



## Inventory of Mountain Sheep Farming and of the Phenomena Related to Colonisation Based on the so-called Wallachian Law in the Territory of the Žilina Region



**Interreg**  
Poľsko-Slovensko

Európsky fond regionálneho rozvoja



**TRASA  
VALAŠSKEJ  
KULTÚRY**



# **Inventory of Mountain Sheep Farming and of the Phenomena Related to Colonisation Based on the so-called Wallachian Law in the Territory of the Žilina Region**

## **TABLE OF CONTENTS:**

### **Inventory of Mountain Sheep Farming and of the Phenomena Related to Colonisation Based on the so-called Wallachian Law in the Territory of the Žilina Region**

The arrival of Wallachians and the Colonisation Based on the so-called Wallachian Law in the Territory of the Žilina Region .....	4
The origin of Wallachians .....	5
Characteristics, signs and the right context for colonisation based on Wallachian law .....	7
Ethnic question of the colonisation based on Wallachian law in the territory of the Žilina region .....	8
The underlying reasons and factors influencing Wallachian colonisation and its scope ..	10
Wallachians, Wallachian settlement, sheep farming a mountain sheep farming in the respective parts of the Žilina region, Regions .....	12
Liptov	
Colonisation based on Wallachian law in Liptov .....	14
Traditional methods of sheep farming in Liptov .....	18
Orava	
Colonisation based on Wallachian law in Orava .....	24
Traditional methods of sheep farming in Orava.....	27
Turiec / Turiec and the colonisation based on Wallachian law.....	33
Traditional forms of sheep farming in Turiec.....	35
Kysuce and upper Váh valley (the surroundings of Žilina and Bytča)	
Colonisation based on Wallachian law in Kysuce and upper Váh valley.....	39
Traditional forms of sheep farming in Kysuce and Upper Váh valley .....	49
Traditional Forms of Sheep Farming in Slovakia and in the Territory of the Žilina Region.....	56

### **Natural heritage associated with Carpathian mountain sheep farming in the territory of the current Žilina region**

Tatra National Park – TANAP.....	74
National Park of Low Tatras – NAPANT .....	76
National Park of Veľká Fatra .....	78
Protected Natural Area Kysuce .....	79
Protected Natural Area of Horná Orava .....	82
Protected Natural Area Strážovské vrchy .....	87
National Park of Malá Fatra .....	84
Meadows and Pastures of Malá Fatra and Kysucká vrchovina mountain ranges – Our Cultural and Natural Heritage .....	89

Study was prepared under the project titled Routes of the Wallachian Culture (project code: PLSK.01.01.00-18-0068/16), supported from the Interreg V-A Poland-Slovakia 2014-2020 program and co-funded by the EU: 85 % from the European Regional Development Fund within the Activity III. CARPATHIAN UNIVERSITY.

This publication only presents the expert knowledge and opinions of the respective authors who are solely responsible for them; the opinions presented in this publication are not an official position of the European Union.



TRASA  
VALAŠSKEJ  
KULTÚRY





# Inventory of Mountain Sheep Farming and of the Phenomena Related to Colonisation Based on the so-called Wallachian Law in the Territory of the Žilina Region

Tomáš Mrázek

## The arrival of Wallachians and the Colonisation Based on the so-called Wallachian Law in the Territory of the Žilina Region

So far, the topic of colonisation based on Wallachian law in the territory currently administered by the self-government of the *Žilina region* has not been processed comprehensively for the whole territory, although partial information can be found in numerous publications, articles and other sources. The following text attempts to provide a certain summary of knowledge and information about the specified theme and is based directly in the above sources with minimum modifications or interpretation. The territory of the currently existing *Žilina region* comprises the **historical regions of the Upper Váh Valley (Upper Váh valley), Kysuce, Turiec, Orava and Liptov**. This is a predominantly mountainous region with distinctive areas which is closely connected to the heritage of the colonisation based on Wallachian law from the historical, ethnographic, cultural as well as natural or even environmental perspective. ***It is exactly here where a number of phenomena are rooted that are related to the arrival of Wallachian colonists as well***



Pastorale, František Zvěřina, ink and pen, Slovak National Gallery, source: webumenia.sk



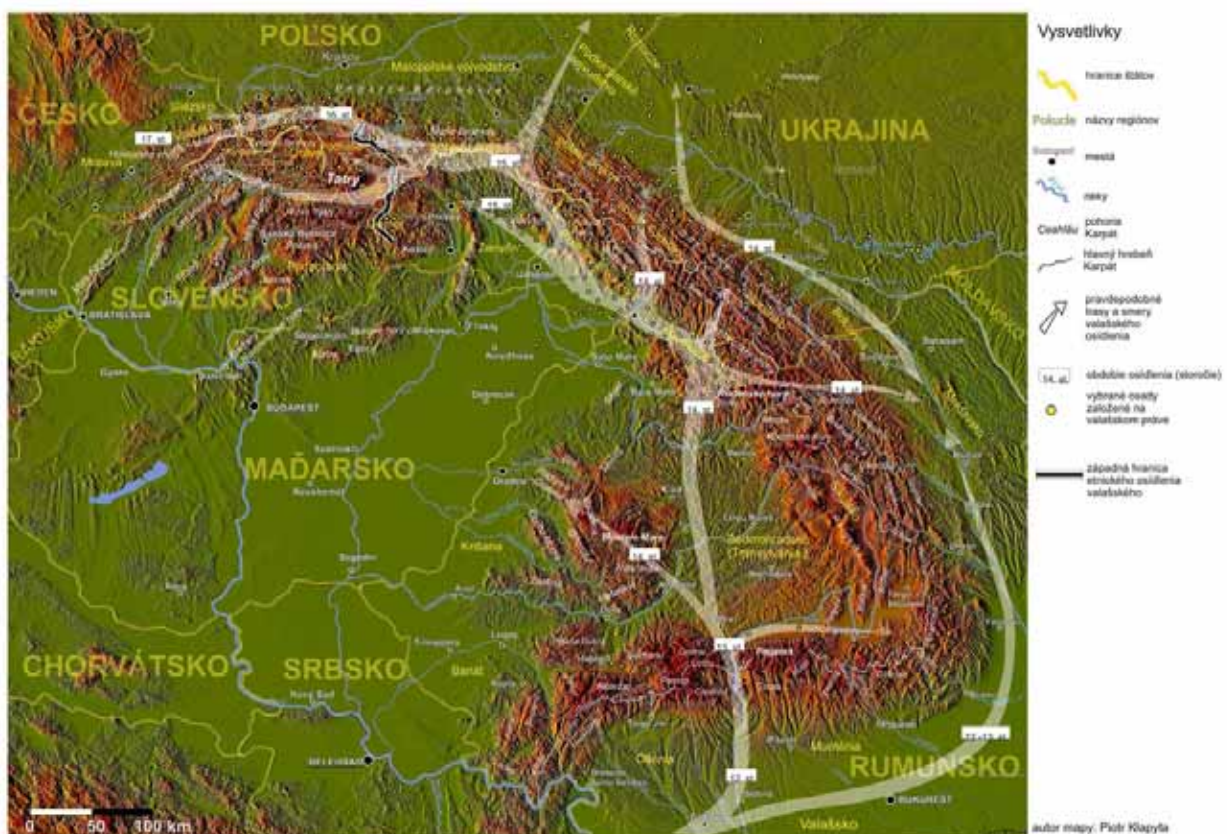
*as development of Carpathian mountain sheep farming (“mountain sheep farming”) as a unique form of agricultural farming in the mountain regions which are until this very day perceived as a part of the Slovak identity through their cultural and commercial expressions.* Many images and pictures related to the life of the shepherds, posturers and flock masters *from the regions of Liptov, Orava or upper Váh valley* have become a symbol of how we perceive our own identity, independence, as well as pride and uniqueness and captivating charm of these mountain regions. Dumplings with *bryndza* cheese, or other cheese-made delicacies are an integral part of the *Žilina region* and its character, while only few people know about others highly exciting circumstances and facts related to the arrival of Wallachians and the beginning of *Carpathian mountain sheep farming*, which gradually started to shape this land.

### **The origin of Wallachians**

The true origin of **Wallachians** is hidden behind the veil of secrecy until this day. However, various theories of their origin agree that they represent a *Romanised population of the Balkans* that – as a result of various reasons – started to move up to the *uplands of the southern Carpathian Mountains* where they chose to live as herders and shepherds. *First reliable records about Wallachians come from Byzantine sources from the 8<sup>th</sup> century.* These documents suggest that they were *linguistically and ethnically specific ethnic unit of Romance origin.* After the end of 12<sup>th</sup> century, these mountain herders and shepherds gradually started to migrate along the both sides of the Carpathians towards the north and west. *From the territory of Wallachia,* they first penetrated to *Transylvania* and from there, their colonisation stream steadily penetrated the *territory of Ruthenia, Galicia, Lesser Poland and Slovakia* reaching even the westernmost point of the Carpathian crescent, that is the *territory of Silesia and Moravia* in today’s Poland and Czech Republic respectively. *First Wallachians penetrated to Slovakia in the 1330s from the territory of Ruthenia. Their presence is documented as early as in 1337 in the village of Koromľa in the Uh county in today’s Ukraine.* Shortly afterwards, they are likely to have penetrated to the neighbouring *county of Zemplín* (south-east Slovakia) and by the mid-14<sup>th</sup> century, Wallachian population penetrated the *territory of today’s Šariš* (north-east Slovakia). Then, in the first half of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, they settled down also in *Turňa county* and in the same century they are also found in *Abov county*. Still in the early 15<sup>th</sup> century, Wallachians started to move further to the west, to the counties of *Gemer and Liptov* and from there, still before mid-

15th century, they reached also the territory of Orava. In the second half of the 15th century, we have reports of Wallachians also from the counties of **Trenčín and Zvolen** and later on they penetrated further west to the **county of Nitra**. The counties of **Spiš and Turiec**, which were known for their dense settlement based on the so-called emphyteutic privilege (tenancy for regular payment) started to be settled by Wallachians only at the end of the 15th century. It was in this period when the first groups of *Wallachians* crossed the borders of medieval *Hungary* and reached the westernmost point of the Carpathian crescent, that is, the territory of **Silesia and Moravia**. Although Wallachians **did manage to penetrate to almost all the regions which were later known for settlement based**

**Wallachian Colonisation, map author: Piotr Kłapyta**



**on the so-called Wallachian privilege** by the end of the 15th century, as we can see from the map, the main wave of their settlement lagged behind their initial penetration. **During their ‘march though the Carpathians’, the originally ethnically unified Wallachians gradually mixed and merged with the population of the eastern Carpathians to produce a mixed Romanian-Ruthenian-Polish ethnic unit which was later enriched with the Slovak element in our territory. The Romanian element retained its dominant position in this extensive colonising move only in Transylvania.**

*In the territory of north-east Carpathians, it was later dominated by the Ruthenians and further to the west, it was increasingly taking on the original Slovak population.*

### **Characteristics, signs and the right context for colonisation based on Wallachian law**

*A typical and original characteristic of Wallachian colonisation was extensive breeding of sheep (to so called “valaška”, or Wallachian sheep) as well as goats based mainly on pasturing the animals on the mountain uplands in the altitude exceeding 900-1000 meters above the sea level from spring to autumn with prevailing wintering of the flocks in the outdoor environment, outside conventional the stables.*

Typical nomadic way of pasturing known from the Balkans, where the shepherds move to the warmer areas with their animals for summer was modified in the Slovak territory. Shepherds of the Wallachian herds and flocks were changing pastures and sheepfolds usually within a single feudal domain (demesne) they also had to ensure sufficient fodder for the animals during winter (felled yearling shoots of trees, harvested hay), which they often prepared in the zone of the forest (upland meadows, clearings, felled forest areas) and during wintering in the winter sheepfolds (so-called freezers) they fed the animals with it. **Wallachian law represented yet another sign:** it was formed as early as in the 13<sup>th</sup> century in the **Southern Carpathians** on the basis of gradually established system of customs and conventions which, through their extended application, gradually became “living conventions and standards” for the Romanian shepherds. **As a result of migration of the original Wallachians, the Wallachian law was modified and partially also**



**differ-entiated. Mainly the groups of Ruthenians living in the Eastern Carpathians** left their essential influence on its modified version, however, it also reflected the aspects of jurisdictions of other areas and countries where it was spread (e.g. elements of the *Russian Pravda* which represents a complex of the oldest legislation preserved from the *Kyevan Rus*). **It was exactly the privilege of Matthias Corvinus for the Wallachians from**

**Flock Master and Gamekeeper from under Orava Castle, Peter Michal Bohúň, lithography, Slovak National Gallery, source: webumenia.sk**



*Orava and Liptov from 1474 issued by the king in Ružomberok, which represents the most extensive body of laws and duties captured in writing in the Carpathian space. Its significance is also attested by the fact that it was used as a reference document by the Wallachians living in other regions towards the west (upper Váh valley, that is Upper Váh valley) when requesting the nobility to confirm their rights.* The specifics of the Wallachian life were also reflected in the structure of organisation of their self-government. This was made up by two essential components: 1. *Municipal* and 2. *supra-municipal*. **The leader of the Wallachian municipal communities was 'knez'.** Knez had a role to manage the Wallachians subject to him so that they could pasture the flocks and herds smoothly as well as to produce the *Wallachian products* and pay the required *dues* to their landlords. If there existed several *Wallachian villages* within a single castle dominion or possibly the respective Wallachians lived here dispersed across several locations by individual families or smaller groups, **they used to elect a 'voivode' from amongst the 'knezi'.** A *Wallachian voivode* had a higher court authority and represented the *Wallachians* also in relation to the landlord. Another specific trait was the payment of *dues*. In our territory this usually meant a so called "twentieth part" (e.g. 5 pieces out of 100 sheep).

### **Ethnic question of the colonisation based on Wallachian law in the territory of the Žilina region**

First groups of *Wallachians – herdsmen*, who penetrated to the territory *of eastern Hungary, Slovakia as well as Ruthenia in the first half of the 14<sup>th</sup> century* where members of the *Eastern Christian Orthodoxy* with regards to their predominantly *Romanian* and **after the mid-14<sup>th</sup> century** perhaps also *Russian* (Ruthenian) ethnic origin. The catholic clergy regarded them as *schismatics*, **they didn't have to pay taxes.** Upon their arrival to the current territory of the *Žilina region*, **they were largely a very specific people, aliens, ethnically diversified. Even in the Western Carpathians, they didn't lose the remains of the original Eastern Carpathian ethnic element.** These people advanced along the both sides of the Carpathians. **In the central Carpathians**, they were subject to *Russification or Ukrainization*, either by adjusting to the locals or by attracting the local inhabitants from *central Carpathians* to join their ranks while



Goral, C.L. Monogram author, copper engraving, 1801 - 1850, Orava  
Gallerv. source: webumenia.sk

passing by. This *Russification or Ukrainization* were evident both on the ***Polish side of the Carpathians as well as in today's Slovakia***. The context of various ethnic influences during Wallachian colonisation is also shaped by the fact that the contemporary feudal lords often held extensive domains in ***various parts of Hungary***, e.g. Ján Corvinus not only held **Likava** and **Hrádok** castles around 1490 but also **Mukačevo** as well as **Solymos castle domain (at the border with Transylvania)**, while in the early 16<sup>th</sup> century the Zápol'ský (Zapolya) family ruled over the **dominions of Trenčín, Košeca, Ilava, Lietava, Likava, Hrádok, Spiš and Orava**, and in the early second half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century Thurso family acquired the domains of Trenčín, Spiš, Bojnice, Tematín, Šintava and Hlohovec as well as Orava and Lietava. ***New settlers could have been also led by the captains of brigands or mercenary units from the Serbian-Croat frontier or possibly the Galician or Romanian frontiers.*** In the 1540s-60s, Wallachians in the territory of Žilina region were ***still perceived as a foreign*** (non - native) ***element***. Wallachians who were arriving to and settling in these regions ***in the territory of today's Slovakia or Poland*** were ***ethnically influenced by the Ruthenian or originally Romanian elements***, on the Polish side of the mountains they were *Polonized*, thus giving birth to the ***unique ethnic group of Gorals***. ***In Slovakia*** (Orava, Kysuce and in some enclaves in Liptov), they were merging with the domestic population, which led to ***significant impact on the traditional Slovak culture, which has left its traces on the material culture, customs, regional***

Ruthenian Idyll, František Bohumír Zvěřina, pen drawing, 1858, Morava  
Gallerv. source: webumenia.sk





**A Farm in Vrátna Dolina, Thomas Ender, watercolour, 1853-1866, Library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences**

***dialects and traditional music.*** It is exactly the northern territory of ***Orava and Kysuce*** where the two strong colonisation streams of Wallachians penetrated, met, mixed and merged. Of these two, the northern penetrated from the ***territory of present Poland*** (through ***Galicia***, and ***Southern Poland***, above the ***High Tatras***), where it came ***from the more eastern parts of the Carpathians*** and ***was gradually getting a Polish ethnic character***, while the southern stream was arriving ***from the east, south of the Tatras*** and with participation of the domestic population it was gradually ***getting increasingly Slovak ethnic character***. During penetration ***to the territory of Moravian Wallachia*** (Moravské Valašsko), ***the Slovak ethnic element was already dominating*** (surnames, denominations, customs and habits) with all specific layers (culture, language, whether the original Wallachian – Romanian, Ruthenian, Polish, Slovak or other).

## **The underlying reasons and factors influencing Wallachian colonisation and its scope**

Wallachians did not arrive at the ***end of the 15<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> century*** to the respective locations all at once, but instead ***they were arriving gradually in groups in the form of several colonisation streams***. Feudal agricultural economy certainly had ***an important influence*** on the colonisation under the so-called Wallachian law: the so-called directional economy. Thanks to (very simple) ***manufacturing of goods***, ***the upland Wallachian sheep farming was granting a greater economic performance than sheep farming with non-Wallachian type of sheep***. Breeding of Wallachian sheep became convenient also from the food-making perspective as along with the



*previously produced sheep cheese and cow-milk curd, production of more durable sheep cheese types grew substantially, mainly of bryndza cheese.*



**Flock Master, Ján Hála, oil painting, 1926, Slovak National Gallery, source: [webumenia.sk](http://webumenia.sk)**

quasi-nomadic way of life of the Wallachian colonists as well as complicated economic and social situation and obstacles by the feudal lords and other factors in the mountainous regions they were facing in the Central Carpathians (in Ukraine and Poland). For example, *in the territory of eastern and central Slovakia*, mainly in the mining regions, with their extensive method of farming and the resulting damage to the forests, Wallachian colonists often found themselves in conflict with the already established mining economy. *Although Wallachian colonists were* (mainly in later periods) *settled in targeted manner on specific locations, in the first colonisation waves, we observe often quite spontaneous activities not under full control of the feudal lords.* Wallachian colonisation and after all the actual situation of the Wallachians *were closely related also to the development of large estates as well as deterioration of the position and liberties of the Wallachians, which occurred first in the Polish regions and later also*

According to available data from the contemporary documents and their processing in literature, it appears that *Wallachian colonists in the first half of 16<sup>th</sup> century* did not live in the territory of Žilina region on a specific compact and large territory, *instead, we observe isolated islands of individuals and groups with specific type of agricultural and farming activities.* The reasons for the move of the Wallachian colonists in the given timeframe was certainly also the rise in the number of the population in Central Carpathians and the constant move in the search for new pastures and the unsettled,

*in the territory of present Slovakia, from where it later spread (thanks to delayed development of large manors) to the territory of present Moravské Valašsko.*

## **Wallachians, Wallachian settlement, sheep farming a mountain sheep farming in the respective parts of the Žilina region**

### **Regions**

The territory of the currently existing **Žilina region** comprises the *historical region of upper Váh valley, Kysuce, Turiec, Orava and Liptov*. This is *predominantly a mountainous region*, with natural conditions and characteristics offering an opportunity for settlement on the Wallachian law. *The abundance of alpine uplands in the mountain ranges of Kysucké and Oravské Beskydy, Malá and Veľká Fatra, Low and High Tatras offered conditions for development of unique sheep farming and specifically the mountain (salaš - based and seasonal) sheep farming, which in turn strongly influenced the character of the landscape and the local popular culture too.*



**Iveta Zuskinová,  
2018, photo by: Matej  
Hlbočan**

In the past, this phenomenon was a subject of research and publication mainly by Polish geographer *Ludomir Sawický, Kubijowicz*, Polish geographer and ethnographer *Zofia Jadwiga Hołub-Pacewiczová*, ethnographer and ethnologist *Bronisława Kopczyńska-Jaworska*, and **in Slovakia** it was *Jozef Laurinčík, Ján Podolák*, **for the region of Liptov** the ethnologist *Iveta Zuskinová*, and the ethnologist *Jaroslav Štika* for **the territory of Morava and north-west Slovakia**. Among later Slovak authors, we must mention also *Ján Novák*

and *Ján Keresteš*, while research in the regions was conducted also by other historians and ethnographers (*Čaplovičová, Muňková, Pastieriková, Beňušová, Húščavová, Kotvasová*). With regards to the **region of Kysuce and Orava**, the topic of Wallachian colonisation is frequently covered in the works of other authors (*Velička, Liščák, Tkáč, Paráčová*). **Liptov** is that precisely mapped in this respect from the ethnographic perspective, mainly thanks to the work of *Ján Podolák*, whose research was later continued by *PhDr. Iveta Zuskinová*, the long-standing director of the *Liptov Museum in Ružomberok* and the current director of the *Sheep Farming Museum in Liptovský Hrádok*. Thanks to the above activities as well as the scope of sheep farming which found a very strong base in the region of Liptov and in several municipalities it has continued until this day, this region has been captured and has been subject to holistic research. **However, research of the other regions remains a challenge, and with time, and by natural passing of the generations of the old sheep farmers and salaš-farmers, it is becoming increasingly complicated. Due to strong decline in mountain sheep farming across a wide range of locations, the tradition has been preserved only on a few farms.** Liptov, with its specific mountain sheep farming and *salaš*-associations (i.e. mountain sheep farming associations) represent a strong sheep-farming region, however, **Orava, Kysuce**, as well as the **micro-region of Terchová, Belá, Dolná Tižina and Vadičov in Kysucká vrchovina and Malá Fatra mountain ranges** as well as **Čičmany in Strážovské vrchy in the upper Váh valley** also deserve attention. These and other locations were strongly influenced by the colonisation based on Wallachian law and the local mountain sheep farming has often retained its archaic and specific forms. Many municipalities in these regions were and still are regarded as centres of chief shepherds (flock masters, also known as “*flock master*” in Slovak) and shepherds, called “*valasi*” (e.g. *Terchová, Zázrivá*), even though mountain sheep farming has been rapidly declining in these locations and thus a precious aspect of the local culture and traditions is becoming lost for good.



