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The Relics of the Great War in the Foreground of the Dęblin Fortress as a Basis for the Creation of the Cultural Heritage of the Region

Relikty Wielkiej Wojny na przedpolu twierdzy Dęblin,
jako zasób do tworzenia dziedzictwa kulturowego regionu

Abstract: The article presents provisional results of research into material relics of the Great War in the foreground of the Dęblin Fortress. In the years 1914–1915, this area became the arena of battles between the Russian, German, and Austro-Hungarian armies. The hostilities left their mark on the landscape, such as field fortifications, forts, and cemeteries. The aim of the research was to locate and establish the chronology of the remains of field fortifications on the Gniewoszów-Bąkowiec-Mozolice line. The research involved analysis of source materials, LiDAR, field verifications, and analysis of the social value of relics of the Great War. The last phase of the research was analysis of the social value of these

objects based on the philosophy of managing the past through preservation and heritage, exemplified by the cemetery in Wysokie Koło and the Gorchakov Fort. The research allowed to determine the course of the main Russian defence line from 1915, which consisted of three groups: Gniewoszów, Bąkowiec, and Mozolice. The best preserved are the remains of field fortifications within the Bąkowiec group, which was the central section of the Russian defence line. As analysis of the social value of the Great War relics indicates, the dominant way is to create heritage, and the message conveyed by the content of places representing the past causes a lot of controversy and conflicts among local residents.

Keywords: Dęblin fortress, the heritage of the Great War, Warsaw-Dęblin operation, the paradigm of preservation, the paradigm of heritage, archaeology of the contemporary past

Introduction

Field earth fortifications, such as trenches and fire positions, are the relics of the warfare conducted in the foreground of the Dęblin Fortress in 1914–1915. Thanks to the presence of their material remains, they are still elements of the forest landscape of the Kozienice Forest and its buffer zone. They also stand

as testimony to intensive and dynamic fights between Russian, German, and Austro-Hungarian armies near the Dęblin Fortress in the autumn of 1914 and the summer of 1915. The remains of field fortifications constitute a special kind of heritage. In this paper, I will try to present them as objects of research, considering information that might be of interest to scientists dealing with the history of armed conflicts and the development of fortifications, and as subjects of social activities aimed at local history enthusiasts as well as inhabitants of the area. The specificity of the remains of field fortifications is that they have no spectacular appearance and they are usually difficult to access for potential visitors unlike fixed fortifications, such as monumental fortresses and forts, e.g. the Boyen Fortress (Kraheil 2003).

Field fortifications without any additional narrative that would support their intrinsic message may be perceived by the recipients of heritage as ditches in the ground and holes for disposing of rubbish or sources of sand. In our country, most relics of this type are in no way preserved. The reasons why preserving them is problematic is the fact that they are poorly known, the remote location of areas where these relics can be found, and issues connected with property rights. In the Kozienice Forest and its buffer zone, a considerable part of the area with the remains of field fortifications is privately owned. As a result of land development, these relics get destroyed. Their deterioration started right after the end of hostilities in 1915, when the area was cleared to restore its economic value, making it possible to reuse these areas as, for example, arable land. It was a natural course of action, typical of the post-war period, when effective recultivation of agricultural lands formed a basis for life. Examples of the creation of regional heritage making use of the material remains of history in the area in question are discussed further in the paper.

Research scope and purpose

The subject of the paper concerns the relics of the Great War near the villages of Gniewoszków, Bąkowiec, Słowiki Nowe, Głusiec, and Wysokie Koło. The area described is located in south-eastern Poland, in the Masovia Province, Kozienice District, approximately 140 km to the south-east of Warsaw. The research was conducted with the aim to:

- Determine as precisely as possible the chronology of the construction of field fortifications in the foreground of the Dęblin Fortress;
- Inventory the preserved relics from 1914 and 1915;
- Determine their state of preservation and, indirectly, also the effect of these relics on the contemporary landscape;

- Analyse the use of the resources of the past represented by relics of the Warsaw-Dęblin operation to create the narrative of the Great War (Fig. 1).

Due to the allowed length of the paper, I will only present conclusions concerning selected examples:

- Relics of field fortifications on the Gniewoszczów-Bąkowiec-Słowiki Nowe line, where the Russian army constructed the main fortification lines of the Dęblin Fortress in 1914–1915;
- The Gorchakov Fort located in the village of Zajezierze, Sieciechów Commune, in the north-eastern part of the Kozienice District;
- The war cemetery in Wysokie Koło, Gniewoszczów Commune, Kozienice District.

I will also offer comprehensive conclusions about the specificity and potential of the Great War heritage resources with regard to the creation of socio-cultural identity, using the above-mentioned examples. To achieve this goal, apart from analysis of the source materials (written and cartographic sources), I have conducted analyses of imaging, being derivatives of the airborne laser scanning (i.e. digital terrain models, hereinafter DTM), and I have conducted field verification.

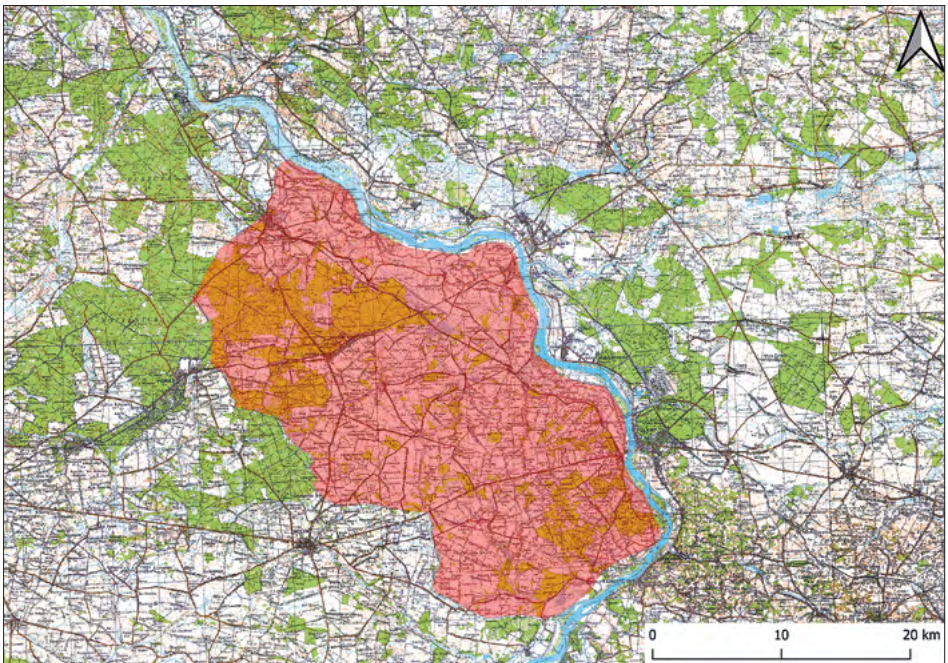


Fig. 1. A map presenting the area explored (prepared by A. Bachanek).

