

Lords' Forestry for People's Basic Needs

Evidence from Prussia's Royal Domains and Forests during the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries

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In early modern Brandenburg-Prussia, the Hohenzollern monarchs were not only sovereigns of the electorate of Brandenburg or the Prussian kingdom but also lords of their domain estates, just as nobles were lords of their noble estates. Like noble lords, the sovereign lords owned domain estates as landed property, which included their demesne farms and their forests, as well as the peasant farms that they lent to their domain subjects in hereditary or leasehold tenure. Tenant peasants were obligated to render labor for the lords' demesne farms and forests as well as to pay feudal rent in cash or kind. Conversely, the lords were also obligated to supply their subjects with many of life's necessities, especially from their forests, because most of subject peasant communities lacked woodland.¹ In general, demesne lords had an obligation to grant the necessary timber for construction free of charge to subject peasants who held farmsteads in leasehold tenure. This obligation was owed, because the lords owned the farmsteads exclusively and, thus, were solely responsible to (re)build and repair the farm buildings.² Otherwise, demesne lords were obligated to allow their subjects access to their forests to gather fallen dead wood as firewood, graze livestock, collect litters, and so on. Accordingly, while the royal authorities managed their forests for profit, they were obligated to meet the basic needs of royal domain subjects.

In 1713, however, King Friedrich Wilhelm I transferred all domains, including the forests, to the state budget and reserved only a specific amount for the royal family and the court. Owing to this development, the Prussian General Legal Code (*Allgemeines Landrecht für die preußischen Staaten*) of 1794 declared the domains to be the property of the state.³ Consequently, the royal authorities had to allow not only domain subjects but also the other state's population to use the

royal forests. During the eighteenth century, the Prussian state rose to become one of the great European powers through the expansion of its army. To secure army personnel, the state was very eager to increase the state's population. As a result, an increasing population of cottage residents emerged, among which the lodgers were not domain subjects but joined in the use of the royal forests.⁴ Furthermore, King Friedrich II, with his remarkable sense of right and wrong, began allowing subjects of noble lords to use the royal forests just as his domain subjects.⁵ Thus, while the exploiting pressure on the royal forests increased, Friedrich II started the project of afforestation and established the system of sustainable forestry in the royal forests.⁶

This chapter examines how and to what extent the royal authorities met the demands of the growing population both inside and outside domain estates for wood resources in the royal forests while advancing the forestry. Prussia's royal domains and forests in Brandenburg during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries will be explicitly focused on. While surveying the general developments in Brandenburg, this chapter details the case of the royal domain and forest district of Alt-Ruppin (*das königliche Domänenamt und Forstrevier Alt-Ruppin*). Delving into this case will help reveal the realities that a survey of Brandenburg alone cannot.

ROYAL DOMAIN(S) AND FOREST(S) IN BRANDENBURG AND ALT-RUPPIN

The royal domain and royal forest district of Alt-Ruppin traditionally belonged to the Kurmark Brandenburg (the greater part of Brandenburg comprising the Altmark west of the Elbe River and the East Elbian areas to the Oder River surrounding Berlin and Potsdam). In 1815, after ceding the Altmark in 1807, the Kurmark area roughly became the governorate district of Potsdam (*Regierungsbezirk Potsdam*), the western part of the Prussian province of Brandenburg.

Traditionally, the Kurmark had a higher density of sovereign lordship than other Prussian territories. At the end of the eighteenth century, it included fifty-four royal domains, encompassing 40% of all peasants in the East Elbian area.⁷ Throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, approximately one-third of Brandenburg was covered in forests.⁸ In the Kurmark around 1800, the crown owned seventy-two royal forest districts covering approximately 58% of the total woodland, while the nobility and peasants owned 28%, and the cities and towns owned 14%. This calculation, however, did not include at least 134 other forested areas belonging to nobles and peasants because no records were available for these areas.⁹ Data regarding the share of peasant ownership is available in the Ruppin district (*Kreis Ruppin*) of the Kurmark. This data shows that peasants owned only 4% of the forests while 75% belonged to royal families and 13% to noble lords and private owners.¹⁰ Peasants or peasant communities often had meager or no woodlots, making their entitlement to the lords' forests indispensable.

Both the royal domain of Alt-Ruppin and the royal forest district of Alt-Ruppin had their headquarters in or around the town of Alt-Ruppin, which lay approximately sixty kilometers northwest of Berlin. The domain and forest authorities cooperated in the exercise of royal lordship over the agricultural lands in the domain as well as the woodlands in the forest district.¹¹ As a result of incorporating a part of the domain of Lindow in 1764, the royal domain of Alt-Ruppin became comparatively sizable among the royal domains in the Kurmark. Around the year 1800, the domain included the two towns of Alt-Ruppin and Lindow, two royal demesne farms in the town of Alt-Ruppin and the village of Dabergotz, twenty-six villages, and new settlements such as eight colonies (one of them was a colonist village) and two *Büdner-etablissemments*. Some of the new settlements were constructed by a tar oven, a glasswork, or a farm hereditarily leased to a nobleman. While the towns and the villages had long been established mostly since the Middle Ages, the construction of the new settlements occurred only in and around the 1750s. The royal authorities settled these new settlements with “foreigners” and retired soldiers.¹²

Table 8 presents the development of the social structure in the rural settlements that belonged to the royal domain of Alt-Ruppin in the year of 1800. Farms of peasants (*Bauern* and *Kossäten*) existed only in villages and towns. Due to limits on arable land and the impartibility of individual farms, the number of peasant farms was mostly constant except for the devastation caused by the Thirty Years’ War. Conversely, the number of cottages increased drastically beginning in the early eighteenth century. The cottages were built not only in old villages but in new settlements also. An increasing number of disinherited children of peasant farmers and offspring of cottage residents were repeatedly permitted to own and lease cottages as cottagers (*Büdner*) and lodgers (*Einlieger*), respectively.

