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# OD POSTELJE DO POKOPALIŠČA ZGODBA O MRLIŠKEM VOZU

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**Ključne besede:** *Slovenija, transport, vozovi, mrličji, odnosi*

Pričujoče besedilo sega na področje ene izmed povečini obrobno obravnavanih kulturnih sestavin, kakršno pomeni transport umrlih. S poskusom strnjenja niza zapisanih védenj o prenašanju in prevažanju umrlih na slovenskem podeželju v 20. stoletju prinaša nekaj splošnejših odgovorov na vprašanja o fizičnem preseljevanju iz tostranskih bivališč v onstranska. Besedilo sklene zgodba o mrliškem vozu iz Smlednika pri Ljubljani in o njegovem vzniku; sicer posamezen zapis, vendar poln zgovornih odse-  
vov dveh osnovnih odnosov do smrti – strahu in pietete.

Trenutek smrti je tudi na Slovenskem, tako kot v mnogih drugih družbah in kulturah, stoletja pomenil ločitev fizisa in metafizisa, telesa in duše. Obdajala so ga dejanja pred tem in dejanja okoli mrliča vse do njegovega pokopa, ki so bila povečini obredna, apotropejska, namenjena še posebej čim lažjemu prehodu duše iz sveta živih v svet senc in temu, da bi se duša iz onega sveta ne vračala. Odsevala so odnos do umrlih, v katerem so se prepletali strah, pieteta in verovanja v čudežno moč.

Metafizičnemu odhodu duše umrlega v vice, nebesa ali pekel, njeni selitvi v takšen ali drugačen Hades, ki jo je marsikje na Slovenskem še vse do zadnjega časa vsaj kot navado označevalo na primer odpiranje oken (Orel, 1944, 305; Smerdel, 1980, 135; Ložar Podlogar, 1980, 163), je sledilo fizično potovanje trupla; od postelje, v kateri je pokojnik izdihnil, do pokopališča oziroma do groba kot njegovega onstranskega doma. Začetek mrličeve selitve iz tostranske postelje, v kateri ali nad katero – na mrtvaškem odru - je najprej dan ali dva ležal, je pomenila njegova premestitev v krsto, v njegovo poslednjo posteljo. Ta je bila na Slovenskem največkrat črna – za poročene, bela – za otroke in za “mlada dekleta”, glede na gmotni položaj umrlega bolj ali manj okrašena in nemalokrat tudi kar doma izdelana iz grobega nepobarvanega lesa (Smerdel, 1980, 137; Makarovič, 1985, 275; Oder, 1992, 262). V krsti kot poslednji postelji so potem praznje oblečenega mrliča prenesli ali prepeljali od doma do groba; iz vasi – naselja živih, do pokopališča – mesta mrtvih.

Transport umrlega je bil na Slovenskem pogosto že del pogreba, obreda pokopavanja; zlasti v primerih, ko je bil dom, ki ga je mrlič zapuščal, v bližini pokopališča. Od bližine oziroma od oddaljenosti pokopališča je bilo povečini tudi odvisno, ali so umrle nosili ali peljali in s čim so jih peljali. Bistvene spremembe glede transporta umrlih sta prinesli šele izgradnja in splošneje uveljavljena raba mrliških vežic – posamezne se omenjajo ob koncu 19. stoletja (Terčelj, 1989, 20), ponekod v mestih ter njim bližnjih vaseh v letih po drugi svetovni vojni in ponekod drugod v zadnjih dveh desetletjih (Pajsar, Židov, 1991, 171; Oder, 1992, 262; Tome Marinac, 1994, 200; Terčelj, 1989, 171; Fister, 1985, 140; Balkovec, 1994, 235) – ki je prenašanje oziroma prevažanje umrlih skrčila na kratkotrajno, uradno, brezosebno porivanje mrliškega vozička. Kljub nezadržnemu uveljavljanju vežic pa v mnogih bolj odmaknjenih vaseh mrtvi ponavadi do pogreba še vedno ležijo doma.

