



**CULTURE AND NATURE: THE EUROPEAN HERITAGE OF
SHEEP FARMING AND PASTORAL LIFE**

**RESEARCH THEME 1: HANDICRAFT BASED ON THE PRODUCTS
OF THE SHEEP**

RESEARCH REPORT FOR POLAND

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Handicrafts based on the products of the sheep (wool, leather etc) in Podhale (Poland)

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Introduction

Łańcuski, spinecki to som stroje nase

owiecek kierdelek, pociesenie nase

This simple highlanders' couplet depicts a distinctive feature of highlanders' lively character, which since the 16th century has been strictly interlocked with high mountain pasture. Pastoralism brought together with Vlach immigration found favourable conditions for its development in the Tatras region. Over the centuries it formed a specific model of communal existence, economic and social relations and later a particular ethos of the highlander's life together with a set of customary, ritual and cultural behaviours. This pastoral heritage has become an important ingredient of the regional universe, a significant component of Podhale highlanders' identity in modern culture, which can be exemplified by a representative of regional elites: "Pastoralism is the foundation of the culture of Podhale".



Il. 1. Grazing sheep on the on mountain pasture ("hala"). 1950s-1960s. Photo from the collection S. Trebunia-Staszal

The importance of sheep breeding in the lives of inhabitants of this region was noticed in the beginning of the 19th century by Ludwik Kamiński the author of the oldest ethnographic monograph of Podhale.

“The most needed, the most useful for them [highlanders] creature is a sheep. A good farmer sometimes even has thirty of them. After shearing, two weeks later, they drive their sheep to the mountains, where they stay until the end of August or if the weather is favourable, until St. Michael’s day. They give them wool and cheese”⁹.

In the period of the self-sufficient economy the sheep were the main source of support for local people. Besides food products they also supplied basic raw materials for production of highlanders’ outfit, footwear, textiles and festive clothes. Cloth was made from sheep fleece, from which clothes were sewn and the leather was used for warm outer items of clothing: jerkins, fur coats and hats. The sheep farming and co-related activities were a part of the highlanders’ world; they determined the rhythm of local people’s lives. When the spring came shepherds or juhases set off under the leadership of a baca with herds of sheep for seasonal pasture up the mountains, as they said “*śli w hole na salas*”, where they stayed until the autumn. When they arrived the Tatras became vibrant with life. Juhases’ singing and whistling, *zbyrkanie* of sheep bells, shepherd dog’s barking, lonely wails of shepherdesses pasturing cows woke up the pasture lands of Podhale from the winter lethargy. Groups of sheep grazing on clearings, smoke coming out of wooden huts, shepherds dressed in traditional clothes were naturally interlocked with the Tatras nature. This pastoral life is described in another highlanders’ couplet, which is nowadays hummed by older inhabitants:

*Ej szkoda tyz to szkoda starodowyk casów,
kiedy sie na holi dymielo z salasów.*

During the Second World War, at the time of Hitler’s regime and terror the Steep saved local people from Hunger. They made it possible to survive the hard time of occupation. Journalist J. Antecka wrote about it: “Germans took away cows and pigs but for long they could not come to like mutton. It is no wonder then that in the massacred farming economy the sheep became the main feeders¹. Thus, when after the war, in connection with founding TPN the pastoralism was banned from the Tatras for many highlanders, bacas it was the “end of the world”. This not well-considered realization of otherwise noble idea to protect the Tatras wildlife led to the breakdown of the hut economy. The process of compulsory expropriation of highlanders from their clearings started before the foundation of TPN. The highlanders had to leave their pasture lands, on which they had been

farming for a few centuries and which were a part of their lives. The sheep were banned from the Tatras and directed to Bieszczady, to the land of Lemkos, an ethnic group which was cruelly removed from their fatherland and moved to the so-called western regained lands. The authorities of the Polish People's Republic successfully manipulated people in accordance with the rule: "divide and rule"¹.

