

## THE CULTURAL LANDSCAPE OF THE BORDERLAND IN PODKARPACKIE PROVINCE ON THE EXAMPLE OF A SELECTED ASPECT OF THE LEMKOS' MATERIAL CULTURE

Agnieszka HUZARSKA<sup>ABDEF</sup>, Maciej HUZARSKI<sup>ABEF</sup>

*Faculty of Physical Education, University of Rzeszow, Rzeszow, Poland*

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### **Keywords:**

- orthodox church,
- the Lemkos,
- Lemko people,
- cultural heritage,
- borderland.

### **Abstract:**

The article focuses on the cultural landscape of the borderland in Podkarpackie Province on the example of a selected aspect of the Lemkos' material culture, in this case Lemko orthodox churches. The sacral architecture objects discussed in this article enrich the landscape values of the borderland. They are also a valuable cultural asset of this part of Poland, allowing tourists to learn about certain manifestations of the Lemko culture. The article briefly mentions the Lemkos' past, related to the functioning of their churches at a time when the Subcarpathian border areas were inhabited by the Lemko people. The main part of the article describes twenty-six such churches. All of them are examples of buildings that stand out against other sacral objects. The authors point to the elements that constitute the greatest value of the churches described, help deepen the knowledge of the Lemko culture and provide aesthetic experiences.

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Border regions in Podkarpackie Province create many opportunities to practice cultural tourism understood in various ways. Cultural travels around the Subcarpathian borderland perfectly fit the definition given by Metelka, according to which "Cultural tourism is a form of tourism where travelers' interests are focused on the rich past of the people or areas preserved and reflected in monuments, historical surroundings, traditional architecture and crafts" [Metelka, 1990]. The Subcarpathian frontier offers a wide range of historic surroundings and valuable historic architecture.

This article aims to show the Lemko cultural heritage, in particular religious architecture, on the territory defined by the borders of Podkarpackie Province. The Lemkos' legacy described in the article makes for a unique type of wealth of not only the borderland, but it is also one of the most valuable assets of this region as a whole. Heterogeneous and excellent design forms, combined with a variety of style, determine the uniqueness of these sacral objects. Each of them has its own history and allows visitors to enrich their knowledge about the culture of the Lemko people.

### **THE LEMKOS**

The rich culture of the Lemkos proved to be a fertile soil for distinctive rites. Many of them were directly or indirectly related to religious beliefs and participation in religious services of the orthodox church. The day of Christmas Eve called "Świątyni Weczer" was celebrated by the Lemkos thirteen days later than in the Roman Catholic tradition. Compared with the Polish tradition, it was a mystical day on which numerous magical activities were practiced, albeit participation in the Midnight Mass at the church after supper was an

important element related to the tradition of that eve. Easter was preceded by "*Kwietna Niedziela*", with palm leaves being blessed at the church to be used later as a medicine for humans and animals. During Holy Week, Thursday was particularly important, as it was the day when the Lemkos would visit graves and participate in a mass dedicated to the souls of the dead. From Thursday onwards, women gathered to paint Easter eggs. On Good Friday, a fireplace was lit near the church, where young boys stood guard until Sunday. On Saturday, foods were blessed at the church, and then the following days were spent on celebration and rejoice. Characteristic celebrations for the Lemkos were Orthodox indulgences known as *kermesze*. *Kermesze* took place in any place inhabited by the Lemkos with active orthodox churches. They were usually held without artistic performances or revelry, and had a rather friendly and family atmosphere. During *kermesze*, people would trade products, sing songs and discuss a variety of topics [Cieśla, 1981].

Apart from their homes, the Lemkos also built beautiful sacral buildings, namely orthhodox churches. These buildings have a distinct style, which distinguishes them from other Carpathian churches such as those erected by the Boykos or Hustuls. The Lemko orthodox church consists of three fundamental parts: a rectangular or pentagonal presbytery, a square nave and a church porch with a tower rising above it. The tower, borrowed from the Latin church architecture, gives the Lemko churches their characteristic figure [Reinfuss, 1990b]. Another inherent landscape element of the Lemko hometowns were cemeteries and roadside shrines. It should be noted that in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, Lemkovina was dominated by Greek Catholicism. There were then numerous churches where masses were held in accordance with the Eastern rite. However, since 1926, as a result of the so-called "Tylawa schism", a massive conversion to Orthodoxy began [Subik, 1999]. A direct impact on the spiritual and material culture of the Lemkos was also due to displacement occurrences.

