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Researchers of Culture Confronted with the “Treasures of Culinary Heritage” in Upper Silesia as Described in the Most Recent Cookbooks

Abstract: Considering that in the last few years culinary matters have become a fashionable topic, the author is making a preliminary attempt at assessing many myths and authoritative opinions related to it. With respect to this aim, she has reviewed utilitarian literature, to which culinary handbooks certainly belong (“Concerning the studies of comestibles in culture”). In this context, she has singled out cookery books pertaining to only one region, Upper Silesia. This region has a complicated history, being an ethnic borderland, where after the 2nd World War, the local population of Silesians acquired new neighbours: repatriates from the Eastern Borderlands annexed by the Soviet Union, settlers from central and southern Poland, as well as former emigrants coming back from the West (“The treasures of culinary heritage’ in cookery books from Upper Silesia”). The author discusses several Silesian cookery books which focus only on the specificity of traditional Silesian cuisine, the Silesians’ curious conservatism and attachment to their regional tastes and culinary customs, their preference for some products and dislike of other ones. From the well-provided shelf of Silesian cookery books, she has singled out two recently published, unusual culinary handbooks by the Rev. Father Prof. Andrzej Hanich (*Opolszczyzna w wielu smakach. Skarby dziedzictwa kulinarnego. 2200 wypróbowanych i polecanych przepisów na przysmaki kuchni domowej*, Opole 2012; *Smaki polskie i opolskie. Skarby dziedzictwa kulinarnego. 2500 wypróbowanych i polecanych przepisów na przysmaki kuchni domowej*, Opole 2014), which have become a culinary bestseller in Upper Silesia. The author perceives these books as an interesting and unusual example of a monothematic “collective lecture” pertaining to the multi-cultural character of Opole Silesia, the noticeable foreign influences and the globalisation of culinaries. In her opinion, these books constitute a very rich set of materials pertaining to the present-day culture of consumption in Poland, with a discernible emphasis on Opole Silesia.

Key words: food, culinary handbooks, Upper Silesia, Opole Silesia.

Introduction

Since the emergence of our species, an interest in food has been one of the most basic human initiatives and needs. The progressive development of culinary recipes which introduced a degree of variety into the diet has also been the *conditio sine qua non* for human life and development. The more or less dynamic modifications in this respect are directly linked to changes in social customs and culture; they are also dependent on the geography, economy and demographic of a given region, as well as on its political situation. In recent years, many scholars have conducted research into things culinary, making them the subject of monographs and popular science publications; this must be emphasised, as it is of crucial importance to the present analysis. The authors of such works, which may often be regarded as interdisciplinary, are recruited from specialists in the humanities and social sciences, which category, in turn, includes ethnographers (ethnologists), experts in culture studies and folklore studies, as well as historians. As a result, the subject is discussed not only at scientific conferences, but also at culinary fairs. One popular aspect of such activity is the unprecedented development of one specific type of literature: utilitarian publications such as culinary guidebooks. Popular initiatives brought about an unparalleled increase in the number of culinary vernissages on national, regional and local level, often partially financed by the European Union. Various culinary events are organised with the intention of promoting the given commune, county or region in terms of its “cultural and regional heritage”.¹ In describing the dominant position of culinary issues in modern culture, the numerous food-themed internet

1 Some of the cuisine-related events held in only one region, i.e. Upper Silesia, are “Dzień Kartofla” (Potato Day), “Kartoflada” (Potato Feast), “Święto Pstrąga” (Trout Fête), “Święto Czekolady” (Chocolate Fête), “Od zymology do krupnioka” (celebration of regional blood sausages) [for more, see Świtawa-Trybek 2007]; the “Smaki Śląskie” Festival; the “Opolskie Smaki” Festival; food stations organised by bloggers from Opole Silesia; Easter fairs in Silesian open-air museums; “Nasze Kulinarne Dziedzictwo – Smaki Regionów” (Our Culinary Heritage – Regional Tastes); “Kiermasze Jesiennych Smaków Domowych” (Home-made Autumnal Food Fairs) and “Wojewódzka Wystawa Stołów Wielkanocnych” (Voivodeship Easter Table Exhibition) organised by the Silesian Countrywomen’s Association / Verain Schlesischer Landfrauen).

blogs and television programmes must also be mentioned.² The instigators of the above initiatives in Poland – i.e. not only scholars, but also cultural managers, master chefs and more or less talented amateurs – create an optimistic and colourful picture of the interdisciplinary interest in the culinary realm in modern science and culture. A special place should perhaps be awarded to interdisciplinary monographic studies on the role of the feast, and feasting, in the culture of the Polish gentry and in modern culture [see: *Oczywisty urok biesiadowania* 1998; *Smak biesiady...* 2000; *Miejsca biesiadne...* 2007]. Attempts to promote the so-called new gastronomy are an example of a type of research already fashionable in Western Europe and the newest manifestation of such pioneering initiatives in Poland. The interest that experts in cultural studies take in the new methods of food production, the quality of meat and cold cuts, the need to limit the use of nitrites and nitrates in meat preservation and other related issues, and the resultant consultations with veterinarians, are certainly worthy of special attention [Gomółka 2011].

Concerning the studies of comestibles in culture

In the context of such unambiguous preference towards culinary issues in science and in modern culture, one finds it difficult to agree with the criticism raised by scholars who claim that “thus far neither ethnographers nor historians of culture in Poland have taken the issue of food seriously enough to make it the subject of a thorough analysis, even though such research has already been conducted abroad” [Łeńska-Bąk 2010: 11]. Naturally, my disagreement with this diagnosis stems simply from the history of research in ethnic studies conducted in Poland in the previous centuries; it is justified by earlier research objectives and the development of folklore studies, ethnography and ethnology, since the shape and direction of the work conducted in the past was indubitably deter-

2 It is worth noting that the first culinary shows to be seen on television, in Poland as much as worldwide, were based on a simple principle: a renowned cook is televised cooking a tasty dish and shares the recipe with the viewers. Currently, this type of culinary show, which has a cognitive value, has a rival in culinary entertainment shows, which the experts categorise as a type of reality show.

mined by historical and political factors. This aspect has frequently been emphasised in the history of cultural studies, particularly in the research related to folk culture, showcasing all that has so far occurred “between ethnic studies and anthropology”. I am equally disinclined to agree with the opinion that the research on comestibles conducted nowadays is of meagre scientific value; even though scholars such as Katarzyna Łeńska-Bąk express their disapproval of the conference publications (“the fruit of scholarly meetings”): “[...] the aim of the organisers is to deepen the participants’ interest in the issue, yet their promises are never fulfilled, and the volumes issued after the meetings do not offer a thorough analysis of the subject” [Łeńska-Bąk 2010: 21]. I am also critical of the opinions offered on the public arena by the media-employed culinary expert, who display a regrettable lack of knowledge of fields other than their own by claiming that “[...] Polish ethnography is remarkably silent on the subject of food. Sometimes I even think that Polish ethnographers must have come from underprivileged families and thus the thought that food might be an important issue did not even occur to them” [*Co nam zostało...* 2009: 12]. The present article is no place to list the achievements in this field of research. It is the view on the culinary realm taken by historians that seems relatively one-sided, as they focus mainly on the cuisine of the elite classes: the royalty, the magnates or the gentry, in other words, on court cuisine. The scope is sometimes broad enough to include monastic fare, but peasant food has for many centuries remained outside the interests of historians. Jarosław Dumanowski, a historian specialising in comestibles, offers some self-criticism:

Although eating certainly has a history, understood as past events that took place at a given point in time, historians did not always consider such prosaic and mundane action to be worthy of their attention. When, bored by traditional political event-centred history, scholars turned to the history of nutrition, it was still limited to an aspect of economic history [Dumanowski 2010: 121].

