

“Lilium Inter Spinas”: The DuVal Family Heirloom and Coat of Arms

By Joseph Stephen Hays

The DuVal Heirloom

SICUT LILIUM INTER SPINAS. There is preserved in the Cathedral of New Orleans, a large silver gilt plate with a coat of arms on it. These arms are a lily on the centre of the shield. Above it on either side and below it, a branch with thorns. The motto is: "Sicut lilium inter spinas." Can any of our readers inform us whose bearings these are? (Query by F. J., *United States Catholic Historical Magazine* 3, no. 11 [New York, 1890]: 394).

The above query concerning a Coat of Arms (COA) appears to be a part of the COA that was described on the elusive gold soup tureen, a DuVal family heirloom. It was described in the Horsley-Easley Bible as the “. . . arms of the DuBois & DuVals intertwined. A lily surrounded by thorns and the motto 'Lillia inter pinas'.” The correct motto is “Lilium Inter Spinas.” It appears to have quite a history. The coat of arms that decorated the DuVal heirloom had a very French symbol, the fleur-de-lis, or "flower of the lily".

In the Middle Ages the symbols of lily and fleur-de-lis (lis is French for "lily") overlapped considerably in religious art. The historian Michel Pastoureau says that until about 1300 they were found in depictions of Jesus, but gradually they took on Marian symbolism and were associated with the Song of Solomon's "lily among thorns" (lilium inter spinas), understood as a reference to Mary. Other scripture and religious literature in which the lily symbolizes purity and chastity also helped establish the flower as an iconographic attribute of the Virgin. The emblem worn by the Swan Brethren depicts a rose, or lily, amongst thorns. At the root of the rose is the Latin word SICUT which is the first word from a line from Solomon's Song of Songs 2:2. As the lily among thorns, so is my love among the daughters. Sicut lilium inter spinas sic amica mea inter filias.

The family heirloom, a gold soup tureen, described in the Horsley-Easley Bible (ca. 1840-1880):

Maj. Wm. DuVal's daughter, Mrs. Adams, saw a family relic, a gold tureen which had the Arms of the DuBois & DuVals intertwined. A lily surrounded by thorns and the motto 'Lillia inter pinas'. Many reliable and prominent men have seen the tureen heirloom of the DuVals which descended to Samuel DuVal, then to his oldest son, Maj. Wm D., then to his daughter. On the outside was engraved the blooded Arms of DuBois and DuVal. It was handed down to the oldest child, Mrs. Price, and now in Philadelphia, Pa."

Bessie Grabowskii included in her book, *The DuVal Family of Virginia*, a description of it by Dr. William P. Palmer (ca. 1850) of Richmond, Virginia:

"It had surmounting the top a tuft of lilies and thorns, with the motto lilia inter Pinas, and also bore the coat of arms. It was kept in a red morocco case with a red velvet lining."

He remembered it being shown to him when as a boy he went with his mother to visit a Mrs. DuVal in Richmond, Virginia. When last heard of it was in the possession of one James Price, a lawyer, who went to Ohio to live, and who was a great grandson of Maj. William DuVal of Richmond, but all trace of it has now been lost. The above description may mean that the finial or handle to the cover was a tuft of lilies and thorns.

From Nellie Howard Gillian we have an excerpt of a letter with a description:

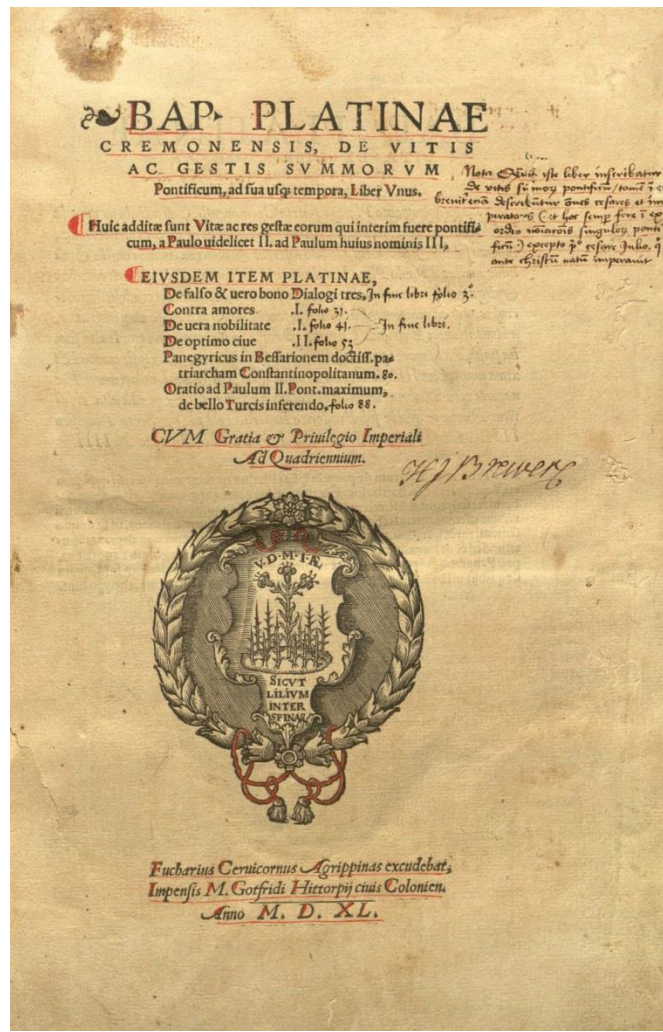
I, too, have heard about the gold tureen often. It was last heard of in Austin, Texas, having descended to William Price, son of Cousin Marcia DuVal Price. William married a northern woman. . . . After cousin William Price's death she sold all of the family silver and the tureen by private sale, and returned to her home in the north. None of the family knew of the sale and have never known who bought the silver and the tureen.

This account by Mrs. Gillean seems to be the most accurate. The northern woman was Achsah Catherine "Kate" Starr. After the death of William Price she married Otto H. Woehsner a hatter in Austin, Texas where they were living in 1880. They later moved to Cleveland, Ohio.

Mrs. T. P. O'Connor (half-sister to the above William Price) also mentions some family heirlooms, including a silver christening dish. A christening dish would be smaller than a tureen but could be confused. The soup tureen would have been the size and shape of what we know as a large covered vegetable dish with legs. Some illustrations can be seen in *Huguenot Silver in England, 1688-1727*, by J. F. Hayward. From this book we learn of a goldsmith, John DuBois, who unsuccessfully applied to get his work admitted for assay. An excerpt from the Minute Books dated 7th March 1682: 'Mr. John Dubois, merchant, requests assay and touch for an unnamed French Protestant, also recommended by the Rt. Hon. the Ld. Mayor and the Ld. Bishop of London by a paper under their hands and seals.' He was refused no doubt for the reason given by "complaints against the great numbers of alien goldsmiths that are permitted to work in and about London, of the unlimited [number] of Journeymen foreigners they keep to the undoing and impoverishing of the freemen of the Company . . .". This great influx of foreigners was frightening the Londoners and causing them to resist and find inventive ways of trying to reduce the number of immigrants such as furnishing ships and fare to transport them to the New World.



The tureen may have looked similar to the one above. This example from London, England, is of Huguenot origin.



Above is a depiction of the motto “Lily among the thorns” from 1540.

The DuVal Coat of Arms

No reference to its use has been found before the publication of Bessie Grabowskii's book *The DuVal Family of Virginia* in 1931. It appears to have been rendered by one of the many studios at that time which were obtaining them from stock images for persons without any historical significance. The only information concerning a family member's COA is from an entry in the Horsley-Easley Family Bible:

Maj. Wm. DuVal's daughter, Mrs. Adams, saw a family relic, a gold tureen which had the Arms of the DuBois & DuVals intertwined. A lily surrounded by thorns and the motto 'Lillia inter [s]pinas'. Many reliable and prominent men have seen the tureen heirloom of the DuVals which descended to Samuel DuVal, then to his oldest son, Maj. Wm D., then to his daughter. On the outside was engraved the blooded Arms of DuBois and DuVal. It was handed down to the oldest child, Mrs. Price, and now in Philadelphia, Pa.

