STM 1987

Music in Watermarks

By Jan Olof Rudén

Music in Watermarks[*]

By Jan Olof Rudén

The study of watermarks as an aid to sorting and dating music manuscripts is nothing new to musicology and needs no further explanation here. What has not yet attracted the attention of musicologists is that the reproduction of musical instruments as watermarks is yet another field of music iconography. That musicologists have not devoted attention to this field before might be explained by the poor representation of an object given by a watermark resulting from the imprint of a thin wire in the wet paper. Even if the maker of the wire mark had the best intentions, the material he worked with did not allow precision.

Compared to other pictorial representations there are narrower chronological limits for watermarks: the watermark as such in European paper—which is the only paper to contain watermarks as we know them—did not appear until about 1280. Prior to that date no musical subjects were used as watermarks.

With these limitations in mind, several questions arise: what are the motifs? Are the instruments the main subject or just an attribute to the motif? Is there a symbolic meaning in choosing the instrument as a watermark? Is there chronological accordance between the watermark and the actual appearance of the instrument? What about geographical distribution?

As we shall see, the term "instruments" has a wide connotation including both sound-producing and tone-producing instruments.

In the thick volumes of watermark reproductions there are very few musical instruments—only about 15 motifs even when including supplemental material from unpublished sources.[1] This is a clear indication that in the wealth of watermarks

[1] I am indebted to Edo Loeber, Hilversum and Wolfgang Schlieder, Deutsche Bücherei, Leipzig for supplementing unpublished watermarks. The references are as follows:

Briquet, C. M., Les filigranes. Jubilee ed. Amsterdam 1968 = Br.
Decker, V., Dejiny rucnej vyroby papiera na Slovensku. 1982.
Deutsche Bücherei, Papierhistorische Sammlung, Deutscher Platz, DDR-7010 Leipzig = D. Büch.
Eineder, G., The ancient paper mills of the former Austro-Hungarian empire and their watermarks. Hilversum 1960.
Fiskaaa, H. – Nordstrand, O. K., Paper and watermarks in Norway and Denmark. Amsterdam 1978.
Gavell, Th. – Miller, G., A catalogue of American Watermarks, 1690–1835. N.Y. & London 1979.
Heawood, E., Watermarks, mainly of the 17th and 18th centuries. Hilversum 1950.
Laucevicius, E., Paper in Lithuania XV–XVIII centuries. Vilnius 1967.
Adam Lewenhaupt's tracings of watermarks. (Manuscript in the National archive, Stockholm.) = LEW
Lindt, J., The paper mills of Berne and their watermarks. 1465–1859. Hilversum 1964.
The Nostitz papers. Hilversum 1956.
Piccard, G., Wasserzeichen Horn. Findbuch VII. Stuttgart 1979.
Shorter, A., Paper mills and paper makers in England. 1495–1800. Hilversum 1957.

music has almost no place at all. This fact is emphasized when you learn that very long-lived motifs like the Bell and the Post horn have a purely symbolic meaning, the Bell designating a paper format and the Post horn the use as post paper.

The drawings accompanying this article are accurate only in the representation of the music motif. The original size of the watermarks has been diminished and the countermarks have been disregarded.

1. The Bell

Br 3994 (1368)   Br 4033 (1397)   Picc (1418)   D Büch (1424)   D Büch (1707)   D Büch (1743)
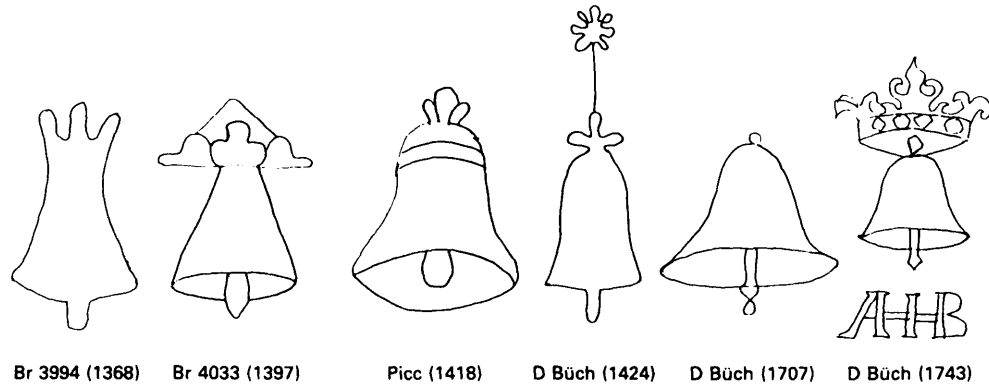
This is the earliest watermark to represent music. It appears as early as 1317 in paper from Fabriano, one of the places where watermarks first came into use around 1280. It remained popular well into the 19th century but with a decline in the 17th century.

