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**Family and Kinship in the Jewish City of Piotrków Trybunalski  
in the 19th Century**

The research project for  
International Institute for Jewish Genealogy

Wrocław 2012–2013

## Introduction

Family life is considered in culture a central part of Jewish everyday existence in Central and Eastern Europe. In historiography, it is usually researched through narrative sources, even if the nature of the specific research subject is demographic or economic. Mass sources with individual character are only rarely employed in quantitative historical researches on Jews. This study is an attempt to break this bad habit. I have decided to analyse the Jewish family through sources very popular in small-scale genealogical researches; 19<sup>th</sup>-century birth, marriage and death records. While genealogists focus on the history of one multigenerational family regardless of the place of living, I am interested in the history of multiple nuclear families living in one specified place. Analysis of mass records allows the historian to statistically express elemental demographic and social characteristics of the family. For the purposes of this study, I have built two databases: the first one gathering data on all marriages taken in Piotrków Trybunalski between 1808 and 1870; the second one listing all families started between 1808 and 1850, for which complete genealogical data has survived: the couple's marriage certificate, birth certificates for their offspring and the record confirming the death of the first spouse or confirming surviving the marriage till the wife reached the age of 50, considered in demography as the definitive end of a woman's fertile period. The methods which I applied in the study—aggregative -family reconstitution and social networking—are rarely used in the research on Jewish families on the lands of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. For this reason, I have decided to compare my research outcome mainly with the data on Christian communities, even though such comparison should be made with great caution as the Christian and Jewish socio-economic structure was different.

The study consists of two parts. In the first section, I focus on the aggregative and network analysis of marriages—the social and demographic processes of family formation, the influence of economic, professional and social conditions on strategies for selecting a partner. In the second part of this study, I explore the possibilities of the family reconstitution method, and look how the newly established family functioned later, beginning with the selection of the place of living, the interval between marriage and the

first birth, intervals between births, ending with the age of the mother at the last birth and the calculation of theoretical fertility (total marital fertility level). Though the study is based on one place and cannot be generalised, it introduces important quantitative data to the discussion on the Ashkenazi family in the past, so far based mainly on narrative sources.

## Kinship

### Social and professional mobility

Registration of the groom's, his father's and father-in-law's profession in marriage certificates allowed me to divide them into eleven socio-economic groups and analyse how belonging to one of these groups influenced spouse selection. Two comparisons—between the groom's and his father-in-law's occupation as well as between the groom's father's and the groom's father-in-law's occupation—show that the strongest endogamic tendencies among merchant's (*kupiec*) sons, 6 out of 9 married merchant's daughters and 2 out of the remaining 3 married rich leather tradesmen's (*handlarz*) daughters and slaughter man's daughters. Similarly 7 out of 13 merchant's daughters chose their husbands from the same social group (including one merchant's son remaining economically dependent on his parents, in 2 out of the remaining cases they married sons of fathers with prestigious professions: cantor and “writer” (most likely *sofer*). Tradesmen, poorer than merchants, followed endogamic tendencies less strictly. Stronger endogamic tendencies among higher social classes within the same professional group are also reflected by craftsmen's choices: while 32% of craftsmen other than apprentices married women from the same socio-economic class, poorer apprentices (30%) most commonly chose day labourers' daughters. Only 1 out of 10 apprentices married craftsmen's daughters. Matrimonial decisions of persons without a stable profession, day labourers, were restricted mainly to other day labourers' and craftsmen's daughters. Soldiers in 3 out of 5 cases married day labourers' daughters.

Network analysis reveals that the Jewish community of Piotrków Trybunalski was divided into five social circles:

1. the lowest circle of beggars and soldiers who were able to marry into the second

circle;

2. the second circle of apprentices and day labourers, who were much closer to the middle, third circle than to the first one;
3. the third, middle circle of craftsmen with their own workshop, owners of small soap, leather and paint factories, teachers, musicians, **factors**;
4. the circle of tradesmen, pedlars and shopkeepers, because of their prestige much closer to the third circle than to the fifth circle;
5. the elite circle of merchants and community officials, into which only rarely could daughters from other circles, mainly slaughter men's marry.

Most of the marriages took place within the same or within the nearest social circles. Matchmakers, parents and spouses prized financial, professional and social equality. Relations between merchants and community officials, cantors, rabbis and "writers" were unique, because they engaged a factor in marital relations unknown in other societies, namely that of respect of religious authority. As I show in the later part of the study, most of these officials also came from merchant families.

Besides the occupation factor, the economic factor also played an important role in spouse selection (table 3). The ideal spouse for Jews from Piotrków Trybunalski came from the same or close financial class. An exception are <sup>1</sup>spouses coming from families paying low taxes, who preferred to marry those exempted from tax duties, which shows that the distinction between the poorest ones and the ones paying minimal taxes was not fixed. People exempted from tax in one year were obliged to pay it in another if, in the eyes of the community officials, their financial condition improved. Perhaps temporary tax relaxation was a deliberate policy aimed at relieving the burden of the poorest.

Social, professional and economic endogamic preferences are often observed in urban and village communities in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. In Warsaw, Poznań, Opole and Jasienica the selection of spouse coming from the same group is more common than the share of this group in the general structure of the community. The researchers of Opole,

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<sup>1</sup> On the contrary, Pelagia Kwapulińska noticed that economical factor was not the primary reason for spouse selection in Kochłowice. Pelagia Kwapulińska, *Rodzina w parafii kochłowskiej w XIX wieku*, [in:] *Śląskie studia demograficzne*, vol. 5, *Rodzina*, pod red. Zbigniewa Kwaśnego, Wrocław 2001, s. 146–147.

Jasienica, <sup>2</sup>Kochłowice and Radzionków point out that peasants commonly chose their spouses from their own social class, something which can be explained only <sup>3</sup>partially by their large share in the general local population, and mainly by their conscious choice: experience in agricultural work of both of the spouses was required to run a village household. In many parishes, well-to-do peasants<sup>4</sup> (*kmięcie*) strictly chose daughters of other well-to-do peasants. Poorer peasants were more socially mobile, but still usually preferred daughters of other peasants. Similarly in towns, representatives of most profitable professions were less mobile. Poorer grooms from towns were more mobile and did not refrain from marrying peasant daughters. Jews from Piotrków obviously did not marry peasant daughters; nonetheless their lower social circles were more mobile than the higher.

