Kamil Federyga
[Jagiellonian University]
https://orcid.org/0009-0008-3487-2794

Dominika Cieplak
[Kraków University of Technology]
https://orcid.org/0009-0000-7967-9084

"There was a house here. There were two houses there." Oral history as a source for the reconstruction of displaced Lemko/Rusyn villages on the example of Biała Woda

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Abstract
Using the example of the abandoned Rusyn village of Biała Woda, an attempt was made to involve oral history in the process of space reconstruction, while demonstrating the close connections of memory and place. Through the analysis of an interview with a former resident of the village and comparison with historical sources and press articles, the history of key locations for the pre-displacement village layout, such as the school, mill and lime kiln, was recreated. Thus, the potential of using oral history in protecting the heritage of repressed national and ethnic minorities is presented.

Keywords
oral history, reconstruction of space, displaced village, memory of place, Biała Woda, Ruś Szlachtowska, Lemkos/Rusyns, cultural landscape, memory mapping, LIDAR

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Space in theory [1]

Remembering and discovering both local and family history is crucial in the process of understanding one's identity and belonging. Listening to a person's story gives the narrator a sense of being noticed, helps to sort out difficult memories, and is often considered a therapeutic activity.[2] Recreating the past seems to be of particular importance where there has been an attempt to erase it, and the continuity of cultural development has been interrupted – "the collapse of a category of long duration."[3] The identity of national and ethnic minorities is then deprived of spontaneous memory because the natural transmission of values has been disturbed, destroying "real environments of memory."[4] The space of belonging is closely related to the group's memory and is based on a common past embedded in a specific place.[5] Oral history, as an element of revitalization of a given culture, serves "first of all – the present and action in it."[6]

Defining a person's relationship with a place is often one of the stages of discovering their identity, both in the context of the individual's subjective emotions and events in which the community participates.[7] However, the trend of the 20th century was the process of invalidating memory – erasing the past through the Holocaust or numerous deportations and displacements, and therefore persistently breaking cultural connections.[8] The repression affecting minority groups led to a long silence, but there was certainly no forgetting. Luisa Passerini tries to distinguish these two concepts, although they are so close, noting that silence

1 The information about the reconstruction of the village of Biała Woda used in the article comes from research conducted as part of a master's thesis entitled *Biała Woda. The Pain of Oblivion* written and defended in 2023 at Kraków University of Technology under the supervision of Piotr Winskowski, Ph.D., D.Sc., Assoc. Prof. Unless otherwise noted, quotations from Lemko and Ukrainian sources have been translated into Polish by the authors.

2 P.R. Thompson, *Pamięć i tożsamość*, "Wrocławski Rocznik Historii Mówionej", special issue (2018), p. 163.

3 A. Szpociński, *Miejsca pamięci (lieux de mémoire)*, "Teksty Drugie", no. 112 (4/2008), p. 18.

4 P. Nora, *Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire*, "Representations", no. 26 (1989), p. 7.

5 S. Steinberger, *Mapping belonging: analysing spaces with oral history in the border region of Melilla and Nador*, "Wrocławski Rocznik Historii Mówionej", vol. 13 (2023), p. 70.

6 A. Karpowicz, *Historia mówiona na granicach. Geografia, mowa, tożsamość*, in A. Karpowicz, M. Litwinowicz, M. Rakoczy (eds.), *Opowiedziane. Historia mówiona w praktykach humanistycznych*, Warszawa 2019, p. 76.

7 K. Kaźmierska, *Biografia i doświadczenie miejsca w kontekście współczesnych wydarzeń. Zaproszenie do refleksji*, "Biografistyka Pedagogiczna", vol. 7 (2022), no. 2, pp. 30–32.

8 L. Passerini, *Pamięci. Między milczeniem a zapomnieniem*, "Wrocławski Rocznik Historii Mówionej", special issue (2018), p. 197.

does not mean a lack of memory but may actually lead to it. Each invalidation of emory, in its paradox, leads to the creation of a new set of memories.[9] However, fragments of the bonds of everyday life can be found more in the place of its functioning, e.g. in the remains of houses, wayside shrines, furniture, than in monuments of high artistic value, because this can obscure the function of experiencing the passage of time and cultural connections of a given place and community. The experience of continuity is therefore recorded and highlighted in simple artefacts of everyday life.[10] Learning history takes place not so much in the ability to read historical sources, but in the interpretation of the landscape based on material and non-material traces, including oral history.[11] The stories of people "geographically uprooted"[12] as a result of forced resettlement, refugees or evacuees often paint a picture of a place that cannot be seen on maps.[13]

Attempts to reconstruct the past most often begin with criticism of historical and archival sources, but as Piotr Filipkowski notes, working exclusively with such documents only creates the illusion of contact with the past.[14] In "rescue history,"[15] the past examined most often concerns places that were excluded, omitted or repressed from consciousness. However, filling the gaps is more difficult and less accurate as each subsequent generation passes away,[16] because the reconstruction of history is based on transient individual and collective memory. Rebuilding local history is therefore particularly difficult in the case of communities dispersed as a result of repression, but this process strengthens the sense of agency and reunites a given community.[17]

9 *Ibidem*.
10 A. Szpociński, *Nośniki pamięci, miejsca pamięci*, "Sensus Historiae", vol. XVII (2014), no. 4, p. 22.
11 The motto "in space we read time" by Friedrich Ratzel became the inspiration for the publication of the same title by Karl Schögel. The author attempts to understand the cultural landscape as a connection between world history and the place of everyday events. See K. Schögel, *W przestrzeni czas czytamy*, Poznań 2009, p. 10.
12 Agnieszka Karpowicz thus defines the next stage in the Polish trend of oral history, noting the increasingly present theme of resettlement in the culture and science of the 21st century, right next to communist, war, and extermination issues. In this way, she underscores that silence is broken to relieve the inherited trauma of not belonging to a given place. See A. Karpowicz, *op. cit.*, p. 78.
13 K. Schögel, *op. cit.*, p. 429.
14 P. Filipkowski, *Historia mówiona jako historia ratownicza: doświadczenie, opowieść, egzystencja*, "Teksty Drugie", no. 5 (2014), p. 28.
15 This term was coined in 2008 by Ewa Domańska as an analogue to rescue archaeology and is closely connected to local history. See E. Domańska, *Historia ratownicza*, "Teksty Drugie", no. 5 (2014), p. 13; cf. L. Abrams, *Oral History Theory*, New York 2010, p. 5.
16 M. Kopiniak, *Historia mówiona jako narzędzie partycypacji muzealnej*, "Wrocławski Rocznik Historii Mówionej", vol. 11 (2021), p. 96.
17 E. Domańska, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

Agata Tatarenko notes that "symbolic landscape analysis allows intangible, symbolic content through content to be seen through visible material elements."[18] Knowledge about the former panorama of the village, i.e. its spatial layout and important places characteristic for the inhabitants, also enables reconstruction of the local social situation. The landscape is not so much a border or territory, but an integral whole composed of human and natural factors.[19] For researchers, oral history can therefore be a source of information about transformations in vernacular creativity and culture,[20] i.e. regional heritage. Historical maps and documents can provide valuable information, but only when combined with the narrative of people who remember a given space a coherent "cultural landscape"[21] can be obtained.

