

Burghers and Heraldry: On the Usage of Heraldic Signs by Burghers in Early Modern Hungarian Kingdom*

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The study presents the state of research into burgher heraldry in Slovakia. It notes the perspectives and possibilities of further research, as well as the importance of the sigillographic study of burgher seals. On the basis of its findings, it demonstrates discoveries on the uses of coats of arms, or more precisely, personal heraldic marks, by burghers in early modern towns of the Hungarian Kingdom (and includes, for instance, the issues of heritability of burgher marks and the ennoblement of burghers from a heraldic point of view).

Keywords: Heraldry. Sigillography. Burghers. Hungarian Kingdom. Arms/Coat of Arms.

Heraldry today belongs undoubtedly to one of the most dynamically developing branches of auxiliary history, as far as Slovak historiography is concerned. Only relatively recently, fundamental works were published that describe in detail the development of this discipline in Slovakia, as well as offering a modern perspective on Slovak heraldic terminology.¹ Scholarly research has been particularly impressive regarding state symbolism, and communal, county-level and especially noble heraldry. The past two decades have seen a relatively high number of heraldic and genealogical lexicons relating to noble family heraldry.² These are interesting to the academic community but also to a wider reading public, which is beneficial because until now this type of publication was absent in Slovak heraldry scholarship.³ Other publications tracked the development of noble arms in Slovakia, as well as works on the links between heraldry and phaleristics.⁴ It is equally encouraging that heraldic source books are beginning to be published, including the soon to be published, much anticipated collection of grants of arms from Slovakia.⁵

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1 VRTEL, *Osem storočí*. VRTEL, *Heraldika na Slovensku*, 41–56. VRTEL, *Heraldická terminológia*. ŠÍŠMIŠ, *Heraldika na Slovensku*.

2 NOVÁK, *Štátne znaky*. NOVÁK, *Pečate miest a obcí*. SOKOLOVSKÝ, *Pečate a znaky stolíc*.

3 The pioneering heraldic-genealogical works on the coats of arms of the nobility were two publications by Jozef Novák. However, it was not a classic lexical work, but only a kind of lexicon of specific collections of coats of arms seals. NOVÁK, *Rodové erby na Slovensku I*. NOVÁK, *Rodové erby na Slovensku II*.

4 FEDERMAYER, *Lexikón erbov*. KERESTEŠ, *Lexikón erbov*. GRAUS, *Rád Draka*, 3–25. GRAUS, *Armálesy*, 181–193. FEDERMAYER, *Uhorskí magnáti*, 256–291. FEDERMAYER, *Vývoj a premeny*, 81–104; FEDERMAYER, *Heraldická móda*, 27–36.

5 HRDINOVÁ et al. *Mortuária zo zbierok*. FEDERMAYER, *Zbierka erbových pečatí*.

Studies into burgher (non-noble) heraldry are more complicated, and this area has stood in the shadows for a long time for Slovak heraldic scholars.⁶ In the 1985 academic symposium in Námestovo on the state of research by auxiliary history departments, for instance, burgher heraldry was not even mentioned; or at least, it is absent from the published symposium proceedings.⁷ The subsequent decades have seen the first scholarly studies and articles which mapped, on the basis of case studies, the situation in certain chosen localities. Despite previous assumptions which tended to marginalize burgher heraldry in Hungary, quite the opposite has been revealed. The wide use and richness of burgher heraldic symbolism was particularly surprising. The published studies therefore gave us a preliminary, basic overview of the breadth and development of heraldic use in our towns. It has become evident that burgher heraldry in Hungary developed along similar lines to that of neighbouring Central European countries. A wealth of typological similarities and choices of burgher symbolism, as well as the manner of using burgher heraldic marks, are particularly comparable to those of Austrian, southern German and Czech urban environments. This is without doubt a phenomenon deriving from the intensive German colonization of medieval Hungarian (today Slovak) towns not only during the Middle Ages, but also during the Early Modern Era.⁸ Nevertheless, we also notice some Hungarian deviations which we focus on below. It is clear, therefore, that we shall require further and deeper studies to understand the complexities of this area, including studies of an interdisciplinary heraldic, sigillographic, prosopographic and genealogical nature.

Hungarian historiography and heraldic research, both current and historical, does not focus sufficiently on this topic. This is odd, since family heraldry has a rich tradition with our southern neighbours. What research there is focuses mainly on noble families, and heraldic studies related to burghers and their marks are published only sporadically. Older works by E. Tompos and Cs. Csorba are nevertheless still relevant, and they present similar findings to those by Slovak authors. Hungarian historiography also feels the absence of a complex synthesis relating to burgher heraldry.⁹

The author of this text has a long-term focus on the use of heraldic marks in Hungarian towns. In 2002 he presented a study on the development of burgher heraldry, including the classification of symbolism and use of personal marks, i.e., arms of burghers and non-nobles. He also published several studies on burgher heraldry in the Hungarian capital Prešporok (Pressburg, today's Bratislava), the vineyard towns of the Little Carpathians and Central Slovakian mining towns.¹⁰ He has begun to define the basic direction of further research and pointed to the need of heraldic research of citizenry

6 The most recent Slovak textbook on heraldry describes burgher heraldry as one of the least explored areas of heraldry in our country. GLEJTEK, *Heraldika*, 201–205.

7 VRTEL, *Pomocné vedy historické*, 62–70.

8 CHALUPECKÝ, *Znaky a erby*, 77–91. PETROVIČOVÁ, *Meštianske znaky*, 19–27. FABOVÁ, *Podoby pečati*, 12–23. POSPECHOVÁ – SPIRITZA, *O erbových znakoch*, 98–116. DOMENOVÁ, *Pečate na prešovských testamentoch*, 18–24.

