

PECSRL 2024 BORDERSCAPES – PAST AND FUTURE

9 –15 September 2024, Lublin and Zamość, Poland

FIELD TRIP 1

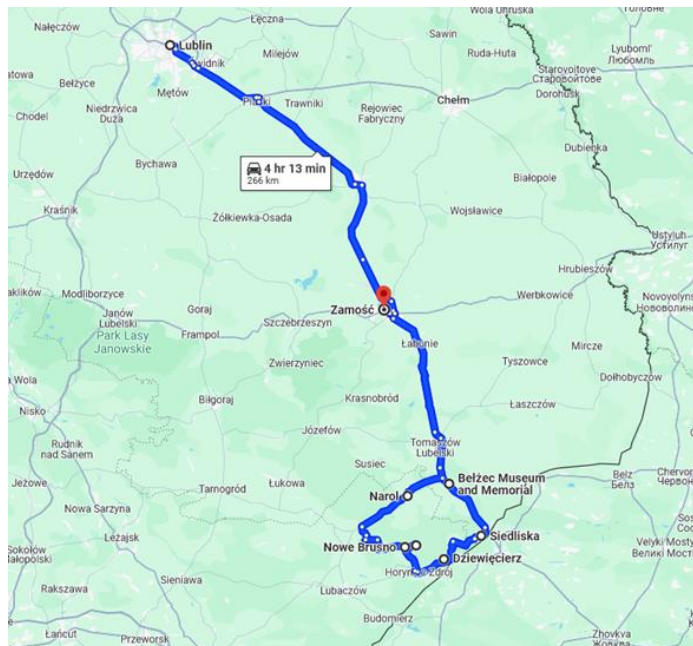
Landscape changes in the Polish-Ukrainian borderland related to World War II and its consequences in Eastern Roztocze

Timetable and stops:

Lublin (8:00)

1. **Bełżec** (10:30–11:00)
2. **Siedliska** (11:30–13:00)
3. **Dziwięcierz** (13:20–14:00)
4. **Brusno Stare** (14:30–15:10)
5. **Nowe Brusno** (15:20–15:40)
6. **Narol** (16:20–17:30)

Zamość (18:30)



Coordinators: Ewa Skowronek, Renata Krukowska

Institute of Socio-Economic Geography and Spatial Management

Maria Curie-Skłodowska University in Lublin

INTRODUCTION

The route of the fieldtrip leads through the contemporary borderland between Poland and Ukraine, located in the south-eastern part of the Roztocze region. For centuries it has been exposed to a variety of influences, primarily of a political and military nature. Today, as it was in the past, it is a meeting place of Eastern and Western European cultures, the Roman and the Greek Catholic religions, the Latin and Cyrillic alphabets as well as the Julian and Gregorian calendars. Valuable historic monuments have been preserved in the landscape of the region, reflecting the rich history, cultural and religious diversity and mutual coexistence of its former inhabitants: Ruthenians, Poles, Jews and Germans.

The area was part of the territory of the early medieval Cherven Towns, later it belonged to the Ruthenian principality of Halych-Volhynia and, from the 15th to the end of the 18th century, to the Polish Commonwealth. From Poland's loss of independence in the late 18th century until the end of World War I, the region was under the influence of Austria-Hungary. Until the outbreak of World War II, it belonged to Poland. At various points in history, the region was split by the border between Russia and the Austrian-Hungarian Empire, the German Reich and the Soviet Union, Poland and the Soviet Union, whereas the present Polish-Ukrainian border is part of the eastern frontier of the European Union and NATO.

The successively shifting borders and the fact that, starting from the Middle Ages, the area belonged to various state organisms had a decisive impact on the formation of the multicultural community and landscape of the region.

Despite various historical events, the shifting borders or ethnic diversity of the population, until the outbreak of World War II the landscape of Roztocze was homogenous and highly valuable thanks to the diversity of the economic activity, spiritual and cultural life of the inhabitants.

Significant changes in the landscape of the borderland comprising Roztocze took place during World War II and immediately afterwards. They were connected with the tragic fate of the local population as a result of various political decisions. Massive displacements, the Holocaust, the demarcation of the new Polish-Soviet border and other actions resulted in a dramatic decline of the region's population that became almost homogenous ethnic and religious structure. They also led to major and irreversible changes in the landscape, primarily concerning the settlement network, transportation system and land use structure. Other elements of the region's cultural heritage were also badly affected and impoverished. A very important and new phenomenon was the separate development of the landscape in parts of the Roztocze divided by the new state border.

