

MILAN SUNKO – A FORGOTTEN WORLD RENOWNED CROATIAN HERALDIC ARTIST

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Milan Sunko (Zidani Most, 5 December 1860 – Zagreb, 9 March 1891) was a heraldic artist, numismatist, and collector, who studied and started his career in Vienna working with the most renowned heraldists of the “classical” Austrian heraldic period. He moved to Zagreb where he made number of well received paintings and graphics and was supported by the intellectual elite of the fastly developing city. His brief spectacular career was abruptly ended by laryngeal tuberculosis, and he died in his 31st year. His works are preserved in several museums and galleries in Zagreb, and his heraldic lithographs and ex libris bookplates are remembered in specialized bibliography. However, the Croatian heraldic historiography has forgotten all about him and this paper attempts to remedy this. After the establishment of the Brotherhood of Croatian Dragon Society – one of its founders being Emilij Laszowski, notable Croatian heraldist; it took upon a project to preserve Sunko’s grave, exhuming his remains and providing a modest but dignified grave for him at the Zagreb cemetery in 1910. To achieve that, the Draconian Society raised funds in an international action, activating his foreign friends and fans, documenting the project in respectable heraldic periodicals.

Keywords: Milan Sunko, heraldic artist, Croatian heraldic heritage, Brotherhood of Croatian Dragon Society

“Who is Milan Sunko?” is a question that arose to the author¹ after reading through the Volume 1 of the *Zmajska kronika (Draconian Chronicle)*

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by Milovan Petković,² a monumental lexicographic work on history of the Brotherhood of Croatian Dragon Society (*Družba „Braća Hrvatskoga Zmaja”, DBHZ*), a cultural and historiographic fraternity established in Croatia in 1905. A paragraph there dated 7 December 1906 raised author’s attention: “A proposal by High Master³ [Emilij Laszowski] was adopted, that the Brotherhood save the earthly remains of Milan Sunko, the world renowned Croatian heraldic painter (...).”⁴ Researching Croatian heraldry for over a quarter of a century, the author was rather astounded with a name entirely unknown to him. Accepting the fact that he may not know everything, he started consulting with other Croatian heraldic researchers, members of the Croatian heraldic and vexillological society (*Hrvatsko grboslovno i zastavoslovno društvo*, HGZD) and others. Receiving equally stumped responses, the author can regret to say that the modern Croatian heraldic community today has unfortunately completely forgotten this prominent member of theirs and took upon writing of this paper with the desire to correct it in some way.

The DBHZ documents that Petković provides in his work title Milan Sunko a “world renowned heraldic painter”, but although these references appear in the following ten years in the Chronicle, one may learn little of Sunko’s heraldic significance beyond that syntgam. One of the two founding fathers of the Draconian Society, Emilij Laszowski, Proto-Dragon of Brlog and Ozalj was himself an eminent heraldic expert and beyond doubt he knew well Sunko’s work, but it seems that other brothers of the recently established fraternity were familiar with it as well. It appears that Sunko’s opus was well known not only to the intellectual elite gathered in the Society, but to general public as well, since in all correspondence with the state and other institutions in Croatia, as well as with the heraldic experts around the world, the Society found it unnecessary to explain in much more details who Sunko was. If that was so, the question how come that we managed to forget all about him today, is probably be left unanswered.

Perica Krapljanov and Dajana Batinić of the Zagreb City Museum, Dajana Vlaisavljević of the National Museum of Modern Art, Antonija Dejanović of the Arts and Crafts Museum, and Milovan Petković, Dragon-Restitutor of Veliki Tabor II, as the chronicler of the Draconian Society.

² Milovan Petković, *Zmajska kronika I.: Kronološki prikaz povijesti Družbe „Braća Hrvatskoga Zmaja” 1905.–2005.*, sv. (Vol.) I. *Razdoblje 1905.–1909.* (Zagreb: Družba „Braća Hrvatskoga Zmaja”, 2016) [further on abbreviated as *ZK1*]

³ The head of the society was initially named High master (*Vrhovni meštar*), changed to more traditional Grand Master (*Veliki meštar*) on 9 January 1907.

⁴ „Prihvaćen je prijedlog Vrhovnoga meštra da „Braća hrvatskoga zmaja” spase zemne ostatke Milana Sunka, hrvatskoga heraldičkog slikara svjetskoga glasa...”, Petković, *ZK1*, pp. 147-148.

The DBHZ takes particular care to mark dates and persons from Croatian history, recalling exceptional patriotic deeds and martyrdoms, as well as contributions to Croatian cultural and scientific heritage. The Society took upon itself in its history a number of projects to exhume and provide dignified burial for various prominent historical figures. The most well-known among these is the exhumation of Petar Zrinski and Fran Krsto Frankopan, Croatian magnates that opposed Habsburgs in the 17th century, beheaded in the Wiener Neustadt, buried in a new grave there in 1907 and transferred to the Zagreb Cathedral in 1919, the exhumation of Ljudevit Gaj, the leader of 19th century proto-national renaissance movement, from the old St. George's cemetery to the central Arcades in Mirogoj, the new cemetery in Zagreb in 1909 and the exhumation of Eugen Kvaternik and his comrades from the 1871 Rakovica uprising to the Zagreb Cathedral crypts in 1921.⁵ Even if the Sunko exhumation and burial was finally completed only in 1910, this was actually the first such activity the Society took upon in its over-a-century long history, thus putting even more weight on the Sunko's importance.

The High Master's proposal of 7 December 1906 was explained to the Master's College in the minutes thus: "(...) to exhume [the earthly remains] from the grave in a 3rd class field at the Zagreb's cemetery Mirogoj (Field XXVII, grave nr. 336), that is to be soon dug over, to bury them in a new grave in the 1st class field at the same cemetery and to erect a simple but deserving monument."⁶ The records in *ZKI* are silent on this issue next three years, although it is clear that the Dragons have not forgotten the proposal. Thus, on 18 October 1909 there is a note "The Society informed by letters (nr. 223, 224 and 225) relatives of Milan Sunko in Zagreb of the intent to exhume his early remains from the disregarded tomb to bury them in a new one at Mirogoj cemetery, asking them if they wish to perform the issue themselves or if they would yield it to the 'Brotherhood of Croatian Dragon.'" These letters were sent to a Milan's brother, lawyer Miroslav Sunko, a relative, architect Dionis Sunko and a niece, teacher Štefanija Iskra, for her mother Ana Iskra ex-Sunko."⁷ A joint answer from the family was received on 25 October that year, asking the Society to perform the proposed, because the family is unable to afford it financially. The letter was signed by Miroslav Sunko and sisters Franciska (Fanika) Hafner ex-Sunko, Ana Iskra ex-Sunko and Henrietta Sunko. Architect Dionis Sinko answered several days afterwards, that "as a further removed relative of Milan Sunko, he intends to support the Society's noble enterprise."⁸

⁵ Zvonimir Despot, „Povijest Družbe Braća Hrvatskoga Zmaja 1905.–1996. godine“, *Časopis za suvremenu povijest* 29 (1997), no. 1: 5-40.

⁶ Petković, *ibid.*

⁷ Petković, *ZKI*, p. 519.

⁸ Petković, *ZKI*, p. 529.

Thus, immediately the Society started fundraising activities. They wrote to Izidor Kršnjavi, influential politician, writer, painter and benefactor, who previously supported Sunko's work during his lifetime, and to several heraldic experts with whom Sunko cooperated, and to his devotees in Austria: Dr. Eduard Gaston Count Pettelegg⁹ in Holzenegg near Ober Laibach, Moritz Maria Edler von Weittenhiller,¹⁰ Dr. Karl Count Brzezić-Lanckowski,¹¹ Hans Johann Nepomuk Count Wilczek,¹² and Ernst Krahl¹³ in Vienna, to Philipp Hubert Count de La Fontaine et Harnoncourt-Unverzagt in Baden near Vienna and to Hugo Gerard Strohl¹⁴ in Mödling.

The Zagreb daily newspapers *Narodne novine* in its number 284 of 13 December 1909 provide this short news item:¹⁵

Milan Sunko's grave. Famous artist Milan Sunko died here in 1891 and he was buried at Mirogoj in a 3rd class grave. Since that graves are soon

⁹ Eduard Gaston Count Pöttich von Pettelegg, (Ljubljana, 1847 – Friesach, Carinthia, 1918), archbishop, genealogist and heraldist, cf. s. v. *Österreichisches Biographisches Lexikon und biographische Dokumentation*, 2003–2020 Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, https://www.biographien.ac.at/oebl/oebl_P/Poettichk-Pettelegg_Eduard-Gaston_1847_1918.xml (visited on 9 December 2021)

¹⁰ Mori[t]z Maria Edler von Weittenhiller, (Vienna, 1847 – Bozen, 1911), genealogist and heraldist, author of the „Salzburger Adler“ volume of the Siebmacher Armorial Book, cf. s. v. *Biographisches Lexikon des Kaiserthums Oesterreich. 54. Theil* (Vienna: Kaiserlich-königliche Hof- und Staatsdruckerei, 1886), pp. 207-209.

