

ANNA DROŻDŹ



[HTTPS://ORCID.ORG/0000-0002-4178-154X](https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4178-154X)

ANNA.DROZDZ@US.EDU.PL

Uniwersytet Śląski w Katowicach
Wydział Humanistyczny
Instytut Nauk o Kulturze

DOROTA ŚWITAŁA-TRYBEK



[HTTPS://ORCID.ORG/0000-0001-8525-5800](https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8525-5800)

DOROTA.SWITALA-TRYBEK@UNI.OPOLE.PL

Uniwersytet Opolski
Wydział Filologiczny
Instytut Językoznawstwa

Bread Baking Traditions in the Second Half of the 20th Century in the Silesian, Opole, and Lower Silesian Voivodeships in the Light of the *Polish Ethnographic Atlas* as Source Materials

Tradycje wypieku chleba w drugiej połowie XX w.
w województwach śląskim, opolskim i dolnośląskim
w świetle materiałów źródłowych
Polskiego Atlasu Etnograficznego

Summary: This article addresses the topic of homemade bread production in rural areas of south-western Poland during the second half of the 20th century. The study focuses on selected localities within the Silesian, Opole, and Lower Silesian voivodeships. Its foundation rests on primary source materials gathered as part of the research conducted for the *Polish Ethnographic Atlas* [PEA], based on a standardized questionnaire titled *Folk Material Culture*. The core of this study consists of archival record – particularly the narratives of respondents and the metanarratives of researchers – which represent the most valuable aspect of the collected materials. The article presents the findings of



an analysis of these archival sources. It discusses the methods of bread preparation, the tools and equipment necessary for this process, and the various ingredients involved, including sourdough starter used in making bread dough. In addition, the study addresses selected magical practices traditionally associated with bread-making. The documented accounts reveal not only traditional methods of preparing bread but also the evolving nature of these practices in the context of broader socio-economic transformations. These include the impact of modernization on everyday life and the influence of multicultural environments, particularly in regions inhabited by postwar settlers. The data thus provide a valuable basis for understanding the processes of change affecting domestic bread production in the postwar period.

Keywords: bread, *Polish Ethnographic Atlas*, Silesian Voivodeship, Opole Voivodeship, Lower Silesian Voivodeship

Streszczenie: W tekście zostało przybliżone zagadnienie domowej produkcji chleba na wsi w drugiej połowie XX w. w południowo-zachodniej Polsce. Dotyczy to wybranych miejscowości w województwach: śląskim, opolskim i dolnośląskim. Podstawę opracowania stanowią materiały źródłowe zgromadzone w ramach badań dla Polskiego Atlasu Etnograficznego w oparciu o jednolity kwestionariusz „Ludowa kultura materialna”. Największą wartością tych zapisów są narracje badanych i metanarracje badaczy, które zachowały się w materiałach archiwalnych, dlatego też one stanowią trzon tego artykułu. W niniejszym opracowaniu zaprezentowane zostały wyniki analizy wspomnianych zapisów. Omówione zostały sposoby przygotowania chleba i niezbędne do tego celu sprzęty, a także różne składniki, w tym zakwas, wykorzystywane do wyrobu ciasta chlebowego. Poruszony został również temat wybranych praktyk magicznych związanych z tym działaniem. Wiele wypowiedzi ukazuje nie tylko tradycyjne działania podejmowane w celu przygotowania tego produktu, ale także dynamikę zmian zachodzących, zarówno pod wpływem modernizacji różnych przestrzeni życia codziennego, jak i tych, które były efektem funkcjonowania w środowisku wielokulturowym (dotyczy to w szczególności obszarów zamieszkałych przez osadników). Dzięki tym wiadomościom możliwe jest wnioskowanie o procesach zachodzących w tym zakresie w okresie powojennym.

Słowa kluczowe: chleb, Polski Atlas Etnograficzny, województwo śląskie, województwo opolskie, województwo dolnośląskie

Introduction

Bread (originally in the form of flatbreads baked on heated stone slabs in ash) has been the basic food of humans since the earliest times. This baked product, made from dough prepared with various types of flour and water, subjected to fermentation, constitutes a rich and healthy component of the diet. For a long time, the bread

as known today was considered a luxury item, appearing largely on the tables of the wealthy, while poorer people (who made it from lower-quality wheat) had it only on special occasions.

In areas where agricultural activity was predominant, bread constituted a fundamental component of the rural diet. It was one of the staple food products forming the basis of both everyday and festive meals. It was taken to work in the field as supplies, eaten on its own, as an addition to various dishes, but it was also used to prepare various dishes, such as soups.¹ Less wealthy households added boiled or mashed potatoes, pea flour, bean flour, couch grass, orache, and the bark of certain trees to increase the volume of the bread during the pre-harvest period, the war, and times of famine when the main ingredient – flour – was scarce.²

In traditional culture, bread was a symbol of nourishment, which is reflected in many Polish proverbs, such as: *Chleb i woda, nie ma głoda* [Bread and water – no hunger]; *Soli i chleba doma trzeba* [Salt and bread – a home is fed]; *Każdy chce chleba i nieba* [Everyone longs for bread and heaven], but it also represents abundance and prosperity.³

In the past, it served important functions in religious practices, being a gift intended for the deceased, their provision for the long and dangerous journey to the afterlife, food consumed at ritual feasts, and various types of bread were used in magical activities.⁴ There was no celebration, festival, whether annual or family-related, or major occasions in a person's life that did not include bread.⁵ It was also commonly used in folk medicine.⁶

For centuries, bread, identified as food symbolising the sacred, life, the fruit of human labour, abundance, community and unity, has been held in high esteem, as evidenced by the following behaviours: before a new loaf of bread was sliced, the sign of the cross was made with a knife; when it fell to the ground, it was picked up and kissed. Bread was not thrown away; stale bread was used to prepare other dishes

1 D. Światała-Trybek, L. Przymuszała, "Na beztydzień i od święta – o tradycyjnych zupach w śląskim menu," [in:] *Polska i świat przez kuchnię. Studia o dziedzictwie kulinarnym*, eds. A. Kamler, D. Pietrzkiewicz, K. Seroka, Warszawa 2018, pp. 187–196.