1. BEŁŻEC – MUSEUM AND MEMORIAL: NAZI GERMAN EXTERMINATION CAMP (1942–1943)

Camp history

The German death camp in Bełżec was a centre of extermination for the Jewish people. From March to December 1942 about 450 thousand people were murdered there, most of whom were Polish Jews as well as the Jewish deportees from Germany, Austria, Czechia and Slovakia.

The date of the first deportations to Bełżec, 17 March 1942, corresponds to the beginning of operation „Reinhardt” – its aim was the extermination of Jews from the General Government and the plunder of their property. The camp in Bełżec was the first of the three killing centres established within the course of “Einsatz Reinhardt.” The supervisor of the death camp was the commander of the SS and police forces in the Lublin district Odilo Globocnik. Bełżec was a place where the Nazis conducted different experiments aiming at developing the most efficient methods of mass murder.

The Germans started the death camp construction on November 1, 1941. Its location was determined by several factors. First of all, Bełżec was situated next to the railroad which connected Lublin with the junction station in Rawa Ruska, where transports from the Kraków and Galicia districts could be brought. The location was very well known by the perpetrators at that time, since in 1940 a labour camp for Jews, Poles, and Gypsies had already operated there. Its prisoners built the anti-tank ditches within the “Otto Line” situated on the border of the USSR and the General Government. The town also had an existing railway ramp belonging to the former forest exploitation company.

The German death camp in Bełżec was the first place, where stationary gas chambers were used to kill the Jewish people. It was managed by the commanding officer supported by the SS garrison, which consisted of no more than 37 people. The camp had two commandants: Christian Wirth and Gottlieb Hering. The supervision and sentry duties were the responsibility of the recruited former Soviet prisoners of war, most of whom were Ukrainians trained at the camp in Trawniki. At different periods of time their number changed but always oscillated around one hundred people.

Two phases can be distinguished in the history of the camp's operation. The first one started on March 17, 1942, when two transports of Jews from Lublin and Lwów arrived at Bełżec. At that time there was a primitive wooden gas chamber operating, wherein 80,000 people were murdered by June 1942. The second phase falls on the period of increased deportations from the direction of Lwów and Kraków in July 1942. In the meantime, a bigger, more efficient, concrete gas chamber building was erected in the central part of the camp. During the several months of its operation, up to 370,000 people were killed there. Both the first primitive, wooden gas chamber and its improved, concrete version were built in such a way so that they would resemble a bathhouse. The imitations of showers were installed at the ceilings and the inscriptions at the entrance contained information that the rooms were used for “bathing” and “inhalation.” The labour connected with burying or burning bodies, and segregating the victims' property was done by a group of around 500 Jewish prisoners. From time to time Germans performed selections and shot the rejected people whom they considered no longer fit for labour. New workers were chosen from the deportees arriving in next transports.

The Jews were transported to Bełżec in cattle cars. On average, about 100 people travelled in each of them. Horrible conditions during the transport, such as overcrowding, heat, the lack of water and food resulted with the deaths of many deportees already on their way to Bełżec.

The camp ceased functioning in December 1942. The most probable reason for shutting the facility down was the lack of space for more mass graves. The burning of corpses and covering trails of the camp's activity lasted until the spring of 1943. All the buildings and equipment were dismantled by June 1943. The prisoners of the last Sonderkommando tasked with the camp liquidation were transferred to the death camp in Sobibor. Realising their imminent fate, they attacked the guards at the unloading ramp of Sobibór and were all shot upon their arrival. Only one man survived the transport – Chaim Hirszman – who escaped from the train.

The monument and its symbolism

The main entrance to the cemetery has been located in the place where the siding (sidetrack) was situated. The cemetery consists of two parts: the “Ramp” and the building of the Museum, both of which form a cemetery wall from the side of the gateway. At the end of the „Ramp”, there is a railroad track sculpture. It symbolizes the siding where trains carrying the deportees stopped upon arrival at the camp as well as pyres (stacks) on which the bodies of the victims were cremated.

The only way from the “Ramp” is the “Road” leading to the “Crevasse,” which resembles a crack in the ground. Those two elements create the “Crevasse – Road,” which cuts the ground in half and uncovers the hidden elevation of the ground, thus revealing the dimension of the crime. At the very beginning of the „Crevasse-Road”, there is rectangular relief with expressive lines arranged in the shape of the Star of David which is the symbolic border between life and death. The soaring walls, which give the impression of immersing in the ground, render the horror of one of the biggest graves of the world.



What forms the top of the “Crevasse – Road” is the granite wall, which contains an engraved quotation from the Book of Job. Together with stone plaques containing symbolic names of the victims, it forms “Ohel Niche” (ohel [*Hebrew*] is a structure built around a Jewish grave as a sign of prominence of the deceased) which is a place of reflection on the tragedy of the people who died in the camp.



