

## DRIVING TRADITION IN CROATIA

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As anywhere else before the introduction of machinery into agriculture, the use of draught cattle in team was also in Croatia an economic necessity, characterized by the geographic location and the condition of the soil of an area.

Driving was a tradition which guaranteed the survival of people, while the number of teams and carts was an expression of richness of the peasants.

Generally speaking the tradition of draught-horses and driving in the course of long Croatian history was very rich and diverse. However, it varied quite a lot, influenced by the geography of the country full of contrasts.

The carts and wagons were different in terms of shape, design and construction above all, but also in terms of harnessing the animals. That was very much different in the plains of Slavonia and in the mountainous parts of the country, as well as in the coastal karst areas of Istria and Dalmatia where not only horses used to be harnessed but also oxen, cows and donkeys.

This work does not take into consideration the use of horses for military purposes and in sports.

The enclosed schematic presentation shows the principal use of horses as draught animals in agriculture.

1. In mountainous woods lumber was hauled mainly by one or two horses.
2. The plain arable land was cultivated by use of one horse or up to four horses, depending on the condition of the soil and the weight of horses, however, two horses at most were harnessed next to each other.

It is also important to mention the use of horses in home production of juices and spirits made of fruit, where the power of horses in circular movement was used for pressing the fruit.

3. One horse or up to four horses were also harnessed for cart- pulling. In the recent past, after the construction of white roads, the use of platform carts started, where also four horses at most were harnessed.

4. Hackney cabs, coaches and carriages with up to four horses were used as means of transport for passengers. Alternatively, in winter-time sleighs with one or two horses were used.

The coaches and mail coaches with two or up to four horses were used to cover greater distances, representing the main connections between bigger cities such as Zagreb - Vienna, Pula - Verona, etc.

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5. In the cities horses were used for pulling trams as public transport.

6. In the river basins of the Sava, the Drava nad the Kupa horses were used to pull the ships, ferries and boats for centuries, upstream against the current. In that case the horses were usually harnessed in tandem.

7. A special occasion for the use of all kinds of carts were various celebrations such as weddings, births and annual church festivities. For such occasions the horses and coaches were specially decorated.

In the course of many centuries during which the horse represented the only means of transport and was a faithful companion to man in his work, many different types of carts were developed, depending on the kind of use and the need and many different horse breeds were used. Horseback-riding meant a fast transport of one man on a fast horse. Also hackney cabs and light coaches required lighter horses (light and medium-heavy warm- blooded breeds) that could transport up to six passengers, which corresponds to the capacity of today's cars.

Light and untiring horses also used to pull carriages on longer distances.

Hard work and heavy carts and coaches, as well as trams, circular harvesters and ferries required heavy horse breeds.

#### *Cart construction*

The ordinary carts used mainly as people's vehicles were widely spread over the whole of Croatia.

Due to heavy rainfall and therefore soft ground these carts in Slavonia had a functional height that was determined by the size of the wheels; the front wheels had approximately 70 centimetres in diameter and the rear wheels had a slightly bigger diameter, that is approximately 80 centimetres.

The wheels were narrow, so that on soft ground they sank up to the solid lower layer.

Such carts were relatively difficult to drive, since the left and the right lock had an angle of only 50 to 60 degrees and the centre of gravity was high. There was little danger of overturning on flat ground, though.

In the karst and mountainous areas the hand-carts had to be lower. The rear wheels were approximately 60 centimetres in diameter at most and the front wheels were 45 centimetres. Therefore the centre of gravity was deeper, which was definitely an important factor of safety in the mountainous areas.

All other wagon systems which were widely spread in the rest of Europe, such as hackney cabs and hunting carts were rather rare and as such considered a privilege of few rich people.

#### *Harness*

The usual harness was and still is the Hungarian harness (chest harness). Only heavy horses had a collar. Cows and oxen used have a special wooden yoke.



*Present*

In our recollections returning from the past into the present, one can still find horse-drawn vehicles in those cases where modern technology has proved to be inadequate or insufficient, or in those areas where tradition is deeply rooted and preserved and cherished with pride.

The most important task of the Posavina horses still is work in the dense woods which are inaccessible for tractors and other machinery.

Heavy horses are nowadays used much less and in agriculture and farming in a much smaller percentage, except for the works in marshland.

