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Rituals at Birth, Wedding and Funeral in Silesia

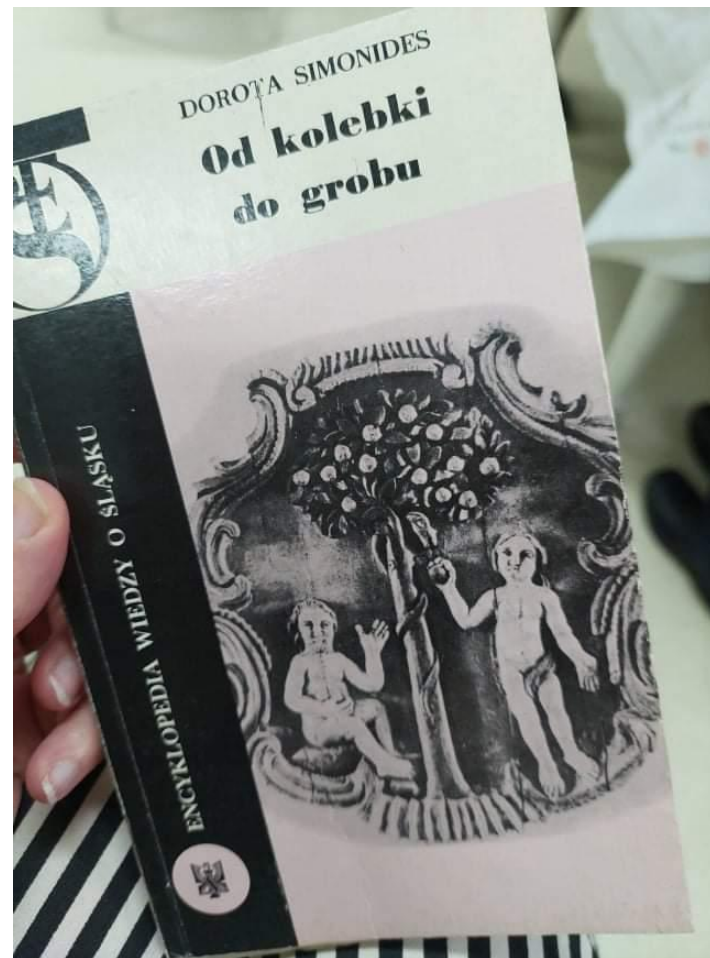
2020-1-KA229-081982_1

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„Encyclopedia
knowledge of
Silesia”.
„From the cradle
to the grave”



Rituals at birth in Silesia in 19th and 1st half of 20th century

Pregnancy and childbirth, although natural today, were associated with many “magical” beliefs and behaviors. They wanted to tame the question of whether a child should be born, because it was not fully understood, especially among the rural population.

It was believed that the pregnant woman was on the border between two worlds because, according to popular belief, the child came from beyond the worlds. It should take away the woman’s energy and strength.

The woman was socially isolated because, according to beliefs, she had a negative impact on the environment. She could not perform ceremonial functions during the wedding, the pregnant woman was not asked to become godmother and she was not allowed to attend funerals.



At the time of delivery, the woman was completely isolated. The children were born at home in the presence of a midwife.

The newborn was not bathed on Friday (the day of Jesus' death) and after dark (believed to take the child's sleep).

In many regions of Poland, the placenta was buried under the threshold, in the hallway or in the corner of the room where the table stood. It was supposed to bring happiness to the family

During the first six weeks of a baby's life, it was not allowed to dry diapers in the yard. This was to keep the little one from crying.

The woman was not allowed to leave the house until she was baptized. However, guests who had to bring something as a gift for the newborn came to see the baby.

The child was brought to church by godparents.

Fearing the demons lurking on the child, the newborn was carried out of the window until baptism. The child's name was also not used



Rituals at Wedding

Silesian traditions are not uniform, in every part of the region different customs can be found, which is why Silesia is exceptionally diverse. Today it is very rare to find weddings or weddings in the typical Silesian style.

Silesian “Kessel”

The wedding celebration in Silesia starts one week before the wedding. Then the future couple distributes a “cheese cake” to the family, friends and neighbors who will not be present at the wedding, i.e. cheesecake, poppy and apple pie on the yeast dough. The cake is always decorated and provided with a card on which rhymes such as “In order for our guests to remember us, the bride and groom share their hearts with a bike” or “As the old custom says, according to the fathers of our faith, we share with you and wish you a good appetite.”