Redki objavljeni zapisi o **prenašanju umrlih** na Slovenskem pričajo, da so krsto na pogrebu skoraj praviloma nosili nesorodniki; ti so tudi sicer na dan pogreba opravljali večino del okrog mrliča. Na Koroškem kot nosače krste omenjajo sosede (Oder, 1992, 264), v Beli krajini sosede oziroma “prve sosede, ki so tudi izkopali grob” (Makarovič, 1985, 276), in v slovenski Istri tiste štiri sovaščane, ki so kopali “bužo”, grob, vnuke, če umreta “nono” ali “nona”, in vaške fante v spremstvu v belo oblečenih deklet, če umre mlad fant (Smerdel, 1980, 137).

Nadomestna možnost za prenašanje je bila v primerih oddaljenosti pokopališč nedvomno že od nekdaj **prevažanje umrlih** z vozom s konjsko ali z drugo živinsko vprego in v zadnjih desetletjih tudi z drugimi vozili.

Za okolico Raven na Koroškem je tako na primer sporočeno, da so konec 19. stoletja iz bolj oddaljenih krajev krsto peljali na vozu s konjsko vprego, v 70-ih letih tega stoletja so ponekod za prevoz do odmaknjenih pokopališč uporabljali traktor in gasilski avtomobil, v 50-ih letih pa naj bi krste začeli splošno voziti, in sicer v dolini s “totnbognom”, z mrliškim vozom, v hribih pa kar z lojtrskim vozom (Oder, 1992, 264). Iz zapisa iz Strojne na Koroškem je mogoče razbrati, da so tam krsto še leta po drugi svetovni vojni nosili ali vozili z vozom, vse do zadnjih let, ko jo peljejo s traktorjem (Makarovič, 1982, 297). Besedilo iz Bele krajine, iz okolice Metlike, pa na primer sporoča, da so krsto “pozneje” vozili z mrliškim vozom, “zdaj pa tudi z mrliškim avtomobilom, furgonom” (Balkovec, 1994, 235).

Posebno pozornost kaže nameniti še prevažanju umrlih v zimskem času. Iz življenja odmaknjenih samotnih gorskih kmetij v takem času na primer obstajajo posamezna ustna pričevanja (terenski zapisi avtorice, Arhiv SEM), kako s svojimi morebitnimi mrliči niso zmogli poti do nižje ležečih pokopališč, temveč so jih morali do pomladi ohranjati na hladnem, zakopane v snegu. Kjer je bilo to mogoče, so umrle od doma do groba drugače nedvomno tudi pozimi nosili ali jih peljali z vozom ali s sanmi, v katere so bili vpregli živino.

Na Blokah, v Vidovskih hribih in v delu sosednjega dolenjskega ozemlja pa je pri pogrebu v zimskem času za obdobje do druge svetovne vojne izpričana posebnost – raba smučī ali sani s podloženimi smučmi (Orel, 1964, 71). Bločani in Vidovci tako svojih starodavnih smučī niso uporabljali le za hojo in za drsanje. Služile so jim tudi kot

prevozno sredstvo, s katerim so prevažali svoje umrle: kot zasilno prevozno sredstvo oziroma nadomestilo za sani in kot pomožni sestavni del pri saneh. V prvem primeru so krsto z mrličem položili kar na dve letvici, ki sta počez povezovali nekaj daljši par smučī, oziroma na podložene deske in jo nanju privezali. Tako so prepeljali umrle zlasti v hribovitejših krajih. V drugem primeru so vzeli manjše otroške sani, pod njihove bose krivine pribili primerno široke in dolge smučī, na sanke so položili eno ali dve dolgi deski in vrh njiju krsto, ki so jo s sanmi dvakrat prevezali z vrvjo. Na ta način so vozili svoje mrlīče še posebej na položnejših Blokah. Povsod v omenjenih krajih pa raba smučī pri pogrebu ni bila vsakdanja. Vanjo so bili primorani le v primerih izredno hudih snežnih razmer ali terenskih ovir (Orel, 1964, 71-74).

