

## WINGED SAMSON AND POPULAR ICONOGRAPHY IN SIXTEENTH-CENTURY TRANSYLVANIA

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We all knew biblical Samson was strong and fierce, that he had supernatural powers, but that he could fly, that is novel! We knew that Samson, overcome with the Spirit of God, slew a lion with his bare hands, defeated an army with a donkey's jaw bone, and destroyed a temple<sup>1</sup>, but not that he had wings. Yet, a series of related sixteenth-century stove tiles from Transylvania depict the biblical hero with long hair, in full body armor, holding down a lion with his knee and opening its mouth with his bare hands, and strangely enough, Samson seems to have wings. We might never know what the medieval beholders of such images made of this, but we can take a closer look at this intriguing group of tiles and explain the possible reasons for the scene's popularity and for such iconographical "misunderstandings".

On the territory of the Medieval Kingdom of Hungary 19 stove tiles decorated with the scene in which Samson is fighting the lion have been discovered, making him one of the most popular Old Testament characters to be depicted on tiles there. Most of them are unique representations (such as those in Buda, Banská Stiavnica, Nitra, and two unknown locations)<sup>2</sup>. Others are just mentioned in the existing literature, but no image has been published. Some of them were popular enough to be produced and used in more than one location in the same area and to be copied after distant and prestigious models. In Varaždin, identical tiles have been discovered both in the area of the castle and in the old town (both green glazed and unglazed items)<sup>3</sup>. They have perfect analogies among the tiles produced for St. Stephen's cathedral in Vienna around 1500. In Vienna, on one side of a crest corner tile with a small sculpture of a woman in a turban holding a shield decorated with the image of St. John, Samson wearing a turban and with a moustache is fighting a lion in an identical pose (Fig. 1)<sup>4</sup>. The same headdress, facial characteristics, and costume are found on tiles decorated with the image of St. Christopher from tiles in Vienna and Ružica. Similar tiles were reportedly found in Buda (but not included here because no further data is available on them), showing the connections between Hungary

<sup>1</sup> Gregory Mobley, *Samson and the liminal hero in the ancient Near East*. New York, T&T Clark, 2006, p. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Soon to be published in my forthcoming book *Religious Representations on Stove Tiles from the Medieval Kingdom of Hungary*, CEU Press (henceforth Gruia, *Religious Representations...*). For tiles from Transylvania depicting Samson, see Adrian Andrei Rusu, *Cahle din Transilvania (VI)*. Câteva piese figurate de la Sighișoara, in *Investigări ale culturii materiale medievale din Transilvania*. Cluj-Napoca, Ed. Mega, 2008 (henceforth Rusu, *Cahle din Transilvania (VI)*), p. 252-254.

<sup>3</sup> Mira Ilijanić, *Urbanizam Graditeljstvo Kultura. Zbornik radova*. Varaždin, Gradski Muzej Varaždin, 1999, p. 263, fig. 1, p. 264; *Županija varaždinska u srednjem vijeku/Die Gespanschaft Varaždin im Mittelalter*. Varaždin, Tiva Tiskara, 1999, p. 54, cat. 112; *Iz srednjega u novi vijek. Varaždinski stari grad i project bastion*. Zagreb, Gradski Muzej Varaždin, 2008, p. 49, fig. 115.

<sup>4</sup> Rosemarie Franz, *Die Kachelofen -- Entstehung und kunstgeschichtliche Entwicklung bis zum Ausgang des Klassizismus*. Graz, Akademische Druck- u. Verlagsanstalt, 1969 (henceforth Franz, *Die Kachelofen...*), fig. 108; Yvonne Hackenbroch, *Stove Tiles from Austria*, in *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin*, 9, 1964, p. 310-312, fig. 4.

and Austria by the time of King Matthias Corvinus' death<sup>5</sup>. Specialists have interpreted the facial characteristics of both Samson and Christopher as being the portrait of a typical Hungarian, implying that wherever the motif was first created, it took as source of inspiration the oriental turban and the moustache considered typical for Hungarian men<sup>6</sup>. If the tiles from Varaždin are copied after those in Vienna or Buda, the motif was transmitted over a distance of ca. 300 kilometers, indicating their importance and the prestige associate to them.



