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Poltava

## **Widows and widowers of Poltava in the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century**

### **1. Introduction**

A full analysis of the demographic structure in early modern Poltava is not possible without studying its marital status, with widows and widowers as its inseparable part. They were quite a unique micro group, since in a traditional society of that time, the death of one of the spouses caused not only personal troubles, but also often economic problems. Changes in the family structure played an important role as far as the households, which were economic units at the same time, were based on the work of at least two adult members (Klassen 2001: 208).

According to the established tradition in historical demography, researchers pay greater attention to the question of widowhood among women than men (Poppel 1995: 421–441). It is mainly due to the fact that the traditional society perceived widows controversially. In folklore and literature, a widow appears both, as a miserable, disadvantaged woman and as the “evil” homewrecker (Serdyuk 2008: 175; Zinoviiv 1971: 99). The acquisition of this status was the event that radically changed the social, economic, and psychological status of a woman (*Istoriya zhenshchin na Zapade...* 54–55).

The Ukrainian city of Poltava was back then a part of Hetmanate – an autonomous unit of the Russian Empire that was headed by Cossack Hetmans (hence the name). The total area of this state formation was about 1,038 km<sup>2</sup>. The geographical location on the left-bank Ukraine and the climatic features divided it into the wooded northern and steppe southern parts. The total population was about 2,046,186 people (Perkovs’kyi 1968: 110).

Administratively, the whole territory of Hetmanate was divided into 10 military and political constituencies – regiments that were led by the colonel and subordinate to Cossack Hetman and the government – a general military office. However, from 1764, after the abdication of the last Hetman, Kyrylo Razumovsky, the territory was managed by Little Russian Collegium led by the appointed president from Empress Catherine II, an earl Pyotr Rumyantsev.

The Cossack state had quite a specific social structure, on the top of which was the so-called Gentry formed from the Cossack leaders. The second position was occupied by the Cossacks, close to the first group in political rights and social privileges, but economically much weaker. The third position was held by the burghers, who were mostly engaged in crafts and trade, and paid state taxes. At the foot of the pyramid, the peasantry was located – the most numerous, but politically and economically the least protected social group.

The legal system was also mixed. It was based on the norms of the Lithuania Statutes (*Statut Velykoho...* 568), Magdeburg rights (Kobylets'kyy 2013: 55–61), and the legislation of the Russian Empire, which intervened more and more into the traditional law of that territory.

Despite the fact that some parts of the cities of Hetmanate enjoyed Magdeburg law and had their own government, the Cossack administration constantly interfered in their lives. The cities of Hetmanate were relatively small, and sometimes they did not differ from rural settlements. The economic activities of many burghers, except for the traditional crafts and trade, were often similarly connected with agricultural production.

Poltava was founded in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century (Kovalenko 2015: 42) on the high right bank of the river Vorskla. Surrounded from the east and west by deep ravines, it formed a pretty impregnable triangle which needed artificial protection only from the third – the northern side. The fortifications of the city fortress consisted of a moat that protected city from the north, earthen ramparts, and stockade towers.

In the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the city was the administrative center of Poltava regiment. It was the biggest military and political center located in the south of the Cossack state, near the border with the Cossack Sich territories. As most of such cities, Poltava consisted of two parts – the fortress and suburbs. It occupied the area of about 126 hectares and the total population slightly exceeded 7,500 people (Voloshyn 2016: 83). This was obviously one of the largest cities in Hetmanate that had Magdeburg law. Poltava received it in 1752 from Hetman Kyrylo Razumovsky. Thus, the city was managed by an elected council headed by Vogt.

It must be noted that the social structure of early modern Poltava was in general similar to the structure of Hetmanate, but also had its own characteristics, inherent to Hetmanate cities of the period. The urban society was divided into four main groups: clergy, Cossacks, burghers, and craft artisans (in 1765, there were 7

workshops in the city). In addition, there were also outcasts, united not by social origin, but by occupation, a group of ‘servants’, which included: domestic workers, students and apprentices of artisans, laborers, and others. Researchers cannot measure this group completely due to methodological difficulties and problems with their designation in sources (Karpiński 1983: 152). At the bottom of the social pyramid, there was an urban fringe with beggars and cripples.

Regarding the marital status, most Poltava residents in the studied period were married. According to my calculations, in 1765 these were 55% of men and 55.3% of women. However, 42.5% of men and 25.3% of women were single. The proportion of widows was relatively small – 7.9%.

Despite the fact that the situation of widowers in the early modern society, including the Hetmanate (Serdyuk 2010: 48–55), was less complicated and dramatic than the situation of widows, the transition into this status was perceived as a tragedy also by men. Popular national Ukrainian proverb describes the situation as: “who has not lost the wife – never felt real grief” (*Narodni prysliv'ya...* 183). Therefore, for a complete understanding of the social structure, it is necessary to know what life circumstances were changed in the life of a man after the death of his marriage partner.

It is a well-known fact that in the population of Europe, the proportion of widows was usually bigger than of widowers, mainly because widowers had many more chances to marry again. According to the statement of Sherri Klassen, the researcher of this problem, in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, half of all widowers were re-married, while only a third part of widows were married again (Klassen 2001: 207–208). Men had more opportunities in that time. First, the gender specificity of the population structure, in particular, the larger number of women, gave men a more favorable position on the marriage market. In addition, the presence of young children often pushed them to remarry, while for women it was an additional barrier (Van Poppel 1995: 424). The economic position of a widower, legal relations, and the situation in the family also became the reasons to enter into a new marriage.

In this paper, we will try to examine the problems of widowhood in the regimental city of Poltava in the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. We will review the following aspects:

- the proportion of widows and widowers in the total population of the city,
- the topography of their settlement in the city,
- age-related characteristics,
- social identity,
- the structure of households,
- financial situation.

We will take the census book of Poltava regiment, created in 1765–1766, during the creation of Rumyantsev description of Little Russia on the territories of Hetmanate (years 1765–1769), as the main source for this research (*Misto*

*Poltava...* 43–504). It was one of many projects of Catherina II to provide well-ordered state education.