An example of such activity was the project implemented by the "Grodzka Gate – NN Theatre" Centre as part of the "Oral History of the City of Lublin," devoted to the Polish–Jewish character of the city. The analysis of press and memoir sources allowed researchers to capture the atmosphere of the former Jewish district and outline the problems and lifestyle of its inhabitants. Oral accounts often described narrow streets, crammed houses, and a warren of shops.[22] A book *Obertyn. Stories on the town life*[23] brought together the accounts of residents who talk about their town with great accuracy, giving precise locations of no longer existing houses, memorial sites, and churches – all surrounded by a cultural context and memories of local traditions and rituals.

For researchers, the names of specific places used by residents are also important – toponyms are often a source of information about old buildings. An example of such research is the analysis of microtoponyms in Truskolasy near Często-chowa and nearby villages, where many names are associated with utility buildings,

18 A. Tatarenko, *Badania nad krzyżami i kapliczkami przydrożnymi na podstawie przekazów świadków historii,* "Wrocławski Rocznik Historii Mówionej", vol. 9 (2019), p. 10. This article is one of the examples of using oral history to rebuild space – physically through architectural activities or purely theoretically by conducting research. The author states that the information collected on regional history is often created from the bottom up, in a natural and amateurish manner, but can be used to reconstruct a place. The given example of searching for information about the origin of crosses proves that oral history is often the easiest way to obtain information about the location of non-existent objects or their purpose.

19 K. Schögel, *op. cit.*, pp. 280–281.

20 A. Ardhyanto, B. Dewancker, Y.L. Tsai, R.E. Heryana, *Memory recollection and oral history: a study of vernacular architecture transformation of the past,* "Journal of Asian Architecture and Building Engineering", vol. 22 (2023), no. 6, p. 3451.

21 K. Schögel, *op. cit.*, p. 281.

22 M. Kubiszyn, *Miejsce rzeczywiste – miejsce wyobrażone: nieistniejąca dzielnica żydowska w Lublinie we wspomnieniach mieszkańców,* "Wrocławski Rocznik Historii Mówionej", vol. 5 (2015), pp. 11–25. Cf. J. Zętar, *Miejsce – obecność – pamięć. Praca z pamięcią o żydowskim Lublinie na przykładzie wybranych działań Ośrodka "Brama Grodzka – Teatr NN"*, "Rocznik Antropologii Historii", vol. IX (2019), no. 12, pp. 63–74.

23 M. Jakimowicz, P. Zubowski (eds.), *Obertyn. Opowieści o życiu miasteczka,* Wrocław 2018, pp. 85–117.

e.g. the site of an old inn, wooden houses (sheds), the location of a coal kiln, a warehouse, and even a radio and television tower.[24] Integrating a place with the memory of its individual history can be called "memory mapping."[25]

A special example of the use of oral history to reconstruct the cultural landscape, because concerning Lemko villages, is the work restoring the pre-displacement space of Bartne based on interviews with its inhabitants,[26] as well as a work juxtaposing the cultural landscape of Komańcza presented in the narratives of Lemkos who returned to the village after the displacement with the image appearing in the stories of former residents who remained in Ukraine.[27] The aim of this paper is to demonstrate the potential of oral history materials for the spatial reconstruction of forgotten locations on the example of a displaced Lemko/Rusyn village[28] – Biała Woda.

Space in history

Biała Woda no longer exists as a Rusyn village, which, together with Szlachtowa, Jaworki, and Czarna Woda, constituted a microregion separated from the compact wedge of Lemko settlements on the northern side of the Carpathians, but bordering directly with Rusyn towns in the Slovak Spiš. The village was famous for its tinkering tradition, which included, among others, repairing clay pots or making mouse traps. In the interwar period, Roman Reinfuss distinguished the inhabitants of villages located in the valley of Ruski Potok (now called Grajcarek) from the indigenously Lemko group and introduced the term Ruś Szlachtowska[29]

24 T. Jelonek, *Obraz wsi utrwalony w mikrotoponimach motywowanych czynnikami kulturowymi (na przykładzie nazw terenowych Truskolas koło Częstochowy i wsi okolicznych)*, in U. Sokólska (ed.), *Odkrywanie słowa – historia i współczesność*, Białystok 2015, pp. 531–532.

25 This term appears in the project of the KL Plaszow Museum in Kraków, which includes the development of the space of the former Nazi concentration camp in a way that commemorates its victims. As part of the project, 41 concrete field points were created in historical locations, such as the foundations or walls of former barracks, directly related to specific accounts of former prisoners. You can listen to or read these accounts by scanning the QR code located at a given point. See https://plaszow.org/wydarzenia/mapowanie-miejsca-pamieci [accessed: 21.04.2024].

26 K. Nowak, *Wieś zapamiętana. Rekonstrukcja łemkowskiej przestrzeni kulturowej sprzed wysiedlenia na przykładzie wsi Bartne*, "Rocznik Ruskiej Bursy", vol. 17 (2021), pp. 151–182.

27 P. Trzeszczyńska, *Łemkowszczyzna zapamiętana. Opowieść o przeszłości i przestrzeni*, Kraków 2013, pp. 319–402.

28 In accordance with the Act of 6 January 2005 on national and ethnic minorities and on regional languages (Polish Journal of Laws 2005, No. 17, item 141) https://isap.sejm.gov.pl/isap.nsf/download.xsp /WDU20050170141/U/D20050141Lj.pdf [accessed: 26.07.2024] the name Lemko minority is the only official term for this ethnic group in Poland. However, in the pre-displacement period, Lemkos on both sides of the Carpathians most often called themselves Rusyns or Rusnaks. Although the name Lemkos became popular among the displaced people after the Second World War, there is now a return to the original self-identifying names, which may indicate the formation of a supra-local Carpatho-Rusyn bond; see P. Trzeszczyńska, *op. cit.*, pp. 65–66. In this article, the terms Lemko and Rusyn are used synonymously.

29 R. Reinfuss, *Próba charakterystyki etnograficznej Rusi Szlachtowskiej na podstawie niektórych elementów kultury materialnej*, "Lud", vol. XXXVII (1947), no. 2, pp. 160–164, 203–210.

into the discourse, which is still popular today. However, the validity of this distinction is questioned by some researchers.[30]

The end of the settlement's existence was brought about by post-war resettlements as part of the mutual population exchange with the Ukrainian SSR and Operation Vistula.[31] In June 1945, after a large-scale propaganda campaign, 444 residents from Biała Woda (105 families) were resettled to the Voroshilovgrad Oblast (currently Luhansk Oblast in Ukraine).[32] The living conditions there were tragic. Olena Konował reports that there was a lack of food and places to live, and the indigenous people were hostile towards the Rusyns, treating them "like occupiers."[33] The remaining inhabitants of Biała Woda and those who managed to return from Donbas (a total of 134 or 139 people) were resettled in July 1947 to Wołów and Gorzów Wielkopolski counties.[34] Resettlement of the Ruś Szlachtowska also took place in November 1949 and April 1950.[35] Abandoned buildings were systematically dismantled and transported away. Matrona Gieras from neighbouring Czarna Woda reports: "Here they were tearing down houses for the nails. Once they had torn out everything, you could buy a new house for half a litre of vodka. [...] They wrote on the houses: 'firewood.' They took it all to the lime kiln."[36] In the years 1949–1950, four highlander shepherd's huts were built in the post-Rusyn clearings, and the Mountain Pasture Research Point was established in Biała Woda. In the new reality, Ruś Szlachtowska was ethnographically incorporated into Podhale.[37] In 1963, a nature reserve was established in the area of the displaced village.[38] Of all the old buildings in the village, only a stone chapel has

30 Cf. H. Duć-Fajfer, *Łemkowie w Polsce*, "Magury", vol. 91 (1992), pp. 15–16. The issue of the identity of the residents of Ruś Szlachtowska is discussed in the work: K. Awzan, *Ruś za miedzą – przedwojenna Ruś Szlachtowska we wspomnieniach mieszkańców Szczawnicy*, in K. Propola (ed.), *Wschód–Zachód. Interakcje na przestrzeni dziejów*, Rzeszów 2017, pp. 63–80.