¹¹ Karl Count Lanckoroński-Brzezić (Vienna, 1848 – Vienna, 1933), writer, collector and benefactor, cf. s. v. *Österreichisches Biographisches Lexikon und biographische Dokumentation*, 2003–2020 Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, https://www.biographien.ac.at/oebl/oebl_L/Lanckoronski-Brzezić_Karl_1848_1933.xml (visited on 9 December 2021)

¹² Johann (Hans) Nepomuk Count Wilczek, (Vienna, 1837 – Vienna, 1922), polar explorer, landowner and benefactor, cf. s. v. *Austria-Forum*, Gemeinnütziger Verein „Freunde des Austria-Forums- Verein zur Förderung der digitalen Erfassung von Daten mit Österreichbezug“, Wilczek, Hans Johann Nepomuk Graf (english) | AEIOU Österreich-Lexikon im Austria-Forum (visited on 4 February 2022)

¹³ Ernst August Krahl, (Dresden, 1858 – Vienna, 1926), heraldist and heraldic artist, imperial and royal court armorial artist (*k. k. Hofwappenmaler*), cf. s. v. *Österreichisches Biographisches Lexikon und biographische Dokumentation*, 2003–2020 Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, https://www.biographien.ac.at/oebl/oebl_K/Krahl_Ernst-August_1858_1926.xml (visited on 9 December 2021)

¹⁴ Hugo Gerard (Gerhard) Ströhl, (Wels, Upper Austria, 1851 – Mödling, Lower Austria, 1919), heraldist and artist, numerous capital works of Austrian heraldry, cf. s. v. *Österreichisches Biographisches Lexikon und biographische Dokumentation*, 2003–2020 Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, https://www.biographien.ac.at/oebl/oebl_S/Stroehl_Hugo-Gerard_1851_1919.xml (visited on 9 December 2021)

¹⁵ Petković, *ZK1*, p. 547.

to be dug over, the diligent society “Brothers of Croatian Dragon” took upon itself to transfer the earthly remains of renowned artist to a 1st class grave. Some excellent men already provided nice amounts for that purpose, while the Viennese heraldic society “Adler” stepped forward with contributions in their domain, and in their journal *Monatsblatt* published the call from the “Brotherhood of Croatian Dragon”. Even those Croats who honor the genius of our artist Sunko shall gladly bring some fillérs, to preserve his remains. Any voluntary contribution shall be gladly received by the “Brotherhood of Croatian Dragon”, the Stone gates, Zagreb.

A note on the Society preparations for this project was published in the December 1909 issue of the “Adler” society monthly journal, inviting members to reply with donations:¹⁶

Received.

Painter Milan Sunko, undoubtedly the most outstanding heraldic painter of modern times, died in Zagreb in 1889¹⁾. A warm obituary was dedicated to him in the Adler Yearbook. Since Sunko was ill for many months and could not earn anything, he died in great misery in the state hospital in Zagreb and was buried at public expense in the 3rd Class grave at the Zagreb cemetery.

The field of the cemetery, in which Sunko’s earthly remains rest, will soon be dug up and the deceased buried there will be transferred to a common grave. In order to save Sunko’s bones from this fate, the association “Braća Hrvatskoga Zmaja” in Zagreb decided to have Sunko’s remains exhumed and transferred to a permanent grave purchased for him and to decorate it with a simple but dignified monument.

In order to raise the necessary funds for this, all friends of heraldic art, especially the older members of the I. R. Heraldic Society “Adler”, who mostly knew Sunko personally, are sincerely requested to support this enterprise with even the most insignificant contributions.

The I. R. Heraldic Society “Adler”, which has already placed itself at the top of the donators with a corresponding amount, is ready to accept incoming donations, to be addressed, with designated purpose, to the treasurer Mr. G. E. Bauernfeld, Vienna, III. Hauptstraße 67.

¹⁶ „Eingesendet“, *Monatsblatt der Kaiserliche königliche heraldischen Gesellschaft „Adler“* VI (December 1909), no. 48 (348), p. 408.

[Footnote in the source:] ¹⁾ Correct: on 9 March 1891 (Note of the Editorial Board).¹⁷

Information about this is also mentioned in the monthly *Archiv für Stamm- und Wappenkunde* (*Genealogical and Heraldic Archive*) of the Roland society from Dresden, in their bibliographic review “Buecherschau” citing the *Monatsblatt der Kais. Kört. Heraldischen Gesellschaft „Adler“*. VI. Bd. Wien 1909. under the title “Ein Grabmal für Milan Sunko” (“A Tomb for Milan Sunko”).¹⁸

As mentioned in the above text, a warm obituary – a lengthy necrologue was published in the yearbook of the Adler heraldic society for 1893, stretching through no less than 6 pages, describing life, skills and difficulties of Milan Sunko. In it we learn that he was born in Steinbrück, today Zidani Most, Slovenia, on 5 December 1860, as the tenth child of a wealthy wholesaler. In his youth his family moved to Sisak, Croatia, where he showed interest for drawing and numismatics. He was of poor health and showed no interest for education, although when he was finally sent to a regular school in Petrinja, he proved to be diligent and good pupil. He went to secondary school in Rijeka, where he contracted smallpox in 1873, resulting in partial hearing loss. He

¹⁷ Eingesendet.

In Agram starb im Jahre 1889) der Maler Milan Sunko, unzweifelhaft der vorzüglichste heraldische Maler der neueren Zeit. Es wurde ihm als solchem damals auch im Jahrbuche des “Adler“ ein warmer Nachruf gewidmet. Da Sunko viele Monate krank war und nichts verdienen konnte, starb er im Landesspitale zu Agram in großem Elende und wurde auf öffentliche Kosten auf der III. Klasse des Agramer Friedhofes begraben.

Nun wird demnächst das Feld des Friedhofes, in welchem Sunkos sterbliche Überreste ruhen, umgegraben und die dort bestatteten Toten werden in einem Massengrabe untergebracht werden. Um Sunkos Gebeine vor diesem Schicksale zu bewahren, hat der Verein “Braća Hrvatskog Zmaja“ in Agram beschlossen, Sunkos Überreste exhumieren in ein für denselben angekauftes ewiges Grab übertragen zu lassen und mit einem einfachen, aberwürdigen Denkmale zu schmücken.

Um die hiefür nötigen Kosten aufzubringen, ergeht an alle Freunde d. er heraldischen Kunst, insbesondere an die älteren Mitglieder der k. k. heraldischen Gesellschaft “Adler“, welche wohl alle Sunko persönlich gekannt haben, die er gebenste Bitte, dieses Unternehmen mit wenn auch noch so unbedeutenden Beiträgen zu unterstützen.

Die k. k. heraldische Gesellschaft „Adler“, die sich selbst mit einem entsprechenden Betrage an die Spitze der Geber gestellt hat, ist bereit, einlangende Spenden, welche an den Schatzmeister, Herrn G. E. Bauernfeld, Wien, III. Hauptstraße 67, adressiert werden wollen, entgegenzunehmen und der bezeichneten Verwendung zuzuführen.

1) Richtig: am 9. März 1891 (Anmerkung der Redaktion).

¹⁸ “Buecherschau”, *Archiv für Stamm- und Wappenkunde: Monatschrift zur Festlegung von Familiengeschichten und Familienwappen, zum Austausch für Familiengeschichtsforscher, Wappen-, Exlibris-, Siegel- und Münzsammler, sowie für heraldisch-genealogische Vereine* 10 (1909-1910), no. 8: 123.

came to the Academy in Vienna in 1875, first in the class of architect Prof. Johann Petschenigg, and then painter Prof. Hans Klein. His father suffered financial breakdown in the mean time, and was unable to uphold him any more. This was the main reason why Sunko turned to production of heraldic depictions. He was able to earn on those as modestly as possible. He started working numerous orders from Vienna artist house St. Norbertus, and afterwards receiving independent orders. In spite of his weak health and hearing impairment, he was called to serve compulsory military service in 1881 (that he served in Bosnia),¹⁹ and afterwards he was working in Croatia and Bosnia, doing watercolor paintings and ink drawings, mostly of landscape content.

Further on, we may learn that he was noticed in Zagreb by Ivan Bojničić Kninski, director of the Croatian Land Archives, who soon became his supporter and friend. From his work here, Sunko was able to afford occasional recuperations in the fresh air, and in 1890 he even went to a study trip to Italy with his friend and Maecenas Count Pettenegg. At the Zagreb International Exhibition in 1891 he participated with 16 water paintings, receiving an honorary diploma for them.

However, the laryngeal tuberculosis has progressed more and more, and in final years Dr. Kršnjavi has arranged for Sunko financial support from the Croatian Land Government, which eventually paid for his funeral. He died in the morning of 9 March 1891. His friends from Vienna and Zagreb erected a modest monument on his grave.



Fig. 1.
Milan Sunko Self-Portrait
in a frame by H. G. Ströhl,
Adler Jahrbuch 1893.

¹⁹ Petković, *ZKI*, p. 549.