Comparison of father's and son's profession makes the analysis of profession inheritance possible. However, it should be noted that this method is not ideal as it compares people in different phases of their career.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Stefania Kowalska-Glikman, *Ruchliwość społeczna i zawodowa mieszkańców Warszawy w latach 1845–1861 na podstawie akt stanu cywilnego*, Wrocław 1971, p. 137; Krzysztof Makowski, *Rodzina poznańska w I połowie XIX wieku*, Poznań 1992, p. 117–121; Waldemar Pasieka, *Śluby w parafii opolskiej w latach 1801–1850*, „Przeszość Demograficzna Polski” (further PDP) 21 (2000), p. 71–78; Gaziński Piotr et al., *Śluby w parafii ewangelickiej Jasienica pod Szczecinem w latach 1778–1880*, PDP 28 (2007), p. 100; Elżbieta Kościak, *Mobilność społeczno-zawodowa ludności Opola w drugiej połowie XIX i na początku XX w.*, ŚKHS 43 (1988), s. 313–318.

<sup>3</sup> Elżbieta Kościak, *Mobilność społeczno-zawodowa ludności Opola w drugiej połowie XIX i na początku XX w.*, ŚKHS 43 (1988), p. 313–318; W. Pasieka, dz. cyt., p. 71–78; Pelagia Kwapulińska, *Rodzina w parafii kochłowskiej w XIX wieku*, [in:] *Śląskie studia demograficzne*, t. 5, *Rodzina*, ed. Zbigniewa Kwaśnego, Wrocław 2001, s. 146–147; Marek Górny, *Ruchliwość społeczna mieszkańców parafii Radzionków w latach 1851–1870 w świetle metryk ślubów*, PDP 16 (1985), p. 157–158.

<sup>4</sup> Marek Górny, *Ruchliwość społeczna mieszkańców parafii Radzionków w latach 1851–1870 w świetle metryk ślubów*, PDP 16 (1985), s. 157–158.; Danuta Daszkiewicz-Ordyłowska, *Śluby w parafii toszeckiej w latach 1789–1877*, [in:] *Śląskie studia demograficzne*, t. 1, *Śluby*, Wrocław 1995, s. 64–65; Janusz Spychała, *Śluby w parafii Strzelce Opolskie w latach 1766–1870*, [in:] *Śląskie studia demograficzne*, vol. 1, *Śluby*, Wrocław 1995, p. 38; K. Makowski, *op. cit.*, s. 118–120. Zależności te dla żydowskiej społeczności społeczności Torunia nie były aż tak jednoznaczne. Agnieszka Zielińska, *Przemiany struktur demograficznych w Toruniu w XIX i na początku XX wieku*, Toruń 2013, p. 108.

<sup>5</sup> See Stefania Kowalska-Glikman, *Akta masowe w badaniach historii społecznej*, [in:] *Metody i wyniki. Z warsztatu historyka dziejów społeczeństwa polskiego*, Warszawa 1980, p. 187–188; M. Górny, *Ruchliwość...*, p. 160.

The father's occupation had a very strong influence on his son's professional career (table 4 and 5). 62.5% of tradesmen came from families involved in trade. Such dependence was weaker in the case of craftsmen, 51% of them came from craftsmen's families and 19% from day labourers' families. 57% of grooms working in industry (leather, soap, oil, paint production) were recruited in from industrialist's families and 16% from day labourers' families. The strongest relationship between the father's and son's occupation is noticeable for day labourer grooms. The weakest relationship occurred in families involved in services, only 36%. As I have previously mentioned, there were five circles in which people functioned and into which people married. The groom usually remained in his father's circle. This circle marks the boundaries of upward and downward social mobility, restricted mostly to neighbouring circles. The case of day labourers exemplifies it most clearly. There were only a few fathers with different professions that had an unskilled day labourer as a son. Similarly, only a few labourers could be proud of a father more skilled than them. Spectacular changes might occur only downward. Among the representatives of crafts, services, industry and day labourers there are a few merchants' sons. On the contrary, there are no opposite examples of merchants coming from families involved in services, crafts and day labour. Signs of spectacular degradations can be found in the lists of taxpayers from Piotrków Trybunalski mentioning merchant bankruptcies.

Stefania Kowalska-Glikman and Krzysztof Makowski noticed a similar dependency of father's and son's career in (non-Jewish) Warsaw and Poznań. They argue that education and wealth was the main factor fostering social upward mobility. However, the case of Jewish <sup>6</sup>Piotrków Trybunalski was different. In this community—without noblemen, officers, lawyers, engineer and secular scholars—it was self-recruiting merchantry who occupied the highest rung on the social ladder. Education was not a way to self-promotion either. In traditional Jewish society, like the one from Piotrków Trybunalski, education meant only high proficiency in *halakhah*, it made a scholar respected but not rich. His financial situation had to be protected by his parents, father-in-law or by holding a regular job. Though in Jewish culture, and thus in historiography, there is a firm image of *talmid hokhem*, poor but talented student who finds support from his rich father-in-law, introducing him into higher socio-economic class, in reality, such

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<sup>6</sup> S. Kowalska-Glikman, *Ruchliwość...*, s. 74; K. Makowski, *op. cit.*, s. 108.

success stories were rare. In marriage certificates from <sup>7</sup>Piotrków Trybunalski 14 students were registered (table 6). At least six of them had merchant fathers and at least 8 of them had merchant fathers-in-law, ten were themselves involved in commerce. Only 2 out of 14 came from non-merchant background and were sons of baker and synagogue servants (shames). So, in most cases it was the family background which allowed a student to have prolonged education and gain the status of scholar-merchant married to a daughter of a merchant. Significant wealth was necessary for the student to spend his time on unprofitable studies in *besmedresh*. Education not supported by family wealth was enough to turn one into a mediocre, poverty-stricken teacher, but not into widely recognised scholar. Taxpayer lists register over 40 teachers, all exempt from paying tax. The lack of financial support and the necessity to find paid work was the main obstacle to social advancement.

