



## Human-powered transport in Slovakia until the second half of the 20th century Selected questions\*

We have no idea how heavy is  
the burden we do not carry.  
African proverb

The burden which is well borne  
becomes light.  
Publius Ovidius Nasso

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**ABSTRACT:** For centuries, traditional means of transport have been tightly connected to traditional peasant culture. The work of a farmer has always represented not only the means of adaptation to the natural environment and the acquisition of essential articles of food and raw materials, but also the realization of one's cultural identity. Over the centuries, it has acquired its typical features and has become distinct within several regional forms. This has been reflected in the traditional means of transport related to the daily annual cycle of a farmer's work, as well as various non-agricultural opportunities. The aim of the study is to summarize the knowledge within the field of traditional transport in Slovakia during the first half of the 20th century, exemplified through some typical transport aids. It aims to point out their manifold utilization and their gradual adaptation to the changing natural, historical, and social conditions.

**KEYWORDS:** transport, human-powered transport, ethnography of Slovakia, traditional economy

**SŁOWA KLUCZOWE:** transport, transportowanie siłami ludzkimi, etnografia Słowacji, tradycyjna gospodarka

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In his study on transport in Žakarovce from 1955, Béla Gunda, an eminent European expert on transport, wrote:

Life is movement and this movement is expressed in various forms of transport through mutual contacts in agricultural and social life of people. To a large extent, the means of transport are influenced by geographical conditions. On level terrain, with satisfactory soil, it is easy to travel, to transport loads by foot or on carriages. Hay from high mountains, burnt coal or quicklime, and dairy products can only

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\* The article was conducted as part of the author's own work.

be transported on the backs of animals or by manpower down the steep mountain trails. Modern means of transport can hardly reach the high-perched settlements, shepherd's huts and their meadows and fields. Thus, it is natural that in these regions the ancient and primitive means of transport have been preserved. (Gunda, 1955: 156)<sup>1</sup>

Transport by human force, in literature referred to as human-powered transport, belongs to the simplest means of transport, which depend on the nature and weight of the carried goods as well as the natural and agricultural-social conditions. Moreover, such factors as cultural traditions, natural division of labour between sexes, generations, as well as civilization development and the related cultural lifestyle innovations influence the human-powered transport to a great extent. For centuries, traditional means of transport have been tightly connected to traditional agriculture. The work of a farmer has always represented not only the means of adaptation to the natural environment and the acquisition of essential articles of food and raw materials, but also the realization of one's cultural identity (Slavkovský, 2014: 7). Throughout the centuries, it has acquired its typical features and has become distinct within several regional forms. This has been reflected in the traditional means of transport related to daily annual cycle of the farmer's work, as well as various non-agricultural opportunities. It is thus understandable that within present ethnological research, the study of traditional means of transport has been mainly connected to agrarian culture and traditional livestock farming.

As for the disciplines of social sciences, carrying loads has been primarily investigated by ethnology, which studies traditional folk transport, transport aids, and transportation in various ethnical, social, and cultural-historical contexts. However, the view of ethnology on transport requires more than just a morphological description and typological classification of individual means of transport. The research of these is also related to traditional non-agricultural occupations, as well as the manufacture of the means and aids of transport in question. It is thus necessary to also analyse the natural, historical, agricultural-social, and cultural contexts of this part of cultural heritage.

## Methodological obstacles

Until the 1950s, hardly any research on the means of folk transport can be found in Slovak ethnological literature. The first study which investigated a particular transport aid was written by Pavol Socháš (1930)

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<sup>1</sup> All translations from Slovak by Dr. Lukáš Kurajda.

where he tried to analyse the significance of bed sheets in the life of Slovak people. The first one who pointed out this question as a possible subject of ethnographic research was Rudolf Bednárík (1950) in his study *Systém ľudového transportu* [Folk transport system].

Later it was Béla Gunda who studied the subject in detail from the point of view of comparative research while investigating the folk transport in the mining village of Žakarovce of the Spiš region. Gunda continued the research within the following investigations of transport in the Slovak environment, particularly in the region of Gemer.<sup>2</sup> The importance of the research on traditional folk transport was confirmed within other topics related to transport, namely, agriculture and craft industry. One of the most interesting and the most concise sources of this period is a monograph of the village of Žakarovce (collective work from 1956) where we can find a precise and meticulous chapter on agriculture by Ján Podolák. This text offers a comprehensive portrayal of the development of agrarian culture, taking into account questions of transport.<sup>3</sup>

The need for classification of the material into a specific system has been mentioned by Karol Anđel and Michal Markuš in the study on folk transport in the region of central Zemplín. According to the abovementioned researchers, the need for systematising is derived from the diversity of material and its complexity. For example, some objects are carried by various means – by hands, on the back, bound around the waist, in the bag and the like. Thus, the classification sometimes appears to be forced or unsubstantiated, in other cases also insufficient. They were aware of the limitations of their own classification of transport into: transport by human force, transport by various vehicles, transport and communication. The individual parts are furthermore divided into smaller groups which can be arbitrarily expanded and narrowed according to the requirements of the material. One of the criteria was primarily the question which part of the body or which tools during the transport are mostly burdened or used.<sup>4</sup>

Within the analysis of the material collected for *Ethnographic Atlas of Slovakia* (hereafter EAS) the topic of transport was investigated by Magdaléna Paríková (1979/1981 and other studies: 1982, 1985, 1987).