The highlanders tried to protest, some bacas drove their sheep to pasture lands despite the ban. It ended in arresting. When the last baca was chased away from the Tatras, highlanders of Bukowina Tatrzańska composed a couplet:

Posmutaniały góry I Wołosyn place,
bo nom z hól wywiedli ostatniego bace.*

After banning sheep from the Tatras it turned out that clearings started to grow wild, the tall grass overgrew other plants, crocuses and gentians did not grow on the impoverished soil. More and more often the necessity to bring the sheep back to the Tatras was mentioned. In 1980 when the solidarity movement originated there was a hope to change the situation. Representatives of the regional elites of Podhale with the Association of Podhale Inhabitants as their leaders sent a memorial about the economic policy for Podhale to the authorities. One of the items was the postulate to restore the sheep pasture on the Tatras pasture lands. This is how the above quoted journalist Jolanta Antecką commented on these attempts: "A reasonable number of sheep in the Tatras, when preserving the natural economy, does not necessarily mean devastation: on the contrary – keeping the soil in such condition as it was used to for a few hundred years – and preserving the culture, which was cut off from its roots in the name of higher causes"¹. In the effect of the above mentioned actions the sheep returned to the Tatras within the frames of the so-called agricultural pasture.

Wool processing

Farming activities connected with breeding and taking care of sheep were men's duty. They were the ones who initially processed sheep fleece to obtain wool. After sheering and washing the fleece it was subject to *cechrание* – (cleaning the fleece by hand) and then to combing. Combing was done with special *kreple*. They were two square wooden boards with metal spikes. The combed wool was passed to women who proceeded to spinning. Usually in autumn, winter and spring evenings both young and old women gathered in a chosen house for the so-called *przqdki*. L. Kamiński wrote about it: "Women, when men are away for trade, govern households; they spin flaxes, wool, produce linen or cloth; they

* Name of a peak in the Tatras

are considerate not to waste any of the acquired property”⁹. The spinning was accompanied by discussions, stories and singing. They were a kind of social meetings of women during which the village inhabitants’ lives were commented on. Sometimes “prządki” ended in partying at music. A spindle and a whorl were used for spinning. In the beginning of the 20th century *warcule* – spinning wheels became common. The yarn obtained after spinning was coiled on reels and then formed into a skein and passed to weavers or woven at home on their own looms. A couplet from that time is still preserved:

*Moja miela nic ni miała, ale będzie miała
co uprzędła, namotała i do knopki dała*

In Podhale spinning was one of the basic and best developed handicrafts. In every village there were at least a dozen of weavers called *knopki*. However, the memory about men specialized in creating complicated patterns has not been preserved. As emphasized by the authors of elaboration “Handicraft and rural industry” during research conducted just after the 2nd WW only women were mentioned in villages¹¹. Woollen yarn was used to produce both uniform fabrics in natural colours of sheep wool: white, black or grey from old sheep fleece. From combination of light and dark young sheep mousy colour was obtained. They also produced white-black-mousy stripes for shepherds’ bags and checked fabrics for the so-called *derki*. They were used as covers and blankets for winter. All fabrics were made in a simple, i.e. linen weave. The woollen fabrics prepared by *knopki* were passed to fullers, where they were fulled, woollen fabrics milling. In comparison to other regions in Podhale there were a lot of processing plants. They were mills, sawmills, distilleries, dye-works, oil mills, shingle-works and fullers. The development of rural industry and entrepreneurship was favoured by social-economic conditions in this region. The area of Podhale belonged to royal estate and its inhabitants, who were the royal indirect subjects, enjoyed numerous economic privileges and personal freedoms⁶. As we learn from the location documents of villages the locator, who usually became the village administrator received numerous privileges, including the right to run the above named workshops⁴.

The rural plants had private owners, they belonged to particular families. They operated on a large scale until the 1950’s. A fast collapse of mills, sawmills and fullers took place in the years following the 2nd WW, which resulted in ceasing the production of self-made cloth. Then the highlanders started using fabrics produced in factories in Bielsko Biała (a neighbouring province) to

make their festive outfits. This situation lasted until the 1980's when an inhabitant of Poronin, a famous musician of Podhale named Tadeusz Szostak Berda, bought a mechanical fuller and started the production of self-made cloth for making black *cuchas*. Nowadays the fuller and the workshop of regional attires are run by his son Tadeusz Szostak Berda. It is the biggest folklore tailoring workshop in Podhale, and even in the whole Małopolska. They mainly produce male cloth outfits for local highlanders and inhabitants of neighbouring regional groups.

SHEEP WOOL PRODUCTS

A) Traditional outfit

The cloth was a basic material for production of many items of male clothing, which may prove the significance of the pastoral tradition in shaping it. It is confirmed by the oldest known historic documents and images of highlanders of the 18th c. They show that the old outfit of inhabitants of Podhale had a lot of common features with the outfit of other Carpathian groups, mainly those living in regions situated south from the Tatras.

