately 3000 people and was the largest town in the Mazovia voivodeship, just after Warsaw and Przasnysz. Ostrołęka at that time had about 2 000 inhabitants.

Interesting is the comparison of the population of five towns from north-east Poland, which were voivodeship towns in the years 1975–1998 (the comparison does not include “old” voivodeship cities, i.e. Olsztyn and Białystok). The data covers the years from 1946, so from the end of World War II, to the present day (2015).

Table 1

Comparison of the population of five towns from north-east Poland

Nb.	Year	Ostrołęka	Ciechanów	Łomża	Suwałki	Biała Podlaska
1	1946	9 279	13 588	14 173	13 670	15 496
2	1950	10 409	16 237	15 272	15 456	13 689
3	1960	15 216	20 803	19 253	19 868	20 486
4	1975	28 040	27 349	29 006	30 558	31 765
5	2000	55 818	47 607	65 112	69 092	58 958
6	2015	52 611	44 506	62 737	69 370	57 414

Source: Statystyka miast i osiedli 1945–1965. GUS, Warszawa 1967; Rocznik Demograficzny z lat 1976, 2001, 2016.

Definitely, Ostrołęka had the worst start, with 9279 inhabitants, whereas the other four towns quite clearly outnumbered it, from approximately 30–35% (Suwałki, Ciechanów, Łomża) to over 40% (Biała Podlaska). After several years

(data from 1950), Ciechanów noted the biggest increase by 2645 people, Suwałki – by 1786, Ostrołęka – by 1130 and Łomża by 1099, whereas in Biała Podlaska the population significantly decreased – by 1807 people. Another 10 years (1950–1960) was the period of an increase in the towns' population: the biggest increase was in the former outsider, Biała Podlaska, by 6777, the lowest in Łomża (3981), and Ostrołęka was the second in this table (population growth by 4801). Within the years 1960–1975, so the last 15 years of “county” Poland, Ostrołęka reached a record level of population growth (12 284), ahead of Biała Podlaska (11 279), Suwałki (10 690), Łomża (9753) and Ciechanów (only 6546). The period of voivodship of those towns, so, as we assumed to simplify, the years 1975–2000, instead of 1975–1998, was the time of an increase in population, in Suwałki – by 38 534, in Łomża – by 36 106; Ostrołęka at that time increased in the number of inhabitants by 27 778, in Suwałki it was almost the same (27 293), and the lowest increase was in Ciechanów (20 358).

The last fifteen years (2000–2015), for the majority of the discussed towns, brought a decrease in population, and the biggest was in Ostrołęka (3207 persons), then in Ciechanów – 3101, Łomża – 2475 and Suwałki (only 1544), Biała Podlaska was the only town which noted relatively small but still an increase in population (78 people).

The nearly six-and-a-half-century history of Ostrołęka has been running in a sinusoidal manner. The periods of prosperity intertwined with the times of stagnation, but the breakdowns happened as a result of both – and most often – external reasons and, less frequently, internal ones, specific only to Ostrołęka. It was usually related to wars taking place in the country, such as the “Swedish Deluge”, the First Northern War, the November Uprising, the First and Second World Wars as well as fires, epidemics and the liquidation of the Ostrołęka voivodship in 1998. The periods of prosperity, however, were usually related to beneficial for Ostrołęka decisions of superior authorities, most often central. Such was the situation with, for instance, the decision to incorporate Ostrołęka, as part of Mazovia, to the Crown in 1526, and then the implementation of the 1823 so-called plan of the Minister of the Treasury, Ksawery Drucki Lubecki, interrupted relatively quickly and rapidly by the outbreak of the November Uprising and the Battle of Ostrołęka on 26 May, 1831, the adoption of the 6-year plan (with two major investments in Ostrołęka – the electrical power and heating plant and the cellulose and paper factory), as well as the administrative division changes in the country in June, 1975, which resulted in establishing Ostrołęka voivodship.

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### **SUMMARY**

The article deals with certain issues selected from the entire, over 600-year-old, history of Ostrołęka. Particularly highlighted are such problems as: periodization, demography, some economic and social issues as well as the role of the Narew River in the development of the town. As far as it is possible, the indicators of Ostrołęka are compared to the indicators of other nearby towns. Various historical, archival and printed sources are used, as well as publications. Relatively interesting, perhaps controversial, is the discussion on the present times (since the Ostrołęka voivodeship liquidation in 1999 to the present day).

### **STRESZCZENIE**

Artykuł traktuje o wybranych zagadnieniach z dziejów Ostrołęki w całej jej ponad 600-letniej historii. Szczególnie wyeksponowane są takie problemy jak: periodyzacja, demografia, niektóre sprawy gospodarcze i społeczne oraz rola rzeki Narwi w rozwoju miasta. Na ile to możliwe, wskaźniki ostrołęckie porównywane są ze wskaźnikami innych, sąsiednich miast. Wykorzystane są różnorodne źródła historyczne zarówno archiwalne, jak i drukowane oraz opracowania. Dość ciekawe, być może kontrowersyjne, są rozważania dotyczące czasów najnowszych (od likwidacji województwa ostrołęckiego w 1999 r. do chwili obecnej).

**Key words:** Ostrołęka, history, economy, the Narew River, investments, demography

**Słowa kluczowe:** Ostrołęka, historia, ekonomia, Narew, inwestycje, demografia

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## JEWIS IN THE KURPIE FOREST

### ŻYDZI NA OBSZARZE PUSZCZY KURPIOWSKIEJ

#### **Introduction**

The Kurpie Forest, also known as the Green Forest, used to be called Zagajnica; the present name derives from the people who lived in this region: *Kurpie Zielone (Green Kurpie)* (in distinction to *White*), inhabiting the area between Pułtusk and Ostrów Maz.). The region covers approximately 2,000 km<sup>2</sup>, situated between the rivers Narew (from the south), Pisa (from the east), Orzyc (from the west) and a former Polish-Prussian border (from the north); the area now spreads across the Voivodeship of Mazovia ( $\frac{3}{4}$  of Kurpie), Podlasie ( $\frac{1}{4}$ ) and Warmia-Masuria (Dąbrowy village). The “capital” of Kurpie is the town of Myszyniec, vying for this name with Kadzidło, which is slightly bigger but still a village<sup>1</sup>.

The aim of the dissertation is to demystify the history of Jewish community inhabiting the region of the Kurpie Forest from the beginning of their settlement to the extermination during the World War II, and, in particular, to show the community’s contribution to an overall social development of the region discussed. The main sources of information are archival materials from The Central Archives of Historical Records (AGAD), the Archives of the Jewish Historical Institute (ŻIH) and the National Archives in Białystok (APB), including the Department in Łomża (APŁ), as well as printed materials<sup>2</sup>. Available publications on the discussed region and the history of Jewish communities in northern Mazovia were also used.

#### **Jewish settlements in the Green Forest during the Noble’s Republic of Poland**

During the time of The First Republic of Poland, Zagajnica Forest belonged to the dukes of Mazovia and then (after incorporating this part of Mazovia to the Crown in 1526) to Polish kings, and it was a part of the Mazovia Voivodeship but in the area of Łomża, together with the following county administrations of Łomża, Nowogród and Ostrołęka. The towns built on the edges of the Forest (Kolno,

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<sup>1</sup> M. Żerański, *Kurpie. Puszcza Zielona. Przewodnik turystyczny*. Cieszyn 2008, p. 11.

<sup>2</sup> What needs to be highlighted is: *Mazowsze Północne w XIX–XX wieku. Materiały źródłowe 1795–1956*. Elab. J. Szczepański. Warszawa–Pułtusk 1997.

Nowogród, Ostrołęka, Chorzele) were the “guidance of cultural work”<sup>3</sup> for fairly unstable at first settlement (beekeepers, charcoal burners, hunters, fishermen). In the light of the eldest description of Zagajnica, it seems that the majority of the population were, however, immigrants from Prussia, thus Lutherans<sup>4</sup>. Since 1650, there had been a Jesuit mission<sup>5</sup> in the Forest, with confrontational attitude towards Lutheran Prussia, which may have created more comfortable living conditions for Jewish people- that was the case in Węgrowo, where Jews took place of the Protestants leaving the town managed by new owners, Krasieńscy, who conducted an intolerant policy towards Jews. Unfortunately, no certain records from the 17th century relating to the presence of Jews in this area have been found so far<sup>6</sup>.

The process of Jews coming to Mazovia began in the 13th century (the eldest reference about Jews in Płock is dated 1237)<sup>7</sup>. Trade routes along the Vistula river, the Narew and the Bug encouraged Jewish merchants to settle in Płock, Warsaw, Wyszogród, Pułtusk and Wyszaków.

Mazovia was different from other districts of The First Republic of Poland in a matter of its uniformity: Polishness, Catholicism and poor urbanization. “Before the Partitions of Poland, Jewish population lived mainly on ethnically non-Polish lands, where the majority of inhabitants were Ukrainians, Belarusians and Lithuanians [...]. On ethnically Polish lands [...] lived 171 804 Jews [excluding infants under the age of 1, according to the census of Jewish people in 1765 – J.M.], representing 29,24% of the overall number of the population of Jews, but in the areas of mainly non-Polish population there were 415 854 Jews, representing 70,76%”<sup>8</sup>. In the Mazovia Voivodeship at that time there were 10 379 Jews, in the Płock Voivodeship (Northern Mazovia) – 3960, whereas in the Russian Voivodeship, for instance, 100111, in the Voivodeship of Trock – 33 738, Podlasie – 19 403. Interestingly, Jewish population used to live in towns and cities (e.g. in the Kalisz Voivodeship – 98,79%, the Łęczyca Voivodeship – 66,36%, the Sieradz Voivodeship – 77,53%). The situation was different in the Mazovia Voivodeship,

<sup>3</sup> L. Krzywicki, *Kurpie*. Warszawa 1962, s. 516, as cited in: Z. Niedziałkowska, *Kurpie. Bory Ostrołęckie*, Warszawa 1988, p. 28.

<sup>4</sup> *Najstarszy opis Puszczy Kurpiowskiej spisany przez jezuitę Łukasza Kościeszę załuskiego w czasie misji odbytej w lasach, Zagajnica, około 1650*, [In:] M.K. Kozłowska, *Duchowe i materialne wytwory kurpiowskiej kultury ludowej jako wyraz działalności myszynieckiej misji jezuickiej w latach 1650–1773*. Ostrołęka 2009, pp. 79–80.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 12–23.

<sup>6</sup> AGAD, *Księgi ziemskie ostrołęckie 1633–1670*.

<sup>7</sup> J. Szczepański, *Dzieje społeczności żydowskiej powiatów Pułtusk i Maków Mazowiecki*. Warszawa 1993, p. 7.

<sup>8</sup> A. Podraza, *Żydzi i wieś w dawnej Rzeczypospolitej*, [In:] *Żydzi w dawnej Rzeczypospolitej. Materiały z konferencji Autonomia Żydów w Rzeczypospolitej szlacheckiej*. Wrocław–Warszawa 1991, p. 243.

where out of the total population of 10 379 Jews, 4092 (39,43%) lived in cities, and 6287 (60,57%) in the countryside<sup>9</sup>.

The situation in question can be explained by a confluence of some consequences. Jews living on non-Polish rural areas were intermediaries between noblemen (Polish or polonized) and peasants, i.a. as tax-collectors, lessees of taverns, breweries. In Mazovia, where gentry prevailed, the role of Jews was not significant. However, much more important was the fact that Jewish community was banned from living in most cities of Mazovia (there were only few private cities, and only their owners, who cared for their income, weren't prejudiced against Jews, especially when it came to trade<sup>10</sup>).

The functioning of Jewish community was often connected with the attitude of the Catholic Church in The First Republic of Poland towards Jews, which was related to church councils and successive Popes. Although local conditions did not always allow the all-Church doctrines of proceedings against Jews to be realized, the Polish ordinaries were yet obliged to release the canons of *De Judaeis* and Pastoral Epistles; some of them actually did that with apparent reluctance towards religious dissenters<sup>11</sup>. The bishops of Płock, who managed the Catholic congregation from Northern Mazovia, were no different in this respect. As far as the Church goods are concerned, the bishops usually undertook to discard Jewish lessees, which was the case in Pułtusk and Wyszaków, managed by the bishop of Płock<sup>12</sup>. The antipathy towards Jews is confirmed by the protocols of visitation in a parish in the Diocese of Płock, in which the Jewish were described as following: "they do not bring any good to the Church, even though they settle in Catholic places and apartments [...] Drunkenness is common among Jews"<sup>13</sup>. However, it is necessary to point out here that, despite the official rigid attitude towards Jews, it was the part of Catholic clergy, especially the monastic as they did not abide by bishop decrees, who willingly used the opportunity to increase their income collected from the Jewish lessees of parish goods, breweries and taverns, as well as of built or repaired synagogues<sup>14</sup>.

<sup>9</sup> Ibidem, p. 244.

<sup>10</sup> ŻIH, Master's theses written before 1939 r. (dissertations written under prof. Majer Bałaban's supervision), sign. 117/2 (E. Szejnberg, *Szlachta polska a Żydzi w drugiej połowie XVIII wieku*. Warszawa 1937), p. 4.

<sup>11</sup> Bishop Stefan Rupniewski wrote in a pastoral letter *O Żydach* in 1722 r.: "Not only did they almost deprive themselves of their disgraceful slavish name in Poland, publicly conduct their celebrations, customs, and services, usurbing all the freedom, but also over Christians they want to rule, and take away from them trade, mercantilism, art, craft, and other ways of earning a living", as cited in: A. Kaźmierczyk, *Polscy biskupi wobec Żydów w XVIII wieku*, [In:] *Rzeczpospolita wielu wyznań*. Materiały z międzynarodowej konferencji. Kraków, 18–20.11.2002. Ed. A. Kaźmierczyk et al. Kraków 2004, p. 351.

<sup>12</sup> J. Szczepański, *Dzieje społeczności żydowskiej...*, p. 8.

<sup>13</sup> J. Szczepański, *Spoleczność żydowska Mazowska w XIX–XX wieku*. Pułtusk 2005, p. 30.

<sup>14</sup> A. Kaźmierczyk, op. cit., pp. 352–355.