## Liptov



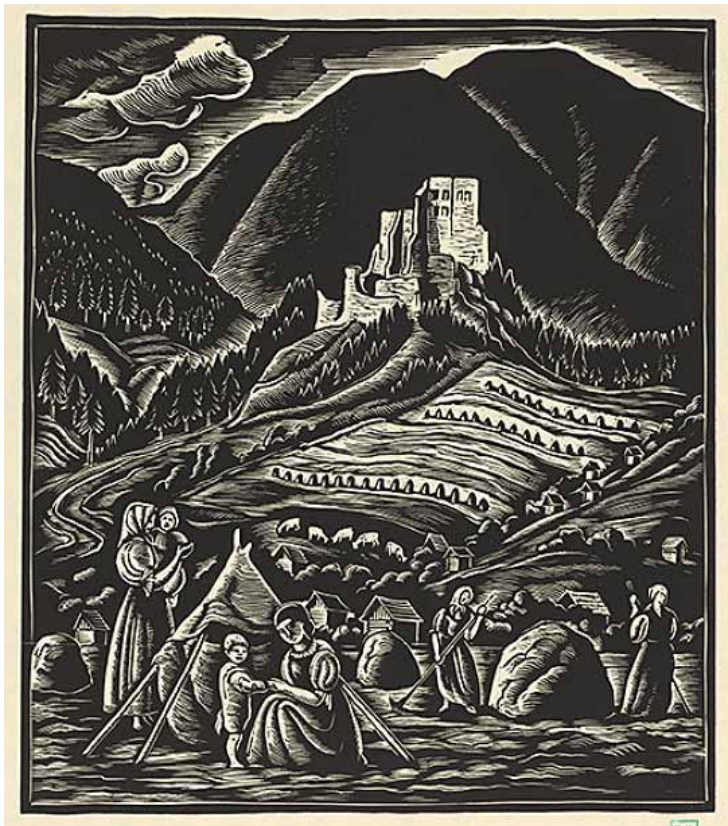
Upland Sheep Farm ("salaš") in Štrba, 1952, photo by: Archive of the Shepherding Museum in Liptovský Hrádok

### Colonisation based on Wallachian law in Liptov

*In 15<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> century, Wallachians were moving into the Liptov territory, settling here following the specific agreements derived from the rights of agricultural settlers. In the 15<sup>th</sup> century, Wallachian families permanently settled e.g. the municipalities of Východná, Lúčky, they founded Švošov. In the 16<sup>th</sup> century, other Wallachian families founded Liptovská Teplica and in the 17<sup>th</sup> century others founded Hričkov and from this settlement, Liptovské Revúce later developed. Founding of new villages continued also in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, new settlements were being founded by immigrants according to the "kopanice"<sup>1</sup> law: this includes e.g. Veľké Borové, Malé Borové, Liptovská Lúžna and the colonisation also contributed to extension and enlargement of Liptovské Revúce. Wallachians were arriving to Liptov from the east (the territory of Spiš and Šariš) or from the north (from upper Orava). We have documents from the 16<sup>th</sup> century that many of them come from Ruthenian environment of the north-east Hungary. Starting from the 15<sup>th</sup> century, several dozen families lived in several villages which were*

---

<sup>1</sup> From "kopanice" – remote hamlets, small settlements



**Likava, Ferdiš Duša, wood engraving, 1933, Gallery of Art of Ernest Zmeták, source: webumenia.sk**

*active in sheep farming. Wallachians used to breed flocks of sheep using the salaš<sup>2</sup>-based method from spring to early autumn, where they pastured the sheep on the pastures on the edges of municipal lands, on cleared meadows in alpine valleys as well as above the line of forest on the extensive upland grassy meadows. Later, this upland farm-based sheep farming also spread to peasant villages, which resulted in the rising share of mountainous deforested grassy uplands and pastures, flocks of peasant-owned sheep as well as*

*flocks of feudal lords' manor sheep, which were pasturing on all the Liptov uplands. Upland farm-based sheep farming required expansion of grassy pastures in the forests and led to retaining of the alpine grasslands of the rounded peaks of the Liptov mountains.* Wallachians, upland farms, flocks of sheep, shepherds, huts, young cattle and horses become regular traits characterising the Liptov forests and mountains – particularly in summer.

**The oldest municipality founded on the Wallachian law of the Likava castle lands was Valaská Dubová (1474), which existed already in the mid-15<sup>th</sup> and switched to the Wallachian law and later became a part of the Orava castle domain. In 1474, representatives of Wallachians travelled to the town of Ružomberok to meet the king Matthew Corvinus on their own behalf as well as in the name of all Wallachians from the villages of Kňažia and Medzibrodie (belonging to the lands of the Orava castle) and Dubová (Valaská) belonging to the Likava castle lands to present their plea to the king to confirm their old privilege. The privilege by Matthew Corvinus from the Orava and Liptov Wallachians from 1474 issued by the king in**

<sup>2</sup> Upland sheep farming on alpine meadows and pastures in higher altitudes during late spring and summer

**Ružomberok is an important document witnessing the contemporary importance of Wallachian colonisation and simultaneously a rare body of liberties and duties of the contemporary Wallachian law.**

*In Liptov*, we have documents confirming the presence of Wallachians in the villages of **Gombáš** (established before 1426 as a peasant-reeve settlement) and **Lúčky** (first record from 1469). A typical and one of the few villages founded on the Wallachian law in Liptov is **Švošov** (derived from the surname “Šoš”). **Every Easter, Švošov-based Wallachians were providing lambs, around Pentecost they provided the twentieth** (that is 5 sheep out of 100) **and around the St. John’s day they provided cheese and belts**. Their *alpine pastures* spread **from the Fatra mountains towards Turiec**. The population of Švošov together with *that of Gombáš, Hrboltov, Stankovany* were supposed to carry to the castle, *wooden pipes as well as slats from the lumber mill*. Similar duties were also attributed to the village of **Lúčky**, which **switched to the Wallachian law**. Later, we find **in the Likava castle lands**, Wallachian peasants **in 4 “streets” of the town of Ružomberok** as well as in **Hričkov** (today **Liptovské Revúce**). **On the lands of Liptovský Hrádok**, serfs settled based on Wallachian law **in the older municipality of Východná**, which did not even carry traces of hereditary reeve-based system as the reeves were selected by the feudal lord. **Wallachians from Východná had the same duties as the Wallachians on the Likava castle lands**, which was perhaps determined by the same landowner. A direct evidence on the presence of *Wallachians* and the flocks of sheep as well as goats in Liptov comes from 1521 and is related to the **Wallachians on the Liptovský Hrádok castle lands**, when the Wallachians had already been settled there and their extensive exploitation of pastures by sheep led to resentment of the townsfolk and older settlers. Direct evidence of Wallachian households on the lands belonging to the castle of Liptovský Hrádok exists already **from the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century** (only in the village of **Východná**) where in 1551, the local Wallachian households **traditionally submitted their typical Wallachian duty** (every twentieth piece from the flock – the so-called *twentieth*). **In mid-16<sup>th</sup> century**, they were pasturing their sheep **in the meadows of Jalovecká dolina valley**. In 1553, feudal lord *Michal Bán* filed a protest against several men **from Bobrovec** and other locations *who attacked a flock master, broke into the sheep farm and took a flock of sheep with them*. At that time, Wallachians were pasturing sheep also in the **neighbouring Bobrovec valley as well as Malatíny** and besides pasturing sheep, they also used to steal other sheep from Wallachians in other villages or other sheep enclosures. For example, in summer in the village of **Pribylina**, flocks had as much as



several hundred sheep, in 1750 they accounted for 300. *Most Wallachian households lived in Lúčky.* In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, Wallachian households were found not only in Lúčky, but also in Biely Potok, Černová, Ludrová, Vlkolínec, Likavka, Hričkov (later Liptovské Revúce) and in Lúžna. *In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, in Liptov, Wallachian farming and way of life was on the decline,* feudal lords required Wallachians to perform mainly manual work duties and taxes, in the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century they also required *the Wallachians in Švošov* to pay money dues instead of *bryndza* cheese. *The registers of the castle lands of Hrádok and Likava show that typical duties of Wallachian households included dues in the form of Wallachian products as sheep, cheese and belts.* By the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century, Wallachians in Liptov had no duties to the king, only the assembly in 1557 decided that in Hungary, also Wallachians are supposed to pay taxes to the king, however only one half compared to other peasant serves, which was justified by the fact that Wallachians lived in mountain and farmed one part of the year, where they breed animals, therefore they do not have peasant houses and do not work in the fields, *which is evidence of their partially nomadic way of life.* Most of Liptov - based Wallachians were of Ruthenian origin. The serf population of the villages of Lúčky

Liptovský Hrádok, Ferdiš Duša, wood engraving, 1933,  
Gallery of Art of Ernest Zmeták, source: [webumenia.sk](http://webumenia.sk)



and Východná were characterised as Wallachians and Ruthenians in 1581. At the time, Uličný also mentioned the fact that *Wallachians were prone to stealing and robbery.* Towards the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, in relation to the new methods of processing and utilisation of sheep wool, the king's officials issued printed recommendations and guidelines for breeders about the benefits of breeding sheep, their shearing and first purification and washing of wool which could then be sold conveniently to the processors.

*The profession of flock masters, his helpers-shepherd and junior shepherds **but mainly the Wallachian sheep farming** were so typical for men in some villages (such as Lúčky) that the ram was depicted in the heraldic signs of these settlements. Starting **in the 17<sup>th</sup> century**, the new settlements of Liptovská Teplička and Huty **in the outskirts of the Liptov county were founded, there lived serf population of Goral origin from upper Orava, their language was regarded as half-Polish by the Liptov population.** This part of the population was the **major element introducing the most stable influx of Polish elements and influenced in the dominantly Slovak environment of Liptov between the 17<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century.***

### **Traditional methods of sheep farming in Liptov**

***In Liptov, conditions for sheep farming were very convenient.** In summer the fodder base included surfaces for pasturing while in winter the animals were provided with crops grown on agricultural land or obtained by picking on uncultivated land. Starting*



**Under Čierny Kameň, Liptovské Revúce, 1937, photo by: Archive of the Shepherding Museum in Liptovský Hrádok**

with Wallachian colonisation **until the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the most widespread breed of sheep was the Wallachian sheep.** This coarse-wool breed was suitable for breeding



in tough climate of the mountainous regions. *In the past, sheep of black colour were preferred for breeding.* The contemporary breeders *appreciated the black wool more than the white, as it was suitable not only for clothing, but above all for sewing shoes as well as for manufacturing of warm blankets from wool cloth.* Every flock only contained a few white sheep *so that to ensure also white cloth for trousers and coats, mainly for shepherds.* People used to hold sheep in high esteem as farming animals. *They used to say that sheep will sustain humans and provide shoes and clothing.* According to the statistics from 1897, when **Liptov** was divided into three parts, *in the district of Ružomberok, 16 353 sheep were bred*, while *in Liptovský Mikuláš it was 16 347* and *in Hrádok it was 14 053 sheep.* According to the registration of farming animals, which was ordered by the *District Authority in Liptovský Mikuláš* for the years 1928 - 1930, *the highest number of sheep was in the upper Liptov.*

In **Liptovská Teplica**, there were 1871 sheep, in **Liptovská Kokava** there were 1369, in **Hybe** 1422, in **Pribylina** 956 and 702 sheep in **Východná**. Based on the information provided by the municipalities to the notaries in 1926, we learn that *in central Liptov*, in the villages of **Bobrovník**, **Ižipovce**, and **Bukovina** the number of sheep was very low and in **Svätá Mara** no sheep were bred at all. **Svätá Anna** was an



**Upland Sheep Farm at Prostredie in Račkova Dolina, photo by: Archive of the Shepherding**

exception as there was a single summer sheep farm (*salaš*). We have information about well-developed sheep farming in **Liptovské Revúce** and **Ružomberok**, **Černová**, **Biely Potok**, **Ludrová** and **Vlkolíne**c. The most widespread method of increasing the number



of sheep in the flock was *to breed one's own lambs*. ***In the past, many sheep were specialised for winter breeding in stables by ensuring sufficient amount of fodder, these sheep were then sold in spring due to lack of pastures.*** Settlements *in upper Liptov* using this method included **Liptovská Kokava** and **Pribylina**. ***Purchasing of sheep flocks outside the Slovak territory was instrumental to Slovak sheep farming.*** Up until the WWI, Liptov shepherds used to travel to purchase sheep flocks to **Transylvania**, later they oriented mainly on **Ruthenia**. In Liptov, the most extensive pastures were available in the form of grassy uplands. Originally, the term “grassy upland” was understood as generally as a naturally formed pasture above the line of the forest. Gradually, as a result of human activity, the surface of grassy uplands was being extended



**At the Upland Sheep Farm of Hybe, 1936, photo by: Archive of the Shepherding Museum in Liptovský Hrádok**

to the detriment of the forest, which reduced the upper altitude limit of the forest. **Already from the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the alpine pastures and grassy uplands are being gradually left unused, and pasturing is shifted to the meadows located at lower altitude – at the border between the arable land and the forest – on grassy meadows.** Towards the end of the summer and in autumn, sheep are also pasturing *on the meadows near the village* where they are kept in the paddock. ***Two major seasons in sheep breeding are distinguished: winter sheep breeding season and then the spring, summer and autumn pasturing.*** In early spring, the sheep (before the actual

drive of the sheep to the uplands, to the upland farm called *salaš*, before initiation of the proper summer season), were driven to the meadows around the village for the day and in the evening they were redistributed to the respective owners. The purpose of this pasturing was to make sure that *sheep get used to long walking and conditioning against coldness – and getting used to shared pasturing in the large flocks.*

***The farmers – sheep breeders were grouped in sheep farming associations.*** These were

communities, voluntary association of sheep farmers and breeders which originated based on administrative arrangement of the municipalities, ownership or family relations, the actual form and pattern of village housing etc. ***The sheep farming association was closely related to the association of landowners***, which provided the co-owners pastures for pasturing while the ***sheep farming association ensured correct economy and management of the whole process of shared***



**Flock Master Ján Jacko from Rovné, Liptovské Sliače, photo by: Archive of the Shepherding Museum in Liptovský Hrádok**

***pasturing of sheep.*** The association was headed by one of the sheep owners, the title was “*salašný gazda*” or “*salašník*”. This was an esteemed position, as “*salašník*” was a respected citizen of the village and administered the whole farming process of the upland farm (*salaš*). His major duties included ***selecting the suitable shepherds for the position of the flock master*** (the chief shepherd, called “*flock master*” and his assistants called “*valasi*” , i.e. Wallachians<sup>3</sup>), on behalf of the association to sign an agreement with them and to agree on specific conditions of sheep farming. “*Salašník*” was in charge of controlling the processing of sheep milk, supervised the distribution of products, took care of the sale of excess products in order to obtain funds into the association’s treasury.

---

<sup>3</sup> This terms is already devoid of any ethnic meaning, it means only “a shepherd” helping the flock master/chief shepherd

He purchased salt for the sheep, ensured transport of the farm equipment when the summer farm was being moved and determined the actual order of moving *sheep paddock for manuring* over the communal lands. During the whole pasturing season, “salašník” supervised the process of sheep farming, tackled any issues or problems, represented the interests of the association in relation to the flock master, as well as feudal lords, he represented the association overall. For his work, he was receiving a pay in kind, usually the products of the upland sheep farm, or possibly a certain *number of nights for sheep paddock manuring*. Besides “salašník”, the association had two other officials, the secretaries, who were controlling the activities of “salašník” in particular the management of the association’s funds and the minute’s clerk who was responsible for recording of minutes. ***In later autumn, after the summer pasturing season was over, or perhaps in early winter before Christmas, “salašník” settled the accounts to the association.*** If the he was performing well in the previous season and the upland farm was economically successful, he was re-elected. If it was the other way around, somebody else was appointed as “salašný gazda”. Also, if the sheep owners were satisfied with the flock master (“flock master”), they confirmed his position also for the next period. If not, the “salašník” found a suitable flock master during winter as well as his assistant shepherds (“valasi”). ***In general, in Liptov the local shepherds were preferred and only if a local choice was not available, they used to call a flock master from another location. Flock masters from other regions only rarely penetrated to Liptov.*** Most often, only junior shepherds ***from Spiš*** (towards the east) were travelling to ***Liptov*** to assist the local flock masters. Also, the conditions for hiring shepherds were different in Spiš than in Liptov. Here, the flock master and other shepherds usually agreed with the representative of the upland farming association for a specific reward and the expenditures of the upland farm was actually covered by the association. ***In Spiš, the deal was typically for releasing the farm produce ‘per hand’,*** which was sometimes also transferred to Liptov, when the *flock master* basically leased the flock of sheep from the association, for which he then gave the owners a specific volume of products. All the expenditures of the “salaš” farm, *such as salt for the sheep, cow stomachs for rennet, fees for borrowing of the farm equipment etc. was paid by the flock master alone.* ***The craft of flock master was often passed from generation to generation, so in some municipalities there developed traditional flock master and shepherding families whose name was a guarantee, far and wide, that they are skilled in their particular craft.***



These villages had a reputation of *centres of qualified and adept shepherds*. In upper **Liptov**, these included mainly **Liptovská Teplička, Východná, Hybe, Boca, Jakubovany** and **Liptovská Porúbka**. In lower **Liptov**, it was mainly **Liptovské Sliache**. The pasturing season, which started with *the driving of the sheep in April*, can be divided into respective stages depending on the location of the pastures that were being used for grazing. *The first stage comprised grazing on the meadows* between the spring drive of sheep until the prohibition (fencing off) of meadow pasturing. Then the *shepherds* were already spending nights with the sheep on the meadows that were also simultaneously paddock-manuring by regular moving of the paddock. As shelters for the shepherds, there were huts (called “koliba”) or hay-barns that belonged to the actual landowners. *The second stage begun after the “fencing off the meadows”* which meant a prohibition to let the sheep graze on the meadows used for cutting grass. In this period, the upland farm (“salaš”) *was usually transferred to the sub-alpine pastures*, where it stayed approximately for one month, between the early May until the early June. On these locations, stable objects were built, which belonged to the sheep farming association. This mainly included a shelter for shepherds – “koliba” and *sheep paddock*, which had to consist of *light transferrable parts as they were regularly moved*. *The third stage of the shepherding season was the actual grassy upland pasturing* during the peak summer when the weather was already stable and warm even in higher altitudes. This was typically from mid-June until mid or end of August. On the grassy uplands, there were also stable building constructed as the shelter for shepherds. *The paddock* was either movable or often built from rocks without mortar, or possibly ‘cut’, i.e. built from felled softwood timbers. In some cases, sheep were sleeping out in the open, without any paddock near the shelter for shepherds. *The last fourth stage was the return of sheep to the meadows and pastures* in lower altitudes, where the animals stayed until the end of the season and returning of the sheep to the respective owners for winter (called “rozsad”). This period took typically from early September until the end of October (depending on the actual weather), that is, until the end of the outdoor sheep farming season. The municipality of **Pribylina** can serve as a typical example of gradual stages in grazing of meadows and grassy uplands, where this traditional procedure was preserved **until the early 1960s**.

## Orava

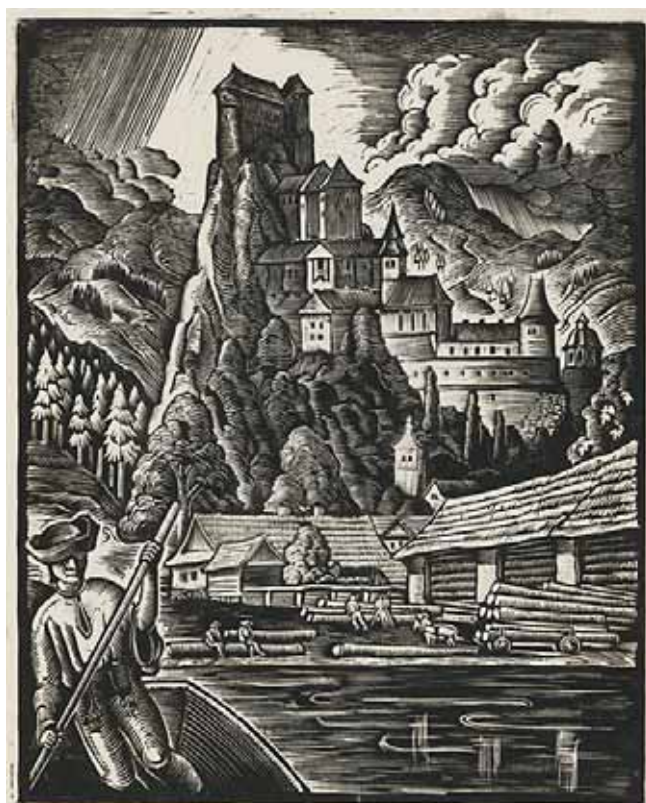


Pasturing Sheep in  
Zázrivá – Končítá,  
photo by: Š.  
Janičiar, 1976,  
source:  
documents of the  
Orava Museum

### Colonisation based on Wallachian law in Orava

Based on archaeological findings, we can assume gradual settlement of Orava already before the 13<sup>th</sup> century. Initial settlement was mainly concentrated in the territory of **lower Orava**, with new settlements gradually established based on the emphyteutic law, so-called German law and alter also Wallachian law and the process of settlement ended using the above-mentioned “kopanice-law”. **Orava was located in the north of the Hungarian kingdom, bordering with Poland** and it was exactly here where the borders were often violated even with arms. **The northern parts of the territory were unsettled and left unused.** On the other hand, there was an old trade route passing though Orava and its territory was strategically important. **Already in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, the economic and military-guarding importance of the Wallachian population was already well**

*known as the said population was gradually settling the territory of eastern Slovakia from as early as the beginning of the 14<sup>th</sup> century. Starting with the 15<sup>th</sup> century, Wallachians also penetrate to the territory of Orava.* When the king Matthew Corvinus acquired the **territory of Orava and Liptov**, based on the petition of **Wallachians from Kňažia and Medzibrodie**, belonging to the **lands of the Orava castle domain**, as well as the **Wallachians from Dubová** (today **Valaská Dubová**), belonging to the **lands of the Likava castle**, the king issued a privilege in 1474 in



Orava, Ferdiš Duša, wood engraving, 1930 – 1933, Slovak National Gallery, source: [webumenia.sk](http://webumenia.sk)

**Ružomberok**, where he confirmed the rights that their ancestors had been enjoying since old times (*“ab antiqua”*). The privilege granted to the Wallachians from Orava and Likava represent the most extensive and the most compact formulation of the **Wallachian law in western Carpathians**. The precisely set rights and duties of the Wallachian population specified in this privilege became an important condition enabling further immigration of other groups of settlers from the other parts of the Slovak territory and in the first half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century also from bordering areas of Poland. In the portal register<sup>4</sup> from 1549, a new location is mentioned in Orava, **called Ústie**, which is also mentioned as a Wallachian settlement exempt from tax which had 24 portals together with older Wallachian settlements of Kňažia, Medzibrodie and Bziny. ***This status was also taken into account by the confirmation of the privilege of Matthew Corvinus***, issued by the king Ferdinand I. in 1550 and further extended to include the Wallachians from Bziny and Ústie. However, in the confirmation the king terminated the exemption of Wallachians from paying tax and instructed them to hold a fire arm instead of a crossbow (as the form of their military service). In the period of fighting for the Hungarian crown between *John Zapolya (“Zápol’ský”)* and *Ferdinand I.* it can be assumed that other

<sup>4</sup> From Latin ‘porta’ – a gate. It was a gate leading from an agricultural/farming homestead to the main road. A ‘port’ could consist of several houses and households



groups of Wallachians arrived to Orava strengthening the older domestic population from the existing Oravian villages. In the dense forest, already in first half of 16<sup>th</sup> century, there were likely numerous upland sheep farms, where several Wallachian families lived. ***The settlement of Wallachian population in the territory of Orava was also supported by the efforts of landowner Václav Sedlnický before 1556***, who – in the attempt to increase income of the Orava castle lands - founded several new villages in the lower Orava using the Wallachian law taking advantage of the excess Wallachian and peasant population. These villages included **Zázrivá, Krásna Hôrka, Chlebnice, Pucov, Podbiel, Pribiš, Biely Potok, as well as Vitanová** located in upper Orava. The most intensive development of settlement founded on the Wallachian law is associated with František (Francis) and Juraj (George) Thurso and their descendants, who developed a settlement system which resulted in founding of almost one full half of today existing villages in Orava. In the time, when František Thurso acquired Orava into his land ownership, the populated part of the region mainly involved lower Orava. In the northern (upper) Orava, there were uninhabited territories offering further possibilities of land use. ***Wallachian settlements always used the privileges confirmed by the charter of Matthew Corvinus*** but based on the decision of Ferdinand I. they already had to land tax which was required from them by the king's officials based on Article 3 from 1557 and Article 12 from 1559.



