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The Painting of a Coat of Arms on Shields as a Dispute Between Painters and Shield-makers

Abstract: The present paper deals with the diversity between the crafts of painting and shield making, which overlapped in terms and final products. The paper follows the question of the emergence of armorial signs and the craft of shield-makers. The primary sources for the study are the statutes of the two mentioned craft associations and guilds from Prague, Florence, Siena and Vienna. Treaties about heraldry can help understand artisan practice, especially Bartolus de Sassoferrato's *De insigniis et armis*, which deals with armorial practice and law. By comparing these materials, the limits of a hypothesis are defined from which a general idea of the functioning of the workshops of painters and shield-makers can be drawn. The study is focused mainly on the Prague context in which painters and shield-makers participated and seeks the limits of hypotheses within the framework of European examples. Furthermore, we are looking for commonalities and dissimilarities that lead to a better understanding of the general phenomenon of producing and painting arms - whether on shields or other media.

Keywords: Bartolus de Sassoferrato - Heraldry - Painters - Shields - Shield-makers

Introduction

Italian novelist Franco Sacchetti recorded an anecdotal tale about a man who came to the workshop of the famous painter Giotto di Bondone to get his coat of arms painted on a shield he brought. It is said that the master had never decorated a shield before, but he agreed to the commission. Since the client dealt arrogantly with the master and did not even tell the painter what his coat of arms looked like, Giotto decided to mock him and painted a whole array of armour and weapons on the shield. When the client saw the final result, he angrily accused the master of not making his coat of arms. The master asked what part was missing and suggested that he paint it in. When the

vain man questioned again why he had not painted the correct coat of arms, Giotto replied that since the client was not the King of France or the Duke of Bavaria, he (Giotto) could not immediately associate him with any particular coat of arms (Steegmann, and Biagi 1908, 39-41).

This anecdotal story from the mid-fourteenth century opens many questions about the depiction of coats of arms on shields, which this paper aims to point out and try to answer. To whom did people go to have coats of arms painted on their shields in the fourteenth century? What awareness did the painters have about coats of arms? Were these painters allowed to compose crests themselves, or did they have to follow a set of strict instructions? Were there any specialised painters who dealt primarily with coats of arms? If so, what distinguished them from other painters? We definitely know that in the world of medieval craftsmen, there were artisans called shield-makers. But this answer needs to be revised and raises further questions, such as, can we find out the scope of the shield-makers and what their final product was? Was it the fabrication of the shield or only its decoration? Can other products be classified as part of their production? These questions are relevant not only to the Italian area but also in a European context. In the present paper, we are seeking a diversity between the crafts of painting and shield making, which, until the sixteenth century, overlapped in both their regulations and the final products. The paper follows the question of the emergence of armorial signs and the craft of shield-makers using examples of the statutes of the artisan societies, with a focus on the Prague context in which painters and shield-makers participated. Furthermore, we are looking for commonalities as well as dissimilarities that lead to a better understanding of the general phenomenon of the producing and painting of arms - whether on shields or other media.

The statutes of the two mentioned artisan societies and guilds are an essential source, similar across Europe in their structure and various regulations. Alongside these, the understanding of practice from written sources and artefacts, we included in the analysis Bartolus de Sassoferrato's treatise *De insigniis et armis*, dealing with heraldic practice and law. By comparing these materials, we thus define the boundaries of a hypothesis from which we can get a general idea of the operation of workshops of painters and shield-makers. Historians and art historians often neglect the proximity of the shield-maker and painter crafts, studying them generally separately. However, investigating these crafts together and appraising their relationships can help to gain a deeper understanding of the operation of medieval workshops. The study of painters' associations and guilds is geographically segmented, except for the *Statuta pictorum* (Tacke 2018), an edition of sources on Central European painters' societies. However, due to its focus, this volume omits the essential Italian milieu with its rich source material, which, despite its ge-

ographical difference, would make a critical comparative resource.¹

Painter's statutes and other sources from Prague have been published in editions since the eighteenth century.² At the beginning of the twentieth century, Karel Chytil drew attention to Prague's painters and shield-makers (Chytil 1906), and in the 1990's, Hana Pátková published the edition of the Prague's painter's association book revisited the theme (Pátková 1992; 1996; 1997). Recently, Maria Theisen investigated shield-makers in Prague and Vienna (Theisen 2013). Still, no synthetic study has comprehensively investigated shield-makers and painters from an interdisciplinary perspective, representing both historical and art historical perspectives; a gap in the study of this theme, which the present paper aims to address.

At the beginning of the discussion of shield-makers' products, it is necessary to remind readers of the difference between a coat of arms and a shield. Since coats of arms serve for easy identification, they use a simple system of colours and signs that create a unique emblem by their systematics and combination. Even small changes in the arms could lead to confusion about the bearer, so awareness about heraldry was probably also crucial for the artisans working with coats of arms.³ The arms are depicted in their primary form of a shield, called an *escutcheon*, and it is necessary to distinguish the represented arms from a physical shield. Although the two concepts are closely related, they must be differentiated because a shield can exist without a coat of arms, and a coat of arms does not necessarily take the form of a shield.

The coat of arms, which served to identify its bearer, is close in function to a *portrait*, as Hans Belting suggested. According to him, the parallels between these two terms lie in their meaning and the message to the recipient who looks at the depiction. What is common to the arms and the *portrait* is not only the identification of the displayed person but also the medium, which is the wooden panel (Belting 2011, 62-83). A coat of arms, unlike a *portrait*, was more related to the entire family of the arms owner and carried information about the connection to the family. On the other hand, a *portrait* is primarily associated with a single person (any information about his lineage is shown as a kind of extension).⁴ A comparable principle can be observed in the so-

¹ Equally neglected are the French and British materials, which also include important source and artistic artefacts.

