

Being Single: Household Composition in Mid-Nineteenth-Century Lithuania

DALIA LEINARTĖ AND IRMA DIRSYTĖ

Classic Lithuanian writer Juozas Tumas-Vaižgantas's (1869–1933) 1929 short story "Uncles and Aunts" (*Dėdės ir dėdienės*),¹ depicts the family and interpersonal relationships of Lithuanian peasants. The short story begins before the abolition of serfdom in 1861 and continues as emancipatory reform takes place throughout all of tsarist Russia and Lithuania, which at the time was part of the imperial empire. Vaižgantas's protagonist is Mykolas Šiukšta (often referred to by the diminutive "Mykoliukas"), the young peasant of Saveikiai Manor who lives on the homestead of his deceased parents with the family of his older brother. The brother, the full-fledged owner of the farm, sends Mykolas to work on the manor to pay off the bondage (*lažas*) owed by their household, as well as to work on the family farm. The brother's wife

¹ *Dėdė* literally "uncle", however, this is also a reference to social class in nineteenth century Lithuania.

DALIA LEINARTĖ (orcid.org/0000-0002-6614-5400) is a senior research fellow at the Institute of Sociology at the Lithuanian Centre for Social Sciences. She is the author of *Family and the State in Soviet Lithuania. Gender, Law and Society*. In 2018 Leinarte received an award of the Association for the Advancement of Baltic Studies (AABS), Honorable mention, for the book *The Lithuanian Family in its European Context, 1800-1914: Marriage, Divorce and Flexible Communities*.

IRMA DIRSYTĖ (orcid.org/0000-0001-7736-0942) is a junior research fellow at the of Sociology at the Lithuanian Centre for Social Sciences.

assigns Mykolas her own “women’s work,” i.e., caring of their children. The text reveals that although the two brothers held equal rights of inheritance of their parents’ farm and land, Mykolas’s marginal family situation, i.e., he is unmarried and childless, causes him to forfeit his status as farmer. Mykolas thus cannot aspire to his part of the farm and must accept the reduced position as hired hand in his brother’s household. In the nineteenth-century Lithuanian rural community, Mykolas, like any other single farmer’s son or daughter has no other options except to live within the married brother’s household and accept his role as hired hand. Like other hired hands, he does not have his own space or things. In time, according to Vaižgantas, as Mykolas grows old, he becomes the village oddball eternally pushed around by the brother’s family:

He has neither his own bed, nor any other space of his own to lie down, nor a place to keep his things, or even a blanket to cover himself. Once the kids are in bed, he can lie down where he finds room; if he finds a blanket someone has left behind, he can use it to make a bed – that is, if he’s allowed to sleep in the cottage.

Lithuanian literary criticism and textbooks discuss *Uncles and Aunts* as presenting a unique depiction of the relationship between man and nature as well as archetypal imagery and complex psychological portraits of peasantry. But aside from its literary contributions, the short story is a valuable resource for social history and demography, offering insight into the plight of unmarried women and men in nineteenth century Lithuanian rural communities. The life of single people has interested historians, demographers, and other specialists for quite some time. Their research examines the life strategies of unmarried individuals in pre-industrialized Northwestern European societies where single men and women made up approximately 20 percent of the population.² This article, however, is the first of its kind to

² Hajnal, “Two Kinds of Preindustrial Household Formation Systems,” 449–494.

offer such historical demographic data and their analysis in Lithuanian scholarly literature. The article presents data about the composition of households in the Kaunas and Vilnius provinces up to the abolition of serfdom in 1861, with focus on familyless peasants and their situation in rural communities. Our analysis allows us to state that the percentage of single individuals in nineteenth century Lithuania was small, and that for all practical purposes single farmers with land and other real estate holdings barely existed. The article claims that serfdom as an institution had no essential influence on the composition of the Lithuanian family household which was essentially governed by a particular system of inheritance. The research also offers a historical-demographic perspective on the Vaižgantas's short story.