2 I. Kubiak, K. Kubiak, *Chleb w tradycji ludowej*, Warszawa 1981, p. 10.

3 W. Kopaliński, *Słownik symboli*, Warszawa 2006, p. 36.

4 P. Kowalski, *Chleb nasz powszedni. O pieczywie w obrzędach, magii, literackich obrazach i opiniach dietetyków*, Wrocław 2000, p. 180.

5 B. Wałęciuk-Dejneka, *Chleb w folklorze polskim – w poszukiwaniu znaczeń*, Siedlce 2010.

6 An example of such a practice: "In the Kielce region, ulcers are treated by transferring them to a dog: the affected area is rubbed with fresh bread, and the bread that has absorbed the disease is given to the dog." H. Biegeleisen, *Lecznictwo ludu polskiego*, Kraków 1929, p. 101.

or fed to animals.⁷ In the past, it was believed that starting a fresh loaf when there were remains of an old one was ‘cutting off the heels God.’ Bread as a gift from God had a special meaning, and when thrown into the water with a candle, it helped find a drowning person.⁸ A popular custom in the past was to bless bread (as well as salt and water) on February 5th – on St. Agatha’s Day. Blessed bread – referred to as an apotropeion – was considered an excellent means of protection against fire in the house and farm buildings (*Chleb świętej Agaty od ognia strzeże chaty* [The bread of Saint Agatha protects the cottage from fire]), viper bites, and dog bites;⁹ breast and toothache; and in the case of pregnant women against miscarriage or infertility.¹⁰

Some notes on research and source materials regarding bread

Field research conducted for the purposes of the *Polish Ethnographic Atlas* (hereinafter PEA) began in 1945. It covered more than 300 villages across Poland. The primary objective of the intended studies was to reconstruct the subsequent stages of the development of the traditional culture being studied. This was to be made possible by systematically collecting data at specific locations and such information was expected to be comparable, representative and precise.¹¹ The last requirement was the most difficult to fulfil. Ethnographic interviews were frequently conducted in an elaborate format, with numerous individual tales, and the researcher was required to select only the most important pieces and record them in a questionnaire-notebook. In many cases, the field notes were lengthy, including both spontaneous information and quotes from the stories heard. Although these recordings were of little value to the creators of ethnographic atlases, they are extremely valuable to individuals interested in understanding 20th-century rural life.

7 J. Światała-Mastalerz, D. Światała-Trybek, *Śląska spiżarnia. O jodle, warzyniu, maszketach i inkszym pichcyniu*, Koszęcin 2014, pp. 29–33.

8 D. Simonides, *Od kolebki do grobu. Śląskie wierzenia, zwyczaje i obrzędy rodzinne w XIX wieku*, Opole 1988, p. 77.

9 J. Pośpiech, *Zwyczaje i obrzędy na Śląsku*, Opole 1987, p. 124.

10 A. Chwałba, “Rok obrzędowy,” [in:] *Obyczaje w Polsce od średniowiecza do czasów współczesnych*, ed. A. Chwałba, Warszawa 2006, p. 173; A. Gauda, *Dziedzictwo kulturowe Lubelszczyzny. Kultura ludowa*, Lublin 2001, p. 34.

11 More on the theoretical and methodological premises of the PEA can be found in: J. Bohdanowicz, “Polski Atlas Etnograficzny – wykładnia zadań i metod pracy,” [in:] *Komentarze do Polskiego Atlasu Etnograficznego*, vol. 1: “Rolnictwo i hodowla,” part 1, ed. J. Bohdanowicz, Wrocław 1993, pp. 7–49.

Source materials from towns currently located in the Silesian, Opole and Lower Silesian Voivodeships are of similar value. Their value is related to their complexity and diversity. This is due to the fact that within such large geographical units, there are at least several smaller ethnographic regions.¹² In the case of the Lower Silesian Voivodeship, and to a lesser extent the other areas, there are reports from people re-settled and settlers who arrived after World War II from the Eastern Borderlands and south-eastern part of Poland. Their memories therefore concern not only the situation in their place of residence but also their place of origin.

The primary source of information about bread making in the mentioned area is the records kept by seven ethnographers who conducted research based on an interview questionnaire entitled *Folk Material Culture*.¹³ Field explorations took place in the 1960s. During these studies, the following topics were addressed: baking bread at home, the type of flour used, enriching bread dough, techniques of preparing sour-dough, containers for starting and kneading the dough, ways of shaping loaves, and the baking process.

In this study, we aim to present the findings of an analysis of data collected during field research pertaining to the preparation of this product. The greatest value of these records lies in the narratives of the respondents and the metanarratives of the researchers, preserved in archival materials. It is primarily these accounts that construct the image of everyday practices related to the preparation and consumption of bread among inhabitants of the specified regions. These narratives reveal not only traditional practices associated with bread-making but also the dynamic processes

12 This particularly refers to the Silesian Voivodeship, within which one can find records related to the Dąbrowa Basin, Lubliniec region, Kłobuck region, Pszczyna region, Cieszyn Silesia, Silesian Beskids, and Żywiec region.

13 Field research was conducted by the following researchers: Barbara Jankowska: Gołąsza (near Będzin), Wojsławice (near Myszków), Istebna (near Cieszyn), Żabnica (near Żywiec), Grabin (near Niemodlina), Stare Kotkowice (near Prudnik); Jerzy Grocholski: Lubomia (near Wodzisław Śląski), Wiślica (near Cieszyn), Nasiedle (near Głubczyce); M. Matuskówna: Kryry (near Pszczyna); Janusz Bohdanowicz: Ryczeń (near Góra Śląska), Wrzosey (near Wołów), Piersno (near Środa Śląska), Polanowice (near Wrocław), Zielenice (near Strzelin), Zawidowice (near Oleśnica); T. Skarżyński: Piersno (near Środa Śląska); Konrad Hanisch: Kokotek (near Lubliniec), Lubojna (near Częstochowa), Panki (near Kłobuck), Rudziniec (near Gliwice), Wieszowa (near Tarnowskie Góry), Brzezina (near Brzeg), Dzierżysławice (near Prudnik), Głuszyna (near Namysłów), Grabczak and Ligota Prószkowska (near Opole), Łaziska (near Strzelce Opolskie), Wędrynia (near Olesno), Modła (near Głogów), Ogrodziska (near Lubin), Lubomin (near Wałbrzych), Książnica Śląska (near Dzierżoniów), Wilcza (near Nowa Ruda), Idzików (near Bystrzyca Kłodzka), Pawłów Trzebnicki (near Trzebnica), Starczówek (near Ząbkowice Śląskie), Guzowice (near Milicz), Bukowice (near Trzebnica); Antoni Kuczyński: Poświętne (near Bolesławiec), Stary Węgliniec (near Zgorzelec), Szyszkowa (near Luban Śląski), Górczyca (near Lwówek Śląski), Słup (near Jawor).

of change – both those resulting from the modernization of various aspects of daily life and those stemming from experiences of living in multicultural environments (particularly in areas inhabited by settlers). For this reason, we allow these stories to take central stage in the text.

