

Szidónia Weisz

**THE PRICE OF FIDELITY. DONATIONS OF COATS OF ARMS
FOR NOBLES FROM TRANSYLVANIA DURING THE REIGN
OF SIGISMUND OF LUXEMBURG**

MA Thesis in Medieval Studies

Central European University
Budapest
May 2007

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by

Szidónia Weisz (Romania)

Thesis submitted to the Department of Medieval Studies,
Central European University, Budapest, in partial fulfillment of the requirements
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Accepted in conformance with the standards of the CEU

Chair, Examination Committee

Thesis Supervisor

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I, the undersigned, **Szidónia Weisz**, candidate for the MA degree in Medieval Studies declare herewith that the present thesis is exclusively my own work, based on my research and only such external information as properly credited in notes and bibliography. I declare that no unidentified and illegitimate use was made of the work of others, and no part of the thesis infringes on any person's or institution's copyright. I also declare that no part of the thesis has been submitted in this form to any other institution of higher education for an academic degree.

Budapest, 25 May 2007

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List of abbreviations

AHA = Acta Historiae Artium

AK = Akadémiai Kiadó (Publisher of the Academy)

MTA TI = Magyar Tudományos Akadémia Történettudományi Intézete (Institute of History, Hungarian Academy of Sciences)

MOL = Magyar Országos Levéltár (National Archives of Hungary)

MOL DF= MOL Diplomatikai Fényképtár (Diplomatic Photo Collection)

MOL DL= MOL Diplomatikai Levéltár (Diplomatic Archives)

TOKl = Teleki oklevéltár (Teleki Collection of Charters)

ZsOkI = Zsigmondkori oklevéltár (Collection of Charters from the Reign of Sigismund)

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Introduction

*A claro lumine throni cesaree aut regie maiestatis velud e sole radii nobilitates legitimo jure procedunt et omnium nobilitatum insignia ab imperatoria seu regia maiestate sic dependent, quod non sit dare alicuius generositatis insigne quod a gremio non proveniat cesaree aut regie claritatis.*¹

I have been interested in the history of the Transylvanian nobility since I was a child. Probably this interest originated from the fact that my home place (a small village in Transylvania) was for centuries the center of the estate of several noble families. The traces of their lives are visible even today, represented by the buildings that were constructed centuries ago. These buildings (a Gothic church and a Baroque castle) deserve to be visited; the one who goes there cannot miss seeing the coat of arms of the Somkerekí family, carved above the southern entrance of the Calvinist church.

My research objective is to study the phenomenon of granting nobles from Transylvania with grants of arms during the reign of King Sigismund of Luxemburg (1387-1437).² During his fifty-year-long reign many changes affected the different layers of society and the organization of the country. Many aspects of these changes have already been studied, but a study of the grants of arms received by a certain category of people, viewed from the point of social history, has not been written before.

¹ Grant of arms of the Hótvafői family, MOL DL 50514.

² For further information on Sigismund's reign see Elemér Mályusz, *Zsigmond király uralma Magyarországon 1387-1437* (Reign of King Sigismund in Hungary 1387-1437) (Budapest: Gondolat, 1984) (Hereafter Mályusz, *Zsigmond király uralma*); *Sigismundus Rex et Imperator – Művészet és kultúra Luxemburgi Zsigmond korában*, ed. Imre Takács (Budapest: Szépművészeti Múzeum, 2006) or Josef Macek, Ernő Marosi, and Ferdinand Seibt, ed., *Sigismund von Luxemburg: Kaiser und König in Mitteleuropa, 1387-1437: Beiträge zur Herrschaft Kaiser Sigismunds und der europäischen Geschichte um 1400*. (Warendorf: Fahlbusch, 1994).

The approach is interdisciplinary, as I used the help of several fields while doing this research. Genealogy proved to be useful in reconstructing the biographical gazetteers of my sample of ten nobles who were awarded this privilege; diplomatics and paleography were used while studying one category of my primary sources, namely the grants of arms. Art history and heraldry were also of a great help, especially when dealing with the visual part of the sources, the coats of arms.

My working methods are the following: description, explanation, comparison, and contrast. Description is used to present facts like the biographical gazetteers and careers, the situation of the nobility, the relationship between the king and nobles, and also to give an image of the coats of arms studied. Comparison and contrast were applied in the case of the coats of arms. Explanations will provide information in order to understand certain events and, for example, the terminology used in heraldic description.

There are many questions connected to this topic, many aspects of this whole donation policy that have to be analyzed. My research questions are the following: Why did Sigismund choose to give this type of reward to the nobility? What did he want to achieve by this? How can these donations illustrate the relationship between king and the nobility? Another aspect worth studying is the place and role of this kind of donation, whether it was more important than some other types of privileges. Who were these people and for what reasons did the aristocracy apply for coats of arms? Why in such large numbers?

The thesis is structured in three chapters, with an introduction and conclusions. The introduction presents the methodology used during the research, the structure of the thesis, and gives a brief overview of the primary and secondary sources.

The first chapter is a brief presentation of the grants of arms. In this chapter the structure of these documents is analyzed, with a focus on the standard and individual elements. Also of great importance are the questions of what kind of information one can get from the study of this source type, and to what extent this information helps historians to reconstruct careers and biographies, whether these were signs of royal power or even self-fashioning, and so on.

The second chapter deals with life stories and investigates who among the nobles from Transylvania earned coats of arms, what is known about them, their families, and estates. In my sample ten individual careers are discussed, being reconstructed on the basis of the available material. Other questions to be discussed are: Who were the other people included in the grants of arms as beneficiaries? What was the relationship between them and the main grantee? Why and when did they receive this type of privilege?

The third chapter presents the objects with which the fidelity of nobles was repaid, the coats of arms. The main research topic is how these coats of arms looked (as a group and as individual images). The method is the presentation of the coat of arms as source types and an analysis of similarities and differences in the images. Besides this description a brief presentation will be given of the components of a coat of arms and the specific aspects of Hungarian heraldry.

In this research I am using two types of primary sources: visual (coats of arms) and written (grants of arms). Also important are the other documents connected to the grantees, although according to the aim of this research the two first mentioned source types represent the main body of my source material.

These documents and images were issued mostly for the same public, but they had different purposes. The grants of arms were meant mainly for the nobility from Transylvania, and on a larger scale also for the noble society of the Hungarian kingdom. As the grantees went abroad sometimes, the grants of arms were also for an audience of the whole European nobility. One could say that the use of coats of arms was for a smaller group, namely the grantees, but it has to be mentioned that usually the images of the coats of arms were shown to a larger public, not the grants of arms, therefore the coats of arms were for a fairly broad public.

The full text of four out of these ten grants of arms (Mecseniczai Garázda, Somkerekí, Hótvafői and Suki) was published in the journal *Turul*; in the case of the other six the original version had to be checked. Even in those cases when a published version exists, this version was compared with the original grant of arms. The Zsigmondkori oklevéltár (Collection of Charters from the Reign of Sigismund) provides researchers with *regestae* of several of the grants of arms, but it is published only until 1422, therefore all the documents issued after that date are not available. These *regestae* are useful as they give general ideas about the contents of the charters.

There are several approaches in the historiography connected to the coats of arms issued by King Sigismund of Luxemburg. The earlier one is heraldic; it is connected to the articles published in *Turul* between the end of the nineteenth and the first part of the twentieth century. These articles were written by respected Hungarian heraldists like Albert Nyáry, Gyula Schönherr, and József Csoma. Even though these articles give a good description of the coats of arms and a variable amount of information connected to the grantees, they do not extend the borders of their research to other questions. Éva

Nyulásziné is also a respected name among those who deal with heraldry. Her works are useful mainly because she gives a good list and description of the grants of arms available in the National Archives of Hungary, and also general information about heraldry.

For the social history and general historical background many titles are available, giving different approaches to the history of Hungary and Transylvania, the history of the nobility, and the reign and personality of King Sigismund. Elemér Mályusz, Pál Engel, and Erik Fügedi have written extensively on this topic. These authors are important not only because of the amount of information provided, but also for new and special methods used to approach these subjects.

The topic has also been studied from art historical point of view, as Dénes Radocsay, Szabolcs Vajay, Ernő Marosi and Zsombor Jékely have written about the grants of arms and coats of arms, giving a good description of these source types. Even though several articles have been written about the grants of arms, none of them analyzes the inner characteristics of the texts, this being a fairly remarkable deficiency in the analysis of these charters. Regarding the diplomatics, the works of Imre Szentpétery and László Solymosi should be checked.

On the general topic of heraldry there are many handbooks; especially those in English proved to be useful for my research as giving a description of the components of the coats of arms, the presentation of specific aspects of Hungarian heraldry, and the special language of heraldry. Still in connection with heraldry, the on-line dictionaries

also proved to be a great help, especially the ones that use images besides the explanation of the terms.³

One could ask why nobility from Transylvania is discussed separately from the Hungarian one. Scholarly literature has considered the relationship of Transylvanian society, including the nobles, to the whole of Hungary in various ways. On the one hand, it is clear that Transylvanian noble society enjoyed the same privileges as other nobles in Hungary.⁴ The phrase *etiam in tenuis ducalibus sub inclusione terminorum ipsius regni nostri existentes* (“including also those living on ducal territory within the borders of our kingdom”) in the famous *una eademque nobilitas* article of 1351 issued by King Louis I⁵ meant in practice, as Pál Engel formulated it, “including those of Transylvania and Slavonia.”⁶ On the other hand, as Elemér Mályusz pointed out, since Transylvania was a well-defined territorial and administrative unit within Hungary, governed in the king’s name by the voivode, Transylvanians depended not only on the king, but also on the voivode. Therefore they were in a more delicate position, having to comply with the voivode’s policy, while not getting cut off from direct access to the king and his court.

³ Due to lack of space I will not give a list of the titles used. For further information see the titles presented in the general bibliography.

⁴ See the coronation decree of King Andrew III from 1291. In this decree no difference was made between the Hungarian and Transylvanian nobility: Elemér Mályusz, *Az erdélyi magyar társadalom a középkorban*, (Budapest, MTA TI, 1988), 20.

⁵ *The Laws of the Medieval Kingdom of Hungary*, Vol. 2., 1301-1457, ed. János M. Bak, Pál Engel, James Ross Sweeney (Salt Lake City: Charles Schlacks Jr., 1992), 11.

⁶ Pál Engel, *The Realm of St. Stephen. A History of Medieval Hungary 895-1526* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2001), 175. (Hereafter: Engel, *The Realm of St. Stephen*)

The study of grants of arms, which implied strong ties to the king and his retinue, can therefore contribute to a more balanced view of this social stratum.

Chapter I. The Grants of arms

This chapter deals with the ten grants of arms issued to nobles from Transylvanian during the reign of Sigismund of Luxemburg. The role of these documents - summed up briefly – was to assure a legal basis for the royal donation and to attest that grantees were entitled to use a coat of arms.⁷ The fact that in most cases it mentioned that the descendants were also entitled to benefit from the donation in my view clearly shows that these texts were also meant to serve posterity, not only the grantee himself.

The grants of arms and coats of arms are products of the work of several persons, as the scribes wrote the texts and the illuminators decorated them with the proper images. Unfortunately none of these people are known by name; the only certain information connected to them is that they were working for King Sigismund and the royal court. In the case of the illuminators certain traces about their origin or their belonging to a workshop can be found, if one compares their style with the style of some other works (like codices, charters or different miniatures).⁸ I consider that besides these unknown

⁷ Bartolus de Saxoferato (the first person to write about heraldry) described in the fourteenth century that a coat of arms can be chosen by the person himself, but the one given by the king is more valuable.

⁸ My research is not engaged in the authors of these grants of arms, as the subject has already been discussed. For further information see Radocsay Dénes, Gótikus magyar címereslevelek (Hungarian Gothic Grants of arms), in *Művészettörténeti Értesítő* 1957, vol. 6, 271-294, (Hereafter Radocsay, Címereslevelek) or Zsombor, Jékely, A Zsigmond-kori magyar arisztokrácia művészeti reprezentációja (Artistic Representation of the Hungarian Nobility in the Sigismund Era) in Imre Takács, ed. *Sigismundus Rex et Imperator – Művészet és kultúra Luxemburgi Zsigmond korában* (Sigismundus Rex et Imperator -- Art and Culture During the Time of Sigismund of Luxemburg). Budapest: Szépművészeti Múzeum, 2006, 298-300. (Hereafter Jékely, Arisztokrácia)

masters and scribes there is a so-called moral author, King Sigismund, as he was the one to decide whether someone should receive a grant of arms.

The grants of arms as source types are useful for several fields of study, although so far mainly genealogists and art historians have studied them. The main works and articles dealing with Hungarian family histories or individual careers and biographical gazetteers utilize grants of arms, as in most cases these charters contain information about the history of the family and the life of the individual (see the parts where the other beneficiaries of the privilege are mentioned or the narration, which can contain valuable details about individual life stories). Interest in the history and origins of noble families whose descendants were still alive in the nineteenth century and who often possessed their old grants of arms themselves also fostered an interest in publishing these documents.⁹

Grants of arms have been popular items among art historians due to their relationship to book illumination. There have been several attempts to connect the painters with the illuminators of manuscripts and thus provide evidence for their dating with the help of precisely dated charters.¹⁰ Because of their decorative character, grants of arms have also been popular showpieces in exhibitions.¹¹

⁹ The basic study of the Hungarian genealogy is still Iván Nagy, *Magyarország családai címerekkel és nemzedékrendi táblákkal* (Families of Hungary with Coats of arms and Genealogies) (Pest: 1857-1868). The main forum of publications on genealogy and family history is the journal *Turul*, where some of the charters studied here were presented in the form of case studies already at the end of the nineteenth century.

¹⁰ See for example Radocsay, Címereslevelek; Dénes Radocsay, "Gotische Wappenbilder auf Ungarischen Andelsbriefen," in *AHA*, 1964, vol. 10, 57-68; Dénes Radocsay, "Über einige illuminierte Urkunden," in *AHA*, 1971, vol. 17, , 31-61; Dénes Radocsay, "Wiener Wappenbriefe und die letzten Miniaturen von Buda," in *AHA*, 1973, vol. 19, 61-73; Tünde Wehli, "Magyar családok címereslevelei" in Ernő Marosi, ed., *Művészet Zsigmond király korában. Katalógus*. (Arts during the Reign of King Sigismund. Catalogue) (Budapest, 1987), 383, or Szabolcs Vajay – Dénes Radocsay, "Egy Zsigmond-kori címeradomány" (One donation of grant of arms from the reign of Sigismund of Luxemburg), in *Művészettörténeti Értesítő*, 1972, vol. 21, 272-278. (hereafter Vajay-Radocsai, Címeradomány)

¹¹ For example, the exhibitions organized by the Historical Museum of Budapest ("Mary, widow of Mohács," 2005) and that organized by the Museum of Fine Arts ("Sigismundus, Rex et Imperator," 2006),

However, these documents also represent a good basis for studies of diplomatics, archontology, and also social history, as Éva Nyulásziné, a Hungarian archivist in charge of the relevant collection at the National Archives of Hungary points out in her most recent study.¹² Not necessarily the amount of information (as sometimes these texts can be quite reticent on details that would interest modern scholars), but the variety of it allows researchers to use these texts for a number of purposes, both as individual documents and as a well-defined group of charters. Questions that can be asked are the following: What kind of information can be derived from these documents? Is there a general pattern in the structure and the ideas presented? What are the similarities and differences among the studied examples?

where grants of arms were important exhibited objects, as the periods of both these persons were rich in the emission of such of privileges. For information about the grants of arms exhibited there see Jékely, Arisztokrácia or Árpád Mikó, “II. Lajos király címereslevelei. Egy speciális heraldikai reprezentációs forma művészettörténeti kérdései a késői Jagelló-korban” (Grants of arms issued by Louis II. Art historical aspects of a special heraldic form from the late Jagello period), in *Habsburg Mária, Mohács özvegye* (Budapest: Történeti Múzeum, 2005), 73-87. One can also mention the earlier Sigismund exhibition in 1987, the “Mathias Corvinus” exhibition in Schallaburg in 1982 and the “Pannonia Regia” exhibition in the Hungarian National Gallery in 1994.

¹² Éva Nyulásziné Straub, “Mohács előtti címereslevelek” (Grants of Arms before Mohács), in *Tanulmányok Érszegi Géza hatvanadik születésnapjára*, ed. Tibor Almási, (Budapest: MOL, 2005), 245-246.



Fig. 1. The grant of arms of the Somkerekí family, MOL DL 104 871

The structure and outward appearance of the Hungarian grants of arms became stable starting from 1411, with the grant of arms of Jakab Hideghéti (Hettendorfi).¹³ The image of the coat of arms was positioned in the left upper corner of the document and a hanging seal was attached to it. The position of the image, as pointed out by several scholars,¹⁴ differs from other grants of arms outside Hungary, where it was inserted in the middle of the charter and surrounded by the text. The issuer usually did not sign the

¹³ The earlier ones differ from these, as they do not have a depicted image of the coats of arms or when they do have it, it is positioned in the middle of the text. See for example the grant of arms of the Tétényi family, MOL DL, 64,122.

¹⁴ Radocsay, Címereslevelek and Jékely, Arisztokrácia, 298.

charter; this emerged only after 1526, when all the grants of arms were accompanied by the signature of the issuing authority.¹⁵

In spite of the specific features of the grants of arms, which unite them into a well-defined group of charters, no comprehensive overview of their inner characteristics has been made so far. There are several handbooks on diplomatics,¹⁶ but none of them devote special attention to this type of charter; grants of arms are only mentioned among other products of the royal chancery. Therefore, it will be useful to give a short survey on how the various standard elements of medieval charters were adapted to fit the special thematic and representational needs in grants of arms. My overview will follow the traditional structure of charters as defined by Imre Szentpétery in his work on Hungarian diplomatics.¹⁷

The *protocollum* (the introductory part of the charters) – in spite of the lack of the *invocatio*, as was usual for most late medieval charters – is in most of the examined charters fairly long and detailed. Since granting the use of a coat of arms was a royal prerogative in Hungary, the issuing authority was King Sigismund of Luxemburg in all the cases studied. As they were issued by the same king, all the *intitulationes* are similar, with minor changes according to the actual political situation, meaning mainly what his titles at the moment of the emission of the grants of arms were. For example, in the case of the Somkerekí, Tamásfalvi, Hótvafői, Mindszenti, and Suki grants of arms the

¹⁵ Éva Nyulásziné Straub, *Címereslevelek jegyzéke*, (Budapest: MOL, 200), 6.