The way out from this underground square is by means of the stairs leading to the left and to the right. The next stretch of the road is a concrete path which runs through the “Stone Pile.” The path contains cast-iron names of the towns from which people were deported to Bełżec. The trees that were the “Witnesses” of the tragic events still grow in the area of the graves. The surface of the graves has been covered with metallurgical clinker, which reflects the natural land form. It is supposed to show the uniqueness of this place and commemorate the tragedy that took place here.

The Museum building

In the museum building there is an exhibition which presents the history of the camp and the German occupant's extermination policy in the General Government. The exhibition presents original camp relics found during archaeological works.

2. SIEDLISKA – former property of the Sapieha family, where we will show the historical conditions for changes in the village landscape and visit the Museum of Petrified Trees.

The village was founded in the 15th century and was initially called Stare Hrebenne. It was destroyed by the Tatars at the turn of the 15th and 16th centuries. The Dzieduszycki family were the tenants of the local lands for several hundred years from the mid-15th century, had a manor house in Siedliska from the 16th century.

The estate changed hands several times, being owned by the Fontana, the Tyszkiewicz, and then the Jabłonowski family in the 19th century. Finally, it was purchased by a well-known politician, Prince Adam Sapieha. The estate, apart from Siedliska, also included Hrebenne, Rata, Mosty and Rawa. Siedliska was a famous pottery centre during this period.

After Adam Sapieha's death in 1903, his son Paweł inherited the property and treated Siedliska as a family seat. He rebuilt the manor house at the beginning of the 20th century. At the same time, a hydroelectric power plant was built on the Prutnik River, which powered the manor house and the farm.

Paweł Sapieha donated materials for the construction of the Roman Catholic church and Greek Catholic church, and built a school for the village residents. He was a social activist, and co-financing children's playrooms and reading rooms. Paweł Sapieha was the first president of the Polish Red Cross. His brother Cardinal Adam Sapieha conferred priestly ordination on Karol Wojtyła (later Pope John Paul II) in 1946. Some consider him Wojtyła's mentor.

The last owner of Siedliska before the war was Paweł's son, also Paweł. His wife was an American, Virginia Peterson. After the outbreak of the Second World War, he was an officer in the Polish army in the September campaign. He moved to Romania with his family, and then got to France and finally to the United States after the occupation of Poland. There he continued his military career in the US Army. He took part in the Korean War. Later, he worked in counterintelligence.

Before the Second World War, the village was diverse in terms of religion and nationality. In 1921, Siedliska had 468 inhabitants, including 242 Ukrainians. However, the war brought significant changes. In 1944, the Sapieha estate was parcelled out, and the descendants of Paweł and Matylda Sapieha moved to Kraków and London. The village's Ukrainian population was displaced during the Operation Vistula in 1947.

A small village with about 260 inhabitants, Siedliska is presently known for sightseeing opportunities. Its contemporary landscape is nothing like it was years ago. This was determined by political factors and historical events. The beautiful manor house, park, school, manor buildings and one of the largest grass courts in Europe disappeared.

Important historical facts

First German Occupation (September 10–25, 1939)

On September 1, 1939, the Nazi Germans entered the territory of Poland. By September 12, their units had occupied Rawa Ruska and Siedliska. In Siedliska, a manor house belonging to the Sapieha family was seized for the needs of the army.

Soviet Occupation (October 25, 1939 – June 22, 1941)

In October 1939, in accordance with the Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact, German troops withdrew to the west (the Soviet-German border ran near Bełżec). The Sapieha property was taken over by the Red Army this time. A Soviet border guard unit was stationed in the manor until June 1941. Soviet soldiers devastated both the manor and the park. During this time, many villagers were deported to Siberia, Kazakhstan, and other Soviet republics.

Second German Occupation (June 22, 1941–1944)

After Nazi Germany had attacked the Soviet Union in June 1941, the manor house was the headquarters of the German army in the area. Most of Siedliska's residents were sent to work in industrial plants for the army.

The New Soviet Occupation – the so-called “Liberation” (1944)

Soviet troops entered Siedliska at the beginning of August 1944. On the night of July 16–17, 1944, the wooden mansion, school, and all farm and other buildings were burned by a unit of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army.

The **Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA)** was a military organization formed by the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists during the Second World War. Established in 1942, its main goal was to create an independent Ukrainian state. The UPA fought against Nazi Germany, the Soviet Union, and Polish partisans. Unfortunately, it is also known for committing atrocities, including the massacre of Polish civilians in Volhynia and Eastern Galicia.

