

**Оксана ПОЯСИК,**

кандидат педагогічних наук, доцент, завідувач кафедри педагогіки і психології,
Коломийський навчально-науковий інститут Прикарпатського національного університету
імені Василя Стефаника (м. Коломия, Україна)

Oksana POIASYK,

Candidate of Pedagogical Sciences, Associate Professor, Head of the Education Science and Psychology
Department,
Kolomyia Institute of Vasyl Stefanyk Precarpathian National University (Kolomyia, Ukraine)
oksana.poiasyk@pnu.edu.ua
ORCID ID 0000-0002-4375-5660

Євгеній ЛЕПЬОХІН,

кандидат філологічних наук, доцент, викладач кафедри психології,
Інститут управління природними ресурсами Університету економіки та права «КРОК» (м. Коломия, Україна)

Eugene LEPOKHIN,

Candidate of Philological Sciences, Associate Professor, Lecturer at the Psychology Department,
Institute for Natural Resources Management of KROK University (Kolomyia, Ukraine)
lepokhinyo@krok.edu.ua
ORCID ID 0000-0002-6941-7467

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СИМБІОЗ ЛЮДИНИ І ПРИРОДИ: КАРПАТСЬКІ ЛІСОРУБИ В КУЛЬТУРІ ГУЦУЛЬЩИНИ

Анотація. У верховинах Карпат, де величні ліси й гірські потоки створюють неповторний краєвид, мешкає унікальна спільнота – карпатські лісоруби. Лісовий промисел серед гуцулів, етнографічної групи, що живе у високогірних Карпатах, є важливою частиною їхньої культури та відіграє ключову роль в екологічному балансі регіону. Гуцули, спираючись на багаторічні традиції, створюють унікальний симбіоз з природою через свою лісозаготівельну діяльність. Вибіркове вирубування дерев, використання традиційних технологій обробки та обробка деревини – це лише кілька складників цієї особливої системи.

Бутинар, карпатський лісоруб, який вправно сплавляє плоти по гірських річках, є справжнім майстром. Він поєднує в собі велику майстерність у роботі з деревом і необхідні навички для створення надійних плотів, здатних витримувати сильні течії. Це ремесло об'єднує навички лісоруба, суднобудівника і мореплавця, перетворюючи сплавлення дерева не лише на спосіб транспорту, але й на символ карпатської стійкості та майстерності. Мистецтво сплавлення деревини по гірських ріках – це вміння гармонійно взаємодіяти з природою. З дерев'яними плотами, які легко плывуть по кришталевих водах, ці майстри вправно маневрують серед гірських порогів і стрімких течій, маючи унікальну здатність читати річку та адаптуватися до її викликів.

Кожен рух веслом – це своєрідний танець з природою, щира комунікація з річкою. Бутинарі не лише вміють управляти плотом, але й розуміють важливість збереження навколишнього середовища, щоб наступні покоління могли насолоджуватися красою карпатських вод. Ці люди – справжні герої, наділені силою та стійкістю, які дозволяють їм адаптуватися до будь-яких умов. Їхні трудові дні, наповнені звуками сокир, поєднуються з природним концертом. Ліси Гуцульщини не лише забезпечують матеріальні ресурси, а й виконують важливу екологічну та соціокультурну роль. Вони створюють унікальні екосистеми, є джерелом дикорослих трав, грибів і диких тварин, які забезпечують гуцулів їжею та сировиною для ремесел. Ліси також мають величезне культурне значення для гуцулів, оскільки вони вважають їх священними місцями, наповненими легендами та традиціями свого народу.

Вивчення етнокультурних традицій, народних ремесел та промислів Карпат сприяє формуванню у школярів екологічної свідомості, спонукає до вивчення культурної спадщини горян.

Ключові слова: гуцули, гірські ріки, бутинарі, бутин, ліси, етнокультурні традиції, виховання особистості, етнокультурне середовище., екологічне виховання.



