

COPPICE WOODS AND POLLARD TREES IN THE VISUAL ARTS

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Received: 14th May 2016, **Accepted:** 27th May 2016

ABSTRACT

The sprouting capacity of some broadleaves has been used for their regeneration since ancient times. Often concurrently with taking advantage of sprouting stools, the trees used to be shaped also by pruning their stems, namely on pasturelands and in grazing forests. The activity of woodcutters and shepherds was obviously rather common in warmer climates with broadleaved stands because coppice and pollard trees appear relatively often in the visual arts from ancient works through the period of the Italian and German Renaissance up to the romantic and realistic landscape painting of the 19th century overlapping into the 20th century. For centuries, most frequently illustrated in European and Czech paintings have been pollard willows (*Salix* spp.). Other coppice and pollard tree species identified in paintings are oaks (*Quercus* spp.), hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*), European beech (*Fagus sylvatica*), European chestnut (*Castanea sativa*), and rarely other species, too. Artists apparently often used bizarrely shaped woods to increase the dramatic atmosphere of their landscape sceneries as well as figural compositions, and the coppice and pollard trees had certainly also a symbolic meaning in some of their works.

Keywords: coppice trees, pollard trees, visual arts

INTRODUCTION

Buček (2010) starts the preface of his comprehensive essay on ancient coppice forests by quoting from the Old Testament Book of Job, suggesting that people had known the sprouting capacity of woods already several centuries before Christ. Particularly in warmer climates, human cultures apparently used it for a relatively fast regeneration of broadleaved stands or individual trees since ancient times. A similarly long, if not longer, tradition as sprout woods, i.e. periodical cutting out of young trunks from the stool, has the pruning of branches in various stem parts. According to Konšel (1940), pruning is in terms of forestry "either a purely harvesting operation, based on the regenerative capacity of woods, or a silvicultural operation implemented in order to improve the tree shape, dwelling only on the capability of occlusion". However, this consistent pruning governed by strict rules should be differentiated from the occasional pruning conducted from time immemorial, which used to be done for harvesting fuel wood or grazing cattle. Zlatník (1976) mentions remainders of old pollard beech trees on pasturelands as a demonstration of the species presence in the natural composition of woods at places where it is already missing today.

Admitting that the coppicing and pollarding systems as well as other interventions into the woody vegetation were a common phenomenon from ancient civilizations through the middle ages until recently, we can almost certainly expect them to be reflected in the visual arts of all mentioned periods.

METHODS

In addition to old maps, photographs, aerial and satellite photographs, landscape ecology can make use of artistic depictions of the landscape if they are sufficiently realistic (Lacina, 2009, 2011; Lacina & Halas, 2015) at valuating changes in the landscape, land use and anthropogenic impacts. Although the landscape painting with dominant realistically depicted landscape elements including the vegetation fully developed as late as in the 19th century, composed landscape sceneries with the vegetation or at least with some indications of trees appeared –mainly as complements to figural compositions- much earlier, from ancient times. Because the sprouting capacity shows mainly in thermophilic broadleaved trees, it was utilized primarily in Mediterranean and Submediterranean areas with a considerable overlap into warmer territories of temperate Europe, the search for the corresponding artworks was focused namely on the arts of Ancient Greece and Rome, as well as on Italian, French, Spanish, Dutch, German, Austrian, and -of course- Czech fine arts.

Repeated visits to collections of the National Gallery in Prague, Old and New Pinakotheks in Munich, Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna and the studying of several dozens of encyclopaedias, monographs and exhibition catalogues yielded important findings. Of these, let us mention at least the Czech edition of the Encyclopaedia of the Greek Mythology (2003), the Dictionary of World Painting (1991) and the Gallery of World Painting (2006), *Natur als Kunst* (2013), the serialized edition of the encyclopaedia *The Greatest Painters – Life, Inspiration and Work* (2000), catalogues of the Prague exhibition of Czech landscape painting *My Country* (Má vlast, 2015) and the Bratislava exhibition *Two Landscapes – Image of Slovakia, 19th Century and the Present*. A similar method was successfully used for example in the selection and landscape-ecological assessment of paintings with the theme of meadows and pastures (Lacina, 2015).

