

THE COATS OF ARMS OF THE CALVINIST CHURCH IN DAIA SECUIASCĂ/SZÉKELYDÁLYA¹

SZEKERES ATTILA ISTVÁN²

STEMELE BISERICII REFORMATE DE LA DAIA SECUIASCĂ

REZUMAT

În sanctuarul bisericii reformate de la Daia Secuiască (județul Harghita) întâlnim un ansamblu de opt steme. De fapt, este lăcașul medieval cel mai bogat în steme de pe teritoriul Ținutului Secuiesc. Bolta sanctuarului a fost decorată în stilul "camerelor verzi". Pictura murală înglobează stemele: regelui Ungariei, Vladislav al II-lea, a vicevoievodului Transilvaniei, vicecomite al secuilor, Leonard Barlabásy, comunităților secuiești și săsești, orașelor Brașov, Sibiu și Sighișoara, precum și a dinastiei Arpadiene. Studiind stemele și prin comparație cu altele asemănătoare din apropierea locației, heraldistul poate veni în ajutorul istoricului de artă și al arheologului, reducând intervalul realizării picturii murale nedatate la doar câțiva ani, în preajma anului 1510.

Cuvinte cheie: stemă, pictură murală, secui, sași, Daia, Vladislav al II-lea, Leonard Barlabásy, Sighișoara, Cioboteni, Leliceni.

A SZÉKELYDÁLYAI REFORMÁTUS TEMPLOM CÍMEREI

ÖSSZEFOGLALÓ

A székelydályai református templom szentélyének boltozatán, melyet a német eredetű "zöld szoba" stílusban díszítettek, nyolc címert találunk. Ez a leggazdagabb festett címeregyüttest tartalmazó középkori épület a Székelyföld területén. A címerek a következők: II. Ulászló, Magyarország királya, Barlabásy Lénárd, Erdély alvadjája, székely alispán, a székely, illetve a szász közösség címere, Brassó, Nagyszében és Segesvár városának címere, valamint az Árpád-ház címere. A címereket tanulmányozva, hasonló, a közelben található más címerekkel összevetve, a művészettörténész és a régész segítségével jöhet a heraldikus, mindössze néhány, 1510 körüli évre leszűkítve a címerek, egyben a falfestmény keletkezési idejét.

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² Heraldist, doctor în istorie, Asociația de Heraldică și Vexilologie din Transilvania – Sfântu Gheorghe; e-mail: attila@szekeres.ro; <http://www.szekeres.ro>.

Kulcsszavak: címer, falfestmény, székely, szász, Székelydálya, II. Ulászló, Barlabásy Lénárd, Segesvár, Csobotfalva, Csíkszentlélek.

The Calvinist church in Daia Secuiască³ is the richest in coats of arms of all the medieval buildings in Szeklerland, and is also the only medieval monument in Szeklerland which houses painted coats of arms.

A century ago we could still see the wall-painting⁴ on the side of the building in the so called Mathias-loggia of the castle in Hunedoara, which in its ornaments showed some affinity with the dome painting⁵ in the apsis of the church in Daia, but the latter was richer in coats of arms, containing an ensemble of fourteen coats of arms. There is a gap of about seventy years between the two works, the former is from earlier times. According to the latest researches it dates back to the times of John Hunyadi and based on the messages of the coats of arms it was issued in the 1440s during the reign of King Wladislav I or just right after it⁶.

The monument church

Focusing on our subject, we briefly sketch the history of the process of building. It has quite a rich literature, during newer researches newer elements surfaced, and there are still many things to discover.

Daia is mentioned even in 1333 and 1334 in the pontifical register⁷ as Dalya or Daya. By then the church already existed. We do not know the exact date it was built, but according to researches it is dated to the 13th century.

The bicellular Roman building, from which only the northern and southern stone walls of the nave and the remains of the western wall are still standing was built in the 13th century. We can deduce this from the early, straight closing apsis and its remaining walls with fragments of frescos⁸. In

³ Hungarian: Székelydálya.

⁴ See: Möller István, *A vajda-hunyadi vár építési korai*, in Foszter Gyula (szerk.), "Magyarország műemlékei", III. kötet, Budapest, 1913, p. 77-104.