9 It should be noted that the historical archives from today's Hungary, apart from Sopron and Kőszeg, have survived only in fragmentary form from the Middle Ages and the Early Modern Period, seriously hampering research for Hungarian heraldists. MIKLÓSY, *Polgári címeres levelek*, 89–90. TOMPOS, *Cimeres pecsétek*, 42–54, 126–130, 177–183, 270–276. TOMPOS, *Soproniak középkori pecsétei*, 289–306. TOMPOS, *Bürgerwappen in Ungarn*, 237–242. CSORBA, *Tulajdonjegyek, mesterjegyek, polgári címerek*, 143–189. KUBÍNYI, *Sprechende Wappen*, 277–294. PANDULA, *Súčasná maďarská heraldika*, 160–164.

10 FEDERMAYER, *Meštianska heraldika*, 13–48. FEDERMAYER, *Erby, znaky a pečätne znamenania*, 286–299. FEDERMAYER, *Wappensiegel und heraldische Symbolik*, 69–86. FEDERMAYER, *Lausser*, 49–64.

not only of royal towns, but also in smaller feudal towns and townships.¹¹ In terms of basic research, we still do not have satisfactory data on the use of burgher heraldic seals in the context of diplomatic production in towns. We are aware of only minimal sources on trade symbolism used chiefly by master artisans of lesser-known crafts, and similarly we know little about the links between burgher and guild heraldry. Similarly, there is yet to be systematic primary research into the heraldry of town intelligentsia (preachers, organist, schoolmasters, artists, scribes, lawyers and public notaries). It is necessary to connect the heritability issue of burgher marks with the genealogical research of their families. Certainly, the most fascinating area of study is burgher ennoblement and the subsequent transformation of their arms, which also requires focused genealogical and prosopographic work. Here we must admit an important advantage enjoyed by Slovak research into burgher heraldry, and that is the wealth of surviving archival material. This makes a successful study into this subject eminently possible.

The period of probably the greatest use of burgher heraldry in Hungarian towns was during the Early Modern Era, between 1500 and 1750. As such, this study focuses on this time and includes a number of thematic areas that revealed themselves during sigillographic research.

Ennoblement of burghers and changes in their heraldic marks

One of the most interesting phenomena of social development in post-Mohacs Hungary was the significant growth in ennoblements. As a rule, the Habsburg monarchs ennobled soldiers, royal officials and the familiars of magnates and dignitaries of the realm. However, another particular social group granted nobility in the Early Modern period consisted of the inhabitants of royal and mining towns – particularly members of the patriciate and town elites. It appears that even the royal court supported this trend. For instance, a successful career in town administration became an accomplishment worthy of ennoblement. However, this process of ennobling town elites occurred in different timeframes across different Hungarian free royal towns. In the capital we can roughly define it to 1570–1600. Whilst in the first half of the sixteenth century only some individuals of the senate were nobles, by 1600 almost every senator of Bratislava was either newly ennobled or, indeed, a noble by birth. If a non-noble was voted into the senate, soon after he successfully petitioned for noble status for himself and his family. Senators from Hungarian (Magyar) and Croatian artisan classes, who were pushed into the senate as supporters of the Catholics, also soon became noblemen. The master blacksmith Michael Bán was raised to this status in 1618, the haberdasher Caspar Bella alias Gömbköthő in 1612, another haberdasher, Martin Galgóczy in 1629, the barber and wound healer Caspar Várady in 1635, locksmith Peter Szilvassy and butcher John Otth in 1651, to be followed by others.¹² Of course, families outside of the town administration were also ennobled. The right to arms and noble privileges were also obtained by members of the urban intelligentsia, town officials and wealthy merchants, as well as successful artisans.¹³ They all continued to pay taxes from their

11 FEDERMAYER, *Heraldické znamenania*, 126–153.

12 NYULÁSZINÉ STRAUB, *Öt évszázad címerei*, 399, 443. Štátny archív v Bratislave [State Archives in Bratislava] (hereinafter ŠA BA), Župa Bratislavská [Bratislava-County] I., Nobilitária. Fasc. Galgóczy, Várady.

13 NÉMETH, *Polgár vagy nemes*, 79–106. SULITKOVÁ, *K metodologickým otázkám*, 319–337. FEDERMAYER, *Lausser*, 49–52.

urban properties and they bought themselves out of military duty, and were therefore precisely documented in towns. The 1597 rollcall of Bratislava burghers included 79 such individuals ("armalists").¹⁴ The majority of the recently ennobled Bratislava patriciate continued their urban way of life. They continued to make their living principally by trade or craft; but with some families we see an intention to blend into the Hungarian nobility. They sought positions in royal service and offices and tried to become related to noble families. Such marriages were, counter-intuitively, particularly interesting to impoverished gentry and descendants of noble exiles from the south, as well as to educated young nobles working in royal offices of the capital. A contributory part to this intermingling with the Hungarian nobility were attempts by the richest members of the city elite to purchase the free noble country possessions outside of town. Importantly, this kind of ownership transformed their legal status, and from mere possessionless "armalists", they became county nobles with the right to engage with the county administration and apply for royal posts. And so, for instance, the Bratislava Hoffingers became owners of a noble estate in Deutsch Jahrndorf in Moson county; the Heindls and Schrembsers bought estates in Rajka; the Pecks and Karners owned estates in the Rye Island (Žitný ostrov, Csalloköz); and the Schmuggers, estates in Vel'ké Leváre. Some secured their ownership even further with royal donations.¹⁵

