

## Željko Heimer: The Flags of Zagreb

**Abstract:** Zagreb was formed in 1850 by unification of Gradec, Kaptol and two rural neighbouring communities, all tracing their establishment to the early Middle Ages. Their seals are preserved since the 15th century, while a flag is mentioned already in the 14th century. These were basis for the coats-of-arms. The oldest preserved flags of Gradec and Kaptol are from the 18th century. The rural communities used coats-of-arms but no flags. All four coats-of-arms were predominantly red, as was the municipal colour.

The unified city was granted a coat-of-arms in 1896, changing the colour of the shield to blue that from now on becomes the municipal colour. A banner of arms was adopted in 1902 and produced in 1916.

After 1945 the civic crown from the coat-of-arms was replaced with the red five-pointed star, the flag being prescribed only in 1964 with few changes in the design. In 1975 the red star was added to the flag. Some municipal subdivisions adopted coats-of-arms but no flags.

After independence the city was united again with temporary symbols. In 1999 a new design of the symbols was introduced, following the state regulations. Unofficially, previous flags are still often used and even produced in several variations.

### 1. Introduction

The oldest settlements in the region of the city of Zagreb predate the Roman era, but they are located mainly along the *Sava* River. The first settlements on the southern slopes of the *Medvednica* Mountain were made on the hill of Gradec (also named *Grič*) with the arrival of Croats in the 7th century. At least since the 9th century, there are traces of the first settlements on the nearby



hill later known as *Kaptol* (the Capitol of Zagreb). There the Croato-Hungarian king *Ladislaus* (*Ladislav*) I established a diocese in around 1094, as is known from a document of 1134 named *Felician's charter*

(*Felicijanova povelja*), in which the Esztreгон (*Ostrogon*) bishop *Felician* recounts on the first Zagreb bishop *Dub*. This is also the oldest preserved mention of the name Zagreb. [ZL1, p. 216] Beneath Kaptol, south of it, a settlement of foreign (initially Italian) merchants was created in the 12<sup>th</sup> century under the name *Vicus Latinorum* (Latin Street, in Croatian *Vlaška ulica*, still bearing the same name) under the auspices of the bishops of the Zagreb's Kaptol.

The merchants city of Zagreb on the hill of *Gradec* was granted the privileges of the Royal and Free City by the *Golden Bull* issued by the Croato-Hungarian king *Bela IV* in 1242, for the services rendered in his retreat from the Tatar hordes. [ZL2, p. 576]

Also on the north side of Kaptol, a settlement was granted free community status in 1344 under the name *Nova Ves* (i.e. New Village), under the diocesan auspices. [ZL2, p. 124]

These four communities were united in 1850 into the Free and Royal Capital City of Zagreb. It began growing into a modern capital including more and more surrounding villages in the plains towards the Sava River and beyond. The oldest parts of the city built on the hills are today referred to as the Upper Town (*Gornji Grad*).

## 2. The Symbols of Gradec

Although it is certain that both Gradec and Kaptol must have used seals earlier – especially Kaptol that was *locus credibilis* – place where the documents were notarized – the oldest seal of Gradec is preserved attached on a document from the 14<sup>th</sup> century. That seal pictures a



raising from fortification walls with a Gothic doorway between in sinister a crescent between three roses above and two below and on the dexter an eight-pointed star between two roses, one above and one below it. It bears the inscription S: COMVNI: DE MONTE GRACI – *Sigillum Communitatis de Monte Graci* – Seal of the Community on the Hill of Gradec.

With the seal the civic magistrate would seal all the municipal charters, in the 14<sup>th</sup> century using either green or pure beeswax and since the 15<sup>th</sup> century using red wax.

From the sources it is known that before this seal, at least since 1322, a slightly different one was used, and yet one differing in few other tiny details since 1384 – however, the one from 1397 remained in use since. This greater seal was used exclusively for the certification of ceremonial charters once a year, on the St. Blasius Day, the patron of Zagreb, celebrated on 3<sup>rd</sup> February, while for the other documents a lesser seal of similar design was used. According to the greater seal of 1397, a municipal seal was faithfully produced in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, preserved today in the collection of the City Museum of Zagreb (MGZ). [Laszowski, 1895]



A mention of the city flag is preserved from the 14<sup>th</sup> century. The Zagreb bishop *Alben (Ivan)* mentions in a document of 1422 that from a belfry of the Church of St. Marcus a *bloody flag (vexillum cruentum)* was hoisted, so it must have been red, but regarding to its details we may only speculate. [ZL2, p. 559], [Laszowski, 1896]

The oldest preserved depiction of the coat of arms of Gradec is dated 1499, carved on a relief that was embedded above the entrance to the Chapel of St. Fabian and Sebastian, built that year in the north-western



part of the Church of St. Marcus. The relief is today preserved in the MGZ, as the Chapel was torn down during the renovation of the Church in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and a facsimile was set in the north-western wall of

the Church. [Premerl, 2002], [Laszowski, 1895] <sup>[1]</sup>

The relief depicts the city coat of arms in a shield pointed in the base and notched in the dexter chief, with basically the same heraldic contents as in the seal. A double-tailed lion rampant is a supporter of the shield. It may be noted that the star there is five-pointed, only

illustrating that the exact number of points was heraldically irrelevant at the period. The roses are not present – in the seal they serve for space filling – a result of medieval *horror vacui* – or explained more practically – a seal would not leave good impression in the wax if it would have large empty areas, so it would be filled with various hatchings, floral ornaments etc.

