

The Maps and Mapmakers that Helped Define 20th-Century Lithuanian Boundaries – **Part 1:** Administrative Boundaries of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania Just Before the Partition of 1772

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The leader of Russia, upon the pretext of protecting minorities' rights in a supposedly anarchic neighboring country, occupies and annexes land belonging to that sovereign nation. A primary driver of Russia's action: fear that Western-European thinking in the now-partitioned nation might spread, and cause problems at home. I'm not talking about today's headlines, but late 18th century reality.

How Lithuania went from being part of one of the largest countries in Europe in 1772 to one of the smallest after World War I is the subject of a series of articles in which I hope to explain the role that maps and their makers played in determining, for instance, that Palanga wound up in independent Lithuania, while Trakai, Vilnius, Lyda and Gardinas didn't.

As Steven Seegel says, writing about the late 18th century in "Mapping Europe's Borderlands:"

"The tensions between Imperial Russia and Poland-Lithuania ensured an early modern purpose to Europe's maps – that maps would be tools of governance. But for Europe's margins, maps also structured 'historic' claims to land and promises of progress through territorial aggrandizement... Long before the drawing boards were opened in January 1919 at the Paris Peace Conference, maps were invaluable means of claiming land and structuring political power in the borderlands of East Central Europe."¹

I originally thought that the first installment of this series would cover Russian Empire administrative boundaries applied to lands acquired from the Grand Duchy of Lithuania (*Lietuvos Didžioji Kunigaikštystė*) in the Partitions of 1772, 1793 and 1795. But what I found – in the literature, on the Internet, and at my site (<http://www.lithuanianmaps.com/>) – to my surprise, based on 21st century commentary by specialists on the relative accuracy of those maps – were significant differences in how the best 18th century mapmakers defined boundaries in the Grand Duchy, compared with how makers of historical maps, from the 19th century to today, have defined those boundaries in historical atlases and in maps specifically created for, and posted on, Wikipedia/Wikimedia. My learning: while it's always good to go back to the original sources, expect that, in an age before accurate surveys – even in lands that have been extensively mapped for over a hundred years – errors and assumptions will have been

repeated and copied so many times as to pass for fact.

So this first article in the series hopes to establish a valid visual starting point for the dismemberment of the Grand Duchy within the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Future installments will cover how the Russian Empire mapped their Grand Duchy territorial acquisitions, the role that 19th and 20th century ethnographic and historical maps and their makers played in establishing boundaries after WWI, and the struggles of 20th century mapmakers to accurately depict newly independent Lithuania's boundaries.

First, who was at the table carving up the Commonwealth pie, and what did that pie consist of?



Fig. 1. Sayer: "Le gâteau des rois," from Jonathan Potter: jpmaps.co.uk

“The Troelfth Cake” (likely a corruption of *Twelfth Cake*) or “Le gâteau des rois,” or “King’s Cake” (from the three kings of the Bible) – a popular and often-banned image (leading most versions to be anonymously published) from 1772 and 1773, imagines the 1772 partitioning of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth by showing the rulers of those countries – Catherine II of Russia, Frederick II of Prussia and Austrian Habsburg Emperor Joseph II – tearing apart a map of the Commonwealth. Catherine’s right hand points to “Polock” and “Vitebsk” – two of the Grand Duchy’s voivodeships (*vaivadijos* in Lithuanian) she would acquire – while staring at her former lover, and

possible father of one of her three illegitimate children, the last King of Poland and Grand Duke of Lithuania, Stanisław (Stanislovas in Lithuanian) August Poniąkowski, elected to his position in 1764 in the presence of Russian troops.

What Grand Duchy lands, specifically, did Catherine II take for the Empire in that first partition? An intuitive visual starting point for that partition, and for this series of articles, is the best and most complete map of the Commonwealth to that point, published in Paris in 1772: Giovanni Rizzi-Zannoni’s “Wizerunek Powszechny Polski Litwy...” (A general image of Poland – Lithuania).