Ingredients for bread dough

The materials collected during field research provided information on the ingredients used to make bread and how the taste of the bread was enhanced. To prepare the bread dough, rye flour¹⁴ (also called *żarnówka*,¹⁵ *żarnowa* flour,¹⁶ *życiana* flour¹⁷) was primarily used, occasionally buckwheat flour (*tatarczana* flour or *tatarka*) and barley flour; in several villages, rye flour was also mixed with wheat flour,¹⁸ as well as wheat flour with corn flour.¹⁹ Relatively rarely, however, bread was baked solely from wheat flour;²⁰ interviewees considered such a product ‘too expensive.’ Moreover, the residents of several villages did not consider bread made from pure wheat flour to be bread as such but rather baked products, as evidenced by expressions such as: “Bread made from wheat flour is no longer bread, but cake, so-called *kołocze*”²¹; “From wheat flour, it’s *kołocze*.”²²

14 Such data was collected in all examined locations.

15 Recorded in the village of Gołaszka.

16 Recorded in the village of Lubojna.

17 Recorded in the village of Wojsławice.

18 Recorded in the following villages of: Stary Węgliniec, Szyszkowa, Piersno, Zawidowice, Panki.

19 Recorded in the village of Grabczak.

20 Recorded in the following villages of: Istebna, Żabnica.

21 Recorded in the village of Wiślica.

22 It was documented in the village of Wilcza (near Rybnik). Atlas materials also provided some information about a unique bakery product *kołocz*, which still serves as ceremonial wedding bread (K. Lach, “Kołacz weselny w starych i nowych odsłonach (przykład pogranicza śląsko-morawskiego),” [in:] *Dziedzictwo kulinarne Śląska w nowych kontekstach interpretacyjnych*, eds. L. Przymuszała, D. Światała-Trybek, Opole 2021, pp. 169–182; E. Wijas-Grocholska, “Kołocz w tradycji i współczesnej kulturze Śląska Opolskiego”, *Notatnik Skansenowski. Rocznik Muzeum Wsi Opolskiej* 2013, no. 2, pp. 49–70), accompanying other important family ceremonies, such as the act of christening, first holy communion, first masses, funerals, and annual fairs and kermesses (M. Szymańska, *Dziedzictwo kulturowe południowej części powiatu raciborskiego. Kultura agrarna, wierzenia i praktyki religijne oraz tradycje kulinarne*, Wrocław–Krzanowice 2024, pp. 255–257). During the interviews, researchers noted that *kołocze* were baked with various fillings; in the

Various ingredients were added to the dough in order to enhance the taste, extend the bread's freshness, and, in many cases, save money. According to the interviewees, the aesthetics of the bread itself were also taken care of through the use of certain products: "They sprinkled it with flour, brushed it with water or water with egg on top to make it shine;"²³ "The loaves are soaked on the outside, because then they shine."²⁴

Among the most common additives were potatoes: grated²⁵ or boiled²⁶ (well mashed²⁷). Their use in baking was forced by the lack of necessary ingredients, especially in poorer families and during World War II.²⁸ Vegetables were frequently used as a substitute for flour. In the village of Pawłów Trzebnicki the settlers reported that "grated potatoes were added during the war in their hometowns. Bran, millet groats and roasted rye were also added at that time." In the post-war period, the practice of enriching bread dough began to be abandoned,²⁹ as mentioned during interviews by residents of many villages, including Ogrodzisk: "Grated potatoes, raw and boiled, are rare today, only to ensure longer freshness. During the war, for austerity reasons," Ryczenia: "Not anymore, in the past they used to add boiled potatoes," Piersna: "Potatoes are added, but not always. Potatoes must be cooked (not necessarily), they could also be grated."

According to the respondents, adding potatoes to the dough improved its quality ("lovely bread from those potatoes"³⁰) and freshness ("such bread stays fresh for

village of Kryry, with *posypka* [crumb topping], cheese, apples, poppy seeds for different holidays, including kermesse. In the village of Wiślica, *zawijoki* were well-known ("For a long time, they baked *kołocze* with cheese here, and after World War I, with poppy seeds. The dough for the pastry was made from wheat flour, thick, like a small loaf of bread"). In the village of Lubomia, the participant shared a saying popular among the indigenous people: *Na kołocze gęba skocze* [Your mouth jumps for *kołocz*], which indicates that this pastry was particularly beloved by the locals.

23 Recorded in the village of Zielenice.

24 Recorded in the village of Piersno.

25 Recorded in the following villages: Ogrodziska, Piersno, Ryczeń, Polanowice, Idzików, Łaziska, Wiślica, Głuszyna, Panki, Lubojna.

26 Recorded in the following villages: Istebna, Wiślica, Kokotek, Kryry, Lubomia, Rudziniec, Wieszowa, Wilcza, Lubojna, Panki, Wojsławice, Gołąsza, Głuszyna, Grabin, Grabczak, Ligota Prószkowska, Goła, Wędrynia, Nasiedle, Gołąsza, Ogrodziska Piersno, Ryczeń, Polanowice.

27 Recorded in the village of Gołąsza.

28 Recorded in the following villages: Guzowice, Bukowice, Pawłów Trzebnicki.

29 Recorded in the following villages: Pawłów Trzebnicki, Modła, Starczówek, Zawidowice, Lubomin.

30 Recorded in the village of Zielenice.

longer”³¹). In the village of Ligota Prószkowska, the vegetable addition was grated or overcooked pumpkin (“the bread is fluffier then”), while in Stare Kotkowice, housewives baked bread with fruit (“sometimes bread stuffed with fruit, pears, apples, if they were available”). In Lubojnia, a delicacy was “a loaf of bread with a handful of boiled wheat added to the dough.”

