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Two Stained-Glass Emblems

Andlau, Lower Alsace
ca. 1420 – Strasbourg, ca. 1506



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From Engraving to Glass: Two new emblems from Peter Hemmel 's Andlau workshop based on Designs by Schongauer

Shield with a Unicorn, Held by a Lady Shield with a Griffin's Foot and Shield with a Cock Held by a Moor

Workshop of Peter Hemmel de Andlau (Andlau, Lower Alsace, ca. 1420 – Strasbourg, ca. 1506) based on designs by the engraver Martin Schongauer. Probably made for Nuremberg.

Dated 1481 and 1495.

Glass-Stained

Pot-metal glass, vitreous paint and lead

Diameter: 31 cm

Provenance: Private collection

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We present two pieces with names and surnames. Both were made by one of the most important stained glass workshops of the 15th century in Central Europe, the one established by Peter Hemmel de Andlau in Strasbourg. Following models by the engraver Martin Schongauer (the main representative of engraving along with Albrecht Dürer), they were commissioned in 1481 and 1495 by the notable patrician families of the Beheim and the Tucher, who, curiously, were portrayed by Dürer himself in the same years.

Two Heraldic Emblems

We are faced with two round stained glass windows, each 31 cm in diameter, depicting heraldic emblems. The oldest one houses a female allegory of Prosperity. The figure is shown sitting on a bench, dressed in a tunic and a cloak with wide, angular folds, and her head is covered by a turban-like headdress. In her right hand she holds an oak branch, while in her left hand she holds a coat of arms bordered by a rampant unicorn in silver on a gold field. Around the figure (and occasionally surpassed by her, in an attempt to give depth to the scene) is a band with the inscription ANNO DOMINI MCCCCLXXXI, in white Latin capital letters on a black background.

The second piece represents a bearded male figure, dressed in the Muslim style of the period, with a short tunic tied at the waist and a turban. The character appears kneeling, carrying a shield in each hand: in his right hand he holds a coat of arms with a split field in silver and gules, crossed by a sable band; in his left hand, he shows a cut field coat of arms, with bands in silver and sable at the top and the bust of a black man on a gold field at the bottom. Like the previous one, the figure goes beyond the frame and enters the perimeter border, which incorporates, in Gothic type (different from the previous one, Latin), an inscription alluding to the families represented by the shields and the date on which DIE BEHAIMB – DIE TURCHER – ANNO DOMINI MCCCCLXXXV was made.

In both cases, the polychromy stands out for the use of white (clothing, flesh tones), silver yellow (hair, coat of arms), red and blue (backgrounds and clothing), as well as green (plants). The state of conservation of the pieces is exceptional, with all the original glass remaining. On the reverse of both there is the same modern cursive inscription scratched with a punch, difficult to read, but surely alluding to one of its previous owners, which determines that at some point they belonged to the same collection.

As for their function, these types of family emblems were frequently mounted occupying the central part of larger stained glass windows (made with transparent leaded glass) that closed the openings of the homes of their promoters.



Fig. 1 Stained glass window with a representation of Prudence and the unicorn's coat of arms. Jaime Eguiguren Art & Antiques



Fig. 2 Stained glass window with coats of arms of the Tucher and Beheim families. Jaime Eguiguren Art & Antiques

For the patrician families of Nuremberg

Thanks to the heraldic emblems and the epigraphy described above, it is possible to link the second of the stained glass windows with the patronage of two of the most important patrician families of the city of Nuremberg. Settled there since 1309, the Tuchers (represented by the coat of arms on the right) played an important role in the politics of the city, as well as in its economic and cultural development. Having sided with the Protestant side, after the acquisition of Simmelsdorf Castle in 1598 they became known as the Tucher family. from Simmelsdorf. They were among the most important patrons of the golden age of art in Nuremberg, around 1500. Some of its members were portrayed by Albrecht Dürer at the time of the stained glass window (among them, Elsbeth Tucher, 1473-1517, Hans Tucher, Felicitas Tucher-née Reiter-1499). In the same year of 1499, Dürer himself painted the coat of arms of the couple (Schlossmuseum Weimar), on the right of which can be seen the same emblem that represents the stained glass (fig. 3). Several contemporary examples of the emblem are known, also in stained glass, such as the one that accompanies the portrait of Lorenz Tucher (in a very



Fig. 3 Family emblem of the Tuchers and Rieters (Albrecht Dürer, 1499, Weimar, Schlossmuseum)

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different style, from the workshop of Michael Wolgemut, 1485, Nürnberg, Germanisches Nationalmuseum, MM811, fig. 4) or the one on deposit at the Victoria & Albert Museum (no. C.101-1934, fig. 5).