The same author makes another accurate conclusion, stating that the marginalisation of the culinary issues was still commonplace among historians

in the 1970s, when the works of “most scholars dealing with the history of comestibles applied the economic and statistical approach employing the terms of the old Annales School [...] Thus, the primary question is how to measure a phenomenon we know practically nothing about” [Dumanowski 2010: 121]. In this context, not only historical examples of cookery books (e.g. by Stanisław Czerniecki, Wojciech Wincenty Wielądka), but also the culinary best-sellers published after the Second World War (e.g. the ones edited by Lucyna Ćwierczakiewiczowa) are worthy of discussion.

It must be emphasised that not only popular publications still promote and repeat many culinary myths related to the culture of the magnates and the gentry. In the past, court and peasant cuisine were, in fact, aspects of two different cultures. As many scholars rightly observe, “the life of the court revolved around food” [Byszewska, Kurpińska 2012: 15], meals were hearty, the dinners prolonged, the tableware made of porcelain, the recipes – in accordance with the fashion of the day – written down in French and the pantries were always well-stocked. Sometimes the trends dictated that French cooks be employed; a custom registered by a perceptive chronicler from the era of the Wettin dynasty from Saxony: “since the deluge of French cooks reached Poland and our compatriots honed their skills in the culinary art, the natural dishes have vanished, replaced by a most sophisticated fare [...]” [Kitowicz 1970: 425–426]. In this context, Zofia Szromba-Rysowa offers an accurate description of the general character of peasant cuisine:

the properties of traditional folk foodstuffs were a result of the social and economic conditions in the villages; the level of economic self-sufficiency determined the quality and composition of dishes, adding a local tinge to the fare. Food consumption was dependent primarily on the production capacities of the farms and the existing models of behaviour [Szromba-Rysowa 1978: 40].

The extent of the differences between the two types of cuisine is delineated in a more recent publication by Krystyna Bockenheimer, who recollects the “forgotten recipes” (“two hundred years ago already forgotten”) such

as baked capons, cooked turtles, partridges made of salted fish, moose muzzles, bear paws etc. [Bockenheimer 2003: 192–201].

As researchers of culture aptly observe, “modern cookery books are very different from the ones written in the previous century, because the repertoire of dishes and indispensable ingredients has changed, along with the kitchen utensils and appliances, dietary norms, standards of taste and culinary customs” [Bednarek 1998: 173]. Which is not to say that in modern times no attempts are made to review old cookery books and to evaluate them from the perspective of our current ethical and aesthetic sensibility; this approach might lead us to perceive olden-day cooking instructions as “dispassionate, objectifying to the extreme and treating the animal technically as the stuff for producing sophisticated dishes” and to accuse the authors of being oblivious to the “problem of animal suffering” [Łeńska-Bąk 2005: 62]. The viewpoint of modern culture studies on the numerous descriptions of putting animals to death found in the old “course-books in cookery” [see e.g. Bednarek 1998: 173–177; Łeńska-Bąk 2005, 2007, 2010: 211–251] is very clear:

Anyone trying to use such examples to argue that these books were barbaric would probably be wrong. The cooks of the 19th century performed their duties in good faith and according to the principles of the art, making sure that the final product satisfied even the daintiest of palates [Bednarek 1998: 175].

I am convinced that the scholarly assessment that in modern times “the two spheres – killing and ingestion – have been separated” [Łeńska-Bąk 2010: 251], as the “end user has no contact with the slaughtered animal” [Łeńska-Bąk 2007: 208; see also: Łeńska-Bąk 2005: 75] may calm the conscience of modern consumers of meat and its derivatives, but is only relevant in urban reality, where animal products are purchased in a shop. In the rural context, the situation may be perceived very differently: there, every person knows that animals are reared for a specific purpose; potential consumers are habituated to slaughtering livestock from a very early age and very often have very direct experience with ruthless killing not

only of poultry and small animals, but also of larger beasts, the popular custom of pig-slaughter being just one example.

“The treasures of culinary heritage” in cookery books from Upper Silesia

The numerous cookery books that have so far appeared on the Polish market describe only the features of traditional Silesian fare, the peculiar conservatism and the locals' attachment to familiar tastes and culinary preferences causing them to favour some products and shun others. The examples include such texts as *Kuchnia śląska* by Emilia Kołder [two issues; Ostrava 1972; 1976]; *Kuchnia śląska. Wybrane przepisy kulinarne* by Adolf Balcerowski [Warszawa 1980]; *Śląskie parszczyne* by Elżbieta Łabońska [Chorzów 2001]; *Kuchnia śląska z przyprawami leczniczymi* by Barbara Jakimowicz-Klein [Wrocław 2003]; *Tradycyjna kuchnia śląska* by Joanna Baranowska [Chorzów 2007] and *Kuchnia śląska. 171 potraw* by Ewa Krasnopolska [Łódź 2007].

Out of this abundance of cookbooks from Upper Silesia, four are, in my estimation, deserving of a special mention due to their particular emphasis on the traditional culinary heritage of the region: *Nowa kuchnia śląska* edited by Otylia Słomczyńska and Stanisława Sochacka [five editions, first edition Opole 1985]; *Śląska kucharka doskonała* by Elżbieta Łabońska [two editions: introduction by M. G. Gerlich, Katowice 1990; introduction by D. Simonides, Katowice 1996]; *Krupnioki i moczka, czyli gawędy o kuchni śląskiej* by Wera Sztabowa [three editions; first edition Katowice 1985]; *Śląska spiżarnia. O jodle, warzyniu, maszketach i inszym pichcyniu* by Joanna Światała-Mastalerz and Dorota Światała-Trybek [two editions, first edition Koszęcin 2008].

The authors of *Nowa kuchnia śląska* (the title meaning *New Silesian cuisine*) emphasise that their publication is not “a guidebook to a rational diet in the professional sense of the term” and add that it was

designed as a selective collection of recipes for older and more modern dishes served in Silesia, provided by experienced Silesian homemakers, taken from the authors' own collections or acquired from hobbyists

interested in cookery. In many cases the authors made use of the listed external sources [*Nowa kuchnia śląska* 1985: 9].

As a result, the book captures – as the title suggests – not only the “characteristic features of traditional Silesian cuisine”, but also the process of changes that stem from contemporary demographic, cultural and sociological factors; i.e. the *novum* signifying the emergence of inter-group influences (immigrant population versus the locals) and the growing influence of urban culture on the rural parts of Silesia. The recipes for specific dishes (1528 in total) are preceded by a comprehensive section entitled “*W kuchni śląskiej*” (*In Silesian cuisine*) which offers a synthetic description of the characteristics of Silesian culinary heritage.

