Kėdainiai Germans' Names in 17th–18th Centuries

Alma Ragauskaitė Institute of the Lithuanian Language https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5952-8027 alma.ragauskaite@lki.lt

Abstract: This article discusses the naming of German nationals recorded in historical documents of the largest Kėdainiai of the 16th–18th centuries, reflecting the unique characteristics of this anthroponymic system. Notably, a portion of German men have two given names and a surname.

Keywords: Lithuania; city; Germans; historical anthroponymy; historical personal name.

In the past, in Lithuania, Vilnius and Kaunas hosted the largest German Lutheran communities (Ragauskaitė, 2005: 23–25). Vilnius had the most German townspeople in the second half of the 16th century, and its Lutheran community enjoyed a true "golden age" in the first half of the 17th century. The community's elite was dominated by wealthy and educated German artisans, lawyers, pharmacists, merchants, and medical doctors. The 16th–17th centuries saw German city officials, burgomasters, and influential and wealthy families. Surnames of German origin were also observed among them, i.e., *Kinder, Kringel, Kurt, Lampart, Minder, Ulrich* (Zinkevičius, 1977: 62–64). As a result of Polonisation, Counter-Reformation and decreased immigration, the number of Germans in Vilnius started dropping in the middle of the 17th century and reached its minimum in the second half of the century (Ragauskaitė, 2022: 65–66).

In about 1629, Kristupas Radvila¹ invited Germans (artisans and merchants) to come to the town of Kėdainiai² (Ragauskaitė, 2018: 175). Eighty houses of these settlers were already counted in 1630. A Lutheran pastor was invited to Kėdainiai from Prussia. After the passing of Kristupas Radvila in 1640, his widow Ona Kiškaitė-Radvilienė released them from taxes for at least ten years. She

¹ Kristupas Radvila (1585–1640) was a Polish-Lithuanian noble, and a notable magnate, politician and military commander (Ragauskaitė, 2018: 175).

² Kėdainiai is one of the oldest cities in Lithuania. It is located in central Lithuania, known for its rich cultural and religious heritage (Ragauskaitė, 2022: 23–24).

named the new part of the town *Jonušava* in honour of her son Jonušas Radvila. In 1590–1795, Kėdainiai magistrate officials had 18 Germans (8 %) (Ragauskaitė, 2016: 114). This part of town maintained its self-government until 1795, when Lithuania was taken over by Russian Empire. About 300 German naming cases of Kėdainiai residents were selected from Kėdainiai historical sources of the 17th–18th centuries. Since the end of the third decade of the 17th century, German nationals coming to Kėdainiai already had surnames, yet their recording was varied, e.g., 1684 *Piotr Lambart*, 1604 *jakub Meier*, 1641 *Jerzy Reth*, 1641 *Frydericus Starckius*, 1666 *Frydrich Wegner*; 1794 *Jan Ferdorf*, 1760 *Filip Hirchner*, 1783 *Daniel Hoff*, 1783 *Wilhelm Luter*, 1774 *Piotr Rittberger*.

Christian names of German origin were usually taken from German saints. Most frequently, they were Latinised forms of old German two-stem personal names that spread throughout Europe. They also reached Lithuania, most of the times, through Slavic languages and, less often, directly. The tradition of two Christian names is also characteristic of the Kėdainiai German naming system of the 18th century (also see Ragauskaitė, 2016: 116), e.g., 1774 Johan Godfryd Adank, 1768 Jan Bernard Cimerman, 1797 Iohan Goffried Eckman, 1796 Marcin Henryk Fahrenholtz, 1794 Jan Fryderych Haff, 1794 Jan Frydrych Henckendorf, 1743 Ian Frydrych Kiroff, 1776 Jan Gotlib Kop, 1722 Jan Fryderych Kuba, 1783 Johan Gabriel Lide, 1750 Carol Gonther Plec.

German Lutheran community of the 16th–18th centuries was relatively secluded. The following essential aspects of the Lutheran subculture are clearly accentuated: foreignness (specifically, Germanness), the predominance of the laity over the clergy, and distinct lifestyle, customs and style. In Lithuania, Germans also resided in other towns, e.g., Biržai, Skuodas, Tauragė, Virbalis (Ragauskaitė, 2022: 71). The aforementioned ideas about the Kėdainiai Germans' naming and their surnames' recording of the 17th–18th centuries add to other previously performed research of German origin surnames in the largest Lithuanian cities (Kaunas and Vilnius) of the 16th–18th centuries.

Appendices

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Figure 1: Kėdainiai register book of 1783–1792, fragment dated 1790 (p. 152)

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Figure 2: Kėdainiai register book of 1794–1798, fragment dated 1796 (p. 87)

Recebido em 05/08/2023 Aceito em 21/08/2023 Publicado em 21/08/2023

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