The municipal coat of arms of
Küsnacht On November 23, 1933, the municipal council of Küsnacht
approved the form of the municipal coat of arms, which is well known
to most citizens and residents today, after it had been corrected by the
coat of arms commission of the Antiquarian Society in Zurich in
conjunction with the state archive. The red shield with the square golden
cushion, which has tassels of the same color at the corners and whose
edges are rotated by 4 5 degrees relative to the flanks of the shield, will also
appear in unchanged form in the new municipal coat of arms of the canton of Zurich.
It is therefore worthwhile to take a look at the origin, history and meaning
of the Küsnacht municipal coat of arms, all the more so since its content
has already given rise to all sorts of assumptions.

The external history

We owe the oldest surviving depiction of the coat of arms of Küsnacht to
a parish plaque from the year 1556, the main motif of which three
decades after the introduction of the Reformation still shows the popular
church patron, Saint George, slaying the dragon .

On horseback, the knightly figure swings his sword to kill the monster and,
according to legend, to free the virgin praying in the background. Below
the picture runs a bar with the inscription: "Dill Fenster gives a
gmeind zu Küßnacht. » On the left above the line, next to a flick, is
the year 1 5 5 6. Two columns rise up the flanks of the rectangular disc, which
- like an arch - support the richly designed upper part. Here the coat of
arms pyramid, consisting of three shields, is located between ornaments
and two angels blowing horns. On the right you can see the coat of arms
of the municipality of Küsnacht, on the left the red shield with the
continuous white cross of the Order of St. John and above it - reversed -
the blue and white coat of arms of the state of Zurich!

More information at www.ortsgeschichte-kuesnacht.ch How
was the Küsnacht sign designed in 1 5 5 6? Everything is already there in
substance, for in the red field one sees a golden cushion with tassels or
"shags" at the corners. Nevertheless, there are some deviations
compared to the later, better stylized forms: firstly, the cushion is not
square but rectangular, secondly, it is not placed at an angle, but
placed crosswise - bar by bar - in the shield, and thirdly, its surface was
made with continuous edges parallel decorated with running double
lines, an ingredient that hardly needs to be mentioned in a heraldic
description (blazon).

The question arises as to whether the coat of arms with the pillow
had not been adopted earlier by the village community of Küsnacht. It
deserves attention that in the coat of arms letter, which the Küsnacht
commander Andreas Gubelmann received on August 24, 1497 from the
hermit dean and court palatine count of Emperor Friedrich III, Albrecht
von Bonstetten, a golden cushion with red tassels appears as a crest2.
One must not imagine that the Freiherr von Bonstetten himself
designed the coats of arms that he gave; Rather, they were included in
the parchment letters on the basis of existing traditions or personal wishes.
If Gubelmann hired a red-clad half-monk for his shield in gold, but a
golden pillow for the jewel

enough, we may assume that he was alluding to an already existing community symbol.

Admittedly, this may only have been used hesitantly, because according to the well-known chronicle by Gerold Edlibach, which was created around 1486, the links led: Coat of arms of the lords of Kil.rsnafht am Rigi, after painting in the house "Zum Loch" and seals. - Middle: Poor variant of the coat of arms of Kiisnafht ZH on letterheads and civil rights documents from the 19th and early 20th centuries. - Right: Full coat of arms of the AbrkJrf family after Gerold Edlibach

(15th century). 6 Further information at www.ortsgeschichte-kuesnacht.ch Churches in Küsnacht at that time had St. George in their coat of arms4. In the red field, the gray-clad knight, riding a gray horse, strikes the green lindworm. However, it must also be noted that the parish, village community and bailiwick were three different legal areas whose coats of arms did not originally have to match. The pillow can therefore very well have been used as early as the 15th century alongside the battle with St. George.

The parish disc from 1 5 5 6 proves that although Saint George was still remembered at that time, the pillow had finally been adopted as a heraldic figure. It was used both in the shield of the village community and in that of the Oberbailiwick of Küsnacht, which extended far beyond.

This is shown, for example, by the fairytale official disks of the years 1544, 1560 and 1574, but also by the many other compositions of the coats of arms of all bailiwicks, dominions and Mwili:ipal towns in Zurich sovereign territory, with their mostly circular arrangement of the shields. In Jos Muret's map of the canton from 1566 you can see the shield with the pillow immediately to the right of the Commandery buildings, and on the even more famous Zurich map, which was completed by Hans Conrad Gyger in 1667, it is shown in color or similar.

