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## **Portrait Silhouettes in the Czech Lands from the 18<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> Century – the Variety of their Customers**

This paper is based on my dissertation project "Portrait Silhouette in the Czech lands from the 18th to the 19th century", which is slowly drawing to an end. The aim of my dissertation is to chart the phenomena of silhouette making in the Czech lands and fill the gap in domestic art history. Portrait silhouettes are a specific part of visual culture. They range from the leisure-time product of dilettantes to high-quality and cultivated art expression of specialists. They can be created with different techniques like painting, cutting, verre églomisé or mechanical tracing the shadow, which contributed to the diversity of this art. In my paper I would like to focus on social aspect of portrait silhouettes, concretely on the types of customers. The range of silhouetted persons is wide. Despite the spread opinion, that silhouettes were cheaper surrogate for more luxurious portrait miniatures and therefore commissioned especially by townsmen, we can find many silhouettes of aristocracy. Particularly during the first boom of interest in portrait silhouettes (in the Czech lands 1780-1820) the aristocratic silhouettes quite predominated (Sternberg, Lobkowitz, Metternich). Being silhouetted was fashionable as well as the classical form of silhouette itself, which corresponded with period taste and interest in antiquity as reaction to rococo garishness. It was reaction not only to the visual aspect of rococo, but also the ideological reaction to the moral looseness. Silhouettes comply with the new ideal of "edle Einfalt, stille Größe" that J. J. Winckelmann postulated. It also corresponded with the then interest in physiognomy. That is probably reason, why also clergymen had their silhouettes made and what is more, some of them actively created silhouettes on their own (L. Schimmel, V. B. Juhn, A. Heinrich). During the second boom of silhouette making which coincided period of Biedermeier the townsmen became the main customers. With this fact the change of form of silhouettes is connected (emphasis on the surrounding, on the dress and jewellery, on the other family members in the form of group family silhouettes). At that time also students from European universities (especially German universities) had their silhouettes made. The last great period of interest in silhouettes occurred at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. What is surprising, the new interest of aristocracy appeared (Auersperg, Kálnoky). Silhouettes can be found together with photos in aristocratic family albums, on their postcards or in the form of ex libris. Of course demand of non-aristocracy continued too. Almost everybody was acquainted with silhouettes thanks to their usage in applied graphic (book and journal illustration, advertisements etc.) and silhouettes were included into new types of handbooks that were focused on children (for example *Papier-Schneide-*

*und Klebearbeiten. Ihre technischen Grundlagen und ihre erzieherische Bedeutung* by F. Čížek, 1916).

My paper should demonstrate this variety of clients of silhouette making, that will be shown on the basis of several interesting convolutes from Czech collection; 107 silhouettes of Premonstratensians from Prague Strahov monastery published at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century under the title *Sacri et Canonici Ordinis Praemonstratensis* (...) and created by one of the Premonstratensians, convolute of 31 silhouettes of noblemen from château Rájec nad Svitavou (Moravia) connected with Freemasonry, examples of Biedermeier bourgeois silhouettes from Pilsner collection, convolute of humorous silhouettes of family members created at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century by Franz Joseph Auersperg. Some aspects are similar to situations in other European countries (early interest of aristocracy in silhouettes), other can be described as Czech specific (deep and active interest of clergymen).