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Merja Uotila

## **Knowledge transfer within artisan families in early nineteenth-century rural Finland**

### **Introduction**

Rural artisans constituted an important part of early nineteenth-century rural society in the Grand Duchy of Finland. Even though the rural population maintained self-sufficient households, the contributions of professional artisans were nonetheless needed. For example, the ability of blacksmiths to make and repair farming tools was particularly vital. Likewise, tailors made fine quality clothes and shoemakers were experts in manufacturing leather shoes. Rural artisans were jacks-of-all-trades who met the needs of country folk.

The authorities regarded craftwork as an urban occupation, but in an agrarian society where the few existing towns were small and distant, rural crafts had to be tolerated and accepted as necessary. Thus, unlike many other European countries,<sup>1</sup> rural artisans in Finland constituted an official institution under the so-called parish artisans system. In this system, artisans had to apply for a work licence from the governor and pay special craft taxes. Rural artisans did not belong to craft guilds, and their prestige and appreciation were not equal to the urban masters, but they were locally esteemed.<sup>2</sup> Alongside the parish artisans, there were also unofficial artisans who were usually unaffected by legal restrictions (Uotila 2014, 79–81, 113–116).<sup>3</sup>

In the Finnish countryside, the most common craft occupation was that of the smith, usually a blacksmith, who did all the metalwork. Smiths became more common because people started to use more iron in their tools and household items, and the need for farrier work was on the increase. The second and third largest occupational groups in the countryside were usually tailors and shoemakers. The common people of the countryside could make ordinary clothes and shoes, but tailors made men's clothes and fine attire for women. Likewise, shoemakers made finer quality shoes. Rising standards of living and expanding consumption increased the number of tailors and shoemakers. Together, these three basic occupations constituted the majority of the official artisans working in a single parish (Ranta 1978, 206–211; Gadd 1991, 144; Laakso 1994, 76; Uotila 2014, 117–122).<sup>4</sup>

In early modern society, it was natural that a son followed his father's trade. This was a matter of societal stability and maintaining the right kind of social order. It was also practical to invest in the children's future by transferring the family's craft knowledge and skills to the offspring, thus providing for the future care of elders as well. However, not all the sons of artisans became artisans in turn, and practising a craft was not option for daughters, since girls were not permitted to become artisans themselves.

This chapter studies the careers of artisans' children in rural Finland, and discusses the ways in which artisans' training practices influenced knowledge transfer within their families. How often was the occupation handed down from father to son? What was the daughters' position in an artisan household – did they play a role in knowledge transfer?

The chapter in particular focuses on artisan families in Hollola, an old, centrally located parish in southern Finland. In the nineteenth century, Hollola was a purely agricultural area with no noteworthy industrial activity. The closest towns lay more than 60 kilometres away, which is why the economic life of the parish was not affected by the existence of urban artisans.<sup>5</sup> The research group consists of over 200 artisans' children born between 1780 and 1820. Their working lives started before 1850, which makes it possible to follow their future occupations and marriage choices.<sup>6</sup>

Methodologically, the study is a collective biography, or – more precisely – a prosopography. This method entails studying a particular definable group that is based on a large population of individuals, with the aim, if possible, of collecting the same data on everyone and treating each person in the same way for the sake of comparison.<sup>7</sup> The prosopographical approach has proven useful especially when investigating the informal side of rural artisanship. It also provides more tools for examining family connections and networks. Overall, bringing together scarce and isolated data and connecting them to a biographical profile can yield value-added information (Uotila 2014, 31–43).

Parish registers, or communion records, are used as the main source. Although the records were originally lists of persons attending Holy Communion, they can be used as population records as well. Importantly, they registered the whole family.<sup>8</sup> Minors, children who had not completed confirmation classes and been duly confirmed, were entered in this area into the children's book.<sup>9</sup> The clergy were also ordered to keep accurate records of births, deaths, and marriages, which were listed in so-called history books, where the status of an individual was often recorded alongside his/her name. Despite some shortcomings, by bringing

together scarce or abundant information and forming a collection of short biographies, it is possible to follow the life-course of artisans and – here especially – their children’s careers.

Previous research in Finland has largely focused on urban guild artisans (E.g. Vainio-Korhonen 1994; Juutila 1997).<sup>10</sup> Moreover, attention has usually been paid only to those who became artisans, eliminating the sons who did not make it in the profession. Likewise, the role of artisans’ daughters has not received much attention. This exclusion is partly the result of the challenges that research on large quantities of people and sources entail: it is time-consuming to trace the children’s career choices. The current growth in digital archives and databases, however, has made family searches easier to conduct, and it is now straightforward to continue examining the fate and life stories of artisans’ children in neighbouring parishes and beyond.

