

ART. XVI.—*The Seal used by the Archdeacon of Carlisle ; with Notes on the Seal of Chancellor Lowther.* By R. S. FERGUSON, F.S.A.

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THE registrar of the Diocese of Carlisle, Mr. Mounsey, recently called my attention to the seal used by the Archdeacon of Carlisle, and was kind enough to allow me to examine the matrix, or rather matrices, for there are two, and to take impressions in wax and in gutta percha.

The seal is of pointed oval form, about two inches long, rather over, and represents the Virgin and Child with St. Peter under tabernacle work of three canopies. St. Peter occupies the dexter side, and his keys are of gigantic size compared with St. Peter himself. The engraving is rude, and the countenances of the figures are somewhat grotesque. The background behind them is cross hatched, with small crosses and saltires. The *triquetra* is below their feet. The legend in Gothic characters is

SCVSTODIS : SPVALITATIS : KARLIL : DIOC' SEDE : VACANTE.

The directors, Messrs. Franks, Tucker, and Way, of the Museum formed at Carlisle, on the occasion of the visit of the Archæological Institute to that place in 1859, assigned this seal to a late period in the fourteenth century. They appear to have only seen one of the matrices, which I shall now describe as Nos. 1 and 2.

No. 1 is clearly the original ; it is a thin plate of brass, soldered, or in some way fixed to an iron back, which again has had another iron back, now loose, once soldered to it. The marks of a hinge show that this second iron  
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back has superseded a hinged flap or flaps, which formed a handle to the matrix. No. 2 is a solid piece of brass, and is an inferior copy of No. 1; the cutting is shallower and more regular, and the rude rigour of the irregularities of No. 1 is superseded by a poor tameness. The engraving given in the text is from an impression taken from No. 1, but the engraver has softened down the irregularities; for instance in No. 1, one side of the canopy work is cut deeper than the other, a peculiarity which is hardly shown in the engraving, but which comes out in a wax cast.



The legend tells us that this is the seal of the custodian of the spiritualities of the diocese of Carlisle while the see is vacant; and the device is appropriate, for during a vacancy of the see of Carlisle, the Archbishop of York becomes guardian of the see, and in modern times, at least, appoints the Chancellor of Carlisle his commissary. During the vacancy caused by the death of Bishop Halton in 1324, William de Ayrmyne, Canon of York was appointed to take charge, as appears by his letter of resignation,  
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printed in "Letters from Northern Registers," from the Reg. Melton at York.

Venerabili in Christo patri ac domino suo reverendissimo, domino W. Dei gratia archiepiscopo Ebor., Angliæ primati, suus clericus humilis et devotus, W. de Ayrem ynne, canonicus Ebor., obedientiam ac reverentiam debitam cum promptitudine complacendi. Pater ac domine reverende, de innumeris beneficiis et honoribus mihi per vos impensis, vobis, non ad quales debeo, sed quantas possum, ad multiples assurgo gratiarum actiones. Verum, pater reverende, audito nuper rumore quod sanctissimus in Christo pater et dominus, dominus Johannes Divina providentia papa xxij episcopatum Karliolensem reservavit, et eidem ecclesiæ providit de pastore, statim administrationem mihi in spiritualibus et temporalibus commissam re et verbo dimisi cum effectu, et super hoc scribo magistro Johanni de Skiren, officiali loci prædicti, et idem dominationi vestræ reverendæ significo, si placet. \* \* \* Ad ecclesiæ Suæ regimen Altissimus vos conservet per tempora feliciter longiora, mihi, vestro in omnibus, præcipientes vestræ beneplacita voluntatis. Scripta London, xiiij die Aprilis [1325].

It is clear that Messrs. Franks, Tucker, and Way only saw matrix No. 2, and assigned it to late in the fourteenth century. Matrix No. 1 might well be assigned to an earlier date, and may have been made for W. de Ayrmyne, Canon of York, who may have been the first *cvstros* to have hit on the happy idea of symbolizing his office by placing on his seal the saint to whom York Minster is dedicated, and the B. V. M., to whom is dedicated the Cathedral of Carlisle. Matrix 2 is, I have no doubt, a modern copy of No. 1, but when engraved, or why, I cannot ascertain.

The question yet remains of why this seal should be used by the Archdeacon of Carlisle. It is very probable that the seal of the Archdeacon of Carlisle was lost in the long and stormy interval between the death, in 1643, of Isaac Singleton, Archdeacon and Chancellor of Carlisle, and the appointment of a new Archdeacon, Lewis West, in 1660. The new Chancellor, Robert Lowther, appointed  
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in 1661, got a new seal, which was exhibited at Carlisle in 1859, by the Rev. Tullie Cornthwaite, and is described on the catalogue as



Brass matrix of pointed oval form, a seal of a Chancellor of Carlisle. A figure in a flowing dress and flat cap, appears seated under a round arched canopy; beneath it is an escutcheon charged with this bearing: six annulets, 3, 2, 1, (Lowther). Legend

+ REVEREND. EPISC. CARLIOL. CANCELL.

A new seal was also procured in 1660 by the Dean and Chapter of Carlisle; it is the seal they still use, and has on it the date 1660. It is thus clear that during the troubles of the Commonwealth, the seals of the Dean and Chapter, of the Chancellor, and of the Archdeacon, all went

went astray and were lost. The Dean and Chapter and the new Chancellor procured new ones, but Mr. Archdeacon West did not see any use in going to the expense of a new seal; he had very little use for one, nor had any of his successors, only for the sealing, Mr. Mounsey tells me, of inductions, and these were unfrequent.\* Hence, probably, Mr. Archdeacon West thought, and so did his successors, that any old seal in the registrar's possession would do, as indeed it would in law.

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#### APPENDIX.

Since the above was written, I have by the kindness of Mr. Percival, Treasurer, S.A., obtained access to a cast of Chancellor Lowther's seal, preserved in the collection of the Society of Antiquaries, and from it the engraving given on page 169 was made. It is as described before, of pointed oval shape; Chancellor Lowther, is seated in a large chair, with huge round knobs on the corners of the back, and at the ends of the elbow. The chair is within a round arched canopy, supported by fluted pillars with Corinthian capitals. The Chancellor is bearded. I imagine the flowing dress and flat cap to be the velvet cap and gown of a graduate of the civil law. According to Nicolson and Burn,† Chancellor Lowther held the degree of LL.B.; he was instituted as rector of Bewcastle in 1663, and held that preferment until his death in 1671, but he resigned the Chancellorship in 1666. As his seal was, in 1859, in the possession of the Rev. Tullie Cornthwaite, it is probable that the seal of Chancellor Lowther continued to be used by his successors, until the death of Thomas Tullie, Chancellor of Carlisle, 1683 to 1727, from whom the Rev. Tullie Cornthwaite was descended. It may also have been used by Dr. Waugh, Chancellor 1727 to 1765, who married a daughter of Chancellor Tullie. The Rev. Tullie Cornthwaite inherited much of Chancellor Waugh's property, including his papers.

I am not without hope that the matrix of this seal may yet be recovered, although at present it cannot be found. It is described as very massive, with a large knob or handle on the back.

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\* The Bishop of Carlisle is his own Archdeacon, and executes most of the functions through his Chancellor.

† Vol. II, p. 307 and 478.