

**MICRO-HISTORICAL INSPIRATIONS IN THE
INTERPRETATION OF THE ARCHIVE COLLECTIONS OF THE
POLISH ETHNOGRAPHIC ATLAS (SELECTED EXAMPLES:
MACIEJÓWKA CAPS AND WOODEN SHOES)**

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Abstract. In this text I will suggest new ways of studying and using the Polish Ethnographic Atlas archives. The archives contain the largest collection of Polish ethnographic field records. The records, made at the time of research, provide new opportunities for contemporary interpretation. Drawing inspiration from the theories of social memory, and micro-history, the collections can bring a great deal of new and interesting information. They allow looking at the processes taking place in the rural culture from a different perspective, and they also enable the perception of its dynamics and complexity. It is possible to identify the causes of their appearance, duration and abandonment. This analysis will focus on the functioning of two artefacts: *maciejówka* caps and wooden shoes. Narratives about various meanings added to everyday objects, in a broader perspective indicate different ways of remembering the past.

Key words: Polish Ethnographic Atlas, archival materials, field research, caps, wooden shoes, memory, micro-history.

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Claude Lévi-Strauss [explored how culture is experienced by common people, analyzing totems and tattoos]. “Why not try a similar strategy for the study of eighteenth-century France?” “Because you cannot interview the 18th-century French”, the skeptic would answer, adding that archives will never serve as a substitute for field research. Yes, it's true, but the Ancien Régime archives are unusually rich and you can always put new questions to old material (Darton 1984, 4).

1. Introduction

Rereading the meanings of the material gathered in the past provides the researcher with an opportunity to build a different image of the past. Posing

completely new questions to old material offers a new interpretative perspective of the past events. Archival ethnographic data, repeatedly subjected to different analyses, provide different answers depending on the questions posed. In this context, an essentially unchanged material constantly leads to different observations and conclusions. Similar approach to sources is included in Clifford Geertz' concept or in the theory of Hayden White, of which Ewa Domańska writes that "they have undermined the objective status of the anthropological/historical science, showing that its source is not a (past) reality as such, but its interpretations" (Domańska 1999: 70).

New possibilities of interpretation are also offered by the huge collection of empirical data collected for the purposes of the Polish Ethnographic Atlas project. So far, this information was primarily used to determine the presence of certain artefacts in the studied area, indicating their age and characterizing their differentiation. This purpose was served by the ethnogeographic method.

A change of perspective in the perception of the data collected and posing new questions to it reveals its new content and interpretative value. It includes, among others, a great deal of information which makes it possible to determine the chronology of selected cultural artefacts, and consequently, reading the processes taking place in the rural culture and discovering the phenomena which led to their appearance, existence and disappearance.

The Atlas data, both represented on the maps, as well as the data which has not been put on the map, have mostly incomplete chronological information. This means that the informants pointed to the time of appearance or disappearance of a given element of culture. For the most part, the answers pointed to the period of departing from the old forms, which could be described as traditional, and acquiring new ones, coming from the urban culture, often based on industrial production. Determining the chronology of the disappearance of the studied phenomena enables to capture the dynamics of the changes, which mostly took place in the lifetime of the informants. Negative information, which is manifested in the lack of knowledge or amnesia regarding the appearance of the studied artefacts, expands the possibilities of interpretation. In the context of the processes analyzed they strengthen the beliefs about the character of the changes taking place. This means that they allow the observation of the old forms of culture (artefacts), which in the classical approach constituted the traditional culture, departing into the past, and the dissemination of those that lead to the uniformization of culture.

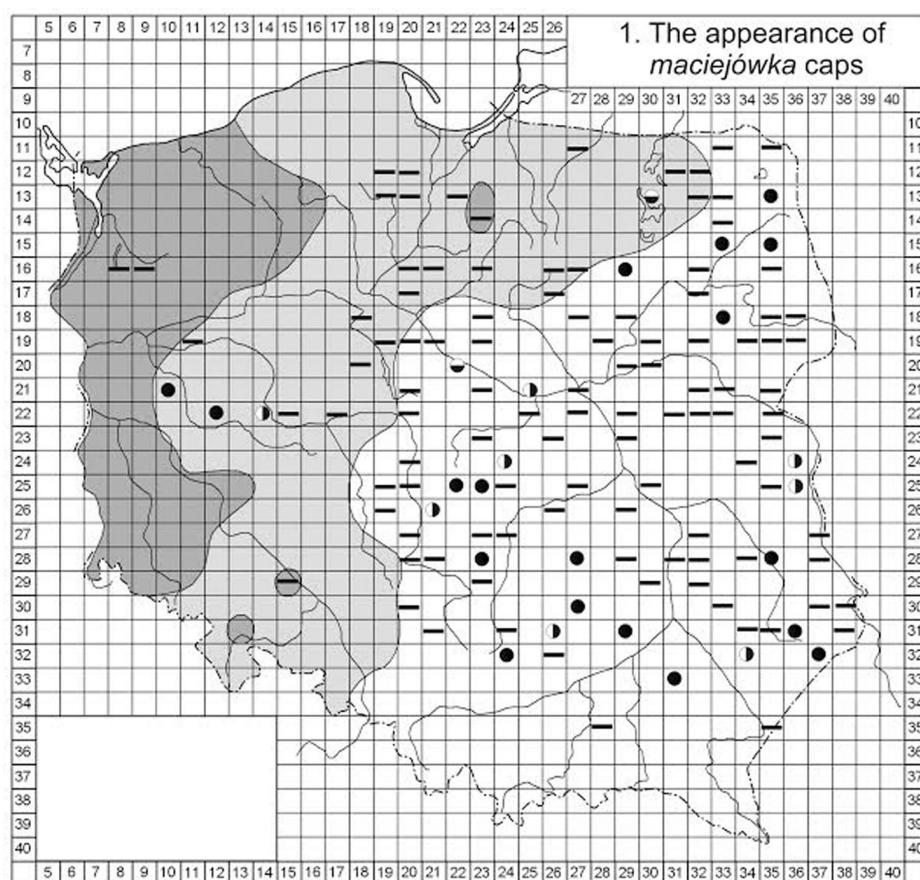
Among the data collected there are narratives where the speakers specify both the time of appearance and disappearance of certain elements of culture. Such cases are rather rare and they are evidence of different mechanisms of change taking place in the rural culture. They refer to single, specific components of a given culture. The memory of these processes covers not only the time when they appeared and disappeared, but also the circumstances in which the processes took place. Thanks to such records it is not only possible to track the course of these processes, which undoubtedly constitutes an important source of knowledge about changes in culture in a broad context, but above all, to uncover the individual,

