

---

# Stories of a Dollhouse

Exploring our Family  
Memory and Traditions

## Coffee in Soplicowo

1811



---

## Coffee in Soplicowo

---

Soplicowo is the manor house where most of the fictional action of [\*Pan Tadeusz\*](#) (*Sir Thaddeus*) takes place in 1811 et 1812. The hero, Tadeusz Soplica, is a young man who visits his old uncle living there. The author, famous Polish poet Adam Mickiewicz, locates Soplicowo in Lithuania, a region that was a Polish territory at the time of the action. *Pan Tadeusz* tells the story of two families of the gentry fighting over property rights but unite together against a common enemy. In this confrontation, Tadeusz is more a spectator than a protagonist. However, there is no doubt that his naïve patriotism and romantic feelings make him the hero of the book.

The manor of Soplicowo is full of guests making a small world of trivial disputes and petty conspiracies. For Mickiewicz, this is an opportunity to picture the daily life of the gentry (*Szlachta*) in the countryside through interactions, activities and leisure. There is no Soplicowo on the map but this fictional location has a special place in the hearts of the Poles.

Our dollhouse story focuses on the very short description of **preparing coffee** for breakfast. In the Book II verses 493 – 510, Mickiewicz highlights the very unique quality of Polish coffee. He insists on the role of the **Kawiarka**, a skilled servant lady dedicated to coffee selection and preparation. Mickiewicz celebrates coffee as a precious beverage “*black as coal, transparent as amber, fragrant as mocha, and thick as honey*”. The author gives side details such as premium cream, fine porcelain, painted flowers on large trays and golden cups.

Our *Dollhouse* scenery aligns on the original text of Mickiewicz in Polish. This is an educational project for the younger generations of the *Polonia*, without any History or Literature pretentions.

Remark: there is no perfect translation of *Pan Tadeusz*. All the existing translated texts give an idea of the story but they are far from giving back the elegance and the spirit of the original writing.



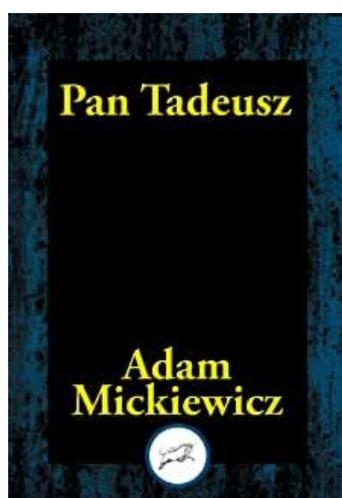
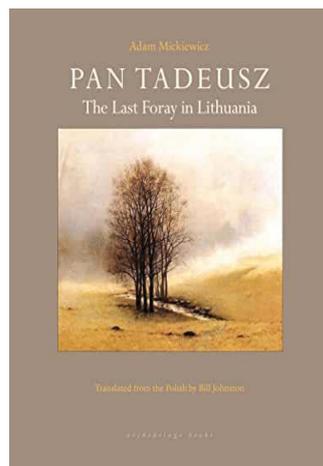
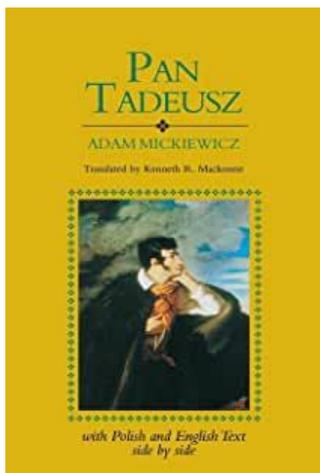
---

## Coffee in Soplicowo

---

***Pan Tadeusz*** is an epic poem in 12 books, 9,721 verses and 68,682 words. Most Polish editions have more than 300 pages.

The story opens with “*Litwo, Ojczyzno moja!*” (Lithuania, my Homeland). These three iconic words reflect the cultural bond with a wider territory that was an historic part of Poland from 1569 to 1918.



**Adam Mickiewicz** (1798-1855) was born in Lithuania in Zaosie or Nowogrodek according to different sources. These two places were a Polish territory under Russia occupation at this time and they are today located in Belarus.

With a social background map

of rural impoverished gentry (*szlachta*), Mickiewicz received an education developing strong patriotic aspirations. Very early as a student, then a teacher and poet, he engaged in fighting the occupant. In 1823, he was arrested and sent for 5 years in Russia. Mickiewicz lived most of these years in Saint-Petersburg and Moscow, contributing to the cultural environment. After this deportation, he began a long exile and never returned in Poland.