In 1798, the forest district of Alt-Ruppin included a total area of more than thirty-five thousand *Morgen* (one *Morgen* is approximately 0.26 hectares), a comparatively large area among the royal forest districts in the Kurmark.¹³ In 1820, it incorporated a part of the neighboring forest district of Zühlen, and this amounted to a sizable district of more than forty thousand *Morgen*, which consisted of the seven subdistricts of Klausheide, Lietze, Krangenbrück, Hohenheide, Pfefferteich, Glienicke, and Rägelin. This size proved to be uneconomic in many regards. In 1843, as the new forest district of Neu-Glienicke was founded, the two subdistricts of Glienicke and Rägelin were transferred to it. As a result, the Alt-Ruppin forest district was reduced to about twenty-six thousand *Morgen*, a size more conducive to protection and administration.¹⁴

According to an investigation in 1825, six-sevenths of the forest district of Alt-Ruppin consisted of pine stands. Considering the dominance of pine trees, it is no wonder that in the forest district of Alt-Ruppin, high forest management with 100- or 120-year cutting cycles was practiced. Here, even broad-leaf trees formed exclusively high forests, leaving no room for coppice. Thus, the subjects and locals

TABLE 8. Development of the Social Structure of Rural Settlements That in 1800 Belonged to the Royal Domain of Alt-Ruppin, 1687–1831

| | 1687 | 1757/64 | 1800 | 1831 |
|------------------------------------|----------|---------|------|------|
| Large peasants (<i>Bauern</i>) | 347 (97) | 420 (1) | 420 | 412 |
| Small peasants (<i>Kossäten</i>) | 98 (21) | 110 | 105 | 94 |
| Cottagers (<i>Büdner</i>) | 0 | 124 | 124 | 359 |
| Lodgers (<i>Einlieger</i>) | 18 | 135 | 322 | 682 |

SOURCES: Iida 2010, 43; for 1831, BLHA, Rep. 7, Amt Alt-Ruppin, 283.

NOTES: (1) A fishing village was not considered. (2) The number of devastated farms in parentheses.

were permitted to gather fallen dead wood as fuel and to graze their livestock under the high trees.¹⁵

FEUDAL ERA TO 1811

After the end of Thirty Years' War in 1648, it took more than half a century to resettle the peasant farms devastated and abandoned during the war. In the Alt-Ruppin domain, one-fourth of the peasant farms were still not yet resettled even forty years after the war (Table 8). During the postwar depopulation, the woodlands increased.¹⁶ In 1688, however, the annual income of the electorate of Brandenburg from the electoral forest was only about sixty-one thousand Reichstaler (rt), while that from the electoral domains (which consisted mainly of farmland) amounted to more than one million rt. As Otto Behre noted, this meager income from the electoral forest was in striking contrast to its immense size. After deducting the salaries of forestry and hunting officials, the surplus that the electorate of Brandenburg could earn from his immense forest did not reach even seven thousand rt.¹⁷ At that time, based on the wood ordinances of 1590, 1593, and 1622, peasants of the electoral domains were entitled to obtain the necessary timber for maintaining and constructing farm buildings by paying half of the cost.¹⁸

While Elector Friedrich III (1688–1713, King Friedrich I beginning in 1701) only minimally improved the electoral or royal forests, King Friedrich Wilhelm I (1713–1740) succeeded in increasing the revenue from the forests mainly through an intensive ship timber trade with foreign countries as well as by putting the forest accounting system in good order. The monetary budget of the royal forests in the Kurmark in the fiscal year 1731/1732 was 108,017 rt in revenue and only 6,057 rt in expenditure.¹⁹ However, Friedrich Wilhelm I was more interested in improving agriculture on domain lands than in improving the forestry. Thus, the king lowered the price of timber for his peasants. Even after the farms were completely resettled in the early eighteenth century, royal authorities still faced the problem that buildings on usufructuary peasant farms were mostly dilapidated because the peasants could not afford to pay for the timber. Such conditions made the farms susceptible to fires, collapse, or total abandonment. To remedy this problem, King

Friedrich Wilhelm I released a patent on April 25, 1729, in which he declared that all timber, regardless of whether it was necessary for new constructions or maintenance, would be given from his forests to non-farm-owning peasants in the royal domains free of charge. According to the investigations in 1747 and 1748, about 53% of all peasants (5,774 out of 10,898) in the royal domains in the Kurmark were non-farm-owners. Additionally, the king declared that timber granted to his farm-owning peasants for new constructions and repairs would only require payment of one-third of the total cost. In this way, the domain peasants' entitlement to timber reached its peak in 1729.²⁰