² The oldest books of the Prague painting confraternity (Archive of the National Gallery in Prague, AA 1207, Book of the Prague Painting Brotherhood) were published in the eighteenth century (Jahn 1788, 117–138; Pangerl 1878; Patera and Tadra 1878; Neuwirth, 1891).

³ Since the arms served as an unambiguous identification, heraldic camouflage was also part of medieval society. This topic is particularly emphasised in Arthurian literature. More on this topic (Crane 1997).

⁴ For Belting, the coat of arms operates with a heraldic emblem and the portrait with

called '*political body of the ruler*' (Kantorowicz 2016), whose depiction did not always have to be a reference to the *physical body*, but the *political body*. In the same way, shields (media) carried information or meaning that referred to the supporting information '*body*' - the coat of arms. This was the emblem of an individual, a family, or a wider group of people, i.e., more generally, the emblem of a natural or legal person (Pastoureau 2009; 2018, 18-21). Thus, the display of arms in public (and likewise the depiction of rulers or references to their *political body*) functioned not only as a reference to the local ruler in his physical absence but represented his political personification - the ruler was thus present in a *de jure* sense (Belting 2011, 67).

Heraldry is an essential but complicated aspect of medieval culture, and its little-explored aspect is the transfer of the coat of arms to shields and other objects. The process of shield production itself is, therefore, a network of several parties, similar to the creation of an artefact, which must include the theoretical background of its creators or the rules of its production. The arms and their bearer represent the mentioned relationship's focal point. A critical element of this network were heralds, i.e., people skilled in diplomacy, tournament laws, and the laws of war, who emerged as heraldic experts only in the late fourteenth century.⁵ It was not until the fifteenth century that heralds became the guarantors of armorial law, gaining the privilege of officially granting the arms and composing their design (Belting 2011, 65-82). Other critical elements of this network were shield-makers, painters, and other craftsmen who painted and embroidered the existing coat of arms on objects belonging to the bearer of the arms. In other words, they took over an already 'licensed' representative form of the graphic sign (coat of arms) and used it as a pattern, which they applied, varied, and adapted to the medium. This medium, among other things, were murals, in which arms played an important role, especially in the noble's representative rooms, and paintings of burgher houses, which, although they fall under the painting craft, are not necessarily associated only with the most outstanding painters. However, even within this application, certain rules had to be observed to make its depiction heraldically intelligible.

Why is the relationship between these three subjects (the bearer of the arms, the designer of the arms, and the depicter of the arms) important to our knowledge but difficult to discern? The first reason is that coats of arms (or, more broadly, signs) emerged organically because anyone could bear them regardless of social status (Pastoureau 2018, 195-199). Furthermore, no par-

a physiognomic duplicate. He refers to both as media because in representing the body they require a necessary and appropriate sign through which they are recognised by the viewer and thus require his participation (Belting 2011, 62-64).

⁵ The drawing of an equation between heralds and heraldry is a matter of the late fifteenth century or even more so of the early modern period (Wagner 1960, 1-2, 20-22, 35-40, 46-55).

ticular authority would decide in matters of heraldic quarrels for a long time. The supreme arbiter was, of course, the sovereign, who, at first, delegated armorial issues to the marshal and the court of chivalry, and later, he established specialised institutions with heraldic authority.⁶

Since coats of arms provided a system of substitute designations that needed to be very simple in their original form, the emergence of duplicated coats of arms was only a matter of time. Regardless of whether the duplicity of arms arose accidentally or deliberately, it inevitably led to disputes over the rights of the bearers to given arms. The coats of arms of the fourteenth century had long since ceased to play only a battlefield identification role but also became part of the identity (both individual and collective). They were no longer found only on shields and banners but also, for example, on seals and paintings. The earliest writing on arms and signs was written in the mid-fourteenth century when the number of heraldic disputes grew. It is the mentioned *Tractatus de Insigniis et Armis*, written by the Italian jurist Bartolus de Sassoferrato, which deals with the law of arms but also with the practice of armorial composition.⁷

This treatise became the cornerstone of the theoretical heraldic literature of the Middle Ages.⁸ In the first part of the treatise, Bartolus describes the rights associated with possessing and using arms. Among other things, he provides a juridical interpretation for the legal disputes linked to the duplication of a crest (Vrteř and Munková 2009, Chapter 4-12, 50-90). This part is an interesting insight into Bartolus' legal reasoning since, as the treatise title suggests, it is not only about arms but also about signs. In Bartolus' interpretation, signs can include notarial or workshop marks, i.e., generally signs representing a natural or legal person. In the case of workshop marks, Bartolus gives us a description of a medieval trademark. Such a sign is intended primarily to serve as proof of quality for the buyer of a product (see below) (Vrteř and Munková 2009, 84-90). The second part of the treatise describes how heraldic

⁶ This trend can be traced across whole Latin Europe in the second half of the fourteenth century (Wagner 1960, 56-64).

⁷ Bartolus de Sassoferrato, serving as an advisor to Emperor Charles IV around 1355. For his loyal service, the emperor subsequently granted him a coat of arms, which Sassoferrato mentions in his treatise. His work became popular and widespread, especially after the invention of the printing press. From 1472 to the end of the fifteenth century it was published in print twelve times (Vrteř and Munková 2009, 7-29).

⁸ Among the works based on the *Tractatus de Insigniis et Armis* are *L'arbe de Bataille* by Honoré Bonet (1387), *Tractatus de Armis* by Johannes de Bado Aureo (1392/3), *Le Blason des Couleurs en armes, livrées, & devises* by Jean Courtois (1414) and *De studio militari* by Nicholas Upton (1440). These works were produced in the French, English, and Silesian kingdoms, and heraldic theory was thus primarily the domain of Western and Southern Europe.

figures should be depicted on various media, such as shields, banners, garments, and caparison, but also how they should be painted on murals or engraved on seals. The necessity for a comprehensive description is driven by the complexity of heraldic practice and the ‘reading’ of the coat of arms. The basic and most obvious medium is the shield on which the crest is depicted in its pure form. A problematic case is then, for example, the banner, where the arms must always be directed towards the flagpole so that the emblem is always pointing forward.⁹ However, the whole treatise is not addressed or formulated as an instruction for artisan workshops. Primarily, it is Bartolus’ legal reflection and an attempt to gather various observations of heraldic practice.

