

# THE ANALYSIS OF THE LAND USE OF THE HOMESTEADS OF FORMER MANORS

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## Abstract

From the old times Lithuanian manors were the main centres of diplomacy, administration and culture. The applied land reforms, war and post-war periods and changing regimes altered the structures of the manors; their owners and users changed as well. The number of homesteads of manors and their territory highly decreased. During various periods of time more than 150 manors were present in the current territory of Panevėžys district municipality. The aim of the research is to analyse the land use of the least researched homesteads of former manors in 1923 and 2016. Six homesteads of former manors that are located in Panevėžys district have been analysed. The research has revealed that a great amount of small land lots aggravates the farming conditions and does not allow the rational land use. Certainly, this problem is solved partially by renting or selling the land to the owners of the adjacent land lots. Land consolidation would help to pass beneficial decisions for the land use. In the recent years, due to the initiatives of state institutions and individual people a fair part of homesteads of manors are being rebuilt and adjusted to the use of society.

**Keywords:** homesteads of former manors, land use.

## Introduction

Manors are a valuable part of country's history. During long centuries both Lithuanian and Latvian manors and small manors were the centres of culture, art and spiritual life as well as known for perfect architecture of the palace and parks. In specific regions several different manors, owned by the same landlord, were the sources of long-term economic growth and region prosperity that determined the advantage of a specific competitive business. The owners, structures and the territory of the manors varied during the years.

The building of traditional homesteads of manors started between the end of the 14 c. and the beginning of the 15 c. In the 16 c., Lithuania already had various types of manors: patrimonial, mother's, bought, mortgaged, rented, etc. (Kiaupienė, 2001; Sandstrom, 2011). From the 16 c. to the beginning of the 19 c. a big manor was constituted of a main homestead of the landlord, few arable lands of manors with industrial factories and peasant villages or sometimes even with little towns that belonged to the landlord. In 1861, after the abolishment of the serfdom, villages were separated from the manor. From this period only the homesteads of the landlords with a specific land lot were referred to as manors. In the second half of the 19 c. most of them became big market economy farms (Lithuanian..., 2004; Baranauskas, 2001; Vaskela, 1998). Folwarks are introduced as a separate territorial farm unit of a land lot ruled by the manor (usually a big one) that was employed for narrower and specialised farm use (Lithuanian..., 1993). After the 17-18 c. the manors destroyed in the wars were usually rebuilt or reconstructed according to the old plans, though new ones were also built. After the World War I, when the aristocracy lost their privileges, new homesteads of manors were no longer built (General..., 2004). Until 1940 there were about 4 thousand manors in Lithuania (with folwarks) (Lithuanian..., 2008). Many homesteads of manors were damaged during wars and the post-war period, while some of them rapidly declined during the Soviet period, when they were nationalised.

After the restoration of the independence, 817 manors were enlisted in the cultural heritage register; 239 that were completely decayed or did not remain were crossed out from the list. According to the data provided by the Ministry of Culture in 2008, 576 manors were enlisted in the cultural heritage registry (Lithuanian..., 2008). Majority of the homesteads of manors are in a bad shape.

“Many buildings have become ruins in our times, after the restoration of the independence. In recent years, the situation has begun to change. Some of the manor buildings have been renewed by their new owners. The revival of the manors has attracted the attention of people – manors are becoming popular objects of tourism” (Svitojus, 2016). Only about one fifth of the manors is restored and visited.

In 1992-1993, when the privatisation of the real estate started, the government passed several acts dealing with the protection of the homesteads of manors (Lithuanian..., 1992; 1993) and a list of manors that cannot be privatised was prepared. The laws regulated that natural environment and land resources should be preserved and adjusted for the use of humans (Lithuanian..., 1994b), as well as that the real estate cultural heritage should be kept since it is an authentic witness of country's and regional history or a work of art (Lithuanian..., 1994a). Specialists and representatives of state institutions thought that

the most valuable objects should remain open to the society and should be protected by the initiative and expenses of the government. According to J. Glemža (2002) and other authors (Bražaitė-Dijokienė, 2000; Riaubienė, 2003; Steponavičienė, 2001), in order to protect the homesteads of manors from the decay and to provide legal protection, it was necessary to preserve the heritage of remaining manors by providing them with the heritage status.