Methodology

The research was conducted in three stages. During the first stage, I used war diaries, maps, diagrams, plans, reports, correspondence, and memoirs of the fortress commandant Aleksiej Władimirowicz von Schwartz¹ to recreate the lines of trenches, so as to locate their traces in the contemporary landscape as precisely as possible. During the second stage, I conducted a field survey and prepared documentation, which offered an insight into the actual state of preservation of the objects explored. The third stage involved analysis of the relics of warfare from 1914–1915 in the context of two philosophies of past management: the paradigm of preservation and the paradigm of heritage (Ashworth 2015).

The most useful historical sources for localising the lines of trenches turned out to be:

- A fragment of the military operation log of the Ivangorod Fortress (Russian: Vypiska iz zhurnala voyennykh deystviy kreposti Ivangorod);
- A description of the war activities of the Ivangorod Fortress in August, September, and October 1914 (Russian: Opisaniye boyevykh deystviy kreposti Ivangorod v techeniye avgusta, sentyabrya i oktyabrya 1914-go goda);
- A map of army positions near Ivangorod from February 22 to 28, 1915 (Russian: Karta raspolozheniya voysk u Ivangoroda s 22 po 28 fevralya 1915 g.);
- A description of the fights near Ivangorod (from July 8 to July 22, 1915) (Russian: Opisaniye boyevykh deystviy pod Ivangorodom s 8-go iyulya po 22-ye iyulya 1915 goda)².

What turned out to be very significant for the achievement of the goal set were the conclusions drawn from the memoirs of the commandant of the Dęblin Fortress General Alexander von Schwartz³.

1 General Engineer Aleksander von Schwartz fought in the Russo-Japanese War, during which he took active part in the work of an assembly on its description, and he was a lecturer. His academic papers on Port Arthur made him famous both in Russia and Germany. From the very beginning of the war, von Schwartz was deputy engineer head of the Ivangorod Fortress, and then its commandant. In his memoirs he wrote that the Ivangorod Fortress had been his favourite “child”. His aim was to create a fortress that would be able to put up long-lasting resistance to the enemy.

2 The materials are available on <https://gwar.mil.ru>. The site offers source documents concerning the activity of the Russian army in the years 1914–1915.

3 A.V. Schwartz, *Oborona Ivangoroda v 1914–1915 g.g. : iz vospominaniy komendanta kreposti Ivangoroda*, Moscow 1922.

In the area identified thanks to this, I analysed the digital terrain model generated using the data provided by the Head Office of Geodesy and Cartography (geoportal.pl). The geospatial data was correlated using Qgis ver. 3.20.

The following stage was a field survey and verification of places localised based on a source survey and analyses of geospatial data, including DTM derivatives. Field verification involved photographic documentation. Android Locus Map used for navigation and offering advanced GPS online and offline functions helped to register the line of fortifications. Then, the collected data were subjected to correlation analysis (using Qgis ver. 3.20), which resulted in an interpretation of the war landscape using historical and archaeological data.

Analysis of the social value of these objects was based on the philosophy of past management through preservation and heritage. The analysis covered information placed on boards and monuments in the Gorchakov Fort and the war cemetery in Wysokie Koło. Reception of this content was described based on autoethnography, meaning my personal experiences as a recipient of the content and participant of discussions on its message.

The War landscape and its relics in the Kozenice Forest

The landscape, which I define as a historically shaped fragment of space, created as a result of a combination of environmental and cultural influences forming a specific structure (based on: Myga-Piątek 2005), is difficult to reconstruct and imagine as a phenomenon from the time past. In the humanities, research into the landscape attempts to link the visual image of the world to the material world. However, it is undertaken based on a premise that the landscape is only able to register historical events, which means a demonstration of a specific type of spatial memory (Myga-Piątek 2015: 37).

I treat the area explored as consisting of layers of matter, memory, religious beliefs, ethnic background, cultural heritage, and tourist attractions occupying the same space (Saunders 2003: 7). These layers testify to the activities conducted during the war, including the use of landscape features to employ new methods for conducting hostilities. Apart from the remains of field fortifications (barely visible, and so not very spectacular, as I already emphasised at the beginning of this paper), integral elements of the landscape are fixed fortifications, bomb craters, the remains of road and railway networks as well as war cemeteries and graves.

All these form specific cultural stratification in the landscape, frequently co-existing with accumulations from other historical periods, such as the time of national uprisings and the Second World War. The Kozenice Forest served as a shelter for insurgents during national uprisings, and for partisan troops during the Second World War and right after its end (cf. Abramczyk 1971; Dąbkowski 1974).

It is also worth emphasising that during occupation Germans used the forts as a POW camp Stalag 307 and forced labour camps for Jews that operated in 1941–1942 (cf. Opieka 2010).

Thanks to appropriate research methods, each of the accumulations identified in the landscape can be classified in chronological terms and presented on a graphical model (Myga-Piątek 2018: 201). These traces of the past recorded in the landscape can become material representations of the social memory thanks to people involved in studying and commemorating history. As elements of a difficult past, they are frequently sources of social discord in the present (cf. Ashworth, Tunbridge 1996: 46). The basis for such discord is the injustice suffered by the nation, the extent of damage caused by the war, and the perception of soldiers fighting in the partitioners' armies as strangers. This reflects the neglect in education about the history of the Great War in our country. Issues concerning this period are only discussed on a general level: causes, course, and consequences. A result of this educational gap is Poles' poor knowledge of the First World War operations on the so-called eastern front (usually limited to factographic data, such as the assassination of Franz Ferdinand, the establishment of the Polish Legions, and the regaining of independence by the Polish state). Events related to local history are omitted altogether, so knowledge of them is in most cases based on family accounts (verbal memory). This is why there are discrepancies in local communities between local history, personal history, and official history that the society might reject (Ashworth, Tunbridge 1996: 45).

Construction of the Russian line of defence Gniewoszczów-Słowiki Nowe-Bąkowiec-Mozolice

The preserved fragments of fortifications in the section of the Kozienice Forest described in this paper were created in a few stages in 1914 and 1915.

The first stage (1910–1914) was connected with the upgrade of the Dęblin Fortress before the outbreak of the First World War. In 1909, it was decided to liquidate it. The commandant's office was closed down, the garrison was disbanded, and a decision was made to liquidate fortifications on the Vistula line, which did not happen for financial reasons (Bystrzycki 1976: 172; Michalski 1996: 110). Abandoned buildings and fortifications served as a perfect source of building materials for the local inhabitants, which contributed greatly to the degradation of these objects. A year later, it was decided to once again use the fortress for defence purposes, however, the upgrading work only started in the summer of 1914 (Bystrzycki 1976: 181; Trzaskowski 2014: 21).

