

## REMARKS

ON

### The History of Seals, with Local Illustrations.

BY THE REV. W. H. MASSIE.

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**I**T is for a practical object that I have been called upon to make some remarks on the history of "Seals." The Council have thought that a general view of the whole subject may assist those artists who have kindly offered their services in designing a common Seal for the Society. I cannot pretend, indeed, to add much to the stores of knowledge already possessed by advanced antiquaries; but I should rejoice in applying those stores to a distinct and useful point—the improvement of the present miserable and loose system of using such once-important instruments.

Whenever we find an *old* charter or deed with a seal in tolerable preservation, we have another link added to the chain of historic evidence,—it establishes original relations between public or private parties,—it elucidates the records of heraldry, it shews the state of art as it then was, and in other ways it serves to fill many a gap in local or even general chronicles, as we shall hereafter see, because of the precision in the ancient method of seals: whereas *now*, how is it? Who would think it worth while noticing the mass of devices, or care to add them to a collection? They tell no tale, and imply no meaning. Except in the most solemn instances we have nothing but disorder in their use: the seals of one office confounded with another,—privy seals and public seals impressed at random,—one person borrowing his neighbour's, and his neighbour's answering for all the world, if the world please,—individual officers adopting devices mistaken afterwards for the stamp of the office itself, or perhaps for the "coat of arms" of a county or city, or corporation, instead of the person's representing it,—and even, when regularity is aimed at, designs formed upon no clear principle, heraldry mixed with

allegory, fancy preferred to reason, or ancient symbols set aside for individual whim. In short, seals have long altogether lost their import. My eyes were first opened to this state of things by having a parchment of an authoritative nature returned from a public office, for want of a seal as well as signature, upon which some one affixed a wafer or a blotch of red wax, which I touched with my finger, saying, "this is my act and deed." Not having had much to do with such points, it struck me then as an absurdity to insist on an addition of evidence which evidently could be no evidence at all, of anything or to anybody, though I now perceive it to be the shadow of a most ancient custom, just as the "*forms*" of Convocation (though forms only) are the "dry bones" still waiting to be breathed on. The *Normans* REQUIRED the seal in addition to the signature, a point not *essential* with the Saxons, though occasionally used by them. But *then* the Mediæval Noble stuck his own tooth into the wax, "In witness of this sooth," "I seal with my fang tooth;"\* or he put a bit of his own hair into it in token of his personal bequest, or left the impress of his own fingers deep on the back of the wax, when he placed them on it, saying, "My act and deed," or plucked some of the grass† itself as a first-fruit of the land which he conveyed, and so identified it with the substance of the seal, or endorsed it with his own signet, or badge, or other mark which could be mistaken for no one else's but his own, or even fastened a ring,‡ or knife, or pledge of some kind to the deed. So particular, indeed, were they (even from the classical era) that the seal was examined critically; and in after times, when every landowner used his seal, a fac-simile of most of the important ones was laid up with the registrars, often impressed on lead, in order to detect forgeries.

Now it is not that I would have all these funny things brought back,

\* Flower's M.S. Visitation of Cheshire, has a good instance by William Rufus:—

"I, William, Kinge of Englande, give unto Masci all my righte, intereste, and tytyle of the Hoppe and the Hoppe lande, from me and myne to him and his, with bounde and lymyte from heaven above to hell beneath:—

To houlde of me and myne with bowe and arrowe,

When I come to shoot on Yarrowe;

And in wisesse of this soothe,

I have sealed with my wange toothe:

In presence of Maude and divers others."

† "*Scilicet quod contractibus agrariis stipula ista agrum integrum representaret.*"

‡ Will. de Belmeis gave lands to St. Paul's, and directed that his gold ring, set with ruby, together with a seal, should be affixed to the charter for ever.

"Another forme is that of Aberricke de Veer, conteyninge ye donation of Hatfield, to ye which he affixed a short black-hafted knife, like to an old halfpenny whyttell, in steade of a seale."

any more than I would have all the funny things of Convocation restored ; nor yet would I cure *either* evil by abolishing the empty form, but I would deprive them of their formality by making them a reality, so far as may be conducive to practical advantage. I would, while using the old practice, use it for the old *purpose*, and make it again of some historical and tangible value to posterity. The whole system of seals wants revising and reducing to a regular shape, and though quite incapable myself of carrying this out, yet I can so far perhaps speak of it, as to set other wheels in motion, and awaken some clever and skilful hand to adapt the machinery more accurately to its end. This is, in fact, one of the chief intentions of our Society, not only to accumulate examples, but to multiply agents, and awaken the zeal of many, in following up our bare suggestions, and bringing them to the test of use ; and I shall be content to be found guilty of some blunders, or to repeat "trite things," so that I may help the real object one step forward.

I shall begin, then, with a brief summary of the history of seals, distinguishing between official and private, though an occasional intermixture can hardly be avoided.