¹⁶ See, for example, Karl Heidecker, ed., *Charters and the Use of the Written Word in Medieval Society* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2000); Olivier Guyotjeannin, Jacques Pycke and Benoit-Michel Tock, *Diplomatique médiévale* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1993). For Hungarian diplomatics see Imre Szentpétery, *Magyar oklevéltan*. (Budapest: Magyar Történelmi Társulat, 1930) (original publication); in reprint publication (Budapest: Hatágu Sip Alapítvány, 1995). (Hereafter Szentpétery, *Oklevéltan*)

¹⁷ Szentpétery, *Oklevéltan*, 18-20. The most recent overview on the topic is: László Solymosi, “Oklevéltan” (Diplomatics), in *A történelem segédtudományai* (Auxiliary sciences of history) (Budapest: Pannonica-Osis, 1998), 176-193.

intitulatio is *Sigismundus Dei gratia Romanorum rex semper Augustus ac Hungarie, Dalmatiae, Croatiae etc. Rex*;¹⁸ when issuing the Paczali Peres, Aszúvölgyi, and Ábrahámfalvi grants of arms, Sigismund was already Roman emperor and king of Bohemia, therefore the *intitulatio* was the following: *Sigismundus dei gratia Romanorum imperator semper augustus ac Hungarie, Bohemie Dalmatie Croatie etc rex*. The *intitulatio* from the Mecsenicei Garázda grant of arms is the most complex: *Sigismundus dei gratia Hungarie, Dalmatie, Croatie, Rame, Seruie, Gallicie, LOdomerie, Cumanie, Bulgarieque rex ac marchio Brandenburgensis, sacri Romani imperii archicamerarius, necnon Bohemie et Lucemburgensis heres*.

The next part after the *intitulatio* is the *inscriptio* (the addressee of the charter). Besides the neutral general formulation (*omnibus Christi fidelibus tam presentibus quam futuris presentium notitiam habituris*), several other expressions are used. For example, in the Aszúvölgyi grant of arms the grantee is addressed as *Tibi fideli nostro nobili Benedicto*; Antal Somkerekí is also addressed directly: *nobili Anthonio ... nostro et sacri imperii fideli dilecto*. The case of Antal Mindszenti is similar to that of Antal Somkerekí: *... nobili Anthonio ... familiari nostro continuo commensali ac sacri imperii fideli dilecto*.

The *salutatio* is almost identical in all cases: *salutem in eo qui dat regibus regnare et victoriose triumphare*. The same idea – with minor changes – is present also in the Hótvafői grant of arms (*salutem in eo, per quem reges regnant, et principes victoriose triumphant*) and in that of the Aszúvölgyi (*Salutem gratiamque nostram et omne bonum*). This, as opposed to the more widespread *salutem in omnium salvatore* or similar formulas, is more ostentatious. It prefigures the expression of royal power and grace in

¹⁸ Grants of arms of the Somkerekí (MOL DL 104.871), Tamásfalvi (MOL DL 50.513), Hótvafői (MOL DL 50.514), Mindszenti (MOL DF. 281415, fol. 274b-275a), and Suki families.

the main part of the charter. Only some of those charters that have a more personal *inscriptio* continue with the less elevated formula *gratiam regiam et omne bonum*.

The next big unit is the *contextus*, which contains the legal act or disposition. It starts with the *arenga*, which is meant to justify the disposition of the charter through an eloquent general statement.¹⁹ This part is again fairly formulaic, but contains strong elements of royal propaganda, and especially an emphasis on the royal prerogative of granting arms. According to this part, it is only the king or the emperor who can offer such a privilege, and noble status together with its signs and symbols depends on and radiates from royal grace, just as the rays radiate from the sun.²⁰ The length and elaboration of the *arenga* differ from case to case; usually it depended on the wealth of the grantee and his standing in the courtly hierarchy. According to this, the *arenga* of the Hótvafői grant of arms is one of the longest, as Tamás Hótvafői was a *vicethavernicus* (vice-master of the treasury) of Queen Barbara.

The *promulgatio* (*ad universorum notitiam harum serie volumes pervenire...*) is very general, and does not differ from other contemporary charters. The next part is the *narratio*, which tells about the circumstances leading to issuing the charter: first, the deeds of the grantees, and then the fact that they (partly with exhibiting an image) asked the king to grant them its use as a coat of arms. As the next part on the families will deal extensively with the data supplied by this part of the charters, I will not discuss the *narratio* here in more detail.

A comprehensive overview on this element of charters: Heinrich Fichtenau, *Arenga. Spätantike und Mittelalter im Spiegel von Urkundenformeln*, MIÖG Ergänzungsband 18 (1957).

²⁰ “A claro lumine throni cesaree aut regie maiestatis velud e sole radii nobilitates legitimo jure procedunt et omnium nobilitatum insignia ab imperatoria seu regia maiestate sic dependent, quod non sit dare alicuius generositatis insigne quod a gremio non proveniat cesaree aut regie claritatis.” Grant of arms of the Ábrahámfalvi family, MOL DL 13.509.

Then follows the *dispositio*, the heart of the matter, *i.e.*, the act of donation. It usually starts with the term *Unde nos...* or *Volentes itaque...* or some similar phrase. It names the coat of arms as a token or emblem of the nobility (*arma seu nobilitatis insignia*) and in some cases (Tamásfalvi and Hótvafői) it even describes the image in detail. A list of family members and relatives who are other beneficiaries of the donation is also mentioned in all of the grants of arms.²¹

Another aspect to be analyzed is the clause about where and in what context the family can use the coat of arms. This part, which is another particular element of grants of arms, is again relatively similar in each of the grants of arms studied, like *in preliis, hastiludiis, torneamentis et in omni exercitio militari*, but some of the nobles were expressly allowed to use the coats of arms in wider contexts, such as on flags, tents, seals, rings, buildings, and so forth – which does not mean that the others were forbidden to do so, only that a more solemn charter for a higher-standing beneficiary required a longer list.²² In spite of their formulaic character, these enumerations give an impression of the penetration of knightly culture into the lifestyles of Hungarian (and among them, Transylvanian) noblemen.²³

Also of great importance, if not the most important and revealing element of such charters is the closing part of the *dispositio*. Here it is clearly stated what the main

²¹ This question will be analyzed in the subchapter II.5. Other persons mentioned in the grants of arms.

²² For a list of where the nobles could use their coats of arms see fig. 16 in the Appendix.

²³ For an introduction to the spread of knightly culture see Béla Zsolt Szakács, “Saints of the Knights – Knights of the Saints: Patterns of Patronage at the court of Sigismund” in *Sigismund von Luxemburg. Ein Kaiser in Europa: Tagungsband des internationalen historischen und kunsthistorischen Kongress in Luxemburg* (Mainz am Rhein: Philipp von Zabern, 2006), 319-330, or Pál Lövei, *Uralkodói lovagrendek a középkorban, különös tekintettel Zsigmond Sárkányrendjére* (Royal knightly orders in the Middle Ages, with an emphasis on Sigismund’s Order of the Dragon), in Imre Takács, ed. *Sigismundus Rex et Imperator – Művészet és kultúra Luxemburgi Zsigmond korában* (Sigismundus Rex et Imperator -- Art and Culture During the Time of Sigismund of Luxemburg) (Budapest: Szépművészeti Múzeum, 2006), 251-263.

purpose of the whole donation procedure was. Besides repaying the nobles for their services, the king wanted to assure further loyalty and services; this is why he mentions that the stronger they feel the emanation of royal grace, the more faithfully they will want to serve the king and the kingdom in the future as well.²⁴

The *sanctio* represents the closing part of the *contextus*. Most of the grants of arms lack the *sanctio*, and even when it is present, it differs from case to case. For example, in the case of the Somkerekí grant of arms there is a long *sanctio*, where the king states that no one should doubt the validity of the donation; otherwise the most severe royal anger will punish the skeptics. In other cases even pecuniary punishment could occur. Such a *sanctio* is used in the Mindszenti grant of arms, where the one who affronts the royal donation has to pay 20 golden marks, ten to the royal treasury and ten to the affronted person.²⁵

The *eschatocollum* (closing part) of the charters in general is made up of the *subscriptiones*, *datum*, *corroboration*, and *apprecatio*. In the case of the grants of arms here one finds only the *datum* and the *corroboratio*. The *subscriptiones* (list of officials signing and attesting the charter) represents the opening part of the *eschatocollum*. In the cases mentioned in this research one can find only one example, in the grant of arms of the Mecsenicei Garázda and Szilágyi families, where a long list with the officials is being mentioned.

All the grants of arms were sealed with different seals of Sigismund. Just to mention a few examples: the Somkerekí grant of arms was sealed with *sub nostre*

²⁴ “...tantoque ampliori studio ad honorem regalis dignitatis eorum inantea solidetur intentio quanto se largiori favore regio preventos conspiciunt...”: Grant of arms of the Ábrahámfalvi family, MOL DL 13509.

maiestatis sigilli, the Hótvafői with the *appensione secreti nostri sigilli minoris*, the Paczali Peres with *secreto sigillo nostro*, the Aszúvölgyi with *sigillo nostro imperiali*. My opinion is that there was probably neither consistency nor a definitive system in using these seals, although to establish this all the 97 existing grants of arms should be checked and compared.²⁶

Each grant of arms ends with a notation of when and where it was issued. Actually the production itself was a longer process, the date indicated shows only the day of finishing it. The date of finishing the text and that of finishing the image were not the same, as Dénes Radocsay pointed out. In some case the images were even finished in a different place than that of the emission of the charter.²⁷

Regarding the period of time of the emission, the ten grants of arms included in my sample were issued between 1409 and 1437, six in Konstanz, and one each in Nuremberg, Milan, and Prague; in one case (Mecsenicei Garázda and Szilágyi) the place of issue is not known. After mentioning the place of emission, the date itself is defined. The dating always has two parts; it starts with the calendar date (the name of the fest when the grant of arms was issued and after that the year itself), then the regnal date of the king (the years when he was invested in his different functions).

Besides demonstrating what information one can expect to derive from the study of this source type, even this limited sample of ten charters can show how the contents and purpose of this special kind of document determined the use of the standard elements

²⁵ "... indignationem nostram gravissimam et penam viginti marcae aure puri se noverit tociens quociens contra factum fuerit incursum..." : Grant of arms of the Mindszenti family, MOL DF 281415, fol. 274b-275a.

²⁶ The study of the seals clarifies many questions, so it represents a good field for further research. Many of the seals used by Sigismund are presented in the exhibition catalogue, but regrettably there is no study dedicated to this topic in the volume, although the seals are important components of royal power and representation.

of charters. Those parts which reflected royal power and even self-fashioning were always present with a pompous, but fairly standardized terminology: the *salutatio*, the *arenga*, and the special clause on enhancing the fidelity of the grantees by this manifestation of royal grace. Besides the individual elements referring to the grantee's deeds and the members of the family included in the grant, as well as a high-level depiction of the coat of arms before the text, the phrases on royal grace set the solemn and elevated tone of these documents. Sigismund and his chancery did not miss the opportunity to declare his power and glory while "radiating it out" onto his faithful subjects. It is conspicuous how consistent the use of the standard elements was for the almost 30 years comprised in this sample. However, the statements presented here should in future be tested on a larger sample of charters issued by Sigismund and by his successors on the Hungarian throne, as well as by contemporary European rulers.

The next chapter will deal with the life stories of the nobles who received these grants of arms. Besides these pieces of information, I will also discuss who could receive a grant of arms, who were the other persons included in the donation, and which were the criteria that made such a privilege possible.

²⁷ Radocsay, *Címereslevelek*, 271.

Chapter II. Biographical Gazetteer and Careers of the Nobles

II. 1 Introduction

This chapter deals with life stories and careers of the persons and families in question, mainly with those details that are relevant for their receiving the grants of arms. It investigates who among the nobles from Transylvania²⁸ earned coats of arms from Sigismund, although one cannot state that the list of the nobles mentioned is complete. It is highly possible that losses occurred in the source basis and thus some grants of arms did not survive; another possibility is that some later charters which were not surveyed in the framework of this study may contain references to earlier donations. The main goal here is to collect and analyze the information known about these nobles, their families, estates, and careers. The reasons why they received this privilege will also be mentioned in connection with their careers.

Another question to be analyzed is the place and role of the usage of coats of arms in comparison with other privileges. Did the grantees already have noble status when they received their grants of arms? When did the persons in question get estates, before or after the coat of arms? What about other privileges like *jus gladii*, the right to build a stone castle or the right to hold a market on their estates?

²⁸ For a list of all the known grants of arms issued during the reign of Sigismund, see Fig. 13. Catalog of the coats of arms issued during the reign of Sigismund of Luxemburg from the Appendix.

II. 2. Criteria for identifying a nobleman from Transylvania

As the aim of this thesis is to analyze the privileges received by nobles from Transylvania, the first step in this work is to identify who belonged to this part of the country. There are three ways of identifying the place of origin of the nobles who received coat of arms from Sigismund, but there are also several difficulties.

The main difficulty is the scarcity of sources. There are several cases when the only existing information about a person is contained in the grant of arms,²⁹ which can be quite laconic. In these cases I decided not to include any of these persons in my sample, because there is no evidence that could suggest their possible origin in Transylvania. Another difficulty was the deficiency of the existing material. Due to the fact that the grants of arms rarely mention the place of provenance of the grantee, many archives and source publications had to be checked.

The first way of identification was always to see where these nobles had their estates, because this is the clearest evidence about their origin and their families. As Pál Engel observed for the case of the nobility of Ung County, the genealogy and history of the estates cannot be separated, and both of them have to go back in time from the known information towards the unknown.³⁰

György Tamásfalvi is the most fortunate example, because his grant of arms mentions that he is *de Thamasfalua partium nostrarum Transsiluanarum*. This is the only

²⁹ For example the cases of the following nobles, with the date and place for the emission of the coat of arms: János Kölkedi (12 May 1429, Pozsony [Bratislava]), János Herncsényi (6 February 1432, Piacenza), or Márton Bacskai Dempse (24 April 1434, Bratislava). Éva Nyulásziné Straub, *Öt évszázad címerei* (Coats of Arms of Five Centuries) (Szekszárd: Babits, 1999), 137-142. (Hereafter Nyulásziné, *Öt évszázad címerei*)

piece of information of this kind in the Transylvanian grants of arms examined here. Antal Somkerek Erdélyi is known from different charters showing that he had many estates in several parts of Transylvania, especially in Maros-Torda County.

The Mecsenicei Garázda family represents a special case, as they were from Bosnia, but in 1407 (two years before the coat of arms was granted), they received estates in Transylvania: Balázsfalva (Blaj) in Doboka County and Szentimre (Sântimbru) in Fehér County. In 1414 they received some other lands in Bihar and Arad Counties.³¹ Because the family had domains in other places as well, (Zaránd and Békés Counties), one cannot state that they were exclusively Transylvanian. However, as they had estates in Transylvania and because they were the ancestors of one of the most important noble families (the Teleki family)³², I consider that their case should be included in this work.

The second way of identifying a person's place of origin was to check his family connections, to see whose *familiaris* the person was. This information can be helpful because if the master was Transylvanian, it is more than probable that the *familiaris* was also from there. For example András Paczali Peres was the *familiaris* of Ferenc Csáki, son of a former *comes Siculorum* (count of the Székely). The Csáakis were a Transylvanian family, so one can state that the Paczali Peres family was from that region as well.

Topography can be useful in some cases and it is the third way of identifying people, as topography and family names have strong connections. Pál Engel gives good

³⁰ Engel, Pál. *A nemesi társadalom a középkori Ung megyében* (Noble Society in Medieval Ung County) (Budapest: MTA, 1998), 12. (hereafter: Engel, *Ung megye*)

³¹ Nagy, Iván. *Magyarország családai címerekkel és nemzedékrendi táblákkal* (Families of Hungary with coats of arms and genealogies) (Pest: 1858, vol. 2), 333. (Hereafter Nagy Iván, *Családok*)

³² For details, *Ibid.*, 333.

examples for Ung County,³³ but the Transylvanian cases demonstrate this as well. For example, it was easy to locate György Tamásfalvi as Transylvanian knowing that he was the owner of Tamásfalva (Tamaşfalău), a village (and estate) in Transylvania.

Antal Somkerekí is a good example, too. Nobles often traveled to other parts of the country or abroad and in these cases they were named after their place of origin, as nobody knew their so-called family names there.³⁴ This makes it understandable why Antal Somkerekí was also called Erdélyi (from Transylvania).³⁵

II. 3. Biographical gazetteer

At the beginning of King Sigismund's reign only those were considered worthy of a grant of arms (and thus of a coat of arms) who deserved this royal favor with military deeds or with loyalty to the crown. Later even administrative activity or competence in a certain field could result in a coat of arms.³⁶ The grants of arms are good sources to find traces for the reason of the donation, as in most cases, this was discussed in the *narratio* parts of the charters; they offer information about the good and brave deeds of the grantee.

The selection criteria for the biographical case studies presented here are that all of these noblemen received a coat of arms from King Sigismund and they were from Transylvania, or they had an estate there. The ordering principle is the chronology, as the

³³ Engel, *Ung megye*, 13-14.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 18-19.

³⁵ Elemér Mályusz explains this name-usage with the fact that while being the castellan of his master, Miklós Garai, in Somlyó, the people from that region considered him a "foreigner" and this is why they started to call him Antal Erdélyi (from Transylvania). Mályusz, *Zsigmond király uralma*, 136.

³⁶ See for example the case of Ferenc Eresztvényi (1414), courtly cook or the one of Mihály Dabi (1430), courtly barber and dentist. Vajay-Radocsay, *Címeradomány*, 272.

biographical case studies are structured in chronological order of the receipt of a coat of arms. As data about these nobles are not numerous, all relevant data will be presented, focusing mainly on careers and privileges received.

II. 3. 1. Miklós and Dénes Mecsenicei Garázda and László Szilágyi

The coat of arms of the Mecsenicei Garázda brothers and László Szilágyi is among the first known coats of arms issued by King Sigismund,³⁷ on 24 February 1409. It was already mentioned that the family was of Bosnian origin, but they had estates in several places in Hungary and Transylvania. They are among those few noble families who received estates in Transylvania from Sigismund, namely Balázsfalva and Szentimre in 1407, which they exchanged for Horogszeg in 1408.³⁸

Miklós³⁹ and Dénes Garázda and László Szilágyi⁴⁰ had impressive military careers in the army of János Maróti,⁴¹ ban of Mačva, defending the castle of Srebernik⁴² for several years against Ottomans and Bosnians. The grant of arms describes the difficulties that the grantees had to face during the siege that lasted for four years; these

³⁷ If one excludes the foreigners from this list (for example Wilhelm, Count Palatine of the Rhineland, who received a grant of arms in 1403), the grant of arms of the Mecseniczei Garázda family is the fifth one in chronological order, after the ones of Demeter Csentevölgyi, János Semsei, Dénes Pochyk and Péter Tétényi.. Among Transylvanian coats of arms it is the first one. Nyulásziné, "Mohács előtti címereslevelek," 249.