If your guests are unfamiliar with this custom, they will surely be delightfully surprised.



“Times” at a traditional Silesian wedding

On the day before the wedding, in the late afternoon or evening, acquaintances, friends, wedding guests and neighbors come to the house of the bride and “knock” on the door large quantities of porcelain dishes, fortunately for the bride and groom, while the young people have the duty to unite their efforts to clean up the broken ones. As a thank you, the parents of the bride entertain the visitors with a Silesian “Kotsch” and a wedding liquor.



Buy the bride

“Silesian offspring are flu babies”, so parents don’t give them back so easily. On the day of the wedding, the bride is not handed over to the groom like this. He has to “pay” the parents for their daughter, this is called “bride purchase.” Most often the witness offers the bride with the groom how much he can pay for his future wife. After payment, he can give the bride a bouquet of flowers.



Silesian “Schlogi”

The journey of young people into the Church is not easy. Young people often have to cross the so-called “pathways” on the street, i.e. gates/barriers made of cords, coloured tissue paper or flowers, which are usually set up by neighbours or acquaintances. In order for the youngsters to continue driving, they have to pay with a wedding liquor.



Team single

The “team” is called bridesmaids and best man, who must be single. For each virgin, a bachelor of her choice was invited to accompany her to the wedding. A whole team, consisting of a few, sometimes even a dozen couples, who led the bride and groom to the altar by forming a trellis along the corridor, and later to the place of the wedding ceremony. This tradition can still be found in some regions of Silesia and the region.

“Oczepiny” from the North

Let us not forget the “fortifications”, which are a very characteristic element. The “followers” take place on time at midnight. This ceremony consists in the couple depriving each other of the marital attributes. The groom has to remove the veil from his wife, which is disturbed by the witnesses by slapping his hands. After removing the veil, the bride ceases to be a bride and becomes a wife, as a sign of this she receives a hood or a cloth. The bride is also disturbed by witnesses while taking off the bridegroom’s bow tie, this time in a gentler way, by stroking her with roses, kissing her hands or tickling her hands to make it a little more difficult.

Silesian wedding dresses

The Silesian women decorate their hair with colorful wreaths or “merty”, decorate the dress with colorful ribbons or less ostentatiously you can choose flowers in vivid colors red, green and garnet that reflect the colors that were on the “dresses” of the traditional Silesian women. The girls even opt for a festive traditional Silesian dress consisting of a dress, a ribbon and a Jakla (skirt, apron and sweater).



Rituals at Funeral

Silesia is a distinctive and characteristic region of our country. This is a special area of Poland, full of traditions, customs and popular beliefs. Below you will find traditions related to death, burial and also mourning, which have their origin in Silesia.

The inhabitants of Silesia believed in the messengers of death or signs that foretold the imminent death of the family concerned.

The folk traditions of Silesia dictate that when a person dies, one calls a priest and then prays for the deceased. A symbolic dimension also has the habit of stopping the clock to stop life and obscuring mirrors, pictures and windows.

The deceased had to be dressed festively. The coffin with the body was placed in the room, decorated with flowers and lit candles. While the body of the deceased remained at home, the next family could not do housework to avoid disturbing the deceased. The deceased was visited by his relatives, relatives and neighbors, who at the same time said goodbye to a loved one. The farewell to the dead man in Silesia consisted of touching the dead man's hand and saying, "Go with God."

When the coffin was carried out from the house, it had to be knocked on the doorstep three times and at the same time said, "Get up with God." According to the Silesian faith, when the funeral procession was about to leave for the church, one of the deceased's relatives ran into the stable and shouted, "The innkeeper has already left."



The funeral in Silesia is often a very solemn and sublime ceremony in which the orchestra and the mourners take part in festive folk dress. After the funeral, a funeral ceremony is held, which is known in Silesia as "drinking skin" or "drinking of the bowl."



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Thank you!



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Funded by
the European Union



**„Rituals at Birth, Wedding, Funeral”
14-18.03.2022,
Heydar Aliyev Mesleki ve Teknik
Anadolu Lisesi, Aliaga, Turkey,
II exchange of students and teachers**