King Friedrich II (1740–1786) further increased the revenue from his forests through timber trade with foreign countries. The revenue from the royal forests in the Kurmark amounted to 215,044 rt in the fiscal year 1747/1748 and 233,046 rt in the fiscal year 1756/1757.²¹ He was the first monarch who thoroughly engaged in afforestation, which, however, did not advance without difficulty. The Seven Years' War (1756–1763) interrupted his forestry endeavors and caused devastation to the royal forests, from which they recovered only over a long period.²² Furthermore, the king's forestry endeavors clashed with his other central policy of populating his kingdom.²³

In the royal domains in the northern districts of Brandenburg like Prignitz, Ruppín, and Uckermark, the building of new settlements concentrated within a few years around 1750.²⁴ Within the Alt-Ruppín domain alone, at least eight colonies and two *Büdner-etablissemments* were established in and around the 1750s. Some of these, such as Frankendorf, Woltersdorfer Baum, and Wüsten-Rägelin, were founded within the royal forest district of Alt-Ruppín.²⁵ Thus, colonization increased exploitation on the royal forests.

While new establishments increased the demand for building timber from the royal forests, the authorities took measures to prevent the waste of timber grants, which was likely to occur, especially in cases of non-farm-owning peasants who were entitled to free timber. In 1784, the General Forest Department created a draft of a building code. Domain and construction officials from the Altmark and the Prignitz were commissioned to provide expert reports if the code would apply to their areas. According to the draft, the necessity for a new building and its size were determined by the building's master carpenter and peasants, which often resulted in excess timber being granted. To remedy this problem, the draft proposed that a construction official should visit the construction site to determine whether or not a repair would be sufficient and to estimate the size and amount of timber needed for the new building on the basis of model drawings (clauses 1, 2, and 6 of the proposed code). This proposal had, as expert reports revealed, already been put into practice in several domains and then was generally applied during the 1780s. In fact, in 1840, an official named Wittchow, of the governorate of Potsdam, reported for the Alt-Ruppín domain that buildings that were more than sixty or eighty years of age had been built with superior timber and had greater longevity than newer buildings.²⁶

Specifically in the Alt-Ruppin domain, the timber economy advanced in another way. In 1763 and 1764, as the royal domain of Lindow was dissolved and incorporated into the neighboring domains, including Alt-Ruppin, the authorities offered farm ownership to the usufructuary peasants in these domains. Approximately 240 usufructuary peasants from sixteen villages in the expanded domain of Alt-Ruppin accepted this offer by agreeing to pay one-third of future timber costs, while approximately 260 peasants from ten other villages did not accept the offer due to concerns with losing the provision of free timber. Consequently, the authorities not only improved the royal forest revenue but could certainly economize on timber grants as well, because the farm owners used to refrain from demanding unnecessary timber due to the one-third payment, as expert reports on the draft of the building code of 1784 explained.²⁷

One reason why many peasants in the Alt-Ruppin domain gave up free timber is illustrated by the case of the village of Grieben (which belonged to Lindow domain until 1764, then to Friedrichsthal, then to Alt-Ruppin after 1819). Here, only eight peasants accepted farm ownership while the other twelve refused it. Starting in 1765, however, even the twelve usufructuaries paid one-third of the costs for granted timber, the same as the farm owners, a choice that was influenced by the threat of eviction. Being replaced by other tenants who were willing and able to pay more for timber was no longer an unrealistic fear. It might have been out of such a fear that all of the peasants in each of the sixteen villages fell into line with accepting farm ownership by giving up free timber.²⁸ Rivalry over the limited number of impartible farms intensified in the agrarian boom during the latter third of the eighteenth century, as farms enjoyed an increasing demand for grain from growing populations in rural Brandenburg and Berlin as well as from industrializing England.²⁹

While economizing on timber grants, the authorities improved the royal forestry to increase wood production. In 1764, King Friedrich II prohibited selection cutting and introduced compartment cutting, which made artificial planting in each compartment possible.³⁰ On the basis of this development, the authorities began to mobilize the labor of subjects toward afforestation works. On January 17, 1785, it was declared that each subject who was entitled to receive timber from royal forests should work to improve the forests. This consisted of ploughing, harrowing, and raking forest lands as well as gathering and delivering pinecones to the authorities, who used them for artificial regeneration.³¹ In the late eighteenth century, as the afforestation of the royal forests advanced, the authorities no longer permitted new settlements in the royal forests to conserve wooded areas.³²

Traditionally, the royal authorities not only provided domain subjects with timber but also firewood. While the authorities collected the larger cordwood to be sold, the subjects were typically permitted to gather only the thinner fallen dead wood (*Raff- und Leseholz*) for domestic use "but never for sale."³³ To make this division effective, authorities forbade subjects to bring axes or hatchets into the royal

forests and specified an upper limit of wood to be gathered. These regulations, however, were often met with resistance as the fallen dead wood became insufficient for the growing population, especially from the mid-eighteenth century.³⁴

According to the oldest available register, from 1809/1810,³⁵ 243 inhabitants of nineteen surrounding settlements were entitled to gather fallen dead wood in the royal forest district of Alt-Ruppin. Most were subjects and preachers in the villages and colonies belonging to the royal domain of Alt-Ruppin. Three of the registered settlements, however, belonged to the noble or princely estates, from which the lords' demesne farms and their subjects were entitled to the fallen dead wood. A peasant farmer or a preacher was entitled to gather fallen dead wood with a two-horse-drawn wagon by paying four Scheffel oats or twenty-four to thirty-two *Groschen* (gr) for two days a week, while a cottager was entitled to bring only a handcart and paid eight gr. The register included 227 wagon users, from which seven were allocated to two noble demesne farms, and sixteen handcart users.