The oldest preserved flag of Gradec is made in the first half of the 18th century, between 1711 and 1740. It was made of dark red damask silk textile in shape of a rectangular flag with split tongues. On its obverse is painted the city coat of arms in a cartouche: *gules on a hill vert three towers argent between a crescent and a star* (here sixpointed – this being the most frequent heraldic depiction of a star). The reverse pictures the black Habsburg double-headed eagle displayed, topped with a crown and holding a sword and a sceptre, bearing an escutcheon azure with a cipher C or - for *Carolus VI*, the Croato-Hungarian king *Charles III* (Emperor *Charles VI*). The worn-out tails of the flag were renewed with



red damask in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. [Premerl, 2002], [ZL2, p. 559]

This flag was kept in the City Hall on St. Marcus Square, although it seems not always with the best care. Namely, in 1896, when it was discovered in some odd corner of the Hall, it made quite a sensation in the local journals. [Laszowski, 1896] It was then again given a place of



honour in the City Hall, where it stood until 1907 [Premerl, 2002]. This flag was hoisted on ceremonial occasions. In processions it was carried in front of the representatives of the City Council. It is noted that in some ceremonial circumstances it was hoisted from the belfry of the Church of St. Marcus – where from it was also displayed from when the city was to be defended against enemies [ZL2, p. 559] [2].

It is not clear whether it is the same flag that is mentioned in a receipt from 1740 where the city tax officer *Franjo Fabijanec* notes on expenditures: “I have ceded – with the knowledge of the lord captain – 10 pennies to the silversmith who repaired the finial of the town’s flag.” [Horvat, 1942, p. 411]

As other feudal subjects granted certain privileges, the city of Gradec was obligated to maintain troops for its own defence. These units used flags, of course. The oldest preserved is the one of 1790, kept in the MGZ. The flag is rectangular of brown and white 4 horizontal stripes with silk sewn heraldic devices – the double headed Habsburg eagle with painted rectangular cartouche. On the obverse the cartouche contains a semi-heraldic picture of Gradec – three towers with opened doors in front of which is standing a guardsman, while on the reverse



the cartouche contains the iconographic picture of St. Marcus, the patron of Gradec, with a lion. The flag was painted on October 13<sup>th</sup>, 1790 by *Franjo Postl* as is stated on a

signature on the flag. [Premerl, 2002]

These national guard units were again reinforced during the insurrection against Napoleon, when Gradec fitted its guard unit with a new flag, now preserved in the HPM. It was made in 1813, sewn of several vertical stripes of yellow silk with triangular serrations along the three edges. On both sides are painted devices remarkably similar to those on the 1790 flag, with addition of the year 1813. [Borošak Marijanović, 1996, p. 101]



### 3. The Symbols of Kaptol

Kaptol used seals to attest its documents and manuscripts well; however these seals are, as a rule, with nonheraldic contents, pointed in shape, typical for ecclesiastical authorities. An example from 1189 depicts a king on a throne with inscription S(igillum) CAPITVLIS



(Z)AGRABIENSIS (Seal of the Zagreb's Capitol), those from 1297 and 1371 bear similar inscriptions and picture St. Stephen showing a model of his cathedral to Madonna holding Baby Jesus. [Gulin, 1980]

In the 15<sup>th</sup> century, in 1478 the Zagreb's Capitol established a "civil" municipality, so



from thereon it uses seals with heraldic emblems. *Emilij Laszowski* dates a preserved seal to the early 16<sup>th</sup> century [Laszowski, 1895], showing the same coat of arms as is painted in the Upper Town Hall (these painted coats of arms see further): *Gules a chevron argent, in chief two mullets or and a tower argent with doorway and two windows issuant from the base.*



Kaptol prepared two new flags expecting a visit of the imperial couple *Maria Theresa* and *Francis I* to Zagreb in 1753. These flags, meant to represent the Kaptol clergy, rather than the community; are almost rectangular, blue, bordered on three edges with red and white flammulets. In the centre of one is on both sides the iconographic depiction of the *Madonna Immaculata*, while on the other flag is the iconographic depiction of *St. Ladislaus*, the founder of the diocese,

surrounded with ornaments. As it happened, the imperial visit did not occur then, but the flags were used afterwards in celebrations during the visit of *Francis II (Francis I of Austria)* in 1818. [Borošak Marijanović, 1996, p. 97-99]