subjective evaluation of the processes as manifested by the residents of the surveyed villages. This knowledge enables to identify the motives of action and the causes affecting the decisions of people who introduced cultural changes in their lives in a relatively short period of time (in the span of their own lives or the lives of their direct ancestors). Their narratives allow the retrieval of trends that gained so much popularity in some areas that they left a mark on the local cultural heritage at their time. The trends appear in the local community only for a moment, they become very clearly pronounced in some areas and then quickly fall into oblivion or are replaced by novelties (usually of urban origin). Interestingly, they span a small area and they are not as significant elsewhere, although they are known (ie, there is a 'blurring out' of data – the information provided is general, it does not contain any subjective, spontaneous elements) or they are not known at all. These phenomena are the evidence of the complexity and multi-contextuality of the processes which they undergo. They emphasize the importance of individual decisions made by the residents of the surveyed areas, and they strengthen the element of evaluation in the statements about the changes taking place in the traditional culture. Thus, it becomes possible to position these phenomena next to the processes induced by social, economic or political changes, and whose range is far wider – nationwide, or even Europe-wide. Therefore, the significance of these data is based on their quality.

In the Atlas material, such information relates, among other things, to certain items of casual clothing: the male headgear – *maciejówka* caps and wooden shoes (worn by both women and men). The research into this subject/topic/area was carried out according to the principles of the ethnogeographic method in several hundred villages in Poland – the fixed research stations using a single questionnaire. The original premise was that the macroscale would enable judgments about the diversity of folk culture. Translating the gathered information into signs/marks on the map allowed building predominantly static images (showing how a given phenomenon is varied in the studied area). In contrast, giving a dynamic character to the images on the maps, which meant transferring to the foreground the information about what happened with a studied element over time, uncovers new interpretive contexts. Also transferring the collected material to microscale – a more detailed analysis of the collected speech records, including frequently occurring spontaneous narratives, allows the discovery of new threads of interpretation of this phenomenon.

2. *Maciejówka* caps – men's headgear

Questions about *maciejówka* caps, which appeared in the questionnaire No 6, were meant to check how well-known this type of headgear was, its popularity and the time of its introduction to the local patterns of male clothing. The information gathered points to the fact that *Maciejówka* caps were known in parts of the study



Maciejówka caps appeared:

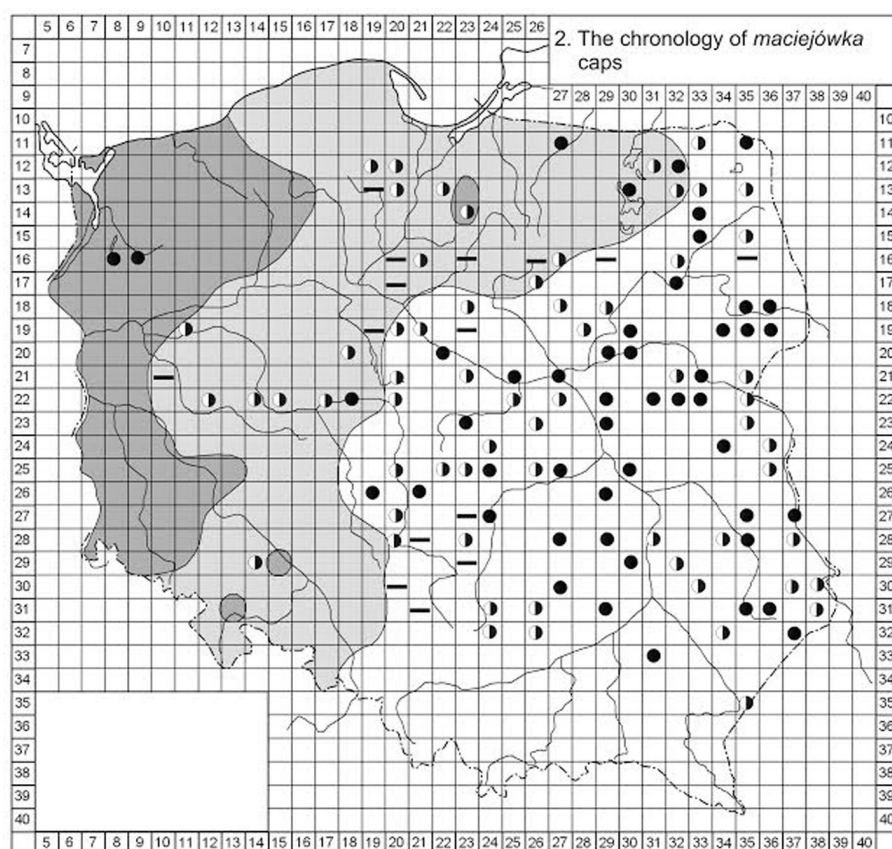
- - before World War I
- ◐ - after World War I
- ◑ - after World War II
- - The respondents don't remember when *maciejówka* caps first appeared