Varaždin

Vienna

Fig. 1. Tile and tile fragment depicting Samson, with turban and moustache, fighting the lion.

Nevertheless, Samson fighting the lion seems to have been the most popular in Transylvania (11 out of the 19 tiles), and all occurrence from this province can be delegated to two groups of related tiles<sup>7</sup>. Certain iconographic elements are, as shown below, common to the

<sup>5</sup> Imre Holl, Pál Voit, *Alte ungarische Ofenkacheln*. Budapest, Corvina Verlag, 1963 (henceforth Holl, Voit, *Alte ungarische Ofenkacheln*), p. 39.

<sup>6</sup> Franz, *Die Kachelofen....*, p. 55.

<sup>7</sup> Stove-tiles created with the same mold, even if used in very distant places, are all *original products*, directly connected to each other. Some may have less sharp relief and details due to the wearing out of the mold. The demand was often greater than the tiles created with one mold could cover, however, so the copying of tiles was widely practiced. A tile can be used as positive mold to create an entire series of negative molds and with them a series of *copies* may be created. The copy is ca. 30% smaller than the original (because the clay shrinks during each drying and firing up to 10-15% and the process takes place twice), but bears the same decoration. A copy can be used to create another mold and thus other copies, so the process can be repeated several times. A category in between a copy and an imitation is created when small corrections are made to the raw copy by incision or modeling. Sometimes pottery masters created *imitations* of other tiles. The two objects are never identical, but filtered by the master's memory, ability, and imagination. Originals, copies, and imitations all fall in the category of *directly connected tiles*. In the case of originals and copies the mould is the direct connection and in the case of imitations, the master is the connection. There are also *indirectly connected tiles*, inspired by a common image, usually by prints, but not related to each other in any other way. I translated the terms related to copying from German, from the seminal writing of Judit Tamási, *Verwandte Typen im schweizerischen und ungarischen Kachelfundmaterial in der zweiten Hälfte des 15. Jahrhunderts*. Budapest, Országos Műemlékvédelmi Hivatal, 1995.

two groups. They are all later products, dated to the sixteenth century, created in a simplified and not very talented manner. Two more fragments, discovered in Cluj – St. Peter and Sibiu, were reported as depicting the same scene, but the first is too small for a positive identification<sup>8</sup>, while the latter remains unpublished<sup>9</sup>.

The first group comprises five directly related tiles that have been discovered in Bodogaia (Harghita County)<sup>10</sup>, in a village house in Cechești (Harghita County)<sup>11</sup>, another in Rugănești (Harghita County)<sup>12</sup>, and in the cellar of a late medieval market town house in Cristuru Secuiesc (Harghita County)<sup>13</sup>. One other fragment is preserved in the Museum of Odorheiu Secuiesc (Harghita County) (Fig. 2)<sup>14</sup>. All of them are probably unglazed and were used in lower social contexts in the Szekler region of eastern Transylvania. Potters and workshops are attested for the same period in Cristuru Secuiesc<sup>15</sup> and the production center of this group of stove tiles seems to have been located there. The iconography is fully Renaissance, with the main scene under a semicircular arch decorated with human masks in the corners. Samson, an older vigorous man with a beard and moustache, wears a small cap and a costume with short sleeves, collar and buttons. Bodogaia, Cechești, and Rugănești are all villages around Cristuru Secuiesc, while Odorheiu Secuiesc is 25 kilometers away. The transmission of this motif is therefore restricted to a small geographic area in the Szekler region of southeastern Transylvania:



Bodogaia



Cristuru Secuiesc



Rugănești

<sup>8</sup> The fragment actually shows the bent knees of a character wearing a mantle, but the group of tiles we will discuss later all include Samson's left knee bent differently, in a straight angle. Elek Benkő, *Kolozsvár magyar külvárosa a középkorban. A Kolozsvárba olvadtt Szentpéter falu emlékei*. Kolozsvár, Erdélyi Múzeum Egyesület, 2004, p. 59, 103, fig. 13.