The second stage (1914–1915) of the construction of fortifications was initiated by the fortress staff after the end of the Warsaw-Dęblin operation and the retreat of the troops of the Central Powers from the area. Despite the fact that the fortifications constructed had served their purpose, General von Schwartz wanted to create a highly

fortified area in the foreground of the Dęblin Fortress. Before a plan to construct new fortifications was developed, liquidation of German and Austro-Hungarian positions started; this work ended in May 1915 (Schwartz 1922: 64; Bystrzycki 1976: 197).

The Remains of field fortifications on the Mozolice-Słowiki Nowe-Bąkowiec-Gniewoszów-Vistula Line

The attempt to recreate the arrangement of German and Austrian field fortifications in the foreground of the Dęblin Fortress from 1914 using source data and LiDAR derivatives poses a significant interpretative challenge as no aboveground traces of these fortifications have been preserved. The reason for this is the fact that after the lost battle of Dęblin the fortress command ordered to clear the foreground to build a new defensive system. In consequence, the area was levelled and then new defensive positions were erected. Before the German and Austro-Hungarian fortifications were destroyed, their location was marked on a map, however, its legibility leaves much to be desired. According to the account provided by the fortress commander, the troops of the Central Powers had strongly fortified the area.

The line of fortifications ran through the forests in the Gniewoszów-Słowiki Nowe-Mozolice section.

[...] celebrations were brief, there were too many urgent matters to attend to. First of all, it was necessary to demolish the German fortifications. The task was not easy as, according to the information we had, the area was strongly fortified. The positions were located on the upland between Gniewoszów and Mozolice, including the village of Słowiki Nowe [...] (Schwartz 1922: 62).

Schwartz's description indicates that the line of fortifications in this area was uninterrupted, with sections of double lines of trenches and dugouts. At the back, bunkers surrounded by wood and wire entanglements were built (based on: Schwartz 1922: 63). The account provided by the commander of the 15th Reserve Infantry Regiment General Hans von Below, including a description of the night attack of the Russian troops on German positions, indicates that they were located by the hill 122; today, there is a war cemetery on the hill (Rypulak 2014: 41). Another account helping to determine the location of the fortifications is the one provided by Jan Karsznia, who took part in the fight in Słowiki. The author described the location of the Austrian positions on a higher ground near the village of Słowiki⁴.

⁴ The account written down by Stefan Siek can be found in the collection of Izba Historyczna in Sieciechów.

The way these fortifications were organised and constructed suggests that the German side expected long fights. There is no doubt that some of the German fortifications were used by the Russian army during the construction of the fortress's lines of defence in 1914–1915.

The main line of the Russian defence on the left bank of the Vistula ran between the forts, including positions beyond the ring of forts⁵, seven kilometres away from the bridges on the Vistula and four kilometres away from the forts of the fortress along the Łoje–Sieciechów–Wola Klasztorna–Sławczyn–Oleksów–Gniewoszów–Regów line (Schwartz 1922: 69; Bystrzycki 1976: 182; Trzaskowski 2014: 21).

[...] The range of the enemy's siege artillery and the heavy field artillery made me move the main line of defence to the [...] Łoje–Sieciechów–Wola Klasztorna–Oleksów–Regów line [...]. Thus, on the left bank of the Vistula, the line of defence was moved by 6–7,5 versts away from the crossing [...] (Schwartz 1922: 69).

It included foxholes, redoubts, artillery positions, connecting trenches, and obstacles in the form of barbed-wire entanglements, wooden barriers, ditches filled with water, and pitfalls (Schwartz 1922: 70; Bystrzycki 1976: 183; Trzaskowski 2014: 21). Even though, unlike in the case of German fortifications, Russian fortifications were placed in open areas, meadows and fields, their reconstruction is possible based on source materials. Additional protection of the main Russian line was ensured by flooding the areas in front of the fortifications.

[...] Points such as Sieciechów, Opactwo, Wola Klasztorna-Sławczyn-Oleksów-Regów were turned into a fortress. The whole area in front of the railway line, the Kozienice forest, and the Vistula is flooded by ponds and dams [...]⁶.

In his memoirs, Schwartz was critical about this method for fortifying the foreground. Flooding the area in front of the line of fortifications made it impossible for Russian troops to attack German positions.

5 In the years 1879–1885, the fortress was upgraded and three forts were erected on the left bank of the Vistula: (Kiliński) fort v Borek in the village of Borek, (Bem) Wannowski fort VI in Nagórnik, and (Sowiński) fort VII in Głusiec. All forts of the fortress were located within a 2.5–3.6-kilometre radius from the centre of the fortress, 2.5–3.5 kilometres apart. The total circumference of the external line of defence was eighteen kilometres. The citadel was connected with the forts with radial gravel or paved roads.

6 *Opisaniye boyevykh deystviy kreposti Ivangorod v techeniye avgusta, sentyabrya i oktyabrya 1914-goda/k.383*, <https://gwar.mil.ru/> [28 IV 2022].

[...] Although the war activities confirmed the necessity to build our defence line from Regów to Sieciechów, they also exposed many of its imperfections:

[...] the other shortcoming of our disposition were our own floods that made us move far away from the enemy, constituting a major obstacle to their activities, which was my main aim, but it also made our offensive more difficult, just like in the case of the attack of the 47th division towards Słowiki Nowe and of the Yekaterinburg Regiment on the German positions in the forest in Bąkowiec [...] (Schwartz 1922: 72).

The attack on Ivangorod in 1914 ended with the retreat of the German and Austro-Hungarian armies. The forces used in this section of the front proved to the fortress command how important it was for the enemy troops to seize a crossing on the Vistula and the fortress. On account of this, General von Schwartz analysed the previous defensive system and started planning the construction of fortifications that would ensure that the crossings on the Vistula were held.

[...] And thirdly (a defect of fortifications from 1914), if the distance between our main defensive line and the fortress centre was enough in the last battles [...], then with absolute certainty it can be said that in their next attack Germans will use large-calibre cannons, and then the centre of the fortress will be damaged. [...] This is why I have been entrusted with a new extremely important task: to immediately build a fortification system that will ensure the holding of all crossings on the Vistula and Ivangorod regardless of the means the enemy might use in the future (Schwartz 1922: 80).

To achieve this new goal, defensive fortifications were erected in place of the levelled German fortifications (Bystrzycki 1976: 198).

At the time, three lines of defence were created on the left bank of the Vistula:

1. Kozienice–Policzna–Janowiec,
2. Mozolice–Słowiki Nowe–Bąkowiec–Gniewoszów–Vistula,
3. Sieciechów–Wola Klasztorna–Zalesie–Sławczyn–Vistula.