While Murer's cushion is divided into nine squares, Gyger's figure appears almost circular; but both put the pillow so that the tassels are up and down, left and right. Another variant has its since Professor Dr. Friedrich Hegi-Naef found in a glass painting design (window tear) for the city court of Zurich from the year 1693; in this one finds an oval cushion, the longitudinal axis of which is vertical, with the tassels attached at the top and bottom as well as on the sides s.

After the revolution, Küsnacht retained its municipal coat of arms, but now shows that heraldic ignorance and degeneration characteristic of the 19th century. On a flea bag from the fire brigade from 1821, a standing oval cushion was painted brown-red on a black background, with the tassels arranged in the same way as in the pane tear from 1693. The municipal coat of arms is then found uncolored on the large bell from 1857; the cushion is now square again, placed on one corner and provided with the four tassels. There are also four double lines, each running in the same direction as an edge, as an ornamental addition - as in the congregational pane from I 5 5 6. A sculptural work that was attached to a console in the gallery during the church renovation of 1866 is only slightly younger. This time the shield shows only a slight slant

posed rectangular cushion with the usual corner tassels 7, 7

Further information at www.ortsgeschichte-kuesnacht.ch In this century there is a stamp from the Küsnacht municipal council, in whose shield from below and from the flanks apparently only a part of the cushion protrudes; this is boxed or diamond-shaped and ends at the top with a tassel. Equally questionable is the coat of arms on a letterhead that was in use for some time. Following a trend that could also be found elsewhere, the municipal symbol was placed in the Zurich shield, diagonally divided by white and blue, which not only resulted in unsightly overlaps, but also conflicts with the heraldic color laws. In our case, the pillow is diamond-shaped and quilted with three seams in each direction. This unfortunate shape was then somewhat improved in later letterheads, still in use in the early 1930s, by placing the quilted pad - now almost square again - within a uniform red shield (indicated by vertical hatching). From here was the step to today's "classic"

The shape of the pillow was not far off: you only had to choose the strictly square shape, omit the stitching and stylize the tassels uniformly and without any hint of perspective.

Influences from Kiissnacht am Rigi?

It has always been obvious to associate the coat of arms of Küssnacht am Zürichsee with the similar shield of the municipality of Küssnacht am Rigi and that of the ministerial family living there. The question was not simplified by the fact that in the 11th century there lived a noble-free Ekkehard von Kiissnacht, who the Acta Murensia put in Küsnacht am Zürichsee, while other researchers assigned him to Küssnacht am Rigi. A number of years ago, in a treatise on Küsnacht and the Lords of Küsnacht, Paul Kläui advocated the thesis that the "Eggehardus de Cussinach" who, on z. June 1087 as a witness for Count Burkhard von Nellenburg in the monastery of All Saints in Schaffhausen actually came from Küssnacht on Lake Lucerne9. Through his relationships with the Counts of Lenzburg, who at that time administered the Reichsvogtei on the right bank of Lake Zurich, he would have been transplanted to our area and prompted to build Wulp Castle near Küsnacht. With him, the name of the village on the Rigi, which is traced back to a Gallo-Roman jundm Cossoniacm, would have been dragged to Lake Zurich, where a second Küs(s)nach(t) was not created until the end of the 2nd century. The wonderful family of Ekkehard von Küsnacht, to which we can also count a «Ruopertus de Küssenacho», who was wealthy in Toggwil-Meilen around the turn of the 2nd to the 12th century, must have died out early10. 8 Further information at www.ortsgeschichte-kuesnacht.ch Since coats of arms did not

appear among the nobility until the second quarter of the 12th century, it is impossible that the noble lords of Küssnacht already possessed one. This rules out any possibility of linking the municipal coat of arms of Küsnacht to the lords of the Wulp; what they have left us is the name of the village - and it is certainly not

few.
But what about the servants from Küssnacht am Vierwaldstättersee?
These cannot be proven with certainty as descendants of a branch of the

barons that remained in their old homeland. However, such a descent would
be conceivable, because their castle - known as "Gessler burg" by the
people - was not a fief of a higher lord, such as the House of Habsburg
Austria. This opens up the possibility that the once baronial
Küssnachter have lost their noble status by entering into an employment
relationship or by marrying a daughter of the lower nobility and have thus
become ministerials.
Eppa I von Küssnacht is known as the oldest representative of the

knightly family of servants, who acted as guarantor for Count Rudolf von
Habsburg opposite Engelberg in 1210. His son Rudolf, knight, appears in
documents from 1256 to 12.63, a knight Johannes from 1258 to 12.84. The
last son, Eppa II, attested from 1282 to 1331, experienced that his bailiffs
wanted to storm the castle; with his sons Eppa III. and Ritter Hartmann the
family must have died out around the middle of the 14th centuryll.