As we can see, in addition to the landscape of the village, the number and national structure of its inhabitants have irreversibly changed. Today, 80 years after the end of the war, only 55% of the former population lives here. This is the Polish population. Ukrainians and mixed families were displaced from here in 1947 as part of the **Operation Vistula**.

Operation Vistula was a forced resettlement campaign carried out by the Polish communist government in 1947. The operation aimed to suppress the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA) by relocating around 141,000 Ukrainians, from southeastern Poland to the western and northern regions of the country. This action was intended to cut off support for the UPA and eliminate the Ukrainian minority's presence in the area.

Photos of the non-existent Sapiieha manor house (early 20th century)



Petrified Trees Museum in Siedliska

The peculiarity in Siedliska is the largest concentration of petrified tree trunks in Poland. Specimens of petrified trees are also found in other parts of Roztocze, including Ukraine as far as Lviv.

Fragments of petrified wood are among the most valuable components of the Neogene (Miocene: 5–23 million years ago) geological heritage of the Roztocze region. However, they occur in sediments of various ages, from Miocene clays in primary deposits (in situ), through Miocene sands, to glacial (Pleistocene) or fluvial (Holocene) formations as displaced (redeposited) by various processes.

Generally, it is assumed that in the early Miocene (15–20 million years ago) in Roztocze, by the warm sea, thermophilic forests with the participation of swamp cypress (*Taxodium distichum* (L.) Rich.) grew. It is currently believed that it is the modern equivalent of the fossil wood species – *Taxodioxydon taxodii* Gothan.

The range of the sea at that time changed in geological time, which was caused by the tectonics of the Alpine orogeny, during which the Carpathians were formed. In conditions of high environmental dynamics in the coastal area, trees were destroyed by sea waves or submarine landslides. They also ended up in shallow lagoons of the sea reservoir as driftwood, as a result of erosion processes or river activity. In this way, they were buried in Miocene clays and/or sands. In a continental-marsh environment, in anaerobic conditions, cypress wood was carbonized and forms contemporary levels of brown coal (lignite).

Museum was created in the building of a former school closed in 2003. Much of the work on its construction was done by the village residents. They also donated most of the collections to the museum. There are several rooms open to the public: rooms with farm and household tools, and a hunting room, where we have antlers, skins and prepared animals. On the first floor, there is a room dedicated to Paweł Sapięha. There are about five hundred exhibits in total. Most of them are fragments of petrified wood, some very impressive. The heaviest fragment of the trunk in the museum weighs about six hundred kilograms. The specimens have different colours and textures.

In Siedliska, most farms have petrified wood. In the past, it was used to build houses, for example, foundations. Currently, it is mainly used for interior decoration or as a garden ornament. Since 2004, it has been forbidden to extract and sell petrified trees.

3. DZIEWIĘCIERZ – where we will discuss two topics:

1. Changes in land ownership, exemplified by the remains of State Agricultural Farms created during the socialist period.
2. Changes in the eastern border of Poland and their consequences, illustrated by a bunker belonging to the system of fortified border areas built by the Soviet Union in 1941.

State Agricultural Farms

Polish Agricultural Farms (SAF) were a form of collective farming in the Polish People's Republic, similar to Soviet sovkhoz and to the East German Volkseigenes Gut. They were created in 1949 as a form of socialist ownership of agricultural land by the government. They were primarily formed on the Regained Territories (lands that Poland acquired from Germany after the Second World War; western and northern Poland) and in south-eastern Poland (from where the Ukrainian, Lemko and Boyko populations were displaced). Collectivization in Poland met strong resistance from farmers. Various repressions were used against peasants who opposed collectivization and the compulsory supply of agricultural products.

Polish Agricultural Farms ran many specialised farms, which bred and trained horses (especially Arabians), bred cows, fish, and produced certified seed and potatoes. The size of state farms varied: from several dozen to several thousand hectares.

After 1989, the concept of liquidation of state farms prevailed. The last state-owned farms were liquidated in 1994. Nearly 2 million people were affected by the liquidation of state farms. More than 500,000 workers every day were left jobless and without means of livelihood, but with families to support. According to its supporters, state farms as a creation of the socialist economy did not fit the emerging free market. Opponents of liquidation, on the other hand, criticize the way it was carried out – some farms were in good economic condition and after the reform, they could adapt to the new economic reality.

The property of state-owned farms turned out to be a rich base for various "compensation". Most of the SAF land went to the Church. A smaller part was leased to private individuals, contributing to the creation of large-area farms.

For a long time, former employees of state farms were labelled "lazy", living on social benefits. The truth is that they were left without work, in the middle of nowhere, away from urban centres and any kind of work. Left with nothing. The effects of the liquidation of farms have not been dealt with to this day.