The second of the emblems belongs to the Behaim family, and most likely to Michael Behaim, whose coat of arms was also engraved by Albrecht Dürer himself around 1520 (preserved in The National Gallery of Art, 1943.3.3608, fig. 6). One of the best-known representatives of this family was the merchant, astronomer, navigator and geographer from Nuremberg who settled in Portugal, Martin Behaim (1459-1507), who is credited with building the oldest surviving globe.

If the family attribution of this piece is beyond doubt, the same cannot be said of the Prudence stained glass window. The unicorn shield has a more complicated affiliation, since it is a heraldic attribute present in numerous Germanic coats of arms. The absence of an inscription, as is the case with the other example, does not help to shed light on this question either. What does seem clear is that both pieces belonged to different groups; in addition to their different dates, the type of lettering used (classical capitals in this example versus Gothic letters in the previous one) also suggests that they are the result of two different commissions.



Fig. 4 Family emblem of the Tuchers and Rieters (Albrecht Dürer, 1499, Weimar, Schlossmuseum)



Fig. 5 Stained glass with the Tucher blazon (Victoria & Albert Museum, no. C.101-1934).



Fig. 6 Emblem of Michael Behaim (Alberto Dürero, ca. 1520, The National Gallery of Art, 1943.3.3608).

On Designs by Martin Schongauer

There is no doubt about the models used by the workshop to make the stained glass windows. Following a very common practice in the Central European Late Middle Ages, the designs for both windows are taken directly from works in engraving. Because they were easy and quick to reproduce, these engravings were widely circulated and served as inspiration for other artists, including glassmakers. In this case, models by Martin Schongauer (Colmar, ca. 1448 – Breisach, 1491) were used. With more than 116 designs produced from 1470 onwards, Schongauer is, together with Albrecht Dürer, the most relevant and influential engraver of the Late Middle Ages in Germany, often extending his influence to distant territories. Schongauer was a pioneer in the development of engraving, bringing to it an unprecedented richness in the reproduction of surfaces and textures.

The female figure is clearly inspired by his work entitled “Shield with a Unicorn, Held by a Lady” deposited at the Art Institute of Chicago (1944.610, ca. 1480-1490, fig. 7), while the male character copies another titled “Shield with a Griffin's Foot and Shield with a Cock Held by a Moor”, deposited in the same institution 9no. 1956.916, ca. 1475-1495, fig. 8). In the first case, both designs coincide down to the smallest detail (except for the field of the coat of arms, which in the stained glass is decorated with vegetal scrolls while it remains plain in the engraving). However, the engraving of the male figure presents greater differences: while the character is identical, the heraldry has been replaced by the family shields of the Tucher and the Beheim.

There are up to ten known engravings on heraldic themes made by Martin Schongauer, copies of which are now distributed in museums such as the Philadelphia Museum of Art, Museum of Art and the V&A Museum. These were not commissions exclusively for noble families, but rather seem to have been conceived as standard models aimed at a middle-class market: each of the engravings has a unique design, where different characters with a strong allegorical charge (an angel, a Moor, a peasant, a wild man and woman, and two women) hold shields or pairs of shields (stars, lions, swans, and roosters,



Fig. 7 “Shield with a Unicorn, Held by a Lady” (Martin Schongauer, ca. 1480-1490, Art Institute of Chicago, no. 1944.610).