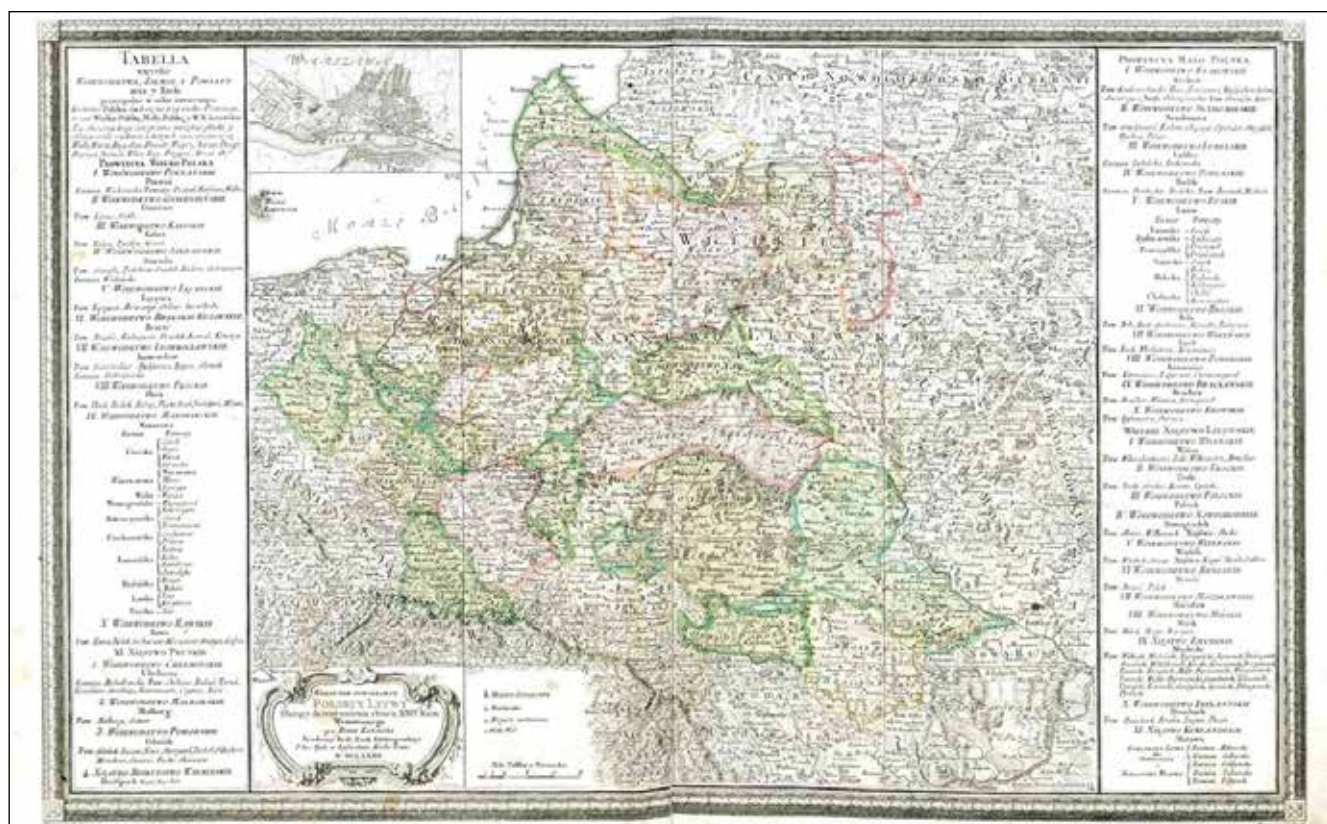


Fig. 2. 1772 Giovanni Antonio Rizzi-Zannoni: "Carte de la Pologne: Divisée par provinces et palatinats et subdivisée par districts, construite d'après quantité d'arpentages d'observations, et de mesures prises sur les lieux" (Map of Poland with its provinces, voivodeships, lands, and regions), Paris, from the National Library of Belarus, as hosted at the World Digital Library: <http://www.wdl.org/en/search/?institution=national-library-of-belarus>