It received Rumyantsev name because this idea was brought to life by then president of the Little Russian Collegium, Earl Rumyantsev.

In addition, the description contains the information about cities, towns, villages, and hamlets, and it also describes in detail their population, specifying age, gender, marital status, health, and the size of taxes paid. This document is valuable in our research also, and, that in addition to the data about age, sex, and social status of the widowed Poltava residents, it contains information about the size and structure of the family, property status, including data on households, arable land, forests, hayfields, pastures, mills, distilleries, malt and livestock, the size of taxes, etc. It should be noted that the description has several drawbacks which, in my opinion, do not significantly affect studying the problem.

First, it did not foresee the collection of information about so-called “New nobility” (Cossack officers) and clergy. Therefore, the representatives of the two social groups, if they appear in the text of the document, are very indirectly mentioned. Due to this, the information about them was obtained from another well-known source of confessional lists – church documents of public account created in the Orthodox churches of Poltava in 1775, that recorded the visiting parishioners who attended confessions. Their content reminds the Catholic book – *Status Animarum*.

Thirdly, in my opinion, the inaccurate reflection of age was a significant disadvantage. This conclusion can be made by viewing the large number of people whose age ends in “5” or “0”. My preliminary calculations indicate that they constituted the majority among the Poltava widows (Voloshyn 2011: 14).

## **2. Widowers and widows in marital, age, sex, and social structures of the Poltava population**

According to the description in 1766, the city was inhabited by 6,913 people (3,337 men and 3,576 women) (*Misto Poltava...* 43–504). Meanwhile, 1,555 people (679 men and 876 women) lived in the central part – the fortress, and the remaining 5,358 people (2,658 men and 2,700 women) lived in forstate (suburbs).

As it was noted above, more than a half of Poltava citizens aged 15 and older were married, but the vast majority of the unmarried had all perspectives to marry. Only a few members of the urban society, according to my calculations – 7 men and 2 women out of every 100 people in Poltava, never entered into marriage. The average age of the first marriage in Poltava for men was 28.1 years and for women – 22.3 years (Voloshyn 2016: 166). It was slightly higher than in the Hetmanate villages, where men married at the age of 23.7, and women – 19.1 years

(Voloshyn 2005: 194). It is likely that this difference was mainly because in the cities, the percentage of singles was higher due to the presence of servants, laborers, students, artisans, soldiers, and so on.. The marriage age of the residents of Poltava is similar to those defined by Kuklo for the territory of the Commonwealth. In particular, he argues that “in the end of existence of the Commonwealth the noble men married in an average age 25–29 years and women got married in 20–24 years” (Kuklo 2009: 278–279. In Western Europe countries, especially in the large urban centers, the marital age was the same (Petrenko 2010: 202). For example, in the town of Selby, in Yorkshire (England), according to Roger Bellingham, men took marriage at the age of 25.1 and women – 22.8 (Bellingham 1998: 56). Meanwhile, the existing legislation in Hetmanate gave Poltava citizens the opportunity to marry at a relatively young age (Voloshyn 2016: 167). Early marriages, according to sources, were rare for this city.

After the detailed analysis of the marital status of Poltava citizens (Table 1), we received a complete percentage of widows in the female population – 12.1% (432 people) and of widowers among men – 1.6% (53 people). This number is almost identical to the proportion of widows in another regimental city – Pereyaslav, where they numbered 12.7% (Serdyuk 2008: 175).

Table 1. Structure of the marital status of Poltava citizens in 1765-1766 years

Age groups	Men				Women			
	Total	Marital status			Total	Marital status		
		Unmarried	Married	Widowers		Unmarried	Married	Widows
0-4	426	426	–	–	478	478	–	–
5-9	419	419	–	–	442	442	–	–
10-14	387	387	–	–	429	429	–	–
15-19	390	385	5	–	426	405	21	–
20-24	287	256	31	–	222	93	113	16
25-29	180	94	86	–	282	29	216	37
30-34	243	61	181	1	259	10	213	36
35-39	178	19	156	3	225	4	193	28
40-44	278	24	251	3	210	4	162	44
45-49	140	11	126	3	185	2	164	19
50-54	207	12	187	8	171	4	85	82
55-59	63	2	58	3	56	1	26	29
60-64	46	6	36	4	79	–	20	59
65-	74	8	39	27	97	5	15	77
Indefinite	19	16	2	1	15	7	3	5
Total	3337	2126	1158	53	3576	1913	1231	432

Sources: *Misto Poltava...* 43–504.

According to the statement of the Polish researcher Cezary Kuklo, the same fivefold and sixfold benefit of widows was typical for many Polish cities at that time – in Krakow it was 6.9% of widows versus 1.2% of widowers, and in Warsaw – 9.9% widows versus 2.2% widowers (Kuklo 1998: 58). In Western European cities, widows prevailed too, but without such a significant advantage. For example, the proportion of widows in Southampton was 9.5% versus 4.2% of widowers (Froide 2002: 30).

It must be noted that the share of widowed Poltava citizens increased with the growth of age groups. Among women, the share of widows exceeded 10% after the age of 25, and after the age of 50 – almost half of Poltava women became widows, whereas in the oldest age group – already 79.3%. The share of widowers, though it was much smaller, steadily increased after the age of 45, reaching 36.5% in the age group of over 65 years.

The analysis of the resettlement topography in these categories shows that most widows, i.e. 58% (251), lived in the suburbs, and 42% (181) – in the fortress. However, their share in the population structure of the central part was 11.6%, and in the suburbs it was more than twice lower – 4.7%. If we consider only the adult population, the situation will remain almost the same, i.e. 16.3% in the fortress and 7.8% in the suburbs. The main part of widowers, i.e. 85% or 45 people, lived in the suburbs as well, and the rest, i.e. 15% (8), lived in the center of Poltava. They constituted 0.5% in the population of the fortress, while in the population of the suburbs – 0.8%. Thus, despite the fact that the majority of these two categories lived in the suburbs, the percentage of widows was much higher than the percentage of widowers in the mating structure of the central part population. It means that the group of widows was larger in the central part of Poltava than the group of widowers.