Note: The dark grey was used to mark the area inhabited by settlers and repatriates, light grey was used to mark areas inhabited by immigrants and native people.

area: in the regions of eastern and central Poland¹. The caps were not in common use anywhere else.

The process of the *maciejówka* caps becoming popular developed in two ways: on the one hand it was becoming a popular element of everyday male clothing. On the other hand, in the late nineteenth and the early twentieth century it was an

¹ The discussed type of headgear is identified with the influences of Russian culture which left its traces particularly in the areas belonging formerly to the Russian Partition and in the nearby areas.



Maciejówka caps were commonly worn:

- - until World War I, then they disappeared
- ◐ - in the inter-war years until World War II, then they disappeared
- - still after World War II they were occasionally worn by older farmers

Note: The dark grey was used to mark the area inhabited by settlers and repatriates, light grey was used to mark areas inhabited by immigrants and native people.

important element of the Polish soldiers' uniforms. *Maciejówka* caps as military caps come into use after 1848 as one of the types of headgear which was becoming popular in the Polish countryside. This was due to the fact that "the infantry during the uprisings wore mostly regional peasant clothing: white and navy blue homespun coats, caftans, katanka jackets and pants tucked into the shoes. As for headgear it was mostly a soft *rogatywka* (soft peaked cap) with sheepskin rim and different colours on top, usually brought from home, a black hat or a fur cap as well as the round *maciejówka* cap, which was gaining popularity at that time" (Żygulski 1988:89). The period preceding the outbreak of the First World War was the next stage in the development of the Polish uniform. During that time *maciejówka* caps were the headgear of Polish soldiers, both from the Polish

Legions and the Rifle Squads: “They were initially gray uniforms, then blue-gray, consisting of a round peaked cap, the so called *maciejówka* taken from the traditions of everyday life...” (Żygulski 1988:100). During that time *maciejówka* caps played a significant identifying role as volunteers were usually recruited for the army in their civilian clothes: “Effort was made to at least equip them with unifying *maciejówka* caps” (Żygulski 1988:101). Later the cap became the symbol of soldiers from the First Brigade of the Polish Legions, distinguishing them from other infantries. Subsequent changes in the uniforms of Polish soldiers led to the rejection of *maciejówka* as it had German connotations and non-military, folk origins (the rejection of the cap from Polish uniforms proved to be very controversial, especially among the ranks of the First Brigade of the Legions, where in 1916 the cap was a symbol of the rebellion inside the Legions against the Austro-Hungarians (Żygulski 1988:115).

The period when the caps became a common headgear for both civilians and the military was strongly pronounced in the memories of the respondents interviewed for the purposes of the Polish Ethnographic Atlas. This in turn allowed for plotting certain information onto ethnographic maps in the form of marks. Precise information provided by the interviewees who were asked when the caps enjoyed popularity point to the fact that they were a component of clothing which carried many meanings and often caused emotions. The emotions, in turn, preserved the interviewees’ memories about the cap and thus multiplied its symbolic value.

The symbolic value is indicated by the fact that the time of *maciejówka*’s popularity as part of everyday clothing of rural residents was identified with significant events in the history of the country. The First and the Second World Wars are the general division lines indicated by the interviewees when talking about the changes taking place in the countryside. Also in the case of *maciejówka* caps these events were most frequently referred to as time limits. The outbreak of the First World War was indicated as the period when the caps became popular while the time of the Second World War was described as the time of their disappearance. Of particular interest are, however, the few mentions which indicate that this item of clothing did not only have practical applications, but also carried a symbolic meaning. In several statements the interviewees mentioned the reign of Tsar Nicholas II (the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century) as the period when the caps became fashionable². This is probably the result of the Russian influence on Polish lands during the time of partitions. The arrival of cultural patterns from the east to the areas of eastern and central Poland was quite common at that time and was also reflected in the changes in the rural culture. The new headgear won favours with peasants and quite quickly became recognized as an element of folk clothing in these areas.

Another turning point in time which significantly affected peoples’ thinking about *maciejówka* caps was the interwar period. This had to do primarily with Józef Piłsudski’s government and the legions which he had created and for which

² *Maciejówkas* arrived during the rule of Tsar Nicholas – recorded in Wodzierady (near Łask) and Zalesie (near Olecko) villages.

maciejówka was the trademark³. At that time the cap became a symbol. One interviewee mentioned that the cap was “called [...] ‘Piłsudzki’s emblem’⁴.” In the villages near Poznań it was identified with the insurgents fighting in the Greater Poland Uprising⁵. These connotations of *maciejówka* caps with the military and with the national liberation movement were reflected in their popularity among partisans involved in combats of the Second World War, which was also remembered by the interviewees⁶.