The State Agricultural Farm in Dzięwicz was part of "Agricultural and Industrial Complex IGLOOPOL in Dębica" the biggest company of this type in southern Poland.

The subject of the activity of the State Agricultural Farm in Dzięwicz was the conduct of large-scale plant and animal production and cooperation between other farms of the company and individual farmers. SAF managed built-up facilities and agricultural land approx. 900 ha in 3 neighbouring villages: Dzięwicz, Niwki and Polanka, with the possibility of breeding approx. 450 cattle. The main direction of this farm was plant production and pastures and grasslands as well as cattle breeding (approx. 450 cattle).

In 1992, State Agricultural Farm Dzięwicz was liquidated and transferred to the Agricultural Property Resource of the State Treasury – 470 ha in 115 agricultural plots, while the remaining area was taken over from the State Land Fund (PFZ). At that time, the State Agricultural Farm in Dzięwicz conducted very limited crop and animal production

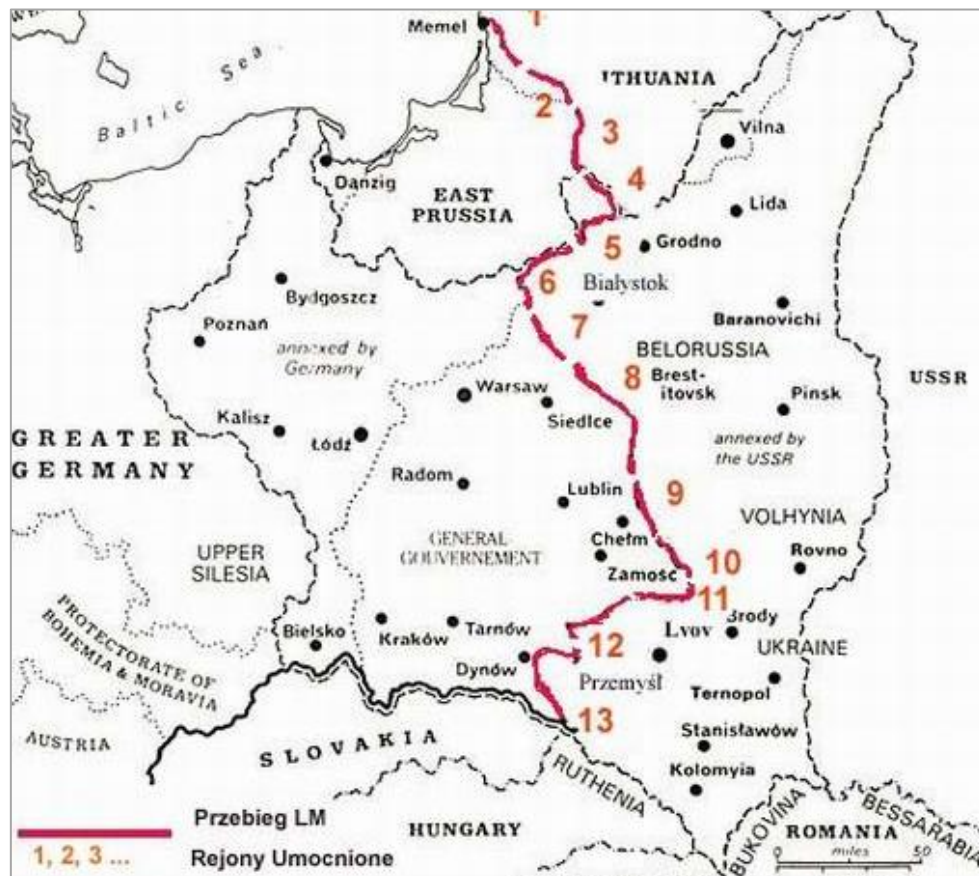
The lands taken over in Dziewięcierz were distributed and developed mainly through sale or lease to individual farmers and employees of the former State Agricultural Farm. Tenants and purchasers of real estate conduct agricultural activity on their own account. Some of them conducted crop and animal production, while currently mainly crop production. Currently, 395 ha are permanently disposed of, including: through the sale of 172 ha and transfer to the State Forests, about 70 ha remain under lease. However, there are about 15 ha of land remaining to be developed in small plots.

Employees of State Agricultural Farm Dziewięcierz purchased apartments with the necessary land, as well as gardens and garages, of which they were previously tenants. As part of the assistance to post-state agricultural farm communities, the National Support Centre for Agriculture co-finances the renovation of the housing estate taken over by the Horyniec Commune.

The Molotov Line bunker

The Molotov Line was a system of Soviet border fortifications built between 1940 and 1941 along the new western borders of the Soviet Union. After the border was moved west, the concept of defending the territory had to be changed, especially since Joseph Stalin was planning a war with Germany.