The analysis of the age structure according to their biological type, where the young are defined as people of 0–19 years of age, the adults – 20–59 years, and old people – 60 years and older (Kuklo 2009: 140) (Table 2), shows that among widows the adults (20–59 years) prevailed – 67.4% (291). The rest, i.e. 31.4% (126), constituted the old. The age of 5 widows (1.2%) was not specified by the drafters of the Census. It should also be noted that most of the adults were women aged 50–54 years – 28.2% (82), and the minority – aged 20–24 years – 5.5% (16). The age division of widowers was somewhat different: most of them were old – 62.3% (33), and the minority were adults – 37.7% (20).

It is significant that among the widows who lived in the fortress, the percentage of adults was 78.5%, the percentage of old people – 19.9%, and among those who lived in the suburbs, the percentage of adults was 59.4%, and of old people – 39.8%. Thus, there lived younger widows in the fortress than in the suburbs. The situation with widowers was different: 62.5% of adults lived in the central

part, with only 37.5% of old widowers, but in the suburbs the percentage of adults (42.2%) was smaller than the percentage of old people (57.8%).

Table 2. Age structure of widows and widowers in Poltava

Age group	Widows			Widowers		
	Fortress	Suburbs	Total	Fortress	Suburbs	Total
20-24	12	4	16	–	–	–
25-29	21	16	37	–	–	–
30-34	29	7	36	–	–	–
35-39	15	13	28	1	1	2
40-44	26	18	44	–	2	2
45-49	5	14	19	1	2	3
50-54	30	52	82	1	5	6
55-59	4	25	29	2	5	7
60-64	27	32	59	1	4	5
>65	9	68	77	2	26	28
Indefinite	3	2	5	–	–	–
Total	181	251	432	8	45	53

Sources: *Misto Poltava...* 43–504.

Probably, the structure of the settlement were largely related to the social affiliation of widows and widowers (Table 3), and the social topography of the city in general.

As we can see in Table 2, 70% (127) of the widows from the central part were maids, while in the suburbs, their percentage was much lower – 11% (27). They also showed the highest proportion among the city widows in general – 35.6% (154).<sup>1</sup>

It is likely that the crucial reason for the enlistment of widowed women was the financial situation in which they found themselves after the death of their husbands. In this way, they tried to solve the financial problem. In Polish cities, a very prominent group of widows were maids (Poniat 2014: 162).

According to researchers, in Poltava 50% of maids were girls aged 15 to 24 years (Voloshyn 2016: 121), for whom joining the service was just a phase of life between leaving the parental household and setting their own family – so-called life-cycle service (Poniat 2014: 162). That service was seen as a temporary work, which was undertaken more for practical experience than as the source of

<sup>1</sup> It should be noticed that in Pereyaslav their percentage was higher – 49% (see Serdyuk 2008: 179).

a serious income. Widows, unlike unmarried girls, saw the service as the work of a lifetime and the opportunity to receive constant financial support (Fauve-Chamoux 2008: 322).

It is significant that among widowers only one man (1.9%) had this kind of work – Opanas Salohubenko, who, together with his young children: son Petro (3 years old) and daughters, Ustina (9 years old) and Irina (7 years old), is listed among the servants of the butcher Micholai Lohvar (*Misto Poltava...* 227). The largest group among them, 39.6% (21), were Cossacks, and most of them – 17 people lived in the suburbs.

The second position as among widows – 28.9% (125), and among widowers – 26.4% (14) was held by burgers. Most of them were also the residents of the suburbs – 34.7% (87) of widows and 26.7% (12) of widowers. It is significant that among the widowers, the same position – 26.4 % (14), with the exact benefit of the inhabitants of suburbs – 26.7 % (12), was held by craftsmen.

Next, in the social class hierarchy of widows, there were Cossacks – 20.8% (90), and the majority of them – 95.6% (86) – also lived in the suburbs. Then, with a quite big gap, but with the similar topography of the settlement, there were widows of artisans – 9.3% (40) in general, and 90% (36 people) of them lived in the suburbs.

Table 3. Distribution of widowers and widows by social and professional groups

Group	Widowers						Widows					
	Fortress		Suburbs		Total		Fortress		Suburbs		Total	
	Ab- solute num- ber	%	Ab- solute num- ber	%	Ab- solute num- ber	%	Ab- solute num- ber	%	Ab- solute num- ber	%	Ab- solute num- ber	%
Clergy	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	0.6	1	0.4	2	0.5
Cossacks	4	50	17	37.8	21	39.6	4	2.2	86	34	90	20.8
Guild	2	25	12	26.7	14	26.4	4	2.2	36	14.3	40	9.3
Burghers	2	25	12	26.7	14	26.4	38	21	87	34.7	125	28.9
Others	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	2	0.8	2	0.5
Servants	–	–	1	2.2	1	1.9	127	70	27	11	154	35.6
Not specified	–	–	3	6.6	3	5.7	7	4	12	4.8	19	4.4
Total	8	100	45	100	53	100	181	100	251	100	432	100

Sources: *Misto Poltava...* 43–504.



### 3. Residential patterns of widows and widowers

I will make the research of the family structure of widowed Poltava citizens with the help of the most common in historical demography classification proposed by British researcher Eugene Hammel, and Peter Laslett (Table 4) (Hammel & Laslett 1974: 73–109).