⁵ Balogh Jolán, *Az erdélyi renaissance*, Budapest, 1943, p. 117; Radu Lupescu, *Vajda-hunyad vára a Hunyadiak korában*, Phd. Dissertation, ELTE BTK History of Arts Phd School, Budapest, 2006, p. 138 (<http://doktori.btk.elte.hu/art/lupescu/thesis.pdf> - 22.10.2016).

⁶ R. Lupescu, *Laic and Ecclesiastic in the Heraldic Representation on the Matthias Loggia in Hunedoara Castle*, in "Studia Universitatis Babes-Bolyai. Historia", vol. 58, 2013, p. 31-48.

⁷ In 1333: "Clemens de Dalya solvit II. et medium banale" (*Monumenta Vaticana historiam Regni Hungariae illustrantia*, vol. I, Budapest, 1887, p. 115); in 1334: "Item Clemens sacerdos de Daya solvit II. banales antiquos" (*MonVat*, I, p. 133).

⁸ János Mihály, *A székelydályai református templom kutatása*, in "Műemlékvédelmi Szemle", 1993, I, p. 38-39.

the 14th century the church was repainted, this was the time when the scenes of Saint Ladislav, Saint George and Saint Christopher were created.

The church was remodeled at the end of the 15th and the beginning of the 16th centuries. The apsis from Roman times was demolished and a somewhat wider and much longer Gothic apsis was built⁹. The dome of this was painted at the beginning of the 16th century. This is where we can find the coats of arms of our subject. At the same time the nave was remodeled as well, its walls were built taller, its windows were enlarged. In 1630 they have added coffer-work to the nave¹⁰. The remodeling of the church in Baroque style took place between 1770-1802, the slender and tall tower was built in the last three years of the period¹¹.

Those entering the apsis are amazed by the painted dome with foliose ornaments. Jolán Balogh writes the following about this: "The wordly origin appears veilless on the apsis' beautiful dome of the church in Daia, painted with foliose ornaments, whose waveing runners are filled with profane motifs, coats of arms, decorative figures, amongst them a Turk with a turban and a diversity of other masks. The decorations consisting of the abounding leaf-canopy and the decorations of fitted huge flowers and decorative figures developed in the German late-gothic, they arrived to us from Germany, too (...). The fresco in Daia, however, differs from the German pattern, which became well-known throughout Transylvania with the help of engravings, with its more perspicuous drawing, bigger flower-ornament, more abstract colouring – in which only the different nuances of green and brown dominate, the naturalistic colours of flowers are absent –, with its Renaissance motifs appearing here and there (the shapes of coats of arms, leaf-rosetted flower, the leaf ornaments painted on the groinded vault) and especially with the drawing and plaiting of the figures"¹².

The author refers to the fact that in such cases it is about the interference of the late Gothic ornamentation and the Renaissance style¹³. László Dávid also says: "its style pictures the gradual conquest of space, the depiction of its coats of arms shows the integration of the community of a village in the order of the changing world"¹⁴.

⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 39.

¹⁰ *Ibidem*.

¹¹ *Ibidem*, 40.

¹² Balogh Jolán, *op. cit.*, p. 117-118.

¹³ *Ibidem*, p. 118.

¹⁴ Dávid László, *A középkori Udvarhelyszék művészeti emlékei*, Bukarest, 198., p. 31.

The "green chamber" ornamentation in the church in Daia was elaborated in the most detailed way by Emese Nagy¹⁵. In her paper she described schematically the coats of arms as well – although, in relation to other authors, more detailed and, more importantly, correctly. She recognized the coat of arms of the Saxon community. Others refer to it as unknown and there are some who – as if it would not even exist –, leave it out of the enumeration.

The heraldist is instantly caught by the coats of arms in the apsis. And they tell the stories – about the past. As the heraldry is an auxiliary science of history and its main charge is to help the historiographer in his work, so do these coats of arms help in the decoding of certain contents. They show us who painted the ceiling, and when they did so, who the rulers were in those times, and the Transylvanian vice-voivode.