Modern heraldic study should also be concerned with the issues surrounding burgher ennoblement; since with the gaining of noble status a burgher, or his family branch, was also granted a hereditary coat of arms. Often the appearance of the latter was suggested or co-produced by the petitioner himself, who sent it to the royal chancellery drawn into the ennoblement application.¹⁶ It is important to note a Hungarian particularity in respect to this. In the Kingdom of Hungary, contrary to in Imperial lands, there was no legal mid-position between burgher and noble status. In Austrian and Bohemian lands, for example, the monarch could grant hereditary arms to burghers and other individuals by way of a document, without also granting nobility. These gained a coat of arms, sometimes even the right to feudal possession (*Wappen und Lehenartikel*), but not nobility. A similar jurisdiction to issue grants of arms for burghers was exercised by Imperial palatine counts (*Hofpfalzgraf*).¹⁷ This produced a numerous group of armigerous burghers whose families thus had hereditary arms. Yet, it remained a burgher coat of arms, however complete (with helm, mantling and crest). The closed or tilting helmet was used as a rule. It lacked the coronet and was replaced by the torse. These armigerous burgher families could subsequently petition for ennoblement, but did not always do so.

It was not possible for Hungarian burghers to petition for this kind of hereditary coat of arms. Then again, an advantage for them was that with a grant of arms they also gained noble status and noble arms. Since the burghers themselves were directly involved in co-creating their noble arms, it is evidently very interesting to explore the

14 Archív mesta Bratislavy [Municipal Archive of Bratislava], mesto Bratislava [City Council of Bratislava] (hereinafter AMB, MB), Spisy, box 56, lad. 34, no. 6.

15 FEDERMAYER, *Leopold Peck*, 168, 175. Slovenský národný archív [Slovak National Archives], Hodnoverné miesto Bratislavskej kapituly [Collegiate Chapter of Bratislava – place of authentication] (hereinafter SNA, HMBK), protokol no. 18, p. 57; no. 27, p. 804; no. 28, p. 411.

16 GLEJTEK, *Heraldika*, 20–24.

17 SULITKOVÁ, *K metodologickým otázkam*, 325, 336–337. PŘIBYL, *Palatíny a erbovní listy*, 1–49. BRŇOVJÁK, *Proměny raně novověkých bohemikálních erbovních a nobilitačních privilegii*, 19–20. NEUBECKER, *Ein hofpfalzgräflicher Wappenbrief*, 56–59.

extent to which they carried through their original personal marks or symbols. We studied this phenomenon with a number of elite urban Bratislava (Pressburg) families of the Early Modern period. It became clear that only rarely have their original burgher arms, and individual figures from them, been incorporated into newly granted noble arms. Those that were used were mostly so-called canting arms. This is seen with the mayoral families of Klee, Aichinger or Kögl, who were among the first in the Hungarian capital to be ennobled during the sixteenth century. These findings are published in an earlier study.¹⁸ By contrast, families whose members used trade symbolism or personal trade marks (including the Laussers and Schrembsers) preferred noble coats of arms depicting entirely different symbols. Their noble heraldic achievement was principally evidence of their newly acquired privileged social standing. But there remained families who did not cease to use their burgher signs, particularly merchants with their personal marks, even after ennoblement – since they fulfilled a function. This can be seen with the Burgstaller family of Bratislava mayors.¹⁹

Transformations of the heraldic arms of the Feyrtag and Welligrand families

It was possible to use the sources to successfully map and document the heraldic changes subsequent to ennoblement of further burgher families living in the Hungarian capital. We have chosen two families – Feyrtag and Welligrand – which until now have not been the subjects of any heraldic or genealogical work. In the Early Modern period the Feyrtags (Feyertag, Fayrtagh, Freytag) were among the most eminent burgher families of Bratislava. We may consider them as a typical example of a family which gradually ascended from the craftsman class to the city elite. So far, it is possible to trace the family genealogy from the master furriers, brothers Thomas Feyrtag (†before 1590) and Andrew Feyrtag (†after 1590). Thomas was more significant for the family; he sat in the greater city council and owned a house on the main square. His widow married the nobleman and royal official Salamon Streitberger.²⁰ This relation probably ushered the furrier family into the city's noble community. Thomas's descendants became familiar with the social environment of their father-in-law and they themselves, later, gained noble titles.²¹ We do not know exactly when this was, since the date of the ennoblement is unknown and neither is it mentioned in older genealogical literature. However, the earliest Feyrtags appear in the lists of Bratislava nobility in the years 1640, 1643 and 1650.²² A more significant ascent of the Feyrtags in the capital city was probably limited by their Protestant faith, to which they were loyal after ennoblement. This made it impossible for them to apply for the higher royal posts then resident in Bratislava. The family became extinct in the second half of the seventeenth century.

We can also trace the Feyrtag ennoblement through heraldic sources. We are familiar with the seals of Thomas Feyrtag's son, Joachim (†before 1624) pressed in 1603 and 1623, and of his grandson Lawrence from 1633.²³ They depict differing heraldic charges.

18 FEDERMAYER, *Richtár Michal Klee*, 68–79.

19 FEDERMAYER, *Heraldický svet richtára*, 168–179. NOVÁK, *Rodové erby na Slovensku I*, 205.

20 AMB, MB, Magistrátny protokol 2a. 4, p. 254; 2a. 5, pp. 57, 186, 317, 516, 584; 2a. 6, pp. 89, 257.

21 AMB, MB, Magistrátny protokol 2a. 9, p. 285.

22 AMB, MB, Spisy, box 67, lad. 39, súpis šľachty 1640. ŠA BA, Župa Bratislavská I. Taxálne súpisy šľachty, rok 1650. FEDERMAYER, *Rody starého Prešporka*, 318.