Prince Józef Aleksander Jabłonowski (1711-77), related to the noble Lithuanian Radvila (Polish: *Radziwiłł*) and noble Polish Sobieski families, was Voivode, or governor, of Novogrudok – then in the Grand Duchy’s “*Naugarduko vaivadija*”, and today in Belarus – became interested in cartography and in collecting maps of the Commonwealth. Despite the increasing accuracy of maps of the area Jabłonowski wished for better maps of

the entire area, and planned to have an atlas engraved in Paris with his support and guidance. His first choice was the Hungarian cartographer Franciszek Florian Czaki (1700-1772), whom he commissioned in 1760 to correct existing maps of the Commonwealth. But his plans for a new general atlas were thwarted by Poniąkowski, who – as primarily a map collector rather than a producer of new maps and as someone who wanted

to centralize Commonwealth mapmaking – hired away Czaki in 1764 at a higher salary to be Geographer to the Court. He added two others, Charles de Perthees and Jan Bakalowicz, to a cartographic institute he formed in Warsaw, and together they began working on a new general map of the Commonwealth. It was completed in 1770, but Perthee's latitude/longitude calculations were found to be inaccurate, and so Jabłonowski, anxious to create a legitimate European identity for the Commonwealth via generally-available detailed and accurate maps, plowed ahead with his own plans.

Under his supervision, and with his financial support, he commissioned the noted Italian cartographer Giovanni Antonio Rizzi-Zannoni (1736 – 1814), who had begun his cartographic career on the ground in the Commonwealth, to create a large-scale 25-sheet atlas of engraved maps of

the Commonwealth. The starting point would be maps from Jabłonowski's collection. The result, published in 1772, was the only atlas from this period showing future Belarusian lands in detail and drawn to scale. Inscriptions are in Polish, French, and Ottoman Turkish (Russia and the Ottoman Empire were at war from 1768 to 1774 – and again from 1787 - 1792). (Poniatowski sought to finance an update of the Rizzi-Zannoni map in the 1780's, incorporating boundary changes as a result of the 1772 Partition, but his plans were never realized.)

The Grand Duchy "Woiewods" (Lith.: *Vaivadijos*) – a Voivode or Voivodes, being the governor of an administrative entity called a Voivodeship, or province – and other entities on whose geographical transformations we will focus, using the map's Polish names on Rizzi-Zannoni's 1772 map (see Fig. 3):