The other above-mentioned publications share the same manner of organisation. Interestingly, the recipes are grouped and presented according to the ritual and liturgical calendar. *Śląska kucharka doskonała* presents “*kuchnia na beztydzyń*” (cuisine for weekdays) and “*kuchnia na niedziela*” (Sunday cuisine). It also distinguishes the dishes for “the period of fasting and for the hungry gap”, for holiday periods and “all other celebrations and meetings” (e.g. the All Hallows, the day of Saint Barbara, church fairs, parish indulgence days), as well as for family occasions (e.g. the wedding and day-after-wedding parties, baptism feasts and celebrations of the child’s first birthday, the First Communion, birthdays, wedding anniversaries and “*polywanie skórki*” which literally means “sprinkling the skin”, i.e. funeral banquets). The characteristics of Silesian cuisine as presented by Elżbieta Łabońska are complemented by a section describing the pantry and the process of gathering supplies, including “pig slaughtering and meat processing”. A similar focus on ritual calendar, annual and family celebrations in Upper Silesia is found in the cookery book by Wera Sztabowa and the joint publication by Joanna Światała-Mastalerz and Dorota Światała-Trybek. Sztabowa’s collection of regional and local recipes, as well as her knowledge of traditional beliefs, customs and rituals in Silesia and the changes that have occurred in them, are most impressive indeed. Her extraordinary book reads like an essay addressed to the general public and pertaining not only to the cultural heritage of Upper Silesia, but also to the cultural

legacy on the sub-regional level, e.g. in the region of Cieszyn, Racibórz, Opole etc. As noted by Sztabowa, Silesian cuisine is an amalgam of “culinary influences from many parts of the world: Slavonic, German, Austrian, Czech, Italian and even Turkish. [...] However, as I was repeatedly told, these recipes were always altered to fit the local familiar style” [Sztabowa 1985: 6–7]. Cultural characteristics of Upper Silesia are also emphasised in *Śląska spiżarnia* in its respective chapters: “*Kuchnia na beztydzień*” (Weekday Cuisine), “*Kuchnia świąteczna*” (Holiday Cuisine), “*Zaproszomy na maszkiety*” (Invitation to *maszkiety*; it is a Silesian term for sweet treats), “*Od piwa głowa się kiwa. Alkohole*” (Beer Makes the Head Wobble. Alcohols), “*Ogóreczki do krauzeczki, a do buncloka kapusta z pola. Przetwory*” (Cucumbers into the jars, cabbage from the field to the pot. Preserves.), “*Tuste z gynsi najlepsze na kaszlanie i smarkanie. O domowych sposobach leczenia*” (Goose fat is best for coughing and snivelling. About home remedies). The character of regional dishes in this book is additionally accentuated by the presence of dialect introduced to the narration by the authors, or rather by the providers of the recipes. For this reason the cookery book is supplemented with a dictionary of dialectal terms. Some of the recipes are noted down in verse, e.g.:

Ciastka ze szkwerek III

Składniki i przygotowanie:

Po świniobiciu przeważnie przed świątami
były w komorze garce ze wyskwarzonymi szpyrkami.

Z tych szpyrek pyszne ciastka pieczono

i zaraz opowiem, jak je robiono:

- trza zemleć ćwierćlitrok szpyrek wytopionych,
- na miska wsypać pół kilo maki przesionej,
- dodać 8 łyżek cukru miążkiego,
- wbić 2 jajka i nie zapomnieć cukru waniliowego.

Prędko z tego ciasto zagnijjść do kupy,
nie wyrobiać tak dugo, jak nudle do zupy.

Na godzinka wynieść do chodnej komory,
a potem przez maszynka robić różne wzory.

Takie ciasteczka upieczone w piekaroku na złoto,

chrupiące, pachnące kożdy zjy z ochotą.
Na choince tyż się takowe wieszało,
a po świyntach z chyncią zjodało [*Śląska spiżarnia...* 2008: 147].

Crackling cookies III – Ingredients and preparation: After pig-slaughter, mostly before a holiday, pots of roasted crackling stood in the pantry. Delicious cookies were baked of this crackling, and I shall tell you now how they were made: a quart of crackling must be minced; half a kilo of flour sifted into a bowl; 8 spoonfuls of caster sugar added; 2 eggs poured in; vanilla sugar must not be forgotten. The dough must be worked quickly, not kneaded for as long as soup noodles. The dough must be taken to the cold-room for an hour, then cut with a wee gadget into various shapes. Baked golden in the oven, crunchy and fragrant, everyone will gladly eat such cookies. They were also put on the Christmas tree and eaten with much pleasure after the holiday.

In my private view, a popular cookery guidebook enhanced with wide-ranging information on the role of tradition in Silesian life and the preservation of this tradition is a perfect example of a harmonious combination of scientific value and science popularisation. The authors of *Śląska spiżarnia* not only display intimate knowledge of traditional Silesian cuisine, but employ this medium to introduce the reader to the realm of everyday life in the region – the varied types of annual and family-related celebrations, household remedies and treatments, mutual borrowings and civilisational changes, as well as magic, symbolism, religious factors – in other words, the cultural heritage of the native inhabitants of the industrial areas in Upper Silesia (as defined by the contemporary administrative division of Poland; Silesian Voivodeship). The book will be of interest not only to experts and teachers, but also to enthusiasts of regional history and culture who are keen on popularising them. The cognitive value of this cookery book manifests itself in yet another important aspect: the authors conducted field research (surveys, interviews, participative observation, contest organisation) in more than ten communes in Silesia as a project for the Lokalna Grupa Działania “Spichlerz Górnego Śląska” foundation. Edited and enhanced with comments, empirical data gathered using ob-

jective methods were included in the cookery book. The interviewees' statements were treated with due diligence and the authors' arguments are supported with numerous quotations, which adds to the authenticity of the publication. Another element worth mentioning are the carefully chosen sayings and proverbs used as mottoes to respective chapters. The combination of all these aspects makes for an admirably thought through, well-organised and scientifically accurate work on traditional and contemporary Upper Silesian cuisine. This well-made, cleverly structured and academically valuable cookery book truly deserves praise. It proves how much is yet to be learnt about Silesian cuisine.