The earliest form in which seals appear to have been used is "the signet ring," which was regarded as the most solemn of pledges: "Though Coniah, the son of Jehoiakim, were the signet on my right hand, yet would I pluck thee thence."\* The delivery of such a ring was itself as the act of conferring the highest offices of authority, just as the giving of the great seal to the Lord Chancellor makes him what he is to this day. Moses mentions this custom 1700 years before Christ, among the Egyptians: "Pharaoh took his ring off his hand and put it on Joseph's hand," when he gave him his commission as vicegerent over Egypt. In Persia likewise, King Ahasuerus, in transferring the post of chief authority, "took off his ring, which he had taken from Haman, and gave it unto Mordecai." What such rings were, we know from examples found, one of which I give (in fig. 5, p. 148) from the Journal of the Association. They seem to have been in form exactly similar to those which the Romans, and our own mediæval ancestors used, as we may perceive by comparing some discovered in excavations at Chester (fig. 6, 7) and elsewhere. The devices varied much, though some were symbolical, as Augustus is said to have appropriated the sphynx, in token of secrecy ; other emperors the graving of a lituus, as being pontiffs,—and the Phœnicians often the beetle ; the Egyptians one of their deities ; the Pope, on his *anulus piscatoris*, a figure of St. Peter ; but on more common signets, from the earliest Roman age, little images of Victory, Cupid, Mercury, Hope, and others found on the reverse of coins, have been cut in every

\* Jeremiah xxii. 24.

shape. They were of a large and clumsy shape, worn on the fourth finger (Aul. Gel. x. 10,) consisting of a jewel set in iron, bronze, and afterwards in gold, but not of metal *only* until the time of Claudius (I believe). The object and manner of using them likewise, has scarcely varied since those ancient days, the impression being taken on some earthy substance, answering to our modern wax, and applied in token of authenticity. In Job we have the expression, "turned as clay to the seal;" and Herodotus (b. ii. c. 38) speaking of the selection of beasts for sacrifice by the Egyptians, says, that the examining priest attached a certificate to the horns of the unblemished bull, and then applied a preparation of earth, which received the impression of his *seal*. This seal, he adds, was so essential, that to sacrifice a beast without it, was a capital offence. Cicero, in his oration against Verres, describes a letter as sealed with "sealing earth," having an impression on it from a *seal-ring* (in Ver. iv. c. 9). The signet was still, in mediæval times, worn by abbots and bishops as an essential part of their ecclesiastical attire, to denote their being "*married to the Church*," the ring having always been regarded as a symbol of eternal fidelity (Plin. xxxiii. 4—7); and such are often found in the coffins of those old men; they are found also with Christian devices in the catacombs; nor has the signet-ring ever been entirely discontinued to the present day, when they are being more generally revived, and are coming into almost universal vogue.

So much for signets.

But seals on a larger scale, *official seals*, or devices on some kind of stamp, in attestation of conveyances or in token of authority attached to deeds, and accompanied with forms of signature, &c. are of almost equal antiquity, as we read in the 32nd chap. of Jeremiah, "Men shall buy fields for money and subscribe evidences, and seal them and take witnessess," &c. And again, in Nehemiah, "We make a covenant and *write* it, and our princes and priests seal unto it." The Roman dukes and governors of provinces had in their book of general orders a device, which was in Great Britain a prætorium, or castle, on a triangle, to represent the island, the probable original of most of such architectural badges (see page 148, fig. 8). It appears that this very ancient practice of confirming official signatures by seals has never entirely ceased abroad, though particular nations (our own among the number) had up to a certain time never adopted it, or had allowed it to fall into temporary disuse, as we shall presently find.\*

\* It is sometimes said that seals, as distinct from signet rings, did not appear till the ninth century; but by this must be meant, I suppose, their attachment to charters and deeds. It may be true that, in some such limited sense, the custom was renewed upon the Continent by Charlemagne, but the German dukes had used them before that time. The Roman potters, and every legion had its own *stamp* and badge, as





18. The phoenix tower is so called because this company used to meet there, whose badge was therefore set upon it, a Phoenix.

Fig. 3.  
Seal of a Chartered Company.



Seal of the Company of Painters, Glaziers, Embroiders & Stationers.



Seal of the Guardian & Convent of Friars Minors, or Grey Friars of Chester. Seal granting to Sailors Merchants an island for repairs of ships.

The letters and boar are in relief: the sketch is full size.

Fig. 3.

Fragment of a tile, found at Blue school 1852. It is just coming to surface to illustrate the same in note at page 153.



Fig. 4.

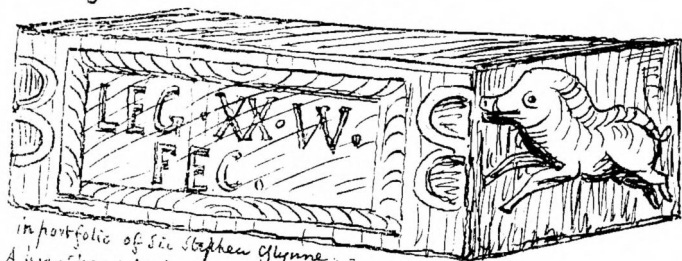


From the Roman Wall illustrated by Bruce p. 360.