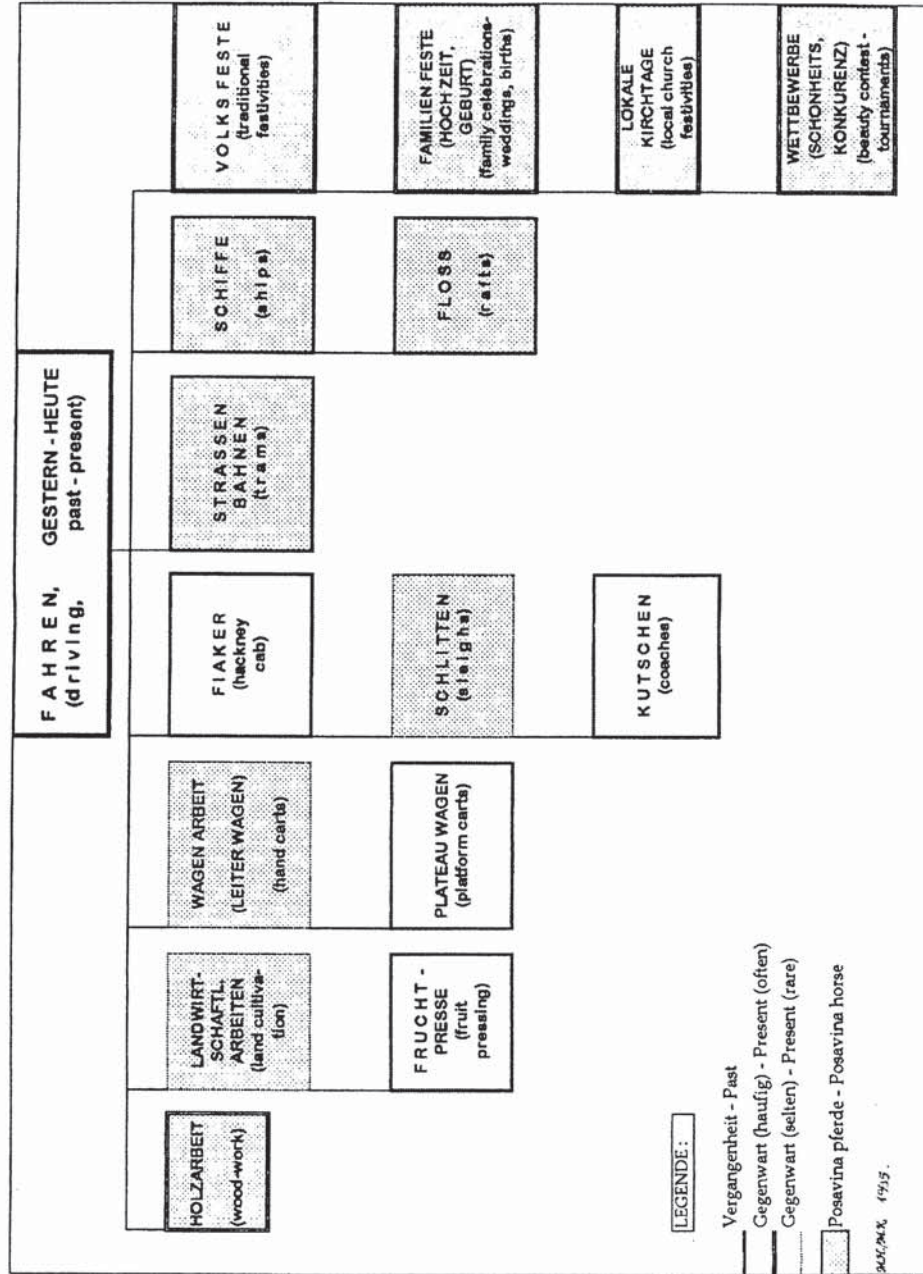
In the Slavonian plains as well as in the regions of the Sava and the Drava rivers the farmers still use their horse-drawn carts on shorter distances. That is an expression of their profound attachment to their horses and pride in their tradition, which is reflected primarily in the high quality of horses and the construction of carts and coaches.