The coat of arms of this family has been reliably handed down to us.
His shield can be found, reproduced in colour, among the well-known coats
of arms in the house "Zum Loch" in Zurich and shows in red a silver cushion
without tassels, standing straight, with the slightly curved edges running
parallel to the upper limit and the flanks of the shield sin 12,ÿExactly the
same coat of arms - only without colors - can be found in the seal of Knight
Eppos II of Küssnacht, whose Gothic pointed shield bears the inscription: + S' .EPPONIS.
MILITIS.DE.CHUSSINACH13, While these two documents do not hand
down any ornaments, one encounters one in the Palatine Coat of Arms from
around 1460, where the full coat of arms of those from "Kussnach" is
shown. The white shield shows a red cushion without tassels and in the
same position as in the seal, so that the colors of field and figure are
reversed compared to the depiction in the house «Zum Loch». A red
pillow (without tassels)14 also appears as a home gem.
This coat of arms did not become the municipal coat of arms of
Küssnacht am Rigi without further ado. Similar to the way in which the
Zurich congregation first had St. George as their church patron in their

coat of arms, the oldest seal of the Schwyz congregation on
a document dated February 27, 1378 shows St. Peter with a tiara. and a
key in his right hand, because the parish church of Küssnacht am Rigi was
dedicated to St. Peter and Paul. This ÿ
Siegel appears for the last time on the Landrechtsbrief of April 3, 1424,
and Johannes Stumpf even mentions it in his chronicle of 1 5 48.15
In the meantime, however, the congregation had left the old symbol,
because in a land register about the Dinghöfe of the Lucerne church
from 1499 suddenly appeared as the coat of arms of the municipality of
Küssnacht, a pen drawing shows a shield with a straight cushion, which is
decorated with tassels at the corners for the first time. The next stage in the
whole development involved turning the cushion onto a corner, as we know
it from the coat of arms of Küsnacht am Zürichsee. In this way it adorned the portal

Tellskapelle with the year 1 6 1 8, it appears similarly on a coat of arms disc in the parish church of Meierskappel from the year 1684, then in the round seal of the community around 1712 of the pillow might indicate.

In a somewhat simpler version, the cushion returns in the seal of the Küssnacht region around 1732, then in an oval shield with a cross-hatched, tasselled cushion as the seal of the Küssnacht chancellery in 178616 Look at the coat of arms of the municipality of Küssnacht, which is shown in the historical-biographical dictionary of Switzerland. It shows a rectangular red cushion with small tassels on the corners in white bars (ie not diagonally).

The coat of arms of the municipality, as it is listed in the coat of arms of the canton of Schwyz von Styger (I 9 3 6), goes even further back: It corresponds to that of the lords of Küssnacht, i.e. it shows the upright, tasselless white pillow 11 in a red shield.

Our municipal sign as a talking coat of arms There is not the slightest doubt that all the forms of coat of arms we have listed with the cushion as - incidentally always the only one - figure can be described as speaking. Such coats of arms are based on the sound of the place or family name without in any way caring about the etymology and real meaning of the same. Who knew anything about the ft1ndus cossoniacus back then? So they stuck to the closest, Middle High German kiissen, kiissin, which in turn is based on Old French coissin, cossin (New French coussin). The word came to us from the west with the thing in

the Middle Ages, and the original ii form did not make it difficult to relate the name Küssnacht to it. The unrounded sound form of cushion was still rare in Early New High German; it only made its way in the 18th century and was essentially victorious through Goethe's language. It is therefore clear that the coat of arms of the Lords of Küssnacht is eloquent; At the end of the 12th or early 13th century they resorted to kiissin, as their name sounds, whose Alemannic dialect form "Chüssi" is still alive. It remains to be seen whether the community of Küssnacht am Rigi, when it also adopted the cushion coat of arms, remembered the coat of arms of its local nobility or whether it directly linked back to the word kussin. We suspect the latter, because the municipal coat of arms shows tassels from the beginning, but the noble shield never.