Table 4. Structures of families with widows

Categories	Classes	Widowers		Widows		Poltava Citizens	
		Class	Total	Class	Total	Class	Total
1. Solitaries	1a Widowed	–		35.7		3	
	1b Single, or unknown marital status	–	–		35.7		5
2. No family	2a Coresident siblings	–		0.2		0.6	
	2b Coresident relations of other kinds	–	–	0.2	0.9	0.4	1
	2c Persons not evidently related	–		0.5		–	
3. Simple family household	3a Married couples alone	–		–		6.4	
	3b Married couples with child(ren)	–	32.1	–	27.1	51.4	66.7
	3c Widowers with child(ren)	–		27.1		7.9	
	3d Widows with child(ren)	32.1		–		1	
4. Extended family household	4a Extended upwards	15		11.3		5.2	
	4b Extended downwards	5.7		2.3		1.3	
	4c Extended laterally	1.9	22.6	1.2	14.8	4.6	11.2
	4d Combinations of 4a-4c	–		–		–	
5. Multiple family household	5a Secondary units UP	–		9.2		3.2	
	5b Secondary units DOWN	17		2.3		6.4	
	5c Secondary units laterally	20.8	45.3	5.6	21.5	2.2	16.1
	5d Fréchès	7.5		4.4		4.3	
	5e Other multiple family household	–		–		–	
Total		100	100	100	100	100	100

Sources: *Misto Poltava...* 43–504.

The application of this scheme to the analyzed data indicates that most urban widows were single – 35.7% (154). It is typical that they lived mostly in the central part of Poltava – 68.2% (105), and almost all of them – 65.6% (101) – were maidens that worked in the households of wealthy citizens. For example, in the household of Dmitry Bilushenko, a bunchuk's friend (the highest military rank of the Noble military society in Hetmanate during the 17–18<sup>th</sup> centuries), that was located on Bilushenkova Street, among 16 young servants there lived 4 widows, (*Misto Poltava...* 116–118) and in the household of Andrei Bogdanovich, a military friend, that was located nearby, there lived also 4 widows among 8 young servants. In the household of Alexiy Lukyanovich, Poltava's Burgomaster, that was located on the Preobrazhenska Street, 11 servants were recorded, including 3 widows (*Misto Poltava...* 153–155). In the household of Gregory Sakhnovsky, a main judge, located on Bogoroditska Street (*Misto Poltava...* 200–203), that was obviously the most populated in the city, there lived 26 servants with 7 widows among them. In the household of Fedor Olkhovskiy, a priest's son, on Mazurivska Street, there lived six maidens, and 4 of them were widows (*Misto Poltava...* 191–192).

The second position was occupied by the widows who lived in simple type families – 27.1% (117). They were women with children, most of whom lived in the suburbs, unlike single women. For example, such was the family of 60-year-old burgess Kilina Ivchyha, who lived with her children – son Illya (22 years old) and daughter Maria (18 years old) (*Misto Poltava...* 192–193), and the family of 35-year-old Cossack Matryona Kurylychyha, who had two daughters – Zinovia (17 years old) and Marina (14 years old) (*Misto Poltava...* 408) .

The third position was occupied by the widows who lived in multiple family households – 21.5% (93). Most of them usually lived in the families of their married children in the suburbs – 63.4% (59). Sometimes these women even headed the house communities – 11.8% (11). The main example is a Cossack Horpyna Scherbynyha (80 years old), who lived in the household together with the families of her two daughters – Anna (35 years old) and Domaha (32 years old). The eldest was married to a Cossack Lavron Lytvyn (40 years old), with whom they raised four children – two sons, 15 and 8 years old, both named Ivan, and two daughters – Frosina (9 years old) and Marina (1 year old). The junior daughter was married to a Cossack Opanas Kobylchenko (35 years old) and had three children: Stepan (7 years old), Dmitry (5 years old), and Yavdokha (1 year old) (*Misto Poltava...* 272).

Also, 9.7% widows lived in the families of their brothers and sisters and the families of their dead husbands. One of them was a 27-year-old widow Liybov, who, together with her four children – two sons, Ostap (6 years old) and Ivan (5 years old), and two daughters, Marina (12 years old) and Pelagia (1 year old) – lived in the family of her father-in-law – a merchant Ivan Mospan (80 years old)

(*Misto Poltava...* 97). Perhaps the widow's children, as the merchant did not have any other, became the main heirs of his estate.

Other five women (5.4%) after death of their husbands returned to their parents. For example, there was a widow Yavdokha (40 years old), who, together with her children, Vakula (3 years old) and Frosina (6 years old), lived in the family of her father – Martin Orzhickij (60 years old) (*Misto Poltava...* 316).

There was 15% (65) of widows who lived in extended house communities. Most of them lived in their sons' families – 44.6% (29), and daughters' families – 32.3% (21). For example, 60-year-old Anastasia Ivanovna lived in the family of her daughter Palashka (30 years old), who was married to a worker of Velykobudyzkiy Transfiguration Monastery Vasil Yagidka (30 years old) (*Misto Poltava...* 57). Another widow, Cossack Tatiana Ponomaryha (70 years old), lived in the family of her son Fedor (25 years old) (*Misto Poltava...* 237). Their families were extended upwards (4a).

In the families, which should be considered extended downwards (4b), because of the married children recorded in census, there lived 12.3% (8) of widows. This was the family of Cossack Paraska Porohovnychka (70 years old), who lived with her son Michail (30 years old) and his wife Anastasia (28 years old) (*Misto Poltava...* 293). A small percentage of them, i.e. 10.8% (7), lived in the households of siblings: brothers, nephews, and grandchildren. Their families are considered to be extended laterally (4c). An example of such extension is 50-year-old widow Maria, who lived in the family of her brother – Cossack Iosip Deripaska (55 years old) (*Misto Poltava...* 255). And 50-year-old widow Agafia Pavlivna lived in the family of her nephews – Cossacks Gregory Sohavec (28 years old) and Gnat Sohavec (25 years old) (*Misto Poltava...* 172).