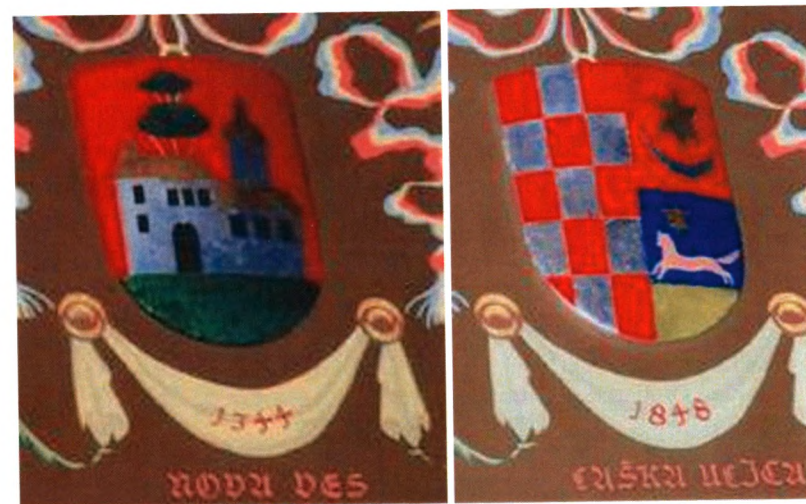
These two flags were probably kept in the old Kaptol Town Hall (that was placed in front of the Cathedral in the middle of the square where a monument is today) until 1876 when the Hall was torn down. Probably since that time they are in the Croatian History Museum (HPM).

Kaptol was obligated to maintain armed units as well, and in the funding of these participated also Nova Ves and Vlaška ulica. The flag of the Zagreb's Kaptol Guard of 1839 is preserved in the HPM: yellow rectangular flag with red and white triangular border, with an oval cartouche bordered with laurel wreath painted on both sides. On the obverse the cartouche contains the coat of arms of the Habsburg Monarchy, inscribed year 1839 and a ribbon above it reading: *Civium Capituli Zagrabiensis*. The reverse pictures St. Stephen, the patron of the Zagreb cathedral, the year 1790 and the coat of arms of Kaptol – of the same design as described above, only with blue background of the shield [Borošak Marijanović, 1996, p. 97-99].



#### 4. The symbols of Nova Ves and Vlaška Ulica

The two rural communities, *Nova Ves* and *Vlaška ulica*, as independent communities must have used some kind of seals for their documents, but this area is apparently yet quite unexplored. As far as it is known, neither of the communities was officially granted a coat of arms and they are not to be found in the armorials of the period. However, in the Upper Town Hall there are coats of arms attributed to them among the series of coats of arms of constituent communities of the Zagreb County painted along the balcony walls of the Assembly Hall. These coats of arms were painted in the last years of the 19th century, by painter Edmond Hasse [Peić Čaldarović, 2004], probably under the expert guidance by Dr. *Ivan pl. Bojničić*, the leading heraldic expert of the period and director of the Royal Land Archives in Zagreb.



The coat of arms of Vlaška ulica is: *per pale, chequy gules and argent (3x5) and per fess gules a mullet or above a crescent argent and azure on a base vert a marten passant and a mullet or.*

The coat of arms of Nova Ves is: *Gules, on a mount vert a city wall argent with opened doors and windows and with tree tops within it.*

There is no record of any flags used by the two communities.

### 5. The New Visual Identity of 1896

After the unification into the single city in 1850, considerations about the new symbols were raised. The city leadership contacted *Bojničić* to prepare proposals for the coat of arms and this was forwarded to the Croatian parliament and government at the time led by *Ban* (viceroys) *Khuen-Héderváry* [3]. As noted in the city council proceedings [Zapisnik, 1896], on August 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1896, on the session of the City Assembly of the Free and Royal Capital City of Zagreb chaired by the City Mayor honourable Mr. *Adolf Mošinski*, a member of the City Council *Hudovski* read the response from His Excellency Ban of the Kingdoms of Croatia, Slavonia and Dalmatia, informing the City Council that, based on the research carried out, in that issues the coat of arms of Zagreb is established thus:

“A shield painted blue depicting on a green mount a silver city with three towers, followed on the right with rising silver moon and on the left a six-pointed golden star. The shield is topped with a golden crown.” (i.e. *Azure issuant from a mount vert a city wall argent with three towers embattled of the same and in chief to dexter a crescent increscent also argent and to sinister a mullet of six or. On top a crown masoned with five embattlements or.*)

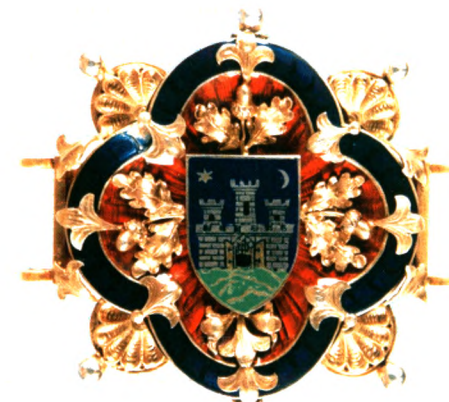
This response was duly noted and accepted, and based on it, the article 6 of the City Statutes was amended to include these specifications. Since then the official colour of Zagreb becomes blue (although this was not explicitly stated anywhere, of course).

*Dr. Bojničić* prepared a drawing of this coat of arms, today preserved in the MGZ and in spite of all formal changes to follow it still serves as the most frequent model for the depictions of the city coat of arms.

#### GRB GRAĐA ZAGREBA



*Članak 6. ovog zakona o gradskoj zastavi, kojim se na temelju pravnih i h. i. razmatranja od strane obilazne potvrdjuje*  
*Novonastajanje te razmatranje od strane*  
*11. listopada 1896.*



The mayor's chain including this new coat of arms was designed in 1899 by a famous architect *Herman Bollé* [4], and was manufactured by a goldsmith *Slavoljub Bulvan* from Zagreb in 1902 after models were first made in Cologne (MGZ 1767). In 1905 similarly made badges for members of Council were made by *Bulvan* also carrying the coat of arms as well. The chain was stored in the MGZ at an unknown time, probably after 1945 [Premerl, 2002].