<sup>9</sup> Rusu, *Cahle din Transilvania* (VI), p. 252, note 21, p. 253, note 23.

<sup>10</sup> Imre Holl, *Renaissance-Ofen (Mittelalterliche Ofenkacheln in Ungarn V)*, in *Acta Archaeologica Scientiarum Hungaricae*, 45, 1993, p. 294, fig. 70; Elek Benkő, István Ughy, *Székelykeresztúri kályhacsempék 15-17. század*. Bucharest, Kriterion Könyvkiadó, 1984 (henceforth Benkő, Ughy, *Székelykeresztúri kályhacsempék...*), p. 47; Daniela Marcu Istrate, *Cahle din Transilvania și Banat de la începuturi până la 1700*. Cluj-Napoca, Editura Accent, 2004 (henceforth Marcu Istrate, *Cahle...*), p. 181.

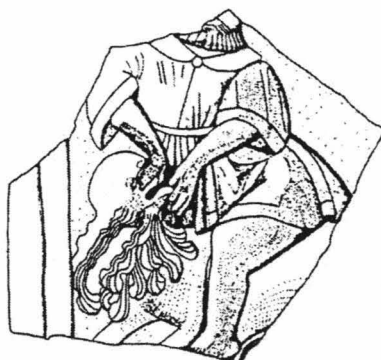
<sup>11</sup> Marcu Istrate, *Cahle...*, p. 185; Benkő, Ughy, *Székelykeresztúri kályhacsempék...*, p. 50-51 (illustration not published but tile mentioned as belonging to this iconographic group).

<sup>12</sup> Marcu Istrate, *Cahle...*, p. 265, 470, fig. A1; Horst Klusch, *Zauber alter Kacheln aus Rumänien*. Sibiu, Herausgegeben von Demokratischen Forum der Deutschen in Rumänien, 1999 (henceforth Klusch, *Zauber alter Kacheln...*), p. 36, fig. 44; Benkő, Ughy, *Székelykeresztúri kályhacsempék...*, p. 58, plate 23.

<sup>13</sup> Elek Benkő, Attila Székely, *Középkori udvarház és nemesség a Székelyföldön*. Budapest, Nap Kiadó, 2008 (henceforth Benkő, Székely, *Középkori udvarház...*), p. 253-255, fig. 120.

<sup>14</sup> Marcu Istrate, *Cahle...*, p. 245, 437, fig C1.

<sup>15</sup> Benkő, Ughy, *Székelykeresztúri kályhacsempék...*



Odorheiu Secuiesc

Fig. 2. Tiles depicting Samson fighting the lion under a semi-circular arch decorated with human masks.

The second group of tiles from Transylvania, which is of interest here, is composed of indirectly related tiles dated to the sixteenth century. The six items are imitations of the same motif. The original seems to be the tile discovered at Roșia (Sibiu County), the only one dated to the end of the fifteenth century and the beginning of the next<sup>16</sup>. Samson is depicted in full armor, opening the mouth of the lion and leaning his left bent leg on the animal's back. The upper part of the tile represents an arch and has two heraldic shields in the corners, one inscribed with a star. As. A.A. Rusu noted, the general composition of this tile resembles that of the previous group, i.e. the characters depicted under an arch with two decorative elements in the upper corners (shields and masks, respectively)<sup>17</sup>, although it does not denote any clear relation between them. Archaeologists consider the discovery context in Roșia the house of a Saxon leader (*greb*). A transformation of the motif decorated two other tiles, one found in a secondary position at the castle in Vințu de Jos (Alba County)<sup>18</sup> and the other among the ruins of a manor house in Cristuru Secuiesc<sup>19</sup>. There are significant differences: the image is flipped horizontally, the arch and the shields have disappeared, and the background is decorated with lines that suggest wings, or a mantle (inconsistent with the scene). In Vințu de Jos the recovered fragments, both unglazed and with green glaze, suggest the existence of minimum 10 and maximum 12 tiles of the sort, some with slight differences indicating the use of different molds. Despite looking very similar, the tiles in Vințu de Jos and Cristuru Secuiesc are probably not copies but also imitations, taking into consideration the added border and the confusing dimensions (Vințu de Jos: 30.3 x 20.8 cm, Cristuru Secuiesc: 27.3 x 21.2 cm.).