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2 Gunda carried out the research in the villages of Gočovo, Rejdová, Muránska Zdychava, Silica, Muránska Huta, Čierna Lehota a Brdárka in 1973.

3 There are very good descriptions of the technology and tools used during sowing and grain harvesting, soil preparation, collection of grass, hay and clover; it also covers the subject of sheep-breeding and mountain farming with plenty of photographs and drawings which document the condition in the 1950s.

4 Anđel and Markuš relied mainly on the system of classification of transport of O.T. Masona: *Primitive Travel and Transportation*, Report of U.S. National Museum 1894–1896 and L.K. Kovácsa: *A magyar népi közlekedés kutatása*. Budapest 1948.

In her studies, Paríková attempted to interpret the atlas material. For further research she elaborated a work entitled *Návod na etnografický výskum transportu a dopravy* [Instructions for ethnographic research of transport and transportation] (1979). Similarly to Bednárík and others, Paríková attempted to suggest a classification of transport into several groups. She analysed the results of research within EAS, that is, she investigated the transport by manpower with the main focus on sheets and their diverse use in agriculture as well as the transport of children; hampers and the means of their production and carriage, as well as the opportunities for carrying loads in these aids. Through a cartographic method, she also interpreted the names of transport aids and some typical means of carrying (transport of fodder, transport of children, transport of food). In her later studies, Paríková focused on wheel transport. In this regard, she provided us with an immense piece of work regarding the methodological background within the research of transport. Therefore, her works and conclusions are very valuable for us these days.

Štefan Mruškovič (2003) also focused on the subject of transport in *Tradičné transportné prostriedky v tradičnom poľnohospodárstve* [Traditional means of transport in traditional agriculture], which is an attempt to summarize in a dictionary form the headwords related to transport. The dictionary contains the headwords of work tools and aids associated with transport. Each entry contains a standard codified name of the object, its local dialect forms, content-functional definition, typological classification of the object, historical occurrence, nomenclature of the main parts, as well as the references to literature and the illustrations. Mruškovič mapped the tools such as: *batôžtek, dieža na vodu, fúrik, košar, krosná na kôš, hnojné nosidlá, pavúz, pavúzny hák, pavúzny povraz, pavúzny valec, polvoz dvojkolesový, popluh, rám na vrecia, sane, smyk, ťapka na hnoj, tragač, trakovica, trávnicca, vázky vlačuhy, voz, vozík orný, and vrece*. All the entries have been ordered alphabetically. The dictionary is a fine background material for several topics.

Ján Podolák, Alexander Fenton, and Holger Rasmussen provided a concise view on the subject matter in their work *Land Transport in Europe* (1973). It is an exceptional work that collects articles dealing with the subject of transport throughout Europe, however, the texts related to Slovakia and Czechia only have a summarizing character.

All these studies represent a partial theoretical and methodological background, but mainly a valuable source of material for broader comparative study. The most valuable and the most complete data from Slovakia have been collected by means of broadly conceived research for the needs of EAS. The results of this research have broadened our knowledge about traditional means of transport in Slovakia, however,

in many aspects they also raised the level of theoretical and methodological research within this topic.

In ethnological literature, the terms of transport define the means and tools by which various loads are carried from place to place. In a broader sense, all existing forms of traditional means of carrying or moving of loads/objects of different kinds during various activities (including the transport of humans), represent the subject matter of ethnographic research of transport (with the help of traditional means, such as aids, tools, instruments, with particular aim, from one place to another). However, they are commonly confused or understood as synonyms. In order to define the terms describing these phenomena more precisely and to use a uniform ethnographic terminology, Páriková (1979: 5) suggests differentiating individual means and methods, that is, with what something is carried or transported and what is the process of this activity. Páriková classifies the set of transport as follows:

- transport by human force;
- transport by means of mechanisms or animal force;
- water transport.

Similar classification has been suggested by Bednárík (1950), as well as Slavkovský (2014: 11–19). Another way is to classify transport according to the system suggested by Andel and Markuš (1971: 377–412):

- transport by human force;
- transport by various vehicles;
- carriage and communication.

As can be seen, the wide set of phenomena of transport can be classified in various ways. Traditionally, it is divided into three basic groups:

- transport by human force with the help of transport aids;
- transport with the help of animal force;
- transport with the help of mechanisms (wagons, ships, etc.) (Fenton, Podolák, Rasmussen 1973: 9–10).

Each of these systems has its pros and cons, therefore, a single system does not yet exist. In this regard, we will deal with transport, that is, methods and means of carrying by which a man moves loads and burdens solely by their own power: by pulling or carrying on the body (on a shoulder, head, back, freely in hands), or with the help of adjusted transport aids (various containers, trays, hampers, sheets).