1. Gunie or cuchy

In the old times the basic male outer coat was the so-called *cucha* previously called *gunia*. Its form was similar to a homespun coat, i.e. a kind of overcoat with long sleeves. The available resources show that even until the mid 19th century the knee-length *gunias* made of dark cloth were dominant among highlanders. Besides them, also shorter ones made of light cloth ones were worn. The former and the latter had a simple "witty planned" style similar to transversal ponchos. The characteristic feature was that the sleeves and the upper part of the coat were made from one rectangular piece of cloth of the length equal the length of arms spread horizontally at the level of hands from one wrist to another (*siąga, siąg*) and the width of app. 70 – 80 cm (the sleeves and the shoulders were in one piece). From the second piece of the same dimensions the front wings i.e. *fartuchy* and the back of the *cucha* were cut out. This simple style and the very term *gunia* meaning both the outer coat and a piece of thick self-made cloth has become for Seweryn Udziela the ground for drawing a conclusion that the *gunias* of Podhale have ancient origin. According to him they originated in the way of evolution: initially animal leather was worn on the back as protection from rain; later they were replaced by hairy pieces of cloth, from which *gunias* were later made. This is how Udziela justifies his theory: "The fact that from this primary cover for the back consisting of a piece of cloth an item of clothing *gunia* originated can be proved by its fashion. In fact it is not a fashion, because this piece of cloth is only cut

a little bit on its two narrower sides and one longer and then properly folded. After putting this piece on one's back, its bottom wings are put on the chest and the upper oblong part is put at the bottom and then the sleeves are created and they are joined with the side wings on the chest. Gunia does not have a collar or buttons and it is tied with a strap under the neck²¹. The cloth coats mentioned by Udziela remind of cloth *gubas* and *gubars* with long woollen hair which are still worn in Romania by Transylvanian shepherds and used to be worn by Ruthenian and Slovakian ones. In Podhale *gunie* nowadays called *cuchas* were worn with sleeves, or they were worn *na hajtas*, i.e slung on shoulders. At the front they were tied with a metal chain or a leather strap. Black *cuchas* occurred in two versions: everyday ones were shorter and without decorations at the most they were trimmed with a twisted string, and those worn on holidays were longer, knee-length and decorated with red *ślak*. It was a kind of trimming made by folding and sewing side by side straps of red cloth, which was added on sleeves, around the neck and along the front edge of the coat. White *cuchas* were less popular than black ones even in the 19th century. They were mainly worn by highlanders living the closest to the Tatras and it was daily. Along their sides they were trimmed with twisted brownish-white strings only. In the second half of the 19th century, when the textile industry developed and colourful yarn became commonly available, the white *cuchas* were decorated with colourful embroideries around the necks, the lower parts of the sleeves and in front on the chest. Initially they were geometric ornaments, which in the beginning of the 20th century developed into large naturalistically embroidered with bunches of red flowers. Then they became festive elements of the outfit of Podhale. They have preserved their significance up till now. Nowadays they are worn by young bachelors and they are the basic item of clothing of grooms and best men.



Il. 2. Cucha. Phot. Stanisława Trebunia-Staszal

In addition to men's cuchas they were also similar women's *guńkas*, also called *cuzECKI* which had a similar fashion. And though modern highlander women do not remember this kind of coats, in the 19th century descriptions we can find mentions about women's cloth *guńkas*.

2. Highlanders' trousers

Also men's trousers called *portki* were made of white home-made cloth. They were cut to a "Hungarian" style and they had narrow legs which ended a little under the ankle. At the front top symmetrically to the middle seam there were two *przypory*, (i.e. flies) covered with small pieces of cloth sewn on top the so-called *zołykace*. The edges of *przypory* were trimmed „around” with a mousy-white thread, and sometimes also with a border of red leather. In the old times the trousers did not have the nowadays typical decorations in a form of colourful embroideries. The only decorative element, and that is mainly of utilitarian character, protecting the cloth from shredding were stripes, they ran along the side seams of legs and then curved, also along the seam, back to the rear. From the 19th century this kind of modest stripes, were replaced by more and more decorative *snury* made of twisted colourful yarn. It was also then when they started decorating the trousers below the *przypory*. At first they

applied decorations twisted from strings of *petlice*, and in the second half of the 19th century they were transformed into embroidered ornaments called *parzenice* – nowadays a typical and basic decorative motif of men's outfit. The bottoms of the trousers were wrapped in cloth or linen foot-cloths, put into *kierpce*, i.e. shoes made of cow leather, and tied around with a string. In winter besides the cloth foot-cloths they also wore *pońcochy*. They were a kind of socks made of mousy cloth with a low upper. *Pońcochy* were also used as slippers worn at home. In winter children wore them as their basic footwear. In the 20th century *pońcochy* evolved to winter, festive shoes enforced on toes and heels with cow leather, on thick soles, which were called *kapce*. Nowadays they are still in. Men's *kapce* are similar to boots and women's ones have a high cloth upper at the back decorated with a row of stripes.

