

Chane

Categories: Phenomena

The “biegeln”¹ of wood, or the act of wood being taken home by carpentry workers. According to one interpretation, the expression was first used in Carpentry Workshop II at Reiterstrasse 3.

Working there was a master craftsman who specifically cut out wood, packed it and handed it to his wife as she brought him lunch. One day she was caught and he screamed, “Chane, what have they done with you?” – and so “Chane” came to mean “gebiegeltes” (“purloined”) wood.

According to another version, in the porter's box of Carpentry Workshop II worked a man called Leitner, a half-Jewish auditor who was brought to the ghetto and neither spoke nor understood Yiddish. He heard other workers talking about the “biegeln” of wood and taking “chale” but could not understand. Only when he heard one saying to another, “sayner chale fartsukht²” did he finally get it. However, he mispronounced “chale” as “chane”. Since then, it has been used for “stealing wood”.

Józef Zelkowicz

Resources

Encyclopedia, p. 51

Tags

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