The individual phenomena of transport cannot be perceived as an isolated set of phenomena related only to one field of folk culture. Even though the subject matter is most closely related to the agrarian-ethnographic study section, the majority of individual forms of transport are connected with agricultural work. We do come across the function of various means of transport also on other occasions, for instance, woodcutting, carrying trade, house-to-house business, as well as in the

sphere of folk culture in connection with ceremonial occasions such as hay pick-up, wedding procession, transport to fairs, carrying food for puerpera and many others.

## Resources

As regards the Slovak territory, there are several works primarily focused on narrower regions or individual locations which represent partly theoretical and methodological background, as well as a valuable source of material for broader comparative study.

The most valuable and, from the point of view of mapping of Slovakia, the most complete resource is unequivocally *Ethnographic Atlas of Slovakia* (EAS, 1990), which contains the information from all over the country collected from broadly conceived research. The material was analysed according to direct field research by means of questionnaires in 250 locations of Slovakia, out of which 189 were Slovak, 37 Hungarian, 17 Ruthenian-Ukrainian, 4 Goral, and 3 former German locations. The results of this research brought data on particular phenomena of transport over a wide area and within a limited period of time, that is, approximately 100–150 years. The results of this research were partially analysed by Paríková (1979b, 1979c, 1982).

The information acquired from field research were furthermore verified and supplemented by literature, museum documents, archival materials, and surveys. On the basis of dated objects and subjects preserved in the terrain, museums, or otherwise documented, it was possible to go deeper into the past. Similarly to the aforementioned atlas, *The Encyclopaedia of Folk Culture of Slovakia* (ELKS, 1995) has solved the problem of the categorical and conceptual apparatus related to this part of traditional folk culture. Both works made accessible important information about the last stage of a continuous development of traditional forms of transport in Slovakia. They also stand for a significant gnoseological contribution from the point of view of comparative European studies in ethnology.

However, the atlas research focused on the subject of traditional transport was limited only to some selected phenomena; other information necessary for my work originate in earlier or later research for the needs of scientific and national monographs of municipalities or regions, research of Ethnographic Society of Slovakia (hereafter ESS) and the like. In this regard, the most interesting and the most detailed research materials are the following: *Transport in Eastern Slovakia* by Štefan Apáthy (app. 1960s, archival material), *Folk Transport in the Region of High Tatras* by Ján Olejník (ESS at the Slovak Academy of Sciences, archival material), *Transport-doprava-záprah, No. I, II., III* by Ján Podolák (archival

material), as well as other works on transport in the archives of ESS at the Slovak Academy of Sciences.<sup>5</sup> From the published works on the matter, I mainly focused on the studies of B. Gunda (1955), L. Baran (1950), K. Andel (1971), M. Markuš (1971), J. Podolák (1962), J. Olejník (1994), M. Paríková (1979), Š. Mruškovič (2003), and P. Slavkovský (2014).<sup>6</sup> I also partially concentrated on synthesis works, either thematic or regional, in which the subject of transport was partially covered.<sup>7</sup>

The reconstruction of the development of means of transport from older periods (from the first half of the 19th century) can only be done on the basis of iconographic material, confrontation with ethnographic material originating in later periods.<sup>8</sup>

We can thus partly use materials and apply methodology of ethno-linguistics in order to compare the acquired information. Within words, archaisms from even older periods have been preserved, when the denoted phenomenon already ceased to exist. In such cases, the names of the subjects had lasted longer than the phenomena they denoted. However, such material must also be analysed because the original names used to be transferred onto newer phenomena, which functionally correspond to older phenomena, but are often typologically or structurally different.

After all, even the archival material can in some cases complement or broaden a diapason of information. These occur sporadically in the inventory of estates or heritage inventories. Most frequently these are the

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5 Apáthy, Š.: *Transport in Eastern Slovakia*, (research transcript, 52 handwritten pages + drawings, undated, app. 1960s, archive of the author); J. Olejník: *Folk Transport in the region of High Tatras*, 28 pgs, 44 photographs, 15 drawings, archive of ESS at the Slovak Academy of Sciences, inventory number 36/60; J. Podolák: *Transport-doprava-záprah*, No. I, II, III research material from the second half of the 20th century. Archive of J. Podolák, archive of the Department of Ethnology and Non-European Studies, Faculty of Arts of Ss. Cyril and Methodius University in Trnava.

6 I have selected the most significant, other can be found in the list of resources: Andel, K.-Markuš, M.: *Ludový transport v strednom Zemplíne*. In: *Slovenský národopis*, XIX, 1971, č. 3; Baran, L.: *Způsob dopravy při senách an Horehroní*. In: *Český lid*, pp. 85–88. Gunda, B.: *Ludový transport v Gemeri*. In: *Gemer, národopisné štúdie*, 1978, č. 3. Mruškovič, Š.: *Transport a dopravné prostriedky v tradičnom poľnohospodárstve*. In: *Národopisný zborník*, 14, 2003. Podolák, J.: *Zimná doprava sena z horských lúk na západnej strane Veľkej Fatry*. In: *Slovenský národopis*, 1970, roč. XVIII, č.4, pp. 565–574. Podolák, J.: *Poľnohospodárstvo*. In: *Banická dedina Žakarovce*. Bratislava, Veda, 1956, pp. 63–121; Slavkovský, P.: *S nošou za industrializáciou krajiny*. Bratislava, Veda, 2014.