The earliest type just gives the contours without perspective ("flat") but already in the middle of the 14th century three-dimensional designs are also found. The three-part means of suspension and the clapper are clearly seen.

This watermark is most often found during the 14th and 15th centuries in paper from Italy and France. In the 18th century, specimens can be found in paper from Switzerland, England and North America (with a single means of suspension).

The popularity of this motif depends not on the musical implications but on the fact that it denoted a specific paper size.

The motif appears as a watermark at the same time that advances in casting techniques made it possible to make bells big enough for campaniles and church towers to serve as means of transmitting signals. Thus there is good chronological accordance.

Tromonin's watermark album. A facsimile of the Moscow 1844 edition. Hilversum 1965.
Tschudin, W. Fr., *The ancient paper mills of Basle and their watermarks*. Hilversum 1962.
Uchastkina, *A history of Russian hand paper mills and their watermarks*. Hilversum 1962.
Valls y Subirà, O., *The history of paper in Spain*. Madrid 1978.
Voorn, H., *De geschiedenis der nederlandse papierindustrie. 1–2*, Haarlem 1960, 1973.
Zonghi's watermarks. Hilversum 1953.

2. The Hunting horn

Br 7735 (1392)   Laucevicius 2949 (1414)   Summa Gaufredi (c. 1470)   Eineder 1619 (1726)
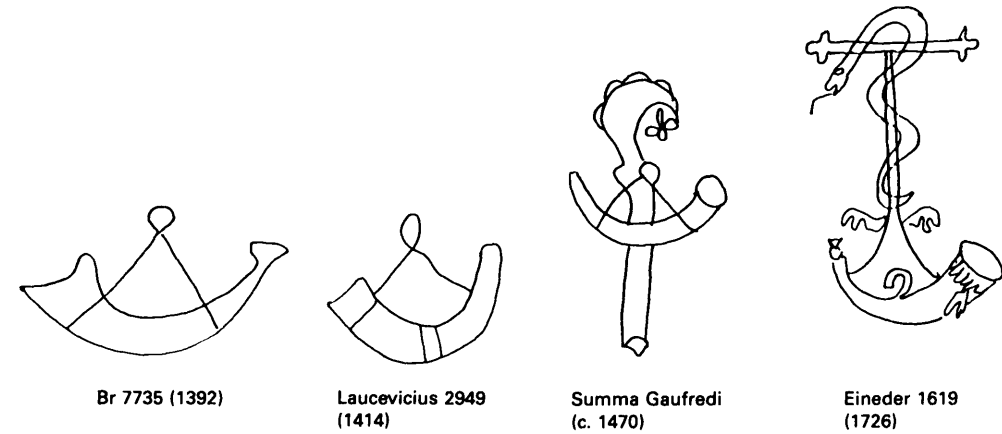
This is a very long-lived watermark, appearing in 1314 in Italy and extending into the 18th century in southern Germany.