The popularity of *maciejówka* caps begins to fall before the outbreak of the Second World War. On the map ... it can be seen that on the edges of the area where *maciejówka* caps could be found, the downfall had occurred earlier – during the Second World War. They remained popular for longer in the centre of the territory – where they were worn even after the fightings had ceased. The analysis of the map images and the interviewees’ statements suggests that this process was dependent on several factors. Faster decrease in popularity of this type of headgear on the borders could be due to the influence of other patterns – urban or different rural traditions. The fact that *maciejówka* caps remained popular for longer in the central location indicates that this area was exposed to other influences to a lesser extent. As a result, the caps gained popularity and gave a specific character to the traditional menswear⁷. Probably not without significance was also the symbolic

³ *Maciejówkas* were popular after the First World War (it has to do with Piłsudski’s legionnaires), disappeared at the end of the interwar period (Sędzin, near Aleksandrowo Kujawskie). Similar information was also recorded in villages: Leksyn (near Płock) and Orle (near Radziejowa).

⁴ Recorded in Jędrzejów village (near Łódź).

⁵ Information recorded in Krajkowo village (near Poznań).

⁶ Recorded in Galiny village (near Bartoszyce).

⁷ *Maciejówkas* as traditional element of male clothing appear in folk costumes: from the vicinity of Bielsko Podlaskie and Hajnówka, łukowskie, near Sokołów Podlaski and Węgrowo, near Radzyń Podlaski, podlaskie, near Włodawa, near Tomaszów Lubelski and Hrubieszów, kurpiowskie Puszcza Biała, sannickie, wilamowskie, kołbielskie, łowickie, łączyckie, sieradzkie, piotrkowskie, opoczyńskie, kieleckie, świętokrzyskie, częstochowskie oraz drobnoszlacheckie. Information about it is included in numerous studies of folk costumes, e.g.: Piskorz-Branekova E., *Polska. Stroje ludowe*, Warszawa: MUZA 2008, ISBN 978-83-7495-365-4; Karwiczka T., *Ubiory ludowe w Polsce*, Wrocław: Polskie Towarzystwo Ludoznawcze 1995, ISBN 83-904914-0-0; Dekowski, J. P., *Strój sieradzki*, Ed. J. Gajek, seria: “Atlas Polskich Strojów Ludowych”, Vol. 23, part. IV Mazowsze i Sieradzkie, z. 4, Wrocław: Polskie Towarzystwo Ludoznawcze 1959; Dekowski, J. P., *Strój piotrkowski*, Ed. K. Zawistowicz-Adamska, seria: “Atlas Polskich Strojów Ludowych”, Vol. 11, part. IV Mazowsze i Sieradzkie, z. 3, Wrocław: Polskie Towarzystwo Ludoznawcze 1954; Jacher-Tyszkowa, A., *Strój kielecki*, seria: “Atlas Polskich Strojów Ludowych”, Vol. 31, part. V Małopolska, z. 12, Wrocław: Polskie Towarzystwo Ludoznawcze 1977; Kamocka, M., Kamocki, J., *Strój świętokrzyski*, Ed. T. Seweryn, seria: “Atlas Polskich Strojów Ludowych”, Vol. 27, part. V Małopolska, z. 10, Wrocław: Polskie Towarzystwo Ludoznawcze 1961; Krajewska, J., *Strój opoczyński*, Ed. J. Gajek, seria: “Atlas Polskich Strojów Ludowych”, Vol. 14, part IV Mazowsze i Sieradzkie, z. 4, Wrocław: Polskie Towarzystwo Ludoznawcze 1956; Świątkowska, J., *Strój łowicki*, seria: “Atlas Polskich Strojów Ludowych”, Vol. 7, part IV Mazowsze i Sieradzkie, z. 2, Wrocław: Polskie Towarzystwo Ludoznawcze 1953; Świeży, J., *Strój podlaski (nadbużański)*, Ed. J. Gajek seria: “Atlas Polskich Strojów Ludowych”, Vol. 21, part IV Mazowsze i Sieradzkie, z. 5, Wrocław: Polskie Towarzystwo Ludoznawcze 1958;

character gained by the caps in the interwar period. In this context, the interviewees' statements in which they mention the attachment to this item of clothing in times of war – when other components of the folk costume had been abandoned – give interesting interpretive possibilities. Among the recorded memories are those which mention the popularity of *maciejówka* caps with the group of older people who treated them as their Sunday best. Some interviewees emphasized that tailors from the nearby towns were commissioned to sew the caps. With this information a thesis could be proposed that the emotional attachment to *maciejówkas* as a symbol of the past events in which the interviewees had participated (directly or indirectly). The departure from wearing this cap among the younger generation shows that the symbolic value was slowly falling into oblivion, remaining alive only among the older members of the community.