A BRIEF OUTLINE OF ARTWORKS WITH THE THEME OF COPPICE WOODS AND POLLARD TREES

European art

Of the identified dozens of artworks, let us mention at least the most interesting ones in a chronological overview – from the antiquity until the mid-20th century.

The oldest piece of graphic art with the above-mentioned theme that we succeeded in detecting is a painting on the vase from the Hellenic Taranto (4th century B.C.). Among figures of the dramatic scene on which mainadas (Bacchantes) are rushing on Orpheus, one can see scattered pollard laurels (*Laurus nobilis*). In the Roman Pompeii, a fresco originating from the 1st century A.D. was discovered, named *The Trojan horse*. In this fresco, warriors are dragging the fabled wooden horse to the open urban area with the snags of pollard trees.

A number of interesting plant motifs can be found in the medieval art including altarpieces originating from the then Kingdom of Bohemia. Nevertheless, these are mainly stylized tall, upright growing trees with birds in their crowns. Some paintings by the Master of Třeboň Altar (around 1380) are rare exceptions. Trees shaped by human hands are apparent on the altar board depicting *Christ on the Mount of Olives*. The altar board in Církvice near Kutná

Hora originates from the Master of Třeboň Altar too. On this altar board, *St. Christopher* carrying the infant Jesus over deep waters leans on a whole pollard tree rather than on a branch.

Somewhat mysterious by its symbolism is the stunning surreal work of Hieronymus Bosch (1453-1516) whom the surrealists of the 20th century perceived as their predecessor. The Flemish painter succeeded in squeezing also some specific nature motifs into his figural compositions. For example, in the right bottom corner of his *St. Christopher* (1505), we can see a sprout shooting from an old stump. In the *Temptation of St. Anthony* (c. 1510), the saint's dwelling place is a hollow trunk of an ancient tree but with a promising young sprout. A pollard willow in the background cannot be overlooked either.

The first to be mentioned of German painters from the turn of the 15th and 16th centuries, i.e. from the period of Renaissance, is Nuremberg Master Albrecht Dürer (1471-1528). The series of 14 woodcuts of his famous *Apocalypse* (1498) features as complementary motifs some variously warped coppice and pollard trees on four sheets. In the *Death of Orpheus* (1494), the same scene that we have already seen on the ancient vase takes place with a thicket of coppice trees in the background. Coppice trees complement figural scenes of some Dürer paintings too; for example the *Feast of the Rose Garlands* (1506) and *Madonna with the Siskin* (1506). Clumps of coppice and pollard snags are depicted in the foreground of the author's realistic watercolour *Water Mill in the Mountains* (1526). In his *Stuppach Madonna* (around 1518), Dürer's contemporary Matthias Grünewald (1470-1528) complements the picture of *Mary with the infant Jesus* –apparently symbolically- with the motif of an old tree with a young sprout shoot. Regensburger painter Albrecht Altdorfer (1480-1538), one of the first European artists who depicted the landscape not only as a scene of figural compositions but also as a main object, painted a group of snake twisted coppice trees on a pasture near a magnificent chateau in his allegory of *Beggar Sitting on the Train of Arrogance* (1531).

Fig. 1: Albrecht Dürer (1494): *The Death of Orpheus*

(repro from the monograph by H.Lüdecke: Albrecht Dürer, Leipzig, 1970)