So why is this legal theory important for applying crests on physical media? The increasing number of disputes over arms, the demand for writing down heraldic theory, and the subsequent establishment of institutions to oversee armorial rights all lead to the fundamental question: what was the shield-makers’ awareness of heraldic principles?¹⁰ It is, after all, a communication system based on a combination of colours and signs, in which even a change in one element can lead to mistaking the owner of the crest. A great example is the dispute between two English knights (Scrope vs. Grosvenor) at the end of the fourteenth century over their identical coat of arms, *Azure, a bend Or*.¹¹ The litigation at the *Court of Chivalry* dragged on for five years, with one side claiming the antiquity of the arms back to the Battle of Hastings, while the other argued for the crest’s origin dating back to the time of King Arthur. There is a similar mention of an armorial dispute from Prague dated 1350 when the town council, not the Court of Chivalry, settled the dispute, which suggests that it was a quarrel between the burghers.¹² In such conflicts, the role of witnesses who testified to the antiquity of the claim to the coat of arms was absolutely crucial. The legal cases over the right to arms bring us back to the

⁹ Specifically, according to the *Tractatus de Insignis et Armis*: a heraldic figure (e.g. a lion) always points its head to the right, i.e. to the more exalted side. The right side is, of course, the right side of the shield bearer. In the case of a banner, the lion must face the pole of the banner and is thus depicted heraldically correct on one side and mirrored on the other for practical reasons. The right-left reading of heraldry is explained by Bartolus using the example of Hebrew writing. Similarly, he explains the need for mirror reversal of the coat of arms when making seals (Vrteř and Munková 2009, Chapter 13).

¹⁰ It should be noted at this point that the first theoretical heraldic treatises from the fourteenth century recorded the gradual crystallisation of heraldic rules, but it was not until the fifteenth century that they were consistently followed.

¹¹ For the entire record of the trial, see (Nicolas N.H. 2017).

¹² *Conradus Puchler de Nova Civitate de Moravia recepit purchrecht et fatcus est civis Pragensis et dedit XVI gr. luratis. Pro quo Conradus Pogner Polonus et Henricus dictus Chpp fideiusserunt.* (Pátková et al 2011, 367, f. 181r).

question of the makers of the shields. Their potentially erroneous depiction of the crest could have had significant consequences. This is why we can assume that these makers were a group of craftsmen or workshops, who, in addition to the craft itself, probably had to have a basic knowledge of heraldic theory, such as the distinction between tinctures and metals or the system of placing heraldic figures, as discussed by Bartolus. From the theoretical nature of the *Tractatus de Insigniis et Armis*, we are unable to tell what the actual practical part of the commission might have looked like; on the contrary, we can assume that Bartolus was trying to capture and probably codify an already existing practice.

Naturally, the question arises: how relevant can Bartolus' treaties be for the Bohemian and Central European area of the fourteenth century? Existing literature suggests that the earliest surviving *Tractatus* from Bohemia, Austria, Hungary, and part of German lands dates back to the end of the fifteenth century (especially in the form of early prints) (Vrteř and Munková 2009, 25-29). Several indications exist that contradict this previous claim. Firstly, there are two manuscripts deposited in Austria since the Middle Ages, the origin of which is not entirely clear, but we know that they date from the end of the fourteenth century. These two manuscripts probably represent some of the earliest extant versions of Bartolus' *Tractatus*.¹³ Furthermore, the 1994 English edition of Bartolus' writings builds on seven manuscripts from the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries, and editors claim their origins as German or directly Prague manuscripts (Cavallar *et al* 1994; Ramsay 2022). The last indirect clue is the later treatise called *Tractatus de Armis* by Johannes de Bado Aureo, written for the English Queen Anne of Bohemia, which is mainly inspired by Bartolus' *Tractatus de Insigniis et Armis*.¹⁴ Recent scholarship challenges earlier claims of British scholars that Bado Aureo was an author of insular origin, and instead comes up with the eventuality that Bado Aureo was possibly connected to the Luxembourg court before his arrival to England (Moll 2018, 28-31; Jauernig 202, 74-81). From these indications, we can seriously consider the relevance of Sassoferrato's treatise also for the Central European area of the late fourteenth century.

¹³ Österreichischen Nationalbibliothek, cod. 5513 - dating (1399/1409), Klosterneuburg Augustiner-chorherrenstift, cod. 194 - (1395-1399).

¹⁴ Johannes de Bado Auero mentions the unknown master Francis de Foveis as his main source, and Bartolus de Sassoferrato is de facto not mentioned. However, the vast majority of Bado Aureo's writing is based on the work of Sassoferrato, and several variants of the writing mention a passage about the granting of the arms to Bartolus de Sassoferrato by Emperor Charles IV. (Jones 1983, 85; Müller 1989, 18-19).