The dataset used in this article was created from the *inventories* of the tsarist Russian empire from 1847. The inventories were created under the initiative of the tsarist administration with the aim of setting taxation rates for the landlords. In contrast to religious registers, which mostly recorded vital events (births/baptisms, marriages, deaths), these inventories covered a wider set of peasant household characteristics, including detailed information on household members, land, buildings, cattle, and other possessions of the household. The data from the inventories were entered into the data matrix using the pre-defined list of 56 variables, recording the information on the archival source, location (*ujezd*, village), personal information of the household member (name, family name, relation to the head of the household), demographics of the individual (age, gender), certain categories of peasants, number of working individuals in the household by gender, economic characteristics of the household (size of the land, meadows, marshland, homesite land, horses and cows, pigs, sheep), homesite (number of farmbuildings and residential buildings), taxes paid, and corvee in working days to the landlord. The dataset covers five districts (*ujezd*) in the former Kaunas province and four districts in the Vilnius province. Overall, the dataset used in this article covers 2,941 peasant households: 19,917 individuals from 483 villages in the former Kaunas

and Vilnius provinces (*guberniyas*). To our knowledge, this is the only dataset of this scope in Lithuania, and it thus opens up opportunities for analyzing household compositions in pre-reform Lithuania (before the tsarist emancipation reforms of 1861).³

On the basis of the data, households in this research were divided into five main types.

The first type: *simple household*, i.e., a household comprised of a married couple (or a widower/widow) and their children, in other words, a nuclear family.

The second type: *extended household*. This household consisted of one nuclear family (with or without children) and single relatives residing with them. Typically, these relatives were either siblings or relatives of an older generation (aunts, uncles, etc.) of the heads of the household.

The third type: *multiple household*, whereby more than one nuclear family lived within the same household. The fourth type was the *solitary household*, consisting of only one person. The fifth type: *non-family household* was comprised of siblings or other relatives who were not related by marriage. These were separate individuals living under one roof.

The Administration of Serfdom in the Tsarist Empire

In 1795, when Lithuania was incorporated into the tsarist empire, the total population of serfs in Russia was comprised of approximately 10.5 million males.⁴ Although the peasants of Vilnius and Kaunas provinces were thus governed by the same institution of tsarist serfdom, their family households were not identical to those of the central provinces of the empire because

³ The initial dataset collection was developed within the framework of the international Mosaic project which was supported and coordinated by the Max Planck Institute for Demographic Research (MPIDR) in Rostock in 2011–2012. The procedures of random sampling were applied to collect data at the State History Archive of Lithuania.

⁴ Hoch, *Serfdom and Social Control in Russia. Petrovskoe, A Village in Tambov*, 2.

serfdom and land management were administered differently in the central and western provinces of the empire (Lithuania belonged to the western provinces). The duty of the central Russian serf/village communes (*obschchina/mir*) was to periodically re-divide the size of land among households in accordance with numbers of actual working hands. The Russian village communes were responsible for delivering appropriate numbers of soldiers to the tsar's army, sharing the harvest amongst households, and paying taxes by the serf/village commune, not by separate individual households.⁵ In contrast, in the Vilnius and Kaunas provinces, land which had been cultivated by serfs for their own purposes belonged to individual households and was passed down from generation to generation (dividing informally or buying additional land if possible). This factor allowed Lithuanian serfs to avoid communal management of land and property as well as living in complex households. In the Russian rural areas, married sons traditionally remained on their father's farmsteads, thus, by definition rendering their households complex. If the farmstead would become too large, division became the responsibility of the head of the household (*bolshak*) and with the consent of the village commune (*obshina*). Households in the Russian rural areas were passed onto new heads of household only after the death of the *bolshak*, and change in ownership was not associated with redistribution of land/property and household. In the rural areas of central Russia, efforts were made to keep as many working-age male and female units (*tiagla*) in one household as possible because the allocation of land and distribution of products and other resources depended on the size of the household and the number of working hands.⁶ As a result (despite some varieties), multiple households prevailed

⁵ Worobec, *Peasant Russia. Family and Community in the Post-emancipation Period*, 47, 21; Hoch, *Serfdom and Social Control in Russia. Petrovskoe, A Village in Tambov*, 134.