These fortifications were constructed after the Soviet occupation of the Baltic States, Eastern Poland, and Bessarabia. The line consisted of 13 Fortified Areas, which included numerous bunkers and defensive structures to protect against a potential invasion. However, it did not fulfil its role, with many sections being incomplete when Germany invaded the Soviet Union in 1941.

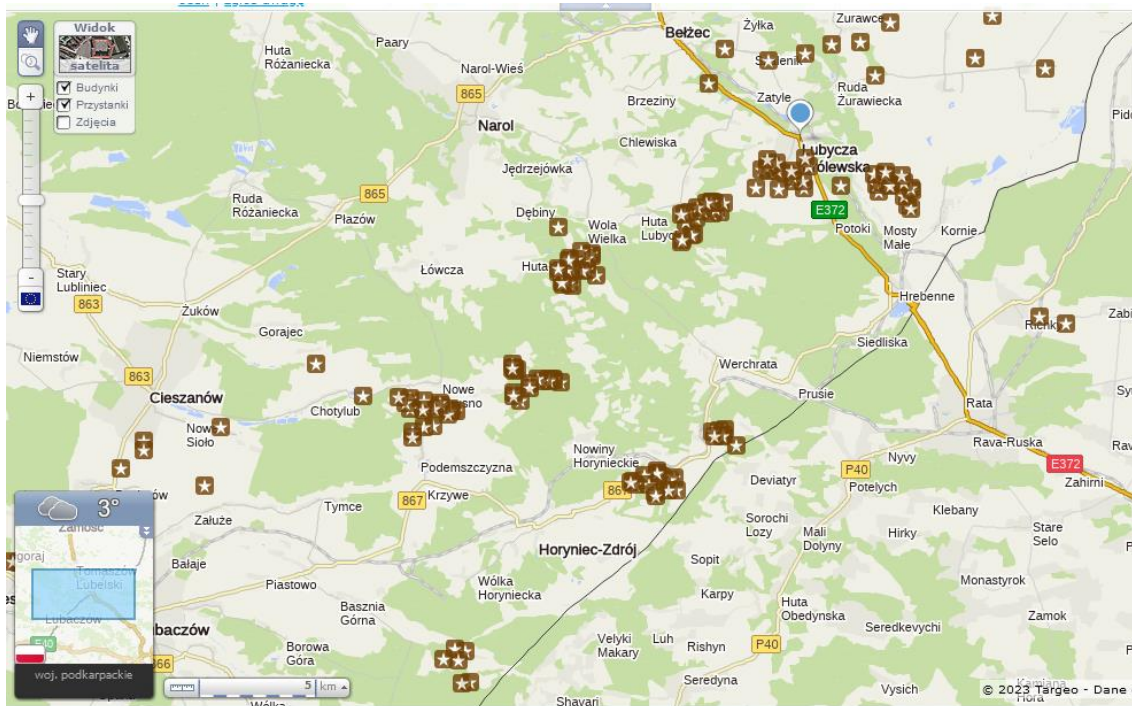


The bunker in Dziewięcierz is an element of the Rawa Ruska Fortified Area (no 11 on the map), a typical example of Soviet fortifications from 1940–1941. These areas, as borderlands, were difficult to access in the socialist era.

This bunker, like others in the area, was intended to protect the borders of the Soviet Union from a potential attack. It is built of reinforced concrete. It was equipped with gun positions and crew quarters.



There are remains of anti-tank ditches nearby. None of the bunkers in this area are currently open to visitors. Currently, there are tourist trails where you can see the bunkers from the outside. Efforts are underway to prepare several of them for internal sightseeing.



Location of bunkers around the field trip route (<https://mapa.targeo.pl/23.5147793,50.2637961,25>)