In terms of organization, Jews were related to religious communities – kahals and subordinated kehilas (przykahalki), and if the population was small (or they appeared later) they belonged to the nearest kahal<sup>15</sup>. According to the census of 1765, there were 2763 Jews over the age of 1 living in the area of Łomża; they all belonged to the kahal of Tykocin (tab. 1). Nearly half of them lived in the Stawiski parish; within the Zagajnica region Jews were found in the eastern part (the Lipniki parish was established only in 1838 and its account occurred in later censuses of Jewish communities).

Table 1

Jews on Łomża Land in 1765 according to Catholic parishes

Parish	Organization of Jews	Kahals they belonged to	Number of heads*
Stawiski	Kehila	Tykocin	1005
Zambrów	Kehila	Tykocin	197
Jabłonka Kościelna	Kehila	Tykocin	92
Rudki	–	Tykocin	83
Zawady	–	Tykocin	105
Śniadowo	Kehila	Tykocin	718
Lipniki	Kehila	Tykocin	64
Goworowo	–	Tykocin	109
			Total: 2373

Source: J. Kleczyński, F. Kluczycki, *Liczba głów żydowskich w Koronie z taryf roku 1765*. Kraków 1898, pp. 20–21.

Notice: \* – the census did not include infants below the age of 1; it probably gives a lowered number of Jews as the amount of *pogłównie* depended on that (compare with J. Kleczyński, F. Kluczycki, op. cit., pp. 4–6).

The main sources of information about Jews living in the parishes within Zagajnica range are actually the protocols of visitations in the Płock Diocese. The area neighbored on the Duchy of Prussia (the Kingdom of Prussia since 1701), whose authorities did not tolerate Jews, and therefore they resided in local places. In a secular parish of Myszyniec, which was established at the site of a Jesuit mission in 1774, it was noted that 23 Jews lived there (out of 4300 of the total population); however, there was no information on the number of Jews from the neighboring villages in the Łomża Starosty, who “are sitting in taverns and

<sup>15</sup>*Atlas historii Żydów polskich*. Ed. W. Sienkiewicz. Warszawa 2010, pp. 80–86; M. Bałaban, *Z zagadnień żydostwa polskiego*. Lwów 1932 (the work refers to the organization in Małopolska and western Ukraine).

breweries”<sup>16</sup>. During the parish visitation in 1782, there were listed 9 Jewish men, 12 women and 17 children; nonetheless, the parish was at that time expanded by 11 villages (the total population increased to 5871)<sup>17</sup>.

The increase in the Jewish population in Myszyniec should be related to the transformation of this settlement into a town, which had certain trading laws and whose inhabitants were exempt from some feudal charges. In the light of the convincing arguments<sup>18</sup>, it ought to be assumed that it happened already during the Prussian governance.

### Synagogue District in Myszyniec

As a result of the The First Republic of Poland partitions, Mazovia fell to Prussia. The region of Zagajnica was included in New East Prussia, Płock Department and a smaller part – Białystok Department (for the first time the Forest was located on different “voivodships”). In 1802, King Frederick William II approved of the Prussian government abolition of the cities’ privileges *de non tolerandis Judaeis*, which resulted in the migration of Jews from rural areas. In 1808 (already at the time of the Duchy of Warsaw), the number of Jews in “Kurpian and close-to-Kurpie” cities of the Płock Department was: Chorzele – 175 out of the total population of 375, Ostrołęka – 99 in 2036 inhabitants, Myszyniec – 122 out of 725<sup>19</sup>.

Table 2

Non-agricultural occupations in Myszyniec and Jews’ participation in them (September 2, 1830 status)

Occupation	Total number	Number of Jews	Jews: first name and surname, the amount of annual tax in zlotys
Stallholder	4	4	Hersz Rozen (18), Lewin Lewitan (18), Herszek Kofman (18), Hersz Rozner (18)
Butcher	5	1	Mosiek Zysman (45)
Soap maker	1	1	Icek Wolfowicz Rozen (20)
Nailer	1	1	Icek Rodbel (4)

<sup>16</sup>Archiwum Diecezjalne Łomżyńskie, sign. II 160, k. 1–2, as cited in: M. Przytocka, *Parafia myszyńska od 1773 do 2009 roku*, [In:] *Dzieje parafii i kościoła pw. Trójcy Przenajświętszej w Myszyńcu*. Ostrołęka 2009, p. 104.

<sup>17</sup>Archiwum Diecezji Płockiej, Visitation Acts No. 307, k. 16–18 (Myszyniec, 19.09.1782), as cited in: W. Paprocka, *Myszyniec. Studium z dziejów miasta*. Warszawa 1993, p. 100.

<sup>18</sup>W. Paprocka, op. cit., pp. 26–30.

<sup>19</sup>*Struktura wyznaniowa mieszkańców departamentu płockiego – 1808 r.*, [In:] *Mazowsze Północne...*, pp. 28–29.

Occupation	Total number	Number of Jews	Jews: first name and surname, the amount of annual tax in zlotys
Turner	4	–	–
Needlemaker	1	–	–
Carpenter	2	–	–
Blacksmith	4	1	Kuszel Tobiasz (4)
Woodworker	2	–	–
Coppersmith	1	1	Boruch Sztein (4)
Hatter	9	–	–
Tailor	9	5	Lewin Berliner (4), Leyba Szerman (4), Josk Perner (4), Leyzer Szerman (4), Ajzyk Szejnfeld (4)
Furrier	3	1	Leyba Czapnicki (4)
Wheelwright	3	–	–
Cooper	2	–	–
Shoemaker	8	1	Abraham Szumar (4)
Potter	13	–	–
<i>Obraznik</i>	4	–	–
Tanner	11	2	Jankiel Gerber (4), Icek Bączek Zysman (4)
Baker	13	8	Fizel Gutman (4), Boruch Tobiasz (4), Waliwia (?) Beylach (4), Boruch Sztein (4), Leyba Golfinkiel (4), Aron Blank (4), Leyzer Miller (4), Leyzer Tobiasz (4)
Glassmaker	5	4	Dawid Inerfeld (4), Icek Inerfeld (4), Leyba Inerfeld (4), Mosiek Inerfeld (4)
<i>Plockarz</i>	7	–	–
<i>Vodka producer</i>	5	2	Mortek Bursztyn (20), Icek Tobiasz (20)
Dyer	2	–	–
In total	119	32	

Source: AGAD, KRSW, sign. 4411, The Personal List of Wage-earners in Myszyniec City, Ostrołęka District, Płock Voivodeship, dated 2 September 1830 r., as cited in: W. Paprocka, op. cit., pp. 117–124.

Due to the fact that Chorzele, Ostrołęka (and Nowogród) were situated on the edges of Zagajnica (called the Green since the 18th century, in comparison to the White), particular attention shall be paid in this respect to the development of Jewish community in *the very heart* of the Forest – Myszyniec. The population gradually increased, mainly because the city was becoming an attractive place for worshippers of Judaism, due to the process of expelling them from rural areas. According to the report of mayor Ignacy Zaleski made in 1820, in the city alone lived 291 Jews<sup>20</sup> next to 924 Christians, and they also inhabited local villages<sup>21</sup>. An interesting source of insight into the lives of the Myszyniec Jews is the *Personal List of Wage-earners* preserved in the records of the Government Commission for Internal Affairs (KRSW), which is dated 1830 (tab. 2) so from the times of the Kingdom of Poland. The list contains 119 “job positions”, including 32 Jewish “jobs” (4 stallholders, 1 butcher, 1 soap maker, 1 nailer, 1 blacksmith, 1 coppersmith, 5 tailors, 1 furrier, 1 shoemaker, 2 tanners, 8 bakers, 4 glassmakers, 2 liquor tavern keepers), which represented 26,89% of the whole. The number of “wage-earning Jews” alone was slightly lower – Boruch Szein worked at the same time both as a coppersmith (probably a producer of cauldrons) and a baker.

Similarly to other towns, the following professions can be distinguished: “Christian”, “Jewish” and “mixed”. There were interesting “pre-Jewish” occupations such as *obraźnik* (probably a folk sculptor, a person who made of wood sculptures of saints and other people) and *płockarz* (the name presumably derived from a “fence” – in Polish “plot”, therefore they were people who made wooden railing for fences). As far as Jews are concerned, it is worth noting a “nailer” (so far, probably, nails were rarely used, and, if needed, they were brought from outside) as well as “glassmakers” – this profession was almost entirely in the hands of the Inerfeld family. The stallholders, thus the owners of small trading “stalls”, were only Jews.

Unlike in Ostrołęka<sup>22</sup>, for instance, the amount of tax for particular “wage-earners” in a profession was undiversified. This demonstrates the lack of property disproportion, less developed “tax system”, and as a result – a later development of “Professionals” and a city in general.

Urban concentration of Jews during the successive governments (Prussian, the Duchy of Warsaw, and the Kingdom of Poland) resulted in the formation of the so-called synagogue districts, the “inheritors” of kahals. An effort to create their own

<sup>20</sup> AGAD, KRSW, sign. 4206, The historical and topographically-statistic description of Myszyniec city made by Ignacy Zaleski the mayor of this city in 1820 r., as cited in: W. Paprocka, op. cit., pp. 112–115.

<sup>21</sup> According to the 1817 census of the Diocese of Płock, in the whole Myszyniec parish out of the total population of 9966 people (at that time it was a parish with the largest population in the entire diocese) there were 385 Jews – *Parafie Diecezji Płockiej z największą liczbą Żydów i innowierców – 1817 r.*, [In:] *Mazowsze Północne...*, p. 51.

<sup>22</sup> J. Mironczuk, *Żydzi w powiecie ostrołęckim do I wojny światowej*. Ostrołęka 2011, pp. 41–44.

religious community was also made by Jews from Myszyniec. When the November Uprising broke out, “The Jews, who had the Material prepared, from which in the Revolutionary Ages with the Mayor’s consent, and for saving it from damage by the Troops during marches, they established a Synagogue, before having a proper permission from the authorities to do so”<sup>23</sup>. It is worth noting here that the Jewish observed the outbreak and the course of the Polish-Russian war with great concern, and with little belief in Poland’s victory, and the harassment of Polish troops even deepened the unwilling attitude towards the uprising<sup>24</sup>; of course, there were also cases of Jews’ involvement on the uprising side<sup>25</sup>.

With regard to founding a synagogue, the Jews of Myszyniec approached the Commission of Płock Voivodeship about the approval for construction, and they then addressed the inquiry to the Administrative Council of Governmental Commission for Internal, Clerical and Educational Matters – KRSWDiOP (formed from “combining” internal, religious and educational affairs), informing that the synagogue in question “requires not much to be finished – demanding for now that a consensus for that purpose is given, that is building Synagogues in other places, apart from those with Jewish Communities”<sup>26</sup>.

KRSWDiOP applied with regard to the above-mentioned case to the Jewish Committee (the central authorities’ consultative body concerning Jews), and it noticed that: “the rules of Jewish Religion do not allow on public holidays, prayer services and fasting, when every Israelite has to be in a Synagogue, to travel such long distances as the one from Myszyniec City to Ostrołęka [approximately 40 km – J.M.]; and so, the inhabitants of Myszyniec may not belong to the Community in Ostrołęka nor this Community to Myszyniec [...] The Committee’s opinion is to release the Jews in question from the punishment for not having the permission to build the so many times mentioned Synagogue”<sup>27</sup>. KRSWDiOP agreed on the requests, but with the reservation that: “as long as there are no obstacles in terms of

<sup>23</sup> AGAD, The Central Religious Authorities (Centralne Władze Wyznaniowe), sign. 1675, k. 6–8, A letter from the Jewish Committee (Pismo Komitetu Starozakonnych) dated 6 July, 1833 to KRSWDiOP.

<sup>24</sup> J. Szczepański, *Dzieje społeczności żydowskiej...*, p. 58: “In Różan, were hanged a Jewish waiter and a crossing guard Antoni Darewski from Ostrołęka, who led gen. Sacken’s troops near Różan and pointed him a crossing route over the Narew”.

<sup>25</sup> *Patriotyczna postawa płockiego Żyda Behr Mendel Kurtzbanda – maj 1831 r.*, [In:] *Mazowsze Północne...*, pp. 94–95: “The commander [...] presented to me a dressed entirely according to the rule in the uniform of the Mobile Guard Star. Behr Mendel Kurtzband, «dziesiątnik setni dziesiątnej» of the Security Guard. That man, having left all the superstitions, was the first to set an example of a well-thinking inhabitant of the country, where he resides”.

<sup>26</sup> AGAD, CWW, sign. 1675, k. 3, Letter from the Płock Voivodeship Commission dated 16 December, 1832 to KRSWDiOP.

<sup>27</sup> AGAD, CWW, sign. 1675, k. 6–8, Letter of the Jewish Committee dated 6 July, 1833 to KRSWDiOP.

police legislation and the due rounding of the Jewish Communities of Myszyniec and Ostrołęka”<sup>28</sup>.

However, some obstacles must have arisen (lack of relevant records) as no independent synagogue was established at that time. Another effort was made in 1855: “The Jewish inhabitants of Myszyniec [...] established with their own means a synagogue, a beth-midrash and a bathhouse, they organized a cemetery and, regardless of the contributions to the Synagogue district in Ostrołęka, they maintain in Myszyniec an assistant rabbi, a Cantor-Scholar and lower synagogue service [...] furthermore, the village of Goworowo and other villages in the area, although less populated by Jews than Myszyniec and only 2 miles away from Ostrołęka – have their own separate district, and so Myszyniec City – with more than 120 Jewish families – and situated far away [written above, exaggerated by 6 miles – J.M.] from Ostrołęka deserves the consideration”<sup>29</sup>. The following documents were attached to the letter: 1) Name list of Jews in Myszyniec and in the area (741 people), 2) Protocol of the “synagogue supervision” selection, 3) Project for a job position in *Kassa Bożniczna*, 4) Name list of the collection among Jews from Myszyniec, 5) Their application dated November 20/December 2, 1851. On December 18/30, 1855 KRSWiD approved of “separating Myszyniec City from the synagogue district in Ostrołęka”<sup>30</sup>. As a result, a synagogue district was established in Myszyniec.