⁶ Bush, *Serfdom and Slavery. Studies in Legal Bondage*, 315.

in Russian village communes. In 1830, in the village of Manuilovskoe, for example, 67.7 percent of households were multiple and multi-generational.⁷ Different conditions of the emancipation of the peasantry in tsarist Baltic provinces (Estland, Livland and Courland) also had a major impact on maintaining large multiple and extended households.⁸ The serfs of the Baltic provinces were freed but landless by virtue of abolition proclamations 1816–1819, and thus for many decades they remained tied to the landlord's estate even under worse conditions than under serfdom and were forced to stay in farmsteads in order to ensure a sufficient number of farmhands to pay for the land rent and ensure survival. As a result, in the Baltic provinces, quite large and often multiple households still remained after serfdom had been abolished. Andrejs Plakans' data shows that after the abolition of serfdom in Courland (current-day Latvia), the average household in the rural areas was made up of approximately fourteen individuals.⁹

The opposite, in the Kaunas and Vilnius provinces, where households sought (and were not restricted by landlords) to enlarge the land itself, not the number of people living in the household. Traditionally in Lithuania, well before the abolition of serfdom, the land was informally passed on to a single heir or divided equally among inheritors, thus forming separate simple, multiple or extended households. The descriptive statistics based on the 1847 demographic data uncovered that two dominant types of households, i.e., simple and multiple, prevailed in the Vilnius and Kaunas provinces. Overall in the Kaunas and Vilnius provinces, a slightly larger group consisted of simple households (36.2 percent). 34.4 percent were multiple, and 21.3 percent were extended households as can be seen in Table 1.

⁷ Pola, "Family Systems in Central Russia in the 1830s and 1890s," 39.

⁸ Kaljundi and Plath, "Serfdom as entanglement: narratives of a social phenomenon in Baltic history writing," 349.

⁹ Plakans, "The Familial Contexts of Early Childhood in Baltic Serf Society," 205.

Table 1. *Household Structures in Lithuania: Total and by Provinces, Percentages.* Descriptive statistics is based on data collected from the inventories of the tsarist Russian Empire from 1847. The State History Archive of Lithuania.

Household type	Vilnius and Kaunas provinces	Vilnius province	Kaunas province
Simple	36.2	36.6	35.7
Extended	21.3	18.1	24.3
Multiple	34.4	39.4	29.8
Solitary	4.5	3.2	5.6
Non-family	2.5	1.1	3.8
Not-identified	1.1	1.6	0.8
<i>Total</i>	100	100	100

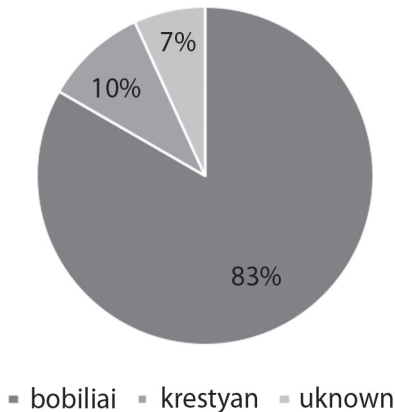
Our research uncovered that single peasants comprised a very small group in Lithuanian rural communities in the middle of the nineteenth century. Single never married individuals could be found in extended households, solitary and non-family households in Lithuania in 1847.¹⁰

Portrait of the Single Individual

Descriptive statistics based on the demographic data reveal that only a small percentage of single individuals had been reported in the 1847 survey. Among 2,941 households, the survey records 131 solitary households, which comprised 4.5 percent of all households in the research. Notably, the 131 heads of the solitary

¹⁰ The universal pattern of marriages also prevailed in central Russia. In 1832, approximately 85 percent of young women in the Russian village of Voshchazhnikov married by age 20, and 95 percent of men in the same village married before their thirtieth birthday, see Pola, "Family systems in central Russia in the 1830s and 1890s," 39.

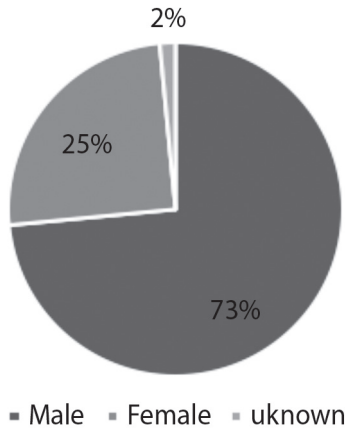
Graphic 1. *Heads of Solitary Households by Social Groups of Peasants, Percentages.* Data collected from the inventories of the tsarist Russian empire from 1847. The State History Archive of Lithuania.



households comprised only 0.66 percent of the 19,917 individuals in the survey. The research also uncovered that 83 percent of all heads of solitary households consisted of so-called *bobiliai*, peasants who had no allocated land nor property in their possession. 10 percent of solitary households were headed by peasants without an indication about land they cultivated or property in possession, while 7 percent of heads of solitary households were not associated with any peasant category (*unknown*). (Graphic 1.)