For the flag one had to wait some more years. The City Council begun considering a new flag and in 1901 required from the Royal Land Government to establish the design of the city flag. *Ban Khuen-Héderváry* again soon answered it by forwarding a report prepared again by *Dr. Bojničić* containing two proposals for the flag. *Bojničić* obviously preferred one of them, as he names one of the two “heraldically better and based on the good old heraldic principles” and the other “newer and less good version”. The first proposal is a mono-coloured flag with elements of the coat of arms (i.e. without the outlining shield – the banner of arms!), or according to *Bojničić* description: “The flag is of the



same blue colour as the shield of the city coat of

arms, and on both sides has the city coat of arms without the shield and the crown, followed to the right by a silver rising crescent and to the left by a six-pointed golden star". The second proposal was blue-white horizontal bicolour with the full coat of arms in the middle. [Horvat, 1942, pp. 411-412] The Council, on the session held on May 5<sup>th</sup>, 1902 [Horvat, 1942, p. 412], apparently readily followed *Bojničić's* advice favouring the "old and better" version and it seems that the second proposal was not even discussed. However, a member of the Council *Stjepan Timet* proposed that red and white thin stripes be added vertically along the hoist to highlight the national element, but this was not accepted. After a proposal by a Council member *Dr. Ljudevit Šhwartz*, *Bojničić* was granted with a formal appreciation and the city award. The Council allotted 1000 crowns for the manufacture of the flag. The city flag and the *Šhwartz's* proposals were adopted in the Council with 26 votes for and 8 against. [Zapisnik, 1902] A drawing of the flag was prepared by painter *Branko Šenoa* in cooperation with *Bojničić*, the original drawing being preserved in the MGZ. [Premierl, 2002]



However, the flag was not manufactured immediately, and we may only speculate why. It was on the occasion of the coronation of the Emperor and King *Charles I (Karlo I)* in Budapest in 1916 that a richly produced ceremonial city flag was

made according to the 1902 decisions. [ZL2, p. 559]

As was noted on a piece found sewn in the flag when the flag was being renovated in 1994, the flag was produced in the time when *Janko Holjac* was mayor, and it was manufactured by Sisters of Mercy *Kvirina*, *Germanika*, *Tomislava* and *Trojana* after the design by *Branko Šenoa*. The flag was carried during the coronation by City Council member *Josip Radaković*. [Premierl, 2002]

It should be noted that this, as well as those previously mentioned flags, was produced in a single example only, what we would call ceremonial flag. The "usual" flags that are mass produced and used in many places around the city for ornamentation and designation of city offices were not known at the time – this became common practice only in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century – such practice being not typical for Zagreb only.

While considering the blue colour of Zagreb, it may be noted, that one of the more important elements that confirms this identity today are the blue painted trams of ZET (public transport company) – it may be interesting to note that these were initially yellow, while they began painting them in characteristic light blue shade only in 1923/1924. At that time, new domestically produced tramway wagons were introduced, that ZET's chief engineer *Mandl* decided to paint blue. *Mandl* was not only the leading ZET inventor and engineer, but a well known numismatics and stamp collecting expert, through which he had become aware of heraldic concepts, so he was well aware how this colouring may be important for development of the inevitable city identity it makes up for today. [Šobota, 2001, pp. 20-21] These wagons always carried the coat of arms attached on the hull.



Of course, in heraldry there is no concept of determination of shades of colours, and the blazon simply states that the shield is blue. For quite a long time this was depicted as dark, ultramarine or cobalt blue, but it

may be that exactly the light blue shade of trams was in later years more often connected with the “Zagreb blue”.

### 6. The flag of Zagreb in the 20<sup>th</sup> century

Thus established symbols remained in use since and they were not changed even when Austria-Hungary collapsed and the new Kingdom later to be known as Yugoslavia was established. They were not changed in the period of the Independent State of Croatia that was formed during World War II. From that time one may note a commemorative postage stamp issued on March 21<sup>st</sup>, 1942 on the occasion of celebrating the 700<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the royal and free city status grant. The stamp was designed by *Oto Antonini* faithfully following the *Bojničić's* pattern. [Ercegović, 1995]



Also in 1942, a flag of the Society of Zagreb Citizens (*Društvo Zagrepčana*), a cultural and charitable organization, celebrating its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary that year was manufactured. [ZL1, pp. 179-180] The flag, also preserved in the MGZ, includes prominently the city coat of arms only slightly shifting from the *Bojničić's* pattern.

With the liberation of Zagreb and introduction of the new political system, someone sewed a red five-pointed star to the 1916 flag. This flag was apparently used as such for



some time, to be soon stored in the MGZ. [Premerl, 2002] The star from the flag was removed in 1994 renovation, although the stitching in form of five-pointed star is still clearly visible.