Another variant decorated a tile kept in Sighișoara (Mureș County)<sup>20</sup> and a fragment discovered among the ruins of the manor house in Racoșul de Jos (Brașov County)<sup>21</sup>. On the two unglazed tiles, Samson is turned to the right and the background suggests more of a vegetal decoration. Again, the very similar tiles still display diverging details and thus seem to be imitations and not copies of each other.

<sup>16</sup> Marcu Istrate, *Cahle...*, p. 264, p. 531; Klusch, *Zauber alter Kacheln...*, p. 87, fig. 26; Thomas Năgler, *Un depozit de plăci ornamentale descoperit la Roșia (raionul Sibiu)*, in *Culegere de Studii și Cercetări*, 1, 1967, p. 146, fig. 6. Preserved in the collection of the Brukenthal Museum, Sibiu, inv. no. 8355.

<sup>17</sup> Rusu, *Cahle din Transilvania (VI)*, p. 253.

<sup>18</sup> Marcu Istrate, *Cahle...*, p. 286, p. 495, fig. 67, 67 a, b. Preserved in the collection of the National History Museum of Transylvania, Cluj-Napoca, without an inventory number.

<sup>19</sup> Benkő, Székely, *Középkori udvarház...*, p. 251, p. 252, p. 254, fig. 119. Discovered in the manor house excavated in Kriza János St., no. 23.

<sup>20</sup> Marcu Istrate, *Cahle...*, p. 272, p. 476, fig. B3. Preserved in the collection of the History Museum in Sighișoara, without an inventory number. An illustration of the preserved fragments and not the drawing in Rusu, *Cahle din Transilvania (VI)*, p. 261, fig. 3.

<sup>21</sup> Marcu Istrate, *Cahle...*, p. 449, fig. 110.20.

A previously unpublished tile is preserved, in several fragments, in the collection of the general school in Războieni-Cetate (Alba County)<sup>22</sup>. This unglazed tile resembles more the previously discussed items from Vințu de Jos and Cristuru Secuiesc, and despite its worn-out relief one fragment clearly depicts the character's tassets and (probably) a sword. The exact place of discovery of this item remains unknown, but it must have been local, probably on the territory of the medieval settlement. Războieni is located 60 km from Alba-Iulia.