Poskus strnjenja skopih zapisov o prevažanju umrlih na Slovenskem lahko dosega 129 zgolj raven sporočil, da so krste z mrlīči od doma do groba tu in tam pač prepeljali, in navedb, s katerimi prevoznimi sredstvi so jih vozili. Zato se zdi ob koncu mikavno ubesediti zgodbo o enem samem prevoznem sredstvu (ki je postalo muzejski predmet; hrani ga SEM); gre za pripoved o mrlškem vozu iz Smlednika in o njegovem vzniku, ki razkriva nekatere bolj povedne vsebinske razsežnosti prevažanja umrlih.

Že sam pojav mrlškega voza je v tem pogledu pomenil nekaj novega. Za vsa druga vozila (razen novejših furgonov), za lojtrske in druge vozove, za traktorje in gasilske avtomobile je namreč mogoče zapisati, da je bilo prevažanje mrlīčev le njihova sekundarna, zgolj občasna funkcija. Šele mrlški vozovi s svojo zgovorno obliko in slavnostno podobo so bili temu nedvoumno v osnovi namenjeni. Zato je bil za skupnost, ki je posamezen mrlški voz uporabljala, njegov pomen nedvomno precejšen.



Mrlški voz iz Smlednika pri Ljubljani (foto I. Smerdel). ♦ Hearse from Smlednik near Ljubljana (photo I. Smerdel).

Lastniki smledniškega mrliškega voza (imenovanega po kraju, v katerem so ga pod cerkveno lopo nazadnje hranili in iz katerega je bil leta 1988 prepeljan v muzej) so bili farani nekdanje smledniške fare, prebivalci vasi Pirniče, Vikrče, Zavrh, Verje in Smlednik. Kot kaže, so sredi 50-ih let soglasno ugotovili, da želijo imeti za prevažanje svojih umrlih mrliški voz. Zanj naj bi zbirali denar prav vsi. Potem so v Vižmarjih pri Ljubljani naročili njegovo izdelavo, in sicer pri treh uglednih vižmarskih mojstrih – kolarju, kovaču in sedlarju. Pripovedovali so, da je mrliški voz, imenitna črna kočija, leta 1957 ponosno zapeljal na cesto. Voznika zanj pa niso našli kar takoj. Poleg ustreznega para konj je moral imeti izbrani mož tudi voljo za opravilo, kakršnega pomeni prevažati mrliče. In takega dela ni bil pripravljen sprejeti prav vsak.

130 Voz je nazadnje zapeljal v lopo največje vikrške kmetije pri Bačniku (Vikrče 28). Njen gospodar, tedaj triindvajsetletni Franc Trojanšek (r. 1934), je imel zanj v hlevu primeren par temnih slavonskih konj in skorajda v usodo vdan odnos do dela, ki ga nekdo pač mora opravljati. O takem odnosu priča preprost stavek, s katerim se je Bačnik branil pred pomisleki druge žene, ki si jo je leta 1980 kot vdovec pripeljal v hišo, in so veljali njegovemu prevažanju mrličev: “Sej veš – eden mora.”

Iz ženinih pomislekov je prepoznavno vel strah pred umrlimi, pred smrtjo, ki jo je poosebljal črn mrliški voz. Ko ga je ob prihodu na novi dom prvič uzrla, je kar zakričala. In na Bačnikovi domačiji ni bila edina, ki se je črnega voza bala. Po opravljenih pogrebnih vožnjah so se vsi branili njegovega čiščenja, a ne zaradi morebitne lenobe. “Kdo ga je pucal? Eden družga smo gledal – kir ga bo.”

Kaže, da je za vsako delo treba najti pravega človeka. Bačnik je vsekakor poseben človek, ki še dandanes (zapisano leta 1988), v času skoraj popolne mehanizacije kmečkih del, na veliki kmetiji nedaleč od Ljubljane še ni sedel na traktor, temveč mirno, preudarno vozi in orje s parom konj. Tako mirno in vdano je vse do pred nekaj leti prevažal tudi umrle. Ponje se je odpravljal v vse vasi smledniške fare ter celo na Marjeto in v Žlebe. Iz domačih hiš jih je prevažal na pokopališča v Smlednik, v Soro in v Šmartno. Ponj niso prihajali le svojci tistih umrlih, ki so živeli v neposredni bližini pokopališč in so krste s pokojniki nanje kar nosili.