The first mention of the city symbols after World War II in the official documents is to be found in 1947, when the Executive Council of the City People's Committee in Zagreb (*Gradski narodni odbor u Zagrebu*) adopts the proposal of the chairman Vouk

[Zapisnik 1947a, 1947b]:

*“The coat of arms of the City People's Committee in Zagreb is composed of a blue field in which on a green curved ground is standing a silver city with three embattled towers with semicircular entrance with half-portcullis and with opened doors, each tower having a keyhole-like loophole; to its right a six-pointed golden star and to the left a half-moon rising.*

*Above the shield is set a red five-pointed star.”*

So, the previous crown atop the shield was replaced by a star. Although the blazon clearly states the colours, it is not known if the coat of arms was ever used in colours; the preserved examples are mono-coloured. A flag is not mentioned; although it may well be that this was the decision that led to the adding of the star in the old flag.



The new Statutes adopted in 1955 mention neither coat-of-arms nor flag. [Statut, 1955]

The Statutes to follow, from 1964, introduce a new description of the coat-of-arms and the flag in its Article 12 [Statut, 1964]:

*“The city of Zagreb has its coat-of-arms and its flag.*

*The coat of arms of Zagreb is its historical coat of arms: shield coloured blue, in which is depicted on a green mound a silver city with three towers, a rising silver crescent to its right and a six-pointed golden star to its left.”*



The flag of the city of Zagreb is also “blue as the shield of the coat of arms of the city of Zagreb containing on both sides the coat of arms of the city of Zagreb without the shield.”

There are no elements above the shield now. The coloured versions were, again, apparently avoided, so in the one shown on the covers of the Statutes. The flags were, apparently, also



produced with such white outlined depictions of the coat-of-arms.



Namely, in the second half of the

20<sup>th</sup> century a trend of “modernization” of heraldic symbols conforming to the graphical design trends in the world in general is apparent. So, the coat of arms of Zagreb is used in simplified and stylized versions, most often as white silhouette of the shield only. The flags are now industrially mass produced, to be hoisted not only over the buildings of the city administration but also by the city owned companies, they are hoisted as holiday decorations



on the street light poles, they are flying on prominent positions in the city during important events, such as the Zagreb Fair, on places like the Marshal Tito Square in front of the National Theatre and the plateau in front of the Lisinski Concert Hall. The ceremonial city flag uniquely produced is no more.

The Statutes of 1968 only mention (in Article 9) that the city has a coat of arms and a flag, but that the details would be prescribed by the City Assembly [Statut, 1968], however, only some months later a correction to the Statutes was published, amending the reading of the Article 9 to the text of the 1964 Statutes with additional provision that “The use of the coat of arms and the flag is prescribed with a decision of the City Assembly.” [Ispravak, 1968]

The 1971 Statutes repeat the previous specifications literally. [Statut, 1971] In this period the city coat of arms is to be seen at least on one occasion in colours, on postage stamps: on 8<sup>th</sup> May 1970 a commemorative stamp was issued on the occasion of 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of liberation of Zagreb, designed by *A. Milenković*.



There are some very minor differences in this design from the drawing of the 1964 Statutes covers, with no heraldic importance. Here the doors are shown golden although this is not mentioned explicitly in the blazon (although one may hesitate to blame the blazon as well, as it is historically inconsistent...) and the portcullis is missing (although these are also not mentioned explicitly in the blazon any more). The star above the shield here is not part of the coat of arms, but a part of the stamp design (the same star being present in the other stamps of this series).

The 1975 Statutes introduce a rewording in the blazon of the coat-of-arms, but it does not change its contents. However, the flag is now changed with the addition of a red star in the canton. Article 7 determines [Statut, 1975]:



“The coat-of-arms of the City of Zagreb consists of a blue field in a shield shape. In the middle of the field on a green hill is set a city with three towers and opened city gates. In the chief part of the field on the left is a six-pointed star and on the right is a crescent.

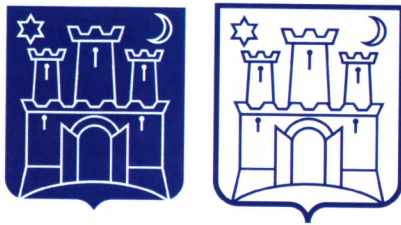
The city with towers and the crescent are silver, while the city doors, the six-pointed star and the shield border are green [sic].

The flag of the City of Zagreb is blue. In the middle of the flag on both its sides is the coat of arms of the City of Zagreb without the shield. On the flag of the City of Zagreb in its top right corner is a red five-pointed star.

With a decision of the City Assembly is determined the mode of use of the coat of arms and the flag of the City of Zagreb and the obligation of hoisting the flags of the Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia, the Socialist Republic of Croatia and the City of Zagreb on the days of determined state holidays.”

The prescription of green colour of the doors, star and the border (instead of golden) is obviously a typesetting error, but it was not corrected until the issue of the next Statutes in 1988. The words left and right here, as in all blazons of the period, are used in non-heraldic sense. The decision mentioned in the last paragraph was apparently never adopted.

The same prescriptions, with very minor differences in the wording, are repeated in the last socialist Statutes of 1988 in Article 6 [Statut, 1988]. The above-mentioned typesetting error was corrected. The last paragraph was simplified reading: “With a decision of the City of Zagreb is determined the mode of use of the coat of arms and the flag of the City of Zagreb”, however such decision was not adopted either.