Mickiewicz lived in Paris most of his life. He never stopped his patriotic activities. Sent for a diplomatic mission during the Crimea War, he

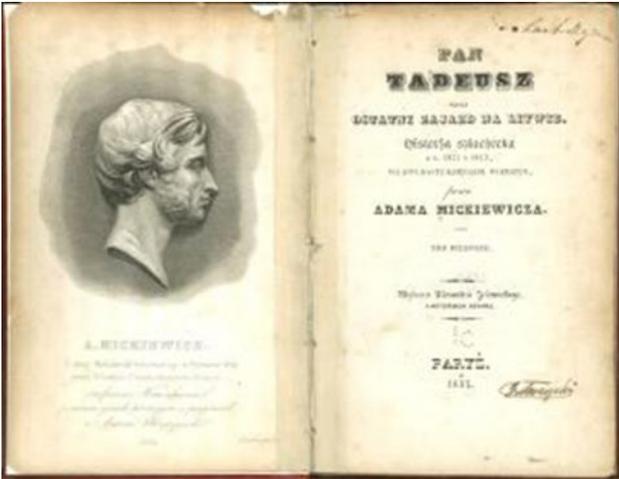
*Pan Tadeusz* was translated into 33 languages. There are some 10 different translation in English. The book can be read either as a poem or in prose. Translations are quite different from the original text and even more different from one another! As a result, reading *Pan Tadeusz* is always a new journey into a masterpiece of Polish literature.

---

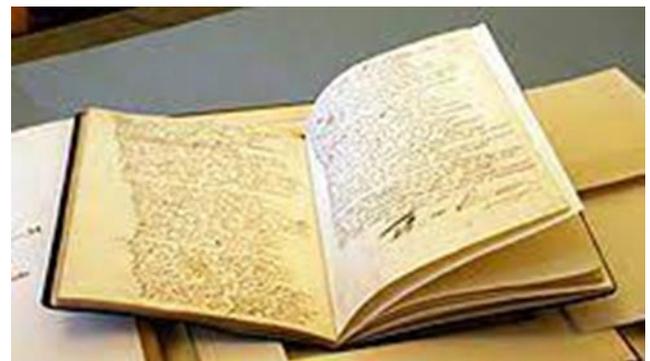
---

## Coffee in Soplicowo

---



Adam Mickiewicz wrote *Pan Tadeusz* during his long exile in Paris. The book was published in 1834, receiving immediate success among the Polish emigration in France.



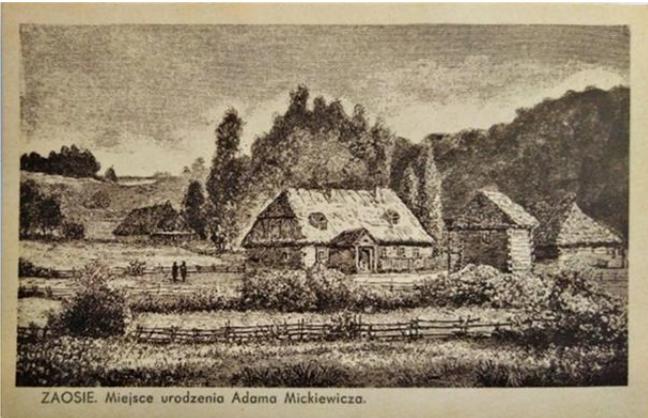
The original manuscript of *Pan Tadeusz* is in the Ossolineum Library in Wrocław. In 2014, this document entered the Memory of the World list of the UNESCO as a treasure of the Polish national culture.

---

---

## Coffee in Soplicowo

---



Soplicowo reflects the traditional architecture of the modest manors (*dworek*) owned by the minor gentry (*Szlachta*) living in the countryside. In *Pan Tadeusz*, there is no description of this house but the reading suggests some traditional elements of manors in Poland.

The traditional *dworek* is no more than a big and unpretentious house built on a rectangular plan with a central corridor. This ground level house may have one floor with a low ceiling. Extensions are usually added on the sides and rarely with an additional floor.



Many *dworek* (including Soplicowo) have a stone base and wood walls. Both interior and exterior walls are usually filled with local clay mixture and painted white. The front door has a neo-classical pediment with two or more pillars (*ganek*), a characteristic that signs the prosperity of the owner. The tiled roof is rather low with only few small windows to keep warm and accentuated slopes to resist heavy snow during winter.