The basic form is an animal horn but in the earliest instances it is an olifant, the same instrument as used by Knight Roland in the Chanson de Roland. The horn appears both with a strap and without, both with a mouthpiece and without, as well as designed with and without perspective. This is a signal instrument with a limited number of produceable tones.
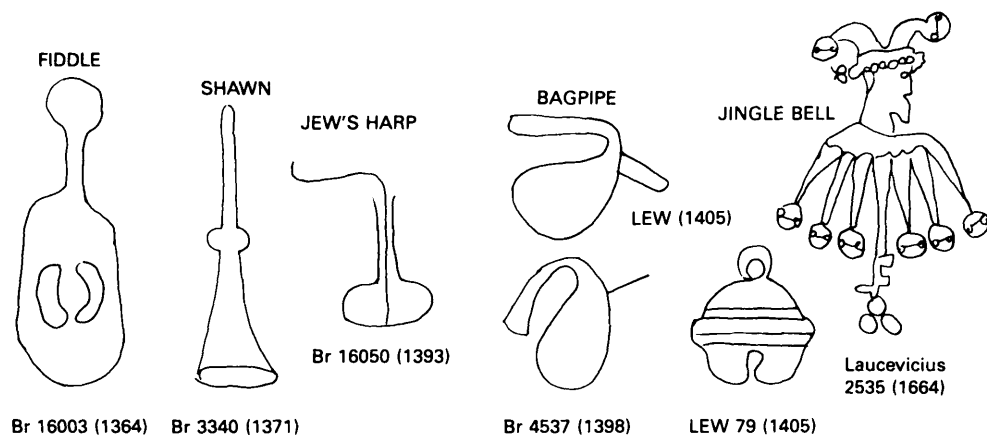
In his Findbuch VII (Horn) Piccard gives 1 845 examples dating from 1322 to 1680. Most, however, appear in the 14th and 15th centuries. Geographically they stem from northern and central Italy, southeast and western France and south Germany. Briquet includes over 100 from Italy (dated 1314–1569) and France (1371–99) plus 104 from the 16th century with counter marks. Eineder no. 1.619 would appear to come from the Alpine area. The watermark in Summa Gaufredi, an icunabula from Cologne 1470, depicts a crozier with a horn and probably symbolises the "good herdsman".

3. Popular instruments

A group of instruments appear during the short period between 1360 and 1425. Differing from the more primitive signal-giving instruments, the Bell and the Horn, they represent "proper" instruments, capable of producing a larger number of tones.

Fiddle

The fiddle is only found during the two years 1363 and 1364 in paper from Fabriano (Briquet no. 16.003, Zonghi no. 203/54). It has a rounded disc for the tuning pegs

FIDDLE

SHAWN

JEW'S HARP

BAGPIPE

JINGLE BELL

LEW (1405)

Br 16050 (1393)

Laucevicius 2535 (1664)

Br 16003 (1364)   Br 3340 (1371)

Br 4537 (1398)   LEW 79 (1405)

and C-shaped sound holes in the corpus. In pictorial representations the fiddle appears as early as the middle of the 11th century. According to Johannes de Grocheo, it was one of the most prominent instruments around 1300. Briquet erronuously uses the term Violin for this watermark.

Shawm

The shawm is found in one single paper only (Br. no. 3.340 from Palermo) dated 1371. The characteristic bulk above the bell piece is shown but no reed or finger holes.

Jew's harp

This watermark motif is also only to be found in a single paper, Br. no. 16.050 dated 1393.

Bagpipe

The Bagpipe is to be found in Br. no. 4.537 (Paris, 1398) and 4.538 (St. Marcellin, 1405) and in two papers in LEW (no. 109 dated 1405 and 1413). The melody pipe, hanging downwards, and the inflating tube or bordun pipe are shown.

There is a strong similarity to the Retort motif but other iconographical evidence from the Middle Ages shows that the bagpipe was often shown together with the fiddle and shawm so there are strong reasons to interpret this watermark as a bagpipe.
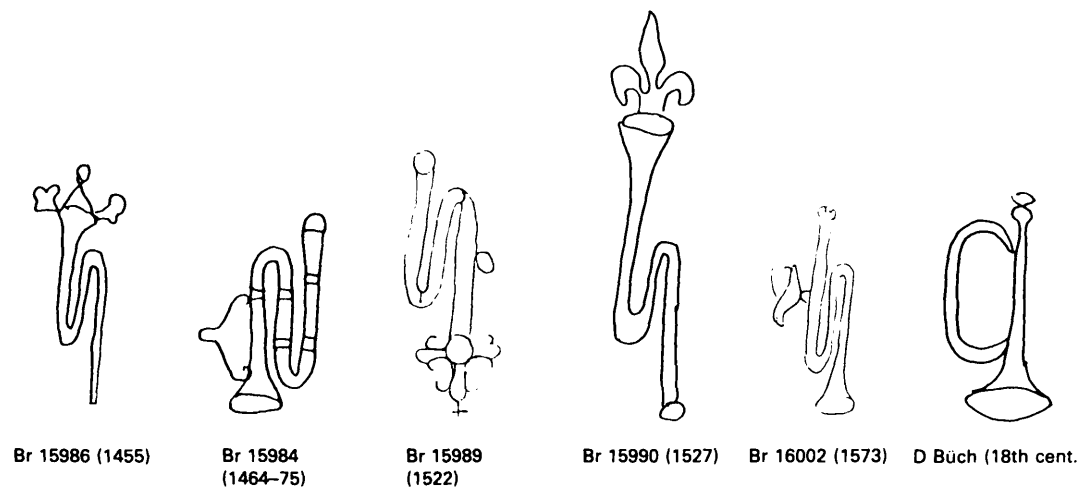
Jingle bell

This motif is found in singular instances (Br. and LEW no. 79, both dated 1405). This is a sound-giving device which can be used in a musical context or as a signal-

giving device. It can also be attached to the clothing, thereby attracting attention. A remnant of this use is found on the fool's cap in watermarks from the 17th century.