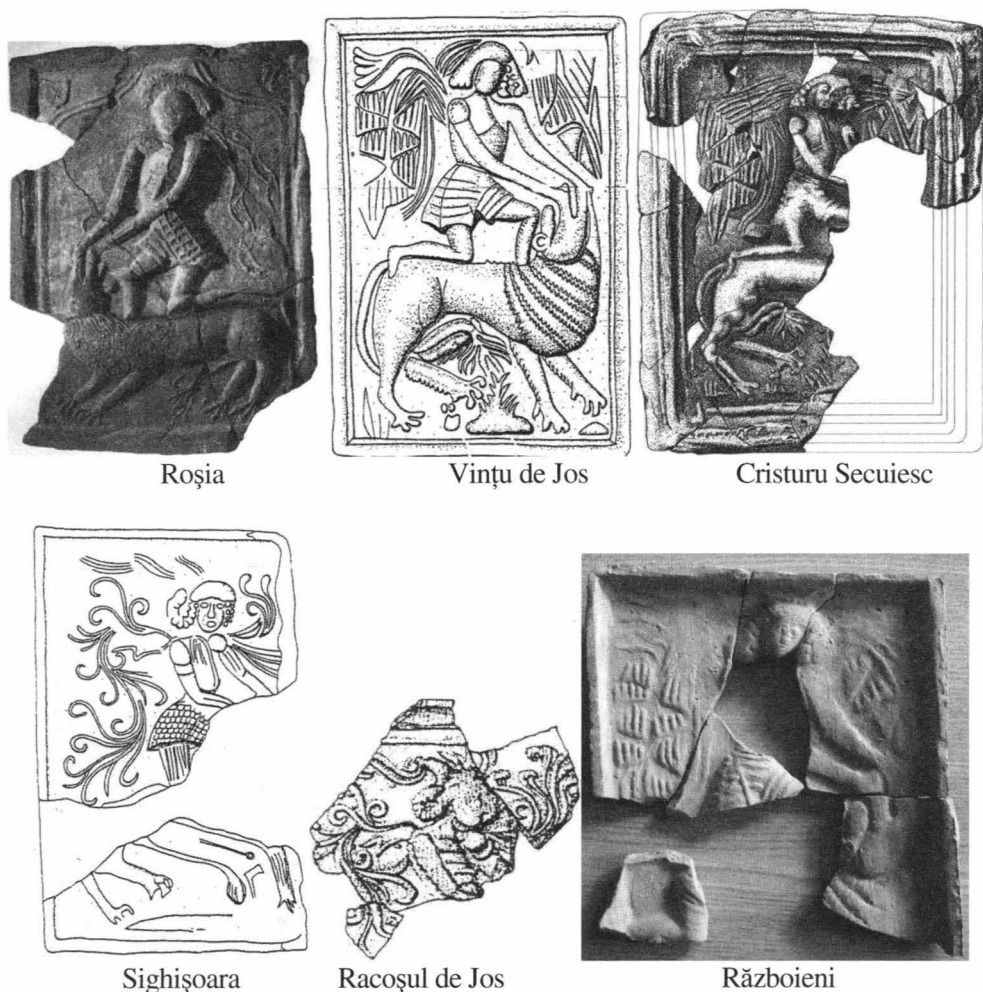


Fig. 3. Group of indirectly-related tiles depicting Samson fighting the lion.

All the discovery sites are located in southern Transylvania around the cities of Alba Iulia, Sibiu and Cristuru Secuiesc. The most similar tiles (Vințu de Jos - Cristuru Secuiesc, Sighișoara - Racoșul de Jos) were used on sites 148 and 73 kilometers away, respectively. Racoșul de Jos and Vințu de Jos are the farthest away, 200 kilometers from one to another. Compared to the previous group, these variants circulated over wider distances, but still a relatively restricted area. It is also probable that they were produced locally, considering the fact that they lack close parallels elsewhere and the archaeologically excavated tile workshops

<sup>22</sup> I thank my colleague Rada Varga for indicating this tile to me and for sharing the photograph.

previously mentioned in Cristuru Secuiesc. The tile in Vințu de Jos is a product of another workshop active in the area, since a great collection of tiles have been recovered on the site and the lion in this scene is almost identical to another item found there illustrating a literary episode, the fight between the knight and the lion against the dragon<sup>23</sup>. The discovery site in Roșia might have also functioned as a pottery workshop, or the lot might have belonged to a traveling master since it also included a tile mold.

As for the contexts in which this group of tiles was used, they are also more diverse and of a higher status compared to the first discussed group. The house in Roșia might have functioned as a manor house owned by a Saxon leader or as a workshop because several types of tiles were found there and also a mold. The place of discovery in Racoș was a manor house and Vințu de Jos a castle. If the tile from the Museum in Sighișoara was found in the same German city then it might have been used in an urban house and the tile in Războieni might have been discovered in a local town house as well.