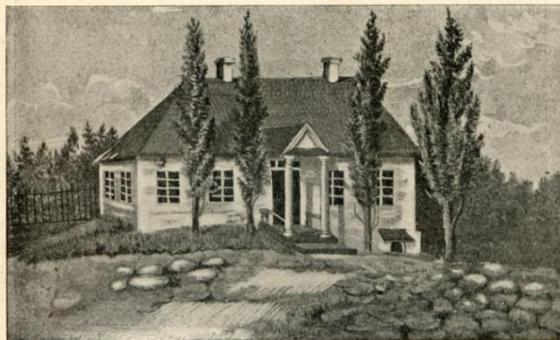
In Zaosie, the [Mickiewicz Museum](#) recreates the atmosphere of a modest *dworek* with many interesting items from everyday life.



---

## Coffee in Soplicowo

---



Dom Mickiewicza w Nowogrodku.  
(Z akwarelli malowanej w 1853 r. niewiadomego autora, ze zbiorów p. J. Olszewskiego.)



Most probably, Mickiewicz refers to his own childhood house in **Nowogrodek** to describe Soplicowo. This page presents some pictures of his family house before the WWII destruction (above) and after reconstruction in 1990.

Another inspiration for Soplicowo might be the first house of the Mickiewicz family. This manor is located in **Zaosie**, a village in today Belarus. Zaosie is considered as the possible birthplace of the author.

In *Pan Tadeusz*, the Soplicowo manor conveys the nostalgia of countryside harmony, family values, friendship bonds, land prosperity and welcoming tradition. We can imagine that Adam Mickiewicz kept a fond memory of his childhood in Zaosie.

Reading *Pan Tadeusz* is also a wonderful opportunity to experience the rural life of our Polish ancestors some two hundred years ago. We walk through their environment of untouched nature. We learn about the woods, the garden, the fields. We uncover the tradition of Polish cuisine.



---

## Coffee in Soplicowo

---

There is no description of the Soplicowo kitchen in *Pan Tadeusz*. Still, we can get some insights from these pictures from the [Zaosie Museum](#) located inside the manor where lived the Mickiewicz Family. There are no evidences that this room was organized this way during the early 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Considering that the Mickiewicz Family belonged to the impoverished *szlachta*, the number household servants was certainly limited to a minimum. Therefore, the presence of a *Kawiarka* lady in the kitchen was very unlikely.



---

## Coffee in Soplicowo

---



Jan Julian Szczepański - *Cookbook for general use in every household* –  
1827 – from the frontispiece.

---

---

# Coffee in Soplicowo

---

## Translation 1

### *Pan Tadeusz Book II The Castle*

“Various dishes were brought to this company by servants balancing immense trays painted with colourful flowers. Slowly, they walked through steamy, aromatic haze with tiny pots of coffee and Dresden China, each cup with its own jug of cream. For Poland has coffee like no other nation, its preparation a custom held in esteem in all respectable homes. Typically, a special woman, the coffee-maker, has the chore of going to the river barges to haggle for the best beans. She alone knows the lore for brewing such a drink that's black as coal, translucent as amber, and thick as honey. And then the finest cream has its role in the preparation. In the country it is not difficult; after the pot is set atop the fire, it's off to the barn to skim the milk. The richest of the lot poured in each jug, shaped like a tiny urn. The ladies sipped their drinks and then prepared, by warming beer on the stove, a new dish, mixing in cream and bits of floating curd.”

► [translated](#) by George Rapall Noyes, publisher J.M. Dents Ltd, London 1917 (p. 41)

## Translation 2

### *Pan Tadeusz Book II The Castle*

“There were likewise different dishes for the ladies and for the gentlemen. Here they carried around trays with an entire coffee service, immense trays, charmingly painted with flowers, and on them fragrant, smoking tin pots, and golden cups of Dresden china, and with each cup a tiny little jug of cream. In no other country is there such coffee as in Poland. In Poland, in a respectable household, a special woman is, by ancient custom, charged with the preparation of coffee. She is called the coffeemaker; she brings from the city, or gets from the river barges, berries of the finest sort, and she knows secret ways of preparing the drink, which is black as coal, transparent as amber, fragrant as mocha, and thick as honey. Everybody knows how necessary for coffee is good cream: in the country this is not hard to get; for the coffee-maker, early in the day, after setting her pots on the fire, visits the dairy, and with her own hands lightly skims the fresh flower of the milk into a separate little jug for each cup, that each of them may be dressed in its separate little cap.”