The above-mentioned instruments and sound-giving devices can be called popular because they are often found in pictures in a secular context more often than in a sacred context and more often in a popular than in an aristocratic context.

4. Sackbut—Trumpet

Br 15986 (1455)   Br 15984 (1464–75)   Br 15989 (1522)   Br 15990 (1527)   Br 16002 (1573)   D Büch (18th cent.)

The sackbut is a metal wind instrument, unlike the horn which is made of other material. Metallurgic advances in the 14th century made possible the coiling of the long tube into an S-shape which made the instrument easier to handle. The sackbut is associated with nobility, a connotation taken over from the Arabs through peaceful contacts and belligerous confrontations during the crusades. According to J. E. Cirlot,[2] it is often found in emblems symbolising the spiritual vocation to join the Holy War. Crosses, trefoils, circles and fleur-de-lys are associated with the sackbut, as is also evident from the watermarks. As such, the Sackbut appears between 1455 and 1558 as noted by Briquet and Laucevicius, and consequently much later than the crusades.

In the 18th century the modern type of trumpet occurs as a watermark in an undated specimen in D. Büch (without valves or keys).

5. Post Rider—Warrior

In the 16th century no completely new motifs appear. The symbols of the Middle Ages, the Bell, the Hunting horn and the Sackbut, remain during the Renaissance.

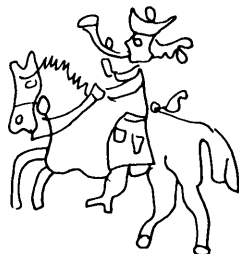[2] Article "Horn", in *A dictionary of symbols*. 2 ed. London 1971.

Neuer
Auß Münster vom 25. deß Weinmonats im Jahr
1648. abgefertigter Freud- und Friedenbringender Postreuter.

**Heawood
2819, 2819 a
(17th century)**
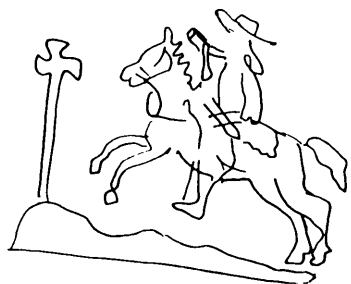
Nostitz 490 (1697)

Eineder 772 (1753)

This is quite in accordance with other motifs in watermarks. Not until the 17th century do we find a radical change.

The Post Rider motif appears at the same time as the post institution was started, initially as a private undertaking. The Post Rider is very common and can be traced chronologically and geographically through the German Chancellery (Nostitz,

Eineder 768 (1733)

D Büch (1789)
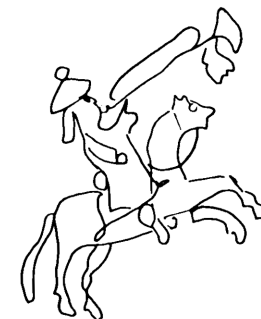
D Büch (1810)

1600–97), Russia (Tromonin, 1635–1708), The Netherlands (Heawood, 1660's, Voorn, 1776), Latvia (Laucevicius, 1664–1799), Austria-Hungary (Eineder, 1733–53), Slovakia (Decker), Germany (D. Büch, 1758–1810) to Bern, Switzerland (Lindt, 1806–35).

The Post Rider is found in pictures from the 17th and 18th centuries like the flyleaf celebrating the peace treaty of Westphalia in 1648. Other watermark motifs like Fama (cf. watermark 9) and Mercury (cf. watermark 11) are found in the same picture.