SYMBIOSIS OF MAN AND NATURE: CARPATHIAN LOGGERS IN THE CULTURE OF THE HUTSUL REGION

Abstract. The upper reaches of the Carpathians, where majestic forests and mountain streams offer a distinctive scenery, are home to a unique minority of people – the Carpathian loggers. Timber industry among the Hutsuls, an ethnic group inhabiting the high altitude Carpathians, is an intrinsic part of their culture and pivotal in the environmental balance of the area. The Hutsuls, relying on long-standing traditions, forge a rare symbiosis with nature through their logging activities. Selective felling of trees, the use of traditional processing techniques and wood processing are just a handful of the components of this special system.

«Butynar», a Carpathian logger who is an expert at rafting down mountain rivers, is a proficient craftsman. He blends exceptional woodworking skills with the right ones to build reliable rafts that can withstand heavy currents.

This craft incorporates the skills of a logger, a shipbuilder and a sailor, transforming rafting of timber not only into a means of conveyance but also into a symbol of Carpathian resilience and craftsmanship. The art of rafting down mountain rivers is the ability to interact harmoniously with nature. With wooden rafts that float effortlessly through the waters pure as driven snow, these craftsmen deftly manoeuvre through mountain rapids and swift currents, with a knack for predicting and adapting to the river's challenges.

Each splash of a paddle is a kind of dancing with nature, a genuine interaction with the river. In addition to navigating the raft, the loggers have a strong awareness of the importance of the environment maintenance to ensure that the generation to come relish the beauty of the Carpathian waters.

These people are regular heroes, endowed with strength and resilience enabling them to adapt to any conditions. Their working days, brimming with the sound of axes, blend into a natural concert. The forests of the Hutsul region both provide material resources and play a significant environmental and socio-cultural part. They develop unique ecosystems and are a source of wild herbs, mushrooms and wild animals that provide the Hutsuls with food and raw materials for their crafts. Forests also hold cultural significance for the Hutsuls, as they consider them sacred places steeped in the legends and traditions of their people.

The study of ethnocultural traditions, folk crafts and crafts of the Carpathians contributes to the formation of environmental awareness among schoolchildren, encourages the study of the cultural heritage of the highlanders.

Keywords: Hutsuls, mountain rivers, loggers, felling site, forests, ethnocultural traditions, personality education, ethnocultural environment., environmental education.

INTRODUCTION

The problem formulation. Among the snow-capped peaks of the Carpathians, where mighty forests and mountain brooks shape a wild landscape, there inhabits a distinctive group of people – the Carpathian loggers (called «butynars» in the past, the representatives of a trade that has long become entirely a thing of the past). It fell to their lot to develop dense forests resolutely for firewood and construction.

The timber industry among the Hutsuls, an ethnic group inhabiting the high altitude Carpathians, is an intrinsic part of their culture and pivotal in the environmental balance of the area. The Hutsuls, relying on long-standing traditions, forge a rare symbiosis with nature through their logging activities. Selective felling of trees, the use of traditional processing techniques and wood processing are just a handful of the components of this special system.

RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH

Notable representatives of the Ukrainian classical literature often dealt with the life and work of loggers and rafters in the Carpathians. There are a variety of examples of this issue, which showcase the creative and stylistic traits of different authors. The study features excerpts from the works of Yaroslav Holovatsky, Mykhailo Ustianovych, Ivan Franko, Ivan Nechuy-Levytsky, Hnat Hotkevych, Mykhailo Kotsiubynsky, Borys Lepkyi, Volodymyr Hrendzhi-Donsky, and others.

The renowned Polish writer and ethnographer Stanisław Vincenz wrote, «The route to Chornohora led through forests that had not been cut down or axed. The forest thicket grew ever more impregnable, ever more boundless... It was a sacred forest, undisturbed since the beginning of time. A bitter adversary of any stranger, it would not let anyone inside, neither old nor young. Not even a snowstorm managed to penetrate it. Even the next tree generation had no place there. One tree would support the other, one would entwine with the other. Even rotten trees kept their balance... The young stand – fir and spruce – cheered there as long as they remained young. As soon as they grew a little, the wind would break them, twist them, peel them off the bark with its ice-cold breath, and truncate them. However, most of all, they were cut down by people who had already settled on those flat spots. Each year, the meadow would be improved, expanded, cut down further, and stumps and roots would be burned» (Vincenz, 1997, p. 53).