31 The period of the German occupation and the post-war resettlement is described in detail in: B.A. Węglarz, *Spacerkiem po starej Szczawnicy i Rusi Szalchtowskiej*, Pruszków 2011, pp. 214–221.

32 Archiwum Narodowe w Krakowie (National Archives in Kraków) (hereinafter: ANK), Starostwo Powiatowe w Nowym Targu (District Office in Nowy Targ), ref. 29/3484/39, p. 117. Statistical data relating evacuated families and property taken away by them from Szczawnica district, Nowy Targ county, Nowy Sącz, 25 July 1946; Â. Galik, *Kniga pam`âtì Lemkìvŝini 1944–1946*, vol. I, L'vìv 2015, pp. 334–341.

33 Interview with Olena (Olha) Konował (née Szymczak, born 1930 in Biała Woda), 2007 (recorded by W. Maksimovich), https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I140z2zQioI [accessed: 26.04.2023].

34 E. Misiło (ed.), *Akcja „Wisła" 1937. Dokumenty i materiały*, Warszawa 2012, pp. 977, 1014.

35 *Ibidem*, p. 977.

36 Archiwum Fundacji Ośrodka KARTA (Archive of the KARTA Centre Foundation), Archiwum Opozycji (Opposition Archive), ref. A01/105, Account of Matrona (Marta) Gieras (née Kulik, born 1929 in Czarna Woda), 22 August 1994 (prepared by H. Blimel and H. Blimel), p. 11.

37 A. Kroh, *Sklep potrzeb kulturalnych po remoncie*, Warszawa 2013, ebook, not paginated, p. [159].

38 Order of the Polish Minister of Forestry and the Timber Industry of 14 January 1963 concerning recognition as a nature reserve (M.P. 1963 No. 13 pt 72), https://isap.sejm.gov.pl/isap.nsf/download.xsp/WMP19630130072/O/M19630072.pdf [accessed: 26.04.2024].

survived on the border of Biała Woda and Jaworki and three, currently partially inhabited, farm buildings in the hamlet of Kornaje.

Space in memory

The basis for the reconstruction of the space of the resettled village was a 90-minute film made on 25 June 2017, recording a walk by a former resident of Biała Woda, Helena Łazarczak (née Karpiak, born in 1946 in Biała Woda)[39] with Alina Doboszewska and Krzysztof Krzyżanowski (who was also the camera operator) through the area of the current reserve.[40] The combination of a spoken account with a recorded walk through places that are key to the interlocutor's story, and at the same time stimulating her memory, can be called a narrative walk.[41] Since the modern boundaries of the Biała Woda Nature Reserve do not exactly coincide with the administrative boundaries of the resettled village, the recording does not cover the beginning of the village, Niżny (Niźni) Koniec (English: lower end) hamlet, but begins at the current entrance to the reserve at Czubata Skała. The interview is informal, where the interlocutor herself initiates the topics and indicates places that are important in her opinion.[42] The presenters occasionally ask for details or a more precise indication of the discussed objects' location. Due to

39 Due to the unsystematized nature of the interview, the interlocutor is also a narrator, freely talking about her life, but also answering questions about the former appearance of the village, which also makes her an informant. See M. Kurkowska-Budzan, *Informator, świadek historii, narrator – kilka wątków epistemologicznych i etycznych oral history*, "Wrocławski Rocznik Historii Mówionej", vol. 1 (2011), pp. 25–28.

40 The authors of this work would like to thank Krzysztof Krzyżanowski for providing the entire recording. For the purposes of publication, the transcription was prepared by the authors of the article. Fragments of the interview with Helena Łazarczak constitute the main narrative axis of the document: *Biała Woda – zapomniana wieś na Szlaku Kultury Wołoskiej* (Biała Woda – a forgotten village on the Wallachian Culture Trail), directed by Krzysztof Krzyżanowski, Kraków 2023, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uKSDj8R70DA [accessed: 02.04.2024].

41 This approach is emphasized by Tomasz Marcysiak, who mentions an actual walk around the research site as an important element in understanding its history in connection with the analysis of narrative interviews, but he does not mention the possibility of integrating these two research methods. See T. Marcysiak, *Zapis wywiadu narracyjnego jako przyczynek do badań autoetnograficznych wsi kosznajderskich*, "Studia z Geografii Politycznej i Historycznej", no. 6 (2017), p. 239. A narrative walk, or go-along interview, can be consider a technique combining an interview and a research walk with the use of a visual method (a photo-walk), cf. M. Kurkowska-Budzan, E. Soroko, M. Stasiak, *Wywiad ustrukturyzowany w badaniach historycznych. Propozycja procedury badawczej*, "Wrocławski Rocznik Historii Mówionej", vol. 10 (2020), p. 10; D. Porczyński, *Badanie pogranicza fantomowego. Omówienie technik i procedur*, "Przegląd Socjologii Jakościowej", vol. XX (2024), no. 2, pp. 107–112.

42 The circumstances of the interview may influence the conversation and constitute an incentive to recall, which is why the fact that the entire interview takes place in parallel with the walk around the former village is particularly valuable. The positive influence of the environment on restoring the narrator's memory is called the sense of immersion. See M. Kurkowska-Budzan, E. Soroko, M. Stasiak, *op. cit.*, p. 22.

the age of the interviewee during the displacement,[43] most of her memories come from the period after her family returned to Biała Woda in 1955, when some of the buildings had not yet been destroyed. Her narrative about the past was also influenced by stories she had heard from her relatives.[44] The information provided by the interviewee was compared[45] with other accounts,[46] as well as archival, press,[47] iconographic, cartographic sources, and LIDAR (Light Detection and Ranging) data from ALS (Airborne Laser Scanning).[48] These data were verified during field research carried out on 27 May and 21 July 2023.[49] The route with detailed points is presented in the figures 1 and 2 below.

43 The interlocutor can be considered a member of the '1.5 generation,' which Suleiman formulated on the example of children of Holocaust survivors. See S.R. Suleiman, *The 1.5 Generation: Thinking About Child Survivors and the Holocaust*, "American Imago", vol. 59 (2002), no. 3, pp. 277–295.

44 During the first displacement as part of Operation Vistula, the interlocutor was only one year old, and autobiographical memory is formed only from approximately 24 months of age. The numerous details provided by the interlocutor may indicate that her current age caused her to reminisce about memories from her childhood and youth after 1955. See A. Rybak-Korneluk, H.M. Wichowicz, K. Żuk, M. Dziurkowski, *Pamięć autobiograficzna i jej znaczenie w wybranych zaburzeniach psychicznych*, "Psychiatria Polska", vol. 50 (2016), no. 5, p. 960; T. Rzepa, *Jakie wspomnienia i w jaki sposób przywołuje najczęściej nasza pamięć autobiograficzna?*, "Przegląd Psychologiczny", vol. 50 (2007), no. 4, p. 399.