An article on life of Milan Sunko issued in the “Adler” Yearbook contains numerous lauda to his artistic genius and lyrical description of his difficult life, while Petković provides a full-length Croatian translation of it.²⁰ The Adler article is unsigned, and it is accompanied with a beautiful graphics consisting of Sunko’s self-portrait in the center of a cartouche frame, cunningly added to it by his heraldic colleague and friend Hugo Gerard Ströhl (Fig. 1).²¹

However, the lengthy and beautiful text does not even provide a hint on Sunko’s heraldic opus. Descriptions of his artistic works may be found in the text, but his heraldry is almost unmentioned: “Therefore all his works provide some originality. He was able to show in artistic way everything he was able to see with his eye. Nothing was too small. All had to be reproduced, all was taking into his circle. Everything that walks, crawls, and flies, from a mand to the least important bug, fantastic shadowy landscapes or the simplest small straw of grass, Sunko was able to show an interesting side to everything.” Or. “Sunko had a rare feeling for styles. Thus, with great virtuosity he was mastering Baroque with all of its characteristics though frisky Rococo, that ha was able to show with rare craftsmanship and an inexhaustible wealth of imagination.”

Petković reproduced in his volume the Ströhl’s interpretation of Sunko’s self-portrait, but he also provides reproductions of Sunko’s pen and ink drawings “Veliki Tabor” (ca. 1883)²² and “South entrance to Črnomelj” (3.7.1883).

The story on exhumation and reburial of Milan Sunko’s remains is continued in the Volume 2 of Petković’s *Draconian Chronicle*,²³ providing 10 January 1910 reply of the Art Society in Zagreb to the Draconian Society request of 28 December 1909. The Art Society president Kršnjavi and its secretary Andrija Milčinović informed the Dragons that their Society shall cover the expenses for the monument, which they shall order in the Crafts School and a bronze plaque to be ordered from the High School for Arts and Crafts.²⁴ This was soon followed by an answer from the Imperial and Royal Heraldic Society “Adler” from Vienna, sending 32 Crowns for arranging Sunko’s grave. A plead was sent to the City Magistrate for the City of Zagreb to donate a 1st class grave at Mirogoj and to take it in custody. From that letter we find that Sunko

²⁰ Petković, ZK1 : 547-551.

²¹ “Milan Sunko (Mit Abbildung.)”, In: *Jahrbuch der K. k. heraldiscen Gesellschaft “Adler”*, Neue Folge 3 (Vienna: K. k. heraldische Gesellschaft “Adler”, 1893), pp. 9-14.

²² From the Croatian History Museum collection, cf. Mladen Obad Štitaroci, Bojana Bojanić Obad Štitaroci: „Feudalni grad Veliki Tabor“, *Zagreb moj grad VIII* (2014), no. 47: 80-87.

²³ Milovan Petković, *Zmajska kronika II.: Kronološki prikaz povijesti Družbe „Braća Hrvatskoga Zmaja“ 1905.–2005.*, sv. (Vol.) II. *Razdoblje 1910.–1918.* (Zagreb: Družba „Braća Hrvatskoga Zmaja“, 2020) [further on abbreviated: ZK2]

²⁴ Petković, ZK2, pp. 11-12.

was originally buried at the grave marked XXVII-III-336. (Field XXVII, 3rd class, number 336).²⁵

The Magistrate filed a request to the Free and Royal City of Zagreb Assembly, which reached unanimous decision on its 2nd session to allow the removal of Sunko's remains to a grave marked as IXa-I-60, which the city provided free of charge. The Magistrate informed the Society on this on 10 February 1910.²⁶ Ensuring thus funds, a monument and a grave, final preparation for transfer were planned for the April 1910.²⁷

In regards with that, on 8 April 1910 Emilij Laszowski writes a request to the Croatian Land Government, asking that they donate the Sunko's painting "Jesus resurrects Lazarus" and a wooden polychrome coat of arms of the Triune Kingdom to the City Museum (that was just recently before that established and managed by the Society)

from administrative offices of the Ban's Court, the government seat.²⁸ His uncle, Ban Nikola Tomašić approved this present to the museum on 25 April of the same year.²⁹ The Sunko's lithography with an alternate title "Jesus raises the dead" is still kept in the successor to the Society's city museum, under the number MGZ 54157 in the Fine Art, Graphics and Applied Graphics Collection of the City Museum of Zagreb (Fig. 2).



Fig. 2. Milan Sunko: "Jesus resurrects Lazarus" / "Jesus raises the dead", a lithography (MGZ 54157, reproduced with permission).

²⁵ Petković, ZK2, p. 12.

²⁶ Petković, ZK2, p. 16.

²⁷ Petković, ZK2, p. 20.

²⁸ Petković, ZK2, p. 22.

²⁹ Petković, ZK2, p. 33.

On 25 May 1910 the Draconian Society wrote again to the City Magistrate, requesting permission to transfer the earthly remains,³⁰ which was obviously granted, since on 15 July 1910 the exhumation was finally performed.³¹ The exhumation was attended by: relatives of the deceased Miroslav Sunko, Franciska (Fanika) Hafner ex-Sunko, Dionis Sunko and Humbert Sunko, City of Zagreb representatives: Slaviša Katkić, member of the City Magistrate and Dr. Milan Figatner, city district physician, engineer Milivoj Majcen, director of the Mirogoj cemetery, Ferdinand (Ferdo) Pajas, correspondent of the “Narodne novine” newspapers, and members of the Brotherhood of Croatian Dragon Society: Grand Master Emilij Laszowski, Proto-Dragon of Brlog, deputy Master Protonotary Svetoslav Gaj, Dragon of Psar, and chaplain of the parish church of St. Mark Rev. Mirko Novak, Dragon of Kneginec. Rev. Novak led the ritual ceremony and blessing of the grave, while Ferdo Pajas published a short article in “Narodne novine”.³²

The Society gathered for this project the total of 149.10 Crowns, so that Edler von Weittenhiller from Vienna sent 40 Crowns, The “Adler” Society 32 Crowns, Count Wilczek from Vienna 25 Crowns, Dr. Pettenegg from Holzenegg 20 Crowns, Dionis Sunko 20 Crowns, and Dr. Izidor Kršnjavi 10 Crowns while 2.10 Crowns were gotten from interest. The cost of exhumation and burial was 124.72 Crowns.³³ The remaining amount served for establishment of a Sunko Grave Monument Erection Fund.³⁴ It appears from data available so far, that a grave monument was never erected, neither the one promised by the Art Society nor on from this Fund.

Furthermore, Petković provides info that Sunko’s earthly remains were exhumed for the second time on 29 April 1930 and buried in a common grave at 12th Catholic field at Mirogoj.³⁵

A portrait of Milan Sunko (Fig. 3) is held in a graphical collection of the Croatian State Archives in Zagreb (inv. nr. 812)³⁶ while the same graphic may be found in the Zagreb Museum of Arts and Crafts (inv. nr. MUO-005469). It is identified there as a 1895 lithography by Lav Hartman (Lavoslav Hart-

³⁰ Petković, ZK2, p. 37.

³¹ Petković, ZK2, p. 47-49.

³² Ferdo Pajas, „Ekshumacija Milana Sunka“, *Narodne novine* (Zagreb), no 134, June 15, 1910.

³³ Petković, ZK2, p. 48.

³⁴ Petković, ZK2, p. 49.

³⁵ Petković, ZK2, p. 48.

³⁶ „Sunko Milan, inv. br. 812“, *Portreti u Grafičkoj zbirci HDA*, digital collection, Hrvatski državni arhiv, Zagreb, http://www.arhiv.hr/portals/0/_DigitalniArhiv/Portreti/Portreti-S-0812.htm (visited on December 3, 2021)



Fig. 3. Lav Hartman: Milan Sunko, lithography, ca. 1895. (MUO-005469, Museum of Arts and Crafts, Zagreb, reproduced with permission)



Fig. 4. “Milan Sunko, Slikar”, *Dom i svijet*, no. 23, 1893.

mann, 1812 – 1881), owner of the Kugli and Deutsch bookstore in Zagreb, probably made after a photograph.³⁷ The short note in the Arts and Crafts Museum provides a nice small lauda to Sunko’s work in the caption: “Sunko was also a heraldist, and made several nice ex-librises for Austrian bibliophiles.”³⁸ The same Sunko’s portrait³⁹ was published in 1893 in *Dom i svijet* (*Home and World*) journal issued by Lav Hartman (Fig. 4), followed with an unsigned extract in Croatian from the Adler necrology (not mentioned in it).⁴⁰

Petković provides a reproduction from his family collection of a nice Sunko’s self-portrait in uniform of the 25th Home Defence Zagreb Infantry Regiment from 1889 (Fig. 5).⁴¹ Note the characteristic mirrored author’s signature in it.

³⁷ „MUO-005469: Portret slikara Milana Sunka: grafika“ MUO | Athena Plus, Muzej za umjetnosti i obrt, Zagreb, <http://athena.muo.hr/?object=detail&id=22693> (visited 12.12.2021)

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ „Milan Sunko, Slikar“, *Dom i svijet: Ilustrovani list* (Zagreb), no. 23, 1893, p. 356.

⁴⁰ „Milan Sunko“, *Dom i svijet: Ilustrovani list* (Zagreb), no. 23, 1893, p. 365.