It should be noted that among the nineteen registered settlements, at least five (Pfalzheim, Frankendorf, Stendenitz, Gühlen, and Woltersdorf) were only established in and around the 1750s. They joined with nineteen wagon users and ten handcart users in the practice of gathering fallen dead wood. Additionally, as reported in the late eighteenth century, there were a large number of *freiwillige Heidemieter*, who apparently entered the forest for firewood without entitlement. This was probably due to the fact that the lodgers, who increased most rapidly in number (table 8), were not included in the register of the entitled inhabitants. With this increasing rivalry, authorities were compelled around the year 1800 to raise the maximum thickness limit of fallen dead wood that subjects could gather, namely, from 2.5 to 3 *Zoll*. Furthermore, since the royal forestry shifted from selection cutting to compartment cutting in 1764, pure pine stands became dominant, which caused frequent insect damage, because pure stands were more vulnerable to insects. Especially in the years following insect or wind damage, subjects could enjoy an abundance of fallen dead wood without strict controls by the royal authorities.³⁶

The royal forests were not only the place of timber and fuel-wood production but offered pasturing areas as well. In the seventeenth century, the forest orders did not yet care about the damage of unrestricted pasturage in the royal forests, because the livestock were few at that time.³⁷ Population growth during the eighteenth century, however, resulted in an increase of livestock and, thus, grazing pressure on the royal forests. According to the first available list of 1812,³⁸ twenty-six settlements were entitled to pasture a fixed number of livestock in the forest district of Alt-Ruppin. Most of these settlements belonged to the royal domains, but a few were subject to surrounding noble estates. Out of the twenty-six registered settlements, at least three farms hereditarily leased to nobles (Woltersdorf, Frankendorf, and Gühlen) and three colonies (Bienenwalde, Stendenitz, and Pfalzheim) were established in the royal domain of Alt-Ruppin between 1747 and 1755 and joined in the pasturage of the forest district of Alt-Ruppin.

While the number of pasturing parties increased, the pasturing area in the royal forests narrowed because, for successful afforestation, the authorities enlarged the area preserved from the grazing animals. As a result, the forest-grazing parties were not in harmony. A report from 1797 mentioned "countless numbers of conflicts" in the Pfefferteich subdistrict. At that time, livestock from Darritz, Frankendorf, Storbeck, Woltersdorf, and Katerbow grazed there collectively. Since no party had a specified territory, they constantly felt intruded upon and were at odds with one another. Parties who advanced their interests by force gained the upper hand. In this respect, Storbeck stood out. Around 1797, Storbeck seized the animals that the villagers of Darritz pastured in an area called Hasche, denying them their rights to pasture there without reason.³⁹ In any case, such rivalry functioned as mutual regulation of the number of animals pastured in the forest.⁴⁰

To support forest-grazing villages, the authorities offered them additional pastoral use of the forest. In 1796, the villagers of Storbeck petitioned the authorities to permit them to continue raking moss and pine needles in the Alt-Ruppin forest. They could not spare these forest by-products for supplementing the litter that they lacked because of insufficient hay and straw yields. On this occasion, the forest official of Alt-Ruppin not only accepted Storbeck's demand, but also offered the same permission to other villages like Darritz, Pfalzheim, and Nietwerder, who were experiencing the same or an even more severe litter shortage. Ultimately, the four villages were allowed to rake moss and pine needles only on a predetermined day every week during the winter half-year in a place specified by the forest officials.⁴¹ As discussed in the annual economic report for 1802 on the district of Ruppin (*Kreis Ruppin*), to which the Alt-Ruppin domain and forest belonged, raked moss and pine needles helped peasants to keep up with the general intensification of manure production at that time, which notably resulted in intensive potato cultivation on fallow lands. The potatoes and their waste served as livestock feed.⁴²

The peasants' gain from the forest was, of course, combined with their obligations to the forest owner. In return for being permitted to rake moss and pine needles, the peasants were obligated to deliver a certain quantity of pine cones to the forest authorities. This obligation was due to an ordinance from 1788, with which the authorities had increased their opportunities to extend their subjects' labor into afforestation.⁴³

REFORM LEGISLATION OF 1811 AND THE FOLLOWING HALF CENTURY

After the defeat of Prussia by Napoleonic France in 1806, Prussia launched a reform to dissolve the relationship between lords and subjects. The reform legislation (such as the 1811 *Regulierungsedikt* and the 1821 *Ablösungsordnung*) prescribed how to redeem the rights of lords and subjects, including the subjects' entitlements

to the lords' forests. However, these entitlements were often long maintained because they were excluded from settlements where relationships between lords and subjects were dissolved.

