


DOI: <https://doi.org/10.4467/25439561KSR.24.004.20751>

TOMASZ KWOKA  <http://orcid.org/0000-0003-1222-6472>  
Uniwersytet Jagielloński  
Kraków

## IN SEARCH OF LEMKO VALUES. CULTUREMES OF THE NAMES OF VALUES BASED ON SELECTED FOLKLORE TEXTS OF THE LEMKOS

### W POSZUKIWANIU ŁEMKOWSKICH WARTOŚCI. KULTUREMY NAZW WARTOŚCI NA PODSTAWIE WYBRANYCH TEKSTÓW FOLKLORU ŁEMKÓW

#### Abstract

The paper attempts to identify present-day cultural concepts that are referred to as culturemes in the recent ethnolinguistic literature and, naming the most important values, that co-define the contemporary Lemko identity. The culturemes identified by the author (God, church, work, land, forests, cottage, poverty, longing, injustice) are strongly value-laden, designating the elements of the surrounding world which were, have been, and still are important for the Lemko community in Poland. They constitute values for Lemkos, usually positive, but sometimes also negative, including those strongly linked to post-war historical traumas.

#### Streszczenie

Artykuł stanowi próbę identyfikacji aktualnych konceptów kulturowych, które w nowszej literaturze etnolingwistycznej noszą nazwę kulturemów i które, nazywając najważniejsze wartości, współdefiniują dzisiejszą tożsamość łemkowską. Wytypowane przez autora



kulturemy (Панбіг, церков, робота, земля, лісы, хыжа, біда, туга, кривда) mają silny aspekt wartościujący, wskazując na te elementy świata otaczającego, które są ważne dla społeczności łemkowskiej. Dla Łemków stanowią one wartości – zwykle pozytywne, ale także negatywne, w tym silnie związane z powojennymi traumami historycznymi.

Keywords: Lemkos, culturemes, values, longing, ethnolinguistics

Słowa kluczowe: Łemkowie, kulturemy, wartości, tęsknota, etnolingwistyka

Language contains not only a description of the world around us and its elements, but also, and perhaps above all, its interpretation. This is language that determines thinking about the world, the way we observe and learn about it. It is, therefore, not only a means of expression and transfer of information, but also a reflection of culture, a storehouse of knowledge, experience and valuation of the world.<sup>1</sup> When describing the linguistic image of the world in this way, it should be remembered that language itself “Not only perpetuates and conveys knowledge about values, [...] but also serves as a tool for valuation [...] and is the material on which the values are realised”.<sup>2</sup>

The aim of the article is to show how the Lemko language values the surrounding world. Based primarily on the material of oral creativity and comparing it with selected literary and memoir texts, the author attempts to identify the most important elements of the linguistic world of the Lemkos, which in newer ethnolinguistic works are called culturemes and treated as synonymous with terms such as Anna Wierzbicka’s key words, Michał Fleischer’s collective symbols, Walery Piasek’s banner words, Jerzy Bartmiński’s cultural scripts, or stereotypes and concepts of “the Ethnolinguistic School of Lublin”.

According to Alicja Nagórko, culturemes are “key words important for the self-identification of a given community, characterising both its attitude to tradition, inherited values, as well as its coping with the present, its current experience of the world”.<sup>3</sup> Usually, these are lexemes that are untranslatable, or difficult to translate, into another language, with rich meaning that describe the national, ethnic, cultural specificity of a given community. Maciej Rak adds that the lexemes representing

<sup>1</sup> Cf. A. Nagórko, *Z problemów etnolingwistyki – jak porównywać języki i kultury*, “Poradnik Językowy” 1994, no. 4, p. 5; A. Dąbrowska, *Współczesne problemy lingwistyki kulturowej*, “Postscriptum” 2004–2005, no. 2–1 (48–49), p. 144.

<sup>2</sup> J. Bartmiński, *Język w kontekście kultury*, [in:] *Współczesny język polski*, J. Bartmiński, (Ed.), Lublin, Wydawnictwo UMCS, 2001, p. 21.

<sup>3</sup> A. Nagórko, M. Łaziński, H. Burkhardt, *Dystynktywny słownik synonimów*, Kraków, Universitas, 2004, p. XIX.

them, as words of collective memory, have an ethnocentric attitude, often being components of an autostereotype.<sup>4</sup> The main difference between keywords and culturemes is frequency which in the case of the latter is less important for their identification. Categorising of culturemes is largely intuitive (subjective), and therefore requires from researchers the usage of various data when determining each case (e.g. vocabulary, phraseology, or literary texts).