⁴¹ Petković, ZK2, p. 51.



Fig. 5. Milan Sunko: Self-Portrait, 1889. (Petković Family Collection, used with permission).

Possibly the crucial piece of information on significance of Sunko as a heraldist for Laszowski, the Draconian Society and the Croatian culture is found near the end of the 2nd Volume of Petković's *Chronicle*, which may be easily overlooked. It copies a brief note by Grand Master Emilij Laszowski, Proto-Dragon of Brlog, on his work in 1917, here copied and translated in extenso:⁴²

And more, I established a seal collection (sphragistics collection) in the City Archive, ordered in studies. The base for this collection was the collection of painter Milan Sunko, renowned heraldic artist. This collection was received from him by my boss, Dr. Ivan Bojničić, who donated it to me. I supplemented this collection with numerous seals (imprints of seal matrices from the state archives collection, the archeology museum collection and other locations, and imprints in gypsum and foil) and finally I included it in the City Archive collection.

⁴² Petković, ZK2, p. 591. quoting from Emil Laszowski: "Zagrebačka gradska pismohrana je riznica povjestnog blaga ne samo za Zagreb, nego i za cio hrvatski narod – Zbornik povjestnih spomenika grada Zagreba je djelo, koje je na diku Zagreba", *Nova Hrvatska* (Zagreb), no. 269, September 15, 1942., p. 15.

Was Laszowski somewhat confused with the names of institutions where he ordered the collection quarter of a century afterwards when he was writing this note for *Nova Hrvatska* newspapers, or if it was due some organizational or administrative differentiation that evades us from today's perspective – but the current State Archives in Zagreb (as the city archive is now named) does not hold nor it ever had a seal imprints collection, while an important and considerable collection named “Seal Imprints Collection” (*Zbirka otisaka pečata*) under the mark HR-HDA-912 forms a part of the Sphragistics collection of the Croatian State Archives (which includes also the Seal Matrices collection HR-HDA-911). The Seal Imprints Collection today counts over a thousand seal imprints of personal and family seals, seals of state and commercial institutions, guilds, counties, cities and communities (domestic and foreign), ecclesiastic, cultural and military institutions and many others ranging from the 14th century until 1918.⁴³ Unfortunately, the record on history of that archival units does not mention Sunko:⁴⁴

The Seal Imprints Collection was formed around 1900 in the Land Archives (today Croatian State Archives) through cooperation of its director Dr. Ivan Bojničić and Emilij Laszowski. They collected seals fallen off various documents and glued them on cardboards and hard paper 17×12.5 cm in size, while they also made new imprints of seal matrices kept in the collection. Each seal was numbered and all data and readable inscriptions on it were inscribed on the reverse. More damaged seals were put in a *Varia* series. In 1948 the collection was supplemented with seal imprints from seals owned by the Varaždin City Museum, and afterwards similarly from the Croatian History Museum (at the time the History Museum of Croatia).

Linking these two brief notes, it seems clear that Sunko was creator of basis for extremely rich and significant collection “valuable, beside for sphragistics, also for research of cultural-political history of Croatia between the 16th and 20th century.”⁴⁵ Thus, Ivan Bojničić, director of the Land Archives, got, apparently around 1890, presented from Milan Sunko carefully collected set of imprints, that he found no time to study and organize, and he gave it in his turn to Emilij Laszowski.

In the period when Sunko was active in Zagreb in the late 80s and early 90s of the 19th century, Laszowski was studying law and since 1891 he was

⁴³ *Inventar Sfragističke zbirke Arhiva Hrvatske (HDA-912/P – 1) /Zagreb: Arhiv Hrvatske u Zagrebu, s. a.)*

⁴⁴ “HR-HDA-912”, *Arhivsko gradivo – Nacionalni arhivski informacijski sustav* (Zagreb: Hrvatski državni arhiv), http://arhinet.arhiv.hr/details.aspx?ItemId=1_4824 (visited on December 15, 2021).

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

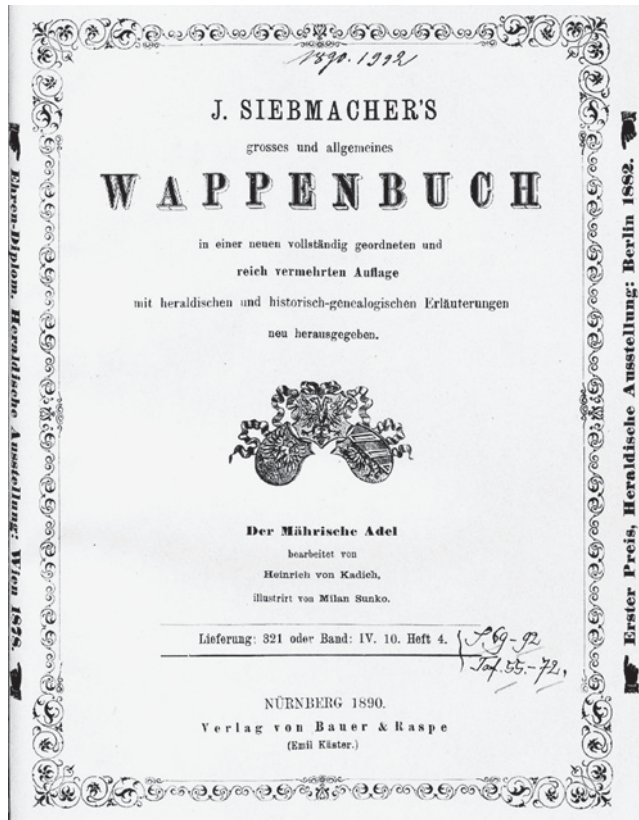


Fig. 6. Supplemental booklet 321 cover page of the Siebmacher's Armorial Book.

working as a lawyer in the Land Archive. There is no doubt that there he had chance to meet and apparently gain great respect towards eight-years older heraldic artist. It is not beyond compression that Laszowski may have learned much about heraldry from Sunko and that he may have considered Sunko a sort of a mentor.*

However, the necrology in the Adler Yearbook is not the first mention of Milan Sunko there. In the 1891 book, in the bibliography list for 1890,⁴⁶ in

⁴⁶ „Literaturbericht über das Jahr 1890“, *Jahrbuch der K. k. heraldiscen Gesellschaft „Adler“*, Neue Folge 1 (Vienna: K. k. heraldische Gesellschaft „Adler“, 1891), pp. 265-275.

* After the paper was submitted for publication, DBHZ reobtained a collection of seal imprints in plaster and in foil that was taken when the Society was disbanded in 1946 and was being held quietly and unregistered by various institutions, to be finally found in Croatan History Museum atticks after the 2021 earthquake, when it was being relocated. This may well be the mentioned Sunko's collection amended by Laszowski or a copy of it. It consists of about 300 plaster and some 100 foil seal imprints. Further research is required.

the heraldry section (*Heraldik./Lehrschriften. Wappenbücher, Monographien.*) the first record quites the most important heraldic edition of the period, the *Siebmachers großes und allgemeines Wappenbnch*, issued by Bauer and Raspe in Nuremberg. There the monthly additions are listed since 1889, where there is a record on monthly booklet nr. 321:

Lfg. 321: Der mährische Adel von Heinrich v. Kadich. — Text: Liebeniczky bis Orlik. Tafeln (trefflich gezeichnet von Milan Sunko): Liebenberg bis Ottersdorf.

This refers to the booklet (Lfg.=*Leiferung*) for the monograph of Moravian nobility arms prepared by Heinrich Kadich Edler von Pferd,⁴⁷ covering the Moravian nobility families starting in letters L though O with graphical tables on separate sheets “splendidly drawn by Milan Sunko” (*trefflich gezeichnet von Milan Sunko*). This modest brief praise needs to be particularly stressed, because for the other eleven monthly supplement booklets a draftsman was not mentioned, even less with such a superlative. Indeed, the cover page of the booklet 321 (“oder Band: IV.10. Heft 4”) states “Ilustrirt von Milan Sunko” (Fig. 6). The same inscription is present also on “Heft 3” (Lfg. 302, 1889), while the covers of previous two booklets do not mention Sunko (Lfg. 277, 1887 and Lfg. 283, 1888). Conrad Blažek joined Kadich in the next booklet (Lfg. 406, 1897), and Sunko is no loner mentioned as the illustrator, while subsequent booklets only credit Blažek (Lfg. 406, 1897, Lfg. 411, 1897, Lfg. 416, [n. d.] = 1897, Lfg. 424, 1898, Lfg. 426, 1898, Lfg. 435, 1899, Lfg. 438, 1899 i Lfg. 439, 1899). Anyway, the vast majority of the Sibmacher series monthly supplement booklets has no explicit credit to the illustrator, although several booklets, also prepared by Blažek, include the formulation that he has “prepared and illustrated” (*bearbeitet und ilustrirt*), but otherwise it is mostly a single author mentioned who had prepared (*bearbeitet*) it. Illustrators that got mentioned in other Siebmacher series included A. M. Hildebrandt⁴⁸ and A. von Bierbrauer-Brennstein.⁴⁹

⁴⁷ Heinrich Kadich Edler von Pferd (Brünn, 1865 – Vienna, 1918), count concillor, state official, genealoist and heraldist, cf. s. v. Österreichisches Biographisches Lexikon und biographische Dokumentation, 2003–2020 Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, https://www.biographien.ac.at/oeb1/oeb1_K/Kadich-Pferd_Heinrich_1865_1918.xml (visited on February 4, 2022.)