### **Apprenticeship and knowledge transfer**

Craft skills demanded special knowledge that had to be learned through experience. Thus, the technical knowledge of craftsmen was largely experience-based and shared through face-to-face communication (Epstein 2013, 27–31). The transfer of craft skills was usually organised in a master-journeyman-apprentice system where an artisan’s occupational career began with a period of informal training with his own father or a more formal apprenticeship period with a non-relative. Self-taught artisans were rare in the nineteenth-century countryside (Ranta 1978, 155, 173–181).<sup>11</sup> There were universal practices related to both urban guild and rural craft apprenticeship. The conventions of rural apprenticeship often imitated those of the urban guild system (Uotila, forthcoming).

There were only a few regulations concerning rural crafts and their apprenticeship practices. From 1686 onwards, rural artisans had the right to employ apprentices, but an official permit had to be sought for this. However, the general guild order,<sup>12</sup> which was designed for urban craft guilds, affected rural artisans and their apprentice practices, life, and work culture. For instance, the order specified the apprentices’ minimum enrolment age to be 14 and outlined a maximum trial period of two months. It also stated the master craftsman’s responsibilities towards his apprentices more generally. For instance, it prohibited the dismissal of apprentices before the agreed apprenticeship period was complete (Vainio-Korhonen 2010, 232–233).

In the eighteenth century, rural artisans’ trainees were designated according to their age and apprenticeship time. Boys who were still apprenticed were called *läropojkar*, and

the older assistants who had finished their initial training but were still in the service of a master were referred to as *lärodrängar*. As there were only a few applications for permission to take an apprentice, it is probable that in practice, permission was only needed for taking on older assistants (Uotila, forthcoming).<sup>13</sup> They were in some ways equivalent to the urban guild-trained journeymen.<sup>14</sup> In the nineteenth century, the naming system changed, and it is therefore not possible to distinguish the boys from the older assistants, since the titles were no longer used coherently. In addition, a new title *lärlingar* gradually replaced the older and more precise titles.<sup>15</sup>

If an artisan's son was brought up in his own family – that is, the artisan taught his own son, or an older brother taught his younger brother – the boy was not registered as an apprentice. He was simply designated in the records as an artisan's son or brother, and his skill in the craft is revealed in the records only when he started his own career (Laakso 1994, 76; Uotila 2014, 221). This makes it difficult to determine the details of the training careers of artisans' sons. For example, as the boys were generally thought just to grow up with the profession, there is no record on the starting age or the length of training. The situation was similar in towns.<sup>16</sup> This put artisans' own sons in a favourable position compared to apprentices; they could benefit from their fathers' status, network, tools, and reputation. It was simply easier for them to achieve the status of master artisan (De Munck and Soly 2007, 18–19; Vainio-Korhonen 2010, 237–238; Epstein 2013, 29).

The artisan's trade was a family business. Apprentices were a part of an artisan's household; they boarded in their masters' homes both in towns and in countryside.<sup>17</sup> The master artisan usually provided shelter, food, and clothing for his apprentice according to what was agreed in the private contract between the master and apprentice.<sup>18</sup> Apprentices were to witness and emulate the honorable conduct of their masters in order to follow in their footsteps (De Munck and Soly 2007, 11). This adaptation was facilitated by the young age of the boys and the many years they spent in the master's household. As the head of the family, the artisan had a master's authority and the responsibility to educate and supervise his son's and apprentice's upbringing. Craft masters have sometimes even been seen as surrogate fathers for the boys to whom they had promised to reveal the tricks of the trade. Universally, the master craftsman was thought to raise his apprentice as he would his own son (Vainio-Korhonen 2010, 234–235; Epstein 2013, 32).

As the head of the family, the artisan was also responsible for discipline.<sup>19</sup> It was generally accepted that apprentices were obliged to take part in their masters' household duties

and chores, but only to a reasonable extent. Even in towns, apprentices were obliged to run errands that had little to do with craftwork.<sup>20</sup> By taking part in everyday or otherwise necessary housekeeping chores, the boys participated in the household's well-being. In rural areas, chores usually related to agriculture, taking care of animals, harvesting, haymaking, and logging. The boy's contribution might have been crucial, because rural households did not usually employ purely domestic servants; there were no housemaids or farmhands present.

Masters were obligated to teach their sons and apprentices all they knew of their craft. How this happened – that is, how they actually transferred knowledge related to craft skills to next generation – remains largely unknown. Apprenticeship is often called 'learning by doing', and it is occasionally stated that apprentices simply copied what they saw, or learned to 'steal with their eyes' (De Munck and Soly 2007, 14–15; Vainio-Korhonen 2010, 234). There were few textbooks or written manuals.<sup>21</sup> It is probably the case that youngsters started with simple tasks and were gradually given more difficult and demanding duties. Education was a trial and error process in which apprentices and sons were familiarised, hands on, with the craft's own materials, style, and work culture. The apprenticeship period was also an initiation into the cultural context in which apprentices and sons were acquainted with the artisan's position in the community. They were to adopt an artisan's social and occupational identity (De Munck and Soly 2007, 13–16; Wallis 2008, 247–251; Epstein 2013, 29–32).