A portion of single individuals living in solitary households and not included in any specific peasant category as well as peasants without any indication of ownership, might have been so called *free people* (*laisvieji žmonės*). The dearth of information in the inventories about different peasant categories is not accidental. On the one hand, there was no such category as *free people* in central Russian villages. And when the surveys were conducted, tsarist civil servants characterized this category in their inventories in the general term they were accustomed to: 'peasant'. On the other hand, as the reform was approaching after the abolition of serfdom in 1861, the landowners sought to

Graphic 2. *Heads of Solitary Households by Sex, Percentages.* Data collected from the inventories of the tsarist Russian empire from 1847. The State History Archive of Lithuania.



avoid precise references in official documents to the lands that had been assigned to peasants and which were cultivated by them. This was particularly significant with reference to the *free people*, who were added informally and arbitrarily to the category of serfs. For this reason, of 105,000 *free people* in 1795, fewer than 33,000 men remained in 1858. The majority of *free people* lived in the Kaunas province, in Samogitia (Žemaitija).¹¹

In traditional rural societies, men were more likely to become head of a solitary household. Accordingly, in 1847, in the Kaunas and Vilnius provinces, 73 percent of solitary households were led by men and 25 percent by women. (Graphic 2.)

The average age of heads of solitary households was 36.7, with the mean age of 35.4 for men, and 38.9 for women. It is notable that young adults between the ages of 16–32 comprised the largest group of solitary households. There were 28 individuals marked as heads of solitary households under the age of 18, and their marital status was indicated as “never married.”

¹¹ Tarvydienė, *Žemėtvarkos pagrindai*, 58.

On average, heads of solitary households were younger than heads of households of any other category. The average age of heads of simple (nuclear) households was 42.9, respectively; that of extended households was 39.4; and that of multiple households was 43.6. Thus, the members of solitary households were, on average, seven (6.9 years) years younger than heads of households of extended family households, six (6.2 years) years younger than heads of simple households and more than two years younger (2.7 years) than heads of multiple households. We can assume that for some single men and women, solitary households were transitional to their future marriages. On the other hand, a portion of peasants who had neither land allocated to them nor property in their possession, the so-called *bobiliai*, remained unmarried. For instance, the *bobiliai* as a category of peasants, rarely settled down as part of an extended household. According to our research, *bobiliai* made up only 5 percent among all extended households (32 households out of all the 625 extended family households). During the period under study, the majority of single individuals living in solitary households were found in the Panevėžys, Zarasai and Vilnius provinces. For this reason, solitary households on average made up a greater percentage (5.6 percent) in the Kaunas province compared to the average of both provinces. (Table 1).

Another category of single, unwed men and women in the middle of the nineteenth century Lithuania was found among extended households, which were made up of the nuclear family along with the unwed brother, sister and/or other relatives of an elder generation of the heads of a household. It was important within the confines of this research to determine how many single individuals of marriageable age lived in their married siblings' households. Compared to the entire population of extended households (not as a percentage), the number of single individuals living within the households of their married siblings in the Kaunas province was three times greater than in the Vilnius province. However, regardless of the different geographical distribution, the model itself depicting instances of unmarried

Table 2. *Single Individuals in Extended Households by Age Groups and Their Relation to Household Owners, Percentage.* Data collected from the inventories of the tsarist Russian Empire from 1847. The State History Archive of Lithuania.

Provinces	Single siblings 15 years of age and older		Single siblings 20 years of age and older		Single siblings 30 years of age and older	
	Hus- band's sib- lings	Wife's sib- lings	Hus- band's sib- lings	Wife's sib- lings	Hus- band's sib- lings	Wife's sib- lings
Kaunas	11.4	0.4	9.1	0.8	4.5	0.2
Vilnius	10.9	1.0	7.8	1.7	2.0	0.2
Total in Kaunas & Vilnius	11.2	0.6	8.6	1.2	3.5	0.2

siblings giving up their share of the farm and residing in their married sibling's household was identical in both Kaunas and Vilnius provinces. In addition, the analysis of data about households in 1847 indicates that, in both provinces, the distribution of unwed brothers/sisters living within their married siblings' households depended on their direct kinship with the heads of the households, i.e., it was by far more frequent to encounter unwed brothers or sisters living in their married brother's household than in their married sister's extended household. Indeed, this is a specific observation never before articulated or examined in Lithuanian scholarly literature. (Table 2).