7 For example, works such as: Podolák, J. (ed.) 1969: *Horehronie*; Michálek, J. (ed.) 2011: *Gemer-Malohont*; Podolák, J. *Tradičné ovčiarstvo na Slovensku*; Podolák, J. 2008: *Tradičné poľnohospodárstvo na Slovensku* and many others.

8 The authors of these illustrations were often foreigners, immigrants, and travelers. The result of their work did not always reflect the real phenomenon in the given region or location in which they originated. These questions were addressed by, for example J. Kramařík in his study: *Die ethnographische Problematik in der Abbildung der Pörmysel-Szene in der St. – Katharinakapelle zu Znojmo*. In: *Etnologica Slavica*, 1976, 6, pp. 89–107.

data about those means which were made of linen – tablecloths, sheets, sacks, and straps. Since the production and the usage, as well as the care for these means were almost solely a women's work and duty, these can be found most frequently in relation to dowry.

Almost all means of transport were of multipurpose use, that is, they were not used for one purpose only. A sheet was mostly used for carrying burdens in agriculture, such as hay or fodder, it allowed to carry a relatively large amount of load (40–50 kg of hay). Besides carrying fodder, a sheet was used during hand sowing, crop collection (corn, potatoes, legumes), collection of dry leaves, and carrying wood. It was also used for carrying food during summer agricultural works or to shepherd's huts, as well as carrying children to the field, for various loads, shopping or fair products. A sheet was also used for fastening of a hamper or a sack onto the back. Sheets were usually of rectangular shape with dimensions of 100–110 cm; they could, but did not have to have straps at the ends for a better grip or binding. Larger sheets of 150 × 150 cm were only recorded in nine locations of Slovakia, in the village of Podhorie it even had dimensions of 200 × 200 cm.<sup>9</sup>

A sheet as a general means of transport was already mentioned in 1930 by Pavol Socháš. In a work entitled *Význam plachty – prestieradla u slovenského ľudu* [The importance of sheets among the Slovak people] he collected then known information about a sheet as such, he attempted to analyse the significance and summarise the used terminology, as well as types of sheet brodering in selected locations. Interesting, in the case of Socháš, is the information about a sheet in the testaments from the 18th and the 19th century. For example, a testament from Chorvátsky Grob from 1717 (Pezinok borough, Slovakia) in which a mother shared the sheets with the family as the part of the heritage (Socháš, 1930: 82); and another one from 1839 originating in the public sale of things that belonged to a deceased person, adopted by Socháš from Antonín Václavík and his book *Danube Village in Czechoslovakia*:

[...] Dore, Turijnič Jurovej žene, tenkú plachtu, Andrišovi Jendrekovi jednu plachtu s bílú recu, na kostol jednu plachtu s bílú recu, svojmu manželovi plachtu konopnú, jestli ma bude opatrovať.

At the end of the text, Socháš (1930: 84) adds examples of songs from several regions of Slovakia in which a sheet is mentioned in various forms and on various occasions.

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9 Regarding locations of EAS: č. 33 Krakovany, č. 68 Raková, č. 82 Čata, č. 96 Žibřítov, č. 124 Hrochoť, č. 125 Klokoč, č. 134 Bacúch, č. 199 Jarovnice, č. 233 Karnal.



Luboreč village:

[...] čímže ťa prikryjem Anička moja?  
Bielou plachtickou, jedľovou daštičkou, mamička moja  
Bola som v hájičku na žalude, vzali mi plachticku, nech tam bude!

Hnilec village:

Žalo dievča žalo trávu, neďaleko Temešváru.  
Jak našalo, naviazalo, na milého zavolalo:  
Poď sem milý s tamtej strany,  
Poc mi dvíhac zajdu/plachtu trávy.

Another generally spread and universal aid was a strap. It was a simple aid for carrying in the form of a 2–3 m long rope made out of linen or several braided cords. According to available resources and research, in the Zemplín region a strap was also made of limewood fibre. In Slovakia a strap was used in one continuous and several sub-areas. The first one relates to a region beginning in southern Tekov, through Hont, central Novohrad and Gemer, up to north to the Spiš region. Another region is western and southwestern Slovakia, the third one is the region of Low Tatras. It was used for carrying fodder from more distant meadows to the road, and sometimes – for carrying hay directly to storage areas. Moreover, it was an aid for carrying sacks of potatoes, hampers of fodder and manure or smaller loads of wood.

Another common multipurpose means of transport was a hamper. From the point of view of individual occasions of carrying, the function of hampers can be divided according to the activity. Besides agriculture, a hamper was used as means of transport during almost all types of work, in the village or outside of it, such as picking potatoes, corn, grapes, fruit, carrying food, fair products, carrying children outside the house, as well as for manure management in inaccessible areas such as mountains or wine-growing regions. Hampers were usually of two types – square and round; in mountainous regions, the hampers also had two or four legs which were stabbed into the ground so that the hamper stood on an uneven terrain (Slavkovský, 2014: 13). The hampers had two straps, so-called lifting straps, with which the hamper was fastened on the back. In this case, they were mostly called *back hampers*.