Curd, or buttermilk were less usual component to bread dough³². This ingredient, like potatoes, impacted the quality of the bread. In the village of Gołąsza the researcher noted the following statement: “The bread is better.”

Herbs and seeds were another type of ingredients whose role was limited to enhance the flavor of the baked items. In this particular case, they were added both to the dough during the kneading process and, at the end, sprinkled on top of the formed loaf. Residents of the villages where the survey was conducted pointed to several such ingredients: cumin,³³ dill,³⁴ anise,³⁵ black cumin,³⁶ and poppy seeds.³⁷ Housewives who used these particular spices frequently mixed them in the following manner: “Only some housewives add cumin to the dough and poppy seeds on top,”³⁸ or “cumin to the dough, black cumin on top.”³⁹

Sourdough – preparation and storage

Sourdough was the most important ingredient in bread dough, determining the success of the baking process. In households where baking bread took place, having it was essential. Each housewife had her own sourdough, which she made herself.

31 Recorded in the village of Dzierżysławice.

32 Recorded in the following villages: Ryczeń, Pawłów Trzebnicki, Zawidowice, Grabczak, Rudziniec, Stare Kotkowice, Wędrynia.

33 Recorded in the following villages: Łaziska, Grabczak, Ligota Prószkowska, Brzezina, Wiślica, Wilcza (near Rybnik), Wieszowa, Kryry, Lubomia, Panki, Ryczeń, Wrzosey, Książnica Śląska, Starczówek, Guzowice, Bukowice, Pawłów Trzebnicki.

34 Recorded in the village of Wrzosey.

35 Recorded in the village of Wilcza.

36 Recorded in the village of Ryczeń.

37 Recorded in the village of Pawłów Trzebnicki.

38 Recorded in the village of Ogrodziska. Similar information was noted in the villages of: Lubomin, Piersno, Idzików, Polanowice, Zawidowice.

39 Recorded in the village of Wilcza (near Nowa Ruda). Similar information was noted in the village of Zielenice.

As it was an extremely important product, knowledge of its making and storage was also available to those who had given up making bread themselves. The most common way to obtain sourdough was to leave a bit of dough from the previous bake, which was covered with flour and kept in a wooden bowl, clay pots (called *bon-cloki*⁴⁰), jars, or even in flour. The following record comes from the village of Panki: "The sourdough was put in the sack with the flour, on top." Similarly, this was a common practice in other towns.⁴¹

Some housewives added yeast,⁴² potatoes,⁴³ bread crust,⁴⁴ sauerkraut juice,⁴⁵ a bit of borscht (sour rye soup),⁴⁶ or sour milk⁴⁷ to the sourdough to make the dough sour faster. In the village of Stare Kotowice in the post-war period, only yeast was used: "A long time ago, bread was baked with sourdough, but recently, when it was baked, it was with yeast."

The most common method of refreshing the sourdough was to dissolve it in warm water or, less frequently, in milk. This method was known in all villages included in the project. "Before starting the dough, the sourdough was refreshed by soaking,"⁴⁸ *nociastek* [...] is refreshed with warm water."⁴⁹ Flour was added to the prepared mixture, and the process of bread-making began. Round kneading troughs were used for this purpose, which are discussed later in the text. The sourdough itself was referred to by various names: *ciasto kwaśne*,⁵⁰ *ciasto kwasowe*,⁵¹ *kwas*,⁵² *kwasek*,⁵³ *kis*,⁵⁴

40 Recorded in the following villages: Wilcza, Lubomia, Ligota Prószkowska.

41 Recorded in the following villages: Wilcza (ok. Nowa Ruda), Piersno, Idzików, Starczówek.

42 Recorded in the following villages: Żabnica, Istebna, Panki, Grabin.

43 Recorded in the village of Wojsławice.

44 Recorded in the following villages: Stare Kotkowice, Wojsławice, Wiślica.

45 Recorded in the following villages: Lubomia, Ligota Prószkowska, Goła

46 Recorded in the village of Gołąsza.

47 Recorded in the following villages: Wiślica, Polanowice.

48 Recorded in the village of Gołąsza.

49 Recorded in the village of Lubomia.

50 Recorded in the following villages: Lubomin, Ogródziska.

51 Recorded in the village of Starczówek.

52 Recorded in the following villages: Wilcza (near Nowa Ruda), Idzików, Starczówek, Rudziniec, Wieszowa, Łaziska, Dzierżysławice.

53 Recorded in the village of Istebna.

54 Recorded in the village of Żabnica.

naciasta,⁵⁵ *nociastek*,⁵⁶ *nouciastek*,⁵⁷ *rozkwas*,⁵⁸ *rozczyzna*,⁵⁹ *zakwaska*,⁶⁰ *zakwasek*,⁶¹ *zaczyniek*,⁶² *zaczynka*,⁶³ *zocyna*,⁶⁴ *zoucyna*,⁶⁵ *zoukwasek*.⁶⁶

Vessels required for bread dough preparation and baking

Preparing bread dough and baking bread required the use of several vessels dedicated to this purpose. They were simple in design and multifunctional. The most universal vessel, known to all inhabitants (both locals and newcomers) of the regions studied, was the kneading trough. It was primarily used to prepare bread dough. In some places, the specifics of its design were very well recorded. According to the narrative, spherical troughs made of spruce stave,⁶⁷ oak,⁶⁸ and deciduous trees, especially ash, which was considered “the best for making troughs,”⁶⁹ were common. The vessel’s size was determined by the size of the family using it. In the more numerous families, bread dough was prepared in large kneading troughs, while “in small families it used to be done in troughs.”⁷⁰ For the dough to rise properly, “the kneading trough must be covered, and the dough must be kept warm.”⁷¹ In the village of Gołąsza the