## Family

### *Kest* or extended family

The custom of *kest* is mentioned in 18<sup>th</sup>-century gentry administrative ordinances<sup>8</sup>, 19th-century writings of rabbis and *maskilim*<sup>9</sup>, as well as 20th-centuries memorials on *shtetl*<sup>10</sup>. According to them, *kest* was the custom of financially supporting a newly married couple by inviting them to live in the house of bride's parents. Such support was

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<sup>7</sup> Jacob Katz, *Tradition And Crisis. Jewish Society at the End of the Middle Ages*, New York 1993, p. 118–119; Breyer Menachem, *The Jewish Woman in Rabbinic Literature*, t. 2, *A Psychohistorical Perspective*, Hoboken 1986, p. 58–59.; Mark Zborowski, *Elizabeth Herzog, Life is with People*, New York 1953, p. 81–83.

<sup>8</sup> Jakub Goldberg, *Gminy żydowskie (kahały) w systemie władztwa dominialnego w szlacheckiej Rzeczypospolitej*, [in:] *Między historią a teorią. Refleksje nad problematyką dziejów i wiedzy historycznej*, ed. Mariana Drozdowskiego, Warszawa-Poznań 1988, p. 160–161.

<sup>9</sup> Immanuel Etke s, *Marriage and Torah Study Among the Lomdim in Lithuania in the Nineteenth Century*, [in:] *The Jewish Family. Metaphor and Memory*, ed. Davida Kraemera, New York-Oxford 1989, p. 156–157.

<sup>10</sup> Mark Zborowski, Elizabeth Herzog, *Life...*, p. 299; Sydney Stahl Weinberg, *The World of our Mothers. The Lives of Jewish Immigrant Women*, Chapel Hill-London 1988, p. 5.

supposed to help the groom to fulfil the most important Jewish commandments: start a family and continue the study *halakhah* in convenient conditions freed from the necessity of “wasting” time on paid work. Maskilim's critiques and idealised and sentimental memorials exaggerated the phenomenon of *kest*.. Shaul Stampfer,<sup>11</sup> on the basis of Rafał Mahler's statistics,<sup>12</sup> claims that *kest* was marginal and only the richest could afford to support their son-in-law in such way. According to the 1765 census data for 7 voivodships of the Crown of the Kingdom of Poland, 14.7% of married couples in towns and 10.7% in villages lived in their father or father-in-law's household. Jakub Goldberg calculated on the basis of the 1791 census that in Kraków voivodship, Land of Wieluń and Ostrzeszów Powiat 13.6% of married couples in towns and 5.8% in villages lived together with their parents<sup>13</sup>.

Analysing the popularity of *kest* in Piotrków Trybunalski is possible by comparing the place of living of newly married couples and their parents at the time of marriage and at the time of the birth of the first child. Exact data on addresses were registered for the years 1815 and 1825. During those years at least 20.8% of newly married couples (table 7) continued to live in the groom's or the bride's father's house. Perhaps the actual percentage was higher as it was impossible to establish the place of living in one quarter of all marriages. The sample of 22 couples staying with their parents is too small to analyse its socio-economic structure. Nonetheless, it seems that parental support served learning (four cases of grooms being students and teachers), as well as gaining professional experience in trade (six cases)<sup>14</sup> and in other fields (slaughter man, wagoner). In about half of the cases a couple stayed with the groom's parents, and, the other half with the bride's parents. In a few cases where it was possible to establish the financial situation of the supporting parents, they belonged to wealthy and quite well-off classes. The difference in mean age at marriage among those who enjoyed *kest* and those who did not was about a year for brides and 0.6 year for grooms. Parental support made it

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<sup>11</sup> Shaul Stampfer, *Families, Rabbis and Education. Traditional Jewish Society in Nineteenth-Century Eastern Europe*, Oxford 2010, p. 14.

<sup>12</sup> Rafał Mahler, *...*, t. 2, table 7, 7 d.

<sup>13</sup> Jakub Goldberg, *Matżeństwo Żydów polskich w XVIII w.*, manuscript, p. 13–23; מאהלר רפאל, *יידן אין אמאליקן*; 18 יארהונדערט פולין אין ליכט פון ציפערן. די דעמאגראפישע און סאציאל-עקאנאמישע סטרוקטור פון יידן אין קרוין-פולין אין 18 יארהונדערט, Warszawa 1958, vol. 2., tab. 5D.

<sup>14</sup> See J. Katz, *op. cit.*, p. 159.



possible for the couples to marry earlier, perhaps even before gaining the full financial independence required to create an independent household. Zenon Guldon suggested that *kest* might be one of the factors fostering a general lower mean age at marriage among Jews<sup>15</sup>. Even though the mean age at marriage among couples staying under protection of *kest* in Piotrków Trybunalski seem to support that thesis, it should be noted that the scale of the phenomenon was rather low and similar parental support occurred among Christians as well.

The custom of temporarily hosting a young couple filled a few social roles. It was:

1. the way to live according to the *halakhah* for a young student,
2. the way to transfer experience inevitable for a successful professional life,
3. vital necessity determined by economic situation<sup>16</sup>, and
4. a way to bypass the law limiting settlement privileges, possibly also in case of Piotrkow Trybunalski<sup>17</sup>.

In Piotrków Trybnalski the custom of *kest* exceeded its traditional boundaries as depicted in historiography. Therefore, it would be better to view *kest* just as variant (limited mainly to point no. 1) of common European household patterns. The temporary extended family phase and kinship domains were much more popular than Hajnal and Laslett supposed initially<sup>18</sup>. As I analyse the phenomenon in relation to a relatively small group of newly married couples and not in relation to all marriages, 20% of young couples living in their parents' households means that a much lower percentage of households were extended.

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<sup>15</sup> Guldon Zenon, Kowalski Waldemar, *The Jewish Population and Famaily in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in the Second Half of the 18th Century*, „The History of Family” 8 (2003), p. 526.

<sup>16</sup> See J. Goldberg, *Małżeństwa...*, p. 22.