The rider holds the post horn in his hand, blowing it. There are three types of post horn, a straight one which resembles the hunting horn, probably made of animal horn (e.g. Nostitz no. 490, Eineder no. 768, 772), an "ordinary" post horn coiled in a circle (e.g. D. Büch, 1789) and finally one with trumpet form (D. Büch, 1810).
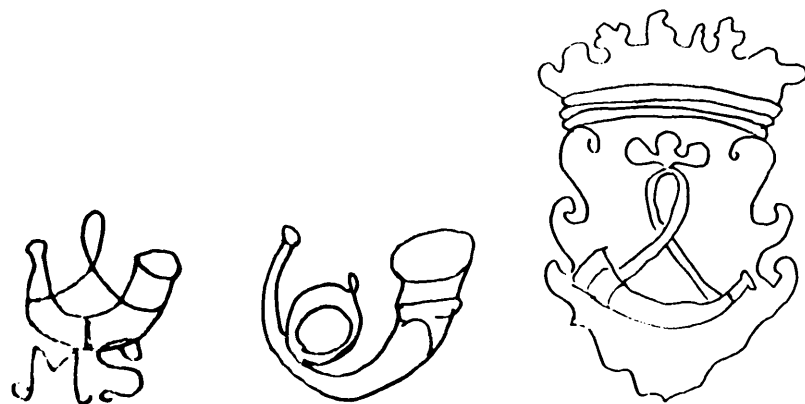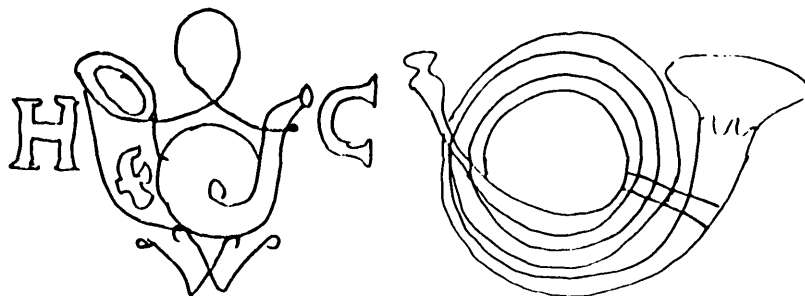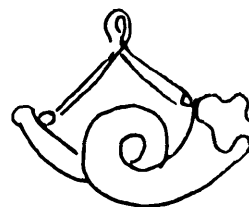
The instrument was principally a signal instrument for attracting attention. The number of sounds possible by playing the naturals has, however, permitted signals with various meanings.

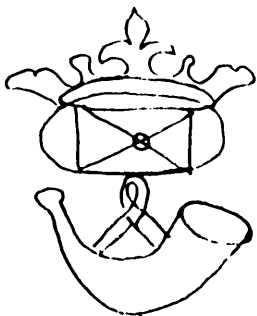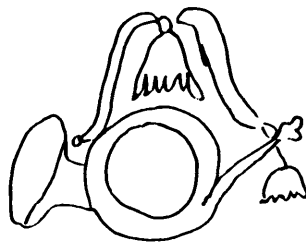The Post Rider watermark denotes post/letter paper. Cf. Post Horn watermark.

Heawood no. 2819 represents a rider with a horn but this is apparently a warrior blowing the charge (no date, 17th century).

6. The Post Horn

The Post Horn motif (without the rider) seems to appear somewhat later than the Post Rider motif, remaining in usage well into the 19th century. Earliest and most frequently it is found in paper from Austro-Hungary, from 1631 (Eineder shows 238 specimens) and in Lithuania (152 specimens to be found in Laucevicius). This motif flourished in the Netherlands (Heawood shows 166 specimens, Voorn reports on paper dated 1692–1826) but also elsewhere in Europe and North America.

and Eineder no. 1391 and 1415. Laucevicius no. 3089 seems to represent the German "Reichsposthorn" with three and a half turns of the tube allowing an ambitus of two octaves.

The watermark Lindt no. 652 shows a paper folded as a letter under crown. This clearly denotes that paper with the Post horn watermark was intended as post/letter paper. This use explains why Post horn paper was so common in the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries, the period when letter writing was most common.