Another book which ought to be mentioned in this context is *Kuchnia raciborska. Podróże kulinarne po dawnej i obecnej ziemi raciborskiej* by Grzegorz Wawoczny [2005]. The author, who is a lawyer, the owner of WAW publishing house and news agency in Racibórz and the editor-in-chief of the "Nowiny Raciborskie" weekly, reveals that "the subject matter tackled in *Kuchnia raciborska* is presented in a time frame spanning from the Middle Ages to modern times" [Wawoczny 2005: 9]. Fascinated with the archival research query of source materials pertaining to the sub-region of Racibórz, Wawoczny aspired to writing a historical study. The result is an original culinary monograph comprising three parts. It may be argued that the centre of gravity in this monograph, labelled by its author as having a "conventional title", lies in its first part.³ This section (which, surprisingly, does not bear a title) presents an almost overwhelming amount of facts and data taken from an impressive list of external sources [see the literature at the end of the section] both in the author's own rendition and as direct citations. The first part (containing 24 "essays") is *sensu stricte* culinary in nature, yet it also contains a profusion of data on local and regional history. The opening "essay" presents the history of Racibórz through the ages,

3 This part contains "sketches dedicated to fishing, butchery, baking, grain-milling, gingerbread-making, pastry-making, bee-keeping, agriculture, gardening, hunting, herbal medicine, water supply, great feasts in the principality of Racibórz, local culinary specialities in the 19th and 20th c., kitchen utensils, beer brewing, wine-making, spirit distillation and stimulants such as coffee, tea, snuff, cigars and cigarettes; not omitting issues concerning poisons, such as mushroom poisoning" [Wawoczny 2005: 7–8]. Each section of this part could, in fact, become a separate monograph.

whereas the string of chapters on “strong liquors”, “in-town breweries”, “the castle brewery”, “distilling spirits” and “coffee and other stimulants” is interrupted (or perhaps complemented) by a long section describing inns, hotels and restaurants in Racibórz and its vicinity. Part One closes with two distinctive “culinary” chapters, which also present selected facts from the history of Racibórz and the surrounding region, and of Upper Silesia against the background of European history [see: the chapters entitled “*Wojskowy prowiant*”, i.e. military provisions, and “*Od głodu uchron nas Panie*”, Deliver us from famine, O Lord]. Part Two, entitled “*Obrazy z minionych lat..., czyli podróż w zapomniany świat z przedwojennych raciborskich reklam, anonsów, pocztówek, unikalnych zdjęć archiwalnych, pięknie zdobionych rachunków i kolorowych opakowań po wyśmienitych miejscowych wyrobach*” (Images from a time gone by... or a journey into the forgotten world of pre-war Racibórz advertisements, notices, postcards, unique archival photographs, beautifully decorated bill notes and colourful packaging for delicious local products) contains an impressive number of illustrations with much cognitive value. The most interesting photographs are presented with notes on their provenance, but, unfortunately, the vast majority of images lack any comment regarding their origin. Part Three, “*Kulinarne podróże po współczesnym Raciborzu i okolicach..., czyli o: miejscowych wypiekach, wędlinach, dziczyźnie, miodzie, zapach dodatkach do dań oraz słodkościach, a także wyposażeniu kuchni*” (Culinary journeys around contemporary Racibórz and its vicinity... or a description of local baked goods, cold meats, game, honey, soups, garnishes and sweets, as well as kitchen utensils) presents the results of the author’s field research. The project focused on cookery in a broad understanding of the term; research results also provide valuable information. This section of the publication is a cookery guidebook *sensu stricto*, offering recipes for specific dishes typical for the Racibórz sub-region. It is supplemented with data regarding the informants, their photographs and illustrations of specific dishes.

Silesian cookery books edited by experts on the region of Upper Silesia or hobbyists whose family history is linked to the region present a very different academic level than the two more general guidebooks pertaining to the same issue: a volume entitled *Śląsk*, edited by Marta Orłowska

as a part of a commercially successful series *Regionalna kuchnia polska* [Kielce 2007]; and *Kuchnia śląska* compiled by Tadeusz Barowicz for an equally commercial monograph *Polskie kuchnie regionalne* [Warszawa 2007: 9–38]. The dishes in Orłowska’s publication are divided into typical categories known from non-regional cookery books (appetisers, soups, main courses and garnishes, cakes and desserts); everyday fare is interspersed with holiday and ritual dishes not only from the various sub-regions of Upper Silesia, but also from Lower Silesia – a region distinctly different in terms of culture [see e.g. beef roulades with cabbage in the Świdnik style]. The regional nature of selected dishes often seems to be determined by the adjective “Silesian”. Recipes included in this publication are taken from various volumes of “Polish Cuisine” and “Traditional Polish Cuisine” or selected from “newspapers and magazines” and Internet resources; the most authentic ones come from the cookery book by Elżbieta Łabońska. Unfortunately, the names of some dishes contain spelling inaccuracies, e.g. Silesian “*szalot kartoflany*” (a type of potato salad) is labelled “*szalot*”, while “*ajntopf*” (one-pot dish) is spelt “*ajntop*” [cf. Łabońska 1990: 101, 184]. Orłowska attempts to introduce supplementary data in sections entitled “*Czy wiesz, że...*” (Did you know...), e.g. informs the reader that Silesia, “usually perceived as the land of coal and steel covering a very limited space” is, in fact, “a large region”;⁴ yet in doing so she seems to identify Silesia mostly with its industrial part.⁵ All too often she perpetuates stereotypes not only with regard to the cultural characteristics of Upper Silesia, but also to folk and traditional culture. To name but two examples: many dishes she associates with the region of Silesia were actually known in the peasant community of all parts of Poland;⁶

- 4 According to Orłowska, this region “stretches on both sides of lower Oder and Eastern Neisse, encompassing the entire Silesian Plain and Upper Silesian Coal Basin, the latter reaching Beskid in the south” [2007: 84].
- 5 See e.g. “*Czy wiesz, że...*”: “The ‘peasant food’ [dish] is nothing else but a Silesian version of scrambled eggs enhanced with many high-calorie ingredients, because Silesians, the men being mostly miners, need a nutritious meal after hard work” [Orłowska 2007: 6].
- 6 To give an example of Orłowska’s banality: “At harvest and during periods of intensive work in the fields the Silesian menu was special” [2007: 8]. It must also be pointed out that (a) generally known harvest-time customs were observed not only in the Opole and the sub-Beskid region (i.e. the Opole Silesia) [2007: 16]; (b) “periods of fasting were observed

and it was not only Silesian women who “had an extensive knowledge of herbs and believed in their beneficial properties in the treatment of various afflictions” [Orłowska 2007: 97]. Many oversimplifications pertain to the varied forms of annual religious celebrations and family rituals, which have, in fact, been practised in the entire Poland.⁷ The section containing practical advice (a peculiar *silva rerum*) Orłowska not only enlightens the reader as to the reason why “aluminium dishes cannot be used for cooking sour dishes” [2007: 72], but also includes a portion of stereotypical information on the Silesian population (often untrue or relevant only in reference to a given sub-region), as well as a bizarre typology of Silesian festivities, for instance: “one of the most important festive occasions for the Silesian people is the last day of carnival called ‘śledź’” [2007: 12]; “pig-slaughter was a veritable holiday for the Silesian people, an occasion for family meetings” [2007: 33]; “the day-after-wedding party in Silesia can stretch over two or three days” [2007: 34]; “the most important elements of decoration on the Easter table in Silesia were [...] a wreath [...] and a basket [...] of painted eggs, sometimes in a stack of several dozen, or even a hundred” [2007: 20]; “the kitchen, a symbol of the family, is the focal point in all Silesian households. It is associated with the warmth of the stove, the smells of the various dishes and the bustling life of the mistress of the house” [2007: 29]; “Easter has always been the greatest culinary feast in Silesia” [2007: 78]; “on the day of the wedding all kinds of ceramic pots were smashed in front of the bride’s house” [2007: 83].⁸

in Silesia”, but definitely elsewhere as well, and similarly “evenings of communal feather-plucking and spinning” [2007: 40] were not an exclusively Silesian tradition; (c) bread was revered not only in Silesia, but in the peasant culture in general; (d) soups were “the Silesian breakfast staple in days gone by” [2007: 10], but they were eaten for breakfast elsewhere as well; (e) pickled cabbage was made not only “in Silesia – Cieszyn Silesia, Upper Silesia and Opole Silesia alike”, with the additional observation that Cieszyn Silesia and Opole Silesia are sub-regions of Upper Silesia.