⁴⁸ E. g. Georg Adalbert von Mülverstedt; Adolf Matthias Hildebrant, *Der abgestorbene Adel der Provinz Pommern*, J. Siebmacher’s grosses und allgemeines Wappenbuch, Band VI, Abtheilung 9 (Nuremberg: Bauer und Raspe, 1894)

⁴⁹ E. g. Hermann Adrian Guenther von Goecking; A. von Bierbrauer-Brennstein: *Der abgestorbene Nassauische Adel*, J. Siebmacher’s grosses und allgemeines Wappenbuch, Band VI, Abtheilung 7 (Nuremberg: Bauer und Raspe, 1882)

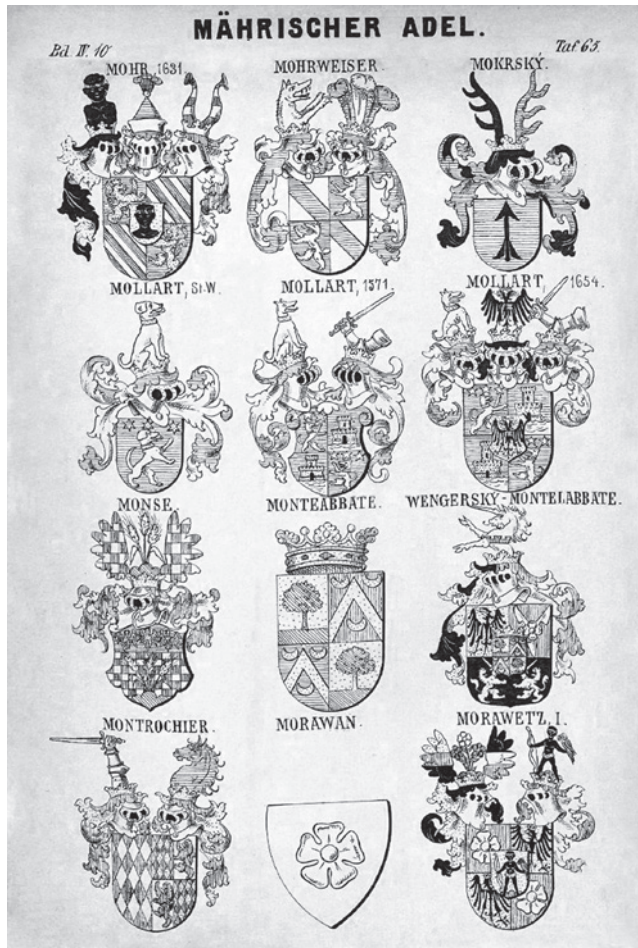


Fig. 7. Siebmacher's Armorial Book booklet 321 Plate 65 illustrated by Milan Sunko.

The Siebmacher's armorial book of Moravian nobility was integrally published as a monograph in 1899,⁵⁰ and in it the Sunko's plates are numbered 55 through 72 (Fig. 7).

The mention might lead us to suspect that Sunko cooperated with Bojničić in his preparation of the armorial book for the Kingdom of Croatia and Slavonia,⁵¹ published in the same Siebmacher's armorial series, and it even has the same year of issue, the year of 1899, as the Moravian armorial, printed

⁵⁰ Heinrich von Kadich; Conrad Blažek, *Der Mährische Adel*, J. Siebmacher's grosses und allgemeines Wappenbuch, Band IV, Abtheilung 10 (Nuremberg: Bauer und Raspe, 1899)

⁵¹ Ivan Bojničić, *Der Adel des Königreich Croatien und Slavonien*, J. Siebmacher's grosses und allgemeines Wappenbuch, Band IV, Abtheilung 13 (Nuremberg: Bauer und Raspe, 1899)

on the cover, however, the Bojničić's booklets were issued only from 1896, five years after Sunko's much too early death (Lfg. 395, 1896, Lfg. 398, 1896, Lfg. 405, 1897, Lfg. 409, 1897, Lfg. 414, 1897, Lfg. 417, 1897, Lfg. 421, 1898, Lfg. 425, 1898, Lfg. 429, 1898, Lfg. 436, 1899). The Bojničić's booklets, like most others in the series, provide no illustrator's name. As far as the author of this paper is aware, no illustrator was identified so far for the Bojničić's capital work of Croatian heraldry.

Sunko is also mentioned in the Report from the 21st General Assembly of the Adler Society, published in their monthly papers for March 1891.⁵² The Assembly was held on 7 February 1891 and beside the elections of society's officers, it included lectures and an exhibition of heraldic art. It included:

Our esteemed member, Count Hubert Harnoncour, sent an extremely impressive family tree painted by Mr. Milan Sunko, which aroused general admiration both through the figurative and the very atmospherically composed depiction of the ancestors of Johann de Lafontaine Cruise.⁵³

By the early 1890s Sunko proved himself as a skillful heraldic artist, and he is thus mentioned in several monographs on *ex libris* bookplates, where he is counted among the most prominent German and Austrian authors of heraldic *ex libris*. Thus, Warnecke mentions him in the Introduction (*Einleitung*) of his *ex libris* monograph.⁵⁴

In modern times, the professors Ad. M. Hildebrandt and Emil Doepler Jr. in Berlin, as well as painters Otto Hupp in Schleißheim, Ernst Krahl and Milan Sunko in Vienna, professors Ludwig Richter and Brückner in Dresden, Professor Ludwig Bürger and engraver Carl Leonhard Becker in Berlin, painter Christian Bühler in Bern and many more. They earned the merit of not only reviving the beautiful old custom, but also of approaching the masters of the 16th century with their work, whose achievements still arouse our admiration today.⁵⁵

⁵² Moriz Wertner, „Die XXI. Generalversammlung“, *Monatsblatt der Kaiserliche königliche heraldischen Gesellschaft "Adler"* III Bd. (March 1891), no 3. (123): 13-17.

⁵³ „Unser hochgeehrtes Mitglied, Graf Hubert Harnoncour sendete einen äußerst imposanten, von Herrn Milan Sunko gemalten Stammbaum, der sowohl durch die figural als auch landschaftlich sehr stimmungsvoll komponierte Darstellung von des Ahnherrn Johann de Lafontaine Kreuzfahrt allgemeine Bewunderung erregte.“

⁵⁴ Friedrich Warnecke, *Die deutschen Bücherzeichen (Ex-libris): von ihrem Ursprunge bis zur Gegenwart*, (Berlin : Verlag von J.A. Stargardt, 1890), p. 20, <https://www.e-rara.ch/zut/content/structure/22716086> (visited on December 3, 2021).

⁵⁵ „In der Neuzeit haben sich ganz besonders die Professoren Ad. M. Hildebrandt und Emil Doepler d. J. zu Berlin, sowie Maler Otto Hupp in Schleißheim, Ernst Krahl und Milan Sunko

Warnecke also provides two examples of Sunko's ex libris on the plate XXVI (Fig. 8).⁵⁶

The first example (nr. 1249) has a plaque inscribed "Ex libris Ottonis Mautner de Markhof" and a field "N^{no}" for a number to be manually inscribed. The central element of the bookplate is the coat of arms of the Mautner family, depicted in an arched portal with two rozettes in the corners. The coat of arms is per pale, gules three clover leaves, a quatrefoil and two trefoils, conjoined in stems issuant from a bar wavy argent and azure a masonry tower argent roofed azure on ground vert. Two helmets crowned regardant, on the dexter two wings issuant, a gules ensigned as in the dexter field and an argent, and on the sinister two wings quartered azure and argent. The mantle dexter gules and argent and sinister azure and argent. Signed to the left of the coat of arms above the plaque: "M. Sunko".

Dr. Otto Mautner Ritter von Markhof (Vienna, 1868 – Berlin, 1905) was a son of a Viennese industrialist, brewery and food industry owner from a Christianized Jewish family originating from Bohemia, a writer, and a bibliophile. The Austrian nobility was granted to the family on 14 May 1872.⁵⁷

The other included ex libris (nr. 144) is also based on architectural frame, this time showing a richly ornamented Gothic portal, inscribed along the top "A. Dm̃. 1438", and along the bottom in two rows "GERARD / BAVTRAXLER". A coat of arms is shown in the centre without indication of heraldic tinctures: in a shield between two six-pointed mullets a sword on a bend sinister. From a crowned helmet above there is issuing a worker holding in its enbowed raised dexter arm a pickaxe and leaning the other arm on his sinister side. The ex libris has no designer mark. Ger(h)ard P. Bautraxler (Waller, Upper Austria, 1835 – Vienna, 1895)⁵⁸ was director of a Benedictine higher gymnasium in the Lower Austrian city of Seitenstetten.⁵⁹

in Wien, die Professoren Ludwig Richter und Brückner in Dresden , Professor Ludwig Bürger und Kupferstecher Carl Leonhard Becker in Berlin, Maler Christian Bühler zu Bern u. v. A. das verdienst erworben , die schöne alte Sitte nicht nur wieder neu zu beleben, sondern mit ihren Arbeiten sich den Meistern des 16. Jahrhunderts zu nähern, deren Leistungen noch heute unsere Bewunderung erregen."