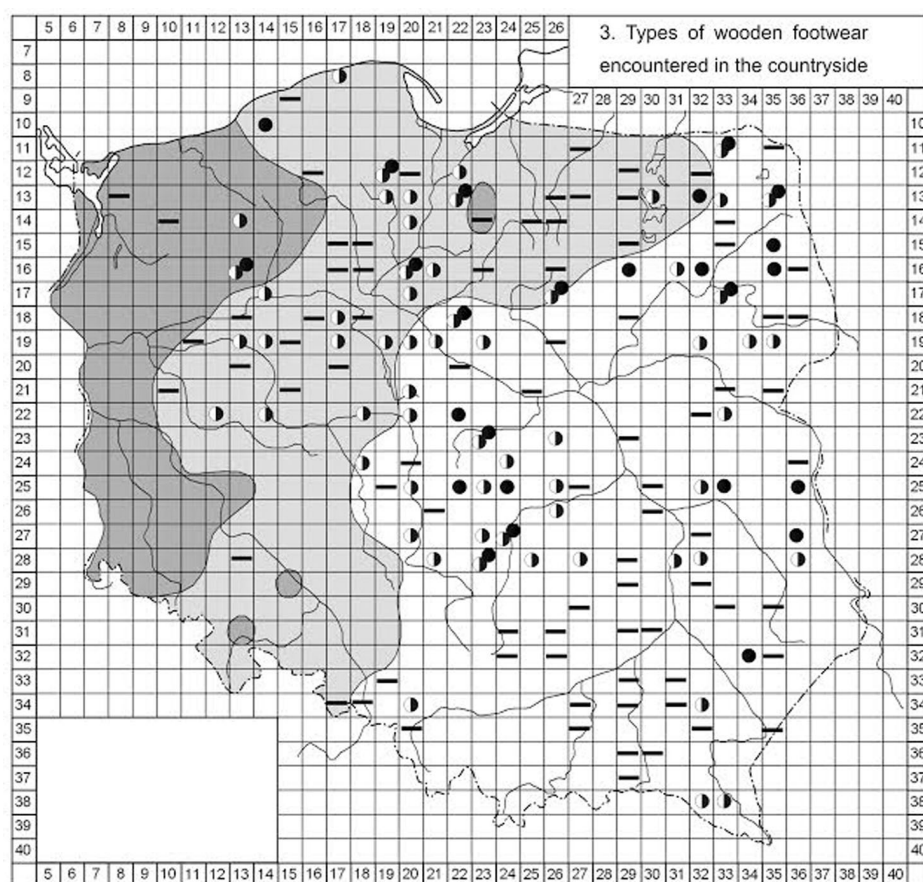
Comparison of the two maps shows a short but intense presence of that element of culture. It enables to capture not only a static picture of the occurrence of *maciejówka* caps, but also the dynamic changes taking place in this regard. Adding interviewees' statements to the images created on the maps presents an opportunity to understand the nature of these processes and the reasons for the course they took.

3. Wooden shoes

During the studies conducted for the Atlas purposes, responses indicating the knowledge and the use of wooden shoes appeared in the northern, central and eastern regions of Poland. Presenting the research results in the form of an image on the map made it possible to determine the range of their occurrence. However, 'clarity' and 'compactness' of the above mentioned graphic presentation is distorted by the long narratives of the interviewees provoked by the questions posed. These statements bring a new quality to the analysis and interpretation of this issue. Adding elements to the maps of a general nature helps to trace the changes in the meaning of a given element and to see how it functioned in the changing cultural, social and political conditions. Spontaneous expressions indicate at least a few levels of functioning of the wooden shoes and a variation of their meaning depending on the changes in the social context.

Availability of material and the fact that wooden shoes were easy to make decided about their popularity in many Polish regions. In these areas clogs had

Żywirska, M., *Strój kurpiowski Puszczy Białej*, seria: "Atlas Polskich Strojów Ludowych", Vol. 6, part IV Mazowsze, z. 5, Wrocław: Polskie Towarzystwo Ludoznawcze 1952.



The following types of wooden footwear were known in the countryside:

- - no definite description
- ◐ - wooden soles, leather uppers
- - entirely wooden shoes

Note: The dark grey was used to mark the area inhabited by settlers and repatriates, light grey was used to mark areas inhabited by immigrants and native people.

been known for a long time⁸ and even at the time of the the study they still enjoyed quite a big popularity among the interviewed residents. Usually, in places where they were commonly worn they were a part of everyday and working clothing, that means clothing which is not marked with symbolic or representative meanings. Some respondents remembered them as very practical shoes which, among other

⁸ Some interviewees mention clogs as being in common use as early as the first half of the 20th century. Others do not say precisely when the footwear came about because they simply do not remember.

things, protected against cold – hence their popularity especially in winter⁹. Others pointed out the economical use of material for their production¹⁰. It can be assumed that these were the reasons for wooden shoes remaining in common use for so long. In this case, the basic functioning level of the cultural artefact is suggested and such conclusions can be made about it while interpreting the source materials gathered. The lack of clear social context for its existence in a specific space and time is characteristic here. By taking a look at the map one can conclude that in the centre of the area of wooden shoes, there is a slow process of regression. This is because of the generational change of culture carriers – cultural patterns disappear together with their users.

Different processes took place on the edges of the area. Interviewees living in villages located in the peripheral areas¹¹ strongly emphasised the social and political contexts of the functioning of the discussed artefact. In this case, its appearance and disappearance was conditioned by specific historical events. Also the meaning assigned to it by the interviewees remained in close connection with the situation in which it was used.