Hampers were made of various materials. In most cases, it was willow wicker, fir splints, bark, rootlets, corn husk or straw. The hampers were made by the farmers themselves, bought at the fairs from the manufacturers of basketry centres or bought and swapped from local Gypsies. Among the most significant basketry centres in Slovakia were the following: Spiš, Šariš, Gemer, the vicinity of Trenčín and southern

Slovakia – Komárno, Sereď, and Hlohovec. Here entire families and villages were devoted to basketry. The products were sold at fairs or were spread throughout the country by means of house-by-house trade.

## An example of use of means of transport: Carrying loads in agriculture and outside agriculture

For carrying loads in farming various kinds of transport aids were used. Most frequently, these were different kinds of hampers, sheets of various sizes, smaller wooden or wicker containers, according to the type and size of the load as well as the place of transport. For the needs of this study, I am presenting some examples of the ways loads were transported in farming and elsewhere.

### Carrying food to the house

For carrying potatoes from the cellar to the kitchen people used flat shallow basket of oval shape with two handles called *filfas*, *felfas*. It was made of a wicker or thinner splint. These baskets were also made by the farmers themselves. For carrying legumes, eggs or vegetables they used smaller oval-shaped baskets or straw bowls called *slamienky*.

### Carrying water

Drinking water and cooking water was carried to the house from the well in various containers; most frequently in buckets, watering cans and tubs. The distance of springs from the household influenced the use of transport means for carrying water. Wooden scales were used in mountain settlements or in terrain where the spring was far from the houses. The scales were not used in the villages if there were plenty of wells. The scales for carrying water and milk were also used in shepherd's dwellings, provided they had a special place for milking, that is, *strunga*, further from the hut. *Water tubs* were wooden plate containers of oval shape and flat bottom. These were made by coopers, and they were used quite often for carrying water. Another container for carrying water were *gargale*, wooden conical containers 20–25 cm tall, 18–20 litres of water in volume. Water was also carried in *dieža*, a wooden container with two handles, used for carrying in longer distances in hands, on shoulders or held by handles by two persons. Usually, it was of cylindrical shape with vertical, slightly conically shaped walls made of soft wood, tightened by two or three iron bands, having two

handles, too. The holes were used for inserting a longer pole-yoke, also called *drúčik*, the ends of which were held by two people walking behind each other. While carrying the container, the man in the back held the mouth of the container to avoid swinging. This container was used until the second half of the 20th century, in some places even longer. In Žakarovce, water was carried in a tall wooden container called *kop*. In Gemer, it was called *kupa*. These containers for carrying water were bought in Dobšiná. The Hungarian population of Gemer used to purchase these containers at the fairs in Rožňava. The containers were also used for carrying water to the house. These wooden containers bear many regional features. In Gemer, they were even decorated with carvings or baked ornaments, which is similar to Huculs in Transcarpathian Ukraine (Gunda, 1978: 159).

*Bukolak* (Sečovce), *boklach* (Trebíšov) – a cylindrical container made of winter oak – was also used for carrying water, sometimes even wine. In the Zemplín region, these containers were made by coopers in the village of Kochanovce. Some were decorated, with thick handles on each side into which the ropes or chains were threaded. Men used to carry them with the ropes draped over shoulders, women carried them in bags or sheets. If these containers were transported on the wagons (e.g., to the field), they were tied to the side of the wagon. In a similar fashion, another wooden tub was used in Zemplín – *puto*. It was oval in shape and had four iron rings into which a rope or a strap was threaded and, as such, it was put on the back. In Rejdová, for carrying water people used a stoneware container with a big hole called *kupelačok*. In Čierna Lehota, it was called *zbanok*. In the village of Lutiše (district of Žilina), they used a big clay jug with a narrow neck called *veledžúr* for carrying water to the fields. The jugs were bought at the fairs in Žilina (Archive: *Etnografický Atlas Slovenska*, no. 86/1975, noted by A. Pranda).

Invaluable aid in carrying water were scales, that is, a wooden tool for carrying the containers of water for watering animals and carrying water to the household from distant springs. Wooden scales were already used in the farming environment in medieval times and they belong to the tools of simple construction, which were made by each farmer for his own needs. As a simple tool that allowed to carry even two buckets of water at once the scales were in use for practical reasons until the second half of the 20th century, sometimes even longer.

Typologically we distinguish two variants:

Simple scales made of unworked wooden snag, 140–160 cm long, at the end of the rod there were wires or ropes attached with hooks for buckets.

Scales of saddle design in the neck, consisting of bulkier wooden hanger, hollowed out in the middle part, and worked to the shape of a hod or a saddle with a carving for the back part of the carrier's neck.