7 By this I mean such celebrations as All Hallows (according to Orłowska, an occasion for “special gatherings of Silesian families” [2007: 64]), the Christmas Eve (“a special day to Silesians” [2007: 80]), the First Communion (“celebrated by Silesians with great solemnity” [2007: 54]) or a funeral wake (“In Silesia, a sumptuous banquet is given” [2007: 22]).

8 For more on this topic, see Smolińska [2004: 80–82 (*Polterabend jako przedweselny zwyczaj trzaskania skorup*)].

Given the growing interest in regional cuisine and the development of agrotourism (with farms offering local dishes as one of the attractions of the sojourn), the primary aim behind T. Barowicz's monograph entitled *Polskie kuchnie regionalne* (apart from Silesian cuisine, the work also showcases the cuisine in the mountain regions, in Greater Poland, Kashubia, Podlachia, Warmland and Masuria, the Eastern borderlands, Galicia/Lesser Poland, Mazovia and Kuyavia) was to "save the delicacies of various local cuisine from oblivion and to popularise them. The opening of Poland to the world means that we should care for our cultural heritage like never before" [Barowicz 2007: 8]. His popular collection of Silesian dishes (53 recipes, from soups to the "foreman's beverage") contains no source material data and is preceded by a brief introduction, which is not free of stereotypical generalisations (e.g. regarding the typology of noodles and their names; the sub-regional nature of the *kołocz* cake; the recipe for Easter eggs in caraway brine).

The class of "tasty reading matter" (a term used by the marshal of the Opole Voivodeship Józef Sebesta to describe culinary folders) includes, among other things, "publications describing traditional products originating from ancient culinary traditions" of Upper Silesia [*Produkty tradycyjne Śląska Opolskiego* 2009: 2].

The collection of interesting and richly illustrated culinary folders that have been issued in recent years in the region as an element of promoting and the so-called identification of traditional regional products would in themselves deserve a separate analysis. They constitute extraordinary promotion material; many such folders are financed from the resources allocated by the EU to the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development in the years 2007–2013 and by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development.⁹ Another category of "tasty reading matter" for the general public are culinary calendars published by various Upper Silesian regional

9 See e.g. *Opole w czterdziestu smakach. Czyli 40 przepisów opolan, zebranych podczas V Festiwalu Opolskich Smaków, przyrządzonych przez opolskich blogerów*, published in 2014 by the Promotion and International Cooperation Bureau of the Opole city council; *Produkty tradycyjne Śląska Opolskiego 2008* published by the Opole Voivodeship Marshal's Office; also, cookery book *Przepis na piętnastkę* published in 2014 by the pupils, parents and teachers of primary school no. 15 in Opole.

associations,¹⁰ sometimes as a part of trans-border initiatives and Silesian binary projects¹¹ (i.e. ones organised both in the Polish and Czech parts of the region). These wall calendars serve to promote regional dishes by presenting the recipes in both Polish and German or Polish and Czech. They might also feature Silesian and German culinary sayings or showcase restaurants, chefs or confectioneries.

A monograph that stands apart from all the above cookery books is Marek Szotysek's *Kuchnia śląska. Jodło, historia, kultura, gwara* [2003]. Its author manages to explain the reason for the "originality" of Silesian cuisine. He presents the Silesian culinary tradition as very distrustful of culinary novelties and closed to external influence. He calls Silesian cooking an "extraordinary culinary phenomenon". He also identifies a problem with the nomenclature of Silesian dishes, which are gradually becoming Polish. Attempts at the ideologisation of culinary characteristics of Upper Silesia would require a separate analysis and evaluation.

The growing variety of Silesian cookery guidebooks will soon be joined by a new monographic publication by the members of the Silesian Women's Association. As I established during my field research, the book will feature recipes "for traditional Silesian dishes prepared by *mamy* and *oimy* [moms and grandmothers] in the olden days and now rather forgotten", which will be presented in the form of scanned manuscripts.

In the context of the distinct Silesian preferences in the cookbooks published thus far (and, as demonstrated, also the ones being prepared for publication), there are two recent cookery guidebooks that deserve a special mention: *Opolszczyzna w wielu smakach. Skarby dziedzictwa kulinarnego. 2200 wypróbowanych i polecanych przepisów na przysmaki kuchni domowej* [2012] and *Smaki polskie i opolskie. Skarby dziedzictwa kulinarnego. 2500 wypróbowanych i polecanych przepisów na przysmaki*

10 See e.g. *Śląsk smakuje / Schlesien schmeckt* [wall calendar for the year 2010]. Conception by Klaudia Kluczniok. Published by Związek Śląskich Rolników / Verband Schlesischer Bauern.

11 See e.g. *Podróże kulinarne po Euroregionach / Kulinářské cestování po Euroregionech: Gogolin – Jablunkov* [wall calendar for the year 2010], published by the Gogolin town council and Městský úřad Jablunkov. The project was financed from the "Crossing the Borders" European Regional Development Fund and from state funds.

kuchni domowej [2014], edited by Father Andrzej Hanich rector of a parish in the suburbs of Opole, historian specialising in Church history and professor at the State Research Institute, the Silesian Institute in Opole. The long evolution of a cookbook as a utilitarian text meant to “provide help in solving problems” [Żarski 2008: 92] is amazing indeed, considering the continuing success of *Kuchnia polska* [first published in 1955] issued by Państwowe Wydawnictwo Ekonomiczne, in which the “dominant, organising discourse is academic”. This cookery book, written as a collective effort of expert engineers and professors whom Anna Jaroszuk established to have been “acting on behalf of the National Institute of Hygiene (Food Safety Department) and the Medical Academy, and later of the National Food and Nutrition Institute”, is considered by scholars to be “the guidebook to human nutrition” [Jaroszuk 2012: 232].

Before presenting the evaluation of the two original cookery books from the Opole region of Silesia edited by Father Hanich, I must add that mentioning the source of and foundation for the ethnic diversity of the region’s population is important, in fact indispensable, to the assessment of the author’s idea for culinary guidebooks in a “multi-taste” aspect. Hence, I shall begin the discussion of these two serviceable monographs with the issue of the complex ethnic and demographic conditions of the region in question.