Even before the legislation, royal authorities watched for an opportunity to negate subjects' rights to free timber. They found such an opportunity in 1799, as they offered freedom from labor obligations and farm ownership to those peasants in the royal domains who did not enjoy these.⁴⁴ In the domain of Alt-Ruppin, negotiations began in 1803 with four villages (Dabergotz, Molchow, Nietwerder, and Wuthenow) where the peasants were mostly usufructuary farm holders and saddled with labor obligations for the royal demesne farms. For freedom from labor and farm ownership, the authorities enforced rigid conditions, including that peasants should surrender their entitlements to free timber without any compensation. The peasants eventually accepted such conditions by 1818 because their greatest concern was emancipation from labor services.

In the royal domain of Alt-Ruppin, however, peasants saddled with labor obligations for the royal demesne farms were in the minority. Besides the four villages referenced earlier, there were six villages dominated by usufructuaries that were already exempt from labor obligations. Without the inducement of freedom from labor obligations, they could take the time to fight against the abolishment of their entitlement to free timber. Eventually, the royal authorities redeemed the entitlement in the form of rent by the mid-nineteenth century. Furthermore, the domain included sixteen to nineteen villages comprising mostly farm-owning peasants without labor obligations for the demesne farms, who were entitled to timber for a one-third payment. The authorities proposed to redeem their entitlements through rent. In most cases, the negotiations only began around 1840. As a result of the determined opposition of the majority of the farm-owning peasants, however, the authorities found no alternative but to continue granting them timber until the 1860s and 1870s when, eventually, their rights were redeemed. Until then, the authorities had to meet their increased timber needs for enlarging or increasing their stables and barns to handle concurrent advancements in agriculture, in accordance with Clause 210, Title 22, Part I of the Prussian General Legal Code of 1794.⁴⁵

In contrast to the situation regarding timber, the royal authorities left the subjects' rights to fallen dead wood and forest pasturage untouched for half a century after the reform legislation of 1811. In his guidebook for redeeming rights to forests from 1829, Georg Ludwig Hartig, the chief forester of the Prussian kingdom, argued that it was unwise for forest owners to redeem entitlements to fallen dead wood and forest pasturage. Fallen dead wood, which satisfied the necessity of subjects, was of little or no value for the authorities because it was unsaleable and cost time and labor to collect piecemeal. Pasturing animals caused no noticeable harm to the forest, as long as they were kept from preserved areas. It was not prudent to abolish forest grazing because the rich undergrowth would then die uselessly.⁴⁶

For regulating the surviving entitlements to the forests, the authorities relied on the 1811 *Landeskulturedikt*, which promoted the cultivation of land. Concerning forestlands, the *Landeskulturedikt* stated that, for silviculture, entitlements to pasturage and gathering firewood were, per se, not harmful unless there were abuses. Based on this perception, the edict ordered that each forest owner should be authorized to limit the fallen dead wood collected by an entitled person to necessary purposes only, by permitting the gathering of wood only on fixed days under a forest official's supervision (§26). Preservation areas were to be made as large as necessary to enable regenerative silviculture (§28). If, however, the indispensable forest pasturage suffered from the unrestricted application of this rule, a fair restriction would be put in place by an arbitrator (§29). Thus, the edict aimed to make sustainable forestry and indispensable forest use somehow compatible.⁴⁷

In the Alt-Ruppin forest district, the authorities not only retained entitlements to fallen dead wood but also even permitted unentitled parties to gather it. As reported in the Description and Management Plan of the forest district in 1825:

Besides (the entitled parties), still many unentitled individuals enter the forest for fallen dead wood. They cannot be removed because they were living in the forest and very poor. They, however, had to pay a higher access fee than the entitled.⁴⁸

In 1846/1847, while 270 wagon users and twenty-eight handcart users were entitled to gather fallen dead wood in the royal forest district of Alt-Ruppin, the authorities allowed two wagon users and 159 handcart users to do so, not by entitlement but by granting formal permission. Thus, the authorities accepted the previously unentitled parties mostly from the growing lower-class population living in cottages. This increased openness was based on the increasing volume of wood as a result of advancing afforestation.⁴⁹

While fallen dead wood increased with advancing afforestation, forest-grazing areas narrowed as a result. In 1820, in the Alt-Ruppin forest district, the authorities planned to afforest all existing clearings of 4,523 *Morgen* by 1839. In fact, between 1825 and 1846, clearings were reduced from 4,145 *Morgen* to 572 *Morgen* or from 10.2% to 2.2% of the total district area.⁵⁰ To afforest the clearings, additional areas had to be continuously preserved to prohibit grazing animals. Meanwhile, however, the authorities kept the people's entitlements to forest pasturage intact. To make forestry and pasturage somehow compatible, the authorities carefully investigated each preserve, focusing on when it could be reopened for pasturing.⁵¹ Starting in the 1840s, the forest authorities spoke of the "permissible extent of preserved areas," which was, on the whole, limited to one-fifth of the total pasturing area.⁵²

Obviously, the forest-grazing parties did not fully exercise their entitlements. As reported in the Description and Management Plan of 1825, "although many villages were entitled to pasture horses, they did not exercise these rights any more at all."⁵³ This was the result of their efforts to shift from pasturage to the feeding of horses by stalls.⁵⁴ Nevertheless, the pasture in the forest district seemed to be