The distribution of single brothers/sisters within their married brothers'/sisters' extended households differed by age group. In 11.8 percent of extended households of the Kaunas and Vilnius provinces, the brothers/sisters of the head of the household were 15 years of age and older; and respectively, in 9.8 percent of extended households the brothers/sisters living in the home of the head of the household were 20 and older. The percentage of

unwed brothers/sisters over the age of 30 in both provinces was recorded at approximately half that number (less than 3.7 percent). It is notable that unlike the number of brothers or sisters of the male head of household, the number of his wife's single sisters and brothers was stable and practically did not differ within every age group. (Table 2).

The life of adult single brothers and sisters within the extended household of their married brother/sister was marked by the milestone of the death of one parent (or poor health), after which the farm would be inherited by the son/daughter along with their siblings' share of land until these married and separated to form their own families. However the life strategies of the time indicate that if marriage and inheritance did not coincide, brothers and sisters would have informally transferred their part of the inheritance when they moved in with their brother's/sister's family and quite frequently the inheritance and the social status associated with it would be forfeited. In violation of the simultaneous exchange of land/financial compensation and marriage, single adult children would be left without their share although the debt would be remembered for the rest of their lives. After the abolition of serfdom, the tsarist administration legally recognized the ownership of the serfs' plots of land that they had cultivated before 1861. For this reason, the brother/sister who had not separated from their family automatically became part of the household holdings *de jure*. If/when they would ultimately leave the household upon marriage, they would do so having lost ownership of their share of the land, thus forced into the category of landless *kampininkai* or *bobiliai*. Or, they would remain in their brother's/sister's household as eternal hired hands. An unenviable fate more than likely awaited these individuals in their old age.

Twenty-two million men, women and children of the peasantry and approximately 100,000 estates were impacted by the abolishment of serfdom in the Russian Empire in 1861.¹² After

¹² Moon, *The Abolition of Serfdom in Russia, 1762–1907*, 3.

the abolition, the peasants of the Right Bank of Ukraine received land according to the inventories of 1847–48. Meanwhile, in Vilnius and Kaunas provinces, peasants received land which they had worked until the abolition of serfdom. In addition, after the abolition of serfdom, peasants in both provinces received approximately 24 percent more land than they previously held and were allowed to buy it at the market price, unlike the peasants of central Russia and the Left Bank of Ukraine who paid for land at rates approximately 47 percent higher than the market price.¹³ As a result, in post-emancipation Lithuania, extended households had a much better chance of retaining their wealth since they left serfdom under much more favorable conditions, i.e., possessing bigger plots of farmland, more domestic animals, and more farm buildings. To a great extent, the economic situation of extended households improved as they benefited from the possessed land as well as unpaid work of their unmarried brothers/sisters or other single relatives living in their households. Vaižgantas's Mykoliukas, remaining at his married brother's homestead would never find an opportunity to reclaim his part of the family inheritance:

And so Mykoliukas Šiukšta eventually became an "uncle", that ancient family work horse who plows, harrows, does everything needed in the household, like a hired hand, an indispensable part of the household inventory without which the farm would not survive and the head of the household would have to go out and beg.

Rapolas (the husband of Mykoliukas's love interest Severiutė), who had been the steward of the manor, also knew perfectly well that the parcel of land which was managed by his brother until the abolition of serfdom, belonged to him as well. But Rapolas Geišė too never got his share of the land returned to him:

The Geišė family were outside in the yard sitting on their hope chest stunned, not uttering a single word to object: they felt that

¹³ Moon, *The Abolition of Serfdom in Russia, 1762–1907*, 75, 107.

this was unjust, they had not done anything to deserve this, and there wasn't enough to eat, and certainly not enough room. But where would they go? They sat there until evening. Their little girl began to cry. They felt like crying too. Finally Rapolas could take no more. He came back to life when Dovydas started jumping at him a bit too closely, and so he shot back:

Shut up, idiot! I can see how things look myself. I can leave if I want to. Just remember that the land (*valakas*) belongs to both of us and if I leave, I will take my part of it, even if you have buildings built on it.