In the previous research, the object of detailed analyses was the main line of defence located on the Mozolice–Słowiki Nowe–Bąkowiec–Gniewoszów–Vistula line. Within this line of fortifications, three defence groups were created: Mozolice (the right wing), Bąkowiec (the centre), and Gniewoszów (the left wing), closely connected with one another. They were located 12–14 kilometres away from the citadel. The fortified section covered minefields, bunkers, flooded areas, channels, lines of camouflaged foxholes, and lines of barbed wire (Bystrzycki 1976: 197). Between Bąkowiec and Gniewoszowiec (approx. 2.5–3 km), trenches and bunkers were built. On the foreground, there were barbed-wire entanglements and water

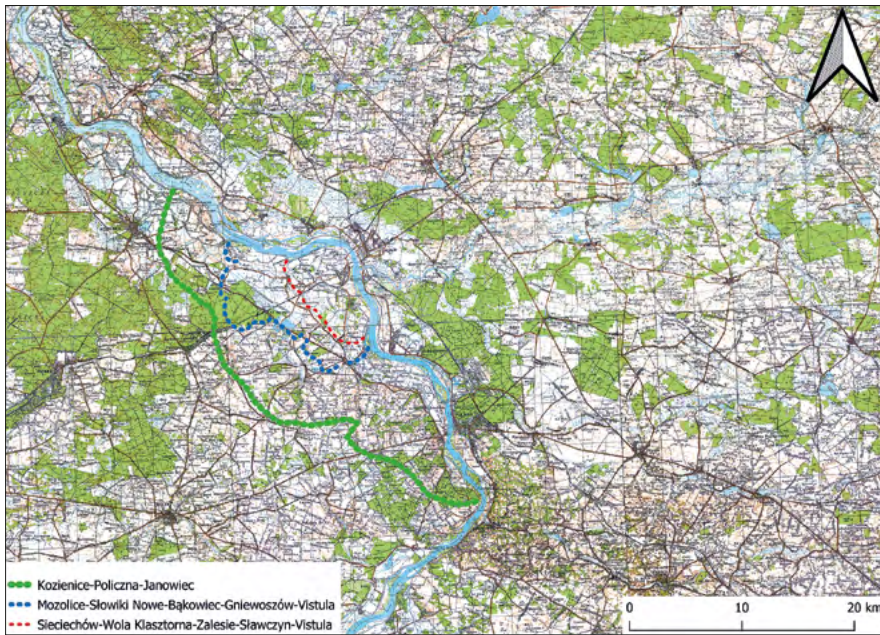


Fig. 2. The defence lines of the Dęblin Fortress in 1915 (prepared by A. Bachanek based on source materials).

obstacles (Bystrzycki 1976: 197). To increase the defensive capabilities of the Gniewoszków group, a channel was built between the village of Gniewoszków and the Vistula (Szwartz 1922: 62). Fortifications of the central group were concentrated near the villages of Bąkowiec and Słowiki, along the forest edge. The left wing of this group was reinforced with a ditch filled with water and barbed-wire entanglements (Fig. 2).

In the section between Bąkowiec and Mozolice, no frontal fortifications were erected. It was protected by the wings of other groups and water obstacles (Bystrzycki 1976: 197). After the Russian defensive positions had been broken through near Radom, German troops started a brisk march towards the Vistula, pushing the Russian troops to their last positions near the Ivangorod Fortress⁷. As a result of this situation, the fortress garrison came under the command of the 1st Army. On the following day, July 8, the German army forced the Russian troops to retreat from their positions on the Kozienice–Policzna–Janowiec line. The situation on the foreground of the fortress became dramatic for the Russian side.

⁷ Opisanije boyevykh deystviy pod Ivangorodom (s 8-go iyulya po 22-ye iyulya 1915 goda/k.222), <https://gwar.mil.ru/> [28 IV 2022].

In consequence, the defence of the fortress was concentrated on the positions of these three groups. Troops that were to take these positions arrived very late. As the German army continued their march towards the fortress, many sectors of the defensive line remained vacant, while the cannons and machine guns already installed in their positions remained unprotected (Fig. 3)⁸.

On the night of July 9, 1915, German troops launched an attack along the whole front line from Mozolice to Gniewoszków, which did not cease for twelve hours. The Russian side repelled all attacks, and the German troops dug in along the whole front line. The following night, there were no attempts to seize Russian positions⁹. On July 11, 1915, a decision was made to evacuate the fortress and destroy the defensive system¹⁰. After Russians had left the fortress, the area was seized by the German troops (Bystrzycki 1976: 197).

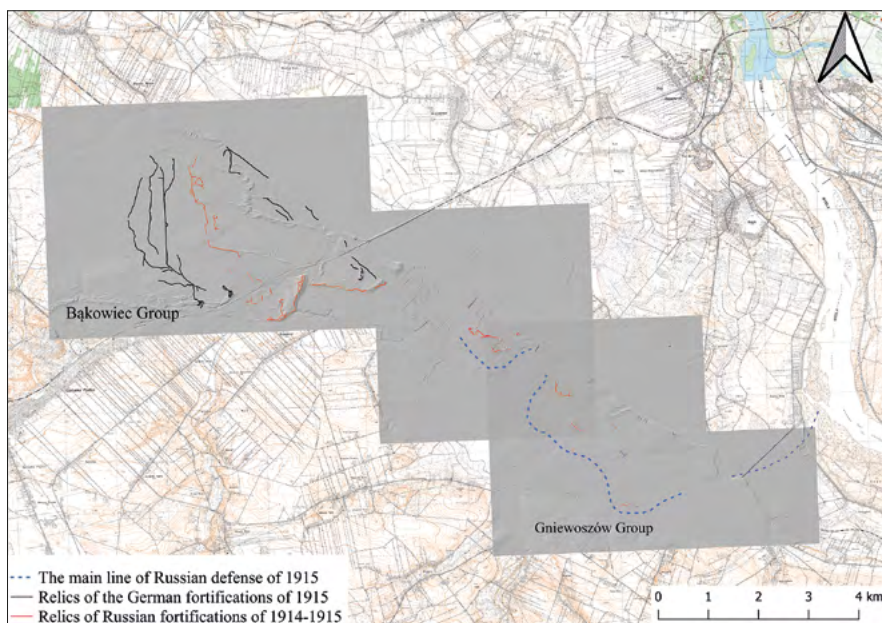


Fig. 3. The remains of field fortifications of the main line of defence of the Dęblin Fortress based on LiDAR images and source materials (prepared by A. Bachanek).

8 Opisaniye boyevykh deystviy pod Ivangorodom (s 8-go iyulya po 22-ye iyulya 1915 goda/k.223), <https://gwar.mil.ru/> [28 IV 2022].

9 Opisaniye boyevykh deystviy pod Ivangorodom (s 8-go iyulya po 22-ye iyulya 1915 goda/k.223), <https://gwar.mil.ru/> [28 IV 2022].