TABLE 9. Number of Livestock Pastured in the Royal Forest District of Alt-Ruppin, 1847–1854

| | Horses | Oxen | Cows | Calves | Sheep | Pigs | Calculated as cows |
|------|--------|------|------|--------|-------|------|-----------------------|
| 1847 | 15 | 51 | 398 | 71.3 | 8,188 | 343 | 1,383 |
| 1848 | | 55 | 289 | 35 | 9,847 | 300 | 1,402 |
| 1849 | 10 | 55 | 313 | 54 | 7,133 | 327 | 1,181 |
| 1851 | 14 | 10 | 320 | 44 | 8,534 | 390 | 1,276 |
| 1852 | 16 | 10 | 358 | 53.7 | 7,910 | 321 | 1,251 |
| 1854 | | 4.7 | 215 | 21.5 | 6,290 | 171 | 882 |

Source: BLHA, Rep. 2A, Regierung Potsdam, III F, no. 4288, 263–283.

Notes: (1) One cow = 3/4 horse = 3/4 ox = two calves = ten sheep = eight pigs. (2) The values of 1850 and 1853 are not presented, because for both years the data is incomplete. (3) Numbers of geese, which were very few, were not considered.

insufficient for the livestock pastured. As the forest and domain officials of Alt-Ruppin in 1829 reported, even during the summer months, the forest pasturage could not support the livestock without supplementary fodder.⁵⁵

From 1847 to 1854, the numbers pastured in the forest district of Alt-Ruppin were recorded. For each year, the forest official counted and recorded the numbers of livestock pastured by each party. The total number of animals pastured in the forest district of Alt-Ruppin was between 882 and 1,402 in cows (table 9). Even the smallest number significantly exceeded the capacity of the district's pastures, which, in the assessment of 1856, worked out at 661.9 cows.⁵⁶

Excess grazing animals had significant consequences, especially in the 1840s. In 1842, most areas of the Prussian state were struck by an unprecedented drought, causing a severe lack of livestock feed, primarily because the meadows and pastures became arid. On September 1, the central authority in Berlin proposed to permit suffering peasants, even if unentitled, to graze their livestock in the royal forests, which, because of the shade, still afforded some pastures. To this proposal, the domain of Alt-Ruppin replied that it would be no use, because a large number of peasants were already entitled to pasturage in the Alt-Ruppin forest and, therefore, would never admit the unentitled parties. The domain proposed that peasants lacking straw and hay be given extraordinary permission to gather litter in the forest. This counterproposal was, eventually, supported by the forest inspector of Rheinsberg, von Schaltzen. He initially remarked that a forester always wanted to see his forest as free as possible from litter exploitation because it hindered the growth of trees.⁵⁷ Ultimately, he gave priority to the general interest over special forestry interests.⁵⁸

The excessive quantity of grazing animals also damaged the foresters' meadows and surrounding stands in the forest district. In 1847, the senior forester (*Oberförster*) of the Alt-Ruppin forest district petitioned the governorate of Potsdam to redeem the pasture rights on the meadows of all foresters in the

district. The meadows were pastured by many entitled parties in spring and autumn. Consequently, they deteriorated constantly, and their productivity levels were deficient because there was no opportunity to improve them. For years, all foresters had requested this redemption without success. In 1847, they could no longer endure as their meadows were deteriorating at a greater rate than ever because hungry animals could find "no fodder" in the forest and, thus, depended almost exclusively on the meadows.⁵⁹

In his petition, the senior forester indicated the merit of stopping spring and autumn pasturage on Eggersdorf meadow for the benefit of the forest surrounding it. If ceased, the animals would also leave the royal forest in spring and autumn because the forest alone could hardly feed them during these seasons. For the forest, the pasturage in early spring was most dangerous because the grass was lacking; therefore, woody plants necessarily served as fodder and suffered. As this meadow was narrow and long, the pasturage on it continuously and inevitably damaged the neighboring forest preserve. It was all the more sensitive as the bordering forest grounds were mostly designated for growing beech trees.⁶⁰

In fact, in 1847 and 1848, the number of livestock pastured in the forest was remarkably large (table 9). This situation might have resulted from a severe potato failure that prevailed in Brandenburg during the 1840s, most seriously in the middle of the decade. It meant a decrease in feed, which made the livestock more dependent on the wood pastures than usual.⁶¹ Also, 1848 was the year of revolutions, in which the populace overused the royal forests in various ways.⁶²

THE REDEMPTION OF THE ENTITLEMENTS TO FOREST

In 1849, the budget of the royal forests in the governorate district of Potsdam was approximately 504,289 rt in revenue and 202,289 rt in expenditures. The revenue was more than twice that of the Kurmark a century earlier, when King Friedrich II began afforestation activities, and approximately 452,660 rt (90%) were generated from the sale of timber and firewood.⁶³ During this century-long forestry improvement scheme, subject's and local's traditional use of royal forests was, as shown, intensified as a result of population growth. This use survived for a substantial period even after the reform legislation of 1811.