In August 1857, “the Builders from Ostrołęka Powiat”, together with the mayor of Myszyniec and a local “synagogue supervisors” carried out an inspection of the synagogue: “made of wood and built on a foundation, with tiles on the roof and in a medium condition, it is 48½ feet long, 37 wide, 16 feet high and it consists of one main room and a hallway leading to the gallery [...] The population of Jews in Myszyniec is about 800 people, therefore the size of the synagogue is too small in terms of the population. For that reason, next to the synagogue (the main house of prayer) there was also a so-called beth-midrash (a study hall) in which they carry out religious rites during bigger Jewish gatherings”<sup>31</sup>.

The Fund of *Kassa Bożniczna* in Myszyniec district in the years 1857–1860 was as follows: **Income** 1) From leasing a bath in a bathhouse – 10 rs. 2) From burying the deceased – 3 rs. 3) From reading the *Rodale* – 5 rs. 4) From selling yeast to Jews for baking on holidays and celebrations – 8 rs. 5) From donations of the faithful – 205 rs. 6) From donations collected in the moneybox – 2 rs. In total: 233 rs. **Expenditure** I. On salaries: 1) Assistant rabbi – 60 rs. 2) Cantor – 40 rs. 3)

<sup>28</sup> AGAD, CWW, sign. 1675, k. 12–14, Letter of KRSWiDiOP dated 24 November, 1833 to the Płock Voivodeship Commission.

<sup>29</sup> AGAD, CWW, sign. 1675, k. 20–22, Letter of the Guberniya of Płock Authorities dated 19/31 October, 1855 to KRSWiD.

<sup>30</sup> AGAD, CWW, sign. 1675, k. 23–26, Letter of KRSWiD dated 18/30 December, 1855 to the Guberniya of Płock Authorities.

<sup>31</sup> AGAD, CWW, sign. 1675, k. 27–28, Protocol of the Myszyniec synagogue inspection dated 1/13 August, 1857.

Scholar – 30 rs. 4) Assistant in burial – 20 rs. 5) Office stationery for the cashier – 4 rs. 50 kop. 6) Office stationery for the “synagogue supervisors” – 3 rs. II. Fuel and lighting in the synagogue: 45 rs. III. Taxes and fees: 12 rs. 38 ½ kop. IV. Different needs: 1) 5% of all the income for the Cashier – 11 rs. 65 kop. 2) At the disposal of the Guberniya of Płock – 6 rs. 46½ kop. In total: 233 rs. The years 1861–1863 were granted with the fund of 258 rs. 30 kop.<sup>32</sup> Among the documented references of the Myszyniec rabbis in the second half of the 19th century there were known: Elias Sorekom, Lejzor Lerner, Abram Goldszlak<sup>33</sup>

Just before the administrative reform, when the region in question was incorporated to the newly-established Guberniya of Łomża, and Myszyniec was denied its city-status, in 1864 in Myszyniec only there was the following number of Jews: “individuals” – 304, “their families” – 704 (Poles respectively: 298 and 667, Germans: 10 and 20). Among them there were: “Townspople-farmers, i.e. persons who owned settlements and arable soil on the law of perpetual usufruct of land” (respectively: Jews – 1 and 6, Poles – 160 and 356, Germans – 2 and 6), “Townspople-non-farmers having settlements in the town on the law of rent-owned usufruct but not having gardens or land outside the town” (respectively: Jews – 60 and 226, Poles – 80 and 185, Germans – 2 and 7), “other inhabitants of the town” (respectively: Jews – 243 and 469, Poles – 58 and 126, Germans – 6 and 7)<sup>34</sup>.

In 1866, an administrative reform was carried out and, as a result, the Guberniya of Łomża was created. At the same time, the tsarist authorities took effort leading to “arranging” the status of towns which did not fulfill specific requirements – as a consequence of the ukase (a decree) of June 1869, over 300 towns in the Kingdom of Poland lost their city rights, and among them there were also Kurpian Chorzele, Nowogród and Myszyniec; only Ostrołęka and Kolno as the county capitals remained cities. The above places were still Jewish “parishes”, thus synagogue districts.

The financial situation of synagogue districts in the Guberniya of Łomża improved during the overall economic progress at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries. Unlike in the beginning of their existence, they dealt much better with rising expenditures, both on rabbis’ salaries and other people employed by religious communities, as well as the organization of education, hospitals, maintenance of synagogues and other). City districts in Kolno and Ostrołęka had considerable savings in their annual budget, in smaller districts of Nowogród and Myszyniec the income and expenditure were balanced, which was still quite a good result, concerning the fact that “rural” Jews were rather poor.

<sup>32</sup> AGAD, CWW, sign. 1675, k. 31–33, A Job Position for Kassa Bożniczna of Myszyniec District in the years 1857–1860; also, k. 35, Letter of the Guberniya of Płock Authorities dated 28 April/10 May, 1861 to KRWRiOP.

<sup>33</sup> As cited in: J. Mironczuk, *Żydzi...*, pp. 62, 80.

<sup>34</sup> AGAD, KRSW, sign. 4412 (statistic data of Myszyniec city, 1864), as cited in: W. Paprocka, op. cit., pp. 125–126.

**The decline, extermination and legacy of Jewish community in Kurpie**

The World War I outbreak drastically changed the situation of Jews in the Kurpie Forest, which was basically in the frontier zone: “In Myszyniec city [actually, it was no longer a city – J.M.] ... first, as a result of the denunciation of Poles, the rabbi of the city and some representatives of the Community [Jewish – J.M.] were captured, and then, on 29 August [1914 r.] the order of massive displacement of Jews from the city was issued. All the Jewish families in the number of 300 went out – men, women, children and the elderly – onto the field and gathered by the commandant’s tent, shivering with cold and indignation, and started to sing Psalms, asking him to reverse the evil and to call the order off, but the commandant did not care about them. And so the Jews had to leave their hometown and disperse, wander through the fields and paths, and look for a new place to live in the nearby towns and villages. After a few weeks, the governor obtained permission for them to return but the city had already been completely burnt down”<sup>35</sup>. Equally tragic was the fate of Jews from Ostrołęka, when the front reached this city in July 1915, turning especially the Jewish district into a complete ruin<sup>36</sup>.

The data from the population census on 30 September 1921 (tab. 3) correlate well with the 1906 data<sup>37</sup>, which illustrate in detail the amount of Jewish population in particular municipalities and villages. Striking is the fact of the “disappearance” of over a half of the Jews from Myszyniec: in 1906 there were 1996 Jewish people; on the other hand, the number of Jews in Kadzidło increased – from 107 to 150 in total. The above-quoted mention was therefore supported by the census data.

Table 3

Jewish population in Kurpian municipalities of the Ostrołęka County, 30 September 1921

Municipality	Total population	Jews	Catholics	Other Christians
Dylewo	6426	170 (Dylewo Stare 14, Kadzidło 133, Kadzidło Poduchowne 17, Obierwia 6)	6230	26
Myszyniec	7671	927 (Krysiaki 15, Myszyniec 912)	6719	25
Nasiadki	5162		5115	47
Wach	8104	5 (Charcibałda 5)	8094	5

<sup>35</sup> A. Litaj, *Rozdział z dziejów zniszczenia*, as cited in: *Księga Żydów ostrołęckich* (2nd ed.). Trans. A. Ćwiakowska, Z. Drezner, S. Raczyńska, introduction J. Gołota. Ostrołęka–Tel Awiw 2002, p. 49.

<sup>36</sup> J. Mironczuk, *Żydz...*, p. 73 and photographs (unnumbered insert).

<sup>37</sup> *Pamiętna książka Łomżyńskiej Guberni na 1906 god* (Nasielenije Ostrolenskogo Ujezda), as cited in: J. Mironczuk, *Żydz...*, pp. 121–124.

Source: *Skorowidz miejscowości Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej na podstawie wyników pierwszego powszechnego spisu ludności z dnia 30 września 1921 r. i innych źródeł urzędowych*, Vol. V: *Województwo białostockie*. Warszawa 1924, pp. 56–60, as cited in: Z. Niedziałkowska, op. cit., pp. 197–206.

The archival sources, including the most important “Situation reports of the provincial governor of Białystok”<sup>38</sup> (both Łomża and Ostrołęka Poviats were included in the Białystok Voivodeship, only a small part of the Kurpie region was in the Przasnysz Powiat – the Warsaw Voivodeship), confirm the opinion of a prominent expert on social relations in the Białystok region about the Polish-Jewish relations: “coexistence preponderated, examples of cooperation and healthy competition were noted”<sup>39</sup>. This opinion cannot be changed even due to anti-Semitic excesses during a village fair in Kadzidło in May 1938 and anti-Jewish pledge near the church in Myszyniec in November 1938<sup>40</sup>. Besides, even the Holocaust survivors left a similar opinion: “the relationships between Kurpie people and Jews were very good. Jews were called starozakonni and they trusted them as well as traded with them”<sup>41</sup>.

When the war broke out in September 1939, the Jewish community living in the Kurpie Forest, which shared a border with East Prussia, and where the Nazi atmosphere was particularly noticeable (for instance, the arson of all the synagogues during the *Kristalnacht*), started to depart in the southern and eastern direction, e.g. the Lewińscy family from Kadzidło. In October 1939 most areas in the Forest, including Ostrołęka, Myszyniec and Chorzele, were incorporated to the Third Reich, only the eastern lands, with Nowogród and Kolno, fell under the Soviet occupation. All the Jews had to leave the lands incorporated to the Nazi Germany and they headed towards Łomża, some of them to Ostrów Mazowiecka, occupied by the Soviets, and then further, into the so-called West Belarus, established by the USSR. Later, after the outbreak of the German-Soviet war, the Jews were taken over by the Nazis and directed to ghettos (e.g. the majority of Jews from Ostrołęka were placed in the Vilnius and Słonim ghettos, but most of them were murdered in November 1941), and next they were transferred to death camps, mostly in Treblinka and Oświęcim (Auschwitz)<sup>42</sup>.

The period of war deepened mutual relations, both in its positive and negative meaning. On the one hand, the war and occupation brought out some heroic

<sup>38</sup> APB, Weekly and monthly management reports of the Białystok Voivode 1928–1938.

<sup>39</sup> J.J. Milewski, *Stosunki polsko-żydowskie w Ostrołęckiem i Łomżyńskiem w latach trzydziestych i w czasie II wojny światowej*. Zeszyty Naukowe OTN 2002, Vol. XVI, p. 164.

<sup>40</sup> Ibidem, pp. 166–167.

<sup>41</sup> *Księga Żydów...*, p. 328 (report of Izrael Lewiński from Kadzidło).

<sup>42</sup> The most important studies of this subject are: M. Grynberg, *Żydzi w rejencji ciechanowskiej 1939–1942*. Warszawa 1984; J. Gołota, *Losy Żydów ostrołęckich w czasie II wojny światowej*. Biuletyn Żydowskiego Instytutu Historycznego 1999, No. 3(187).

attitudes (hiding Jews, who survived in the number of a dozen or so near Ostrołęka thanks to the help of Polish people), but, on the other hand, even more unworthy and treacherous behavior was noted (e.g. a few months before the liberation, armed Polish forces carried out genocide of the Jews hiding between Ostrołęka and Łomża)<sup>43</sup>. Besides, Jews themselves were not always only passive participants of events, which is supported by a report from the Kurpie region (it may be assumed that the report refers rather to White Kurpie) dated 1943 and addressed to the Delegate of the Polish Government: “Nonetheless, a lot of Jews escaped to forests forming bands and joining in many cases the Bolshevik airborne army. These bands are hostile towards Polish people, murdering every wealthier householder. The German army will liquidate such band from time to time, but generally it is quite indifferent to the news about attacks on Jewish villages”<sup>44</sup>. However, a full clarification of the phenomenon requires further research and analysis.

The period of communism did not foster remembering about the Kurpie Forest co-inhabitants. The situation improved during the Third Republic of Poland. The effort made by the Landsmanshaft and local authorities led to collecting the remaining traces of the Kurpian Jews generally in their “centers”. In fact, it refers to Jewish cemeteries (*kirkuts*); the renovated *kirkuts* in Chorzele and Kolno should be distinguished<sup>45</sup>, a slightly worse situation is in Nowogród; in Ostrołęka and Myszyniec, the “capital” of Kurpie, former Jewish cemeteries were “developed” and commemorated only by monuments.

### Conclusion

The Kurpie Forest, also called Zagajnica in past times, had been the hunting ground and the area of the exploitation of wood and other forestry goods up until the 17th century, without any permanent residences. The “exit” to the Forest were urban settlements established on its edges; the eldest and the biggest of them is Ostrołęka. The “drive wheel” of settling in the Forest, apart from the local people who escaped there from Prussia, was also the Jesuit mission (*Mysiniiec*), resisting the “heretical” Prussia. To some extent, the Catholic-Protestant competition favored the appearance of Jewish population.

The number of Jews in the Forest was not great until the end of The First Republic of Poland. In the vast Myszyniec parish there were only a few Jewish families, there were slightly more in the eastern part, in the Łomża County Starosty. All of them belonged to a kahal in Tykocin.

<sup>43</sup> *Księga Żydów...*, pp. 340–358, 360, 377, 391–392; J. Mironczuk, *Ostrołęka bez Żydów – kwestia żydowska w powiecie ostrołęckim po II wojnie światowej*. Komunikaty Mazursko-Warmińskie 2014, No. 2(284), pp. 379–382.

<sup>44</sup> The Archive of New Files, the Government Delegation for Poland, Press and Information Department. Eastern section, sign. 202/III/149, k. 2, Report from the Kurpie region, as cited in: J.J. Milewski, op. cit., pp. 179–180.

<sup>45</sup> Online: <http://www.kirkuty.xip.pl/chorzele.htm>; <http://www.kirkuty.xip.pl/kolno.htm> [17.06.2017].

The development of Jewish settlement took place during the time of annexation, starting from the Prussian authorities, who enabled Jews to live in cities, just like in other districts of The First Republic of Poland. Apart from the cities on the edges of the Forest, Jews also brought together in Myszyniec, where they established their own synagogue district in 1855.

The Jewish community in Kurpie played an important role in the economic development of the region by introducing new products among local people and spreading a faster trade in goods. The increase in wealth of Jews at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries also brought out negative attitude of some Poles towards them. However, it did not result in any conflicts – both communities coexisted and sometimes cooperated; there were also – in fact, rarely but still – mixed marriages.