«Butynars» (loggers) were among the first to experience the majesty of the mountains and the power of nature. This craft taught people to respect their ancestors, their homeland and to be mindful of where we came from and where we would go.

Originally, the work in the Hutsul «butyna» (sites intended for felling) followed the Christian standards, as evidenced by the observance of a number of religious prohibitions and regulations. The loggers would pray before starting work and end their rounds in prayer; they did not play at cards in the evening – potentially, the workers did not violate their conscience.

The loggers perform more than just felling: they are the custodians of the forest ecosystem, maintaining a balance and ensuring that the environmental impact of their activities is respected. Having appreciated the need for careful maintenance of forests, they have become guardians of nature in these picturesque mountainous settings.



They are men of perfect courage and endurance, which makes them flexible. Their hard days of work are framed by the rhythm of shattering axes and the glory of a natural symphony concert.

Selecting trees that can withstand the various tests of water is a crucial part of their work. They skilfully employ traditional methods and tools to process and harvest materials.

Raft construction takes place along the banks of mountain rivers, where they consider every factor, including strong currents and altitude difference. The loggers take great care to ensure that their rafts are sturdy and able to withstand challenging mountain water conditions.

This craft unites the skills of a logger, a shipbuilder and a sailor, making a raft both a means of transportation and a telltale sign of the Carpathian endurance and craftsmanship.

Vasyl Knyschuk, a local lore historian and the owner of the Butynar museum complex, spoke about the life history of the Hutsul loggers. The following is the transcription of his recount.

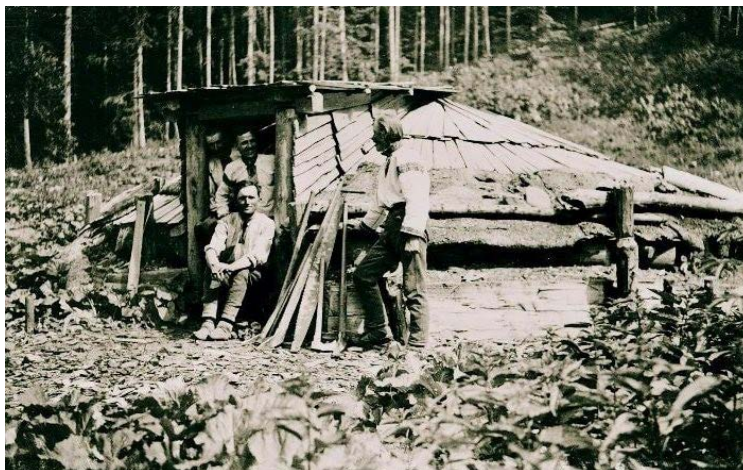
Living in the mountains, the Hutsuls had to uncap as a sign of welcome both to the visible and unrecognizable inhabitants of the forests and meadows. Paying their debt to Dame Nature, they were rewarded with shelter, their daily bread and her mercy. Entire families were supported by the gifts of nature.

At the felling sites, they hew down old trees showing branches at the top and smooth at the bottom. The owner of such harvest areas would employ a contractor ("zavidtsia") who took over all the work in the forest. The contractor would take on the Hutsul lads (butynars) who could handle the job in the felling coupe. They made 120-150 crowns a day, and 80-90 crowns – the weaker ones, either per «sakman-group», for the entire duration of the task, or per piece of tree felled. To keep tabs on felled tree account (revash) (who was performing the felling, how many trees for how many days), the lads appointed a logger (rublinnyk), who would make notches on splinters (beech small planks, wood chips), ascribed to each feller, to be used for calculations.

Approved loggers would erect the so-called «lubianka» (a crude hut of four wooden buttresses driven into the ground with the top tied with fir tree branches and covered with bast obtained from fir tree's bark) in the forest against the autumn.