The older ladies had risen earlier and had already drunk their coffee; now they had had made for them a second dish, of warm beer, whitened with cream, in which swam curds cut into little bits.

► [translated](#) by Leonard Kress, publisher HarrowGate Press, 2006 (p. 57-59)

---

---

## Coffee in Soplicowo

---



*"a special woman is, by ancient custom, charged with the preparation of coffee. She is called the coffeemaker."*



It is very likely that Mickiewicz has observed the presence of a *Kawiaka* during his stay at the Śmiełów Castle during the summer of 1831. Śmiełów is in the district of Żerków (Jarocin County) and this region of Wielkopolska is called "Switzerland of Zerkow" because of its dairy tradition.

---

## Coffee in Soplicowo

---



*“she brings from the city, or gets from the river barges, berries of the finest sort”*



---

## Coffee in Soplicowo

---



*“she knows secret ways of preparing the drink, which is black as coal, transparent as amber, fragrant as mocha, and thick as honey.”*

---

---

## Coffee in Soplicowo

---

In the kitchen of the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, the smell of freshly roasted coffee was a perfume of prosperity. Neighbours used to “drop by” whenever smelling roasted coffee was an opportunity to get a cup.

This distinctive aroma that waked houses in the early morning has disappeared from our lives, except in torrefaction shops.

In Soplicowo, the *Kawiarka* lady was in charge of roasting the green beans. Most probably, she used a hand-cranked roasting pan similar to the antique artefact pictured on this page. With this equipment, she was able to adjust the heat easily.



---

## Coffee in Soplicowo

---



When coffee became more affordable in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Polish paysans strived to buy green beans from the local *kolonialny sklep* (colonial grocery). Without adequate equipment, they roasted the coffee in a large open pan before crushing the beans with a mortar and pestle.



---

## Coffee in Soplicowo

---



Rotating roaster were introduced on the market during the early 19<sup>th</sup> C. Made in heavy cast iron, this equipment more complex than the roasting pan. Green beans were put into a cylinder inserted above a receptacle for hot coal. This equipment could also be put above an ember bed.



Our Ksiazek Family keeps preciously this antique coffee roaster in cast iron from the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. My Grand-mother put a string around the handle. Born in 1910, she kept the childhood memory of roasted coffee in the house. Our dollhouse pictures a rotating roaster quite similar to this artefact from 7 generations ago.

---

---

## Coffee in Soplicowo

---

Once roasted, coffee beans are poured into a grinder. This device is operated with a crank and the contents must be stirred regularly with a spoon to obtain a uniform product. The coffee powder is collected in the small catch drawer.

The *Kawiarka* lady knows that the taste of freshly ground coffee is the best. There is little doubt that in the Soplicowo kitchen, the rondo music of the coffee grinder was heard very early in the morning.

According to preferences regarding coffee powder consistency, some may use different blades for breaking the beans, making coarse crumbs or getting extra fine powder. However, some grinders haven't the right blades and therefore, two different appliances are needed to make a consistent grind.

In Soplicowo, the *Kawiarka* knows that grinding is a time-consuming activity. All along the process, she opens the lid to remove uncrushed beans and check the result. However, when she adds other ingredients (nutmeg, cinnamon, cocoa,...), the final taste is incomparable.



In Poland, coffee grinders were inspired by the models mass produced in Germany. Usually, households grinders had a crank. Grinders with a wheel were sold after the mid-19<sup>th</sup> c.

---

---

## Coffee in Soplicowo

---



The Zoasie Museum displays an antique coffee grinder in the kitchen. This model was common throughout Europe during the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

However, we can also imagine that the *Kawiarka* lady used an antique iron grinder. The opposite picture shows devices used during the late 18<sup>th</sup>. century.

---

## Coffee in Soplicowo

---



*“after setting her pots on the fire”*

These words from the English translation refer to a kettle (*imbryk*) as a cookware usually used to boil water. Still, we can also imagine that the *Kawiarka* lady made her coffee in the traditional Turkish way. She most probably used a *dżezwa*. This cooper pot with a long handle is the Polish version of the Turkish *cezve*.

To prepare a Turkish coffee, the *Kawiarka* puts coffee and sugar in water before boiling this mixture several times. Getting the perfect froth requires much attention since the whole process should remain gentle and regular.

Turkish coffee is prepared a very fine coffee powder because the grounds are served with the beverage in individual cups. However, according to tastes, the *Kawiarka* might use a sieve to remove grounds and foam.