Fig. 8 “Shield with a Griffin's Foot and Shield with a Cock Held by a Moor” (Martin Schongauer, ca. 1475-1495, no. 1956.916).

among others) that, at a given moment, could be exchanged or replaced by the coat of arms of the relevant family (as, in fact, we have been able to see in the case of the stained glass window with the male character). In this way, a much wider public was reached, which would commission pieces with the family heraldry not only from glassmakers, but also from goldsmiths, miniaturists, and other craftsmen, who would adapt the design to each particular case. On the contrary, the fact that the Prudence stained glass window fully reproduces one of Schongauer 's standard designs (without altering its heraldry) would point to its possible decorative function, rather than heraldic, a hypothesis to which the absence of an inscription alluding to any family contributes.

Materialized in the Workshop of Peter Hemmel in Andlau

The style of the stained glass windows is that of the German glassmaker Peter Hemmel de Andlau (ca. 1420-1506). Established next to his workshop in Strasbourg, he was one of the most important glassmakers of the Late Middle Ages. His work is found throughout southeastern Germany, eastern France and Austria. His stained glass windows are characterized by the use of two-tone glass, shaded in iron reds, bright blues, black enamel and silver yellow (obtained from silver salts), chromatic resources that give rise to an increasing attention to detail in the representation of the textures of faces and clothing, all of which are present in our pair of stained glass windows. His work is closely related to painting, frequently using cartoons inspired by designs by Rogier van der Andlau. Weyden, whom I knew through the engravings of the aforementioned Martin Schongauer, as well as Dieric Bouts.

He was a citizen of Strasbourg from 1447, after marrying the widow of a glass painter named Hirtz in 1466. During the following decades he received various commissions in different places (Salzburg, Obernai, Frankfurt) that established him as a consecrated and highly esteemed glassmaker. His early works from the 1460s were strongly influenced by the engravers of the Upper Rhine and by the painting of Kaspar Isenmann. Even in his early works, he is presented as a glass painter who surpassed all his fellow artists not only by his mastery of all the glass painting techniques possible at that time, but also by his outstanding knowledge of perspective, anatomy and landscape. According to most authors, Peter Hemmel 's works are among the most technically perfect ever produced in the field of stained glass. Particularly famous are his portraits of donors, taken from life. His works were highly sought after, were paid for at a very high price and his clients had to wait years for their orders to be completed. Among them was Emperor Maximilian I, to whom he personally presented the stained glass windows of the Church of Our Lady in Tahr (near Hall in Tyrol) in his old age.

The volume of his orders must have increased to such an extent that he was forced, from 1477, to join a cooperative association with four other glassmakers from Strasbourg (Lienhart Spritznagel, Hans von Maursmünster, Theobald von Lixheim and Werner Störer), with whom he formed an important workshop whose production, thanks to his accumulated prestige, was supervised by Hemmel himself, who was also the oldest member. Thanks to the creation of this large workshop, Hemmel participated in numerous large and, at times, remote commissions. However, the precise role played by each of the parties, the way in which the work was divided up or the degree of specialization of each one are questions that are still being studied.

An astonishing number of stained glass windows (both small and large) in an immediately recognisable and relatively homogeneous style are attributed to this Strasbourg workshop-cooperative, not only in the

city of Strasbourg, but also in the regions and cities of Alsace and Lorraine, Frankfurt, Wiener Nestadt, Urach, Tübingen, Freiburg, Lautenbach, Konstanz, Ulm, Augsburg, Nuremberg (the place from which at least one of the windows must have come, where the workshop took over the decoration of the Volckamer window in the church of St. Lawrence in 1481, fig. 9), Munich, Salzburg and Thaur, among many other places.

Of the vast production of this workshop, only two works can be documented as attributed to Hemmel (the Standing Madonna and Child from Obernai, 1474; and the program of the nunnery in Nonnberg, Salzburg) and one to Theobald von Lixheim (window in the transept of Metz Cathedral, 1504). Thus, as with our pair of stained glass windows, the vast output of this workshop-cooperative rests on attributions based on stylistic arguments. All its members had to work in the characteristic style of the master, which was key to the success of the product's commercialisation. This practice became very important in the case of the Strasbourg workshop cooperative, since a considerable degree of stylistic homogeneity had to be maintained between the five associated workshops, so that the collective style replaced the individual hand.

Among the copious production of Hemmel 's workshop, we would like to highlight, due to its relation



Fig. 9 Mystical desposorios of St. Catherine (workshop of Peter Hemmel de Andlau, 1481, Nuremberg, Volckamer window of the church of St. Lawrence).

