

Kėdainiai Germans' Names in 17th–18th Centuries

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Abstract: This article discusses the naming of German nationals recorded in historical documents of the largest Kėdainiai of the 16th–18th centuries, reflecting the unique characteristics of this anthroponymic system.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 Lambert*, 1604 *jakub Meier*, 1641 *Jerzy Reth*, 1641 *Frydericus Starckius*, 1666 *Frydrich Wegner*; 1794 *Jan Ferdorf*, 1760 *Filip Hirschner*, 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

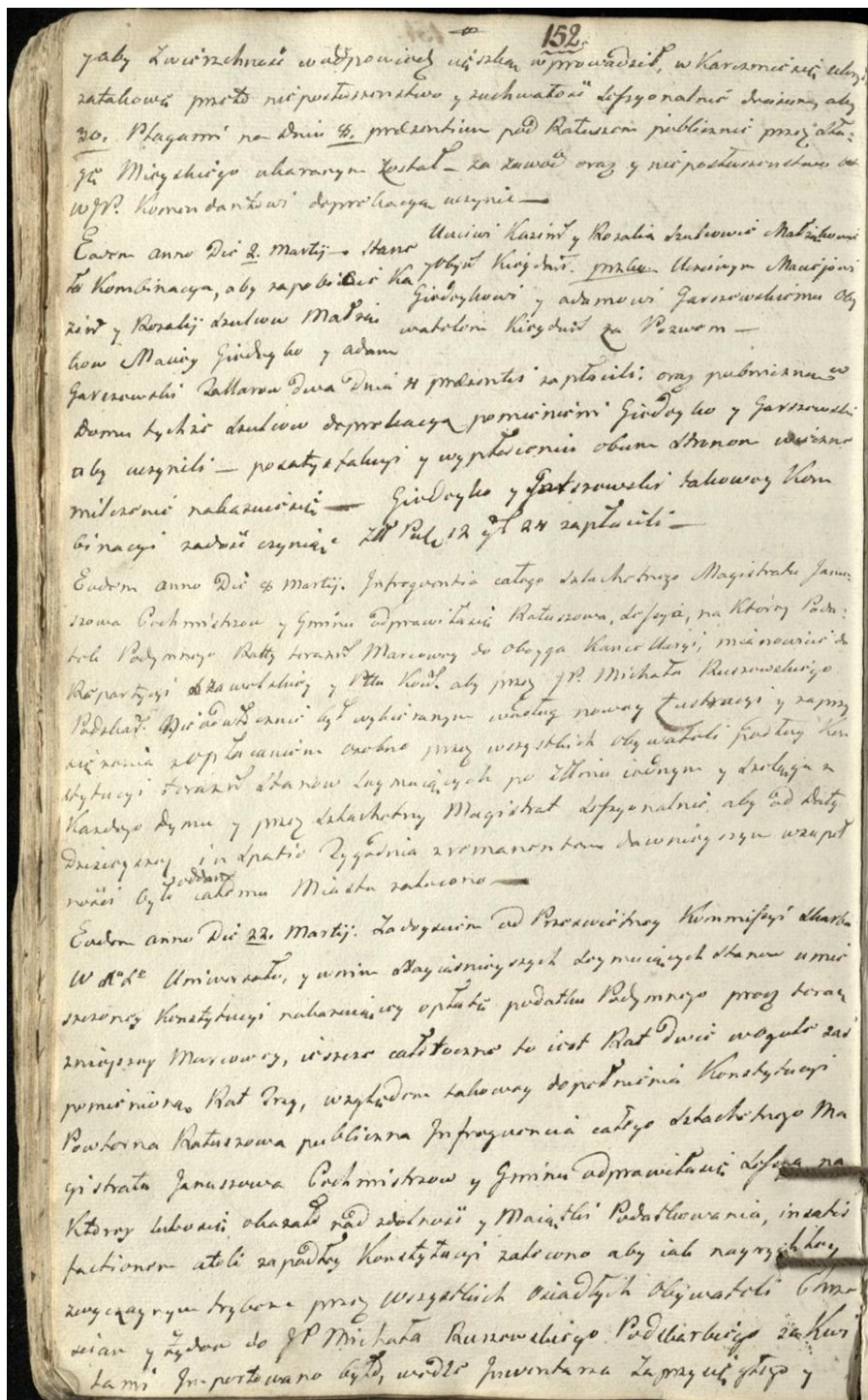


Figure 1: Kėdainiai register book of 1783–1792, fragment dated 1790 (p. 152)

Dambrowskiego y Jafuba Esmana 0066: Michał Kiedan - Chrystyan
 an y Kateryna Preysowice Obwatele Kowieny, Johan Potlick y Anna
 Luksanowa Sudowicze Kapelnyymi Kowieno Kowieno y Corli ewangelical-
 ter za Johana Daniela y Anny Barbary brata y siostry przyjaciel wspany-
 kim miay, Opisanym awarunkom podlegajac świadomo czyniemy tym
 naszym wieczyto-wiecznym przedatnym prawem M. Antoniemu
 y Ewie Hoffmanom Mistrzom Kunkta Szew. Obywat. Kiedan. wydzaju
 nato: to co ja wytrzedona Eufrozyna Matykełyowa y dalzi jeno
 wie Corli bedze aktualnem: Altoram y sukcesorami Morgu gruntu
 Orowego w Polach Miayskich letzcego, takowj morg gruntu Orowego wlo-
 lach Miayskich letzcy - koncami jednymi do ulicy Jarowj, drugim do Jana
 Matyszewicz, bokami jednymi do Jafuba Esmana, drugim do jezuitycki
 przylegajacy, za summy miesz nas dobrowolnie ugodzony y calkowicie do
 naszych Kalcionz y Osobraz czerwonych Zlotych sztuk trzydziestu jeden y
 zloch dziesiec. Czyli za Jalarow siedm dziesiat po zloch dziesiec lico-
 mych - rachujac Czerwony Zloty po Zlotych dwadzieciu, tym ze 1/10
 Antoniemu y Ewie Hoffmanom Matkom y sukcesorom ich na wieczne
 Czasz przedalimy, odstapilimy, Altorstwa naszego na osoby ich zrzekli-
 mysz y janygodzynie inthronowac sie pozwolimy - z mocy wiez tego na-
 szego wieczyto-wiecznego Prawa pommemi M. Hoffmanowc takow-
 wym morgim gruntu odtyd iak swojz własnosz rzedzi, dysponowac, me-
 dac zastawic zamienic darowac y janygodzynie pozytkowi swojemu obro-
 cić macisz y wolni - w przypadku naruszenia miesz nas lub sukcesorow
 naszych tego naszego wieczyto-wiecznego Prawa Zarzki wafnosz
 rzeczy wynozzce zahtadamy, y od kazdego turbatora ewinkowac y usz-
 kie Kowderowe zastepowac wydatki Stowizniamy sie y uszczamy -
 w Dowodzie to nasze wieczyto-wieczne przedatne Prawo przy sugadzi-
 twie M. Pieczarzow własnem Matho Liczowic y Corli podpyskie-
 my Pyskami - Dnia to sie w Mieście Kiedanach Roku Pysig Kunkta
 Dzieni dziesiat 20 tego Meca Apryla Dwunastego Dnia - ulozy
 Prawa podpisy Altorow y Pieczarzow takowj wydatki Eufrozyna Ma-
 tykełyowa ++ Chrystyan Preys, Kateryna Preysyn ++ Johan
 Potlick

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

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