The Lithuanian Inheritance System in Rural Community

Vaižgantas's literary figures and their fates accurately reflect the traditional system of Lithuanian inheritance. In the middle of the nineteenth century Lithuanian rural communities, only married family life was acceptable as holding meaningful value. Single individuals were outcasts who existed outside the traditional family as a marginalized group and did not fully and meaningfully participate in village social life.¹⁴ Analysis of the 1847 dataset attests to the fact that in the rural communities in the Kaunas and Vilnius provinces, single unwed individuals made up on average approximately 3.3–4.9 percent of the population. These individuals lived in solitary households, non-family households or in the extended households of their married siblings. After having forfeited their social status and losing their part of the inheritance, single sisters and brothers entered into "kampininkai" and "bobiliai" categories.

Social pressure was commonly felt not only by unmarried brothers and sisters of landed peasants but also by widows and widowers with small children who had not entered into new

¹⁴ Leinarte, *The Lithuanian Family in its European Context, 1800–1914. Marriage, Divorce and Flexible Communities*, 41–130.

marital relationships. The premature death of a spouse could destroy the socially acceptable traditional nineteenth-century family and destabilize the widow(er)'s status in the village community. A farm suddenly left without one of its masters would unavoidably fail, since the full complement of farm tasks required the "hands" of both a man and a woman. In the reports of parish priests of the Kaunas province (*guberniya*) to the Samogitian bishop, widowers were described as serfs incapable of adequately managing a farm. In many cases, widows/widowers would rescue their standing in their family relationship and status in society by marrying their brothers/sisters-in-law. Otherwise, they would risk poverty by not being able to manage the farm alone. Lithuanian widows often married the brother of the deceased (*the levirate*) in order to ensure the line of heirs. Upon the death of the wife of the head of the household, the head of the household could marry his wife's sister (*the sororate*). In nineteenth century Lithuania, this practice occurred when the widower was unable to return to his deceased wife's family the dowry that she had brought to the marriage. In these cases, the sister would "replace" the deceased sister without having to pay any additional or new dowry.

Historically, European peasant marriages and inheritance were most often determined by practical calculations that ensured the continuation of the household. The same was true in Lithuanian peasant families: marriage considerations were not determined by children's individual desires and decisions, and well into the nineteenth century were endogamous. Until 1865, on average 85 percent of Catholics in Kaunas province selected their marriage partner from within the immediate vicinity, i.e., within their own parish. In other years, this percentage was even greater: in 1845, it was 87%; in 1865, 90% of families were endogamous. In 1835, "foreign" brides or grooms came from distances no greater than 2.9 kilometers. From 1835 to 1865, on average only 15 percent of Catholics married outside their parish. However, in every case, in the first part of the nineteenth centu-

ry in Lithuanian rural areas, marriage partners were found from within no more than a 2.9 kilometer radius.¹⁵

Inheritance schemes in Lithuania as in other European rural communities were comprised of a complex set of civil and customary norms and laws, which had different lasting impact on single unmarried siblings. Land and household division took place in the southwest provinces of Germany, where, according to tradition, a system of partible inheritance was prevalent. Partible inheritance in Spain was established through the Napoleonic Code in 1804, but Basque village traditions differed from the provisions of the civil code and Basque communities continued to informally practice an impartible system of inheritance. Within Basque villages in the Pyrenees, families engaged in various illegal practices in order to preserve the tradition of handing down the farm and homestead to a single primary heir. Often, the death of both parents was required before the farm could be inherited and the remaining siblings could be paid their share of the inheritance.¹⁶ Meanwhile, in Sweden, sons inherited twice as much as daughters. However, although partible inheritance was legally guaranteed to both sexes in Sweden in 1845, sons traditionally maintained the right to land, while their sisters were paid financial compensations.¹⁷ In Portugal, partible inheritance was established by law, but in 1867, the civil code forbade the handing down of inheritance to a single heir. Regardless of the law, in some Portuguese provinces (namely, Minho province), impartible inheritance was practiced via various informal methods, most often forcing sisters and brothers to accept their inheritance in money.¹⁸ In Romania, impartible inheritance was the norm, remaining children were paid compensations and the

¹⁵ Leinarte, *The Lithuanian Family in its European Context, 1800–1914. Marriage, Divorce and Flexible Communities*, 41–130.

¹⁶ Arrizabalaga, *Marriage, Strategies and Well-Being Among 19th Century Basque Family Property Owners*, 53–56.

¹⁷ Dribe, *Leaving Home in a Peasant Society. Economic Fluctuations, Household Dynamics and Youth Migration in Southern Sweden, 1829–1866*, 69.