Beautiful horse-drawn carts still exist particularly Slavonia, where they are unchanged and used at all festivities. On such occasions the horses and carts are decorated with flowers, embroidered linen, bands and lace according to old family tradition and each owner shows his individual way of decorating. In its highly imaginative diversity the decoration itself competes with the beautiful traditional costumes which are characteristic of each place. The carts are again without suspension, only the seats are covered with cushions and woollen blankets. Richer peasants have always had one cart for work and another, more finely constructed cart for festivities. In winter-time, instead of carts people used to decorate their sleights.

The decoration of horses and carts is always in harmony with the traditional costumes of men, women and children. The processions are always accompanied by traditional national music played on the "tamburica", a string instrument typical of the region, and the musicians sit in a cart and play while driving.

Such festivities take a whole day with a rich and varied program, the presentation of national dishes and the "beauty contest" of carts, horses and costumes. There are also tournaments in the speed of harnessing the horses, changing of broken wheels or repairing a broken axle. All this is an expression of pure zest for life connected with a profound sense of everyday work.

- Driving tradition in Croatia -





## TRADICIJA ZAPREGE U HRVATSKOJ

Kao i drugdje prije uvođenja poljoprivredne mehanizacije i u Hrvatskoj je uporaba životinja za vuču u zapregama predstavljala gospodarsku nužnost, čija su obilježja bila uvjetovana geografskim položajem i vrstom tla pojedinog područja.

Vožnja zapregom bila je tradicija koja jamči opstojnost jednog naroda, a broj zaprega bio je znak materijalnog položaja seljaka.

Općenito gledano, tradicija vožnje zapregom i konjima u Hrvatskoj je osobito bogata i mnogovrsna, te uistinu raznolika, što je pak uvjetovano raznolikošću i kontrastima njezinog geografskog smještaja.

Kola se prije svega razlikuju oblikom i načinom izrade, ali i načinom uprezanja, različitog u slavonskim ravninama od onog u brdovitim dijelovima zemlje, kao i od onog u krševitim priobalnim područjima Istre i Dalmacije, gdje se uprezalo ne samo konje, već i volove, krave i magarce.

Ovaj rad ne razmatra uporabu konja u vojne svrhe niti njihovu uporabu u športu.

Na priloženom shematskom prikazu vide se ključne mogućnosti uporabe konja kao životinje za vuču u poljoprivredi.

1. Pri šumskim radovima u brdskim šumama radni su konji bili uprezani pretežito u jednopreg ili dvopreg.

2. Poljoprivredne površine u ravničarskim predjelima (oranice) bile su obrađivane jednopregom do četveropregom, već prema vrsti tla i težini konja. Najviše se uprezalo do dva konja, jednog pokraj drugog.

3. Za vuču kola uprezalo se također jednog do četiri konja. Čak i kada su u nedavnoj prošlosti, nakon izgradnje tzv. bijelih cesta, u uporabu bila uvedena tzv. platformna kola, uprezalo se najviše četiri konja.

4. Kao prijevozno sredstvo putnika upotrebljavani su fijakeri i kočije s jednim do četiri konja, a zimi saonice s jednim ili dva konja.

Kočije i poštanske kočije s dva do četiri konja upotrebljavane su na dužim relacijama i predstavljale su glavnu vezu između većih gradova kao što su Zagreb - Beč, Pula - Verona, itd.

5. U gradovima se konje upotrebljavalo za vuču konjskih tramvaja kao javnog prijevoza.

6. U porječju Save, Drave i Kupe konji su stoljećima vukli brodove, splavi (skele) i čamce, uzvodno protiv struje. Pritom je bilo uobičajeno uprezati konje u tandem.

7. Osobitu primjenu imale su zaprege svih vrsta pri svečanostima: vjenčanjima, rođenjima i godišnjim vjerskim blagdanima, kojom prigodom su bile posebno okićene.

Tijekom više stoljeća, kada je konj bio jedino prijevozno sredstvo i vjerni sluga i pratitelj čovjeka u njegovom radu, razvijeni su različiti tipovi kola, već prema vrsti uporabe i potrebi, te su upotrebljavane različite pasmine konja. Jahanje je značilo brz prijevoz jednog čovjeka na brzom konju. I fijakeri i lakša kola zahtijevali su lakše konje (toplokrvnjake lakšeg do srednjeg teškog tipa), a mogli su prevoziti do šest osoba, što po kapacitetu odgovara današnjem automobilu.

Na većim udaljenostima kočije su vukli lakši i izdržljiviji konji.