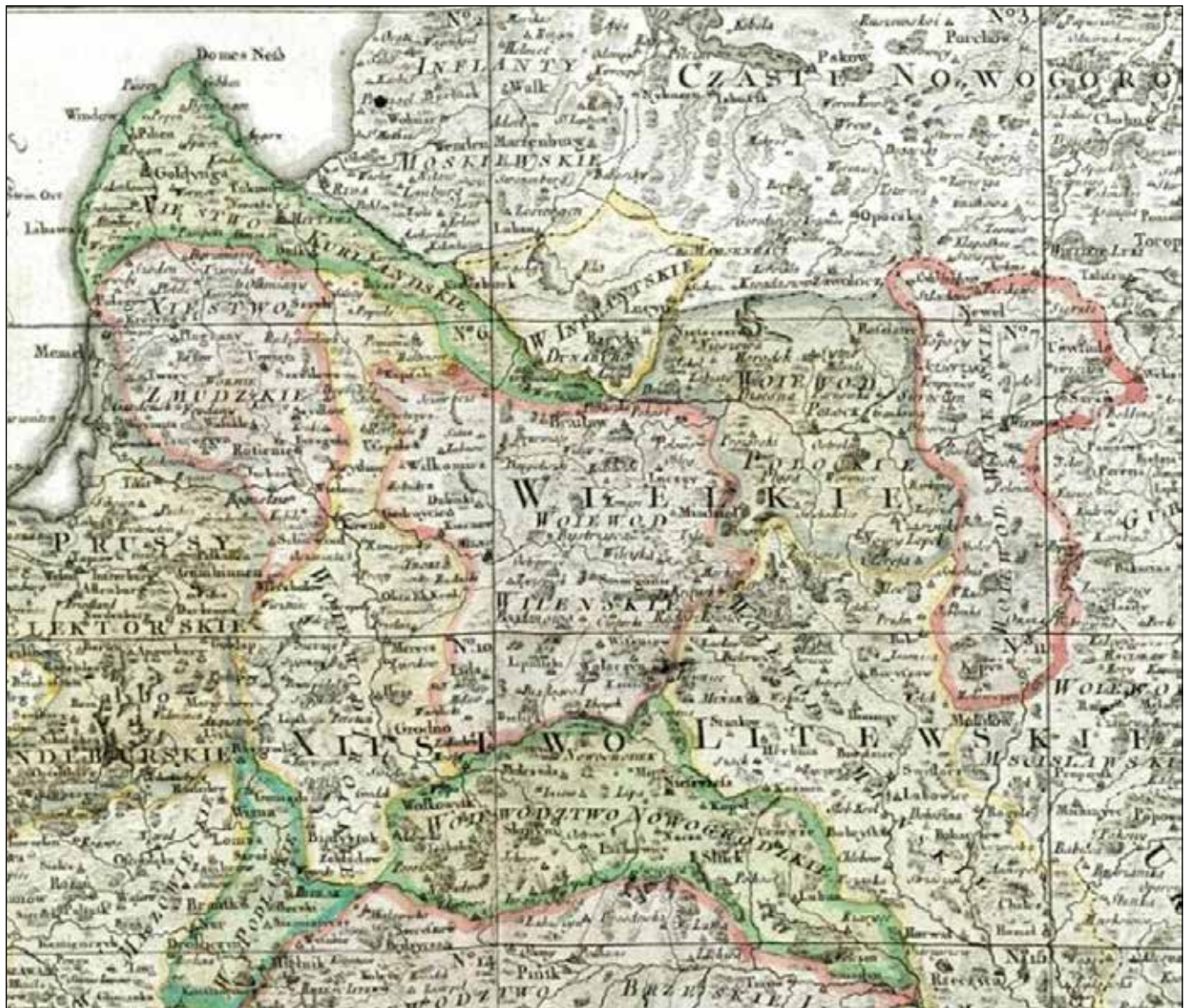


Fig. 3. Detail, 1772 Giovanni Antonio Rizzi-Zannoni: "Carte de la Pologne..."

1. “Xiestwo Kurlandskie y Semigalskie”

(Contemporary Polish: “Księstwo Kurlandii i Semigali”; Latvian: “Kurzemes un Zemgales hercogiste”; Lithuanian: “Kuržemės ir Žiemgalos Kunigaikštystė,” or “Kuršo Kunigaikštystė”; German: “Herzogtum Kurland und Semgallen”; English: “Duchy of Courland and Semigallia”)

2. “Woiewod Inflantskie”

(Contemporary Polish: “Województwo inflanckie”; Latvian: “Latgale” or “Lettgallia”; Latgalian: “Latgola”; German: “Liefeland” or “Livland”; Lithuanian: “Livonijos vaivadija”; English: “Livonian Province” and “Polish-Lithuanian Livonia”)

3. “Xiestwo Zmudzkie”

(Contemporary Polish: “Księstwo Żmudzkie”; Samogitian: “Žemaitėjė”; Lithuanian: “Žemaičiu Seniūnija”; English: “Samogitian Province”)

4. “Woiewod Trocki”

(Contemporary Polish: “Województwo trockie”; Lithuanian: “Trakų vaivadija”; English: “Trakai Province”)

5. “Woiewod Wilenskie”

(Contemporary Polish: “Województwo wileńskie”; Lithuanian: “Vilniaus vaivadija”; English: “Vilnius Province”)

6. “Woiewod Polockie”

(Contemporary Polish: “Województwo połockie”; Lithuanian: “Polocko vaivadija”; English: “Polotsk Province”)

7. “Woiewod Witebskie”

(Contemporary Polish: “Województwo witebskie”; Belarusian: “Віцебская ваяводзтва”; Lithuanian: “Vitebsko vaivadija”; English: “Vitebsk Province”)

8. “Woiewod Minskie”

(Contemporary Polish: “Województwo mińskie”; Belarusian: “Менская ваяводзтва”; Lithuanian: “Minsko vaivadija”; English: “Minsk Province”)