Both *cuchas* and trousers are still now made in Podhale by local tailors, also young ones. It is worth adding that after a period of stagnation in the 1960's and 1970's the Podhale outfit is now experiencing a kind of renaissance.

3. Lasowskie gloves

On frosty days, mainly for work in a forest, men wore woollen, white-mousy *smuziaste* one-finger gloves. Because in the period discussed women did not know how to knit, the gloves were woven on a special slat on which canvas were placed and then the woollen weft was woven. The description of gloves production is given by Z. Szewczyk in his elaboration on Ochotnicki outfit: Gloves "were made on a special slat cut to the size of the hand. The edges had a number of cuts on which the canvas made of thick string twisted from a few woollen threads was wrapped around. Next the weft composed of small pieces of yarn was interwoven. The ends of the yarn were placed inside and therefore the gloves were hairy inside. After the glove was made the canvas was cut off at the bottom and individual strings were threaded outside from the inside with a thick needle through the bottom part of the glove so that it did not come unstitched. The ragged ends of the canvas formed an artificial opryma around the hole"¹⁹. This kind of woven gloves were replaced by lighter and easier to produce knitted or crocheted gloves. They are also popular with tourists. They were particularly fashionable in the interwar period and in the 1970's when the folk fashion was popular with Polish society. It is worth emphasising that after fifty years the woven gloves are again produced by an inhabitant of Zakopane, who after returning from the United States decided to restore the forgotten handicraft, which he had remembered from his childhood.

4. Shepherds' bags

Mousy-white striped cloth was also woven from sheep wool. They were used to make big shepherd's bags (100 cm X 80 cm) also called juhases' bags. The flops of these bags were finished with characteristic long fringes. Juhases who pastured sheep on pasture lands. They were worn on backs, by throwing the so-called frąbije, i.e. long straps attached to the sides of the bags on shoulders. The shepherds' bags were mainly used for carrying cheeses during pasture in huts. Also handy objects were kept in them: knives, shoemaker's tools, pipes, tobacco and money. Moreover, during heavy rains they were a good protection from rain thank to their fringes and folded in a rectangle they were used as pillows when juhases were resting. This type of bags disappeared at the end of the 19th century. They were brought back to life in the 1980's as an accessory worn by some highlanders with the outfit of Podhale.



Il. 3. Shepherds' bag. Phot. Stanisława Trebunia-Staszal

Several years ago small lady's hand-bags made of cloth or a piece of fabrics of woven woollen yarn appeared in the market of Podhale. Nowadays both of them are very popular with young girls. They are usually worn with a festive highlanders' outfit. The cloth hand-bags are usually decorated with colourful embroideries of floral motifs whereas the woven ones have geometrical patterns.

B) KNITWEAR – Knitting. Woollen sweaters, socks, gloves and caps

Knitting, that is *plecenie* as researchers dealing with folk crafts notice, was not traditional handicraft of Podhale¹¹. This skill became common among women of Podhale only in the first half of the 20th century. Promoted in the 1920's it soon became important. The new less labour-consuming technique than weaving opened a possibility to produce woollen sweaters, caps, gloves and socks faster and on a bigger scale. This kind of knitted regional products were mainly intended for sale to tourists who visited the Tatras. The folks from lowlands willingly acquired highlanders' sweaters in natural light, grey and black colours. Geometrical patterns appeared on sweaters, socks and gloves to increase their aesthetic values. It is worth noting that woollen sweaters, socks and gloves were also appreciated by highlanders. They were introduced to highlanders' outfits and accepted as typical traditional elements of clothing. Thus, the knitting technique applied in Podhale for almost 100 years may today be considered a traditional handicraft.