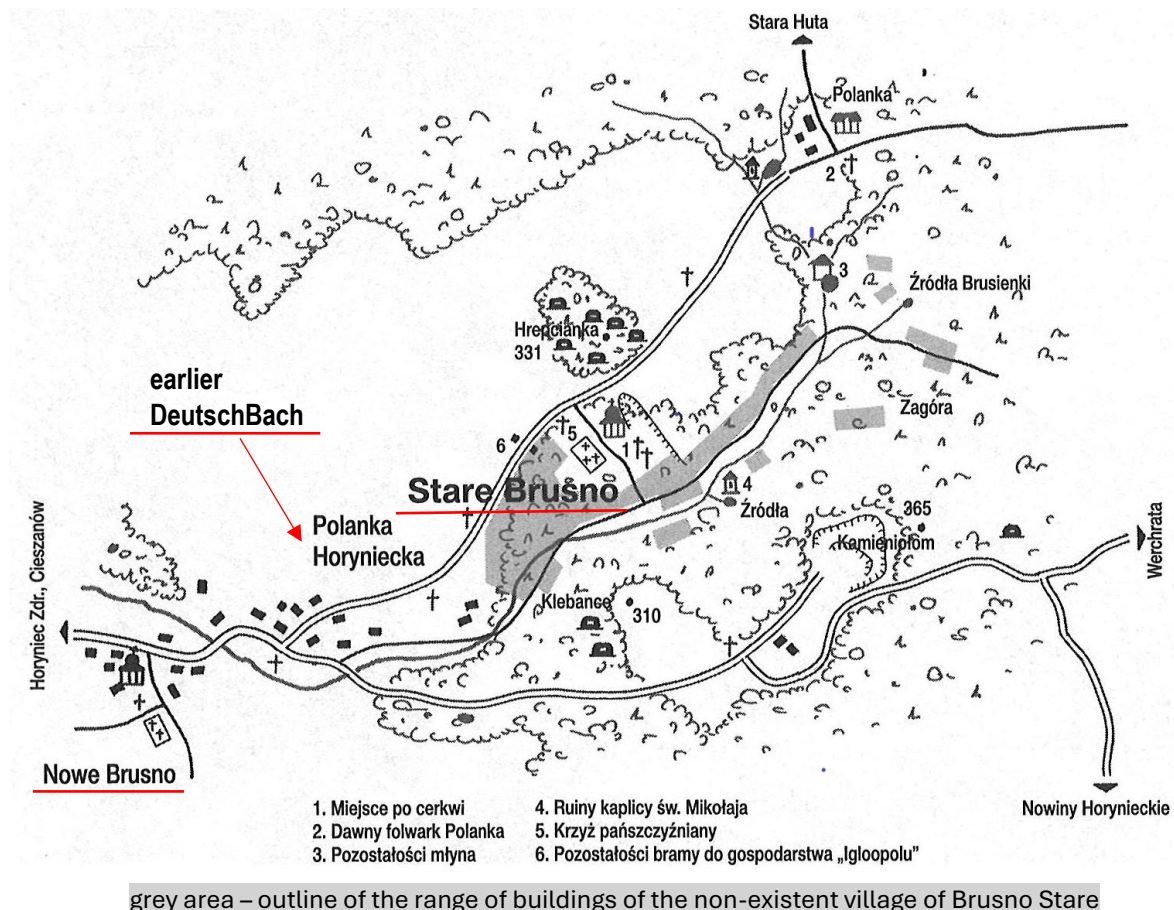
4. BRUSNO STARE – an example of a depopulated village after the border changes in 1944–1947 (Operation Vistula), and a cemetery with tombstones made by local stonemasons, representing a non-existent stonemason center in Brusno Stare.

We are in the area of the former village of Brusno Stare, which had 1,150 inhabitants until the outbreak of the Second World War. It has a very interesting and turbulent history. The village was first mentioned in historical records in 1444. The name “Brusno” is derived from the word “brus,” which refers to a type of fine-grained sandstone or a sharpening stone.

From the beginning, Brusno Stare inhabitants were primarily engaged in stone masonry, utilizing local deposits of sandstone and limestone from the nearby Brusno Mountain. This craft made the village well-known in the region, especially since the 19th century, when local self-taught stonemasons specialized in the production of tombstones, leading the village to be called a centre of stonemasonry. Tombstones from Brusno Stare are numerous in cemeteries in the region.

In the 16th century, a new part of the village was established – Wola Bruśnieńska. After the First Partition of Poland in 1785, the Austrian authorities divided the village into two parts: Brusno Stare and Brusno Nowe (formerly Wola Bruśnieńska), and established a German colony – the village of Deutschbach in Brusno Nowe. Deutschbach, originally known as “German Stream”, was established as part of the Josephine colonization initiated by Emperor Joseph. This colonization aimed to settle German-speaking populations in Galicia, which was then part of the Austrian Empire.

In this way, three settlement units were created on the basis of the former village.



In a small area, there were three villages whose inhabitants differed in terms of nationality and religion. Brusno Stare was predominantly inhabited by Ukrainians, with smaller populations of Jews and Poles. Most of its inhabitants were Greek Catholics. In Deutschbach, there was a German community (Evangelicals, mainly Calvinists). In Brusno Nowe, the majority were Poles of Roman and Greek Catholic faith, and there were also some Jews. Until the Second World War, the three neighbouring villages were connected and together had over 2,000 inhabitants.