9. “Woiewodztwo Nowogrodzkie”

(Contemporary Polish: “Województwo nowogrodzkie”; Lithuanian: “Naugarduko vaivadija”; Belarusian: “Навагрудская ваяводзтва”; English: “Novogrodek Province”)

10. “Woiewod Mscislawskie”

(Contemporary Polish: “Województwo mścisławskie”; Belarusian: “Амсьціслаўская ваяводзтва”; Lithuanian: “Mstislavio vaivadija”; English: “Mstislav Province”)

11. “Woiewod Brzeskie Lit”

(Contemporary Polish: “Województwo brzesko-litewskie”; Lithuanian: “Bresto vaivadija” or “Lietuvių Brastos vaivadija”; English: “Brest Litovsk Province”)

Are the boundaries in this detail image (Fig. 3) of the most accurate map of the Grand Duchy, just before its First Partition, the way this area has been portrayed in later historical maps and atlases, and in maps created for, and posted on, the Internet? You might think so, based on the expert conclusion that “In the 18th century maps [of the Lithuanian area] [have an] average [inaccuracy] of settlement position only 0.4% compared [with] the real coordinates.”

A striking example of what might be an anomaly jumped out at me as I looked at contemporary historical depictions of the borders of “Woiewod Inflantskie” or “Livonijos vaivadija,” or also known as “Polish-Lithuanian Livonia,” or even more often, as just “Polish Livonia,” even though the area was jointly ruled by Kingdom of Poland and the Grand Duchy. (Details of the 19th century Polonization of the maps of the former Grand Duchy in a future installment.) The constants in all maps: the chief city: “Dünaburg” (or “Duneburg” or “Dyneburg,” or today’s “Daugavpils” in Latvian, “Daugpilis” in Lithuanian), the southern border the river “Düna” (“Daugava” in Latvian, “Dauguva” in Lithuanian), and the town “Marienhauz” (“Marienhausen,” “Marienhaus,”), “Viļaka” in today’s Latvia, about 200 km / 124 miles northeast of Daugavpils.

Compare the shape of Rizzi-Zannoni’s 1772 depiction of the province, vs. today’s Google Map:



Fig. 4. Detail, 1772 Giovanni Antonio Rizzi-Zannoni: “Carte de la Pologne...”

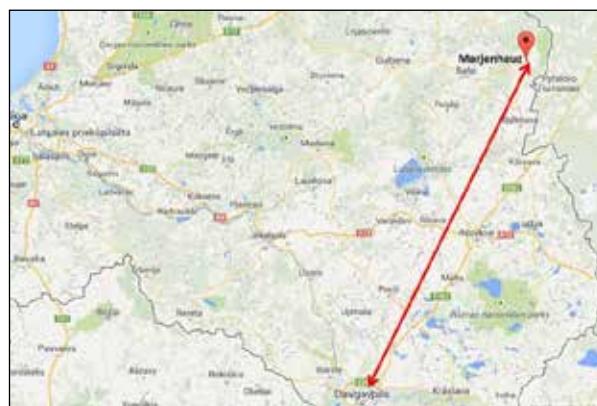


Fig. 5. Latvia, Google Map

Not bad, but for “Marjenhauz” being south of Riga on Rizzi-Zannoni’s 1772 map, and in reality north of it. It’s Inflanty’s boundaries that appear to radically change in the following decades. Remember that Rizzi-Zannoni had access to, and probably copied from, Jabłonowski’s map collection. Absent copyright protections, mapmaking in the 18th century, as in previous centuries, was a culture of rampant copying, relabeling and re-engraving. Here is a historical sequence of how “Inflanty” was depicted by a number of prominent 18th century mapmakers, as well

as how some 19th to 21st century historical mapmakers have depicted it. For the reasons why border accuracy improved following the Partitions, see my next installment. What’s key to remember is that Woiwodeship/Vaivadija definitions were often just named towns and “surrounding areas,” and especially in this instance, that the course of the “Ewest” river (today’s Aiviekste) was always just south of Inflanty’s northern border. See how it goes from being depicted as draining roughly east to west, to draining to the “Düna” southwest, changing the shape of the province.