<sup>17</sup> See Jakub Goldberg, *Gminy żydowskie (kahaly) w systemie władztwa dominialnego w szlacheckiej Rzeczypospolitej*, [in:] *Między historią a teorią. Refleksje nad problematyką dziejów i wiedzy historycznej*, ed. Marian Drozdowski, Warszawa-Poznań 1988, p. 160. Jewish settlement in the Christian part of Piotrków was forbidden until 1862.

<sup>18</sup> Renzo Derosas, *A Family Affair. Marriage, Mobility, And Living Arrangements In Nineteenth-Century Venice, 1850-1869*, [in:] *The Road to Independence. Leaving Home in Western and Eastern Societies, 16th–20th centuries*, Bern i in. 2004, p. 149–150.; Charles Tilly, *The Historical Study of Vital Processes*, [in:] *Historical Studies of Changing Fertility*, ed. Charles Tilly, Princeton 1978, p. 47. Mikołaj Szoltysek, *Teoria rodziny w ujęciu Petera Lasletta i The Cambridge Group — „angielska tajna broń”, jej krytycy i jej „długie trwanie”*, PDP 24 (2003), p. 22–23.

## Premarital conceptions and 1<sup>st</sup> birth interval

In the sample of reconstituted families the mean 1<sup>st</sup> birth interval—i.e. between marriage and first childbirth lasted 25.4 months (table 8). Even if we consider that it is artificially prolonged by the deficiencies in birth registration, it belongs to one of the longest birth intervals registered in 18th- and 19th-century Poland and close to the one in Lubawka (about 23 months), Toszec (about 21 months), and Bejsce (about 27 months)<sup>19</sup>. The analysis of the 1<sup>st</sup> birth interval, taking into account the age of mother at marriage (table 9), reveals that it took more time for younger women to become pregnant. In effect, with a generally low mean age at marriage among Jews in Piotrków, the 1<sup>st</sup> birth interval is long and lasts nearly two years. Edmund Piasecki suggested in his study on Bejsce<sup>20</sup> a similar relationship between the age at marriage and the 1<sup>st</sup> birth interval length.

In the sample of 103 families with children, in seven cases the first child was conceived before marriage and five of them were born before marriage. Such percentage of premarital conceptions is one of the lowest in Poland and Europe<sup>21</sup> and most probably was a consequence of early marriages (mean age at first marriage for both of the spouses among Jews in Piotrków Trybunalski was 20.0 for brides and 22.0 for grooms). What is unusual for Piotrków, compared to non-Jewish communities, is the fact that most of the premarital conceptions ended up in premarital deliveries and the couple married only afterwards. It might be that the specific view on illegitimacy in Jewish law motivated such postponement. According to it, only a child of married woman conceived with a man other than her husband was considered as illegitimate (*mamzer*). Single women having children were not prized in Judaism, but there were no special punishing consequences for them as in the case of *mamzerim*<sup>22</sup>.

## Birth intervals and non-susceptible period

<sup>19</sup> J. Karbowska, *op. cit.*, s. 151; Danuta Daszkiewicz-Ordyłowska, *Rodzina w parafii toszeckiej w latach 1789–1877*, [in:] *Śląskie studia demograficzne*, vol. 5, *Rodzina*, pod red. Zbigniewa Kwaśnego, Wrocław 2001, p. 92; Edmund Piasecki, *Ludność parafii bejskiej (woj. kieleckie) w świetle ksiąg metrykalnych z XVIII–XX w.*, Warszawa-Wrocław 1990, p. 235.

<sup>20</sup> E. Piasecki, *op. cit.*, s. 235.

<sup>21</sup> Cezary Kukło, *Demografia Rzeczypospolitej przedrozbiorowej*, Warszawa 2009, p. 348–350.

<sup>22</sup> *Незаконнорожденные*, [in:] *Еврейская энциклопедия...*, vol. 11, col. 647–650.

Second and next birth intervals, like the first birth interval, were long. The 2<sup>nd</sup> birth interval lasted 31 months and the next ones were longer (table 10). Similar lengths are registered in villages and small towns, e.g. in Lubawka (about 25–29 months), Gubin (about 32–37 months), Toszek (about 31–37 months), Strzelce Opolskie (30–36 months) and near Rzeszów (32–36 months)<sup>23</sup>.

Measurements of mean birth interval taking into consideration the survival of a child help to estimate the length of post-partum non-susceptible period (table 11). In cases when a child died within first 12 months of life, meaning that half of them died within the first month<sup>24</sup>, a birth interval occurring afterwards was shorter about 30%, i.e. 10 months. Such non-susceptibility after delivery is caused by temporary sexual abstinence, natural ovulation pause, and lactation delaying ovulation return<sup>25</sup>. Breastfeeding is the main factor regulating fecundity in the demographic *ancien régime*. According to Bardet, one year and according to Krystyna Górna, two years of breastfeeding extends usually the birth interval from 20 to 30 months<sup>26</sup>.

Breastfeeding for the purposes of child's health was advised in the Talmud and rabbinic literature<sup>27</sup>. Abraham Tsvi Hersh Eisenstadt in his *Pithey tshuva* (Vilna 1836, Zhytomyr 1840, Lviv 1858) recommended mothers breastfed children for two years. Some historians<sup>28</sup> claim that Jews deliberately treated breastfeeding as a contraception<sup>29</sup>,

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<sup>23</sup> C. K u k l o, *Demografia...*, p. 339 n.; Hanna Kurowska, *Gubin i jego mieszkańcy. Studium demograficzne XVII–XIX w.*, Zielona Góra 2010, p. 221; Karbowska Jolanta, *Ludność Lubawki w latach 1801–1850*, PDP 24 (2003), p. 151; J. S p y c h a ł a, *Rodzina...*, p. 36 n.; D. D a s z k i e w i c z - O r ł o w s k a, *Rodzina...*, p. 92 n.

<sup>24</sup> J. K n o d e l, *European Populations...*, s. 26–27.

<sup>25</sup> Ron L e s t h a e g h e, Hilary P a g e, *The Post-Partum Non-Susceptible Period: Development and Application of Model Schedules*, „Population Studies” 34 (1980), p. 143; Jean-Pierret B a r d e t, *Urodzenie w kontekście płodności naturalnej*, PDP 23 (2002), p. 11; J. K n o d e l, *Demographic...*, p. 279–280.