Personal initiatives play a big part in the restoration of the manors. Due to active people in Lithuania and Latvia more than 100 manors and castles have been restored and used for recreational purposes. The owners of these objects belong to the associations of manor and castle owners (Lithuanian..., 2016; Latvian..., 2016). In Lithuania about 100 people, that own 50 manors and castles, participate in these activities. The Latvian association connects owners of 78 manors and castles. The majority of these objects are perfect cultural centres and interesting objects for tourism.

However, not all of the former manors are advised to be restored (Levandraitytė, 2010). Though only parts or even ruins are left of some historically significant objects, in some cases it is suggested to retain them (Stulpinas, 1993). The remaining fragments of the manors can be suitably integrated into the landscape (Muceniec, 2015).

Although there is a lot of information about manors, the research on the land use conditions of manor lands is quite scarce. An analysis of the use of a few northern Lithuania homesteads of manors and buildings (Abalikštienė et al., 2008; Čirvinskienė, 2016; Žvironaitė, 2007) and an overview of the peculiarities of the territory planning of the Panemunė homesteads of manors have been carried out (Abromaitė, 2015). As currently a quite immense attention is given to the restoration and protection of manors it has been decided to analyse the least researched and described homesteads of former manors situated in Panevėžys district.

**The object of the research** is the homesteads of former manors in Panevėžys district.

**The aim of the research** is to analyse the land use of the least researched homesteads of former manors in years 1923 and 2016.

**The objectives of the research are as follows:**

1. To analyse the chosen homesteads of former manors located in Panevėžys district.
2. To estimate the influence of the land reform on the land use of homesteads of former manors.

### **Research methodology and material**

The research was carried out by applying literary sources, mathematical statistics and cartographic material methods of analysis. The data analysis was conducted by applying comparative and descriptive methods and by employing a comprehensive documentation of the object by including archival and natural research.

The land use of the manors in years 1923 and 2016 was analysed in selected manors from Panevėžys district: Jotainiai, Spirakiai, Upytė-Deblovas, Anitava, Rodai and Milešiškiai. The chosen and analysed manors are in a bad shape and decaying and only one of them is well preserved and managed. The selected ratio coincides with the situation of the analysed periods. The archival documents of the object were collected from the funds of Lithuanian Central State Archives.

During the research standard documents, scientific articles, other literary sources and statistical data collections were analysed. The archival documents collected from the Panevėžys division of State Archives allowed to determine the land lots of these homesteads of manors as well as agricultural lands and their owners. In addition, plans, obtained from the Panevėžys division of the National Land Service under the Ministry of Agriculture (further – NLS), in which the boundaries of the homestead territories of former manors were marked, were used to determine the land lots formed in these territories.