10 Opisaniye boyevykh deystviy pod Ivangorodom (s 8-go iyulya po 22-ye iyulya 1915 goda/k.226), <https://gwar.mil.ru/> [28 IV 2022].

The Gniewoszków defence group

The relics of field fortifications on the Gniewoszków–Vistula line have been poorly preserved. Today, their arrangement can be reconstructed almost only based on the following source documents:

- A fragment of the military operation log of the Ivangorod Fortress (Russian: *Vypiska iz zhurnala voyennykh deystviy kreposti Ivangorod*);
- A description of the war activities of the Ivangorod Fortress in August, September, and October 1914 (Russian: *Opisaniye boyevykh deystviy kreposti Ivangorod v techeniye avgusta, sentyabrya i oktyabrya 1914-go goda*), and
- A map of army positions near Ivangorod from February 22 to 28, 1915 (Russian: *Karta raspolozheniya voysk u Ivangoroda s 22 po 28 fevralya 1915 g.*);
- A description of the fights near Ivangorod (from July 8 to July 22, 1915) (Russian: *Opisaniye boyevykh deystviy pod Ivangorodom s 8-go iyulya po 22-ye iyulya 1915 goda*)¹¹.

Based on them, it can be concluded that the main line of defence of this group was located on the Sarnów-Granica (today a part of the village of Gniewoszków)–Regów–Vistula line (Fig. 4). Artillery positions in this section were arranged parallel to the line of trenches, 1–1.5 km away from them. On the night of July 6, 1915, Russian troops retreated towards these positions, dragging the enemy troops behind¹². Faced with such a situation, the fortress commandant decided to send the Karsk Infantry Regiment there, however, the order was revoked. The Gniewoszków Group became the most vulnerable section of the defence, with the situation on the foreground of the fortress becoming more and more dramatic. At the time, empty front sections were manned with troops and equipped with artillery: four batteries within the Bąkowiec group and five batteries within the Gniewoszków group.

Positions on the Gniewoszków–Vistula line were occupied by the Rostov Grenadier Regiment, thus protecting the vulnerable section of the front. However, as a result of the decision of the commandant of the grenadier corps, the regiment retreated from the fort positions to the village of Sarnów. This posed a serious threat to the fortress, so the regiment soon returned to the positions on the Gniewoszków-Vistula line. The positions to the right of Gniewoszków were to be occupied

¹¹ The materials are available on <https://gwar.mil.ru>. The site offers source documents concerning the activity of the Russian army in the years 1914–1915.

¹² *Opisaniye boyevykh deystviy pod Ivangorodom (s 8-go iyulya po 22-ye iyulya 1915 goda/k.222)*, <https://gwar.mil.ru/> [28 IV 2022].

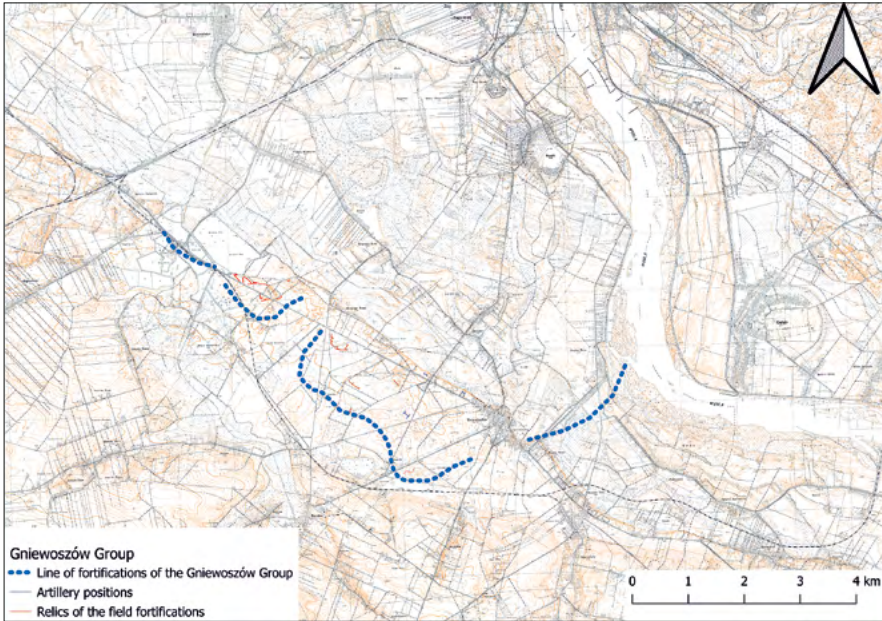


Fig. 4. The line of defence of the Dęblin Fortress in the Gniewoszków group section (prepared by A. Bachanek).

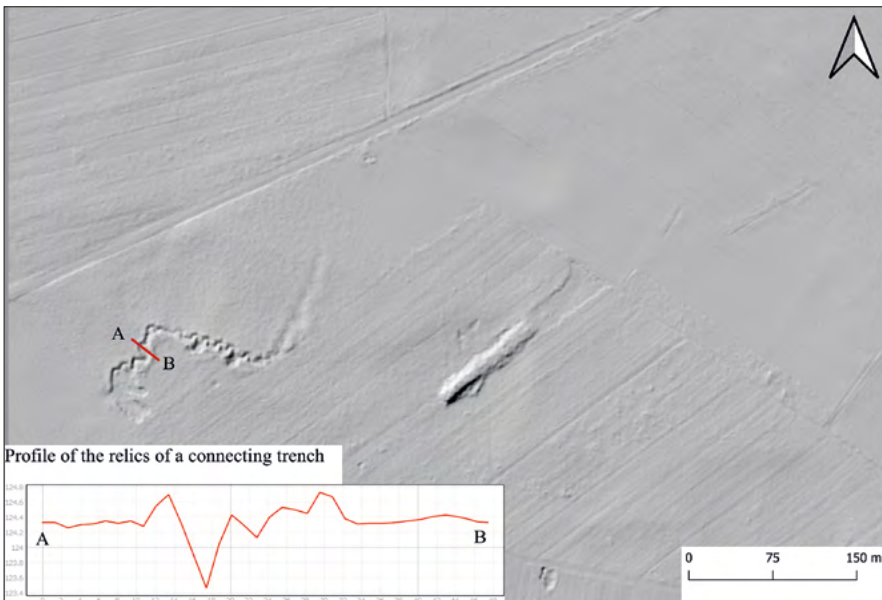


Fig. 5. The remains of a connecting trench in the village of Sarnów, Gniewoszków Commune, based on LiDAR images (prepared by A. Bachanek).

