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A rare pair of painted armorial Green Sea Turtle shells (*Chelonia mydas*)

England, late 19th century

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H. 91 x W. 72.5 cm (Tyerman)

H. 92 x W. 75.5 cm (Warren)

Provenance:

Private collection, United Kingdom

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The heraldic motifs suggest a possible connection to the marriage of Albert Henry Warren (1830–1901), a noted artist and ornamental designer, and Augusta Warren née Tyerman (1831–1909).

Albert Henry Warren was an influential figure in the Victorian art world, authoring *A Guide to Beginners on the Art of Illuminating* (1860), a manual advising on heraldic colours and symbols. The use of the turtle shells as a canvas for heraldic designs aligns with the Victorian fascination with family lineage, identity, and artistic display. Albert's father, Henry Warren (1794–1879), served as President of the Royal Institute of Painters in Watercolour and was celebrated for his orientalist works. His painting *The Return of the Pilgrims from Mecca* (c. 1847–1848) was praised for its "Eastern and Egyptian character." Using turtle shells – an object linked to the Mediterranean and Eastern regions – may be a homage to his father's legacy in Orientalist art, with Albert positioning himself within the same artistic lineage. In *Fairbairn's Book of Crests* (1905), a combined coat-of-arms for the Warren and Tyerman families is recorded for their son, John Rosier Warren, who was born in 1862, further solidifying the genealogical link between the emblems on these shells.