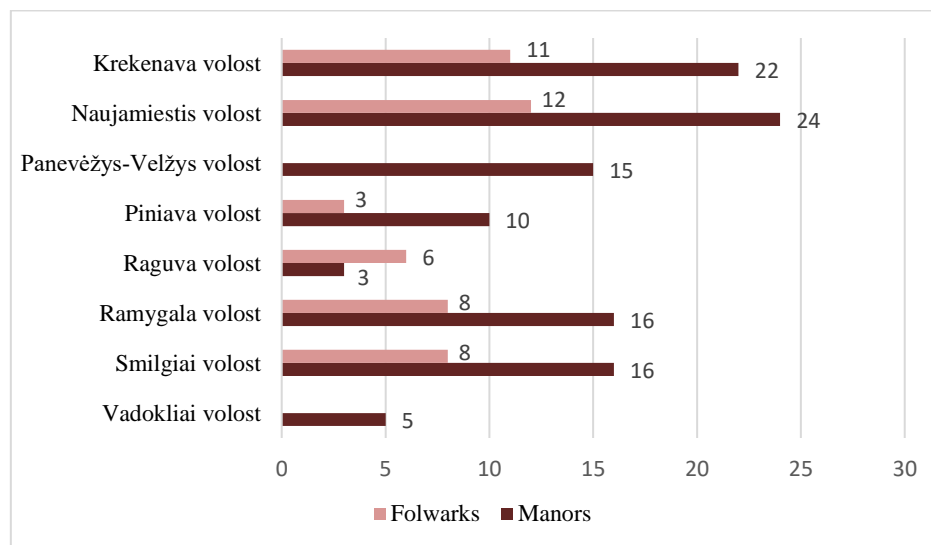
### **Results and discussion**

The preservation of manor heritage is an important objective of many countries. Both in Lithuania and Latvia, after the restoration of the independence and the 1991 land reform, homesteads of manors that have historical and cultural value became the matter of concern. The government institutions confirmed the lists of manors that cannot be privatised as well as the programmes to save these objects. The most valuable homesteads were awarded the heritage status.

According to J. Glemža (2002), the slow and quite late process of making the manors a part of the heritage determined that in northern Lithuania, according to a database (Lithuanian, 2008), 33% of the former manors were crossed out. In Panevėžys district only, 16 manors are left currently, while 159 homesteads of manors were registered during the interwar. Manors that have no remaining information about them were also crossed out. The most famous remaining manors and castles in the northern

Lithuania are: Biržai castle, homestead of Žagarė manor and Bistrampolis manor. According to the newest data, 142 manors and their homesteads are registered in the northern Lithuania. In 2008, five manors of Panevėžys district – Alančiai, Kučiai (or Bistrampolis), Naudvaris, Pamiškė (or Paliesė) and Puziniškis – were declared as protected by the state, and 11 objects of cultural heritage – fragments of homesteads of manors – were registered in the registry of cultural heritage. These numbers reveal that lots of manors decayed and collapsed not only during the Soviet period but also in the period of modern independent Lithuania, as they were not used. Thus, only 10% of the homesteads of former manors in Panevėžys district that existed till 1940, witnessed the end of the Soviet period.

The research focused on the search of the owners of the homesteads of former manors, the influence of the last land reform on the use of the territories, the changes of buildings, etc. The number of manors and folwarks, that remained until 1940, was estimated. According to the data from of the general population census of the Republic of Lithuania conducted in 1923 (Lithuanian..., 1929), 3508 manors and folwarks existed in Lithuania (Gražulis, 2007). In the current territory of Panevėžys district only 159 manors and folwarks exist (Fig. 1).

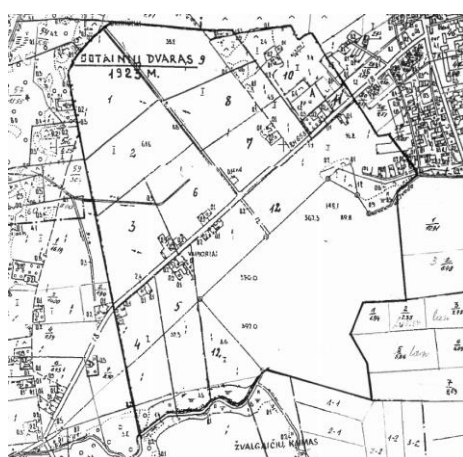


**Fig. 1.** The number of former manors and folwarks in volosts situated in the current territory of Panevėžys district

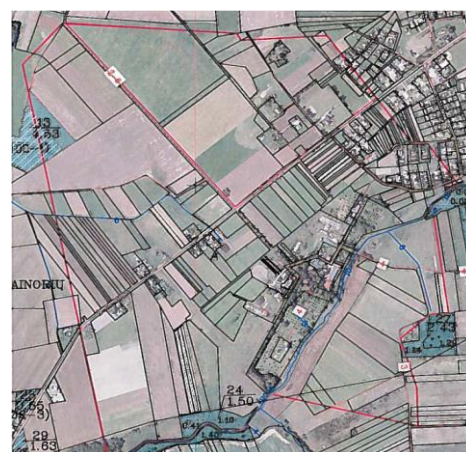
In Panevėžys district most of the manors and folwarks were concentrated in the then volosts of Naujamiestis (even 36) and Krekenava (33).