The lowest number of widows, i.e. 0.7% (3), belonged to unstructured families. They were: Burgess Paraska Kozachka (60 years old), who lived with her unmarried sister (80 years old) (*Misto Poltava...* 189); merchant Melania Hurbyha (70 years old), who lived together with her grandchildren – Semen (18 years old) and Michail (16 years old) (*Misto Poltava...* 291–292); and Burgess Melania Doroshyha (55 years old), who had an adopted daughter Varvara (10 years old) (*Misto Poltava...* 315).

As we can see, the structure of the families where the widows of Poltava lived reflected the classification proposed by Peter Laslett. Instead, the families of widowers were limited to only three types: simple, extended, and multiple. Most of the widowers lived in multiple families – 45.3% (24), 32.1% (17) lived in simple, and 22.6% (12) – in extended families.

Almost in half of the cases, 49% (26), the widowers headed the households. Multiple families – 53.8% (14) dominated there, on the second place there were simple families – 27% (7), and on the third place there were extended families – 19.2% (5). Naturally, they all were extended downwards, as the father-widower lived together with the family of his son or daughter. An example of such

a household is the family of Semen Sobko (77), a tailor who lived with his son Ivan (44 years old) married to Irina (30 years old). The couple had two young daughters – Yliana (3 years old) and Lybov (1 year old) (*Misto Poltava...* 173).

A significant part of widowers were those who lived in the households of their relatives – 28.3% (15). Among these families, multiple households, 60% (9), constituted the majority, and the other families were extended – 40% (6). Since the widowers in these households lived with their children, but were not the leaders inside the family, all of them were extended upwards.

The next micro group consisted of those widowers who worked for the wealthy householders of the city and lived in their households – 17% (9). Mostly all of their families were simple – 55.6% (5). As an example, we can choose the family of Semen Dzhunenko, who worked for the chief scrivener Gregory Baginskiy. He had three young children – son Musiy (7 years old) and daughters: Evdokia (10 years old) and Ganna (8 years old) (*Misto Poltava...* 233).

Another 33.3% (3) families were extended by their structure. Two of them, Samiyo Halaburda's and Gregory Perepylytsia's families, were extended downwards, and Sidor Sidorenko lived in the extended upwards family (*Misto Poltava...* 284, 425, 357). Only the family of Leontius Nazarenko, 1.1% (1), was multiple (*Misto Poltava...* 357).

Two out of the three families that were not included in the micro groups named above are simple family households of Athanasius Salohubenko, a servant, and of Fedor Mykytenko, a master of bricklaying (*Misto Poltava...* 464). The family of Cossack Gnat Prikhodko, who rented the household of Transfiguration Church, was extended. In his household, only 10 people lived: the owner, who was 55 years old at the time of the census, his son Pavlo (35 years old) and his wife Irina (25 years old) and their son Avram (3 years old). Together with his father, the second son lived – Musiy (30 years old), who had a wife Paraska (25 years old) and a son Iosip (2 years old). The mother-in-law of Musiy, Tatiana Timofiivna (60 years old), and her younger daughter Horpyna (15 years old) (*Misto Poltava...* 161) lived together with them. As we can see, this Cossack family consisted of four nuclear cores connected by family ties. Together, they formed a house community with the multiple family household.

Generally, we can admit that there was a difference between the structures of the families that were prevailed among widows, and those that were prioritized among widowers.

Besides that, the family structure with widows and widowers inside significantly varied from those that prevailed among the population in general. Widows were often single people, and widowers were usually members of multiple organizations. The second position among widows and among widowers was held by the residents of simple family households. However, if the third place among

widows was taken by multiple family households, among widowers – extended. Generally, in Poltava, according to Rumyantsev description, the simple family household was dominant – 66.7%. The multiple family household counted 16.1%, extended – 11.2%, single – 5%, and the unstructured family households constituted only 1% from total share. It must be noted that after ten years since the Rumyantsev description, the ratio of family types hardly changed. Thus, according to the data of another source, i.e. the Poltava confessional lists of churches from 1775, the share of simple family households amounted to 66.5%, multiple – 15.6%, extended – 11.7%, single – 5.1%, and the unstructured was equal to 1.1% (Voloshyn 2015: 141–157).

#### 4. Financial situation

In this section, we will try to consider the economic welfare of the analyzed group. As we remember, a significant percentage of widows were maids who lived on the salary that they received from the household owners (Table 5).

Probably, there were no clearly defined payments for servants, and each case was treated separately. This conclusion can be drawn based on the Rumyantsev description that recorded different amounts of a servant's payment (*Misto Poltava...* 47–505). It should be noted that along with the money, the remuneration included also a uniform and food supply. The uniform was the property of a master and a servant had to give it back after retirement (Voloshyn 2016: 121).

Table 5. The salary of widows-maids

Payment	Widows-maids		City maids in total	
	absolute numbers	%	absolute numbers	%
<1 rubles	1	0.7	55	9.4
1 to 2 rubles	36	23.3	164	28.1
2 to 3 rubles	50	32.5	165	28.3
3 to 4 rubles	21	13.6	22	3.8
4 to 5 rubles	1	0.7	17	2.9
Food	45	29.2	161	27.5
Total number	154	100	584	100

Sources: *Misto Poltava...* 43–504.

As we can see from Table 5, the payment of widows-maids was different from the payment of Poltava maids in general. For example, only one of them, i.e. 30-year-old Motrona, who served in the household of Cossack Ivan Vysotsky

earned only 50 kopecks (*Misto Poltava...* 298). Similarly, only one, i.e. 22-year-old Evdokia, who worked in the household of Vogt Peter Chernysh, received the highest amount for Poltava maids – 5 rubles a year (*Misto Poltava...* 293). She was the only widow who received more than 4 rubles a year, while among the maids in general, according to my calculations, 17 people had the same payment. Widows more often than young girls received salaries that ranged from 2 to 3 rubles, and from 3 to 4 rubles. However, the proportion of those who worked only for food was also higher among widows.