Culturemes usually appear in phraseological connections, clichéd folk texts and self-reflective statements<sup>5</sup>, hence the analysis was based on the author's own experience and the works of Lemko folklore. The corpus of texts includes proverbs from the book *Lemko Proverbs and Sayings from Swiatkowa Wielka and the Surrounding Area* (*Łemkowskie przysłowia i powiedzenia ze Świątkowej Wielkiej i okolic*)<sup>6</sup>, folk songs from the publications *Lemko Wedding in Swiatkowa Wielka* (*Łemkowskie wesele w Świątkowej Wielkiej*)<sup>7</sup>, *Lemko Songs from Swiatkowa Wielka. A Songbook* (*Łemkowskie piosenki ze Świątkowej Wielkiej. Śpiewnik*)<sup>8</sup> and *Ukrainian Folk Songs from Lemko Land* (*Українські народні пісні з Лемківщини*)<sup>9</sup> as well as fairy tales from the volume *How the Inhabitants of Lipna Caught the Sun in the Sack. Tales and Stories of the Lemkos* (*Як липняне сонце до міха імали. Баї, байки і оповіданки Лемків*)<sup>10</sup>. The following monographs were of great help: *Between the Rivers of Poprad and Oslava. Cultural and Linguistic Integrity of the Lemkos in the Ethnolinguistic Approach* (*Міędzy Popradem a Oslawą. Tożsamość kulturowo-językowa Łemków w ujęciu etnolingwistycznym*) by Małgorzata Misiak<sup>11</sup> who describes the ideas, judgments and values co-creating the mental world of the Lemkos, and Patrycja Trzeszczyńska's *The Lemko Land Remembered: Stories about the Past and Space*

<sup>4</sup> M. Rak, *Kulturemy podhalańskie*, Kraków, Księgarnia Akademicka, 2015, p. 13.

<sup>5</sup> M. Rak, *Kulturemy podhalańskie*, op. cit., p. 13.

<sup>6</sup> B. Bawolak, *Łemkowskie przysłowia i powiedzenia ze Świątkowej Wielkiej i okolic*, Siercza, Wydawnictwo Żyznowski, 2021. All subsequent references to this work will be marked as BB2, with the number of page following.

<sup>7</sup> B. Bawolak, *Łemkowskie wesele w Świątkowej Wielkiej*, Siercza, Wydawnictwo Żyznowski, 2019. All subsequent references to this work will be marked as BB1, with the number of page following.

<sup>8</sup> B. Bawolak, *Łemkowskie piosenki ze Świątkowej Wielkiej. Śpiewnik*, Siercza, Wydawnictwo Żyznowski, 2024. All subsequent references to this work will be marked as BB3, with the number of page following.

<sup>9</sup> О. Гижа (Ed.), *Українські народні пісні з Лемківщини*, Київ, Музична Україна, 1972. All subsequent references to this work will be marked as UNPL, with the number of page following.

<sup>10</sup> Ю. Старинський, А. Рыздзянич (Eds.), *Як липняне сонце до міха імали. Баї, байки і оповіданки Лемків*, Лігниця, Кычера, 2010. All subsequent references to this work will be marked as BBO, with the number of page following.

<sup>11</sup> M. Misiak, *Міędzy Popradem a Oslawą. Tożsamość kulturowo-językowa Łemków w ujęciu etnolingwistycznym*, Wrocław, Profil, 2018.

(*Łemkowszczyzna zapamiętana. Opowieści o przeszłości i przestrzeni*)<sup>12</sup> analysing Lemko cultural memory based on her own research and memoirs. For comparative purposes, literary material from the anthology of post-expulsion Lemko literature *Is It Longing or Hope? An Anthology of Post-Deportation Lemko Literature* (*Ци то лем туга, ци надія. Антологія повиселеної лемківської літератури*)<sup>13</sup> and several memoirs were used.

The folklore texts analysed in the article are confronted with literary works, which here fulfill an actualising function. Although these are different types of texts (folk texts are linguistic statements communicated orally, which usually symbolise, simplify and conventionalise reality, while literary texts, written, are “constructed” by the author as a statement and carry the whole portion of information for the articulation of which they were created<sup>14</sup>), which also differ in chronology (folklore texts were created mainly before the war, whereas literary texts – after it), their use was considered purposeful. The use of these two types of texts, different in terms of aesthetics and chronology, is justified by the need to indicate the durability (currentness) or changes in the valuation and functioning of the analysed culturemes.

The analysis was based on the classification of Maciej Rak who in the monograph *Podhale Culturemes (Kulturemy podhalańskie)* introduced four categories of them: our own – foreign, values, cultural identity and mental geography. The above classification will be used as a starting point for the analysis of Lemko concepts, many of which are universal and common not only to the Podhale Highlanders and Lemkos, but also to the rural population in general.<sup>15</sup> In this work, there will be discussed culturemes concerning the names of values, while the remaining ones – including a Lemko, Ruthenian, host and priest (Лемко, Русин, газда and єгомость) – opposition own – foreign; language/speech, song, watchfire, displacement and bread, potatoes, booze, kieselycia (type of a soup), chuha (typical ornate winter jacket) (язык/бесіда, спів, Ватра, висеління and хліб, комперы, палюнка, кеселиця, чуга) – cultural identity; the Lemkovyna, the Mountains,

<sup>12</sup> P. Trzeszczyńska, *Łemkowszczyzna zapamiętana. Opowieści o przeszłości i przestrzeni*, Kraków, WUJ, 2013.