The multi-faceted nature of the ongoing scientific and political discussion regarding the history of Upper Silesia, the national identity of Silesians and the region as an ethnic and cultural borderland and a “little fatherland” for many regional and national groups is very interestingly revealed in the academic works by specialists representing various fields of research and branches of science, such as history, political science, sociology, ethnology, folklore studies and linguistics. Emotional responses and the rekindled (or continually present) stereotypes related to issues of national identity and ethnic affinity in the Opole region of Silesia bring about the need for detailed studies of history and cultural tradition, not only regarding the “salt of the earth” in the region, i.e. the indigenous population, but also the immigrants who came to Silesia after 1945. An evaluation of the changes in traditional Silesian culture in the face of post-war and modern social,

economic and political transformations cannot ignore the consequences of the social and cultural migration movements that took place after the Second World War. The resettlement operation begun in February 1945 brought a wave of new immigrants to Upper and Lower Silesia. As a result, the local population acquired new neighbours: repatriates from the Eastern Borderlands annexed by the Soviet Union, settlers from central and southern Poland, as well as former emigrants coming back from the West [see e.g. Szmeja 1997; Dworzak, Goc 2000; Dworzak, Goc 2008; *Pamięć o kresowych korzeniach tożsamości* 2010; *Kresowanie na Śląsku Opolskim* 2011]. Officially, the mass resettlement operation ended in 1948, but spontaneous and vigorous migration movements continued for many years afterwards. The first comprehensive statistical data quoted by specialists date from 1950. Scholars analysing national identity and the essential terminology associated with this subject devoted much attention to the social and cultural categories of “alienness” and “familiarity”, which are crucial to the phenomenon in question. Popular opinions on other national and ethnic groups constitute an important argument in a person’s national identity, self-awareness and national identification, resulting as they do from the close presence of other cultures clashing or intertwining with one another, as well as from the experience of multiculturalism. Negative images of Poland’s neighbours converged in the post-war reality of the so-called Recovered Territories. Silesia was the part of Poland inhabited not only by settlers who came there of their own volition, but also people uprooted from their homeland “by a twist of fate”, “not by their own choice”. As noted by Adam Wierciński, these reluctant settlers were forced

to live among other groups, together yet separately, to coexist and mutually wonder at each other [...]. – So many varieties of Polish-ness. And so many paradoxes [...] Chaos and confusion. And mistrust towards anything that came from the outside. And jokes as a form of defence against persuasion [Wierciński 1992: 54–55].

The post-war mass migration brought cultural models of various ethnic groups together and resulted in a process of integration that is still ongoing.

It has had a significant influence on the cultural tradition of both the native and the immigrant populations. It must be emphasised that in the early post-war period the indigenous Silesians and the immigrants adhered to their respective ritual calendars, with differences not only in the external form of festive activities, but also on the level of beliefs and magic. The majority of the surviving traditional recipes are for distinctive dishes, associated not only with a specific holiday (the Christmas Eve, Easter etc.), but also with everyday fare (e.g. dumplings, cabbage rolls, borscht) and with culinary preferences brought over from the Eastern Borderlands and other regions.

Another aspect that deserves analysis (and is significantly present in Hanich's book) is related to pop-culture, i.e. the mass media, advertising, fads for specific dishes or materials and changes in traditional culinary habits. Direct examples thereof are found e.g. in the local newspaper "Nowa Trybuna Opolska". It features an emblematic (read: currently fashionable) regional thematic section entitled "*Opolskie smaki*" (The flavours of Opole), which allows readers to recommend and describe recipes preferred by their families but very different from typical Silesian fare in terms of their origin. Some of these dishes are, in fact, typical of ethnic groups which settled in the region after 1945, witness "dumplings with lentil filling", "dumplings with sweet cherry filling", "*cepelinai* from Podlachia", "*fuczki*, the Ukrainian pancakes" or "fish with onion, Volhynian style" to name but a few. Other recipes come from ethnically distant cultures and represent culinary tastes arrived from other parts of Europe (or other continents) as a result of the development of new culinary habits in the region, e.g. "an easy recipe for home-made pizza", "lasagne – an Italian classic", "lasagne in the Silesian style", "spaghetti with tuna", "*penne al pomodoro*" (pasta with tomatoes, cheese and herbs), "an Italian delicacy for supper" (a salad in the colours of the Italian flag), "French buns", "beans from sunny Greece" (a white bean soup), "Bulgarian fare for an afternoon snack" (Bulgarian salad), "Saint Patrick's Irish stew", "delicious brownies", "a *tajine* made to suit our taste" (an Arabian dish with couscous), "Oriental-style courgettes", "home-made sushi", "essential dipping sauces". It is apparent that the appetites of the contemporary residents of the Opole region are not limited

to the local dishes proposed for the EU list of traditional products, i.e. the *kołocz* cake (with all the related not-entirely-scientific discussion on whether this product is specific only for the Opole region or for the entire Upper Silesia) [see Wijas-Grocholska 2012, 2014], *krupniok* (a type of blood sausage typical of both the Opole Voivodeship and the Silesian Voivodeship) or wine from Winowo near Opole. We are witnessing the development of an original “festival of Silesian tastes” both in the literal sense (“Silesian Tastes” is the name of an annual culinary contest organised by local government institutions, regional initiatives, museums etc.), and, more importantly, understood as an opening of the borders to let in unfamiliar culinary influences and to supplement traditional regional fare with new dishes [see e.g. *Pokarmy i jedzenie w kulturze...* 2007; *Historie kuchenne...* 2010; *W garnku kultury* 2014]. Scholars are not indifferent to the ubiquitous and varied promotion of traditional regional cuisine described by the umbrella-term of “regional products”. All too often the fashionable “regional tastes” become nothing more than a folklore decoration that only seems to “document” a “mythologised image of rural culture” for the general public [see e.g. Burszta, Kuligowski 2005; Karpińska 2014]. The globalisation of modern culture, including its culinary aspects, is an irreversible process, noticeable also in the cookery guidebook *Opolszczyzna w wielu smakach* (The Opole region in many flavours). The issue of the constancy vs. mutability of culinary preferences is a complex one, not only in the case of the Opole region. However, the phenomenon of cultural identity (which includes the distinctness of the culinary tradition) in the region is currently subject to irreversible influences of other cultures, sometimes very exotic and distant from the native one. In the words of one historian of culture,

We are looking for new attractions, having no interest in peculiarities, meanings or values. Apart from the most general information (pizza and pasta is Italian, frog legs are French, blini are Russian, kebab is Turkish) we do not know and do not wish to learn about what constitutes the actual determinants of a given foreign cuisine. We accept the signboards and the Europeanised dishes modified to appeal to our preferences. The Chinese

cuisine served in our country may have as much in common with China as the Polish “coffee in Turkish style” has with the preferences of Turks [Łeńska-Bąk 2010: 97].

It must also be emphasised that the modern unified market provides an increasing number of semi-finished products and ready-made dishes usually marketed as “traditional”. Unfortunately, such dishes are hardly evocative of original and natural tastes unspoiled by artificial preservatives.