The First and the Second World War were special periods when the rural population returned to earlier, antique patterns and applied solutions based on self-sufficiency and self-production. The reason for this was a limited access to urban and industrial products which were already popular among the rural population in the beginning of the twentieth century and constituted an important part of their daily life. However, wars made it impossible to function normally and forced them to take up extraordinary measures. The particular nature of those activities – the use of objects that did not belong to the ‘natural’, familiar environment of their users – left very strong, durable and often emotional traces in the memory of their users. The results are memories pointing not only to the history of the object described, but also the socio-political context which forced certain behaviour of the people. Items described by the interviewees cease to be a part of everyday life and become emotionally charged ‘slogans’, revoking memories of specific situations from the people’s lives. Wooden shoes are such a component of everyday life culture which did not appear before the wars started and did not remain after they ended¹². Interviewees closely identify them only with the war period, for example: *klumpy* – used during both wars (100% wooden)¹³, *korki* had been worn

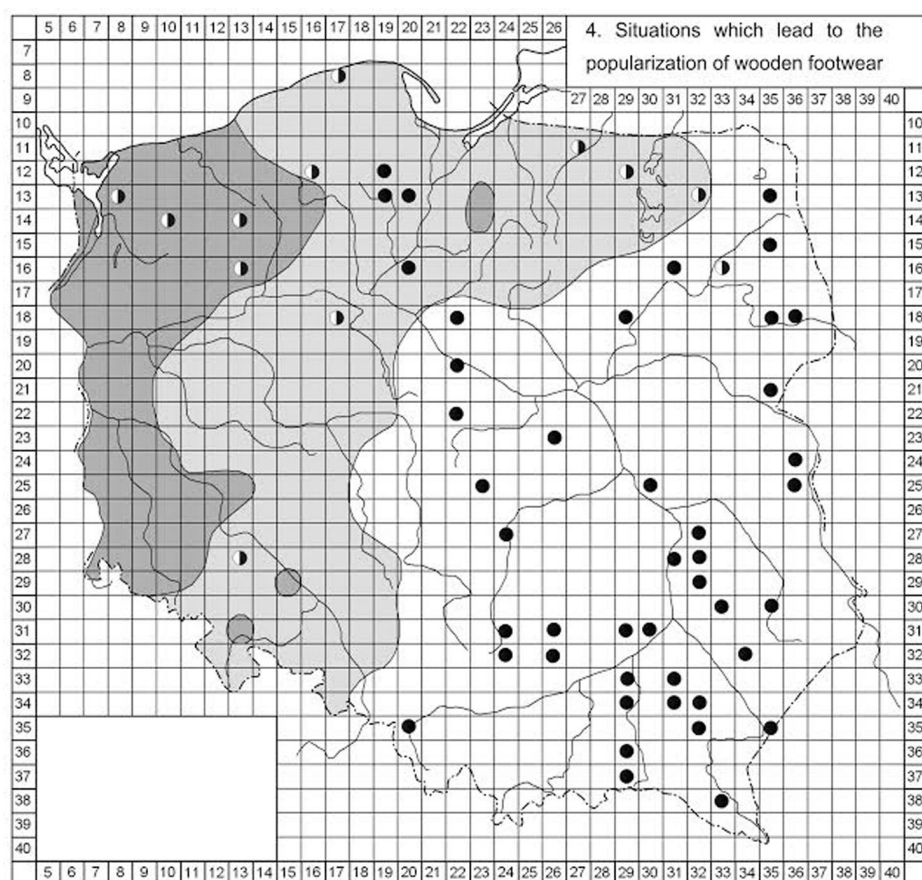
⁹ Recorded in villages: Papowo Toruńskie (near Toruń), Tralewo (near Malbork), Kocierzowy (near Łódź), Zarzęcin (near Opoczno), Osowa (near Włodawa).

¹⁰ Worn shoes with broken soles were used as the leather upper of these shoes.

¹¹ Distant from the center of occurrence of the studied element and neighboring the territory where it was not known.

¹² This situation applied to most of the recorded statements. In several cases interviewees mentioned that the footwear was worn even before the war and few years after. But even in these few statements the emphasis was put on the use of these shoes especially during the war time.

¹³ Recorded in Barkoczyn village (near Kościerzyna).



Wooden shoes

- ◐ - taken over by settlers from the indigenous people (the period after World War II)
- - worn only in situations of crisis - during World War I and II

Note: The dark grey was used to mark the area inhabited by settlers and repatriates, light grey was used to mark areas inhabited by immigrants and native people.

until the end of occupation¹⁴, during the First World War, Russian captives used *dlubanki* – made entirely of wood with ends curved upwards¹⁵, entirely wooden *dlubaki* worn during the war¹⁶, *drewniaki* – worn only under the German occupation – the First World War¹⁷, *drewniaki* (wooden shoes) appeared during the First World War – under the German occupation; after the Second World War

¹⁴ Recorded in Czarna Woda village (near Starogard).

¹⁵ Recorded in Wabcz village (near Chełmno).

¹⁶ Recorded in Giżynek village (near Rypin).

¹⁷ Recorded in villages: Słupia (near Jędrzejowo), Wola Podleśna (near Miechowo), Dzierążnia (near Kazimierza Wielka).

drewniaki were no longer used¹⁸, *derewjanyki* appeared in 1939 and disappeared in 1945¹⁹, shoes used during that time had leather uppers and wooden soles, but only during the Second World War (because other types of shoes were hard to obtain)²⁰, *they disappeared with the end of the occupation; drewniaki – they were not known before*²¹, *after both wars people wore wooden shoes called 'klapatyny' because there was no leather*²², etc.

Wooden shoes had very negative connotations in these areas. They were primarily identified with the period of the two World Wars, a hostile occupation and the 'Germans' whose presence was remembered as highly oppressive. When interviewees remembered back to the First World War, they mentioned the shoes mostly in the context of the occupiers (the German army) and also in the context of the prisoners of war (Russian soldiers). In those memories information about the practical functions of wooden shoes – so often emphasized in other villages where wooden shoes were longer in use – are absent. However, there is a strong emphasis on the historical and political contexts conditioning their appearance. This in turn leads to the conclusion that this element is primarily conditioned by the symbolic meaning, carrying strongly negative connotations. The consequence of is the rejection of this artefact²³.