Displacement of the Ukrainian population to Soviet Ukraine, and then - following the 1947 "Vistula" action in 1947 - to the Western and Northern Polish Territories caused the surviving buildings to cease serving their public utility functions, becoming instead a symbol of spiritual bond of the displaced with their lost homeland. Oftentimes, lack of clear ownership prompted man-made or nature-made devastation.

During the displacement, the Roman Catholic Church attempted to take over the of the Greek-Catholic assets, which soon led to serious disputes over this matter. Overtaking of orthodox churches by the state, and also by the Roman Catholic Church, was badly received by the Ukrainian population. To provide a legal basis for those actions, the authorities issued on 5 September 1947 the decree of the acquisition by the State treasury of the properties of legal persons whose existence or activities had become redundant as a consequence of the resettlement of their members to the USSR. This act was subsequently amended on 28 September 1949, and was shortly followed by the takeover of the properties belonging to the Greek Catholic Church. This solution was not approved by the Roman Catholic Church and it began to arbitrarily take over Greek Catholic churches in the villages populated by Roman Catholics. The authorities often preferred to dismantle historic churches, rather than turn them over for religious purposes. The acquisition of orthodox churches by the Roman Catholic Church was often associated with the need to make changes in their design, mostly with respect to iconostasis. In some cases, churches were dismantled completely or partially, whereas others were preserved, and in still others altars were placed in front of the iconostasis. altar. A lot of monuments of Orthodox art suffered destruction or theft - even Cyrillic inscriptions were removed from bells. The attitude of the authorities towards the activities of the Orthodox Church in Rzeszow Province changed after 1956. This was due to the demand by the local Greek Catholics to worship in their ritual. Consequently, some of the Orthodox institutions resumed operation, thus facilitating the return of the Ukrainian and Lemko people to those lands. Unfortunately, the 70's and 80's saw a significant worsening of

orthodox churches' fate, especially those abandoned without any supervision or those used for economic purposes. Decisions taken by the state authorities ultimately led to the disappearance of many historic orthodox churches from the landscape of south-eastern Poland, and temples were also devastated. Cemeteries, shrines and many of the buildings associated with the Lemkos' culture were destroyed, too [Drozd, 2015]. An important factor for the Ukrainian and Lemko minority in Poland became the normalization of the Greek Orthodox Catholic Church after 1989. It was then that the Orthodox Church received its bishop, Jan Martyniak. Two years later, the Diocese of Przemyśl was reactivated. These factors contributed to the dynamic development of the Church, previously inhibited by the authorities. Attempts were made to recover the temples owned by Greek Catholics until 1947. This became the subject of a dispute with the Roman Catholic Church. The dispute provoked by the communist authorities over temples in Lemkovina ended in 2008 by signing the agreement between the Orthodox Churches and the Polish Government [Halczak, 2014]

After the World War II, the Lemkos - forced to leave their lands - left behind a considerable legacy that we can still admire today. Even though the events described earlier contributed significantly to the impoverishment of the Lemkos' material culture, Podkarpackie Province remains home to a number of orthodox churches, cemeteries and roadside shrines. Nowadays, legacy of the Lemkos is a very interesting part of the cultural landscape of the borderlands.

Orthodox churches are the most characteristic buildings pertaining to the material culture of the Lemkos. For their construction, most often chose those sites that were the most representative part of the village, preferably up on the hill. They were situated so that the priest conducting masses at the high altar could face east. Up until today, Podkarpacie managed to retain relatively few Lemko-style churches, as compared to the times before World War II. All of them form a beautiful and valuable part of the cultural landscape of the borderland.