In this context, *Opolszczyzna w wielu smakach* may be perceived not only a cookery book presenting dishes typical of various ethnic groups, but also as a type of a monothematic collective “lecture” on the multiculturalism of the Opole region of Silesia and the noticeable influence of other cultures. The author of the book acquired an impressive amount of culinary recipes from master chefs and published, to use his own words, “2200 tested and recommended recipes for homely delicacies”. This culinary collection constitutes the best description of the characteristic features of the region’s cuisine; it presents a direct insight into the culinary context of the culture of the local population. It testifies not only to its conservatism and stability, as well as the existence of an unbreakable bond between the locals and their original cultural heritage, but also to the contamination, integration and influence of other cultures and the modern consumer culture. The book offers the readers culinary data for comparing and contrasting, characterised by distinctive features and national or ethnic autonomy on the one hand, and on the other by instances of modern symbiosis and the cultural unification of the recipes for specific dishes. The “many flavours” of the Opole region are not only beneficial in terms of taste, but also possess social, integrative, educational, cognitive and advertising value, in a broad understanding of all these terms. The table set with dishes “of many flavours” becomes an asset in promoting the region. It is known that cookery guidebooks (as an example of literature intended for practical purposes) can be viewed as a special type of a manual, teaching readers and shaping their views and preferences. Hanich’s cookery book was certainly designed to serve that purpose. Its emphasis on the multicultural values of traditional and contemporary “homely cuisine” may thus be considered pioneering.

As to the content of the cookery book under analysis, it is divided into twenty-nine basic compositionally arranged units.¹² The supplementary parts include the “(Selected) Bibliography”, the “Culinary Lexicon” and two indexes – “The Dishes in Alphabetic Order” and “The Authors of the Recipes”.

Hanich’s book has yet another admirable and noteworthy quality: it makes the perpetuation of stereotypes impossible and disproves a number of existing ones. As it has already been mentioned, the Opole region of Silesia, and thus the cuisine of its native and immigrant inhabitants, constitutes an example of an interaction between many different cultural influences. As a result, I find it difficult to agree with the opinions perpetuated by some scholars and spurred by political factors, for instance that in the post-war period the “central management of gastronomy has led to the unification of recipes and resulted in the fact that no matter whether one was eating in Silesia, Mazovia or Greater Poland, everything everywhere smelt of pork cutlets with cabbage” [Adamczewski 2007: 418]. The author of *Opolszczyzna w wielu smakach. Skarby dziedzictwa kulinarnego* argues that the inhabitants of the region prefer and cultivate the smell of their own fare; these preferences have been changed neither by poverty nor by the

12 These being: “Starters” (Jellies, Sandwich butters and pastes, Pastes, Lards, Other starters); “Soups and creamy soups” (Cold soups, Creams, Soups, Side dishes for soups); “Flour, groats and rice dishes” (Flour dishes, Noodles); “Veal”; “Poultry”; “Game”; “Lamb and kid meat dishes”; “Pork”; “Beef”; “Pâté and meatballs”; “Mayonnaises and sauces” (Mayonnaises, Purée, Hot sauces, Fruit sauces, Cold sauces); “Semi-meat dishes” (Meat-and-veg dishes, Casseroles); “Fish” (Stuffed fish, Cooked fish, Baked fish, Fried fish, Smoked fish, Herrings); “Cooked and casserole vegetable dishes”; “Vegetables and salads”; “Mushrooms”; “Egg dishes”; “Tarts and pizzas”; “Desserts” (Puddings, candies, chocolates, Desserts, Fruit salads, Alcoholic deserts, Cocktails, Soufflés and waffles, Coffees, Teas); “Cakes” (Basic recipes, Brioches and fruitcakes, Sponge cakes and gateaus, Yeast cakes, Nut cakes, Fresh fruit cakes, Gingerbreads, Apple cakes, Poppyseed cakes, Cheesecakes, High-fibre cakes, Other cakes); “Cookies and biscuits” (Cookies, Muffins, Doughnuts, Fried dough pastries, Profiteroles and éclairs, Other cookies served warm); Yeast and non-yeast breads and pastries”; “Cordials, wines, liqueurs, vodkas and other alcoholic beverages”; “Christmas Eve dishes”; “Easter dishes”; “Home-made cold cuts”; “Home-made preserves” (Fruit preserves, Vegetable preserves, Jams, Marmalades and mousses, Juices, compotes and beverages); “Home-made medicines”; “Diabetes” (Cakes, Cookies, Desserts, Meats; Fish, Vegetable dishes, Salads, Soups, Others). They are translated here to give the reader an idea of the book’s range.

political and economic transformations, not even by the democratic system; which is not to mean that the locals are not open to external influence [see e.g. Part XVIII: “Tarts and pizzas”].

Father Hanich’s text presents multicultural “treasures of culinary heritage” and testifies to the fact that – despite the many transformations which the culinary aspect of Silesian culture underwent in the course of the centuries as a result of various external influences and fashions – modern Silesian cuisine constitutes a solid base for the cultural identity of the native and immigrant inhabitants of the region. The guidebook implies that the current state of the culinary art in the Opole region is still indicative of a degree of cultural diversity.

Cuisine may be perceived as a very interesting topic not only in the context of the modern era. The book under analysis aptly defines the subject matter as “The Opole region in many flavours. The treasures of culinary heritage” and adds a forthright sub-heading: “2200 tested and recommended recipes for homey delicacies”. My positive assessment of this book ought not to be construed as a diplomatic contestation, since it is obvious that, given the multitude of cookbooks published in recent years, it is currently very difficult to impress the readers with new material.

The analysis of the second book by Father Hanich should perhaps begin with the phrase “the appetite grows with what it feeds on”. Two years after the first monograph appeared in print, the author treated his readers to a new volume containing an even larger number of recipes. This time the dishes come from a less defined region, stretching far beyond the borders of Poland. The book, entitled *Smaki polskie i opolskie. Skarby dziedzictwa kulinarnego. 2500 wypróbowanych i polecanych przepisów na przysmaki kuchni domowej* (The flavours of Poland and Opole. The treasures of culinary heritage. 2500 tested and recommended recipes for homely delicacies) introduces dishes from a number of ethnic groups. It may be regarded as an interesting example of the still-apparent culinary identity of Poles, the characteristic nature and the openness of Silesian cuisine, the multiculturalism of the contemporary inhabitants of the Opole region of Silesia and the increasingly prominent influence of other cultures, including non-European ones. The author acquired his recipes from ex-

pert cooks specialising in homely cuisine, some of whom are currently living abroad. The sheer number of recipes – 2500 – is remarkable. This collection appears to be the best testimony not only to the preferences and inclinations of the people who recommended specific dishes, but also to their open-mindedness and interest in various, sometimes quite exotic culinary novelties. It must therefore be added that a cookery book composed in this way provides a direct insight into the culinary aspect of Polish culture, demonstrating the existence of not only conservative tendencies, stability and lasting connections with the original cultural heritage, but also the presence of contamination, intermingling and the influence of various other cultures. All this leads to a single conclusion: the book presents an image of the contemporary consumer culture in Poland with a clear focus on one region – the region of Opole. My own assessment of the presented material is positive. The publication provides the reader with invaluable culinary data for comparing and contrasting, characterised by distinctive features and national or ethnic autonomy on the one hand, and by instances of modern symbiosis and the cultural unification of the recipes for specific dishes on the other. The “treasures of culinary heritage” are not only beneficial in terms of taste, but also possess social, integrative, educational and cognitive value; They are also valuable for advertising, as they promote Polish cuisine in general and the Opole region, which has original dishes and remarkable flavours to offer, in particular.