Orava Landscape, Martin Benka, oil painting, 1937, Slovak National Gallery, source: webumenia.sk

The population of **Medzibrodie, Bziny, Kňažia, Zázrivá, Podbiel, Pucov, Chlebnice and Slanica** therefore send a complaint to the king (Ferdinand I.) in 1564 where they asked for protection from paying general land tax and preservation of their privileges as a substitute for their volunteering service. Another evidence is the plea by Katarína Zrínska, widow of deceased František Thurso, which was addressed to the new king Maximilian II. in 1576. *In her letter, she asks the king to waive the king's tax due for 1573 to 1575 in relation to the Wallachians from Ústie, Pucov, Podbiel, Chlebnice, Námestovo and Bobrov, pointing out that also the population of older Wallachian villages - Medzibrodie, Bziny and Valaská Dubová have been exempt from paying this tax.* ***Thurso family members usually delegated the richest Wallachian farmers to found new locations (settlements),*** who thus became their reeves. In the beginning, these were the representatives of older lower-Orava Wallachian families, but also families from the newly-established locations in upper Orava. Although the foundations of numerous upper ***Orava settlements were laid in the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century using the Wallachian law,*** the process of settlement of upper Orava was still in its early stages and most locations were regarded as newly-built even at the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century as their development was still unfinished. As a result of the extensive settlement activities by the Thurso family, Wallachian law was applied to settle almost the whole territory of upper Orava by founding the villages on the tributaries of **Čierna Orava river (Zubrica, Podvlk, Srnie, Harkabúz, Podsklie, Suchá Hora, Bukovia, Pekelník and Hladovka)** and this territory then reached the old Hungarian-Polish border on the ridge of the Carpathians. *Still in the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century,* inhabitants of the settlements founded on the Wallachian law had to duty to provide men-at-arms and to perform guard duty which meant that some locations were even exempt from Wallachian duties. Most Wallachian population that settled the lands in upper Orava mostly included (besides newcomers from eastern and northern areas) the older population of lower Orava. **This is also supported by the identity of the essential language items of the upper and lower Orava dialects as well as the dialect of central Slovakia which was threatened by the Turkish war at the time. The dialect in the northern part of the upper Orava, so-called Goral dialect is a specific dialect of the Goral ("mountaineer") population living along the Slovak-Polish border.**

### **Traditional methods of sheep farming in Orava**

Shepherding in Orava was related not only to dairy production but also to fertilising fields and meadows by paddock-manuring. ***Mountain sheep farming on grassy uplands was***

*a highly specific type of sheep farming* as shepherds used to stay outdoors for several months grazing the alpine pastures in higher altitudes. In the territory of whole **Carpathians, Orava** was one of several regions where grassy upland sheep farming was never combined with plough-fields and meadows of the low-altitude agriculture.

*In 1625*, the owner of Orava lands, Juraj Thurso issued a charter in which he directly specified the respective grassy uplands in his feudal lands and gave them for long-term usage to the Wallachian villages. According to the charter, the 18 villages in the territory



**Sheep Grazing in Zuberec, photo by: Vávra, 1975, source: documents of the Orava Museum**

of Roháče had at least **7985 sheep** together and two more villages from Podhalie had an unknown number. **In Roháče and Oravice**, the grassy uplands have offered natural pasturing lands since ancient times, located above the line of the forest and scrub pines in **Látana dolina, Predné Zelené, Salatín, Bobrovec, Lúčna, Suchá Dolina, Biela skala,**



**Osobitá, Javorina, Čaplovka, Tichá dolina, Magurka, Črchla, Poľana, Zuberec, Lysec, and Šindľovec.** After the WWI, there were grassy uplands also in the slopes of Zábrat, Rákoň, Dlhý úplaz, Záprašivé and under Biela Skala. They were interchangeably used for grazing of sheep as well as cattle. In Osobitá, at the upland farm of Sedliacka Dubová, Malatiná and Nižná, there were **1920 sheep** originally but just before the overall ban on mountain sheep farming in the National Park of High Tatras (*in the 20<sup>th</sup> century*) there had only been up to **300 sheep**. The farm (salaš) was originally placed at the location "Na Kasňach" and the animals grazed along the whole ridge from Končitá to Okolík on the



**Sheep at the Upland Sheep Farm in Malatiná, photo by: Siakel', 1979, source: documents of the Orava Museum**

**Flock Master Gägačka,  
Jasenová, photo by:  
Vávra, 1970, source:  
documents of the Orava  
Museum**



other side of the mountain. Besides the naturally deforested mountain tops, such as in Látana dolina, they had larger, probably cleared pastures. The situation was more complex in the case of Osobitá grassy upland. Very near, **500 sheep** from Zábiedovo were grazing at Javorinka, **250 sheep** from Bre-

zovica were grazing in Suchá dolina and Maršalek from Biely Potok pastured **200 sheep** in Látana. Thus, all the ridges were clear (i.e. deforested) and in the valleys, there were substantially larger and probably artificially cleared pastures, similar to Látana dolina. ***When more than 6 times more sheep (compared to id 20<sup>th</sup> century) could be sustained in Roháče at the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> and early 17<sup>th</sup> century,*** it can be assumed that the mountains were more deforested than they are now. The above-mentioned number of sheep was moved several times within one season in distances of up to **30 - 40 km**. In Roháče, sheep and cattle were grazing also from more distant villages such as lower Orava village of Malatiná and from all villages from Dolná Lehota towards Suchá Hora. In their effort to extend the pastures, shepherds often burned scrub pine. In this manner, number of valleys were burned like this in Roháče only, the local names bear witness to this process, such as **Spálená** and **Spálený žľab** ("Burnt Valley, Burnt Furrow"). Thus, ***the typical grassy upland shepherding was applied in Orava, which was represented by***

***sheep and cattle farming with all animals combined into single herd (flock).*** The chief shepherd (flock master) was called “flock master” elected in the election announced by the chairman of the committee of municipal land owners. Flock master was elected from several rich candidates so that he could guarantee with his property any potential loss or death of sheep with agreed rate of **8-10 kg of cheese** per sheep. During the municipal assembly, where also the “salašný gazda” was elected, the flock master agreed with the sheep owners on the rate ***usually 6-7 pieces of “oštiekok” cheese or 8-9 kg of cheese per sheep/week or on a regular cash payment for himself and his shepherds*** (who usually came from applicants from poorer families). At the same time, he had to put down a deposit – a security to cover any potential damage compensation. *Flock masters from Suchá Hora and Brezovica were well-known.* From the territory of lower Orava, the famous sheep shepherding locations included Zázrivá. **Sheep were driven into the single flock with the assistance of the whole village at the St. George’s day.** They grazed the pastures near the village first. The committee of the land owners association with its

**Shepherd Balco, Jasenová, photo by: Vávra, 1974, source: documents of the Orava Museum**





chairman and the association's chief farmer and the flock master performed the so-called measurement - milking of sheep aimed at assessing the milking performance in order to classify the animals into a particular milking class. **On the St. Sofia's day**, they drove the sheep to the grassy uplands (the ceremony called "*redik*") where they were stabled in the paddocks and built the wooden huts for shepherds. They returned back to the village on St. Michael's day for the ceremony of the redistribution of the sheep back to the individual farmers called "*rozsad*". On the occasion, the flock master usually paid for refreshments. *During the summer season also the livestock shepherds used to let the young cows and oxen graze in the grassy uplands between the St. Urban's and the St' Michael's.* Shared grazing of young cattle, oxen and horses was performed on much smaller lands compared to mountain sheep farming. Before announcing of the Act on the **Tatra National Park**, there were ***more than 1000 pieces of cattle grazing*** on the Roháče uplands and in Oravice. Owners of cattle used to pay the shepherds based on a written agreement – both in kind as well as with money. ***Zázrivá was known for specific archaic forms of mountain sheep farming in lower Orava.*** Mountain sheep farming was preserved here until the 20<sup>th</sup> century in the archaic "family form" when pasturing was a shared responsibility of a family where members often combined their flocks together and pastured them together or individually near their homes and together processed the dairy production as well. ***Just like in other villages in Orava famous for skilled flock-masters, many shepherds*** (flock masters and shepherd helpers) from Zázrivá travelled to sheep farms in **Liptov, Orava, Turiec, upper Váh valley as well as Kysuce, west Slovakia or even Morava for summer.** Similar to Liptov, *flock masters from Orava were skilled in manufacturing bryndza and oštiepok cheese and often took their own helpers for the seasonal sheep shepherding outside their native village (typically their relatives) to the mountain farms in their own as well as more distant regions and followed many archaic customs related to the first drive of the sheep to the mountain farm or the everyday life therein (incensing of sheep, sprinkling salt on the animals, and other magic acts and rituals).* Mountain farms in lower Orava were mostly located in the mountains of Kysucká vrchovina (**Okrúhlica**) Low Fatra (around **Veľký Rozsutec - Medziholie, Behár, Strungy**), Oravská Magura (Kubínska hoľa, Vasil'ovská hoľa, Hruštínska hoľa) as well as around Veľký Choč.

## Turiec



**Flock Master with Shepherds, Sklabiňa, 1965, photo by: Ján Podolák, Archive of the Shepherding Museum in Liptovský Hrádok**

### **Turiec and the colonisation based on Wallachian law**

Until the mid-15<sup>th</sup> century, the population of Turiec was predominantly domestic with a small share of Germans or other immigrants. ***In the second half of the century, Wallachians started to arrive***, most of them serfs from Liptov, Orava and other counties from the east, mostly of *Ruthenian* and original *Wallachian* (Romanian) origin. To breed their cattle and sheep resistant to the tough climate, *Wallachians* were searching for previously unused alpine meadows and grassy uplands. There was abundance of such pastures in **Turiec**, but practically, there was no place for founding of new Wallachian villages. Probably **the first written record about Wallachians in Turiec basin is from 1495**, when in early January, certain Andrej Just complained that some Wallachians (*walachos*), serfs of *Valentín Korom*, drive their sheep and cattle outside the roads in the night time and thus “according to their habits” they are destroying fields, meadows and forests. In the same year, the documents show the name of a Wallachian called *Gromko*, who (according to historian Ján Beňko) could be of Ruthenian origin and is likely to have been one of the founders of the village of **Vrícko**. In 1499, documents mention Wallachian

named *Drahoš* from **Kl'ačany**, who purchased some documents for 4 golden coins attesting his title to the part of the settlement of **Lipovec**, called **Ondrašovská**. Previously settled Wallachians are mentioned as of 1504 in the lands of the **Pravno** castle. The same year, the feudal landowners of the Pravno castle, *Ján Serafín* and *Cherubín* agreed that all income from Wallachians, who have arrived at their estate from "foreign lands" shall be divided into two halves. Certain **Tomas Wallachius** is mentioned among the inhabitants of **Trebostov** in 1505. From the same year, we have the first written record of the village of **Vrícko**, in 1519, **Budiš** and **Nevol'no** in the lands belonging to Dubové ceased to exist for a short period of time, only to be renewed again. These two villages – the only ones in the whole of Turiec – can be regarded as founded on the Wallachian law within the framework of additional populating of the lands. It is of interest that in the second half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century a German enclave came to **Vrícko**, which gradually assimilated the Wallachian element. Based on the register of landowners, we know that Wallachian law was applied in the process of additional populating of the villages such as Kl'ačany, Šútovo and probably also some other old villages in the north-east part of Turiec. In **Kl'ačany**, after the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, there was also the seat of the Wallachian *voivode* (leader) of the Sklabiňa castle lands. It can be assumed that the process of additional population based on Wallachian law came about similar as we know it from other regions, e.g. Orava and Liptov. **Despite the fact that Wallachian colonisation in Turiec was not very strong, it left its traces on the proper nouns in the region.** These names are more concentrated mainly in the settlements close to the *Váh river* as well as the lower stream of Turiec. One part of Wallachians was settled in the lands near *Váh river*, others were invited by yeomen (smaller feudal lords) to the central and upper (south) Turiec, where they attempted to settle them to the selected lands. Wallachians were also hired as mercenaries and often used in the mutual disputes related to their particular estates and in acquiring new lands. In central Turiec, this phenomenon is attested by the toponyms and hydronyms such as **Košarisko**, **Valašský jarok**, **Z Červeného grúňa**, **Rusnácky grúň** (Dubové), **Kýčera** (Kláštor pod Znievom). Many of these names are located in the northern Turiec, where Wallachians arrived from the upper stream of Váh river: **Grúň** (Šútovo), **Magura** (Krpel'any, Nolčovo), **Dolu grúňom**, **Hankov grúň**, **Kl'ak**, **Pod Kl'akom** (Podhradie), **Mojský grúň** (Turany), **Kl'ačianska magura** (Sučany), **Kýčera**, **Nad kýčerou** (Turčianske Kl'ačany), **Grúň**, **Holý grúň**, **Ploštínsky grúň**, **Ráztočný grúň** (Vrútky), **Lipovská Magura**, **Nad Kýčerou**, **Pod Magurou** (Lipovec), **Grúň**, **Minčol**, **Pod Minčolom**, **Pred valaskou dolinou**, **Prostredný grúň**, **Valaská dolina** (Martin),



Červený grúň, Košariská (Necpaly), Červený grúň (Belá-Dulice), Hlinická kýčera, Košarisko, Kýčera, Tisov grúň, Povaský grúň (Valča).

### Traditional forms of sheep farming in Turiec

Turiec is squeezed between several significant mountain ranges which certainly supported successful establishment of Carpathian type of mountain sheep farming there. Turiec had been relatively densely populated based on emphyteutic right in 13<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> century and along with **Liptov** and **Orava**, a significant part of its population was made up by yeomen, who were members of the lower feudal class of the *Hungarian kingdom*. Along with them, in the southern part of the region, there was a significant group of German colonists, who directly established or additionally populated many settlements in Turiec. Wallachians arrived into this ethnically diverse make-up of the region not later



Blatnica Castle, Eugen Lehotský, 1968, oil painting, Slovak National Gallery, source: webumenia.sk

than in the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century. In Blatnica, in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, *the Révay family* started to breed sheep and in other Turiec villages, it was mainly the rich farmers and landowners who took on sheep farming (**Abramová, Bystrička, Dražkovce**, Folkušová, Košťany, Necpaly) some of them even had flocks of several hundred animals (Folkušová, Necpaly). Smaller peasants held sheep in smaller scale. Sheep were pastured mostly individually, often together with cattle (**Abramová, Dražkovce, Turček**). In **Bystrička**, three local landowners were hiring their own flock masters. In terms of shepherding

organisation in Turiec, there was a symbiosis between the lowland sheep farming by the peasants and the mountain sheep farming (*Carpathian or Wallachian type*). Breeding of sheep was usually based in the owner's own stock, mainly in **Vrúcko**, **Krpeľany**, **Rudno**. Some farmers were buying lambs in spring within their own village (**Rakša**, **Abramová**) or possibly in the wider environment of the village. Inhabitants of **Turček** used to buy sheep as far as **Kremnica**. Major part of the pastures in Turiec was in private ownership, most of its by feudal lords. Some pastures were communal lands, there were pastures held by the landowners' association in **Rudno**, Bela (Belá-Dulice) and in **Vrúcko**, In **Krpeľany** and partially also in Rudno, there were also pastures in shared ownership. Pasturing association were quite widespread in **Turiec** too. The municipality of **Bystrička** had these pastures situated "on the uplands" and the population of **Trebostov** used them too. Folkušová had pastures in Gader with names such as *Krížna*, *Kráľova hol'a*, *Ostredok*. In *Košťany nad Turcom*, the "pasturing association" owned approx., 16 hectares of meadows. Pastures in Turiec were of diverse quality, in case of lack of pasturing lands, some municipalities purchased or leased pastures from other villages. *An interesting case is the purchase of an extensive pasture of Kubínska hol'a by owners of animals from Krpeľany, who later grazed large number of young cows there. Inhabitants of*

**Upland Sheep Farm in Malá Fatra, Šútovo, photo by: Ján Podolák, 1963, source: Af ÚESA SAV**



*Sklabiňa let their animals graze in the mountain pastures of Bela (Belá-Dulice). Alpine grassy uplands were owned by the municipalities of Bystrička, Folkušová, and Krpel'any, while Sklabiňa had its pastures situated in Bela (Belá- Dulice).* Originally, the peasants from Krpel'any let their young cows and oxen graze on Kriváň near the Chleb mountain as they had his land in use for 99 years from the count Révay. When the inhabitants of **Turany** purchased the alpine pastures from them, they pastured their animals on **Vrútocká hoľa** and finally they chose the above-mentioned purchase of **Kubínska hoľa**. Shepherds were boys aged 13 to 14, who didn't attend school anymore



**Covered enclosure for sheep in Velka Fatra, photo by: Ján Podolák, 1965, Archive of the Shepherdin Museum in Liptovský Hrádok**

and they were- sought-after by farmers not only from Turiec and the more distant Orava but also Liptov or Kysuce. Shepherds from other Turiec villages were coming to the region, as well as those from **Orava, Kysuce**, or even from **Prievidza**. Many of these shepherds made Turiec their home and remained to live here. Individual pasturing of sheep was typical for wealthier farmers or landowners (*Abramová, Bystrička, Dražkovce, Rakša*). Those often bred more than 100 sheep and therefore employed their own flock masters. These private mountain farms were e.g. in **Vrícko, Malý Čepčín, Rudno, Košťany nad Turcom, Krpel'any, or Sklabiňa**. Shepherding season started in



May (**Folkušová, Krpel'any**), or June (**Sklabiňa**). Sheep were driven to the grassy uplands as first because they needed shorter grass. ***One day before the driving of the sheep, the municipal employee announced the beginning of the season on the grassy uplands using a trumpet all around the village.*** Every owner first drove his sheep to the uplands alone. *According to the stable tradition, the flock master used to carry a green conifer branch behind his hat.* According to the available materials and research made in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, people of Turiec did not follow any specific customs during the first driving of sheep to the uplands. When people from Orava were shepherding, flock master took also his wife with him and she used to sprinkle the sheep with flour. ***Sheep were grazing until the first snowfall, or possibly until the All Saints' Day.*** Sheep from Folkušová were grazing on the grassy uplands in Gader that belonged to the pasturing association, specifically in Ostredok and Úplaz. Inhabitants from Sklabiňa had two sheep farms located on the communal pasture in Ploská – upper and lower, while each of them had its own flock master. In the **Turiec** villages of **Folkušová, Krpel'any** and **Sklabiňa**, sheep were pastured by flock masters using the traditional way, with their helpers and junior shepherds. In **Krpel'any**, they also had a shepherd from Zázrivá along with the local shepherds. *Selection of other flock master was organised by the village reeve and was held on the New Year's Day.* Flock master then agreed with two helpers and one junior shepherd. If the village didn't have a domestic flock master, natives from **Orava** or **Zvolen** from **Priečhod** came to supervise the grazing of sheep. The selection process was organised by "salašník". The farmers (sheep owners) agreed on the flock master and his helpers. However, when the Orava natives were selected the flock master used to bring his own helpers. *Junior shepherds who were driving the sheep for milking used to be local boys.* Turiec was also a location of live trade with sheep products: hides were sold to the leathersmakers (**Abramová, Folkušová**), wool was usually sold from **Folkušová** to **Martin** and from **Rudno** to **Nitrianske Pravno**, from **Malý Čepčín** to **Veľký Čepčín**, where it was further processed and the wool cloth was used for manufacturing horse blankets. Traders were travelling across villages to purchase wool for cash or in exchange for ready-made products. Ready-made woollen cloth could also be purchased in Krpel'any, and was processed in households in Abramová, Sklabiňa, Turček and Vrícko. Production from mountain sheep farming in Turiec was mainly focused on cheesemaking and domestic production of *bryndza*. Production of *oštiepok* cheese was rather rare in Turiec

and in some villages oštiepok was made by shepherds from other regions (**Orava, Zvolen, Priečhod**) who happened to work in Turiec.

## **Kysuce and upper Váh valley (the surroundings of Žilina and Bytča)**

**Bells at the Upland Sheep Farm in Sklabiňa, photo by: Ján Podolák, 1965, source: Af ÚESA SAV**



### **Colonisation based on Wallachian law in Kysuce and upper Váh valley**

*Form the regional perspective, Kysuce and the surroundings of Žilina and Bytča could be regarded as individual units, however, when viewing the topic of Wallachian colonisation, these units were interconnected in the past and therefore they closely related to reach other with respect to shared history, settlement process and culture. The most important document proving the presence of Wallachians in the regions of Kysuce, surroundings of*

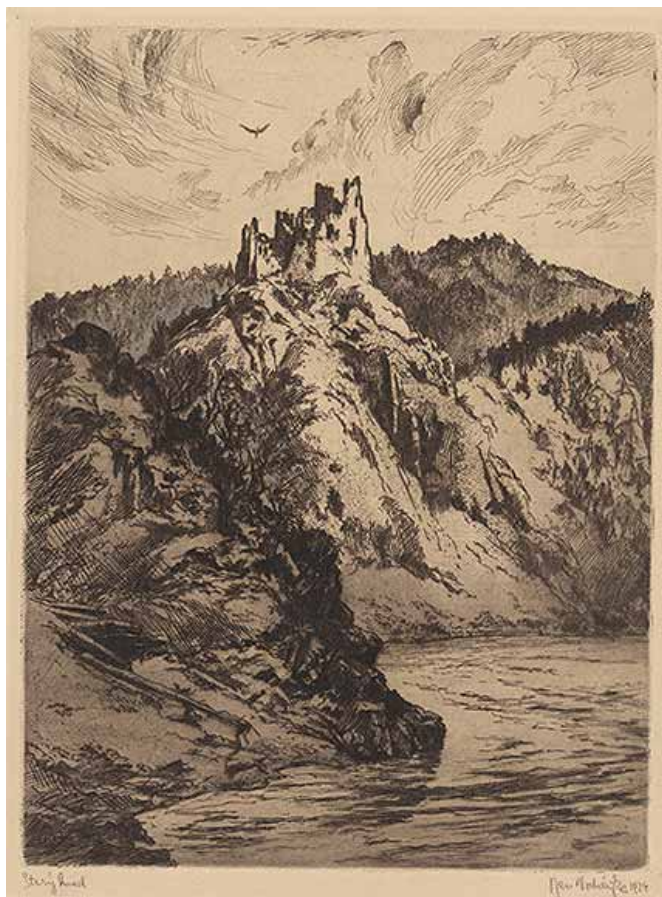


Travel to the  
Upland Sheep Farm  
in Terchová, photo  
by: Ján Podolák,  
1963, source: Af  
ÚESA SAV

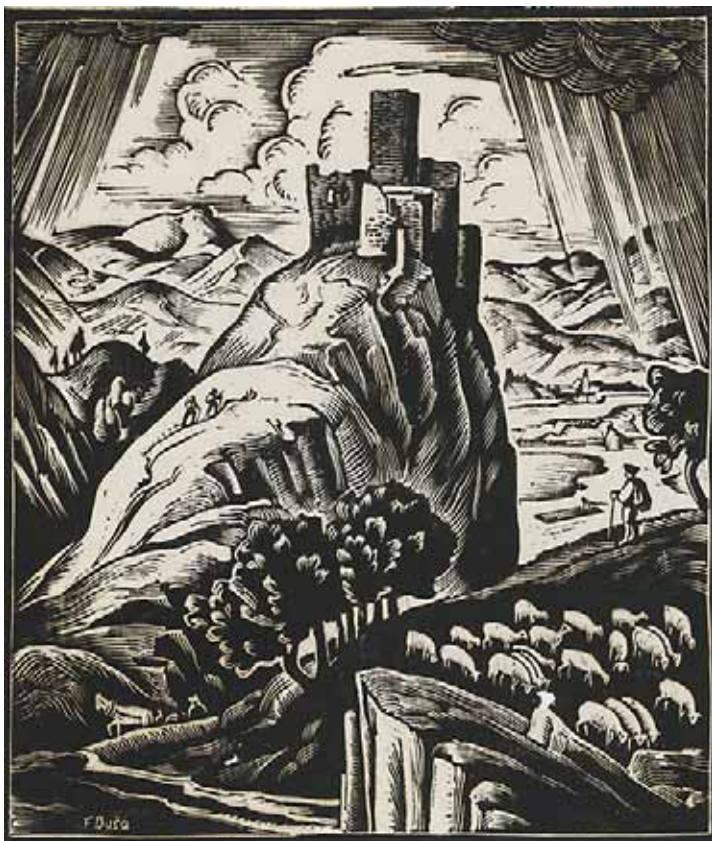
Žilina and Bytča is **the document issued by Vladislav II.** from 1496, confirming the previous charter by king Matthew (Corvinus) issued after 1475 which grants liberties to “Volachis” in **Belá** and other locations and forests belonging to *Strečno castle*. Based on this document, we can assume that at the turn of 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> century, Wallachians were present at several locations of the lands belonging to Strečno castle domain. Documents from 1504 and 1505 tell us about the disputes between the lords of *Budatín and Strečno* castle lands on the **Rača** mountain that were related to pasturing. In 1514, a sheep paddock is mentioned near **Krásno**, which was built by a certain Gašpar Suňoga from Budatín castle. In 1540, Wallachians are mentioned also in Štiavnik, which at the time belonged to the lands of **Považská Bystrica castle**. In 1548, Wallachians are also mentioned in Nesluša and one year later also in Tižina (today **Dolná Tižina**). Wallachians from Tižina, together with those from Belá, started to settle in the upper ends of the Varín valley with overlaps to Bystrická dolina valley. ***Tižina is a very important village for the Wallachian settlement of this region, as it provided a certain administrative framework for the whole process of settlement of the Bystrica valley as well as the upper ends of the Terchová valley. This whole territory originally probably belonged***