The boar was the badge of the 20th legion, as the next stone from the same work at page 261 more plainly



Fig. 6



in portfolio of Sir Stephen Glynn. A boar (head & shoulders) as large as life was found under city walls last year (1881) by Mr Wiggner who gave it to Mr Hastings, he gave it (I understand) to Mr Gardner. Each legion had its own badge.

4. This is from Ribchester. Sketch taken by Bui. The type corresponds very closely with Fig. 3. on a tile found at Blue school.

For instance,—to pass on to the Saxon era,—while as a general rule our Saxon ancestors required no actual seal, yet the mark of the cross was a kind of substitute, and their cotemporaries on the Continent undoubtedly retained the custom. Nor are instances wanting to prove the occasional use of seals by our own rulers before the Norman Conquest, in charters of Edwin, Edgar, Offa, and others. A brass matrix of Ælfrie, Earl of Mercia, was found near Winchester in 1832, of which I have an impression (drawn in p. 148, fig. 4); so that it is no proof of a spurious Saxon deed to allege the appendage of a seal in token of its falseness, which sometimes has been attempted. I do not dwell upon the well-known great seal of Edward the Confessor, because his habits were all Norman in reality. The simple fact, however, is, that the Norman law *required* the seal in some form to authenticate certain deeds (whence our own law unto this day); whereas the Saxons, while they sometimes introduced it, did not count it essential, and in general did not use it. Their method was to place opposite to their names (written by a clerk if not by themselves) their cross, in ink or red or gold, since so few were able to write their own names. Selden quotes the following form of signature by Caedwalla, a Saxon king, at the end of one of the charters:—“*Propria manu pro ignorantia literarum signum sanctæ crucis expressi et subscripsi;*” and Mr. Roach Smith, in his interesting account of Reculver, has given a full copy of a Saxon charter, with all the signatures at the end, Dunstan acting as clerk, thus—

+ “I, Eadred, king by the protection of Divine grace, chief ruler of Albion, have confirmed this charter with the sign of the holy cross.”

+ “I, Ælfrie, Bishop (constipulator),\* concurring in this grant, have made the sign of the cross.”

+ “I, Eadgive, mother of the aforesaid king, with a mind rejoicing in Christ, have humbly signed this before-mentioned gift, granted in the hope of redemption, with the corroboration of the sign of salvation.”

+ “I, Dunstan, unworthy abbot, at the command of Eadred the king, have composed this charter of inheritance, my lord the king dictating, and have written it throughout with my own hand.”

the boar was the badge of the 20th legion at Chester; and such stamps we find constantly on tiles and jars, having been impressed on the wet clay before baking. What are these but seals? We know, too, how the stone at the mouth of our Lord's sepulchre was sealed with the seal of authenticity, “so making it sure.” The Lacedæmonians are said to have used worm-eaten wood for the purpose, because the capricious holes in it could not be imitated,—they were called σφραγῖδια θριπνέστα so that I imagine “the practice has never entirely ceased from the remotest ages.”

\* Livery of Seisin, “*Veteres quando sibi aliquid promittebant, stipulam tenentes frangebant, quam iterum jungentes et metientes, sponsionem agnoscebant, quam stipulam recipere, erat argumentum assentientis, scil. quod contractibus agrariis stipula ista agrum istum repræsentaret.*” (Quoted by R. Smith.)

I have given these few, out of a long list of names, to shew the spirit in which the sign of the cross was added. It might appear at first sight as if a mark so easily imitated could be no security or evidence, since one cross is like another; but I question whether any seal or signature could have been equally authentic in those early times. The virtue of the sign lay in the emblematic import of the cross, which made it sacred in the Court of Conscience. To violate such a sign would be an act, not of simple forgery, but of sacrilege, at once drawing upon the head of the violator the wrath of the Lamb, which was often expressed in an imprecatory clause of the deed, as in the above charter of Reculver:—"If any man shall infringe this grant, or appropriate a single foot of this donation from the Church, unless he expiate his enormous crime by penitence, shall incur the guilt of sacrilege, and shall be damned for ever by the Lord Jesus Christ, without hope of redemption. This grant is written in the year of our Lord's incarnation DCCCXLIX." A similar imprecatory clause occurs in a confirmation of the Norman grant to St. Werburgh's Abbey, Chester:—"Si quis igitur patris nostri predicti Beati Anselmi confirmationem aut nostram ausu temerario infestare aut irritare attentaverit Dei et nostræ subiaceant maledictioni." A charter of the second Randle, Earl of Chester, is attested by all the parties present in precisely the same form, with the sign of the cross after their names, shewing how the habit was preserved among the Normans.\* And this sacred force of the cross as a mark was still continued upon seals also, after their general introduction, by engraving the sacred monogram for a device, or by adding it as a counterseal, which was, I believe, sometimes stamped with a die on the back of the principal seal; and, in fact, the very same expressive practice has never been interrupted, as may be seen in one-half of the attestations by witnesses in our marriage registers. The name is entered first by the clerk, "Betty Martin, her mark," and then Betty Martin puts her own mark, which, without any suggestion or rule to that effect, is invariably a cross, and which, though easily imitated in fact, yet is still instinctively retained as inviolable, now that the original