---

## Coffee in Soplicowo

---



©Ksiazyk

---

## Coffee in Soplicowo

---



Preparing a Turkish coffee is a delicate process that would be fine for individual serving. The resulting beverage is very hot and rather thick. Prepared with much sugar and some optional spices, this coffee can have a surprising syrupy aspect.



During the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, spices were very expensive in Poland and sparingly used in the kitchen. For special occasions, the Kawiarka might have added cinnamon, cardamon, anise, paprika, nutmeg and even some pepper.

---

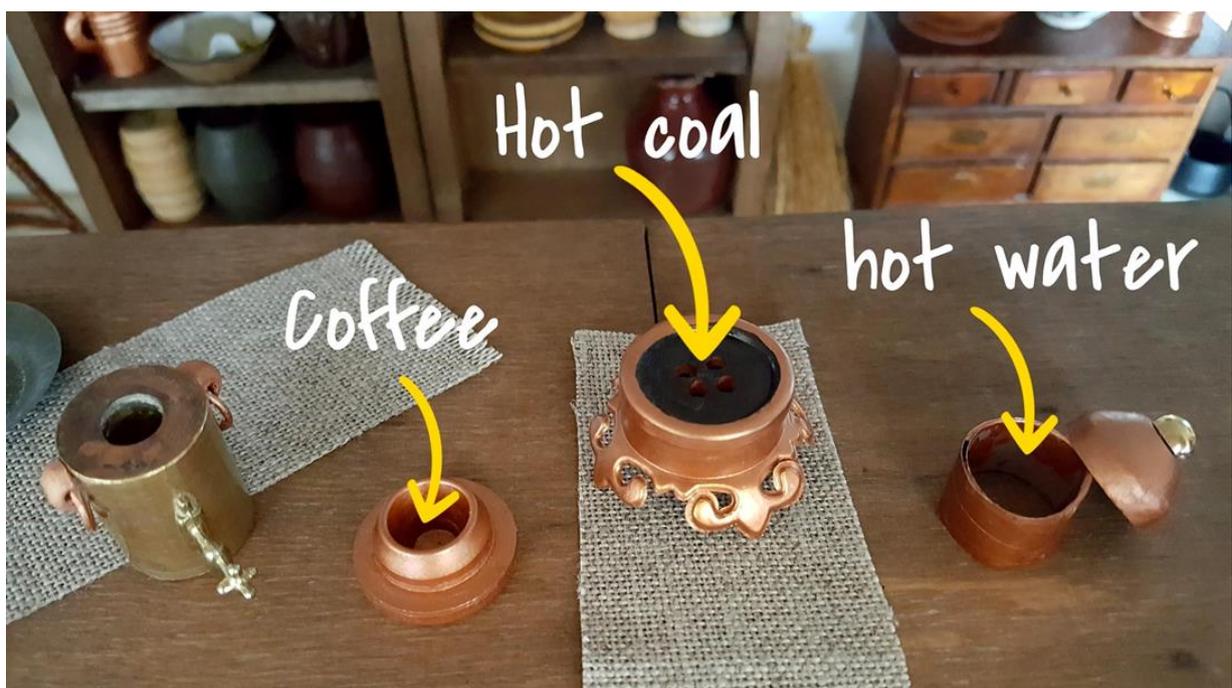
## Coffee in Soplicowo



However, considering the impressive number of guests in Soplicowo (some 15 individuals), it remains likely that the *Kawiarka* lady had to prepare a great quantity of coffee. When guests return from their hunting party for a lavish breakfast, there is no doubt that most of them would drink several cups.

Hence the use of a large coffee urn that would keep the coffee warm and serve many cups along the day.

Coffee urns were quite different than samovars. The hot water was poured into a first (removable) container and slowly flow through a (removable) filter filled with coffee. The beverage was kept in a container and served from a small faucet. The lowest part of this equipment was a heater receiving hot coal when needed.



---

## Coffee in Soplicowo

---



During the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, cheap models of coffee urns made in cooper arrived on the Polish market, replacing the antique pewter urns. This “modern” equipment was elegant enough to be present in the dining room or in the parlour.