*under Tižina from the administrative perspective, only later independent municipalities developed.* This is confirmed e.g. by the document from the 18<sup>th</sup> century, which states that the territory of the future **Riečnica** was actually the territory of **Tižina** in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Therefore, Tižina was probably the seat of the original Wallachian *voivode*, who administered extensive territory from today's Terchová (the peak of Rozsutec) to Veľká Rača. For example, Wallachians from **Belá** and **Lúčka (Nezbudská)**, which used to belong to Starý hrad castle let their flocks graze in the territory of future **Čadca, Raková and Oščadnica** and paid their dues for this privilege to Strečno castle. Wallachians from Horný Vadičov belonging to the same castle pastured their animals (according to contemporary documents) between the Orava and **Tešíň** castle lands. *These documents suggest that the given territory was a subject to colonisation and later of settlement and also frequent ownership disputes.* At the time, the original medieval settlement was located mainly in the southern part of the **Žilina** basin and **Kysucká vrchovina**, in the direction north-east from Žilina the original settlement reached the above-mentioned municipality of **Belá**, to the north up to Krásno nad Kysucou, the upper northernmost parts of today's territory of Kysuce where settled only very lightly, if at all. Perhaps only by seasonal lumberjacks, hunters or farmers. In the territory of Krásno nad Kysucou, this "southern stream" of Wallachians encountered (near **Čadca**) the previously settled Wallachians from the northern branch of colonisation, who had settled in the neighbourhood of **Veľká Rača** as early as near the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century. **Čadca** itself was established in **1534**. Still, we should perceive this line as a symbolic border as the Wallachians at that time still lived a nomadic lifestyle



**Starý Hrad Castle, Jaroslav Vodrážka,  
lept, 1930-1938, Slovak National Gallery,  
source: webumenia.sk**



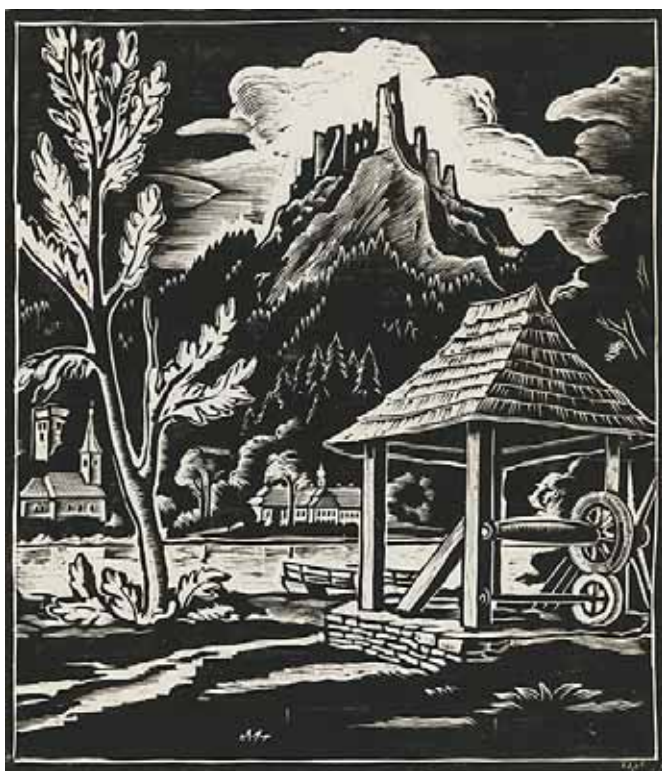
**Strečno Castle, Ferdiš Duša, wood engraving, 1933,  
Gallery umenia Ernesta Zmetáka, source: webumenia.sk**

and they were migrating on relatively large territories. Northern **Kysuce** was destination for colonists from Orava, Kysucká vrchovina, areas around the towns of **Živiec** and **Tešíň** as well as mountain villages in **Považie**. This heterogenous element was mixed and comprised sources from larger parts of the wider region and finally penetrated also to the current Czech territory (**Valašsko, Jablunkovsko**) and Poland (**Tešíň and Živiec area**). In 1549, Wallachians are mentioned in **Nesluša, Povina and Lehota** (today **Budatínska Lehota**). After

1550, we have records about *Wallachians* also in other villages of **Bytča** and **Považska Bystrica** castle lands, such as Rovné (today **Veľké Rovné**, 1550), **Štiavnik, Pšurnovice, Petrovice, Kolárovice**, Dlhé Pole (1553). It may be assumed that **Rovné** (today Veľké Rovné) was founded by Wallachians and the earlier medieval settlement of **Rimanovice** (this is the name of one local part of Veľké Rovné) then merged with Rovné. Documents from 1552 mention Wallachians as “vigilatores” (guards), which is related to the duties they had to the respective castle lords. This duty was generally associated with Wallachians and the manner in which they were invited to the respective territories. The fact that the guardship service was a part of their duties is attested by the first mentions of Wallachians serving near Likava castle from the first half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century (they came here from Spiš). Guardship was later taken over from this area also to the territory of the current Moravské Valašsko in the Czech Republic where we encounter this duty in the second half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. *However, really extensive Wallachian colonisation can be attested after the second half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, when the number of Wallachians increased so much that originally founded settlements later served as sources for further colonisation in their vicinity (e.g. Bystrica – today Stará Bystrica ).* In this period, the plenitude of the Wallachian population around the older settlements (**Čadca,**



**Bystrica**) enabled founding of new settlements that separated from the older ones (**Nová Bystrica, Klubina, Radôstka**) or profiled independently in their neighbourhood (**Čierne, Skalité, Oščadnica etc.**). *Voivodeships* under which they belonged remained their unifying element and the voivode remained his superiority over the village reeve. In 1577, Wallachians are mentioned in Vrátna, in 1540 Wallachians were also pasturing their animals in the forests of **Radicza, Klubina, Zbor, Blasovicz and Diedova**, that is in the major part of the territory of today's Bystrická dolina. In the first half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century Wallachians from Tižina (today Dolná Tižina) had their juts and paddocks in Čadca. We have mentioned of upland farms in 1582 in the territory of today's **Oščadnica**, still labelled as Podjavorská Oščadnica. From 1639, there is a mention of upland farms in



**Hričov, Ferdiš Duša, wood engraving, 1930 – 1933, Slovak National Gallery, source: webumenia.sk**

Veľká Bránica (**Belá**) and Príslop (**Terchová**) which belonged to Strečno castle. A document from 1614 mentions a case of *Wallachians* in the surrounding of **Čadca** and **Krásno** using the term “*ovčenie*” (sheeping) which at the time perhaps meant shepherding Wallachian flocks. A document of country officials from 1626 also mentioned Wallachians from the surrounding of Krásno nad Kysucou. It is of interest to read the documents about the interrogation of *Wallachians* from 1650, who came from the vicinity of Čadca and were captured in Jablunkov. In front of the

court, certain **Jakub Jendriščák** from **Čierne** stated that he had moved in from Poland only last year. Similarly, certain **Karkoščok Križek** is mentioned among the interrogated ones, who came from Piosek near Jablunkov but settled in **Čierne** where he received a piece of cleared land. This not only points out to the gradual overlap of the Wallachian and *kopanice*<sup>5</sup> colonisation but also suggests the original regions from where the colonists in

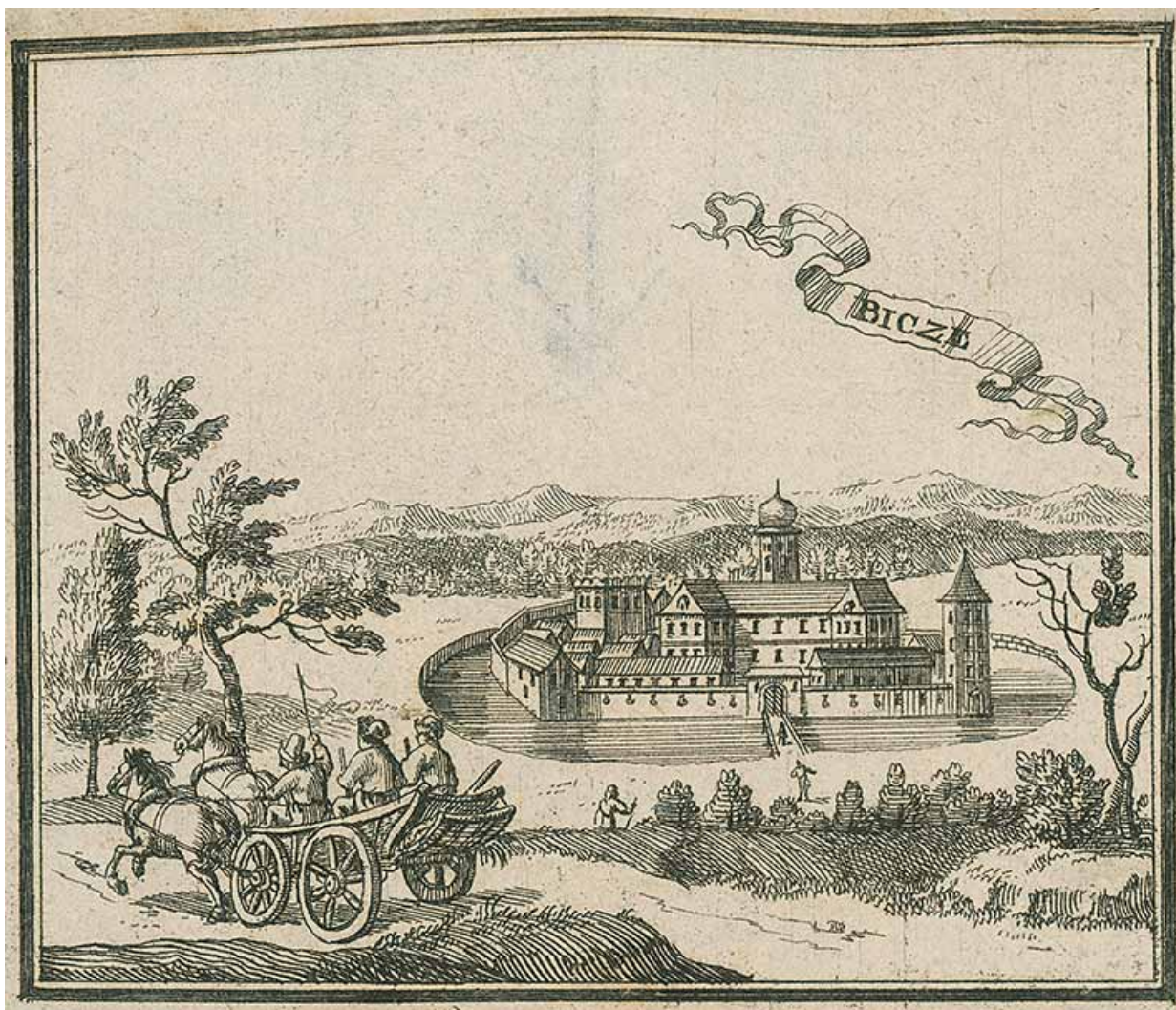
<sup>5</sup> From “*kopanice*” – remote hamlet, small settlement





**Súľov Castle, Ladislav Mednyánsky, oil painting, 1875-1885, Slovak National Gallery**

the wider region of **Čadca** actually came from. **Čadca** is certainly the oldest settlement established under the Wallachian law in the upper Kysuce, *its founding dates back to 1534*. Other villages established on the lands belonging to the Budatín castle included ***Nová Dedina (part of Divina), Lopusné, Ochodnica and Dunajov, Rudinská and Pažitie (today Lopusné Pažite)***. In the second half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the Dersffy family, who owned Strečno castle attempted also to establish other settlements, of which only ***Bystrica (today Stará Bystrica) and Lutiše*** (1591) survived until this day. The land register of Budatín castle from 1690 mentions Wallachians in ***Horelica, Raková, Povina and Lodno*** but Wallachians lived also in other settlements founded directly based on Wallachian law, or subsequently populated later by Wallachians, such as ***Brodno, Zádubnie, Považský Chlmec, Divina, Svederník, Vranie, Rudina, Rudinka, Oškerda, Dubie, Kysucké Nové Mesto, Nesluša, Kysucký Lieskovec, Budatínska Lehota, Krásno, Radol'a, Čadca, Ochodnica, Raková, Staškov, Svrčinovec, Podvysoká, Podjavorské, Čierne, Skalité, and Zákopčie***. Intensive settlement activity as well as later conflicts are also attested by the report from 1716, which states that inhabitants from **Raková, Staškov** and **Olešná** during the uprising of **Francis Rákoczy** built 200 huts and uplands farms above the Kysuca river and in **Skalité**. A municipality that certainly needs to be mentioned is Terchová, founded near Žilina based on the Wallachian law. **A founding charter has been preserved and we therefore know that the village was founded on the Friday before the St. George's day (which is 23<sup>rd</sup> April), which means the founding took place on 17 April 1580.** Based on archive data, we know that there were Wallachian *voivodeships* in this area along the stream of Černianka located in **Svrčinovec**, another one in **Staškov** but also one located in **Čadca**, with authority of the municipalities in its neighbourhood. In lower Kysuce, it was a voivodeship in **Nesluša** and one voivodeship was quite certainly in **Belá** (lands of the Starý hrad castle) although it is not directly attested in sources. **Tižina**, as a bridgehead of the Strečno lands behind the



**Bytča, Justus van den Nypoort, copper engraving, 1686, Orava Gallery, OGD, source: [webumenia.sk](http://webumenia.sk)**

settlements belonging to the **Starý Hrad**, constituted an important element in the Wallachian colonisation of the eastern part of the Strečno lands. It was a seat of *voivodeship* (perhaps as the substitute of the original *voivodeship* from **Belá**), which administered a large territory starting in today's Vrátna dolina going as far as Veľká Rača. **Contemporary documents prove that its territory also included the peak of Veľký Rozsutec.** The number of Wallachians grew substantially until the early 17<sup>th</sup> century and the original extensive *Tižina voivodeship* divided into the independent voivodeships of **Terchová and Bystrica** (Stará Bystrica and surroundings), which became natural central points in their respective valleys. ***The territory of Bytča castle lands is of interest too, as the register from as late as 1793 still mentions voivodes in Petrovice, Čierne, Turzovka, Vysoká nad Kysucou, Dlhé Pole, the voivode from Pories, named Ján Hubočan from Jasenica (aged 34) and in Podhradie and Papradno that belonged to Bytča lands at the time.*** In the territory of Javorníky and Strážovské vrchy, documents mention Wallachians in **Veľké Rovné, Súľov, Bytča, Kotešová, Dolný Hričov.** In the 18<sup>th</sup>



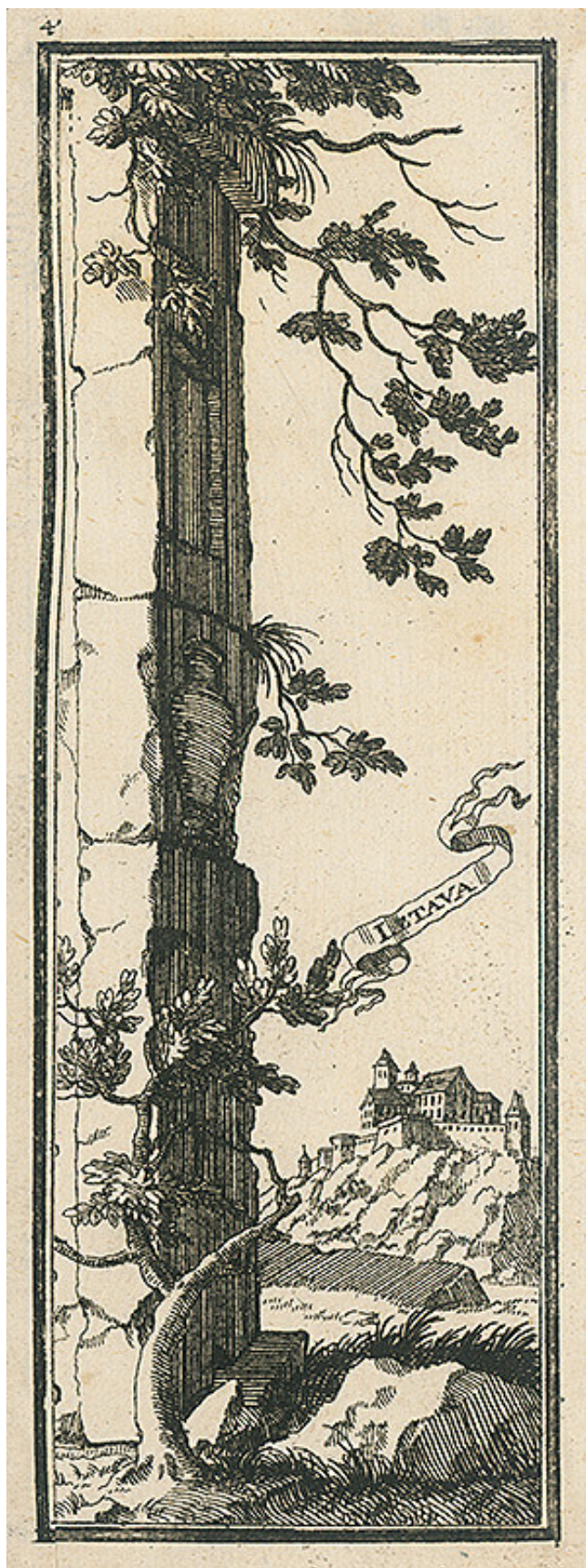
and 19<sup>th</sup> century, mountain sheep farming in Javorníky mountain range (both the **Kysuce** and **Bytča** parts) was in decline as sheep were gradually replaced by cattle, as well as there was excessive pressure in the form of dues required by feudal lords, but also bans on pasturing or removal of pastures from original owners. Around **Bytča (Kolárovice, Štiavnik)** the former upland sheep farms are changed to “huts, summer dwellings, shepherd’s houses” that served for seasonal breeding of cattle and poultry of the respective farmers from the village. *These “summer dwellings” were being founded in order to economically utilise the mountain meadows while simultaneously dealing with the lack of pastures in and near the actual villages.* In the respective villages of **Kysucká vrchovina, Kysucké Beskydy and Javorníky** mountain range there were differences in the extent of agriculture, animal type (only cattle or also goats, sheep and poultry), some processed dairy using methods similar to the Carpathian upland farm cheese processing, while others applied conventional domestic milk processing methods. Due to the respective colonisation streams and the later historical context, mutual influence and overlap of the

**Budatín Castle, Ferdiš Duša, wood engraving, 1930 - 1933, Slovak National Gallery, source: [webumenia.sk](http://webumenia.sk)**





Lietava Castle, Justus van den Nypoort, copper engraving, 1686, Orava Gallery, OGD, source: [webumenia.sk](http://webumenia.sk)



Wallachians in the region of Kysuce, there developed independent and quite characteristics Goral municipalities of *Skalité, Čierne, Svrči-novec, Oščadnica and Čadečka* (today a part of Čadca), which have provided evidence with their unique cultural customs attesting to the heritage of Wallachian colonisation and are true followers of the Goral cultural traditions. A specific part of the region south of Žilina influenced by the Wallachian colonisation is the Rajec basin and a part of Strážovske vrchy, of which the northern part is related to the above-mentioned lands belonging to Strečno castle domain and the southern mostly to **Lietava**, and partially to **Hričov** and later **Bytča** castle. Minor parts also belonged to **Považská Bystrica** and **Záblatie** castle lands. All the municipalities existing today had already existed also when the first Wallachian colonists started to arrive, most of them founded on emphyteutic law. Just like in the surrounding of Bytča and the related lands, Wallachians were arriving to a relatively densely populated areas (apart from the north-east parts of Žilina basin, the **Varínka** river basin and **Kysucká vrchovina** (Terchová, Lutiše), or Bystrická dolina and the surrounding of **Čadca** and northern parts of Javorníky mountains, which had not

been inhabited according to the available documents and sources. First mentions about the presence of Wallachians in this territory date back to early 16<sup>th</sup> century when a report from 1510 mentioned an upland sheep farm in the mountains near the village of **Fačkov**, in 1518 and 1525, the names “Valach” and “Rus” are mentioned in **Súl’ov** and in 1530 **Lietava** castle rewarded the “Wallachians from Orava” for their services and in 1539 a certain *“Wallachian who regularly travelled to Spiš”* was rewarded for his services and also *“Walachs from Likawa”* are mentioned. In 1540, the documents record Wallachians in Turo (today Turie near Žilina) and Porúbka, and in 1543 there are mentions of Wallachians in Frívald (today Rajecká Lesná) and **Malá Čierna**. In 1550 Wallachians are attested in **Fačkov**. *At the end of 16<sup>th</sup> century, the documents of Lietava castle talk of “loca hole dicta” or “alpibus hole vocatis”*<sup>6</sup>. Interesting mentions from the end of 16<sup>th</sup> century record Wallachians from Strečno castle taking over 43 sheep and 8 oxen in the municipality of **Višňové** near Žilina. In the same period, we have records mentioning the robbery by the Wallachians from **Lietava** castle who in the territory of **Poruby, Turie and Rosiny** took away from the serfs of Strečno castle 93 sheep and 8 oxen. In the early 17<sup>th</sup> century, we have mentions of breeding forest cattle by peasants from Lietava castle lands amounting to 4 500 pieces. From the same period, we also have information about application of Wallachian law in disputes between the settlements of **Lucska and Sztranja (today Lietavská Lúčka and Stránske)**. In this period, peasants used to lease mountain pastures previously used by the castle lords themselves, specifically in locations such as *Rajecká dolina, Uhličná dolina, Frývald’anská dolina, Kuneradská dolina, Konštica, Svrčník, Babčanka, Kohuľa, Dúbravka, Lietavka, Strážovské hory, Smrečník, Holica, Veľký Žiar, Višňovka and other*. In the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century, we have numerous mentions of Carpathian upland sheep farming, sheep, cold (outdoor) paddocks, and mountain sheep farms in the distinctive village of Čičmany. **Numerous historians and ethnographers worked with hypotheses Wallachian (Balkan-Bulgarian) origin of the settlement of the municipality, other hints rather suggest German settlement. In every case, Wallachians certainly left a strong trace in Čičmany.** The indications and theories of the municipality’s origin should be thoroughly explored and subject to a detailed analysis (e.g. the theory of Bulgarian origin of the municipality’s name by gradual distortion of the name of Bulgarian khan Šichman (Shishman), Kadlec’s interpretation of the village name derived from the word used to label shepherds without stable settlements (“Cincari”) etc. Equally interesting fact indicates the first written mention

---

<sup>6</sup> Mentions of grassy uplands

about **Frívald** (today Rajecká Lesná) from 1413, when landowner Stibor from Stiborice granted hereditary office of reeve in **Frívald** to Michal Valach for his loyal services. Stibor from Stiborice was simultaneously the duke of Transylvania, the above-mentioned hereditary reeve is likely to have been only a rare minor feudal lord with potential **Balkan** (Wallachian) origin in this territory at the time, since the first relevant written sources on for the territory of the upper Váh valley are known from end of 16<sup>th</sup> century.