The representation of coats of arms, ensembles of coats of arms started from Western Europe and with a small delay it arrived to Transylvania as well. The most suitable medium in Europe in the Middle Ages to accept these were the castles and churches. The coats of arms were carved in stones, chiseled in wood, painted on walls, sewed in rugs, painted on furniture or illustrated with a mixed technique. They carried a message, their procurer, their maker wanted to send a message through them: they showed ownership, social, canonical, national, familial, administrative belonging or some kind of subservience. The ensemble of coats of arms, besides of having an ornamental role, has an ensemble message, too. For example the ensemble in Hunedoara has compacted the coats of arms of the Hungarian lords in those times, including the ruler, the amphitryon John Hunyadi and the barons of the country¹⁶. These kinds of ensembles of coats of arms, as the so called "green chambers"¹⁷ ornamentation, are one of the particularities of the late Gothic style, which was present primarily in Germany. Such a coat of arms varied ornament signalled the good social and distinct political situation, more precisely it flaunted, had a genealogical message.

In the case of the church in Daia, the ensemble of the eight coats of arms has a different message. Contradictory to the ensemble of coats of arms in Hunedoara, here we can see the dynasty-coat of arms of the king, communities, towns.

As mentioned before, the coats of arms similarly to the surrounding foliose ornaments show the stage of the late Gothic passing into the Renaissance. It can be seen immediately that they lived the era of living

¹⁵ Nagy Emese, *Green Chamber Iconography from Saxony to Székelydálya: A Case Study*, in "Annual of Medieval Studies", vol. 7, Ed. Sebök Marcell and Szende Katalin, Budapest, CEU, 2001, p. 39-63.

¹⁶ R. Lupescu, *Vajdahunyad vára a Hunyadiak korában*, p. 115-116.

¹⁷ In technical terms, in German: grüne Gewölbe.

heraldry. Characteristic to the coats of arms is the simplicity. Dominant is the Gules-Argent tincture combination: their models were the coatings of Hungary's coat of arms, thus every coat of arms's field was painted Gules. The majority of the coats of arms have got a double tincture, a third tincture appears only in very justified cases.

In the era of living heraldry the use of coating was strictly kept, only four tinctures – Gules (red), Azure (blue), Vert (green), Sable (black) –, and two metals – Or (gold) and Argent (silver) –, were used. The latter two were replaced by yellow and white. In Daia white was used instead of Argent, instead of or they used such a perfect brownish-yellowish imitation that you can see only by getting close, that it is not Or. In our paper we used the terms Or and Argent by the visualizing of metals at the description of the coats of arms.

Seven out of the eight are simple shields, only one, the first, is topped with a crown, a five-leaved, open, Or crown. This clearly signals a reigning coat of arms. In that age only coats of arms of royals were topped with a crown.

The form of the shields is the same, their size differs a little, it is sized to the intergraind widths, but in average they are 60x74 centimeters.

In our paper we show the coats of arms as seen by a heraldist. The order is different than in former presentations, where they presented mainly the northern and southern sides' coats of arms. A point of reference is the eastern end of the apsis, which is the place of the old altar. The coats of arms will be described in the order of importance correlated to the old altar.

In the first field between ribs from the most eastern top-stone we can see King Wladislav II coat of arms, to the left the coat of arms of Leonard Barlabásy, vice-voivode of Transylvania, vice-count of the Szeklers (Székelys), in the next field on the right is the Szekler community's ancient coat of arms, on the left the Saxon community's coat of arms, in the third field on the right Braşov town, on the left Sibiu town, in the fourth on the right Sighişoara town, on the left the coat of arms of the Árpáds. Thus we can categorize even the fields between ribs: the first contains the coats of arms of lords, the second contains the ones of estatal communities, the third those of towns. The fourth differs: it is mixed since it contains a coat of arms of a town and one of a king's court.

Description of the coats of arms

The coat of arms of king Wladislav II

We can see a quartered shield with an inescutcheon. The basic shield's first and fourth canton is barry Gules and Argent, in the Gules section of the second and third quarters a right-turned, double-tailed, frisking, crowned Argent lion holds both its front legs into the air. In the inescutcheon in Gules

is an Argent eagle with opened wings turning its head to the dexter. The shield is topped with a five-leaved Or crown¹⁸.