Also the socio-cultural aspect of using this type of footwear does not ring positively in the interviewees' memories. Wooden footwear formed a substitute for 'normal' shoes which at the time were difficult to obtain. Both women and men wore wooden shoes, on weekdays and on holidays. They were used at work and in town (where more elegant look was demanded). The particular situation in which the villagers found themselves forced them to use such shoes, creating resentment, expression to which was given in the post-war period. The end of the war and the improved financial situation of the rural population led to almost absolute rejection of the shoes. While resignation from wearing wooden shoes on formal or solemn occasions seems to be natural and understandable, the absence of this kind of shoes in the memories of everyday life raises some questions. Interviewees never accepted this item of clothing as their own. It was a foreign element which intruded people's lives. It was brought by the traumatic reality of war and it woke clearly negative associations which, in turn, made it impossible for it to continue functioning in society. This negative symbolism and strong links

¹⁸ Recorded in Borszowice village (near Jędrzejowo).

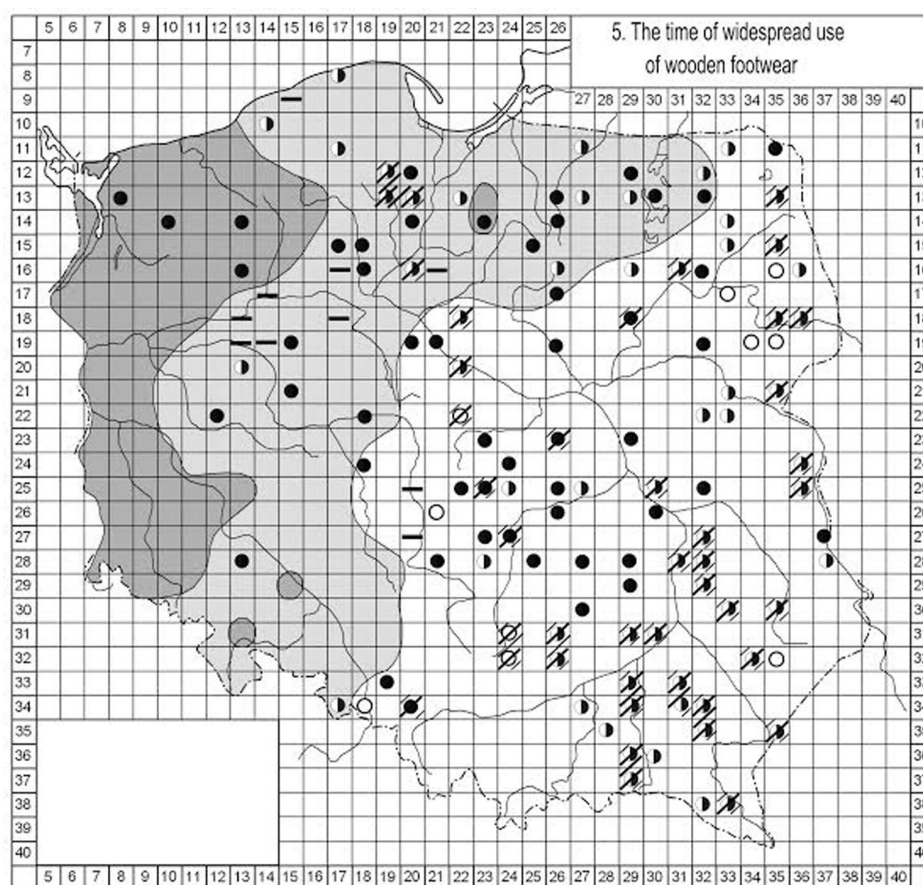
¹⁹ Recorded in Bartne village (near Gorlice).

²⁰ Recorded in Kłudzie village (near Lipsko).

²¹ Recorded in Łyniew village (near Biała Podlaska).

²² Information recorded in one village (Potok Górny, near Biłgoraj). However, it does not change the discussed artifact's meaning and significance, quite the contrary: it strengthens its social and historical context of its use.

²³ It should be noted that the footwear not being worn in normal, everyday life conditions is not synonymous with the footwear being forgotten (erased from memory). To the contrary, remembering it and putting it in strongly emotional, historical context, reinforces the need for its rejection.



The approximate time of the widespread use of wooden shoes in the countryside

- - no definite data
- - until World War I
- ◐ - until World War II
- - in the post-war period
- /// - wooden shoes were worn only during World War I and II

Note: The dark grey was used to mark the area inhabited by settlers and repatriates, light grey was used to mark areas inhabited by immigrants and native people.

in the memories of the interviewees between wooden shoes and war prevented them from functioning at the level of everyday life. Despite many practical features of this footwear, it was not possible. In this case, the practical character of the cultural artefact could not defend itself against the challenge of the symbolic meaning. Returning to normality involved rejection of everything that the war brought about.

Another level of the studied artefact's functionality can be distinguished on the basis of statements from settlers and repatriates who arrived in the western and

northern parts of Poland after 1945. People who settled in these regions brought their own cultural baggage – often completely different from that developed by the natives – and diametrically changed the cultural face of these areas²⁴. Not only did the landscape of socio-cultural space undergo a change, but also the cultural heritage of the new residents. These were (and still are) gradual processes and they often forced a re-evaluation and redefinition of familiar norms and patterns.