⁵⁶ Warnecke, 1890, Tafel XXVI. (figures 144 and 1249)

⁵⁷ "Wappen der Ritter Mautner von Markhof", *Dynastie Mautner Markhof*, <https://www.dynastiemautnermarkhof.com/de/familienchronik/familienwappen/> (visited on December 14, 2021)

⁵⁸ "Todesszenen von Mönchen der Malerin Maria Sturm in der Totenkapelle im Benediktinerstift Seitenstetten", Wikimedia Commons, https://commons.m.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Maria_Sturm_Totenkapelle_Stift_Seitenstetten_05.jpg (visited on December 14, 2021)

⁵⁹ "Nécrologie", *Revue Bénédictine* 12 (1895), no. 3: 188-190.



Fig. 8. Ex libris by Milan Sunko for Otto Mautner von Markhof and Gerard Bau-traxler (Warnecke, 1890, Tafel XXVI).

Another monograph on German and Austrian bookplates mentioning Sunko is by Leiningen-Westerburg, published in 1901 in German in Stuttgart⁶⁰ and that same year translated in English by George Ravenscroft Dennis in London and New York.⁶¹ The monograph is divided by periods, so that in its Chapter XI titled “Modern Exlibris: 1871 – 1900” (*Neuzeit 1871–1900*) in subchapter “A. Heraldic exlibris (with arms only)” (*A. Reinheraldische Exlibris*), it starts with listing of “a. designers” (*a. Die hervorragendsten Zeicher*) grouped into “Professional artists” (*aa. Berufskünstler*), for Austria after two entries for heraldic giants Ernst Krahl and Hugo Gerard Ströhl, the third is mentioned Milan Sunko, followed by Heinrich Jauner, Johann Schwerdiner, Karl Boess, Vincenz Katzler, Leopold Geisbe, Oskar Grüner, and the companies of Camillo Lambotte Theyer and Hartmuth, C. Angerer and Göschl. The entries for Sunko states:⁶²

⁶⁰ Karl Emich Graf zu Leiningen-Westerburg, *Deutsche und Oesterreichische Bibliothekzeichen Exlibris – Ein Handbuch für Sammler Bücher- und Kunstfreunde*, (Stuttgart: Julius Hoffmann Verlag, 1901).

⁶¹ Karl Emich Count zu Leiningen-Westerburg, *German Book-plates – An Illustrated Handbook of German & Austrian Exlibris* (Translated by George Ravenscroft Dennis) (London & New York: George Bell & Sons, 1901).

⁶² Leiningen-Westerburg, *German Book-plates*, p. 392 (in the German edition) and p. 376 (in the English edition).

Milan Sunko, mehrere Exlibris, darunter das schöne des Rats Josef Leidinger, †, Wien, 1886 bzw. 1896; Wappen mit Schildhalterin, Lichtdruck.

Milan Sunko; several exlibris, including the beautiful plate of the late Josef Leidinger, Councillor (Vienna), 1886 and 1896.

Unfortunately, no edition provides reproduction of Sunko's works, however, the author of this paper believes the mentioned Leidinger⁶³ ex libris might be the MGP-608 described further on.

However, even if it may be that Croatian heraldry has temporary forgotten all about Milan Sunko and his work, the art historians in Croatia keep due memory on him and they regularly mention his heraldic importance – although, as it appears, heraldists rarely read their works. Thus, Sunko got his entry in the Croatian Art Encyclopedia (*Enciklopedija likovnih umjetnosti*), in its last volume published in 1966 by the Jugoslav Lexicographic Institute:⁶⁴

SUNKO [...]

2. Milan, painter (Zidani Most, 1860 – Zagreb, March 9, 1891).

Studied at the Academy in Vienna (J. Petschnig and H. Klein). He painted lyrically intoned landscapes from Bosnia and Italy, portraits, and folklore scenes in watercolor. He was engaged in numismatics and archeology, drawing, and recording architectural monuments of the past, mostly from the Križevci area. He distinguished himself as a painter of coats of arms, working on heraldic motifs for Austrian and English customers. His works were exhibited at the Economic Exhibition in Zagreb in 1891, at the Millennium Exhibition in Budapest in 1896, at the Exhibition of Vukovar Portraits of the 19th and 20th Centuries in Vukovar in 1961, and others [Ž. D.]

The most famous Sunko's artistic achievement seems to be his participation at the 1891 exhibition of the Arts and Crafts Society in Zagreb, organized as a kind of a side show of the International Husbandry Exhibition in Zagreb.

⁶³ [Obituary for Joseph Leidinger], *Monatsblatt der Kaiserliche königliche heraldischen Gesellschaft "Adler"* VI Bd. (August 1897), no. 20 (200): 212.

⁶⁴ "SUNKO [...] 2. Milan, slikar (Zidani Most, 1860 – Zagreb, 9. III 1891). Studirao na akademiji u Beču (J. Petschnig i H. Klein). Slikao u akvarelu lirske intonirane pejzaže iz Bosne i Italije, portrete i folklorne prizore. Bavio se numizmatikom i arheologijom, crtao i snimao arhitektonske spomenike prošlosti, pretežno iz križevačkog kraja. Istakao se kao slikar grbova radeći heraldičke motive za austr. i engl. naručioce. Radovi su mu bili izloženi na Gospodarskoj izložbi u Zagrebu 1891, na Milenijskoj izložbi u Budimpešti 1896, na Izložbi vukovarskih portreta XIX i XX st. u Vukovaru 1961 i dr. [Ž. D.]", *Enciklopedija likovnih umjetnosti*, 4: *Portr-Ž+Dodatak* (Zagreb : Jugoslavenski leksikografski zavod, 1966), s. v. Sunko, 2. Milan.

The exhibition catalogue⁶⁵ lists Sunko's artworks exhibited, one among some thirty paintings in Hall nr. VII:

207. Sunko Milan, Vienna, On the border.

and no less than 24 among 75 paintings in the Hall nr. IX under the joint title "Watercolors, pastels and the like", some with indicated price in Forints (Ft):

278. Sunko Milan, Vienna, Ruins of Kalnik. Price 250 Ft.

279. Sunko Milan, Naples, Owner Count G. Pettenegg in Vienna.

280. Sunko Milan, Catania on Sicily, Owner Count Pettenegg.

281. Sunko Milan, The Coat of Arms of Schlecht, Owned by the Adler Heraldic Society in Vienna.

282. Sunko Milan, The Coat of Arms of Prince Rudolf, Owned by Adler.

283. Sunko Milan, A Cover Page, Owned by Dr. Bojničić.

284. Sunko Milan, A Young Man from Naum.

285. Sunko Milan, A Mill. Price 25 Ft.

286. Sunko Milan, A Peasant's Head. Price 10 Ft.

287. Sunko Milan, A Bagpiper. Price 30 Ft.

288. Sunko Milan, A Bosnian Boy. Price 25 Ft.

289. Sunko Milan, Girl. Price 50 Ft.

290. Sunko Milan, A Home Guard. Price 25 Ft.

...

306. Sunko Milan, A View at Grado. Price 100 Ft.

307. Sunko Milan, Glogovnica. Price 100 Ft.

...

320. Sunko Milan, A Landscape. Price 30 Ft.

321. Sunko Milan. A Mosque. Price 25 Ft.

322. Sunko Milan, A Scene from Rome. Price 50 Ft.

323. Sunko Milan, A Sketch. Price 10 Ft.

...

331. Sunko Milan, Veliki Tabor. Price 100 Ft.

332. Sunko Milan, Entrance to Arnaudija Mosque in Banja Luka. Price 150 Ft.

⁶⁵ Antun Aron, *Izložba Društva za umjetnost i umjetni obrt u Zagrebu 1891*. (Zagreb : Društvo za umjetnost i umjetni obrt, 1891).

333. Sunko Milan, A Turk with a Watermelon. Price 50 Ft.

334. Sunko Milan, A Peasant from Sisak. Price 50 Ft.

335. Sunko Milan, Sulphur Baths in Banja Luka. Price 100 Ft.

Among the listed works there are, thus, two or three coats of arms. It is not easy to dismiss an impression that the exhibited “Cover Page” owned by Ivan Bojničić would be of any other but heraldic topic. The author’s research curiosity would rather speculate that it may be from possible and early version of design prepared for Bojničić’s *Der Adel des Königsrech Croatien und Slavonien*, published only in 1899.⁶⁶ No cover page of Bojničić’s work was identified so far that could be attributed to Sunko, so it may well be that Bojničić has not used it anywhere at all.*

While engaging into speculation, the author supposes that the listed “Home Guard” may well be the self-portrait in a home guard uniform, now in Petković’s collection mentioned above.