Il. 4. Woollen sweaters. Phot. Stanisława Trebunia-Staszal

A great demand for highlanders' sweaters, socks and hats in Polish society occurred in the 1960's and the 1970's. In this period the majority of women of Podhale, who did not professionally work, were occupied with knitting sweaters, hats, socks and gloves. In this way they earned extra money to their modest incomes obtained from working on farms. Some highlander women were so skilled in *plecenia*

techniques that they were able to make a big sweater in one day. The sweaters, socks and gloves made by highlanders were bought by local merchants, who sold them mainly in market stalls in Zakopane or took them for sale to other cities of Poland, mainly Warsaw, Szczecin at the seaside or Karpacz located at the western border of the country. And though in the 1980's the demand for products of Podhale decreased, the practice of *sale at the bottom* is still continued, of course on a smaller scale.

C) TAPESTRY

In the beginning of the 20th century in Podhale a new variety of weaving appeared – production of weft-facing kilims. The new technique was introduced by Polish artists, who in 1910 in Zakopane set up workshop “Kilim”. It mainly produced kilims for urban clients. The kilims designed by famous artists were very fashionable among Polish intelligentsia in the 1920's and the 1930's. “Kilim” workshop employed highlander girls, who had been previously taught the vocation during three-month training courses¹¹. On completion of the training the participants received looms, which they took home, and made kilims in conformity with the patterns designed by artists. The ready-made products were handed over to the commissioner. Later on the tapestry courses were also conducted in villages of Podhale¹¹. One of them was town Suche, where the courses, production and the sale of kilims were organized by teacher Antonina Tatarówna, who is of merit for the culture of Podhale. Before the 2nd WW a private tapestry workshop was set up in Poronin village, which was created mainly to satisfy the demands of local recipients. The tapestry produced by highlander women gradually became popular with local buyers. More wealthy farmers ordered them for themselves and decorated the walls of their houses with these artistic fabrics. In the 1960's the kilims were so popular among highlander women that they even became an element of brides' dowries¹¹.

During the period after the 2nd WW the tapestry received the status of a regional handicraft and was included in the system of cooperative handicraft production conducted by Cepelia, i.e. the Centre of Folklore and Artistic Industry*. A lot of kilim producers of Podhale found employment in Cepelia cooperatives, where they produced fabrics for Polish and foreign recipients. An important moment for the development of tapestry art was the introduction of weaving in the syllabus of Helena

* Cepelia – the Centre of Folklore and Artistic Industry (CPLiA). It was the central association of folklore handicraft cooperatives created in 1949. Cepelia dealt with the organization of production and sale of handicraft products made by associated cooperatives all over the country. In the period of system transformations in 1990 it was liquidated and on its grounds other units were set up, among others: Foundation Cepelia Polish Art and Handicraft.

Modrzejewska Secondary School of Lacing (founded in Zakopane in 1883). In the 1950's two new majors were opened: weaving, embroidery and regional tailoring. Also a Technical Secondary School of Artistic Weaving (TTA) was opened, where the female youth of Podhale and outside this region was educated in the field of artistic design. Unfortunately, in the second half the 1990's the young people's interest in weaving decreased, which was to a large extent the effect of closing down Cepelia, which meant liquidation of potential job positions for its graduates. Gradually other specializations of education were closed down. Finally, in 2007 the school ceased existing. The authorities of the Tatras region did not take the challenge to reform and adjust the school syllabus to the new situation. Nowadays kilims are no longer made in Podhale, and the existing situation is explained with the economic conditions by those who take decisions. There is no demand for such products and there are no people willing to learn the craft. Perhaps as the trend to preserve the cultural heritage develops and the regional products are promoted the time will come to revitalize the artistic tapestry of Podhale.

SHEEP FUR AND LEATHER PRODUCTS – fur industry of Podhale

Another important raw materials supplied by sheep were furs and leathers used to make warm coats. In Podhale there were two kinds of fur coats: jerkins – i.e. short sleeveless fur coats with long white hair, and proper fur coats with long sleeves. They were worn both by men and women.

Jerkins

The most common and typical element of highlanders' outfit was a jerkin. Until the middle of the 19th century it was made of not dyed sheep leather and trimmed with „*opryma*”, i.e. a narrow border of black lamb. It was the oldest type of jerkins in Podhale, for which Nowy Targ – a royal city set up in the 14th century, and in the 19th century Białka Tatrzańska were famous. It is hard to say what exactly these jerkins looked like, because the memory of them has not been preserved among highlanders. On the basis of a description made by L. Kamiński of the beginning of the 19th century we only know that the festive version of them was decorated along edges with red-sapphire embroideries. They were probably geometrical patterns. In the Museum of the Tatras there is only one white jerkin, which is decorated alongside the *opryma* with a colourful stripe (cross-stitch) and straps of white chamois leather. The jerkins worn every day were made at home on local farms. As Elżbieta Wijas-Grocholska suggests at the times when in Podhale the skill of tanning was unknown the commonly applied method was smoking the leather. „After slaughtering a sheep the leather was purified from fat and spread on the door of a hut to dry. After drying the leather was placed on perches, where oscypeks were smoked, and it was smoked. After being smoked, it was stiff and well- preserved”²².