23 Štátny archív v Trnave [State Archives in Trnava], Magistrát mesta Trnava [City Council of Trnava], Missiles, school year 1623. AMB, MB, Spisy, box 50, no. 2; box 51, lad. 33.

In 1603, Joachim still used his personal mark on the seal, inserted into the escutcheon within a cartouche. This mark was a combination of his initials and an upward pointing arrow (fig. 1). We know that he worked in the services of the Bratislava town chamber, and later as a Bratislava merchant. His eponymous elder son, Joachim, entered the Imperial service in Vienna, where he became a member and subsequently a corporal of the city guard. Around this time the family was raised to the nobility, and it appears that this was Imperial, not Hungarian nobility. When Joachim Feyrtag the younger married in 1611, documents already identified him as a noble.²⁴ Joachim's younger son Lawrence Feyrtag (†1653) entered the services of the Imperial protestant nobleman Melchior Beringer von Königshofen, who was a courtier of Emperor Ferdinand II and worked as a military official in Hungary. Lawrence himself became an Imperial courtier later on, but was not given a more important office.²⁵

The earlier seals of Joachim (1623) and Lawrence from 1633 already depict the noble arms of the Bratislava Feyrtags. The escutcheon was divided by a wedge (heraldic chapé) into three fields. The wedge was charged by a bird facing to the right (a cockerel?). Both upper fields contained rosettes. The shield was surmounted by a closed, barred helmet with a coronet and mantling. The crest was the aforementioned bird between a pair of oliphants. Three roses issued from each oliphant (fig. 2). We do not yet know the tinctures (colours) of the coat of arms, but we hope to find the Feyrtag grant of arms. Arms of this kind and content were typical for the Renaissance period, or the period between the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Joachim Feyrtag kept nothing of his personal mark in his new noble arms. This was not unusual and, as we have mentioned, it is consistent with other ennobled Bratislava families who used merchants' marks in the past.

Other families managed to enter noble ranks in the Early Modern Period, some even from the densely populated suburbs of the Hungarian capital. We have chosen the Welligrands (Beligrond) as an example where we can also trace a change in heraldry. The earliest known ancestor of this burgher family was George Welligrand (†1594), who lived, together with his sons Matthew and Michael, on Danube Street (*Thonaugasse*) in the suburbs.²⁶ This street was inhabited by numerous burghers who made their living on the river – boatmen, millers or fishermen. The Welligrands were also originally a fishing family. The Danube branches, richly stocked with fish, enabled the local fishermen to prosper within the Bratislava burgher community, both materially and socially. The guild of fishermen and fish merchants was one of the oldest in the city, with its statutes published by the city in 1511 and 1543.²⁷

The wealthiest master fishermen used their own personal marks, probably also depicted in the billboards hanging outside their shops, and certainly in their personal seals. Their heraldic signs depicted the symbolism of their craft – most commonly fish in various configurations.²⁸ The Welligrands were no exception. We know of three seals

24 Diözesarchiv Wien, Erzdiözese Wien, Kirchenmatriken, Wien, Pfarre St. Stephan, Trauungsbuch (1609–1615), folio 72; AMB, MB, Magistrátny protokol 2a. 6, p. 589.

25 SNA, HMBK, Spisy, caps 4, fasc. 9. SNA, HMBK, Protokol no. 40, p. 293; no. 41, pp. 320, 404.

26 AMB, MB, Magistrátny protokol 2a. 6, p. 344; AMB, MB, Protokol testamentov 4n. 5, p. 236. FEDERMAYER, *Rody starého Prešporka*, 209, 224–225.

27 ŠPIESZ, *Štatúty bratislavských cechov*, 32, 395.

28 FEDERMAYER, *Meštianska heraldika*, 34.

pressed by George's son Matthew, from 1601 (fig. 3) and 1610.²⁹ All show the same image: a shield charged with two crossed fish, accompanied by four rosettes. Above the shield, at the top of the seal field, are the initials M. W. Since two or three crossed fish was a common charge of fishing guilds, it is probable that Matthew was influenced in his arms by guild heraldry.³⁰

In the first third of the seventeenth century, the Welligrand family rapidly achieved social prominence. They moved into the city centre where they owned two houses, and Matthew's brother Michael Welligrand (†1644) was chosen as Bratislava's town winery mountain master (Pergmeister). By then Michael's two sons, Andrew and Paul, had adjusted themselves to their higher social status and they abandoned their traditional work. Both became linen merchants and city dignitaries, and finally gained Hungarian nobility. The highest position in the city was achieved by Paul's eponymous son Paul Welligrand the younger (†before 1684) who was a member of the senate in 1670–1672. Noble status enabled the family to gradually distance themselves from town life. In the eighteenth century, the Welligrands were prominent principally in Moson, Győr and Trenčín counties. They even reached royal service, including Andrew Welligrand (†1751) who headed the royal toll station in Trenčín. His seal from 1745 depicts the noble family arms.³¹

This family coat of arms was granted to the Welligrands when they were raised to noble status by a grant of nobility, published by Ferdinand II on 6 January 1633. The shield was charged by a dove, issuing from a coronet on a trimount, and holding a branch in its beak. The crest depicted a griffon issuing from a coronet, grasping a branch in its claw.³² It is interesting to see that there is no trace of the original burgher symbolism of the family (fish, rosettes). It appears that the Welligrands were loath to return to the artisan (fishing) past of their ancestors and, indeed, by adopting completely new charges in their noble coats of arms they projected a future as part of the noble community.

