

THE COAT OF ARMS OF BÁTHORI'S AS THE SYMBOL OF TRANSYLVANIA¹

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STEMA FAMILIEI BÁTHORI CA SIMBOL AL TRANSILVANIEI

REZUMAT

Stema familiei Báthori e cunoscută ca un scut având câmpul roșu, încărcat de trei colții de dragon. De fapt este vorba de colții de lup. Descrierea având la bază colții de dragon își are originea în faptul că unii membri ai familiei Báthori erau cavaleri ai Ordinului Dragonului, al cărui simbol a inspirat anumite legende despre un strămoș al familiei, care a învins un balaur, apoi a rupt trei colții ai monstrului – cu sau fără o bucată din mandibulă –, ca doavadă a isprăvii sale. Imaginea scuturilor încolăcite de dragon ar fi inspirat descrierea elementului heraldic ca colții de dragon. Totuși este vorba de colții de lup, după cum apare descrierea stemei în diploma acordată în data de 28 ianuarie 1595 la Praga principelui Transilvaniei, Sigismund Báthori, de către împăratul romano-german Rudolf al II-lea, prin care i-a acordat titlul de principe al Sfântului Imperiu și i-a augmentat stema în acest sens. Familia Báthori de Somlyó a dat șase domni Transilvaniei. În stemele folosite de aceștia cei trei colții de lup – uneori orientați în față, alteori către spate –, apar ieșind dintr-o bucată de mandibulă. În primele decenii ale existenței Principatului Transilvaniei au domnit aproape numai Bathorești. Tânără țară neavând încă stemă, principii au autentificat documentele cu sigiliu heraldice afișând stema de neam. Astfel stema cu cei trei colții de lup a Bathoreștilor a devenit un simbol de identificare a Transilvaniei în Occident. Mărturie stau numeroasele hărți, ale căror cartuș prezintă stema cu cei trei colții de lup.

Cuvinte cheie: Transilvania, Báthori, stemă, colții de lup, hartă.

A BÁTHORIÁK CÍMERE MINT ERDÉLY JELKÉPE

A Báthori család címerét úgy ismerik, mint vörös mezőben levő három sárkányfogat. Valójában farkasfogakról van szó. A sárkányfogas leírás onnan eredhet, hogy a Báthori család egyes tagjai a Sárkányrend lovagjai voltak, és annak sárkányos jelvénye bizonyos legendákat ihletett. Ezekben a család egy bátor őse legyőzte a sárkányt, és bizonyosan magával vitte a sárkány három fogát, vagy egy állkapocsdarabját három foggal. A sárkánykigyóval díszített címerek láttán születhettek azok a mondák, melyek azt magyarázzák, a család címerében levő fogak sárkányfogak. Mégis farkasfogakról van szó, mint ahogyan leírása megjelenik azon az 1595. január 28-án Prágában kiadott adománylevélben, amellyel II. Rudolf német-római császár birodalmi hercegi rangra emelte Báthori Zsigmondot, és ennek megfelelő címert adományozott neki. A somlyói Báthoriak hat uralkodót adtak Erdélynek. Címerábrázolásainon az állkapocsdarabból kinövő három farkasfog esetenként

¹ Conference presentation with the title *Heraldic representation of Báthori's on the throne of Transylvania* at the 11th International Colloquium of Genealogy organized by the International Academy for Genealogy and the Polish Heraldry Society in Warsaw, Poland, 2-4th July 2019.

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előre, azaz jobbra, máskor hátra, azaz balra mutat. Az Erdélyi Fejedelemség első évtizedeiben szinte csak Báthoriak uralkodtak. Az országnak címere még nem lévén, a fejedelmek családi címerükkel ellátott pecséttel hitelesítették az iratokat. Így a farkasfogas Báthori-címert mint Erdély országazonosító jelképét értékelték Nyugaton. Erről számos térkép tanúskodik.

Kulcsszavak: Báthori, Erdély, címer, farkasfog, térkép.