The situation has vastly changed. The territories that belonged to the manor owners started to be diminished, from 1922, already during the inter-war, by executing a land reform and by performing the parcellation of manors. The homesteads of manors were severely damaged during the war, post-war and Soviet periods. After the restoration of Lithuanian independence, a vast influence on the use of these territories was made by the land reform that was applied from 1991. Some buildings in these homesteads experienced vast damages for not having owners for a long time.

To achieve a better understanding how the land is currently used in the lands of former manors, a detailed analysis of six objects was carried out. Homesteads of former manors, that were selected for this analysis (Jotainiai, Spirakiai, Upytė-Deblovas, Anitava, Rodai and Milešiškiai), can be distinguished by their quite big territories, varying from 41 to 384 ha. Information provided in the written sources about the majority of the homesteads dates only from the 18 c. to 19 c. The first mentioned homesteads are Rodai manor (15 c.) and homestead of Jotainiai manor (16 c.). Jotainiai manor is the only analysed manor, that is currently enlisted in the database of Lithuanian manors and is established as protected by the state. Jotainiai manor was mentioned for the first time in 1564. From the 19 c. the manor was owned by Zavišai (Juknevičius, 1994; 1995; 2000). 199.38 ha of land belonged to the manor (Fig. 2).



a) 1923 year



b) 2016 year

**Fig. 2.** The territory of the homestead of Jotainiai manor

Sources: a) a distribution plan of the Jotainiai vicinity, 1926 (from the Panevėžys archives), b) the land reform project of the cadastral vicinity of Jotainiai (NLS)

During the post-war years a psychoneurological care home and its auxiliary property were established in the nationalised palace. Six buildings of the former manor remained. The adornment of the former manor is the three-story barn, made of stone. The current manor land lot amounts to 11,4021 ha. The land is still used by the care home. Almost all territory that currently does not belong to the manor is occupied by land lots that are privatised or designed for privatisation.

The number of buildings in the homesteads of manors, their arrangement and exterior varied during different periods. Buildings of the homesteads of manors usually were splendid and could be distinguished by their complicated architectural shapes. Naturally, the main buildings of the manors were the most splendid. Subsidiary service buildings were situated next to the palace. Further from the palace the farm buildings were built with their own separate approach roads. Large areas were occupied by the farm-hand buildings. To establish the change of the number of buildings, 12 homesteads of former manors of Panevėžys district were analysed (Table 1).

**Table 1**

Buildings of the homesteads of former manors in the Panevėžys district

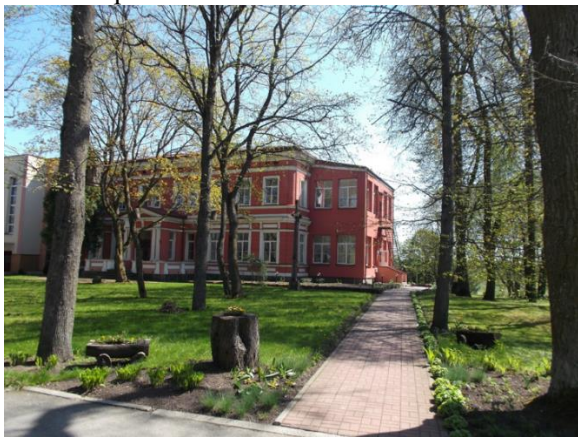
Name of the manor		Number of manor buildings						2016 in total
		1923-1925						
		in total	living buildings	farm buildings	manufactory buildings	other buildings	remains of buildings	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
<b>In the analysed homesteads of manors</b>								
1.	Jotainiai	31	3	18	1	9	-	6
2.	Spirakiai	29	2	22	1	3	1	1
3.	Upytė-Deblonas	37	1	33	1	2	-	5
4.	Anitava	6	1	4	-	1	-	2
5.	Rodai	21	2	16	2	1	-	-
6.	Milešiškiai	33	5	25	1	2	-	-
	<b>All in all in the analysed homesteads</b>	157	14	118	6	18	1	14

