

## SUMMARY OF ARTICLES

**Jacek Olędzki — WAX VOTIVE OFFERINGS FROM THE VILLAGES OF BRODOWE ŁĄKI AND KRZYNOWŁOGA WIELKA**

The custom among peasants of making votive offerings is known in many countries of Europe. This custom also existed in Poland, although there is no reliable ethnographic material on this subject which would make it possible to establish the scope and character of this practice. J. Olędzki's article is the result of research made by the author in the north eastern regions of Poland, particularly in the Kurpie region.

At the outset, the author writes about the existing views on the origin and history of the custom of making votive offerings in Europe, and next expresses the view that in Poland, votive offerings were most probably introduced from Bavaria by the Cistercian Order — about the 14th or 15th century, in the period when the social and economic position of the peasants was improving and, in connection with this, the development of farming and stock-breeding. The custom was to ensure successful stock-breeding, cattle rearing and poultry breeding. This custom was a continuation of the recreation practices which at that time were dying out owing to the spread of the catholic religion in the Polish countryside. In the 16th century there are undoubted proofs of the practice of votive offerings. Apart from the votive offerings of the „rich” people, made from gold and silver, the common people made their own votive offerings from wax. Such votive offerings were also known in Slovakia, Bavaria and the Tyrol, but there, they were soon replaced by iron votive offerings, while in Poland, most probably owing to poverty, only the wax form of offering continued.

They were the peasants' wax tribute to the Church. However, owing to difficulties in obtaining wax, etc, as time went, on, church helpers engaged in making votive offerings and they became an object of exchange for offerings in money and food to the Church from believers. The form of the votive offerings themselves changed and became more uniform. But as from the 16th century there was a decline in the popularity of this custom among the peasantry so that it is now very rarely practiced. During his research work in north east Poland, the author only met with votive offerings in two parishes: in the Kurpie region — Brodowe Łąki, and in the Przasnysz District — Krzynowłoga Wielka. The preservation of this custom in these places can be explained by the economic backwardness of that area, its distance from important communication centres and routes. The church in Krzynowłoga was erected as far back as the 13th century, while the church in Brodowe Łąki was built in the 19th century.

The custom of making votive offerings is observed in both parishes on the Day of the Transfiguration (August 6th) and in Krzynowłoga the custom is additionally observed on February 14th — St. Valentine's Day

(the patron saint of the church). The practice of making these offerings has undergone certain changes and today it is not the same in both of these parishes. The votive offerings are made by so-called „brastewny” (peasants known for their honesty and piety, engaged in making votive offerings, hiring them out, etc). In Krzynowłoga the votive offerings were made several score years ago, while in Brodowe Łąki they are newly made each time by the „brastewny”:

Most of the votive offerings take the form of animals — particularly horses (fig. 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11), there are also cows (fig. 14, 15), calves (fig. 16), sheep, very rarely pigs (fig. 17). Some others represent domestic poultry (fig. 18–23), but they are less popular in Krzynowłoga. On the other hand, one finds there votive offerings in the form of bees (fig. 24) and hives (fig. 25), which do not exist in Brodowe Łąki. A separate and less numerous group represent symbols of health and success: a „ring”, wreaths, balls, and, in Krzynowłoga — hearts, jaws, legs, arms (fig. 4). In both parishes the votive offering of a „child” is known (fig. 27, 28, 29), although it appears very rarely in Brodowe Łąki, like the „hearts”, „legs” and „arms”, which are found very often however in Krzynowłoga. The author explains the difference in subjects of interest between both parishes, the differences in the social milieus and conditions of life, showing the stronger influence of bourgeois ideals in Krzynowłoga, where the population is composed of the descendents of former nobles.

The author also observed differences in the artistic form of the votive offerings, which in Krzynowłoga are closely connected with the properties of the materials used to make them while in Brodowe Łąki they are similar to the schematic design of the dough figures still widely made in the Kurpie region (fig. 30, 31, 32, 33, 34). The Brodowe votive offerings are usually 12–14 cm. high, while those made in Krzynowłoga are usually 6–7 cm.

In spite of these differences in form, the votive offerings from both parishes have a number of features in common — particularly in the way of seeing the objects represented, in the lapidary approach and eloquence of form. The votive offerings differ from all other folk sculptures, above all in their function — they are not made to satisfy aesthetic needs — but exclusively for gaining certain graces from God. This specific function determines both the subject and the general artistic expression of these wax votive offerings.

**Aleksander Blachowski — FROM RESEARCH ON THE FOLK ART OF THE OPOLE REGION. PAINTED CHESTS**

On the basis of material collected during research in the Opole region (1953) the author makes an analysis of the painted chests from this region. The

Opole chests are made from pine wood and are rectangular in shape. They are decorated with painted ornamentation, the front of the chests is divided into two squares filled with trailing flower designs. The range of colours used is relatively broad. The ornamentation has several common elements and this points to the existence of a definite regional group. But there are however variations in the typical elements. The author gives as examples chests from the Olesno (fig. 2—9, 12, 15, 16—22), Kluczbork (fig. 10 — ) and Strzelce (fig. 13, 14) districts, pointing to the characteristic differences in construction and decoration. After analysing the different types, the author makes a comparison between chests from Opole and from Upper Silesia, remarking a number of common features, both with regard to the arrangement of the ornamentation and finally the very composition of the decoration.