\* *Notum sit me concessisse, quando feci transferri corpus Hugonis Comitis, mei avunculi, a cæmeterio in capitulum, ut in die mortis meæ Darem simul cum corpore meo Ecclesie Sanctæ Werburgæ, Uptonam, solutam et quietam ab omni re,"* &c. *Et ut igitur sic sint omnia, sicut predictum est, libera, confirmamus ea, hinc sanctæ crucis signo +* (First, or on one hand, with the sign of the sacred cross). *Hinc meo sigillo* (Secondly, or on the other hand, with my seal). *Hinc horum virorum testimonio* (Thirdly, with the witness of these persons) *scilicet Willelmi Meschini, &c. Signum Willelmi Meschini + Signum Robert de Masci + &c. &c.* The seal was duly affixed in a formal way "*coram paribus,*" and often in the Baronial or other Court assembled. "*Teste meipso*" was used first by Royalty by Richard First, though not common till the fifteenth century; nor was the clause "*his testibus*" entirely disused till Henry VIII. since which time witnesses have subscribed or marked their own names.

reason for that special form is hardly noticed. This is a remarkable perpetuation of a national custom from our Saxon forefathers for at least a thousand years. And this brings us to the Norman period.

It is from the Normans we derive the custom of *requiring* seals to grants and charters. They brought the rule from France, where it had been used without much intermission, the seals being there for the most part fixed on the right hand of the deed itself, and not pendant with labels as they afterwards came to be; nor was any signature beyond the seal required by them at all, except the cross which still continued to be used though not *essentially*. Edward the Confessor's charter is witnessed by his seal alone.\* Even in England this habit of *attaching* seals to the parchment itself was not unknown, the great seal being laid on the left side of a charter granted by Henry I. to Anselm; so that, in fact, this point can no more be relied on as an *infallible* test of authenticity, or distinction between Norman and Saxon, than the use of seals themselves, however *generally* characteristic they may be of their origin and date. But there are, doubtless, certain peculiarities of detail in the use of seals by which forgeries may be, and often *have* been detected, as in the form of letters, the pretence of heraldic bearings, or shape of a seal before a certain age, and so on. Alas! the Monks were too little scrupulous in concocting charters, in order to maintain special exemptions and convenient privileges, as if derived from Joseph of Arimathea, or any other patron equally remote.† Yet, these impostures could hardly be proof against the acumen of genuine archæologists. Cicero's skill in this respect (for he was one of the archæologicals) is well known. In one of his eloquent orations, he disproves the authenticity of a written testimony, which professed to come from Asia, by shewing the nature of the substance which composed the seal; as the Asiatics (he said) would have used a bituminous earth, and not the sort of wax wherewith the letters had been sealed, so proving their Latin origin. The fact is, no trade requires so much wit as roguery, for I question if ever such a creature was known, as a rogue beyond detection. It is easy for such smatterers as myself to be taken in; but genuine antiquarians will sift out error in some minute feature, which none of *us* might notice. I shall, however, presently adduce instances of mistakes made in assigning seals, where no fraud was meant, there being little dependence in general on seals, unless attached to, or confirmed by ancient deeds.

\* The seal alone, without necessity for signature of name, continued to be law until 29th Charles II. c. 3, expressly directed the signing as well as sealing in all grants of land and many other deeds. Seals are said to have been first appended by labels in time of Louis VI.

† See Stillingfleet's orig. Brit.

The first seals in this country were probably limited to the chief ruler of a kingdom or province, as the source of all authority within it, on the same principle as the image and superscription upon money.\* The great seal displayed the king sitting on his throne, with a sceptre in his hand. (See the seal of Edward the Confessor.) The letters round it specified the title and name of the individual who bore it. The counterseal on the back was at first a repetition of the same device, the object probably being (as on the reverse of coins) only to secure compactness, &c. by impression between two stamps. When, however, William the Conqueror assumed the throne, he seems to have retained his own peculiar seal as “Dux Normannorum,”† Duke of Normandy, viz. a warrior on horseback, and used it for a counterseal, to identify the individual, while he asserted his right to the Crown and regal authority in England by adhering to the Confessor’s device (for his chief or obverse seal) of a sceptred monarch on his throne. This custom has never been interrupted by our sovereigns from that day to this; and as the Norman dukes had used the armed Eques for the badge of rank upon their seals, so, whenever any noble in this country had subordinate dominion, as vicegerent of the monarch, given to him by the Conqueror, that deputed authority was represented by an official seal, which mostly bore (like the Dukes of Normandy) a warrior on horseback; while on the reverse they used for a counterseal some device of their own to distinguish the person in possession of the dignity. These devices on the reverse were at first quite optional,—the sacred monogram, or a fancy badge, or a Roman antique, or anything else they pleased, surrounded by a legend expressive of the owner’s name and title, until, as heraldry prevailed, regular escutcheons were almost universally substituted. The similarity of the mounted figure, and uniformity of plan, without reference to family, disposes me to think that the idea was borrowed from the 6th chapter of Revelations—“And when he had opened the second seal, I saw and beheld a white horse, and he that sat on it had a bow,” &c. We know that they were not very nice in their application of Scripture, and might regard such symbols as only the more inviolate from their sacred import. Whether the saint so invariably appearing on ecclesiastical seals under an arch at the foot of the chief figure meant to represent the faithful upon earth praying for the soul of the founder in heaven, or likewise alluded to the same chapter in Revelations—“And when he had opened