<sup>13</sup> О. Дуць-Файфер (Ed.), *Ци то лем туга, ци надія. Антологія повиселеної лемківської літератури*, Лігниця, Товаришшя Лемків, 2002. All subsequent references to this work will be marked as ODF, with the number of page following.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. R. Sulima, *Folklor i literatura. Studia o kulturze i literaturze współczesnej*, Warszawa, LSW, 1985, p. 12.

<sup>15</sup> According to M. Rak, the culturemes common to all regions of Poland include, among others: work, land, bread, poverty, hunger, freedom, honour, the cross, God, Jesus, Mother of God, priest, gentleman and vodka (cf. M. Rak, *Kulturemy gwarowe, polskie i słowiańskie – zarys problematyki*, “Etnolingwistyka” 2021, no. 33, p. 28).

foreign land, Thalerhof (Лемковина, Горы, чужина and Талергоф) – mental geography – require separate discussion.

Among the names of positive values, we should mention sacred ones: God, church (Панбiг/Бог, церков), secular – social: work (робота) and economic: land, forests, cottage (земля, ліси, хыжа). The negative ones include: poverty, long-ing and injustice (бiда, туга and кривда).

1. Lemkos are a traditionally religious group, for whom belonging to the Eastern Church and cultivating annual and family customs still constitute an important part of cultural identity. For this reason, God, appearing in the forms God and Lord (Бог, Панбiг) in the analysed works, should be mentioned first among sacral values. Both lexemes are repeatedly used in many proverbs and songs, especially wedding and other ritual ones. Typical of this type of culture are frequent, everyday references to God, e.g. through greetings: “May Lord give us a good day” (Дай, Боже, добриден), invocations “oh, Lord!” (вера Боже) or requests: “God help us / and you Mother Mary” (Допомо́ж нам, Бо́же / I ty, Boża Maty, BB1: 124), “May God bless you with all the happiness!” (Дай Боже щесыця!, BBO: 25). In proverbs and songs, the omniscient God “Only the Almighty and Virgin Mary know / where I will be buried” (Зна то пан-бiг з неба i панна Марія, / Де я загину, UNPL: 321) appears as the Creator and the being whose will the Lemkos accept without any objection: “The Almighty sees everything from His throne up high” (Высоко Панбiг сiдит, то i вшытко видит, BB2: 352), “Whom God loves, he often sends crosses” (Кого Панбiг любує, тому часто хресты дарує, BB2: 354) or “Another says: God willing” (Другий гварит: як бог даст, UNPL: 67), “God, God, what did You give me / Oh, to my heart / Great pity” (Боже, боже, што лес мi дав / Ой, до серденька / Великий жаль, UNPL: 73).

The name of God is also invoked in the poems of contemporary poets, in which the lyrical subject surrenders to His will, asking for help: “Oh, save us, good Lord” (О, сохрани нас, Боже милый, ODF: 192), “I would come back, God, if only you had so decreed” (Ja bym, Boże, wrócił, gdybyś tylko tak zrządził)<sup>16</sup> or complaining about his fate: “And God himself / turned his back to the Lemkos” (I сам Бог / до Лемків плечами, ODF: 173). Often it is “God of the Lemkos” (Лемків Бог, ODF: 235), with whom they share a special bond: “In our life / there was no other God / except you / oh God...” (W naszym życiu / nie było innego Boga / prócz ciebie / Boże..., ODF: 245). P. Trzeczyńska quotes a fragment of a prayer that, in the memoirs of Seman Madzelan, was said by a priest from the village of Michalow in so

---

<sup>16</sup> P. Murianka, *A Wisła dalej płynie*, Warszawa, WUW, 2022, p. 43.

called “the Recovered Territories”: “God, do you see our tears and our pain, why have you punished us so cruelly, after all we have praised Your Name for centuries” (Boże, czy widzisz nasze łzy i nasz ból, za co nas tak pokarałeś okrutnie, przecież od wieków chwaliliśmy Imię Twoje).<sup>17</sup> The change in attitude towards God is clearly visible in literary texts, with regret and even resentment about the fate that the Lemkos suffered after the World War II. This is a novelty compared to older folklore texts, where the only objects of criticism were usually priests.

2. The lexeme church (церков) denotes an institution that has always been one of the most important factors of integration, and after World War II also distinguishing from the Roman Catholic majority. After 1947, in so called “the Recovered Territories”, the Orthodox Church was the only institution protecting against assimilation and for the displaced was a substitute for the “old country”. It created a space for meetings, conversations in one’s own language, cultivating tradition, and “[...] religious affiliation was, in the post-displacement conditions, even more than their ethnolect, an element of self-identification”.<sup>18</sup> After the displacement, “religion remained a kind of cocoon for the ethnic values of the Lemkos. It also allowed for the creation of a point of reference for the community that enabled the reconstruction of the shaken identity”.<sup>19</sup> The strong position of the Orthodox Church resulted both from the confrontation with the Polish and Catholic populations, as well as the need to continue their own religious practices.