The first and fourth quarter are not the same, although they should be. The first is barry of five with Gules and Argent and the fourth is barry of seven with Gules and Argent. More precisely, in the first quarter alternate three Gules and Argent bars each, while in the fourth there are four bars each and even the order changes, in the latter it starts with an Argent fess.

The first and fourth quarter contain the barry of the Árpád court, it refers to the Hungarian Kingdom, since Wladislav II was King of Hungary in 1490-1516¹⁹. The second and third quarter show the Bohemian lion, since the king named Wladislav I was King of Bohemia in 1471-1516²⁰. In the inescutcheon we can see the Argent eagle of Poland, since Wladislav is member of the Polish Jagiellon dynasty, the son of the Polish King Casimir IV²¹. The crown topping the base shield symbolizes the royal honour.

A similar coat of arms of Wladislav II is to be seen on the predella of one of the altars of the Roman Catholic church in Şumuleu-Ciuc - Cioboteni, which at the present is to be found in the store-room of the Art Museum in Cluj-Napoca, out of the sight of visitors. The altar was made around 1510²². Another coat of arms is to be found on the predella of the altar made in 1510 in the Roman-Catholic church of Leliceni, which is guarded in the National Gallery in Budapest, a third one is to be seen on the carving made in 1495 on the northern door of the Hill church in Sighişoara.

The majority of the authors handling the church describe the symbol as the Jagiellon-era coat of arms of Hungary. As previously mentioned, we are not talking about a country coat of arms but about a royal coat of arms. On the other hand, we are dealing with the coat of arms of Wladislav II.

The coat of arms of Leonard Barlabásy

In Gules an Or bullock head facing us, with ascensional, outwards bowing Argent horns between which on the dexter there is an ebbing Or moon, on the sinister an Or mullet (star).

¹⁸ The height of the coat of arms with the crown is 88 centimeters.

¹⁹ Markó László, *A magyar állam főméltóságai*, Budapest, 2000, p. 73.

²⁰ *Ibidem*.

²¹ *Ibidem*.

²² Szekeres Attila István, *Félévezredes címerek csík- és udvarhelyszéki kerített templomokban*, in "Acta Siculica 2016-2017", A Székely Nemzeti Múzeum évkönyve, Sepsiszentgyörgy, 2017 - will be published in 2017.

Leonard Barlabásy of Héderfája fulfilled the function of vice-voivod of Transylvanian and at the same time that of the vice-cont of Szeklers between 1501-1525²³.

He supported various churches, amongst them probably that of Daia that is how his coat of arms got on the dome of the apsis²⁴.

The ancient Szekler coat of arms

In Gules an Argent-armoured arm bent in the elbow, descending amongst eddying Argent clouds, turned to sinister, holding in his hand an upright standing sword, with its nib up. The sword passes trough a five-leaved Or crown, stabbing with its nib an Argent heart standing to the right and an Or bear-head, turned to the right with jaws opened. The head of the animal is surrounded by an ebbing Or Moon on the dexter and an Or mullet (hexagram) on the sinister.

There is an almost identical painted coat of arms – the difference being in the arm turning to dexter –, in the already mentioned predella of the winged altar in Cioboteni, a similar one on the apsis ceiling of the Roman Catholic church in Armășeni, coats of arms stone-carved in both corbels in the apses of the Calvinist church in Mugeni and Unitarian church in Dârjiu²⁵.

The painted symbol contains all the elements of the so-called "ancient" Szekler coat of arms, they added to this the moon and the star as a secondary coat of arms-picture. Some authors designate the symbol as a unified old and new Szekler coat of arms. We do not agree with this statement, because the crescent and the mullet are not in the same category with the main coat of arms-picture, they just fulfill a secondary role.

It might seem interesting that, opposing to similar coats of arms, in this case the armoured arm turns to the back and not to the front. This has the explanation that in those times the principle of blazonry gallantry still existed, the coat of arms could not turn its back on the coat of arms of the royalty, but faced it.