Taking into consideration the dating of this group of tiles in the sixteenth century, it might be useful to look at the religious status of the sites in question, trying to determine if this Old Testament motif was preferred because of a Protestant taste for certain images or not. In the case of Roșia, if the site was the manor house of a Saxon *greb*, he might have been Lutheran, but there is no evidence for this except for the preference of Transylvanian Saxons for this religious denomination<sup>24</sup>. If the site was a pottery workshop, the religion of the owner is not very relevant since he probably worked “on demand”. It is known that the owner of the castle in Vințu de Jos was George Martinuzzi, a Catholic prelate, while the manor house in Racoș was owned in the fifteenth and sixteenth century by the Sükösd family until it was destroyed by a fire in 1624. In the sixteenth century the Sükösds were probably Protestant. The tiles kept in Sighișoara and Războieni might have been discovered in the respective medieval settlements, but there is no way of knowing who were those who bought and used them, nor their religious beliefs. It is nevertheless relevant to note that the tiles under discussion were used by both Catholics and Protestants, indicating the fact that this motif, despite being taken from the Old Testament and thus more likely to have been preferred by Protestants, was primarily a matter of fashion and availability, circulating freely across ethnic and confessional borders.

But let us return to the iconography of the scene, as it is rendered on this group of tiles. The Old Testament episode (Judges 14:4-6)<sup>25</sup> recounts that

Samson went down to Timnah with his father and mother. When he got to the vineyards of Timnah, a young lion came at him, roaring. The Spirit of GOD came on him powerfully and he ripped it open barehanded, like tearing a young goat. But he didn't tell his parents what he had done.

The scene exemplifies *par excellence* the virtue of fortitude, when the hero, inspired by the spirit of God, performs an outstanding feat of strength and power. The Biblical text does not offer any details on how Samson was dressed, but during the Middle Ages it was a common

<sup>23</sup> On Vințu de Jos, see Adrian Andrei Rusu, *Gotic și Renaștere la Vințu de Jos. Documente de cultură materială din Transilvania secolelor XIII-XVII*. Cluj-Napoca-Satu Mare, Gedo SRL, 1998; on the depiction of the fight of the knight and the lion against the dragon (a key episode of Chrétien de Troyes' *Chevalier au lion*) on tiles from Vințu de Jos and Făgăraș, see Matthias Corvinus 1443-1458-2008. *Exhibition Catalogue*. Cluj-Napoca, Muzeul Național de Istorie a Transilvaniei, 2008, p. 41, fig. 7-8. The resemblance noted by A. A. Rusu in *Cahle din Transilvania* (VI), p. 254.

<sup>24</sup> Joachim Bahlcke, *Calvinism and estate liberation movements in Bohemia and Hungary (1570-1620)*, in *The Reformation in Eastern and Central Europe*, ed. Karin Maag, p. 72-91. Aldershot, Scolar Press, 1997; Konrad Gündisch, *The History of Transylvania and the Transylvanian Saxons*, cap. 4, la <http://www.sibiweb.de/geschi/7b-history.htm>; for a chapter dedicated to the impact of the Reformation on the iconography of stove tiles in the former territory of the Hungarian Kingdom see Gruia, *Religious Representations...* (Chapter 8).

<sup>25</sup> <http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Judges+14%3A4-6&version=MSG>.



practice to “update” such accounts and make their heroes wear medieval dress and armor. Such is the case with the Transylvanian stove tiles under discussion. Samson is depicted as a fashionable fighter, in full body armor. The tiles render fine details of his cuirass, shoulder, elbow and knee protection plates, and his tassets. But what makes reference to the Biblical story is the fact that he wears no helmet, but his long hair (in which his strength resided) is depicted flowing freely around his head. On the tile from Roșia, a ribbon seems to flow from the back of his head and over his left shoulder. The later tiles, loosing in detail, replace this element with more or less intricate designs which suggest, instead of a ribbon or a mantle, the fact that Samson has wings. One explanation might be the fact that the masters copying and imitating tiles like that from Roșia did not know or did not understand the depicted scene and mistook Samson for an angel. It is known that details are often lost during the mechanical copying of tiles in the creation of new molds for new series of tiles. This copying of a tile and then impression of a series of new items in the mold thus created leads to the diminishing of the relief and the loss of details and precision. The process can be complicated even more if the copied tile was glazed, with the liquid glaze having filled some of the original relief.