Shield-makers in Prague

The term *shield-maker* refers to various professions in the Middle Ages and was often confused and identified with painters. Contemporary scholarship also leans more towards interpreting the term *schilder* as a secular painter (Smrž 2019, 223; Theisen 2013, 14-15). The term *schiltaere* also points to this issue and refers more to a painter or an armorial painter (*maler, wappenmaler* - Lexer 1992), which in turn refers to the term used in Wolfram von Eschenbach's poem *Parzival* (Tacke 2018, II.32, 105): *Even the Lady of the Tidings tells us of a work where a painter (schiltaere), whether from Maastricht or Cologne, has succeeded in portraying of both steed and hero.*¹⁵ In the Prague environment, shield-makers are referred to by German terms *schilder*, *schilter* Czech term *štítaiři, pavézníci* or by the Latin term *clyppeari* (Pátková et al 2011, 215, f. 1v) and *puchler*.¹⁶

The shield-makers appear for the first time in Prague sources in a list of nineteen Old Town professions from the 1320s.¹⁷ Subsequently, they appear alongside painters as founders of the St. Luke's Brotherhood, established on the 13th of December in 1347 based on a city council charter and appointed by the Old Town's mayor and sworn officials.¹⁸ Every year on St. Luke's Day (17th of October), all the masters and their wives were supposed to meet for Vespers in St. Mary's Church (*kostel Panny Marie na Louži*) to present a decorated candle, recognisable as a donation by the painters' guild. The painters and shieldmakers have chosen St. Luke as their patron saint, and they wish to celebrate Mass on his feast day, as he first painted a picture of the Virgin Mary.

The difference between painters and shield-makers in Prague is further defined by charters issued during the second half of the fourteenth century, which regulated and specified their craft and mutual relations. The shield-makers were probably originally active throughout the whole Prague agglomeration, but initially grouped in the Old Town. By the 1360s, they were

¹⁵ (Pokorný 2000, 61) *Parzival*, Book III, verse 158, lines 13-16. Confer (Lachmann 1833): *Von Kölne noch von Maastricht kein schiltaere entwürfe in baz, denn alser ufem orse saz.*

¹⁶ *Conradus Puchler de Nova Civitate de Moravia recepit purchrecht et fatcus est civis Pragensis et dedit XVI gr. luratis. Pro quo Conradus Pogner Polonus et Henricus dictus Chpp fideiusserunt.* Ibidem, p. 229, f. 11v.

¹⁷ (Pátková et al 2011, 53; Smrž 2019, 40), Prague City Archives, Manuscripts, ms. 986, f. 1v. Paleographically dated 1324-1330.

¹⁸ (Chytil 1906, 1; Pátková 1996, vii). The charter, which also contained the statutes, has not survived to this day, although it probably still existed at the beginning of the seventeenth century. Prague, *National Museum Archives*, F 142, ANG, AA 1218b, the charter of the Old Town Mayor and Council from 14 December 1347.

already situated along the New Town walls¹⁹ or, rather, one of its towers. The so-called Painter's (Shieldmaker's) Tower was located close to the Church of the Assumption and Charlemagne until the nineteenth century²⁰, and because the shield-makers were settled close to this tower on the city periphery, they were freed from obligations towards the city. However, they had to provide their services to the marshal or ruler on request, which probably involved making shields and pavises, painting standards and other armour, as well as decorating and painting them. The statutes did not distinguish these shield-makers' products from the artistic products of painters. However, later charters suggest that the scope of shield-making was broader and overlapped in some respects with the painter's craft. These charters arose, among other things, precisely because of repeated disputes between shield-makers and painters and granted shield-makers a monopoly on the production of the shield craft.

Prague's charter of Emperor Charles IV from the 16th of January 1365²¹ not only relocated shield-makers to the New Town walls but also defined the craft of *schilterwerk* as the making and painting of shields and pavises, decorating weapons of all kinds, harnesses and other tournament equipment. According to the charter, the painters, identified as *geistlich maler*, were not allowed to engage in shield-making. For this very reason, the shields found with the painters may have been confiscated. If a foreign shield-maker wished to settle in Prague, he had to produce and present to the masters for inspection within four weeks following tournament equipment (*eine Garnitur Stechzeug anfertigen nämlich*): saddle (*einen Sattel*), chanfron (*einen Rosskopf*), leather barding/caparison/leader cuirass (*ein Brustleder*) and shield (*einen Schild*). If this work was faultless, he was assigned a tower or workshop.²² If he moved away from Prague without the masters' awareness and subsequently worked elsewhere, he had to regain his master's right on his return, as if he were a foreigner. The charter states that anyone who made *schiltwerk* products and had an assigned tower had to sell his work only under his tower. If his product appeared elsewhere, it could be confiscated. Finally, the charter records that the shield-makers painted shields and their other products, which shows the width of their craft.

¹⁹ Gunners, whose products are confused with the crossbow-maker, were also moved to the walls. (Smrž 2019, 327-331).

²⁰ (Kupka 2008, 89-90, photo 91), a contemporary photograph of the tower taken around 1890.

²¹ (Tacke 2018, IV. 88-3, 261-264), Archives of the National Gallery in Prague, ANG, AA 1219/37.

²² It is not clear from the previous charter whether it was one or more towers, but this charter already mentions them in the plural.

The charter thus defined the form of the shield-makers' product, and set out the circumstances of their sale. This privilege from 1365 was subsequently confirmed on the 6th of January, 1380 by Wenceslas IV, who regulated the statutes for painters. Later, the king expressed his opinion in the charter on the dispute between painters and shield-makers, described as "*protracted, caused by competition in the production of shield-maker's goods*" (Pátková 1996, viii).

Charter issued by the council of Prague's New Town from the 16th of November 1387²³ This charter was issued for glaziers, painters, and pavise-makers (i.e., shield-makers); it repeats the previously mentioned regulations and states that their violation shall be punished by a fine. The articles also deal with such issues as the place of sale, the conditions for obtaining mastery, the provisions for apprentices, and duties towards the town. The charter is very similar to the Italian ones, including the same professions. According to this charter, the artisans should practise their craft in their workshops (again located along city walls). This regulation aimed to allow customers to easily find the producer and complain about the goods, since previously it was possible to sell similar products anywhere and the seller was then untraceable. Further, it stated that if an apprentice painted for himself and not for the workshop, he would be sanctioned with a fine and confiscation of the goods. Both of the latter regulations relate to the recommendation of chapter twelve in Bartolus' *Tractatus*. Similarly, the regulation of journeymen states that they may work only under one master. This statement is closely formulated as in the Sienese statutes of the painters' guild.