<sup>26</sup> J.-P. B a r d e t, *op. cit.*, s. 11; K. G ó r n a, *Rodzina na Górnym...*, p. 55–56.

<sup>27</sup> E. K a n a r f o g e l, *Attitudes Toward...*, p. 18.

<sup>28</sup> G e s h o n H u n d e r t, *Jewish Children and Childhood in Early Modern East Central Europe*, [in:] *The Jewish Family: Metaphor and Memory*, pod red. Davida Kraemera, Oxford 1989, p. 86–87; M. B r e y e r, *op. cit.*, p. 60; M. Z b o r o w s k i, E. H e r z o g, *op. cit.*, p. 327.

<sup>29</sup> Jon Knodel points out that there were many breastfeeding patterns in German villages, and the custom varied between various areas in Germany. Knodel claims that most probably breastfeeding was not

however, such a view is not supported by historical sources and may be an anachronism. It is also not certain if prolonged breastfeeding was religiously motivated.

### Number of children and fertility

Total marital fertility rate is considered the most precise and standardised way to estimate general fertility levels. It suitably describes the traditional population as most of the fertility took place within marriage and number of illegitimate children was insignificant. It describes the theoretical fertility of women between 15 and 49, independently of main factors lowering her chances of having a child: delayed age at marriage and end of marriage before her 49<sup>th</sup> year after which there are no chances for conception. Additionally, an analysis of fertility in 5-year periods allows the demographer to trace dynamic changes in fertility and estimate to what extent it was deliberately limited<sup>30</sup>.

Due to inconsistencies in the source material and incomplete birth registration, it was not possible to estimate marital fertility levels for Jewish population in Piotrków precisely. Male-female ratio among children in reconstituted families equalled 130, while with complete registration it should be close to 106. This difference means that the actual fertility levels might be up to 22.8% higher than the measured ones (table 12, graph 1). As a result, I estimate that the number of children that women could bear was between 8 and 10, of course provided that she was married between 15 and 49. Compared to other Jewish and non-Jewish communities (tables 13) fertility levels in Piotrków were rather average for preindustrial times. The characteristic shape of fertility levels measured in 5-year periods, though lower than model levels, shows that there was no deliberate contraception at least on a significant scale: according to the model, natural fertility levels slowly decrease from age 20 till 35 and only then quickly diminish together with the woman's natural fecundity. General lower marital fertility level in Piotrków is directly

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deliberately used as a means of contraception. John Knodel, *Demographic Behavior in the Past. A Study of Fourteen German Village Populations in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries*, Cambridge 1988, p. 334.

<sup>30</sup> Luis Henry, *Some Data on Natural Fertility*, „Eugenics Quarterly” 8 (1961), p. 81–91; J. Knodel, *Demographic...*, *passim*.

related to longer birth intervals and breastfeeding patterns, and possibly to a lesser extent to deliberate attempts to postpone the next conception through temporary sexual abstinence. Still, such forms birth control were not a part of deliberate fertility limitation slowly spreading among Christians in 19<sup>th</sup> century Poland, which is, by definition, parity dependent.

While total marital fertility shows theoretical possibilities for childbearing, it does not tell the actual mean number of births per married woman. In reconstituted families, there were 4.9 (6.0 after correction) children per family and 7.2 (9.3 after correction) per family which broke only after the wife's 49<sup>th</sup>. Compared to the mean number of children in other (non-Jewish) communities (table 14) in Poland, a Jewish family from Piotrków had on average at least one more child. So, even though theoretical fertility levels in Piotrków were rather low, thanks to early marriage and late age at last birth (table 15), the actual number of children per family was higher than in non-Jewish communities.

## Conclusion

The only way to precisely describe the Jewish family's vital characteristics is from a statistical point of view. Thanks to that, the case of Piotrków Trybunalski showed that a few views popular in historiography are not supported by precise data from that town.

The Jewish family from Piotrków Trybunalski fits the commonly held historiographical image of Jewish families with numerous children. However, the high mean number of children in this case was not caused by more frequent (in comparison to non-Jewish families), deliveries, but by much more complete usage of the woman's fertile period. Most probably thanks to the popularity of breastfeeding, birth intervals remained quite long, at the same time contraception remained unknown until the end of researched period. Spouse selection was mostly endogamic, within the same social, professional, and economic circle. Stories, often mentioned in narrative sources about talented young and poor students marrying daughters of rich merchants does not occur in Piotrków, in the light of nominative analysis. Poor students turned into poor teachers. Rich students could afford financial idleness for such a long time to turn into scholars. Only one-fifth of newly married couples were supported by their parents who shared their home with them.

Except for the higher average number of children per family, the social and demographic characteristics of the Jewish family in Piotrków were close to the non-Jewish majority surrounding them. The same demographic mechanism applied to both of the groups.

Data from the Piotrków Trybunalski civil register should not be over-generalised, only further statistical studies on other communities may show, which of the above mentioned characteristics are universal for Jews in Poland and which ones are specific to a strictly limited time and space. A high number of children, as an effect of early marriage and more complete usage of woman's fertility is a factor standing behind faster population growth among Jews. It is not clear what socio-economic mechanism allowed them to create families and households earlier than among non-Jews. This question should be a subject of further demographic study.

Table 1. Selection of spouse according to the groom's and father-in-law's profession in Piotrków Trybunalski, 1808–1867

Groom's profession	Total	Father-in-law's profession									
		total	Trade not merchants	merchants	Industry	With parents	craftsmen	services	day labourers	Other	poor
trade											
total	24	16	8	8	1	—	2	5	—	—	—
not merchants	15	9	7	2	1	—	1	4	—	—	—
merchants	9	7	1	6	—	—	1	1	—	—	—
officials	2	2	—	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
industry	16	4	3	1	2	—	4	2	4	—	—
with parents	13	3	1	2	1	1	3	4	—	—	1
craftsmen											
total	82	7	7	—	11	—	24	17	20	1	2
not apprentices	72	6	6	—	9	—	23	16	17	—	1
apprentices	10	1	1	—	2	—	1	1	3	1	1
Services	30	7	5	2	3	—	9	5	5	—	1
day labourers	22	3	3	—	—	—	9	1	9	—	—
Soldiers	5	1	1	—	—	—	—	—	3	—	1
Other	3	2	2	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—