## **THE LEMKO ORTHODOX CHURCHES**

**Church in Bałucianka** – former wooden Greek Catholic church dedicated to the Dormition of the Mother of God. Until 2002, used as a branch church for the parish in Królik Polski dedicated to the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary; since 2002, after building a new church in Bałucianka, remains out of service. It is one of the oldest churches in Lemkovia, built probably in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. It underwent two thorough renovations in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and they significantly transformed its look. It was during the second renovation that the temple took on the shape similar to the one it has today. After displacing the residents of Bałucianka to Soviet Ukraine, the church was taken over by the Roman Catholic Church. It is a tripartite (presbytery, nave, porch) of the framework structure, with a pole tower that has sloping walls and is covered with sheet metal – it lacks a large room so typical of other towers in orthodox churches. Like most Orthodox churches in Lemkovia, the presbytery faces east (oriented church). The roof of the tent structure with small towers above the nave and the presbytery has a rustic, unusual eight-pole finials. Inside the church, there is a complete iconostasis, but it is not the one designed for the church in Bałucianka. Today's iconostasis is composed of other two: the Deesis part comes from the seventeenth-century Baroque iconostasis, while the rest pertains to the eighteenth-century Baroque iconostasis. Four icons of today's iconostasis have an unusual composition and represent St. Anne, Mother of God with the Infant Christ, Christ Teaching and St. George. On the south wall, there is a folk copy of the miraculous image of Christ from Kobylanka near Gorlice. The church is surrounded by a low wall made of broken stone. Next to the church, there is a bell tower (unfortunately without bells) and a cemetery with preserved gravestones and cast iron crosses [Grzesik, Traczyk, Wadas, 2012]

**Church in Chyrowa** – former wooden Greek Catholic church dedicated to the Protection of Our Lady, made in Western Lemko style. In 1947, the Church was taken over by the Roman Catholic parish in Dukla. The building is a framework, tripartite oriented temple with a wooden-brick tower of pole structure. The roof is covered with sheet metal, with bulbous cupolas with crosses. The oldest part is the brick sanctuary, probably former chapel of the early 18<sup>th</sup> century. The wooden nave and the porch with the tower were built in 1780. Inside, there is a rococo iconostasis from the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. In 1982, demolition of the church, already in a very poor condition. The complete destruction of the building was managed to be halted and in the late 80's extensive refurbishment was performed. Within the church, there are four crosses from the years 1880-1885. The area of the church is surrounded by a low wall made of stone, and nearby there is a cemetery with a number of historic tombstones [Beskid, 1999a].

**Church in Zydranowa** – branch Orthodox church dedicated to St. Nicholas. Currently belongs to the parish of Our Lady in Komancza, in the Sanok deanery. The temple is situated in the center of the village. The first Orthodox Catholic church in Zydranowa was built in 1581 in the upper part of the village, near the forest. The second church was erected in the middle of the village in 1720, while the third church was built in the lower part of the village around 1875 [Szumielewicz, Tyczyn 2003a]. The original Lemko church survived two world wars. In 1962, after returning from their displacement, the Lemkos dismantled their temple due to its bad condition. The new church was built in 1985. The tripartite (porch, nave, presbytery) brick building was the first Lemko-style Orthodox church built in Lemkovia after World War II. Its furnishing includes icons from the old church. In 2015, over the entrance to the temple, a small dome was placed [Mendelowski, 2006].

**Church in Tylawa** – Greek Catholic church dedicated to the Nativity of the Mother of God. Today the Roman Catholic Church dedicated to the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary. It was built in 1787. The building is made of stone and is plastered, with its form resembling traditional Lemko churches. Inside, there is a valuable 18<sup>th</sup> century floor of sandstone, late-Renaissance pews from the 17<sup>th</sup> century moved from the church in Iwonicz, iconostasis with icons from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, and a fresco depicting the "Baptism of Ruthenia". The temple doors are from the 19<sup>th</sup> century and have old wooden fittings. Partially preserved stone crosses around the temple are the place of burial of former clerics [Beskid 1999b].