45 Although the methodology assumes that all accounts, as interlocutors' personal perspectives on their own lives, are psychologically true, this does not relieve the researcher of the need to confront the material with other sources; cf. M. Jakimowicz, *Świat, który już nie istnieje. Polskie i ukraińskie opowieści biograficzne (1918–1956)*, Wrocław 2022, p. 27.

46 Account of Helena Łazarczak's parents: Maria (born in 1929 in Biała Woda) and Szymon (born in 1921 in Biała Woda) Karpiak, November–October 2011 (prepared by A. Stopka), in: A. Stopka, *Łemkowie z Białej Wody – okruchy wspomnień*, "Prace Pienińskie", vol. 21 (2011), pp. 312–320; Account of Olena Konował (née Szymczak, born 1930 in Biała Woda), 14 December 2007 (prepared by B. Huk), https://nasze-slowo.pl/bila-voda/ [accessed: 08.04.2023]; Account of Olena (Olha) Konował (née Szymczak, born 1930 in Biała Woda), *op. cit.*; Account of Matrona (Marta) Gieras (née Kulik, born 1929 in Czarna Woda), *op. cit.*

47 Articles about Biała Woda and other villages of Ruś Szlachtowska were published, among others, in the newspapers "Lemko", Philadelphia–Cleveland–New York–Yonkers 1928–1940; "Karpatska Rus'", Yonkers 1940–; "Nash Lemko", Lviv 1934–1939, "Dilo", Lviv–Vienna 1880–1939, and "Krakivs'ki Visti", Kraków–Vienna 1940–1945.

48 LIDAR is an integrated remote sensing system using laser or optical radar to generate an accurate digital terrain model (DTM), allowing the visual identification of earth objects, especially those difficult to access or covered with vegetation, and their measurements on the horizontal and vertical planes. The technology has found wide application, including in conservation or archaeology – in particular for the reconstruction of unpreserved architecture or spatial arrangements (e.g. the Carpatho-Ruthenian villages of Borysławka and Caryńskie, abandoned after the Second World War). See Ł. Sławik, R. Zapała, *LIDAR w archeologii – zagadnienia wprowadzające*, in R. Zapała (ed.), *Dygitalizacja dziedzictwa archeologicznego – wybrane zagadnienia*, Lublin 2011, pp. 210–227; A.N. Affek [*et al.*], *The use of LiDAR in reconstructing the pre-World War II landscapes of abandoned mountain villages in southern Poland*, "Archaeological Prospection", vol. 29 (2022), no. 1, pp. 157–173.

49 A short summary of field research along with an artist's reconstruction of the village layout before the displacement was published in K. Federyga, D. Cieplak, *Pamięć miejsca. W poszukiwaniu współczesnej łemkowskiej/rusińskiej architektury komemoratywnej*, "Rocznik Ruskiej Bursy", vol. 19 (2023), pp. 202–206.

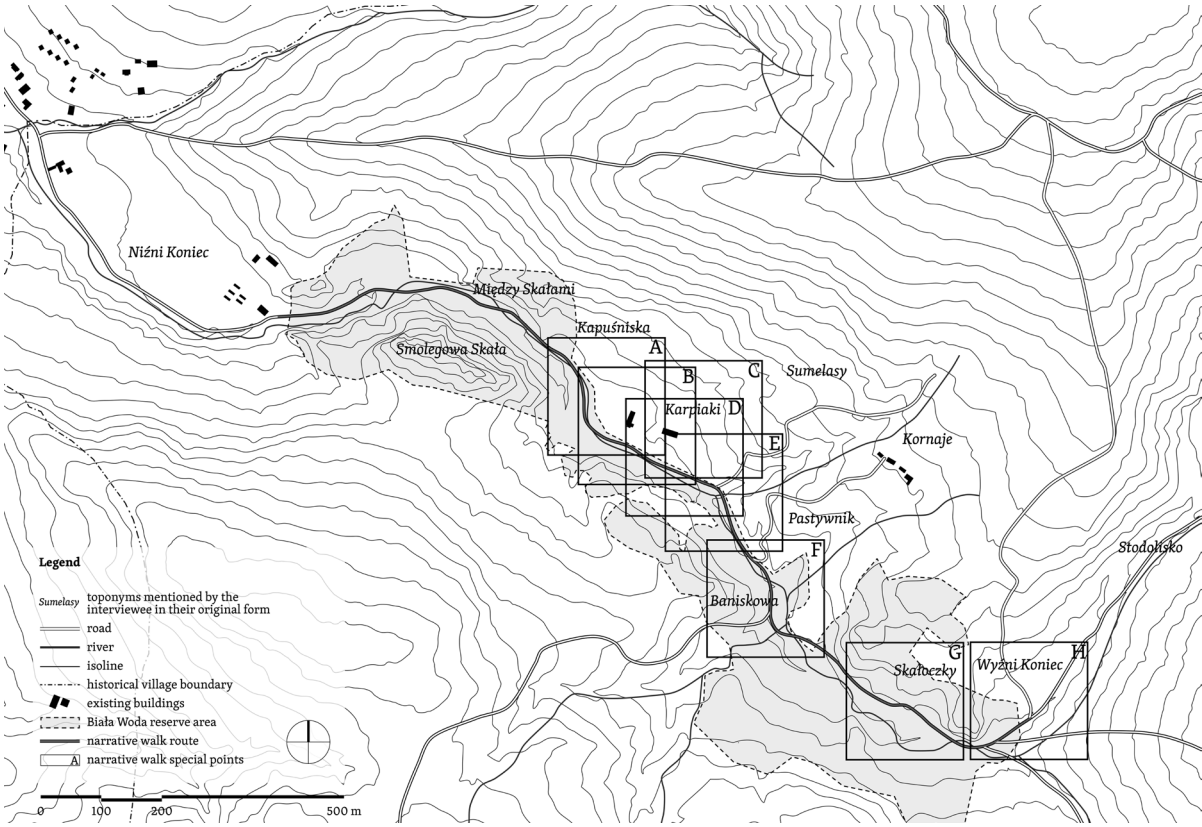
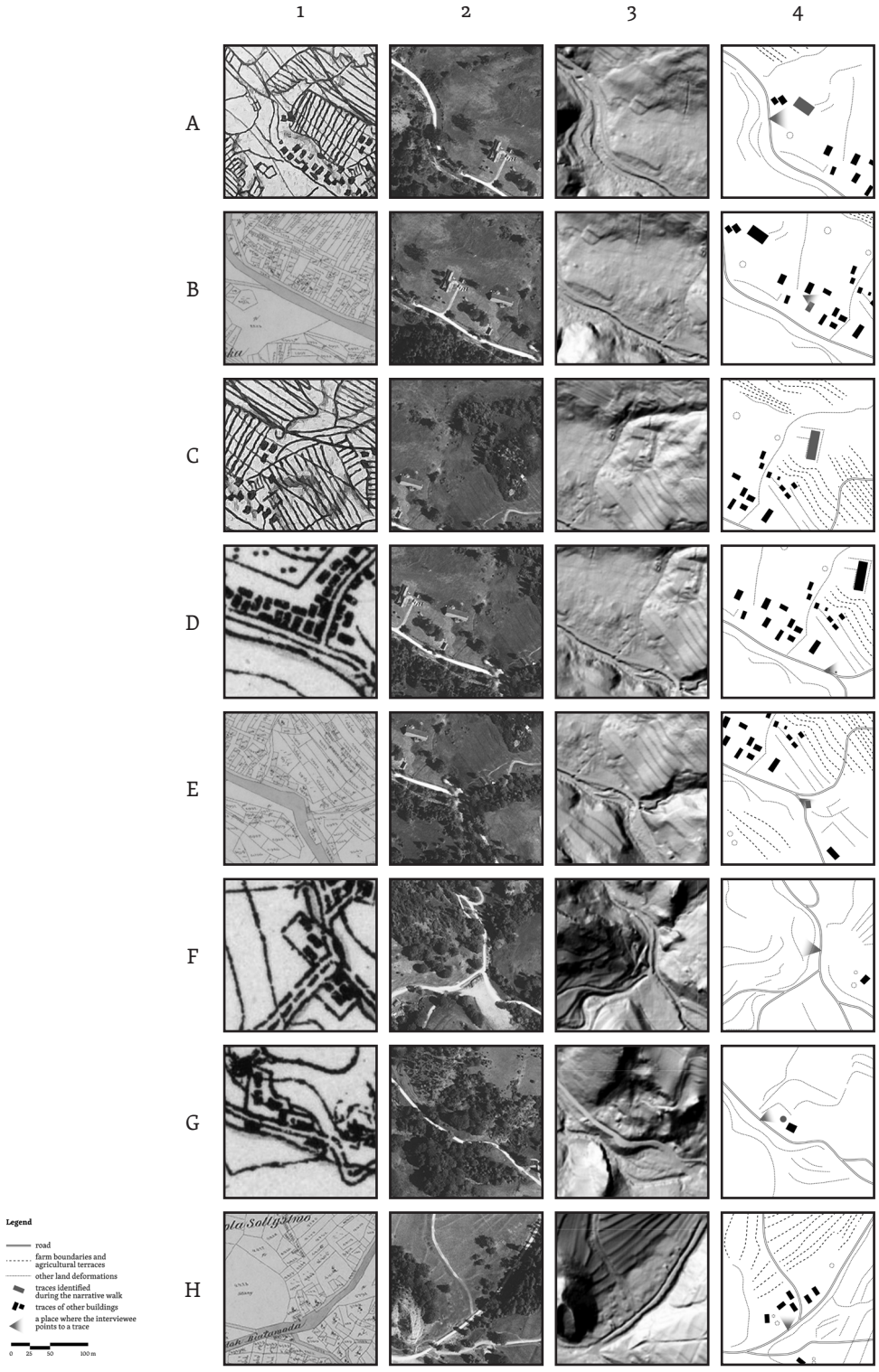