In the second half of the 19th century brown jerkins richly decorated with colourful floral embroideries and elements of red morocco leather were brought to Podhale from present Slovakia, precisely from Liptovo. Initially they were imported by highlanders of Liptova, and at the end of the 19th century they were already produced by workshops in Podhale. The jerkins made by inhabitants of Podhale, which originated from the Slovakian tradition, gradually adopted native features. First of all, the furriers of Podhale simplified the embroidery decoration at the back. Instead of a large stylized bunch there was a small modest floral element, the so-called *kogutek*, embroidered at the bottom *opryma* and the motif of mountain flowers: edelweisses and carlinas embroidered on shoulders. As regards the Slovakian prototype only the ornaments decorating the leather element along the *opryma*, i.e. colourful geometrical embroidery called *krokiewka*, narrow strings made of green leather, the so-called *cyroń* and a line of red circles surrounded by green leaves embroidery were left²². The limitations in embroideries were compensated by widening the lamb trimming, which was made of local lamb fur or

more and more often of expensive imported astrakhan fur. Besides, the colours of leather were varied, since now they were dyed various shades of brown. As for the implementation of new solutions, as Elżbieta Wijas-Grocholska writes, the furriers of Nowy Targ had the lead, since they were the ones who the earliest liberated from the Slovakian influence and based the decorations on their own motifs²². The same author emphasises that in the 1920's and the 1930's was the golden age for the fur industry of Podhale, which at that time supplied also the clients from neighbouring regions. The above described jerkins were worn by both men and women.

Fur coats

The second type of fur and leather coats were white fur coats with long sleeves. They were mainly bought by wealthy farmers. The fur coats were longer than jerkins and they reached at least mid-thighs. They were made of white-tanned leather by means of leaven composed of rye or barley flour mixed with water with addition of salt. Along their edges they were bordered with a narrow long-haired light or black trimming or sometimes with a black and white trimming of goat leather. According to Kamiński, at the front they were decorated with geometrical sapphire-red embroideries. In the 19th century this kind of fur coats were called *białcańskie*. This name, as may be supposed, comes from the town in which they were produced. The most famous production centre of white fur coats made to the "Hungarian design" in the second half of the 19th century was Białka (nowadays Białka Tatrzańska). The knowledge of this trade is believed to have been brought by a local farmer, who completed apprenticeship in Budapest²³.



Il. 5. Fur coat from Podhale. Phot. Stanisława Trebunia-Staszal

The basic type of the fur coats manufactured by furriers of Białka had a complex fashion, usually made of 8 or 12 parts. At the waist they were narrowed and widened at the bottom. Along their edges there was a trimming, the so-called „kaletka”, which was made of small squares of black and white goat leather placed alternately. Also ram paws were applied. Along the edges of the front, around sleeves and around the pockets there was an application made of white chamois leather. The straps of red Moroccan leather were pulled through the strap of chamois leather, which created the so-called „kosteczka”, or it was decorated with geometrical embroideries made with red and white yarn. Crimson cloth and ribbon applications were also added. Of course, the fur coats of Podhale were not identical. They differed in ornamental details and fashion. Anyway, there were many varieties in Podhale²². For example in Nowy Targ „Christian furriers” manufactured ornamental fur coats “beautifully embroidered with sapphire and red woollen strings and „wykładane safijanem”. In turn, in Czarny Dunajec long fur coats with collars of fox tails were in fashion²².