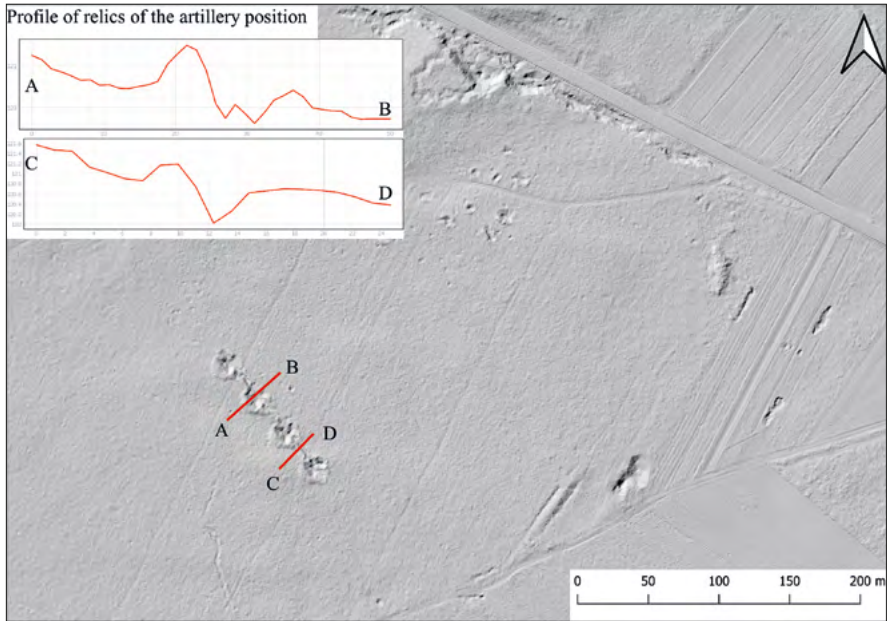


Fig. 6. The remains of a Russian artillery position in the forest in the village of Oleksów, based on LIDAR images (prepared by A. Bachanek).



Fig. 7. The present state of preservation of the remains of a Russian artillery position in the forest in the village of Oleksów (photograph by A. Bachanek).

by the Yekaterinburg Infantry Regiment, but Russian soldiers were not familiar with the area or the location of the positions, and darkness and rain made it difficult to find the right places. Using this situation, German soldiers vigorously attacked the soldiers who stopped near the entanglements during their retreat. The state of the regiment made it impossible to relocate. Then it was found by the officers sent by the commandant.

Under fire, they placed a part of the unit on their positions. At the same time, positions on the Sieciechów-Sławczyn line and near Gniewoszów were reinforced. The situation was so dynamic that the Russians ceased artillery fire for fear of killing their own soldiers.

Today, this group of fortifications is represented by the remains of a trench in the forest near the village of Sarnów (Fig. 5). Considering the zigzag form of the embankment and the fact it is perpendicular to the front line, it is a fragment of a connecting trench, with breastworks on both ends. The remains of fortifications stretch for 240 metres, along the SW-NW axis. This position was nearly destroyed by the German artillery during the attack on Ivangorod in the summer of 1915, when German troops concentrated their attacks in the direction of the village of Gniewoszów. The state of preservation of these fortifications was also affected by the fact that they were destroyed during the retreat of the Russian army. They were further devastated after the war.

The remains of the fortifications constructed between the Bąkowiec and Gniewoszów groups have been preserved to a moderate extent near the villages of Oleksów, Sławczyn, and Wólka Bachańska. The remains of an artillery position have been preserved in the forest on the edge of the village of Oleksów.

Along approximately 130 metres, near the today's village of Oleksów, one can see four hollows in the ground, which are the remains of objects originally meant for cannons and their crews, located along the NW-SE axis in the WS direction. The diameter of each of them is approximately ten metres. They are spaced approximately twenty metres apart and connected with trenches that are 3-4 metres wide. Each of these hollows is surrounded by an embankment (Fig. 6 and 7). Approximately 700 metres away from the remains of the artillery position in the NW direction, there are the remains of shooting positions covering the right flank. Shooting trenches stretch for 250 metres. It is a linear object with visible transoms, with a breastwork preserved. Over the stretch of 80 meters, calculating from the NW direction, there are the remains of a connecting trench, most probably leading to a bunker. It is a zigzag trench, with a breastwork from the SE side, preserved along 40 metres. In a grove located 500 metres north to the fortifications described above, in the village of Sławczyn, there are other remains of the last line of defence. They represent a forward line of shooting trenches with connecting trenches leading to bunkers.

The trenches are located along the NW-SE axis in the SW direction. They are



Fig. 8. The remains of the Russian line of defence in the Gniewoszków group section in the village of Sławczyn, based on LIDAR images (prepared by A. Bachanek).

linear, with visible ventilation holes and a breastwork. The front position stretching along 130 metres has flanking trenches branching off in both directions. Each is approximately 200 metres long. Along the whole section of the shooting trench, there are connecting trenches with a zigzag embankment, leading to bunkers. The connecting trenches and bunkers are well-preserved. They are the most distinct field elements in this section. A connecting trench runs from the eastmost bunker towards the next line of fortifications. The remains of fortifications built in this section can also be found in the forest in the village of Bąkowiec. The fortifications were built using the lie of the land. The shooting trenches were located on a rise stretching for approximately one kilometre along the forest. They are linear and follow the rise in the NW–SE direction. Connecting trenches with zigzag embankments follow the falling ground (Fig. 8).

The Bąkowiec defence group

The Bąkowiec group constituted the central defensive section of the Dęblin Fortress in 1915. The remains of fortifications have been preserved in the forests in the villages of Bąkowiec and Słowiki Nowe. German troops approached the Bąkowiec group on July 9, 1915. The defensive line in this section was manned by infantry

units, which is why the enemy's patrol was immediately attacked with a machine gun. Heavy fire gave the impression that the positions were strongly manned, so the German troops only directed artillery fire at them, digging in about one kilometre away from the Russian fortification line¹³.

The remains of field fortifications stretch for approximately four kilometres on both sides of the primary route 738. In this section, the Russian defensive lines have been preserved well, even though during its retreat the Russian army blew up the warehouse and some of the trenches. Outlines of shooting trenches, connecting trenches, and the remains of artillery positions are plainly visible in the field and derivatives of digital terrain models. One can quite clearly see regular, square objects, being the remains of the military warehouses built by Russians. The main shooting trenches were connected by a network of connecting trenches. Some 1–1.5 km behind the trenches there was a network of artillery positions. Russians built this group using the German positions from 1914. Thus, the remains of German positions are preserved worse and they are less visible in the field. After Russians had retreated, Germans moved north-east, taking the Russian positions. On the bluff at the road, one can see regular lines of dugouts stretching for approximately 200 metres. Their outlines are poorly visible on the surface; dimensions of most of them are 5 x 2.5 m. Along the dugouts, there are the remains of a trench that originally led to another line of trenches on the bluff on the other side of the road. These fortifications are poorly visible on the surface and stretch for approximately 800 metres.