Not all apprentices had the ability to become master artisans. Sometimes this was true even of the master's own sons. There was usually a trial period before enrolment, during which the boys' behaviour, skills, and suitability for the trade were tested. According to Swedish legislation, the trial period was limited to two months. Even though such trial periods were likely used in the countryside, there is no definitive evidence. Overall, the length of the training period varied between trades and depended on the skills demanded, the apprentice's age and prior experience, and also whether the apprentice had to compensate his master for the cost of the training, either by working for him for a lengthy period of time or by paying a premium (Epstein 1998, 690–691; De Munck and Soly 2007, 12–14; Minns and Wallis 2013).<sup>22</sup> Sometimes sons who had received training from their own father fine-tuned their skills with short additional training periods at another artisan's shop. This journeyman-like behaviour – where basic skills were acquired with the initial master (here the father) and afterwards with another artisan – has been sometimes recorded (Uotila 2014, 234; Uotila, forthcoming).

Not all artisans had apprentices. Especially in the smith's trade, the tradition of training and setting up their own sons first led to a low number of smith's apprentices. A smith

expecting to be succeeded by his own son was naturally less willing to train others to compete with him. Occasionally an artisan stopped training apprentices when his own son was old enough to start his training – this practice was more typical in tailors' families. In addition, only artisans who were skilful and had sufficient work assignments could act as instructors, and a large number of apprentices can be seen as an indicator of a master's good reputation, skill, and prosperity (Laakso 1974, 69–70; De Munck and Soly 2007, 20). Most of the craftsmen who had apprentices were official parish artisans. Therefore, having apprentices can be regarded as a mark of a parish artisan's occupational identity – it came with the official position to have at least one apprentice over one's career (Uotila 2006, 137; Uotila 2014, 286–287). In spite of this, some artisans might have been too poor to take on apprentices and/or their reputation was not good enough to attract potential apprentices.

The burden of supporting the hired help was alleviated by traditional custom: shoemakers and tailors led an itinerant way of life, going from one customer to another, living at their expense while carrying out their work assignments. The customers also had to feed the apprentices.<sup>23</sup> This is one reason why tailors in particular could have many apprentices, possibly at different skill levels. They gained assistants whose work they could rely on. Blacksmiths typically had a few or just one apprentice because there was usually room for only one assistant at the time at the forge. As noted, often this assistant or work partner was the smith's own son.

### **The sons' career and occupational continuity**

In the artisan's world, marriage and the practice of trade were interconnected. Typically, marriage coincided with the start or establishment of an independent career. It was rare to have married apprentices or journeymen in an artisan's household.<sup>24</sup> Especially in towns, artisans needed a wife who would look after the shop and the commercial side of the craft. This was also evident in rural areas, where the whole family's contribution was needed in household chores, even though there were no commercial workshops in rural areas of Finland. Unmarried artisans were a rarity in both the towns and the countryside (Laakso 1974, 125; Edgren 1987, 180–181, 205).

Along with marriage came children. On average, artisans in Hollola had only 1.5 children (see Table 1). Sometimes there was just one surviving child. Smiths had the most children, with shoemakers and artisans in specialised trades having the least, but the number

of children was related to the number of artisans. There were slightly more daughters (111) than sons (105) (see Tables 2 and 4), but the proportion is quite the same among different trades. Thus, it is evident that not all artisans had a son who could inherit the family business. For example, every third smith had no son of his own. As there were not enough artisans' sons to answer the growing demand for artisans, most craftsmen came from other social groups.<sup>25</sup>

Table 1. Artisans' families with children in Hollola, 1780–1820.

	Artisans	With children	No children	With sons	With daughters	Number Of children
Smiths	40	36	4	27	25	88
Tailors	28	23	5	18	17	52
Shoemakers	22	18	4	14	13	39
Specialised <sup>26</sup>	20	16	4	12	13	37
Total	110	93	17	71	68	216

Source: Prosopographical Database on artisans in Hollola, 1724–1840.

In Hollola, only 15 per cent of artisans were childless, and just a few were unmarried.<sup>27</sup> In some cases, the couples could not have children, while in other cases, their offspring did not live to adulthood. Succession could then be arranged in other ways, such as by adopting a child.

The smith Erik Salomonsson had a specific way of arranging his succession. His only child was stillborn in 1780. He did have a large kin group, however, and he apprenticed two of his nephews, but neither of them inherited the fortune or the position of the wealthy smith. In his later years, Erik Salomonsson took on another apprentice, this time from outside the family circle, and made him his heir. The smith's last will and testament was authenticated by the local district court in 1822. The will's phrasing confirms that the purpose of the transaction was to secure the smith's and his wife's provision in old age.<sup>28</sup> The heir, Anders Matsson, was obligated to take care of the elderly couple, and in return, he would receive the old smiths' position and tools along with other belongings. This is a rare example, but one possible solution for childless artisan couples, although it was perhaps more common to adopt children when they were younger.