It must be noted that there was an imbalance in the calculation of payment that was characteristic to all pre-modern masculine societies. Men usually received a bigger payment than women. For example, a single widower who was hired on work, Opanas Salohubenko, mentioned above, received from his master 4 rubles a year, as well as food and clothing (*Misto Poltava...* 227). According to my calculations, a big part of maids (56.1%) earned between 1–3 rubles a year, whereas male servants received salaries between 2–7 rubles. In general, the average wage of women in Poltava in the period 1765–1766, was 1 ruble and 62 kopecks, and for men it was much higher, i.e. 4 rubles and 10 kopecks. Widows received a slightly lower payment, i.e. 1 rubles and 51 kopecks.

Some representatives of the researched group headed house communities. There were 64 of such widows. Most of them lived in the suburbs – 47 widows, and the rest, i.e. 17 widows, in the central part. Almost half of widowers headed the communities (26 persons). Most of them lived in the suburbs. Their material prosperity depended, in my opinion, on several factors, such as: social status, presence of possession, size and family structure, etc.

In regard to the Cossacks, I counted 19 widows who headed households, and 14 widowers. In the Rumyantsev description we find information about 16 widows, and 11 widowers (Table 6).

Table 6. Property state of Cossacks widows and widowers

Property	Gardens	Vegetable gardens	Forests	Hayfields	Apiaries	Hamlets	Tillage	Cattle	Crafts
Widowers	10	7	7	4	3	2	9	11	3
Widows	12	6	2	1	–	1	3	8	5
Total	22	13	9	5	3	3	12	19	8

Sources: *Misto Poltava...*, pp. 43–504.

As we can see, in the vast majority of households there were gardens (10 widows and 12 widowers). Vegetable gardens, which were also found in the city, were in a smaller number, and they were usually kept near houses. Only 6 widows and 7 widowers had vegetable gardens. In addition, the representatives of the analyzed group, as the rest of the inhabitants of Poltava, also owned arable plots, forests, grasslands, apiary, and sometimes hamlets outside the city.

It is difficult to determine which of the estates listed above can be a measure of prosperity. Perhaps, those who had the most extensive collection of land properties can be counted as wealthy. If we accept this point of view, the two richest widows were the abovementioned Horpyna Scherbynyha and Yefymiya Sorokova. The former not only kept in her household a large number of residents, but also owned the biggest part of the property. She, in particular, owned a property, including: a garden with the area of 0.07 hectares, a vegetable garden (0.27 hectares), a forest (just 0.27 hectares), and an arable land used for the cultivation of 1 quarter<sup>2</sup> and 4 tchetveriks of rye, 6 tchetveriks of wheat, 1 tchetverik and 4 harts (old Ukrainian and Russian unit of dry measures, equal to 3.28 liters) of peas, 6 tchetveriks of barley, 1 tchetverik of oat, 3 tchetveriks of millet, 6 tchetveriks of buckwheat, 3 tchetveriks of hemp, and 2 harts of linen. In addition to the household in the city, the widow also possessed a hamlet by the river Svyukivka. On the hamlet, according to a description, there were two houses, and two barns where cattle was kept: 9 bulls, 5 cows, 3 goats, and 7 pigs (Voloshyn 2016: 202).

The wealth of Yefymia Sorokova was smaller as compared to Horpyna's wealth, however, taking into consideration that she was a single woman, and in comparison to other widows' properties, we can affirm that she was much more prosperous than other widows. She had a garden of 0.06 hectares, 0.16 hectares of a vegetable garden and a hayfield. She also owned three pieces of arable land at various places, which were seeded by 4 tchetveriks of rye, 1 quarter of wheat, 4 tchetveriks of barley, 6 tchetveriks of oat, and 1 tchetverik of millet. Yefymiya had only one pig (Voloshyn 2016: 134–135).

However, the vast majority of widows did not have such lands. Only Ganna Firenchiha had croplands, but she did not cultivate them, apparently because of her old age (Voloshyn 2016: 8). Another 9 widows had gardens, and only 3 widows had vegetable gardens. Five widows had cattle, mostly only pigs, but also bulls, cows, and sheep. The most diverse livestock was owned by Paraska Nykonyha, who held 2 oxen, a cow, 3 pigs, and 10 sheep (Voloshyn 2016: 129).

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<sup>2</sup> According to O. F. Sydorenko, in the 18th century, federal standard of one quarter was 141.69 kilos, tchetverik – 17.71 kilos, harts – 2.21 kilos. (Sydorenko 1975: 158.) According to Russian units of area, 1 quarter 0.545 hectares, and tchetverik 0.07 hectares (see Gramm 2000: 194–195).

The widows could not subsist entirely on livestock, in addition, as we can see, it was hard to take care of cattle without land, and that is why the primary source of money for 9 of them was employment (Voloshyn 2016: 5, 17, 38, 53, 64, 129, 150, 151, 155). Two widows, i.e. Maria Velika and Natalia Basyha (Voloshyn 2016: 17, 58), earned money from the sale of vodka during Poltava auctions and fairs. Matrona Kurylchyha and Maria Posunchyha baked bread (Voloshyn 2016: 60, 71). This obviously was relatively profitable, because widows received earnings: from the sale of vodka – from 2 to 5 rubles respectively, and from the sale of bread – 1 ruble, and 1 ruble and 50 kopecks.

The wealthiest among widowers was probably Dmitro Yukhimenko, whose multiple family household consisted of 8 people. In his household, there were two residential houses, two barns, and a barrack. He did not have a vegetable garden in his household, only a large garden (0.15 hectares) in comparison to other widowers. There was also an apiary, the largest (100 hives) among the analyzed micro groups. The honey and wax that were obtained from the apiary, were sold by the master at city fairs, which gave him 30 rubles of an annual income (Voloshyn 2016, p. 21).<sup>3</sup>

This widower had five parcels of arable lands. Every year, the lands were planted with: 3 quarters of rye, 3 quarters of wheat, 1 quarter of peas, 4 quarters of barley, 5 quarters of oats, 1 quarter of millet, 3 quarters of buckwheat, 6 tchetveriks of hemp, and 3 harts of linen. A winter cereal was planted in the autumn – 6 quarters 4 tchetveriks of rye and 4 tchetveriks of wheat (Voloshyn 2016: 21).