Coppice woody plants relatively often complement various figural compositions of painters of the famous Venetian Renaissance. For example, Giorgione (1475-1510) depicted coppice trees in his paintings *The Three Philosophers*, *The Tempest* and the *Pastoral Concert* at the turn of the 15th and 16th centuries. Titian (1485-1576), an even more renowned painter companion of Giorgione, has the coppice trees for example in his paintings *Venus and Adonis* (1560) and *Nymph and Shepherd* (around 1570). Another representative of the Venetian school, Tintoretto (1518-1594), depicted the coppice trees too - for example in the painting *The Concert of Muses*. Yet another Venetian artists, Vittore Carpaccio (around 1460-1526), included some coppice trees into composed romantic landscapes at the background of biblical scenes for instance in his paintings *Sacra Conversazione* and *Lamentation* (both around 1510). Influenced by the Venetian Renaissance painting was also Dosso Dossi (1479-1542), coming from Ferrara or Mantova. In his painting of *Landscape with Scenes from Lives of the Saints*, one can find a bundle of coppice shoots not only in the foreground on the riverbank but also on the edge of rock outcrop where the human hand could have hardly reached. In the painting *Noli me tangere* (1534) by Correggio (1489-1534) representing the Parma school, a coppice polycormon sticks out right behind the Christ's arm. The same artist seated the antique *Leda and the Swan* (1532) amidst a group of other whitish naked females in front of a dark coppice thicket.

Giuseppe Arcimboldo (1527-1593), court painter of the Hapsburg family, who worked a long time at the Prague Castle in the service of Rudolf II, came from Italy (Milan), too. He became famous especially by his cycles *Four Seasons* and *Four Elements*, in which human heads are composed of various natural materials. Most interesting in the spirit of our theme is *Winter* (1573) because this head has a lush knotty polycormon instead of hair.

Wandering for coppice and pollard trees, one cannot pass over the Flemish and Dutch graphic arts of the 16th and 17th centuries. The sought motifs can be found at least occasionally among whirling figures in paintings by the famous Brueghel dynasty of painters – e.g. *The Magpie on the Gallows* (1568), *The Return of the Herd* (1565) and in the drawing *Summer* (1568) by Pieter Brueghel the elder. Pieter Brueghel the younger (1564-1637) painted pollard willows and sprouting trunks of other broadleaved trees in his *Winter Landscape with Bird Trap*. In the painting *Assault* (1607) by Jan Brueghel the elder, the robbery takes place in the opening of mainly coppice oak wood. The real birth of landscape painting with realistic elements, even with their dominance, can be seen in works of the next generation of Dutch painters who searched for at least the remnants of trees in the strongly cultivated farmland. Two pairs of twisted coppice and pollard trees stick out of the frozen surface with skaters in the painting *Winter Landscape with Huys te Merwede* (1638) by Jan van Goyen (1596-1656). From the comprehensive landscape work of Jacob van Ruysdael (1628-1682), let us mention at least the *Oak Trees near a Torrent* (*Grove of Large Oak Trees at the Edge of a Pond*) where ancient oak trees at the edge of grove are apparently shaped by long-term pollarding. Paulus Potter (1625-1654) became famous as a painter of pastures with the grazing herds of cows and goats. In his painting named *The Young Bull* (c. 1650), goats are grazing between a solitary pollard tree and a sprout thicket. In his painting *Farmstead* (1662), Meindert Hobbema (1638-1709) depicted a rural farmhouse surrounded by pastures with the clusters of pollard and coppice trees, which can be seen also in his *Oak Wood* (c. 1670). The group of pioneer Dutch landscape painters' ends with Claes Berchem (1620-1683), who preferred painting the mountainous landscapes of "Italian type" to Dutch plains. Above the pastoral scene in his *Landscape with Castle Bentheim* (1656), old coppice trees stick out from a cliff.

The prominent personality of the Flemish Baroque, Peter Paul Rubens (1577-1640) produced in his painting workshop an amazingly extensive collection of primarily figural

religious, historical and mythological paintings but was devoted to landscape painting as well. Coppice trees appear for example in the *Landscape with Cows and Wildfowlers* (c. 1620-1630) and in his dramatic *Landscape with a Rainbow* (after 1640). The drunken scene of the Rubens painting *Bacchanal at Andros* takes place in the half-shade of coppice broadleaves.

In the period of the sometimes excessively decorative Rococo, the fashion dictated a return to the simple pastoral life and pastoral landscapes with pollard and coppice woody plants. Worth mentioning are for example the works of French painters – *Pastorale* (c. 1730) by Nicolas Lancert (1690-1743) and *Pastoral Landscape* (1741) by Francois Boucher (1703-1770).