55 Recorded in the village of Wiślica.

56 Recorded in the village of Kototek.

57 Recorded in the following village: Rudziniec, Wieszowa, Łaziska, Dzierżysławice.

58 Recorded in the village of Głuszyna.

59 Recorded in the village of Pawłów Trzebnicki.

60 Recorded in the village of Grabin.

61 Recorded in the following villages: Brzezina, Modle.

62 Recorded in the village of Panki.

63 Recorded in the village of Wojsławice.

64 Recorded in the village of Lubojna.

65 Recorded in the village of Dzierżysławice.

66 Recorded in the village of Grabczak.

67 Recorded in the village of Kokotek.

68 Recorded in the village of Ligota Prószkowska.

69 Recorded in the village of Grabczak.

70 Recorded in the village of Żabnica.

71 Recorded in the village of Istebna.

kneading bowl used to be covered with feather blanket and pillows “so that the dough would rise and the bread would be successful.” Hence, it was a well-known belief that the best dough troughs were those with lids.⁷² The participants mentioned as well that “a kneading trough is not good when it is new, and they are rarely washed.”⁷³

Numerous testimonials from settlers who arrived in Lower Silesia and Opole confirm the popularity of this vessel. Several years after the war, some still used the troughs they had brought with them⁷⁴: “Shortly after the war, settlers from the east had stave kneading troughs, which have now disappeared;”⁷⁵ „in their hometowns – in the troughs. Currently, only a few farmers have kneading equipment [...]. The troughs are stave vessels (pine staves).”⁷⁶ In several towns, settlers also mentioned kneading troughs alongside the wooden troughs.⁷⁷ Before World War II, basins carved from tree trunks were also used,⁷⁸ “which are now almost non-existent in the village.”⁷⁹

According to the documented memories, the indigenous people of Lower Silesia also used wooden vessels. The settlers found many everyday items at the site, including those used to make bread dough. However, in the post-war reality they were no longer used. In the village of Szyszkowa, the researcher noted: “the post-German trough-shaped kneading bowls have been preserved at the site which were out of use – their capacity is too large.” Similarly, in the village of Górczyca: “The troughs left over from the Germans were not used in the village by the settlers after 1945. This was due to their large capacity.” In the village of Słup “post-German kneading-troughs were preserved which the settlers refused to use.” Also in the village of Poświętne “the post-German trough-shaped kneading bowls have been preserved, which are not currently used due to their large capacity.”

72 Recorded in the following villages: Grabczak, Ligota Prószkowska, Dzierżysławice, Istebna.

73 Recorded in the village of Żabnica.

74 Recorded in the following villages: Wrzosey and Wilcza.

75 Recorded in the village of Stary Węgliniec.

76 Recorded in the village of Górczyca.

77 The wooden troughs were mentioned by settlers from the Stanisławów area living in Idzików. The information related to the situation in their hometowns. Similarly, the situation in Buczacz was described by residents of Piersk. They mentioned wooden troughs in addition to basins. In the village of Ryczeń, on the other hand, in the past, dough was made in poplar troughs called *naczółki*. In the village of Głuszyna, an interviewee from Ternopil mentioned that in his home region “they used to knead bread in a trough.” In the village of Zawidowice, a wooden trough chiseled from fir wood was used.

78 Recorded in the following villages: Dzierżysławice, Stare Kotkowice, Istebna, Kokotek, Rudziniec, Kryry, Panki, Lubojna.

79 Recorded in the village of Stare Kotkowice.

The vessel in question was also used for producing, storing, and refreshing sourdough. Most interlocutors believed that the vessel in which the sourdough was started was the determining factor in its quality. According to them, the most useful vessel was a wooden trough.⁸⁰ In the village of Stary Węgliniec, it is common to “sour in an old trough,” which is “well soured.”⁸¹ Residents in Szyszkowa village reported a similar method: “There are only a few people in the village who have a kneading trough. They also refresh the sourdough from the previous baking. They store this sourdough (dough) in the kneading trough [...]. They frequently provide this sourdough to those who don’t have a dough trough and start the dough in enamelled containers.”

The essential step in the process of bread making was combining and kneading the raised dough. To mix, a dough trough or other vessels in which the dough had previously risen were used.

The dough was then kneaded on a table⁸² or pastry board⁸³, a *biyrkownica*,⁸⁴ the lid of a dough trough,⁸⁵ in round tin bowls,⁸⁶ formerly in a trough,⁸⁷ and allowed to rise once more.⁸⁸ The dough was then shaped into loaves and placed in the bread oven. This task was carried out by women in several ways. The most old-fashioned way, while also requiring the most experience, was one that used no tools at all. In the Zielenice village “a woman kneaded the loaf by hand and placed it on a shovel.”⁸⁹

Typically, the optimal shape was created by using containers specifically built for this purpose. Round or circular straw baskets were widely used, but reed baskets were less common.⁹⁰ These were vessels known in both indigenous-inhabited

⁸⁰ Recorded in the following villages: Książnica Śląska, Bukowice.

⁸¹ This method and the accompanying belief were adopted in the following villages: Lubomia, Poświętne, Górczyca, Modła, Ryczeń, Słup and Wrzosey.

⁸² Recorded in the villages of: Grabczak, Dzierżysławice, Lubojna, Panki and in the villages of Poświętne and Stary Węgliniec inhabited by resettled persons and settlers.

⁸³ Recorded in the villages: Goła, Wędrynia, Ligota Prószkowska, Grabczak, Wiślica, Kokotek, Rudziniec, Wieszowa, Panki, Lubojna and in the villages of Poświętne and Stary Węgliniec inhabited by resettled persons and settlers.

⁸⁴ Recorded in the village of Łaziska.

⁸⁵ Recorded in the following villages: Dzierżysławice, Grabczak.

⁸⁶ Recorded in the village of Żabnica.

⁸⁷ Recorded in the following villages: Kryry, Lubomia, Lubojna.

⁸⁸ Recorded in the following villages: Modła, Ogrodziska, Lubomin, Książnica Śląska, Wilcza, Idzików, Pawłów Trzebnicki, Polanowice, Starczówek, Guzowice.

⁸⁹ A similar procedure was recorded in the village of Ryczeń: “Now on straw baskets, previously on a shovel” and the village of Polanowice: “In straw baskets or directly by hand on a shovel.”