Using a hereditary family burgher coat of arms

An as yet little-studied phenomenon of Hungarian burgher heraldry is that of armigerous urban families, in other words non-noble but hereditary arms in towns. Older research suggested that these kinds of families were rare, particularly in large towns, both during the Middle Ages and in the Early Modern period.³³ Clarification of this issue is complicated by two factors. One of these is the relatively widespread ennoblement of town elites; particularly from the final third of the sixteenth century, many prominent urban inhabitants enjoyed nobility and noble arms, even if their way of life remained dependent on their civic status (as merchants, scholars or artisans). We usually know the precise date on which the grant of arms and ennoblement was published by the Hungarian monarch. We must consider these kinds of grants as unquestionably noble arms of ennobled burghers and not as part of urban, burgher heraldry. The problem

29 AMB, MB, Spisy, box 51, lad. 33, fasc. 11; AMB, MB, Listy a listiny, inv. no. 9129.

30 NAGYBÁKAY, *Zunftwappen mit Helmzierden*, 147, 154. MAJERECH-MRZÚCH, *Remeselnické cechové organizácie*, 84–85. NOVÁK, *Cechové znaky, heslo Rybári*.

31 NAGYBÁKAY, *Zunftwappen mit Helmzierden*, 147, 154. MAJERECH-MRZÚCH, *Remeselnické cechové organizácie*, 84–85. NOVÁK, *Cechové znaky, heslo Rybári*.

32 In the text of the document, the surname of the family is written as "Belligront". REXA, *Czímeres levelek Fejérvármegye levéltárban*, 124.

33 FEDERMAYER, *Meštianska heraldika*, 15–17.

cases are those where it is uncertain whether the family was in fact ennobled, as many families died off relatively early and we miss genealogical data. Often the royal grants for these burghers are missing or lost. The second factor undermining a clear understanding of the issue is the fact that some Hungarian burghers, namely those of German ethnicity, petitioned not for Hungarian, but Imperial nobility, which they gained as burghers of Hungarian towns. We have several examples, including the Schifferers of Krupina (ennobled 1583), Liechtenpergers of Banská Bystrica (1604) and Partingers of Bratislava (1583).³⁴ Other Hungarian burghers of Imperial extraction brought their nobility from their homeland. Even if they lived civic lives in Hungary, not as noblemen, they quite legitimately continued to use the hereditary noble coats of arms of their ancestors. A useful differentiating tool in the study of heraldic charges of ennobled burghers is the formal appearance of their arms. These are almost always complete achievements – with shield, helm, crest and mantling. Important, however, is that the helms are surmounted as a rule by the coronet, as a sign of noble status.

But apart from the arms of ennobled burghers with coronets we have also found hereditary arms of burghers that lack this kind of helm coronet. They are known to have existed since the Middle Ages, namely the fourteenth century. While the Bratislava mayoral Jakub family still represented a specific status as burghers – and patricians holding noble property – the younger Gailsams of Bratislava and Jung of Banská Bystrica were definitely burghers. Both these families not only used complete coats of arms, but with the Jung we also have sigillographic proof that their heraldic blazon of three shells was hereditary.³⁵ Similarly, but later, in the sixteenth century, heraldic charges (three postal trumpets and half an arrow) were also hereditary in the well-known Banská Štiavnica burgher and mining family, the Schalls.³⁶ Again, we know this through discovering their heraldic seals – that of Conrad Schall from 1542 for instance, or of Elias Schall in 1570.³⁷ Both these patricians of Štiavnica bore arms without the noble coronet. Since the family moved to Banská Štiavnica from Swabian Stuttgart, their hereditary coat of arms was clearly an Imperial import. We have found similar types of arms borne by other families from the mining town regions, including the Lindacher and Riedtmüller families.

The Lindachers are documented since the sixteenth century and they worked in mining towns as miners and mining officials. The first significant member was Christopher Lindacher, who began as a mining master in Boca in Liptov county (1564–1569); he is then mentioned in 1571 as a successful chief steward of the private Brenner mining venture in Banská Štiavnica. His 1569 seal depicts an unusual coat of arms (fig. 4).³⁸ Its formal appearance suggests a hereditary coat, but its charges point to

34 Österreichisches Staatsarchiv, Allgemeines Verwaltungsarchiv, Adelsarchiv, Reichsadelakten, Allgemeine Reihe, no. 248. 43; no. 313. 15, no. 369. 56.

35 HALKO – KOMORNÝ, *Dóm*, 42–45. RÁBIK, *Erb stredovekej banskobystrickej meštianskej rodiny Jungovcov*, 49–58.

36 Recent work on this family: ČELKO, *K lokalizácii knižnic*, 239–247.

37 Slovenský banský archív [Slovak Mining Archives], Hlavný komorskogrofský úrad v Banskej Štiavnici [Office of the Main mining chamber count in Banská Štiavnica] (hereinafter SBA, HKG BŠ), Spisy, Spoločná agenda, box 93. Štátny archív v Banskej Bystrici, pracovisko Archív Banská Štiavnica [State Archives in Banská Bystrica, Banská Štiavnica branch], Magistrát mesta Banská Štiavnica [City Council of Banská Štiavnica] (hereinafter ŠA BB, ABŠ, MG-BŠ), Missiles, school year 1542.

38 ŠA BB, ABŠ, MG-BŠ, Missiles, school years 1564/2, 1569/2. BALÁŽOVÁ, *Medzi Prahou a Norimbergom*, 75. HERČKO, *Osobnosti Banskej Štiavnice*, 145.

personal burgher marks. The shield is divided vertically. The right field contains a cut branch from whose right side grows a living shoot with leaves. The left field depicts two melter's pincers side by side. The escutcheon is surmounted by a tilting helmet with mantling, but lacking a coronet. Two outspread eagle's wings form the crest. The hereditary quality of this coat of arms is confirmed by an earlier seal (1586) of a different family member – Elias Lindacher of Banská Štiavnica.³⁹ It depicts a very similar blazon, again without a coronet. The only difference is represented in the right-hand field of the shield, where the branch and shoot are replaced with an entire tree. It is doubtless a canting charge – the linden tree (*die Linde* in German). The left field is once more filled by the melter's pincers, which we may assume to represent the bearer's profession. Pincers were used to drain ore and melt precious metals. We do not have any evidence that the Lindachers enjoyed Hungarian nobility. Since both heraldic achievements lack a coronet, we can assume that they were true burgher arms.