The founder of the modern English landscape painting, John Constable (1776-1837) liked to paint green grassy landscapes with scattered trees, i.e. landscapes of the English park type. However, no coppice trunks were found in his paintings, only some pollard trees – e.g. in *Boat-Building near Flatford Mill* (1815) and in *Flatford Mill* (1817).

"Painter should not paint only what he sees in front of him but also what he sees inside himself" claimed German romantic painter from Dresden Caspar David Friedrich (1774-1840). His landscape paintings are full of symbols. Yet one can find in them distinctive sprout oaks – in the painting *The Tree of Crows* (c. 1822), and even sprout beeches – in the painting *The Chalk Cliffs on Rügen* (1818).

Johan Christian Dahl (1788-1857) came from Bergen, Norway, where he could hardly have seen a coppice. However, already in youth he settled in Dresden, and as a pioneer painter of the nature, he admired the work of Jacob van Ruysdael. Very dramatic is the atmosphere of his painting *Forest Fire* (1846), in which a coppice – apparently oak- wood is hit by fire on a rocky hillside.

In the 19th century, landscape became the sought painting theme and Munich was considered the European capital of landscape painting. Munich painters of romantic moody landscapes significantly influenced Czech artists. After all, Munich resident Maximilian Haushofer was professor of landscape painting school at the Prague Academy. The romantic painters however preferred the wilderness of Alpine peaks, torrents and lakes, painting scarcely at lower altitudes where coppice woods and pollard trees could have been expected. Let us mention at least Carl Rottmann (1799-1850) in whose painting *Cosmic Storm-Landscape* (1849) a pair of ancient pollard oak trees defies the elements. In his idyllically pastoral *View of Munich from Oberföhring* (1839), Ernst Keiser (1803-1865) painted a cluster of coppice trunks (likely ash) in a nearly dominant position on the moraine above the broad channel of Isar River below the Alps.

More frequently than in German landscape painters, we can find the object of our interest in French painters. The famous predecessor of plain-air painters of Barbizon school and impressionists Camille Corot (1796-1875) painted in his *Windy Day* (1862) and *Souvenir de Mortefontaine* (1864) widely branching old trees with bowed sprout shoots. His painting *Cows in a Marshy Landscape* (after 1860) then depicts a segment of lowland with a group of pollard willows. Jean-Francois Millet (1814-1875) belonged in the first Barbizon painters, i.e. landscape painters who resorted to the village of Barbizon south of Paris in order to seek and paint directly in the open air at least studies of common intimate scenes. Apart from his numerous paintings from the lives of rural people in the predominantly agricultural landscape, one can find also a range of motifs from the local broadleaved woods in his works. While in the painting *Reisigsammlerinnen*, referred to also as *Charcoal-Burner Wives* (around 1850), two females are pulling an apparently oak snag stuck at the bottom of still growing forked coppice shoots, in *Faggot Carriers* we can see the binding of huge bundles of thinner straight stems. Depicted there is most likely the sweet chestnut (*Castanea sativa*),

commonly grown around Paris, sprouts of which used to be cut out in short rotation not only for fuel but also for small-scale woodwork. Millet works were admired and imitated at the beginning of his career by Dutch painter Vincent van Gogh (1853-1890) who spent a greater part of his life in France. Although we do not find coppice groves in his artworks, there are a number of pollard trees there, e.g. poplars in the foreground of the *View of Arles* (1889). Frequently occurring in his paintings are sprouting olive trees - e.g. in *The Olive Grove* (1889), and sometimes we can also meet with pollard willows – e.g. in the *Landscape with Path and Pollard Trees* (1888). The leading figure of impressionism, Claude Monet (1840-1926), could not overlook coppice poplars in the riparian plain around the Seine River; he repeatedly depicted them both standing alone and in the background of his famous *Haystacks* from the 1890s.

The leading representative of romantic symbolism, Arnold Böcklin (1827-1901) was born in Basel, Switzerland, but settled and painted mainly in Italy. His gloomy pictures are dominated by dark cypress trees but for example in the *Villa by the Sea* (1865) – perhaps to emphasize the dramatic atmosphere – he painted a broadleaved coppice windblown on the rock above the black veiled woman.