↑ Fig. 6. Detail, 1750 Matthaus Seutter: "LIVONIAE et CURLANDIAE DUCATUS," Augsburg. From the Univ. of Tartu, Estonia: <http://dspace.utlib.ee/dspace/>

↓ Fig. 7. Detail, 1752 Robert de Vaugondy: "LE ROYAUME DE POLOGNE...", Paris, from "Atlas Universel." The map itself is dated 1752. From www.davidrumsey.com





Fig. 8. Detail, 1762 Johann Baptist Homann: "DVCATVVM LIVONIAE et CVRLANDIAE," Nuremberg, from the Univ. of Tartu, Estonia: <http://dspace.utlib.ee/dspace/>

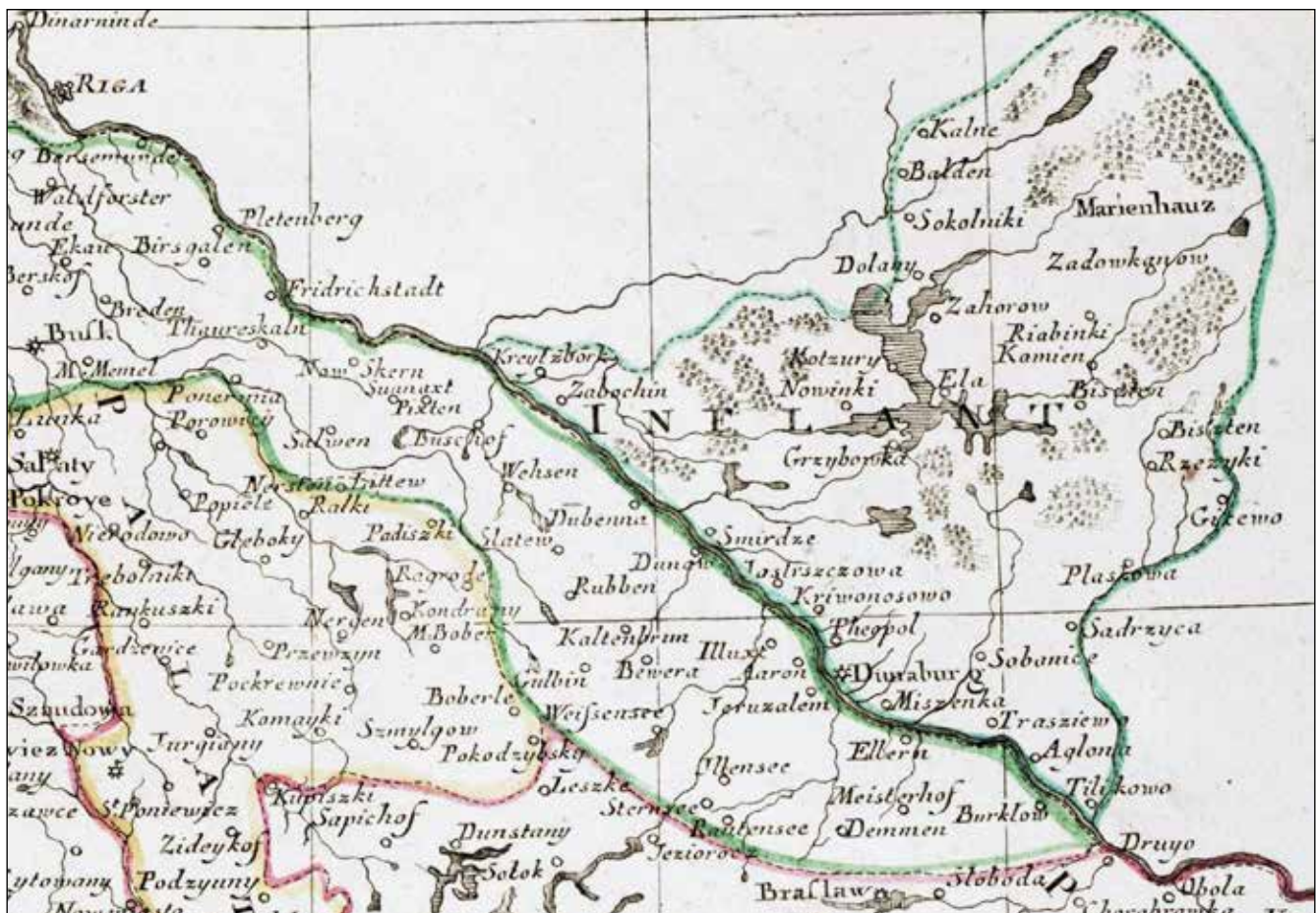


Fig. 9. Detail, 1791 Rizzi-Zannoni - Antonio Zatta: "LI PALATINATI di WILNA, TROKI, INFLANT..." AK collection

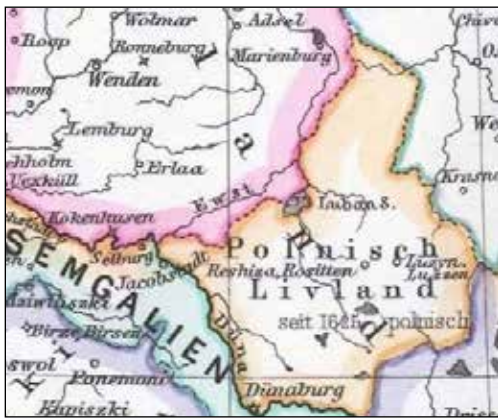


Fig. 10. Detail, 1871 "POLEN..." from the "Spruner-Menke Hist. Handatlas No. 71"

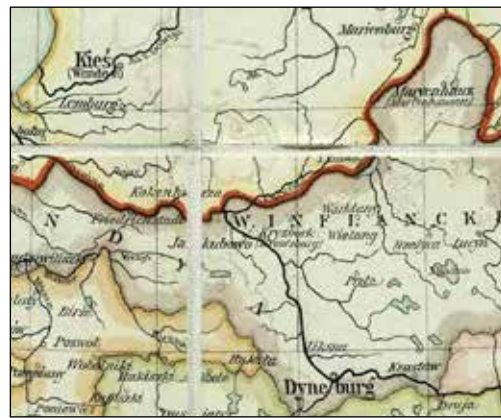


Fig. 11. Detail, 1895 Jan Babirecki: "Polska w roku 1771," Kraków, from <http://rcin.org.pl/dlibra/docmetadata?id=323>

Below is the best Lithuanian-created historical map I've found of the pre-partitioned Grand Duchy (Fig.12). Like all such recently historical maps, made either for historical atlases or for the Internet, it is fine for delineating approximate boundaries, but lacks the details which would show the smaller towns and natural features that would enable tracking border changes over time.

LIETUVOS DIDŽIOSIOS KUNIGAİKŠTYSTĖS ADMINISTRACINIS SUSKIRSTYMAS PO LIUBLINO UNIJOS



Fig. 12. "Lietuvos Didžiosios Kunigaikštystės Administracinis Suskirstymas Po Liublino Unijos," showing 1771 boundaries. From "Lietuvos istorijos atlasas," Project Director Dr. Albinas Pilipaitis, Copyright Vilniaus Universiteto Kartografijos Centras, and Leidykla VAGA, 2001

Let's use the detail below of Warsaw high school teacher Jan Babirecki's 1895 folding map of the Commonwealth (Fig. 13) as our baseline for future articles.