Figure 1. Outline of a narrative walk, edited by the authors based on information from https://www.geoportal.gov.pl/ [accessed: 29.07.2024]

→ Figure 2. Special points of the walk: (1) historical map:[50] (A, C) ANK, Starostwo Powiatowe w Nowym Targu (District Office in Nowy Targ), ref. 29/3484/118, p. 1440; situation plan for the development of post-Lemko areas, Biała Woda village, Szczawnica commune, Nowy Targ county, 1:10,000, 1948; (B, E, H) ANK, Galician Cadastre, ref. 29/280/0/13.1/2191, Biała Woda in Galicia, Tax District of Nowy Targ (Neumarkt), 1:2880, 1888; (D, F, G) detailed map of Poland 1:25,000, sheet P51 S31 E Szlachtowa, Military Geographic Institute, Warsaw 1936; (2) modern orthophotomap, source: https://www.geoportal.gov.pl/pl/dane/ortofotomapa-orto/ [accessed: 29.07.2024]; (3) LIDAR data visualization, source: https://www.geoportal.gov.pl/dane/dane-pomiarowe-lidar [accessed: 27.07.2023]; (4) data interpretation, edited by the authors.

50 Fragments of historical maps were selected due to the year of preparation, adequacy of scale or visibility of the places described.


1
2
3
4
A
B
C
D
E
F
G
H
Legend
road
farm boundaries and agricultural terraces
other land deformations
traces identified during the narrative walk
traces of other buildings
a place where the interviewee points to a trace
0 25 50 100 m

The first important point on the route was the site of the wooden primary school building (Figure 1, point A) built in 1936:

> Helena Łazarczak: Well, the school stood there [*points*] between this ash tree. There was a balk here [*pointing*] and there was a school here as well. There may be some more fragments there… I don't want to go there because of the grass and all… But here, here [*points*] it was standing on this [hill]! And it… in that photo you can see it well, the school as it looked in reality.
> *Krzysztof Krzyżanowski: How many grades did it have?*
> H.Ł.: The school, it was a new school, four grades, but the children were already learning there, they were still studying under the Germans, because my mother worked [at this school], because there was a teacher here, she always said… Denis was his name, and he taught these children, and my mother, because they didn't take her to Germany, she was a cook, she cooked in exchange for [not going to] Germany, she had to work for them here, in this school.[51]

The information about the four-grade school in Biała Woda is consistent with that provided by Olena Konował.[52] In the Schematism of the Apostolic Administration of Lemkovyna from 1936, two utraquist schools with one and two grades were mentioned, which were to be located in the parish in Jaworki.[53] The establishment of a separate two-grade school in Biała Woda is further confirmed by a letter published in the Lemko émigré press published in New York:

> As you know, Biała Woda belongs to the parish of Jaworki, but when winter came, it was difficult for children from Biała Woda to get to the school in Jaworki. After the war, Biała Woda started looking for a teacher. And finally, they achieved their goal; they got a teacher. But the problem was that there was no school building, and the teacher had to teach the children in a private house. Biała Woda started thinking about raising a school […]. Last year, the locals cut wood, brought stone, and this year they built a two-grade school. The building is large, but not yet completed.[54]

The school visible in the above-mentioned photo (Photo 1) is a single-storey building with an attic, rectangular in plan and a wooden log structure. It has a gable roof covered with sheet metal, with pent roofs in the gable walls and two dormers placed symmetrically in the middle, one on each longer side of the building. After the displacement, the building, which "stood empty and of no use to anyone," was

51 Account of Helena Łazarczak.
52 From the account of Olena Konował: "Then, before the war, they built a beautiful school, four grades it had. And then we had to go to Krynica, but who would pay…?"
53 *Šematizm greko-katolickogo duhoven'stva apostol'skoï admìnìstracìï Lemkovŝini 1936*, L'vìv 1936, p. 114.
54 L.P., *Ìz Starogo Kraû. Ìz Âvorok i Bìloj Vody (Povìt Novyj Torg)*, "Lemko. Karpatorusska Roboča Gazeta", vol. IX (1936), no. 89, p. 3.

demolished; the building materials were transported to the school grounds in Szlachtowa and rebuilt.[55] The relocated building still serves as the local primary school.

In the Karpiaki hamlet, a levelled school site has been preserved, visible in LIDAR photos (Figure 2.A3). The school building was no longer marked on the situation plan prepared in 1948 (Figure 2.A1). The demolition and relocation of the building took place before the end of 1948, which is additionally confirmed by the entry in the *History of the Primary School in Szlachtowa*: "After several meetings in Szlachtowa and the commune [of Szczawnica] in February 1948, on the order of the mayor of Szczawnica, Dziuban Wojciech, the inhabitants of Szlachtowa started to tear down the school in Biała Woda and to transport this demolished building to the school grounds in Szlachtowa."[56]



Photo 1. Panorama of Biała Woda seen from Smolegowa Skała: the building in the foreground on the left is the primary school, and the larger building in the background is a German guardhouse, 1940s. Author unknown, private archive of the Radyk family[57]

The next place, Helena Łazarczak's family home (Figure 1, point B), has special emotional significance for her. However, the levelling of the land and the construction of the Mountain Pasture Research Point in the mid-20th century resulted in the almost complete removal of any trace of its presence:[58]

55 *History of the Primary School in Szlachtowa*, written by H. Dawidek, 1947/1948–1948/1949, manuscript, not paginated.