Czech and Slovak painting

The motif of pollard tree in the Master of Třeboň Altar from the 14th century has been mentioned above to maintain chronology. Other artworks documenting coppicing and pollarding of woods were found no sooner than in romantic landscape painters at the beginning of the 19th century. One of the first ones was František Xaver Procházka (1746-1815). In the *Landscape with Aqueduct and Footbridge /Krajina s akvaduktem a mostkem/* (1800), he used a traditional romantic motif of the bent coppice tree sticking out from a cliff, another pair of trunks being depicted on the bank of the creek.

The first professor of landscape painting school at the Prague Academy was from 1806 Karel Postl (1774-1818), educated at the Academy of Vienna. Based on classicism, he painted heroic landscapes with antiquizing staffage. Into his composed landscape paintings, however he included sceneries observed and drawn in the open air – for example pollard willows and coppice broadleaves on a cliff near ruins in the *Landscape with Bridge /Krajina s mostem/* (c. 1810). His disciple and successor Antonín Mánes (1784-1843) composed his romantic sceneries already with a greater emphasis on reality than his predecessor did. In his *Landscape with Summerhouse /Krajina s letohrádkem/* (1816), he painted pollard trees by the river and other coppice trees –most likely hornbeams- on a high riverbank opposite the summerhouse.

Jozef Anton Lántz worked in Slovakia, at that time in Upper Hungary, at the beginning of the 19th century. Among other things, he created a series of twenty lithographs of landscape in the wider surroundings of Bratislava. Of these, the romantic-realistic view of *Plavecký Castle /Plavecký hrad/* (1827) in the Little Carpathians documents that grazing groves with coppice and pollard trees used to occur not only on steep hillsides but also in adjacent flatlands.

Hardly anyone notices that on the generally known calendar board of the Old Town Square astronomical clock in Prague, created by Josef Mánes (1820-1871) in the period from 1865 to 1866, two allegories of months include the sought motif of trees shaped by human hand. Although the central figure of *April /Duben/* is a man staking a newly planted fruit tree, in the background, a woman is collecting brushwood for heating under still leafless coppice trees. In the month of *November /Listopad/*, the entire motif is devoted to preparing wood for winter by pollarding: a man in the foreground cuts the lower branch from a weirdly shaped

oak tree while a woman with her daughter in the background carry away a bundle of slash passing coppice trunks.

Fig. 2: Josef Mánes (1865-66): *November* (repro from the monograph *Mánesův orloj /Mánes Astronomical Clock/*, SNKLHU Praha, 1953



Bedřich Havránek (1821-1899), disciple of A. Mánes and M. Haushofer in particular, used to be blamed for non-pictorial documentarity. Following the footsteps of his teachers, he sought romantic mountainous sceneries too, but succeeded in capturing at a level of scientific illustration the segments of "common" landscapes and woods as well. In the period of years 1854-1856, he depicted in multiple variants and by very detailed drawing a *Beech Forest /Bukový les/*, giving highly valuable evidence about the sprouting capacity of beech in the surroundings of Choltice in the Železné hory Mountains. His *Cottage in Broadleaved Forest /Chalupa v listnatém lese/* (1863) is standing amidst most likely a hornbeam coppice.

Coppice woods were depicted occasionally also in the works of the other disciples of Haushofer school of landscape painting at the Prague Academy of Graphic Arts. Alois Bubák (1824-1870) even incorporated some coppice broadleaves into his composed *Ideal Landscape /Ideální krajina/* (after 1850). He painted them also in his more realistic scene *The Mužský Hill near Mnichovo Hradiště /Vrch Mužský u Mnichova Hradiště/* (1865). Warped coppice trunks on the edge of a rock increase the dramatic atmosphere of *Early Evening at the Pool /Podvečer u tůně/* (1853) by Jan Václav Kautský (1827-1896). Prague native Adolf Chwala (1836-1900) painted his pictures mainly in the Alps and in Lower Austria, but also in the regions of Sázava River and Dyje R. Coppice trunks by origin can be found for example in his *Forest Interior /Lesní interiér/* (1865-1870) and in the *View from Dyje with Hardegg Castle on Horizon /Pohled od Dyje s hradem Hardegg na obzoru/* (1870s). Trees ridiculously shaped by human hand or by elements were sought by František Bohumír Zvěřina (1835-1908), native from Hrotovice in south-west Moravia. He found them not only in the Balkans, see e.g. *Trunks of Giant Oaks in a Swampy Area near Ševarov in*

Bosnia /Kmeny dubových obrů v bažinatém území u Ševarova v Bosně/ (1876) but also in his home country – e.g. *Beech Trees above the Kakovský Forest near Hrotovice /Buky nad Kakovským lesem u Hrotovic/* (1883).