⁹⁰ Reed-woven vessels were only mentioned by residents of Idzikowo.

areas and places where masses of settlers arrived following World War II. In the latter case, the newcomers brought their own baskets. In Szyszkowa village “the farmers from Ternopil, Lviv, and Stanisławów brought woven straw baskets with them, but they are no longer present.” A similar observation was made in Górczyca village: “Occasionally, settlers from Tarnopol and Lviv brought woven straw baskets, which are no longer in use.” In most of the villages, straw baskets were still commonly used at the time of the survey: “Loaves are formed in straw moulds made from previously braided straw braids.”⁹¹

In Górczyca village, “loaves were shaped and placed in vessels – tin moulds or straw baskets,” similarly in the village of Słup, where “loaves were shaped by hand and placed in baskets made of straw [...] or in tin moulds – vessels bought in stores.” In the village of Piersno, the type of flour used determined how the dough was shaped: “Rye bread is shaped by hand, wheat bread in straw baskets.” The most common names for these vessels were: *koszyczki*,⁹² *słomianki*,⁹³ *słomionki*,⁹⁴ *sumianki*,⁹⁵ *miarki chlebowe*,⁹⁶ *miareczki*,⁹⁷ *plećki*,⁹⁸ *kobiółki*,⁹⁹ *koszałki*,¹⁰⁰ *koszarki*.¹⁰¹

Baking was the final stage in the bread-making process. The shaped loaves were placed in the oven with a bread shovel,¹⁰² much less often using a stick.¹⁰³ Depending on the shape of the bread being baked, the shovel could be round or close to

91 It was recorded in the village of Modła. Straw baskets were also used in the villages: Ogrodziska, Lubomin, Ryczeń, Piersno, Książnica Śląska, Wilcza, Idzików, Pawłów Trzebnicki, Bukowice, Polanowice, Zielenice, Starczówek, Guzowice, Zawidowice.

92 Recorded in the following villages: Nasiedle, Gołasza, Panki, Głuszyna, Grabin, Brzezina.

93 Recorded in the following villages: Stare Kotkowice, Wiślica, Żabnica, Rudziniec, Wieszowa.

94 Recorded in the following villages: Dzierżysławice, Łaziska, Lubomia, Istebna.

95 Recorded in the village of Kryry.

96 Recorded in the village of Lubojna.

97 Recorded in the village of Panki.

98 Recorded in the village of Grabczak.

99 Recorded in the following villages: Goła, Wędrynia.

100 Recorded in the village of Istebna.

101 Recorded in the village of Lubojna.

102 Recorded in the following villages: Poświętne, Górczyca, Ogrodziska, Słup, Lubomin, Ryczeń, Piersno, Książnica Śląska, Wilcza, Idzików, Pawłów Trzebnicki, Bukowice, Polanowice, Zielenice, Starczówek, Guzowice and Zawidowice. In the Istebna village, a shovel was also called a *połać*.

103 Recorded in the village of Stary Węgliniec: “Using a wooden shovel or pushing it in manually with a long stick”.

rectangular. The bread was placed directly on the floor of the oven, which was sprinkled with flour or covered with cabbage leaves.¹⁰⁴ The purpose of placing the leaves of a few selected plants on top of the bread was to prevent the dough from being burnt and contaminated by dirt on the oven floor. Cabbage leaves,¹⁰⁵ horseradish leaves,¹⁰⁶ and leaves from specific trees¹⁰⁷ were used to achieve this goal. In the village of Wrzosey, this tradition survives only in the memories of the interviewees' hometowns: "Oak leaves, calamus leaves, bran, leaves from horseradish, leaves from cabbage. Not used in the Regained Lands."

Specific practices were routinely performed in order to produce quality bread. One of these was reshuffling bread¹⁰⁸ in the oven, which included shifting the loaves around to achieve even baking. This task was seen as required because "the oven is generally hotter in the back. Loaves that were initially in the front are now placed at the back"¹⁰⁹ or moves "from corner to corner."¹¹⁰ This seems particularly important in the cases "when the oven was already old (flimsy) and it was difficult to bake in it."¹¹¹ Usually, the reshuffling took place after an hour of baking,¹¹² in the village of Brzezina (near Brzeg) after a dozen of minutes. However, in the village of Grabin (near Niemodlin), as noted by the researcher: "the locals, after a short time of placing the bread in the oven, when a thin crust forms, take the bread out of the oven and turn it over." Bread was not shifted, if it was baked in the "baking pans."¹¹³

Bread, seen as the result of hard work, was deeply respected – it was never thrown away, even when it was stale. Various methods were used to restore its freshness. One of these was a culinary practice called 'ashing bread', which involved moistening bread

¹⁰⁴ Recorded in the village of Kryry.

¹⁰⁵ Recorded in the following villages: Kryry, Nasiedle, Brzezina, Głuszyna, Piersno, Ogrodziska, Wilcza, Idzików, Polanowice, Zielenice, Starczówek i Zawidowice.

¹⁰⁶ In the village of Bukowice "only repatriates use cabbage or horseradish leaves," similarly in the village of Lubomin.

¹⁰⁷ In the village of Ryczeń, "historically maple leaves on a shovel, oak leaves, and poplar leaves".

¹⁰⁸ This practice was observed in the following villages: Grabczak, Dzierżysławice, Stare Kotkowice, Goła, Wędrynia, Grabin, Głuszyna, Kokotek, Rudziniec, Wilcza, Panki, and Lubojna.

¹⁰⁹ Recorded in the village of Dzierżysławice.

¹¹⁰ Recorded in the village of Stare Kotowice.

¹¹¹ Recorded in the village of Gołasza.

¹¹² Recorded in the following villages: Grabczak, Goła, Wędrynia, Lubojna, Wilcza.

¹¹³ Recorded in the village of Wojsławice.

with water and toasting it on the stovetop. This particular practice was recorded in many villages where the survey was conducted.¹¹⁴

In the study area bread was known by a variety of names, including *bochenek*,¹¹⁵ *pecenek*,¹¹⁶ and *chlebicka*.¹¹⁷ In the village of Wojsławice it was known as *tatarczuch* (made of buckwheat flour), in the village of Wędrynia (near Olesno) *podpłonik*, which meant “a loaf of bread taken in advance out of the oven and consumed immediately with coffee.” In the village of Kryry (near Pszczyna), on the other hand, a *świecennik* (in the form of a loaf) was baked from wheat flour for Easter, which was blessed in the church on Holy Saturday.