There are other examples when tiles show knights with wings, due to similar faulty copying procedures. A representation of the popular knight in tournament motif, originally created by the royal workshops of Buda to decorate the stoves of the royal palace<sup>26</sup>, has been discovered in Bistrița<sup>27</sup>. The Transylvanian tile, not related but only distantly reminding of the original, differs in various elements. The knight on horseback, in full armor and holding a lance, is turned to the right and the architectural background of the original motif is replaced by a background decoration consisting of lines that suggest wings or flames behind the knight and grass in the foreground. In this case the wings seem to be not invent a miss-interpretation of an existing element (like the ribbon or mantle in Samson’s case), but a simple erroneous addition.



Buda



Bistrița

Fig. 4. Stove tiles depicting knights in tournament.

<sup>26</sup> See the analysis of the entire series and the full bibliography in Ana Maria Gruia, *Tiles Decorated with the Knight in Tournament in the Kingdom of Hungary*, in *Acta Musei Brukenthal*, 4, 2009, p. 203-221. Photo taken by the author with permission of the History Museum in Buda.

<sup>27</sup> Vasile Mizgan, *Cahle cu cavaler în turnir descoperite la Bistrița*, in *Revista Bistriței*, 15, 2001, p. 136, fig. 5.

The above mentioned example makes us turn to another connection, that between Samson and other knightly heroes depicted on tiles. Unlike the first group of tiles discussed here, the depiction of Samson in full body armor stresses his knightly virtues. Fifteen-sixteenth-century tiles indicate the popularity of depictions reflecting the values of knightly culture, showing in details the arms, armor and tack elements fashionable during that period, worn by St. George, St. Ladislav, Samson and anonymous riders. As a Byzantine reminiscence, St. George and St. Ladislav are sometimes depicted on tiles wearing mantles<sup>28</sup>. This element of dress is iconographically symbolic of strength, dignity, and ultimately of royal character<sup>29</sup>. These saints and Old Testament characters become in popular vision true heroic fighters, all inspired by divine power, thus a misunderstood element in the image, conferring them wings, can only underline such a perception.

Misunderstood or not, Samson was a popular figure on tiles in sixteenth-century Transylvania. As presented above, these items fall in two iconographic groups which nevertheless show considerable inner variation, indicating the use of several distinct molds. Despite the fact that some tiles decorated with the same episode in the Old Testament character's life show him slaying the lion in a similar position, namely holding the animal down with one knee, the two groups in Transylvania are products original to that province (at that time an autonomous principality). In the territory of the former Realm of Saint Stephen, tiles decorated with the image of Samson mounted or kneeling on the back of the lion have been discovered in the royal palace of Buda<sup>30</sup>, an unknown location<sup>31</sup>, and in the town hall or a burgher house in the upper Hungarian town of Nitra<sup>32</sup> (Fig. 5), but none of them served as models for the tiles discovered in Transylvania, who remain thus unique.