Nevertheless, the greatest Czech painter of trees and forests was Julius Mařák (1872-1899), for a short time the disciple of Haushofer and later his successor as the head of the Prague school of landscape painting. Hundreds of his works depict forests of natural or semi-natural species composition, mostly high forests of seed origin. An exception is his cycle of charcoal drawings *Austrian Forest Characters /Rakouské lesní charaktery/* (1878), in which he in fact depicted vegetation zoning of the then monarchy from the Adriatic up to Alpine peaks. Although the cycle is mainly showing high forests, in the *Hornbeam /Habr/* sheet, the author could not avoid a coppice. Sprouting and pollard hornbeam trees can be found also in other charcoal drawings by the author, e.g. in the *Rustling /Šumění/*. Somewhat surprising is the occurrence of partly sprouting trees in the *Elm /Jilm/* sheet, in which Mařák depicted elm trees somewhere on the Alpine pastures high beneath rocky mountain peaks.

The first of Czech landscape painters influenced by the Barbizon school was Antonín Chittussi (1847-1891). Even though his brushwork was more relaxed than in the former Romantics, a number of important testimonies about specific trees can be found in his paintings. Many of his artworks from France, where he repeatedly stayed, show polycormons of riparian willows, e.g. *The Seine River at St. Cloud /Seina u St. Cloud/* (around 1885). Significant for us within the scope of the given theme is also the *Creek in Hilly Land /Potok v pahorkatině/* (1885-1886) with a solitary pollard broadleaved tree on the pasture. The site of the painter's scene can be precisely localized to the castle ruin in Ronov nad Sázavou near Přibyslav, i.e. to the landscape on the border between the 4th (Beech) and 3rd (Fir-Beech) altitudinal vegetation zone. Thus, we can justly believe this to be an example of pollard beech – as pointed out by A. Zlatník. Today, the former pastures have been replaced by probably already the second generation of a spruce monoculture.

František Ženíšek (1849-1916) from the generation of the National Theatre included coppice broadleaves at the background of the popular historical scene in the painting *Oldřich and Božena /Oldřich a Božena/* (1884). Mikoláš Aleš (1852-1913) painted pollard trees in several pastoral motifs of his *Špalíček of National Songs and Rhymes /Špalíček národních písní a říkadel/*. Some of his ornamental drop caps even seem to have been developing exactly from the pollard trees.

František Kaván (1866-1941), graduate from the Mařák landscape painting school, referred to at the end of the 19th century as a "realist of the big breath", painted mainly in his native region below the Krkonoše (Giant) Mts. and in the Hlinsko region where coppice woods did not occur. However, he descended also into the lowlands of the Elbe River, where he repeatedly painted pollard willows that he called "babky" (old women). These predominate for example in his paintings *Babky near Chvalín /Babky u Chvalína/* and *Babky below Kuňka /Babky pod Kuňkou/* (both 1898). In his period of symbolic creation, he used multitudes of freshly pruned pollard willows under a red sky to express *Despair /Zoufalství/* (1899) and to amplify the terrifying atmosphere of his painting *Jack o' Lantern /Bludička/* (1897) by bizarre shapes of pollard willows. Kaván's schoolmate Antonín Slaviček (1870-1910) expressed the melancholy of the autumn in his painting *In Autumn Fog /Na podzim v mlze/* (1897), in which he depicted a carriage on the road leading through a partly coppice grove near the village of Veltrusy. In one of his last paintings that he started to work on before the tragic incident, *Žamberecká Road /Žamberecká silnice/* (1919), he depicted an alley of coppard poplars near Rybná nad Zdobnicí. Roman Havelka (1877-1950), who continuously depicted the Dyje River incision near Bítov, ranked with the youngest disciples of J. Mařák. In spite of the fact that coppice woods are rather frequent in the region,