A brief biography of Milan Sunko, accompanied with Ströhl’s vignette around Sunko’s self-portrait was published by Emilij Laszowski in his monumental lexicographic-biographic work *Znameniti i zaslužni Hrvati te pomena vrijedna lica u hrvatskoj povijesti od 925–1925 (Famous and Deserving Croats and Notable Figures in Croatian History from 925–1925)* based on the text published in the Adler Yearbook in 1893. It seems that all subsequent texts mentioning Sunko draw their data from that source:⁶⁷

⁶⁶ However, the well known and often reproduced cover page of that work was made by Italo (Kamilo) Hochetlinger (Osijek, 1868 – Zagreb, 1923), who clearly signed it. Italo Hochetlinger graduated art at the Vienna Academy in the same year that Sunko died.

* The author recently located in the DBHZ archives an inventory list of the Society’s Museum in Ozalj, undated, from 1940s, typed with numerous corrections written in it. It is attached to a request form for return of confiscated property the Society filed to the competent office of the Karlovac County, dated 26 July 1997, containing several other inventories being sought for. The Museum inventory counts 950 items briefly described including the provenience notes. Among them there are a dozen items directly attributed to Sunko, mostly watercolors and ink drawings (now apparently in various museums in Zagreb). Here is the most interesting entry nr. 766:

Naslovni list za “Plemstvo Kraljevine Hrvatske, Slavonije i Dalmacije Izdao D. Ivan pl. Bojničić” Sign. Mil. Sunko. Beč 12.V.91. akvarel – Dar Dr. Vjera pl. Bojničić E. Laszowskom 1927 [koji ga je] Dep[onirao u muzej]

This confirms that the Cover Page listed as 283 in the 1891 exhibition catalogue was indeed the one prepared for the prominent book. Current location remains unknown. If this was similar to the final cover on the issued book, which is signed by I. (Italo Kamilo) Hochetlinger, Sunko’s colleague from the period and the same cultural circle, remains unknown.

⁶⁷ Aleksandar pl. Balogh; Emilij Laszowski (ed.), *Znameniti i zaslužni Hrvati te pomena vrijedna lica u hrvatskoj povijesti od 925-1925: sa pregledom povijesti Hrvatske, Bosne i*

SUNKO MILAN, heraldic painter. He was born in Zidani Most on 5 December 1860, moving with his parents to Sisak, he became interested in Roman antiquities, which he began to draw. He finished a primary school in Petrinja, and secondary in Rijeka. In 1875 he went to Vienna Art Academy, student to architect Prof. Ivan Petsehing and painting Prof. Hans Klein. He progressed excellently in spite of modest resources, and he devoted himself to heraldic painting and created the finest works. Even small pictures from rural life and folk costumes from Croatia prove a great understanding of natural beauty. He worked with his left hand. He worked a lot for art institute St. Norbertus in Vienna. He is a special connoisseur of styles; his works in the Baroque show his special gift and inexhaustible imagination. In 1884, a soldier in Bosnia and Croatia, in 1890 he traveled with his benefactor Count Petteg to Italy. He contracted laryngeal tuberculosis. In 1891 he received recognition and honorary diploma for his watercolors in the Zagreb art exhibition. He died in the Hospital of the Brothers of Mercy in Zagreb on March 9, 1892. He was buried at the Mirogoj cemetery in Zagreb. The Brothers of Croatian Dragon with help of his excellent Viennese admirers, transferred him to an honorary tomb. A larger collection of his works can be found in the collection of Brothers of Croatian Dragon. – E. L.

Sunko's works were exhibited in several exhibitions after his death. In a series of retrospective exhibition of Croatian art held in 1934 in Zagreb in the Old Masters Gallery of then Yugoslav (today Croatian) Academy of Arts and Crafts, an exhibition titled "The Zagreb Circle: Crnčić – Kovačević – Tišov 1890-1910" was held. Among some hundred works of artists mentioned in the title, a single work by Milan Sunko was included – The city of Kalnik from the collection of the Archeology Museum in Zagreb. The catalogue provided a brief biography:⁶⁸

MILAN SUNKO

(December 5, 1860 Zidani most – March 9, 1892 Zagreb)

He finished primary school in Patrinja, secondary in Rijeka. He went to Viennese Art Academy in 1875, taught by J. Petsching and H. Klein. He drew coat of arms, painted scenes from Croatian peasant life and folk costumes. He exhibited watercolors at the Zagreb 1891 exhibition.

Istre, hrvatske književnosti i razvitka hrvatskog jezika, te hrv. vladara, hercega, banova i biskupa kao uvodom. sa 9 zasebnih slika, te 421. slikom u tekstu: prigodom proslava 1000-godišnjice hrvatskog kraljevstva (Zagreb: Odbor za izdavanje knjige Zaslužni i znameniti hrvati, 1925), p. 250., <http://library.foi.hr/lib/knjiga.php?sqlx=X00270&sqlid=1&sqlnivo=&rb=901&MG=&lang=&H=varazdin&U=> (visited on December 14, 2021)

⁶⁸ *Retrospektivne izložbe hrvatske umjetnosti o pedesetoj godišnjici "Strossmayerove galerije" 30. IX. – 14. X. 1934.* (Zareb: Tiskara Narodnih novina, 1934)

An exhibition of Yugoslav and Czechoslovak graphic artist was set up in June 1921 in Osijek, with two of Sunkos works:⁶⁹

SUNKO MILAN :

110. A Vignetta, pen drawing

111. A Sketch, brush drawing

In more recent time, Vera Kržišnik Bukić mentions Sunko among fifty or so “assumed Slovenians among those deserving Croats [from the above-mentioned Laszowski’s bibliographic lexicon], judged by ethnical or local source” [i.e. where they were born], among some three thousand biographies appearing in that luxurious anthology.⁷⁰ We do not know how Sunko ethnically considered himself, but however it may have been, the Slovenians living in Zagreb and Croatia today count him among their compatriots. Thus Polonija Jurinić included Sunko among “fine artists in Croatia who were born in Slovenia, who acted or studied as Slovenian in Croatia or being of Slovenian origin”. A relatively large number of Slovenians in Croatian art she explains with the fact that the Zagreb Art Academy was established in 1907, while the one in Ljubljana followed only in 1946, so that a large number of the Zagreb Academy students came from Slovenia as well.⁷¹ Jurinić thus counts Sunko among 27 Slovenian artists in Croatia in the 19th century, with a brief biography presented so:

SUNKO MILAN, painter

(Zidani Most, December 5, 1860 – Zagreb, March 9, 1891)

He studied at the Academy in Viena. He painted watercolor landscapes in Bosnia and Italy, portraits and folklore scenes. He was active in numismatics and archeology, he was drawing and photographing architectural monuments from the past, mostly from the Križevci region. He excelled as heraldic painter, producing heraldic ornaments for Austrian and English clients. His works were exhibited at the Husbandry Exhibition in Zagreb 1891, at the Vukovar portraits exhibition of the 19th and 20th century in 1961 and others.

Besides that, she also provided a reproduction of Sunko’s landscape kept in the Zagreb Modern Gallery (today the National Museum of Modern Art),

⁶⁹ Miljenko D. Gjurić, *Izložba jugoslavenskih i čehoslovačkih grafičara umjetnika* (Osijek: Tisak Hrvatskog štamparskog zavoda d. d., Podružnica Osijek, 1921).

⁷⁰ Vera Kržišnik Bukić, “Znameniti Slovenci na Hrvaškem skozi zgodovino”, *Migracijske i etničke teme* 22 (2006), no. 4: 421 – 445.

⁷¹ Polona Jurinić, *Slovenske boje u hrvatskoj likovnoj umjetnosti/Slovenske barve v hrvaški likovni umetnosti*, (Zagreb: Vijeće slovenske nacionalne manjine Grada Zagreba/Svet slovenske nacionalne manjšine Mesta Zagreb i Slovenski dom Zagreb, 2012).

identified to be the one numbered MGP-583. It is signed “Slikao Milan Sunko” (painted by Milan Sunko). The museum holds 38 Sunko’s works, mostly studies and sketches. Among those with heraldic contents, we may mention:



Fig. 9. Milan Sunko: Stephen of Meissa seal, an ink sketch (MGP-594, the National Museum of Modern Art).

- MGP-594 (Fig. 9), an ink sketch for what appears a 13th c. seal of Stephen of Meissaw (Meissau), High Marchal of Austria, depicting a knight with a coat of arms (or a unicorn rampant sable) ⁷²

⁷² Representation of the seal attached to the charter „Stephan von Maissau tauscht mit Herzog Albrecht I. von Österreich sein Patronatsrecht in Niederschleinz gegen dasjenige in Neunkirchen ein” (dated 10 February 1291), Reference Code: AT-OeStA/HHStA UR AUR 2400. Österreichisches Staatsarchiv; Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv; Urkundenreihen, Siegelabguss- und Typarsammlungen, Staatsverträge Abschriften und Drucke, 0816.02.05 – 1918.09.14; Allgemeine Urkundenreihe <https://www.archivinformationssystem.at/detail.aspx?ID=307014>



Fig. 10. Milan Sunko: Blessed Stilla von Abenberg, a lithography (MGP-598-2, the National Museum of Modern Art).