But apart from these common features, the Opole chests differ from the Upper Silesian ones, both in their richer ornamentation and colour scheme, and in a number of details which give them their own special appearance.

#### *Olga Mulkiwicz* — OPEN-WORK WOVEN FABRICS

The Folk Art Research Section at the State Institute of Art has collected material on open-work woven fabrics in Podlasie region and the northern part of Lublin region.

„Though this technique is alien to traditional rural methods of weaving — Miss Mulkiwicz writes — it is worthy of being studied precisely because of its peculiar character, differing much from traditional methods of weaving and also because it is quite frequently used now. It was not possible to ascertain who invented this technique of weaving, but it is certain that it was unknown before the Twenties and possibly it was introduced only after the Second World War.”

The authoress gives a detailed description of the open-work weaving technique and writes that the finishing stage is the most important one, because here by fastening loose skeins of yarn the weaver can obtain various designs which, judged by the collected material, are quite limited in number.

Because of their character open-work woven fabrics are mostly used as table-cloths or curtains.

#### *Zbigniew Jasiewicz* — MOULD FOR BAKING WAFERS FROM THE VICINITY OF MIĘDZYRZECZE

The author of the article discusses one of the most interesting folk art relics from the Lubusz region, found in Kalsk in 1958 by a group of Polish ethnographers. It is a decorated iron object (tittle page) and the decorative motifs and their primitive arrangement (fig. 1) point to its folk origin. Further research revealed that this object had been used for baking wafers. The very unique decorative motifs and the technique used in decoration, showing basic differences between the Kalsk tongs and analogical relics found in Brandenburg and Lower Saxony lead one to attribute it to the region in which it was found. The motif — a bunch of grapes — is known from the embroidery of the Lubusz region. It is also known that the baking of wafers (factory made, it is true) was very widespread in this region. Our research leads us to the conclusion that the baking mould found dates back to the 19th century.

#### *St. F. Gajerski* — MATERIALS FOR THE HISTORY OF THE POTTERY CENTRES IN POTYLICZ AND SURROUNDING DISTRICTS

The author publishes materials from various archive collections. The oldest documents (materials from inspections and inventories) dating back to 1460,

concern Potylicz and give information as to the number of potters working there and their duties up till the time of the partitions of Poland (1772). In the period after the partitions, Potylicz was still famous for its pottery. Material collected by the State Art Institute throws light on the period preceding the First World War, when there were 10 potters working there, while in the inter-war period, 10 pottery workshops were operating in which the potters worked as paid labourers. Their products were widely sold.

Another pottery centre near Potylicz — Dziewięcierz — also has old traditions. „Inventories” show that the number of potters working there varies a great deal (for instance, in 1710 — 17 and in 1716 — 4) and also give an idea of their duties to the court.

Before 1939 and in the first years after the Second World War 10 potters were working here. They produced cooking pots and ceramic ware, their products being sold widely in a number of places.

The author adds here some information about smaller centres in the area such as: Hrabenne and Kamionka Wołowska.

In his concluding remarks, Mr. Gajerski quotes materials showing how the pottery centre in Potylicz began to decline in the 18th century, when the potters — being burdened too heavily with duties — fled to neighbouring villages. It is probably in this way that the new pottery centres in Dziewięcierz, Hrabenne and Kamionka Wołowska were formed.

#### *Ewa Fryś* — EXHIBITION OF FOLK ART IN LAŃCUT

An exhibition of folk art, organized by the Union of Folk and Artistic Industry Cooperatives CPLiA, with the cooperation of the „Jedność” Cooperative in Pawłów, the „Zjednoczenie” Cooperative in Janów Lubelski and the Folk Art Industry Cooperative in Leżajsk, was opened in Łańcut on November 12th, 1959. The exhibition was mainly devoted to folk earthenware exhibited on the occasion of the competition run by CPLiA and the Ministry of Culture and Art. The Rzeszów and Lublin pottery centres were represented, displaying grey, (fig. 1) painted and glazed earthenware. There was also quite a rich show of sculptures in clay. The exhibition also included a display of the „Koronka” Cooperative in Bobowa and a big show of decorative fabrics produced by the „Przemysł Ludowy” Cooperative in Leżajsk. The competition, on which the exhibition was based, was aimed at encouraging potters to produce earthenware of great artistic value, cleansed of non-folk influences. At the same time as the exhibition a conference of the regional purchase centres of CPLiA was held to select a certain number of designs for sale in Poland and abroad.

#### *Maria Przeździecka* — EXHIBITION OF EMBROIDERY IN RZESZÓW

An exhibition of historical embroideries on linen, dating back to the 16th- 18th centuries, was opened in Rzeszów in November, 1959. In her review, the authoress, stresses the apt selection of exhibits and the excellent arrangement of the exhibition.

Among the 17 embroideries exhibited, the oldest dated back to the 16th and 17th centuries. The most valuable and rare exhibit was a chalice cover from Jarosław (fig. 1.), representing the most technically skilled type of embroidery of that time.

Some of the 17th century embroidery on church cloths shows a tendency towards a simplification of design. The authoress shows the development of these tendencies in the 18th century embroideries (fig. 4.).