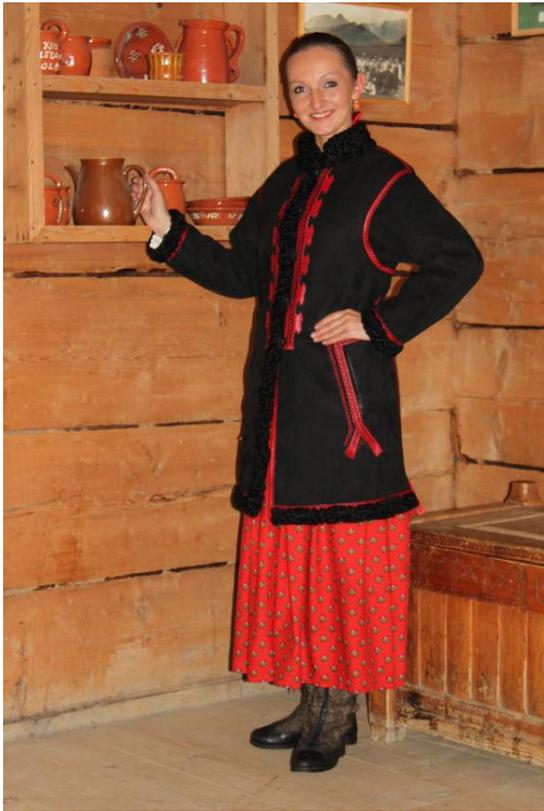
Besides native products of Podhale made of local Cakla sheep leather, they also imported high quality richly decorated white fur coats from Slovakia for more wealthy customers. Less sophisticated in their fashion and ornaments fur coats were made at homes by self-taught highlanders.

Together with the acquisition of dying leathers brown in the second half of the 19th century the white fur coats quickly started disappearing from Podhale. They were totally replaced by short simple fashion coats made of leather dyed brown. In comparison to the białczańskie ones these new coats were very modest. The only decoration was black geometrical embroidery, i.e. *krokiewka* covering the stitches. Along the edges there was a black lamb trimming. Ladies' brown fur coats evolved in a different way. They were more decorated than the men's ones. In the beginning of the 20th century they were made and decorated similarly as jerkins of Liptova. Women's brown jerkins decorated with colourful embroideries and red applications became common in Podhale at the peak of the local fur industry, i.e. in the 1920's and the 1930's. Then they were considered typical coats of Podhale and up till now they are a basic element of highlander women's winter outfit.



Il. 6. The Women's Fur coat. Phot. Stanisława Trebunia-Staszal

Nowadays in Podhale there are a few dozens of furriers, most of them in Nowy Targ. Here we can also find the workshop run by spouses Pawlikowski-Blochorz, who several years ago decided to bring back to life the abandoned in the 19th c. “białczańskie” fur coats. On the basis of objects exhibited in museums they recreated in details the fashion and ornaments of the white fur coats, which soon became appreciated by the regional avant-garde of Podhale and among customers outside Podhale – mainly popular artists.



Il. 7. The Women's Fur coat. Phot. Stanisława Trebunia-Staszal

For a few years the fur industry of Podhale has been experiencing a period of specific bloom. Highlanders' workshops manufacture both traditional jerkins and fur coats as well as leather coats in highlanders' style, which are very popular with customers from other regions of Poland.

Caps: *Barankule* and *fiokierki* (in other words *copkami z uskami*)

The winter outfit was supplemented with sheepskin caps, the so-called *barankule*, made of black mountain lamb (*wyporki*) with the fur outside. Later they were made of expensive imported astrakhan fur and called *copki perskie* or *rumunki*. This kind of caps were bought by wealthy farmers. The youth wore felt black hats. In the second half of the 19th century the so-called caps with *uskami* /ears/ appeared, which were also called *orawki* and nowadays *fiokierki*; they were made of brown sheepskin. The head of the cap had a round shape and was decorated with geometrical embroidery. Along its edges the cap was trimmed with black lamb, which could be unfolded in winter to cover the neck and ears. Nowadays *fiokierki* are willingly worn by young and old highlanders.

A FUR COAT – a symbol of harvest and fertility

A fur coat with long hair symbolized wealth. It was a desired attribute of rituals and procreation activities. A bride was sitting on a sheepskin or a fur coat during the rite of "oczepiny". It was also used in other ritual situations such as during Christmas. On Christmas eve before they sat down to dinner the host entered the house and he was well dressed in warm shoes and hairy fur coat carrying a bunch of oats and a green twig of fir in a shape of a cross, the so-called *podłaznicka*. Fixing the *podłaznicka* above the door he said wishes:

*Na szczęście na zdrowie, na to Boże Narodzenie,
coby sie nom darzyło, mnożyło syćko boskie stworzenie*

Sheepskins are now often used as rugs or small carpets. Also a bride and a groom kneel on them when their parents give them blessing.