\* Hence to forge the King’s Seal is an act of high treason. Letters patent are from the King to all his subjects open, with seal appendant. “*Littere clause*,” or clause rolls, are sealed up. The Royal sign manual, superscribed in patents, is the warrant to the Secretary of State to affix the “Privy Seal,” which is the warrant to the Chancellor for “The Great Seal;” but some grants have only the sign manual.

† The dukes of Normandy had used seals long before. There are examples from 1015, A.D. a warrior on horse or on foot, as the case might be.

obs. These seals are well known & are only drawn rudely here in order to illustrate the subject of the lecture. to face p. 156.

Fig. 1. Seal of Edward the Confessor



Face on the counter.  
- seal of Edw<sup>d</sup> Confessor



The counter-  
- seal is as  
- nearly the  
- same as the  
- obverse as pos-  
- sible on Edw<sup>d</sup>'s  
- seal: but with-  
- out crown & with  
- a crozier for the dove  
- & globe for sword

4. NB. SANDFORD in his burial of Kings of England gives  
the inscriptions complete on William's seal, one side,  
# Hoc NORMAN NORVM Willelmum nosse Rationum,  
on the other side.  
# Hoc Anglis Regem signo fidei regis eundem.  
He translates in verse -  
Fig. 4  
This sign doth William Normans' patron show;  
2 By this the English him their King do know...

William  
Conqueror  
Fig. 2.



Fig. 2. 3.  
Obverse  
& Reverse  
of Seal  
of William  
The Conqueror  
the first as  
King of En-  
- gland: the  
second as  
Duke of  
Normandy  
vid supra

Fig. 3 counter-  
- seal of  
William  
Conq.



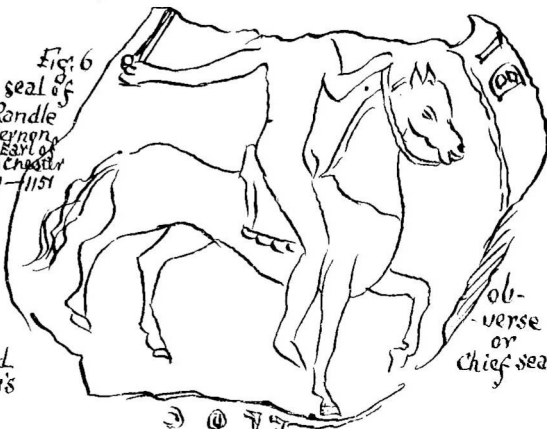
Fig. 5

Rev. or  
counter-  
seal  
of  
RANDE  
GERNON  
EARL  
- of  
- the  
- Palace  
- of  
- Chester  
- a Roman  
- Antique



Fig. 6

seal of  
RANDE  
GERNON  
EARL  
- of  
- the  
- Palace  
- of  
- Chester  
- a Roman  
- Antique



ob-  
-verse  
or  
chief  
seal.

The matrix of this seal was found  
at St Edmundsbury in 1774. His  
uncle was Abbot there.





the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain," &c. I do not know; but the very method of folding the deed of grant to abbies, by our earliest Norman ancestors, seems to justify the foregoing notion; for the confirmation charter to St. Werburgh's, Chester, about 1130, recapitulating the original of Hugh Lupus, is not a roll, but folded in the form of a book, or rather as a map, in compartments side by side, each page having had its own distinct seal, as if opened in succession. (See page 158 fig. 1.) The deed is described in Appendix. The only seal still remaining is in green wax, with a mounted horseman as usual. The mounted figure is still the *counter*-seal of our Sovereign, as it continues to be the *principal* seal of the earldom, though I have no example of the latter to adduce later than Charles II.\* And here let me say what a pity it is that our corporate seals, and especially our early Norman seals attached to civic charters, have not been more carefully preserved. Let us hope that steps will be taken to secure such as yet remain from turning to dust within their bags, at least until exact drawings have been made. What an absurdity, too, the present use of a fragile wax under the great seal of England is! Even if it does not crack immediately to pieces, it melts within its tin case, if kept in a place warm enough to save the parchment itself from damp: and why so huge and cumbrous? How poor and feeble the impression! Before the discovery of gum lac, about 1550, the substance used was sometimes a bituminous earth, or a resinous mastic, and afterwards bees'-wax, mixed with various pigments, which gave it an adhesive toughness, so that one can to this day see the wrinkles of the lady abbess' finger, as impressed four centuries ago (fig. 2, p. 149). Green is said by some to have been used especially in grants and charters. But I find no regularity on this point; though, if any could be certified, it might greatly assist research: white was common—yellow prevailed at one time—Charles V. used blue (unique)—green was most usual with the Western emperors—and also green, with yellow border, in the 14th century; but red wax in the main was as general as any, probably on the same account as the making the mark of the cross in the colour of blood. Gold and silver have also been used instead of wax in the highest cases (imperial especially); and every one knows that lead is the common mark of a Pope's bull, so called from the "*bullæ*" attached;† yet it is a mistake to suppose that lead was invariably limited to these. Mr. Dawes has named to me sundry examples; and I have somewhere seen quoted an expression in a deed of Charlemagne, "*Et subter plumbum sigillari jussimus.*" It was not till the 16th century that the present fashion came in of stamping paper laid on wax, and in 1624 on wafers. As to the matrices, I am not