In 1905, all the inhabitants of Deutschbach decided to put their farms up for auction and move near Poznań. The farms were bought mainly by Poles. Only one German family, the Birnbachs, stayed and quickly became Polonized. In 1938, the name of Deutschbach was changed to Polanka Horyniecka (this name still exists today).

During the Second World War, the villages experienced dramatic turmoil resulting from the mixed ethnic structure of their inhabitants. Between 1943 and 1946, many Polish villagers died at the hands of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army. In September 1945, some of the Ukrainian inhabitants were displaced to the USSR, and the rest were deported to the northern and western areas of Poland as part of Operation Vistula in 1947.

On September 21, 1945, Brusno Stare was burned down by the Polish People's Army during operations against the Ukrainian Insurgent Army. The village was completely destroyed and ceased to exist. Its territories were taken over by the State Forests.

Today, the area is covered by forests and fields, with remnants such as the old cemetery and the site of the former church still visible.

5. NOWE BRUSNO – we will see a multi-denominational cemetery, a testament to the diverse national structure of the village’s inhabitants, and also the wooden church of St. Paraskeva

Built in 1713, **the wooden Greek Catholic church of St. Paraskeva**, is one of the oldest in the region (originally, it served as a branch church of the Greek Catholic parish in Brusno Stare). It is a tripartite building, consisting of a presbytery, nave, and women’s gallery. The church is of log construction, with each part covered by a large dome with a lantern and shingles. The building is surrounded by roofs and “sobots” (*low arcades supported by pillars and covered with roof, surrounding Greek Catholic or Orthodox wooden churches. The name means "Saturdays" and refers to the old practice of the faithful who arrived for Sunday services, often from considerable distances, the day before and waited until morning, gathering around the church*).

It was disused and devastated after the war. Between 2014 and 2019, a comprehensive renovation was carried out. Currently, it belongs to the Museum Kresów in Lubaczów and no longer performs sacral functions.

The Greek Catholic cemetery in Nowe Brusno is a significant historical site, reflecting the rich cultural heritage of the region. Established in the early 19th century, it is known for its unique collection of tombstones. They were crafted by local stonemasons from Brusno Stare.

The cemetery contains approximately 250 tombstones. The oldest date back to the first half of the 19th century and often resemble Maltese crosses.

The necropolis originally belonged to the Greek Catholic parish. The plot was made available to the Evangelicals in 1857. Protestants living in Deutschbach, Brusno Nowe, Brusno Stare, Nowiny Horynieckie and Chotylub were buried there. They left behind unique 19th-century tombstones in the shape of “mushrooms” and “arrows.” Their range of symbolism is related to the Calvinist doctrine, which emphasized simplicity and the absence of religious symbols. This doctrine forbade the making of images for cult purposes, including the cross as the place of Christ’s death. Therefore, local craftsmen created other, unusual forms of tombstone.



The cemetery ceased to be used after the departure of the German population and the resettlement of the Ukrainian population.

This site is a valuable testament to the multicultural history of the region. The religious mosaic of local communities has been preserved in the inscriptions on cemetery monuments, perfectly reflecting the multicultural and ethnically diverse character of Roztocze.

6. NAROL – an example of baroque-classicist residential palace architecture with unique architectural and landscape values destroyed as a result of the war. We will also meet with representatives of local associations and the local government.

Narol is a town in Podkarpackie Voivodeship, in Lubaczów County. It has about 2000 inhabitants.

The Bełżecki family owned the area where the town is situated. It was first called Florianów, from the name of Florian Łaszcz Nieledowski, who founded the town in 1596. The cossack army of Bohdan Khmelnytsky attacked Florianów in 1648. It was overrun and burned to the ground. Twenty thousand people died during those fights, among them Florian Łaszcz, its owner.

A new town was built, somewhat west of the original location “on a field” – Polish “na roli”, hence Narol.

The Łoś Palace is most famous monuments of Narol, which is a stunning baroque residence built between 1776 and 1781 by Count Antoni Feliks Łoś. The palace was designed in the shape of a horseshoe, which is the symbol of the Łoś family crest. It has a central rectangular building connected by arcades to two side pavilions. It was famous for its beautiful architecture and housed an impressive collection of art, historical artifacts and a library. The palace also hosted a drama and music school for talented nobility youth.

Unfortunately, the palace suffered significant damage during the January Uprising in 1864 and was later looted by Austrian troops during the First World War. Having been restored by Countess Jadwiga Korytowska in the early 20th century, it was once again ravaged during the Second World War by the Soviet Army.

For many years the palace lay in ruins until 1995, when it was taken over by a private foundation which worked to restore it. The property is currently in private hands.



From this point we will travel to Zamość 😊