The meaning of the coat of arms-pictures: the armoured arm holding the sword symbolizes the defense of the borders (built in the Middle Ages), its descending from amongst the clouds refers to the fact that this is a heavenly mission. The sword passes the crown first, symbolizing that the Szeklers had to protect the Hungarian kingdom, and its borders. The pierced heart symbo-

²³ Barabássy Sándor, *Egy reneszánsz mecénás főúr a 15-16. századi Erdélyben. Barlabássy Lénárd erdélyi alvajda, székely alispán kora és tevékenysége a dokumentumok tükrében*, Budapest, 2012, p. 39, 52.

²⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 112.

²⁵ Szekeres Attila István, *A székely címer*, in Mihály János (szerk.), "Jelképek a Székelyföldön – címerek, pecsétek, zászlók", Csíkszereda, 2011, p. 15-28; idem, *Székely jelképek*, Sepsiszent-györgy, 2013, p. 9-13.

lizes self-abnegation, the head of the bear was meant to illustrate the bravery of Szeklers²⁶.

The coat of arms of the Saxon community

In Gules three heart shaped leaves pointing downwards, starting from a small triangle and trending towards the edges of the shield, Argent.

The mentioned small triangle is hard to be noticed, from the distance it might seem that the coat of arms depicts three leaves merging from one stem. The artist overdid the representation, he put emphasis on the leaves and almost omitted the triangle.

This illustration is the simplified coat of arms of the Saxon community. It appears in this form on the side of one of the pew in the Lutheran Saxon church in Băgaciu, in carved form. The carved pew dates back to 1533²⁷.

The leafy triangle together with two swords put in a cross is the symbol of Sibiu territory, it expanded from there on the whole Saxon land. The richer coat of arms of the Saxon "Universitas" contains an open crown in the upper part of the shield, under which there is a triangle with leafy ending and downwards showing peak²⁸. This is what appears on the stamp of the Saxon community from the 15th century with the following circumscription: "S.[igillum] minus septem Sedium Saxonicalum"²⁹.

The coat of arms of Braşov

In a shield quartered with Argent and Gules we can see a branching root descending from a five-leaved open crown. The coatings of the coat of arms-picture are changing, we can see Gules installments on the Argent one and Argent installments on the Gules one. The crown falls into the upper part of the shield and the root into the lower part of it.

The change of tinctures is clearly familiar in the West-European heraldry, it has no tradition in Transylvania. It could have been brought in by masters from German territories together with the green leaf-work. We are unaware of the similar visualizing of the coat of arms of Braşov in a quartered shield. The first known visualizing of the coat of arms of Braşov³⁰ contained only a crown, the root got into it only later³¹. This could be the first coloured

²⁶ *Ibidem*.

²⁷ According to the inscription on the pew.

²⁸ J.B. v. S. [Josef Bedeus von Scharberg], *Die Wappen und Siegel der Fürsten von Siebenbürgen und der einzelnen ständischen Nationen dieses Landes*, Hermannstadt, 1838, 5, 1 diagram; *Siebmacher*, 3 diagram.

²⁹ The small stamps of the seven Saxon seats.

³⁰ In 1328, Josef v. Sebestyén, *Das Wappen von Kronstadt*, in "Mitteilungen des Burzenländer Sächsischen Museums", 2. Jhrgang, Heft 1-4, Kronstadt, 1937, p. 11-12.

³¹ In 1429, *Ibidem*, p. 16-17.

depiction of the coat of arms of Braşov town. However, it is true that the master borrowed the coatings of the Hungarian coat of arms, in the traditional coat of arms of the town in an Azure field an Argent root comes down from a, Or crown, but this appeared only later. We can see another symbol, not included in a shield, but containing the crown and the root on one of the piles of the Black church in Braşov, painted in Or, undated.

We can talk about an occupational or name coat of arms. The German name of the town is "Kronstadt", the town of the crown, in Latin "Corona", meaning "crown".

The coat of arms of Sibiu

In Gules two Argent swords in saltire, pointing downwards, on the inner lintel of which rests a five-leaved Or crown.

This is the coat of arms of the town from early times, as it appears on its armored stamp as well. It was later developed with the leaf-ended triangle already presented. In this case the coatings already coincide with the town coat of arms presented in coloured portrayal.

The crown is the same as the one covering the coat of arms of King Wladislaw II, the swords are the same as the ones used by the Szekler coat of arms.