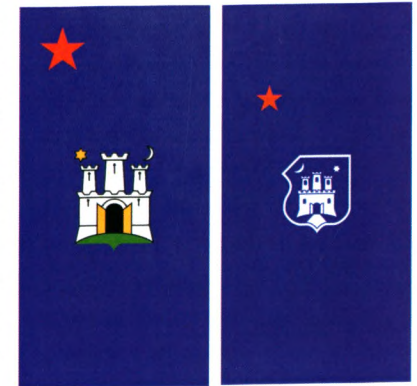
So, the colour of the doors is now explicitly mentioned. The flag is amended with a defacing red star in the canton, although it still contains the coat of arms elements without the shield outlining them. Although it is

nowhere mentioned, these flags were, as a rule, produced so that the coat of arms elements were shown in white only. (Note the third flag to the right of the pulpit on the lower photo, without the red star and of notably lighter shade.)

This coat-of-arms variation is



also often used in mono-coloured depictions, and due to its simplicity and elegance it is quite popular today as well. The flag defaced with the star was used only in very official circumstances, e.g. hoisted in the Assembly Hall, while the previous versions of the flag without the star were onwards used in general, even as newly produced flags (whether due to inertia or ignorance of the flag maker and/or his clients or due to intentional disregard of the new defacement?) The flags with the red star were relatively seldom hoisted on the streets.



After World War II the city of Zagreb was administratively divided into communities with several administrative changes over the next years, so in 1964 Zagreb was composed of 14 communities as basic units of local self-government: Centar, Črnomerec, Dubrava, Maksimir, Medveščak, Novi Zagreb, Peščenica, Samobor, Sesvete, Susedgrad, Trešnjevka,



Trnje, Velika Gorica and Zaprešić.

In the late 1970's and during 1980's some of these communities adopted coats of

arms in accordance with the taste and customs of the period. However, no community adopted any flags. The three coats of arms shown here were designed by *Pero Ćimbur*, probably the most prolific heraldic designer in the Yugoslav region in the period. Although the shift from the classical heraldic tradition is more than obvious and although the symbols are heavily burdened with the contemporary ideology, these symbols represent the most successful heraldic design of the period.

## 7. The flag of Zagreb since 1990



After Croatia attained independence in 1991, the territorial structure of the state was changed in 1993, and the 14 communities were united into a single capital city with the status of a county. In this regard, on April 15<sup>th</sup>, 1993 the Temporary statutes of the City of Zagreb were adopted replacing the symbols determined by the 1988 Statutes. [Privremeni statut, 1993]. The Article 4 determines that the coat of arms “has the shape of a shield coloured blue. In the field of the shield is set a city with three towers fortified with walls and city gates. In the chief on the left is a young moon and on the right an eight-pointed [sic!] star. The city walls, the towers and the young moon are silver; the eight-pointed star is golden. The hill beneath the tower is green.” Further on it is determined that the flag is “coloured blue. In the middle on both sides is set the coat of arms of the City of Zagreb.”

This decision was obviously made hastily and contains several inconsistencies. It is not known whether a graphical depiction of this design was ever actually made, but it is certain that the older (starless) versions were in use abundantly. In 1992 the City of Zagreb donated its allegedly official flag to the collection of the MGZ, however that flag which is currently on display in the Museum certainly does not match the 1993 nor any previous specifications – the coat-of-arms in that flag is white as in the depiction of the 1896 *Bojničić's* design, together with the shield outline and the crown – the most notable difference being the star that is still, of course, six-pointed and not eight-pointed as prescribed.



These irregularities were resolved finally with the adopting of the 1999 Statutes, where Article 8 brings the more appropriate heraldic blazon in accordance with the modern Croatian heraldic expression [Statut, 1999]: “In a blue field on a green mount is set a silver/white city with three towers and opened golden/yellow doors; in chief right a golden/yellow six-pointed star, in chief left a silver/white crescent.” The flag is now described as “in ratio 1:2 coloured blue with the yellow bordered coat of arms of the city in the middle.” The colour of the flag field in the



drawings attached to the prescription is light blue, almost the same as the one used in the coat of arms (similar to the colour of the Zagreb trams), but preferred colour in the manufactured and used flags is the dark blue, notably different from the blue used in the coat of arms. There are flags in use that are



produced with a single shade of blue (for the field and the shield), using an intermediate blue shade. The flag as prescribed by the Statutes of 1999 is used today as a rule only by the institutions of the city administration, although even there one may still find other variations. Most of the city companies hoist such variations on their locations as well. These variations are based on the tradition from the 1980's, with the coat of arms shown white only, and there are several variations of the actual design, some showing outlined elements, others with white filled elements, some with





and some without the shield. It seems that most of the manufacturers still have such flags in their stocks. It may happen that these shall gradually be replaced with the official pattern, as they wear out.

Almost half a century long tradition of depicting the coat of arms in white only – mono-coloured on a blue flag provides it with a certain heraldic validity, even though that all these years no regulation ever determined it so. The differences in the artistic rendition are heraldically absolutely acceptable, as long as it contains all the elements prescribed in the blazon. During most of its history, the flag of Zagreb was prescribed to include the coat-of-arms elements without the shield border

(since the function of the shield is now taken by the flag field – being the banner of arms!), and of course, without the crown.