³⁸ Gyula Schönherr, "A Garázda nemzetség címeres levele" (The Grant of Arms of the Garázda Genus), *Turul* (1894), (11-14). (Hereafter Schönherr, Garázda)

³⁹ Miklós Mecsenicei Garázda was *vice-comes* of Tolna in 1404-1406, captain of Srebernik in 1405-1408, and special courtly familiaris in 1427. Engel. *Archontológia*, vol 2, 81.

⁴⁰ Vice-comes of Valkó in 1404, vice-comes of Bács in 1405, and captain of Srebernik with Miklós Mecsenicei Garázda in 1405-1408. *Ibid*, 232.

⁴¹ János Maróti had an important career, as he was courtly knight in 1393, ban of Mačva for four times (1397, 1398-1402, 1402-1410, and 1427-1428), comes of the Seklers (1397-1398), governor of the Kalocsa bishopric (1406), member of the Order of the Dragon (1408), baron (1411-1417 and 1433). *Ibid.*, 155. Pál Engel wrote also about the barons of King Sigismund. For further information about János Maróti see Pál Engel, "Zsigmond bárói," in *Honor, vár, ispánság*, 225-245, and Pál Engel, "A török-magyar háborúk első éve 1389-1392," in *Hadtörténelmi Közlemények* 111 (1998.) no.3., (special issue "Memoria Rerum Sigismundi Regis"), 12-28.

three nobles remained loyal to Sigismund even if they had to endure famine, thirst and dangers. In the campaign of 1407 they had a role in capturing the castle of Branics.⁴³

These two families were close relatives, and their descendants played an important role in the history of Hungary and Transylvania. The most famous members of the Szilágyi family were Erzsébet, wife of János Hunyadi and thus mother of King Mathias Corvinus, and Mihály Szilágyi⁴⁴; Janus Pannonius (famous Hungarian humanist poet from the fifteenth century) was probably related on the maternal side to the Garázda kindred. The Teleki family (one of the most important Transylvanian noble families) was also descendant of the Garázda on spindle side.

II. 3. 2. Antal Somkerek

Antal Somkerek, a loyal knight of Sigismund of Luxemburg, and ancestor of the Erdélyi de Somkerék family provides a good example of a long and successful career. He was born sometime between 1360 and 1370,⁴⁵ but his name appears for the first time only in 1391/92.⁴⁶ In the following few years there is no mention of him; perhaps this was the period when he started his career, with which he ensured a large fortune and a famous name for his descendants.⁴⁷

⁴² János Reizner, *Szeged története*, vol. 1. (Szeged, 1899), 69.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ Familiaris of János Hunyadi, vicecomes of Torontál 1451, castellan at Belgrade 1456-1457, ban of Mačva. With his death in 1460/1461 the Szilágyi family died out: Engel, *Archontológia*, vol. II, 232.

⁴⁵ Samu Barabás, ed, *A római Szent Birodalmi Gróf Széki Teleki család oklevéltára* (Collection of Charters of the Teleki family), (Budapest, 1895, vol. 1- 2.), 4. (Hereafter TOKI)

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 232 – 233.

⁴⁷ Gyula Décsényi, “A somkeréki Erdélyi család 1415-ös címeres levele és nemzedékrendje” (The Coat of Arms and Genealogy of the somkeréki Erdélyi Family), *Turul* (1892), 110-111. (Hereafter Décsényi, A somkeréki Erdélyi család)

In 1396 he participated in the battle of Nicopolis; it was said that he was one of those who saved the life of King Sigismund.⁴⁸ The king was grateful to Antal for this and some other services, because he offered him privileges and protected him in trials.⁴⁹

In 1401, when Sigismund was a prisoner of the aristocracy, Antal defended the castle of Knin from the attack of Hervoja, the Bosnian voivode,⁵⁰ and in the next two years he followed the king to Bohemia.⁵¹ For participating at the battle and for the protection of Knin he received the estate of Gernyeszeg (Gornești), which became the center of his properties.⁵²

On 16 August 1410 he received permission to build a fortified castle on one of his estates (*castellum seu fortalicium*), and this right was followed on 7 April 1415 by the right to build a stone castle (*castellum lapideum*).⁵³ 25 November 1414 was the date when Antal received the *jus gladii*, as a reward for his services in Germany.⁵⁴ Two months later (25 January 1415) another privilege was given to him, a coat of arms. These two years (1414-15) were the richest in privileges, as he was both allowed to build a stone castle and to use a coat of arms. All these donations were important in different ways, some for their material value, and some for their role in representation.

⁴⁸ Lajos Kelemen, *Magyar emlékek – Gernyeszeg* (Hungarian Memories – Gernyeszeg) in 1923/4, 2-4.

⁴⁹ For example he had a trial in 1406, because of using illegally the estates of Szentandrás and Kajla (Sântandrei and Caila). He wasn't punished because the king intervened and canceled the trial. Zsigmond, Jakó ed. *A kolozsmonostori konvent jegyzőkönyvei*, (The registers of the Convent of Kolozsmonostor) (Budapest: AK, 1990), 312-315. (Hereafter Jakó, *A kolozsmonostori konvent*)

⁵⁰ "... dum idem Anthonius in castro nostro Tininiensi per nefandos paterenos, Hervojam vajvodam Boznensem et suos complices tenebatur obsessus, quod castrum ipse Anthonius sua tantum virtute nobis fideliter conservavit.... TOKl, 283.

⁵¹ Décsényi, A somkeréki Erdélyi család, 110. For Sigismund's itinerary see Pál Engel – Norbert C. Tóth, *Itineraria regum et reginarum (1382-1438)* (Budapest, MTA TI, 2005) 80-81; see also Jörg K. Hoensch, *Itinerar König und Kaiser Sigismunds von Luxemburg, 1368-1437*. (Warendorf : Fahlbusch, 1995).

⁵² Zsigmondkori oklevéltár (Collection of Charters from the Reign of Sigismund), Mályusz, Elemér, and Iván Borsa, ed., (Budapest: AK, 1954-2004), vol II/1, 495. (Hereafter ZsOkI)

⁵³ "... unum castellum lapideum seu fortalitium edificare, tenere, construere et conservare valeant atque possint". József Bíró, *A gernyeszegi Teleki kastély* (The Teleki Castle in Gernyeszeg) (Budapest, 1931), 10.

⁵⁴ TOKl, 403-404.

He probably died between the second half of 1429 and the beginning of 1430, because he is mentioned for the last time alive on 30 May 1429,⁵⁵ and on 16 March 1430 he is already “the late Antal”.⁵⁶

II. 3. 3. György Tamásfalvi

Like many other nobles, György Tamásfalvi received a coat of arms at Konstanz, on 19 May 1415. Besides the events in his career mentioned in the grant of arms, not much information is known about him. In the registers of Kolozsmonostor (Cluj-Mănăştur) there is no mention about György Tamásfalvi, or about his brothers, who are mentioned in the grant of arms. The only members of their family who appeared in the above mentioned protocols are the sons of his brothers, György and Mihály, sons of Tamás; and Tamás, son of Imre.⁵⁷

The origin of the family goes back to the Mikola kindred, which can be traced back to the middle of the thirteenth century.⁵⁸ The first mention of those who received coats of arms appeared in a charter issued on 17 August 1397, when King Sigismund ordered the convent of Kolozsmonostor to register György and his relatives as the owners of the estate of Bikal (Făgetu Ierii).⁵⁹ The same György was allowed to establish a parish church in Bikal, three years later (6 December 1400).⁶⁰ The next mention (1 December

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 515–517.

⁵⁶ Zsigmond Jakó, *A kolozsmonostori konvent jegyzőkönyvei* (The Registers of the Convent of Kolozsmonostor), (Budapest: AK, 1990), vol. I-II, 199.

⁵⁷ Both of these cases mention pledge affairs: *Ibid.*, 237 and 1245.

⁵⁸ Zsigmond Jakó, *A Farnasi Veres család* (The Farnasi Veres Family), in *Emlékkönyv Imreh István születésének nyolcvanadik évfordulójára*, ed. András Kiss, Gyöngy Kovács Kiss, Ferenc Pozsony (Cluj-Napoca: Erdélyi Múzeum Egyesület, 1999), 179. (Hereafter Jakó, *A Farnasi Veres Család*)

⁵⁹ ZsOkI, vol. I, 545.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, vol. II/1, 80.

1408) describes a conflict with their relatives.⁶¹ The grant of arms was issued on 19 May 1415, and the last information about them was two months later (26 July), when the *miles* György (and his brothers) received the estate of Háromföld, Kolozs County, because of his services in *Istrie, Foriulii, et Alamanie partibus*.⁶²

A characteristic of the grant of arms is that it clearly states that György was the one to ask for the coat of arms, in his own name and in that of his brothers Miklós, Imre and Tamás. If one takes into consideration the fact that Tamásfalvi applied personally for the privilege, it is almost certain that he was present at Konstanz.

The reason why he considered himself worthy of the donation was that he, while a *familiaris* of Filippo Scolari,⁶³ performed many services for the empire. The grant of arms gives a good description of those brave deeds. For example Tamásfalvi offered his services although he lost many of his familiares and goods, he faced dangers and huge costs, but even like this he fought the Ottomans and the Bosnians.⁶⁴ He was present *in terra Hystrie, Fori Iuli* (today Istria in Croatia and Friuli, Italy) as well. The date of his presence in Friuli cannot be determined exactly. Most probably he followed his master Filippo Scolari in his travels and campaigns; and as Filippo was in Friuli in December 1411 and in April 1413, György Tamásfalvi also had to be there at least in one of these two dates or maybe on both of them.⁶⁵

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, vol. II/2, 189.

⁶² *Ibid.*, vol. II/2, 264.

⁶³ About Scolari's career see Pál Engel, "Ozorai Pipo," in *Honor, Vár, Ispánság*. (Budapest: Osiris, 2003), 247-302. (Hereafter Engel, "Ozorai Pipo").

⁶⁴ It cannot be reconstructed at which of the Bosnian campaigns Tamásfalvi was present, as there were several at which Filippo Scolari participated. For the list of the Bosnian campaigns, see Engel, "Ozorai Pipo," 265-266.

⁶⁵ For the itinerary of Filippo Scolari, see Norbert C. Tóth, "Zsigmond király tisztségviselőinek itineráriuma I." (Itinerary of the officials of King Sigismund), *Századok* 138 (2004): 465-494, on Pipo: 481-488. The article contains the stages of Filippo Scolari's itinerary up to 1427, including those places where he was probably accompanied by Tamásfalvi.

The beginning of the grant of arms clearly states that he was from Transylvania (*de Thamasfalua partium nostrarum Transsiluanarum*). With the presentation of all the things that he did, suffered and lost for his services, he tried to achieve the benevolence of Sigismund. He stood up for himself, applied on his own and was not recommended as some other nobles were, as for example Antal Somkereki, although the fact that he was among the *familiares* of the king's favorite, Filippo, was a strong recommendation in itself.

II. 3. 4. Tamás Hótvafői

23 June 1415 is the date when Tamás Hótvafői (or Tomadovci) and his father received the privilege to use a coat of arms. Tamás had an important function in the entourage of Queen Barbara, as *vicethavernicus reginalis maiestatis* (vice-master of the queen's treasury), so his career is interesting because he was not only a soldier, but a member of the court. His father was another beneficiary of the royal donation for his services.

Being in the service of the queen and having an important function in her surroundings, it is highly probable that it was on her recommendation that he was given the privilege. The donation of the grant of arms was important for the prestige of both parties. Probably he held the function until 1419, when Barbara lost the king's favor and her court was dismissed. In August 1420 he is mentioned as *litteratus*.⁶⁶ The grant of arms mentions that he was not only loyal but brave, since he also participated in the battle of Nicopolis and he fought against the Bosnians and the Venetians.⁶⁷ Another important

⁶⁶ Engel, *Archontológia*, , Vol. I, 55.

⁶⁷ Grant of arms of the Hótvafői family, MOL DL 50514.

connection is that he was a *familiaris* of Fülöp Kórógyi, who had important administrative, diplomatic and courtly functions.⁶⁸

When applying personally for the grant of arms, Tamás Hótvafői presented an image to the king, the image that later became his armorial bearings. If he already had a depicted image to show to the king, it might be possible that his family was already using a coat of arms or a certain image for self-identification before the royal donation.

II. 3. 5. István Farnasi

Another coat of arms belonging to the group of Konstanz was donated to István Farnasi on 4 April 1417. Besides the main grantee, István, four of his brothers (Lőrinc, András, Péter, and Balázs) and one of his nephews (Lőrinc, son of András) were mentioned as beneficiaries of the donation. The services assigned to István were performed in several parts of the empire, but especially in Aragon, Catalonia, France, England and Germany.⁶⁹ Due to the fact that the grant of arms is damaged exactly at the list of the places visited, one cannot state that these were the only places where István Farnasi performed services for the empire.

There is not much known about the larger family of the grantee. Only the names of those are known who are mentioned in the grant of arms (his father István, the four brothers and the nephew). No information on other donations or privileges to this family has come down to us; no family members are known to have held any kind of services. The origins of the Farnasi family are not clear. Attila Bárány names the grantee as István

⁶⁸Fülöp Kórógyi was castellan of Mihály in 1402, comes of Temes, Krassó and Sebes in 1404, royal deputy in 1406, baron in 1412-1429, and *magister tavernicorum reginalium* (master of the Queen's treasury) in 1413-1419. Engel, *Archontológia*, II, 133.

Farnasi Veres, supposing that he was from the Farnasi Veres family, a family that was from the same kindred as the afore-mentioned György Tamásfalvi.⁷⁰ But this István is not likely to have been a member of the Farnasi Veres family, as it is impossible to place him on the family tree of the Farnasi Veres provided by Zsigmond Jakó.⁷¹ The main fact to suggest him belonging to a different family is that he was awarded with a grant of arms; this donation would have been unnecessary for the Farnasi Veres, as based on their close connections to the Tamásfalvi they would have been entitled to use the same coat of arms.

II. 3. 6. Antal Mindszenti

12 May 1417 is the date when Antal Mindszenti and his family received the coat of arms and, what is even more important, nobility. In contrast to the statements of the secondary literature, this particular donation of grant of arms is the first one accompanied by giving nobility issued during the reign of Sigismund of Luxemburg. This is the only charter among the sample discussed in this thesis which has not been preserved in the original, but as a transcription in the so-called *Werbőczy formuarium*.⁷² Therefore it does

⁶⁹ Attila Bárány, “Zsigmond király 1416-os Angliai kísérete” (The Entourage of King Sigismund from 1416, England), *Aetas* 3-4 (2004), 12. (Hereafter Bárány, Zsigmond kísérete)

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*,

⁷¹ Jakó, “A Farnasi Veres család,” 176-183

⁷² MOL DF 281415, fol. 274b-275a. Formulary of the lawyer-politician István Werbőczy, author of the famous collection of Hungarian customary law, the *Tripartitum*. For further information see Ferenc Eckhart, *Formuláskönyv Werbőczy István hivatali működése köréből* (A formulary from the time of István Werbőczy in office), in *Emlékkönyv dr. Viski Illés József működésének 40. évfordulójára* (Budapest: Stephaneum, 1942), 151-60, quoted by Martyn Rady in the Introduction to the English edition of the *Tripartitum*. Stephen Werbőczy, *The Customary Law of the Renowned Kingdom of Hungary in Three Parts* (1517), ed. János M. Bak, Péter Banyó and Martyn Rady, (Budapest, Central European University, 2005.)

not contain the image of the coat of arms and is usually not included in the standard list of the grants of arms.⁷³

Antal, son of the late Tamás, was the member of a family of *iobagiones castri* (castle warriors) that originated from Kőrös County.⁷⁴ He is mentioned as a royal *familiaris* and *commensalis* (“*familiari nostri continuo commensali*”) and as such, he followed the king to many of his travels abroad. The grant of arms informs us about his presence in Lombardy, Italy, Germany, Aragon, France and England, where he has done services for the empire and the church. He can be attested in the king’s entourage from 1411, and through his services he became a skilled diplomat; probably he was one of Sigismund’s advisors. He was also an *aulicus* and royal notary. The Mindszenti family probably started its career as being *familiares* of the Kanizsai family.⁷⁵

II. 3. 7. János Suki

Another coat of arms for Transylvanian nobles was given to János Suki and his descendants on 29 March 1418. János Suki was a loyal and brave servant of the king and it is possible that the king was also in a good relationship with him. This point can be verified by Suki’s mentions in charters (*specialis aulicus* and *familiaris* of the king, magister, and other titles), and because Sigismund protected him and intervened in an affair with the city of Kolozsvár (Cluj). His several other privileges (*jus gladii*, right to hold a market on his estate and to use a coat of arms) also support this interpretation.

⁷³ Nyulásziné, “Mohács előtti,” 250, does not have it among the grants from 1417, although the ZsOkl clearly describes it as grant of arms. ZsOkl, vol VI (1417-1418), 159.

⁷⁴ Bárány, Zsigmond kísérete, 16.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

János Suki was a member of Sigismund's entourage several times: at the battle of Nicopolis, during the Bosnian campaign,⁷⁶ and the end of the Council of Konstanz.

On the same day with the grant of arms, *jus gladii* was also given to him, but in a different charter. On 30 March 1408 he and some of his companions divided the estates of Veresegyház (?), Vingárd (Vingard) and others estates from Fehér County.⁷⁷ On 19 November 1410 he was allowed to have a market and King Sigismund confirmed the right given by King Louis to hold a market on the estate of Szová (Suatu), Kolozs County.⁷⁸

Many other events were connected to the person of János Suki. For examples: pledge affairs,⁷⁹ renouncement to an estate (in this charter he is called *aule nostre familiaris*),⁸⁰ or another case when Sigismund writes to the city of Kolozsvár to return to the *jobagio* (tenant peasant) of Suki 12 oxen and one barrel of wine.⁸¹

II. 3. 8. Gergely Ábrahámfalvi

Gergely Ábrahámfalvi received coat of arms and noble status at the same time, and both privileges also included as beneficiaries his brothers János and József, as well as János Ófalvi. The date and place of the emission of the grant of arms is 5 April 1431, Nuremberg. According to this document, Gergely was a *familiaris* of Péter Machalfalwi

⁷⁶ They were allowed to establish gallows and other torture implements on all of their estates in order to punish thieves and other criminals. This privilege was given on the same day as the coat of arms, but in a different charter. The charter gives a whole list with those crimes that can be punished by the Suki. For examples: bandits, murderers, robbers, arsonists, and different falsifiers can be executed according to their committed crimes. *Ibid.*, 1418/ 03/ 02.