The royal charter modifying the statutes of the St Luke's Society dated the 30th of March 1392.²⁴ The last Prague charter repeats the determination of the relationship between shield-makers and painters of images, but furthermore, it describes their dispute in detail.²⁵ The shield-makers of Prague's New Town complained to King Wenceslaus IV about the *geistlich maler* from Prague's Old Town, for they did not abandon painting the 'shield-craft', which they had no right for. The shield-makers also complained that the *geistlich maler* did not allow them to sell their paintings (*ide bylde*) at fairs in the Old Town. The shield-makers appealed to the privileges granted to them by Emperor Charles IV (1365), and Wenceslaus himself (1380, 1387). In order to settle the dispute, Wenceslaus decreed that *geistlich maler* were henceforth forbidden to produce 'shield products' (*and to paint this work, which is called*

²³ (Tacke 2018, IV. 88-5, 268-269), Prague, National Museum archive, Topographical collection F, F 178.

²⁴ (Tacke 2018, IV. 88-6, 270-271), National Archive in Prague, Archives of Czech monasteries abolished under Joseph II (1115-1760), ŘKřb Zderaz, 197.

²⁵ (Tacke 2018, IV. 88, 220-444, 270-271) Kept in NA, AZK ŘKřb Zderaz 197.

the shield-work and the shields),²⁶ which belonged to secular matters - and thus in the hands of the shield-makers. The shield-makers could, therefore, paint on helmets and shields without obstacles. Lastly, the shield-makers were allowed to sell their paintings (*by/de*) at the fairs in the Old Town without hindrance, and what are among the most interesting notes, they were also allowed to paint everyone's house with their coat of arms or emblem.

The development of the New Town shield-makers was increasingly directed towards a painters' society, or rather towards an organisation with a specific painting craft. It should also be recalled that alongside painters and shield-makers, there were also glaziers or illuminators,²⁷ and the painting craft's diversity does not seem surprising at a time of increasing commissions.²⁸ A more varied assortment of the painting craft, also recorded in the statutes of the painters' association, can also be found among painters and shield-makers in the Italian area.²⁹ The statutes of the Italian painters' associations are close to the Bohemian analogy in structure as well as in the tendency for the painting crafts to intermingle.

Analogies

Using the same base materials (wood, leather, pigments, etc.) to prepare final products led many crafts to collaborate and join collective associations and organisations where access to these resources would be easier. Furthermore, the primary purpose of the fraternity³⁰ was to practice devotion and provide salvation for the members, which entailed the obligation to provide burial and, eventually, a funeral mass. Specific nuances can then be traced

²⁶ *zuarbeyten und zumalen sulche werk, das schiltwerk heisset und die schilter*, (Tacke 2018, IV. 88-6, 270-271).

²⁷ For more about the Illuminators see (Theisen 2013).

²⁸ Václav Vladivoj Tomek compared one hundred and forty-three crafts listed in the Trojan Chronicle with crafts mentioned in other Prague-related sources, and discovered that fifty-one of those mentioned in the Chronicle were not identifiable elsewhere. Based on this result, he concluded that the production and specialisation of crafts was more developed at the time of the translation, dated around 1400 (Tomek 1869, 69-78). However, Anežka Vidmanová and Helena Businská then proved that the Czech translator of the thirteenth-century Latin text may have invented some crafts in an attempt to approximate the size and wealth of Prague (precisely through examples of various crafts) to Troy (Vidmanová and Businská 1962, 263-267).

²⁹ Not only the structure of the statute and the character of the painters' society is close, but also the technology of painting, as recent research has shown (Dáňová and Chlumská 2017; Pokorný and Skalický 2023).

³⁰ (Pátková 2000, 8–9; Pátková 2005, 11–18). Czech and Italian research agrees on the gradual transformation from brotherhood to guild. Confer (Salvestrini 2015, 4-5).

in the association, which implies that they are linked precisely to order and use the standard raw material. Now let us look more closely at the most common crafts with which shield-makers were associated in a common guild, with which the use of the same raw material or medium linked them. Thus, in Wrocław, we find painters in the association of carpenters and goldsmiths. In Bologna, we find saddlers, cutters, and shield-makers united by leather as the material they use together (Pini 2002, 96).

This confusion and overlapping of crafts and the often complex identification of their products can be seen in the example of painters and shield-makers as late as the sixteenth century. In Magdeburg, in 1541, the local guild of shield-makers, saddlers, and glass-makers approached Cardinal Albrecht, Archbishop of Magdeburg and Mainz, with a request for a more precise definition of the meaning of the terms shield-maker (*schilder*) and saddler (*satteler*), as well as the relevant fields of activity of these crafts, which the Cardinal granted.³¹ According to the privilege, ‘*schilder*’ was to be understood as anyone who produced paintings and carvings in oil and watercolours, regardless of whether they were paintings or coats of arms. Similarly, anyone who made carvings or stained glass, as was already customary – as mentioned in the privilege – was to be referred to as a *schilder*.³² From this example, it is clear that painting activities also belonged under the occupational area of ‘shields’.

The gathering of several related crafts into associations and guilds that are linked by the use of the same raw materials or work with the same media can also be found in the Italian environment. In Florence, guilds were formed during the second half of the thirteenth century, and painters were here alongside apothecaries in one of the leading guilds – *Arte dei Medici e Speziali*.³³ The collaboration of the members was motivated by the fact that they shared working materials with other members (e.g., during the preparation of paints). In 1315, statutes relating to the trade in metals, glue, white lead, and dyes (“*azzurum, cinabrum et alios colores*”) were created under the guild (Salves-

³¹ The charter of 14 January 1541 was supposed to be a translation and reaffirmation of the guild’s privileges, which they had already received in 1197 from Archbishop Ludolph and which were confirmed by Bishop Frederick on 4 July 1464.