The coat of arms of the Báthori³ family is known as three dragon fangs in field Gules. In fact, they are wolf fangs! (Fig. 1).

The dragon fang definition derives from the fact that some members of the family were members of the Order of the Dragon, whose badge with the dragon inspired certain legends. In these legends, a brave ancestor of the family defeated the dragon, and as a proof he took three fangs of the dragon or a piece of jaw with three fangs⁴.

Beyond the legends

The Hungarian Order of the Dragon was established at the end of the 14th century, beginning of the 15th century. King Sigismund of Luxemburg, together with his wife, Barbara of Cilli, regulated the operation of the organization in an establishing charter issued in 1408⁵. The badge of the Order of the Dragon is a dragon snake wrapping its tail around its neck, choking itself; the symbol alludes to willingness to sacrifice⁶ (Fig. 2). This symbol, passed on, can be found around the escutcheon of several members of the Báthori family.

On the heraldic tombstone, originating from 1483, of *Nicholas Báthori of Ecse*, Bishop of Vác, the dragon snake can be seen around the escutcheon⁷ (Fig. 3). On the blazon stone, originating from 1488, of *Stephen Báthori*, Voivode of Transylvania, on the southern wall of the Calvinist Church from Nyírbátor there is also the badge of the Order of the Dragon⁸ (Fig. 4). Above the western gate there is another coat of arms stone carving⁹ (Fig. 5). On one of the backs of the stall, made in 1511, of the Calvinist Church from Nyírbátor (now in Báthori István Museum in Nyírbátor) a Báthori coat of arms with intarsia inlay can be seen, with the dragon snake around the escutcheon¹⁰ (Fig. 6). The symbol of the Order of the Dragon was preferred by *Gabriel Báthori of Somlyó*, Prince of Transylvania, too¹¹ (Fig. 7).

³ The name is also known as Báthory, Bátori, or Batory in Poland.

⁴ Mór Petri, *Szilág vármegye monográfiája II.*, Szilág Vármegye Közönsége, 1901, p. 233.

⁵ László Fejérpataky, *Chapy-czímer és a Sárkány-rend*, in: „Turul”, I/3 (Budapest: Magyar Heraldikai és Genealógiai Társaság, 1883), p. 117.

⁶ Oszkár Bárczay, *A heraldika kézikönyve*, Magyar Tudományos Akadémia, Budapest, 1897, p. 340.

⁷ János Kalmár, Barnabás Szalontai, *A Báthoriak címeres köemlékei*, in: „A Nyíregyházi Jósa András Múzeum Évkönyve”, II - 1959, Képzőművészeti Alap Kiadóhivatala, Budapest, 1961, p. 63, tab. XI.

⁸ Author's photo.

⁹ Author's photo.

¹⁰ regmult.blogspot.com/2019/07/egy-reneszansz-rejtely-nyirbatori.html (accessed: 10.08.2019).

¹¹ Reverse of Gabriel Bathori's ducat from 1610.

The coats of arms decorated with the dragon snake may have been the source of the legends explaining that the fangs in the coat of arms of the family were dragon fangs.

Still, they are wolf fangs, as it appears on the letter patent issued in Prague on 28 January 1595, with which *Rudolf II* Holy Roman Emperor raised *Sigismund Báthori* at the rank of Imperial Prince and conferred him a corresponding coat of arms¹² (Fig. 8). The letter patent does not contain the painting of the coat of arms, but it contains its Latin description: in the middle of escutcheon Gules three wolf fangs stand out (radiate) from wolf jaw White¹³.

In his book presenting the coats of arms of the knights of the Order of the Golden Fleece, issued in Antwerp in 1632, *Ioannes Jacobus Chifflet* describes the Báthori coat of arms: in field Gules wolf jaw Argent, with fangs pointing sinister¹⁴.

In the coat of arms of the Báthori's of Somlyó there can be found three fangs, naturally represented wolf fangs, standing out from a piece of jaw or without jaw. They point both forwards and backwards.