At the ends, the hangers are cut into thinner circular profile with drilled holes into which metal sleeves with bucket chains are threaded. In some cases, the hangers were lined with linen or leather pad to avoid excessive neck pressure.

An interesting thing is that for example in Gemer, within a small space, we have found several types of scales used at the same time – straight scales (Silica), with smaller arc (Muránska Zdychava), as well as arched ones (Rejdová). The straight scales were used for carrying water, as can be seen in the following report: *...len na rovien, lebo ak je cesta alebo dvor do svahu, voda by z dieže vytekla, a svahov v Brdárke je dost*. In the second half of the 20th century, water was carried from the wells to the houses mostly in tin buckets.

A rare method was carrying water on the head. In Slovakia, this method was only documented in two locations – central Zemplín in the community of workers at Andrassy's manor; a linen wreath was placed on the head, followed by a pad and a wooden container called *gargala* containing water. This was the way water was carried by workers from the district of Nitra. Another location is the village of Malá Čausa, district of Prievidza. No pad on the head was used; water was carried to the fields in a wooden watering can of conical shape, possibly as a product of coopers, until the 1950s. Other locations in Slovakia with a documented method of carrying liquids on the head are the villages of Mojtiín, Predhorie, Šarišské Dravce, and Žakarovce. This means was common in the locations with a mountain sheep farming method. Chief shepherds and their companions used to carry the containers (*gelety*) with milk, usually from a sheep-pen to a hut. The container was held by one hand. Contrary to the means of carrying water on the head in the vicinity of Mojtiín or Prehodie, in Žakarovce and Dravce the carriers did not use any pad on the head. Shepherds used to place the container directly on the hat.<sup>10</sup>

## Carrying wood

The simplest means of carrying wood was freely in the hands or stacked in the arms. In the vicinity of the house, that is, underroof, cellar or

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<sup>10</sup> This information was obtained from the research within EAS in the location of Malá Čausa (location No. 75, research conducted in November 1975, documented by Táňa Blagoeva-Neumanová). It is possible that this method of carrying water in wooden watering can was common also in other locations, however, the research of EAS or any other research could not be documented. Carrying on the head in Spiš and Šariš was documented by research for the needs of EAS. Archive of EAS, location No. 185, Šarišské Dravce, carrying of milk from the sheep-pen to the hut in *gelety* on the head, research from 1971, photograph No. 71972, archives of Slovak Academy of Sciences, see also: Gunda, B.: *Ludový transport v Žakarovciach*. In: *Slovenský národopis*, 1955, roč. III, č. 2, p. 180.

barn, wood was carried in round oblong baskets called *opálka*. These were made of willow wicker, thin splint or rootlets. Wood also used to be carried in wicker hampers called *krošňa*. In the village of Východná (district), Jezersko and other locations wood was carried for shorter distances in sheets or on a wooden pole called *nosivo*, in Liptovský Ján wood was loaded on knitted cords – *žinky* and carried to the house. It is interesting to note how a heavy load of wood or straw was lifted in the sheet. The sheet was set in a suitable position, the one to lift the load kneeled, tied the sheet, then stood up on one foot and then on both. While lifting the load a stick was used as a support.

### Carrying wood from forests

One of the most archaic means of carrying wood, for example, smaller branches used for heating, straw or hay, was by ropes, straps or *žinka*. This was a shorter cord, a rope made of hemp fibre, very strong, with which a load of approximately 49 kg could be carried. While carrying wood like this, the load was fastened horizontally, if the wood was shorter, or vertically in case of long branches and brushwood. In the past such ropes were also made of limewood fibre. Wood was often carried in the strap by seven-year-olds. Less frequently, men participated in the carrying; they did not carry the load on the back, but rather on the shoulders or they dragged it on the ground. For longer distances, wood was carried in sheets; the load was tied with straps once or twice, tossed on the back and tied around the neck with remaining free straps. These ends were then held in hands or, in order to lighten to burden, a basket was tied on them. Branches and brushwood were tied into a strap (sheet). Before loading on the back, it was put on a higher spot under which a woman sat down, put the load on the back and formed a knot with two loose ends under the chin (Lendak, dist. of Poprad). Wood was carried in wooden hand-loomes of different kinds, most frequently in the so-called ladder hand-loomes. As an example of carrying wood in the location of Žakarovce may serve the following quotation:

A woman's task was to supply firewood throughout the year. Wood is usually carried in summer; in winter it is not carried or transported. Carrying wood is solely a woman's work. Wood is carried on the back in "zajda" or in "strap." Women usually carry wood until 70 years of age. Small children, but only girls, carry wood from nine years of age. Small boys do not carry wood, they only play football! [...]

In summer, people stock wood for winter. Some people hire a wagoner for wood transport. Women prepare the wood and the wagoner transports, wood is collected in these forests: Kuchyňa, Harbky, Kuchynský vršok.

Going there and back takes four hours. Women leave the house at 7 o'clock in the morning and they come back at around 11.