In the case of Küsnacht on Lake Zurich, we have already established that it is impossible for the shield to have been adopted by the noble family, because they died out here before heraldry came into being. So the only possible connection between the village name and the similar-sounding word kiissin and the thing it designates. This reference happened almost at the same time as Küssnacht am Rigi in the late Middle Ages, but mutual influence is ruled out. In such matters, the communities, especially when they were hours apart, behaved in complete autonomy.

In this context, the coat of arms of a family that bears a strong resemblance to that of Küsnacht should also be mentioned, where

the fact that the branches of the family in the 14th and 15th centuries were to be found in Zurich, Küsnacht, Herrliberg and the end of all places could give rise to all sorts of assumptions. A Heinrich Abdorf was a citizen of Zurich around 1290, a Rudolf a councilor of the Constaffel from 1373 to 1391, so that at least this extinct line can be considered noble[19] a red cushion with the same tassels standing on one corner, which is covered with a white disc. A hat appears as a crest, with the cushion on it as in the shield, but in the middle of it there is still a white staff with a tuft of feathers. According to Friedrich Hegi, it would perhaps only be the coat of arms of Abdorf from Küsnacht, naturalized in 1401, which would again open up the possibility of a meaningful coat of arms based on the local place name. Of course, that cannot be decided because the seals of the Abdorf of Zurich have been lost and we therefore do not know whether they already carried the pillow coat of arms. A connection with Küsnacht would then be questionable[20].

II

Further information at www.ortsgeschichte-kuesnacht.ch
Today's form and "blazon"
In the 1920s, the historical-biographical encyclopedia of Switzerland published another variant of the coat of arms of Küsnacht on Lake Zurich. In a red shield it shows a poorly stylized, rectangular yellow cushion with tassels and the ornamental lines familiar from other depictions. The description (blazon) for this is: "In red, a white or yellow cushion." So there was uncertainty at the time as to the color of the shield figure; moreover, the description is incomplete because the inclination of the pillow should be mentioned.
This brings us to the meaning of the blazon, i.e. the description of a coat of arms in the heraldic language. It is not enough to define a place or family coat of arms only with a colored sketch; rather, it must also be "addressed" in words, because it is conceivable that there are figures on a shield that we no longer know exactly what they represent. A fire ray, a wolf's rod, a wall anchor, but also other implements and certain stylized plants or parts of plants are no longer recognized by everyone for what they are. The blazon must therefore always be added to the drawing, because only then is a coat of arms unequivocally defined. A special artificial language is used for this with fixed technical terms that are not always immediately understandable to the layperson. While this heraldic language has developed to a high degree of perfection in French and uses strict rules, in the German-speaking world the description of coats of arms remained the "stepchild of heraldry" for a long time. A pompous office style was cultivated, and it was only the efforts of heraldic societies over the last hundred years that also succeeded in compiling the German artificial language in rules[21] to have to. Apart from the correct use of technical terms, a good blazon must fulfill two conditions:

1. it must be drafted in such a way that a draftsman or painter can correctly depict the coat of arms without ever having seen it before, 2. it must not contain anything that is self-evident.

Let's show this with a few examples. An animal - lion, wolf, horse, etc. - needs to be told what position it is in, whether it is standing (all four legs on the ground), striding (one front leg raised), or upright (on two hind legs, whatever you use it for). can say "increasing").

More information at www.ortsgeschichte-kuesnacht.ch In the case of a black lion in a golden field, the claws and tongue should only be addressed in a special way if they differ in color from the animal's body, for which, for example, the phrases "red armored", "red tongued" be available. Since stems in the German-speaking area usually have six rays, while five are common in Romance countries, the number of rays in 1111 only needs to be specified if, exceptionally, five or, as in rural heraldry, eight rays occur.

The blazon of the Küsnacht coat of arms is also to be formulated according to these principles. On the map of the municipal coat of arms, as laid down in 193 3, the description read: "In red, a slanted golden cushion with golden tassels." This text has both deficiencies and superfluities.

Above all, there is no indication of the shape of the pillow, because - as can be seen from the previous changes in the coats of arms of both Küs(s)nacht - the pillow could be square, rectangular, circular, diamond-shaped or oval. Since «square» (= French cttn'e) is a valid expression in the German heraldic language, we have to address the Küsnacht cushion in this way.