This quite consentaneous coexistence was demolished by two cataclysms – the world wars. The First World War brought “only” the material destruction whereas World War II led to a total extermination of Jews in Kurpie as well as in the rest of Poland. What remained is the memory, remembrance and few material traces.

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## **SUMMARY**

The dissertation refers to the history of Jewish community in the Kurpie Forest (also called Green, in the past known as Zagajnica). Jews appeared there only in the 18th century. At the beginning of the 19th century they started to move to cities, including Myszyniec, where they established a synagogue district. The border with Prussia/Germany eventually turned out to be extremely dangerous.

## **STRESZCZENIE**

Praca odnosi się do dziejów społeczności żydowskiej na obszarze Puszczy Kurpiowskiej (inaczej Zielonej, dawniej zwanej Zagajnicą). Żydzi pojawili się tam dopiero w XVIII w. Na początku XIX w. zaczęli się przenosić do miast, w tym Myszyńca, gdzie utworzyli okręg bożniczy. Pogranicze z Prusami/Niemcami okazało się ostatecznie dla Żydów bardzo groźne.

**Key words:** Jews, the Kurpie Forest, Myszyniec, Prussia

**Słowa kluczowe:** Żydzi, Puszcza Kurpiowska, Myszyniec, Prusy

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## ATTEMPTS TO OVERCOME ECONOMIC DIFFICULTIES IN THE YEARS 1867–1939 BY THE EXAMPLE OF MAKÓW COUNTY

### PRÓBY PRZEZWYCIEŻENIA TRUDNOŚCI GOSPODARCZYCH W LATACH 1867–1939 NA PRZYKŁADZIE POWIATU MAKOWSKIEGO

Maków County, established by the Tsarist authorities in 1867, included the northern part of the previous Pułtusk County and a small part of Przasnysz County. It was also a part of the newly-established Łomża Governorate. Apart from Maków, two other towns belonged to the county: Różan and Krasnosielc (two years later, in 1869, along with many other towns in the Kingdom of Poland, they lost their city rights, becoming the so-called urban settlements)<sup>1</sup> as well as the communes: Karniewo, Krasnosielc, Perzanowo, Płoniawy, Sielc, Sieluń, Smrock i Sypniewo. The county covered the area of 1.054 km<sup>2</sup>. In 1872, the county was inhabited by 48.500 people and the population density was 46 persons per km<sup>2</sup>. This amount corresponded the average population density in the area of northern Mazovia. In that respect, Maków County definitely dominated over the counties of Ostrołęka, Mława and Przasnysz<sup>2</sup>.

The sources of the weaknesses in the economic development of Maków County in the second half of the 19th century should be looked for in socio-economic factors. Maków County was located on the borderline of two parts of north-eastern Mazovia, clearly different in terms of their social and economic character. A distinctive feature of this region, in social respect, was a considerable number of the landed gentry. In the Łomża Governorate, 28% of the population was gentry and they owned 32% of the land. To compare, in north-western Mazovia, the gentry owned 13% of the land and in southern Mazovia 1%. In 1896,

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<sup>1</sup> The decision on renaming some towns of the Łomża Governorate to persons, dated 30 January (11 February) 1870, announced on 19 (31) May 1870. *Dziennik Praw Królestwa Polskiego*, Vol. LXX, No. 241, p. 81.

<sup>2</sup> J. Łukasiewicz, *Powiat makowski w latach 1867–1914*, [In:] *Maków Mazowiecki i ziemia makowska*. Ed. A. Słoniowa. PWN, Warszawa 1984, p. 99. In 1913, in Maków County, there were already 70 thousand inhabitants, and an average population density was 66 persons per km<sup>2</sup> and it was bigger than in Przasnysz County – 62 persons, but lower than in Ostrołęka and Ostrów Counties – 67 persons in each, A. Krzyżanowski, K. Kumaniecki, *Statystyka Polski*. Polskie Towarzystwo Statystyczne, Kraków 1915, p. 8, 42–45; *Trudy Warszawskiego Statystycznego Komitetu*, Vol. 13, Warszawa 1889–1914, pp. 146–162.

among the inhabitants of Maków County, 33,6% of the people were of noble descent, 46% – of peasant background, 18% – of bourgeois origin and 2,4% belonging to other statuses. In 1894, the gentry of Maków county owned 37,7% of the land and, in that matter, only Łomża County was ahead of this county. The gentry inhabited mainly the communes of Sieluń, Perzanowo and Sielc, whereas the peasants clearly dominated in Krasnosielc, Karniewo and Płoniawy communes. In general, the peasants in the county owned 25,2% of the land. At the same time, the landed ownership covered 32,9% of the land. It was bigger only in Ciechanów County – 41%. In the area of Maków county, there were great properties Krasnosielc, belonging at first to Karol Krasiński. It was the largest latifundium in the North Mazovia region, consisting of 7 granges (Krasnosielc, Amelin, Bagienice, Drażdzewo, Karolin, Kucieja and Niesułów). It covered the area of over 12 thousand ha, out of which 68% were forests<sup>3</sup>.

The main source of income of the people inhabiting Maków County was agriculture. Within the territory of Russian partition, which also included Maków County, agriculture was not efficient. After the manumission in 1864, the need for manufactured materials in a village increased, and at the same time villages provided more and more work force for industry, as the manumission had not included landless peasants. Also, the area of arable land and the production of cereals increased. A major change concerning the Mazovian countryside was abolishing serfdom and the liquidation of feudal service. Since that moment, peasants became the owners of the land that they had cultivated, which was a revolution in the arrangement they had lived in for many generations. As a result of the agricultural reforms, they also started to gradually gain civil rights, such as being under the jurisdiction of common courts, establishing rural self-governments and participating in political life equally to the representatives of other groups. However, the way the land had been managed after those changes was not the best. In Maków county, arable lands covered the area of about 48%, similarly to the neighboring counties of Ostrów and Przasnysz, definitely more than in Ostrołęka County, but much less than in Ciechanów and Pułtusk Counties. Meadows and pastures constituted 20% and uncultivated land only 2,6% – it was a relatively low percentage, because in the Kingdom of Poland, in comparison, it was 4,9% on average<sup>4</sup>.

In Maków County, similarly to almost the entire area of Mazovia, by the end of the 19th century, there was a three-field system of cultivating land. It was used on approximately 75% of the arable land area. The structure of sowing was

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<sup>3</sup> The National Archives in Łomża (APŁ), *Obzor Łomżyńskiej Guberni for the year 1896*, p. 16; *Trudy Warszawskiego Statistycznego Komiteta...*, Vol. 15, pp. 52–73; K. Groniowski, *Kwestia agrarna w Królestwie Polskim, 1871–1914*. PWN, Warszawa 1966, pp. 94–95.

<sup>4</sup> *Statistika Rossijskoj Imperii*, Vol. 23, Issue 54 i 57, tab. IV and V. Petersburg 1887; J. Łukasiewicz, *op. cit.*, pp. 102–103.

relatively good within Maków County. The vast majority of land was sown with cereal (71,4%) but still less than in nearby counties. Among the cereals, rye was ahead of oats, wheat and buckwheat. Potatoes covered 18,6% of the total sowing, and the rest of the crops 10%<sup>5</sup>.

In the 1970s, in the period of good economic situation and price increase, the development of agriculture was systematic, although not at a fast pace. The situation clearly changed during the agricultural crisis and price decrease. Apart from that, there were additional sales difficulties related to river transport through the Narew and the Vistula. Moreover, Maków County did not have the possibility to use rail transport. Ostrów County had used this kind of transport already since 1862 and Ciechanów and Pułtusk Counties since 1887. In 1893, also Ostrołęka received a railway connection. Therefore, cereal prices in Maków County were the lowest in the entire Łomża Governorate. In 1893, a tonne of rye cost about 40 rubles in Maków and, in comparison, 45 rubles in Pułtusk, and 49 rubles in Ostrów<sup>6</sup>.

Farmers, in order to eliminate the declining income, expanded the area of sowing to increase the cereal sales. However, that resulted in further decrease of prices and damage to the profitability of cereals cultivation. As a result of poor harvest of cereals in 1889 and potatoes in 1891, a really difficult nutritional situation occurred among the Maków County population. Additionally, in the years 1894–1896, cereal prices became so low that the financial means obtained from the sales did not cover the production costs. That related mainly to wheat and barley. It forced the farmers to reduce the acreage, especially of wheat, whose cultivation was limited to the most fertile soils, guaranteeing at least a minimum profit<sup>7</sup>.

Since 1896, the situation in agriculture started to improve and cereal prices were slowly increasing. The agricultural crisis was in fact over but its influence on the area of cereal cultivation was so permanent that the amount of income from the cultivation obtained before the crisis belonged to the past. The crisis in agriculture also influenced the changes in land ownership structure. It affected all the land owners but mostly the producers of trade cereals. Granges based on trade cereals did not withstand the significant prices decrease, which led to the situation that the owners sold the farms or parceled their property in part or as a whole. In this regard, the area of peasants and petty gentry's ownership was increasing. In 1904, in Maków County, peasants owned 30% of the land, petty gentry – 38%, and manor owners only 25%. Expanding the area of peasants' land ownership occurred as a result of obtaining land after the liquidation of easements or by purchase. After the manumission, there were 3.307 peasant farmsteads in Maków County, of which 77% used the easements. It must be admitted that the easements' liquidation pace

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<sup>5</sup> Ibidem, p. 104.

<sup>6</sup> APŁ, Obzor Łomżyńskiej Guberni for the year 1893, p. 17.

<sup>7</sup> Ibidem; J. Łukasiewicz, op. cit., pp. 104–105.

in Maków County was at that time relatively fast. By 1 January 1890, the easements had been transformed into peasants' farmstead lands in 56%<sup>8</sup>.

However, the major reason of the increasing economic underdevelopment of Maków County in the second half of the 19th century was the poor development of industry. In the discussed period, the only and the biggest industrial plant in the county was a sugar factory in Łukowo, Karniewo commune, employing in 1896 about 350 workers. Its constant technical improvement led to the annual production of even 2 thousand tonnes in 1906. Nevertheless, there was a significant decline of another industry, quite well-developed in 1880, when 140 workers were employed in 70 small plants (without mills). At that time, there were among others 8 tanneries and 8 brickyards. In 1891, however, only 36 small plants were located in the county, employing altogether about 64 workers. After the agrarian crisis, the situation of industry gradually improved. The production of buttons and brick developed, a relatively big sawmill was established and, in 1896, the first in the county steam mill was built. Unfortunately, in 1901, the production of buttons was liquidated and in 1906 the newly-built steam mill stopped functioning. Gradual progress in industry could be noticed again since 1906. In 1907, in the county, apart from the sugar factory, there was a distillery in Czarnostów, a brewery in Młodzianowo, 2 sawmills and 4 brickyards. In industry, there were in total about 700 employees working mostly seasonally<sup>9</sup>.

The main source of income of the Maków population was craft and trade. In 1908, 10% of the town's inhabitants worked as traders. The number of merchants, however, was falling. In 1898, there were 132 of them, and only 112 in 1905. One of the wealthiest merchants were the Jewish family of Blum. As regards trade, Maków was at that time definitely behind other Mazovian towns. In 1905, in Ostrołęka, 314 people worked in trade, in Ciechanów – 415, in Pułusk – 439, in Ostrów – 419, in Przasnysz – 280. The industry in the town also developed poorly, similarly to the entire county. The most important industrial plants were tanneries, brickyards and mills. Unfortunately, the number of industrial factories was gradually decreasing – in 1882 there were 36, and in 1896 only 13<sup>10</sup>.

The relatively difficult economic situation of Maków County was even worsened by the outbreak of World War I in the years 1914–1918, which caused major damage.

After the restoration of sovereignty, commenced the rebuilding after the damaging war and began the organization of self-governments at municipal, urban and county level. Important was the issue of a proper organization of the county's

<sup>8</sup> Trudy Warszawskiego Statystycznego Komitietu..., Vol. 15, tab. I, Vol. 39, Part 2, p. 64.

<sup>9</sup> In the years 1880–1907, the number of industrial plants was gradually decreasing. In 1880, there were 107 plants, and in 1907 only 75. However, the number of workers was increasing. In 1880, 212 people were employed and in 1907 – 662 people. APL, Obzor Łomżyńskiej Guberni za lata 1880–1907 appendix no. 2.

<sup>10</sup> J. Łukasiewicz, op. cit., pp. 117–118.

victualing, and therefore the Provisioning Office in Maków and the Provisioning Committees in particular municipalities were established<sup>11</sup>.

Agricultural Syndicates in Maków and Różan as well as the Cereal Cooperatives in Maków and Krasnosielc dealt with receiving contingent and confiscated cereals as well as dispensing them to particular inhabitants and institutions within Maków County<sup>12</sup>.

Trade Section of Maków Credit Bank played a major role in gaining basic foodstuff and industrial goods. By the agency of it, people received i.a. sugar, saccharin, salt, leather, kerosene, soap, olive, chicory and woolen or cotton materials from the National Office of the Basic Goods Purchase in Warsaw<sup>13</sup>.

The issues related to the purchase and sales of basic foodstuff and daily-use products were handled by the Office to Combat Usury and Profiteering in Maków, which was subordinate to the Regional Department in Mława. The interviewer of this Office was Zatoński, who was sent the lists of products confiscated by the police<sup>14</sup>.

Only the Trade Section of Maków Credit Bank was authorized to the wholesale of the basic food products. The articles which had not come from the Trade Section were confiscated. Warehouses could carry out retail sales of the articles received from the Ministry of Provisioning on the basis of the directives given by Starost's Office. The supervision over the warehouses' activity was supposed to be carried out by national administrative authorities, delegates of the Office to Combat Usury and Profiteering and the County Provisioning Committee<sup>15</sup>.

Police officers from the State Police ensured that the regulations of the Ministry of Provisioning were respected. They controlled all the permissions as well as revised the mills, windmills, abattoirs, shops, farms, craft workshops and service points. The confiscated goods were given to the local Provisioning Committees. There was an obligation to unconditionally issue receipts for the owners during the requisition, indicating the type, amount and weight of the confiscated articles<sup>16</sup>.

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<sup>11</sup> Archiwum Akt Nowych w Warszawie (AAN), Ministerstwo Apropowizacji (MA), sign. 379, k. 18, 106, 111.