clearly depicted sprouting trunks are rather an exception in his paintings – e.g. in his *Study of Forest /Studie lesa/* (c. 1930). Ludovít Csordák (1864-1937) was another graduate from the Mařák landscape painting school. In his *Moon Landscape with Slanecký Castle /Měsíční krajina se Slaneckým hradem/* (1896) we can see a grazing grove with pollard and coppice trees under the moon-lighted castle ruin east of Košice.

The only "pure-bred" in the Czech impressionist painting is considered Václav Radimský (1867-1946). The native from Kolín in central Bohemia soon went to France where he settled first in Barbizon and later in Giverny near the place where Claude Monet lived. Even after his return to Kolín, he remained faithful to riparian landscapes. Thus, many of his paintings depict coppice willows and alders, and also pollard willows – see for example *The Creek in Giverny /Potok v Giverny/* (1899), *Winter on the Seine River /Zima na Seině/* (1903), *Opatovický Canal /Opatovický kanál/* (1935) and *Old Willows /Staré vrby/* (1942).

The virtuoso painter of butterflies and beautiful women Max Švabinský (1873-1962) liked to stay and paint in the open nature. In the period from 1926-1927, he painted sunlit, mainly coppice hornbeam woods near Lysá nad Labem – see *Morning in Woods /Jitro v lese/* and *Noon in Woods /Poledne v lese/*.

Lovely rural landscapes painted by favourite Josef Lada (1887-1957) cannot be imagined without pollard willows at village greens and millponds – often with a staffage of fairy water sprites. Let us mention at least the *Water Sprite /Vodník/* (1943), *Otter /Vydra/* (1944) and *Scoters /Bruslaři/* (1950).

Interesting at this moment may be a sashay into belles-lettres depicting stories occurring in the landscape, in which coppice woods were the predominating shapes of broadleaved forests. In the Czech classical literature, it is first of all the *Year in the Village /Rok na vsi/* by Alois Mrštík and Vilém Mrštík, taking place in the village of Diváky (renamed by the authors to Habrůvka) in the Boleradická vrchovina Upland in South Moravia. The comprehensive work describing diverse lives of villagers during the year at the end of the 19th century also contains sections about forest. The chapter *Woodcocks /Sluky/* includes for example a direct reference to the "oak head". The chapter *Wood Thieves /Lesňáci/* describes village boys going to steal wood in the forest and being chased by a forest warden: "They ran away down the hill, and after a moment, one could hear the cracking wood of the long-ago cut out hornbeam brush." Vojtěch Sedláček (1892-1973) was a painter of mainly field landscapes in his native Elbe R. region and in the piedmont of the Orlické hory Mts. He illustrated the 8th edition (1958) of the famous chronicle, and was definitely personally familiar with the surroundings of Diváky. Thus, we can find coppice woods and pollard trees in his illustrations at more places of the book.

Zdenka Ranná – Samsonová (1919-1990) painted in the Tišnov region. In her drawing *Our Field Maples /Naše babyky/* (early 1940s), she depicted a hedgerow of periodically pruned and pollarded field maples; the custom continues in the region at some places until today. From the foot-hills of the Bohemian-Moravian Highland originates also the modern landscape painting by Miloslav Sonny Halas (1946-2008), which – in spite of being named *Rapeseed Fields /Řepková pole/* (1996) - depicts green stains of groves surrounding the glowing yellow field of rape. Author's field drawings with notes suggest that the green spots are coppice hornbeam groves in the surroundings of Skorotice and Křížovice in the Sýkořská hornatina Hilly Land. Exactly in this marginal part of the Bohemian-Moravian Highland, one can surprisingly meet with the hornbeam coppice woods even on the border of the 4th (Beech) and 5th (Fir-Beech) altitudinal vegetation zones. The tradition has shot roots so deep that the village of Brumov even has stylized hornbeam polycormons in its municipal emblem. This demonstration of graphic design may close our outline of artworks with the coppice woods and pollard trees.