In the analysed folk material, the lexeme church usually appears as the name of a temple, a permanent element of the Lemko village, a place where “the most important family ceremonies (baptisms, weddings, funerals) and annual ceremonies (including Christmas, Easter, All Souls’ Day) took place, which in traditional culture were considered mediatory”.<sup>20</sup> In the post-war song *The Lemkos will not forget* (*Лемкы не забудут*) it is one of the symbols of the abandoned homeland: “And there in our village / there is a little church” (А там в ріднім селі, / Там церковця стоїт, BB3: 74).

In post-war literary works, a wooden church with characteristic domes was also an inseparable element of the landscape of the former Lemko region “Beskyd flower / that grows up to the sky / with church domes (квітом Бескыду / што виростат під небеса / вежами церковных бань, ODF: 234), which after 1947 became a symbol of the tragedy of displacement and abandoned villages “And now

<sup>17</sup> P. Trzeszczyńska, *Lemkowszczyzna...*, op. cit., p. 221.

<sup>18</sup> M. Misiak, *Między Popradem a Oslawą...*, op. cit., p. 220.

<sup>19</sup> P. Trzeszczyńska, *Lemkowszczyzna...*, op. cit., p. 97.

<sup>20</sup> V. Wróblewska (Ed.), *Słownik polskiej bajki ludowej*. Available at: <https://bajka.umk.pl/slownik/lista-hasel/haslo/?id=41> [accessed: 21.03.2024].

it's dark there in the Carpathians, / There's no bell ringing in our churches" (А темп смутно там в Карпатах, / Нигде не дзвонит в церквах дзвон, ODF: 49). In addition to the Eastern Rite temple "and take / your children / to the church" ([...] і повести / свої діти / до церкви, ODF: 178), it was also the name of an institution: "persecuted our church / for the three-armed cross" (prześladowana cerkiew nasza / za krzyż trójramienny, ODF: 245).

3. The first of the secular values, of a social and universal nature, is work (робота), describing the most important activity among rural communities, ensuring food and survival, the most highly appreciated value in peasant culture, which is a culture of work.<sup>21</sup> Work and diligence are positive personality traits, factors evaluating a person and their life. The involvement of village inhabitants in work was an important evaluative criterion in folk works: "A girl is praised for her work, not her beauty" (Дівку хвалит робота, а не красота, BB2: 158), "Man's work feeds him" (Робота человека кормит, BB2: 238), in which people who avoided an effort were assessed negatively: "Work sustains man, and laziness wastes him" (Робота человека годует, а лень марнует, BB2: 222). The quality of work was, therefore, the measure of a human being. Being hard-working was a required and expected behaviour: "I will teach you, my dear / Every job" (Навчу я тя, моя мила / Всякой работы, UNPL: 53).

4. Agrocentrism in the folk axionormative system is the result of not only respect for work, but also respect for the land – feeding the whole village. Hence, land (земля) can be categorised as another cultureme. Land was the most important resource that provided food, and the area of land owned reflected the wealth and social position of the farmer in the village hierarchy. It was one of the most important elements of the peasant system of values, it was both family (hereditary) property, a place of residence, as well as a workshop and the source of income: "Don't let your land go of your hand if you don't want to experience torments" (Не выпускай земли з руки, то не зазнаш муки, BB2: 96).<sup>22</sup> In mountainous regions, where the resources were limited, the importance of arable land was even more essential: "there was very little arable land" (мало было орной земли, BBO: 27). The Lemkos' attachment to the land is also evidenced by proverbs concerning foreign land: "You won't earn any bread in a foreign land" (На чужій землі хліба ся не доробиш, BB2: 96) in opposition to their native land, "As wise as the Lemko land" (Мудра як лемківська земля, BB2: 406).

Apart from the economic aspect, land has a huge cultural and symbolic potential connected with everyday life in the countryside which often found its way from folk art into literature. As Jerzy Bartmiński wrote:

---

<sup>21</sup> M. Rak, *Kulturemy podhalańskie*, op. cit., p. 195.

<sup>22</sup> Ibidem, p. 210.



The earth for the bearers of traditional culture is a sentient being and a mother, and man is its son. Sacred and everlasting, fertile and rich, it gives birth to plants and all life, feeds animals and people. It provides man with rest after death, accepting him back into its womb.<sup>23</sup>

In folk culture, it was one of the elements, a symbol of motherhood and fertility, personified as Mother Earth – this is associated with her almost sacred status and the belief that only by respecting her one can obtain good harvests: “When you feed the earth, it will bear fruit” and “Take care of the fertile land like your own mother” (Добрі землю накормити то буде родити and Доглядай землю плідну як матір рідну, BB2: 96).

The land is presented as a symbol of homeland, especially when it appears with the attribute “native” (рідна), e.g. “My native land” (Земле моя рідна, BB3: 66), “exiled from her native land” (выгнала з рідной землі).<sup>24</sup> The word land acquires particular meaning in the context of the homeland, native lands in literary texts: “Fatherland, Lemko land”, “My land [...] You are generous and rich” (Земле вітцівська, Земле лемківська, ODF: 190, Землю моя [...] Ты щедра і богата, ODF: 126), where it often becomes the synonym for Lemko Land (Лемковина) – Mountains (Горы) written with a capital letter (e.g. in the book by Petro Murianka).