- MGP-598-2 (Fig. 10), a lithography of “B. Stilla” (Stilla von Abenberg, +1140), church founder and benefactor, beatified in 1927, with coat of arms of the Counts of Abbenberg (azure semee of roses two lions passant guardant argent)⁷³

⁷³ [Ludwig Karl Schmid?] (F.-K.) “Ueber das Wappen der Grafen von Abenberg.” Kupferzell, 1880.



Fig. 11. Milan Sunko: Heinrich Kadich von Pferd coat of arms, a water color, 1890 (MGP-606, the National Museum of Modern Art).

- MGP-606 (Fig. 11), a water-colored drawing of Kadich von Pferd arms (azure a bend sinister between a horse head and two horseshoes all argent),⁷⁴ used as a souvenir gift by Heinrich von Kadich, dated 21. September 1890, note inscribed in pencil by Sunko (?) “Risao Milan Sunko” (i.e. Drawn by Milan Sunko)

⁷⁴ Kadich and Blažek, *Der Mährische Adel*, p. 53, T. 39.



Fig. 12. Milan Sunko: Leidinger heraldic supporter, a lithography, 1885 (MGP-595, the National Museum of Modern Art).

- MGP-595 (Fig. 12), a lithography depicting Leidinger heraldic supporter – a girl holding in her upright arms two trowels, signed with MS cypher and year 1885.



Fig. 13. Milan Sunko: Ex libris Joseph Leidinger, a heliogravure on copperplate, 1886 (MGP-608, the National Museum of Modern Art).

- MGP-608 (Fig. 13), a heliogravure on copperplate, a circular book-plate depicting Leidinger coat of arms (azure [sc. sable?]⁷⁵ three trowels argent)⁷⁶ with the crest and supporter. The motto is inscribed around the top circumference: “NVNQAM MVTO COLOREM” (*I never change color*). Note the Sunko’s cypher “MS” with a cross and the year 1886 (Fig. 14). The drawing is signed “Milan Sunko fec. Sv. Jana 1886” (Sv. Jana being spa near Jastrebarsko, 20 km west of Zagreb).

⁷⁵ Poster stamps (*Reklamemarke*) issued between 1900 and 1920 by publisher “A. Weller” Kahla, Thuringia, include two colored version of Leidinger coat of arms, a black/sable background being identified as “Wiener Linie” (Vienna line), nr. 101, and the blue/azure as the “bayerische Linie” (Bavarian line), nr. 109, of the family.

⁷⁶ See Bernhard Peter, „Historische heraldische Exlibris (68)“, *Heraldik – die Welt der Wappen*, 2020, <http://www.welt-der-wappen.de/Heraldik/seiten/exlibris68.htm> (visited on January 27, 2022) and „Leidinger, Joseph (XIX. sz.), címeres ex libris, litográfia“, *Bibliotheca Ecclesiae Metropolitanae Strigoniensis*, http://bibliotheca.hu/possessores/356_leidinger.htm (visited 27.1.2022). Also compare the two design at „2 Stück Exlibris Otto Hupp für Joseph Leidinger (273)“, <https://picclick.de/2-St%C3%BCck-Exlibris-Otto-Hupp-f%C3%BCr-Joseph-Leidinger-114258030913.html> (visited on January 27, 2022).

The Leidinger's exquisite book-plate is such a meticulous work that it is no wonder that it deserved mention in Leiningen-Westerburg handbook quoted above.

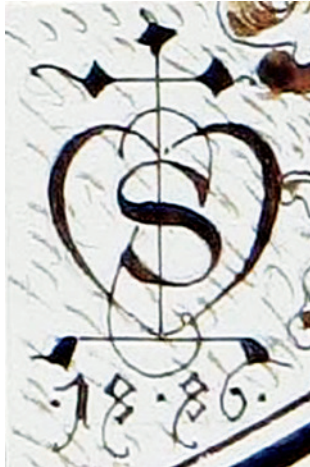


Fig. 14. The Sunko cypher detail of the Leidinger ex libris.

Also in 2012 Milan Sunko is mentioned in a book by physician and poet Boris Vrga entitled *Tuberkuloza i likovnost (Tuberculosis and Fine Arts)* listing artists who suffered and/or died from this severe illness, but unfortunately, except of his name and the years of birth and death, this interesting publication provides nothing more on him.⁷⁷

The Sunko's activity is mentioned also in a paper by Kraševac and Tonković based on his participation at the First International Art exhibition in Zagreb 1891, being part of an international network of artists in the period of early Art Nouveau.⁷⁸

Croatian literature on ex libris also mentions Sunko, thus he appears in Bratulić monograph,⁷⁹ as well as in some graduate works.⁸⁰

Unfortunately, even if the Free and Royal City of Zagreb Magistrate satisfied the petition of the Brotherhood of Croatian Dragon Society and donated the

⁷⁷ Boris Vrga, *Tuberkuloza i likovnost* (Petrinja, 2012)

⁷⁸ Irena Kraševac; Željka Tonković, "Umjetničko umrežavanje putem izložaba u razdoblju rane moderne – sudjelovanje hrvatskih umjetnika na međunarodnim izložbama od 1891. do 1900. godine", *Radovi Instituta za povijest umjetnosti* 40 (2016): 203-217.

⁷⁹ Josip Bratulić, *Hrvatski ex libris: prilog povijesti hrvatskih knjižnica* (Zagreb: Ex Libris, 2007).

⁸⁰ Zrinka Ivković, *Ex libris u Hrvatskoj krajem 19. stoljeća do 30-ih godina 20. stoljeća: diplomski rad* (Zagreb: Filozofski fakultet Sveučilišta u Zagrebu, 2012).

grave lot at the city cemetery, where the Society transferred his earthly remains, it appears that the Magistrate failed to comply to the second part of the request of 15 January 1910 “that the arranged tomb with a monument take under care for eternal preservation and maintenance”.⁸¹ Even more, from the data available so far, it is not clear if the Arts Society ever delivered the promised grave monument or if one was managed to be raised from the Fund established by the Draconian Society. Certainly, it seems that the city magistrate has not ensured financing for the grave maintenance so that the City Cemeteries company exhumed Sunko’s new grave from the lot RKT-9a-I-60⁸² on 29 April 1930 and relocated the remains into a common grave at the site RKT-12-II/I-58-60 (Fig. 15).⁸³ There numerous remains from “abandoned” graves were buried if prescribed fee was not paid for a longer period of time. This common grave has no names of buried there inscribed, so that Milan Sunko, inspite of all the efforts of the Draconian Society has no marked grave in Zagreb after all (Fig. 16).⁸⁴

PREZIME I IME:		<i>Sunko Milan</i>	
ZANIMANJE:	<i>službenik</i>	RODNO:	<i>Lidanski most</i>
STAROST:	<i>31 g.</i>	NAKLADNO:	<i>Lidac</i>
VAJERA:	<i>AKI</i>	OSTAVANJA:	<i>Mica 40</i>
STATUS:	<i>nekrestan</i>	SMRTI:	
DAN, MAREC I GODINA:	SMRTI:	MATIČNI URED:	
	<i>9. IV. 1892</i>		
POKOJA:	<i>16. III. 1892</i>		
POSLEDNJA BOLEST:	<i>Tbc</i>		
SMBRANJE U:	DOJELU:	ARKADI:	KAPELI:
	<i>AKI</i>		
	POLJU:	RAZREDU:	GROBU:
	<i>9A</i>	<i>I.</i>	<i>60</i>
PLAĆENO KOD GRAD. BLAD.	DAN:	ČL.	DM.
	<i>19.10</i>	<i>42</i>	
OPASKA	<i>Ekst. 29/IV.1930 u kosturnicu.</i>		

Fig. 15. Index card of deceased Milan Sunko, City Cemeteries Zagreb, with a note on transfer of remains “Eks. 29/IV.1930. u kosturnicu” (exhumed on 29 April 1930 into the ossuary).

⁸¹ Petković, ZK2, pp. 11-12.

⁸² This lot today holds a grave of the Suden family, apparently first used so soon after Sunko was exhumed. The first burial date for the grave is recorded to 5 October 1930. *Tražilica pokojnika*, Gradska groblja Zagreb, <https://www.gradskagroblja.hr/trazilica-pokojnika/15> (visited on December 15, 2021)

⁸³ Matična kartica pok. Milan Sunko, Gradska groblja, Zagreb.

⁸⁴ „Common Grave, Mirogoj“, Billion Graves, <https://hr.billiongraves.international/grave/Common-Grave/27837705> (visited 4.2.2022)

The database available at the City Cemeteries web site lists total of 300 names moved to this common grave (it appears due to technical limit of 100 records per a grave lot, the common grave covering three lots), but it does not include the name of Milan Sunko.⁸⁵



Fig. 16. Common grave of exhumated remains from graves at the Mirogoj cemetery, RKT-12-II/I-58-60. (Photo: Sabrina, January 15, 2015, BillionGraves).

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⁸⁵ *Tražilica pokojnika*, Gradska groblja Zagreb, <https://www.gradskagroblja.hr/trazilica-pokojnika/15> (visited on December 15, 2021)

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