Another significant phenomenon which is apparent in Father Hanich's book and deserves analysis is directly related to the mass migration to the West. The already-mentioned social, economic, cultural and political phenomena have had much influence on the changes in traditional customs, habits and culinary preferences in contemporary Poland. As it has already been said, direct empirical examples of these tendencies may be found in cooking shows, culinary sections in many newspapers. Father Hanich's cookery guidebook takes into account all of these culturally varied, old and new authentic “flavours of Poland and Opole”. This fact contributes greatly to the originality of this publication.

The two publications under analysis have yet another significant aspect that proves the methodological value of the research tools and techniques

employed by the author. In recent years, Father Hanich has been conducting exhaustive field research (surveys, interviews, participative observation) in the Opole region. In the Introduction to his first cookery book, he admitted that for this purpose he

[...] accessed [...] gourmets and housewives living in various parts of the Opole Voivodeship [...] including those employed at parsonages and both male and female monastic houses [...], members of farmer's wives' associations and the Union of Rural Women of Silesia, and the members of hunting clubs located in the Opole region [Hanich 2012: 5].

Empirical data gathered using objective methods were presented in the reviewed publications along with a brief analysis, in which the author explained the principles behind editorial work on his books, the scope of his research and the techniques employed in field studies. The book is supplemented by a basic bibliography and indexes (of dishes and the authors of the recipes). The informants, whom Hanich described as the "enthusiasts of cuisine" or "practitioners of cooking", were treated with due respect – each recipe features the name of the person recommending it, adding to the authenticity of field research. The reader is provided with a well thought through, well-organised and scientifically accurate work on traditional and contemporary cuisine in the ethnically diverse region of Opole. In the Introduction to the second volume, Father Hanich states that his "cookery guidebook contains recipes acquired from practitioners of cooking, this time not only from the Opole region, but also from other parts of Poland or Poles living across the world who sent him the recipes for their favourite dishes" [Hanich 2014: no pagination (5)]. He also notes that

due to the influence of the mass media and also to human interaction (between family members, neighbours and acquaintances), the majority of contemporary Polish households do not follow a single, homogenous and regionally pure culinary tradition. [...] The introduction of some elements of other culinary traditions into local fare leads to the emergence of a new cuisine. Many of us travel frequently, either as tourists or in search of work, which brings us in contact with other nations and allows us to borrow from

their culinary heritage. In most of our households the elements of these various traditions are so intertwined and combined that they have evolved into a new interesting culinary art [Hanich 2014: no pagination (6)].

It should be noted that the process of rapid social and cultural changes is still ongoing, and thus in many regions of Poland meals are mostly composed of regional dishes, both on weekdays and on special occasions (e.g. the Christmas Eve in regions with a dominant presence of indigenous population, for example in the so-called east belt of Poland, in the south and perhaps also in central Poland). The process of changes ought to be studied in detail. Despite the “new interesting culinary art”, regional products favoured in the countries of the European Union (with the status of a Protected Geographical Indication) still have their *raison d'être* when the need arises to prove that the product that has for centuries been known to regional communities still possesses its original features. Regrettably, the open-door policy also facilitates the proliferation of unhealthy dietary habits from Europe and the rest of the world, such as the fashion for junk food. Dieticians are already voicing their alarm, e.g. identifying obesity as a feature typical of Western societies, the USA in particular. It appears that the author of *Smaki polskie i opolskie* was not consistent in his evaluation, since he presented recipes from the multicultural Opole region as a proof of the unification of culinary traditions. It is much more likely that culinary novelties in the region were accepted not as a result of frequent travels of its inhabitants, but due to the fact that the Silesians and the immigrants to the region have been living as neighbours for nearly seventy years.

The cookery guidebook entitled *Smaki polskie i opolskie. Skarby dziedzictwa kulinarnego. 2500 wypróbowanych i polecanych przepisów na przysmaki kuchni domowej* follows the structural model of the first volume.¹³ It is composed of thirty basic sections and supplemented with

13 These being: “Starters” (Jellies, Sandwich butters and pastes, Pastes, Lards, Other starters); “Soups and creamy soups” (Cold soups, Creams, Vegetable and meat soups and bouillons, Fruit soups, Side dishes for soups); “Flour dishes (noodles), potato, groats and rice dishes”; “Veal”; “Poultry”; “Game”; “Lamb and kid meat dishes”; “Pork”; “Beef”; “Pâtés and meatballs”; “Mayonnaises and sauces” (Mayonnaises, Purée, Hot sauces, Fruit sauces, Cold sauces); “Semi-meat dishes” (Meat-and-veg dishes, Casseroles, Grilled dishes); “Fish” (Stuffed fish,

a “Lexicon of Culinary Terms” containing information on selected spices and preparation methods.

In lieu of a conclusion

The two large volumes of cookery book in which the “treasures of cultural heritage” transcended far beyond the traditional understanding of the term have become best-sellers in Upper Silesia. In a journal issued by his parish, Father Hanich explained that he decided to prepare and self-publish the second volume (the first one was financed from funds allocated by the EU and published by the Marshall Office of the Opole Voivodeship) in order to meet the expectations of his readers and “remedy the disappointment of those enthusiasts of home cooking who were unable to buy a copy of *Opolszczyzna w wielu smakach*”. The precious treasures of culinary recipes inspired the priest, historian and scholar Andrzej Hanich to expand his knowledge on historical and contemporary dietary habits, not only on the regional level. They were also the direct motivation for writing the present article as an analysis of not only this cookery guidebook in two parts, but also of many other aspects of traditional and contemporary culture, the changes in the content of cookbooks and in the dietary habits of Silesians and Poles.

Cooked fish, Baked fish, Fried fish, Smoked fish, Herrings, Other fish dishes); “Cooked and casseroled vegetable dishes”; “Vegetables and salads”; “Mushrooms”; “Egg dishes”; “Tarts and pizzas”; “Cakes” (Basic recipes, Brioches and fruitcakes, Sponge cakes and gateaux, Yeast cakes, Nut cakes, Fresh fruit cakes, Gingerbreads, Apple cakes, Poppyseed cakes, Cheesecakes, High-fibre cakes, Other cakes); “Desserts” (Puddings and chocolates; Desserts, Fruit salads, Alcoholic deserts, Cocktails, Soufflés and waffles); “Cookies and biscuits” (Cookies, Doughnuts, Fried dough pastries, Profiteroles and éclairs, Muffins, Other cookies served warm); “Yeast and non-yeast breads and pastries” (Yeast pastries, Other breads and non-yeast pastries); “Cordials and other alcoholic beverages” (Cordials; Liqueurs; Other beverages); “Christmas Eve and Christmas dishes”; “Easter dishes”; “Home-made cold cuts”; “Home-made preserves”; “Home-made medicines”; “Diabetes” (with 10 types of dishes); “Health and dietary advice for anaemic and undernourished convalescents and those suffering from gastroesophageal reflux disease or diseases of the liver, the bile duct and the large intestine” (with 5 groups of “recommendations” and diets).

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