⁷⁷ ZsOkl, 6028

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 8050

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 2908

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 1668.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 1707.

Reychel,⁸² and while being in the service of his master he was a loyal servant of the king and the country. Unfortunately the grant of arms does not offer detailed information about the services, nor about the places where he accomplished them.

Ábrahámfalvi was present in front of the king and asked him to officially allow the usage of the coat of arms that he was using previously. The fact that he was given nobility within the grant of arms, and the fact that there is no previous or later mention about him or his family, might suggest that they were of low social status. Probably he could not afford to acquire the most elaborate charter, as the grant of arms does not really have specific elements, such as list of services or long *arenga*. I consider that in this case it is about a person with low social status, who wisely used the opportunity while he was in the king's proximity.

II. 3. 9. András Paczali Peres

András Paczali Peres received a coat of arms on 8 December 1431 in Milan. He earned the privilege with his services in Germany and Lombardy. Due to the fact that the only available source about the family is the grant of arms, Iván Nagy supposes that the family was of low social status,⁸³ as András Paczali Peres was the *familiaris*⁸⁴ of Ferenc Csáki⁸⁵ (son of a former Sekler *comes*).⁸⁶ Judging from the date and place of issuing the

⁸² He was mentioned as *familiaris aulae* in 1431: see Engel, *Archontológia*, vol. I., 505.

⁸³ There is no certain information about the origin of this family, but if they were the familiares of a Transylvanian family, then it is possible that they were as well Transylvanian, or at least had some kind of connections with this area. Iván Nagy mentions several nobles with the same name from different counties (Abaúj, Bodrog, Nógrád, and Doboka), but there is no evidence that the above mentioned András Paczali Peres had any connections with them. Nagy, Iván, *Családok*, (1862, vol. 5), 238.

⁸⁴ "... fidelis nostri Andreae, filii Ladislai, dicti Peres de Paczal, familiars egregii Francisci, filii condam magnifici Georgii de Chaak, olim comitis siculorum nostrorum": Grant of arms of the Paczali Peres family, MOL DL 69.451.

⁸⁵ Ferenc Csáki (1417-1468/70) had a long list of functions. He is mentioned as aulicus in 1433, comes of Szatmár in 1435-1445, 1449, 1453-1456, comes of the Seklers in 1439, 1440, 1446-1448, comes of Bihar in 1440-1458 Engel, *Archontológia*, vol. II., 48.

grant, András Paczali may have been part of Sigismund's entourage to Rome; his *dominus*, Ferenc Csáki is certainly attested among the members of the royal retinue.⁸⁷ The name "Andreas filius Ladislai dicti Peres" suggests different possibilities about this András' father, that he might have had many trials, or he was dealing with some legal affairs.⁸⁸

II. 3. 10. Benedek Aszúvölgyi⁸⁹

Benedek Aszúvölgyi (or in some sources Azziwelghi) received a coat of arms and nobility on 27 April 1437, in Prague. In the grant of arms Benedek is called *nobilis Benedictus literatus*, hence it seems that he had some kind of formal education, which may have entitled him to a function in the entourage of King Sigismund. There is no clear explanation of the nature of his services, done in order to get a donation containing a grant of arms and noble status. The only certain information about his family from the grant of arms is that he had two brothers, Miklós and János.

⁸⁶ The *comes Siculorum* was the second dignity in medieval Transylvania, after the voivode. For further information about the Csáki family and this institution see Zoltán Kordé, "A székelyispáni méltóság a Zsigmond-korban," (The dignity of comes Siculorum in the Sigismund period) *Történelmi Szemle*, 2004/3-4, 193-241.

⁸⁷ Enikő Csukovits, "Egy nagy utazás résztvevői," in *Tanulmányok Borsa Iván tiszteletére*, (Bdapest: MOL, 1998),

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, and Ferenc Kubinyi, "Paczali Peres András címereslevele" (Grant of Arms of András Paczali Peres), *Turul*, 4 (1886), 18-20.

⁸⁹ Due to the fact that the Zsigmondkori oklevéltár (Collection of Charters from the Reign of Sigismund) – which is one of my main source collections - has published documents only until 1422 so far, there are no other mentions available about Benedek Aszúvölgyi, or his family. Iván Nagy and Béla Kempelen, who deal with the genealogy of the Hungarian nobility, do not offer any information on him, either. Research in unpublished archival material may yield further information on this person or his family.

II. 4. Other persons mentioned in the grants of arms

In all the grants of arms there are several people mentioned who could benefit from the royal donation. These people can be separated into two groups: the main grantee(s) (in some cases two or more persons) who did something for the privilege and those who could use the coats of arms due to the merits of their relatives. The relationships among these people can shed light on kin ties. Furthermore, the reason for including the second category, who could also use the privilege is also worth investigating. The main explanation is that the grants of arms were considered in the same way as other grants to the nobility, like estates and other privileges, namely that not only a single person, but the whole family could benefit from it. This phenomenon is called “kindred solidarity” by Erik Fügedi.⁹⁰

István Werbőczy describes the customary law connected to the question of donations obtained by family members. If one is serving the king or a lord and obtains a royal donation, it was a custom to include his brothers or family who were managing the house and the land at home with the clause “per eum” (and through him); with the inclusion all the grantees had the same rights as the one who obtained the donation until a division of estates was made.⁹¹

⁹⁰ Erik Fügedi, *The Elefánthy. The Hungarian Nobleman and his Kindred* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 1998), 50. (Hereafter Fügedi, *Elefánthy*)

⁹¹ “... quorum alter in curia regia vel aliorum dominorum laribus servitio se mancipabit alter autem domesticis curis et laboribus domi vacabit, et ille servitio deditus bona aliqua seu iura possessionaria ab ipsa maiestate regia vel aliis etiam forsitan dominis servitiorum suorum meritis ita exigentibus pro se impetrabit et nomina fratrum suorum domi manentium clausula cum illa ET Per eum etc. in litteris seu privilegiis Donationalibus inscribi et inseri procurabit, tunc licet impetrans ipse ante tempus divisionis cum fratribus suis fiendae de huiusmodi bonis per eum acquisitis et inventis liberam prout voluerit disponendi habeat facultatem. Werbőczy, Pars I. titulus 43. 109.

II. 4. 1. Brothers⁹²

Brothers are most often mentioned in the grants of arms, sometimes by name, sometimes only as “brothers.” In the case of Antal Somkereki Erdélyi, he was the one to be given the coat of arms; the other persons mentioned are: *omnibus fratribus, consanguineis ac heredibus tuis legitimis*. In contrast to other grants of arms, his brothers are not mentioned by name. In fact, the term *frater*⁹³ could have meant a larger group than only brothers; therefore it would be more appropriate to use the expression kinsman. This formulation sounds more like a general formula than a specific one; it shows the above-mentioned custom to give a privilege not to a single person, but to the whole family.

In the case of György Tamásfalvi, he was the one to serve the empire in several cases, whereas his brothers are mentioned only in connection with his name. In this case the usual custom of donations may be reinforced by the fact that their father had an important career.⁹⁴ Antal Mindszenti does not have a list of brothers or relatives.

Tamás Hótvafői had one brother included in the grant of arms, namely György; Benedek Aszúvögyi had two, Miklós and János. In the grant of arms of András Paczali Peres, four brothers appear as grantees, information that is precious because this is the only proof about their existence. The situation is identical in the case of the four brothers of István Farnasi (Lőrinc, András, Péter, and Balázs), too. Regarding the Ábrahámfalvi grant of arms, besides Gergely, two brothers (János and József) are mentioned.,

⁹² In this subchapter I am using the term “frater” in the sense of “another son of the ego’s father”, expression used by Erik Fügedi. *Elefánthy*, 20.

⁹³ For the definition of the different types of “frater” see *Ibid.*, 20.

⁹⁴ A charter from 31 May 1398 confirms that Gergely Tamásfalvi (the father of the brothers who received the coat of arms) was forgiven for his earlier infidelity, but what is interesting is the fact that some details are given about his career. For example, he participated at the battle of Nicopolis, where he lost all of his

II. 4. 2. Other relatives included in the grant

Fathers and especially grandfathers are not frequently encountered in grants of arms. The main reason for this was demographic, because they had to be quite old if the son, respectively grandson, was of an age to do something remarkable. In the ten examples studied here the donation refers to a father only in two cases, in the grants of arms of Benedek Aszúvölgyi and Tamás Hótvafői. The fathers of Antal Somkereki and Antal Mindszenti were already dead at the moment of donation (they were mentioned as “condam”); in the Suki, Ábrahámfalvi and Paczali Peres grants of arms the names of the fathers are mentioned, but they are not among the beneficiaries. The Mecsenicei Garázda and Tamásfalvi grants of arms do not mention fathers at all.

All legal descendants and relatives were also entitled to use the royal privilege and the coat of arms. The Suki grant of arms speaks about allowing *patruei et condivisionali fratri suo ipsorumque consanguineis heredibus* to use the coat of arms. A so-called *patrueis* brother⁹⁵ of Gergely Ábrahámfalvi (János Ófalvi) appears as well in the grant of arms.

There are several relatives mentioned in the grant of arms of the Paczali family,⁹⁶ but because no information survived about them, one cannot know how these nobles were

belongings, and he was also present in many other campaigns, especially that from “terra nostra Moldovane.” ZsOkl, vol .1, 577.

⁹⁵ The *patrueis* brother was a person who could benefit from the division of the hereditary estates of the family. He could be a brother, first or second cousin. According to Oszkár Bárczay *patrueis* brother meant only second cousin. Oszkár Bárczay, *A heraldika kézikönyve* (A Handbook of Heraldry), (Budapest: MTA, 1897), 424.

⁹⁶ Kilián and András, sons of Tamás Paczali, Ferenc, son of János, and Mihály and Péter, relatives of András Paczali Peres.

related to each other. It is for sure that they were not brothers, because that would have been mentioned, most probably they were cousins, or even more distant relatives. István Farnasi's nephew Lőrinc (son of his brother András) is the only son of the Farnasi brothers who is mentioned, so it is possible that the other brothers did not have sons at that moment. Several *fratres condivisionales* also appear, but as the term is too broad and the amount of information is unsatisfactory, one cannot reconstruct what was the exact type of relationship among the mentioned persons. Another interesting expression appears, namely the "amicus". With this term probably they meant some kind of relative; the term was not used in its present meaning of "friend".⁹⁷

II. 4. 3. Masters (*domini*) mentioned in the grants of arms

Another category of people mentioned in the grants of arms besides the grantees are their masters (*domini*).⁹⁸ The occurrence of these people is inconsistent, as they are not mentioned in all the cases. For example in the case of Antal Somkereki it is known that he was the *familiaris* of Miklós Garai, but the grant of arms does not mention him as master. In fact, only in less than half of the cases are the masters mentioned.

In my view it can be stated that there are two categories of *familiares* here. The first category is of those who had a really high ranked master, for instance Antal Mindszenti, who was the *familiaris* of the king, and György Tamásfalvi, whose master was no one else than the famous Filippo Scolari. I think that in these cases the name of the master is being mentioned in order to raise even more the rank of the *familiaris*. The second

⁹⁷ For the meaning of the word as "relative" see *Lexicon Latinitatis medii aevi Hungariae*, Vol. I., Fasc. 2. (aeternaliter – assignatio) (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1988), 153-154. (amicus, B.1.b)

category is when the name of the master is partly mentioned in order to help the identification of the *familiaris*. It is the case of Gergely Ábrahámfalvi and András Paczali Peres, when the family was of lower social status; probably this is why the chancery considered that inclusion of the master might be of help. Nevertheless, even in these cases the mentioning of the masters had the role of enhancing the prestige of the grantee. Both Ferenc Csáki and Péter Machalfalvi Reychel had functions in the royal court and were members of the royal entourage. It is true that “the advantages of the service were proportional to the lord’s social status,”⁹⁹ but the advantages were present in any case. Help in getting a grant of arms, since it coincided so well with the king’s interest, could be provided even by less powerful *domini*, too.

In some cases the *relatores* are indicated in the grants of arms. For example both in case of the Paczali and the Ábrahámfalvi grants of arms the *relator* was László Csapi, vice-chancellor, a member of Sigismund’s entourage to Rome.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁸ I do not wish to describe here the phenomenon of *familiaritas*. For a good definition of it see the chapter entitled “Familiaritas” from Martyn Rady, *Nobility, Land and Service in Medieval Hungary* (London: Palgrave, 2000), 110-126.

⁹⁹ Engel, *The Realm of St. Stephen*, 127.

¹⁰⁰ Csukovits, *Egy nagy utazás résztvevői*, 33.

II. 5. Reasons for the donation

In my view there were two kinds of reasons for the donation of grants of arms. First there were the clearly declared reasons, mentioned in the grants of arms;¹⁰¹ the other types of reasons were the ones that can be deducted from the whole donation policy of King Sigismund.

The most immediate reasons for the donation were usually loyalty and participation in some battles or campaigns, where these nobles performed a memorable deed. Each grant of arms mentions the reasons for the donation; the difference is only in the amount of details given. These charters can be quite reticent about the deeds of the nobles. One cannot always know for sure which of these services was more important because the cases giving a description are rare. The general pattern is to give an event where these nobles were present and did something remarkable, usually called “*multiplicia merita*”.

The well-documented case of Antal Somkerekí may shed light on reasons for his receiving a coat of arms, because there are many sources to reconstruct his career. The text of the grant mentions multiple services done for the empire (*multiplicia merita*), but it is not specific as to what services. In the literature there is the theory that he got the coat of arms because of his valor during the battle of Nicopolis, but for this he had already received a payment, the estate of Gernyeszeg, and all the rest of the privileges that he received mention a different reason for the donation. Therefore if the grant of arms does not mention a certain service, it is highly possible that he got the coat of arms because of his twenty-year career and loyalty to the king.

¹⁰¹ See the section connected to reasons for the donation in the table about the structure of the grants of arms from the Appendix.

Specific deeds of valor are also mentioned in several cases. For example an interesting episode is the defense of the castle of Srebrenik in the grant of arms of the Mecsenicei Garázda and Szilágyi families. Other “popular” events were the campaigns against Bosnians and Venetians, mentioned in several grants of arms.

Participation at the battle of Nicopolis was a reason for the donations in several cases. This phenomenon is interesting, as in most cases there were as many as twenty years between the service and the donation. This battle was one of the biggest losses suffered by the Hungarian army in the Middle Ages, therefore it must have caused a concussion that people remembered for a long time.¹⁰² And if it was a well-known event, it is understandable that those who were present and survived this cataclysm used it for asking a royal favor.

Another basic reason was that the donation was requested by the nobles. Due to the frequent travels in the retinue of the king, Hungarian (including Transylvanian) nobles encountered the customs of the Western nobility, and they had the chance to see Western knights en masse; this must have fostered a change in their mentality, so that they realized that this privilege was useful for them.

As already shown in the previous chapter, through the analysis of the formulaic parts of the grants of arms, these documents were consciously used by royalty to assure later fidelity of the nobles. Therefore, from the king’s point of view, this was one of the main reasons for the donation.

¹⁰² Enikő Csukovits gives details about the events that have happened after the battle (such as execution of the prisoners, or captivity and ransom). Enikő Csukovits, “Csodás szabadulások a török fogságból” (Miraculous Escapes from the Ottoman captivity), *Aetas* 2005/4, 78-90. For further information on the battle of Nicopolis from the Hungarian point of view see the special issue of *Hadtörténelmi Közlemények* 111 (1998) no. 3, “Memoria Rerum Sigismundi Regis” and László Veszprémi, “The Birth of Military Science in Hungary: The period of the Anjou and the Luxembourg kings,” in László Veszprémi and Béla

II. 6. Conclusions to Chapter II

The social status of the grantees presented here comprised wide ranges of fifteenth-century nobility. Apart from the first grantees in the sample, the Garázda and Szilágyi families, there are no proper aristocrats among them (the highest-ranking person being Tamás Hótvafői, the vice-master of the queen's treasury), but there is a fairly high proportion of middling/lower nobles. In some cases their careers are impressive; see for example Tamás Mindszenti who, from the family background of *iobbagio castri*, became noble and royal *familiaris*. The Mecsenicei Garázda brothers, László Szilágyi, Antal Somkereki, Tamás Hótvafői and János Suki are also good examples for a well-progressing career. Their examples illustrate what János Thuróczy said in his chronicle about King Sigismund's practice of raising people of low category to high status, if he thought that they are worth of it.¹⁰³ The careers of the other nobles who received grants of arms are not so well documented – or were less impressive altogether, than the ones mentioned before. They were serving the king, and thus had the opportunity of receiving privileges.

In some cases the coat of arms was the only privilege that a nobleman received, but in other cases several different types of privilege were given. As the privileges had different values and meanings, it would be more informative to group them in different categories, namely, economic privileges (estates, markets) and legal/representational privileges (the coat of arms, the right to build a castle or stone castle, and the right to

Király, eds., *A Millenium of Hungarian Military History*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 26-54.

¹⁰³ “Iste rex non solum humilis domus nobiles verum etiam plebee conditionis homines alte dignitatis ad culmen quamplures sublimavit, suoque in regno potentes fecit.” Iohannes de Thurocz, *Chronica*

execute criminals). For the variety of privileges see the following graph and the table with the summary of awards by King Sigismund to Transylvanians in the Appendix (fig. 15.)

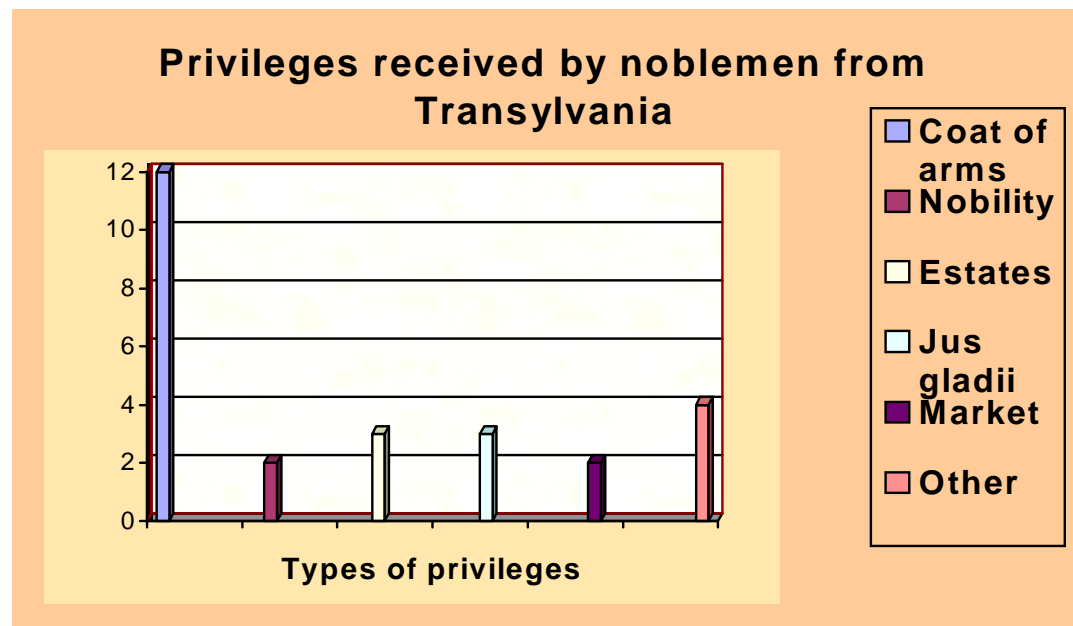


Fig. 2. Types of privileges received by noblemen from Transylvania in addition to grants of arms¹⁰⁴

Therefore, in order to analyze what types of privileges these nobles received, it is better to separate these categories, because one cannot compare the right to build a castle with the right to be called *magister*, for example. Among economic privileges the donation of estates was the least frequent in the sample studied here, mainly because Sigismund did not want to “spoil” the nobility¹⁰⁵ by giving them lands or money.