In the analyzed statements casual footwear – which was familiar to the former inhabitants of the settled areas and completely unknown to the newcomers – was subjected to a simple evaluation. First and foremost, the interviewees emphasized the fact that they encountered wooden footwear (both entirely wooden shoes and those with leather uppers and wooden soles) for the first time in the new place of residence. The footwear was described as foreign and its ‘German’/‘post-German’ origin²⁵ was often pointed out. In interviewees’ memories the names natives gave to the footwear had German roots and also testified to its otherness, as the following names would suggest: *patany*²⁶, *defle*²⁷, *kamarze*²⁸ and others. In contrast to the situation analyzed previously, the German connotation did not entail negative evaluation. The settlers and the displaced people found many artefacts of material culture when arriving at the new place of residence. Some of the artefacts were completely unfamiliar to them (the newcomers encountered objects of this type for the first time), caused fear and resulted in people keeping their distance, while other objects were familiar and their functionality was evident. Wooden shoes almost immediately found application in the post-war everyday reality. They were not identified with the German occupation and the oppressive situation in which the people found themselves in the recent past. In the northern and western Poland they functioned outside of the historical and political contexts. They were primarily a utilitarian object that perfectly met its functions and thus gained popularity among new users. In this case, it is possible to draw two important conclusions. People who arrived to the western and northern areas after the war took over the native patterns voluntarily. Verification and consequently the approval of the local heritage was not due to an unfavourable situation or shortage of goods but was a result of a conscious acceptance. It can, therefore, be concluded that the positive evaluation of wooden shoes resulted from the fact that it was a matter of free choice whether to wear them

²⁴ The resettlement of the indigenous population and the arrival of the new settlers from the southern and eastern Poland brought about a complete change in the cultural character of these lands. In many cases the newcomers took over the objects found and learned to use them. It was often caused by the plight of the afterwar years. It was only after some time that the settlers came to normal, day-to-day existence and the process of taming the new reality began. Although the newcomers brought some elements of culture typical of their place of origin, they were however pressed to use foreign elements, both found in the new habitat as well as brought by people from other regions of Poland. Such situation became a catalyst of changes leading to the creation of a new quality of social and cultural life in a multicultural society.

²⁵ Such words were written, among others, in villages: Lublinowo (near Starogard), Broczyno and Strączno (near Wałcz), Piersno (near Środa Śląska) and others.

²⁶ Recorded in Smolniki village (near Nakło).

²⁷ Recorded in Wałdowo village (near Miastko).

²⁸ Recorded in Piersno village (near Środa Śląska).

or not rather than necessity. The second conclusion concerns the fact that, despite the awareness of its foreign origins, 'German' cultural heritage, it did not spur extremely negative feelings. 'The strangers', whose place was taken by settlers, were not 'strangers' – 'occupiers', but 'strangers' – 'others', and the growing knowledge of their culture was followed by the approval of certain elements of their cultural heritage. This in turn enabled the acceptance and adaptation of some of the forms and their general functioning for many years, from the moment of arrival at a new place of residence.

The ethnographic material collected during the fieldwork allowed to track the functioning of a cultural element in various socio-cultural and historical dimensions. An unalterable material artefact changed its meaning depending on the context and space in which it appeared. On a relatively small area different meanings of the artefact could be found; ranging from the utilitarian, which did not carry a symbolic value to a symbolic meaning with an extremely strong emotional charge, which functioned in the social memory of the interviewees for a long time.

4. Conclusion

The overview of how selected material culture elements – *maciejówka* caps and wooden shoes – functioned in the interviewees' collective memory not only enabled to perceive the diversity in this area but also to see the dynamics of the process to which the selected artefacts were subjected. The stories told by the interviewees pointed to various ways of remembering the past and indicated the role and the meaning of everyday objects stored in their memories. Changing cultural, social or political conditions makes it possible for an object to belong to a number of different orders in a relatively small space, orders which make up the bygone reality, it can also represent significant events and have a symbolic function.

These two case studies have allowed identifying new ways of using Atlas materials, which despite the 'rigid' research tools (questionnaire interview), contain a wealth of spontaneous statements. The analysis of the spontaneous statements does not allow for a classic representation of them as a sign on an ethnographic map but requires an individual, monographic approach. Using all the information, obtained from answers to researchers' questions and from the spontaneous speech records, allows us to develop an ethnographic map of different nature and to offer new possibilities of interpretation. The dynamics of the images produced on the maps is their distinguishing feature. Their goal is to present the dynamics of the processes to which the discussed cultural phenomena are subjected²⁹. Their fragmentation is a reflection of the collective memory of the interviewees. As a result, they are not subordinated to the macro-scale of the ethno-geographic method and to the requirements of its interpretation but comple-

²⁹ It is not, then, about the distinction of the specific types or classifications of a given element and determining its range of occurrence. Such action causes the image on the map to be static and having nothing to do with the reality it is supposed to represent.

ment the analysis of the narratives and spontaneous statements of the informants. The use of this procedure and the adding of an additional tool to the analysis give a broader comparative background and a new interpretative context.

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The data comes from 376 villages – research points in Poland collected by means of a Questionnaire-field notebook for cartographic ethnology studies “Folk material culture” – Ed. Józef Gajek, Wrocław 1964.

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