7. The Harp

Nostitz 612
(1651)

Nostitz 644
(1655)

Nostitz 634
(1694)

Nostitz 647
(1694)

Laucevicius 3089
(1749)

Eineder 1504 (1781)

Lindt 652
(1793–97)

Eineder 1415
(1821)

Eineder 1391
(1837)

Heaw 2578
(1622)

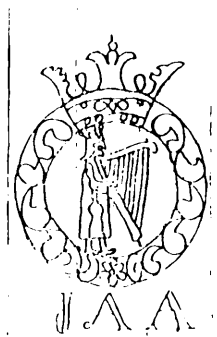LEW 236 (1726)

D Büch (1768)

D Büch (1771)

Heaw 2581

Like most musical instruments in Europe the harp has its origin in the near East. The European harp appears first in the 7th century in Ireland and was spread by Irish missionaries and scholars to the European mainland in the same way as Christianity and other cultural manifestations.

As a watermark, the Harp is not found until the 17th century. The instrument depicted (with diagonal strings) was held with one hand and played with the other. The Harp watermark is found most often in English paper as part of the Coat of Arms of England motif, e.g. Heawood no. 2581 (no date). Another Harp watermark shows the harp standing alone, e.g. Heawood no. 2578 (1622). Heawood accounts for another three specimens up to 1659.
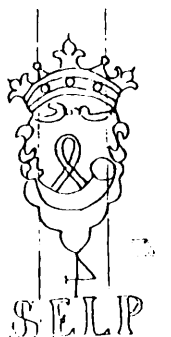
In the 18th century the motif is taken up again, now on the continent. Note the reiteration of history, but with a delay of a millenium. LEW no. 236 (1726) shows the Irish shape but with parallel strings. D. Büch (1768) resembles strongly the shape of the modern harp, i.e., a bigger type standing on the floor and played with two hands. This epoch saw the improvement of the floor harp through the development of the pedal system.

The watermark D. Büch (1771) however, looks more heraldic than life-like. It marks the transition to another motif generally called King David with harp.

There are three types of horn, all of which show a rather distinct mouthpiece. Nostitz no. 634 is apparently an animal horn used as a hunting horn. Other forms of hunting horn are found in Nostitz, no. 612 (dated 1651) and in Lindt, no. 652 (1793–97). The second type is a coiled horn, e.g. Eineder no. 1504 and Nostitz no. 647. The third type shows post horns as we know them today, e.g. Nostitz no. 644
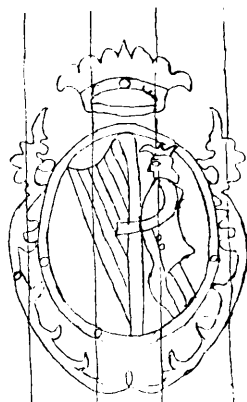
8. King David with harp

D Büch (1792) Selb　　　　　　　D Büch (1794) Geraberg

Eineder 762 (1799)　　　　　　D Büch　　　　　Eineder 763

King David actually played the lyre, "kinnor" in the Bible. In pictures from the Middle Ages and the Renaissance however, he is also shown playing other kinds of plucked instruments, like the psaltary. In watermarks King David always plays the harp.

King David watermarks are found in paper from Germany, Austria and Moravia, especially Gross Ullersdorf (now in Czechoslovakia) during the period 1780–1892.

Frequently the watermark is accompanied by the Post-horn-in-crowned-shield countermark like in D. Büch (1792) originating from Selb. In this case, King David is standing upright, thus marking the transition to a Standing-gentleman-with-harp like D. Büch (1794) from Geraberg. The Post horn countermark indicates the use of the paper as letter paper.

9. Fama

D Büch (1713)　　　　　　　　D Büch (1746)

D Büch (1800?)　　　　D Büch (1801)　　　　D Büch (1803/04)

The common trait in various representations of this watermark motif is a figure with wings like an angel holding a wind instrument of the trumpet/horn type in one hand and an object in the other.

This object may be a victory palm as in the watermark from Dittersbach, a crowned wheel (of Fortune) as in the watermark from Oberscheffach, a flower, or other objects. Fama uses the instrument to trumpet out victory, glory, fortune in war, etc.

The Fama watermark was prevalent in Germany during 1713–1804.

Substantially earlier evidence of the motif as such is found in pictures, e.g., the woodcut celebrating the peace treaty of Westphalia in 1648 (cf. Post Rider).