### **Traditional forms of sheep farming in Kysuce and Upper Váh valley**

*In the territory of Kysuce and Javorníky mountains (the surroundings of Bytča) Carpathian-style mountain sheep farming had been on the decline in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century as the cattle breeding took over.* This was reflected also in the lower prevalence of Carpathian mountain sheep farming if not its full absence in *the territory of Javorníky and around Bytča* in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, where most information is available thanks to field research. In the western part of Kysucké Beskydy and the river basin of Kysuca, mountain sheep farming was only rare in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The area where the Carpathian type of sheep farming was preserved in the territory of northern Kysuce, was the surroundings of *Velká Rača and Bystrická dolina*, mainly *in Oščadnica, Stará, Nová Bystrica and Vychylovka*, today already extinct villages *of Riečnica and Harvelka as well as others (Zborov nad Bystricou, Klubina, Čierne, Skalité, Svrčinovec, Čadečka)*. Farmers from *Oščadnica, Čierne, Čadečka, Skalité* and sometimes even from *Tešínska Hřčava* used to drive their small flocks to the grassy uplands of **Beskydy** mountains. In the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, upland sheep farming was dominated by the village of **Oščadnica** with the massif of Rača. In *Oščadnica, Čierne, Skalité and Čadečka*, the upland sheep farming business was organised in a very interesting manner with no equivalent in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in the Slovak part of the Carpathians. *The only parallels can be found in the Polish and Czech parts of Tešínsko region.* The specificity lied in gradual involvement of all inhabitants of the village/all breeders in the work at upland farm (salaš) where the respective workers took turns in holding the position of the flock master of the farm, according to the principle of their share in the ownership of the farmed pastures. These shares were then calculated into “days” which reflected the right of the





**Shepherd's Hut v Oščadnici, photo by: Ján Podolák, 1965, source: Af ÚESA SAV**

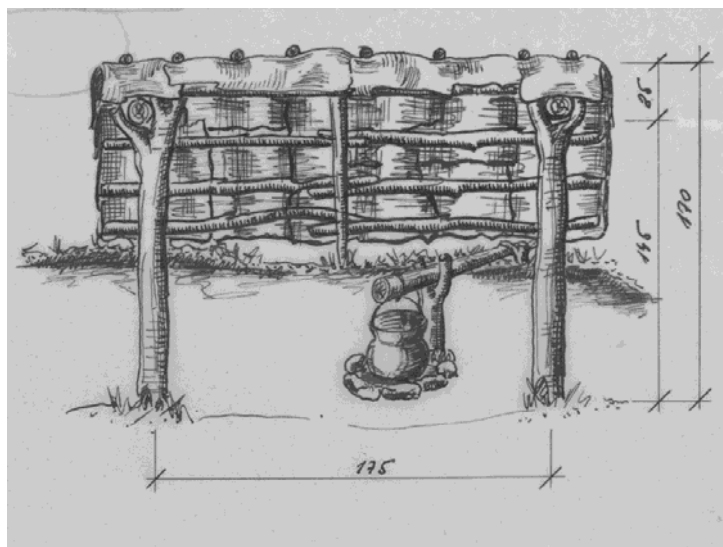
sheep farmer to graze their sheep and to acquire the whole milk income from the given day (the whole dairy production). A well-known ethnologist Jaroslav Štika perceived this type of mountain sheep farming as an evidence of decline of the traditional forms of organisation of mountain sheep farming. He claimed that this process was most visible when looking at the workers at the farm and the titles they had, since the traditional position of the flock master and his shepherd helpers ("Valasi") and the usual system of paying them was not present here anymore in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. **He attributed this phenomenon to economic, social and cultural development and the decline of mountain sheep farming in this region.** The number of sheep in the district of Čadca in 1925 was 386, in 1939 only 279 while in 1946 it was 684 animals. **He regarded this method of sheep farming as very interesting with no parallel anywhere in the Slovak**

*part of the Carpathians in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century with exception of the Polish (Brenna), or Czech part of Tešínsko (Hrčava).* As mentioned above, this region, **Oščadnica** in particular was known for a specific organisation of mountain sheep farming, where the position of flock master rotated among all farmers, only the shepherd was hired for the whole season. *Apart from the position of assistant (“valach”) in the other sheep farming areas of Slovakia, the shepherd had a more dominant position here, he was directly reporting to “salašník” (the representative of the sheep owners’ association) and was selected from among the older and more experienced farmers.* In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the rotation was applied also to the position of the shepherd which reportedly attested the decline of mountain sheep farming as the shepherd could not find adequate subsistence in this profession for the whole year, so he had to rely on conventional field farming. The difference between the area of **Oščadnica** and the other regions known for upland sheep farming in Slovakia was *also in the distribution of the farm production as the individual sheep owners did not receive a specific amount of cheese depending on the number of sheep they had at the mountain farm for the given season but the individual owners claimed the whole production of the farm for a specific number of days.* The length of working as the flock master depended on the number of sheep they had at the mountain farm. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century in **Oščadnica**, an owner of six sheep could



Milking, Belá, Ján  
Podolák, 1963, source:  
Af ÚESA SAV

claim the position of flock master for one day, that is he could have claimed the income from dairy production for the morning, lunch-time and evening milking in every cycle ("round"). Another significant area with preserved mountain sheep farming in the 20<sup>th</sup> century was the river basin of **Varínka stream**, the area of **Kysucká vrchovina** (Vadičovská brázda) and the main ridge of the **Kriváň** section of Malá Fatra with major upland sheep farming centres such as **Terchová, Belá, Dolná Tižina, and Vadičov**. Other significant municipalities with live mountain sheep farming included **Lysica, Lutiše**, and **Krasňany**, while other surrounding municipalities were also strongly involved in mountain sheep farming activities. It was exactly the ridge of **Malá Fatra** that was – even as late as the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century literally covered by live upland sheep farms, which enjoyed a long and strong tradition here. *Upland sheep farms were run by shepherds from several villages, some of which had no land-owning connection to this mountain ridge at all but the*



**Open Shepherd's Hut in Nová Bystrica, drawing: students of SVŠT, 1972, source: Af ÚESA SAV**

*names of the farms provide evidence of long-term usage by sheep owners from the given villages (e.g. **Strážska hoľa, Lysická hoľa, Vadičovská, or "Vajčovská" hoľa**), also the farmers and sheep owners from **Nova Bystrica and Harvelka** used to hire flock masters from Terchová to pasture their sheep in the ridge of Malá Fatra. In the Bystrická dolina, mountain sheep farming was best preserved in **Riečnica** in the given time. Besides the above-mentioned mountain and upland pastures, in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century there existed various grassy uplands and alpine pastures along the whole main ridge as well as side ridges na of the Kriváň section of Malá Fatra but also at lower altitudes, mainly in locations such as **Medziholie, Medzirozsutce, Behár - Ostrô, Strungy - Príslop, Stoh, Grúň, Oštiepková Mulda, Na Javore, Pod Stohom, Kravarské, Podžiar** etc. The most frequent form of flock breeding was breeding from own stock. Along with exchange and purchases in the surrounding regions, sheep owners from Terchová valley stocked themselves with Wallachian sheep purchased in shepherding centres of **Verchovina (Verchovina sheep), in Hutsul villages (Hutsul sheep), in Maramures (Romania),***



northern parts of Transylvania as well as Ruthenia. Terchová sheep owners liked to purchase sheep for breeding around **Rachov** and brought them to **Sučany** by train, there they divided the flock, and everybody drove their sheep over the ridge of **Malá Fatra** to **Terchová**. In terms of the form of organisation of summer pasturing, **Terchová** valley was known for individual mountain sheep farming. In this system, sheep used to graze in flocks put together depending on the respective farms. ***The system of individual mountain sheep farming was preserved up until the forced collectivisation in the 1950s.*** In **Terchová**, as a municipality with well-developed sheep breeding, one part of men were professional shepherds and flock masters in other locations. They were sought-after as shepherds and flock masters in many villages of north-west Slovakia. **The shepherding season started on the St. George's day (24 April).** Combining of sheep (into one large flock) traditionally had a ceremonious character. The departure from the village to the upland pastures was labelled as “*redik*” and the return of the flock to the village after the summer and the subsequent distribution of sheep back to their owners was labelled as “*rozsad*”. *Rozsad* was typically performed on 8<sup>th</sup> September, but some flock masters stayed up in the mountain farms until the St. Michael's day. Up until the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, the first drive of the sheep was an occasion to practice a number of customs and superstitious ceremonies in order to ensure prosperity of the sheep as well as the

**Pastier from Rajecka Dolina, photo by: Karel Plicka, 1928, Slovak National Gallery, source: [webumenia.sk](http://webumenia.sk)**



shepherds. From **Malá Fatra and Kysucká vrchovina**, we have several mentions of archaic wintering of sheep in cold paddocks ("mraznica") and cut paddocks (made from felled timber). *The last rather significant mountain sheep farming region south of Žilina was Rajecká kotlina basin with its distinctive upland sheep farming village of Čičmany located in Strážovské vrchy. In the past, the valley was dominated by sheep bred for meat and wool, after spreading of the Carpathian form of mountain sheep farming, the new form of dairy farming was preferred and as of the end of 16<sup>th</sup> century, mountain sheep farming was fully dominant.* In some other villages, there was a custom of hiring shepherds from other regions (typically from Orava and Terchová) for summer sheep farming season, who were able to get so much milk from the sheep that they produced **as much as 4-5 kg of cheese per animal**. Sheep farming had long-standing tradition mainly in *Čičmany, Fačkov, Zbyňov and Ďurčina*. Later, after the forced collectivisation, sheep farming was developed also in *Lietavská Svinná, Jaseňové and Višňové*. In numerous villages, sheep farming was declining due to lack of pastures (*Babkov, Lietava, Podhorie, Závadka, Brezany, Ovčiarsko*). **Fačkov** used to be the centre for purchase of sheep for the whole Rajecká kotlina, and the inhabitants of **Fačkov** used to buy sheep in *Valaská Belá, Čavoj and Zliechov*. In municipalities with a stronger sheep breeding tradition, larger sheep owners usually organised summer mountain sheep farms, where they leased sheep from other farmers. **Some kept milk as an extra reward for summer pasturing, others gave owners of sheep 4-5 kg of cheese per dairy sheep.** For larger flocks, special pastures were being rented from the summer administrators for the whole season; this is how flock masters from **Svinná** used to do it, who usually placed their summer farms on the grassy uplands above **Kunerád**. **In Fačkov**, only the richest farmers were breeding sheep, usually each had around 40-50 pieces. *Summer mountain sheep farm was organised by three farmers with an equal number of dairy sheep (their own or rented) grouped to form an association. Two of them took regular turns as shepherds while the third was making sheep and then they changed position every week. Thus, the milk was claimed by a different farmer every week. In Fačkov, even the cowmilk production was performed using the Wallachian system.* By using rennet, they produced standard cheese, special "parenica" was made only rarely here. In Turie, smoked cheeses were known as "sušenička" (dried cheese). **Moreover, inhabitants of this village also knew the method, with which they cut the fresh block cheese (from sheep milk) into small cubes which they placed on the shelve to smoke-cure and the (unkneaded) smoked cheese obtained in this way was known as "táliky".** The

*Wallachian method is also attested by the production of bryndza and its domestic usage. In Čičmany, sheep breeding has a long tradition. In the past, sheep owners from Čičmany used to purchase sheep in Detva and earlier on, they used to go as far as Transylvania. In Čičmany, individual shepherding of sheep was typical, owners of upland farms were shepherding mainly their own sheep, then sheep of their relatives but sometimes they also took on to their flock also sheep from other villages. In the land belonging to the municipality, there were as many as 15 individual sheep farms, where most sheep were the property of the farm owner, who hired shepherds to work at the farm. Milk was processed by the farmer or his son, or possibly from the family of farm owner. Sheep were driven to the upland farm in early May. Breeders who kept their sheep at a privately-owned upland farm usually picked their share of cheese in July or August. The owner of*

**Flock Master, Lietavská Svinná - Babkov, photo by: Ján Podolák, 1973, source: Af ÚESA SAV**





the farm used to pay 4 to 6 kilograms of cheese per sheep. Sheep owners used to paddock-manure the lands that were used for growing potatoes, mainly the fields in higher altitudes or poor accessibility. From Čičmany, we also have reports of cold paddocks, or “cut paddocks” where in some cases during large snowfalls sheep even gave birth to their lambs. The production of hides from sheep was usually sold to tanners from Rajec. Here, also the well-known Čičmany fur coats were sawn. In the village, the old method of splicing wool yarn (“*druganie*”) was preserved, mostly performed by men.

## **Traditional Forms of Sheep Farming in Slovakia and in the Territory of the Žilina Region**

*Historical events and colonisation-style migrations have also contributed to origination of regions that are diverse and internally culturally differentiated, mainly if we consider the relatively small territory of Slovakia.* The geographical location of Slovakia at the crossroads of west and east European cultures led to certain differences in shaping of regional specifics. From the cultural and geographical perspective, *Slovakia is located at the border between two large geographic units of Europe – the lowlands and the mountains.* The lowland is linked to **Pannonia** and the **Tisa-river** basin spreading across the southern part of Slovakia, **Moravia**, parts of **Austria**, most of **Hungary**, as well as **Croatia** and **Serbia**. This region offers highly favourable climatic and soil conditions that significantly influenced also the general lifestyle of the population living here – the people became involved mostly in agricultural production. The mountainous part, spreading across most of the Slovak territory is a part of the so-called Carpathian crescent with cultural overlaps with **Morava**, **Poland** and **Ukraine**. *Tough climate and lower quality of soil caused that the population of these lands focused more on logging, pasturing, livestock farming, rather modest agricultural activities and in some parts of the territory also on mining.* While in the lower altitudes of the mountain valleys in the modern Slovak territory, there had already been domesticated sheep and established forms of sheep husbandry labelled as lowland sheep farming that was characterised by driving of the animals to the pastures every day, the Wallachian

sheep farming introduced utilisation of grassy uplands and pastures on alpine meadows in higher altitudes.



**Upland Sheep Farm in Liptovské Revúce, V. Gosiarovský-reproduction 1978, source: Af ÚESA**

**Communal pasturing of sheep (i.e. all sheep from the village in one flock) had been widespread in Slovak settlements already since the middle ages.** Before spreading of the Wallachian method of sheep farming in Slovakia, there had been the lowland sheep farming closely associated to agricultural farming. The sheep farming year had been divided into two major seasons: ***the winter breeding season and the summer season for pasturing*** – both forms focused on production of wool and meat. *In the 15<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> century*, in the mountainous regions of Slovakia, a new system of sheep farming spread across the land from east towards west, known as Carpathian mountain sheep farming. As it was spread by shepherds, who were often labelled as *Valachi* in Latin sources, in professional literature, it was labelled as **Wallachian/Vlach** colonisation, or, more precisely, colonisation based on the Wallachian law. In the Slovak territory, this was a gradual process with unequal results that depended on natural and economic conditions, interest of the local agricultural population in the new methods as well the support of the respective feudal landowners. *The methods of upland sheep keeping, specific farming*

*related to processing of dairy products, characteristic shepherding constructions and artefacts, clothing accessories of shepherds, objects of shepherds' folk art as well as elements of folklore have been shaping the popular folk culture for centuries which has thus acquired truly unique forms thanks to these stimuli.*

In the mountainous regions of Slovakia, we differentiate between two organisational forms of summer pasturing: **individual and communal**. Under the individual system of mountain sheep farming, sheep were grazing in flocks divided according to the respective farms and owners. In the areas with limited population, labour played a very important role. Summer grazing, pasturing, milking and overnight guarding of the flock but also for winter feeding – all of this required male labour which was mostly

**Flock Master Anton Falašta, Dolná Tižina, photo by: Ján Podolák, 1974, source: Af ÚESA SAV**





provided based on the division of labour in the respective families. Depending on the type of labour performed on the farm, the roles were differentiated and labelled as *valach*, *ovčiar*, *baraniar*. (**shepherd, ewe man, ram man**) *This made large family-based communities most suitable for this purpose, as all the important farming tasks could be assigned to male members of the family.*



**Shepherd, Terchová, photo by: Ján Podolák, 1963, source: Af ÚESA SAVSAV**

The system of rotation of sheep owners when pasturing the shared flock and when collecting the milk production of sheep had been preserved until the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in numerous locations known for their mountain sheep farming tradition – villages around *Žilina*, in *Orava* and in *Spišská Magura*. Elsewhere the farmers were taking turns in pasturing, but everyone was milking their own sheep separately – e.g. in **Lutiše**, **Dobroč**, **Belá** near *Žilina*. Yet other villages had the respective homestead farm owners taking turns only in managing of the upland farm (known as *salaš*) and they hired a common flock-master or chief shepherd (called *bača*) to oversee only the grazing of the sheep – e.g. in **Fačkov**, **Dubové**, **Šmigovec**. Another passing phase between individual and communal mountain sheep farming was organisation of individual *salaš* upland farms, where the owner could take over also the sheep of other breeders if necessary. *Establishing of common mountain farm collectives, where the care for the animals was delegated to professional shepherds enabled*



**Shepherd, Zázrivá, photo by: Ján Podolák, 1963, source: Af ÚESA**

*to breeders to get involved in uninterrupted agricultural work in the field or possibly to perform other additional tasks, employments or commit to crafts.* Sheep breeders were associated in mountain sheep farming associations that were established based on the administrative arrangement of villages, property or family relations, forms of village architecture etc. The mountain sheep farming associations were labelled in regional dialects using various names, e.g. *salaš, salašní spolok, ovčarski spolok, salašná spoločnosť, košar, košarna spoločnosť, košarní spolok* [mountain sheep farm, mountain sheep farming association, shepherds' association, sheep breeder's society, mountain sheep farm company, sheep paddock, sheep paddock society, sheep paddock association]. Members of the association were labelled as "*miešalníci*" (the **Liptov and Upper Hron** regions), farmers etc.

The main right of every member of such association was to drive his sheep to join the common sheep flock and receive the appropriate share of cheese production. *Major response-bilities included taking care of the pastures and the asso-ciation's property,*



*which was related to the duty of working for a fixed number of days on cleaning and keeping of the pastures, repairing of roads leading to the mountain sheep farm (salaš), building or relocating the objects at the mountain sheep farm, assist-ing in transporting of the mountain sheep farm inventory.* The association was headed by one of the sheep owners, an elected official, called *gazda* (leading farmer), *salašník* (mountain sheep farm head), *šafar*

**"Salašník" Martin Zat'ko with Shepherds, Liptovský Peter, 1974, source: Archive of the Shepherdling Museum in Liptovský Hrádok**

(warden), *košarnik* (sheep paddock warden), *šoltýs* (reeve) etc. Mountain sheep farm head was an esteemed person in the village as he was in charge of the whole mountain sheep farming business and all the related activities. His major duties included selecting the suitable shepherds for the position of the *bača* (chief shepherd, flock-master) and *valachs* (shepherds, *bača*'s helpers) sign a contract with them and determine the conditions of upland farming. ***Mountain sheep farm head was in charge of overseeing the work with milk, he supervised the distribution of products, took care of sale of the excess production to acquire funds for the association's treasury.*** Through the whole shepherding season, he oversaw the operations at the mountain sheep farm, resolved problems, advocated for the interests of the association against the chief shepherd as well as the landowners, and represented the association in general. For his work, he was compensated in kind by receiving a certain share of the mountain sheep farm products. **In autumn, after the whole farming operation was concluded, the accounts were settled**, sometimes in early winter before Christmas, at a meeting which was labelled *rachung*<sup>7</sup> or *poratúnok* (accounting session) when the new mountain sheep farm head and *bača* for the upcoming year were elected.

**Sheep in Malatiná, photo by: N. Siegelová, 1973, source: Af ÚESA SAV**



<sup>7</sup> *Rechnung* in German means "accounting" or "counting"



From the perspective of mountain sheep farming in Slovakia, we differentiate between two basic types of mountain sheep farm organisation, depending on the two major ways of hiring the *bača* – the head of the *salaš* and the flock master. Under the first type, *bača* and his shepherd helpers – *valasi* were hired for a fixed compensation agreed in advance, which was paid in dairy products or coins. The second concept of organising common mountain sheep farms is when the flock master was farming *at his own risk*. This basically meant that *bača* practically leased the sheep for summer from the individual owners in the village and for the 'lease', he paid out a fixed amount of cheese. **All the mountain sheep farm's expenditures and salary to the shepherds were paid out by the *bača* from the cheese sold.** The rest of the cheese that remained after payment of all expenditures and liabilities constituted the flock-master's compensation for work or profit. Flock-masters and their helping shepherds significantly differed from ordinary shepherds pasturing other livestock in terms of their knowledge and competence in processing milk and dairy production. This was reflected in their social status and the pay they were receiving. *The competence of heading a mountain sheep farm was passed from one generation to another and in some villages, there developed traditional *bača* and *valach* families with reputation of skill and competence in their sheep husbandry crafts. In the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, the villages of Terchová and Zázrivá remained the major centres of shepherding. Sheep breeders from these villages would often leave for the whole season even to more distant regions to work on the local mountain sheep farms. Shepherds from Terchová and*



Upland Sheep Farm in Šútovo, photo by: Ján Podolák, 1963, source: Af ÚESA

***Zázrivá worked across the villages of the north-west Slovakia but also in central Vah valley and even as far as the surroundings of Senica.***

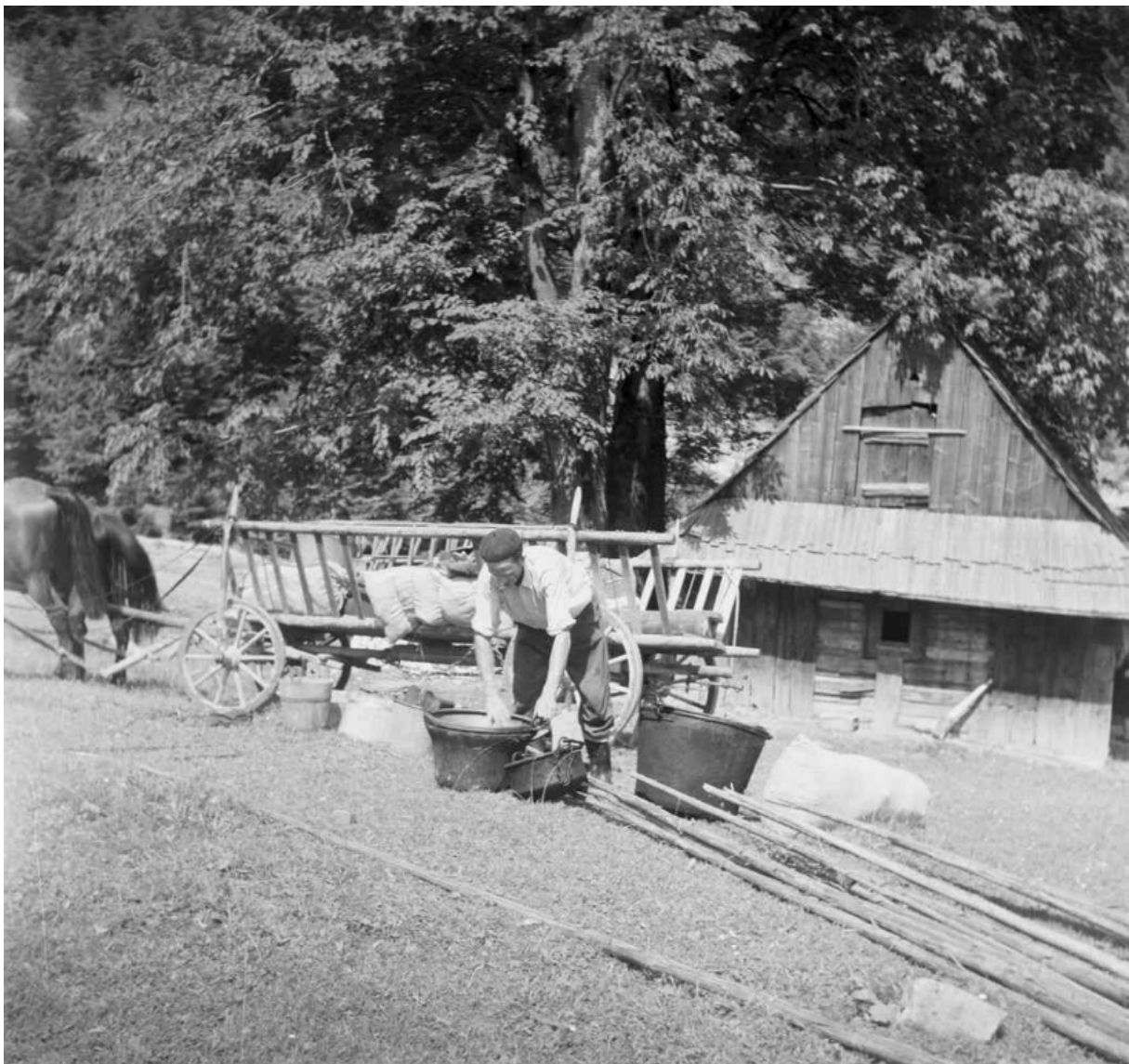
Farmers held chief shepherds in high esteem. **They believed they know the diseases of sheep and know how to cure them – whether using the practical solutions or the means of magic.** Every *bača* had to be hard-working, cleanly and tidy person, other

**Driving of the Sheep in Liptovska Porúbka, Flock Masters Michal Fronko (Liptovská Kokava), Peter Slosiar jr. (Liptovská Porúbka) and shepherd Matej Klaučo from Pribylina, source: Archive of the Shepherding Museum in Liptovský Hrádok**



important personal qualities included bravery, courage and honesty. Besides *bača*, the chief shepherd, the work at a mountain sheep farm were performed by other shepherds who were universally called *valach* or *ovčiar* (shepherd, sheep farmer). The general category of *valachs* was further divided depending on the type of work the respective shepherds were performing. After *bača* the most important position and status was enjoyed by the elder shepherd also called *poubača*, (half-*bača*, flock-master's deputy) who used to work around the sheep farm together with the chief shepherd the whole year round. The other shepherds were only *prijednanci*, that is, contractors agreed to for work at the uplands only for the summer season. The names typically used for these shepherds were *paselník* (pasture man), *striščiar* (shearer), *dojčiar* (milker, milking man), based on the typical jobs these shepherds were performing at the mountain farm. Shepherds pasturing the yearling ewes, young females that were not milked and rams were called