It is correct in the previous blazon that the position of the pillow is reported, because - as we have seen with the coat of arms of Küssnacht am Rigi - there is the possibility of straight and sloping placement in the shield field. In our case, however, "obliquely" is not a happy expression, because we are thinking of an elongated object. It would be quite appropriate for swords, ploughshares, spears, keys, etc., as would a rectangular cushion. Since the previous blazon does not say that the pillow is equilateral-rectangular, the word "oblique" could tempt a reader who has never seen the Küsnacht coat of arms to draw it rectangular (or even diamond-shaped). But how should the current position be addressed? There is only one suitable expression for a square pillow - and for any other square - namely "put in the right direction". It was actually used in heraldry and we believe it is unmistakably 22.

The tassels remain. Since they have the same tincture as the pillow itself, the word "golden" can be left out for them. In the old blazon, however, this over-precision contrasts with the lack of clarity about the number and attachment points of the tassels, which is all the more serious as nothing has been said about the shape of the pillow up to now. Now that we're addressing the pillow as square, it almost goes without saying that there must be four tassels at the corners. But if one were to add "with tassels at the corners", that would again be almost too obvious and also stylistically unattractive because of the preceding word "over corner". We prefer More information at www.ortsgeschichte-kuesnacht.ch

We therefore propose to indicate the four number of tassels, because this makes their
attachment to the corners of the cushion a matter of course. This results in the following
unmistakable blazon for the municipal coat of arms of Küsnacht: In red, a cross-cornered,
fJlfadratische
golden cushion with four quarters.
HansKläui

Anmerlumgm 1
Zurich paperback for the year 1923, p. 230 ff.: Frietlrith Hegi-NaBf. Stained glass and coats of arms of 2ircher communities
(Kusnacht: p. 249 ff.). Figure 21 on page 248. • Gubelmann coat of arms letter: Zurich State
Archives, Küsnacht No. 155; Illustration in Sthofh, History of the Municipality of Küsnacht, on page 120. • The
Hegner of Winterthur, for example, included the butcher's
ax in their seals long before they received their coat of arms letter from Dean Albrecht von Bonstetten on August 28, 1492.

4 Zurich Central Library, Mskr. A 75; cf. Zurich paperback 1923, p. 2j3.
6 Yearbook from Lake Zurich 1948/49: GBOrg Bäth/,,., The coats of arms of the Lake Zurich communities, p. 172 ff.
(Kuesnacht: p. 175 f.). •
Hegi in the Zürcher Taschenbuch 1923, p. 252, as well as files of the Antiquarian Society on the municipal coat of
arms of Küsnacht. • Same sources. •
Same sources.

9 Küsnacht Annual Sheets 1964: Paul Kläui, Küsnacht and the Lords of Küsnacht, p. 3 ff. - The document from
1087: sources on Swiss history, volume m, l, p. 16.
10 Ruopertus: Sources on the formation of the Confederation, Section II, Volume 3, p. 370.
11 Mert 11111 Hegi, The Roll of Arms of Zurich, p. 220; Genealogical Handbook on Swiss History III, 404; and genealogical
table 35: Historical-biographical encyclopedia of Switzerland IV, 559.
11 Zurich Coat of Arms Scroll.
18 Ibid., seal plate VII, no. 2.
14 Ibid., p. 220, and Schweizerisches Archiv für Heraldik 1928 (42). p. 35/36 (fig. 41).
16 Switzerland. Archive f. Heraldry 1916 (30): A. TNllmann, seal and coat of arms of the countryside and the country people
of Küssnach, p. 21 ff., 74f1'., n3 ff. •• Ibid., illustrations p.
22.
17 Historical-biographical Encyclopedia IV, 559; Styg,., Coat of Arms of the Canton of Schwyz, p. 274, 296.
19 Kluge, Etymological Dictionary of the German Language, 20th ed., edit. by Walther Mitzka (1967).

19 Historical-biographical Encyclopedia I; tax books of the city and region of Zurich; Werner Sthl[Ytkr, Zurich Council
Lists, pp. 40 and 130-148. •• Coat of Arms by G. Etllibt#h in
Donaueschingen (photocopies in the Zurich State Archives); Zürcher Taschenbuch 1923, p. 25 2. - A seal of Heinrich
Abdorf, a citizen of Zurich, hung on the document dated November 18, 1290, but has disappeared (Document Book
Zurich VI, 90, No. 2n l).
11 DL Gaibreath, Handbook of Heraldry, 2nd ed. (1948). p. 201 ff.; Coat of Arms Primer, Handbook of Heraldry, 15th
edition, published by «Herold» (1967). P. 42. •• Cf. Grimm, German dictionary:
"fields placed across corners in the armorial art of Oablonski)". 14 Further information at www.ortsgeschichte-kuesnacht.ch