A woman can carry almost 40 kilos of wood in one load. Wood is only picked in state forests, earlier called municipal. Only small dry branches are picked. Each woman carries a chip-axe to cut off needed pieces. An axe is small, it is called "woman's axe," each woman has such an axe. Women usually carry two loads of wood per day, at times, in summer, when the day is long, even three. (Ján Podolák, Archív Katedry Etnológie a Mimoeurópskych Štúdií) [Archive of J. Podolák, archive of the Department of Ethnology and Non-European Studies, Faculty of Arts of Ss. Cyril and Methodius University in Trnava]

## Carrying fodder

For carrying straw and hay in the barn pitchfork was used. Pitchfork is not only a means of transport but also a working tool. Big hampers of dimensions 110 × 60 cm were used for daily works on the farm for carrying chopped forage, hay, straw, and other products. These were wicker hampers or made of raw or boiled chipped wood. These hampers of the biggest size, called *nošaci košar* in Zemplín, *seniak* in Liptov, *hajkorn* in Žakovce, *kosek* in Jezersko, and *kuoš* in Štrba, were used for carrying chopped forage, fodder for livestock, chaff, and cavings. Sometimes a hamper was hung by a handle on a wooden hook and put on the back. The hamper had a semi-circular handle and was made of hazel. The top part was semi-circular, the bottom part was rectangular, and the back part was flat. Smaller hampers were called *opálky*, *filfas*, *filkaš* and the like. While carrying, both handles were held by hands and the hamper was leaning on the body. If carried by two people, each of them held one handle. These hampers were made by the farmers themselves, or, if possible, they bought them from the local Gypsies. A specific type of a bigger hamper were the hampers for carrying chopped forage from Liptovská Teplička. These were big wicker hampers with one handle in the middle, lined at the bottom with cowhide or calfskin to prevent the falling of the chopped forage out of the hamper. Research from the 1970s documented a widespread use of this hamper. Another research between 2013 and 2014 in the location did not confirm the use of this hamper. In other locations the EAS research did not document these hampers.

Hay, straw, clover, and other fodder near the house were carried for example to the barn in the sheet. It had different names – *popelka* in the vicinity of Rožňava, *travjanka* in Jakubovany, *travnica* in Lutilla (district of Žiar nad Hronom), in the area of Východná it was called *puachtička*, *puachta*, in Žakovce it was called *grastuch*, etc. A loaded sheet (if no straps were part of it) was twisted at the end to be grabbed by it, the load was put on the back and the loose ends were tied on the chest. If it did

have straps (ropes, ends), these were tied and then the load was put on the back. The centre of gravity of the load thus rested mainly on the hips; it was controlled by leaning forward, the straps were held by hands, or the load was being lifted. Rarely it was carried in arms (Gemerská Párnica). In Východná, carrying fodder was done by means of a tablecloth (130 × 150 cm). In some cases, simple, two-metres-long straps were used for carrying hay (Hranovica, dist. of Poprad). In Liptovský Ján, people had their own explanation for using a tablecloth for carrying hay: the cloth is bigger in size, its dimensions are 110 × 1110 cm, it is used for carrying hay from the field, a tablecloth is smaller and is used for carrying hay nearby the house.

Throughout Gemer, a linen sheet was used for carrying hay in the form of a bag. The sheet was made of two pieces of linen, and its dimensions were approximately 130 × 135 cm; straps were attached to four loose ends, their length was usually 100–150 cm. The load was carried on the back. There are rarely documented means of carrying the load in the sheet on the head. This was in cases when the load was carried by a man; in such cases a man put the load on the head and held it by one hand.

Table 1. Names of transport aids in region Gemer

Village	Sheet	Straps	Load/bag
Rejdová	<i>plachôtka</i>	<i>trak</i>	<i>bremia</i>
Muránska Zdychava	<i>plachta, popelka, traková plachta, tračka, traška, travňica</i>	<i>trak / plurál traki</i>	<i>batoh, batožok, bremä</i>
Muránska Huta	<i>plachtička</i>	<i>trak</i>	<i>batoch</i>
Čierna Lehota	<i>plachta</i>	<i>trak</i>	<i>batoch</i>
Brdárka	<i>plachta</i>	<i>trak</i>	<i>bremä</i>
Silica	<i>pacókos korcos</i>	<i>kantár pacók</i>	<i>batu</i>

Source: Author's research.

The so-called *dručky*, two poles of the same length, represent a difficult form of carrying fodder. They were called *nošace družky* in Hriadky (dist. of Trebišov). These were used for carrying hay or straw. *Dručky* were usually pushed underneath the pile of hay and this pile was then carried to a different place. They were usually carried by two men.

Sometimes *dručky* had wooden wedges at the ends which were used to prevent the sliding of the load. If the pile of hay was on the top of the hill which could not be reached by a waggon, *dručky* were used for sliding hay down the hill. In such a case, the tool was pulled by only one man. In central Zemplín, *dručky* had an unusual form: a sheet was attached between them. Such a tool was used for carrying husk and straw remnants from underneath the thresher. In Liptovský Ján (dist.), *žinky* were used for carrying grass near the house – these were thick fibres entwined in a braid. For carrying chopped forage, a wooden *šafel* with two handles was used (Žakarovce) or oval baskets (*opálky*), in Štrba (dist. of Poprad) called *kreptuch* or *filfajz*.