In the career patterns of rural artisan's sons, following one's father's footsteps was the most common option (Laakso 1974, 113–117). At least half of the smiths' sons went on to practise handicrafts, most frequently in the same trade as the father; in other trades, the likelihood was a little lower. In shoemaking, the succession rate was only a third, but in the



area of Hollola, there were only a few official shoemakers (see Table 2). Some hesitation concerning the figures arises because a fifth of the boys' career choices remains unclear, mostly because they moved away from the parish. Some of them might have achieved artisan status, but it has not been possible to take this into account in the figures. It is noteworthy that most of the sons still stayed in their home parish, which for its part strengthens the perception of this being a stationary community, even though in general, artisans and their apprentices have been seen as a very mobile group (Tommila 1959, 203–205; Rosenberg 1966, 55–56).

Table 2. The career patterns of rural artisan's sons (born 1780–1820) in Hollola (percentage).

	No data	Land- holding farmers	Artisans	Tenant farmers	Farm hands	Landless agricultural workers	N
Smiths	22	7	49	7	5	10	41
Tailors	18	7	43	14	11	7	28
Shoemakers	33	0	33	11	17	6	18
Specialised	11	6	44	28	6	6	18
%	21	6	44	13	9	8	105

Source: Prosopographical Database on artisans in Hollola, 1724–1840.

In general, an occupation was more likely to be passed on in a trade that required more capital to start up and practise (Daniels 1995, 4; Juutila 1997, 148–151). In rural Hollola, there were a few smith dynasties in which almost all sons were trained; they not only inherited their fathers' equipment and working area, but they also acquired official positions in other villages too. For instance, the Herkepeus family were the only smiths in one village for several generations.<sup>29</sup> As such, it is one example of a closed group into which no outside apprentices were recruited.

The previously mentioned Erik Salomonsson was also a smiths' son who had two brothers, both qualified smiths. Erik was recruited to become the smith in the village of Okeroinen, his older brother in another village, and the youngest of them was destined to stay with their father. For a while, there were three brothers working in same parish but in different villages. Unfortunately, Erik's brothers and father died in the epidemics that followed the Russo-Swedish war in the 1780s, and Erik was left with the duty of training his brothers' sons in the family trade.<sup>30</sup>

Only one person per family paid the craft tax, and therefore the head of the family alone was registered according to his trade. It was customary that the son received the artisanal title only after the death of his father, or after establishing a household of his own. This could

take a decade or even longer. For example, the youngest of above-mentioned Salomonsson brothers was not registered as a smith but as the son of a smith, even though he worked alongside with his father. In fact, he never achieved the artisanal title, because he passed away a few months before his father. The smith Gustaf Herkepeus represents an extreme example: he was over forty years old before he gained independent status.

One factor that had an influence on the strong sense of continuity was locality – rural smiths were taught by other rural smiths. In Hollola, only one boy who was sent to town in order to learn smith's trade returned to serve the parish, and this exception to the rule was a farmer's younger son. In other trades, urban training was a more common phenomenon.<sup>31</sup> For instance, when the tailor Erik Holmberg wanted his offspring to receive better training, he sent his youngest son to the town of Hämeenlinna to learn from the guild master there. Holmberg's elder son also sent his own son to Hämeenlinna, most likely to learn the tailor's trade.

The practice of training rural artisans' sons in towns in order to gain them more prominent positions was not a prevailing custom, however. More often, artisans trained their own sons.<sup>32</sup> Frequently, this was question of means; training one's own son and at the same time acquiring a working partner for a number of years was the cheaper option. In addition, not everyone had the necessary connections in towns to place their sons in the hands of the guild masters.

Sometimes, the son of an artisan inherited his father's position very publicly. There are a number of court cases where father first petitioned for permission to give up his position and then pleaded for his son to be taken as his successor as the next parish artisan. Occasionally, the exchange was arranged in a suitably timely manner, with the father quitting and the son then applying for the vacant position.<sup>33</sup> For instance, the tailor Gabriel Lindfors resigned from his parish tailor position in the local district court, after which his son asked to be taken on as parish tailor.<sup>34</sup> This confirms the widespread desire for occupational continuity. It also reinforced the perception of social stability. The absence of a father did not make the situation hopeless either, as the careers of the sons of the tailor Moses Lindqvist indicate. Lindqvist died before his eldest son was fifteen, but two of his sons learned the tailor's trade.<sup>35</sup> It is likely that the older boy might have already received his initial training from his father, and that he also continued his training with other masters. This was not unusual, as when the artisans' father was unable to teach his own son, his colleagues would often come to the rescue.