Bačnik je bil pripravljen zapreči svoja črna slavonska konja ob vsakem času in ob vsakem vremenu; takoj ko so prišli ponj iz hiše, v kateri je kdo umrl. Vrancema je nadel plašnice, “ta boljša” komata in že se je odpravil. Kot tuzemeljski Haron je za selitev mrličev od doma do groba njihovim svojcem zaračunaval skromno brodarino. (Leta 1980 je na primer za vožnjo v Žlebe in od tam na pokopališče računal le petdeset tisoč dinarjev.) Plačilo je moralo biti sprejemljivo za vsakogar. Poslednja vožnja s črno kočijo, z imenitnim smledniškim mrliškim vozom, namreč nikakor ni bila socialni privilegij.

Povednost zgodbe o mrliškem vozu je tako še posebej v naslednjem:

- ◆ Iz nje je mogoče razbrati skrben odnos skupnosti do vseh umrlih – najsibo sosedov, sovaščanov ali okoličanov – oziroma do njihovih svojcev, ne glede na njihov gmotni ali družbeni položaj.
- ◆ Samo dejstvo, da so pogrebno kočijo sploh želeli imeti, morda sporoča uveljavljenost religioznega prepričanja o tostranskem trpljenju in onstranskem bolj-

šem življenju. S poslovilno vožnjo na imenitnem mrliškem vozu so morda želeli narediti prehod svojih praznje oblečenih umrlih – iz tega na oni, boljši svet – še posebno svečan.

- ◆ Tako skrben odnos skupnosti do svojih umrlih in do njihovih svojcev kot svečana selitev na oni svet izpričujeta enega izmed obeh osnovnih odnosov do smrti – pieteto. Drugega, strah – je mogoče prepoznati v nelagodnem obnašanju smledniških faranov ob iskanju voznika za skupen mrliški voz in v še bolj nelagodnem počutju Bačnikovih najbližjih, ki so črno kočijo doživljali kot posebljeno smrt.
- ◆ V nasprotju z odnosom njegovih domačih in širše skupnosti pa je mogoče pri Bačniku zaslutiti drugačen odnos do smrti. Kot izrazito tradicionalen kmečki človek je smrt sprejemal analogno z naravnimi dogajanjmi – kot samoumevno sklenitev življenjskega kroga.
- ◆ In končno je mogoče zapisati, da je pripoved o smledniškem mrliškem vozu in o njegovem vozniku zgodba o posebnem posamezniku, ki je s svojima vrancema in s črno mrliško kočijo v skupnosti vasi nekdanje smledniške fare pomenil nedvomno svojsko pogrebno ustanovo.

#### VIRI IN SLOVSTVO

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*Rož*. Ljubljana.

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ODER, Karla, 1992

*Občina Ravne na Koroškem*. Ljubljana.

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OREL, Boris, 1964

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PAJSAR, Breda, ŽIDOV, Nena, 1991

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TERČELJ, Mojca, 1989

*Občina Sevnica*. Ljubljana.

TOME MARINAC, Bogdana, 1994

*Občina Izola*. Izola.

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## FROM BED TO CEMETERY THE STORY OF A HEARSE

**Key words:** *Slovenia, transport, the dead, hearses, attitudes*

The present text tackles the domain of a largely marginally treated cultural element - the transportation of the dead. It is an attempt to outline a range of written information on carrying and transporting of the deceased in the Slovene countryside in the 20<sup>th</sup> century and offers some answers of a more general nature to questions on the physical transfer from people's worldly dwellings to those of the other world. The final part of the text tells the story of a hearse from Smednik near Ljubljana and its driver. Though referring to a singular record it nevertheless contains many telling reflections of two fundamental attitudes toward death - fear and piety.