5. After World War II, forests (ліси) gained the status of a cultureme. Previously, for the Lemko community, a forest was primarily an important economic resource – it was a supplier of wood for building huts and making tools, a source of fuel and food, and sometimes a place of work. It was also a shelter for forbidden love, for robbers – cf. a fairy tale *Wasył the King* (Васьо король, BBO: 20–24), and in folk tradition a symbolic space – located right next door, but at the same time distant, “the other”, mysterious world, the place of existence of evil forces.

After 1947, the forests became for the displaced Lemkos and their descendants a synonym of their lost homeland and patrimony, of injustice and wrongdoing, and after 1989 also a symbol of the struggle for moral and material compensation for the “Operation Vistula”. In the efforts to regain the property left behind in the Carpathians, the land was not so important, because the Lemkos obtained its equivalent. It was different in the case of forests, taken away and nationalised by the state, which for pre-war farmers were the most valuable, carefully tended and economically exploited element of property: “Whoever has the forest, has a penny”, “and build a house / taught us / from the forest” (Хто ма ліс, тот ма гріш, BB2: 716, і дім будувати / вчыл нас / з ліса, ODF: 182). The lack of will to return the forests

---

<sup>23</sup> J. Bartmiński, *Słownik stereotypów i symboli ludowych*, vol. 1, issue 2, *Ziemia, woda, podziemie*, Lublin, Wydawnictwo UMCS, 1999, p. 17.

<sup>24</sup> С. Мадзелан, *Смак долі, Криниця, Наша загорода*, 2000, p. 3.



by the Polish state has thus become a symbol, especially among the middle and older generations of Lemkos.

In the analysed post-war texts, both folk and literary, forests appear in the context of memories of the Lemko region, “Forests, dark forests / I will not forget”, “There in the Carpathians, where the thick forests rustle”, “I hear in you, the song, the rustle of the Carpathian forests” (Ліси, темні бори / Не забуду, ВВЗ: 66, Гын в Карпатах, де шумят густы лісы, ВБО: 71, Чую в тобі, пісьньо, шум карпатських лісів<sup>25</sup>) and the injustice of displacement: “They took everything from us, / What they could have taken, / Forests, land, cottages”, “there were people / there were mountains / there were forests [...] people went / mountains cried / forests disappeared” (Забрали нам вишток, / Што могли забрати, / Ліси, землю, хати, ВВЗ: 74, были люде / были горы / были ліси [...] пішли люде / плакали горы / пропали ліси, ОДФ: 222).

6. The last of the economic values can be considered the lexeme cottage (хыжа) which appeared in a special way in the collective imagination of the Lemkos after the displacement, joining the symbols of abandoned villages, mountains and forests. That specific type of construction adapted to mountain conditions: “I will build her a hut / From hewn wood”, “in a small wooden hut” (Збудую ї хижу / З тесаного древа, UNPL: 102, в деревяній невеликій хыжці, ВБО: 33) constitutes today a symbol of home as family and homeland, the old world of the Lemkos. In the analysed dialectal material, the lexeme means family, “Without a host, the house cries, but with a host, it jumps” (Без газды хыжа плаче, а при газді скаче, ВВ2: 98), a building “Even if the cottage is small, it is nice for a Lemko” (Хоцбы хыжка маленька, все для Лемка миленька, ВВ2: 72), confirmation of the host’s social status or readiness to marry: “First build a cottage and then take a wife” (Перше хыжу будувати, а потім жену брати, ВВ2: 70) and a safe place: “At home, you won’t be bothered by worries” (В своїй хыжы нестрашны і згрызы, ВВ2: 68), often presented in opposition to foreign lands, “Misery in a stranger’s cottage” (В чужій хаті недоля, UNPL: 21).

In literature, alongside these meanings, it appears as a symbol of the abandoned Lemko region, Lemko villages: “native cottages”, “Lemko cottage”(хыжы рідны, ОДФ: 98, хыжа лемківска, ОДФ: 177), “My family home – situated among meadows on a hill, just outside the village...” (Mój rodzinny dom – położony wśród łąk na wzniesieniu, tuż za wsią... – Ludmiła Bińczarowska-Ciołka)<sup>26</sup> and „My parents [...] always thought back on their ‘really warm’ wooden house in the Mountains”

<sup>25</sup> Ibidem, p. 171.

<sup>26</sup> P. Trzuszczńska, *Łemkowszczyzna...*, op. cit., p. 291.