Analysis of the relics of the Great War on the foreground of the Dęblin fortress in the context of the paradigm of preservation and the paradigm of heritage

The heritage of the Great War, which is a small fragment of the history of the region in question, is represented today in many ways, for example, through human memory, written history, source materials, the remains of fortifications, historical places, and war cemeteries and graves. From the archaeologist's point of view, the main elements of this heritage are material relics that I interpret in the context of two extreme paradigms of past management. The paradigm of preservation is an uncomplicated idea that focuses on securing the historical place or object against damage, which involves simple forms of activity (Ashworth 2015: 24). Its aim is to preserve the relics of the past for the future generations, possibly

13 Opisanije boyevykh deystviy pod Ivangorodom (s 8-go iyulya po 22-ye iyulya 1915 goda/k.223), <https://gwar.mil.ru/> [28 IV 2022].

without any changes to their form. The selection criteria are: age, historical significance, and the aesthetic value (Ashworth 2015: 48). Theoretically, these are objective criteria, however, in practice only experts are able to see and appreciate their historical, scientific, and social value. A completely different philosophy of managing historical resources is characteristic of the paradigm of heritage, the main objective of which is to use elements of the past in the present by filling material elements of the past with content (Ashworth 2015: 31; Góral 2018: 177). Heritage selection criteria are external, focusing on the use of elements of the past for political, economic, and social purposes (Ashworth 2015: 51). According to this paradigm, the essence of preserving the past for the present and the future is not the object itself but the message that may be conveyed through its content. This is why everything can be heritage. One should only see its potential and demand for a given type of heritage.

How to interpret the material traces of warfare in the foreground of the Dęblin Fortress based on these paradigms? In the 1980s and 1990s, the forts of the Dęblin Fortress were entered into the register of historic monuments and the conservator's recommendations indicated the need for strict protection. In consequence, the area where forts were located became an exposed zone, where construction of new structures was prohibited. Considering the large surface area of the protected land, agricultural activity was allowed there (cf. rej. zab. No. 1/A/79). As a result of these decisions, the forts as spectacular objects, representing the art of Russian fortifications, have become items in the register of historic monuments. Preservation of these objects has not attracted interest of the local inhabitants or potential tourists. The uniqueness of these structures has been noted by experts and enthusiasts, however, the fort area is being constantly degraded.

According to the paradigm of preservation, we should preserve areas where the historic substance is spectacular, but preservation of field fortifications does not fall within the meaning of this paradigm because, as I already mentioned above, to many people these are just holes in the ground. To arouse interest in them, it is necessary to fill them with content, which means supporting the process of heritage creation. Creating such heritage, however, leads to a number of questions and consequences, requiring responsibility for the message and the narrative, and so for the identification of the place, i.e. defining its identity. The narrative we create depends on political, social, and economic needs. Here I will use the example of the Gorchakov fort constructed in the years 1837–1847 (Buczyński, Gruszecki 1996: 97–109), today located in the village of Zajezerze. There is a cemetery in its place and, which is important in the context of the discussed paradigms, a burial mound of Michał Okurzała, corporal of the Polish Army, who died in 1944 in fights near Dęblin. In the 1970s, an initiative to commemorate the heroic death of Michał Okurzała near Głusiec and Zajezerze was undertaken. The building of

the burial mound and erection of a monument on its top, commemorating the death of Okurzała and soldiers of the 1st Army of the Polish Army and the Soviet Army, show the need for a narrative characteristic of the Polish People's Republic. This completely overshadowed the earlier history of the place. Another stage of the narrative was reached in recent years, when plaques commemorating the fights from 1944 were put up near the fort, without mentioning the events from 1914–1915.

It seems that in the Polish People's Republic, the place with Okurzała's burial mound provided a basis for building social identity by creating a meaning founded on an association with an eminent person. The society started to perceive this particular heritage resource as its own thanks to Okurzała, a Polish hero fighting alongside the Soviet Army for the liberation of Poland from the German occupation. This was a perfect propaganda tool for building the Polish identity upon the myth of the liberating Soviet army. Showing the whole story would be undesirable by the authorities. One can ask about the reasons for this. Looking for an answer to this question, it would be worth considering the fact that the fortifications were built by Russians during the Partitions. The army stationed there was the partitioner's army, which contradicted the myth of Russians as liberators. Another reason was the participation of the Polish Legions and Józef Piłsudski in the fights in 1914. During the Polish-Soviet War in 1920, Polish forces preparing for the manoeuvre from the Wieprz River were concentrated in Dęblin and the area (Kosiński 2016: 7–27). These two events, however, did not fit within the policy at the time: Józef Piłsudski, Polish Legions, and the Battle of Warsaw are all symbols of independence and the Polish fight against Russians.

Okurzała's burial mound near the fort is a place of symbolic burial. The society starts asking the following questions: Where is Michał Okurzała really buried? Did he really die in the operation described? His body was never found. Does it prove the social need for a change of narrative conveyed by the place? It is difficult to answer this question, or even impossible at the current stage of research. Perhaps it is a signal and the right moment to extend the narrative about the place to include its earlier history.

The specific character of the heritage of the Great War in the area studied is also reflected by the discussion about celebrations commemorating the regaining of independence. I will analyse it based on my own experience gained by taking part in these celebrations and discussions with the local population. The local inhabitants' knowledge of the specific character of the place, including information about the fallen soldiers buried in the cemetery in Wysokie Koło, is mostly based on information from plaques. On a rock at the end of the main path, there is the following inscription:

In memory of Austro-Hungarian, German, and Russian soldiers buried here, who fell on October 22–26, 1914 Gniewosów Commune Austrian Red Cross October 8, 2006

Whereas the main plaque at the entrance offers the following information:

In the mass graves lie soldiers of Austrian, German, and Russian armies, who fought a fierce battle for the Dęblin Fortress in October 1914. All three armies taking part in the fight were multi-national, with Poles serving in them against their will. Allies of Austria included Hungarians, Slovaks, Czechs, Croats, and Bosnians, while allies of Russia included Serbs. The cemetery was established in 1914. No documentation has been preserved, so the exact number of the buried is difficult to determine. According to estimates, a few hundred people were buried there. The bodies of the fallen soldiers were buried in mass graves. This state has not changed. [...] The cemetery is taken care of by the Primary School in Wysokie Koło and the Commune Office in Gniewosów [...].