Even if it was common for the sons of smiths and tailors to follow their father's trade, it was not the only option. Sometimes there was a tendency to educate a son for a more

appreciated occupation (Humphries 2003, 96; De Munck and Soly 2007, 20). For instance, the mason Mats Häggsted had three sons. He trained his oldest son to be his partner in masonry and carpentry – they were in such close partnership that in the records it is often difficult to distinguish the father and the son from each other. The middle son was sent to learn the trade of hat making. He returned to Hollola and acquired the status of parish hat maker. The youngest son went to Helsinki in order to become a smith. He became a smith's journeyman and most likely earned his living this way, because he did not return to Hollola. The smith Johan Westerberg also trained his oldest son as a smith, but sent his second son to learn the founder's trade in Helsinki.

Occupational continuity was naturally dependent on the son's virtues and flaws. The boy was not always suitable or willing to inherit the family trade (De Munck and Soly 2007, 19). Perhaps Gabriel Lindfors' oldest son was not suitable for the tailor's profession, because he became a soldier. He was not, however, a common foot soldier, but a corporal. Overall, a third of the sons who stayed in Hollola did not follow their fathers' footsteps – in other words, they were not entered into the records with artisan's titles. This does not necessarily mean that they had not learned or practised crafts; there are just no sources to prove they did. On the contrary, it was highly economical to transfer craft knowledge to the next generation – the skills and ability to do crafts were nevertheless useful – even if the son did not become an artisan by profession (Edgren 1987, 192; Humphries 2003, 90–91, 95; De Munck and Soly 2007, 20–22).

When artisans' sons did not inherit the craft profession, the reason was seldom due to upward mobility. If it was, then in the countryside it was a move to become a land-holding farmer. For instance, smith Mats Mattson's son married the daughter of a farmer, and was able to raise his status through a favourable marriage. The tailor Gustaf Halin had twin sons born in 1817, but neither of them followed their father's trade. One became a miller and one a land-holding farmer, again due to a favourable marriage.<sup>36</sup> Most of the connection to farming, however, involved becoming a tenant farmer. Usually, this involved renting a part of a farm, a croft. This was not very bad position either; on the contrary, artisans and tenant farmers have often been deemed socially close to each another. Becoming a crofter was common phenomenon even among official artisans, because it was a way of ensuring a living. Farmers could both practise a craft and do agricultural work. For instance, the son of the tailor Jöran Rolig became the tenant farmer of a croft that Rolig had received from his family.

Likewise, the only son of shoemaker Carl Rönberg set himself up as a tenant farmer, again on the croft that his father had already farmed.

A drop in status was also possible; there was a son in every trade who did not succeed as well as his father. These sons usually firstly ended up as hired hands or farmhands, and later their title changed, indicating a position of landless agricultural worker. In other words, they joined the ranks of itinerant people in rural areas who, when they did not have an indenture, did short-term work to make ends meet. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, artisans' sons could also chose a soldier's career, but that route was soon blocked because the Finnish army was disbanded when Finland fell under Russian rule in 1809. Overall, artisans' sons quite seldom ended up in a position lower than that of their fathers', on average, less than 20 per cent experienced downward mobility (Juutila 1997,159–160).

### **Daughters' labour and marital choices**

Daughters were a part of the artisan family, but it was mainly boys' task to inherit the family business and craft knowledge. Firstly, there were professions in which women had no role in the workshop. For instance, smiths' work required a physical capacity that not even every man possessed. The tanners' trade was also physically challenging. Secondly, Finnish girls could not be engaged in formal apprenticeship training or practice a profession as official artisans, although this was possible in some other European countries (Crowston 2008).

There were no official female artisans until the late nineteenth century, when the trade of seamstress became established. This does not mean that women could not engage in crafts or make a living with handicrafts. Women were simply not referred to as artisans by occupation.<sup>37</sup> It is nevertheless likely that in some crafts – for instance, in weaving and tailoring – daughters could have learned the secrets of the trade. For example, both daughters of the weaver Johan Helin learned how to weave. By the nineteenth century, there were only few male weavers left in rural areas, as women did most of the weaving either as part of their housework or as a cottage industry (Vainio-Korhonen 1998, 63–69; Vainio-Korhonen 2000, 48–54). This argument is supported by the fact that many women owned (according to probate inventories) weaving looms and spinning wheels.

In an artisan household, there was seldom need for the labour of girls, because households usually included only few a domestic animals and a small garden. It was customary for daughters to leave the household as soon as they were able to find paid work outside the

home (Gadd 1991, 167). Some artisans' daughters served as domestic servants in mansions, larger farms, and vicarages rather than as ordinary farm maids. Many daughters spent several years working and saving up funds before marrying.<sup>38</sup> The path walked by Ulrika Landsroth, a shoemaker's daughter, was quite long, though; she was in her forties when she finally married a shoemaker.