56 *Ibidem*, 1949/1949.

57 The authors would like to thank Barbara Janczaruk from the Forgotten World Foundation for providing the photographs. The reproduction was also published in: J. Cząstka-Kłapyta, P. Kłapyta, *Ruś Szlachtowska na kresach etnicznego osadnictwa wołoskiego*, "Karpacki Przegląd Społeczno-Kulturalny", no. 55 (1/2024), p. 12.

58 Cf. A. Kroh, *op. cit.*, p. [159].

H.Ł.: Well, I was born here, in the famous Karpiaki [hamlet]! [*laughter*] [...] There is a stable there, because it was already built after that [after the displacement]. There was a house there where I was born. There, there! And there were houses here! There were houses all the time. Immediately taken down, dismantled, there was a house here, here. And so...
Alina Doboszewska: They called it Karpiaki, like the hamlet?
H.Ł.: Well, there was such an estate where Karpiaks lived, yes. [...] And I was born here, like this tree, between this tree, there was a house here. Dad was from here.
K.K.: Where was it?
H.Ł.: Here [*points*] near this tree, there was a house here. But there were houses here all the time, they stood close to the road.
K.K.: Let's enter this area, can we go there?
H.Ł.: Let's go in, shall we? Well, but what's there to see? There's nothing there.
K.K.: Well, but let's go in, what's the harm?
[*They leave the road and climb onto higher ground.*]
H.Ł.: [...] Well, there were houses here, here. Here you can still see some stones. There was a house here.
A.D.: So, the house where you were born was here?
H.Ł.: Well, this is where it stood. Here, here.
A.D: In this place?
H.Ł.: Yes.
K.K.: Where exactly?
H.Ł.: Here, here [*points*]. Well, you can see these stones over there. Here, the basements have already been demolished, these hills were all houses, where these uneven terrains are. And here and there a stone sticks out from the foundations.[59]

The interlocutor, not questioned by the interviewer, did not provide detailed information about the architecture of the house. In his 1884 memories of a trip to neighbouring Szlachtowa, Ivan Nechuy-Levytsky wrote:

The roofs are covered with wood shingles, dark to black. There were no chimneys or smoke holes visible on the rooftops. Smoke from the furnaces was seeping through the shingles. [...] All houses, barns, chambers, even pigsties, are built of thick, good fir or spruce logs [...], often standing under one roof, joined together. [...] To prevent the walls from being damaged by rain, they are smeared with oil on top, which gives the walls a reddish tint. Water seeps from the mountains [...], and that is why all the houses are built on stone foundations, sometimes so high that cellars are built inside. Some houses have filled and whitewashed two-finger-wide gaps between the logs.[60]

59 Account of Helena Łazarczak.
60 Ì. Nečuj, *V" Karpatah"*, "Dělo", vol. VI (1885), no. 90, p. 1.

This account coincides in many places with a more detailed description of the architecture of Ruś Szlachtowska developed half a century later by Roman Reinfuss.[61] Ignacy Tłoczek, in turn, emphasizes that the buildings in Ruś Szlachtowska were characterized by small sizes: a one-room residential and livestock building in Biała Woda from the mid-17th century, preserved until the 1930s, had a room with an area of only 26 m^2.[62]

Olena Konował provides a quite detailed description of house furnishings. She recalls that some had a "baker's oven" in the halls, and others had a tiled *szparhet* (heater-stove). There was a bench or a pull-out *bambetel* (cot-bed) next to the stove. "There was a bed in the house. Under the bed – when there were a lot of children – a smaller bed, a *szlufanek* (truckle bed), which could be taken out and the children put down for the night [...]. There were cupboards on the walls: *miśniki* (for bowls); a *łyżnik* for storing spoons; a *cyharka* for draining potatoes."[63] This account, in addition to its ethnographic and historical value, complementing the descriptions of the interior by Roman Reinfuss,[64] is also a source of local names for home furnishings.

In 1940, on a hill in the hamlet of Sumelasy,[65] above the valley where the interviewee's family house was located, the German occupation authorities built a *Grenzschutz* military guardhouse (Figure 1, point C):

> H.Ł.: [...] you can see up there, the Germans built this guardhouse, you can see these walls there! It's a big building, I remember it with all [the details]... it's also in this photo. The one at the back, this one... It was a wooden building, it already had all the utilities, like water, because they knew how to install it, because there was a river source, as a child I was shocked... it was shocking. Beautiful building, something should have been done with it, not destroyed! They stripped it down to the last stone, stole everything. That's right, a beautiful building! Up there, behind the trees; the name of the hamlet was Sumelasy. And that's where the Sumelas family lived, my father-in-law's sister lived there, and there were about five houses on the hill, their name was Sumelas.[66]

61 Cf. R. Reinfuss, *Próba charakterystyki etnograficznej...*, pp. 190–199. The architecture of Ruś Szlachtowska was also immortalized in pre-war photographs by Stanisław Leszczycki and Roman Reinfuss; see Archiwum Muzeum Etnograficznego w Krakowie (Archive of the Ethnographic Museum in Kraków) (hereinafter: MEK), ref. 118030N–118039N, III/36339/F, III/90702/F, III/90720/F, III/90782/F, III/90783/F, III/90784/F, III/90785/F, and XI/RR/II/782/10 – the last photograph reproduced in: A. Karczmarzewski, *Świat Łemków. Etnograficzna podróż po Łemkowszczyźnie*, Rzeszów 2021, p. 225.

62 I. Tłoczek, *Polskie budownictwo drewniane*, Wrocław 1980, p. 94; *idem*, *Dom mieszkalny na polskiej wsi*, Warszawa 1985, p. 69. This publication also contains a reproduction of the photograph *House with a "wyżka"* (chamber located in the attic) *above the basement from the beginning of the 19th century 20th century* from Biała Woda, *ibidem*, fig. 43.

63 Account of Olena Konował.

64 Cf. R. Reinfuss, *Próba charakterystyki etnograficznej...*, pp. 200–201.

65 The interlocutor consistently called the hamlet *Sumelasy*, even though the original name was definitely pronounced *Sumilasy*, as if it came etymologically from the surname *Sumilas*.

66 Account of Helena Łazarczak.

According to Olena Konował's account, the guardhouse (German: *Kaserne*) was made of wood, although it was stone-walled at the corners: "It stood in the middle of the village, next to our house and not far from the stream that flowed from the rocks, near the cross, on Sumilas' hill [...]. There were about 20 gendarmes stationed there. Only Germans served there, one of them knew Polish."[67]

From the photo mentioned by Helena Łazarczak (Photo 1), it can be concluded that the guardhouse was a single-storey building built on an elongated rectangular plan with an attic covered with a gable roof. The two opposite corners were reinforced with stone extensions with loopholes serving as caponiers. The preserved ground floor proves that the building had concrete basements protruding about one metre above ground level, serving as a shelter and a place of last defence.[68] The twin building of the guardhouse in Szlachtowa has been preserved and is today the seat of the Józef Szalay Pieniny Museum. The *History of the Primary School in Szlachtowa* contains a photo (Photo 2) of the staging of the recapture of the German guardhouse by Polish partisans. On the situation plan from 1948 (Figure 2.C1), the guardhouse building was not marked, which allows the conclusion that it had been demolished before the plan was prepared.