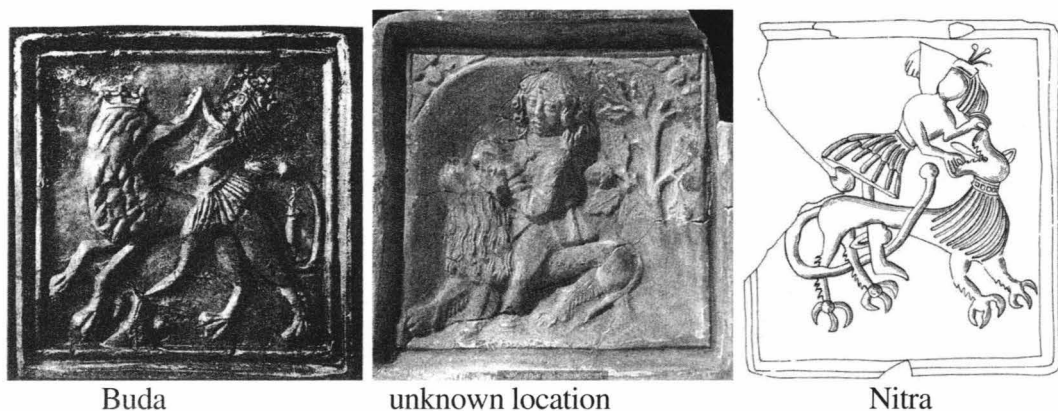


Fig. 5. Tiles with Samson killing the lion by mounting or stepping on the animal.

<sup>28</sup> On a detailed analysis of Byzantine elements in the depiction of St. George on tiles see Ana Maria Gruia, *Saint George on Medieval Stove Tiles from Transylvania, Moldavia and Wallachia. An Iconographical Approach*, in *Acta Musei Napocensis*, 41-44, 2004-2007, p. 231-254 and *Studia Patzinaka*, 3, 2006, p. 7-48 (at [www.patzinakia.com](http://www.patzinakia.com)).

<sup>29</sup> Georg Swarzenski, *Samson killing the lion. A medieval bronze group*, in *Bulletin of the Museum of Fine Arts*, 229, 1940, p. 72.

<sup>30</sup> Péter Havassy, *Gerencserek, kályhások, tűzvigyázók. Feudáliskori kályhacsempék. Az Alföldről és peremvidékéről*, Gyulai Katalógusok 11. Gyula, Gyulai Erkel Ferenc Múzeum, 2002, p. 111, cat. 214, fig. 214; Holl, Voit, *Alte ungarische Ofenkacheln*, p. 64, cat. 2, fig. 2; Imre Holl, *Középkori kályhacsempék Magyarországon I*, in *Budapest Régiségei*, 18, 1958, p. 215-216, fig. 6.

<sup>31</sup> [www.imareal.oeaw.ac.at/realonline](http://www.imareal.oeaw.ac.at/realonline), no. 013723 (interestingly sharing with tiles in Transylvania the composition placed under a semicircular arch decorated in the upper corners with two vegetal motifs). The database dates the tile to the fifteenth century but the Renaissance style and composition suggest a later dating, to the sixteenth century.

<sup>32</sup> Mário Bielič, Marián Samuel, *Kachlice*, in *Tak čo, našli ste niečo? Svedectvo archeologie o minulosti Mostnej ulice v Nitre*, ed. Gertrúda Březinová, Marián Samuel, et. al. Nitra, Archeologický ústav SAV v Nitre, 2007, fig. 86/b, 99d.



**Samson înaripat și iconografie populară în Transilvania secolului al XVI-lea***Rezumat*

Un grup de cahle de secol XVI din Transilvania îl reprezintă pe Samson luptându-se cu leul, însă, în mod curios, eroul veterotestamentar pare să fie redat cu aripi. Articolul trece în revistă reprezentările lui Samson pe cahle în Regatul Ungariei, oprindu-se asupra celor din Transilvania. În această provincie, devenită în secolul cu pricina principat autonom, se pot identifica cu certitudine 11 astfel de cahle, care formează două grupuri iconografice. Unul, cu caracteristici puternic Renascentiste, era creat și folosit într-o regiune restrânsă din Secuime (Bodogaia, Cechești, Rugănești, Cristuru Secuiesc, Odorheiu Secuiesc) iar altul pe o zonă ceva mai amplă, Alba-Sibiu-Cristur (Roșia, Sighișoara, Racoșu de Jos, Vințu de Jos, Cristuru Secuiesc, Războieni-Cetate, cahla din această din urmă locație fiind până acum inedită). Acest de al doilea grup, cuprinzând cahle indirect înrudite, îl reprezintă pe Samson aparent înaripat, probabil datorită unei erori de copiere, prin interpretarea greșită a mantiei eroului.