

TRZNADEL

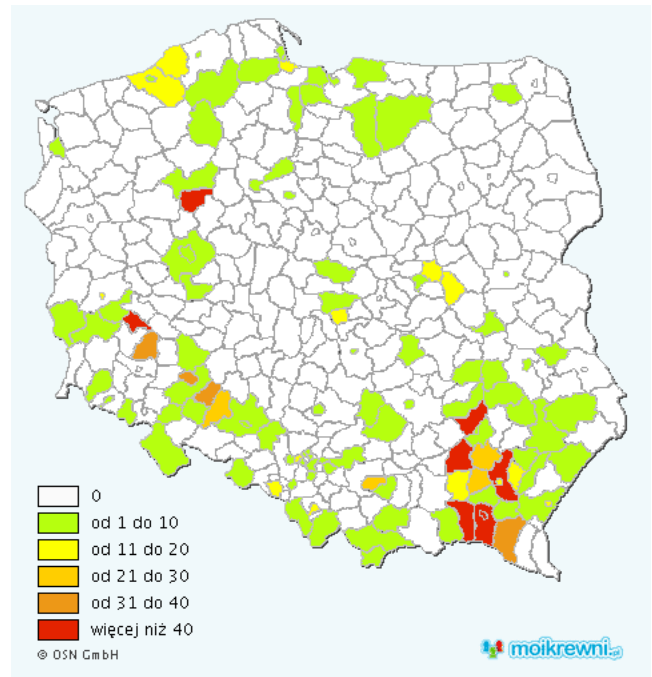
Requested by Carl Merchut: “Another family name (my wife’s side) is **Trznadel**. It has been misspelled so many different ways in the various documents, that it’s been a real puzzle! As far as I can tell at this time, the family centers around the area a little south of Tarnów in the Wola Dębowiecka area.

Any thoughts on the meaning of the name? There seems to have been a connection with the **Paluch** families from Jasło, a little farther east.”

Analysis by: William F. “Fred” Hoffman <wfh@langline.com>, for UPGS 2008

In Polish this name is pronounced roughly “CH’NAH-dell.” For people who don’t speak Polish, the toughest part about saying this name, the hardest part is making a “ch” sound followed immediately by “nah.” Individually, those sounds are not difficult; it’s just putting them together without a vowel between them that causes us trouble. Since the name is hard to pronounce for non-Poles, we can’t be surprised people sometimes struggled in their efforts to spell it.

The data available at the Moikrewni web site shows 1,345 Poles by this name (<http://www.moikrewni.pl/mapa/kompletny/trznadel.html>). The accompanying map (reproduced at right) shows the name appears most often, though not exclusively, in southeastern Poland. The largest numbers were in the counties of Jasło (89), the city of Krosno (79), Mielec (71), Chodzież (62), and Rzeszów (60). Wola Dębowiecka is in Jasło county, so your wife’s family comes from the general area where the name is most common.



Map showing the distribution of the surname **Trznadel** as of 2002.

Professor Rymut mentions this name in his book *Nazwiska Polaków* [The Surnames of Poles]. He says it appears in Polish records as early as 1607, and comes from the noun *trznadel*, “bunting,” a kind of bird (*Emberiza*). Surnames often come from names for birds, even in English (Wren, Robin, Starling). An ancestor was probably nicknamed *Trznadel* because of some perceived association with these birds. Maybe he lived in an area where they were common; maybe he could imitate their song; maybe something about his manner reminded people of these birds; maybe his clothes reminded people of the bird’s coloring. The name wouldn’t have gotten started, and certainly would not have “stuck,” unless there was something about an ancestor that made a nickname meaning “bunting” seem appropriate.

As for **Paluch**, it usually comes from the noun *paluch*, which means “stubby finger” or “toe” in Polish, and in Ukrainian means “thumb” or “finger-hood” (палух). The Kościuszko Dictionary says Tomcio Paluch is the Polish version of the name we know as Tom Thumb. It’s a more common name—15,343 Paluch as of 2002—and it shows up all over Poland, with the largest numbers in the southeast. There’s nothing about the names Paluch and Trznadel that would cause them to be linked. It was probably just a connection between the families, and the names had nothing to do with it.

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