---

## Coffee in Soplicowo

---



*“Everybody knows how necessary for coffee is good cream: in the country this is not hard to get”*



---

## Coffee in Soplicowo

---



*“with each cup a tiny little jug  
of cream.”*

---

---

## Coffee in Soplicowo

---

In Pan Tadeusz, Mickiewicz doesn't write about the importance of sugar. The debate about sugar or no sugar dates back the 17<sup>th</sup> c., when coffee changed statute from medicine tonic to pleasure cuppa. In 1811, sugar was mostly replaced by honey.

Brown sugar (sugar cane) was sold in cones or in bags of small crystals (rock sugar). It was very expensive and reserved for special occasion. Our dollhouse scenery picture the Kawiarka preparing sugar. At this time, brown sugar had to be chopped, cut and crushed. According to the tastes in the house, sugar was served in crumbs or finely grounded. Whatever the way, a mortar and pestle was necessary.

Sugar was carefully stored in a locked cupboard in the kitchen. To avoid clamminess, sugar cones were wrapped into a sheet of newspaper. When ready to serve, this precious staple was put into a sugar box also locked with a small key.



In our dollhouse we are lucky enough to have an antique miniature silver sugar box (without the key).



The cone shape was caused by the crystallization of cane syrup into conic moulds. During this process, excess water dropped down from the small end of the cone.



A special cutter was used to cut the sugar cone.



Rock sugar was also a delicacy for well-behaved children.

---

---

## Coffee in Soplicowo

---

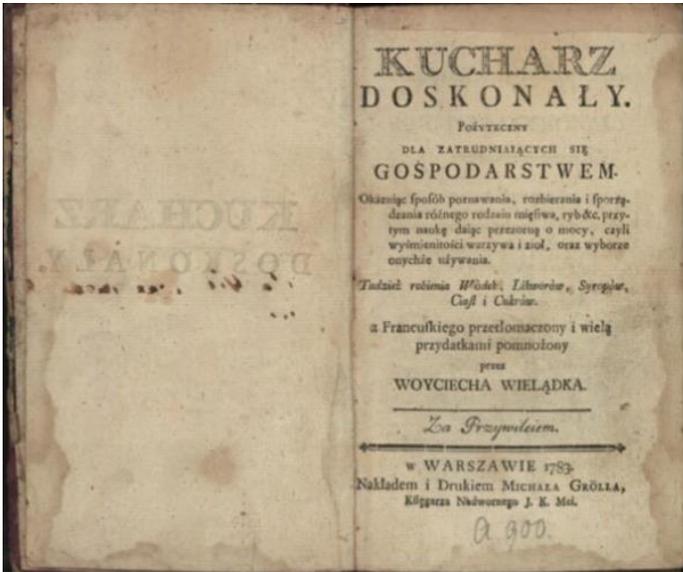


©Ksiazek

The miniature sugar cone above is shaped from a piece brown sugar !

---

# Coffee in Soplicowo



“The Perfect Cook: useful for those working on the farm” – Wojciech Wielądko - 1786



Milkmaid, Jan Piotr Norblin, 1817

§. 13.  
Smietana z Kawą.  
Trzy pół kwaterki wody wley w im-  
bryczek, zagotowawszy wslę dwie uncye  
kawy, zamieszay, przystaw do ognia niech  
się 4. lub 5. razy zburzy, odstaw, aby się usta-  
ła, wley potym w rondel z kwartą mleka i  
kawalkiem cukru, wygotuy w miarę ile po-  
trzeba na półmisek, wley pięć żółtków z  
szeszubcią mąki, przyley śmietany; przecedź  
przez sito na półmisek, na którym masz wy-  
dać, postaw na rondlu pełnym gorącej wo-  
dy, przykryj pokrywą na wierzchu, przyłóż  
ognia, zagotuy aż się śmietana zsiądzie, day  
ciepło.

“Cream with Coffee”

§. 5.  
O mleku.  
Mleko zawsze potrzebuie czystych naczyń;  
ponieważ łatwo zepsuć i zwarzyć się może:  
użytek onegoż iest dostatecznie w tej książce  
opisany; teraz przystąpmy do różnego spo-  
rządzenia śmietany.

“About milk”

---

## Coffee in Soplicowo

---



**Kawiarka** serving coffee in *Pan Tadeusz*, [a film directed by Andrzej Wajda](#) (1999).



**Kawiarka** serving coffee in *Pan Tadeusz*,  
[a film directed by Ryszard Ordyński](#) (1928).

---

---

## Coffee in Soplicowo

---



*“they carried around trays with an entire coffee service, immense trays, charmingly painted with flowers”*



---

## Coffee in Soplicowo

---



©Ksiazek



*“and golden cups of Dresden china.”*

Coffee set c. 1810 –In the early 19<sup>th</sup>. c., china was precious and expensive. Large sets were such as this one were only present in wealthy houses.