The contemporary design of the coat of arms and the flag was designed by *Mladen Stojić* of *Heraldic art d.o.o.* from Rijeka, who has prepared the most of the contemporary local coats of arms and flags adopted after 1990. It was approved for use on May 4<sup>th</sup>, 2000, on a session of the commission established by the *Central State Office for Administration* for approval of use of the coats of arms and flags of the units of local government and self-government. [Bejdić, 2007] The flag that includes the entire coat of arms in a shield bordered with yellow on a mono-coloured flag is prescribed in accordance with the rules of the *Central State Office for Administration*, which in Croatia is the competent authority for approval of use of the coat of arms and the flag for the units of local administration and self-government [Pravilnik, 1994; Pravilnik 1998]. Instead of commenting such design, we may remind ourselves of the opinions expressed by the greatest Croatian heraldic authority, Ivan

pl. Bojničić, more than hundred years ago, when he was preparing the proposal for the flag for Zagreb on the “old and proper” against the “new and lesser” heraldic practice. What *Bojničić* had to say is not different from what the scholars of heraldry and vexillology would have to say today, as well.

The united city formed in 1993 is divided administratively into 17 districts with certain local self-government. The regulations regarding these districts do not provide for adoption of coats-of-arms and flags, but they do not prohibit them either. However, it seems that so far the districts have not been considering adopting symbols.

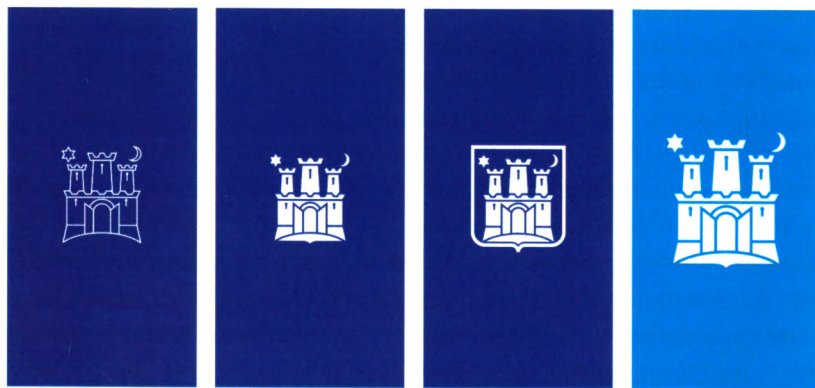
While some of the previous Statutes determine that the city shall determine the usage rules for the coat of arms and the flag, no such regulation was ever issued. However, since the 1999 Statutes, its subsequent changes in 2001 [Statut, 2001] and 2005 amendments [Statutarna odluka, 2005] all determine the basic rules as to where and how the city symbols shall be used.

The coat of arms is used in the classical official scope – in the city seal, in official and ceremonial rooms and halls of the city, in ceremonial occasions, on letterheads of high city officials and so on. However, it is prescribed that the coat of arms as prescribed in the Statutes and its various stylizations (whatever that means exactly – probably various versions such as shown in images in this paper) may be used in emblems of various city companies, and by far the most interesting – the Statutes allow that the coat-of-arms and its stylizations be used for tourist propaganda and on souvenirs. This is interesting because various cities and communities in Croatia as a rule deny such use, unless complicated and time-consuming procedure of request for such usage is concluded, often connected with some taxation as well. The 2005 amendments, however, prescribe that such use shall be regulated by a further decision, but such was never adopted and it does not seem that it shall be any time soon (although it is maybe not wise predicting anything like that). In any case, the use of the coat of arms, especially those historical, on souvenirs and company emblems is quite widespread and the city was not objecting to that so far.

Regarding the use of the flag, it is similar. It is to be used in, on and in front of various official buildings as well as on various public places in

the city. It may be used in various public manifestations – political, scientific, cultural, artistic, sporting and other events held in Zagreb in accordance to the rules and customs of such events and in other circumstances, again, in accordance with some city decision to be adopted later on. The flag may be used by other legal persons promoting the interest of the city, also in accordance with that decision. It may be noted that the use by private citizens is not anticipated. Although the Statutes do not say it, it seems that it is implied (as is prescribed in many other decisions on local symbols in Croatia) that the coat of arms and the flag are to be used in the manner that does not offend the reputation and dignity of the City.

In spite of all the various changes documented in this paper, the symbols of Zagreb show a steadfast consistency since their emergence in the Middle Age. The comparison of the oldest preserved coat of arms of 1499 with the modern representations is striking. The modern



flag adopted over a century ago shows the same kind of currency and recognisability, inspite of the changes of rulers, political systems and tastes of the times, linking the modern city with its past.

## 8. Conclusion

Zagreb was formed in 1850 by unification of Gradec, Kaptol and two rural neighbouring communities, all tracing their establishment to the early Middle Ages. The seals of Gradec and Kaptol are preserved since the 15<sup>th</sup> century, while a flag of Gradec is mentioned already in the 14<sup>th</sup> century. These seals served as basis for the coats-of-arms. The oldest

preserved flags of Gradec and Kaptol are from the 18th century. The rural communities Nova Ves and Vlaška ulica have attributed coats-of-arms but no flags were reported. The coats-of-arms of all four constituent parts to make Zagreb were predominantly red, as this was considered the municipal colour.