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the Riedtmüller family belonged to the city elites of Kremnica and Banská Štiavnica. As their surname implies, as does their coat of arms, the family's ancestors were artisans – millers. In the environment of mining towns, from the second half of the sixteenth century, the Riedtmüllers were miners ("Waldbürgers") and officials of the mining chambers. But there is no evidence that they were granted Hungarian nobility. And yet the extant seals are proof that they used hereditary arms with a noteworthy charge – in two variants. It consisted of a heraldic eagle placed in the shield with a millstone on its chest; or an eagle issuant from a half millstone in the bottom part of the shield. This charge recurred in the crest. It is first seen on seals of John Riedtmüller from 1570 and 1576, who used a full achievement with helmet, mantling and crest.⁴⁰ Subsequently, the coat of arms was used with variations by John's descendants during the entire seventeenth century, including the family's most important member – Matthew Riedtmüller (†after 1672), the mayor of Banská Štiavnica. But all the variants lack a helm coronet; this is sometimes replaced by a torse, and sometimes there is no helm covering at all. This is consistent with burgher arms. The arms used by Christopher Riedtmüller (†1611), treasurer of the Banská Štiavnica mining chamber, is somewhat curious. His seal from 1609 shows the family coat of arms that, in formal terms, is comparable to noble arms of the period.⁴¹ The employment of a tilted Gothic shield, a pagan helm coronet and a cloak instead of mantling was fashionable particularly with the aristocracy and noble scholars in the first third of the seventeenth century.⁴² But the careful viewer will notice that Riedtmüller's coat of arms once more lacks the helm coronet (fig. 5). Since this is repeated with every member of this family, we suspect this is intentional. We are thus dealing with a hereditary burgher coat of arms. It is again probable that the arms are of Imperial origin and were brought to Hungary by the Riedtmüllers from their homeland.

39 ŠA BB, Magistrát mesta Banská Bystrica [City Council of Banská Bystrica] (hereinafter MG-BB), Spisy, box 13, fasc. 45.

40 ŠA BB, MG-BB, Spisy, box 55, fasc. 226; ŠA BB, ABŠ, MG-BŠ, Missiles, school year 1570/1.

41 ŠA BB, pracovisko Archív Kremnica [Kremnica branch], Magistrát mesta Kremnica [City Council of Kremnica] (hereinafter AK, MG-K), Spisy, Tom II., Fons 50, fasc. 1.

42 NOVÁK, *Rodové erby na Slovensku I*, 226, 262, 276. FEDERMAYER, *Zbierka erbových pečatí*, 32, 52.

The double cross in burgher heraldry

From a heraldic perspective, the burgher family of Khuen is similarly interesting. Several artists and scholars came from this family, and the earliest known ancestor is the master goldsmith John Khuen (Khien), a member of the Banská Bystrica town council, who in 1555 and 1574 sealed with a curious personal heraldic sign (fig. 6).⁴³ It consisted of a personal mark inserted into an escutcheon. Its basis was a double cross of arms of equal width. The bottom part of its vertical arm, however, was split into a rounded crocket (a so-called *Sparrenfußschaft* in German). Since the goldsmith and engraver John Khuen was a native of Levoča in Spiš county, we can legitimately ask whether his personal mark's conceptual source may have been the arms of his native town.⁴⁴ Indeed, Levoča used a double cross in its arms in the fifteenth and at the beginning of the sixteenth century; singly, or later in the well-known canting variant supported by a pair of lions.⁴⁵

The fact that the double cross, derived from the Hungarian royal symbol, appears in noble heraldry as well as in the arms of many of the oldest and most important royal towns, is a well-known and thoroughly studied phenomenon.⁴⁶ It has been less studied in connection with Hungarian burgher heraldry. We are aware of its existence in the Middle Ages as one of the several variants of the personal merchants' marks. The first evidence of this type of mark is in Košice, on a heraldic tombstone from the fourteenth century.⁴⁷ It is generally assumed that these burgher marks were derived from masons' marks and so-called house signs (*Hausmarken*). They are widespread throughout Central Europe, together with similar other marks based on the arrow, cross, hooks, or number cipher.⁴⁸ As a result, they should not be directly related to the Hungarian royal double cross, even those seen in Hungary itself.

However, the most recent sigillographic finds cast this theory in a new light. In the event that a burgher's mark was influenced by the heraldic symbol of his home town, then it was indirectly derived from the royal arms. Indeed, Khuen the goldsmith is not an isolated case. His contemporary, the Zvolen burgher Stephen Sielnický, sealed in 1585 with a similarly created personal heraldic mark, inserted into a Renaissance-style shield. Its basis was the double (patriarchal) cross, very similar to the contemporary depiction of the royal double cross. But it was augmented with a new, transversely diagonal arm that connected the bottom of the cross with its lower right arm (fig. 7). Judging from his surname, this burgher came from Sielnica near Zvolen. The former town did not have a double cross in its arms, but the latter used it as a charge since the town's inception – including during the life of Stephen Sielnický.⁴⁹ It is therefore possible that this Zvolen burgher derived his personal mark from the very arms of his town. It is interesting that another contemporary of these two burghers from the Zvolen region used arms featuring a double cross: a certain S. Schlaher who pressed a seal in 1584 at Víglaš castle near

43 ŠA BB, MG-BB, Spisy, box 106, fasc. 337. SNA, Archív rodu Zay z Uhrovca [Zay Family of Uhrovec], Korešpondencia, box 59.