**Church in Daliowa** – Greek Catholic church dedicated to St. Paraskeva. Built on a cruciform plan with a large central dome; differs slightly from the Lemko style, with its architecture resembling the so-called Ukrainian national style. In the eastern "cross arm", there is a sanctuary, while in the western - porch. Today's church was built in 1933 on the site of the old temple that burned down in 1931. After the displacement of the Lemkos from Daliowa, the church ceased to be used for religious purposes, and assumed a new function of the PGR warehouse. For a long time, it was not renovated, which is why it fell into decline. However, after returning to its rightful owners, it managed to be saved with the financial assistance of the Lemkos from America. This allowed in 1995 to re-consecrate the temple [<http://www.beskid-niski.pl/>, date of access: 12/08/16]

**Church in Krempana** – wooden Greek Catholic church dedicated to Cosmas and Damian, now the parish church of St. Maximilian Kolbe. It was built around 1778 and dedicated in 1782. Refurbished three times: in 1893, 1930 and 1971. Typical Western-Lemko church with jointed finials over the nave and the presbytery; tripartite with a tower and sacristy near the presbytery. Inside, there is a complete Rococo iconostasis from 1835, while the southern wall houses the Deesis composition - 12 icons of the apostles and Christ on the Throne. In front of the entrance, one can admire the 19<sup>th</sup>-century stone statue of St. Nicholas [Szumielewicz 2003b].

**Church in Turzańsk** – wooden orthodox church dedicated to the Archangel Michael. Dates back to 1801-1803; erected as Greek Catholic parish. Made of wood, tripartite, classified as the Lemko-type church of north-eastern variation, towerless. Built on a cruciform plan, all the rooms have the same height, the presbytery is closed on three sides. Two sacristies located facing north and south. Inside, there is an iconostasis from the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In front of the church, there is a bell tower from 1817. Today serves as Orthodox Church. After 1947, was used by the Roman Catholic parish in Komańcza, and then closed in 1961. Two years later, it was given over to Orthodox Christians and it serves this function (i.e. of the affiliate Orthodox branch of the Parish of Our Lady in Komańcza) until today [Luboński, 2012].

**Church in Świątkowa Mała** – former Greek Catholic church dedicated to St. Michael, north-western type. Today, Catholic Church. Erected in 1762; renovated and rebuilt around 1911. Renovated and rebuilt. The building is tripartite; comprises a tower with a large room. Its spatial composition shows the structural independence of the temple's framework body and the pole tower. Inside, there is an iconostasis from 1670 that lacks the tsarist and the diaconate gates and icons in the part depicting holy days and the prophets. Survived, however, the images in Deesis row, representing figures of the apostles, evangelists, John the Baptist and two icons of the Virgin Mary. In place of the tsarist gates, inserted was the image of Christ Teaching. On the side walls of the church, there are icons, including the representation of the Last Judgement from 1653 and the figure of the Mother of God [Skarby, 2007a].

**Church in Świątkowa Wielka** – former Lemko-type Greek Catholic church dedicated to St. Michael the Archangel. Since 1986, Catholic church of the parish of Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception in Desznica. Built around 1757 on the site of the old temple from 1581. It is a wooden building of framework structure, oriented, tripartite, with sacristy to the north. No iconostasis was preserved inside. Preserved was the mid-eighteenth century polychrome decoration of the temple's ceiling depicting the scene of the coronation of Mary, assumption of prophet Elijah and scenes from the life of Christ and his mother. Among them, made were smaller images of the prophets from the Old Testament and decorative motifs that mimic railings and columns. Inside, polychromes from the mid-eighteenth century covering the walls, domes and the ceiling of the church's porch. On the wall of the nave there is a cross constituting the culmination of the old iconostasis, as well as the surviving piece of an icon depicting the Last Judgement. Inside the temple, one can admire the 18<sup>th</sup>-century altar in the sanctuary and the rococo-style side altar with a Baroque stone stoup from the 17<sup>th</sup> century. [Skarby, 2007b].

**Church in Czarna** – dedicated to St. Demetrius, now a Roman Catholic parish church. Of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross. Wooden Greek Catholic church built in the year 1834 on the site of another earlier church, probably from 1795. The monument of the Trail of Wooden Architecture. Tripartite framework structure, adjacent sacristies to the south and north of the presbytery; there is also a tower with a large room. Tent-style dome. Inside, the church has preserved Baroque iconostasis moved to the rear wall of the presbytery. It has a very icon depicting St. Demetrius of Thessaloniki, which dates back to 1689. An icon of St. Nicholas comes from the same year. Near the church, there is a large well-preserved cemetery with tombstones from the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Bell tower with a bell from 1886. [Szumielewicz, 2003c].