\* See Liverpool Historic Society's Journal, vol. 2, page 18.

† Papal seals were of three kinds:—*The Anulus Piscatorius*, in red wax; *The Bulla*, in lead; and *The "Sigillum,"* in consistorial bulls. Seals with two swords were usual in Ecclesiastical citations.

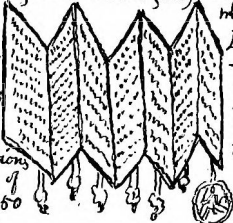
aware of any rule ; they were sometimes of bituminous stone, or clay, set in a heavy weight of lead, sometimes of pewter, brass, or silver, or a jewel set in gold. Specimens of every sort are found from the earliest date.

But now, after this long digression, I return to the subject where I left it. I had shewn how we owe the general law of sealing grants and charters to the Normans, and how the example of the great counter seal of William, as Dux Normannorum, passed into the use of a similar equestrian type by the Vicegerents of the King, and Counts Palatine of England, a practice still continuing. The archbishops and abbots used an official seal of their see or abbey, not indeed equestrian, but of a more ecclesiastical character, as their patron saint, their abbey, or the enthroned abbot himself. Presently, as time advanced, the increase of subordinate offices, or of official business, introduced a corresponding multitude of seals, both in Church and State, of which I shall speak more fully hereafter. But I had also shewn that each of those nobles adopted a "privy seal" of his own, almost *ad libitum*. These are quite distinct from the former, and are in fact distinct also from the *counter* seal, which rather might be called "the reverse," being only another stamp on the back of the "obverse" or chief seal, made by the same press at the same time, perhaps for compactness, though applied also to other ends. The "privy seal" I would rather regard as a distinct and more personal instrument, adding the individual's own confirmation of the public seal, or authorising its application. It is so that the writ of privy seal, which seal is held by the Secretary of State (I speak under correction) still intimates the will of the Sovereign to the Lord Chancellor, in order to his application of the great seal. This privy seal or *sigillum secreti* (as distinct from the counterseal, or mere reverse) was afterwards in common use, as we now add our endorsement to secure a cheque or a bill, being stamped either at the back or on a separate wax. The practice was gradually extended to persons of rank in the 12th century, and thence to the landed gentry who had neither rank nor title, and so became as universal as we find it now. The advance towards heraldry may be traced better perhaps through such private seals than in any other way. First, they were a tooth-mark, or a monogram of Christ, or an antique, or a badge of office, with a legend round giving the name. The badge, both national and personal, was long in use before heraldry, that is, before the assignment of certain bearings to families and their heirs, as such. The *lion* was a badge before it was a bearing. Hugh Lupus might possibly have had a wolf on his shield or his seal, without having a coat of arms ; and the white horse of Kent was long on the Saxon coins. Badges were known to Homer's heroes ; and Æschylus describes mottoes and devices on the shields at Thebes. They appear on the armour of Carausius in his coins, and on that of the Norman knights in the Bayeux tapestry ;

Confirmation by Randle Gernons (1132) of the rights to St Werburgh's Abbey, Chester; recapitulating the original charter of Hugh Lupus: from the muniments of Lord Westminster. The only seal remaining is one in green wax drawn in Fig 2. -

Fig 1.

see Mr. Penck's marks. Archaeological Association Journal of July 1960



The only seal remaining is one in green wax drawn in Fig 2. -

Fig 2.



no device appears upon the shield, nor is it clear to whom the seal may be assigned.

3. Seal of King John, as Earl of Mortain where the lions of England appear on the shield as an heraldic bearing, about 1196 or 1197.

Fig 3.



It is copied from a fragment in the city muniments of Chester, nearly gone. Counter. Fig 4.



Cheshire City records

Fig 5. another antique privy counter seal of Hugh Lupus 1152



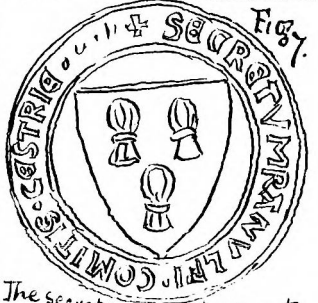
Ormerod reads the first line thus - Dis cui q'd mandet Proferens mea castella pandet & says that the next line is the same in Norman French.

