

Stevan Mičić

The Heraldic Club Belgrade

Žarko Mijajlović

Mathematical institute SASA

HERALDIC CLUB BELGRADE

Abstract. The Heraldic Club (Heraldički klub - HEK) is a society which deals with the preservation and presentation of tradition and identity values among Serbs. One of the activities of the Club is organization of internal and public lectures in the areas in which members of the society work. The aim of this paper is to present the main activities of the Club and the digitization project of delivered lectures.

Keywords. tradition preservation, popularization of science and art, heraldic club

1. Introduction

There are several nongovernmental and nonprofit organizations in Serbia working in preservation of tradition and identity values among Serbs. For example, Adligat is a civil society organization, situated in Belgrade, which works in the area of culture, arts and promotes the international cooperation of Serbia. It operates one of the largest privately owned libraries in the Balkans with more than one million titles, as well as the Museum of Book and Travel and the Museum of Serbian literature. Project “Rastko”, named after Rastko Nemanjić, is a cultural and educational project dedicated to Serb and Serb-related arts and humanities. The main product of the project is its electronic library consisting of electronic books and articles, photographs and comics. Most texts are Serbian, but there are many items in other languages, mostly in English and Russian. Members of this project are in the main writers and people active in arts and culture.

The Heraldic Club is an association having similar aims, to improve preservation of Serbian tradition and identity values. The goal of this paper is to present some of the many activities of the Club. We also present the project of digitization of talks, more than 300 of them, delivered at sessions of the Club. Digital copies of these lectures, or their presentations, are deposited in the Virtual Library of the Faculty of Mathematics in Belgrade.

2. Club

The Heraldic Club (Heraldički klub - HEK) was founded in December 2013 with principal aim to work on preservation of tradition and identity values among Serbs. The main activities of HEK members are related to research and presentations in natural, social and human sciences and creative contribution to scientific, academic and cultural activities. The activities of the Club include: organization of internal and public lectures in the areas in which members of the association work; implementation of projects in the field of social sciences and humanities; publishing activities; research and presentation of archival material from the legacy of our distinguished creators for the purposes of forming digital archives and legacies and realization of exhibitions and events.

HEK published alone or in cooperation, several dozens of books, prepared more than 300 lectures and presented several dozen exhibitions. Members of the Club possess knowledge from a wide scientific spectrum, especially in the field of heraldry, architecture, urbanism and spatial planning, history, archeology, art history, ethnology, genealogy, phaleristics, vexillology, insigniology, protection, natural and political sciences, journalism, scientific publishing, linguistics and other disciplines.

Motto of the Club is somewhat humorous: *Only an animal species called Hippocampéléphantocamélos could carry so much meat without caring about anything on so much tiny bone!* The word *Hippocampéléphantocamélos* is taken from the Edmond Rostand's verse from his play *Cyrano de Bergerac*:

Pédant : L'animal seul, monsieur, qu'Aristophane

Appelle Hippocampéléphantocamélos

Dut avoir sous le front tant de chair sur tant d'os !

In the Memorandum it is also explained that "The association relies on the members of the Hippocampelephantocamelos Club, which is the source of both the HEK's personal and expert body". It is also said that the club does not engage in lucrative business, does not have its own account, nor does it make any profit.

The founders of the Club are Dragomir Acović, Aleksandar Palavestra, Stevan Mičić and Dušan Mrđenović. Beside founders, at the first meeting there were 13 more attendees and they were the first members. Here are the very short biographies of founders.



Dragomir Acović (Belgrade, 1943) is a Serbian and Yugoslav architect, heraldist, member of the Crown Council and President of the Crown Council. From 2000 to 2011, he was the chief architect for the construction and interior decoration of the St. Sava Temple in Belgrade. He founded the Serbian society for heraldry, Genealogy, Vexillology, and Phaleristics "White Eagle" with eleven other intellectuals on December 9, 1991. He is also a member of the American Society of Orders and

Medals, the Society for the Study of Orders and Medals of the United Kingdom and the Swiss Phalleristic Society. He published nine books related to heraldry and sacral architecture and wrote more than 300 articles for Serbian journals. Royal House of Karađorđević honored him with three high decorations. He is *spiritus movens* of the Club.

Aleksandar Palavestra (Belgrade, 1956) is a full professor of Archaeology at the Faculty of Philosophy in Belgrade, known to the general public as a publicist and archaeologist. He published four books related to archaeology and history and two books with mythical and fantastic content, of which "Ale i bauci" (Gorgons and bogies) is probably most known. Since 2007 he is the chief of the archeology department at the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Belgrade.