**Church in Kotań** – former Greek Catholic church dedicated to St. Cosmas and Damian, now Roman Catholic church. Oriented (i.e. choir faces east) framework structure, entirely covered with shingles. It is a typical sacral building erected in the Western-Lemko style. It was built in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and thoroughly renovated in 1841. In 1963, the rumbling church was dismantled and rebuilt anew after repairing the damaged structural elements The

interior of the church, except for a few modern pictures, is devoid of furnishings and icons. Valuable items have been transferred to the Museum in Łańcut [Skarby, 2007c].

**Church in Komańcza** – Orthodox parish church dedicated to the Protection of the Most Holy Mother of God, which before World War II served as a Greek Catholic church. In 1961, it was closed by the authorities. Since 1963 used by Orthodox Christians. It was built in the years 1800-1803. For years, the temple required a thorough restoration, with the most recent having been performed in 2001. The church is a framework, oriented, tripartite building with a presbytery closed on three sides. Later extension in the form of westward sacristy finished with an apparent lantern. Inside, original furnishings were preserved: iconostasis and an altar. Iconostasis from made by residents, obtained from the church in the village of Volosyanka. A hundred years later, the icons were repainted. Near the temple, there is a wooden bell tower, built in 1834, with a magnificent bell from 1882 [<http://mojebieszczady.com/atrakcja/cerkiew-prawoslawna-komanca>, date of access: 25/08/16]

**Church in Rzepedź** – wooden church, currently utilized by Catholics of the Latin and Uniate rite, as well as by Orthodox Christians. Dedicated to St. Nicholas Bishop. The temple was erected in 1824, extended by the sacristy around 1896. One of the few surviving churches made in the Eastern-Lemko style. Tripartite framework structure. Next to the building, there is located a two-floor wooden bell tower. Inside the church, some of its original furnishings have been preserved, three side altars, the original painted decoration of the choir and the four-part iconostasis and polychromes made by Josip Bukowczyk, from 1896 (some of the icons were stolen) [Rudak, 2008].

**Church in Trzciana** – Greek Orthodox church dedicated to the Nativity of the Virgin Mary from the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Currently branch parish church of Christ the King, serviced by the Bernardines of Dukla. The temple is made of brick, oriented, constructed on a tripartite plan. Porch was added in the west part, and the bell tower houses bells from the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Fully furnished inside. Iconostasis from the mid-nineteenth century. Painted by Jan and Paweł Bogdański of Jaslisk, also responsible for the polychromes [Michalak, 1997a].

**Church in Zawadka Rymanowska** – typical Lemko style, wooden Orthodox church from 1855. Former Greek Catholic church dedicated to the Nativity of the Mother of God, now Church of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary. The church was taken over by the Roman Catholic parish in Trzciana after 1947. The building is oriented, has a framework structure, tripartite (nave, presbytery and porch), but unlike other Lemko Orthodox churches, all the rooms are the same height. The presbytery, nave and atrium share one width, with the nave being wider than them. The building was renovated in the 80's, including the refurbishment of its interior. It has preserved the late-Baroque iconostasis from the first half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, supplemented with the icons by W. Buczkowski. He also painted polychromes inside the building in 1931. The church is located in a wreath of old growth, has new fence and a brick gate [Michalak, 1997b].

**Church in Myscowa** – former Lemko Greek Catholic church dedicated to St. Paraskeva, currently branch church of the parish church in Polany. The current building was built in 1796 on the site of the structure existing since 1581. The Roman Catholic Church took over the temple in 1949. The building is made of brick, plastered and has a roof covered with sheet metal. Inside, there are historic elements of a dismantled iconostasis. Two substitute icons - Christ Teaching and Mother of God - were placed in the side altars, while the remaining substitute icons and deacons gates can be seen in the rear wall of the sanctuary, with Deesis row on top. Preserved was the altar with a canopy [Beskid 1999c].