(Rodzice [...] gnali zawsze myślami do swego ‘naprawdę ciepłego’, drewnianego domu w Górach).<sup>27</sup>

7. The culturemes defining negative values include poverty, longing and injustice, the relevance of which is related to the period before or after the displacement. Poverty (бiда), alongside hunger omitted from this set, is a concept deeply rooted in the subconscious of the rural population, historically common to the inhabitants of the Carpathian region.<sup>28</sup> Poverty meant the inability to satisfy existential needs, food, clothing, housing. The famous “Galician poverty”, which was the result of backward and fragmented agriculture, limited land resources and overpopulation of the countryside,<sup>29</sup> was also experienced by the Lemkos: “From Kiev to Cracow, poverty is the same everywhere” (Од Києва до Кракова всяди бiда єднакова, BB2: 390). The poet Iwan Rusenko drew attention to this problem of the Lemko village, writing the famous “We are poor, because of our poor fate” (Мы бiдны, уж з дiда-прадiда). The fact this experience was commonplace is evidenced by several hundred proverbs, e.g. “Swiatkowa, Swiatkowa, a beautiful village, only poverty all around” (Святкова, Святкова, село гарде, лем бiда доокола, BB2: 390) and “Even though the village in poverty, the Lemko rejoices” (Хоц бiда в селi, але Лемкы людe веселы, BB2: 404). In folk texts, poverty was ennobled, and a poor person was usually a positive, respected, honest character – the embodiment of virtues, the opposite of an evil and dishonest rich person.

In the contemporary self-reflective literature, there is an awareness of poverty in the former Lemko village, but it usually appears in an idealised version, as something that is commonplace – especially in the face of the later tragedy of displacement. Petro Murianka wrote that Lemko region was “a beautiful country where happy people lived. Cheerful people, normal in their abnormality, joyful in poverty” (przepiękny kraj, w którym żyli szczęśliwi ludzie. Weseli ludzie, normalni w swej nienormalności, radośni w biedzie)<sup>30</sup> and Iwan Ołenycz added that the Lemkos “[...] loved their native land, although they lived in poverty” ([...] kochali swoje rodzinne strony, chociaż żyli ubogo).<sup>31</sup>

8. Under the influence of post-war events, lexeme longing (tyra) became a cultureme – expressing a negative value, a feeling common for at least two generations of Lemkos resettled to Soviet Ukraine and so called “the Recovered Territories” (but also earlier generations – emigrants to North America from the early 20th century).

<sup>27</sup> P. Murianka, *A Wisła...*, op. cit., p. 27.

<sup>28</sup> M. Rak, *Kulturemy gwarowe...*, op. cit., p. 29.

<sup>29</sup> M. Rak, *Kulturemy podhalańskie*, op. cit., p. 239.

<sup>30</sup> P. Trzecieżyńska, *Lemkowszczyzna...*, op. cit., p. 197.

<sup>31</sup> Ibidem, p. 174.

The dominant motif of longing for the lost homeland is evidenced by the title of the cited anthology *Is it longing or hope?* (*Чи то лем туга, чи надія*), taken from the poem by Olena Duć-Fajfer. Longing, which defines feelings after expulsion and the impossibility of return, appears many times in the analysed poems, both in the works of writers living in Ukraine: “Only one thing hurts me [...] For you, my country, / Being torn to pieces / By this longing” (Лем єдно мя болит [...] За тобом, мій краю, / Розпука / І туга, ODF: 142), and in Western Poland “a soul swollen with longing like a barrel”, “longing sits in the heart / pricking like a pin”, “Our voice, cry, longing” (набырміла тугом душа як боден, ODF: 204, туга в серци сидит / коляча як шпиля, ODF: 222, Наш голос, плач, туга<sup>32</sup>).

9. Another negatively valued lexeme is injustice (кривда), which usually appears in post-war texts. This feeling is the result of the most traumatic experience in Lemko history – the displacement within the framework of the “Operation Vistula” (1947), proceeding earlier, “voluntary” displacements to Soviet Ukraine (1944–1946). For the Lemkos, it meant “the interruption of their existence in their native territories and severing of ties between individual members of the community”.<sup>33</sup> The displacement became the most important caesura in the entire history of the Lemkos in Poland, dividing it into the pre- and post-displacement periods. The situation after the “Operation Vistula” became the source of at least four culturemes: longing, grievance, foreign land and displacement. This is confirmed by M. Misiak, who describes the self-image of a Lemko, which makes up his ethnic and cultural identity: the largest part (38%) of the 68 descriptors is situated in the profile of a Lemko-victim of history and a Lemko-wronged person. The displacement and its consequences define the Lemko identity and are confirmed by proverbs and songs that emerged after the war, such as “Know, Lemko, whose truth in this world, whose wrong and whose children we are” (Знай, Лемку, на тым світі чья правда, чья кривда і чьи мы діти, BB2: 402) or “The ‘Operation Vistula’, it is clear, was a terrible injustice for the Lemkos” (Справа ясна, акция „Вісла” для Лемка то кривда страшна, BB2: 410).

However, the greatest number of “about the wrong done to the Lemkos” (про кривду Лемків, ODF: 109) was written in contemporary literary and memoir works, the authors of which are people directly affected by the tragedy of displacement (or the first generation born abroad). In their statements, injustice is a dominant motif, even if not said out loud “And in the forty-seventh / Sad days came” (В сорок сьомим році / Сумны дни настали, BB3: 70). Many of the statements quoted by

<sup>32</sup> С. Мадзелан, *Смак долі*, op. cit., p. 116.