Photo 2. Staging of the recapture of the German guardhouse in Biała Woda by Polish partisans: the primary school building and Smolegowa Skała visible in the background, 1945. Author unknown, *History of the Primary School in Szlachtowa*, retouched by D. Cieplak[69]

67 Account of Olena Konował.
68 Cf. S. Kryciński, *Łemkowszczyzna nieutracona*, Rzeszów 2021, p. 39, footnote 16.
69 The authors would like to thank Monika Hurkała, principal of the John Paul II Primary School in Szlachtowa for making the *History of the Primary School in Szlachtowa* available.

At the foot of the hill with the guardhouse, the interlocutor stops at two crosses standing right next to the road (Figure 1, point D):

> H.Ł.: Well, here are the crosses… the ash tree has already rotted away… Well, these crosses could say a lot if they could talk, because my grandmother was 93, my father was 95 [years old when he died], but we don't know what these crosses commemorate; they have existed for so long. 200 years already… as we [remember]. 200 years, 200 years, I know the history, and no one knows… [in memory of what these crosses were erected]. Well, I bought these flowers, I decorated them [the crosses], because people come, read, and some are a little interested. […] But they're already deteriorated a lot. You would have to…
> *A.D.: It would be good to renovate them.*
> H.Ł.: Well, it's very difficult, someone has already restored one, and that one too, but I don't know, it's a monument, who would know how to do it? I was trying to decorate them, everything is already rickety, everything is already destroyed. Well, after all these years, it got ruined.[70]

The interlocutor pays particular attention to the condition of the crosses and the need for urgent conservation intervention.[71] Bought at fairs, crosses were placed in clearings and near houses to fulfil wishes, including protection, or to commemorate the death of a loved one.[72] Both the wooden and cast-iron crosses were said to have been erected by the Kornaj brothers.[73] One of the crosses is also mentioned in an interview with Olena Konoważ.[74]

Near the crosses, on the curve of the road, the interlocutor points to the site of a former water mill (Figure 1, point E):

> H.Ł.: Well, here we go to the bridge. There was a mill here. I still remember it when we returned in [19]55. Here, in this place, in this cavity, there was a mill. My father-in-law's sister had this mill, she lived up there… we must go higher, then you'll see more, because… There was a mill here!
> *A.D.: Under that cliff?*
> H.Ł.: No, here, here, in this [cavity], here [*points*]. Down here, there was water under the cliff, right? Because there had to be water on the wheel… because now they have widened the river

70 Account of Helena Łazarczak.
71 The interlocutor's appeal was not exaggerated. One of the mentioned crosses was damaged in mid-September 2023 as a result of excessive wind; see K. Federyga, D. Cieplak, *op. cit.*, p. 205, footnote 3. In spring 2024 it was renovated.
72 A. Ostrowińska, *U Rusinów przed półwieczem*, "Magury", vol. 86 (1986), p. 133.
73 P. Krzywda, K. Majerczak, *Kapliczki nasze, sercu bliskie. Szczawnica – Szalchtowa – Jaworki*, Szczawnica 2017, pp. 194–195.
74 From the account of Olena Konoważ: "The cross remained in Jasilnyczek, where there is a wayside shrine, the Mother of God and the cross on the tree. In Karpiaki, where the waterfall is, there is also Our Lady and a cross. There was a cross at the Konoważ family, but it is no longer there."

and it [the stream] is gone. There are still fragments, as I say, when we came back, there were still those water wheels.

K.K.: You can see it here!

H.Ł.: [...] Well, I'm not sure I'd say it's visible. There was water flowing here, you know? Here! Here, under this cliff, there was a little pond and here was this wheel, right here. And there's water here, but when they widened the road, they immediately... and there was a culvert up there. And this is where Sumelas... his name was also Sumilas... Here [*points*]. This is where the water was flowing, where this gentleman is, there was a river crossing and this is where the water was going, to this mill.

A.D.: And who was the miller?

H.Ł.: [...] Sumilas he was called.[75]

The *Polish Address Book*[76] does not provide information about the owner of the mill in Biała Woda, although there is mention of the neighbouring Jaworki, Szlachtowa, and Czarna Woda. Biała Woda was probably mistakenly identified as Białowoda in Nowy Sącz county, previously placed there. Nevertheless, the existence of the mill, equipped with a typical grinder and demolished in 1946, is confirmed by the Inventory of the Podhale Commission for the Protection of Monuments.[77] In turn, the *List of former owners of the post-Lemko settlers of the Biała Woda, Czarna Woda, Jaworki and Szlachtowa settlements* lists Andrzej Łazarczyk as the owner of the mill (no. 143),[78] which does not coincide with the information provided by the interviewee. Apart from the rather general descriptions provided by Helena Łazarczak, not much is known about the architecture of the building itself. However, it can be assumed that the mill resembled the one photographed by Roman Reinfuss in the area of Ruś Szlachtowska in the 1930s.[79]

According to the interlocutor, another important point on the route is the hamlet of Baniskowa (Figure 1, point F), where there was a house that served as a school until a new one was built, just before the war:

H.Ł.: And here on this [hill] [*points*], this is where the school was and this is where it was called Baniskowa, the school in Baniskowa, this is where my grandfather was born.

75 Account of Helena Łazarczak.

76 The full title of the publication: *Księga Adresowa Polski (wraz z w. m. Gdańskiem) dla handlu, przemysłu, rzemiosł i rolnictwa. Annuaire da la Pologne (y Compris la V.L. de Dantzig)*, Warszawa–Bydgoszcz 1930.

77 Inventory of the Podhale Commission for the Care of Monuments PTTK conducted at the request of the NOT Technical Museum (state as of 1962), in H. Jost, *Młyny zbożowe podhalańskie dawniej i obecnie*, "Kwartalnik Historii Nauki i Techniki", vol. XXI (1976), no. 4, p. 698.

78 ANK, Starostwo Powiatowe w Nowym Targu (District Office in Nowy Targ), ref. 29/3484/118, List of former owners of former post-Lemko settlements including Biała Woda, Czarna Woda, Jaworki, and Szlachtowa, pp. 1257–1285.

79 MEK, ref. 118037N, *Mill – Ruś Szlachtowska*, author R. Reinfuss.

A.D.: Was this school until the war or what? In what times?

H.Ł.: Before the war, before the war it was there, because children also went there from Brysztan, from the Slovak side. And probably [it was] here, because I know that there were two or three grades of weaker children, and this school was here, and then they built it there. Well, I guess it was in a kind of house…[80]

Olena Konował also remembers the old school: "Before the war, we first studied in Semen Kornaj's house. There [were] two grades. Poręba taught us."[81] The accounts do not mention the appearance of the school or its equipment. It was probably no different from the other houses in this respect.

In the hamlet of Skałoczky, the interlocutor draws attention to the site of a lime kiln (Figure 1, point G):

H.Ł.: Here, where you are going, there was a kiln for burning lime, because here were these rocks for burning lime. Oh, here the hillside has slid too, it wasn't there.

A.D.: So where was this kiln located? There?