In addition, Dmitro had two hayfields near the city, where 60 haystacks were mowed down. He also owned a large forest mass, as compared to others, the total area of which was 0.75 hectares (Voloshyn 2016: 21). Also, near the river Kolo-mak, the widower had a small hamlet that consisted of two households. On the hamlet, there were located four houses, two barns, and four sheds. On the hamlet, a considerable number of animals were kept: 33 bulls, 26 cows, 25 goats, 19 sheep, 4 horses, and 13 pigs. There were also three vegetable gardens whose total area was 8.82 hectares (Voloshyn 2016: 21).

So, as we can see, Cossack Dmitro Yukhimenko led a rather strong and prosperous household as compared to other widowers'. He lived his age in a relatively stable and enduring family with two married adult sons and a bunch of grandchildren, so we can assume that the widowhood, which, apparently, he entered in advanced age, was not an obstacle to his serene hoariness.

Similar to Dmitro's, by these parameters, was the household of Ivan Krasnokutskiy. He also owned a hayfield where 20 haystacks were mowed, 0.06 hectares of a vegetable garden, 0.13 hectares of a forest, and quite extensive apiary, though

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<sup>3</sup> Ibidem. pp. 21–21.



it was less than half smaller than the apiary of Yukhimenko – 54 hives. He received 20 rubles from the honey sale. He also owned 3 plots of arable land. They was cultivated with: 4 tchetveriks of rye, 2 quarters and 6 tchetveriks of wheat, 1 tchetverik of peas, 1 quarter and 2 tchetveriks of barley, 1 quarter of oat, 4 tchetveriks of millet, 6 tchetveriks of buckwheat, 2 tchetveriks of hemp, and 1 quarter of linen. Two quarters of rye was planted in the autumn.

Similarly to Dmitro, Ivan Krasnokutskiy possessed a hamlet by the Poluziria river. There were two houses. The Cossack's family kept the cattle on the farm: 8 bulls, 2 cows, 1 calf, 3 horses, and 8 pigs. There was also a small garden with the total area of about 0.1 hectares (Voloshyn 2016: 67).

In the household of another widower, Pilip Molodika, there were 3 houses and a pantry. 4 servants lived in this household, together with the host, his son Ivan (38 years old), and his daughter-in-law Stepanida (35 years old). Pilip taught two of them, Ivan Zakharko (16 years old) and Vasil Kiriliv (14 years old), the craft of fuller (*Misto Poltava...* 331), in which he obviously was proficient. The description of his household indicates that this craft was the main income for his family. Pilip and his son were selling their production goods on the city fairs in Hetmanate and Novorossiya.

Unlike most of his neighbors, Pilip did not own a vegetable garden, garden, grasslands, forests, apiary, fishing places, nor other lands. He had only 1 horse and 4 pigs. He did not plant anything on his arable lands (*Central State...* 38).<sup>4</sup>

Only in the studied micro group, 3 more persons dealt with it, i.e. Sava Bahriy, who sewed hats, Gnat Zabolotko, who was also a sewer, and Semen Gook who worked as a tailor. Of course, this problem requires a separate study, however, according to researchers, the craft as a type of economic activity of the Cossacks in the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century was popular in the Hetmanate (Sklokin 2009: 13).

The next group includes burgers. Among burgers, the merchant widows should obviously be considered as the wealthiest. Most of them lived in the suburbs. Moreover, 15 of them headed households. Sometimes these widows, like Evdokia Marchenko (55 years old) or Marina Guzenko (40 years old), had quite a lot of properties. The former one, the 55-year-old widow lived in her own household with her three children – two sons and a daughter. She had a pretty big household. In addition, in the suburbs, the widow had a farm and 5 houses without a household, which were inhabited by servants. Evdokia also owned a hamlet on the river Suhoi Tahamlyk with arable lands, grasslands and steppe, a mill on the river Vorskla in the town of Stari Sanzhary, a farm in the village Machuhy, and a forest.

Her sons, like a significant part of Poltava merchants, traded cattle, riding it to Silesia. From there, they brought a variety of clothes and silk fabrics that were

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<sup>4</sup> CSHAUK, Found.57, Register.2, Case. 166, p. 38.

later sold on the Poltava fairs. The turnover of commercial capital, according to the own words of the widow, was about 1,000 rubles (*Misto Poltava...* 52–55).

Marina Guzenko had a large family – six children; three sons and three daughters. This widow also lived in a large household combined from two smaller. Besides, she had another household in the city center, 2 farms, and a malt house in the suburbs. She owned two hamlets, one in Ladyzhina Balka and the other by the river Kolomak, arable lands, meadows, a large area of the forest in the tract Bezruchki, and other lands. The merchant's widow led the retail of hot wine, which she bought at fairs and sold from her own home. The amount of capital was much smaller than Evdohia Marchenko's – 200 rubles (*Misto Poltava...* 74–78).

Among the widowers-burgers who lead their own ménage, we should mention a merchant Andriy Fesenko (70 years old). His family consisted of his son Ivan (25 years old) and a daughter Horpyna (25 years old) with her husband Ivan (35 years old) and their son Michailo (7 years old). It is likely that because of old age, at the time of the census, Andriy Fesenko retired. His son and the son-in-law held the trade. The son bought fur and other small local goods on the fairs in the Hetmanate, and transferred them to the Crimea, and from there he brought morocco leather, incense, and cotton. The son-in-law had another 'specialization.' He bought wholesale the cloth that had been brought from Silesia by Poltava merchants, and resold it.

Besides, this merchant possessed a farm in the suburbs. He also owned a hamlet and a forest by the river Suhyy Tahamlyk, and hay by the river Tahamlyk (*Misto Poltava...* 126–127). Although we do not have the information about the capital that was owned by Andriy Fesenko, his household in the central part of the city, two servants and the trading activity of his son and the son-in-law, allow us to suggest that the merchant was not a poor man.