As was typical for this era, women were seen through their father's or husbands' social standing. They could not achieve an independent position other than as a maid, which also referred to their unfree status as a servant. Generally, the social position of women was formed through their spouses' occupation. Therefore, it is appropriate to look at the daughters' marriage choices. First of all, most artisans' daughters got married (see Table 3). Only a small minority remain unmarried. Often a reason for this unmarried status was having children outside marriage.

Table 3. Artisans' daughters (born 1780–1820) marriage patterns in Hollola (percentage).

	Smiths' daughters	Tailors' daughters	Shoemakers' daughters	Specialised artisans' daughters	Average/total
Marriage	77	71	57	63	68
No marriage	13	8	14	16	14
No data	11	21	29	21	18
Number	47	24	21	19	111

Source: Prosopographical Database on artisans in Hollola, 1724–1840.

Consequently, the role of girls in the transfer of a profession was formed through marriage, especially in cases where there were no sons to inherit the position. Particularly in smiths' families, it was common practice to marry daughters off to other smiths and hence ensure the survival of the family business through the son-in-law. For instance, the smith Jöran Thomasson had only one surviving child, a daughter. Her marriage was arranged with a smith's apprentice, who specifically moved from a neighbouring parish to Hollola because of this marriage.<sup>39</sup> This practice – a marriage arrangement where a newcomer agreed to marry the predecessor's widow or daughter – is called conservation. It was more common among the clergy, but it was also practised in artisans' circles. Especially in the towns, a new guild master often got his position by marrying the old master's widow (or daughter if the age difference

was too great) (Edgren 1987, 232; Vainio-Korhonen 1997, 175; Humphries 2003, 89; Uotila 2014, 191–193).

The artisanal background of the groom did not always have to be the same as the bride's (Laakso 1974, 125; Juutila 1997, 162–163). The context of craft created enough common ground. For instance, tailor Erik Bertlin's daughter married a guild-trained shoemaker who had acquired the parish artisan's position. The spouse of mason Mats Häggstedt's only daughter was likewise a shoemaker. There was especially great homogamy among specialised artisans, where most of the daughters married other artisans. This was also common among tailors' daughters; 40 per cent of their husbands were shoemakers, smiths, or carpenters. If there were only a few suitable artisan bachelors available, spouses were also sought from the neighbouring parishes. While smith Johan Kaitlin's daughter married a tailor from Asikkala, her younger sister's groom was a smith from the parish of Lammi.

Table 4. The spouses of artisans' daughters (born 1780–1820) in Hollola (percentage).

	Land- holding farmer	Artisan	Tenant farmer	Farm hand	Landless agricultural worker	Married daughters
Smiths	28	25	33	6	6	36
Tailors	6	41	6	41	6	17
Shoemakers	0	25	25	25	25	12
Specialised	25	67	8	0	0	12
%	18	35	22	16	8	77

Source: Prosopographical Database on artisans in Hollola 1724–1840.

Most of the daughters' spouses, however, had other occupations. Nearly one third of smiths' daughters married a farmer's son. Although the husband could also be the younger son of a farmer who did not necessarily inherit a farm, the marriage nevertheless guaranteed the smith's daughter the social status of land-holding farmer. For example, both of the weaver Helin's daughters had farmer husbands. Nonetheless, it was slightly more common for an artisan's daughter to find a husband among the tenant farmers' sons, which was not necessarily a bad position either.

On the other hand, not all daughters had a prominent marriage. For instance, many tailors' daughters, especially in nineteenth century, married farmhands. They may have later achieved more permanent positions – for instance, as tenant farmers – but during the first

years of marriage they were only hirelings. Then again, it was possible that there would be craftsmen in the next generation – this time the daughters’ sons – who would follow the family tradition into the trade.

### **Knowledge transfer within the rural artisan’s household**

The craft was a family business at its best. Sons not only took on a trade but also the artisan’s social position and culture. Even apprentices living under the same roof were part of the artisan’s household. The universal attitude was that the artisan was a surrogate father to the apprentice, and he thus ought to raise the boy as he would his own son. The connection between skills and family was so close that the artisan’s own son was often not registered as an apprentice, but simply as the artisan’s son. The son’s ability to do the craft was revealed only when he started his own career, which he often did, since occupational continuity was widespread. Artisans’ sons also had privileges; it was easier for them to achieve the status of master artisan. A retiring father often asked to be replaced by his own son, or the son would receive other kinds of benefits. In some families, trade secrets were kept within the family. Especially in the smiths’ trade, it was not that easy to find a master that was willing to take on apprentices. After all, why would one train the future competitors of one’s own son?

Expertise and skills were transmitted by the artisans’ own example and the method of learning by doing. Therefore, even artisans’ daughters might have learned the secrets of their fathers’ trade. Girls, however, could not engage in handicrafts or be appointed as apprentices officially. Thus, the position of daughters was not equal to that of sons, so they were often forced to seek a livelihood outside their father’s household. Their role in occupational continuity was through marriage, because artisans’ daughters often married other artisans. Especially when there were no biological sons to inherit the father’s trade, the son-in-law would help to keep the skills within the family and take care of the elderly parents-in-law.