Fig 6. the seal of Randle Blondeville

Blondeville Earl of Chester 1180



This is the first appearance of the garb as a badge or bearing of the Earls of Chester. It allusion to his name Blondeville - White or wheat. I.e. white & Whitley have the wheat sheaf



The secretum or privy counter - seal of Randle Blondeville, an early & clear example of the heraldic privy seal, afterwards so universal.

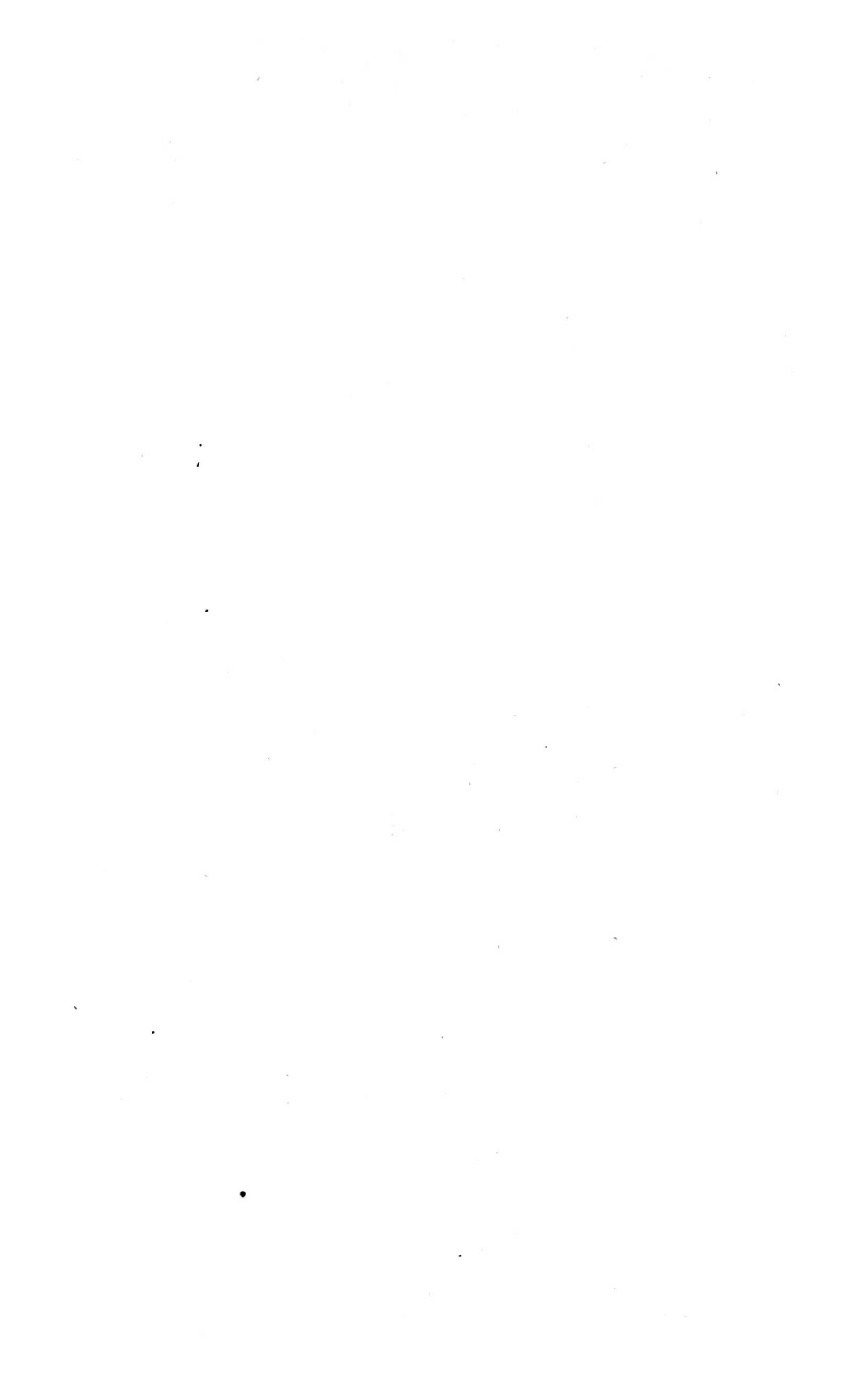




Fig. 1  
Guthlac de  
Ribbia.



The matrix of this seal is of earthy stone & was dug up in clearing a field for a building. I had it from a labourer but it is not verified by any deed but well illustrates the text.

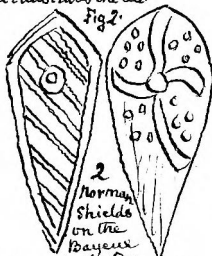


Fig. 2

2 Norman shields on the Bayeux tapestry

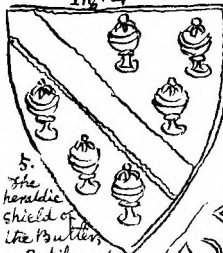
Shewing the form of kite and the device of a cross made by the bands only.