³² (Tacke 2018, III.67-3), Landeshauptarchiv Sachsen-Anhalt, Magdeburg, Copialbuch 73, fol. 137r-138v (old numbering: fol. 128r-129v), Privilege of Cardinal Albrecht von Mainz for shieldmakers and saddlers of 14 January 1541, 455-457. A saddler was anyone who made what belonged to a horse, whether saddles, bridles or harnesses. The products they make must not be supplied by anyone who has not joined their guild. In Magdeburg, painters were still called shield-makers in the seventeenth century and were associated with saddlers.

³³ (Salvestrini 2015, 6). This organisation was maintained until the establishment of the *Accademia del Disegno* (1585).

trini 2015, 6). The painters' association later used this basis for their statutes, established a few decades later. Given the other professions that the guild shielded, the idea was not to distinguish painters from the other crafts but to bring together those covered by the evangelist St Luke - i.e. doctors and painters. His supposed activity as a physician suggested that he had expertise in physiology, botany and natural science, which seemed compatible with the ability to produce and then mix and distribute pigments (Salvestrini 2015, 3). A painters' association dedicated to this patron saint of painters was also founded in Lucca – the *Compagnia e Fraternità di San Luca*.³⁴

The statutes of the Florentine painters' organisation, the *Arte dei Medici e Speciali*, also indicate that painters of paintings still resembled what we would nowadays call room painters (it. *gli imbianchini* - room painters x it. *i dipintorii* - painters), which corresponds to the wide range of the painting craft and its proximity to that of the shield-makers. Vasari later proposes to include in the budget for the frescoes in the Florentine house *manouali* (manual laborers) and *muratori* (plasterers, plasterers) to prepare the scaffolding, the *arriccio* and *intonaco*, three *maestri pictori* (painters with professional status) to create the drapery, the sky, the background and the clay and wax models of the figures, two more *maestri* to make the ornaments, the decorations, the background and the clouds, and to transferring the cartoons, in addition to two *garzoni* (apprentices?) to grind the paints (Bambach 1999, 2).

The statutes further state that disputes often arose between those who practised '*the craft of painting or drawing*' over the taking of commissions from others (Salvestrini 2015, 9). Also, the production of sacred images was possible only with permission from the association's leadership, the so-called Four, who administered the association. These Four were elected for six months, with elections in April and October, without the possibility of immediate re-election in the following two rounds, a system derived to some extent from local government (Salvestrini 2015, 9). Again, this system is analogous to the Prague painter's association.

Besides the painters included in the guild of apothecaries, shield-makers also appear in Florence as part of the guild with harness makers and sad-

³⁴ The exact time of its foundation is now dated by Italian research to 1339, since similarly to Prague, only some charters have been preserved, and at the same time, it is not the first association of painters, but rather the first documented association of painters. The earliest charter, probably recording the older legal regulations of the *Compagnia e Fraternità di San Luca*, dates from 1386 (18 October, the feast of St. Luke) with regulations that had already been modified in 1395. The original statutes were drawn up around the 1340s by twenty-five wise and prudent men who united under the name of St. Luke the Evangelist, and 'to his praise and honour' to invoke the salvation of the souls united (Salvestrini 2016, 6-7).

dlers – *L'Arte de Sanolacciani e Coreggiai e Scudai*.³⁵ Their specialisation is indicated in their statutes published between 1301 and 1309, and, like the other guilds, they were revised and supplemented in 1342, 1415, and 1501 (Edgcumbe Staley 1906, 405). Those enrolled in the guild had to begin their career as disciples, and at eighteen, they took an examination. Only if they passed did they get the title of master, thus earning them the right to open a workshop to produce the speciality they applied for in the examination. Although after the exams, they specialised in manufacturing only a specific piece of armour and could thus work in their specialised workshop, they could also be employed within a large workshop in which they were given work according to their expertise (Merlo 2022, 196). Saddlers were organised into six classes: makers of saddles and harnesses (for heavy goods transport and stirrups); makers of reins and bridles; goldsmiths and silversmiths of horse spurs and armour; saddle and frame makers (all wood); those who covered wooden work with leather; and painters and saddle decorators.

Shieldmakers were also divided into several specialisations: metal frame makers; wood-frame turners; leather stretchers and liners; and painters and relief painters (Edgcumbe Staley 1906, 407-408).

Several types of shields are typical for medieval Florence: the *Rotella*, a round shield; the *Scudo*, an oblong shield; the *Broccchiere*, a small shield worn on the arm and convex; the *Targa*, a large square or round shield; and the *Pavese*, a shield that covered the entire body (Edgcumbe Staley 1906, 407-408). They were made using materials such as iron, copper, wood, and leather, usually in combination. A speciality of Florentine shield-makers was the tournament shields, which were often richly decorated with paintings or reliefs (*gesso*) or inlaid designs in wood and metal and were often decorated by artists of the first rank (Edgcumbe Staley 1906, 405).

The shield-makers then have it directly anchored in their statutes that no one may make signs, i.e. signboards (*signare*) for anyone who is not a member of the said crafts, nor may create a signboard for someone who is not a member of any city guild. This regulation can be explained as a protection of the guilds, which are bound to each other by rules and allow only established craftsmen in Florence to cooperate and offer their services. Other regulations concern the procedures for making shields, which some shield-makers practised (prohibition of the use of tin nails *clovos de stagno*, prohibition of certain types of leather, and the procedure for coating them on shields).³⁶

In Florence, as elsewhere, painting and shield-making were interwoven. In

³⁵ This guild belonged to the *Arti Minori* and formed one of the nine specialised workshops (Camerani Marri 1960).

³⁶ The ban on working with pewter is also mentioned in Wrocław. If such work was found, it was confiscated, and a fine was paid - two-thirds to the city and one-third to the guild. The shield had to be made of good beech wood, and covered with good leather.

the thirteenth century, many painters in Italian municipalities received commissions to decorate the outside of shields, including famous artists,³⁷ as the famous Sacchetti novella at the beginning of this article shows (Puccini 2008, 196-198).