**Church in Desznica** – former Greek Catholic church dedicated to St. Demetrius Martyr, now Roman Catholic church of the Immaculate Conception. Built in 1790. Repeatedly maintained and renovated in 1891, 1898, 1901, 1930. With the 1945 January

front, the temple was seriously damaged by missiles. The building is built of hewn sandstone coming from the local area. It has a large nave and a smaller presbytery with the sacristy. Inside, the walls of the temple are covered with polychromes. Above the presbytery, there are figures of the Holy Trinity. In the main nave, on the ceiling, there is a painting of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary. On the side altar one can see the beautiful icon *Ecce Homo*. In the high altar, there are pieces of relics of St. Catherine and St. Adalbert [<http://beskidniski.com.pl/cerkwie-i-koscioly/cerkiew-w-desznicy.html>, date of access: 29/08/16].

**Church in Olchowiec** – Greek Catholic church dedicated to the Transfer of the Relics of St. Nicholas. Erected in 1932 on the site of the older 18th-century temple. It is in the common use of the Roman Catholic parish of Polany and the Greek Catholic parish of Zydranów. Services of both rites are held alternately. The Orthodox church in Olchowiec is a tripartite, with a presbytery, nave and porch. Has a framework structure and is traditionally oriented. In 1989, the iconostasis by Andrei Stefanowski was installed in the temple (former one was destroyed and looted during World War II). The roof of the church is crowned by two domes. The windows of the building are filled with stained glass. To the church leads a unique for Lemkovia stone bridge, considered in itself a monument of architecture. Added to the list of monuments in 199 and incorporated in the Podkarpackie Wooden Architecture Trail [<http://beskidniski.com.pl/cerkwie-i-koscioly/cerkiew-w-desznicy.html>, date of access: 29/08/16].

**Church in Pielgrzymka** – wooden Orthodox church dedicated to Michael the Archangel. Since 1934, it forms part of the Apostolic Administration of Lemkovia. The building has been gradually falling into decay since 1947. After the return of some the displaced people in 1960, an Orthodox parish was established. This function is fully served by the church up until today. The building was renovated in 1970-1971. Maintenance of the church's furnishings was conducted in 2004-2009. Western-Lemko type of building, oriented, located in the central part of the village; tripartite, with a framework structure. Over the porch rises a tower design with a bulbous dome and two small bells from 1601. Inside, the walls and ceiling are covered with figural and ornamental polychromes. Between the nave and the presbytery, there is a four-part, carved, gilded iconostasis. The side altar houses the miraculous icon of the Mother of God *a la Hodegetria* from the mid-seventeenth century. The church is also home to the Holy Sepulchre made in 1684 [<http://www.cerkiew-pielgrzymka.pl>, date of access: 27/08/16].

**Church in Wola Niżna** – brick Catholic church dedicated to St. Nicholas, now a branch church of the parish of St. Catherine of Jaśliski. Built of fieldstone and brick, plastered. The front wall is topped with a small tower (bell tower); built on a square plan. For the presbytery is adjoined by the sacristy, while temple is covered by a rooftop decorated over the presbytery with a small turret constituting a miniature of the tower's peak finial. Inside the church, both ceilings and walls are richly polychromed. The paintings are from 1905 and were made by Michał Bogdański from Jaśliska. In the temple, one can admire the well-preserved iconostasis [Michalak, 1997b].

**Church in Polany** – former brick Greek Catholic church dedicated to St. John Chrysostom, now the Church of Our Lady of Czestochowa. Built in 1910, designed by the architect named Rudnicki from Lviv with the financial support from the Lemkos residing in the United States. The building was erected on the site of the older wooden church already recorded in 1826. The church was built on a Greek cross plan with a huge central dome, modeled on the Kyiv churches. For many years it has been the subject a dispute between supporters of the Orthodox and Roman Catholic Church. As of November 1992, the temple is shared by the Polany Roman Catholic parish, although it also remains open to Greek Catholics [Sobolewski, 1983].

**Church in Szczawne** – wooden Greek Catholic church dedicated to the Assumption of Holy Virgin Mary, now Orthodox church. Built in the years 1888-1889 by a carpenter named Hosjan of Płonna, modeled on the Eastern-Lemko style. The building is oriented, has a framework structure, timbered with vertical boards, tripartite (porch, nave, presbytery), with a small vestibule. It is surrounded by a stone wall protecting it against slope landslides. Inside, there is a slung choir, an iconostasis with original icons on the walls and ceilings, and figural polychromes made in 1925 by the Kiev Society "*Widrodzennie*". The temple lacks the electrical system. In front of the church, there is a wooden bell tower dating back to 1889. The tower is finished with a dome [Skarby, 2007 c].