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to the pieces we are presenting, a series of stained glass windows. In Strasbourg 9Musée de l'Œuvre In the Notre -Dame church, fig. 10) there is a Washing of the Feet (1478-1481) which features the use of silver yellow, the treatment of a very particular type of grisaille-style face and the use of angularly folded cloths, all of which are also visible in the other examples below. The subtlety in the treatment of the white cloths and the arrangement of monochrome backgrounds with decorative patterns appear in a Crucifixion in the church of St Peter and St Paul in Obernai (ca. 1495, fig. 11). All of the above-mentioned techniques can be seen in a pair of stained glass windows depicting St Catherine (fig. 12, with a face particularly similar to that of our Prudence) and the Virgin and Child (fig. 13, 1475-1480, both housed in the Hesse State Museum, Darmstadt). In circular format, we highlight an Annunciation to Mary by God the Father and an angel, from Erbach Castle in Odenwald, although perhaps originally created for the Ulm City Hall (ca. 1480, Kunstgewerbemuseum Berlin, Inv. No. Æ 561, fig. 14), and, finally, a representation of King David playing the harp, from the Collegiate Church of St. George in Tübingen, today in the Landesmuseum. Württemberg (1478, fig. 15).



Fig. 10 Foot bath (workshop of Peter Hemmel de Andlau, 1478-1481, Strasbourg, Musée de l'Œuvre Notre-Dame).

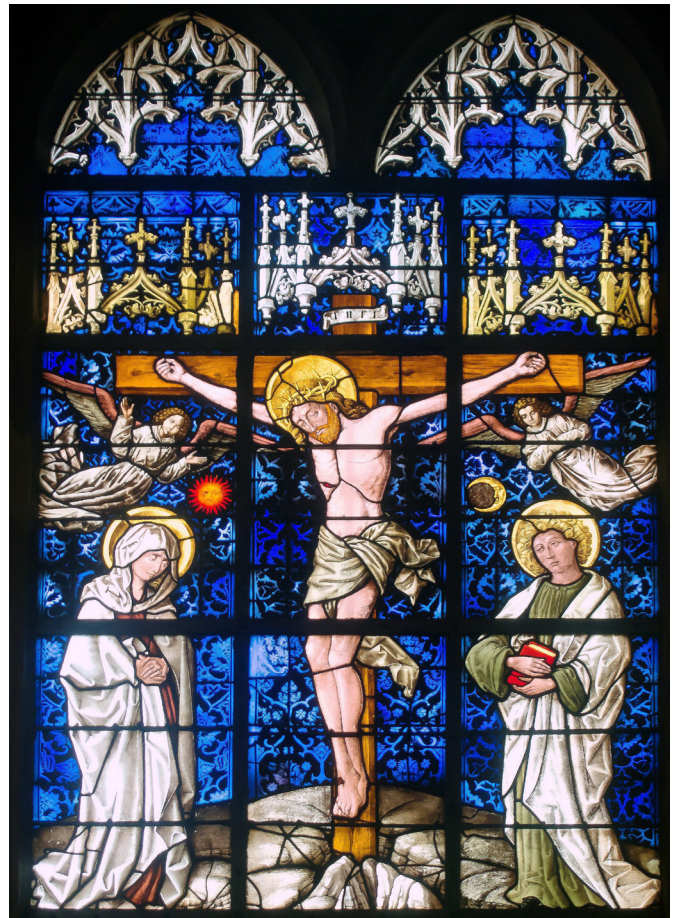


Fig. 11. Crucifixion (workshop of Peter Hemmel of Andlau, Obernai, ca. 1495, church of St. Peter and St. Paul).



Fig. 12. St. Catherine (workshop of Peter Hemmel of Andlau, 1475-1480, Darmstadt, Hesse State Museum).



Fig. 13. Virgin and Child (Idem).



Fig. 14. Annunciation to Mary by God the Father and an angel (workshop of Peter Hemmel von Andlau, ca. 1480, Berlin, Kunstgewerbemuseum, Inv. No. Æ 561).



Fig. 15. King David playing the harp (workshop of Peter Hemmel of Andlau, 1478, Württemberg, Landesmuseum).

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