Magical practices related to breadmaking

Many rituals and beliefs about baking and keeping bread existed in Polish folklore.¹¹⁸ At the time of recording the materials (1960s), some practices were still known to the villagers. The vast majority of them involved symbolic, magical actions related to making the sign of the cross. In the village of Zielenice, the researcher recorded that “the woman would knead the loaf in her hands, place it on a shovel, soak the top with water and make the sign of the cross on the first one.” Making the sign of the cross was practiced by housewives during the various stages of bread baking. In the village of Ryczeń “the sign of the cross was made on the first and the last loaf of bread. When you light the oven, you also make a cross.” Likewise in the village of Zawidowice and other locations: “The kneaded bread is sprinkled with flour and blessed with a cross.”¹¹⁹ In the village of Polanowice the following custom was prevalent among settlers from Krakow Voivodeship: “Before putting the loaf into the oven, it is crossed with the sign of the cross. Before lighting the bread oven, it is also blessed.”

114 Recorded in the following villages: Lubojna, Panki, Brzezina, Głuszyna, Ogrodziska, Książnica Śląska, Starczówek, Guzowice, Pawłów Trzebnicki, Lubomin, Bukowice, Wilcza, Idzików.

115 Recorded in the following villages: Żabnica, Grabin, Słup, Zielenice, Szyszkowa, Górczyca, Ryczeń, Polanowice.

116 Recorded in the following villages: Grabczak, Ligota Prószkowska, Łaziska, Dzierżysławice, Kokotek, Rudziniec, Wieszowa, Lubomia.

117 Recorded in the following villages: Goła, Wędrynia.

118 I. Kubiak, K. Kubiak, op. cit., pp. 164–175.

119 Recorded in the following villages: Goła, Wędrynia.

Among the villagers from Wrzosey and Ryczeń it was believed that when kneading dough, the door to the room should be closed. "When you are making bread, the door must not be opened."¹²⁰

The reason given for such behaviour was: "When the bread is rising, the door had to be locked with a latch so that no one would cause any damage."¹²¹ In the village of Łaziska, on the other hand, "the women danced around the dough trough, then squatted in such a way that their heavily starched skirts, resting on the floor, formed a large bell. The dough was supposed to rise like the bell from the skirt."

Developments after the Second World War

According to the questionnaire materials, bread was regularly prepared in the examined locations prior to World War II. This practice started to fade around 1950. During the study, just in a few towns women continued to prepare and bake bread on their own.¹²² As a rule, they did this once or twice a week,¹²³ less often every ten days,¹²⁴ or every fortnight.¹²⁵

The reasons for the decline included: a lack of sufficient grain due to its mandatory delivery to collection points, the allocation of rye for pig farming, and the exchange of flour for bread in local cooperatives. One of the most important reasons for giving up home baking was the increasing availability of bread (the emergence of bakeries in the local community) and its affordability.¹²⁶

¹²⁰ Recorded in the village of Wrzosey.

¹²¹ Recorded in the village of Ryczeń.

¹²² Recorded in the following villages: Modła, Ogrodziska, Ryczeń, Wrzosey, Piersno, Idzików, Starczówek, Zawidowice.

¹²³ Recorded in the villages: Lubojna, where "half of the farmers still bake bread at home, once a week, on Saturday," Wieszowa, Modła, Ogrodziska, Ryczeń, Wrzosey, Piersno, Wilcza, Idzików, Polanowice, Starczówek, Bukowice and Zawidowice.

¹²⁴ Recorded in the village of Polanowice.

¹²⁵ It was reported in the village of Panki, where "they bake [bread] once a week, or once every fortnight depending on the size of the family."

¹²⁶ Recorded in the following villages: Kryry, Lubomia, Słup, Guzowice, Poświętne, Stary Węgliniec, Wilcza, Zielonice and Bukowice. Some researchers estimated the percentage of households that made bread independently. In the village of Książnica Śląska "about 40% of housewives still bake bread at home," similarly in the village of Pawłów Trzebnicki "about 25% of housewives still bake bread. They bake all year round." In the village of Polanowice "about half of the residents bake once a week, once every 10 days." In the village of Wędrynia "about 25% of households bake bread at home. For practical reasons, baking bread at home has gradually declined. Another 25% of households carry loaves to where they bake bread." In the village of Łaziska "about 2/3 of the village bakes

Such a situation was common in the majority of the examined villages. The following was noted by researchers in the particular locations: "They still bake bread at home, but not in all households;"¹²⁷ "They bake at home very rarely, more often in the past;"¹²⁸ "They no longer bake bread. They stopped about 10 years after the war. Bread baking incidents are sporadic;"¹²⁹ "Only a few households still bake bread at home. Baking at home was generally ended about 10 years ago;"¹³⁰ "Bread is not baked at home. They stopped baking bread several years ago."¹³¹

The researcher mentions the situation in the village of Lubomin: "Very few housewives bake bread at home. Those who still do, do so on average once a week." The people who were more attached to home baking were the elderly: "Occasionally – only older housewives;"¹³² "Occasionally, only older housewives in the winter."¹³³ In exceptional situations, this applied to wealthier individuals: "Only wealthier households bake bread at home, and not often."¹³⁴

In towns where people did not completely give up baking bread themselves, newer types of vessels were used. Wooden kneading troughs were replaced by tin vessels, often enamelled.¹³⁵ In the village of Poświętne, dough was made "sporadically in kneading troughs, more often in enamelled vessels." Similarly, in the Szyszkowa village: "Occasionally in dough troughs or enamelled vessels, and one housewife in a [wooden tub] *szaflik*,"¹³⁶ or in the village of Lubomin: "Bread dough is started in a wooden trough, in basins or tin tubs."¹³⁷ At the same time, the methods for storing

bread at home." A more detailed examination of the functioning of industrial bakeries and the bread distribution system is provided in the following studies: A. Zawadzka, *Kultura kulinarna w Polsce ludowej*, Warszawa 2017; P. Deskur, *Chleb powszedni. Historia pieczywa w Polsce*, Warszawa 2010.