In Slovenia as in many other societies and cultures the moment of death had for centuries implied the separation of *physis* and *metaphysis*, of body and soul. It was accompanied by activities before burial and around the body that were largely of a ritual, apotropaist nature aimed primarily at alleviating the soul's transition from the world of the living to the world of shadows, and also at ensuring that the soul would not return from the other world. These activities reflected the attitude toward the dead in which fear, piety and beliefs in magical power were interwoven.

The metaphysical departure of the deceased's soul to purgatory, heaven or hell and its transfer to some or other Hades was in many places in Slovenia until quite recently as a rule denoted by opening the windows (Orel, 1944, 305; Smerdel, 1980, 135; Ložar Podlogar, 1980, 163). This was then followed by the physical journey of the body from the bed, in which the deceased had passed away, to the cemetery or the grave - its home in the other world. The deceased's transfer from his earthly bed in or above which (on a bier) he or she had rested started by being laid in coffin - the ultimate bed. In Slovenia the coffin was mostly black - for those who had been married or white for children and for "young girls" and, depending on the means of the deceased, more or less ornamented. Quite often coffins were home-made from rough unpainted wood (Smerdel, 1980, 137; Makarovič, 1985, 275; Oder, 1992, 262). In the coffin as the deceased's ultimate bed the

formally dressed body was carried or driven from his home to the grave, from the village - the settlement of the living - to the cemetery - the home of the dead.

The transportation involved was in Slovenia often part of the funeral, of the burial ritual; especially in those cases where the home which the deceased left behind was close to the cemetery. And it also generally depended on the distance to the cemetery whether the deceased was carried or driven and, when driven, by what means of transportation. Major changes to the transportation of the dead followed the building and later common use of funeral chapels - a few are mentioned toward the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Terčelj, 1989, 20) - in some towns and surrounding villages in the years after the Second World War and in some places elsewhere in the past two decades (Pajsar, Židov, 1991, 171; Oder, 1992, 262; Tome Marinac, 1994, 200; Terčelj, 1989, 171; Fister, 1985, 140; Balkovec, 1994, 235). Their existence reduced the carrying or transportation of the dead to the brief, formal and impersonal pushing of the funeral cart. Despite the general spread of funeral chapels the dead still rest at their homes until the funeral in many a remote village.

The scarce published records on **carrying the dead** in Slovenia tell us that at a funeral the coffin was as a rule carried by non-relatives, and the same people took care of most of the jobs related to the body. In Koroška neighbours are mentioned as coffin bearers (Oder, 1992, 264), in Bela krajina neighbours or “the closest neighbours, who also dug out the grave” (Makarovič, 1985, 276), and in Slovene Istria four co-villagers who dug out the *buža* (grave) or the grandchildren when a *nono* or *nona* (grandfather or grandmother) had died or, when a young lad had died, the lads of the village accompanied by girls dressed in white (Smerdel, 1980, 137).

In those cases where the cemetery was far away an alternative to carrying has undoubtedly always been provided by **transportation of the dead** on a cart drawn by a horse or another domestic animal. And the last decades other means of transportation have spread.

Related to the environs of Ravne na Koroškem a record states, for example, that around the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century coffins were transported from more distant places on a horse-drawn cart; in the 1970s the transport to distant cemeteries was in some places performed by means of a tractor or fire engine, and in the 1950s coffins were generally transported in valleys on a *totnbogen*, a hearse, and in the mountains even on an open-frame wooden handcart (Oder, 1992, 264). A record from Strojna in Koroška reveals, that for many years after the Second World War and until the quite recent use of a tractor coffins were either carried or transported on a cart (Makarovič, 1982, 297). A written source from the environs of Metlika in Bela krajina on the other hand tells us that coffins were “later” driven on a hearse and “nowadays also in a motor hearse” (Balkovec, 1994, 235).

The transportation of the dead in winter time deserves special attention. Individual oral records related to life on remote, solitary mountain farms (author’s field notes, SEM archives) refer to times when it was impossible to reach the cemetery which was situated far below: the bodies were preserved until spring by burying them in the snow. But wherever it was possible in winter the dead were undoubtedly carried from their

home to the grave or transported on a cart or sleigh drawn by a horse or other domestic animal.