Hungarorum I. Textus. Ed. Elisabeth Galántai and Julius Kristó Budapest: Akadémiai kiadó, 1985), chapter 214 (De coronatione regis Sigismundi in regem Bohemie), 227.

¹⁰⁴ The present chart is based on the available sources regarding the other donations that nobles from Transylvania received besides the grants of arms.

¹⁰⁵ Expression used by Attila Bárány, *The Rozgonyi Family: Crown and Nobility in Late Medieval Hungary*. MA Thesis, Central European University, Budapest, 1995.

However, this phenomenon has to be checked on the whole range of Sigismund's donations, from which a different picture may emerge.

Concerning the policy of donating lands, one dare not forget the fact that Sigismund had to form a new and loyal aristocracy in order to counteract the power of the barons who revolted against him. He already gave away many of the available estates at the beginning of his rule,¹⁰⁶ and after that substantial donations were rare. For the period of time studied within the present research (1409-1437) the king already changed his whole donation policy; due to his economy even nobles with outstanding deeds (for example the Rozgonyi or the Pálóc) were repaid with less significant favors.¹⁰⁷

Returning to the question of donating money, it was not possible for Sigismund to give this type of privilege as, according to Eberhard Windecke and many other narrative sources and documentary evidences, he was always short of money.¹⁰⁸ This fact is understandable if one thinks about the large number of trips made, the different constructions, or the money needed for representational purposes.

Only Antal Somkerekéi was given a bigger estate, consisting of additional neighboring villages, and later he received several others in that region. Several other nobles received estates, but only one village or more but in different regions, as, for example, the Mecsenicei Garázda family with one village in Arad and one in Bihar Counties or György Tamásfalvi with two villages. The Suki family, although it was

¹⁰⁶ According to Pál Engel it was between 1387 and 1392 when Sigismund donated the largest part of the lands, castles, villages and *oppida* available. The author mentions the examples of five counties from North-East Hungary, where the royal estate collected during the reign of the Angevin dynasty disappeared almost completely. Pál Engel, "A Magyarországi birtokszerkezet átalakulása a Zsigmond korban," in *Honor, vár, ispánság*, 451-471.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 461.

¹⁰⁸ For a concise summary on Sigismund's finances see Engel, *The Realm of St. Stephen*, 222-228.

important and held many privileges received during the reign of Sigismund, did not receive any estates.

The right to hold a market on the estate was given only to two nobles, Antal Somkerekí and János Suki; Antal also got the right to collect customs in Sáromberke (Dumbrăvioara).¹⁰⁹ These privileges were valuable, especially if one takes into consideration that Sáromberke was close to Székelyvásárhely (later Marosvásárhely) and near the Maros River, many people were passing by there.

Antal Somkerekí is the only one allowed to build a stone castle, too, even if he did not take advantage of this right during his lifetime. György Tamásfalvi was allowed to found a parish church. In three cases, nobility was conferred as well, for Antal Mindszenti, Benedek Aszúvölgyi, and Gergely Ábrahámfalvi. The right to punish and execute and the right of *jus gladii* was not a widespread privilege, as only two nobles received it in my sample.

In general, only a few nobles received a significant series of donations and privileges. In most cases the coat of arms was the only sign of royal benevolence towards these families. Another possibility is that other privileges are unknown. However, it is probable that some of the families did not have other privileges, because in donation of lands the charter would have survived in most cases, at least as references in later documents. Antal Somkerekí was the most favored among all those studied here because he received all types of privileges, a big estate, the right to have a market, and the right to build a castle.

¹⁰⁹ Décsényi, A Somkerekí család, 110.

Chapter III. The coats of arms

The focus of this chapter will be on the presentation of the coats of arms as source types, and on the analysis of similarities and differences in the images. Other topics to be discussed briefly are the situation of Hungarian heraldry before and during the rule of Sigismund of Luxemburg, the structure of a coat of arms, and the terminology used in heraldry. Finally, I will investigate, as far as the sources allow, the origins of the images used as coats of arms, their connection to the grantees, and the way they ended up in the charters.

III. 1. What is a coat of arms? Its role

The meaning of the coat of arms has already been defined by several heraldrists; a coat of arms was connected to a certain person (individual or corporate), it was based on a legal donation, and it could be inherited.¹¹⁰

Over the centuries, coats of arms had several roles and functions. For example, they were ornate examples of a previous royal favor, they could help to identify the family, and they helped the family to identify themselves as well. Also of great relevance was the fact that there was a practical side to coats of arms. As they were important in military acts, jousts, and all those actions mentioned in the grants of arms, they identified

¹¹⁰ For general questions regarding heraldry several handbooks can be checked. In the case of the literature in English see the following works: Thomas Woodcock and John Martin Robinson, *The Oxford Guide to Heraldry*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990, (hereafter: Oxford Heraldry); Arthur C. Fox-Davies, *A Complete Guide to Heraldry*, London: Bracken Books, 1993, (Hereafter: *Complete Guide to Heraldry*); or Friar, Stephen. *Heraldry*. ? : Sutton Publishing, 1992, (Hereafter: Friar, *Heraldry*). For literature in

friend from foe, or helped to gather soldiers after a battle, so they had to be decodable with little effort.

Some charges have symbolic meaning attached to them, though this is by no means universal. People in the middle Ages were profoundly interested in signs or legends attributing peculiar behavior to animals and relating those examples of behavior to human virtues or vices.¹¹¹

III. 2. Terminology and structure of the coats of arms

This subchapter focuses on the presentation of the terminology used in heraldry. As the vocabulary is wide and not all of these terms are used in the present work, I will explain only those that occur here (also defined as a group in the glossary). Another aim is to present briefly the components of a coat of arms and what the roles of these elements were.

III. 2. 1 The shield, the armorial bearings, and the crest

The shield and the armorial bearings represent the most important parts of a coat of arms, the shields representing the place of heraldic display.¹¹² This component of the coats of arms is important mostly because of imitating the shields in vogue in that time, shields used for military actions and jousts. A more comprehensive study of the entire series of grants would make it possible to decide whether there was a general pattern of

Hungarian see Éva Nyulásziné Straub, *Öt évszázad címerei* (Coats of arms of five centuries), Szekszárd: Babits, 1999. (Hereafter: Nyulásziné, *Öt évszázad címerei*).

¹¹¹ <http://www.heraldica.org/topics/meaning.htm>. Last accessed 21 April, 2007.

¹¹² Friar, *Heraldry*. 169.

shields used on the coats of arms issued during the reign of King Sigismund or whether different types of shields appear.

The armorial bearings were the images placed on the shield. These can be of two types: animate and inanimate charges. The crest is a three-dimensional device, positioned on the top of the helm,¹¹³ which can be identical or related to the armorial bearings or completely different.

III. 2. 2. Helm, coronet, mantling and other decorations

These elements are part of the inanimate charges of a coat of arms. The right upper top of the shield is covered with a helm, on the helm there is the mantling, and on the mantling there is a coronet or some other element in its place.

The helms are derived from those worn in battle, where they were an essential part of the equipment of a knight.¹¹⁴ The mantling (or lambrequin) is a cloth fixed to the helm, and appears to flow from beneath the coronet.¹¹⁵ The coronets are ornamental elements; they do not show the social rank of the grantee.¹¹⁶

Besides these elements, several other decorative parts of the coats of arms might occur. For example, the frame of the whole image, the inner field, or the supporters, could all be presented with more or less artistic development.

¹¹³ Stephen Friar argues that the right to bear a crest meant a privilege above the right to bear arms. This is why in many cases the crest is not related to the armorial bearings, Friar, *Heraldry*, 174. This might be valid in the case of British heraldry, but in the coats of arms issued by King Sigismund the situation is somewhat different. Almost all of the crests are related (if not identical) to the armorial bearings, except for a few cases when a completely new image appears.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 171.

¹¹⁵ This decorative element originates from the practice of the crusaders, who wore a cloth under their helm to absorb the heat of the sun and to prevent the helm from becoming hot, *Ibid.*, 177.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 176.

III. 2. 3 Tinctures

Tincture is a collective term for the colors that might occur on a coat of arms. All tinctures used in heraldry have specific names and when blazoning (describing) a coat of arms these names have to be used. One can differentiate three types of tinctures: metals, colors, and furs.

Questions to be answered in connection with tinctures are whether there was a general habit of using specific colors in a certain period of time or whether the symbolism assigned to the colors used can be connected to deeds of the grantee. At the same time colors are important because the artistic value and the correctness of the coats of arms depended on them to a great extent.

III. 3. Heraldry during the reign of Sigismund of Luxemburg

Heraldry in its early stages looked uniform throughout Europe, but with time characteristics typical for certain regions started to appear. Even though the rules and the practice of heraldry were regulated from the thirteenth century onwards, after the emergence of strong and organized monarchies local characteristics and practices defined the heraldry of individual countries.¹¹⁷ In the case of Hungarian heraldry, regardless of adopting certain influences from Polish, Austrian, and German heraldry, it has its own ways of depicting a coat of arms that can be connected to the history of the country.¹¹⁸

Several characteristics are typical for Hungarian heraldry. The most important one that brings individuality to this practice is that an extravagant complexity of design is

¹¹⁷ *Oxford Heraldry*, 14-15.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 30.

characteristic of most of the images depicted on the grants of arms. The painters usually gave great emphasis to naturalism in the images, especially in the case of the armorial bearings. This is why on the large majority of the surviving coats of arms there are animate charges on the shields, instead of inanimate ones, as it is typical for the German heraldry, for example.

It was during the reign of Sigismund of Luxemburg when Hungarians started to receive coats of arms in greater numbers than previously and when the specific features typical for Hungarian heraldry emerged. The coats of arms issued in this period of time represented a category that is depicted in Gothic style, respecting the rules of Gothic heraldry.

The images of the coat of arms were positioned in the left upper corner of the grant of arms.¹¹⁹ Both the shield and the armorial bearings are oriented to left in order to express respect for the name of the king and emperor.¹²⁰ The most frequent color of the shield is azure and the armorial bearings are standing on a firm ground.¹²¹ The shields have rounded bases; these types of shields were also called *Spanish shields*.¹²² The helms studied here are called *tilting helms*¹²³ and they are depicted in argent.

The large majority of the coats of arms issued in this time have animate charges: different types of animals, birds,¹²⁴ humans, scenes of hunting or wounded animals, scenes that are based on a true story, and so on. The inanimate charges are represented to

¹¹⁹ This is in contrast to the German practice, where the coat of arms was positioned in the center of the charter. Sigismund issued only one coat of arms of this type, the one of the Tétényi family, given in 1405. It has to be mentioned that this is one of the first coats of arms given by Sigismund, therefore at that time most probably the Hungarian custom was not yet established.

¹²⁰ Jékely, Arisztokrácia, 298.

¹²¹ Oxford Heraldry, 30.

¹²² The French term for it is *écu espagnol*, the German is *Halbrundschild*. <http://www.heraldica.org/shell/illustr.pl?003>. Last accessed 15 April, 2007.

¹²³ <http://www.rarebooks.nd.edu/digital/heraldry/charges/crowns.html>. Last accessed 15 April, 2007.

some extent, too, as coronets and helms are part of this category, but there are some cases when the armorial bearing (whether it is an animal or a human being) is represented with an object.¹²⁵ Crests are the same images as the armorial bearings, maybe with minor changes, and they are put on the top of the crown.

III. 4. Description of the Coats of Arms

III. 4. 1. Mecsenicei Garázda coat of arms

The coat of arms issued on 24 February 1409 to the Mecsenicei Garázda brothers deserves attention, not only because of its artistic value¹²⁶ and because it is the first Transylvanian coat of arms, but because it was one of the first coats of arms given by Sigismund of Luxemburg to a member of the Hungarian nobility.¹²⁷

The image of the coat of arms does not have an external frame nor is the inner field decorated. The central part of the image is the argent shield with a round base. From this argent field a wild goat arises, surrounded by gules flames. The figure of the animal is sable (black) and demi-rampant, with a mane, and or antlers and hooves. In its upper dexter leg it holds a vert pine, and it is eating its needles.

¹²⁴ Probably the birds are the most frequently represented among all the animals.

¹²⁵ For example, the net from the Tamásfalvi coat of arms or the rings from the bear's nose and ears in the case of the Aszúvölgyi coat of arms.

¹²⁶ Gyula Schönherr pretends that this is one of the most characteristic Hungarian coats of arms. Gyula Schöner, "A Garázda nemzetség címeres levele" (The grant of arms of the Garázda kindred), *Turul* (1894) 9-10.

¹²⁷ There are only five coats of arms to precede this donation, the coats of arms of Demeter Csentevölgyi (16 October 1398), János Semsei (23 April 1401), Matthias Kolleisz (1 October, 1403), Dénes Pochyk (6 December 1404) and Péter Tétényi (15 April 1405).



Fig. 3. The coat of arms of the Mecsenicei Garázda and Szilágyi families

The helm is argent, positioned on the sinister upper corner of the shield. The lower part of it is *or*, a rare example for such a depiction, if one compares this helm with the others used in the studied period. The mantling has sable lines on the *or* field; the crest is identical with the armorial bearings.

Another important privilege connected to the donation of this coat of arms was that the king allowed the family to change the color of the shield from argent to or in case any of their family members had a military function. This was not a rare privilege, but to receive it in advance was a great honor.¹²⁸

III. 4. 2. The Group of Konstanz

The period of the council of Konstanz (1414-1418) was the most important for the production of coats of arms in the reign of King Sigismund, from the point of view of both quantity and quality. Due to the fact that the royal court and chancery spent considerable time in a single place, it was possible to gather painters and miniaturists in order to have a good workshop.

So far, thirty coats of arms are known from this period; Tünde Wehli has identified all of them as products of the same large workshop.¹²⁹ The names of the masters are not known; the only thing that can be done is to identify which coats of arms were depicted by the same painter. There is a characteristic style that differentiates the coats of arms issued in Konstanz from the rest, and this is the quadrangular frame and the image itself surrounded by an or quatrefoil.¹³⁰

¹²⁸ "... in premissi armorum insigniis album colorem mutari posint in aureum" Ibid., 10.

¹²⁹ Tünde Wehli, Magyar családok címereslevelei (Grants of arms of Hungarian families), in Ernő Marosi, László Beke, Tünde Wehli ed., *Művészet Zsigmond király korában. Katalógus*. (Arts during the Reign of King Sigismund. Catalogue), 383. (Hereafter: Wehli, *Magyar családok*)

¹³⁰ Ibid., 383. Interestingly, Albert Nyáry supposes that this motif of the or quatrefoil represents those carpets on which the shields were put. They were not mandatory components of the coats of arms; they only had a decorative role. Nyáry even says that these types of carpets were very popular in the fifteenth century. This might have been so, and he might be right about the origins of these decorative elements, but he did not realize that this motif was a distinctive sign for all the coats of arms issued in Konstanz, Albert Nyáry, "A Hótvafői család címere 1415. évből" (The coat of arms of the Hótvafői family from the year 1415), *Turul* (1884), 58-60.

Out of these 24 coats of arms, six were given to Transylvanian nobles between January, 1415, and March, 1418. The Transylvanian coats of arms from Konstanz belonged to the following nobles: Antal Somkereki (25 January 1415), György Tamásfalvi (19 May 1415), Tamás Hotvafői (23 June 1415), István Farnasi (4 April 1417), Antal Mindszenti (12 May 1417) and János and László Suki (29 March 1418).

III. 4. 2.1 The first group of Konstanz: Antal Somkereki, György Tamásfalvi, Tamás Hótvafoi

As was apparent from the biographical surveys, these three coats of arms were issued within half a year, the Somkereki on 25 January 1415; the other two are even closer to each other in time of their emission (19 May and 23 June 1415) and the style of depiction. Due to the fact that except for the armorial bearings the images are almost identical, I consider that it is appropriate to analyze these images together, touching upon the differences in each case.¹³¹

The images are not too varied in the tinctures, as only two colors (gules and azure) and two metals (or and argent) can be differentiated. The first three are dominant; the argent is less represented in comparison to the other three. In the case of the Tamásfalvi coat of arms only the helm is argent, on the Hótvafoi the helm, the rabbit, and parts of the mantle are depicted in this metal. The Somkereki armorial bearings are also argent. Except for the argent, the other colors are used in the same way on both of the images.

Gules is the color for courage and greatness, and at the same time it meant a great honor. Azure is the color of the air and greatness as well. The two metals (or and argent) are symbols of richness and power.¹³² The colors are vivid and shiny, although the choice of using only four colors can make the images a bit monotonous.

Decorative angels holding the corners of the frame are depicted only on the Somkerekí coat of arms. On the other two only vegetal elements like flowers and leaves appear. The external frames are similarly decorated; the only difference is that the Somkerekí is azure, the other two are gules; the inner fields are azure in all cases.

¹³¹ Tünde Wehli also categorized these images together, claiming that probably the Tamásfalvi and Hótvafői images were made by the same painter. Wehli, “Magyar családok,” 384.

¹³² Marcel Sturdza-Saucești, *Heraldica* (Heraldry) (Bucharest: Editura Științifică, 1974), 40.



Fig. 4. The coat of arms of the Somkereki family, MOL DL 104871



Fig. 5. Coat of arms of the Tamásfalvi family, MOL DL 50.513



Fig. 6. Coat of arms of the Hótvafői family, MOL DL 50.514

There is a heraldic rule that the outer color is traditionally the primary color in the arms, while the lining is traditionally the primary metal.¹³³ According to this rule the mantlings of these three coats of arms are depicted in the colors of the shield, azure for the Tamásfalvi, and azure and argent for the Hótvafői and Somkereki.