The Bible is from the 1840s but this portion of the Bible record was probably not written until the 1880s and is riddled with inconsistencies. Nonetheless, there is also a mention of this heirloom upon which the family coat of arms was engraved and is found in *Richmond in By-Gone Days*, a book written in the 1850s by Samuel Mordecai of Richmond, Virginia. In this book the writer mentions

seeing this heirloom in the possession of William DuVal (1748-1842). This would have been while William DuVal lived at the corner of 6th and Grace Streets in Richmond, and thus before 1807. Although the COA is not described, the motto is described as "Lillia Inter Pinas" which is not the motto "Pro Patria" found on our present COA. There is also a mention of a Lily surrounded by thorns as part of the engraving. This may be the description of a crest and not of any component of the COA.

The DuVal Family Association continues to use the COA published in Bessie Grabowskii's book until more exact information comes to light which would give a more accurate idea of what COA an ancestor might have carried. The COA presently used has by now a somewhat long history. It has been used by the Association for more than 80 years. It may also be of some interest to note that the COA currently in use by the "Society of Maren DuVall Descendents" is also used without any proven historical connection. It differs only in that there are two stars in place of the two annulets.

The Bible known as the Horsley-Easley Bible is the source for almost everything we know, or think we know, concerning Daniel (the immigrant). It was the Bible record of William Andrew and Eliza G. (Perkins) Horsley. William A. Horsley was the grandson of John Horsley and Philadelphia Hamilton Dunscomb, the daughter of Andrew Dunscomb and Philadelphia DuVal, the daughter of Samuel Duval and Lucie Claiborne. It was copied by William and Eliza Horsley's grandson, John Dunscomb Easley, and presented to Bessie Grabowskii after she had published her book. There was much written in following the birth, death and marriage entries and it is these entries with which there are concerns. The term *Chevalier* was first used then for Daniel as well as his wife's given name of *Philadelphia*. There are concerns with both. Most of the information written concerning the early history of the Dunscomb side of the family has since been rejected as it has been proven incorrect.

Re: The given name Philadelphia

None of the known children of Daniel, the immigrant, used the given name *Philadelphia* in any succeeding generations with the exception of Samuel DuVal. The name Philadelphia was a family name from the Claiborne side of the family into which Samuel had married. His wife had a sister Philadelphia Claiborne and it is seen several generations backward into the Claiborne family. A reasonable person, not encumbered with a contrary family tradition, would assume this was handed down from the Claiborne family. It would appear that the writer got confused on which side, the DuVal or the Claiborne, from which the name *Philadelphia* came.

Re: The immigrant Daniel DuVal

There are only two known records of the immigrant Daniel DuVal: 1) He arrived on the York River in March 1701 aboard the Le Nassau; and 2) He apprenticed George Pegram in York County in 1704 as a joiner or carpenter. That is it. In fact there is no primary source material associating the brothers, William, Daniel, Samuel, and Benjamin with Daniel, the immigrant. There is reported a document written by William DuVal and supported by affidavits from his sons John Pope DuVal and William Pope DuVal stating that his grandfather was Daniel. These are referenced by Bessie Grabowskii and Roy Swift, but they have not been located. The Horsley-Easley Bible entry refers to him by the title Chevalier as apparently the writer did not know his given name. This is why limited information was inscribed on the monument erected by the Association at Ware Parish, Gloucester, in 2001.

Unanswered Questions

Do we really know that Daniel was even married in France? Why could he not have been married in

London to one of the fine Huguenot families living there? What about the John DuBois, goldsmith, of London. He would have had the means and the wherewithal to have fashioned a soup tureen (a particularly French innovation and introduced about 1690) as a bridal gift with the appropriate coats of arms engraved thereon. Yes, that same Bible entry mentioned the Abbe DuBois as a relative. Somehow he became an uncle because of his wealth. It was theorized that he was the only DuBois with the means to give an engraved tureen for a wedding present (how do we know it was a wedding present?), so there had to be a close connection! From that assumption derives the story that Daniel's in-laws were Jean DuBois and Marie Deyagret because the Abbe supposedly had only one brother! How do we even know Daniel's wife's maiden name? Yes, that same Bible record!

If he were married in France or London why was his wife not listed on the Nassau manifest? Others had wives listed. Did he go back to London to get his wife? Could he have really married in this country? Why not?

Why could not the DuVal family have lived in London (or England) for several generations before coming to America? There is one particularly interesting citation in the very scholarly journals of the *Huguenot Society of London* in which a family is outlined: William DuVal and Marie LesVecque (granddaughter of Judicque duBois) who had issue: Samuel b.1624, Deborah b.1627, Benjamin b.1630, Jean b.1633.

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