<sup>33</sup> P. Trzeszczyńska, *Łemkowszczyzna...*, op. cit., p. 76.

P. Trzuszczńska express regret and injustice: “The greatest tragedy took place in Poland after World War II” (Największa tragedia dokonała się w Polsce po II wojnie światowej – Fedor Gocz)<sup>34</sup> or “There, water will never wash away our injustice nor fire will burn it out” (Tam naszej krzywdy nigdy nie zmyje woda ani nie wypali ogień – Roman Chomiak).<sup>35</sup>

The presented analysis is to be a starting point for creating an axiological image of the world of Polish Lemkos. The analysed set of culturemes constituting names of values and their carriers is to be an attempt to indicate cultural concepts present primarily in folk literature, defining Lemko identity, to indicate the most important values present in the cultural and linguistic space of Lemkos. By comparing them with selected fragments of self-reflective and literary works, the Author wanted to indicate to what extent they remain relevant in today’s world of Lemko values and whether their meanings are subject to modifications. The conducted analysis reveals the picture of a set of culturemes of values typical for rural communities, in which the most important Lemko peculiarities are the result of the tragic experiences of Ruthenians in the first post-war years. The “Operation Vistula” introduced new culturemes into the world of Lemko values (лісы, кривда), and significantly modified some of the existing ones (церков, хыжа, туга). The changes on the Lemko axiological map that appeared in the post-expulsion reality were confirmed both in newer folk works and in literature, mostly created by the people directly affected by the expulsion, trying to deal with the trauma, to tame it and find it in the new reality.

The selected culturemes, present in both folk and literary works, belong primarily to the autostereotype of the Lemkos, serving their self-identification and fulfilling several additional functions, including psychological (they facilitate thinking and talking about the world), social (they integrate) and cognitive (they convey common conceptualisation). In addition, they have a strong evaluative aspect, indicating the most important elements of the surrounding world for the Lemko community. They identify their most important values – usually positive, related to faith, tradition and culture, but also negative, related mainly to post-war historical traumas.

---

<sup>34</sup> Ibidem, p. 175.

<sup>35</sup> Ibidem, p. 177.

## References

- Bartmiński J., *Język w kontekście kultury* [Language in the Context of Culture], [in:] *Współczesny język polski* [Contemporary Polish Language], J. Bartmiński (Ed.), Lublin, Wydawnictwo UMCS, 2001, pp. 13–22.
- Bartmiński J. (Ed.), *Słownik stereotypów i symboli ludowych* [A Dictionary of Folk Stereotypes and Symbols], vol. 1, issue 2, *Ziemia, woda, podziemie* [Earth, Water, Underground], Lublin, Wydawnictwo UMCS, 1999, 481 pp.
- Bawolak B., *Lemkowskie piosenki ze Świątkowej Wielkiej. Śpiewnik* [Lemko Songs from Swiatkowa Wielka. A Songbook], Siercza, Wydawnictwo Żyznowski, 2024, 672 pp.
- Bawolak B., *Lemkowskie przysłowia i powiedzenia ze Świątkowej Wielkiej i okolic* [Lemko Proverbs and Sayings from Swiatkowa Wielka and the Surrounding Area], Siercza, Wydawnictwo Żyznowski, 2021, 800 pp.
- Bawolak B., *Lemkowskie wesele w Świątkowej Wielkiej* [Lemko Wedding in Swiatkowa Wielka], Siercza, Wydawnictwo Żyznowski, 2019, 540 pp.
- Dąbrowska A., *Współczesne problemy lingwistyki kulturowej* [Contemporary Problems of Cultural Linguistics], “Postscriptum” 2004–2005, no. 2–1 (48–49), pp. 140–155.
- Duc’-Fajfer O. (Ed.), *Cy to lem tuga, cy nadija. Antologija powyyselenchoj literatury* [Is It Longing or Hope? An Anthology of Post-Deportation Lemko Literature], Lignycja, Stovaryshynja Lemkiv, 2002, 514 pp.
- G’yzha O. (Ed.), *Ukrai’ns’ki narodni pisni z Lemkivshchyny* [Ukrainian Folk Songs from the Lemko Land], Kyi’v, Muzychna Ukrai’na, 1972, 328 pp.
- Madzelan S., *Smak doli* [Taste of Fate], Krynycja, Nasha zagoroda, 2000, 200 pp.
- Misiak M., *Między Popradem a Oslawą. Tożsamość kulturowo-językowa Łemków w ujęciu etnolingwistycznym* [Between the Rivers of Poprad and Oslava. Cultural and Language Integrity of the Lemkos Ethnolinguistic Approach], Wrocław, Profil, 2018, 272 pp.
- Murianka P., *A Wisła dalej płynie* [The Vistula Keeps Flowing], Warszawa, WUW, 2022, 200 pp.
- Nagórko A., *Z problemów etnolingwistyki – jak porównywać języki i kultury* [From Ethnolinguistic Problems – How to Compare Languages and Cultures], “Poradnik Językowy” [A Linguistic Guide] 1994, no. 4, pp. 4–14.
- Nagórko A., Łaziński M., Burkhardt H., *Dystynktywny słownik synonimów* [A Distinctive Dictionary of Synonyms], Kraków, Universitas, 2004, 586 pp.
- Rak M., *Co to jest kulturem?* [What is a Cultureme?], “LingVaria X” 2015, no. 2(20), pp. 305–316.

