

SUMMARY

20th c. changes in land-management and land-ownership in Tauragnai environs

/TAURAGNAI

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The Lithuanian landscape changed very much in the 20th c. Many aspects conditioned this change. The most important of them that formed this trend are vivid political-economical alterations of this period, not always they were carried out of our own free will. Besides, the territory of Lithuania, though comparatively not large, is not compact from the nature point of view. Varied landscape development was revealed in the background of the above-mentioned changes. Thus, the variety of landscape territorial natural complexes played a limiting role and caused the change scale in this process.

The environs of Tauragnai are not very exceptional territories from the viewpoint of nature but the conditions for agricultural activities here are unfavourable. However, the research data of some authors witness that agricultural landscape in this region began forming about two thousand years ago. Until World War I the peasants in the territory under analysis lived mostly in the street-type villages and the farming was carried out in accordance with the triple field (land plot) agriculture model. This system was eliminated while carrying out Stolypin's land reform in 1907–1914 but mostly while carrying out the Interwar Lithuanian land reform in 1918–1940. Thus, individual farm settlement system and lot land cultivation were formed. Middle-size (8–30 ha) farms predominated in the territory of *Valsčius* (a rural administrative unit, a kind of a borough with its vicinity). The area of arable land made up only 48.1% of the whole agricultural territory because of the complicated dismemberment of natural fields under that period conditions. The agricultural level of these environs was lower than the average in the whole large district of Utena (large fallow areas, rather low crop productivity).

During the Soviet period land ownership and its cultivation greatly changed. In the end of this period two big collective farms – those of Tauragnai (almost 7 thousand ha) and of T. Tilvytis (about 3.5 thousand ha), were in the present territory of Tauragnai *Seniūnija* (neighbourhood – a minor rural district, a part of *Valsčius*). The area of farming lands significantly decreased. That was caused by changed land ownership (state land ownership) and land cultivation (the application of big size agricultural machines, enlargement of lots, demographical changes).

After the restoration of Lithuania's independence (in 1990) essential changes take place again: the restoration of land private ownership rights and the change of land-tenure forms. The land of these environs is not fertile, mostly elderly people live in the villages. That is why land cultivation intensity is not high. Much of former arable land is not cultivated. A part of it is being afforested. This tendency will survive in the future. It is still difficult, however, to forecast how the landscape of these environs will look like in several decades.