<sup>12</sup> The Cereal Cooperative in Maków was established the moment the occupants yielded and it took provisioning over Maków, Różan, Krasnosielc and other settlements of Maków County. It supplied its depots with mostly non-quota cereal and it functioned until February 1919, *ibidem*, sign. 905, k. 179.

<sup>13</sup> Archiwum Państwowe w Warszawie Oddział w Pułtusku (APP), Starostwo Powiatowe w Makowie Mazowieckim w latach 1919–1926 (SPMM), sign. 2, k. 238.

<sup>14</sup> Archiwum Państwowe w Warszawie (APW), Komenda Powiatowa Policji Państwowej (KPPP) w Makowie Maz., sign. 40, k. 21.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibidem*, sign. 39, k. 211, sign. 40, k. 5.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibidem*, sign. 39, k. 78, 94, 122, 150.

Thanks to the actions of the County Provisioning Committee and the help from the ministry of Provisioning, people were provided with food at least at a minimum degree, which saved many inhabitants of the county from hunger or even death.

In the inter-war period, agriculture played a critical role in the economy of Maków County. Maków County was a typical agricultural county. In 1921, 45% of the overall area of the county were arable lands, 20% were pastures, 14% – forests, 1% – waters, and the rest of the area were wastelands. The soils, apart from the south-western part of the county, were barely fertile. An average peasant farmstead covered the area of 12–15 morgens of land (6.7–8.4 ha). There were 2.200 small farms (up to 8 morgens). About 20% of the rural population was unemployed. Some were hired for seasonal work by the owners of bigger farms.

According to the First Population Census of 30 September 1921, in Maków County, 44.679 people occupied themselves with farming, which consisted 76,6% of the total number of the county's population. There were 11.956 farmsteads, of which 11.329 (94,7%) were family farms. The rest were institutional farms (134) and those owned by single people (493). The overall area of the arable lands in Maków County was 160.135 ha<sup>17</sup>.

In the agrarian structure of the country, in the first years of independence, small peasant farms were dominant, but at the same time, there were large landed properties, conducting extensive farming. In Maków County were 46 landed properties, which covered the area of 13.053 ha. Almost half of the estates (21) were farms with an area between 50–100 ha, 6 of 100–200 ha and 6 of 200–300 ha<sup>18</sup>. Within the structure of cultivating large property land, arable lands were dominant – 6.443 ha (49,3%) and lands of forestry use – 3.780 (29%). Other forms of land use were: meadows and pastures (14,3%), ponds and lakes (1,1%) as well as orchards and gardens (0,7%). Wastelands covered the area of 526 ha (4%), and the rest, i.e. 176 ha, was used for buildings and roads<sup>19</sup>.

The vast majority of the properties' owners were Polish citizens – 42, and only 4 estates were owned by Jews<sup>20</sup>. 12 landed properties were under the easements at that time. 243 farmyards used those easements, mainly pastures (172), 40 farms

<sup>17</sup> The First Census of the Republic of Poland Population, dated 30 September 1921, Warszawa 1927, k. 197–198; APP, SPMM, sign. 8, k. 198; Z. Landau, J. Tomaszewski, *Zarys historii gospodarczej Polski 1918–1939*. Książka i Wiedza, Warszawa 1961, pp. 15–16.

<sup>18</sup> *Wielka własność według powiatów*. Statystyka Polski (Warszawa) 1925, Vol. V, p. 26.

<sup>19</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>20</sup> Ibidem, p. 50, AAN, Ministerstwo Apropowizacji (MA), sign. 905, k. 39, 147, 274–275, 277–280, 300; J. Leskiewiczowa, *Ziemiaństwo polskie XX wieku. Słownik biograficzny*, Part 7. DiG, Warszawa 2004, p. 134.

used forestry easements and pastures, and 23 farms used only the forestry easements<sup>21</sup>.

Among agricultural machines, the properties were equipped mostly with regular ploughs (314 items), horse-mills (50 items), horse threshers (38 items), harvesters (29 items) and binders (12 items). Apart from that, people already used steam threshers (6 items) and traction engine threshers (6 items) as well as motored ploughs and tractors (5 items). In 41 estates, the owners had permanent servants, among whom there were 37 janitors, 263 ordinaries, 282 mailmen, 115 boarders, 89 tenant farmers and 363 seasonal workers<sup>22</sup>.

By a decree-law of the Regency Council from 4 November 1918 and the act “in the matter of donation goods” dated 5 November 1919<sup>23</sup>, all the Russian donation properties in the area of the Kingdom of Poland became the property of the State Treasury. In 1919, the area of the state’s agricultural properties in the Kingdom of Poland totalled 483 thousand morgens, i.e. over 270 thousand hectares. By the end of 1921, 331.8 thousand morgens were given for parceling (185.8 thousand ha) which constituted 68,7% of the land owned by the state<sup>24</sup>.

Due to the parceling, it was possible, at least to some extent, to fulfil the shortage of land in villages as well as improve the conditions of the functioning of schools and agricultural organizations.

In Maków County, in the years 1919–1936, about 145.476 ha of land were parceled between 33.171 private buyers. In 1937, 2.5 ha of land were sold in Maków Maz. to self-government and social institutions<sup>25</sup>.

The land consolidation in Maków County began already before the outbreak of World War I. After the war, the action of land reparcelling started again and developed really well. Most of the reparcelling’s participants did not complain about the consolidation of lands. In the years 1921–1922, 14.170 morgens (7.935 ha) were consolidated in 14 villages in Maków County<sup>26</sup>.

<sup>21</sup> APP, Akta komisarza spraw włościańskich powiatu makowskiego, pp. 445–482; W. Łątkowski, *Serwituty w powiecie makowskim i ich likwidacja*. Rocznik Mazowiecki (Warszawa) 2002, Vol. XIV, pp. 71–84; K. Groniowski, *Realizacja reformy uwłaszczeniowej 1864 r.* PWN, Warszawa 1963, pp. 192–204.

<sup>22</sup> Wielka własność według powiatów, op. cit. p. 62, 68, 76.

<sup>23</sup> Journal of Laws (Dziennik Ustaw) (Dz.U) 1919, No. 72, item 426.

<sup>24</sup> E. Kołodziej, *Życie gospodarcze*, [In:] *Dzieje Mazowsza lata 1918–1939*, Vol. IV. Ed. J. Szczepański. Akademia Humanistyczna im. Aleksandra Gieysztora, Pułtusk 2010, pp. 284–285; *Ministerstwo Rolnictwa i Dóbr Państwowych*, [In:] *Informator powszechny Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej z Kalendarzem Policji Państwowej na rok 1922*. Warszawa [n.d.], pp. 223–224.

<sup>25</sup> APW, Urząd Wojewódzki Warszawski (UWW), sign. 1490, k. 1–3, sign. 1415, k. 1–2, sign. 1425, k. 20, 26, 78, sign. 1489, k. 1, sign. 1490, k. 1–3, sign. 1598, k. 5–6, sign. 1599, k. 1–2, sign. 1600, k. 1, 24, sign. 1601, k. 3, 69, 79, sign. 1891, k. 1–100, sign. 1896, k. 1–55, sign. 2053, k. 1–60, sign. 2056, k. 1, sign. 2057, k. 1–13.

<sup>26</sup> APP, SPMM, sign. 4, k. 40; E. Kołodziej, *Życie gospodarcze Mazowsza w okresie międzywojennym*, [In:] *Mazowsze w dwudziestolecium międzywojennym (w granicach*

Due to a difficult situation of agriculture within the first post-war years, the local authorities did not oblige farmers to pay land tax. Moreover, they allocated specific sums in support of agriculture. In the years 1919–1922, the County Council in Maków allocated 3.445 marks for that purpose, and in 1924, 4.800 zlotys on fostering agriculture, trade and industry<sup>27</sup>.

In the years 1921–1922, the County Council, in order to spur the activities of machinery rings in Maków County, dedicated subsidies of 1.395.000 marks for the District Agricultural Society to maintain an instructor, a secretary and other expenses. Apart from that, the County Council also set a welfare benefit for the Central Agricultural Society<sup>28</sup>.

Since 1 April 1921, the farmers from Maków County received help from the state in the form of a loan of 600.000 marks (21 owners of minor properties), 77 horses – gained during the demobilization and 67 horses vindicated from Germany, as well as cereal seeds: 1 wagon of rye, 5 wagons of barley, 7 wagons of oat, 1 wagon of field pea and 1 wagon of vetch. Apart from that, the county was delivered a part of agricultural tools, which were then taken on consignment by the Maków branch of the Agricultural Syndicate in Warsaw<sup>29</sup>.

The County Council in Maków Maz., in order to support farming within the county's area, allocated in its budget appropriate amounts of money for this purpose. They were spent i.a. on the purchase of cereal seed and licensed animals, the afforestation of wasteland, the regulations of rivers and amelioration, livestock presentations, the activity of the District Society of Organization and Machinery Rings, scholarships for agricultural school students and agricultural training courses<sup>30</sup>.

In the years 1929–1939, the County Council in Maków Maz. allocated the funds ranging from 23.800 zlotys to 72.162 zlotys on agriculture, which consisted an average of 7,6% of the general budget<sup>31</sup>.

Since the autumn of 1934, an action of liquidating the villages' liabilities was carried out in Warsaw voivodeship. It covered 6.800 farmsteads, which had purchased land within the agricultural reform, by getting loans from the State Agricultural Bank. Despite cancelling 41% of the borrowers' debts and splitting the

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*województwa warszawskiego*). Ed. A. Stawarz. Mazowieckie Towarzystwo Kultury, Mazowiecki Ośrodek Badań Naukowych im. Stanisława Herbsta, Warszawa 1998, p. 52; Rocznik Statystyczny. Warszawa 1939, p. 70; H. Jabłoński, *Województwo warszawskie w latach 1926–1930*. WBWW, Warszawa 1930, pp. 15–16.

<sup>27</sup> *Statystyka finansów komunalnych. Samorząd powiatowy w latach 1919–1922 i 1924*. Statystyka Polski (Warszawa) 1928, Vol. VII, p. LVIII, 20, 122, 246, 284.

<sup>28</sup> APP, SPM, sign. 4, k. 35.

<sup>29</sup> Ibidem, k. 40.

<sup>30</sup> AAN, Związek Powiatów Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej (ZPRP), sign. 1055, k. 28–29, 209–210, 263–264.

<sup>31</sup> Ibidem, sign. 1053, k. 24, 142, 214, 234, 266, 295, 386, 400, 426, 431.

other part into long-term installments, most of the debtors did not pay the due interest, unfortunately<sup>32</sup>.

The bill on the liquidation of the villages' liabilities, which gave farmers major reliefs, also introduced certain requirements concerning the tardy debtors. In case of not paying two consecutive installments including the interest, an immediate obligation of the entire debt was introduced. Therefore, the debtors had to turn to the Arbitrary Office in order to receive a calculation certificate, which was to contain the fixed amount of the installment by virtue of law. The Arbitrary Office could annul the effects of the debt arrears only in case of an exceptional situation, e.g. a natural disaster<sup>33</sup>.

As it has already been mentioned, Maków County was a typical agricultural county. Therefore, industry and craft developed poorly in this area. In 1919, there were 3 tanneries, 14 oil mills, 10 water mills and 2 steam mills, 25 windmills, 5 sawmills as well as 5 brickyards and 1 concrete plant in the county. Within handicrafts, there should be distinguished shoemaking, carpentry, pottery and rope-making. Moreover, in a domestic environment, canvas and textile materials were made for the needs of manufacturers. Trade did not develop at that time on a bigger scale. A newly organizing itself liquor trade was in Polish hands and petty trade belonged mainly to Jewish owners. Fairs took place twice a week and bazaars once a month. However, the sales were at that time still low, which was related mostly to the impoverishment of the population. In 1919, there were no credit unions or banks in Maków County which would support industry and trade<sup>34</sup>.

According to the First Population Census dated 30 September 1921, there were 5.873 people working in industry in Maków County, which accounted for 10% of the overall number of the county's inhabitants. The majority of people were employed in textile and accessory industry – 2.537, then in food industry – 968, in wood industries – 777 and in construction – 553. At the same time, 2.748 people (4,7%) were traders<sup>35</sup>.

The largest industrial plants included the tanneries in Maków, Maków steam mills – of the Rajczyk, Willenberg and Stefańscy, whose annual production was 30.000 quintals and which employed between 22–28 workers, the Construction Association in Różan, owning a sawmill, cement factories and a factory complex of J. Beckier in Dyszobaba – a brickyard, a mill and a steam sawmill. Apart from that, there were industrial plants in which only the owner worked, or possibly one worker was employed. That kind of plants included: oil mills, water mills, mills, dyeries and groats factories. Within handicrafts, the best developing was

<sup>32</sup> AAN, Ministerstwo Spraw Wewnętrznych (MSW), sign. 124, *Protokół ze zjazdu starostów woj. warszawskiego w dniu 14 I 1936 r.*

<sup>33</sup> *Akcja oddłużeniowa wsi a Urzędy Rozjemcze*. Mazur 1935, No. 2, p. 8, No. 4, p. 7.

<sup>34</sup> APP, SPMM, sign. 2, k. 472.

<sup>35</sup> *Pierwszy Powszechny Spis Ludności RP z dn. 30 września 1921 r.* Warszawa 1927, p. 197.

shoemaking – in Maków there were 13 such factories, producing goods for export, and other industrial and crafting plants manufactured their own products mainly for the internal needs of the county<sup>36</sup>.

Among trading institutions, the most distinguishing was the branch of the Warsaw Agricultural Syndicate in Maków, which dealt with the trade of farming articles, the purchase of grain and delivering farm tools and their parts to the people. Moreover, the Syndicate normalized the prices of those goods in Maków as it owned a significant amount of iron products. The second important trading institution in the county was the Regional Association of Consumers. The rest of the trade was in private hands, mostly Jewish. Among credit institutions in the Maków County region, there was the Savings and Loan Association, which was transformed into the Common Bank in 1923<sup>37</sup>.