Frequent occupational continuity – through both sons and daughters – indicated features of stability in the community; everyone had to know their own place. In the early modern estate society, it was appropriate and even desirable that a son should follow in his father’s footsteps, while a daughter should marry within the same group. For rural artisans, the easiest way to provide for their sons’ welfare in the future was to give them occupational

training. This was also a matter of practicality, familiarity, and experience. They grew up in the trade, and even today, children often end up in the same line of work as their parents.



## Archival Material

### National Archives (NA)

Hollola parish census records 1780–1840

Archives of Hollola District Court 1810–1840

Province of Uusimaa and Häme, Governors' Secretariat, Records of applications 1790–1830

Communion registers of Hollola, Asikkala, Lammi, Nastola, Orimattila, Hämeenkoski, Kärkölä Churches 1780–1860

Church registers of births, deaths and marriages of Hollola, Asikkala, Lammi, Nastola, Orimattila, Hämeenkoski, Kärkölä Churches 1780–1860

Hollola church archives, records of migration 1824

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<sup>1</sup> Studies on crafts have generally concentrated on urban, guild-based artisans. On the literature, see Uotila 2014, 16–17.

<sup>2</sup> According to a law enacted in 1680 – when Finland was still a part of Sweden – the official institution for rural craft was organised by the parish artisans (*sockne hantverkare*) system, which lasted well into the Russian period of Finnish history (1809–1917). In 1879, freedom of trade liberated the exercise of craft trades. The necessary work licences were granted by provincial governors, but an applying artisan had to have a written testimonial from the local court (consisting of members of the local community), so the artisan's customers had a say in regulating the number of craftsmen working locally. Permission was also needed when artisans gave up their position, moved to another parish, or wanted to take on an apprentice.

<sup>3</sup> They did not pay craft taxes and were not entered in the official census records as artisans, even though they made craft artefacts. In the tax registers, unofficial artisans were listed as farmhands (*dräng*) or tenant farmers (*landbonde* or *torpare*) and the like, but not designated by any artisanal title. In rural areas, official and unofficial artisans usually coexisted peacefully, and the number of unofficial artisans was sometimes considerable.

<sup>4</sup> There were also other artisans actively working in rural areas. The number of specialised artisans grew because the standard of living rose and demands for new goods increased. In Hollola parish, discussed in this chapter, the group of specialised artisans mainly consisted of weavers, tanners, carpenters, and masons. Of these, only masons had a legal opportunity to apply to be taken on as parish artisans, but sometimes other trades were permitted to work officially in rural areas. In 1824, the situation was alleviated and the number of trades that were allowed to seek the parish artisan's position grew.

<sup>5</sup> For more about the history of Hollola, see Kuusi 1937.

<sup>6</sup> After that, it is more difficult to study their career choices, because the HisKi-database (<http://hiski.genealogia.fi/hiski/8f06fx?en>) used to define the children's social status ends in Hollola in 1850. There are a few preconditions what come with the selection of the researched group. Firstly, the artisans – children's fathers, working officially or unofficially – had to have a long-running career in Hollola. Secondly, the research involves only children born in wedlock. The third prerequisite is that these children grew up in the parish, though training in a distant town is not an obstacle if information is available. This leaves out short-lived visits (some years) from this study. The original birthplace of the children is not an important factor either, even though most of them were born in Hollola.

<sup>7</sup> On prosopography, see Keats-Rohan 2007.

<sup>8</sup> Unfortunately, they are not without shortcomings. For instance, the individuals' social standing is generally referred to according to the head of the household, so artisans' offspring were merely sons and daughters, and not labelled according to their real occupations. It is also difficult to pinpoint exactly when a new member of the

household arrived or left a household, because this is established by records of his/her attendance at communion, which was a yearly act, but still a vague time measurement. There are also practical obstacles connected to the parish registers. It is sometimes a challenge to decipher the handwritten text, since entries were crossed out when people changed their dwelling place. In addition, the same register might be used for ten years, and the ministers did not always record a changed situation or if they did so, only after some delay.

<sup>9</sup> Specific pre-confirmation registers were not used in all Finnish parishes; rather they were a characteristic feature of this part of Finland.

<sup>10</sup> On the other hand, in his licentiate thesis, Veikko Laakso has examined occupational continuity in two rural parishes in Finland in the eighteenth century, see Laakso 1974.

<sup>11</sup> There were some self-taught artisans who sometimes had to prove their skills by making a masterpiece in front of a court audience in order to support the testimony from the local populace.

<sup>12</sup> The last guild order (*skråordning*) is from 1720.

<sup>13</sup> NA, Province of Uusimaa and Häme, Governors' Secretariat, Records of Applications 1790–1830.