First marriages for both spouses analysed

Table 2. Selection of spouse according to the groom's and father-in-law's profession in Piotrków Trybunalski (percentages), 1808–1867

Groom's profession	total	Father-in-law's profession									
		total	Trade not merchants	merchants	Industry	With parents	craftsmen	services	day labourers	Other	poor
trade											
total	100,0	66,7	33,3	33,3	4,2	—	8,3	20,8	—	—	—
not merchants	100,0	60,0	46,7	13,3	6,7	—	6,7	26,7	—	—	—
merchants	100,0	77,8	11,1	66,7	—	—	11,1	11,1	—	—	—
Officials	100,0	100,0	—	100,0	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Industry	100,0	25,0	18,8	6,3	12,5	—	25,0	12,5	25,0	—	—
with parents	100,0	23,1	7,7	15,4	7,7	7,7	23,1	30,8	—	—	7,7
craftsmen											
total	100,0	8,5	8,5	—	13,4	—	29,3	20,7	24,4	1,2	2,4
not apprentices	100,0	8,3	8,3	—	12,5	—	31,9	22,2	23,6	—	1,4
apprentices	100,0	10,0	10,0	—	20,0	—	10,0	10,0	30,0	10,0	10,0
Services	100,0	23,3	16,7	6,7	10,0	—	30,0	16,7	16,7	—	3,3
day labourers	100,0	13,6	13,6	—	—	—	40,9	4,5	40,9	—	—
Soldiers	100,0	20,0	20,0	—	—	—	—	—	60,0	—	20,0
Other	100,0	66,7	66,7	—	33,3	—	—	—	—	—	—

First marriages for both spouses analysed



Table 3. Spouse selection according to economic position of spouses' fathers in Piotrków Trybunalski, 1821–1850.

Groom's father			Economic status of				total
			Bride's father				
			1	2	3	4	
The poorest, exempt from tax	N	1	32	13	5	—	50
	%		64,0	26,0	10,0	—	100,0
1 <sup>st</sup> half of the tax payers paying lower taxes	N	2	15	10	6	—	32
	%		46,9	31,3	21,9	—	100,0
2 <sup>nd</sup> half of the taxpayers, paying higher taxes	N	3	4	5	17	2	26
	%		15,4	19,2	65,4	7,7	100,0
the richest 10%	N	4	1	1	2	2	4
	%		25,0	25,0	50,0	50,0	100,0

First marriages for both spouses analysed

Picture 1. Network of socio-economic circles in Piotrków Trybunalski, 1808–1867.

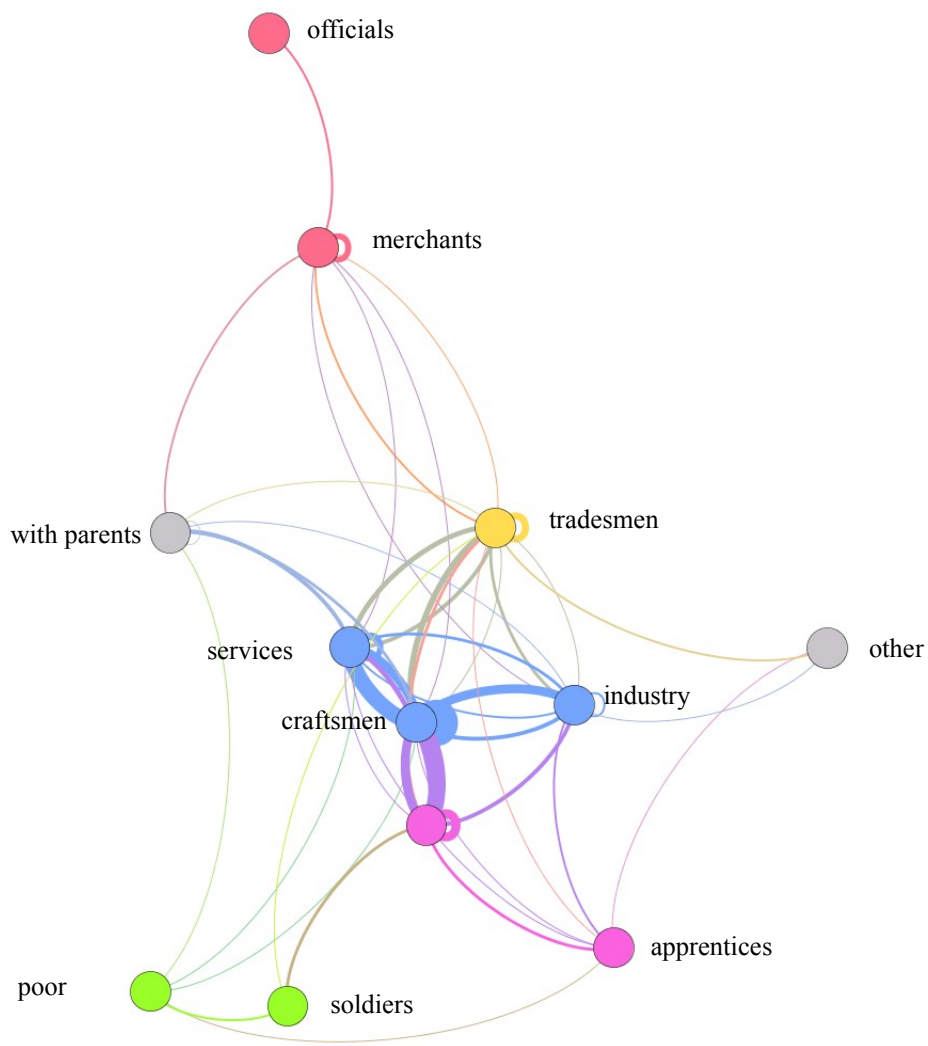


Table 4. Socio-economic status of groom and groom's father in Piotrków Trybunalski, 1808–1870