*jarčiar* (yearling ewe man) and *baraniar* (ram man). ***Their major task was to pasture and guard overnight the sheep that were not milked and the rams as well as to provide help with other auxiliary works.*** The role of a helper at the mountain sheep farm was performed by *honelník* (junior shepherd, herdsman), **a boy aged 10 – 15**, often a son of the chief shepherd or a younger brother of one of the shepherds. When ranking the shepherds into the respective positions, a procedure was established that was strictly followed. First, a boy had to be *honelník*, around the age of 15, he could become a *poldojčiar* (assistant to milking man), who was pasturing the non-milked sheep and rams. Only then he could become a *dojčiar*, that is, a shepherd responsible for pasturing and milking sheep. ***Bača and other shepherds negotiated with the representatives of the mountain sheep farm association for a specific pasturing season for a fixed pay or compensation.*** This was put in a written contract that was entered into the mountain



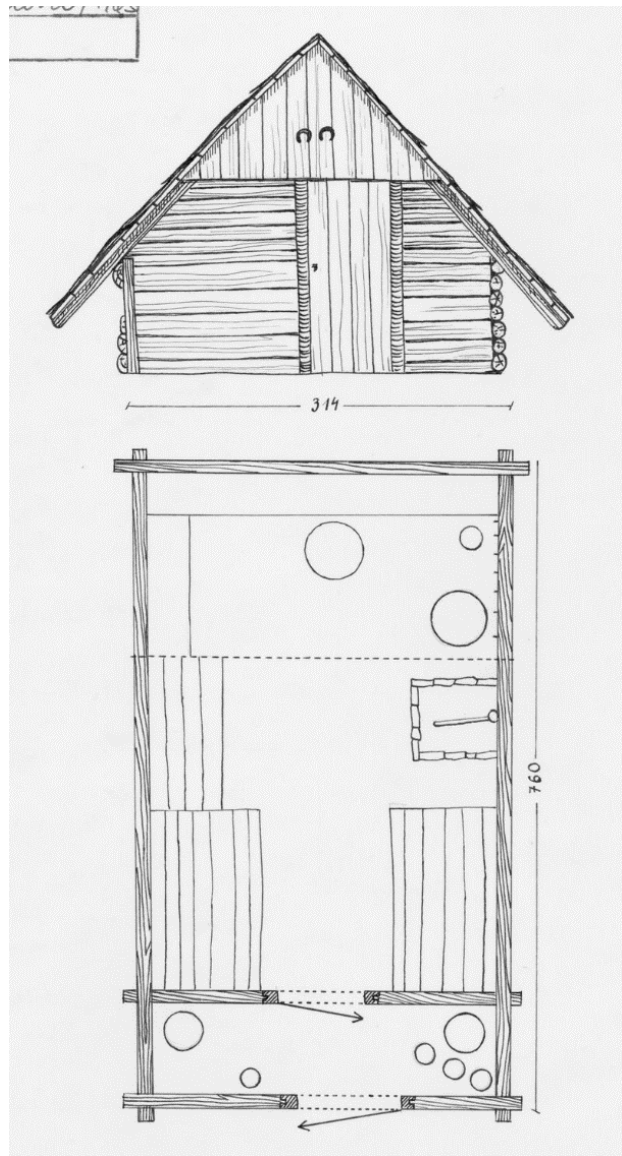
Driving of the Sheep to Príslop, Terchová, photo by: Ján Podolák, 1963, source: Af ÚESA SAV



sheep farm register and was signed by both parties. In the contract, there was not only the amount of pay to the shepherds, but also their duties, obligations, orders, prohibitions etc. *The compensation for shepherds was partially in coin and along with the pay, the shepherds also agreed to receive a certain proportion of cheese as well as the possibility to bring their own sheep to the mountain sheep farm. They could also keep and rear a pig at the farm.*

The pay was gradual according to the responsibilities of the shepherd at the mountain sheep farm. In villages with well-developed tradition in sheep husbandry, *the spring driving of the sheep to the communal pasturing outside the village in the uplands represented a significant ceremonious event of the farming year* (in the local dialect it was called *redik*). Preparations for the sheep driving started several weeks

before the actual day. Individual breeders had the duty to mark their own sheep with their characteristic marks. In some regions, there was a custom that on a **Good Friday**, shepherds were walking from one house to another marking sheep, treating their hoofs, preparing them for a demanding long-term stay in the uplands. They not only marked lambs designed for further breeding but also older sheep that had been previously unmarked or the sheep that the breeder acquired by purchase. *The most frequent way of marking sheep was on the animal's ear. Earmarking was performed by clipping with scissors, cutting with a chisel, axe or making small holes with empty gun shells. Essential markings in the respective families were not changed, they were inherited from one generation to another.*



**Shepherd's Hut from Terchová, drawing: K. Fulierová, 1963, source: Af ÚESA**

In terms of organisation of the communal sheep pasturing outside the village, which was connected to seasonal moving of the shepherds and the sheep to the uplands, shepherding constructions and buildings at the mountain sheep farm played a significant role. *When selecting the location to build the respective objects at the mountain sheep farm, several factors were taken into consideration. Firstly, it was sufficient pastures, the possibility of good access to the surrounding pastures and grassy uplands and simultaneously communications enabling transport of dairy products to the valley.* If on slopes, mountain sheep farms were mostly located in hollows and locations with the least steep gradient, if possible, facing the south or east, the most advantageous locations were protected from winds. And last but not least, a spring with drinking water was an essential factor for operating a mountain sheep farm. As a collective name labelling the whole group of constructions enabling seasonal sheep pasturing outside the settlements and villages, the central Slovakian dialects used the term *salaš* (in English, besides this term we will use interchangeably also the term '*mountain sheep farm*'). **The central object of the mountain sheep farm was the cabin (*koliba*)**, serving as the temporary home for the shepherds as well as the dairy production facility. The cabin was located so that it offered a good view of all the other buildings in the mountain sheep farm as well as the access paths. In the past, only wooden cabins were built using the technology of log-construction

**Shepherd's Hut in Hruštín, photo by: J. Botík, 1970, source: Af ÚESA**





from logs of soft-wood trees, chipped typically only on one side. *The cabin was built without basement and used to have no attic to enable the smoke from the fireplace escape to the house-top where a roof opening would be to let the smoke out of the cabin.* The floor in the cabin was made of hard-packed earth, which was replaced by wood-boards only in the 2<sup>nd</sup> third of the 20<sup>th</sup> century due to hygienic and isolation reasons. Besides wooden log-cabins, there also used to be stone-built cabins, usually located at mountain sheep farms in the highest altitudes of the **High and West Tatras**, in places on the edge of the forest where the scrub-pine vegetation begun.

***Chief shepherd's cabin was originally a one-room object fulfilling several functions. First of all, it served as premises for dairy products manufacture and storage and simultaneously a place for accommodation of the shepherds and a place to spend leisure time.*** The central location in the cabin belonged to the fireplace with loose construction located on the ground, the only protection from fire were the stones lining the perimeter of the fireplace. *The cabin also served for storage of all important vessels, containers and tools for processing milk, namely "putera" (bucket for milk and cheese), cauldron and "trepáky" (whiskers). On the wall, the wooden tankards would be hanging for*

**Shepherds from Žiar, source: Archive of the Shepherding Museum in Liptovský Hrádok**





drinking “žinčica” (boiled sheep whey). They also had a decorative role and each mountain sheep farm, and its chief shepherd took pride in them. There were also smaller containers for milking hanging also on the external wall called “geleta” (buckets for milking). They had to be always clean and placed on the bench upside down.

Besides the chief shepherd’s cabin, mountain sheep farms also featured various shelters for shepherds, known under various local names, such as *kolibka*, *valaská kolibka*, *juháska*



**Flock Master Ján Karcol in his Hut, Zázrivá – Horná Plešivá, photo by: Pavol Breier**

*kolibka*, *podkolibka* (in Čičmany), *strežiareň*, *stražáreň* (in Terchová), *postrieška*, *baraniarka*, *búda*. Their major role was to provide shelter when guarding the sheep that were not milked and the sheep whose *košiar* (paddock) was not placed in the immediate vicinity of the mountain sheep farm. ***The most important buildings at the mountain sheep farms included sheep-folds, paddocks, and shelters for sheep that kept the flock together, prevented the sheep from dispersing and partially provided protection from thieves and predators.*** From the evolutionary perspective, the oldest form of keeping sheep at mountain sheep farms can be regarded as placing of sheep in fenced enclosures in the forested areas on a clearing, where the felled timber logs were placed longitudinally



**Wide Belt, photo by: Iveta Zuskinová, source: Archive of the Shepherding Museum in Liptovský Hrádok**

divided into two parts: the first one was called *honeľnica*, where the flock was concentrated before milking and the other was an enclosure where the flock was placed after milking. From the first to the second part, the sheep were passing through *strunga*, a small gated enclosed location, where the actual milking was taking place. ***It was a specific section in the whole enclosure, typically with 4 to 6 openings (depending on the number of dojčiari, the milking shepherds who sat next to the sheep and milked them.*** If the enclosure served to keep also the non-milked sheep, these were simply let to walk through the opening to the second part of the paddock.

on each other and served as the fence or railing. These enclosures were only used for pasturing of sheep in alpine environment. They were known as *zat'atý košiar* or *košiar z priasma* (felled-log paddock). The pattern of this enclosure depended on the number of animals, the location of the mountain sheep farm and the local tradition. Typically, the enclosure was



***The clothes worn by shepherds didn't substantially differ from the dress of the men from the village but as members of the so-called Wallachian estate or community, they usually added specific artefacts to their dress that served to identify and distinguish them from***

**Wooden Tankards, Valaská Dubová, photo by: Ján Podolák, 1963, source: Af ÚESA**

***the rest of the society.*** The clothes were made of natural home-made materials, based on linen and hemp cloth, sheep wool and hide. *The basic item was the shirt with its characteristic cut and decorations which differed based on the respective location. On the underwear trousers made of plain cloth, another pair of trousers would be worn made of woollen cloth with characteristic cut, decoration and patches.* Shepherds would also wear a short vest made of sheep hides, decorated with embroidery and ornamental applications from coloured leather. In a cold and unfavourable weather, they used to wear woollen smocks known as *suknice*, *širice*, or *guby*. On their head, they would wear a hat with a brim, well-greased to protect them from rain. They would also wear *krpce*, the traditional folk leather shoes and in later periods, also heavy boots. **Along with the essential clothing items, shepherds also used to wear traditional accessories which did not serve any practical purpose, but they were rather the symbols and badges of the Wallachian estate.** Primarily, it was the wide belt with several buckles. This item however, also used be worn by peasants, lumberjacks, and timber rafters as it ***protected the waist of men from cold and injuries while they were performing heavy work.*** Shepherds' belts, however, had richer decorations using studs hammered into the leather as well as brass and nickel-silver buttons called *band'urki* (little potatoes). Hanging from their belts, they used to carry on a metal chain the *šparcháč*, the metal pipe cleaner. *In the belt, they used*

**Dancing at an Upland Sheep Farm, Vážec, postcard: Pavol Sochán, 1910, source: Archive of the Shepherding Museum in Liptovský Hrádok**





to carry a pouch with tobacco, pipe as well as a secret pocket for keeping money. Another significant accessory carried by shepherds was the **shepherds' bag**. **Inside, they used to carry food, knife for woodcarving, magic herbs applied in rituals** during *redik*, the ceremony of driving the sheep to the uplands. Again, the major function of the bag was symbolic and decorative. ***The bag distinguished the owner as a member of the Wallachian estate and the width of the bag strap also his position in the shepherds' hierarchy.*** Shepherds also used to wear wide-brimmed hats decorated with a studded leather stripe or possibly with tiny shells from the tarns of the High Tatras. Shepherds and chief shepherds also used to wear metal badges determined for their profession only. Another shepherds' accessory was the **valaška**<sup>8</sup> **axe**, which used to be a *working tool* in the older era as well as a *weapon* – in case of an attack by another human or a predator. Shepherds also used to carry walking sticks, both simple and decorated. ***In their leisure time, shepherds used to carve various objects from wood, mostly the things closely related to their life and work at the mountain sheep farm, objects of everyday use.*** Their taste in decorations was demonstrated on the ornamental carving of the wooden tankards, mugs, pots, cheese forms, *bača's* ladles, utility objects such as salt boxes and various other small vessels. *Črpák* (wooden tankard or mug) was a symbol of the mountain sheep farm and a pride of every Slovak *bača*. ***A quality črpák had to last for several decades and that is why a suitable material was selected for each of its part – the bowl, the bottom and the handle.*** The bottom was typically made of soft wood of conifers, mostly spruce tree, while the bowl and the handle were made from hardwood, such as maple. For Liptov, Orava and Kysuce, the typical mug is the so-called north-Slovakian *črpák*. The shape and the decoration of the handle are dominated by the themes of various stylised zoomorphic heads (snake, dragon, peacock, horse, rooster) wearing a crown. Many shepherds were highly skilled in manufacturing of decorations and metal jewellery that was characteristic of their estate as Wallachians. **Manufacture of folk musical instruments is a Slovak specific.** These instruments were also used in shepherds' work: they were mostly diverse blowpipes, large *fujara* shepherd's pipe, bagpipe etc. ***Many shepherds were gifted musicians, they were skilled at playing musical instruments, they used to sing Wallachian songs and danced the shepherds' dances. The art related to shepherds' lifestyle is an integral part of the Slovak folklore.***

## NOTES

---

<sup>8</sup> Not to be confused with its homonym, *valaška* – the familiar name for the Wallachian sheep

1. The first wider research into shepherding in Slovak Carpathians was conducted by the Polish geographer L. Sawicki, followed by Z. Holub – Pacewicowa, V. Kubijovyč and J. Král. Czech historians K. Kadlec, V. Chaloupecký and J. Macúrek deserve credit for their research into Carpathian mountain sheep farming from the historical perspective.  
Discussed by Ján Podolák in “Tradičné ovčiarstvo na Slovensku”, VEDA SAV Bratislava 1982 pages 9-14
2. Organisation of collective mountain sheep farms is analysed by J. PODOLÁK c.d. 1982 pages 85 – 92
3. The *bača*'s cabins and shepherds' shelters are discussed by J. Podolák in c.d. 1982 pages 122-129
4. Typology of Slovak wooden tankards was elaborated by Václav Kautman as the visual artists in ÚLUV in the 1950s.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. ABRAHÁMOVÁ, V. :Spracovanie ovčieho mlieka v Nižnej Boci, In. Věstník Národopisné společnosti československé pri ČSAV a SNS 1963
2. BEDNÁRIK, R. : Duchovná a hmotná kultúra slovenského ľudu, In. Slovenská vlastiveda, Bratislava 1943
3. BEDNÁRIK, R. : Pastierske rezbárske umenie, Bratislava, 1956
4. BEDNÁRIK, R. :Príspevok k problematike prvých dopravných prostriedkov a bývania, In. Národopisný zborník SAV XI. 1952 str. 275 - 290
5. CHALOUPECKÝ, V. : Valaši na Slovensku, Praha , 1947
6. HOLUB – PACEWICOWA, Ž.. Pastierstvo v Nízkyh Tatráh, In. Zborník MSS ročník XXVII - XXVIII, 1933-34 str. 94 - 156
7. HOLUB – PACEWICOWA, Ž: Osadnictwo pasterskie i wendrowki w Tatrach i na Podtatrzu, Kraków, 1931
8. HORVÁTHOVÁ, E. : Rok vo zvykoch nášho ľudu, Tatran Bratislava, 1986
9. HYBEN, M.: Vážec, Osveta Martin, 1981
10. Encyklopédia ľudovej kultúry Slovenska 1., 2., Veda Bratislava, 1995
11. Encyklopédia Slovensko Ľud - II.časť, Obzor Bratislava, 1975
12. Encyklopédia Slovenska I., Veda Bratislava, 1977
13. Encyklopédia Slovenska III., Veda Bratislava, 1979
14. Encyklopédia Slovenska IV., Veda Bratislava 1980
15. Encyklopédia Slovenska V., Veda Bratislava, 1980
16. KAUTMAN, V.: Bačovský riad v slovenskej ľudovej umeleckej výrobe Bratislava 1959
17. KOMOROVSKÁ, M.: Slovenské črpáky, Tatran Bratislava 1980
18. KOMOROVSKÁ, M. : Pastierske umenie Tatran Bratislava 1987
19. KOVAČEVIČOVÁ, S.: Ľudový odev v Hornom Liptove, Bratislava, 1955
20. KUBIJOVIČ, V. :Typy pastierskeho života na Slovensku, In. Zborník MSS, r. XXIV 1930 str. 105
21. KUFČÁK, E.: Povera a chov hospodárskych zvierat v 17. century v Liptove, In. Zborník Agrikultúra 18, 1981 str. 47 - 50
22. LAURINČÍK, J. Chov oviec, Bratislava, 1977
23. MARKUŠ, M.: Jelšavskí zvonkári, In. Národopisný zborník SAV r. 9 1950 str. 42
24. MICHALEK, J. a kol.: Liptovská Teplička, ONV Poprad 1973
25. OLEJNÍK, J.: Ľud pod Tatrami, Osveta Martin 1978
26. PALIČKOVÁ, J.: Ľudová výroba na Slovensku, Veda SAV Bratislava, 1992
27. PALKOVIČ, K. 1966. Staré spôsoby liečenia hospodárskych zvierat v slovenskej rukopisnej knižke z 18. storočia, In. Agrikultúra 5, 1966, str. 203 - 229
28. PALKOVIČ, K.: Rukopisná knižka o liečení domácich zvierat z 18. storočia, In. Slovenský národopis, str. 327 - 338
29. PETRÁŠ, M. : Funkcia pastiera a jej kodifikovanie v pastierskych zmluvách v Liptove, In. Agrikultúra 13, 1975 str. 71 - 84
30. PETRÁŠ, M. BERESECKÁ, O. Hospodárenie salašného spolku v Hybiach v rokoch 1886 - 1956, In. Zborník Liptov 7, Osveta 1983 str. 198 - 215
31. PODOLÁK, J. : Pastierstvo v oblasti Vysokých Tatier, SAV Bratislava 1967
32. PODOLÁK, J. : Tradičné ovčiarstvo na Slovensku, Veda Bratislava 1982
33. PODOLÁK, J.: Spôsoby chovu hospodárskych zvierat, vyd. SAV pre SNS, Bratislava 1962
34. PODOLÁK, J.: Tradičné spôsoby zimného kŕmenia a pasenia oviec na Slov., In. Agrikultúra r. 17. 1980

35. PODOLÁK, J.: Tradičné spôsoby ustajnenia oviec na Slovensku, In. zborník SNM Etnografia 21 1980
36. PODOLÁK, J.: Poľnohospodárstvo a pastierstvo In. Monografia Horehronie, Bratislava 1969
37. PODOLÁK, J.: Ovce ako predmet vlastníctva na Slovensku, In. Agrikultúra roč. 18. 1981
38. PODOLÁK, J.: Ovčiarске koliby a košiare na Slovensku, In. zborník SNM Etnografia 22 1981
39. POLONEC, A.: Slovenské opasky, kapsy a spínadlá, Martin 1960
40. PREKOP, I.: Z histórie salašníctva, ovčieho mliekarstva a bryndziarstva na Slovensku, Vlastivedný časopis r. 16, Bratislava 1967
41. SLAVKOVSKÝ, P.: Tradičná agrárna kultúra – Slovensko, Európa kontexty ľudovej kultúry, Bratislava 2000
42. STOLIČNÁ, R.: Jedlá a nápoje našich predkov, Veda SAV Bratislava, 1991
43. ŠTIKA, S.: Salašnícké ustajňovanie dobytku a košarovanie na moravsko - slovenském pomezí, In. Český lid, r. 45. 1958
44. ŠTIKA, V. 2007. Valaši a Valašsko, VMP Rožnov pod Radhoštěm 2007
45. ŠVORC, P.: Štrba, ONV Poprad 1979
46. ZUSKINOVÁ, I.: Zvyky pri salašnom chove oviec v hornom Liptove, zborník Liptov 9, Osveta Martin 1987 str. 213 – 223
47. ZUSKINOVÁ, I.: Ovčiarstvo a salašníctvo v Liptove, Spoločnosť priateľov Múzea liptovskej dediny Liptovský Hrádok 1999
48. ZUSKINOVÁ, I.: Ovčiarstvo a salašníctvo v Liptove, zborník referátov z odborného seminára Prírodné bohatstvo a kultúrne dedičstvo Liptova, SPU Nitra 2000, str. 40-44
49. ZUSKINOVÁ, I.: Ovčiarstvo a salašníctvo v Liptove, Studia Academica Slovaca 30, FFUK Bratislava 2001, str. 329 - 338
50. ZUSKINOVÁ, I.: Pastierska rezba a pastierska tematika v Liptove v druhej polovici dvadsiateho storočia, zborník Rezbárstvo, motivácie, inšpirácie, výsledky ÚLUV Bratislava 2003, str. 43 – 51
51. ZUSKINOVÁ, I.: Ovčiarstvo a salašníctvo v Liptove, zborník Pastierska kultúra, jej dokumentácia a prezentácia, Etnológ a múzeum XII.ročník, Liptovské múzeum v Ružomberku 2008, str. 133 – 139
52. ZUSKINOVÁ, I.: Tradičné formy chovu oviec, In. Ján Keresteš Ovčiarstvo na Slovensku, história a technológie, NIUKA Považská Bystrica 2008, s.87-123
53. ZUSKINOVÁ, I.: Pastierske rezbárske umenie v Liptove, zborník Pastierska kultúra a ľudové výtvarné umenie, Liptovské múzeum v Ružomberku 2010, str. 27 – 31
54. ZUSKINOVÁ, I.: Odevné doplnky ovčiarov v Liptove, charakteristika, výroba, výtvarné hodnoty a výrobcovia, zborník Výrobné postupy a výzdobné techniky v umeleckom prejave pastierskej kultúry, Liptovské múzeum v Ružomberku 2011, str. 43 – 50
55. ZUSKINOVÁ, I.: Karpatské salašníctvo a jeho vplyv na ľudovú kultúru na Slovensku, In. Ján Novák a kol. Po stopách valachov v Karpatoch Tribun Brno 2013 s.191-242
56. ZUSKINOVÁ, I.: Liptov v ľudovej kultúre, Spoločnosť priateľov Múzea liptovskej dediny Liptovský Hrádok 2014
57. ZUSKINOVÁ, I.: Liptov – ľudové umenie, Spoločnosť priateľov Múzea liptovskej dediny Lipt. Hrádok 2017
58. ZUSKINOVÁ, I.: Črpáky tradičné a súčasné, Spoločnosť priateľov Múzea liptovskej dediny Liptovský Hrádok 2017
59. ZUSKINOVÁ, I.: Ovčiarstvo v Liptove, Spoločnosť priateľov Múzea liptovskej dediny Liptovský Hrádok 2018



## Natural heritage associated with Carpathian mountain sheep farming in the territory of the current Žilina region

### Tatra National Park - TANAP

*Tatra National Park (TANAP) represents the oldest-standing large-size protected area in Slovakia.* Geomorphological unit of the High Tatras is divided into two parts: East and West Tatras. Geomorphological subunit of West Tatras is divided into 6 parts: *Osobitá, Sivý vrch, Liptovské Tatry, Roháče, Červené vrchy, Liptovské kopy.* TANAP spreads over both sides of the Slovak and Polish border. ***The Carpathian crescent measuring 1800 km reaches the highest altitude on Gerlachovský štít (2655 meters above sea level), overall there are 25 peaks in the Tatras exceeding the altitude of 2500 meters. High Tatras with the main ridge measuring 26 km are the shortest alpine range in the world. Also, it is the coldest and dampest territory in Slovakia.*** High Tatras also represent