127 Recorded in the village of Istebna.

128 Recorded in the village of Grabin.

129 Recorded in the village of Kokotek.

130 Recorded in the village of Rudziniec.

131 Recorded in the village of Brzezina.

132 Recorded in the village of Szyszkowa.

133 Recorded in the village of Górczyca.

134 Recorded in the village of Słup.

135 A wooden trough or tin vessels were used in the villages of: Poświętne, Górczyca, Modła, Słup, Idzików, Starczówek, Guzowice, Bukowice and Pawłów Trzebnicki.

136 A *szaflik* is a round wooden vessel with one or two handles.

137 The residents of Książnica Śląska also pointed to this method, as they used a dough trough, a tin basin, or a tub for making the dough. In the village of Zielenice residents

sourdough were adjusted to fit the available resources. In Lubomin “the leftover bread dough is stored in a jar.”¹³⁸ In Ogrodziska village “sour dough is kept in a jar or clay pot,” whereas in Pawłów Trzebnicki, “dough scraps were stored in a stone pot and sprinkled with flour.”¹³⁹

Another vessel that gained popularity after World War II was the tin mould, sometimes known as a *blacha*. It was used not just to bake bread, but also to shape it.¹⁴⁰ It was usually rectangular or square in shape, and less frequently spherical.¹⁴¹ Their use was described as follows: “Currently, most bread is formed on a tin square mould,”¹⁴² “the dough was formed in so-called tins,”¹⁴³ “They were shaped by hand – without moulds, then placed on metal trays.”¹⁴⁴ In the village of Wojśławice, bread made from buckwheat flour – *tatarczuch* – was baked in a baking pan.

Changes also affected the production of sourdough. As home baking was becoming less frequent, access to sourdough was possible thanks to the resourcefulness of housewives. In the village of Wieszowa the researcher noted: “Currently, when very few families bake bread at home, housewives sour the flour in large pots and then sell it to neighbours who make sour rye soup. Sour rye soup for sale is prepared primarily during the winter season.”

PEA’s materials concerning home bread baking after the World War II, collected in the surveyed villages across three voivodeships – Silesian, Opole, and Lower Silesian – provided important information ranging from the types of flour and additional ingredients used, to the methods of preparing bread dough, including the use of specific vessels and tools, the performance of symbolic and magical actions, and the final stage of baking. Questionnaire records compiled by researchers, including

mentioned that in the places they came from, wooden troughs were used, whereas upon arriving in Lower Silesia, metal basins became popular. In the village of Guzowice dough was prepared in a wooden trough or basin. In the village of Polanowice it was noted: “Previously in a wooden trough, now in tin basins”. Similarly in the villages of Stary Węgliniec and Piersno.

138 Similarly in the village of Zawidowice.

139 Similarly in the village of Zielenice, where “sourdough was always left. The sour dough was stored in a pot,” and in the village of Guzowice, where “sourdough was stored in a trough sprinkled with flour.”

140 Recorded in the following villages: Grabin, Ogrodziska, Lubomin, Wrzosey, Piersno, Zawidowice.

141 Spherical moulds were mentioned by the villagers of Poświętne: “Bread was put into the oven in metal round baking trays, bought in a store.”

142 Recorded in the village of Polanowice.

143 Recorded in the village of Górczyca.

144 Recorded in the village of Stary Węgliniec.

particularly valuable original statements by local inhabitants, make it possible to trace the transformation of this practice, which began to decline in household routines starting in the 1950s. This process was influenced by a combination of economic, social, and broader structural factors.

Bibliography

Literature

- Biegeleisen H., *Lecznictwo ludu polskiego*, Kraków 1929.
- Bohdanowicz J., "Polski Atlas Etnograficzny – wykładnia zadań i metod pracy," [in:] *Komentarze do Polskiego Atlasu Etnograficznego*, vol. 1: *Rolnictwo i hodowla*, part 1, ed. J. Bohdanowicz, Wrocław 1993.
- Chwalba A., „Rok obrzędowy,” [in:] *Obyczaje w Polsce od średniowiecza do czasów współczesnych*, ed. A. Chwalba, Warszawa 2006.
- Deskur P., *Chleb powszedni. Historia pieczywa w Polsce*, Warszawa 2010.
- Gauda A., *Dziedzictwo kulturowe Lubelszczyzny. Kultura ludowa*, Lublin 2001.
- Kopaliński W., *Słownik symboli*, Warszawa 2006.
- Kowalski P., *Chleb nasz powszedni. O pieczywie w obrzędach, magii, literackich obrazach i opiniach dietetyków*, Wrocław 2000.
- Kubiak I., Kubiak K., *Chleb w tradycji ludowej*, Warszawa 1981.
- Lach K., „Kołacz weselny w starych i nowych odsłonach (przykład pogranicza śląsko-morawskiego),” [in:] *Dziedzictwo kulinarne Śląska w nowych kontekstach interpretacyjnych*, eds. L. Przymuszała, D. Światała-Trybek, Opole 2021.
- Pośpiech J., *Zwyczaje i obrzędy na Śląsku*, Opole 1987.
- Simonides D., *Od kolebki do grobu. Śląskie wierzenia, zwyczaje i obrzędy rodzinne w XIX wieku*, Opole 1988.
- Szymańska M., *Dziedzictwo kulturowe południowej części powiatu raciborskiego. Kultura agrarna, wierzenia i praktyki religijne oraz tradycje kulinarne*, Wrocław–Krzanowice 2024.
- Światała-Mastalerz J., Światała-Trybek D., *Śląska spiżarnia. O jodle, warzynie, maszkietach i inkszym pichcyniu*, Koszęcin 2014.
- Światała-Trybek D., Przymuszała L., „Na beztydzień i od święta – o tradycyjnych zupach w śląskim menu,” [in:] *Polska i świat przez kuchnię. Studia o dziedzictwie kulinarnym*, eds. A. Kamler, D. Pietrzkiewicz, K. Seroka, Warszawa 2018.
- Waleciuk-Dejneka B., *Chleb w folklorze polskim – w poszukiwaniu znaczeń*, Siedlce 2010.
- Wijas-Grocholska E., „Kołocz w tradycji i współczesnej kulturze Śląska Opolskiego,” *Notatnik Skansenowski. Rocznik Muzeum Wsi Opolskiej* 2013, no. 2.
- Zawadzka A., *Kultura kulinarna w Polsce ludowej*, Warszawa 2017.