The coats of arms of the Báthori rulers

The Báthori's of Somlyó gave six rulers to Transylvania.

The first was Stephen Báthori. He was the head of the state between 1571 and 1586, first using the title of Voivode. When he was elected King of Poland and Grand Duke of Lithuania, he adopted the title of Prince of Transylvania¹⁵.

On Stephen Báthori's Transylvanian seal, endowed with the family coat of arms, the three wolf fangs point dexter (Fig. 9).

On his polish coins and coat of arms representations the three wolf fangs growing out of the piece of jaw point backwards (Fig. 10), but there are exceptions¹⁶ (Fig. 11). On the sarcophagus of the king in Wawel, the fangs were pointed forward, but of course, they were made after his death¹⁷ (Fig. 12).

Christopher Báthori was the elder brother of Stephen Báthori. After being elected King of Poland, Stephen appointed his brother, Christopher his deputy, Voivode in Transylvania, from 1576 until his death in 1581¹⁸.

On Christopher Báthori's coins, the heraldic charge turns dexter (Fig. 13).

But on the 50 years anniversary coin made in 1580 of voivode Chistophor Báthori, we can see his portrait on the obverse, with the following inscription: „CHRIST[oforus] BATH[ori] DE SOMLIO”, and on the reverse we can see, the

¹² Andrei Veress, *Documente privitoare la istoria Ardealului, Moldovei și Tării-Românești*, vol. IV, București, Cartea Românească, 1932, p. 187.

¹³ *Scutum videlicet rubeum, in medio lupinum mandibulum album tribus dentibus sive radiis armatum ostentans.*

¹⁴ Jean-Jacques Chifflet, *Insignia gentilitia equitum ordinis velleris aurei, facialium verbis enuntiata: Latine et Gallice producta = Le Blason des Armoiries de tous les Chevaliers de l'ordre de la Toison d'or; depuis la premiere institution, iusques à present*, Antverpiae, Plantin, 1632, p. 156-157.

¹⁵ Klára Papp, *Erdélyi fejedelmek*, Tóth Könyvkereskedés és Kiadó, Debrecen, 2008, p. 29.

¹⁶ Polish taler from 1586 in Déri Museum in Debrecen, id. n. DFNGY 2.328 (Photo: Tihamér Lukács).

¹⁷ Author's photo.

¹⁸ Papp (see *supra* n. 13).

escutcheon of the Báthori coat of arms, with fangs pointing backwards, growing out of the shild the eagle with spread wings, looking to the right, on shild's dexter the shining sun-face, on its sinister the old moon with a human face, under which there are seven hills with bastions on them – the elements of Transylvania's coat of arms, and the inscription continues: „PRINCEPS TRANSYL[vaniae] 1580”¹⁹ (Fig. 14). But the coin was made without his knowledge, as a surprise.

The third Báthori ruler of Transylvania was Sigismund Báthori, Christopher's son. He was Prince of Transylvania four times between 1588 and 1602: 1588-1594, 1594-1598, 1598-1599, 1601-1602²⁰.

As I have already mentioned, Rudolf II Holy Roman Emperor raised Sigismund Báthori at the rank of Imperial Prince in 1595. The coat of arms is described in the letter patent like this: in the middle of escutcheon Gules three wolf fangs stand out from wolf jaw White²¹. This is held by the two-headed, Sable imperial eagle with extended wings, on its breast. Above all these, there are two extended eagle wings, on which the letters RAA can be seen (Rudolphus Austriacus Augustus), written in Or²².

The album of the Order of the Golden Fleece, issued in 1615, served as the basis of this²³. In it, there appears Sigismund Báthori's coat of arms, but in this case the coat of arms is more complex, there appear three superimposed escutcheons, with the chain and badge of the Order of the Golden Fleece.

In the case of Sigismund Báthori's coins, 1593 counts as an age boundary. On the coins minted before, the heraldic charge points backward (Fig. 15); on the coins minted after that, it points forward (Fig. 16).