**Panorama of Tichá Dolina, High Tatras, photo by: Jozef Jurík**

a mountain range with perfectly developed glacial relief (rocky peaks, glacial basins, gorges, numerous rocky seas and moraines around glacial tarns). The most famous glacial valleys in the *High Tatras* include *Kôprová, Tichá, Mengusovská, Veľká and Malá Studená dolina, Javorová, Bielovodská and Zelené pleso* valley. **There are around 100 tarns in Tatras, out of which the largest and the deepest is Veľké Hincovo pleso.** Other well-known tarns are e.g. *Popradské, Štrbské, Skalnaté, Zelené pleso, Päť spišských plies* and other. Forests represent the most significant element of the TANAP's territory. The largest surface is covered by spruces, only in the northern edge of the limestone area, there are smaller parts of beech forests too. *Alpine forms of mountain sheep farming in the grassy uplands of the Tatras were preserved in varying intensity until the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. Shepherding was an activity that significantly influenced (also negatively) the nature of the Tatras.* In the interwar period, an incredible 10 000 sheep were grazing in the Slovak section of the Tatras, together with 4 000 oxen, 400 cows and female yearlings and 500

horses. **There were 100-180 upland sheep farms as well as other shepherding objects.** In the western part of the Tatras, shepherding and mountain sheep farming reached the highest intensity. Looking at the **Liptov** part of the **Tatras**, sheep were grazing in the following valleys: ***Važecká, Suchá, Tichá, Kôprová dolina*** (pastures were spreading from the ridge of ***Veľká Kamenistá up to Kriváň and Hlinská Veža***), ***Tomanovská, Kôprovská, Temnosmrečianska, Garajova, Račková, Špania, Jamnická, Kamenistá, Bystrá, Jalovecká, Boborvecká dolina*** as well as in ***Parichvost***. In the **Orava** section of Western Tatras, shepherding and mountain sheep farming was intensive in



**Shepherd's Hut "Pod Klinom" in Račkova Doline, West Tatras, photo by: JUDr. Michal Králik**

*Látaná, Suchá, Juráňova and Roháčska dolina, on the peaks of Ostrý Roháč, Redikálne, Osobitá, Salatín, Zadný Salatín, Brestová, Spálená, Čaplovka, Magurské, Javorina, Črchľá, Šindľovec, Končitá, Volovec, and grassy upland pastures were also in Zverovka, the slopes of Zábrat, Rákoň, Dlhy úplaz, Záprašivé and under Biela Skala. Upland sheep farming ("salaš") and Wallachian toponyms (***Magura, Baranec, Solisko***) in this region bear witness to intensive sheep pasturing in the past. While **Roháče** were used for grazing of sheep owned by Orava municipalities, Liptovské kopy mountains (also known as *Liptovské hole*) were used by the villages from Liptov. Looking at the villages of Orava,*

those operating upland farms in Western Tatras **included Čimhová, Hladovka, Habovka, Liesek, Podbiel, Suchá Hora, Tvrdošín, Vitanová, Zábiedov, Zemianska Dedina, and Zuberec.** There were even sheep from lower Orava municipality of Malatiná and all the villages from ***Dolná Lehota towards Suchá Hora.*** Among Liptov villages, pasturing their sheep in West Tatras, we should mention ***Liptovský Ondrej, Bobrovec, Bobrovček, Jakubovany, Jalovec, Liptovská Kokava, Kanská, Pribylina, Smrečany, Štrba, Trstené, Vavrišovo, Važec, Veterná Poruba, Východná, and Žiar.*** Grazing of sheep was gradually prohibited in the whole national park. At the moment, many experts suggest that at the alpine altitudes, its renewal in the future is not suitable, while in the subalpine levels and lower mountain altitudes, harvesting is preferred. Sheep pasturing is therefore only desired in the lower altitudes below the “Cesta slobody” (*major tourist path crossing the whole Tatras*). **Many experts do not rule out the possibility of returning the tradition of sheep grazing to the Tatra National Park similar to the northern part of the mountain range, where the so called “cultural grazing of sheep” is conducted on several suitable locations at lower altitudes with the objective of maintaining the authentic sheep farms with all the “salaš” production.**

### **National Park of Low Tatras – NAPANT**

***The massif of Low Tatras is (after High Tatras) the most significant geographic and one of the ecologically most stable territories with tremendous value from the perspective of natural sciences.*** When it comes to surface area, it is the largest mountain range in Slovakia. Its central part comprises crystalline rock (granite, granodiorite, gneiss, phyllite) and was modelled by glacial action. Where the glaciers didn't influence the formation, a smooth grassy uplands relief has developed. Diverse geological structure of Low Tatras also preconditioned development of numerous karst systems. ***The system of Demänová caves, which represents a national natural monument is spreading across nine levels in total distance of 24 km.*** Forests take up as much as 90% of the territory of the national park. Various vegetational layers are represented, from the third beech and oak layer to the eighth scrub pine layer. Above the scrub pine, there is also the alpine layer in locations with highly interesting and precious vegetation. ***Numerous protected and endangered species of vegetation grow in the Low Tatras.*** Among them edelweiss, several species of ***rockfoils, carnations, orchids, pasqueflowers, Carpathian soldanella,*** precious mountain avens etc. **Low Tatras are the only place in Slovakia where encrusted saxifrage and parsley fern can be found growing.** Looking at moss



species, the prevalence of *Ochyraea tatrensis* is of interest as it represents an endemic species of Low Tatras. In the alpine zone, we can observe rock whistlers and an artificially introduced population of *Tatra chamois*. Carpathian mountain sheep farming had a profound impact on the mountain range mainly in the region of Liptov, the surroundings of Banská Bystrica and upper Hron valley. In the past, it is likely that sheep were grazing across the whole grassy upland ridge of the mountain range. Within the territory of the Žilina region as well as the historical region of Liptov, sheep have been grazing until today in within the territory limits of **Liptovská Lúžna, Liptovské Revúce, Liptovská Osada, Liptovská Teplička** (currently in the territory of the Prešov region), **Závažná Poruba, and Lazisko**. At present, sheep graze on the mountain and alpine locations of **Zámotská hoľa and Ďurková**. Sustainable, careful and adequately managed grazing of sheep could be desirable from the nature protection perspective more or less across the whole grassy upland ridge of Low Tatras, in the area of **Veľký bok and Krakova hoľa**.

**Meadows and Grassy Uplands of Low Tatras, photo by: Jozef Jurík**



## National Park of Veľká Fatra



Sheep at Ploská, Veľká Fatra, photo by: Jozef Jurík

National park of Veľká Fatra is located in the north-east part of Central Slovakia spreading across the regions of Turiec, Liptov and Banská Bystrica. The highest peak (Ostredok) reaches 1596 meters above sea level. *Veľká Fatra belongs among the largest and most typical fault-block mountain ranges of Slovakia, which preserved a multifaceted and hardly disrupted natural environment.* Thanks to heterogenous relief and a diverse geological base, vegetable communities have been preserved from various periods of post-glacial development. *The broad biological diversity of High Fatra is also proven by the prevalence of over 1000 species of plants and 3000 species of invertebrates.* The precious communities include the remnants of fir relics on the limestone cliffs for example, approximately 85% of the territory is covered by forests from beech-oak

Pasturing in Veľká Fatra, photo by: Jozef Jurík



vegetation level up until the scrub pine. It is of interest that in Veľká Fatra, we can also find common yew, which is relatively precious in Europe today. The territory of Veľká Fatra is dominated by mountain fauna. *So far, approximately 110 species of nesting birds have been detected as well as 60 species of mammals. Among predators, we can mention bear, lynx and wolf. Golden eagle has his nests here too.* In the past, the highland locations of almost all cadastral areas of municipalities, where the national park is today located, were used for sheep grazing, often also as pastures for yearling cows, oxen and horses. In **Liptovské Revúce**, also dairy cows were pastured in the upland farm. In the Liptov part of Veľká Fatra, mountain sheep farming was developed mainly in **Hubová, Černová, Biely Potok, Liptovské Revúce, in Turiec it was Krpeľany, Nolčovo, Konské, Podhradie, Sklabiňa, Turčianske Jaseno, Belá, Necpaly, Folkušová, Blatnica, and Čremošné.** At present, mountain sheep farming has survived and continues at lower altitudes in **Sklabiňa, Turčianske Jaseno, Folkušová, Čremošné, Hubová, Černová, Biely Potok, and Belá-Dulice.** When it comes to higher altitudes, at present in the cadastral area of the city of **Ružomberok**, sheep are grazing in Smrekovica, Skalná Alpa, and in the cadastral area of **Belá-Dulice** in the location of Lysec and in **Liptovské Revúce** in Minčol, Magury, Ploská, Kýšky, and Suchý vrch. **Sustainable, careful and adequately managed pasturing of sheep could be desirable from the nature protection perspective more or less across the whole grassy upland sections and mountain meadows of the national park.**

### **Protected Natural Area Kysuce**

In the north-west part of Slovakia, neighbouring with the National Park of Malá Fatra, protected natural areas of upper Orava, Strážovské vrchy and the large-surface protected territories of Czech Republic and Poland, there lies the Protected natural area (PNA) Kysuce. It is a part of the regions of Kysuce and upper Váh valley (Horné Považie). *The PNA comprises two individual mutually separated parts, the western one – Javorníky part and the eastern one – Beskydy part.* More than half of the territory is covered by forests, the original mixed forests have been preserved in the highest altitudes. The territory is covered by a dense network of streams, number of springs, temporary peat bogs and moorland meadows with protected and endangered plant species such as round-leaved sundew, ostrich fern, liliu martagon, black barlow and several species of Orchidaceae.





Bystrická dolina, Riečnica, photo by: Jozef Jurík

*So far, 205 species of vertebrates have been detected in the territory of the PNA Kysuce. It represents the westernmost borderline of spreading of all the large predators of Slovakia – wolf, bear and lynx. Also, otter has found its living habitat here and among the glacial relics, we can observe the boreal owl, the three-toed woodpecker, and the northern birch mouse. On several locations, there has also survived a **Carpathian endemic species – Carpathian salamander**. Across the whole protected area, there are over 2400 settlements and hamlets, which has no parallel across the whole territory of the former Czechoslovakia. The best known and best-preserved hamlets include **Brízgalky, Zrubitá, Michalcovci, Vyšné and Nižné Blatá, Ráztoka, Behno, Modlatín, Lovasovci, Greguši, Pláne, Kelčov** – vyšný koniec, **Hrubý Buk, Klin** etc. In the past, approximately 100 years ago the ratio of the forest and non-forested vegetation was 60:40%, i.e. exactly the other way around than it is today. The whole mountain ridges of the eastern part served as pastures, including Veľká Rača. *Carpathian mountain sheep farming was well-developed in the today's territory of the nature protected area, mainly in its eastern section around the villages of Oščadnica, Nová Bystrica, Riečnica, and Harvelka*. At present, mountain sheep farming is preserved in **Oščadnica**, in the territory of the now depopulated villages of Riečnica and Harvelka then also in **Krásno nad Kysucou, Korná, Lutiše or Oravská Lesná**. Sustainable, careful and adequately*

**managed pasturing of sheep could be desirable from the nature protection perspective** for example in the cadastral area of Oščadnica in the location known as Valangy, in the cadastral area of **Zázrivá** in the locations Kýčery – Okrúhlice, on the Javorníky ridge, in the cadastral area of **Makov, Papradno, Štiavnik**, and in **Kysucké Beskydy** also in Brýzgalky, Zrubitá, and Svitková and in the cadastral area of **Nová Bystrica**. *In the part of the territory belonging to Javorníky, mountain sheep farming disappeared already during the 19<sup>th</sup> century due to pressure of the large landowners who*



**Kysuce hamlets, photo by: Jozef Jurík**

*preferred cattle farming.* The locations of the original sheep farms were gradually changed to seasonal stables or huts (locally called as “*letniská, letníky, bačoviská, cholvarky, budy*”), where mostly cattle was grazing between spring and autumn. This specific form of agriculture as well as settlement in the form of scattered hamlets has been preserved in the surroundings of Oščadnica and Bystrická dolina. **In order to preserve the specific landscape character and biotopes, sustainable agriculture is of key importance.** In the past, the intensive animal husbandry in the territory of the protected natural area and in particular the inadequate actions, burden and application of unsuitable agricultural techniques and methods caused undesired changes to the landscape (destruction of the original plateaus, forestation, over-fertilisation etc.).



## Protected Natural Area of Horná Orava

***Protected Natural Area of Horná Orava is located in the northernmost part of Slovakia.*** A large part of the territory is covered by flysch mountain ranges, made up from flysch rock, in the territory of PNA, mainly the so-called Magura flysch – sandstone and claystone, which were intensively folded in the later geological period together with the previously existing geological units. *Almost one half of the territory of this protected natural area is covered by forest, mostly the beech-fir vegetational level with strong representation of spruce mono-cultures.* The exception to this rule is the forest complex of Babia hora, Pilsko and Parač with primaeval forest of spruces and rowan trees. The scrub pine level has been developed only in Babia hora and Pilsko. In the top altitudes of Babia hora, the alpine level is well developed too, represented by alpine meadows. Another exceptional phenomenon in relation to the vegetation of the protected natural area is the presence of substantial heterogeneity of clay phytocenoses with prevalence of ***characteristic precious and endangered species of plants such as blue ice, wild***



**Vasil'ovská hol'a, photo by: Jozef Jurik**

***rosemary, white-beak sedge, round-leaved sundew, inundated club moss, creeping sedge, swamp willow.*** Natural value of the area is substantially increased by the local fauna. Among large predators, we can encounter bears and wolves while lynx is rather



rare. Hoofed game – red deer, buck as well as wild boar all live here. Other characteristic species include wood grouse, capercaillie and hazel grouse. Among the birds of prey, we can see the nests of the lesser spotted eagle, mouse-bird, and ravens are quite widespread. In the most recent decades, the black stork has spread its nests to the area as well. Moreover, the moose has penetrated into the territory as well. ***A specific aspect of fauna in the territory of the protected natural area is the Orava dam lake, offering a suitable biotope not only for fish species but mainly for birds.*** Peat bogs and swamps are a biotope of multiple species of reptiles and amphibians (*mountain salamander, Carpathian salamander as well as giant salamander*). ***Several precious and endangered species of invertebrates also live in the area, such as moorland clouded yellow, raft spider etc.*** Mountain sheep farming was developed in upper Orava in almost all sub-mountain villages. In particular it was villages under Babia hora, ***Pilsko and Parač (Oravská Polhora, Rabčice, Klin, Sihelné, Oravské Veselé, Novot', Lomná, Hruštín, Vasil'ov, Oravská Lesná).*** ***In the past, all grassy uplands of Babia hora and Pilsko were used as pastures for sheep, as well as those of Kubínska hoľa and the sub-alpine pastures of Polhorská hoľa, Veselská hoľa, Rabčická hoľa, Hruštínska hoľa, Vasil'ovská hoľa, Lesnianska hoľa, Lomňanská hoľa, Novot'ská hoľa,*** which serve as pastures until today. Mountain sheep farming has been preserved until today mainly in **Oravská Lesná, Novot', Breza,**

**Novot'ská hoľa, photo by: Ivan Šustr, 2016**



Vasíľov. Hruštín, Rabčice, Oravská Polhora, Bobrov, Oravské Veselé, and in the future, from the perspective of nature protection, all grassy uplands should be occasionally used as pastures with the exception of Babia hora and Pilsko.



Puchmajerová's lake, Oravská Magura, photo by: Jozef Jurík

### **National Park of Malá Fatra**

National Park of Malá Fatra is located in the north-west part of West Carpathians. **It is known for high diversity of relief, geological and climate conditions as well as landscape beauty. Relatively undamaged natural ecosystems have been preserved here.** As a result of heterogenous level of resilience to weathering process, the geological substrate stimulated development of a diverse relief with its characteristic cliffs, straits, rocky outcrops and gorges. *Over 900 species of plants have been identified in the territory, so far. Out of them, 22 are west-Carpathian endemic species, 14 are Carpathian endemic species, 15 are Carpathian sub-endemic species and 1 is an*





Alpine aster, photo by: Jozef Limánek

*actual endemic species of Mala Fatra per se*, it is *Sorbus margittaiana*. On the limestone and dolomites, protected species are to be found, such as *Aster alpinus*, *Gentiana clusii*, *Dryas octopetala*, *Delphinium elatum* and others. Forests

cover over 70% of the national park's total area. The most wide-spread trees include beech, spruce, fir and scrub pine as well as mountain maple. In the ragged terrain, there are communities of Scotch fir on the rocky plateaus. ***Looking at fauna, there are 3000 species of invertebrate (out of which 2 are critically endangered, 12 are endangered, 28 are rare species), 210 species of vertebrae (out of which 15 are critically endangered, 56 endangered and 15 rare species).*** The territory of the national park offers favourable conditions for bear, lynx, otter, golden eagle, eagle owl, wood grouse, wallcreeper, and other animals. For Central European as well as Western European industrialised countries, **this national park has a major significance as an eco-stabilising element of multi-national importance as it enables penetration of west-Carpathian species to the neighbouring territories**, from where these very species have previously withdrawn or became extinct due to human activity. Malá Fatra is divided into two geomorphological subunits, that is Krivánska Mala Fatra and Lúčanska Mala



Fatra. ***In the past, major part of the alpine sections of the ridge of Mala Fatra was deforested and the upper limit of the natural zone of the forest was arti-ficially reduced thus leading to development of numerous grassy uplands used***

*Sorbus margittaiana*, photo by: Anna Dobošová



*as pastures, where the alpine mountain sheep farming was intensively practiced in altitudes between 1200 to 1600 meters above sea level*, in Orava part as well as the upper Váh valley and Turiec sections of the mountain range. In the past, Krivánska Mala Fatra hosted more than 20 upland sheep farms across various locations, such as *Strungy-Príslop, Behár - Ostrô, Mahhučiné zrazy, Koniarky, Bránica, Medziholie, Grúň, Oštiepková mulda, Podjavorské, Turianska hoľa, Pod Chlebom - Úplaz, Ploštiny – Žiar, Končitá - Pekelník-Hlboká, Stratenec juh, Mojžišove pramene -Parohy, Lysická hoľa – Mojský grúň, Stoh – Zadná Bystrička, Ploštiny – Ivašková, Kačov -Skoroň, žobrák -Grúň, Tržinovô, Na Javore- Strážska hoľa, Magura - Dlhá lúka – Príslop, Šľahorka, Podžiar, Kravarské, Medzirozsutce, Tiesňavy – Košiarce, Jamy - Kostolíky – Steny, Malá Bránica – Mraznica, Veľká Bránica, and Pod Suchým*. In the Northern part of Mala Fatra, centres of mountain sheep farming (in the Orava section) included mainly the municipalities of **Zázrivá, Párnica, Oravská Poruba**, in the upper Vah valley it was **Terchová, Belá, Dolná Tižina, Krasňany**, in the Turiec section of the mountain range it was **Krpeľany** and **Turany**. In the southern part, in Lúčanska Mala Fatra, the municipalities dedicated to mountain sheep farming and pasturing included **Fačkov, Ďurčiná, Višňové, Turie, Rajecká Lesná** and in Turiec it was **Bystrička, Vrútky, and Vrúcko**. At present, pasturing in higher altitudes of the



**Grazing Sheep in Zázrivá – Biela, photo by: Anna Dobošová**

National Park Mala Fatra is performed during summer months mainly in the north-east, in Medziholie, Osnica and Strungovy príslop (cattle and young cows). *In Vrátna dolina, meadows in lower altitudes are used as pastures as well as those at the foot of both Rozsutec peaks, and the same can be said about the sub-alpine meadows in Belá, Dolná Tižina, Krasňany, Varín and Nezbudská Lúčka and Rajecká kotlina.* **In the future, careful and managed grazing of sheep could to a larger degree contribute to several precious biotopes in selected sub-alpine and alpine locations or grassy uplands. Besides saving and managing biotopes, this step could also contribute to preserving of the local cultural heritage and management of cultural landscape.**

### Protected Natural Area Strážovské vrchy



**Súl'ovské skaly, photo by: Vladimír Ruček**

Protected Natural Area (PNA) Strážovské vrchy has been added to the list of the large-surface protected areas in 1989. ***It was established in order to ensure protection and rational utilisation of the most preserved parts of the natural environment of Strážovske and Súľovske vrchy mountain ranges.*** The territory of the PNA covers 30 979 hectares, out of which 78% of the surface is covered by forests, 19% is agricultural land and the remaining 3% is made up by built-over areas and water surfaces. The highest peak of the PNA is Strážov (1213 meters above sea level). *It is the only location where one can find maple and beech mountain forests (a priority biotope) in Strážovské vrchy.* In 1981, National Natural Preservation Area was established Strážov in its territory with surface of 480.01 hectares. Apart from other mountain ranges of the central Carpathian crescent, Súľovské and Strážovské vrchy do not have a central ridge. They churn up in all directions with a dense network of basins and deep valleys. *The unusual geomorphological heterogeneity is also attested by the range of altitudes in a relatively limited territory: the*



*altitude of peaks ranges between 600 and 1213 meters while the valleys and basins range between 315 and 655 meters.*



**Fragrant orchid,  
Strážovské vrchy, photo  
by: Vladimír Ruček**

Major part of the territory is covered by hilly and mountainous forests without any human settlement (90%), while the lower altitudes are deforested and turned into meadows and pastures (10%). The north-south orientation of the mountain range facilitates the prevalence of thermophilic as well as mountainous species of plants and animals. ***From the perspective of mountain sheep farming, the most important municipalities in this territory are Fačkov and Čičmany, while sheep farming has been preserved in Súľov.*** From the perspective of nature and landscape protection, carefully managed pasturing would be suitable on all upland ridge meadows and pastures covered with juniper bushes that are not used as pastures at present and are known to be habitats for many protected plant species (such as orchids).



**Tiger orchid, Strážovské vrchy,  
photo by: Vladimír Ruček**



## Meadows and Pastures – Our Cultural and Natural Heritage

Colourful grassy uplands in full bloom, the alpine and sub-alpine meadows and pastures emphasise the pleasing aesthetic experience from beautiful mountain vistas and landscape sceneries around the Kriváň-section of the Fatra and the neighbouring territories of Kysuce and Zázrivá. And ***although we certainly like to look at a meadow entirely filled with dandelions in bloom, we simultaneously perceive very differently a colourful meadow full of various flowers and grasses.*** It was expressed plainly and clearly by one of the locals in a conversation while waiting for the bus: “When I went with my daughter to pick some flowers for a full bunch, we only picked two pieces of each flower species”. A simple and plain explanation of the concept that we like to label as ‘biodiversity’.

### How did the meadows and pastures originate?

***Before being settled by humans, the land was not fully covered by the forest. Even in the periods of the most extensive forestation of the Earth, on some extreme positions, there were some non-forested surfaces – e.g. steep slopes with thin layer of soil, avalanche furrows and their endings, snow fields etc.*** Also, large herds of herbivores contributed to sustaining of some deforested areas. These surfaces were the source of plants that are shaping today’s meadows and pastures. ***After human settlement of the areas, the original forests were felled and instead of them, there appeared extensive agriculture areas around the settlements and villages.*** Terrace-shaped slopes with meadows and little fields were quite typical for the area in focus of this paper. The terraces were interchangeably cultured as fields or mowed meadows, often grazed by the respective pieces of livestock after mowing. Pastures were originating on less fertile lands as well as in mountain and alpine altitudes. Meadows and pastures are therefore a result of interaction of the nature and humans. ***People have been influencing the nature in harmony with natural factors for many centuries.*** This all resulted in a mosaic of forests, bushes, wetlands and non-forested communities (phytocoenoses) known under the professional term *permanent grassy vegetation*.



**Zázrivá – Malá Havrania, photo by: Anna Dobošová**

## **Natural conditions**

From the geomorphological perspective, the territory analysed in this text belongs to Malá Fatra, and its sub-section of Krivánska Fatra and the adjacent parts of the Kysucké vrchy mountain range. Along with the northern foothills of the Fatra, there is Varínske Podolie that forms a sub-section of the Žilina basin. It gets narrower from Varín to Terchová. Its northern border goes along the mountain sides and the ridge of Oravská Magura. ***Krivánska Fatra itself is typical for diverse, rapidly varying geological bedrock.*** It comprises dolomites and limestone of various origin and qualities, and acidophile rocks such as granite, quartzite, and marlites. It is the westernmost truly high mountain range of the Carpathians exposed to the northern winds. Kysucké vrchy are a part of a flysch belt comprising clay and sandstone with a significantly thin chain of the klippen belt going along the whole territory. *This variable relief also leads to different microclimate conditions.* Oravská Magura is another flysch mountain range influenced by a colder and more humid climate.