44 TORANOVÁ, *Zlatníctvo na Slovensku*, 220.

45 NOVÁK, *Pečate miest a obcí*, 541–542.

46 VRTEL, *Osem storočí*, 57–63.

47 CSORBA, *Tulajdonjegyek, mesterjegyek, polgári címerek*, 162–163. VRTEL, *Osem storočí*, 99.

48 We published various examples from the Early Modern period in older studies: FEDERMAYER, *Wappensiegel und heraldische Symbolik*, 71–73. FEDERMAYER, *Richtár Michal Klee*, 71–74.

49 NOVÁK, *Pečate miest a obcí*, 536. ŠA BB, MG-BB, Spisy, box 51, fasc. 211.

Zvolen.⁵⁰ We do not know much about this individual, but the millstone in his heraldic sign implies that he could have been a miller – a burgher or descendant of such a family. Schlaher's arms, which depict a Hungarian royal double cross growing out of a millstone between two leaves, is heraldically very powerful (fig.8). Again, it could relate to nearby Zvolen, or potentially the bearer of this seal was in royal service. We shall see what future genealogical research might show about the Schlaher family.

In relation to the hereditary quality of burgher arms, we must return to the goldsmith Khuen and his heraldic sign. Personal marks were not usually hereditary, but they could sometimes be transformed into hereditary coats of arms. John Khuen was the founder of an important artistic and scholarly dynasty of burghers, which during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries produced a number of exceptional artists – painters, sculptors and engravers.⁵¹ John's son James Khuen (†after 1619) became a relatively well-known Renaissance painter who worked principally in central Slovakia. He also used heraldic seals with his own coat of arms, which was made in a curious way. Into the escutcheon field, between three smaller shields which always symbolised artists (painters and engravers), he inserted his father's personal mark. The sign of the double cross thus became hereditary. The arms included a tilting helm with a coronet (!), mantling and crest. The latter consisted of a pair of deer antlers, surrounding a demi-female figure without arms and with a torse on her head. We have published this coat of arms depicted in James's seal from 1615 (fig. 9).⁵² Even though it had the appearance of a noble coat of arms, it was once again burgher heraldry. The helm with coronet is a little confusing in this instance. The coronet does not denote noble status, but was borrowed from guild heraldry. In fact the painter James Khuen created his arms by assuming the complete arms of the painters' guild and augmenting them with his father's sign.⁵³ A generation later the family really did gain Hungarian nobility. The monarch granted the Khuens (Khien) a noble coat of arms featuring griffins, again without any connection to the symbolism of burgher heraldry. It would certainly be very interesting to focus research on the heraldic development of further generations of the Khuen family. It remains to be seen whether the double cross mark was truly forgotten, since younger members of the family remained painters, making it possible that they used their personal painters' marks alongside their noble coat of arms.

Curiosities of burgher heraldry – the executioner's arms

The content and symbolism of burgher heraldic signs was often influenced by social standing within the urban community, as well as type of activity or profession. With masters of traditional crafts (such as butcher, miller, furrier, tailor or cobbler) we mainly encounter heraldic motifs that derive from an artisanal, professional symbolism. Thus, the products were depicted, or perhaps the tools pointing to the particular craft of the burgher. This symbolism was used in both guild and burgher heraldry, and both closely influenced and enriched each other.⁵⁴ The above-mentioned symbolism was of a relatively unified and universal character, but it nevertheless managed to create

50 ŠA BB, MG-BB, Spisy, box 100, fasc. 326.

51 GARAS, *Schlachtenbilder und fremde Maler*, 342–345.

52 ŠA BB, MG-BB, Spisy, box 70, fasc. 269. RAGAČ, *Maliar Jakub Khien*, 247–256.

53 The following study discusses the blazon of the painters' guilds' coat of arms in several Imperial cities since the Middle Ages: NAGYBAKAY, *Zunftwappen mit Helmzierden*, 141, 154.

54 VRTEL, *Osem storočí*, 163–167, 195.

a large number of original variations and combinations. And so, each urban craftsman was able to choose a unique symbol for his personal sign. This has been noted by several older heraldic studies. We can confidently identify and describe a good number of these professional charges; others, especially of lesser-known professions, are yet to be properly discussed.⁵⁵

But urban communities were also home to relatively uncommon or specialized professions. Their members usually worked in towns as individuals and were therefore not organized into guilds. Sigillographic research of these persons' seals reveals their heraldic signs, which often contained unusual and noteworthy symbolism. Though rare and unusual, they significantly contribute to our knowledge of Hungarian burgher heraldry and to a general understanding of the relationship between Hungarian burghers and their heraldic signs.

For this reason, we have decided to include an example of a heraldic curiosity – the arms of the town executioner. Executioners have not yet been examined closely in heraldic research. Sigillographic sources, however, confirm that they also used seals. This is particularly interesting in light of their ambiguous social standing. On the one hand, they were usually pushed to the edges of society due to their repulsive and morally suspect profession. On the other, their services were extremely valued. Without them, it would have been impossible to enact the most serious judgements (torture, physical punishments and execution itself), which were the bases of feudal legal power and justice. But executioners were also charged with important hygienic services, such as the removal of corpses or catching stray dogs. Urban or county representatives thus always made sure to pay an executioner well, and they were often accommodated and even fed on their account.⁵⁶ The chronic existence of executioners on the edges of society and the marriage relations between their families, as well as their relative wealth, made it possible for the growth of executioner dynasties. It is a phenomenon worthy of closer study by heraldists as well as genealogists.