In Alt-Ruppin, it was only in 1856 that the values of all the people's entitlements to the forest district were thoroughly estimated by Marot, an official of the Potsdam governorate. His task was to calculate the cost of redemption and to examine whether it was practicable and profitable. According to this assessment, the total annual yield of the forest district was 21,606 rt, of which, 6,634 rt (30.7%) went to the local populace.⁶⁴

While the redemption of timber entitlements had long been pursued and partly realized, Marot's report in 1856 was the first official report that recommended the

authorities redeem the entitlements to fallen dead wood and forest pasturage by paying an assessed amount.

Marot considered that it would be profitable to the authorities to redeem the entitlements to fallen dead wood as soon as possible, and with good reasons. First, the entitlement holders obtained 195,482 *Kubikfuß* from the forest while they were legally able to obtain only 128,314 *Kubikfuß*. Thus, the authorities lost 67,168 *Kubikfuß* because it was impossible to monitor firewood gatherers thoroughly. After the redemption, they would be free from this loss because they would then pay compensation rent only for the lesser legal amount. Second, as silviculture and forest monitoring improved, the volume of wood and fallen dead wood (which entitled subjects and locals could gather) increased. Therefore, the authorities could redeem entitlements by paying lower rent sooner than at some future point. Third, with this redemption, Marot did not intend to stop the widespread practice of gathering firewood entirely. Instead of entitled parties who were mainly from the farm-owning class and had their wagons, he planned to accept more of the unentitled parties, which consisted mainly of lower-class people with handcarts, for a particular access fee. The fee would then help to cover the redemption rent paid to entitled parties, which he estimated at 1,046 rt. Marot also expected that a significant number of the people committing wood theft would prefer the honest way if they were given an opportunity to obtain fallen dead wood for a moderate fee, which would profit the public interest as well as the interest of forest owners.⁶⁵

Marot reported that the authorities should redeem pasturing rights by paying 1,631 rt as annual compensation. His reason was that the forestry needs for the preserved areas, which at that time exceeded the permissible limit of 20% of the total pasturing area, could not be satisfied without redeeming the existing rights to forest pasturage. Even with his redemption plan, however, Marot never intended to drive the grazing practice itself out of the forest but to lease the woodlands for pasturage once they were free from the pasturing rights, under conditions better fitting forestry needs. He expected that the rent obtained by the leases would cover the bulk of the compensation.⁶⁶

Marot's plan seems to have been based on the general policy of the Potsdam governorate for leasing forest pastures. In 1853, the governorate declared that, when necessary, even livestock owners who were not entitled to forest pasturage should "always" be permitted to exercise such by paying a pasture fee according to a tariff schedule. Following this declaration, each royal forest district within the governorate's jurisdiction had drafted a tariff schedule according to animal types.⁶⁷

It was primarily in the 1870s and 1880s that the redemption plan was put into practice. At the end of the 1880s, only the town of Alt-Ruppin and some other parties maintained the rights to pasture livestock equivalent to 292 cows. Through the redemptions, the Alt-Ruppin forest district created sufficient latitude to provide

the surrounding livestock owners with pastures according to their needs, especially in cases of severe hay and straw shortages.⁶⁸

This research has proven that the royal forestry improved its wood production during the eighteenth and nineteenth century, especially after Friedrich II introduced afforestation practices. Meanwhile, however, the royal forests provided for the basic needs of subjects and locals. The entitlements of domain subjects to the royal forests were enlarged as a result of the establishment of new settlements in the domain in the mid-eighteenth century; they substantially survived reform legislation in the early nineteenth century; and, in most cases, they were only redeemed between the 1860s and 1880s. Additionally, the royal forest had to permit unentitled parties from the growing landless class and individuals from outside the domains access to the royal forests. The continuing and intensifying forest use of the subjects and locals was a burden on the royal forestry. There were many free riders among the *Heidemieter*. In particular, forest pasturage clashed with the enlargement of preserved areas for successful afforestation and collecting litters impoverished the soil of the woods.

From the 1860s to the 1880s, almost all the entitlements to the royal forest were finally redeemed. After redeeming peasant farmers' entitlements to gather fallen dead wood, lower-class people were permitted to continue to do so in the form of flexible contracts in higher numbers than before. Thus, the authorities provided latitude to accept firewood theft honestly. Through the redemptions of the entitlements to wood pastures, forest authorities created sufficient latitude to widely and flexibly provide the surrounding livestock owners with grazing according to their needs, especially in cases of severe hay and straw shortages. Through such flexible provision, forest use practices could be made more compatible with forestry practices than before.

NOTES

1. Hasel 1974, 6, Hasel and Schwartz 2006, 100–102.
2. Eisenberg and Stengel 1796, 10–11.
3. Hasel and Schwartz 2006, 83.
4. See chapter 7 in this volume.
5. Pfeil 1839/2009, 87.
6. Stadelmann 1882, 139–145, Rubner 1967, 68–70, Asche 2015, 70–74.
7. Müller 1965, 152.
8. Materna and Ribbe 1995, 21.
9. Bratring 1804–1809/1968, 25, 119–123.
10. Bratring 1799, 40–48.
11. Bratring 1799, 390–395.
12. Schulze 1935, 52–57, Iida 2010, 49.
13. Bratring 1804–1809/1968, 122.