To accommodate a large number of guests, most likely, there were several smaller coffee sets in Soplicowo.



---

## Coffee in Soplicowo

---



## Coffee in Soplicowo

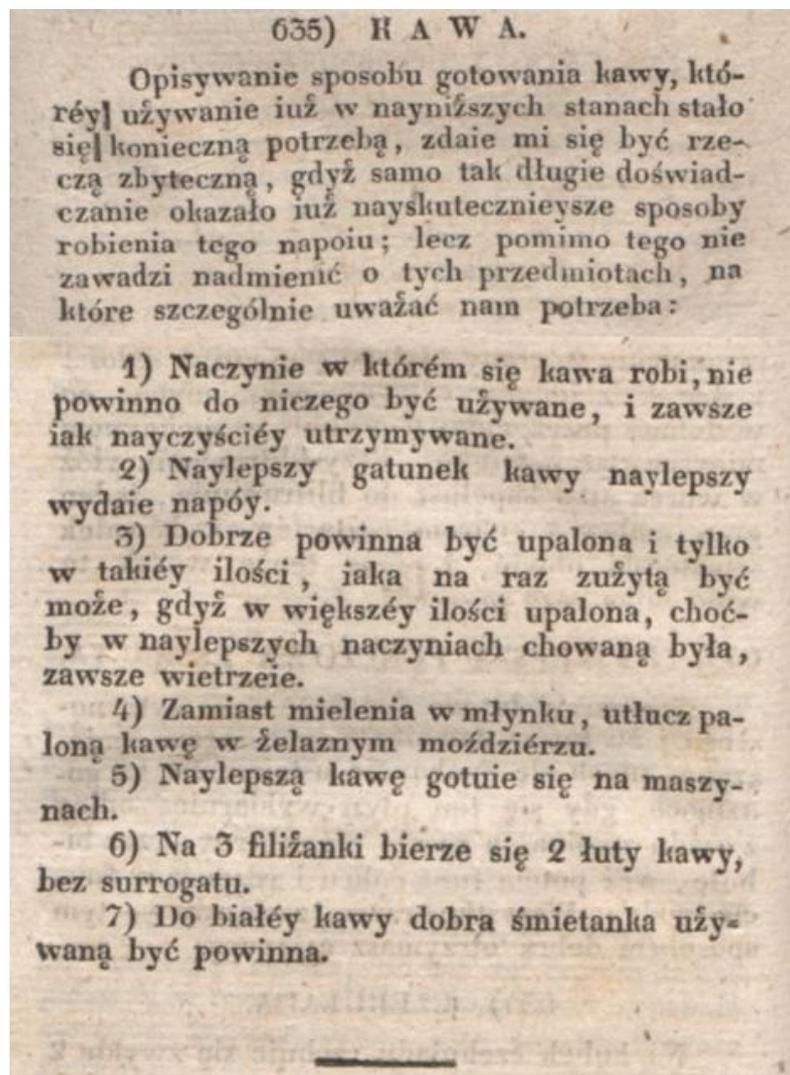


“In no other country is there such coffee as in Poland.”

## Coffee in Soplicowo

*"Morning coffee with cream was drunk around the house, with a dot or almond milk. After lunch it was black, and for afternoon tea again coffee with cream in cups. The fame of the hostess depended on a good coffee. In modest houses, coffee was prepared in the parlor beside the fireplace, under the supervision of the parents or daughters, by the girls assigned for this purpose. It had to be stout and with a thick coat, a specificity of Polish coffee. (...) In larger manor houses during the 18th century and the first half of the 19th century, special "coffee makers" were kept for making coffee."*

Zygmunt Gloger – Illustrated Encyklopaedia of Ancient Poland – t. III – 1902.



Jan Julian Szczepański - *Cookbook for general use in every household* – 1827 – page 349-350

---

## Coffee in Soplicowo

---



*„Elżbieta Kowecka says that the day started with a cup of coffee (thickened with yolk or grated almonds and decorated with cream baked in the oven), to which a rusk or sponge cake was served. The coffee prepared in this way was distributed to the rooms by the servants. However, there were exceptions to this rule: some ladies preferred to refresh themselves in the morning with chocolate flavored with vanilla or cinnamon, while some men - with a glass of herbal or fruit liqueur. Breakfast was served relatively late, between ten and eleven o'clock, and in some houses there were as many as two breakfasts: the first, at 10 o'clock, consisted of coffee, tea, cakes and fruit, the second, at 12 o'clock, already more solid, because with meat but without setting the table, they were served on trays among the household members in a cafe fashion.*

### Muzeum Lasochow

Elżbieta Kowecka is the author of *W salonie i w kuchni. Opowieść o kulturze materialnej pałaców i dworów polskich w XIX w.*



## Coffee in Soplicowo



Adam Mickiewicz – portrait painted by Ladislas Ciesielski (1845-1901) in 1899.