The walls of the hut are shielded from the west and the north only, whereas the other two sides are left open. Spruce and moss branches are laid under the hut, and one would sleep on it. In front of the crude hut, a bonfire kept burning, used to cook meals, dry «ludyni» (clothes), and in the evening they would have a feast around it.

For the winter, the loggers built a log cabin: an eight- or twelve-sided lodging, one and a half metres tall, covered with moss to prevent drafts from entering it. The rafters were installed pyramidally on the top of the log hut so that all of them meet and covered with shingles or bast, leaving a vent in the top for smoke to escape. There were no windows in the log cabin, just low double doors; a «khorimtsi» (a passage between the inner and outer doors in the log hut) was designed in the cabin, which had a second door.



A log cabin [1]

This is where water was stored, and the work-related tools hinged on the pegs. In the cabin, the floor was made of rejected boards, or they would use bast to cover the ground to keep the cold out. A bonfire would burn as a centerpiece, and around it, there would be the trestle beds (low and long wooden benches on which a Hutsul rested in his forest hut) covered with spruce. They would lie down with their heads against the wooden wall of the cabin and their feet against the bonfire.

A «kalman» or «kaiman» would attend to the fire, fix a meal, chop wood, and kindle the fire at night so that people would not suffer from heat and concurrently stay warm at night. He slept during the day. In addition to this, he also mended the work-related tools and axes. To perform tasks at the felling site, they would equip themselves with ordinary axes, «tsapiny» (wooden heavers with a bent metal end for lengthwise travel of logs and their rotation around the axis), haft, and saws.

The day the log cabin was finished, one could start working. The contractor was the first to leave the cabin, he would pray in the yard, notch the first tree he encounters three times, and go back to the hut summoning the people to gear themselves for work. They dropped to their knees, reciting the Pater Noster aloud.



To make the work progress, a man, «schinanyk» (a fortunate soul), who had worked on the felling site before and who had managed to make lumber tumble straight and smoothly without bouncing, would start it. A tree was cut with «dornenki» (axes) by two people. Should it be very thick, then by four: two on one side and two on the other. Cross-cutting saws were used to prune trees.

Once a spruce tree was felled, they cut off its limbs, retaining only the top, and immediately they chopped it, peeling off the bark, which they piled up and hauled downhill by horseback. They would pay for the bark; it was then used for tanning purposes. The spruce itself was left to dry for 14 days. Afterwards, it was cut, measured in sages and sawn into logs. The spruce tops and limbs were chopped up, put into a brushwood pit and committed to the flames in the forest. Upon the cut, they piled it into heaps.

Via «ragash» (the forest road via which the Hutsul loggers piled up the felled trees) they hauled the felled trees down the hillside. They built the roads-wooden chutes («ryzy»), made of logs, in advance, harvested timber, piled up round wood supports in barrages, and broke down them with a frame saw. The construction of roads-chutes was performed when it was neither snowing nor raining.

Two men with «tsapiny» turned the logs, and a third man with a spile nudged and sprinkled water, which made the wood slithery. The chutes were laid out in such a way that whether they went straight or meander, the long logs did not stop, but ran on to a broad «ragash», where there was a «stilets» (a place spread with logs). When the logs sloped hard down the hillside, they didn't hit the ground, they just bounced off the «stilets».

At a distance, people stood by the stilets, rolling and pulling the logs so that they didn't hit each other frontally, for they would break into smithereens. Along the chutes, there were «shykhtari» (labourers involved in hauling felled trees down the hillside). Among them there was a sprinkler (kropivnyk), holding a ladle with a handle and pouring water along the chutes with it; there were springlets dug along the chutes. Water made the chutes slithery, preventing them from igniting due to friction, whilst in winter, the spattered snow safeguarded them.



Гуцули на лісових роботах. Спуск з верхів у долину дерева.