¹⁸ Duraes, *Providing Well-Being to Women through Inheritance and Succession*, 223–224.

primary heir would live in a stem-type family.¹⁹ In Finland, a stem-type family system – in which one child would remain in the parental home after marriage – meant that younger brothers and sisters would leave their family homes, taking compensations with them. However, as in Western European stem-type families, the doors to their parents' homes remained open to children who after marriage encountered misfortunes and thus had become single again.²⁰ There were instances among stem families in Northern France too in which a single sister or brother would assist in managing the farm and would live together with the family after the death of the head of the household.²¹

In tsarist central Russian rural areas, marriage and inheritance were not associated with the division of property and wealth. In other words, marriage, inheritance of land, and household division were not one synchronous event. In Russian rural areas, the land belonged to the entire community (*obshchina*), and not to one single family household (*dvor*). Thus, a new family did not create a new household, but rather a new work unit (*tiaglo*). This is precisely why the groom's dowry (*kladka*) was a financial compensation to the family of the bride, who would lose a worker. Between 1813 and 1827, in the village of Petrovskoe, there were 68 marriages, with 14 of them a second marriage, but during this period, only one new household was produced from among 5.7 first-time marriages. Married sons remained in their parents' households, which on average were made up of 6–14 individuals. In the absence of sons, the parents' households would be handed down to their daughter's husband. The system in Russian villages was called male partible division.²² In Lithuania, on the

¹⁹ Kaser, "Power and Inheritance. Male Domination, Property, and Family in Eastern Europe, 1500–1900," 338.

²⁰ Moring, *Men, Women and Property in Finland and Sweden in the 18th and 19th Centuries*, 278.

²¹ Fauve-Chamoux, *The Stem Family and the Picardy-Wallonia Model*, 228.

²² Hoch, *Serfdom and Social Control in Russia. Petrovskoe, A Village in Tambov*, 116, 96, 109, 84; Worobec, *Peasant Russia. Family and Community in the Post-emancipation Period*, 43.

other hand, the bride's share (*dalis*) which was brought to the husband's home, would guarantee equal material exchanges and the creation of a new household.

The abolition of serfdom in 1861 had not changed the essence of the inheritance system in Lithuanian rural communities. In the traditional village, marriage and change of ownership of the farm formed one unified synchronous event. If there were several sons in one family, at least one of them would ideally be educated in hopes that the son would become a clergyman or doctor and naturally leave the parents' farm – this was also the practice in other peasant communities. The value of the daughter's financial share (*dalis*) was precisely matched to the land worth of her future husband. In other words, land was exchanged for women's financial compensation or other wealth at the time of the wedding. When the daughter became inheritor of the land, her husband (*užkuryys*) would enter into the family under the above-mentioned conditions. As scholars have observed, this system of partible inheritance in essence guaranteed children the opportunity to maintain an equal social status (this however did not apply to unwed daughters and sons). Thus, the parents' household and land would often be inherited by one primary heir. If division of land occurred, the primary heir would remain in the parents' household while the second heir would typically build a separate one with isolated buildings. Although the land was inevitably sliced into smaller plots, this process was mitigated and attenuated through the purchasing of new additional parcels of land and the mass migration of peasants (mostly men) to the United States. 252,594 Lithuanian emigrated to the United States between 1899 and 1914.

Conclusions

Inheritance and the change of ownership of the head of the household is one of the most complex issues for scholars of

historical demography and family history. These practices within Western European societies have been sufficiently analyzed, but demographic data about household composition and models of their exchange in Eastern European countries, including Lithuania, barely exist. As such, there are more studies in the historiography on nineteenth century household structures and their typologies in Eastern Europe, than on composition within the household. This article for the first time in the historiography presents an analysis of demographic data about the composition of households in the middle of nineteenth century Lithuania, specifically Kaunas and Vilnius provinces, with a focus on identifying the category of single, unmarried individuals and examining their possible life strategies in village communities. The analysis of 1847 data shows that within the Kaunas and Vilnius provinces, single unwed individuals comprised, on average, approximately 3.3–4.9 percent of the population. These individuals lived in solitary households, non-family households and/or within their married brothers' or sisters' extended households. Having forfeited their social status, single individuals could potentially enter into the categories of *kampininkai* or *bobiliai*. In some Western European countries, for example, Finland and France, the eldest son traditionally inherited the household and land, but the remaining brothers and sisters could always expect to find sanctuary in the heir's (their sibling's) household with the option of helping out on the farm after encountering misfortune and being forced to return home. Theoretically, such a scenario was also possible in the middle of the nineteenth century Lithuanian village, but historical demographic data and their analysis, as well as Vaižgantas's fictional characters in "Uncles and Aunts" indicate that in such cases single sisters and brothers were losing their social status and being reduced to hired hands.