According to the statistical data of the Second Population Census dated 9 December 1931, in Maków County there were 8.769 people working in industry and craft trades, which accounted for 13,4% of the overall number of the county's population. In comparison to the year 1921, that rate increased by 3,4%, which proves the increase of the role of industry in the county's economy. In that period, 2.797 people (4,3%) occupied themselves with trade, out of which 2.319 persons worked in commodity trading. In comparison to the year 1921, that rate dropped by 0,4%. It was presumably influenced by an economic crisis, which caused the impoverishment of the population and the limitation of the purchase of goods, and that in turn resulted in the reduction of income and the abandonment of such form of activity. However, in comparison to the neighboring counties of northern Mazovia, the percentage of people working in trade in Maków County was high. A higher percentage was only in Pułtusk County, where it amounted to 6,4%<sup>38</sup>.

The economic crisis had a major influence on the decrease in the number of industrial plants and crafting workshops in Maków County, which totalled 515 in 1935 (in 1931 – there were 718). 205 industrial plants were located in Maków Maz., 129 in Różan, and 181 in rural settlements of the county. The majority of the plants and workshops were in textile and leather industry – 189, then in food industry – 123 as well as the chemical sector, including oil mills – 64. At the same time, the number of trading companies in Maków County was 866, of which 254 companies were located in Maków Maz., 147 in Różan, 233 – in rural settlements, and 232 trading units did not have permanent headquarters, which was probably related to itinerant trade<sup>39</sup>.

<sup>36</sup> APP, SPMM, sign. 4, k. 23; *Goniec Mazowiecki* 1923, No. 5, p. 11, 1924, No. 4, p. 4.

<sup>37</sup> APP, SPMM, sign. 4, k. 127.

<sup>38</sup> *Drugi Powszechny Spis Ludności z dn. 9 XII 1931 r. Woj. warszawskie*. Warszawa 1937, p. 79, 149; *Mały Rocznik Statystyczny*. Warszawa 1938, p. 32.

<sup>39</sup> *Statystyka zakładów przemysłowych i handlowych 1935 (woj. warszawskie)*. Statystyka Polski (Warszawa) 1938, Series C, Issue 89, p. 8, 83–84.

During the inter-war period, the development of industry and trade in Maków County was influenced by the County Council, which annually allocated appropriate sums in its budget in support of industry and trade. In the years 1929–1935, it dedicated the sum of 14.400 zlotys to that purpose. In comparison to other branches, such as agriculture, that was not a large amount of money. In the years 1936–1939, the County Council did not allocate any money for the development of industry and trade. The reason was probably the fact that industry did not play an important role in the county and the existing industrial plants and crafting workshops were mainly in the hands of private owners. The subsidies granted in support of industry and trade were mostly used as scholarships for craft school students and the Salesian Company in Jaciążek (Płoniawy commune), the maintenance of vocational supplementary schools as well as the development of folk industries<sup>40</sup>.

The economic situation of Poland after the great crisis was difficult and coming out of the bad economic situation lasted for a long time. Besides, the society felt more and more tired. In 1935, the actual national income per one inhabitant of Poland was still lower than in 1930. The Kościalkowski government announced a rapid fight against the economic stagnation, beginning from a savings policy, which largely affected the masses. Workers earned on average 24–26 zlotys per week, whereas the estimated minimum living cost for a working-class family in Warsaw was 35 zlotys per week. In the entire country, as many as 54% of male workers and 82% of female workers remained below the social minimum. The unemployment rate was also high. In 1936, in Poland, over 900 thousand people were unemployed. In Warsaw voivodeship, there were 22.306 jobless people at that time and in Maków County 305 persons remained unemployed. Within the county plan of tackling unemployment, 204 people were hired for public works. In comparison, in 1927 there were only about 9.431 unemployed in the region of Warsaw voivodeship<sup>41</sup>.

Due to the proper economic policy of the Kwiatkowski government in the years 1935–1939, the economic situation improved and favorable changes were introduced to industry and agriculture, which significantly influenced the improvement of the material situation of Polish society. Food prices remained low

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<sup>40</sup> AAN, ZPRP, sign. 1053, k. 24, 137–138, 142, 214, 234, 264, 266, 295–296, 386, 400, 426,431. The County Council, in budget year 1929/30, allocated 3.400 zlotys (0,3%) on the development of industry and trade, in 1930/31 – 5.300 zlotys (0,8%), in 1931/32 – 3.700 zlotys (0,6 %), in 1932/33 – 1.000 zlotys (0,2%), in 1933/34 – 600 zlotys (0,2%), in 1934/35 – 400 zlotys (0,1%).

<sup>41</sup> APW, UWW, sign. 98, k. 191, sign. 18, k. 28; H. Zieliński, *Historia Polski 1914–1939*. Ossolineum, Wrocław 1983, p. 206; M. Śliwa, *Wielka historia Polski 1918–1939*. Pinnex, Kraków 2000, pp. 152–154. Already in 1932 the number of the unemployed in Maków County was only 71 persons. Fewer were only in Przasnysz County – 54 people. And in the entire Warsaw voivodeship, it was much higher than in 1936 and it totalled 29.348 people, APW, UWW, sign. 61, k. 75.

and the wages were higher by 20–30% in comparison to the year 1929. Generally, the economic situation of Poland was slowly stabilizing and the quality of people's lives was improving<sup>42</sup>.

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## **SUMMARY**

Maków County was established by the Tsarist authorities in 1867 and it covered the area of the northern part of the previous Pułtusk County and a small part of Przasnysz County. The sources of weakness in the economic development of Maków County in the second half of the 19th century should be looked for in socio-economic factors. The main source of income for the population of Maków County was agriculture, which was, unfortunately, less than efficient at that time. In order to improve the situation, farmers expanded the area of sowing. Also, the manumission and the abolition of serfdom were not without significance. The liquidation of easements, the introduction of new agricultural machines and the change in the way of cultivating land partially improved the situation in agriculture. In the second half of the 19th century, industry also developed poorly in Maków County. Some of the largest industrial plants were: tanneries, oil mills, mills, sawmills, brickyards and windmills. During the inter-war period, the development of the industry and trade was supported by the County Council, which allocated in its budget appropriate sums for that purpose.

## **STRESZCZENIE**

Powiat makowski utworzony przez władze carskie w 1867 r. obejmował północną część dotychczasowego powiatu pułtuskiego i niewielką część powiatu przasnyskiego. Źródeł słabości rozwoju gospodarczego powiatu makowskiego w II połowie XIX wieku należy szukać w czynnikach natury społeczno-ekonomicznej. Głównym źródłem utrzymania ludności powiatu makowskiego było rolnictwo, które w tym okresie było, niestety, mało wydajne. W celu poprawy tej sytuacji rolnicy zwiększali obszar zasiewów. Nie bez znaczenia było tu też uwłaszczenie chłopów i zniesienie pańszczyzny. Likwidacja serwitutów, wprowadzenie nowych maszyn rolniczych oraz zmiana sposobu uprawy ziemi częściowo poprawiła też sytuację w rolnictwie. W II połowie XIX wieku w powiecie makowskim słabo rozwijał się także przemysł. Do większych zakładów przemysłowych należały: garbarnie, olejarnie, młyny, tartaki, cegielnie i wiatraki. W okresie międzywojennym rozwój przemysłu i handlu wspierał Sejmik Powiatowy, który przeznaczał w swoim budżecie odpowiednie kwoty na ten cel.

**Key words:** Maków County, agriculture, industry

**Słowa kluczowe:** powiat makowski, rolnictwo, przemysł

*Fr. Rafał Figiel*

*Wąsewo*

## WAR CEMETERIES FROM 1915 IN THE AREA OF THE FORMER OSTRÓW COUNTY – PLACES OF MEMORY AND MEMORY OF PLACES

### CMENTARZE WOJENNE Z 1915 ROKU NA TERENIE DAWNEGO POWIATU OSTROWSKIEGO – MIEJSCA PAMIĘCI I PAMIĘĆ MIEJSC

The political transformation which has taken place in Poland in recent years has made it possible to discover many “terrae incognitae” in the aspects of especially the latest history, but paradoxically it has “hidden” many of these aspects again<sup>1</sup>. It has also become a favourable circumstance for a very interesting debate on places of memory or memory of places. It is also said more and more often about the “memory” of the places themselves, or even “landscape memory”<sup>2</sup>. This is especially true in the context of the events which have left a lasting trace in the history of the region and about which it has not been easy to remember, and which have sometimes been ousted from memory as they brought a lot of traumatic experiences to the inhabitants. The event which is gaining more and more of its place in the Polish public space is at present the First World War, also known as the Great War, and especially its least recognized strand until recently, that is the actions of the European powers on the eastern front of this bloody conflict. However, this recovery of the “place in memory” is not painless. The difficulty of the subject arises from various reasons. First of all, from the fact that the Great War, despite taking place in the territories belonging to Poland now, was a struggle in which Poland, as a state, did not take part, since it was not on the map at that time. Therefore, until the present day, in the minds of many people there still remains a belief that it was “not our war”. According to some historians, the “oblivion” of the First World War in Poland is largely connected with the founding myth of the Second Polish Republic, which was the victory in the Polish-Bolshevik war of 1920. In addition, or perhaps above all, the terrible hecatomb of World War II ousted the miseries of 1914–1918 from the collective memory of the Poles. The far-reaching consequence of this last conflict was also the institutionalized

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<sup>1</sup> W. Borodziej, M. Górny, *Nasza Wojna*, Vol. I: *Imperia 1912–1916*. Wydawnictwo W.A.B., Warszawa 2014, p. 8.

<sup>2</sup> A. Zalewska, J. Czarnecki, *Ślady i świadectwa Wielkiej Wojny nad Rawką i Bzurą*. Fundacja Przydrożne Lekcje Historii, Warszawa 2016, p. 4.

ensorship of historical materials in the post-war years and the conscious obliteration of the “memory of places”<sup>3</sup>.

The remains of the Great War are also present in north-eastern Mazovia. In July and August, the German Armeegruppe Galwitz after the Second Battle of Przasnysz broke through the front near Przasnysz and began to drive out the Russian troops from the Kingdom of Poland. At the end of July, the offensive got stuck for some time on the heavily-fortified Russian natural defensive line that the Narew river bed constituted. After crossing the river, which ended on 3 August 1915 with capturing Ostrołęka, the German army was carrying out the so-called pursuit battles in the areas of the Green and White Kurpie Forests, the lands by the Orz and Bug rivers. The Russian troops retreating to the next line of defence, did not give back these areas too easily. The German regiments, even so well-trained in combat as the elite Guards regiments, were losing a lot of their soldiers, often in the course of a single day, often just as a result of the predominant attack tactics of an extended line battle array with low distances between soldiers, characterized by low resistance to modern weapons (heavy machine guns or field artillery)<sup>4</sup>. Necropolises from the time of the Great War in the territory of the former Ostrów County are evidence of these bloody struggles. Some of them have been preserved in almost unchanged state until today, but most have been either obliterated or forgotten. The location of many of them has been uncertain until the present day and requires extensive archaeological research. Such research has been carried out so far only to a small extent, in 2016, in connection with the works planned by the General Directorate of National Roads and Motorways on the modernized national road No. 8.

The number of necropolises from the First World War in the area of the former Ostrów County is estimated to be about seventy – eighty<sup>5</sup>. The data on them comes from heavily scattered archival sources, as well as from field research carried out among others by the author in the years 2014–2017. There is currently only one comprehensive study on Mazovian cemeteries from the First World War, but it is still incomplete and fraught with errors<sup>6</sup>. According to the Act of 1933 with minor amendments, these cemeteries as war necropolises are under legal protection, in

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<sup>3</sup> Ibidem, p. 15.

<sup>4</sup> R. Figiel, *Bitwa pod Wąsewem*. Wydawnictwo OTN im. A. Chętnika, Wąsewo 2016, p. 40.

<sup>5</sup> It concerns the cemeteries located in the area of the existing during the Second Republic of Poland Ostrów County being part of Białystok Voivodeship; the main archival source on the number of these necropolises are their censuses of the 1920s, available at Politisches Archiv in Berlin; in Poland, i. a. Ośrodek Badań Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej (Research Centre for Central and Eastern Europe) deals with them.

<sup>6</sup> P. Ajdacki, *Szlakiem Wielkiej Wojny na Mazowszu. Cmentarze wojenne z lat 1914–1920. Tannenberga Denkmal*. Wydawnictwo PTTK, Otwock 2014, this work includes basically the cemeteries which are well preserved and listed in the Register of Historical Monuments.

practice the Voivodeship Office simply does not know about many of them, neither are they listed in the National War Cemetery Base.

In the area of the former Ostrów County, the cemeteries from the First World War were established in the following locations, and in some of them there were even a few necropolises (the number of cemeteries in a particular town is given in brackets): Andrzejewo, Bagatele, Bojany, Brok, Brulino Lipskie, Brzezienko, Chmiele-Pogorzele, Chrzczanka (now Chrzczanka Włosciańska), Czyżew (3), Dalekie (Wąsewo commune – 2), Dmochy Mrozy, Dybki, Fidury, Gąsiorowo, Godlewo-Warsze, Godlewo Wielkie, Grądy (Wąsewo commune), Grądy Szlacheckie (2), Guty-Bujno, Jabłonowo-Klaczce, Jelenie, Jelonki, Kalinowo, Kiryłówka (now so-called Cerkiewka), Komorowo, Kramkowo Lipskie, Króle, Króle Duże, Krzeczkowo Mianowskie, Krzeczkowo-Wyborowo, Lubiejewo, Łęg Nurski, Marianowo, Murowanka (now Nieskórz), Nagoszewka, Nowa Osuchowa (2), Nowa Wieś (Długosiodło commune – 2), Nowy Borek, Olszaki, Ołdaki-Polonia, Ołtarze-Gołacze, Ostrykół, Pieńki Wielkie, Pieńki Żaki, Przędziecko-Dworaki, Przędziecko-Grzymki, Sielc, Słup, Smolewo, Stasin, Stok, Strękowo (2 or 3), Sumiężne, Szulborze Wielkie, Trynosy Osiedle, Uścianek – Dębiana, Wąsewo, Wysocze, Zalesie (Zalesie Stare) manor, Zaręby-Warchoły (2), Zaszaków, Znamięcki<sup>7</sup>. Arguably, this list does not include all the cemeteries. Based on the statements made by residents and topographic maps from the 1920s and 1940s, it may be assumed that there are others which are not included in the available censuses. Perhaps some of them have been exhumed, which cannot be determined without invasive archaeological research. At present, the exhumed cemeteries in Sielc, Nagoszewka and Osuchowa (one of the two, located by the national road No. 8, just at the turnoff to Nowa Osuchowa) certainly no longer exist. Out of the remaining ones, relatively well preserved and cared for are the cemeteries in Bojany (by the road from Poręba to Brok), Dybki (by the national road No. 8), Komorowo (on the right side of the road from Ostrów Mazowiecka to Ostrołęka), Kramokowo Lipskie (by the road Nur – Kramkowo), Lubiejewo (on the left side of the road from Ostrów Mazowiecka to Łomża, the cemetery incorrectly labelled as a World War II cemetery), Sumiężne (labelled also as the cemetery in Głina) and Czyżew (3). Some of the remaining ones are listed in in the Register of Historical Monuments, which allows hoping that they will be at least preserved (Pieńki Żaki), although it happens that the area of the cemetery carries traces of its exploration by treasure hunters. Sometimes a cemetery was built by a roadside cross, or such a cross was placed in the area of the cemetery, thanks to which it was not devastated, even if the memory of the necropolis was obliterated. This is the case for the graves located in Guty-Bujno, Stok or Nowa Wieś. Unfortunately, virtually completely

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<sup>7</sup> The list based on available archival materials and field research carried out by the author. A lot of information was confirmed by the courtesy of Małgorzata Karczewska from Ośrodek Badań Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej (Research Centre for Central and Eastern Europe) whom the author sincerely thanks for her assistance.

destroyed were the burial places located on arable lands (Bagatele), in forests (Fidury, Kalinowo, Znamięczki) or belonging to parishes as a separate cemetery quarter at the parish cemetery (Jelonki, Andrzejewo). The location of several necropolises remains doubtful until the present day (Jelenie, Króle).