Groom's occupation	total	Groom's father's occupation									
		total	Trade non- merchants	merchant s	industry	with parents	craftsmen	services	day labourer	other	poor
trade											
total	24	16	10	6	—	1	—	3	2	2	—
non-merchants	16	8	7	1	—	1	—	3	2	2	—
merchants	9	8	3	5	1	—	—	—	—	—	—
officials	1	1	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
industry	18	1	—	1	—	10	—	1	1	3	2
with parents	7	4	4	—	—	—	—	—	—	3	—
Craftsmen											
total	81	15	13	2	—	3	—	41	5	15	1
non-apprentices	75	14	12	2	—	1	—	40	5	13	1
Apprentices	6	1	1	—	—	2	—	1	—	2	—
services	24	4	3	1	1	1	—	3	8	6	1
day labourers	22	2	1	1	—	1	—	—	1	14	—
Soldiers	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—
Other	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—

First marriages for both spouses analysed

Table 5. Socio-economic status of groom and groom's father (percentages) in Piotrków Trybunalski, 1808–1870

Groom's occupation	total	Groom's father's occupation										
		total	Trade non- merchants	merchants	industry	with parents	craftsmen	services	day labourer	other	poors	
trade												
total	100,0	66,7	41,7	25,0	—	4,2	—	12,5	8,3	8,3	—	
non-merchants	100,0	50,0	43,8	6,3	—	6,3	—	18,8	12,5	12,5	—	
merchants	100,0	88,9	33,3	55,6	11,1	—	—	—	—	—	—	
officials	100,0	100,0	—	100,0	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	
industry	100,0	5,6	—	5,6	—	55,6	—	5,6	5,6	16,7	11,1	
with parents	100,0	57,1	57,1	—	—	0,0	—	—	—	42,9	—	
Craftsmen in general/ total	100,0	18,5	16,0	2,5	—	3,7	—	50,6	6,2	18,5	1,2	
non-apprentices	100,0	18,7	16,0	2,7	—	1,3	—	53,3	6,7	17,3	1,3	
apprentices	100,0	16,7	16,7	—	—	33,3	—	16,7	—	33,3	—	
Services	100,0	16,7	12,5	4,2	4,2	4,2	—	12,5	33,3	25,0	4,2	
day labourers	100,0	9,1	4,5	4,5	—	4,5	—	—	4,5	63,6	—	
Soldiers	100,0	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	100,0	—	
Other	100,0	—	—	—	—	—	—	100,0	—	—	—	

First marriages for both spouses analysed

Table 6. Students' and scholars' careers in Piotrków Trybunalski, 1820–1840

Name	his other professions	his father's profession	his father's-in-law profession
scholars			
Arie Natanowicz Ejbeszyc	merchant	merchant	merchant
Wolf Goldknopf	NA	NA	NA
Pinkas Samuel Krakowski	shopkeeper, merchant	merchant	rabbi from merchant family
Szaja Lewinsztajn	merchant	merchant	merchant
Michał Moszkowicz Pimsztajn	tradesman, day labourer	salt dealer	shames
Zelman Rozenkranc	tradesman	NA	drain trader
students			
Icyk Izraelowicz Bendermacher	flour trader, salt trader, leather trader, speculator	flour trader	rabbi
Lewek Jakubowicz Lipszyc	merchant, slaughterman	NA	slaughterman
Josek Majman	teacher	NA	leather trader
Berek Lewkowicz Silbersztajn	NA	shames	grain trader
Szymon Jakubowicz Sztajn	merchant's son, iron huckster, iron merchant, species merchant	salt trader	salt trader, grain trader
Salomon Wajs	wool trader	NA	NA
Abraham Lewkowicz Wald	NA	baker	NA
Icyk Chajmowicz Wolanowski	merchant's son, salt trader	NA	teacher

Table 7. The place of living of newly married couples in Piotrków Trybunalski, 1815–1825

With parents		Other		Nearby plot		No data		Total	
Number and percentage of cases									
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
22 <sup>a</sup>	20,8	51	48,1	6	5,7	28	26,4	107	100
Mean age at marriage									
Panna	Kawaler	Panna	Kawaler	Panna	Kawaler	Panna	Kawaler	Panna	Kawaler
20,7	22,0	21,7	22,6	—	—	20,3	24,3	21,3	23,3

First marriages for both of the spouses analysed with first birth interval shorter than 5 years.

<sup>a</sup> Including 9 cases with groom's father and 10 cases with bride's father.

Table 8. Mean 1<sup>st</sup> birth interval and premarital conceptions in Piotrków Trybunalski, 1808–1850

Number of families with children		1 <sup>st</sup> birth interval (in months) $\bar{x}$	Premarital conceptions <sup>a</sup> ending in delivery			
excluding pre-marital births	including premarital births		after marriage		before marriage	
			N	% <sup>b</sup>	N	% <sup>c</sup>
100	103	25,4 <sup>d</sup>	2	2,0	5	5,0

<sup>a</sup> Not later than 266 day before marriage.

<sup>b</sup> In relation to families without premarital births.

<sup>c</sup> In relation to families with premarital births.

<sup>d</sup> Including premarital births.

Table 9. Mean 1<sup>st</sup> birth interval according to mother's age at marriage in Piotrków Trybunalski, 1808–1850

	1 <sup>st</sup> birth interval length (in months)			
	Age			
	15–19	20–24	25–29	≥30–34
N	47	47	6	—
$\bar{x}$	28,6	23,6	14,1	—

Table 10. Mean birth intervals in Piotrków Trybunalski, 1808–1850

	Mean birth interval (in months)				
	total	1	2	3	4
N	473	80	71	62	49
$\bar{x}$	33,0	31,0	31,0	32,8	34,9

Table 11. Mean birth interval and child survival in Piotrków Trybunalski, 1808–1850

Status of a previous child	Birth interval (in months)	
	N	$\bar{x}$
Did not survive first year	46	23,4
Survived first year	153	33,5
All cases	199	31,1

Table 12. Marital fertility levels in Piotrków Trybunalski, 1808–1850

Data	Marital fertility levels							
	Total	in 5-year periods						
		15-19	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49
original	8,0	350	333	309	269	202	118	26
corrected	9,9	429	408	379	331	247	145	31

Table 13. Total marital fertility levels in selected Jewish and non-Jewish communities