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Related to Bloke, the Vidovci hills and to a part of the adjacent area of Dolenjsko records indicate that a funeral held in winter during the period up to the Second World War was marked by the particular use of skis or of a sleigh mounted on skis (Orel, 1964, 71). The people of Bloke and Vidovci thus did not use their ancient skis just for walking and gliding, but also used as a means of transportation to transfer the dead, as a provisional means of transportation or alternative to sleighs or as an accessory to a sleigh. In the first case the coffin containing the deceased was laid on two boards, cross-connected by a pair of long skis, or on underlain planks to which the coffin was tied. This is the way the dead were generally transported in mountainous areas. In the other case a children's sleigh was used and adequately wide and long skis were nailed to the bends not covered by the metal face. On top of the sleigh one or two long boards were fixed and the coffin was tied to the sleigh with two ropes. This is how the dead were generally transported in the more level regions of Bloke. But the use of skis at a funeral was, however, not common in the places mentioned above. It was a solution people resorted to only in cases of exceptionally high snow or other natural obstacles (Orel, 1964, 71-74).

This attempt to summarise the scarce records on the transportation of the dead in Slovenia can achieve hardly more than conveying the message that in some places coffins were driven from the deceased's home to the grave and, further, to mention which means of transportation were used to that purpose. It therefore appears interesting to relate the story of a particular means of transportation (which became a museum object and is kept by SEM). It is the story of the Smlednik hearse and its driver, a story which reveals some significant and essential dimensions of the transportation of the dead.

The arrival of the hearse was in this respect something new in its own right. About the other vehicles (except for the more recent motor hearses) - open-frame wooden carts and other carts, tractors and fire engines it is safe to say that the transportation of the dead was only a secondary, occasional function. Only hearses were by their proverbial forms and ceremonial appearance undoubtedly intended exclusively for this purpose. To a community which used a hearse of its own its significance was no doubt considerable.

The owners of the **Smlednik hearse** (the name derives from the place where it was kept in a shed belonging to the local church, from which it was taken to the museum in 1988) were the parishioners of the former Smlednik parish - the inhabitants of the villages of Pirniče, Vikrče, Zavrh, Verje and Smlednik. It is said that in the mid-1950s they agreed that the community required a hearse to transport the dead. All parishioners contributed money for it. The hearse was commissioned in Vižmarje near Ljubljana and involved three renowned master craftsmen - a wheelwright, a smith and a saddle-maker. The story goes that the hearse, a splendid black coach was proudly taken to the road in 1957. But it took some time to find a driver. Beside a suitable pair of horses the chosen person had to be willing to carry out this particular job - the transportation of the dead. It certainly was not something the first man around wanted to do.

The hearse was finally taken to the shed of the biggest farm in Vikrče, called "Bačnik's" (28 Vikrče). Its owner, the then twenty-three year old Franc Trojanšek (born



1934) had in his stables a suitable pair of black Slavonic horses and, what is more, the proper resigned attitude that is was just a job someone had to take care of. This attitude of his is confirmed by the plain sentence Bačnik used when facing his second wife's apprehensions - he was a widower until he married her in 1980 - about his transporting the dead: "You know, dear, somebody's got to do it".

His wife's apprehensions reveal an apparent fear of the dead, of death itself as embodied by the black hearse. When she first laid eyes on it at her new home, she even screamed. And she was not the only one at Bačnik's who dreaded the black coach. After its funeral runs everybody tried to dodge cleaning the hearse but this had nothing to do with laziness. "Who cleaned it? We just stood around, looking at each other and waiting for the other guy to do it."

It appears that for every job the right person has to be found. Bačnik was no doubt a particular breed: even today (written in 1988) when all jobs on a farm are mechanised, he has never mounted a tractor on his big farm close to Ljubljana, but continues to quietly and prudently drive and plough with a pair of horses. As quietly and resigned as he used to transport the dead until a few years ago. His rides took him to all the villages of the Smlednik parish and even as far as Marjeta and Žlebe. From the homes of the deceased he took their bodies to the cemeteries in Smlednik, Sora and Šmartno. The only people who did not turn to him for his services were the relatives of deceased people who lived close to the cemetery and who carried the coffin with the deceased themselves.