Further evidence of this intermingling of professions is found in the 1316 statutes of the Florentine painters of the *Arte Medici e Speciali* forbidding the drawing or painting of the arms and insignia of any tyrant or public enemy or rebel against the Commune and people of Florence and the Guelph party.³⁸ Defined by the Latin term *designare*, it applies by statute to painters as well as to the related craft of painting. For coats of arms and painted *insignia*, the decree of the 1st of February 1291 applied, prohibiting “*tenere arma pietà vel insignia alicuius vel aliquorum, seu alicuius domi vel casati civitatis vel districtus.... sub pena magnatibus libr. CC, popularibus libr. C*” (Fiorilli 1920, 5-74, 23). Similarly to earlier, it states that painters were allowed to paint coats of arms since the regulation refers to the charter regulating the status of painters and apothecaries.

According to source records, a similar structure of painting statutes with a division of painting specialisations was in effect in nearby Siena, where many well-known painters worked. They describe that painters took both municipal and private commissions and could represent various positions, from the head of a commission to an assistant painter commissioned only for partial work.³⁹ Guilds were established in Siena during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, governed by priori or rettori, and had their own seats and tribunals. The internal division of the guilds was never definitively adopted, and crafts were grouped not by decree but by their affinities – as in Florence. After the reforms of 1355-1356, twelve craft guilds were directly involved in the city’s administration for a short period. Unfortunately, even here, many of the documents have not survived. Fortunately, one exception is the oldest statutes from 1355, published in an edition in 1854-56 (Milanesi ed. 1856).

In the Siena archive, the book of the statutes of the crafts, which was continuously supplemented and contains a list of members at the end, is pre-

³⁷ (Merlo 2022; 244), confer (Cervini 2011, 376).

³⁸ *Item, quod nullus de dieta arte possit, audeat vel præsumat desingnare vel facere in pennone, scuto vel alibi per se vel alium vel alios insingnia alicuius tyranni seu publici inimici vel rebellis Comunis et Populi Florentie et Partis Guelfe; nec desingnare vel facere aliquam ymaginem seu conium alicuius monete, sine licentia officialium ad hoc per Communem Florentie deputatorum, sub pena librarum decem fl. parv. et plus et minus arbitrio consilium seu officialis predicti, considerata ofensione quam fecerit. Et quod supra dicitur de licentia intelligatur quod cum licentia possint desingnare vel facere ymaginem vel conium alicuius monete.* (Vallecchi 1922, 44-50, 48), Statuto speciale per dipintori e artefici affini, 8. 6. 1316.

³⁹ (Bomford 1989; Maginnis 1995, 25-29; Maginnis 2001; David 2001).

served.⁴⁰ Its form is, therefore, very close to the Prague Book of the painting fraternity, not only in its structure but also in some of its regulations. The Sienese statutes, like the Florentine ones, describe how to handle ingredients and how to dispose of and offer products made from them under the threat of heavy penalties.⁴¹ Even here, within the painters' statutes, we find another specialisation of painters (*dipintore*), that of painters of figures, walls and weapons/signs (*dipintore di figure o d'arme o di mura*).⁴²

For insight into the operation of the workshop and the relationship of the members or commission to the master in charge of the workshop, there is clause no. XVII,⁴³ according to which it is forbidden to distract a journeyman from the work assigned to him. As Italian scholarship confirms, the intertwining of the work commitments of journeymen and artists was common here, and their role in one project may have been at a different hierarchical level than in the other (David 2001, 86). The participation of painters in individual commissions for short periods - and thus the possibility of 'switching' from commission to commission - is encountered in Siena during the fourteenth century.⁴⁴ This regulation also corresponds to the necessity of adopting the style of the 'leading painter' in charge of the commission and accepting his 'style' anyway. This procedure is also de facto described in Cennino Cennini's theoretical treatise *Il Libro dell'Arte* (Cennini 2015), which also recommends following the designs of only one master (the workshop leader). Collaboration between masters on multiple commissions was, therefore, common, and not only in Siena. On a given commission, one leader was appointed, and the other hired painters had to adapt their style to the commission.⁴⁵

Bartolus' text also provides an interesting view of such a workshop environment and its relationships. In chapter 12, he discusses the question of

⁴⁰ Archivio di Stato di Firenze, *Arte dei medici e speciali*, 2, f. 46v. Confer (Staley 1906, 236).

⁴¹ In the original, they forbid the sale of medicines outside of guild members. *Che niuno, che non abbia giurato all' arte, non possa tenere a vendere cose medicinali*, (Statuto degli Speciali della Repubblica di Siena - 1355).

⁴² (Milanesi 1856, 4, Cap. VIII and 19, Cap. XLV).

⁴³ (Milanesi 1856, 8, Cap. XVII): *Che neuno ardisca di lusinghare o sottrarre alcuno lavorente altrui. Ancho ordiniamo, che neuno dipintore ardisca overo presuma da tentare, overo lusingare, o sottrarre neuno lavorente, el quale fusse posto co' neuno dipintore ad anno o a mese , per volerlo tollere a quel cotale con cui fusse posto , per qualunque cagione sia ; se già non fusse di volontà di colui che tenesse el detto lavorente , come per colui che '1 sottraesse ; e cagia in quella medesima pena quando la colpa venisse da lui : però chi contrafacesse paghi xxv lire.*

⁴⁴ On this issue more (Maginnis 1995).