Place	Years	Total marital fertility level
Baden, Jews	1869	10,2
Bayern, Jews	1813–1850	12,7
Bejsce, non-Jews	18–19 c.	7,4
The Hague, Jews	1860–1879	10,8
Nonnerweier, Baden	1840–1859	9,4
Pittigliano, Tuscany	1808–1840	11,3
USA, Jews	1775–1799 <sup>a</sup>	11,0
Warsaw, non-Jews	1740–1769	10,2
Warsaw, non-Jews	1770–1799	9,1
Venice, Jews	1869	6,9

Sources: C. Kuklo, *Rodzina...*, p. 199; E. Piasecki, *op. cit.*, p. 241; E. Benz, *op. cit.*, p. 124; S. Lowenstein, *Voluntary...*, p. 100; J. Schellekens, F. Van Poppel, *op. cit.*, s. 69; A. Goldstein, *Some Demographic...*, p. 130; M. Livi-Bacci, *Demography...*, p. 47; R. Cohen, *op. cit.*, p. 127–128.; R. Derosas, *Between Identity...*, p. 190.

Graph 1. Marital fertility levels in 5-year periods in selected communities.

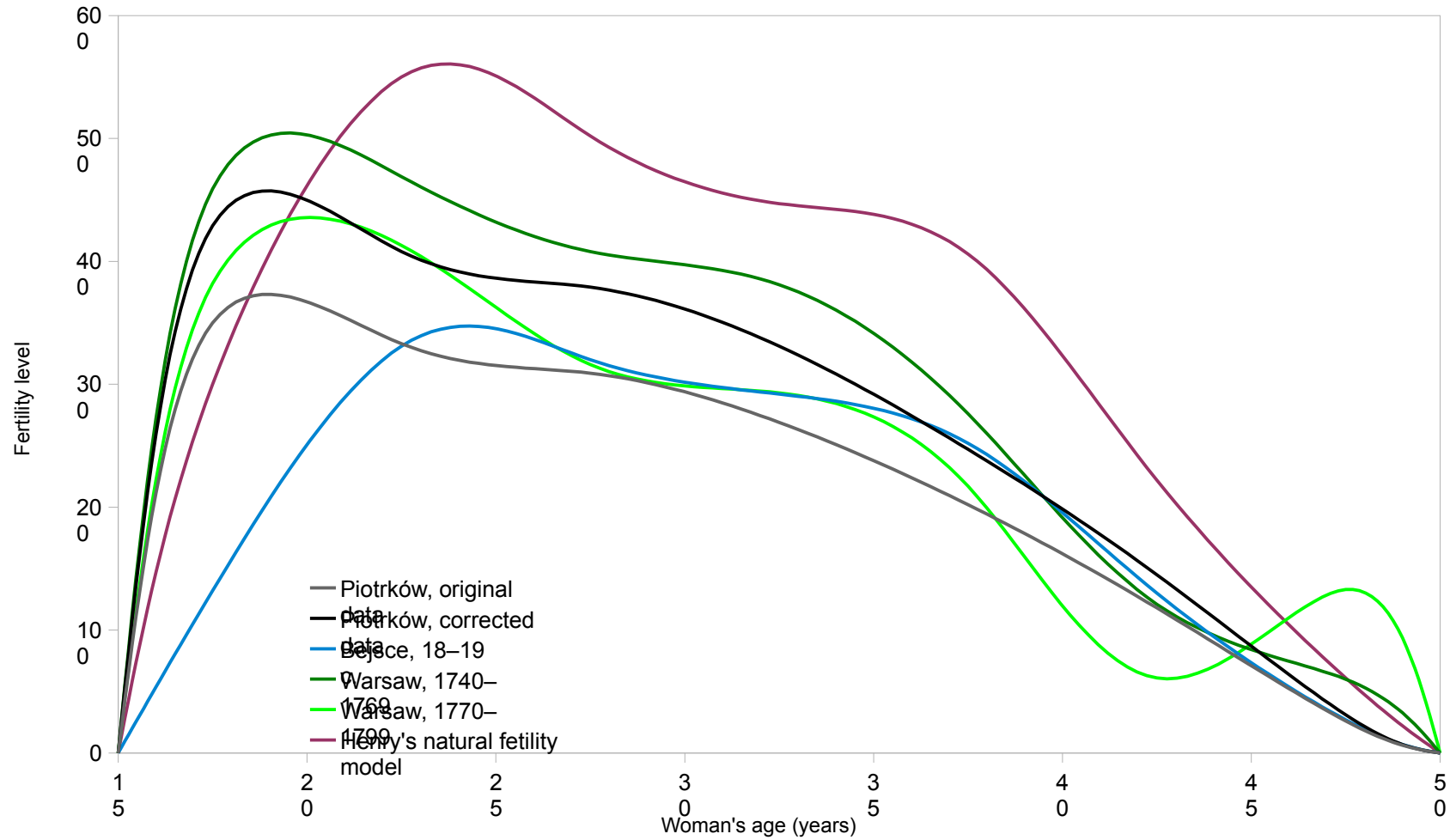




Table 14. Mean number of children per family in selected non-Jewish communities<sup>a</sup>

Place	Years	Mean number of children
Bielawa	1846–1894	4,0
Gubin	1701–1720	3,9
Lubawka	1801–1850	4,1
Poznań	1815–1848	5,2
Radzionków	1811–1830	5,4
Toruń	1801–1850	4,3
Warsaw	1740–1769	7,1 <sup>b</sup>
Warsaw	1770–1799	6,8 <sup>b</sup>

<sup>a</sup> In complete and closed families, including childless families.

<sup>a</sup> Exclusively in complete families.

Sources: A. Kamieniecka, *Rodzina...*, p. 92; H. Kurowska, *op. cit.*, p. 212; J. Karbowska, *Ludność...*, p. 148; K. Makowski, *op. cit.*, p. 159; K. Rzemieniecki, *op. cit.*, p. 68; own calculations based on A. Zielińska, *Przemiany...*, p. 470–474; C. Kukło, *Rodzina...*, p. 192 n.

Table 15. Age of mother at last birth in Piotrków Trybunalski, 1808–1850

	Age of mother at last birth		
	total	15–19	>20
N	59	29	30
$\bar{x}$	40,4	39,4	41,3

Completed families analysed.