The coronets, a kind of crown worn by nobles¹³⁴ are or, with three *fleurs de lis*. Those that appear on the Tamásfalvi and Somkereki coats of arms are identical. Curiously, in the case of the Hótvafői coat of arms the coronet is missing, the crest being placed directly on the mantling, which is rare for such a depiction.

The crest is without exception the image of the armorial bearings, rising from the crown or rarely from the mantling, with small differences in certain cases. On the Tamásfalvi coat of arms the stag of the crest is rampant, not springing as that on the armorial bearings; the Hótvafői leopard on the crest is *sejant erect*, whereas that on the armorial bearings is rampant.

The armorial bearings in all three cases represent animals, an argent stork rising, wings displayed and inverted with red legs on the Somkereki coat of arms, holding an *or* serpent in its beak, which winds around it twice from above to below; a springing stag in the case of the Tamásfalvi, and a *sejant erect* leopard eating a rabbit in the case of the Hótvafői.

An important question arises: Did the families of these grantees use another coat of arms before the grants of arms issued by King Sigismund? In the absence of an earlier surviving grant of arms or coat of arms it is impossible to give a sure affirmative or

¹³³ <http://www.rarebooks.nd.edu/digital/heraldry/achievement.html>. Last accessed 16 April, 2007.

¹³⁴ http://www.digiserve.com/heraldry/pimb_c.htm. Last accessed 16 April, 2007.

negative answer, although there are some clues that can suggest the possible existence of a certain image that was used by the family within the scope of personal identification. These images cannot be considered coats of arms, however, mainly because that required a grant of arms.

The Somkereki family had only the coat of arms received by Antal from Sigismund of Luxemburg,¹³⁵ although the Becse-Gergely kindred (to which Antal belonged) had a previous coat of arms. Unfortunately the coat of arms of the Becse-Gergely kindred has not survived, but some of its elements can be deduced if one analyzes the coats of arms of the descendant families (Somkereki and Bethlen).¹³⁶ On both of them the motif of the crowned snake on a blue shield appears which cannot be a simple coincidence.

It is probable that if the same motif appears on the coats of arms of two related families it would have been present on the common ancestral one.¹³⁷ If this is true, Oszkár Bárczay's idea is not valid: that the serpent appears on the Somkereki coat of arms only because it was a habit to differentiate the stork from the crane in this way.

József Csoma argues that the main armorial bearings is not the stork, as was considered until he wrote, but the serpent and the coronet. The stork appears only because it was suitable for the placement of the central figure, which is not left to float as on the Bethlen coat of arms, because this practice would have been in conflict with the theory of

¹³⁵Gyula Décsényi claims that Antal had a coat of arms, and to support his theory he quotes the grant of arms (... *arma tua ... concedimus*), Décsényi, A somkeréki Erdélyi család, 110. But the document said something completely different, namely that *arma tua* **hic depincta** *concedimus* (the bold is added by me), therefore it does not allow the usage of a certain previous coat of arms, but allows the usage of the one that is depicted in the charter.

¹³⁶ Only these two, because there is no information about the coats of arms of the other families that belonged to the kindred. The other families that belonged to the kindred are the Bethlen, Apaffy, Almakeréki, Tóty, Nemegyei, Somkereki and Virágosberki.

¹³⁷ Csoma, József. "A Dorozsmai és Becse-Gergely nemzetség címere" (The Coat of Arms of the Dorozsmai and Becse-Gergely Kindred), *Turul* (1902/1), 26.

naturalism.¹³⁸ It is more probable, however, that one can consider both of these animals as central figures of the coats of arms, mainly because in noble society the ancestral connections (in this case the motif of the serpent) played a central role. Antal Somkerekí represented a new family; therefore on his coat of arms the new motif (the stork) had an important position as well.

According to István R. Kiss there are no examples in Hungarian heraldry when the old central figure became supplementary or was swallowed.¹³⁹ In the case of the Somkerekí coat of arms this is not the case anyway, since the old animal does not become supplementary; it is equal with the new one. The new central image does not replace the old one; they are rather closely connected. These armorial bearings with the two strongly connected animals reflect the identity of the new family, on the one hand showing origins and on the other also presenting the new element. King Sigismund did not extend the old coat of arms but, using some parts of the old one and adding a new central motif, he created a distinct coat of arms for his loyal nobleman.

The appearance of the serpent on the Somkerekí coat of arms is understandable if one accepts that it could have been a significant animal; but the choice of the other animal, the stork, is not random either. Even today in Sáromberke (Dumbrăvioara), which was one of the central estates of Antal Somkerekí, there is an important population of storks because the village is situated near the Mureş River, which provides them a good habitat. I consider that it was a conscious choice on Antal's part to have this bird on his coat of arms, as his name Erdélyi (from Transylvania) referred to his place of origin.

¹³⁸ Ibid., 7-10.

¹³⁹ István R. Kiss, "*Természetes ábrázolások az 1526 előtti magyar címerekben*" (Natural Representation in Hungarian Coats of Arms before 1526), *Turul*, 1903.

The armorial bearings (the stag) of the Tamásfalvi family was the old symbolic animal of the Mikola kindred, to which, as was mentioned in the biographical part, the Tamásfalvi belonged. After receiving the legal donation of the coat of arms from Sigismund, those families who were members of this kindred (Valkai and Vitéz de Bikal) started to use this image, as the grant of arms allowed all the relatives of György Tamásfalvi to benefit from this privilege.¹⁴⁰

If one thinks about the occurrence of these animals in Transylvania, only the stork and the stag can be encountered there. The stag lives in the hilly region where the Tamásfalvi had their estates, and evidence exists that there were forests there,¹⁴¹ so the environment was proper for this animal. Even so, one should not forget that with this animal the situation is a bit more complicated, as it was a representational animal as well. The fact that the stag has a net on its antlers, however, could also suggest that this was more than the re-usage of the old symbolic animal, meaning that the grantee may have been brave in hunting.

The leopard of the Hótvafői coat of arms cannot have any connections with Transylvania, as it does not live in that region; in this case it may have been the choice of the painter or the king; or another possibility would be, as Albert Nyáry claims, that the coat of arms describes a hunting scene. According to him, in the fifteenth century it was popular among nobles to hunt with leopards; in this case it is clear that it is a hunting scene because the leopard has a collar around its neck and therefore is a tamed animal.

¹⁴⁰ Jakó, *A Farnasi Veres család*, 183.

¹⁴¹ It has already been mentioned that Bikal was donated to the family, where later György cut some forests because he founded a new village, Kelecel, *Ibid.*, 182. Another charter speaks about the right to use the forests of Háromföld, ZsOkl III, 2639.

The role of the rabbit is unclear, but in any case it cannot be something connected to fear or cowardice, because the grantee was known as a brave warrior. Probably it was depicted there to underline the ferocity of the leopard.¹⁴²

III. 4. 2. 2. Second group of Konstanz

III.4.2.2.1. István Farnasi, Antal Mindszenti

The next Transylvanian grant of arms from Konstanz in chronological order was issued for István Farnasi on 4 April 1417. The grant of arms has not survived in the best condition; the text is damaged in several places, but the image is in even worse condition. Even so, fortunately the shield with the armorial bearings is intact, and the mantling, the helm, and the golden quatrefoil allow one to identify this coat of arms as from Konstanz. Regardless of the present condition of the coat of arms, the image is not of particularly outstanding quality. The proportions are not appropriate, as the image is too wide compared to its height.¹⁴³ The armorial bearing itself suggests that the painter was not as talented as the first or second master from Konstanz.

¹⁴² Éva Nyulásziné mentions that in Hungarian heraldry the rabbit was depicted mainly as a prey animal. Éva Nyulásziné, *Magyarország címerkönyve* (Book of Coats of Arms of Hungary) (Budapest: Ceba, 2005), 84.

¹⁴³ From this aspect it is similar to the Somkerekí coat of arms, where the same situation exists, but the quality of that work is much superior to this one.



Fig. 7. The coat of arms of the Farnasi family, MOL DL 98477

The shield is round at the base, being parted *per fess*; the upper part *per argent*, the lower half *gules*. A lion appears on the armorial bearings of the Farnasi family, holding the antlers of a deer in its mouth; the antlers are depicted almost twice the size of the head of the animal.

The colors are light and the image itself seems worn. The *or* of the *quatrefoil* is completely missing, and only knowing that this element is particular for the style of

Konstanz allows one to infer that it was decorated with this metal. The tincture is also typical for Konstanz (two metals, two colors). Nothing can be said about the decoration of the inner field as all four corners are missing; the only certain information is that the color was azure. The external frame must have been *gules* in combination with something else, because some remnants of this color are still visible.

The crest is missing, but one of the antlers held by the lion is visible; therefore it is sure that the crest was more or less similar to the armorial bearings. The coronet is partially visible; only the lower part of it can be seen, but judging from the other similarities with the first group of Konstanz, it can be stated that the coronet was of the same style, meaning depicted in *or*, with three *fleurs de lis* on it. The helm and the mantling (azure and *gules*¹⁴⁴) are nicely arranged, these two being the most elaborated parts of the coat of arms.

In the case of the Mindszenti family neither the original grant of arms, nor the image of the coat of arms has survived.¹⁴⁵ Fortunately there is a copy of the grant of arms from 1510 included in the so-called “Werböczy book of formulae”. There is no information at all about the image of the coat of arms,¹⁴⁶ even though it can be stated that it must have been similar to the others issued in Konstanz.

¹⁴⁴ The usage of these colors has to be explained. The choice of azure as outer color is understandable, as this is the primary color of the arms, but according to the rules of heraldry the inner line should have been depicted in the primary metal of the arms, argent. But this depiction would have contravened another rule, meaning that two metals cannot be placed upon each other. The coronet is *or*, hence the inner line of the mantling cannot be argent; this is why the painter chooses the only remaining color, *gules*.

¹⁴⁵ Even if the image of the coat of arms is not known, I decided to talk about it in this subchapter (second group of Konstanz), as according to previous experience the coats of arms issued in Konstanz within a short period of time are highly similar to each other. As the closest coat of arms to the Mindszenti one is the Farnasi, I consider that it has to be discussed within this subchapter.

III. 4. 2. 2. 2. János Suki

János Suki received his coat of arms on 29 March, 1418. The image is of outstanding quality, and it has been identified as the work of the second master of Konstanz, who improved the style characteristic of the Konstanz period.¹⁴⁷

This coat of arms is accurately decorated, its tincture being more varied than the coats of arms presented so far. This is the first example where vert and purple appear on a Transylvanian coat of arms. The external frame of the coat of arms is not emphasized, as only a light azure band separates the image from the rest of the grant of arms. The inner field is vert, richly decorated with or vegetation and several gules flowers.

On the azure field of the shield, round in base, there is a wolf rampant argent, with a white rabbit in its mouth. The crest is not identical, as not the whole image of the armorial bearings is repeated, but only a wolf's head. Whether this head is *couped*¹⁴⁸ or *erased*¹⁴⁹ cannot be stated, as the coronet covers the lower part of the head, which is really important in blazoning the crest.

¹⁴⁶ It is not included in the Werbőczy book, as there the text was important, not the particular image.

¹⁴⁷ According to Zsombor Jékely, this master started his activity in 1418, and used the golden quatrefoil motif combined with rich decoration. Also characteristic for him was that he used azure or vert for the inner field of the coat of arms and pink or gules for the field of the quatrefoil. Jékely, *Arisztokrácia*, 299.

¹⁴⁸ A term applied to the head or any limb of an animal cut clean off from the body.

http://www.digiserve.com/heraldry/pimb_c.htm. Last accessed 3 May, 2007.

¹⁴⁹ Head or limb of an animal which was forcibly torn off, leaving jagged or uneven ends. http://www.digiserve.com/heraldry/pimb_e.htm. Last accessed 3 May, 2007.



Fig. 8. The coat of arms of the Suki family, in *Sigismundus Rex et Imperator – Művészet és kultúra Luxemburgi Zsigmond korában*, ed. Imre Takács. Budapest: Szépművészeti Múzeum, 2006.

The inanimate charges of this particular coat of arms are similar to others from the coats of arms presented above, except for the *or* coronet, which is not the typical three-branched ancient one with *fleur-de lis*, but has four branches. The helm is *argent*; the mantling wears the metal of the armorial bearing (*argent*) and the color of the shield is azure.

III. 4. 3. Gergely Ábrahámfalvi

The coat of arms of Gergely Ábrahámfalvi was issued on 5 April 1431, in Nuremberg.¹⁵⁰ The six coats of arms issued in this city¹⁵¹ represent a different style from those issued in Konstanz. The armorial bearings are precisely depicted, and some new colors were introduced in the tincture, such as light violet, light azure, pink, and vert.¹⁵²

The main importance of the donation in the case of the Ábrahámfalvi family is not that they got the right to use a coat of arms, but that they received noble status as well. Therefore, this grant of arms is more complex than usual, as more privileges were given.

Another aspect to be mentioned is that the Ábrahámfalvi already used a coat of arms before the royal donation, when the king allowed them to use that particular image legally. If the image of the wounded bear was used earlier, it may be possible that this

¹⁵⁰ Nuremberg was similar to Konstanz in the sense that this was also a place where King Sigismund issued a large number of grants of arms

¹⁵¹ Berényi Kakas, Ábrahámfalvi, Krisztalóczi Tarkasics, Bezerédi, Szarvasdi, and Gathali families. Wehli, “Magyar családok címereslevelei”, 385.

animal was a significant animal for the family or the kindred, or maybe it reminded the local community of a successful hunt by one of the family members.

The crest is identical with the armorial bearing, which is an *argent* demi-bear, wounded on its head by an or arrow, holding the arrow with its left paw. The coronet is missing; instead, a chaplet was used, decorated with the colors of the mantling: *gules* and



Fig. The coat of arms of the Ábrahámfalvi family, MOL DL 13509

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, 385.

azure, and an additional metal, *argent*.¹⁵³ The mantling is carefully painted; together with the chaplet it represents the most beautiful part of the coat of arms. The *argent* helm is the typical one used in that period. The purple frame was decorated with argent runners and a fine *or* stripe on its inner side; *vert* is used for the inner field, with *or* stars distributed evenly on it.

The shield is parted *per fess*, the upper half *per gules*, the lower half azure. In those cases when a shield is parted *per fess*; the upper half is the more important of the two.¹⁵⁴ It seems to be so in the case of the Ábrahámfalvi coat of arms, as only the upper *gules* half has the armorial bearings, and its corners are decorated. The lower azure half is not decorated.

III. 4. 4. András Paczali Peres

Eight months after the Ábrahámfalvi coat of arms was issued, András Paczali Peres received a coat of arms, in Milan on 8 December 1431. This coat of arms is similar to the pattern of the group from Nuremberg because it has the same characteristics. It is clear that the painter was talented, as the image shows good drawing technique and a sophisticated choice of colors.¹⁵⁵

The decoration of the inner field is varied, as there are several lozenges of light azure and brown on a *vert*¹⁵⁶ base. The external frame seems to be similar to the Konstanz type, being depicted in the same *vert* color as the inner field. The tincture is

¹⁵³ Although it might be white, not *argent* because, for example, the armorial bearings and the helm are depicted in a different shade and those are indubitably *argent*.

¹⁵⁴ *Dictionary of Heraldry of the University of Notre-Dame* <http://www.rarebooks.nd.edu/digital/heraldry/blazoning.html>. Last accessed 17 April 2007.

¹⁵⁵ Wehli, *Magyar családok*, 385.

¹⁵⁶ It could be possible that a *vert* inner field was a popular decoration, as both the Ábrahámfalvi and Paczali Peres coats of arms have this type of depiction.

rich, as there are two types of azure, yellow and *or*, gules, vert, sable, and a white color on the beak of the bird.



Fig. The coat of arms of the Paczali Peres family, MOL DL 69451

Even though the Paczali Peres coat of arms is similar to the previously issued one, there are certain differences. For example, there is a new type of shield, a so-called

fourteenth-century shield that is tipped on its base.¹⁵⁷ The shield is not the only innovation, as the coronet became part of the armorial bearings. The field of the shield is azure, without partitions. The armorial bearings represent a sable demi-eagle¹⁵⁸ langued (with tongue), surrounded by two antlers. The eagle is positioned on an airborne coronet, with *gules* lining. The colors of the antlers and coronet are different; this shows that the painter made a conscious choice to depict the coronet with gold and the antlers with yellow.

The helm is regular *argent* tilting one; the coronet is also similar to those already presented. The crest is identical with the armorial bearings, except that the inner *gules* lining became part of the mantling, that is, azure¹⁵⁹ and *gules*.

III. 4. 5. Benedek Aszúvölgyi

One of the last coats of arms given by Sigismund of Luxemburg was donated to Benedek Aszúvölgyi in Prague on 27 April 1437.¹⁶⁰ No importance was accorded to the frame or to the inner field of the coat of arms. The frame is just a simple azure line; whereas the decoration of the inner field is completely missing. There is an interesting situation regarding the orientation of the coat of arms, because this is the only Transylvanian coat of arms that is oriented to right, not towards the name of the emperor.

¹⁵⁷ In several languages (English, German, Italian, Spanish, and French) this type of shield is called a fourteenth-century shield, but the Dutch calls it a *gotisch schild*. <http://www.heraldica.org/shell/illustr.pl?002>. Last accessed 20 April, 2007.

¹⁵⁸ According to Éva Nyulásziné it cannot be stated for sure whether it is an eagle or a falcon, but in the literature the eagle is mentioned as the armorial bearings of the Paczali Peres family, Éva Nyulásziné, *Magyarország címerkönyve*, 40.

¹⁵⁹ The azure of the mantling is different, lighter, than the azure of the shield.

¹⁶⁰ This is the only Transylvanian coat of arms issued in Hungary; all the others were given abroad during Sigismund's travels or political affairs.



Fig. The coat of arms of the Aszúvölgyi family, MOL DL 13.509

The tinctures are not varied; only three (*argent*, *azure*, and *gules*) are used. The special combination of these three (see the helm, for example) makes the coat of arms particular. The shield seems to be depicted without a color. The armorial bearings represent a demi-rampant sable bear, with golden rings in its ears and nose.¹⁶¹ This bear

¹⁶¹ It was a frequent practice to represent bears like this. The bear as a sign in Christian representation could be a symbol of the devil, or a creature that helps man, Nyulásziné, *Magyarország címerkönyve*, 83. Probably in the present case it had the second meaning.

is identical with that from the crest, and in both cases the animal is positioned on azure clouds, even if in the case of the crest the clouds are hardly recognizable.