Basically, three stages in the creation of cemeteries in the area of Ostrów County may be distinguished. The first period are burials as early as on the same or the next day after the soldiers' death. Military actions in this area took place during the days from the second half of July (forcing the Narew river) to 18 August 1915 (ending the pursuit battles by the upper river course of the Narew and Nurzec rivers). According to the information from both the regimental chronicles, the memoirs of Armeegruppe Commander – Max von Gallwitz and parish chronicles of Goworowo Parish, that summer was exceptionally hot, so the soldiers themselves tried to bury their comrades quickly to avoid the outbreak of an epidemic<sup>8</sup>. The archaeological report on the Osuchowa cemetery exhumation in 2016, describes this stage as “primary burials with an intact anatomic system” in which we deal with a “one-time burial of a human body, integral”<sup>9</sup>. However, where the troops advanced forward without being held back by the fortified lines of the Russians, there was probably no time to find and bury everyone, so the bodies remained in the woods and fields. The corpses were buried only after a few days, when they were in a state of advanced decay, and this was already the activity not of a regular army, but usually of a civilian population. The above-mentioned report states as follows: “The bodies of the soldiers that had undergone partial decomposition were transported to the burial site. There is a high likelihood that during such transport some elements of the body were separated from others. Depending on the amount of time which elapsed from death to burial and also depending on environmental conditions such as temperature or air and soil humidity, the decomposition process may have been relatively quick”<sup>10</sup>. At this stage, the corpses were mostly deposited in already existing cemeteries. Lastly, the third phase of establishing cemeteries can be discussed, which in the case of Ostrów County is difficult to locate precisely in time because of the lack of sources, and which concerns planned new cemetery complexes, redeveloping or extending already existing war necropolises in later years, especially while the German administration functioned in those areas. Such action may be observed in the places where at cemeteries emerged not only simple earth graves, but concrete

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<sup>8</sup> R. Figiel, op. cit., p. 63.

<sup>9</sup> W. Więckowski, *Szczątki żołnierzy armii pruskiej z cmentarza wojennego z okresu I wojny światowej w Osuchowej Nowej gm. Ostrów Mazowiecka*, [In:] *Opracowanie wyników archeologicznych badań wykopaliskowych przeprowadzonych na stanowisku nr 2 w Nowej Osuchowej, zlokalizowanym na trasie planowanej rozbudowy drogi krajowej nr 8 do parametrów drogi ekspresowej S 8, odc. węzeł „Poręba” – obwodnica Ostrowi Mazowieckiej (Ekshumacja cmentarza z czasów I wojny światowej)*. Ed. M. Milewski. GDDKiA, Warszawa 2016, p. 8.

<sup>10</sup> Ibidem.

or stone tombstones, of specific height and shape, with appropriate inscriptions in the font of an exact size and style.

The cemeteries of the former Ostrów County were established in the first and second stages<sup>11</sup>, probably at least some of them were neatened later (phase III), but no permanent gravestones survived there until the present day<sup>12</sup>. These were mostly small fields or forest cemeteries, sometimes located by the roads, where a dozen or so or several dozen soldiers were buried<sup>13</sup>. Simple, earthen, individual and collective graves were created, which in the course of time underwent natural or in some cases intentional obliteration. The wooden crosses, originally dug in them, decayed and the necropolises were in need of renovation as early as a few or a few dozen years after the burial. Sometimes they were separate, in many cases no longer existent today, quarters in parish cemeteries. Probably all or most of them were to be eventually exhumed. The agreement concluded between Volksbund Deutsche Kriegsgräberfürsorge (German People's Graves Protection Association) and the authorities of the Second Polish Republic in 1938 assumed joining together small burial sites at large collective cemeteries or burial mounds, designed in the amount of one per each county, but there is lack of source coverage for the fact of creating such places in the former Ostrów County. The draft project of cemetery works assumed the following: "Basically it is planned to create burial mounds for the collective honorary grave for German soldiers in Poland. The mound is meant to be a large circular hill whose shape will change, but also 12, 10 or 8 angular mounds whose form may change and whose diameter will be at least 30–40 m. Eventually, the German soldiers' remains will be put in linen bags, and later all of them will be buried in a large mass grave at the base of the hill. In the face of death all the comrades are the same, united with one another; the huge barrow will cover and protect them, and its greatness will be the symbol of it"<sup>14</sup>. It may be assumed that the plans of exhumation and joining together the burial sites were thwarted by the outbreak of World War II, although this does not mean that the redevelopment or neatening of the cemeteries were completely stopped. Ignacy Saramak from the village of Wołowa in Płock County, during the war staying with his parents in Ostrykół, recalls: "Almost directly by the gable of our barn there was an old cemetery of German soldiers from the First World War. Blurred by the rains and weedy graves, the remnants of rotten, broken crosses, and throughout the area thin, high pines [...] Jews worked on its renovation. They were always watched by a few

<sup>11</sup> M. Karczewska distinguishes two phases, identical with stages I and III in this publication. Cf M. Karczewska, *Cmentarze z czasów I wojny światowej w krajobrazie górnej Narwi*, [In:] *Narwiański Park Narodowy. Krajobraz, przyroda, człowiek*. Eds. P. Banaszuk, D. Wołkowycki. Białystok–Kurowo 2016, p. 300

<sup>12</sup> An exception is the cemetery in Dybki with at least two gravestones with inscriptions.

<sup>13</sup> In the case of the exhumed cemetery in Nowa Osuchowa, according to W. Więckowski doing research on this place (op. cit.) the minimum number of burials is 25.

<sup>14</sup> As cited in: R. Figiel, op. cit., p. 99.

armed Germans with dogs. On their chests and backs, the Jews had to wear the capital «J» letters («Jude»). They cut sod with spades from our meadow, which they then transported on wheelbarrows and used it to mulch the newly formed, individual and collective graves. Then they set birch crosses over them, gravelled the alleys, and finally set up a large birch cross in the centre and fenced everything with wooden perches. It lasted a few weeks. And we would grass cows on the meadow and we saw it all close up”<sup>15</sup>. The inhabitants of Ponikiew Mała village, in conversations with the author, also mentioned arranging or neatening cemeteries during the second occupation of those areas (the first one took place in 1915–1918), although in this case they talked about children working under the guidance of a teacher, which was probably supposed to serve as specific “pedagogy” of the occupant. These “German orders”, as the interlocutors put it, are probably one of the reasons for the reluctance to deal with the subject now, because the deceased, in the eyes of the people forced to work, equated with their persecutors.

As regards the identification of the soldiers buried in the cemeteries of Ostrów Land, it is extremely difficult for several reasons. The first cause is the already mentioned nature of the necropolises, which currently have no indications. There is lack of source data about those places – most of it was destroyed during World War II. Excavations and archaeological research enables collecting a little more data, although even then determining the identity is often incomplete<sup>16</sup>. It is possible to identify individual soldiers in terms of their resting in a particular cemetery, based on regimental chronicles and the so-called *verlustlisten*, or “loss lists”. In this case, we have several data that complements each other: the place of death recorded in the regimental chronicle, the statement from *verlustliste* informing whether the soldier was listed as fallen, wounded or missing and the cemetery existing in the area. Additional information can be found on the memorials of the fallen soldiers still existing here and there in the villages which they came from or where they lived. If we combine these elements, we get the probable place of rest of individual people. It is only probable because it is impossible to determine with absolute certainty whether those sources are not burdened with error. Moreover, many German units in the 1920s and 1930s did not list the fallen, and sometimes there was only a table providing the names of the officers and the number of soldiers who died. The situation when there were two or three cemeteries in a given location, or if a soldier is listed as missing, meaning he may have died but not have been buried in the first stage, may not have been buried

<sup>15</sup> I. Saramak, *Wygności z ojcowizny*, [In:] *Moje wojenne dzieciństwo*, Vol. 14. Ed. M.L. Krogulski. Fundacja Moje Wojenne Dzieciństwo, Warszawa 2004, p. 48.

<sup>16</sup> M. Milewski (Eds.), *Opracowanie wyników archeologicznych badań wykopaliskowych przeprowadzonych na stanowisku nr 2 w Nowej Osuchowej, zlokalizowanym na trasie planowanej rozbudowy drogi krajowej nr 8 do parametrów drogi ekspresowej S 8, odc. węzeł „Poręba” – obwodnica Ostrowi Mazowieckiej (Ekshumacja cmentarza z czasów I wojny światowej)*. GDDKiA, Warszawa 2017, p. 55.

or his remains have been buried anonymously, makes it impossible to determine the place of burial. On many Mazovian cemeteries where tombstones are preserved, many of them bear such inscriptions as “one German soldier”, “Russian soldier” or “unknown hero”.

An exemplary place of burial, where one can be tempted to perform partial identification, is a small forest cemetery in Ostrykol Dworski. This village, under the name of *Ostrykol*, is mentioned in two chronicles, namely the chronicle of the 61st Infantry Regiment (Infanterie-Regiment 61) and the 141st Infantry Regiment (Infanterie-Regiment 141) as a place of death of their soldiers. In the latter, the village is listed under a double-barrelled name *Ostry-kol*, in one case in the abbreviated form – *Ostry*. In the village there is only one cemetery from the First World War, mentioned in the archives and preserved until the present day, located on a private property near the Narew river bank. According to the chronicles, 30 soldiers fell at Ostrykol. The layout of the preserved graves allows estimating the minimum number of burials at thirty, but there were rather more, even around forty.

Table 1. Soldiers resting in Ostrykol Dworski war cemetery

Name	Military rank <sup>17</sup>	Company	Regiment	Place of birth	Date of death	Verlustliste of day/page
Ahlemeier Otto	Musk.	5.	IR 141	Bökendorf, Höxter	24.07.	1915-08-12/8128
Bergmann Richard	Ers. Res.	1.	IR 141	Remscheid	24.07.	1915-08-16/8187
Brinkhoff Heinrich	Res.	12.	IR 61	Gr.Holthausen, Hörde	25.07.	1916-05-1/12261
Bülter Josef	Musk.	7.	IR 61	Nordwalde, Münster	25.07.	1915-08-25/8351
Danielsen August	Ers. Res.	1.	IR 141	Mühlbrook, Bordesholm	24.07.	1915-08-16/8187
Deja Johann	Musk.	5.	IR 61	Luboczyn, Tuchel	26.07.	1915-08-25/8351
Godziewski Wladislaus	Musk.	6.	IR 141	Laszewo, Strasburg	24.07.	1915-08-12/8128

<sup>17</sup>Full forms of German army military ranks abbreviations mentioned in the tables: Lt. – Leutnant, Musk. – Musketer, Ers. Res. – Ersatz Reservist, Res. – Reservist, Ldstm. – Landsturman, Uffz. – Unteroffizier, Gefr. – Gefreiter, Gren. – Grenadier, Freiw. – Freiwilliger, Schtz. – Schütze.

Name	Military rank <sup>17</sup>	Company	Regiment	Place of birth	Date of death	Verlustliste of day/page
Hellweg Wilhelm	Musk.	5.	IR 141	Avenwedde, Wiedenbrück	24.07.	1915-08-12/8128
Hock Johann	Ldstm.	5.	IR 141	Offenbach a. M.	24.07.	1915-08-12/8128
Hoffeins Max	Utffz.	5.	IR 141	Blumsdorf, Strelno	24.07.	1915-08-12/8128
Jahn Max	Gefr.	6.	IR 141	Landsberg	24.07.	1915-08-12/8128
Jayme Peter	Gefr.	7.	IR 141	Rohrbach, Dieburg	24.07.	1915-08-12/8128
Jordan Friedrich	Gefr.	5.	IR 141	Maten, Dortmund	24.07.	1915-08-12/8128
Kaminski Franz	Ers. Res.	2.	IR 61	Hoffmannsdorf, Wirsitz	26.07.	1915-08-25/8350
Kegeler Otto	Musk.	7.	IR 61	Werben, Osterburg	25.07.	1915-08-25/8351
Kirstein Alfred	Utffz.	5.	IR 61	Ströbitz, Cottbus	26.07.	1915-08-25/8351
Kugel Hermann	Ers. Res.	6.	IR 141	Grünental, Lennep	24.07.	1915-08-25/8357
Lange Johann	Musk.	5.	IR 61	Bremen	26.07.	1915-08-25/8351
Mackowiak Anton	Utffz.	10.	IR 141	Sarbinowo, Gostyn	25.07.	1915-08-13/8146
Mittag Rudolf	Utffz.	6.	IR 61	Schwerin	24.07.	1915-08-25/8351
Riefe Wilhelm	Freiw.	7.	IR 141	Athenstadt, Peine	24.07.	1915-08-12/8128
Schluckebier Rudolf	Utffz.	7.	IR 141	Lippstadt	24.07.	1915-08-12/8128
Schröter Ernst	Musk.	6.	IR 141	Langwaltersdorf, Reichenbach	24.07.	1915-08-12/8128
Spata Wilhelm	Musk.	6.	IR 141	Scherbeney, Glatz	24.07.	1915-08-12/8128

Name	Military rank <sup>17</sup>	Company	Regiment	Place of birth	Date of death	Verlustliste of day/page
Stache Hans	Musk.	1.	IR 141	Berlin	24.07.	1915-08-16/8187
Storch Alfred	Musk.	1.	IR 141	Breslau	24.07.	1915-08-16/8187
Streich Rudolf	Schtz.	MGK <sup>18</sup>	IR 141	Ledaha, Wladimir	24.07.	1915-08-12/8128
Thiede August	Musk.	6.	IR 141	Hamburg	24.07.	1915-08-12/8128
Wenigrodt Hermann	Musk.	7.	IR 141	Barmen	24.07.	1915-08-12/8128
Wunsch Hugo	Musk.	1.	IR 141	Grabowitz	25.07.	1915-10-15/9371

Source: Keiser, Geschichte des Infanterie-Regiments v. d. Marwitz (8. Pomm.) No. 61 im Weltkriege 1914/1918, Wieseicke, Brandenburg 1924, p. 371–414; E. Schulemann, Das Kulmer Infanterie-Regiment No. 141 im Weltkriege, Berlin, 1926; Online: <http://des.genealogy.net/eingabe-verlustlisten/search/index> [6.07.2017], own study based on data.