### Carrying manure

Throughout the year, manure was piled on the midden from where it was carried to the fields in autumn and spring. Despite the fact that carrying manure was physically a very exhausting work, it was done almost solely by women. In the barn, the manure was loaded in a smaller wide basket – *opálka* or sometimes called *felfas*, *filfas* by means of hoe which was called *karšť* (Žakarovce). For carrying manure from the barn, they used stretchers called *šeregle*, *šaragle* (Hont, Zemplín), *nosítka na hnoj* (Horná and Dolná Súča), *nosidlo* (Dvorník), *širáky* (Chorvátsky Grob), *tragle* (Sebedražie), *trogí* (Žakarovce). It is one of the many variants of wooden poles, *dručky*, usually shorter (approximately 2 m), connected with an attached board called landing, which was approximately 80 cm long, sometimes also called *ščamble*. Thus, roughly almost an entire central third of the stretchers looks like a wider board or hayrack which can support the load of manure. They existed in two basic variants: with a ribbed platform and a full-board platform. The stretchers were made by the farmers themselves and were stored by the barn or on the midden.

According to the research, still at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, manure was also carried in a bag bound to the back by a strap. These were gradually substituted by back baskets and hampers. To avoid leaking of the manure on the clothes and the back, women used to put a folded sheet or older unused piece of clothes under the hamper.

In one day a woman carried 8–12 hampers of manure. For illustration, eighteen hampers could fill one wagon. A soil which is sowed by four bags of potatoes (approximately 200 kg) needs to be fertilized by four wagons of manure.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> To fill four wagons means to carry 72 hampers of manure, if a woman on average carried 10 hampers a day (7–12 according to condition and weight), a woman only carried



A wicker or fibre hamper was also used for carrying manure from the barn. In Slovakia, there were two types of these hampers:

A flat one of oval shape, with oval bottom and two handles. Most usually, it is called *felfas*, *košarka*, *košiarik* (Žakarovce). The dimensions vary, typically around 60 × 40 cm, it is adapted to be carried by two hands in the front.

A deep hamper with a flat back wall with a big arched handle on its end over the entire part of the back. This hamper used to have three variants in Slovakia. Most frequently, it was a hamper of a semi-circular or rectangular profile with a conical wall from a wider mouth to a flat bottom. It usually had a sparse vertical cane skeleton with four short legs emerging from the skeleton of the hamper underneath the bottom and two straps by which the hamper was carried on the back. The carrier, often a woman, leaned her back on a flat part of the hamper filled with manure, tied it with a strap or a rope which was tossed over the shoulders and held by hands on the chest. Another variant were manure hampers with arched handles which were hung on wooden hand-loom called *šragle*, *šeregle* and carried on the back.

In the mountainous regions as well as small farms in the mountains, manure often had to be carried on back with the help of different transport aids. Carrying manure was one of the most difficult tasks done by women. Manure was carried in bags, hampers, tubs, or sheets. A hamper called *back hamper* (Žakarovce) as a transport aid was used in the transport of manure in the areas unreachable by wagons or where the people did not use to move the sheep-pens. The manure was used to fertilize mountainous fields and meadows. Research documents this method for example in the villages of Žakarovce, Huty, Vyšná, and Nižná Boca, as well as in the villages in Horehronie. The manure was loaded into a small basket – *opálka* – also called *felfas* (Žakarovce) by means of a special hoe or into a hamper. A fully loaded hamper was put on the shoulders with the help of the straps, sometimes bound by a strap tied around the chest. In some areas, a similar method was also used for fertilizing vineyards, especially those located on steep slopes, mainly in the region of Little Carpathians. In the vicinity of the village of Jílové (dist. of Prague) special hampers were created to carry manure to the field; these were called *žena*. This is linked to a humorous anecdote about the farmers poking fun at each other:

...puč mi ženu, já si vyvezu hnůj!...

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manure to one field for more than seven days. For more see Podolák, J.: Poľnohospodárstvo. In: *Banická dedina Žakarovce*. Bratislava, Veda, 1956, pp. 63–121.

## Conclusion

As can be seen, transport aids used in the agricultural environment of Slovakia, especially until the second half of the 20th century, were diverse. In the past, historical, natural, agricultural, social, and cultural contexts had formed various forms of transport – all generations of the pre-Industrial era had to deal with the problems of transport of different kinds of material, goods, loads, and tools. In each stage, transport was the reason that in the following, more advanced civilization, apart from industrial forms of transport there existed traditional ones as a functional part of the period system.

Each environment inhabited by people, each era in which they lived, are culturally unique. This also applies to this part of cultural heritage. The use of individual aids and means was connected to the nature of traditional occupations of the inhabitants of Slovakia (farmers, craftsmen, traders, wagoners, rafters, and the like), as well as to the natural and historical conditions. This study offers a view on a very small part of the subject matter of traditional transport. We are aware of the limits given by the environment. It is immensely interesting to investigate how some aforementioned transport aids are still in use despite the technological advancements.

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