In the Battle of Guruslău fought on August 1601 the mercenary troops of Rudolph II Holy Roman emperor, led by Georgio Basta and the troops of Michael the Brave, former Prince of Wallachia defeated the army of Sigismund Báthori. The flags captured in the battle were sent to the royal court in Prague²⁴. There they were on public display. Georg Puchner, engineer officer of Christian II, Prince-Elector of Saxony was just there; he drew for his lord the captured military flags symbolizing victory, 110 in number. The pages included in a volume – codex – were preserved for the posterity by the Saxon Royal Library Dresden²⁵. 36 flags represent the heraldic element of the Báthori coat of arms, the three wolf's fangs²⁶ (Fig. 17).

¹⁹ Adolf Resch, *Siebenbürgische Münzen und Medaillen von 1538 bis zur Gegenwart*, Hermannstadt, 1901, tab. 62, fig. 15; Lajos Huszár, Ferenc Pap, Judit Winkler, *Erdély éremművessége a 16-18. században*, Bukarest, Kriterion Könyvkiadó, 1996, p. 109, fig. 103; L. Huszár, F. Pap, Judit Winkler, *Erdély éremművessége a 16-18. században*, Kolozsvár, Kriterion Könyvkiadó, 2010, p. 107, 110.

²⁰ Teréz Oborni, *Erdély fejedelmei*, Pannonica Kiadó, Budapest, 2002, p. 86-94, p. 200.

²¹ See n. 11.

²² Tudor-Radu Tiron, *Începuturile stemei Transilvaniei în lumina mai multor izvoare ilustrate externe, din secolul al XV-lea până la începutul secolului al XVII-lea*, in: „Anuarul Institutului de Istorie „G. Barițiu” din Cluj-Napoca”, tom L, 2011, p. 326-327.

²³ Apud: Ignácz Acsády, *A magyar nemzet története 5. Magyarország három részre oszlásának története*, Budapest, 1897, p. 557.

²⁴ Sándor Mika, *Erdélyi hadi zászlók 1601-ből*, in: „Turul”, XI/1 (1893), p. 10-11.

²⁵ *Ibidem*.

²⁶ *Ibidem*.

Sigismund abdicated first time in July 1594. He appointed his cousin, Balthazar Báthori as his successor, but on August 8, he took power again²⁷.

On the coats of arms of Balthasar Báthori which can be found in the Făgăraş Fortress the fangs point dexter (Fig. 18).

In his third resignation, in 1599, Sigismund handed over his power to his another cousin, Balthazar's brother, Cardinal Andrew Báthori, Prince-Bishop of Warmia²⁸.

In Andrew Báthori coats of arms the fangs mostly point sinister (Fig. 19).

The sixth Báthori ruler of Transylvania was Gabriel Báthori, Balthazar and Andrew's nephew, between 1608 and 1613²⁹.

In Gabriel Báthori's coat of arms and coins the heraldic charge is turned dexter (Fig. 20).

The coat of arms of Báthori's as a symbol of Transylvania

In the first decades of the Principality of Transylvania almost only the Báthori's ruled. As the country had not a coat of arms yet, the princes authenticated the documents with a seal endowed with their family coat of arms³⁰. In this way, the Báthori coat of arms with wolf fangs was regarded in the West as a country identifier.

On the map of *Transylvania/Siebenbürgen*, issued by Willem Janszoon Blaeu in Amsterdam in 1635, we can see the coat of arms with the wolf fangs above the cartouche, the field of its escutcheon is Azure³¹ (Fig. 21). The three fangs point backwards.

On the map *Transylvania/Siebenbürgen* of Merian Matthäus, issued in Frankfurt am Main, as well³² (Fig. 22).

On the map entitled *Nova et accurata Transylvaniae Descriptio*, issued by Johannes Janssonius in Amsterdam in 1658, we can see the three fangs pointing backwards also in an escutcheon with field Azure³³ (Fig. 23).