- Rak M., *Kulturemy gwarowe, polskie i słowiańskie – zarys problematyki* [Polish and Slavic Dialectal Culturemes: An Outline], „Etnolingwistyka” [Ethnolinguistics] 2021, no. 33, pp. 25–37.
- Rak M., *Kulturemy podhalańskie* [Podhale Culturemes], Kraków, Księgarnia Akademicka, 2015, 430 pp.
- Staryn'skij Ju., Ryzdzanych A. (Eds.), *Jak lypnjane sonce do miha imaly. Bai, bajkyy i opovidankyy Lemkiv* [How the Inhabitants of Lipna Caught the Sun in the Sack. Tales and Stories of the Lemkos], Lignycja, Kyychera, 2010, 180 pp.
- Sulima R., *Folklor i literatura. Studia o kulturze i literaturze współczesnej* [Folklore and Literature: Studies on Contemporary Culture and Literature], Warszawa, LSW, 1985, 244 pp.
- Trzesczyńska P., *Lemkowszczyzna zapamiętana. Opowieści o przeszłości i przestrzeni* [The Lemko Land Remembered. Stories about the Past and Space], Kraków, WUJ, 2013, 444 pp.
- Wróblewska V. (Ed.), *Słownik polskiej bajki ludowej* [Dictionary of Polish Folk Tales]. Available at: <https://bajka.umk.pl/sownik/lista-hasel/haslo/?id=41> [accessed: 21.03.2024].

## Literatura

- Bartmiński J., *Język w kontekście kultury*, [w:] *Współczesny język polski*, red. J. Bartmiński, Lublin, Wydawnictwo UMCS, 2001, ss. 13–22.
- Bartmiński J. (red.), *Słownik stereotypów i symboli ludowych*, t. 1, z. 2, *Ziemia, woda, podziemie*, Lublin, Wydawnictwo UMCS, 1999, 481 ss.
- Bawolak B., *Lemkowskie piosenki ze Świątkowej Wielkiej. Śpiewnik*, Siercza, Wydawnictwo Żyznowski, 2024, 672 ss.
- Bawolak B., *Lemkowskie przysłowia i powiedzenia ze Świątkowej Wielkiej i okolic*, Siercza, Wydawnictwo Żyznowski, 2021, 800 ss.
- Bawolak B., *Lemkowskie wesele w Świątkowej Wielkiej*, Siercza, Wydawnictwo Żyznowski, 2019, 540 ss.
- Dąbrowska A., *Współczesne problemy lingwistyki kulturowej*, „Postscriptum” 2004–2005, nr 2–1 (48–49), ss. 140–155.
- Misiak M., *Między Popradem a Oslawą. Tożsamość kulturowo-językowa Lemków w ujęciu etnolingwistycznym*, Wrocław, Profil, 2018, 272 ss.
- Murianka P., *A Wisła dalej płynie*, Warszawa, WUW, 2022, 200 ss.
- Nagórko A., *Z problemów etnolingwistyki – jak porównywać języki i kultury*, „Poradnik Językowy” 1994, nr 4, ss. 4–14.

- Nagórko A., Łaziński M., Burkhardt H., *Dystynktywny słownik synonimów*, Kraków, Universitas, 2004, 586 ss.
- Rak M., *Co to jest kulturem?*, „LingVaria X” 2015, nr 2(20), ss. 305–316.
- Rak M., *Kulturemy gwarowe, polskie i słowiańskie – zarys problematyki*, „Etnolingwistyka” 2021, nr 33, ss. 25–37.
- Rak M., *Kulturemy podhalańskie*, Kraków, Księgarnia Akademicka, 2015, 430 ss.
- Sulima R., *Folklor i literatura. Studia o kulturze i literaturze współczesnej*, Warszawa, LSW, 1985, 244 ss.
- Trzeszczyńska P., *Łemkowszczyzna zapamiętana. Opowieści o przeszłości i przeszreni*, Kraków, WUJ, 2013, 444 ss.
- Wróblewska V. (red.), *Słownik polskiej bajki ludowej*, [w:] <https://bajka.umk.pl/sownik/lista-hasel/haslo/?id=41> [accessed: 21.03.2024].
- Гига О. (red.), *Українські народні пісні з Лемківщини*, Київ, Музична Україна, 1972, 328 ss.
- Дуць-Файфер О. (red.), *Ци то лем туга, ци надія. Антологія повиселенчой лемківської літератури*, Ліґниця, Товаришшя Лемків, 2002, 514 ss.
- Мадзелан С., *Смак долі*, Криниця, Наша загорода, 2000, 200 ss.
- Старинській Ю., Рыдзанич А. (red.), *Як липняне сонце до міха імали. Баї, байкы і оповіданкы Лемків*, Ліґниця, Кычера, 2010, 180 ss.