In the coat of arms the crown is situated in the upper part, it is the symbol of kingdom, and refers to the fact that the Saxons got the land from the king, the swords refer to the fact that the Saxons, citizens of Sibiu had the duty of defending the borders of the Hungarian Kingdom.

The coat of arms of Sighişoara

In Gules we can see an Argent castle with three bastions, frontons and an open gate with pulled bars, on a Vert terrace.

In this case the tincture combination Gules-Argent-Vert could refer to the other element of the Hungarian coat of arms, to the Argent double-crossed part in Gules standing on a Vert triple heap, this is where from they could have taken over the coatings.

A similar coat of arms of Sighişoara we can see on a pew made in 1526 by Johannes Reychnuth, in the Hill church in the town. An other similar coat of arms was carved in the door of the Hill church in Sighişoara, made in 1495. There we can see rocks instead of the ground. We think that it would have been more appropriate to illustrate a rocky base instead of the Vert terrace in Daia, it would have fitted better into the ensemble of coats of arms.

The coat of arms of the Árpád court

In Gules four Argent fesses. Back then the number and place of the fesses was not fixed yet. The Barry coat of arms of the Árpád court can refer

to the fact that the original church was built in the Árpád-era, during the reign of one of the Árpád court kings. Since they used the Gules-Argent barry coat of arms from the reign of King Imre to the reign of András II³², that is from 1202 till 1235, then starting with Béla IV and ending with András III, the last king of the Árpád court they only used the double-crossed coat of arms³³, we consider two variations to be possible. The church was built either in the first period, that is before the reign of Béla IV – the confirmation or refutation of which is incumbent on the archaeologists –, or after that, but from a distance considering more than two hundred years they identified Hungary at the time of the Árpád-dynasty only with the striped coat of arms.

The coats of arms mediate

The coats of arms mediate for the posterity, that the dome of the Daian apsis was painted by Saxon masters, probably the artists coming from the symbolized towns worked on the church. This is explained even by the proximity of the Land of Saxons. It was the Saxon masters who meditated the western style.

The last coat of arms had, by all possibility, as a duty to symbolise that the original church was built in the Árpád-era.

The coats of arms unfold that the painting of the apsis happened during the reign of King Wladislav II (1490-1516) and during the function-filling of vice-voivod Leonard Barlabásy (1501-1525). Taking into account the coats of arms of Szekler community and King Wladislav II from Cioboteni and Leliceni, we can state that the Daian version incurred in few years around 1510.

Hereby we narrowed the suppositions regarding the building period appeared until now, which were exclusively restricted to the function-filling period of the vice-voievod.

Illustrations:

Fig. 1 – The Calvinist church in Daia Secuiască/Székelydála.

Fig. 2 – The wall-painting in the Mathias-loggia of the castle of Hunedoara (watercolor painting by Ferenc Storno - 1869).

Fig. 3 – The "green chamber" ornamentation.

Fig. 4 – The coat of arms of Szekler community and King Wladislav II in Daia.

Fig. 5 – The coat of arms of King Wladislav II from Cioboteni (photo: Feleki István).

³² Bertényi Iván, *Magyar címertan*, Budapest, 2003, p. 64.

³³ *Ibidem*.

Fig. 6 – The coat of arms of King Wladislav II from Leliceni.

Fig. 7 – The coat of arms of Leonard Barlabásy and of Szaxon community in Daia.

Fig. 8 – The coat of arms of Szekler community from Cioboteni (photo: Feleki István).

Fig. 9 – The coat of arms of Szaxon community in Băgaciu.

Fig. 10 – The coat of arms of Sighișoara and Brașov in Daia.

Fig. 11 – The coat of arms of Sibiu and Árpád court in Daia.

Fig. 12 – The coat of arms of Sighișoara in the pew of the Hill church.

Fig. 13 – The coat of arms of Sighișoara in the northern door of the Hill church.

Accompanied by the photographs of the author.



Fig. 1



Fig. 2



Fig. 3



Fig. 4



Fig. 5



Fig. 6



Fig. 7



Fig. 8



Fig. 9



Fig. 10



Fig. 11



Fig. 12



Fig. 13