The earliest personal sign of an executioner known so far is from Bratislava, the then Hungarian capital. It survived on the seal of the executioner Christopher Feuler from 1563. It has a beautiful heraldic form and unusually powerful symbolism. The shield contains a large sword wreathed by two snakes.⁵⁷ The snakes here symbolise sin, while the sword means just punishment. The sword traditionally represented justice. Together with a pair of scales it is present in depictions of the Roman goddess of justice – *Justitia* – as well as of the Archangel Michael.⁵⁸ It was simultaneously the executioner's professional symbol and his working tool.

One of Feuler's successors in the Hungarian metropolis was the executioner Nicholas Amon. We know that he was from Vienna. Some brief inscriptions show that he worked in Bratislava, but also had paid work in the nearby towns of Svätý Jur and Pezinok. His seal from 1635 is undoubtedly a curiosity (fig. 10), since we find not a personal burgher sign, but a complete heraldic achievement.⁵⁹ The shield shows an angel holding

55 FEDERMAYER, *Meštianska heraldika*, 24–40. CHALUPECKÝ, *Znaky a erby*, 79.

56 GRAUS, *IUS GLADII*, 13–14. DRŠKA, *Mestská správa Skalice*, 169–170.

57 FEDERMAYER, *Rody starého Prešporka*, 297.

58 MOHR, *Lexikon symbolů*, 155, 284.

59 ŠA BA, pracovisko archív v Modre [Modra branch], Magistrát mesta Pezinok [City Council of Pezinok], Missiles, box 76. MEIER – PIRAINEN – WEGERA, *Deutschsprachige Handschriften*, 918. FEDERMAYER, *Rody starého Prešporka*, 197.

a (fiery?) sword in his right hand, and a pair of scales in his left. A tilting helm above the shield supports a torse with mantling. The crest represents a double-tailed lion, issuing and turned to the right. His right paw wields a sword and his left holds a human head. This executioner's coat of arms also had clear symbolism – justice in the shield and punishment in the crest. The shield charge probably represents St Michael. This archangel's role on the Day of Judgment was to weigh the good and bad deeds of human souls on a pair of scales, and banish the unworthy from heaven with his sword.⁶⁰ But the attention of heraldic experts must focus on the manner of appearance of these arms, since it is identical to hereditary family arms. The use of a torse instead of a coronet rules out the possibility that the family is noble. If the Amons were a family of executioners, the coat of arms suggests that they also bore hereditary arms. The question remains whether these arms were merely assumed or whether they obtained a grant of arms for them. Its publication by the Imperial chamber is not likely, but it might have come from the office of one of the lesser-known Imperial palatines. A wealthy family of executioners, working for generations in the most important cities and doubtless also for royal justice, could have obtained such a palatine grant without too much publicity. It is, of course, only a hypothesis that will have to be confirmed by genealogical research.

Finally, we would like to return to the importance of further developing research into burgher heraldry and point to primary sources. As with noble heraldry, the nature of these varies. As we have already mentioned, in Slovak (Hungarian) research we clearly miss grants of arms, and we only have imports of Imperial privileges.⁶¹ This means that perhaps the most acute problem is determining the exact tinctures of burgher arms. An alternative primary source for these may be decorated heraldic diaries (germ. Stammbuch).⁶² Also significant are sources in museums or on monuments – seal rings, seal matrices, artisanal signs, guild chests and guild memorial cups, as well as house marks or sepulchral monuments (tombstones and epitaphs of burghers).⁶³ These, however, are usually only sporadically extant, and most of these primary sources are not indexed in any meaningful heraldic way. It is therefore likely that the most important source material for burgher heraldry is sigillographic material – seals of burghers themselves. Many are to be found in our archives, and each seal can be precisely dated and attributed to an individual, which markedly facilitates genealogical identification.

We therefore believe that the publishing of more comprehensive collections of sigillographic material in the future will help hugely in researching the use of heraldic signs in urban contexts. A possible goal for the near future would be a comprehensive, scholarly monograph that would introduce burgher heraldry in Slovak (and Hungarian) towns in more depth.

Translated by Miroslav Pomichal

60 MYSLIVEČEK, *Panoptikum symbolů*, 160, 226. OSWALD, *Lexikon der Heraldik*, 270.

61 For instance, many burgher grants of arms of Imperial origin are stored in the Archives of the City of Bratislava or in Hungarian central archives and libraries: FAUST, *I. Archív mesta Bratislavy*, see: inv. no. 2, 8, 9 etc. ÁLDÁSY, *A Magyar Nemzeti Múzeum*, 373–377.

62 BALÁŽOVÁ, *Medzi Prahou a Norimbergom*.

63 ORŠULOVÁ, *Erb*, 91–101. PETROVIČOVÁ, *Meštianske znaky*, 86–90. FEDERMAYER, *Lausser*.

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Figures



Figure 1: Joachim Feyrtag, heraldic seal from 1603.



Figure 2: Vavrinec Feyrtag, heraldic seal from 1633.



Figure 3: Matej Welligrand, heraldic seal from 1601.



Figure 4: Krištof Lindacher, heraldic seal from 1569.



Figure 5: Krištof Riedtmüller, heraldic seal from 1609.



Figure 6: Ján Khuen, heraldic seal from 1555.



Figure 7: Štefan Sielnický, heraldic seal from 1585.



Figure 8: S. Schlafer, heraldic seal from 1584.



Figure 9: Jakub Khuen, heraldic seal from 1615.



Figure 10: Mikuláš Amon, heraldic seal from 1635.