INSTRUMENTS. Koza – bagpipes of Podhale

In Podhale no instruments were made of ram horns and they were not used in this region. However, there was another instrument in Podhale, which was made of goat leather. It was the so-called *koza /goat/*, i.e. the bagpipes of Podhale. Until the beginning of the 20th century it was a basic instrument of highlanders' bands. As emphasized by experts, one *koza* and one violin were enough to play during the whole wedding reception. The bagpipes of Podhale started disappearing in the 1920's. They came back to the Podhale orchestra as a valued instrument at the end of the 20th century. Nowadays there are several musicians in Podhale who can play the *koza*.

Speaking about the bagpipes of Podhale it should be noticed that the goat breeding in Podhale has never been well developed. Wealthy farmers usually had single animals in their sheep herds. It can be in a way explained by a social factor, which is connected with the prestige. A goat was a symbol of poverty and usually it was present in poor farms.

PRODUCTS FOR TOURISTS. Pseudo – highlanders' clothes.

In the second half of the 19th century the Tatras, highlanders and their culture were in the centre of interest of the representatives of Polish intelligentsia. Enchanted with the beauty of the Tatras nature and the specific folklore tradition and encouraged by a bigger than in the remaining annexed territories

political freedom* they founded in Zakopane – a small village in Podhale at the foot of the Tatras, a centre of Polish cultural and artistic life. What is important, in desire to emphasise the fondness for the local people the Polish artists and social activists started introducing certain elements of highlanders' outfit to their clothing. At the turn of the 20th century the seasonal fashion for men and women visiting Zakopane was dressing in highlanders' style. The most popular were jerkins decorated with colourful embroideries and red applications worn both by women and men. Tourist guidebooks even informed where highlanders' items of clothing and regional accessories could be bought.



Il. 8. Winter cloth footwear, the so-called “kapce”. Phot. Stanisława Trebunia-Staszal

Also after regaining independence, when the centres of cultural life moved to big Polish cities, the demand for highlanders' products among the Polish society did not stop. Some tailors of Podhale started sewing pseudo-highlanders' clothes: cloth jerkins, waistcoats and blouses decorated with colourful embroideries for people from lowlands. The tourists also likes light cloth slippers, winter cloth footwear, the so-called *kapce* and leather *kierpce* on rubber in the version for “cepry” (this is how highlanders call Poles from low regions of Poland). The tourists visiting the Tatras also willingly

* At the end of the 18th century Poland lost its independence. Its territory was divided between three occupants: Russia, Prussia and Austria. The area of Podhale was within the Austrian annexation and became a part of Galicia - province, which in the second half of the 19th century (1860-1873) was awarded a series of social and political rights, commonly referred to as Galician autonomy.

bought jewellery referring to traditional metal-work. A similar trend in “folklore” fashion was reborn in the 1960’s. The popular products were: leather hand-bags, kierzec and long fur coats similar to the traditional overcoats of Podhale. Men used to buy fur coats with large fluffy collars and women wore long brown or black leather coats decorated with modern colourful embroideries on edges. In the 1980’s the demand for sheep wool and sheepskin products drastically decreased in Polish society. Some explained this fall with the end of fashion for the highlanders’ culture. Others saw its reason in a difficult economic and political situation of the country, which was connected with the introduction of the martial law and then an uneasy period of the system transformation in the 1990’s. A symptomatic sign of the unfavourable situation in Poland for folk handicraft and art was the liquidation of Cepelia in 1990.

However, after a period of 30-years stagnation, a new increase of the interest in regional products has been observed for a few years. Tourists more and more willingly acquire highlanders’ woollen sweaters, socks and gloves. Long fur coats decorated with hand-made embroideries stylized to highlanders’ fashion are most popular.

PROMOTION OF REGIONAL PRODUCTS

The animation of the regional market is favoured by promotional actions undertaken by both self-government entities and cultural associations. This revival may also be connected with a broader European trend of interest in the regional distinctiveness. In Poland, after the period of system transformation in the 1990’s and the necessity to adjust to the new economic conditions, the regional products regained their significance. As mentioned above, the initiatives aimed at activating and revitalizing some traditional fields of creativity contributed to it. In Podhale such actions were taken, among others, by The Tatra Agency of Development and Promotion of Culture – a self-government unit appointed a few years ago at the Tatra District. Its basic purpose is to promote a broadly understood culture of Podhale region. Similar units also operate on the level of the province, just to mention the Department of Promotion and Tourism at the Marshal’s Office of Małopolskie Province.

Below I present fragments of the publication issued by the above mentioned department called “Małopolska. Shopping with tradition”.

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