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
<b>In other homesteads</b>								
1.	Anytava	9	1	6	1	1	-	
2.	Parcel of a Gudžiūnėliai village	11	2	9	-	-	-	
3.	Liubitis	1	1	-	-	-	-	
4.	Padumlaukis folwark	2	1	1	-	-	-	
5.	Rukiškis	14	2	9	-	3	-	
6.	Taruškos	12	1	8	-	-	3	
	<b>All in all in other homesteads</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	
	<b>All in all</b>	<b>206</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>151</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>14</b>

Source: Lithuanian Central State Archives (made by A. Čirvinskienė)

In 1923-1925, homesteads were constituted of 206 buildings. This number includes the nationalised manor living houses, farm, manufactory and other buildings built during the period of the manor. The highest number of buildings was in the homestead of Upytė-Deblonas manor – 37 buildings (18% of all buildings). The main building that has the best remaining state is in the homestead of Jotainiai manor (Fig. 3).

The homestead of Upytė-Deblonas manor (Fig. 4), that remained until present times, represents the common pre-war homestead of a small farm owner.



**Fig. 3.** Homestead of Jotainiai manor, 2016  
(Photos by A. Čirvinskienė)



**Fig. 4.** Homestead of Upytė-Deblonas manor, 2016

During the inventory of the homestead of Upytė-Deblonas manor, five buildings were described. The state of the main building of the manor is satisfactory.

It was determined that during the period of 90 years in all of the analysed territories of the homesteads of former manors, an average of 20 new land lots with buildings were formed in each one. However, only two homesteads of manors included living houses and subsidiary buildings. Hence, the majority of the buildings were meant for agricultural and manufactory activities.

According to the data provided by the National Land Services in the 2016, it has been determined how the territories of the homesteads of former manors in Panevėžys district are divided by the reinstatement of property rights of the owned land and other ways to privatise the land (Table 2).

**Table 2**

The division of the analysed land lots of homesteads of manors in Panevėžys district, in accordance with the land reform, 1<sup>st</sup> January 2016

Name of the homestead of the manor	The general area of the homestead of former manors in 1923 <sup>1</sup> , ha	The reinstated property rights <sup>2</sup>									Open national land <sup>2</sup>	
		Land return in kind		Given as a free of charge property		Land of a personal farm		Home domain and other land under the buildings		Agricultural land, ha	Number of land lots	ha
		Number of land lots	ha	Number of land lots	ha	Number of land lots	ha	Number of land lots	ha			
Anitava	41.5	2	7.4	-	-	25	11.6	16	11.4	18.9	7	9.1
Jotainiai	199.4	13	64.0	1	3.7	200	99.1	35	10.7	162.8	1	1.50
Milešiškių	320.0	30	189.7	9	89.7	27	44.7	1	0.8	284.2	-	-
Rodai	384.6	39	218.0	8	49.1	51	42.8	17	10.1	328.0	10	35.7
Spirakiai	312.0	29	239.7	17	48.2	14	13.2	12	5.4	233.1	4	3.7
Upytė-Deblonas	309.2	40	99.9	11	10.9	71	81.5	21	10.2	203.6	4	17.5
In all	1566.7	153	818.7	46	201.6	388	292.9	102	48.6	1231	26	67.5
% from the previous general area	100		52		13		19		3	79		4

Sources: <sup>1</sup> – Panevėžys division of the Lithuanian Central State Archive, <sup>2</sup> – National Land Service under the Ministry of Agriculture