10. Dancing Bear
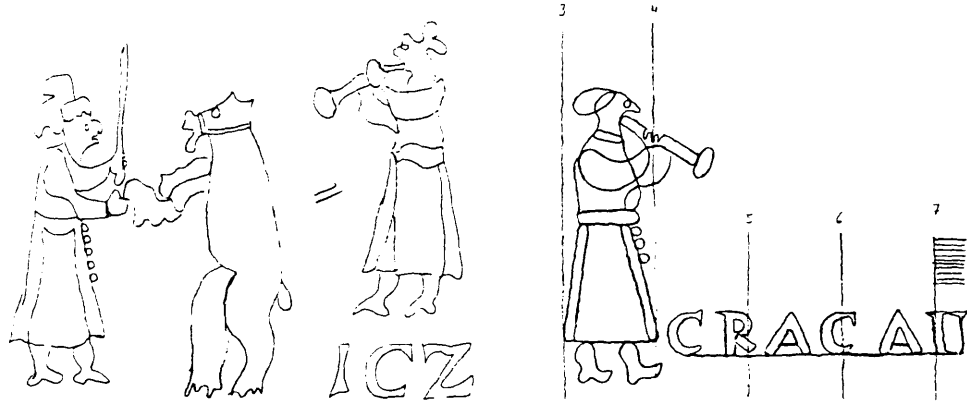
Eineder 743 (1775)
St Veit, Kärnten

D Büch (1784)

The Dancing Bear watermark is accompanied by the countermark Musician-play-ing-a-wind-instrument, probably woodwind (clarinet?). The watermark is found during 1775–84. There are specimens shown in Eineder no. 743 from St. Veit and in D. Büch, marked "Cracau".

11. Hermes/Mercury

Eineder 786 (1792)

D Büch (1811)

The watermark which shows Hermes/Mercury blowing an imaginary instrument of the horn type is to be found in Germany, e.g. in Eineder no. 786 (1792, Freiburg i/Br.) and in D. Büch (1811, Waldkirch).

Like Fama, this motif occurs much earlier in pictorial representation like the woodcut celebrating the peace treaty of Westphalia (cf. Post Rider).
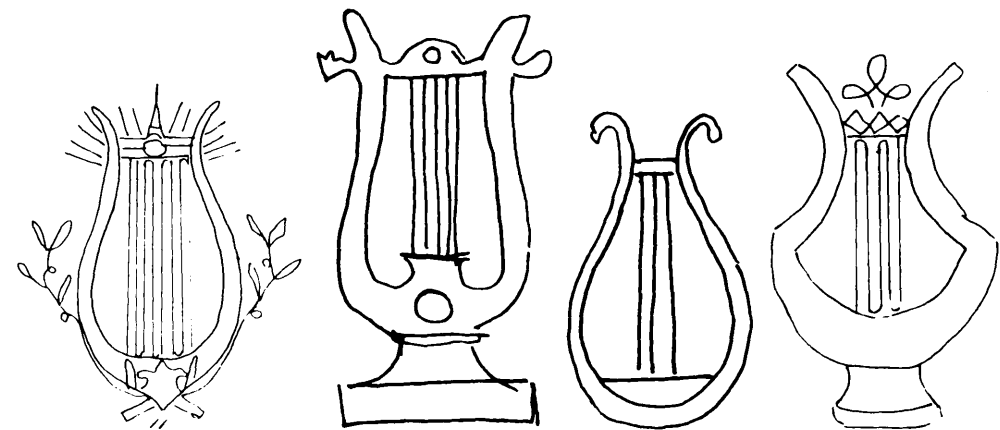
12. Triton

Eineder 789 (1680)

Eineder no. 789 shows a triton blowing the horn in a German paper dated 1680. No other specimen has been found.

13. Lyre

Lindt 529
(1797–1807)

D Büch (1818)

D Büch (1833)

Lindt 536
(1843)

It was probably the renewed interest in Antiquity brought about by the excavations of Pompeii and other places which caused the popularity of the Lyre motif at beginning of the 19th century. During Classicism and Empirical times antique architectural elements influenced architecture, furniture and room decoration.

As a watermark the Lyre is prevalent in paper from Switzerland during 1797–1843 (Lindt) and in Germany during 1818–33 (specimens in D. Büch).