Among another social group that was analyzed by us – guild workers, at the time of the census, no widow headed households, and only half of widowers owned one. Two of them lived in the central part, and the rest in the suburbs. Since the information about the assets is missing in the descriptions of their households, it is very difficult to learn about their level of welfare. However, it must be noted that only two of them – a tailor Semen Sobko and a shoemaker Ivan Pylypenko – had students, and also two of them – already mentioned Sobko and a shoemaker Klim Vedmid – kept servants. Among them, the richest was Semen Sobko, who except for the student, a 18-year-old originally from Nizhin Ivan Cernavskiy, also had two servants – Cossack's son Overko Ugrynenko (35 years old) and a girl Gafia (20 years old). The tailor paid 6 and 1.5 rubles (*Misto Poltava...* 173) to his servants.

## 5. Conclusions

In the summary, we must note that during the studied period, the proportion of widows and widowers in the marital status composition of the Poltava population in general was consistent with the general European trend – the group of widows was in several times larger than of widowers (12.1% vs. 1.6%).

The analysis of their age indicates that most widows were adult women of childbearing age, while widowers were usually older men, over 60 years old.

Their number increased with age. Starting with the age group of 25–29 years and older, the share of widows always exceeded 10%. The number of widowers began to increase in the older age groups, and from the age of 45, this trend only intensified. Such a large disparity between the number of widows and widowers in Poltava, in my opinion, is another confirmation of a well-known thesis that in the early modern society, men were more likely than women to remarry.

This group settling in the urban space, measured up the general structure of the city settlement – most of its members lived in the suburbs. However, the internal feature of the community was that widows more often than widowers lived in the central part of Poltava. Obviously, this was due to the fact that the largest micro group of Poltava widows consisted of the maids who lived in the households of wealthy townspeople in the downtown area. Only one widower worked as a servant.

Obviously, the widowhood is the outcast phenomenon that affects all the members of a society, without any connection with their social identity. However, at the time of the creation of Rumyantsev description, the biggest part of Poltava widows consisted of burghers, while the largest share among widowers were Cossacks.

The family structures where widows and widowers lived were significantly different from those that prevailed among the population in general. Widows were often solitaries, whereas widowers were usually members of multiple family households. Generally in Poltava, according to Rumyantsev descriptions, a nuclear family was dominant.

The financial position of representatives of both analyzed groups was not homogeneous. Among them, we meet fairly wealthy people who often headed households, and relatively poor. However, the percentage of the widows who stood at the head of the house communities was relatively small, while among widowers it reached almost a half. The fact that a significant percentage of urban widows were maids shows us, in my opinion, that generally widows fell into economic difficulties more often than widowers.

In general, we can say that despite the legal protection by norms of Lithuanian Statute and Magdeburg rights, the loss of a spouse created more additional difficulties for women than for men.

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### Summary

This article investigates the situation of widows and widowers in the early modern society of Hetmanate. The main source that was used are census books of Poltava, created in the period 1765–1766, during the time of so-called Rumyantsev description of Little Russia in Hetmanate (1765–1769). The article covers the main problems of widowed Poltava citizens in 1760s. Using the methods of historical demography and social anthropology, the proportion of widows and widowers in the total structure of population, topography of their settlement, age characteristics, social status, the structure of households, and their financial situation were studied.

The study concludes that the proportion of widows and widowers in the marital status composition of the citizens in total was equal to the general European trend – the percentage of widows was much higher than of widowers, widows more often than widowers lived in the central part of the city, most widows were women in the childbearing age, while widowers were usually old men.

By the social affiliation, widows were usually citizens, while widowers – Cossacks. The largest micro group of Poltava widows consisted of the maids who lived in the yards of wealthy townspeople in the downtown area. The financial position of both groups was not the same. Among them, there were quite wealthy individuals, and relatively poor as well.

Keywords: widows, widowers, Poltava, Hetmanate, household, family

## Wdowy i wdowcy w Połtawie w drugiej połowie XVIII wieku

### Streszczenie

W artykule rozpatrzono sytuację wdów i wdowców w społeczeństwie Hetmanatu w epoce nowożytnej. Głównym wykorzystanym źródłem są księgi spisowe Połtawy, które powstały w okresie 1765–1766, podczas tzw. opisu Małorusi Rumiancewa w Hetmanacie (1765–1769). W artykule omówiono główne zagadnienia związane z owdowiałymi mieszkańcami Połtawy w latach sześćdziesiątych XVIII wieku. Przy użyciu metod demografii historycznej i antropologii społecznej przeanalizowano udział wdów i wdowców w całej strukturze populacji, topografię ich rozmieszczenia, charakterystyki wieku, status społeczny, strukturę gospodarstw domowych i ich sytuację finansową.

Badania pozwalają stwierdzić, że w sumie udział wdów i wdowców w strukturze stanu cywilnego mieszkańców odpowiadał ogólnym tendencjom europejskim – odsetek wdów był znacznie wyższy niż wdowców, wdowy znacznie częściej niż wdowcy zamieszkiwały w centralnych częściach miasta, większość wdów była jeszcze w wieku prokreacyjnym, gdy tymczasem wdowcy byli z reguły starcami.

Pod względem przynależności społecznej wdowy zazwyczaj były mieszczkami, podczas gdy wdowcy – kozakami. W skład największej mikrogrupy połtawskich wdów wchodziły służące, które zamieszkiwały w domach bogatych mieszczan w centralnych częściach miasta. Finansowa pozycja obu grup nie była taka sama. Wśród nich były zarówno jednostki całkiem zamożne, jak i względnie biedne.

**Słowa kluczowe:** wdowy, wdowcy, Połtawa (Ukr. Полтава), hetmanat lub hetmańszczyzna (Ukr. Гетьманат lub Гетьманщина), gospodarstwo domowe, rodzina.