H.Ł.: No, no, I'll show you in a moment […]. Here, in this place, under this outcrop, there was a lime kiln, and they burned lime. Some Feczan did it. Well, I knew him too. Here [*points*]. They somehow stacked it with wood and burned it. A lime kiln. And people took it, painted the stone walls, whitewashed them, and painted and whitewashed plastered walls and between the logs.[82]

The interlocutor also indicates that a similar lime kiln was supposed to be located in Szlachtowa, which is confirmed by the previously mentioned *Polish Address Book* (owner: T. Petrikowicz).[83] The description of the whitewashed houses is consistent with that recorded by Ivan Nechuy-Levytsky in 1884: "Such houses look as if they were covered with some striped fabric from the outside."[84] In the 20th century, paintings supplemented with a series of vertically or horizontally running dots or rings around windows became popular.[85]

The walk ends when the interviewee and the people conducting the recording reach Wyżny (Wyźni) Koniec (English: upper end) hamlet (Figure 1, point H), which is the end of the village:

H.Ł.: This is Wyźni Koniec [hamlet]. Well, like this orchard. I remember the houses up there,

80 Account of Helena Łazarczak.
81 Account of Olena Konował.
82 Account of Helena Łazarczak.
83 *Księga Adresowa Polski…*, *op. cit.*, not paginated, p. [585].
84 Ì. Nečuj, *op. cit.*, p. 1.
85 R. Reinfuss, *Malowane zręby chałup wiejskich*, "Polska Sztuka Ludowa", vol. III (1949), no. 7–8, pp. 200, 210, fig. 13.

> when I came from the West, and the orchard was blooming beautifully, it must have been sometime at the end of May. How beautifully the apple trees bloomed! It was very rosy here! And these houses were still standing, [flourishing] in the background [...]. And my husband was born there, where this land elevation is [*pointing*]. And here [we had] neighbours [*points*]; Kornajs lived there, as well as my aunt and two brothers. My father-in-law's new houses were built there. Well, this Wyźni Koniec, there were a lot of houses here... and the orchard here was beautiful, I can see this orchard [before my eyes] from the top [of the hill], it was blooming so beautifully, and these houses were still standing here.[86]

While traversing the route of the reserve, the interlocutor recalls numerous toponyms describing individual cliffs or peaks, such as: Smolegowa Skała, Wierchliczka or Skałki; and oeconyms naming hamlets and parts of the village: Niżny (Niźni) Koniec, Międzyskały (Między Skałami), Kapuśniska, Kornaje, Karpiaki, Sumilasy (Sumelasy), Pastywnik, Baniskowa, Brysztan, Bereśnik, Skałoczky, Wyżny (Wyźni) Koniec, Stodolisko, Grybnik, and Obidza.[87] The vast majority of them are mentioned when the interlocutor passes by a given rock formation or hamlet, which allows for mapping the toponym (Figure 1). The former resident of the village also notices differences in the current route of the road compared to the one she remembers from her childhood. Additionally, she points to the old post-Rusyn trees, while criticizing the destruction that took place after the displacement. The image is complemented by comments explaining which areas were used for grazing cows and sheep and which were intended for growing cabbage, potatoes, oats, and spelt.

Some points along the route evoke special memories for the interlocutor; she talks about the people who lived in a given location, their professions before the displacement and their subsequent fate. Additionally, she provides a detailed account of village life, describing traditional dishes (she mentions, among others, *adzymka* [fried, thick pancake], *halushky* [potato dumplings], *bryndza*, *bundz* [both types of sheep's cheese], sauerkraut and dumplings), the process of making material from flax[88] and contacts with Rusyns on the Slovak side (trade in horses,

86 Account of Helena Łazarczak.

87 Part of the place names coincide with those written by Roman Reinfuss, cf. R. Reinfuss, *Próba charakterystyki etnograficznej...*, pp. 182–184. Part do not, however, appear in any other sources, and thus constitute a valuable addition to the toponymy of Biała Woda.

88 Matrona Gieras recalls: "In the past, we sowed grain here; we sowed potatoes in the clearings and flax; we made linen; we rolled such balls. We had our own looms at home. Here, almost everyone had a loom", Account of Matrona Gieras, p. 1. The fact that "everyone had equipment for processing flax and wool and a pond in which hemp was soaked" was also mentioned in the account of Maria and Szymon Karpiak in: A. Stopka, *op. cit.*, p. 313.

lemons, and shoes).[89] All these details constitute material reconstructing the cultural landscape of the no longer existing village.

Conclusions

The research work on the former layout of the village of Biała Woda presented in this article is is one example of memory mapping with the help of oral accounts and memories. An in-depth analysis would not be possible without the use of both cartographic sources and historical documents, as well as press articles and collections of recordings and transcriptions of interviews with former residents, which were compared with each other. The most valuable source was a recording of an interview – a narrative walk – with a former resident, where the narrative was combined with a vision, thanks to which the interlocutor's words were directly related to the places she was currently passing. Examining the pre-displacement structure of the village with the help of oral history also allowed to verify the existing traces of the buildings and the degree of their preservation, valorizing them. These results formed the basis for subsequent stages of designing the Cultural and Historical Path[90] in line with the idea of sustainable tourism understood as the economic development of a region while respecting and protecting cultural, social, and natural values, as well as the identity and culture of the place.[91] A narrative walk and other sources of oral history can therefore be a tool and aid for architects, planners, and designers of tourist routes requiring interdisciplinary cooperation. This form of site analysis can be an example of an activity that restores the memory of displaced Lemko/Rusyn villages and protects the tangible and intangible heritage of the minority.

Attempts to recover forgotten places through their cultural and historical reconstruction are also a way to revitalize the identity of both former residents and communities that share similar fates – in this case, the loss of homes as a result of displacement. It is also an opportunity to restore the minority voice. The recording of the narrative walk, which is the basis of this research and the main narrative of the film *Biała Woda – a forgotten village on the Wallachian Culture Trail* gave rise to numerous cultural events, including the premiere of the film, accompanied by a Greek Catholic mass and performances by Rusyn bands, as well as an exhibition in a local museum. These activities consolidated the local community and supported the preservation of its distinct language, culture, and traditions.

89 Cf. Accounts of Olena Konoważ: "There were shops in Stará Ľubovňa where you could buy linen and other household items. We went shopping and even traded"; cf. R. Reinfuss, *Próba charakterystyki etnograficznej…*, pp. 164–165.

90 The result of the design work was presented in K. Federyga, D. Cieplak, *op. cit.*, pp. 206–215.

91 A. Pawlikowska-Piechotka, *Zagospodarowanie turystyczne i rekreacyjne*, Gdynia 2009, p. 203.

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Summary
The article addresses the topic of site reconstruction using oral history accounts as a source of information about the location, purpose, and history of a given space. The authors demonstrate a close relationship between memory and the place of events, as well as the community's sense of identity, giving the example of displaced people whose attachment to lost lands influences their image preserved in their memory. Commemorating abandoned locations, in this case Lemko/Rusyn villages, is all the more important to maintain the continuity of the cultural landscape and protect the cultural heritage of minorities. The starting point for the reconstruction of Biała Woda was an audiovisual interview with a former resident, Helena Łazarczak. An analysis of historical and cartographic sources and articles from the interwar press was also employed. This is an example of the potential of using oral histories to revitalize non-existent architecture and explore the layout of a village. The account was obtained during the course of a walk. The interlocutor, a former resident of Biała Woda, walks through the village and talks about its former layout (she gives the location of the school, her family home or mill) and everyday life from the perspective of a child. Personal memories of a given place are not only valuable material for rebuilding its character and the emotions accompanying it but also help restore once lost interpersonal bonds and engage the local community in cultivating memory. A form of interdisciplinary analysis of a place using oral accounts can be a concrete way to protect its tangible and intangible heritage. Additionally, it can be a useful tool for architects, planners, and historical researchers.