14. Violoncello, Violin
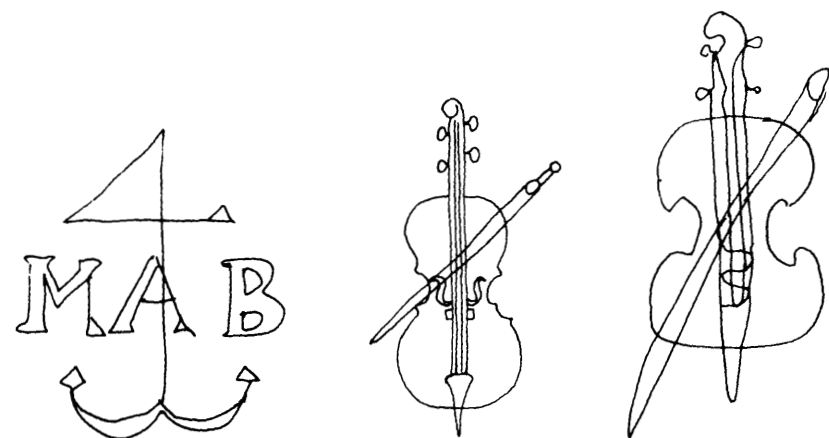
The music publishers Breitkopf & Härtel in Leipzig used paper with a Violoncello-with-bow watermark for music paper. It is found, for instance, in The Seasons by Joseph Haydn, composed in 1801.
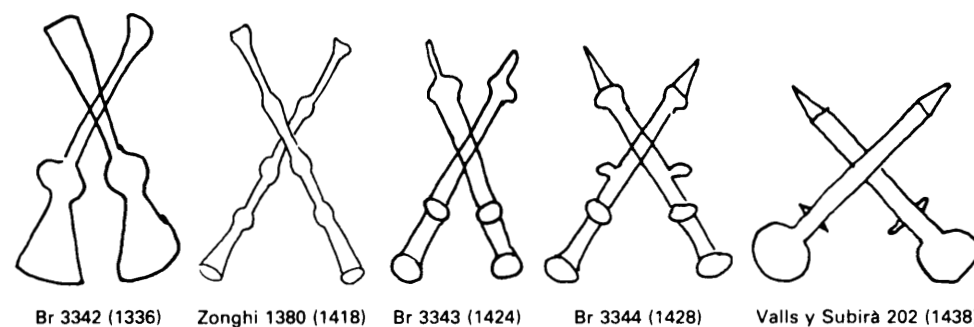
Similar to this is the Violin-with-bow watermark.

15. The Military Drum

The Military Drum is found in the Coat-of-Arms of the Bohemian Graf von Bubna and Litic manufactured in the paper mill of Senftenberg in the 17th century and later on. "Buben" means "drum" in Czeck.[3]

16. Doubtful motifs: The Pipe

Br 3342 (1336)   Zonghi 1380 (1418)   Br 3343 (1424)   Br 3344 (1428)   Valls y Subirà 202 (1438)

The motif Two Crossed Tubular Objects is found during the period 1336–1438. The tubes are open at the bottom end and ornated with one or more bulks. The upper end is shaped like a disc or cup or is shown narrowing. In watermark literature they are called flutes (Zonghi, no. 1380) or shawms (Briquet no. 3342–44).

If these watermarks represent musical instruments it would be more appropriate to call them pipes. If they are pipes, Zonghi no. 1380 and Br. no. 3342 would represent a shawm, whereas Br. no. 3343 and 3344 would represent clarinets.

Valls y Subirá no. 202, dated 1438 is described as Crossed Clubs which seems to be correct. However, it is not as self-evident that the pipes are clubs too.

17. Musical instruments which are not represented in watermarks

It is remarkable that lute instruments which occur very often in pictorial representations, especially in the 16th and 17th centuries, are not to be found as watermarks. Nor do keyboard instruments like the organ, clavichord, harpsichord or piano appear.

The significance of this may well be that it is not the musical content of the watermark motif which has inspired the use of an instrument as a watermark, and further, that the usage of music motifs in watermarks is purely symbolical, to denote the paper format (like Bell, Foolscap) or its use (post).

In some cases the musical instrument is just an attribute to a person, real or imaginary (e.g. Post Rider, Fama). In the Middle Ages, however, the instrument is the motif.

Because of its symbolical meaning it was not necessary to give a detailed representation of the instrument, a fact that made things easier for the maker of the wire mark.

[3] I am indebted to Miroslav Vykydal, Plzen for this information.

On the whole, there is chronological correspondance between the instruments as such and their occurrence as watermarks.

The many types of musical instruments in Europe during the ages have resulted in but a few watermark motifs.

Summarizing the above, it may be said that music in watermarks is of restricted value to musicologists and of more interest to cultural historians.