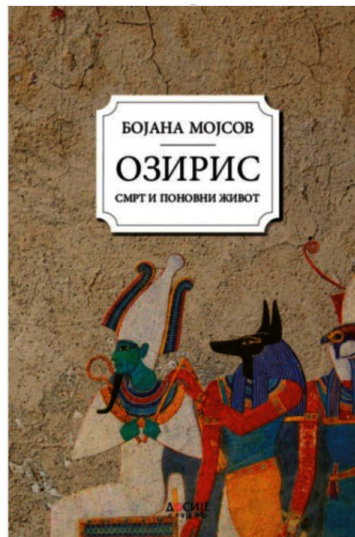
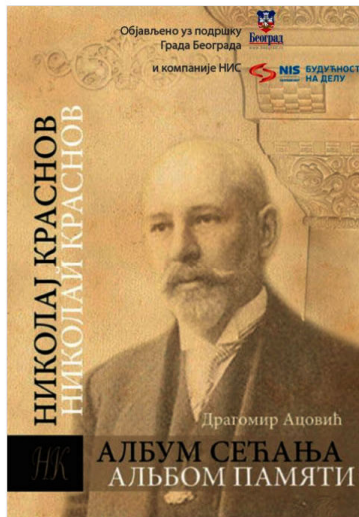
Stevan Mičić (Belgrade, 1951) is a recognized Serbian architect and artist. He is known as one of the most productive domestic builders from the end of the 20th and the beginning of the 21st century in Serbia, whose works marked various stylistic permutations in domestic architecture. The art work of Stevan Mičić consists of original drawings and paintings made in different art techniques of etching, pastel, charcoal, tempera and combined techniques. He organized several exhibitions, for example he is a coauthor of the exhibition "Mihailo Petrović Alas – Life, Works, Times" ordered by the Serbian Academy of science

and arts. He has the great merit for functioning of the Club in the existing form. Sessions of the Club are held in his private house.

Dušan Mrđenović is a known Serbian publicist and editor. He is a cofounder of the prominent Serbian publishing house “Dosije”. He is a coauthor of several books.

Other members of the Club are intellectuals, university professors, scientists and experts with various specialties. Some of them are: professor Marko Popović (1944-2020, archeologist), professor Smilja Marjanović Dušanić (historian), Gordan Dragović (director of opera and ballet), Marko Dragović (psychiatrist), docent Monika Milosavljević (archeologist), Ivan Marković (PhD in history of art), professor Nenad Švrakić (1949-2022, physicist), professor Slobodan Vujošević (mathematician and philosopher), professor Milan Rakočević (architect and World traveler), research associate Filip Jeftić (mathematician), Professor Milan Dimitrijević (astronomer), Slavoljub Tasić (pharmacist and great plants connoisseur), acad. Aleksandar Kostić (philologist), professor Srđa Trifković (historian and publicist), Mirko Milićević (physicist, publicist and owner of the publishing house “Dosije”) professor Žarko Mijajlović (mathematician) and about thirty more others.

The Society published a dozen of books. For example, in 2019 the following books were published: Dragomir Acović, *Nikolai Krasnov – An Album of memories*; Bojana Mojsov, *Osiris: Death and Rebirth*; Nevena Mrđenović (editor), *Pliny the Elder, History of nature*.



Club has cooperation with some of the leading c Serbian cultural and scientific institutions: Travel museum and library Adligat, Publishing house “Dosije”, Mathematical Institute of the Serbian Academy of Science and Arts, Serbian Bibliophile Society, Matica Srpska, Pedagogical Museum in Belgrade, Museum of Natural History in Belgrade and many other institutions.

3. Digitization of lecture presentations

Members of the Club have meetings every Tuesday at 6 pm, except in summer months July and August. First hour is spent in informal talks and planning the next activities of the Club. At 7 pm exactly one of the members starts his address on a particular topic. Duration of the lecturing is not limited, but usually lasts between one and two hours. The lecture is accompanied with the electronic presentation.



Figure 1. Pages from presentations: a. Nevena Vukojić, *The wonderful world of mushrooms* b. Milan Rakočević, *Ethiopia* c. Filip Jeftić, *Symmetry*

Up to the time this paper is written, 304 lectures were delivered. The first lecture was *Carpaccio: Two ladies and hunters in the lagoon* by Aleksandar Palavestra, December 3, 2013, the last one is *Siberia*, delivered by Dragomir Acović. Most talks had Dragomir Acović, 45 of them. We recently started to deposit in electronic form presentations of these lectures into the Virtual Library of the Faculty of Mathematics. About fifty presentations are digitized and are openly available to the general public. We expect to digitize them all until the beginning of the year 2023.

4. Conclusion

Since ancient time coats of arms, flags and decorations were important symbols representing countries, armies and noble families. Sciences studying these emblems and history related to them are heraldry, vexillology and phaleristics, respectively. Heraldic Club Belgrade gather people interested in these sciences, but also in other areas as well, from fine art to architecture and natural sciences and mathematics. The common point to them is, as explained, *Hippocampéléphantocamélos*.

At HEK's meetings members delivered more than 300 lectures. We started the project to digitize presentations of the lectures and deposit in the Virtual Library of the Faculty of Mathematics.

Reference

1. Internal documents of Heraldic Club Belgrade, <https://hek.rs>.
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zarkom@matf.bg.ac.rs