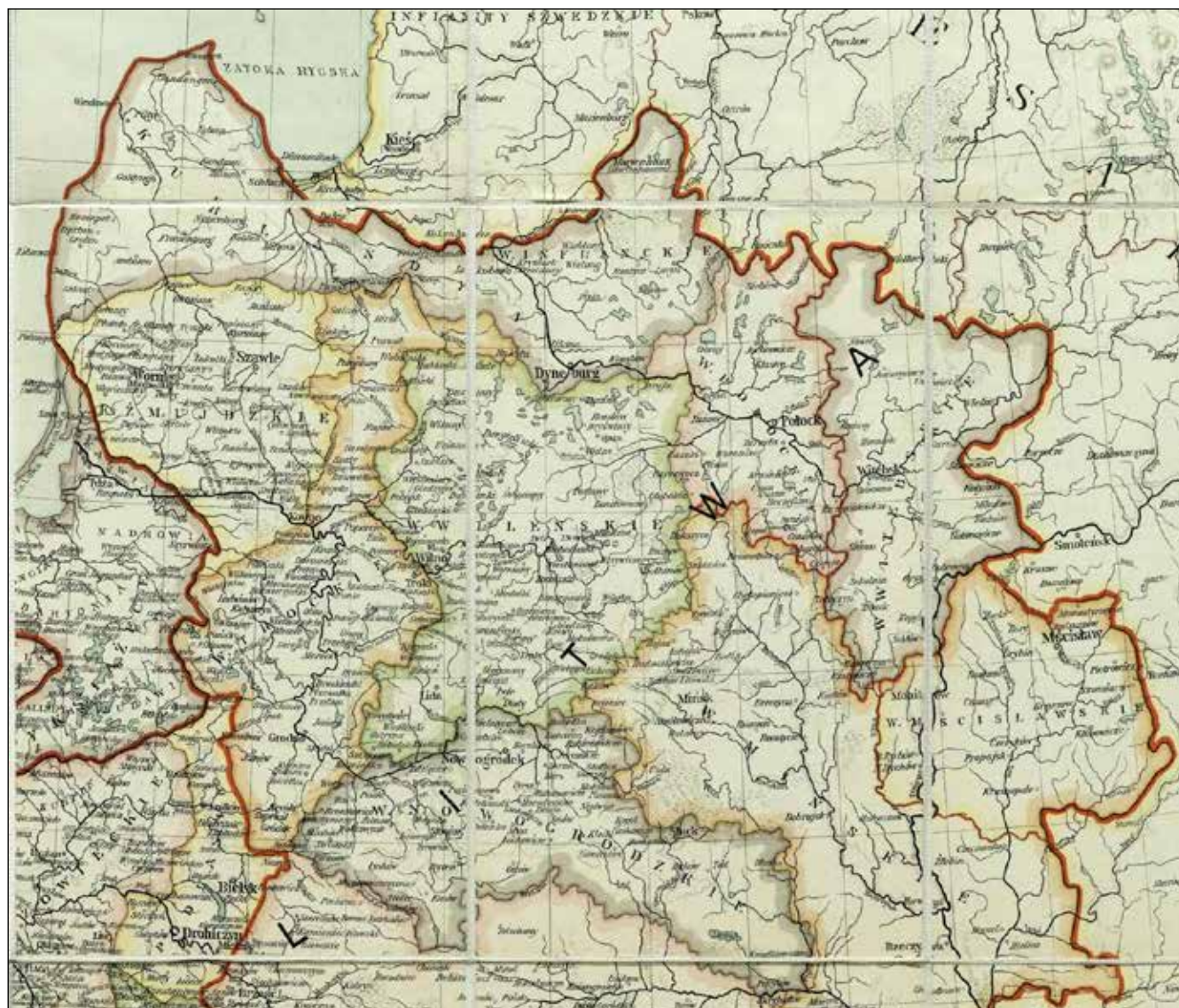


Fig. 13. Detail from "Polska w Roku 1771," by Jan Babirecki, from his atlas "MAPA Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej," published 1895 by Spółka Wydawnicza Polska w Krakowie. Image from RCIN Digital Repository of Scientific Institutes: <http://rcin.org.pl/dlibra/docmetadata?id=323>

In the next installment, I'll go into a bit of the history of each entity before the 1772 Partition, and focus on the Russian administrative and boundary changes each entity underwent.

(To be continued)

References:

1. Steven Seegel: "Mapping Europe's Borderlands," 2012, Univ. of Chicago Press, p 43.
2. Algimantas Česnulevičius, Giedrė Beconytė, "Lithuanian historical maps: periods, methods, accuracy and perspectives," e-Perimetron, Vol.1, No. 4, Autumn 2006.