This article is part of the project which has received funding from the Research Council of Lithuania (LMTLT), agreement No S-MIP-21-29.

Works Cited

- ARRIZABALAGA, MARIE-PIERRE. "Marriage Strategies and Well-Being Among 19th Century Basque Family Property Owners." In *The Transmission of Well-being. Gendered Marriage Strategies and Inheritance Systems in Europe (17th–20th Centuries)*, ed. Margarita Duraes, Antoinette Fauve-Chamoux, Llorenc, Ferrer & Jan Kok. Bern, Berlin, Bruxelles: Peter Lang, 2009.
- DRIBE, MARTIN. *Leaving Home in a Peasant Society. Economic Fluctuations, Household Dynamics and Youth Migration in Southern Sweden, 1829–1866*. Lund: Almqvist & Wiksell International, 2000.
- DURAES, MARGARITA. "Providing Well-Being to Women through Inheritance and Succession." In *The Transmission of Well-being. Gendered Marriage Strategies and Inheritance Systems in Europe (17th–20th Centuries)*, ed. Margarita Duraes, Antoinette Fauve-Chamoux, Llorenc, Ferrer & Jan Kok. Bern, Berlin, Bruxelles: Peter Lang, 2009.
- FAUVE-CHAMOUX, ANTOINETTE. "The Stem Family and the Picardy-Wallonia Model." In *The Stem Family in Eurasian Perspective. Revisiting House Societies, 17th–20th centuries*, ed. Antoinette Fauve-Chamoux, Emiko Ochiai. Bern, Berlin, Bruxelles: Peter Lang, 2009.
- HAJNAL, JOHN. "Two Kinds of Preindustrial Household Formation Systems," *Population and Development Review*, vol. 8, no. 3, September, 1982.
- HOCH, L. STEPHEN. *Serfdom and Social Control in Russia. Petrovskoe, A Village in Tambov*. Chicago, London: The University of Chicago Press, 1986.
- KALJUNDI, LINDA and PLATH, ULRIKE. "Serfdom as entanglement: narratives of a social phenomenon in Baltic history writing," *Journal of Baltic Studies*, vol. 51, no. 3, 2020.
- KASER, KARL. "Power and Inheritance. Male Domination, Property, and Family in Eastern Europe, 1500 – 1900," *The History of the Family*, no. 7, 2002.
- LEINARTE, DALIA. *The Lithuanian Family in its European Context, 1800–1914. Marriage, Divorce and Flexible Communities*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017.

- MATTI, POLA. "Family Systems in Central Russia in the 1830s and 1890s," *The History of the Family* 11, 2006.
- MOON, DAVID. *The Abolition of Serfdom in Russia, 1762–1907*. London, New York: Longman, 2001.
- MORING, BEATRICE. "Men, Women and Property in Finland and Sweden in the 18th and 19th Centuries." In *The Transmission of Well-being. Gendered Marriage Strategies and Inheritance Systems in Europe (17th–20th Centuries)*, ed. Margarita Duraes, Antoinette Fauve-Chamoux, Llorenç Ferrer & Jan Kok. Bern, Berlin, Bruxelles: Peter Lang, 2009.
- PLAKANS, ANDREJS. "The Familial Contexts of Early Childhood in Baltic Serf Society." In *Family Forms in Historic Europe*, ed. Richard Wall, Jean Robin, Peter Laslett. Cambridge, New York, London: Cambridge University Press, 1983.
- POLLOCK, LINDA. "'An Action Like a Stratagem'. Courtship and Marriage From the Middle Ages to the Twentieth Century," *The Historical Journal*, vol. 39, no. 2, 1987.
- Serfdom and Slavery. Studies in Legal Bondage*. M.L. Bush (ed.). London, New York: Longman, 1996.
- TARVYDIENĖ, MARYTĖ ELENA. *Žemėtvarkos pagrindai* (Fundamentals of Land Management). Kaunas: Akademija, 2007.
- WOROBEC, D. CHRISTINE. *Peasant Russia. Family and Community in the Post-emancipation Period*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1991.