The helm is in poor condition; only the dexter half retained its original color, gules; in the case of the other half's original color it cannot be stated for sure whether it was depicted in gold or in another color. At first glance it would seem that the original color is completely missing, but if one analyses the image more carefully it looks like the sinister half was golden.¹⁶²

It is a simple image, but the mantling, for example, is really attentively depicted. The coronet is missing, but instead of it clouds are used as support for the crest. This alternative, having the clouds below the armorial bearings or the crest is quite rare, but not incorrect from the point of view of heraldic rules, even though the clouds were generally depicted above or near these images.¹⁶³

Conclusions to Chapter III

As the selection criterion for my description is a geographical one, one cannot speak about a particular style that is typical for all the Transylvanian coats of arms. Due to the fact that the selected items (ten coats of arms) were issued in different places and in different times, they differ not only in style, but in quality as well. As a consequence, these donations cannot really offer general conclusions on the emissions of coats of arms

¹⁶² Such an interesting color choice is rare, as most of the helms were argent; excepting the present helm, only that from the Mecsencei Garázda coat of arms has a different tincture.

¹⁶³ The coat of arms given by Gábor Bethlen to Transylvanian Calvinist priests has the same motif, and in the article that deals with this donation only the coat of arms of Benedek Aszúvölgyi is mentioned as one that has the clouds below the armorial bearings. _____, "Az erdélyi református lelkészek címere" (The coat of arms of the Transylvanian Calvinist priests) <http://www.ercsey.hu/reflelk.html>. Last accessed 18 April, 2007.

during the reign of Sigismund of Luxemburg, but they offer good examples of the work of different workshops, traces of a certain kind of feeling of belonging to a geographical unit.

On the Transylvanian coats of arms only animate charges (different kinds of animals) appear. Most of these animals are typical for the fauna of the region, but there are exceptions as well, for example, the leopard of the Hótvafői coat of arms; but even in this case the symbolism of the animal can be connected with the person of the grantee. In certain cases the animal represents the old symbolic animal of the kindred to which the grantee belonged. The animals on the Konstanz coats of arms are always full size; whereas the others are just demi (half size).

The frames are usually decorated, especially in the case of the Konstanz coats of arms. Certainly there are exceptions in this category as well, when no importance was accorded to the frame.¹⁶⁴ The situation is similar with the inner field, too, as the cases vary from richly decorated to completely plain. Other kinds of decoration are the supporting angels on the Somkereki coat of arms, the vegetal elements from the Konstanz coats of arms, and or quatrefoils, also typical for this category.

The type of coronet used is the ancient one; they appear on all of the coats of arms, with a few exceptions when they are replaced by other elements or are just missing.¹⁶⁵ Interestingly, this kind of coronet was decorated with *fleur-de-lis*, which

¹⁶⁴ See the Mecsenicei Garázda or the Aszúvölgyi coat of arms.

¹⁶⁵ In the case of the Ábrahámfalvi coat of arms instead of a coronet there is a chaplet, on the Aszúvölgyi there are clouds, and the Hótvafői leopard is positioned directly on the helm, without a coronet.

might suggest Angevin influence, but in this case it was only a kind of coronet fashionable in the fifteenth century.¹⁶⁶

The helms are tilting and in the great majority of the cases they are *argent*. Only the Aszúvölgyi helm is colored differently, with *gules* and probably *or*. The mantling derived from the cloth worn over the helmet as protection from the sun. The outer color is traditionally the primary color in the arms, while the lining is traditionally the primary metal.¹⁶⁷

There is a pattern of depiction in the coats of arms studied in this work, as the images are similar to each other, especially those that were issued in the same place or within a short period of time. With a few exceptions these coats of arms have the same components or these components are similar in style.

The coats of arms were particularly valuable for two reasons. The first one was that it helped the grantees to have a symbol that made their identification possible and it had enormous representational power. Before the royal donations there were several cases when the nobles already used an image, as one finds from the grants of arms, which mention the fact that the families had used an image previously that they depicted on a piece of parchment/paper and presented to the king together with their petition for a grant (see the cases of Tamás Hótvaí or György Tamásfalvi).

The second reason is that having a coat of arms allowed these nobles to feel part of Western nobility or if not part of it then at least similar to them.¹⁶⁸ The chronology of the donations needs to be emphasized, as it coincides nicely with the encounters of these

¹⁶⁶ The motif of the *fleur-de-lis* was popular starting from Charlemagne's period; this is why those coronets that have *fleur-de-lis* on them are called ancient coronets: *Oxford Heraldry*, 4-5.

¹⁶⁷ <http://www.rarebooks.nd.edu/digital/heraldry/achievement.html>. Last accessed 15 April, 2007.

¹⁶⁸ Anyway, they could not be compared from the point of view of lifestyle or fortune.

nobles with Western knightly culture, both in Konstanz and in the entourage of Sigismund at his coronation. Encountering the ways of life and representation of the Western nobility, it is understandable that the Hungarian nobles suddenly felt the need to have similar privileges.

Conclusions

...tantoque ampliori studio ad honorem regalis dignitatis eorum inantea solidetur intentio
quanto se largiori favore regio preventos conspiciunt....

Heraldry is the science of studying coats of arms, but it is obvious that coats of arms do not mean only heraldry. The topic of this thesis is connected to heraldry, but this is not the main aspect of the present work; I was using the help of heraldry and other disciplines to answer questions connected to social history, a working methodology that can be useful in case of similar further research. The investigated documents represent useful sources for several fields of study.

One of these fields is diplomatics, which should pay more attention to the wording of the grants of arms; there is a need for a collective inquiry of all the grants of arms issued by King Sigismund, as such a survey could give more reliable results. However, even this limited sample leads to trustworthy conclusions. As it was visible from the first chapter, in each of the studied grants of arms there were standard elements to underline royal power and self fashioning, like the *salutatio*, the *arenga*, and a special clause on enhancing the fidelity of the grantees by the donation as a special manifestation of royal grace. The importance of this clause also has to be underlined, as it offers one of the key elements of the whole charter. Even though the king and his chancery used all the possible opportunities to declare their glory and power in other ways, it is still impressive how these standard elements were used consistently in all the studied grants of arms. So far my conclusions are valid for the investigated documents; hopefully further research of

the entire material will strengthen them. Furthermore, the research of the usage of seals is another field that has to be deepened.

Concerning the general features of heraldry, it can be stated that there is a pattern of depiction in the coats of arms studied in this work, as the images are similar to each other, especially those that were issued in the same place or within a short period of time. With a few exceptions these coats of arms have the same components, or these components are similar in style.

All coats of arms are typical for the characteristics of Hungarian heraldry, meaning that the importance accorded to naturalistic depictions is visible in all images. Also to be noted is the prevalence of animate charges (a Hungarian characteristic) in comparison to the inanimate ones. The organization of the grants respects the same standard, having the image in the upper left corner of the charter, oriented to the left, towards the name of the issuer authority. The elements used denote the formation of a type of coats of arms, specific for Sigismund's rule; although a more extensive set of conclusions can be made only after examination of the entire surviving material.

For the question of who were these people I formulated answers in the second chapter. It is visible from the grants of arms studied that the people awarded with grants of arms were not of the same social status. The length of the *arenga*, the list with the services and the deeds, the *inscriptio* and the mentioning of the *dominus* denote that there were differences among the services held and their material situation. Another aspect that the existence of the grant of arms underlines is that one did not have to be of high rank; if he deserved the royal favor he could receive several privileges.

One privilege accompanying the grants of arms was giving nobility, which clearly shows that people of lower status were eligible for this kind of royal favor too. With the close reading of the documents I managed to find out that there is an earlier combined donation of grant of arms and nobility than had been considered until the present moment. It is the donation connected to the person of Antal Mindszenti, who received this privilege on 12 May 1417, thirteen years earlier. Even though the original document has not survived, this particular privilege represents an important moment in the whole donation policy of Sigismund; therefore Antal Mindszenti has to be included in all the lists that give information about this topic.

My research is a case-study applied to a certain area, but the way of how much the nobility from Transylvania was integrated into Hungarian nobility, or stood apart from it is not a question that can be discussed in the context of this research. Since the grants of arms are *per definitionem* exclusively royal donations, they can shed light on those instances, when nobles from Transylvania had direct connections to the royal court, either personally or through the mediation of their *domini*. On the other hand, the proportion of such grants, compared to those in the whole of Hungary, may highlight the other side of the coin. Transylvanians represent roughly ten per cent of all such donations, which is less than what would follow from an equal territorial distribution, as Transylvania represented more than ten percents of the Hungarian kingdom. One can ask the question whether this is a result of the remote geographical situation of this province or of the lower level of integration of the Transylvanian nobility, or both.

In the granting of arms, the deeds performed were more important than the place of origin, although in the case of Transylvania geopolitics had an important role, too. The

noble society of Transylvania was characterized all through the Middle Ages and beyond by its military duties and militant spirit. Due to its geographical position, Transylvania played a significant role in the political situation that resulted from the Ottoman expansion. As already mentioned in the chapter regarding the reasons for the donations, participation and valor in the battle of Nicopolis was one of the most frequent reasons for receiving a coat of arms. As these donations were not only for the grantees, but to a certain extent also for their descendants, it might have been an aim of the king to suggest that these descendants should follow the example of their ancestors and behave like them in the Hungarian-Ottoman conflict.

If these statements are valid, then it would be a good field for further research to follow up on whether the descendants of these nobles (when there are sources available) really played some kind of role in military conflicts or not. It would also be interesting to see whether these descendants were at all faithful to royalty, whether the price accorded by King Sigismund was enough to ensure long-term fidelity. The results can be surprising, as for example the Farnasi Veres family (using the coat of arms received by György Tamásfalvi) and István Erdélyi (son of the faithful Antal Somkereki) can be found among the organizers of the rebellion against King Mathias Corvinus in 1467. As nobles from Transylvania are obviously not the only ones to receive coats of arms, a good topic for further research will be to see how this phenomenon compared with, for example, Upper Hungary or other regions of the Hungarian kingdom, or on the whole, on a country-wide basis.

Finally, this investigation provides an answer to the main question that arises during the present research: why did Sigismund choose to give so many grants of arms?

In my view it was a conscious policy from the king's part to choose this type of reward, as he was really talented in making the best of the possibilities that he had. Having a good sense of politics, it is not surprising from his part to find a way of repaying loyalty that allowed him to earn the utmost with the least investment

The explanations provided in subchapter II.5 underline the fact that coats of arms were a kind of donation that assured good relations between king and nobility, the nobility was repaid for the services and thus their loyalty towards the king became even stronger. To improve the relationship with the nobles and to assure further fidelity was one of Sigismund's aims. Pál Engel describes well the support the nobles received by Sigismund after crushing the revolt against him. But the support had to be paid, a proper price had to be given. And this price was the coat of arms.

One does not have to forget about the fact that the donation of grants of arms to these nobles was a two-sided phenomenon. From one side it was the king who considered that this is a good way of repaying the services and the fidelity of these people; on the other side there were the nobles themselves who, after following the king abroad, realized that they lacked such a privilege.

A further answer for the large number of coats of arms issued during the reign of Sigismund of Luxemburg would be that coats of arms were useful for him as well; one must not forget about the important role played by the entourage in the image of a king. Therefore, if Sigismund awarded his nobles with coats of arms, he did not only improve their image, but his own also looked more illustrious. Sigismund's aim, to be a mediator in European conflicts, could also be achieved more easily if his authority was supported by a prestigious entourage.

Coats of arms gained through Sigismund's grants were, of course, used not only (and not primarily) for showing off abroad. The representation of these coats of arms on different objects (like religious objects, gravestones, or tournament shields) or buildings bear witness up to our time to their widespread use. This phenomenon also needs to be studied in greater detail. Material needed for this research exists; see for example, the Suki chalice or the already mentioned carved coat of arms of the Somkerekí family at Gernyeszeg.



Fig. 12. Coat of arms of the Somkerekí family from the Calvinist church in Gornești, Romania; Photograph by the Author

Glossary of heraldic terms¹⁶⁹

Animate charges: animals, monsters, human figures represented on the coat of arms

Argent: silver

Armorial bearings: Charges or emblems represented on a shield

Azure: blue

Blazoning the shield: describing it with the terms of Heraldry

Chaplet: A garland or wreath borne on coats of arms instead of coronets.

Charges: anything borne on a coat of arms, whether upon the field .or upon an ordinary,
or indeed upon another charge

Colors: gules, azure, sable, vert, purpure, sanguine

Coronet: An inferior crown worn by nobles, used as a support for the crest, not as a sign
of rank

Crest: the ornament of the helmet, usually identical or related to the armorial bearings

Dexter: left

Demi: Only the upper half of the body of the charge appears

Full: the whole body of the charge appears

Helm: It is borne above the shield and beneath the crest, referring to the helmets worn in
the battles or jousts

Gules: red

Inanimate charges: all the decorations (coronets, helms, mantling, and so on) and the
objects from the shield and crest if they are not animate

¹⁶⁹ The glossary is based on the glossaries provided by the used handbooks of heraldry (see footnote 109) and on the Pimbley's Dictionary of Heraldry. <http://www.digiserve.com/heraldry/pimbley.htm>. Last

Langued: with tongue

Mantling: The cloak or robe behind the shield, sufficiently large to include the entire arms; initially it had a practical function, preventing the warming of the helmet.

Metals: argent and or

Or: gold

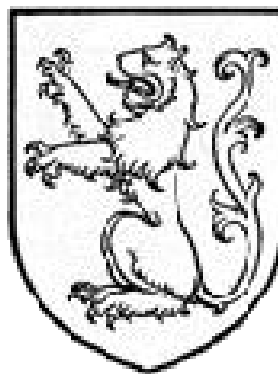
Purpure: purple

Rampant: Said of an animal, rising with fore paws in the air, as if attacking.



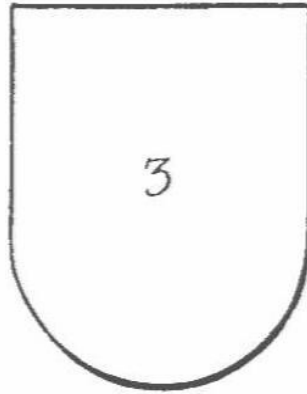
Sable: black

Sejant erect: Animal in a sitting position.

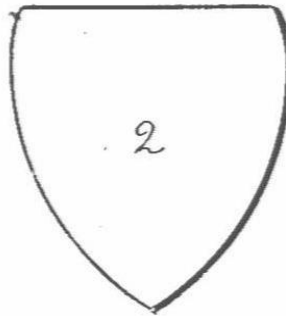


Shield: The field on which the armorial bearings are positioned.

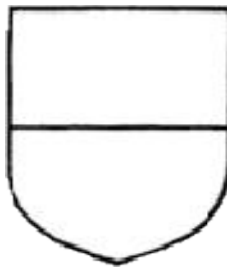
Shield round in base (Spanish):



Shield, fourteenth century type:



Shield parted per fess: shield cut horizontally



Supporters: Figure on each side of a shield, supporting it.

Tinctures: metals, colors and furs

Appendix

Fig. 13. Catalog of the coats of arms issued during the reign of Sigismund of Luxemburg

1. Demeter Csentevölgyi, and Gergely Babócsai

- Coat of Arms, Újlak
 - 16 October 1398
 - ZSOKL I, 609
 - DL 50.509

2. Semsei János

- Coat of Arms
- 23 April 1401, Buda, for the participation at the battle of Nicopolis
- ZSOKL II/1, 125, Turul 1943/81
- DL 84.811

3. Dénes Pochyk

- Coat of arms and nobility+ 2 villages
- 16 December 1404
- DL 75.399

4. Péter and András Tétényi

- Coat of Arms for services
- 15 April 1405
- ZSOKL II/1, 457, Nyáry Albert, p. 229
- DL 64.122

5. Miklós Mecsenicei Garázda + Szilágyi László

- Coat of Arms
- 24 February 1409
- ZSOKL II/2, 208, Áldásy, Turul 1894/9

6. Albert + Benedek Jabródi Jabroczy

- Coat of Arms, 29 September 1411, Pozsony
- Battle of Nicopolis: B→ died, A →7 wounds+ services
- ZSOKL III, 272, Turul 1906/13

7. Jakab Hideghéti (Hettendorfi)

- Coat of Arms + nobility
- 14 October 1411, Pozsony
- ZSOKL III, 284, Turul 1908, Áldásy
- DL 95.026

8. Ferenc Eresztvényi + his relatives, the Fehéregyházi family

- Coat of Arms
- 16 September 1414, Speyer
- ZSOKL IV, 563, Turul 1895, Áldásy
- DL 92. 447

9. István Bocskai

- Coat of Arms
- 8 November 1414, Aachen
- ZSOKL IV, 598, Áldásy, Mon. Herald. III/ 17

10. Miklós Liptói

- Coat of Arms
- 20 January 1415, Konstanz
- ZSOKL V, 84

11. Antal Somkerekéi + relatives

- Coat of Arms
- 25 January 1415, Konstanz
- ZSOKL V, 91
- DL 104.871

12. Benedek+ the Vadkertéi brothers + János Pataki Nagy + László and János Szentgyörgyi Vince

- Coat of Arms + nobility
- 2 February 1415, Konstanz, for services
- ZSOKL III, 272, Turul 1906/13
- DL 50.510

13. Gál Elöljáró + János Nádasdi

- Coat of Arms
- 10 March 1415, Konstanz, services
- ZSOKL V, 100, Nyulásziné, Áldásy
- DL 94.142

14. Márton Bossányi, the Újfalusi, Csermeni and Jókúti families

- Coat of Arms
- 12 March 1415, Konstanz
- ZSOKL V, 147, Turul 1943/ 29
- DL 50.511

15. Márk Zaversiai + his brothers

- Coat of Arms
- 20 March 1415, Konstanz, services
- ZSOKL V, 156, Áldásy, Turul 1906/14

16. János Mellétei Barócz

- Coat of arms
- 24 March 1415, Konstanz
- DL 50.512

17. Tamásfalvi György

- Coat of Arms
- 19 May 1415, Konstanz, services
- ZSOKL V, 206, DL 50513, Áldásy II/3, Nyáry 109
- DL 50.513

18. Tamás Hótvafői

- Coat of Arms
- 23 June 1415, Konstanz, services
- ZSOKL V, 231, Áldásy, Turul 1884/58
- DL 50.514

19. Mihály Halmaji Bor + his relatives

- Coat of Arms
- 2 July 1415, Konstanz, services
- ZSOKL V, 245, Turul 1895/71, Áldásy, Mon. Herald.
- DL 70.603

20. Balázs Buzlai + his relatives

- Coat of Arms
- 29 September 1415, Perpignan, for services
- ZSOKL V, 313, Turul 1906/14, Áldásy

21. Benedek Bártéi + Heteyeki family

- Coat of Arms from Ferdinand I, king of Aragon
- 20 October 1415, Perpignan
- Zsokl V, 327, Turul 1897/187

22. Miklós Garai

- Coat of Arms from Charles, king of France
- 26 March 1415, Paris
- ZSOKL V, 466

23. Miklós Garai

- Coat of Arms
- 26 March 1415, Paris, services
- ZSOKL V, 466, Áldásy II/ 3

24. András Jánoki + Lőrinc Szászi

- Coat of Arms + nobility
- 5 December, Aachen
- ZSOKL V, 664, Turul 1906/15

25. István Farnasi

- Coat of Arms
 - 4 April 1417, Konstanz, for services
 - ZSOKL VI, 127, Áldásy
 - DL 98.477

26. Antal Mindszenti

- Coat of Arms
- 12 May 1417, Konstanz, services
- Zsokl VI, 159

27. Simon Barrwy

- Coat of Arms
- 20 May 1417, Konstanz, services
- Zsokl VI, 167, Áldásy, Mon. Herald., Turul 1894/119
- DL 50.515

28. Szirmai György + Péter

- Coat of Arms
- 27 June 1417, Konstanz, services
- ZSOKL VI, 200, Turul 1899/71, Áldásy, Mon. Herald
- DL 67.416

29. Márton Petenyeházai

- Coat of Arms
- 25 July 1417, Konstanz, services
- ZSOKL VI, 230, Áldásy, Mon. Herald, Turul 1888/12, Nyulásziné
- DL 50.516

30. Jakab Bethlenfalvi + Tatár family + the sons of Henkel Csütörtökhelyi + János Létáni

- Coat of Arms
- 29 July 1417, Konstanz
- ZSOKL VI, 233

31. Békási and Tordasi families

- Coat of Arms
- 15 August 1417, Konstanz, services
- ZSOKL VI, 245, Áldásy, Mon. Herald II/19

32. Imre Bodafalvi

- Coat of Arms
 - 29 September 1417, Konstanz, services
 - Zsokl VI, 285, Áldásy, Turul 1906/ 15
 - DL 98. 441

33. Benedek Petri Ders

- Coat of arms
- 19 November 1417, Konstanz
- ZSOKL VI, 324, Turul 1902/135, Mon. Herald

34. Miklós Chakani

- Coat of arms
- 6 January 1418, Konstanz, services
- ZSOKL VI, 374

35. György Bobai

- Coat of arms
- 1 February 1418, Konstanz, services
- ZSOKL VI, 394, Turul 1906/80, Áldásy

36. Balázs Lászlókarsai + Pál Török and his relatives

- Coat of arms
- 7 February 1418, Konstanz, services
- ZSOKL VI, 401, Turul 1895/39, Mon. Herald.