Bačnik was always ready to harness his black Slavonic horses at any time and in any weather as soon as someone came to him from a house in which someone had died. He put the blinkers on his black horses, their "Sunday" collars and on his way he was. Like a worldly Charon he charged a quite modest fee to the relatives for transporting the deceased from his or her home to the grave. (In 1980 he charged only fifty-thousand dinars for the ride to Žlebi and from there to the cemetery.) The fee indeed had to be within everybody's reach. A man's ultimate journey in Bačnik's coach - the magnificent Smlednik hearse - was not by any means a social privilege.

The significance of the story of the hearse lies above all in the following considerations:

- ◆ It tells us about the conscientious attitude of a community toward all the deceased, whether neighbours, co-villagers or people from the village's environs, as well as their relatives, irrespectively of their financial or social status.
- ◆ The mere fact that they actually wanted to have a hearse of their own is perhaps related to the common religious beliefs about suffering this side of the grace and about a better life on the other side of it. The farewell journey on a splendid hearse was perhaps their idea of making the transition of their solemnly dressed deceased to the other and better world something particularly ceremonial.
- ◆ Such a dedicated attitude from a community toward the dead and toward their relatives witnesses as does the ceremonial transfer to the other world to one of the two fundamental attitudes toward death - piety. The other one - fear - can perhaps be traced in the uneasy approach of the parishioners of Smled-

nik when searching for a driver for the community's hearse and in the even more obvious apprehensions of Bačnik's family, who saw the black coach as the embodiment of death.

- ◆ Contrary to the attitude of his family and to that of the wider community we can sense a different attitude toward death in Bačnik himself. Being a remarkably traditional peasant he accepted death as all other natural occurrences - as the natural end to a life's circle.
- ◆ And finally, we may well conclude that the story of the Smednik hearse and of its driver is that of a particular individual who with his black horses and black hearse was an undertaker *avant-la-lettre* in the community of the former Smednik parish.

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#### BESEDA O AVTORICI

Inja Smerdel, mag., etnologinja, direktorica Slovenskega etnografskega muzeja od julija 1995, je bila pred tem kustodinja za ruralno gospodarstvo v Slovenskem etnografskem muzeju (od leta 1980) in glavna urednica znanstvene publikacije *Etnolog* (1991-95). Po preučevanju nekaterih pojavov množične kulture (stenskega okrasja in godbe na pihala) se je v preteklem desetletju in pol posvečala zlasti raziskovanju različnih gospodarsko kulturnih prvin: soseskine gospodarske samouprave, del ob pravilu žitnega pridelka, ovčarstva s selitveno pašo, ptičjega lova, nazadnje oselnikov in košnje.

Med objavljenimi razpravami in članki, izmed katerih jih nekaj izpričuje tudi njene muzeološke poglede, sta pomembnejši deli: *Ovčarstvo na Pivki, Transhumanca od srede 19. do srede 20. stoletja ali Trije »ovčarji«* (Koper, 1989) in *Oselniki: zbirka SEM* (Ljubljana, 1994).

#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Inja Smerdel, M.A., ethnologist and director of the Slovene Ethnographic Museum since July 1995. Prior to her appointment as director she was curator of rural economy in the museum (since 1980) and chief editor of the scientific periodical *Etnolog* (1991-95). After initial studies of mass-culture phenomena (wall decorations and brass bands) her research efforts of the past fifteen years concentrated on the cultural elements of economic activities: economic self-management of a village, harvesting jobs, sheep-farming and transhumance, bird-catching, and, most recently, whetstone holders and the hay harvest. Noticeable among her treatises and articles, some of which also reveal her views on museum issues, are *Sheep-farming in Pivka, Transhumanca from the Middle of 19<sup>th</sup> to the Middle of 20<sup>th</sup> Century* or *The Three "Sheep-masters"* (Koper, 1989) and *Whetstone Holders*, published in the series of SEM (Ljubljana, 1994).