

THE THREE MOST IMPORTANT CZECH ARTISTS IN THE HISTORY OF MORAVIAN KARST

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The largest and best developed karst region of the Bohemian Massif, the Moravian Karst, captivated the attention of many artists. This was due to an extraordinary natural impression. This area with its many caves and the mysterious chasm Macocha differentiates from non-karstic surroundings.

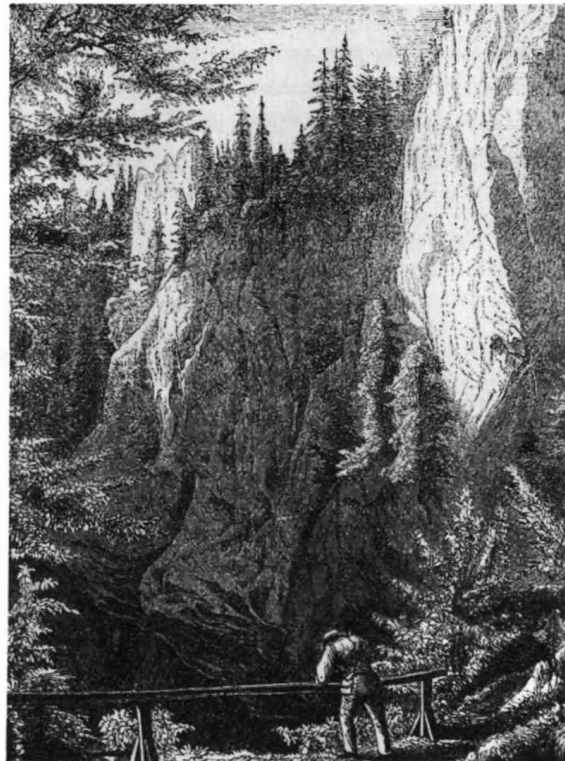
There were many artists and illustrators who tried to represent the beauties of Moravian Karst. Doctor *Jindřich Wankel*, "the father of Moravian archaeology", also made many valuable drawings and aquarelles. Among the artists we must mean especially *KUNIKE* – with his romantic but not exact lithograph of Macocha, *KALIWODA* with very nice romantic lithograph of Macocha chasm and *RICHTER* who made many drawings, aquarelles – such as aquarelle of Macocha chasm from the lower bridge, drawing of Pustý Žleb canyon, aquarelles of the Devil's Bridge in Suchý Žleb etc. All these are artists of the 19th century.

I'd like to mention especially three artists who belong to the category of the most important Czech artists: Josef MÁNES, Bedřich HAVRÁNEK, Otakar KUBÍN.

Josef MÁNES (1820–1871) artist and illustrator was a founder and classic of the Czech modern art and national painting of the 19th century. He was an author of romantic sceneries, open-air studies, monumental and lyrical landscapes, typical and portrait studies and illustrations. He shows a way to modern realism in our art. We can reply very clearly, why he used to go to Blansko and Moravian Karst. *Jindřich Wankel*, the pioneer of archaeological and speleological investigations in Moravian Karst in the 19th century (the father-in-law of Dr. Karel Absolon) learned to paint in the family of Mánes. Josef Mánes began going to Blansko in 1853. His drawings were most likely edited by Wankel to be illustrations for

his own articles without giving credit for them to Mánes. He also made independent drawings, but these haven't been found yet.

Bedřich HAVRÁNEK (1821–1899) artist, illustrator and landscape painter (passed an academy in Prague, his teacher was also Antonin Mánes, father



*Macocha chasm woodcutting of an unknown graver
made according to the drawing of B. Havránek*

of the above mentioned Josef Mánes.) In 1850 Havránek made many romantic drawings and pictures. These works were a basis for a later period, when he returned to the landscape of Moravian Karst in his drawings and pictures (since he painted various landscapes and towns in Bohemia, in Moravia and in the Alps), his drawings were valuable documentations of the investigations made in Moravian Karst by Wankel. Dr. Jindřich Wankel (physician in the Salm's ironworks) began with his research in Sloup caves in 1850, and he also published his findings of skulls and skeletons of animals in the Prague magazine *Lotos*. He later began using the works of Havránek for specific locations for his explorations. In 1857 Wankel published (in *Illustrierte Zeitung* in Leipzig) an article "Blansko und Adamsthal" with seven engravings, which were probably made by B. Havránek, or with the help of his drawings. In 1857 B. Havránek made two very excellent pictures of Macocha chasm, which were very similar. One was a view from the lower bridge (from the same point as Richter's earlier work), the other was a woodcutting with a man, who is standing at a railing and leaning forward for a view into the depth. He also pictured some views of Macocha chasm, Punkva river, Kostelík Cave, Býčí skála Cave, Kulna Cave etc. His drawings were used by other artists for making engravings. He is, without any doubt, a painter of Moravian Karst, who has never been overshadowed. His works has more valuable comparison in the past (with the works of Richter) than with his successors.

Otakar KUBÍN (born 1883 in Boskovice in the Moravian Karst, died 1969 in Marseille) is the third

great Czech painter, who worked in the Moravian Karst. He took part in the third Absolon's expedition to the bottom of Macocha chasm (1905), where Absolon wanted to penetrate into the unknown underground (in present days Punkevní Cave). In this expedition also took part a teacher Alois Král who discovered later (1921) an excellent system of Demánovská Slobody Cave. Investigators camped on the bottom of the chasm in tents and they made fire with charcoal, which doesn't make any smoke. Martel appreciated this expedition very much. Otakar Kubín was painting during eight days. He was 22 years old. We have to value his courage. He had to descend from the lower Macocha bridge to the bottom with the help of a rope ladder. Speleology wasn't really known at that time. Kubín exhibited his pictures in the same year and they were sold out very quickly. He used this money for a travel to Antwerp on Rubens Academy. During the World War I. he was living in Paris as a librarian. After the end of the war he moved to Aix-en-Provence, and later to Simiane, where he also died (some periods he lived again in Czechoslovakia). He came out from the colours of van Gogh and from the flatness of Gauguin. He was considered a French artist in France. All works of Kubín from the Macocha chasm are unknown, except of one, which he presented to Dr. Absolon. (In France he is known after the name Otton Coubine.)

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Josef Mánes: Caves in Podolí (Czech Karst). Oil on canvas, 1834