Hutsuls on forest works [1]

The people who slid the logs down the hillside put the labourers on alert with a «kleihop» (Keep off!) shout so that the shykhtari and those at the stilets to run away, be wary of the logs and hide, lest the logs, coming down with great speed and strength, smear them. Right the logs hit the edge of the chute and the labourers threw them aside, they would respond with a «kinatov!» shout (Sorted!).

This shout came from the shykhtar one after the other, and when the last one on the top repeated it, they would set off the second log. When the shykhtars examined the wood in the chute and noticed some imperfection or blemish, they would shout «habov!» (Stop there!) as a sign to stop providing another tree until everything was resolved.

Below the chutes, the wood was transported by «korchuhy» (short chute boats) to the river. Above the river, they sifted through and graded the logs (stacked them with respect to size and length) into piles. Those performing the grading were called «myhliashi» (graders). They placed the sorted logs on the riverbank. As soon as it was full, they pulled down a dyke; the water arrived violently, causing the deluge, fetching the stored logs and carrying them to the berth.

If there was a sawmill at the berth, they brought out the required amount of logs, and huddled the remainder (marfa) together into a floated timber raft called «daraba». Each daraba had a helmsman (a foreman) who, along with his mates, grabbed as many logs as he required for one «talba» (part) of the daraba, the width of which hinged on the width of the river, then cut each log from below with a slope so that it did not hit a stone frontally, and then gashed each log crosswise, saining the tree with «In nomine Patris, et Filii, et Spiritus Sancti. Amen» (Vasyl Knyshuk (2022)).

A butynar, a Carpathian logger who rafts down mountain rivers, is a neat craftsman, a fusion between an unrivalled ability to work in the forest and the skills essential to making rafts that will float in the twisting mountain streams.

The craft of those who drift logs down the uplandish Carpathian streams is their regular feat in terms of interaction with nature. With wooden rafts gliding quietly through the crystal-clear waters, these artisans skilfully manoeuvre around mountain rapids and rushing streams. They have the ability to comprehend the river, to recognise its whims and obstacles.



Each plash of a paddle is a kind of dancing with nature, a genuine interaction with the river. These craftsmen are experts when it comes to rafting, but they also understand the relevance of environmental protection so that posterity at large could enjoy these beautiful waters in the mountainous heart of the Carpathians.

Timber rafters (bokorashi, helmsmen) were the occupations that the Hutsuls mastered in the 19th and 20th centuries. Skilled Hutsul rafters were frequently hired by contractors to drift logs from Chornohora to the mouth of the Danube River, a task they accomplished well. Every year, 1,500 – 2,000 workers left the Hutsul region to raft on all the rivers of Austria-Hungary and Romania. Timber rafting on the Cheremosh River and the Prut River was most prevalent in the 2nd half of the 19th and early 20th centuries (Chopovsky, 2011).



«The Helmsmen' painting» (1960), oil, canvas
Artist: Petro Sakhro (1918–1987), Kolomyia

Available from the collection of the Yosafat Kobrynsky National Museum of Folk Art of Hutsulshchyna and Pokuttia.

CONCLUSIONS AND PROSPECTS OF FURTHER RESEARCH

Rafting was a male preserve, for it required physical strength, courage, endurance, agility, and persistency. In the mid-19th-century, Yakiv Holovatskyi described rafters from Skole district: «The brave Ukrainian highlander..., holding on to the «stilets», flings himself on a frail raft into the abyss, through which he has repeatedly forced his way and sunk to the bottom so that nothing would drift on the surface but the saddle bags, hanging on high forked woods, and the long forelock of the brave rafter, who would pop up from the depths like a wild duck shortly. This whirlpool would probably have crushed him and dragged him into the abyss, if not for the strong shoulders and dexterity of the rafter floating on the second raft. He pulled his fellow rafter out of the whirlpool and headed him to the water...» (Hlushko, 2020).

For the majority of the Hutsul region's population, logging and timber processing has become one of the primary ways of making a living. The poorest Hutsuls were engaged in wood cutting and rafting. Logging at the felling sites was far more common than traditional farming in the meadows.

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