The unified city was granted a coat-of-arms in 1896, changing the colour of the shield to blue which from now on became the municipal colour. A banner of arms was adopted in 1902 and produced in 1916.

After 1945 the civic crown from the coat-of-arms was replaced by the red five-pointed star, the flag being prescribed only in 1964 with few minor changes in the design afterwards. In 1975 the flag was defaced with a red star. Some municipal subdivisions adopted coats-of-arms but no flags at that period.

After independence, the city was united again with temporary symbols. In 1999 a new design of the symbols was introduced, following the state regulations. Unofficially, previous flags are still often used and even produced in several variations.

In spite of all the various changes documented in this paper, the symbols of Zagreb show a steadfast consistency since their emergence in the Middle Age, linking the modern city with its past.



## Figures:

- Fig. 1. A wax seal of Gradec from a document by bishop Uzolin, 1677. MGZ.
- Fig. 2. A metal seal of Gradec from 19<sup>th</sup> century. MGZ Inv. br. 350.
- Fig. 3. The stone carved coat of arms of Gradec from Chapel of St. Fabian and Sebastian of 1499. MGZ Inv. br. 1759.
- Fig. 4. The flag of Gradec, manufactured between 1711 and 1740. MGZ Inv. br. 334.
- Fig. 5. The flag of the Gradec guard of 1790. MGZ Inv. br. 5433.
- Fig. 6. The flag of the Gradec guard of 1813. HPM Inv. br. 1634.
- Fig. 7. Some of the oldest seals of the Zagreb's Kaptol, of 1189, 1297 (MGZ 5713) and 1371 [ZL1, p. 468], [Gulin 1980].
- Fig. 8. A seal of Kaptol, 16<sup>th</sup> century. [Laszowski, 1895, p. 136]
- Fig. 9. The coat of arms of Kaptol in the Upper Town Hall. [Peić Čaldarović, 2004]
- Fig. 10. The flags of the Zagreb's Kaptol, 1753. HPM Inv. br. 1643 and 1644.
- Fig. 11. The flag of the Guard of Zagreb's Kaptol, 1839. HPM Inv. br. 1642.
- Fig. 12. The coats of arms of Nova Ves and Vlaška ulica in the Upper Town Hall, Zagreb. [Peić Čaldarović, 2004]
- Fig. 13. The coat of arms of the city of Zagreb, 1896 – drawing by Bojničić. [MGZ Inv. br. 5235]

- Fig. 14. Detail of the drawing.  
 Fig. 15. The Zagreb Mayor's Chain, 1902. MGZ Inv. br. 2261.  
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 Fig. 21. The flag of the Society of Zagreb Citizens, 1942. MGZ Inv. br. 5429.  
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 Fig. 25. The flag of Zagreb, 1964. Drawing ŽH.  
 Fig. 26. The commemorative stamp celebrating 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the liberation of Zagreb, 1970.  
 Fig. 27. The coat of arms of Zagreb, 1975. Drawing ŽH.  
 Fig. 28. The flag of Zagreb, 1975. Drawing ŽH.  
 Fig. 29. Various flag design used in the Assembly Hall in 1987. [Univerzijada, 1988]  
 Fig. 30. The coats of arms of the communities of Dubrava, Trešnjevka and Susedgrad, adopted in 1970's and 1980's. Drawings ŽH according to [Čimbur, 1985]  
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 Fig. 32. The coat of arms and the flag of the City of Zagreb, 1999, design Mladen Stojić. Drawing ŽH.  
 Fig. 33. The flag of the City of Zagreb in use, 2007. Photo ŽH.  
 Fig. 34. The flag variation in use (here at ZET left, Hotel "Esplanade" right), 2007. Photo ŽH.  
 Fig. 35. Popular variations of the flag of Zagreb. Drawings ŽH.

#### Abbreviations

- DAZ – Državni arhiv u Zagrebu (State Archives in Zagreb)  
 HPM – Hrvatski povijesni muzej (Croatian History Museum)  
 MGZ – Muzej grada Zagreba (City Museum of Zagreb)  
 ZET – Zagrebački električni tramvaj (Zagreb public transport company)  
 ZL – Zagrebački leksikon (see Bibliography)

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#### Remarks

1. All references to [Premerl, 2002] include also additional material available as captions in the permanent exhibition of the MGZ.
2. Such occasion may have been in 1789 when the city was mobilizing its companies as measure of caution because of the French Revolution and defence against Napoleon soon to follow.
3. The viceroy of Croatia and Slavonia, the highest military and civil official in the Kingdom, representing the King held the title Ban. *Dragutin (Károly) Count Khuen-Héderváry de Hédervár* (1849 - 1918) was Ban from 1883 until 1903, and is otherwise known in Croatian history as pro-Hungarian politician and not being very popular character to this very day.
4. *Herman Bollé* (1845 - 1926) is one of the most prominent architects in Zagreb from the period, responsible for a number of representative buildings in Zagreb.

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**Željko Heimer** was born 1971 in Zagreb, Croatia. He graduated 1997 in industrial electronics at the University of Zagreb and is since 1999 officer of the Croatian Armed Forces. He holds a Master's of science degree in biomechanics and is since 2007 engaged in doctoral post-graduate studies at the University of Zagreb in the field of military sociology concentrating on the issue of the military visual identity and flags from the Homeland War in Croatia in the 1990's.

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