⁴⁵ Such working relationships are defined by the term *compagnia*, referring to temporary collaborations and short-term associations of artists (Maginnis 1995).

the inheritance of marks (trademarks) in a divided society and also mentions artisanal marks: ‘... *and in that case all those who are in the same workshop can use the same brand, as if the master of that workshop approved these products...*’⁴⁶ This example also suggests following the style of the workshop master or commission leader, while the final product output in the workshop must always be of the same quality as if it were made by the master himself - or is viewed as such. This, therefore, relates to copyright and the style to which the final product is tied. The Siene regulation, however, suggests that painters and journeymen sought to participate in multiple commissions, each of which may have involved different relationships and formal ties. Also, a recurring regulation in the younger Prague New Town statutes also forbids masters from interfering with another master’s work or from running journeymen between workshops (Heisslerová 2016, 49). This may be adopting an older regulation or attempting to prevent a common practice.

A final point of note for displaying coats of arms and painting them in space is discussed in the final chapter of the *Tractatus de Insigniis et Armis*. Bartolus describes how coats of arms should be oriented and reoriented in a room, both on the walls and on the ceilings and floors, to respect the heraldic rules and the hierarchy of space. This concerned not only the depiction of the *escutcheon*, but also of the characters, since the coats of arms represent them. His recommendation thus applies to the overall composition of the mural, both within a single field and the entire space in which the mural with coats of arms is located. This practice must have been familiar to shield-makers and painters who worked in prominent workshops and *compagnies*. This could correspond, for example, to the representative space at Tangermünde Castle, whose original decoration is preserved only in the description of the general layout of the space.⁴⁷ A similar example is the decoration of the Karlštejn staircase. There were depictions of the coats of arms of Emperor Charles IV and John of Luxembourg, which have survived in an uncoloured younger version in the form of a drawing in the Wölfenbutel manuscript.⁴⁸ We are informed about the original colour scheme of the Karlštejn Castle mural paintings by the small letters in the manuscript,⁴⁹ which indicate the colours of parts of the coats of arms and robes of the depicted figures, which were commonly used in fifteenth-century armorials as part of unfinished label designs (*escutch-*

⁴⁶ ... *isto casu omnes, qui stant in una statione, possunt uti isto signo, quasi magister principalis istius stationis approbet illa opera...* (Vrteř and Munková 2009, 90).

⁴⁷ (Bobková 2004, 150-151; Wetter 2006, 346-349).

⁴⁸ Herzog August Bibliothek, Wolfenbüttel, ol. 16v, Cod. 60.5. Aug. 2.

⁴⁹ Letters are the initials of colours in vernacular languages. For France and the British Isles, it is French; for Central Europe, it is German. Some colours may have specific designations. For example, green is denoted by V (*vert*) in French, while in German a lime leaf is sometimes used instead of the letter G (*Grüne*).

eon).⁵⁰ Despite the fact that the armorial and Wolfebüttel manuscripts are younger works, it can be assumed that this ‘preparatory marking system of colours’ was already in operation in the craft and painting workshops working with coats of arms on various media in the fourteenth century.⁵¹

Conclusion

The story from the beginning of this article was primarily intended to amuse a medieval reader with the commissioner’s foolishness and arrogance. The anecdote reveals the range of painting specialisations and the overlapping issue in the terminology of painters and shield-makers, often caused by the similarity of their final products. Particularly in the Italian milieu, painters (*dipintori*) could be described as those who painted altars but also as those who painted walls, decorated shields, standards or saddles, and other craftsmen’s products.⁵²

The work of the shield-makers consisted of decorating and depicting coats of arms, varying them on similar media, such as wooden panels or murals, and using existing designs. In contrast, the craft of painters is more associated with the subjects and compositions they created themselves. This artistic process involved creating (*creatio*) a new composition/work, which is quite different from adopting a given form of a coat of arms.

However, this issue of shield-makers is also interesting, for it shows the common practice of ‘order processing’ in fourteenth-century workshops. The example shown in the anecdote is important because it reveals that although Giotto did not usually decorate shields (this was even his first commission of the kind), he did not hesitate to take up such a job. Cases such as this example could fuel disputes between shield-makers and painters, lead to rivalries, and force shield-makers to argue over the definition of their craft. However, we have evidence that huge painting workshops (such as these operated on the Karlštejn castle) depicted coats of arms and were familiar with heraldic practice.⁵³

Finally, the story shows that the fourteenth-century heraldic issue in its entirety was a complex and unsettled topic. The second half of the fourteenth

⁵⁰ Example from late fifteenth-early sixteenth century: London, British Library, Harley MS 4632 (Book of badges); Coll. Of Arms – CoA Vincent N 152 (Armorial of Arthur Tudor).

⁵¹ These marks were commonly used in the painting environment in the late Middle Ages, and it is possible to assume that their marking system may have originated from the heraldic environment, as evidenced by the choice of the language of abbreviations for the colours. Little attention has been paid to this topic to date, and it should be subjected to more in-depth research in the future.

⁵² The painting of the coat of arms was then paid extra by the client (Origo 2017, 230).

⁵³ Jauernig and Uchytlová 2023, 52-55.

century can be described as a period of heraldic boom across Latin Europe in which increased disputes over the right to the coat of arms led to the necessity to codify heraldic law and practice (Bartolus de Sassoferrato and other theorists) or even institutionalise them (Court of Chivalry, heralds as guarantors of the right of arms). Secondly, the disputes over the exclusive right to depict arms (between painters and shield-makers) led to the demand to specify the final products and to a more straightforward definition of the various painting specialisations, i.e., in guild statutes and charters.⁵⁴

The question of the coat of arms owners and creators of the crest is mutually related. Without the proper knowledge of the heraldic theory, there was a risk that the artisan depicted the arms incorrectly. This mistake could cause duplicity of crests and lead to struggles to the right about the coat of arms. So far, these crafts have been examined separately, but the research has also neglected the theoretical aspect of armorial depiction - this connection is, however, essential for understanding the examined topic. Based on written sources, these conclusions can help to study material with depicted arms not only on murals or shields but also on articles of daily use.

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⁵⁴ The crafts were generally institutionalised then and formed into associations that would secure their economic and socio-economic status within the cities.

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