Concordance between the message and historical facts requires a separate analysis. For the purposes of this paper I will only focus on the content building the message about the soldiers buried in the cemetery in Wysokie Koło. In the discussions held, the presence of the cemetery is not questioned. Taking care of it is obvious. The society objects to celebrating the Independence Day at the cemetery. The argument against it is that the celebrations should be held on the opposite side of the road, in the parish cemetery, where Jan Serafin is buried. He was a *Cichociemny*, who died tragically after his parachute did not open in May 1944 in nearby Opatkowice. Other places more “worthy” of such celebrations are the graves of November and January insurgents buried in the cemetery in Oleksów. Then why is the Independence Day still celebrated in this cemetery? Apparently the reason for this is that it is the only place in the Gniewosów Commune that represents the events that led to the regaining of independence.

And what is the source of discord connected with the understanding of the significance of the war cemetery from the Great War? The first reason I would suggest is limited education about the Great War (which I already referred to earlier in this paper), the second one concerns the content the cemetery was filled with, while the third one involves personal experiences of the recipients of this content. The second and third reasons, which I emphasise referring to the philosophy of the heritage paradigm, are more difficult to verify and not so obvious. What also matters in this context is reflection on the way people interpret the message, where they look, and what catches their eye (cf. Rusnak, Ramus 2019).

Analysing the arrangement and the message of the content, the discussion allows to draw the following conclusions:

- The content is placed in the centre of the cemetery, which is why the recipients most frequently absorb the following information: *In memory of Austro-Hungarian, German, and Russian soldiers who fell on October 22–26, 1914*; the message: *here lie soldiers who fought in the armies of the partitioners, meaning “strangers”, “occupiers”*;
- The content placed on the plaque at the entrance, which has most information, meaning it is potentially most important, is divided into sections on different levels¹⁴ and is frequently omitted by recipients or, due to the amount of information, is read selectively:

Level I

The content placed uppermost, at eye level, which is probably most frequently assimilated by recipients, the following layers should be indicated:

Content:

In the mass graves lie soldiers of Austrian, German, and Russian armies, who fought a fierce battle for the Dęblin Fortress in October 1914.

The message:

In the mass grave lie soldiers of Austrian, German, and Russian armies, meaning “strangers”, who fought for the Dęblin Fortress, meaning a strategic object of significance to the partitioners, the seizing of which was of no great significance to Poles.

Based on my observations, it can be said that the lower the content is placed, the less attention it draws. This concerns the content on levels II and III:

Level II

Content:

All three armies taking part in the fight were multi-national, with Poles serving in them against their will.

The message:

Soldiers of different nationalities, including Poles, fought in the armies of the partitioners. Poland had not existed as a state for 119 years, so soldiers did not and could not identify themselves as Poles. They fought because they were conscripted by force, but surnames that sounded Polish did not make them Polish.

Level III

Content:

Allies of Austria included Hungarians, Slovaks, Czechs, Croats, and Bosnians, while allies of Russia included Serbs.

¹⁴ The content is arranged on eight levels, but in this paper I only analyse the first three.

The message:

During the war, Austria fought along with its allies (not forced) including Hungarians, Slovaks, Czechs, Croats, and Bosnians, while Russia was supported by Serbs. This means that soldiers of all these nationalities fought voluntarily (unlike Poles) as they were allies of the partitioners, so they were also “strangers”.

The above content gets supplemented by personal experiences of the recipients in the form of family accounts as well as information recorded in the works of local history enthusiasts (cf. Jaworski 1996).

Conclusions

In this paper, I wanted to present the specific character of material relics of the events that took place near the Dęblin Fortress in the years 1914–1915 based on selected examples. They indicate that the material remains only theoretically represent two systems of past management: preservation and heritage. Fixed fortifications of the Dęblin Fortress are protected, while resources for creating the heritage of the region are war cemeteries. The message conveyed by the content filling places that represent the past gives rise to many controversies and conflicts in the local community. The main issues raised during discussions allow to provisionally identify the questions and doubts related to this message.

This shows how important it is to identify the knowledge and the present attitude of the local inhabitants with regard to the events from the Great War and places connected with it. The activities that need to be taken include documentation of the preserved remains of fortifications, the logistic support to the front line as well as war cemeteries and graves. The next step is to analyse information available in war cemeteries and places connected with the First World War to determine the content and the message recorded. This will allow to create a basis for the discovery and responsible creation of the local heritage, in this particular case referring to the battle of the Dęblin Fortress.

Therefore, before we start creating heritage in a given area, we should first identify the message conveyed by the present context of the understanding of resources and the attitude of the community to the space in which heritage is to be created. In the case of the field fortifications described, it has to be said that creating heritage based on them will require responsibility and intense involvement.

The message already conveyed by the content placed in the cemetery in Wysokie Koło and the Gorchakov Fort evokes a negative or neutral attitude to the events from 1914–1915. However, as I tried to demonstrate in this paper, the remains of the main line of defence of the Dęblin Fortress from 1915 form a space ready to create heritage. Their state of preservation is good and they are connected with one of the most important events in the region. Their construction and form

show the involvement and zest with which Aleksander von Schwartz upgraded the fortress. But most importantly for the heritage creators, they have not been filled with content yet. This opens up many opportunities, such as the creation of a military open-air museum and educational paths or adding information about the First World War to the already existing tourist routes.

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Streszczenie

Artykuł prezentuje wstępne wyniki badań materialnych relikwów Wielkiej Wojny na przedpolu Twierdzy Dęblin. Obszar ten w latach 1914–1915 stał się areną walk armii rosyjskiej, niemieckiej i austro-węgierskiej. Działania wojenne pozostawiły w krajobrazie liczne ślady, takie jak fortyfikacje polowe, forty oraz cmentarze. Celem badań było zlokalizowanie i ustalenie chronologii relikwów fortyfikacji polowych na odcinku Gniewoszów–Bąkowiec–Mozolice. Badania polegały na analizie materiałów źródłowych, LiDAR, weryfikacjach terowych oraz analizie społecznej wartości relikwów Wielkiej Wojny. Ostatni etap badań polegał na analizie społecznej wartości tych obiektów opartej o filozofię zarządzania przeszłością poprzez ochronę i dziedzictwo na przykładzie cmentarza w Wysokim Kole oraz fortu Gorczakowa. W wyniku badań udało się określić przebieg głównej linii obrony rosyjskiej z 1915 r. Linia obrony składała się z trzech grup: Gniewoszów, Bąkowiec, Mozolice. Najlepiej zachowały się relikty umocnień polowych w obrębie grupy Bąkowiec; był to centralny odcinek linii obrony rosyjskiej. Jak wynika z analizy społecznej wartości relikwów Wielkiej Wojny, dominującym sposobem jest tworzenie dziedzictwa. Przekaz płynący z treści wypełniających miejsca reprezentujące przeszłość budzi wiele kontrowersji i dysonansów wśród lokalnych mieszkańców.

Słowa kluczowe: twierdza Dęblin, dziedzictwo Wielkiej Wojny, operacja warszawsko-dęblńska, paradygmat ochrony, paradygmat dziedzictwa, archeologia współczesności

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