From the 1991, by applying the land reform, the property rights to the land were reinstated in accordance with the situation of the land owning in 1940. Until the 1<sup>st</sup> January 2016, half (52%) of the territories of the analysed manors were returned to their owners (or their successors determined by law) in kind, i.e. in those places, where they ruled the land in 1940. In the area of 201.60 ha given free of charge, land lots for 46 people were formed. Almost one fifth of the area is divided into small lots for personal users farming lots. Thus, if in 1923 six homesteads of manors had only few land lots, by the 2016 687 land lots were formed in the analysed territories, i.e. in average 115 land lots per one homestead of manor. Currently the land of the homesteads of former manors is administrated by various forms of property and by many users. For instance, the homestead of Jotainiai manor is administrated by juridical and natural people. One third of the owned area of the homesteads of manors was returned in kind. Personal farming lands constitute 47% of the whole area of Jotainiai manor territory. The average area of a land lot is 0.75 ha. The average area of a land lot returned in kind is 5 ha. As more than 80% (163 ha) of the former area of this homestead is constituted of agricultural land, this division of the territory into small land lots is not good for agricultural activities and insurance of the rational use of the land. This situation could be improved by the renting and transferring of the land, land consolidations and other needed works.

Hence, the land reform that is being applied since 1991, has had a vast influence on the current use of the homesteads of former manors. Differently administrated land lots were formed, whose owners are not connected by agricultural or family ties. Thus, the territory is divided for many users. When applying privatisation, retaining of solid homesteads was not important.

The analysis revealed that almost all territories of homesteads of manors and buildings are privatised. According to the use, manors can be divided into these categories:

- 1) National manors used for public activities;
- 2) Private manors;
- 3) Abandoned manors and their fragments;
- 4) Not-remained homesteads of manors.

It can be seen that the relation between remaining buildings of the former manor and the land-use are no longer existent.



It was revealed that the remaining heritage of homesteads of manors that belong to the state in the analysed places very often have no owner, thus, it can be stated that on the one hand, the privatisation of homesteads of manors is a positive indicator. Upytė-Deblonas homestead, that belong to the list of the manors that were not privatised, is decaying, as a suitable use of the manor buildings has not been found and construction works are stalled due to the lack of funding. The homesteads of former manors of Anitava currently belong to the National wealth fund. The state of the buildings is awful. They are not managed or supervised, hence their state is getting worse. From the analysed manors, the only supervised manor is homestead of Jotainiai manor. Though it is used for special purposes, it always had an owner, thus it is supervised and protected.

The restoration of solid manor lands is quite complicated. It is possible only if specific and favourable conditions exist. The future of these manors will depend on the economic activities that will be developed in them and the purpose of the homesteads of manors. In every specific way it could be achieved if owners of the homesteads of manors would order a thorough analysis and an agri-business plan or by integrated planning and fixing of these territories.

### Conclusions and proposals

1. Currently in the database of manors 142 homesteads of manors from the northern Lithuania are registered. In Panevėžys district during the inter-war majority of the homesteads of former manors were situated in the South-Western part of the district. In this district only 16 manors remained from 159, i.e. 10%. Many manors decayed and collapsed not only during war, post-war and Soviet times, but also by not being used during the current period of independent Lithuania. It was established that during a period of 90 years the landscape changed vastly, as in every homestead of former manors that was analysed, in average 20 new land lots with buildings were formed.

2. From 1991, by applying land reform, homesteads of former manors were divided to a number of land owners and users. It was determined that an average area of land lots that constituted one homestead of manors in 1923 was 11.06 ha and in 2016 – only 2.2 ha. These small land lots that have productive agricultural lands are not rational in accordance with farming. One of the means to achieve sustainable development of these territories could be land consolidation.

3. 47% of the whole territory of homesteads of manors is constituted of personal agricultural land. The average area of a personal land lot amounts to 0.75 ha. Some of these land lots are not used, abandoned, hence the visual quality of surrounding territories of homesteads of manors is getting worse and this also negatively affects the use of the territories of the manors. Irrespective of the land property form, the planning and maintenance works of the manor territories that are being restored and adjusted to public use should be financed by the funds of EU, government and municipalities and they should get more attention from the communities.

4. It can be stated that the problems of protection and rational land use of homesteads of manors are still not solved. The future of the manors will depend on the initiatives of state institutions and individual people, the purpose of the homesteads of manors, the applied economic activities and the possibilities to achieve the necessary support.

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