A similar identification can be performed in the case of the cemeteries in Marianowo or Olszaki, which are located on the battle trail of Gdańsk 5th Grenadier Regiment (Grenadier-Regiment 5).

Table 2. Soldiers resting in the cemetery in Marianowo

Name	Military rank	Company	Regiment	Place of birth	Date of death	Verlustliste of day/page
Burreh Hermann	Gren.	7.	GR 5	Oberröblingen, Sangerhausen	26.07.	1915-08-20/8263
Franke Otto	Utfz.	7.	GR 5	Aue, Zwickau	27.07.	1915-08-20/8263
Furchtmann Ernst	Ers. Res.	7.	GR 5	Polenzig, Weststernberg	26.07.	1915-08-20/8263
Gerlich Oskar	Gren.	7.	GR 5	Breslau	26.07.	1915-08-20/8263
Härtel Friedrich	Ers. Res.	7.	GR 5	Frankfurt a. O.	26.07.	1915-08-20/8263

<sup>18</sup> MGK – Maschinengewehr-Kompanie – Machine Gun Company.







































































































































































































## **Janusz Grabowski**

*Central Archives of Historical Records in Warsaw*

### DUKE OF EASTERN MAZOVIA (1373–1429). JANUSZ I THE OLD [GREAT]

### KSIĄŻĘTA WSCHODNIEGO MAZOWSZA (1373–1429). JANUSZ I [WIELKI] I JEGO POTOMSTWO

In the 16th-century *Genealogia Tomickiego*, the eldest son of Siemowit III – Janusz I – was called *prudentissimus* (prudential, wise)<sup>1</sup>. That epithet must have already functioned at the Mazovian court in the 15th century. It is confirmed by the opinion of Jan Długosz, who used the lost “Rocznik Mazowiecki” and drew on local tradition. In the Piast dynasty, the fame of his name was preserved by next generations; as many as three consecutive sons of his grandson Bolesław IV were named Janusz. Nevertheless, the duke was not given a nickname during his lifetime. It was not until a very late, that is coming from the year 1826, official copy of ducal and royal privileges for Serock, when Janusz I was called – Jan Starszy Wielki (Jan the Old and Great)<sup>2</sup>.

The aim of the article is to outline the character of one of the most prominent Mazovian Piasts with a focus on his role in the civilizational development of Mazovia. There are relatively many source materials about the character of Janusz I. Those are documents, Mazovian Metrica, judicial books: land and city, sphragistics treasures and architectural monuments, yearbooks, genealogies and obituaries<sup>3</sup>.

Janusz I was the eldest son of Siemowit III and Euphemia - the daughter of Nicholas II, Duke of Opava<sup>4</sup>. He was born around 1346<sup>5</sup>. The name Janusz was of cognatic origin (on the distaff side), because the duke received it in honour of his mother’s eldest brother<sup>6</sup>. Janusz was probably raised at the royal court of Casimir the Great, where he acquired skills necessary for the future ruler and knight.

In 1373, the first division of the province took place. The elder of Siemowit III’s sons was then granted the lands of Warsaw, Zakroczym, Wizna and

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<sup>1</sup> *Acta Tomiciana*, Vol. 8. Posnaniae 1860, p. 171.

<sup>2</sup> AGAD, KRSW No. 4207 b, pp. 267–270.

<sup>3</sup> Vide source documentation J. Grabowski, *Dynastia Piastów mazowieckich. Studia nad dziejami Mazowsza, intytucją i genealogią książąt*. Kraków 2013, pp. 22–30, 420–429.

<sup>4</sup> K. Jasiński, *Rodowód Piastów mazowieckich*. Poznań–Wrocław 1998 [2008], pp. 78–79.

<sup>5</sup> M. Wilska, *Książę Janusz Starszy*. Warszawa 1986, p. 7; J. Grabowski, *Dynastia Piastów mazowieckich...*, p. 229.

<sup>6</sup> W. Dworzaczek, *Genealogia*. Warszawa 1959, Table No. 11.













































































































































































































































































































































































































































development and training courses, quality and safety of products, activities mainly connected with human resources, financial operations, tangible, something that is useful and is connected with sustainable development. Free of charge, annual dental check-up, reduced prices in canteens,

Respondents from Poland and Bulgaria find it **difficult to disseminate CSR (Question 5)** because of: *Shortage of information* (in Poland – 42,71%, in Bulgaria – 31,03%) and *Shortage of economic resources* (in Poland – 18,75%, in Bulgaria – 34,48%). The main *difference* relates to *Irrelevance to the company's goals and strategy*, which was not mentioned by any of the Bulgarian respondents whereas in Poland 14,58% of them ticked the answer.

As for the **activities that could facilitate the CSR dissemination (Question 6)** the following factors are considered to be the most important: *The implementation of sustainable development budget* (in Poland – 30,48%, in Bulgaria – 23,29%), *Following environmental policy* (in Poland – 22,86%, in Bulgaria – 28,76%). Then the respondents chose *Following environmental management* (in Poland – 17,14%, in Bulgaria – 17,81%) and *The application of clean energy technology*.

When it comes to the **Question 7: The activities of the company for the benefit of its employees**, the respondents, both Polish and Bulgarian rated *Policy on training and vocational training over the collective agreement regulations* (in Bulgaria – 24,76%, in Poland – 21,17%) and *Initiatives aimed at employees' needs and facilitating internal communication* (in Bulgaria – 19,05%, in Poland – 22,07%). The differences: in Poland *Consultations with employees and trade unions* (18,02%) and *Activities for the benefit of disabled employees and minorities* (13,06%), whereas in Bulgaria: *Health and Safety certification exceeding legal requirements* (16,19%), *Consultations with employees and trade unions* (13,33%) and *Activities for the benefit of disabled employees and minorities* (10,48%). In Poland more often than in Bulgaria the question of *Flexible hours* (in Poland – 8,56%, in Bulgaria – 6,67%) was raised though in both countries this factor appeared less often.

**The activities for the benefit of clients and suppliers (Question 8)** both respondents from Poland and Bulgaria focus mainly on *The selection of suppliers with regard to quality certification* (in Bulgaria – 22,33%, in Poland – 19,76%) and *Checking the level of client satisfaction* (Bulgaria – 19,42%, Poland – 14,92%). The noticeable difference is that among the Polish respondents CSR activities relating to suppliers and clients are more varied, wide-ranging than those of Bulgarian respondent and they more often relate to *The selection of suppliers with regard to social and/or environmental certificates* (in Poland – 15,32%, in Bulgaria – 9,71%), *The application of processes/goods certificates* (in Poland – 14,52%, in Bulgaria – 11,65%), *Contracting purchases which enforces meeting certain social and environmental requirements* (in Poland – 12,90%, in Bulgaria – 11,65%), *Following the terms of payment for suppliers* (in Poland – 12,10%, in Bulgaria – 11,65%).

**The activities undertaken by companies for the benefit of local communities (Question 9).** The most common activities are: *Sponsoring cultural, sports and artistic events* (in Poland – 33,57%, in Bulgaria – 35%), *Communication with local communities, for example ‘Open Day’* (in Poland – 23,78%, in Bulgaria – 18,34%), and also *Direct investment for the benefit of social initiatives (e.g. voluntary services, making premises available for local communities)* (in Poland – 15,38%, in Bulgaria – 15%). What differs the two groups of respondents is that in Bulgaria *Local donations* are more common (Bulgaria – 28,33%, Poland – 16,78%, ), while in Poland *International ones* (Poland – 10,49%, Bulgaria – 3,33%).

After the analysis of the results presented above the following conclusions can be drawn with regard to the socially responsible activities conducted by machine building enterprises that operate in Warmia and Mazury Voivodeship, Poland and Bulgaria.

### **SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE ACTIVITIES CONDUCTED BY THE SURVEYED MACHINE BUILDING ENTERPRISES OPERATING IN WARMIA AND MAZURY VOIVODESHIP, POLAND AND IN BULGARIA. SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES**

**Similarities:** (1) **The main source of knowledge about CSR in both groups is the Internet.** (2) Both Polish and Bulgarian entrepreneurs equally often **associate** CSR with staff training human resources policy (second factor). Donations, sponsoring, philanthropy and investment to support local communities appear to be equally insignificant. (3) The most common obstacles impeding CSR dissemination for the surveyed groups are shortage of information and shortage of economic resources. (4) The most common obstacles impeding CSR dissemination for the surveyed groups are shortage of information and shortage of economic resources. (5) As to the **activities that can facilitate the CSR dissemination** the two groups of respondents consider the actions benefiting natural environment and the implementation of sustainable development budget. (6) Within the scope of **the activities of the company for the benefit of its employees** it appears that both in the surveyed Polish and Bulgarian companies the most important ones are policy on training and vocational training exceeding the collective agreement regulations and also the initiatives aimed at employees’ needs and facilitating internal communication. (7) **The activities for the benefit of clients and suppliers** in the surveyed groups mainly boil down to the question of quality (certificates, customer satisfaction). (8) As for the **communication with local communities** the machine building companies in Poland and Bulgaria focus on sponsoring cultural, sports and artistic initiatives and events.

**Differences:** (1) In Bulgaria more knowledge comes from mass media and sector information. (That might suggest greater awareness and significance of CSR among machine building sector entrepreneurs). (2) The Polish respondents

associate CSR mainly with voluntary environmental, social, quality certificates, next with prosocial activities, equality policy and policy of employees' and trade unions' participation. In Bulgaria, these are the implementation of code of practice / internal regulations, customer care initiatives / dialogue with the customer, responsible fulfilling duties and transparency of financial reporting (mainly internal regulations, clients). (3) **Main benefits (motivation) associated with the implementation of CSR** Polish entrepreneurs focus mainly on enhanced image and reputation of the company and also increased turnover and profits in the long run.

The Bulgarian entrepreneurs advocate for better staff performance and their loyalty, improved work atmosphere and a good rapport with employees and trade unions and only then do they pay attention to the benefits resulting from better image of their companies. (4) The respondents from Bulgaria are aware of the correlation between CSR, their strategy and company goals whereas their Polish counterparts seem to fail to notice it. (That fact proves the Bulgarian entrepreneurs understand CSR issues and their role in a company better (they are more mature) despite the shortage of information and resources). (5) In the surveyed Bulgarian enterprises Health and Safety certificates appear to be of more importance. (6) Among the surveyed companies in Poland this activity appears to be more wide-ranging and it places more importance on the issues of environment protection, local communities, guarantees and quality of processes. (7) There are more international donations among the surveyed Polish companies whereas there are more local donations among the Bulgarian ones.

The results and conclusions drawn from the research allow us to confirm the main hypothesis stating that in machine building companies operating in Warmia and Mazury Voivodeship in Poland and the surveyed companies in Bulgaria ***CSR is often a spontaneous course of action that is not strategically defined but commonly practiced***. It also appears that contrary to the Polish companies, the Bulgarian ones are more aware of the CSR issues and that its implementation is supported by sector activities and focused on internal matters in the first place (quality improvement, internal regulations, Health and Safety, atmosphere and a rapport with their employees) with a view to improving the dialogue with their clients and the corporate image. In the Polish companies the activities are more wide-ranging and more chaotic. They are image-oriented in the first instance to improve their economic and financial results in the long run.

The expertise gained through the research together with the experience of Bulgarian Branch Chamber shall be applied during the six sessions to develop the model of the efficient dissemination of CSR solutions and strategy of their implementation by machine building sector entrepreneurs in a form of Guidelines for the implementation of social responsibility.

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## SUMMARY

The sustainable development means man's and organizations acting which let save our planet for further generations as we know the planet today. To materialize that vision there has been researching intensive and all manner of education projects in range of Corporate Social Responsibility with different effect. In the article showed the research result about CSR knowledge among subjects working and functioning in electro-engineering branch in Warmińsko-Mazurskie Voivodeship (Poland) and Bulgaria.

## STRESZCZENIE

Rozwój zrównoważony oznacza takie postępowanie ludzi i organizacji, żeby dla przyszłych pokoleń zachować naszą planetę taką, jaką my znamy ją dziś. Aby ta wizja mogła się ziścić, prowadzone są różnorakie intensywne prace edukacyjne z zakresu Społecznej Odpowiedzialności Organizacji, z różnym efektem (skutkiem). W artykule przedstawiono wyniki badań wiedzy o CSR przeprowadzonej wśród podmiotów operujących w branży elektromaszynowej w województwie warmińsko-mazurskim (Polska) i w Bułgarii.

**Key words:** Corporate Social Responsibility, electro-engineering branch.

**Słowa kluczowe:** Społeczna Odpowiedzialność Organizacji, branża elektromaszynowa









































































