<sup>14</sup> Those guild-trained journeymen (*gesäller*) appearing in the rural sources were independent workers who were either intending to apply for positions as parish artisans or were working unofficially.

<sup>15</sup> Veikko Laakso has also noted the fluctuating use of these terms. To make things even more complicated, the same person could also be called *lärogosse* (literally translated: a trainee boy). Laakso 1974, 129.

<sup>16</sup> It was customary that boys entered their father's workshop early in their life and followed their father's work. No formal agreements or enrolments on the guild records were needed. On the contrary, artisans' sons could be registered in and out of apprentice records on a same day. Papinsaari 1967, 262; Edgren 1987, 152.

<sup>17</sup> Rural masters were obliged to report their apprentices as new members of their households to parish priests, who registered them as part of the artisan's household, whereas in the towns, apprenticeship began after enrolment on the guild's apprenticeship records. Even when a young boy's parents lived nearby, the boy's name was still transferred to the household of the master craftsman. Uotila 2014, 220.

<sup>18</sup> The enforcement of apprenticeship contracts was usually the guild's responsibility. Epstein 1998; De Munck and Soly 2007, 9–10; Epstein 2013, 31. Cf. Humphries 2003, 81–86; Wallis 2008, 851–853.

<sup>19</sup> However, the boys' biological family supervised their son's well-being, training, and upbringing, and pressed charges if they were not satisfied with their son's treatment or the quality of his training. Epstein 2013, 29.

<sup>20</sup> As long as this did not interfere with their training, it was acceptable. However, the most common complaint by an apprentice against his master was excess involvement in ordinary household chores. Papinsaari 1967, 265–266; Wallis 2008, 843–844.

<sup>21</sup> On the other hand, see Prak 2013, 144–148, 152.

<sup>22</sup> In other words, was the apprentice paying for the knowledge? In this research area, there is only scant evidence of paid premiums.

<sup>23</sup> Smiths, on the other hand, did not usually make rounds to visit their customers but kept their own smithies, to which customers brought work.

<sup>24</sup> Journeymen with families become more common in the nineteenth century. Edgren 1987, 164–169.

<sup>25</sup> Thus, the number of successors is quite small when compared with the total number of artisans. In 1810–1840 in Hollola, only a fifth of artisans had an artisanal background. Uotila 2014, 247–256.

<sup>26</sup> Here, the group of specialised artisans consists of masons, carpenters, weavers, painters, tanners, wheelwrights, and turners.

<sup>27</sup> Unmarried craftsmen often had a stain on their reputation; occasionally illegitimate children explain their marital status. Uotila 2014, 191.

<sup>28</sup> NA, Hollola District Court, winter 1822 § 12.

<sup>29</sup> Gustaf Herkepeus' grandfather had been village smith in Kalliola village. This smith dynasty continued strongly, since Gustaf's two sons, Samuel and Malachias, both became professional smiths. The younger brother of Gustaf, Johan, also worked together with Gustaf and their father.

<sup>30</sup> Johan Salomonsson's son received training from his stepfather. For this exceptionally close-knit family, see Uotila 2006.

<sup>31</sup> Often urban-trained apprentices from different social backgrounds returned to countryside because they could not establish their position in towns. The shoemakers in particular in Hollola were guild-trained journeymen or apprentices. Uotila 2014, 224–225.

<sup>32</sup> Although, for instance, Lars Edgren has stated that many apprentices in towns were sons of rural artisans. Edgren 1987, 151. See also De Munck and Soly 2007, 11, 17.

<sup>33</sup> NA, Province of Uusimaa and Häme, Governors' Secretariat, Records of Applications 1810–1830; Province of Kymenkartano, Governors' Secretariat, Records of Applications 1810–1830.

<sup>34</sup> NA, Hollola District Court, autumn 1820, § 168 and § 169.

<sup>35</sup> Moses Mosesesson was 15 and the younger son, Erik, only seven when their father passed away.

<sup>36</sup> There were also other ways to acquire a farm, such as inheriting or buying it.

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<sup>37</sup> It is not possible to detect women's work other than in exceptional circumstances. Uotila 2014, 85.

<sup>38</sup> On the marriage registers, artisans' daughters are not always referred to as such, but rather according to their last employment – e.g. servant – so it is often difficult to find them on these registers. In order to examine the family connections, an individual approach and following the life-course in detail is needed. This can be seen as one of the benefits of the prosopographic method.

<sup>39</sup> The reason for moving was clearly stated in migration records. NA, Hollola church archives, records of migration 1824. Jöran Thomasson spent his last years with his daughters' family. Most likely, he did not have very good relationship with his stepson, because the family split apart when Jöran Thomasson's wife died. A daughter's marriage to another smith was a way to arrange the smith's security in old age because staying with the stepson does not seem to have been an option. Uotila 2014, 192.