Teški radovi i teška kola, kao i tramvajska kola, kružne vršilice i splavi (skele) zahtijevali su teške konje.

### *Konstrukcija kola*

Obična kola (s "lojtrom"), ponajviše upotrebljavana kao opće narodno vozilo, bila su rasprostranjena u čitavoj Hrvatskoj.

Zbog mekšeg tla uzrokovanog padalinama takva su kola u Slavoniji imala funkcionalnu visinu, uvjetovanu veličinom kotača, pri čemu su prednji kotači bili promjera oko 70 cm, dok su stražnji imali veći promjer od oko 80 cm.

Kotači su bili uski, tako da su na mekšem tlu kola propadala do tvrdog donjeg sloja.

Takva se kola relativno teško vozilo, s obzirom da su lijevi i desni zaokretni kut iznosili svega 50 - 60 stupnjeva. Težište je bilo visoko, pa ipak opasnost od prevrtanja na ravnom tlu bila je relativno mala.

U krševitim i planinskim područjima kola su morala biti niža; stražnji kotači imali su maksimalan promjer od oko 60 cm, a prednji 45 cm. Stoga je i težište bilo dublje, što je predstavljalo značajan čimbenik sigurnosti u brdovitim područjima.

Svi ostali tipovi kola, uobičajeni u ostalim europskim zemljama, kao što su fijakeri, lovačka kola i sl., bili su relativno rijetki i kao takvi smatrani privilegijom imućnijih ljudi.

### *Uprezanje*

Uobičajeni način uprezanja konja bilo je i jest mađarsko uprezanje (preko prsa). Jedino su teški konji vukli terete s okovratnikom. Krave i volovi bili su uprezani u poseban drveni jaram.

### *Danas*

Ako se u našim razmatranjima prošlosti vratimo u današnje vrijeme, uporabu zaprega i dalje nalazimo ondje gdje je suvremena tehnika zakazala, ili pak tamo gdje je tradicija duboko ukorijenjena, te s ponosom čuvana i njegovana.

1. Još i danas je najvažniji zadatak konja šumski rad u gustim šumama, nepristupačnim za traktore i ostalu mehanizaciju.

2. Teške konje nalazimo manje zastupljene u vrlo malom postotku, u obrađivanju polja i ostalim poljoprivrednim radovima, no prije svega za sve vrste radova u močvarnim područjima.

3. U ravničarskim područjima Slavonije, te u porječju Save i Drave seljaci i danas rado upotrebljavaju svoje zaprege za prevaljivanje kraćih puteva. To je izraz njihove duboke povezanosti s vlastitim konjima i ponosa na njihovu tradiciju, koja se prije svega očituje u vrlo dobroj kvaliteti konja i konstrukciji kola.

4. Osobito u Slavoniji zaprege se i danas pokazuju u svojoj ljepoti i punom značenju povodom svih svečanih prigoda.

U takvim se prigodama konji i kola kite cvijećem, izvezenim pokrivačima, ručnicima i čipkom, prema davnim obiteljskim tradicijama, pri čemu svaki vlasnik iskazuje svoj vlastiti način ukrašavanja, što se u maštovitoj raznolikosti nadmeće s prekrasnim narodnim nošnjama, karakterističnog izgleda u svakom pojedinom mjestu.

Kola su ponovno "s lojtrom", bez opruga, jedino su sjedala prekrivena jastucima

i vunenim prekrivačima. Imućniji su seljaci uvijek imali jedna radna kola i jedna finije izrađena kola za svečane prigode.

Zimi su umjesto običnih kola na isti način ukrašavali saonice.

Uresi na konjima i kolima uvijek su bili usklađeni s nošnjama žena, muškaraca i djece.

Svečane su povorke praćene glazbom izvođenom na tamburici, žičanom instrumentu tipičnom za određeni kraj, pri čemu "muzikaši" sjede u jednim kolima i sviraju za vrijeme vožnje.

Ovakve svečanosti potraju cijeli dan, s bogatim programom i narodnim jelima, te izborom najljepših kola, konja i nošnji. Upriličuju se i natjecanja - tko će brže upregnuti i raspregnuti konje, promijeniti puknuti kotač ili popraviti puknutu osovinu.

Sve je to izraz čiste radosti življenja, povezane s dubokim smislom svakodnevnoga rada.