**Upland Sheep Farm, Zázrivá – Grúne, photo by: Anna Dobošová**

*Old documents, photos and paintings bear witness that everywhere in the wider neighbourhood of the settlements, on the ridges, on the less steep slopes or saddlebacks, there were terrace fields, meadows and pastures. There was an effort for maximum agricultural leverage of the lands. **The landscape retained this image to an extent also after the WWII, although the remains of the small terraces covered with older trees and the juniper bushes in the forests bear testimony of being reforested further deep in the past.*** During the process of agricultural collectivisation<sup>9</sup> there occurred changes that continued until the 1980s. In this period, large-scale agriculture had the major impact on vegetation, when the divides between the fields and terraces on the less-steep slopes were eliminated, the wetlands were dried and instead, larger intensively-cultured surfaces originated. On the other hand, the steeper slopes, more distant lands, and permanently wet areas were inconvenient for this type of agriculture and therefore remained unused. **Already at the beginning of this millennium, we witness a gradual loss of interest in agricultural farming in general.** The number of farmed livestock is

---

<sup>9</sup> After 1948





**Zázrivá – Biela, photo by: Juraj Langer, 1963, documents of the Orava Museum**

on the decline, the area of cultured land is shrinking. Tracts of arable land are sown with grasses. This monotonous grassy vegetation is found close to settlements, is easily accessible and can be cultured by large mechanisms. ***Farmers (both small and large) therefore prefer them for production of hay as well as grazing of the existing herds.*** These fields are less important in terms of keeping of diversity of plants (but also various insect, small rodents and other animals and microorganisms). Surfaces with more diverse and valuable flowering vegetation are gradually disappearing, they are covered in bushes and forest or are intentionally reforested. **Their decline in recent years can be labelled as alarming, even though we were warning about the danger more than 20 years ago.**



Harvested Meadow in Terchová - Štefanovej, photo by: Anna Dobošová

### ***Classification of meadows and pastures:***

Meadows and pastures represent a diverse range of plant communities whose character depends on the natural conditions, period of origination and the method of farming.

### **Thermophilic and xerophilic grassy vegetation**

In the southern part of the concerned territory, there are the remains of thermophilic and xerophilic communities spreading from the Žilina basin to the foothills of Mala Fatra, Varínske podolie valley and along the klippen belt of the mountains. There are only the remains of these communities on the steeper slopes, maintained thanks to the sheep grazing. ***Only small part is irregularly mowed. Also, the area of these remains is on the decline.*** As a result of termination of grazing, they are gradually grown by timber species or are intentionally forested. **These biotopes can still be saved by renewal and continued farming.** As an example of preservation of these biotopes, we can mention **Borová** in the municipality of **Dolná Tižina**. The major vegetational grasses include heath false brome (*Brachypodium pinnatum*), quaking-grass (*Briza media*), furrowed fescue (*Festuca rupicola*), Balkans moor grass (*Sesleria albicans*), and other species also feature,



e.g. cream scabious (*Scabiosa ochroleuca*), glossy scabious (*Scabiosa lucida*), dwarf thistle (*Cirsium acaule*), carline thistle (*Carlina acaulis*), blue sedge (*Carex flacca*), horseshoe vetch, (*Hippocrepis comosa*), squincywort (*Asperula cynanchica*), St Bernard's-lily (*Anthericum ramosum*), shirley blue (*Veronica teucrium*), field cow-wheat (*Melampyrum arvense*). The value of this particular location is further increased by prevalence of local orchids, from the *Orchidaceae* family. Among the xerophilic, there are military orchid (*Orchis militaris*) and greater butterfly-orchid (*Platanthera chlorantha*). We also register smaller populations of valuable burnt orchid (*Orchis ustulata*) and white adder's mouth (*Malaxis monophyllos*). **These biotopes and species have been preserved also thanks to sheep grazing.** As a result of unsuitable location of sheep shelters and sheep-folds and the subsequent spreading of weeds, the surface area of these valuable pastures is shrinking, and their quality is also on the decline. *Pastures require care, the areas infested by weed need to be cleaned and renewed before the weeds spread seeds, sections that were not grazed need to be mowed and self-seeding timber vegetation needs to be felled. Further damage is caused by motorbike riders riding across the pastures.*



**White Adder's Mouth, a precious species of orchod with tiny flower, photo by: Anna Dobošová**





**Military Orchid, a thermophilic orchid, photo by: Anna Dobošová**

## **Mesophilic meadows and pastures**

### ***Sub-alpine meadows and pastures, grazed meadows:***

Towards the north, mesophilic vegetation (plants preferring more humid environment) is spreading, such as false oat-grass (*Arrhenatherum elatius*), orchard grass (*Dactylis glomerata*), yellow oat grass (*Trisetum flavescens*), sweet vernal grass (*Anthoxanthum odoratum*) etc. In spring, these meadows are brightened up with flower clusters of early-purple orchid (*Orchis mascula*) and the pink fragrant orchid (*Gymnadenia conopsea*). Furthermore, towards the north, there increasingly prevails spring gentian (*Gentiana verna*). In summer, these meadows are diversified by Turkish marsh gladiolus (*Gladiolus imbricatus*), dropwort (*Filipendula vulgaris*) and rich populations of other species of the



**Fragrant Orchid, Borová – Dolná Tižina, photo by: Anna Dobošová**

genus *Orchis*. In Zázrivá, we can find the attractive orange lily (*Lilium bulbiferum*). Another species present here is protected *Campanula serrata*<sup>10</sup>, which favours meadows and pastures on terraces. This type of meadows is usually mowed irregularly, and they are often grazed after mowing. They belong to the most beautiful and most diverse ones. The most valuable ones are located in Zázrivá (e.g. Biela), around Belá and Terchová (*Huličiarovci, Štefanová, Mažgútovci*), in Lutiše and elsewhere. Unfortunately, large part of them is now deserted. **Mulching that should replace farming is not suitable for them.** There is also a bad habit of burning them off, which leads to development of a layer of dry remains,

which decomposes resulting in accumulation of Nitrogen which is fatal for species with

**Subalpine Meadow Threatened by Construction Activity, Terchová - Huličiarovci, photo by: Anna Dobošová**



<sup>10</sup> West Carpathian endemic species – has no English common name equivalent



lower ability to compete. Aggressive grasses start to prevail and conditions for timber vegetation are being created. *Sadly, in the most beautiful and valuable plant communities, buildings are erected, quite often of recreational character. The location and the construction process itself are often insensitive towards environment, ignoring the character of the landscape as well as the natural riches and values.*

### **Hydrophilic meadows and wetlands:**

Hydrophilic meadows represent a mosaic with other biotopes in locations with a higher level of underground water. Hydrophilic species, such as pink-blooming plume thistle (*Cirsium rivulare*) purple loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*), the interesting cabbage thistle (*Cirsium oleraceum*), wild mint (*Mentha longifolia*) blooming in blue meadowsweet (*Filipendula ulmaria*) etc. create colourful impressions at these locations. Where the underground water is close to the surface, there appear moors, springs and brown sedge vegetation. ***In the past, they used to be farmed just like the surrounding meadows and pastures, what preconditioned their current character.*** Typical plants are white broad-

**Marsh Lousewort, an Attractive Type of Marsh, photo by: Anna Dobošová**







**Marsh  
Helleborine,  
Terchová –  
Štefanová, photo  
by: Anna  
Dobošová**

leaved cotton-grass and common cotton grass (*Eriophorum latifolium* and *angustifolium*), that are visible from far away. In spring, we shall be intrigued by red-coloured western marsh-orchid (*Dactylorhiza majalis*), later on also dark-pink marsh fragrant-orchid (*Gymnadenia densiflora*), attractive marsh lousewort (*Pedicularis palustris*), small carnivorous plant with blue flowers - common butterwort (*Pinguicula vulgaris*). In these locations, we can find marsh helleborine (*Epipactis palustris*), one of the most beautiful orchids found in Slovakia. ***The importance of wetlands as a water-retaining element of***



**Wetland, a Part  
of Pasture in  
Zázrivá, photo  
by: Anna  
Dobošová**

*the landscape is increasing particularly in the current context of rising temperatures and frequent droughts.*

#### **Matt-grass vegetation:**

These are pastures on the bedrock with less abundant nutrients and leached soils. ***Matt grass vegetation in Zázrivá is specific for featuring orchards with alpine elements, must beautifully developed in the location of Paseky.*** The main grass is moor mat grass (*Nardus stricta*), common bent (*Agrostis capillaris*), heath grass (*Danthonia decumbens*), pale sedge (*Carex pallescens*), alpine meadow-grass (*Poa alpina*) etc. ***One of the most precious species*** linked to these biotopes in the foothills is Carpathian gentian (*Gentianella lutescens* ssp. *carpatica*). ***They are very sensitive to intensive farming with increased supply of nitrogen as well as resignation to pasturing. In this case, the meadows are gradually grown over or transformed to different types of communities. Wood vegetation is spreading as well as high-stem plants or possibly blueberry prevail. We shall find them also on the ridges of Oravska Magura and in top altitudes of Mala Fatra.*** A major dominant plant of late summer on the upland pastures is willow

**Matgrass Vegetation with Willow Gentian under Koniarky Mountain, photo by: Anna Dobošová**





gentian (*Gentiana asclepiadea*), greater wood-rush (*Luzula sylvatica*) is another eye-catching plant with broad leaves.



**Alpine Meadows under Chleb Mountain with Adderwortel, photo by: Anna Dobošová**

## Alpine meadows

Located in higher altitudes and on the **ridge of Mala Fatra**. They originated after deforestation, were used for mowing but also grazing and mainly in the locations above the upper limit of the forest. They typically occur in deep soil, in winter they are covered by a thick layer of snow. **Relatively large surfaces can be found on the ridges of Krivánska Fatra**. They are typical for broad-leaved grasses of the genus *Alchemilla*, such as blue-velvet woodland geranium (*Geranium sylvaticum*), yellow-coloured northern hawk's-beard (*Crepis mollis*), pink- coloured common bistort (*Bistorta major*), among grasses,



yellow oat grass (*Trisetum flavescens*), tufted hairgrass (*Deschampsia cespitosa*), sweet vernal grass (*Anthoxanthum alpinum*) etc. In spring, in Zázrivá and on the location known as Dubov-

**Pastures under Rozsutec Mountain, Medziholie, photo by: Anna Dobošová**



ské lúky there blooms globeflower (*Trollius altissimus*), and we can also find here alpine snowbells (*Soldanella carpatica*). One part of these meadows is grazed by livestock every year. The rest is, unfortunately, grown over by timber vegetation and is gradually changing into forest. ***Model case of alpine meadows with a high level of plant diversity can be found in the location known as Medziholie, which has been used as a pasture until this day.*** However, compared to the past when sheep would graze here, now it is used for grazing of young cows. For the farmer using Medziholie, grazing of sheep in this location is not interesting.

## Grassy uplands

***The belt of grassy uplands in Mala Fatra is a characteristic and significant landscape-forming element of this mountain range. If the grassy uplands are preserved, the hope of survival for a large number of endangered plants species and precious communities will be increased.*** Malá Fatra is the westernmost high mountain range of the Carpathians and is exposed to the northern winds which led to prevalence of sub-alpine plants and communities in a relatively low altitude. ***The grassy uplands***

**Grassy Upland under Pekelník Mountain, photo by: Anna Dobošová**



***originated in the 16<sup>th</sup> century by clearing of the scrub-pine vegetation and reducing of the upper limit of the forest.*** One part of the deforested locations was taken by non-forest subalpine communities that have extended from their original locations – steep rocky slopes, avalanche furrows and their endings, hill wash residues, meadows in the pine-scrub retained by the wild deer, locations with extreme temperature, snow and climate conditions.



**Grassy Upland with Turk's Cap Lily at Hromové, photo by: Anna Dobošová**

***The plants were spreading into this environment after deforestation and the result are the alpine meadows offering a diverse look as early as in spring.***

The first plants to show up are true oxlips (*Primula elatior*) and violet Carpathian snowbells (*Soldanella carpatica*). They are followed by blue Clusius and spring gentians (*Gentiana clusii* and *Gentiana verna*). Afterwards, it is the time for the low-rising shrub of eight petal mountain-avens (*Dryas octopetala*) creating genuine white carpets. ***This represents a glacial relict - a remnant from the most recent ice age and it is a part of the northern tundra until this day.*** Another

attractive plant is narcissus anemone (*Anemone narcissiflora*). We observe blooming Carpathian glossy pink (*Dianthus nitidus*) that are found only in western Carpathians (i.e. an endemic species) and a number of other colourful flowers and grasses significant also from the perspective of nature protection. **In most recent decades, changes have been observed as a result of the human factor's impact on the direct utilisation of the grassy uplands, which is a result of the changes of social order, ownership relations and economic situation. The reduction in the surface area of this significant landscape-forming element has been influenced by termination of grazing, advance**

**of succession, planting and subsequent spreading of scrub-pine.** They are also substantially endangered by erosion as a result of excessive tourism and poor discipline of visitors. The pressure on recreational utilisation of the land (including during the winter season) is increasing, which has destructive consequences. ***At the moment, the grassy uplands only survive thanks to extreme alpine conditions.*** We can envision saving the selected locations and areas by clearing of the scrub-pine and grazing of sustainable number of sheep.

**Grassy Uplands of Malá Fatra and Kysucká vrchovina, photo by: Anna Dobošová**



### **Why preservation of meadows and pastures actually makes sense?**

Along with the productive role that is obvious, we offer a list of other functions performed by grassy vegetation.

*1. These plant communities represent our cultural heritage. They were created by our ancestors who have maintained them for centuries. It should be our effort to keep them and preserve them as they are a genuine part of our history.*





**Hol'a pod Stratencom, foto: Anna Dobošová**

*2. Meadows and pastures reflect the history of our nature – according to prevalence of some species, we can deduce the development of natural conditions in the past – relict species are a typical example, as they have survived in this area since the Tertiary era or the glacial periods. Other species are an evidence of the periods of warmth and draughts in different eras and yet other ones prove the damp and cold eras. Farming has also contributed to spreading of the species and their survival as witness to the nature's past.*

*3. They serve as indicators of the environmental characteristics and qualities. According to the composition of species at a particular location, we can estimate presence of underground water under the surface, predict which surfaces are prone to landslides, what bedrock is underneath, and which areas were ploughed in the past.*

*4. Subalpine and alpine meadows and pastures as well as the grassy uplands are a characteristic and significant landscape-forming element. The grassy uplands and the picturesque country in the valleys, basins and foothills have their major share on the overall attractiveness of the territory for recreational activities.*

5. They have great significance as a source of gene pool. Only few original regularly-mowed meadows have been preserved. Large-surface vegetation is farmed whose value in terms of biodiversity is low. In areas where turf hasn't been torn-out drastically together with the surface layer of soil and there are adjacent smaller flower locations with traditional farming continued, the diverse species composition gets gradually renewed.

6. They possess a high level of water-retention ability and favourable impact on a territory's water management and regime.

7. They have significant influence in terms of nature protection. It is exactly here where rare and endangered species of plants and animals survive. Many of them are relics (remnants of the distant past), others are West Carpathian endemic species (living only in this region). Their preservation increases the hope for survival of a number of endangered animal and plant species as well as valuable communities in the current era of macroclimate changes and global impact of humans on nature. The above territory comprises 60 protected species of plants and 16 protected biotopes pursuant to Slovak as well as EU legislation.

**A Glacial Relic - Mountain Avens, photo by Anna Dobošová**



8. Few people realise that the transformation of grassy communities to bushes, scrub and forest creates shelter and conditions for spreading of deer including large predators. The landscape is getting less accessible for humans.

### **Conclusion:**

At present, only one part of the population is able to live off farming, agriculture is generally just an additional activity to provide additional source of income. *For larger agricultural subjects, the most precious (grassy) meadows and uplands are largely unattractive. It cannot be expected that the population will return to the traditional forms of farming (with the exception of activities associated with growth of tourism).* It is, however, possible to copy these forms of agriculture such as using small mechanisms in the more demanding conditions, when processing milk at traditional upland sheep farms and shelters (*salaš*) where hygienic procedures must be complied with, milking and cheese making facilities are required too. Although the work of sheep shepherds or farmers in general is very demanding, with the exception of upland sections, most meadows and pastures are accessible through roads and thanks to vehicles capable of driving in rugged terrain. ***It is, however, regretful that there are increasingly fewer people who are willing to work on preserving and developing our natural values.*** Work in agriculture has seasonal character, workers are often separated from their families, have to put up with unfavourable climate conditions which may be regarded as a disadvantage. Still, how does this differ from a job away from home in, say, civil engineering and construction? We can perhaps conclude that the difference would be the financial remuneration, social respect and willingness to spend time in nature. **We only have to believe that young people will find motivation to take up this career, they will realise its impact on saving of natural values and on preservation of the results of the work of numerous generations of our ancestors.**



## Bibliography:

- DOBOŠOVÁ, A., TOMAN, P., GALVÁNEK, D., 2004: Plán obnovy a manažmentu travinných ekosystémov. Manuscript dep. na SNP Malá Fatra.
- Dražil, T., et al., 1999: Sukcesné procesy lúčnych ekosystémov v Národnom parku Slovenský raj. In. Leskovjanská, A. (ed.), 1999: Zborník referátov zo 7. zjazdu SBS pri SAV. Vydavateľstvo SZOPK, Spišská Nová Ves. 136 -139 p.
- GALVÁNEK, D., VIESTOVÁ, E., 2006: Lúky Slovenska. Bratislava. Daphne – inštitút aplikovanej ekológie. 16 pp.
- HEGEDŮŠOVÁ VANTAROVÁ, K., ŠKODOVÁ, I., (EDS.), 2014: Rastlinné komunity Slovenska. 5. Travinnobyliná vegetácia. Veda. Bratislava, 581 pp.
- JONGEPIEROVÁ, I. (ED.), 2008: Louky Bílých Karpat. ZO ČSOP Bílé Karpaty, Veselí nad Moravou, 461 pp.
- KLIMENT, J., VALACHOVIČ, M. (EDS.), 2007: Rastlinné komunity Slovenska. 4. Vysokohorská vegetácia. Veda. Bratislava, 388 pp.
- MICHALKO, J. ET AL., 1986: Geobotanická mapa ČSSR. Veda. Bratislava. 164 pp.
- PAGÁČ, J., VOLOŠČUK, I. (EDS.), 1983: Malá Fatra. Chránená krajinná oblasť. Príroda. Bratislava. 355pp.
- STANOVÁ, V., VALACHOVIČ, M., (EDS.), 2002: Katalóg biotopov Slovenska. DAPHNE-Inštitút aplikovanej ekológie. Bratislava, 225 pp.

## Pasturing Sheep, Borová – Dolná Tižina, photo by: Anna Dobošová





Bača Vincent Patrnčiak near the cabin under the Malý Rozsutec mountain, source: archive of Rudolf Patrnčiak

### ***Under the Rozsutec on the mountain farm***

***Oh, when I sing my song,  
Both Rozsutec peaks will shake,  
The bear shakes with fear,  
While my sheep will graze.***

***(Terchová)***



Bača – chief shepherd with a geleta bucket for milking, Belá, photo J. Podolák 1963, source: AFn  
ÚESA SAV

### *A Curly sheep*

*Curly sheep gazing from the sheep-fold,  
If the grass is growing green on the hillside.*

*Whether on the hillside, on the hillside,  
the grass is growing green, growing green.*

*Where is the sheep that used to head the whole herd?  
In a deep ravine, with a broken leg.*

*In a deep ravine, In a deep ravine,  
with a broken leg, with a broken leg.*

*(Belá)*





Bača Anton Zajac from Horný Vadičov in front of the cabin with his dog on "Vadičovska hola" in Mala Fatra in the 1950s, source: private archive of the Zajac family

### ***Sheep, my sheep***

*Sheep, oh my sheep,  
you graze far too wide,  
that you cause damage  
and people chide.*

*You cause them damage  
and give little milk,  
Sheep, oh my sheep,  
you make me ashamed.*

*And my sheep, oh my sheep  
Chewing but starving  
While I am cuddling  
With my girl so charming.*

*Behind the barn, oh, our barn,  
Behind the barn, oh, our barn,  
It would be nice to have a sheep farm,  
It would be nice to have a sheep farm.*

*It would be nice to the flock-master there,  
It would be nice to the flock-master there,  
And loving girls, pretty and fair,  
Loving girls, pretty and fair.*

*And I did, oh,  
I did graze my sheep well,  
From one night to another,  
with my love near the warm oven.*

*Hungry shepherds cry  
near the mountain farm,  
That the wolf took a sheep  
and the she-wolf took the shepherd.*

*See the shepherds go,  
they are below the pastures,  
But they carry no money  
just fleas with horns.*

*They carry no money,  
they carry no money,  
Just fleas with horns,  
just fleas with horns.*

*(Horný Vadičov)*



### ***Behind the barn***

*Behind the barn, oh, our barn,  
Behind the barn, oh, our barn,  
It would be nice to have a sheep farm,  
It would be nice to have a sheep farm.*

*It would be nice to the flock-master there,  
It would be nice to the flock-master there,  
And loving girls, pretty and fair,  
Loving girls, pretty and fair.*

*Shepherd's cabin full of holes  
with the sun peeping in,  
Flock-master hacked to death, the  
shepherd's recruited to the army.*

*Flock-master hacked to death,  
flock-master hacked to death,  
the shepherd's recruited to the army,  
recruited to the army.*

*I am old flock-master,  
I don't feel like working  
But I still have strength,  
for chasing and courting,*

*In Kysucké mesto,  
I sat in the prison,  
It all seems to me,  
that I will return there for more.*

*It all seems to me,  
it all seems to me,*

*that I will return there for more,  
that I will return there for more.*

*My father - pay me out,  
I won't work no more,  
I have a girlfriend,  
I am going to marry her.*

*I will pay you out, will pay it to you,  
When I turn your bones to ashes, and  
yourself too.*

*Play me my dear golden strings,  
play me indeed,  
As you used to play  
when I wasn't married.*

*As you used to play  
when I wasn't married,  
when I wasn't married,  
when I wasn't married.*

*For seven years an outlaw robber,  
used to drink muddy water,  
Water from the rut,  
muddled by the carter.*

*Water from the rut, water from the rut,  
Turbid from the carter, turbid from the  
carter.*

*(Lutiše)*



A valach sheperd with oštiepok cheese, Zázrivá,  
photo: Ján Podolák, 1963, source: Afm ÚESA SAV

## *Oh, I won't be a shepherd*

*Oh, I won't be a shepherd,  
I'd rather become the flock-master,  
Near the mountain of green,  
if there is a place for pasture.*

*Oh, the mountains are white with snow,  
the valley is freezing,  
Oh, my dear sheep for which there is no  
grazing.*

*Oh, I was felling the green brushwood,  
for the sheep to winter in,  
I was felling the whole day for the sheep for  
one full week.*

*Oh, my sheep and rams,  
without you there is no joy,  
I was used to your company  
since I was a boy.*

*Sheep, my sheep, you have cast bells,  
Jingling and tinkling,  
'tween the young maple trees.*

*Sheep, my sheep, you have cast bells,  
If you lose them, you pay with your hide.  
Hillsides, oh my hillsides, covered in snow,  
Where shall I stay with my sheep.*

*I shall walk down to the valley,  
I can't see no green,  
I will walk to the bottom of the hillslope,  
where we perish together.*

*Oh, now the beech trees on the hillside are  
growing red,  
Where, oh, where shall the shepherds'  
winter bed*

*The sunrise is not what it used to be  
I don't feel as well as I used to feel.  
I had a girlfriend, dear to my heart,  
she left me be, so I found another one.*

*Sheep, my sheep, I don't care who tends to you now,  
I won't pasture you, I will rather join the outlaw robbers.  
(Zázrivá)*



**Inventory of mountain huts and phenomena related to colonization on the Wallachian law and the natural heritage associated with the Carpathian mountain range in the territory of the present Žilina region**

September 2018

Compilers, authors:

Bc. Tomáš Mrázek - pages 1 to 55, 102 to 106

Mgr. Iveta Zuskinová - pages 56 to 71

Ing. Robert Robenek -72-86

Mgr. Anna Dobošová - 87-101



Study was prepared under the project titled Routes of the Wallachian Culture (project code: PLSK.01.01.00-18-0068/16), supported from the Interreg V-A Poland-Slovakia 2014-2020 program and co-funded by the EU: 85 % from the European Regional Development Fund within the Activity III. CARPATHIAN UNIVERSITY.

This publication only presents the expert knowledge and opinions of the respective authors who are solely responsible for them; the opinions presented in this publication are not an official position of the European Union.