Fig. 3: Municipal Emblem of Brumov near Tišnov

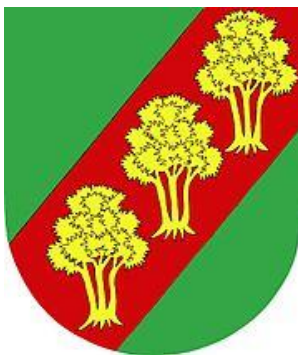


Fig. 4: Zdenka Ranná-Samsonová (1940): *Our Field Maples*



CONCLUSION

Our hypothesis that if the coppicing and pollarding systems and interventions into the woody vegetation were a common phenomenon from ancient civilizations through the Middle Ages up to the recent times, they had to reflect in the visual arts. Although the landscape painting developed at full only during the 19th century, landscape motifs with the elements of vegetation have appeared as a complement of mainly figural compositions already since ancient times. Even in the artworks, in which the landscape with the vegetation is the main object of the painter, coppice woods and pollard trees are usually in the marginal, only exceptionally dominant, position. This is why they can be easily overlooked. Most

often, they appear in the landscape paintings with pastoral motifs (P. Potter, M. Lancrer, F. Boucher, J.A. Lántz, M. Aleš and others).

In addition to the fact that their painting documented the specific tree shapes as the conspicuous consequences of human activity, the coppice and pollard trees used to be painted also with the symbolic contents (M. Grünwald, C. Rottmann, C.D. Friedrich, F. Kaván and others). Frequent was the use of trees truncated and pruned into bizarre shapes to increase the drama of the painted or drawn scenery (A. Dürer, D. Dossi, A. Böcklin, F.X. Procházka and others).

Most frequently depicted across the ages are pollard willows (P. Brueghel the younger, C. Corot, V. van Gogh, A. Kalvoda, J. Lada, M. Trojan and others). Thus, willow (*Salix* spp.) is the most frequently depicted woody plant as we can find it also in the coppice shape in paintings depicting river banks (A. Chittussi, V. Radimský). Coppice European alder (*Alnus glutinosa*) use to be depicted in the same pictures. Other safely identified trees depicted in the coppice and pollard shapes are oaks (*Quercus* spp.) – e.g. in the works by C. Rottmann, J. van Ruysdael, J. Mánes, and hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*) – e.g. in the paintings by J. Mařák and M. Švabinský. Coppiced beech (*Fagus sylvatica*) appears in the paintings by C.D. Friedrich and in the drawings by B. Havránek, Scotch elm (*Ulmus glabra*) dominates the Alpine scenery by J. Mařák, and field maple (*Acer campestre*) appears as a hedgerow in the drawings by Z. Ranná. Coppiced birches (*Betula pendula*) were painted by A. Slavíček and A. Kalvoda, pollard poplars (*Populus* spp.) appear in alleys painted for example by M. Hobbema, C. Monet and A. Slavíček, pollard mountain ashes (*Sorbus aucuparia*) on grazed balks of the Bohemian-Moravian Highland were painted by J. Jambor. South-European woody plants are laurel (*Laurus nobilis*) occurring in ancient graphic arts, olive tree (*Olea europaea*), which appears in the paintings by V. van Gogh and O. Kubín, and European chestnut (*Castanea sativa*), which can be identified with high probability in the paintings by C.P. Fohr and J.F. Millet.

Nevertheless, in many artworks the coppice or pollard tree species cannot be determined precisely. The reason is either the simplistic styling (in older painting) or the loose brushwork (in modern landscape painting). It remains to add that the motifs of woody plants shaped by human hands with the use of their sprouting capacity can be found also in the visual arts of Asia – in old Chinese and Japanese painters. The existence of coppice woods in Central Asia is documented by Uzbek Babur-Nama from the 16th century.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The paper was compiled within the project "Ancient coppice woods and their significance and sustainability in the cultural landscape" (Ministry of Culture of the Czech Republic, identification code DF13P01OVV015).

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