On the map of Gerard Valk and Peter Schenk³⁴, as well³⁵ (Fig. 24).

On the map of Bouttats Gaspar, issued in Antwerpen³⁶, as well³⁷ (Fig. 25).

There can be seen two coats of arms above the cartouche of the map of Emanuel Stenghri, entitled *Descriptio ac delineatio totius Hungariae et Transyl-*

²⁷ Teréz Oborni (see *supra* n. 18), p. 49, 200.

²⁸ László Markó, *A magyar állam főmérítőságai Szent Istvántól napjainkig*, Magyar Könyvklub, Budapest, 2000, p. 97-98.

²⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 98-99.

³⁰ József Keöpeczi Sebestyén, *Erdély címere*, in: „Turul”, XXXV/1-4 (1917), p. 33.

³¹ raremaps.com/gallery/detail/63952op/transylvania-sibenburgen-blaeu?q=0 (accessed: 20.03.2019).

³² bukowskis.com/en/lots/940355-a-mattheus-merian-transsylvania-siebenburgen-coloured-map (accessed: 20.03.2019).

³³ raremaps.com/gallery/detail/42257/nova-et-accurata-transylvaniae-descriptio-jansson?q=0 (accessed: 20.03.2019).

³⁴ *Nova et accurata Transylvaniae Descriptio*, Amsterdam, circa 1690.

³⁵ raremaps.com/gallery/detail/56041/nova-et-accurata-transylvaniae-descriptio-schenk-valk?q=0 (accessed: 20.03.2019).

³⁶ Circa 1680.

³⁷ asommer.de/en/karte/transylvania-3/ (accessed: 20.03.2019).

vaniae, from 1664³⁸. The first is the coat of arms of Hungary, the second shows the already described Báthori coat of arms with field Azure (Fig. 26).

In all likelihood, the cartographers took over the coat of arms figuring on the earlier map, as we can see a Báthori coat of arms with field Azure and fangs pointing backwards.

Conclusions

It can be summarized that the Báthori's who sat on the throne of Transylvania used the family coat of arms, however, the heraldic charge, the orientation of the three wolf fangs was not constant, sometimes they pointed forwards, sometimes backwards.

In spite of this, the coat of arms of the Báthori's survived as wolf fang Argent or White in field Gules, pointing forward, although it is defined by many as dragon fang.

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³⁸ tortenet.oszk.hu/html/magyar/04kincseink/terkeptar/tk_1872_b.jpg (accessed: 20.03.2019).

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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



Fig. 14



Fig. 15



Fig. 16

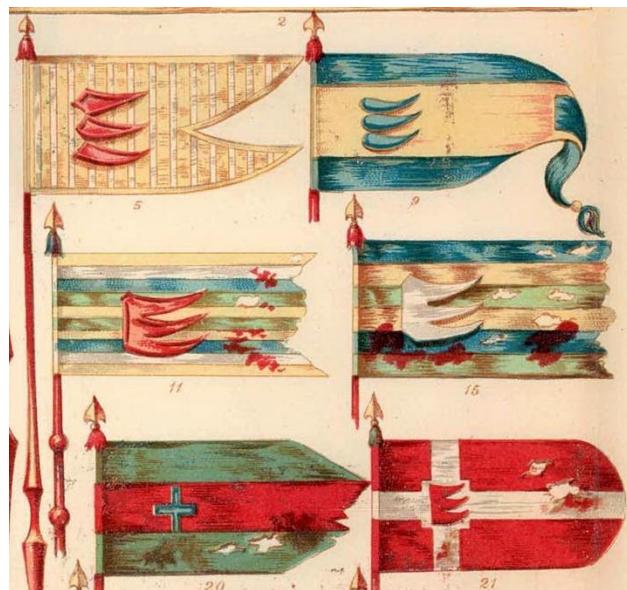


Fig. 17



Fig. 18



Fig. 19



Fig. 20



Fig. 21



Fig. 22



Fig. 23



Fig. 24



Fig. 25



Fig. 26