**Church in Wróblak Szlachecki** – wooden Greek Catholic church dedicated to the Dormition of the Mother of God, now Roman Catholic church of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. The temple was built in 1869. Tripartite structure typical of Lemko Orthodox churches. The presbytery lower than the nave. The tower covered with a metal-sheet bulbous dome in the front wall. The temple covered with a roof with two small towers with domes of the same shape as the tower. Ceilings in the temple are flat and polychromed. On the walls - polychrome figural paintings and paintings with architectural motifs. The paintings date back to the 19<sup>th</sup>. Partially preserved iconostasis. In front of the church, there is a brick octagonal bell tower, out of service. The bells are hung on the contemporary metal structure next to the church [Lodzińska, 2010a].

**Church in Wróblak Królewski** – former Greek Catholic church, since 1946 belongs to the Roman Catholic parish of the Assumption of Holy Virgin Mary. Built in the years 1882-1888. Made of brick, covered with five domes. Inside, there are figural paintings from 1924 made by brothers-painters Bogdański of Jaśliski. In the years 1970-1973 the building was renovated, and the high altar and the presbytery were painted; polychrome paintings were also restored. These works were made by painter Stanisław Ingot. Today, next to the church, there is a bell tower with three bells, the largest of which dates back to 1824. In 2007, general renovation of the temple and the adjacent area was carried out [Lodzińska, 2010b].

**Church in Wisłok Wielki** – former Greek Catholic church dedicated to Saint Onofrio, now Roman Catholic church. Built with a brick bell tower between 1850-1853. In 1902, metal roofing was installed. Lemko Orthodox church of the north-east type. The framework structure, apparently bipartite with the porch separated internally. Over the presbytery and the nave, there are small towers with bulbous domes. On the axis of the church, there is a brick bell tower. Inside, the walls and ceilings are decorated with polychrome paintings from the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Very interesting are paintings housed in the presbytery. Between the presbytery and the nave placed is a complete iconostasis from the mid-nineteenth century. This Orthodox church also has two sets of substitute icons. In the vestibule, there is a small iron figure of the Mother of God that comes from the cemetery located in Wisłok Górny [Duda-Gryc, Michniewscy, 2011a].

**Church in Sieniawa** – wooden Greek Catholic church dedicated to the Nativity of the Mother of God, now Roman Catholic church. The temple was built in 1874 and renovated in 1972. Erected in the north-east Lemko style. The building does not have a tower and its presbytery faces south; framework structure, timbered. Tripartite solid with all parts of the same height covered with a metal-sheet roof. The interior is covered with ornamental and figurative polychromes. On the walls, there are several representations of saints, and on the ceiling of the nave – Transfiguration of Our Lord. In the middle of the altar, there is a painting of Our Lady of Czestochowa, and on the side there are the two pieces of an iconostasis depicting the apostles in Deesis row and the prophets. The side altars in the nave also were also arranged from elements of the old iconostasis. In addition, out of the old furnishing of the church preserved was the rainbow cross, the tabernacle and several processional banners [Duda-Gryc, Michniewscy, 2011b].



## **CONCLUSION**

After some historic churches remain only ruins. Thanks to the initiative of individual citizens, recovery plans are being put forward, although they require substantial material resources that are hard to obtain for these purposes. Pieces of beautiful Lemko Orthodox churches are found, among others, in: Wola Wyżna, Królik Polski (non-existent village of Królik Wołoski) and Mszana.

The Lemko Orthodox churches in Podkarpackie Province are now in the center of interests among culture-focused tourists, and they have a chance to generate even greater interest among public through various types of publications on this topic as well as an increasing awareness of them forming a valuable part of the Subcarpathian cultural heritage. The distinctive architecture and unique interiors of the churches discussed offer exciting tourism advantages, not only for hikers, but also all those who are not foreign to cultural tourism. The Lemko legacy in the borderland areas of Podkarpackie Province is an important factor impacting not only in the aspect of the landscape of this region, but also cognitive and cultural values.

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