14. Brandenburgisches Landeshauptarchiv, Potsdam, Germany (hereafter: BLHA), Rep. 2A, Regierung Potsdam, III F, no. 4286, fol. 266, 285, No. 4524–4529.
15. BLHA, Rep. 2A, Regierung Potsdam, III F, no. 4285, fol. 4, 52, no. 4295.
16. Pfeil 1839/2009, 61.
17. Behre 1905, 85.
18. Christian Otto Mylius, ed., *Corpus Constitutionum Marchicarum oder Königlich Preußische und Churfürstlich Brandenburgische in der Chur- und Marck Brandenburg, auch incorporirten Landen publicirte und ergangene Ordnungen, Edicta, Mandata, Rescripta etc.* Berlin 1737–1751, IV. Theil, I. Abtheilung, II. Cap., Sp. 501, 515, 537, Pfeil 1839/2009, 54.
19. Pfeil 1839/2009, 135.
20. Iida 2013, 506–11.
21. Pfeil 1839/2009, 175–176.
22. Stadelmann 1882, 140–141, Koser 1903, 113.
23. Stadelmann 1882, 144; Asche 2015, 70–71.
24. Asche 2015, 70.
25. Iida 2010, 48–9, Bratring 1799, 452, 454–455.
26. Iida 2013, 514–515.
27. Iida 2013, 515–516.
28. Iida 2010, 104, 121–123.
29. Harnisch 1984, 43–45, Harnisch 1986.
30. Rubner 1967, 69–70.
31. *Novum corpus constitutionum Prussico-Brandenburgensium Praecipue Marchicarum, Oder Neue Sammlung Königl. Preuß. und Churfürstl. Brandenburgischer, sonderlich in der Chur- und Marck-Brandenburg, Wie auch anderen Provintzien, publicirten und ergangenen Ordnungen, Edicta, Mandaten, Rescripten etc.* Berlin 1751–1803, vol. 7, colum 3009–14.
32. Iida 2013, 514.
33. Mylius, ed., *Corpus Constitutionum Marchicarum*, IV. Theil, I. Abtheilung, II. Cap., Sp. 692.
34. Iida 2014, 46–54.
35. BLHA, Rep. 2A, Regierung Potsdam, III F, no. 1836, fol. 64–67.
36. Iida 2014, 46–54.
37. Pfeil 1839/2009, 49.
38. BLHA, Rep. 2A, Regierung Potsdam, III F no. 4286, fol. 518–521.
39. BLHA, Rep. 7, Amt Alt-Ruppin, no. 115, fol. 106–107.
40. See Warde 2009, 75–76.
41. BLHA, Rep. 2A, Regierung Potsdam, III F, no. 1871, fol. 1–7, BLHA, Rep. 7, Amt Alt-Ruppin, no. 115, fol. 92.
42. BLHA, Rep. 2, Kurmärkische Kriegs- und Domänenkammer, no. D.39, fol. 98–99.
43. BLHA, Rep. 2A, Regierung Potsdam, III F, no. 1871, fol. 1–7, No. 1836, fol. 65–66.
44. Knapp 1887/1927, 1:96.
45. BLHA, Rep. 2A, Regierung Potsdam, III F, Nr. 4288, 96–97, Iida 2013, 517–520.
46. Hartig 1829, 19, 62–63.
47. *Gesetz-Sammlung für die Königlichen Preußischen Staaten*, 1811, 306–307, Hasel 1974, 25–26.
48. BLHA, Rep. 2A, Regierung Potsdam, III F, Nr. 4285, fol. 6.
49. Iida 2014, 58–59, 61.
50. BLHA, Rep. 2A, Regierung Potsdam, III F, no. 4285, fol. 52, no. 4286, fol. 66.
51. BLHA, Rep. 2A, Regierung Potsdam, III F, no. 4524.
52. BLHA, Rep. 2A, Regierung Potsdam, III F, no. 4286, fol. 409–427, 517.
53. BLHA, Rep. 2A, Regierung Potsdam, III F, no. 4285, fol. 6.
54. BLHA, Rep. 7, Amt Alt-Ruppin, no. 283.
55. BLHA, Rep. 2A, Regierung Potsdam, III F, no. 4535.

56. BLHA, Rep. 2A, Regierung Potsdam, III F, no. 4288, fol. 45, 233.
57. For far more devastating and lasting damage by exploiting litters to the forest soils than by forest pasturage, see Hasel and Schwartz 2006, 204–206.
58. BLHA, Rep. 2A, Regierung Potsdam, III F, no. 563.
59. BLHA, Rep. 2A, Regierung Potsdam, III F, no. 4536.
60. BLHA, Rep. 2A, Regierung Potsdam, III F, no. 4536.
61. BLHA, Rep. 2A, Regierung Potsdam, III F, no. 4536. For potato failure in Brandenburg, Materna and Ribbe 1995, 427.
62. Iida 2014, 60, see also Radkau 2012, 188.
63. Rönne 1854, supplement to, 66.
64. BLHA, Rep. 2A, Regierung Potsdam, III F, no. 4288, 89.
65. Iida 2014, 60–63.
66. BLHA, Rep. 2A, Regierung Potsdam, III F, no. 4288, 91–96.
67. BLHA, Rep. 2A, Regierung Potsdam, III F, no. 3361.
68. BLHA, Rep. 2A, Regierung Potsdam, III F, no. 4302, fol. 176–177.

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