Podkomorstwo i Sędzia przy stole; a w kątku  
Panny szeptały z sobą; nie było porządku,  
Jaki się przy obiadach i wieczarach chowa.  
Była to w staropolskim domu moda nowa;  
Przy śniadaniach pan Sędzia, choć nierad, pozwalał  
490 Na taki nieporządek, lecz go nie pochwalał.

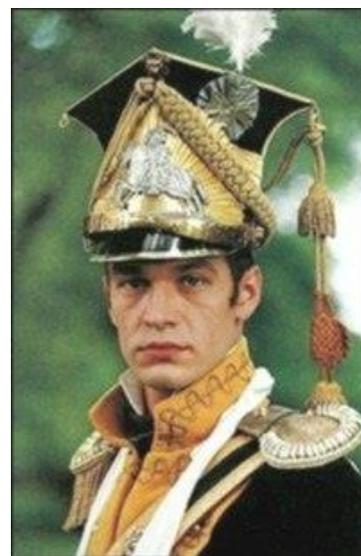
Różne też były dla dam i mężczyzn potrawy:  
Tu roznoszono tace z całą służbą kawy,  
Tace ogromne, w kwiaty ślicznie malowane,  
Na nich kurzące wonnie imbryki blaszane  
I z porcelany saskiej złote filiżanki,  
Przy każdej garnuszczyk mały do śmietanki.  
Takiej kawy jak w Polsce nie ma w żadnym kraju:  
W Polsce, w domu porządnym, z dawnego zwyczaju,  
Jest do robienia kawy osobna niewiasta,  
500 Nazywa się kawiarka; ta sprowadza z miasta  
Lub z wicin bierze ziarna w najlepszym gatunku,  
I zna tajne sposoby gotowania trunku,  
Który ma czarność węgla, przejrzystość bursztynu,  
Zapach moki i gęstość miodowego płynu.  
Wiadomo, czym dla kawy jest dobra śmietana;  
Na wsi nie trudno o nią; bo kawiarka z rana,  
Przystawiwszy imbryki, odwiedza mleczarnie



---

## Coffee in Soplicowo

---



Tadeusz Soplica (actor Michał Żebrowski) in the [movie](#)  
directed by Andrzej Wajda (1999).



## Coffee in Soplicowo







## Coffee in Soplicowo



Coffee in Soplicowo – *The tale of Tadeusz Soplica*, two paintings of Jan Czesław Moniuszko (1899) – How many cups of coffee did we add on these paintings?



---

## Coffee in Soplicowo

---



A special thank you to Agnieszka Kisielwicz Misiurska from the History Institute of the Opole University. She contributed to this project with her precious expertise regarding visual relevance and accuracy.

---

---

## Coffee in Soplicowo

---

With the Kawiarka lady, Mickiewicz pays tribute to the contribution of Poland to popularize coffee.

In 1683, Polish entrepreneur Jerzy Franciszek Kulczycki opened the first coffee shop in Vienna. Previously this same year, Vienna was besieged by the Ottomans. As a Polish entrepreneur, he spoke several languages including Turkish. He was sent for a secret liaison mission and successfully made his way through the enemy lines.

In the war booty, Kulczycki selected several hundred bags of green beans that were presumably used to feed camels. From Turkish prisoners, Kulczyncki learned about the value of coffee drinking. He made a trip to Constantinople to learn more about the business opportunity of this product. Back in Vienna, he received a licence to open a “coffee house”.

Kulczycki is venerated as the initiator of the famous Viennese café culture. He has commemorative statues in Vienna (left) and Lwow (right).



---

**Coffee in Soplicowo**

---

**Find this story**

**and more**

**Dollhouse pictures**

**on our website**

**[www.ksiazek.com](http://www.ksiazek.com)**

All your comments, corrections and suggestions are welcome:

[contact@ksiazek.com](mailto:contact@ksiazek.com)

---