37. Ábrahám Vajai and his relatives

- Coat of arms
- 27 February 1418, Konstanz, services
- Zsokl VI, 428, Áldásy, Turul 1900/ 49, Mon. Herald

38. Miklós Sósvári Sós

- Coat of Arms
- 16 March 1418, Konstanz, services
- ZSOKL VI, 428, Turul 1885/116, Áldásy
- DL 57. 476

39. András Csapi + the Csapi, Szécsi, Agóci, Sztritei, Bacsközi, Sóváry, Sós and Szerdahelyi families

- Coat of Arms
- 19 March 1418, Konstanz, services
- ZSOKL VI, 440, Turul 1883/ 117, Áldásy

40. Albert Nagymihályi and the Nagymiklósi family

- Coat of Arms
- 29 March 1418, Konstanz, services
- ZSOKL VI, 447, Áldásy
- DL 85. 682

41. László Keresztúri Kése

- Coat of Arms
- 29 March 1418, Konstanz, services

- ZSOKL VI, 447, Turul 1899/154, Mon. Herald., Nyulásziné
- DL 105.473

42. Suki brothers

- Coat of arms
- 29 March, 1418

43. Márton Hássági Farkas + Delnei, Kakas, Mocsolyai, Úszfalvai, Komlósi families

- Coat of arms
- 4 April 1418, Konstanz, services
- ZSOKL VI, 450, Turul 1896/92, Áldásy

44. Egyed Coromhasi

- Coat of Arms
- 9 May 1418, Konstanz, services
- ZSOKL VI, 479

45. Péter Ronyvai Csontos, Bertalan Legenyei Csontos

- Coat of Arms
- 11 June, Bazel, services
- ZSOKL VI, 516, Turul 1886/162, Áldásy, Nyulásziné
- DL 50.517

46. Vid Mohorai

- Coat of Arms
- 4 July, Strassburg, services
- ZSOKL VI, 532, Áldásy, Nyulásziné, Turul 1885/ 1
- DL 69.387

47. Szentpéterfalvi Szilágyi family

- Coat of Arms
- 5 July, Strassburg
- Zsokl VI, 533, Áldásy

48. Dávid Zemlényi + his relatives

- Coat of Arms
- 5 July 1418, Konstanz, services
- ZSOKL VI, 533, Turul 1892/12, Mon. Herald.

49. János Gyalokai + his relatives

- Coat of Arms
- September 1418, Ulm, Services
- ZSOKL VI, 578, Turul 1893/69, Mon. Herald

50. Demeter Szecsődi + his relatives

- Coat of Arms
- 11 September 1418, Ulm, services
- ZSOKL VI, 580, Turul 1893/150, Mon. Herald
- DL 38.100

51. Mátyus Magyi + his relatives

- Coat of Arms
- 4 -16 October 1418, Augsburg
- ZSOKL VI, 590, Áldásy, Turul 1885/57
- DL 50.518

52. Mihály Syei + his relatives

- Coat of Arms
- 9 October, services
- Zsokl VI, 601

53. János and Benedek Olsuai + relatives

- Coat of Arms
- 19 November 1418, Passau, services
- ZSOKL VI, 621

54. János and Orbán Mileki + Gál Taródfalvai

- Coat of Arms
- 30 November 1418, Passau
- ZSOKL VI, 628, Turul 1900/185, Mon. Herald

55. András Kisfaludi + relatives

- Coat of Arms
- January 1419, Passau, services
- ZSOKL VII, 43, Áldásy

56. László Felsőbárcai + relatives

- Coat of Arms
- 10 February 1419, Mies
- ZSOKL VII, 50, Turul 1891/86

57. Mihály Ravenni

- Coat of arms
- 28 March 1419, Znaim
- ZSOKL VIII, 135

58. Miklós Salgói

- Coat of Arms
- 18 April 1419, Hradistye
- ZSOKL VIII, 135

59. Gergely Palásti

- Coat of Arms
- 1 May 1419, Brno, services
- ZSOKL VIII, 145

60. György and András Kocsi, Mesteri Imre+ their relatives

- Coat of Arms
- 23 July 1419
- ZSOKL VIII, 232, Turul 1906/81

61. Imre Leszteméri + relatives

- Coat of Arms
- 17 September 1419, Nürnberg
- ZSOKL IX, 311, Mon. Herald., Áldásy, Turul 1891/171-173
- DL 50.520

62. György Rezegei

- Coat of Arms
- 28 March 1421, Znaim
- ZSOKL VIII, 115

63. Benedek Pércsi + his brothers

- Coat of Arms
- 28 March 1421, Znaim
- Zsokl VIII, 115, Áldásy, Turul 1908/82
- DL 50.519

64. City of Košice

- Coat of Arms
- 1423, Bratislava

65. Jakab and Balázs Kökényesi

- Coat of Arms
- 22 June 1428, Services
- Áldásy
- DL 67.774

66. János, Máté , András and Péter Kölkedi

- Coat of Arms
- 12 May 1429, Bratislava
- Turul 1896
- DL 50.521

67. Gáspár Buthor

- Coat of arms
- 11 July 1430, Vienna
- Dl 107. 361

68. Mihály Dabi

- Coat of Arms
- 1430, Bratislava
- Turul 1887

69. Gáspár Marsóvszky

- Coat of Arms
- 1430, Nürnberg

70. János Berényi Kakas

- Coat of arms
- 12 March 1431, Nürnberg
- DL 57. 168

71. Gergely Ábrahámfalvi + his brothers János, József + Ófalvi János

- Coat of Arms and nobility
- 5 April 1431, Nürnberg
- DL. 13.509

72. Józsa Kristalóczy Trakasics

- 28 June 1431, Nürnberg
- Turul 1884
- DL 50.522

73. Zsigmond Bezeréjd

- Coat of arms
- 2 July 1431, Nurnberg
- DL 71.703

74. László Gatháli

- Coat of arms
- 9 August 1431, Nurnberg

75. László Jersai,

- Coat of Arms
- 2 October 1431, Feldkirchen
- DL. 50.524

76. György Vajdai

- Coat of Arms
- 2 October 1431, Feldkirchen
- Turul 1890

77. Dobry Gergely

- Coat of arms
- 20 October 1431, Feldkirchen
- DL 70. 450

78. András Paczali Peres + Ferenc, Mihály and Péter

- Coat of Arms
- 8 December 1431, Konstanz
- DL 69.451

79. Jakab Bethleni

- Coat of arms+ nobility
- 17 december 1431, Milan
- DL 38.69

80. Dénes Kolthai

- Coat of Arms
- 1431, Konstanz

81. János Görögi

- Coat of arms
- 1431

82. János Herencsényi

- Coat of arms
- 6 February 1432, Piacenza
- DL 50.525

83. Péter Szlopnai, his father Gáspár, his brothers Miklós, Gergely, and András

- Coat of Arms
- 18 October 1432, Siena
- Turul 1897
- DL 50.526

84. Miklós Mérái

- Coat of Arms
- 1432, Parma

85. János Básznai

- Coat of Arms
- 1434, Basel
- Turul 1897

86. Péter Karshai, his father Balázs+ Gencsi Gergely and János

- Coat of Arms
- 12 March 1434, Basel
- DL 98.476

87. Pál Czirkuenai

- Coat of Arm
- 1434, Regensburg

88. Márton Bacscai Dempse and his son Balázs

- Coat of arms
- 24 April 1434, Regensburg
- DL 12. 593

89. Imre Vági

- Coat of arms
- 29 April 1434, Basel
- DI 50.527

90. Dénes Kistárkányi

- 23 December, 1434, Bratislava
- Turul 1895
- DI 13.000

91. Balázs Szentbenedeki

- Coat of arms
- 1435, Bratislava

92. City of Bratislava

- Coat of Arms, 1436

93. Márton Szenkirályi Soldos

- Coat of Arms
- 27 April 1435, Bratislava
- DL 30. 792

94. Bálint Westerházi

- Coat of Arms
- 1436 Buda

95. Benedek Azzivelghi

- Coat of Arms+ nobility
- 27 April 1437, Buda
- DL 50. 528

96. Mihály Pátrochi

- Coat of arms+nobility
- 2 July 1437, Buda
- DL 50.529

97. György Sándi

- Coat of arms
- 24 July 1437, Eger
- DI 13. 073

Fig. 14. Coats of arms issued between 1398-1526 (Based on the material of MOL,
Budapest)

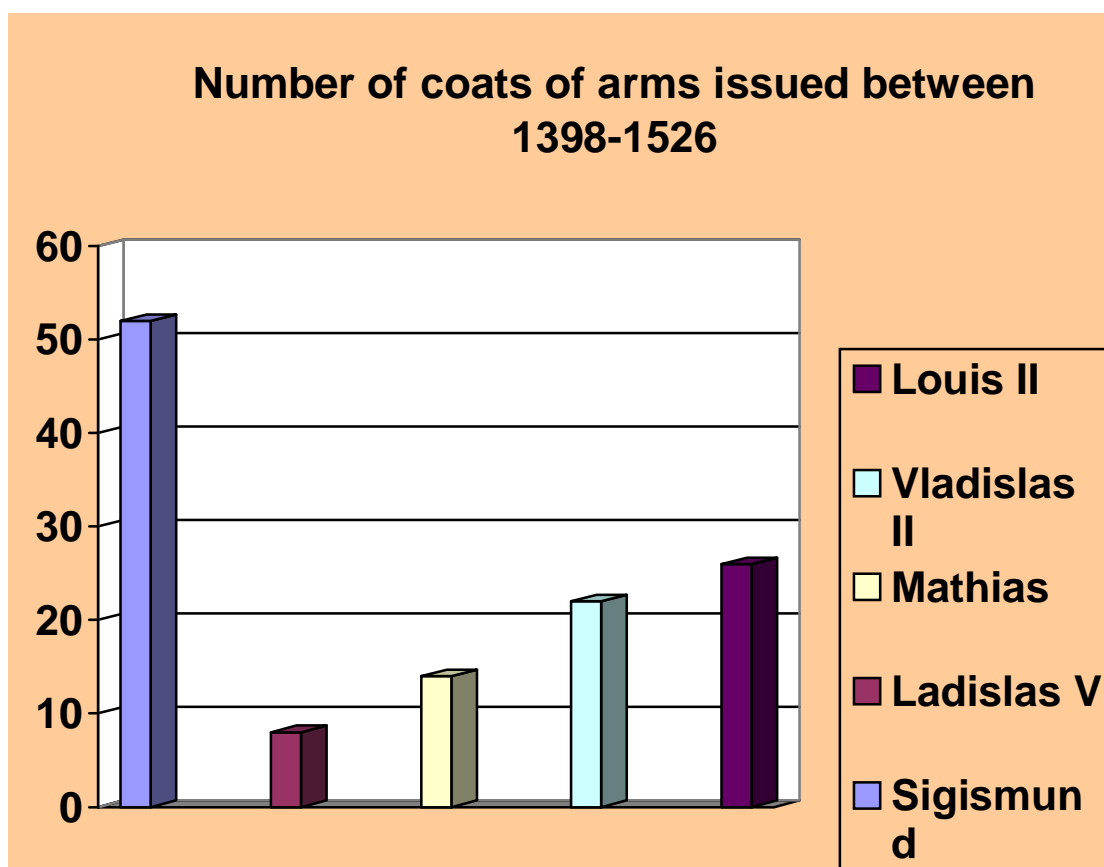


Fig. 15. Summary of awards by King Sigismund to Transylvanians

Noble	Coat of Arms	Estates	Nobility	Jus gladii	The right to hold a market	Other
Garázda	1409	3 villages	x	?	?	Special privilege regarding the coat of arms
Somkerek	1415	1 estate	x	1	1	Stone castle
Tamásfalvi	1415	1 village	x	x	x	Parish church
Mindszenti	1417	x	x	?	?	?
Hótvafői	1415	x	x	?	?	?
Farnasi	1417	x	x	?	?	?
Suki	1418	x	x	1	1	Torture objects
Ábrahámfalvi	1431	?	1	?	?	?
Pacali Peres	1431	x	x	x	x	x
Aszúvölgyi	1437	?	1	?	?	?

Fig. 16. Parts of the grants of arms

Grantee	Mecseniczei Garázda	Somkerek	Tamásfalvi	Hótvafői	Farnasi	Mindszenti	Suki	Ábrahámfalvi	Paczali Peres	Aszúvölgyi
Intitulatio	Long, the most complex	Usual	Usual	Usual	Usual	Usual	Usual	Usual + Bohemie	Usual	Romanorum imperator + usual
Salutatio	Salutem in omnium Salvatore	Nobili Anthonio... gratiam regiam et omne bonum	Usual	Salutem in eo, per quem reges regnant, et principes victorioso triumphant	Usual	Nobili Anthonio... gratiam regiam et omne bonum	Usual	Usual	Usual	Tibi fideli nostro nobili Benedicto
Arenga	Normal	Normal	Normal	Long	Normal	Normal	Normal	Normal	Normal	Short
Number of Grantees	Three	One	One	one	One	One	One	One	One	One
Dominus, familiaris, referees	Not mentioned	Reference of Palatine Garai	Familiaris of Filippo Scolari	Referee - probably Queen Barbara		Royal Familiaris	Not mentioned	Familiaris of Peter Reychel	Familiaris of Ferenc Csáki	Not mentioned
Applying personally	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
List of merits	Srebrenik, Bosnia	Missing; general information	Bosnia, Hystra, Forijuli, Lombardia, Alamania,	Hungarie et AlamaniaN icopolis Bosnia	Cathalonia, Francia, Anglia, Alemania	Lumbardie, Italie et Alamanie, Aragoniam, Francie et Anglie	Nicopolis, Bosnia	indiuersis nostris et regnorum nostrorum expeditionibus	Germany Lombardy	Not mentioned
Description of the coat of arms	Missing	Missing	Yes	Yes	Missing	Missing	Missing	Missing	Missing	Missing

Other relatives	All legal descendants	all his relatives and descendants	Fratibus ipsius ac heredibus proximis et amicis	Father, brother, fratribus condiuision alibus, heredibus, amicis	4 brothers, nephew, et heredibus	Omnes amicos, consanguineos heredesque et descendentes legitimus	László Suki, consanguineis, heredibus	2 brothers, Jakab Ófalvi, and all the descendants	2 brothers, and other three relatives	2 brothers, nephew, heredibus
Where could the coat of arms be used	Prellis, Torneamentis, Hastiludiis, et generaliter omni exercitio militari	Preliis, hastiludiis, torneamnetis, exercitiis militaribus	Prellis, Torneamentis, Hastiludiis, et generaliter omni exercitio militari	Preliis, torneamentis, hastiludiis, et omni exercitio militari	Preliis, hastiludiis, torneamnetis, et omni exercitiis militaribus	hastiludiis, torneamnetis, et omni exercitiis militaribus	Prellis, Torneamentis, Hastiludiis, et omni exercitio militari	Preliis, hastiludiis, torneamentis, omni bus exercitiis militaribus, sigillis, anulis, cortinis, velis, papilionibus, domibus	Hastiludiis, duellis, torneamentis, omnibus exercitiis nobilibus et militaribus sigillis anulis velis papilionibus	Preliis, hastiludiis, torneamnetis, exercitiis militaribus
Seal	Sigilli nostrinoui dupplicis	nostre maiestatis sigilli	Secreti nostri sigilli minoris	Secreti nostri sigilli minoris	Pendenti secreto nostro regio sigillo	Nostri maiestati sigillo	Sigilli nostri secreti	Secreto sigillo nostro		Sigillo nostro imperiali
Place	Not known	Konstanz	Konstanz	Konstanz	Konstanz	Konstanz	Konstanz	Nuremberg	Milan	Prague
Sanctio+punishment	Missing	indignatione m nostram grauissimam	Missing	Missing	Missing	indignationem nostram grauissimam + 20 golden marks	Missing	Missing	Missing	Missing
Date	24 February 1409	25 January 1415	19 May 1415	23 June 1415	4 April 1417	12 May 1417	29 March 1418	5 April 1431	31 December 1431	27 April 1437

1. Usual Intitulatio : Sigismundus dei gratia Romanorum rex semper augustus ac Hungarie, Dalmatie, Croatie
etc. rex

Usual Salutatio: Salutem in eo qui dat regibus regnare et victoriose triumphare.

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