Fig. 3.



observed the badge of office in Pincerna's hand, being, Fig. 3 afterwards the covered cup in the Butlers

Fig. 4



5. the heraldic shield of the Butlers or Rotblers of Dewsey. It appears on the tomb of Robert Curthose at Gloucester & at Warrington.

Coat of Arms, whence also the Massies of Rixton derived it by connexion: - which appears on a pew in Warrington Church. The seal of Hen. I. is added to shew the style of letter & the flower on each side.



Fig. 5  
Hen. I.

Fig. 6



Seal of Willm de Romare drawn as appeared to a deed of which a fac sim is given in a MS. of Hugh Lupus p. 111.

in old city library. The deed is witnessed by Alexander Bishop of Lincoln, who died 1137. It is, a very early coat of arms indeed!

Fig. 7. is the seal of Willm de Filgeris on a deed of covenant with Randle 3<sup>d</sup> Earl of Chester dated 1200 given by Plancher in Arch. Journ. 1880. Filgeris was a Fougere's signifier. Fern. Hence the device of fern.



Fig. 7

but these, though forerunners of, are not to be confounded with heraldic bearings. A good instance of the transition is given in fig. 1 to 4, p. 159, from seals in my possession. The first, of Guthlac de Riblie, is the plain monogram of Christ and nothing more, answering in import to the mark of the cross in writing, before alluded to. The second shews the *badge* of Pincerna, or Botiler, in Henry the First's time, or just before, where you see an officer holding up the covered cup in token of his post, as hereditary *butler*, or cupbearer, to the Earls Palatine; and thirdly, I have given the escutcheon of the same family, carrying the identical covered cup into the heraldic field, after the introduction of that science, which is almost proven to have taken place very soon after the date of the second seal in Henry the First's reign, 1150, or thereabouts. Thus we trace the transition from the simple cross to the badge, and from the badge to the heraldic bearing.

The forming of seals, at the close of the 12th century, upon the rules of heraldry (indicated by the lions in Richard's seal, and also on the seal of John, as Earl of Moreton), made the adoption of such distinctive marks for privy signets obvious, and gradually multiplied them into more vulgar use. At first only *grandeecs* sported them; but presently every armiger had his own device cut upon his ring or on a stamp with his name and title round it. When the Royal arms quartered the lilies of France, many of the gentry of Norman extraction, or of prowess in the French war, adopted the simple *fleur de lys* in the same spirit; and by degrees even persons without pretence to arms began to add their optional device, as "The seal of such a one, "pigdriver," with a "boar" engraved within. Badges, in allusion to the sound of the *name*, were most common. Baines, in his history of Lancashire quotes from the Harl. MSS. (No. 6079, p. 109) an account of this gradual extension:—"First, y<sup>e</sup> Kinge onely, and a few other of the nobilitye besides him—then noblemen and none inferior, as seen in the historye of Battel Abbeye, where Richard Lacye, Chief Justice of England (temp. Henry II.) blames a mean subject for that he used a private seale, whereas that pertayned (as he said) to y<sup>e</sup> Kinges and their nobilitye only. At this time alsoe (as John Roper noteth) theye used to engrave in theyre seals their own picktures and counterfaites, covered with a long coat over their armour. After this gentlemen of the better sort tooke up the fashion and engraved their several coates and shieldes of armes. At length, about the time of Edward III. scales became very common, not onely of armes, but signets of their own device." (See p. 158, fig. 6, for devices in allusion to the name.)

It may be remarked here, that from the earliest ages seals of a symbolical character had been used by ecclesiastics and by Christians. "Let our signets," says Clemens Alexandrinus, in the third century, "be a dove, or a fish, or heavenward-sailing ship;" and still, after the introduction

of heraldry, the private seals of Rectors, Chaplains, and other Clergy, seldom bore any coat, but rather a sacred emblem, as the lily or *fleur de lys* symbol of the virgin, the various monograms of Christ, the pelican or eagle and young, or "Agnus Dei," a chalice, the cross *fleuré* in several patterns, patron saints, or simply the initials of their Christian names. There was good meaning in this abnegation of worldly ties and rights of inheritance, in favour of their ecclesiastical relationship, which, though in the letter found vain by past experience, it would be well for us to follow in the *spirit*.\* Sometimes both laity and clergy had a motto round the seal instead of the title of the owner, as "*Frangere, lege, tege*," or "*Fracta lege—tecta tege*," or "*lecta tege*:" "Break, read, and keep secret what you read;" and other poesies without end. The crest in the centre, with a double inscription round, viz. the motto on one rim, and the address on another, is rich, though simple, in effect. The first Randle, Earl of Chester, has a double motto in French and Latin, round an oval antique, upon his privy seal (page 158, fig. 5).

And this reminds me to say a few words on the shape of seals.

The classical form was generally oval, and was often continued and followed by the early mediævals, who loved to shew their estimation for ancient art by setting such relics in gold or other metal, good Roman coins being also sometimes so used. The Monks of Durham had picked up a fine classical head of a Jupiter tonans cut on an oval gem, and adopted it as their seal, the head being assigned by them to St. Oswald. The round was, however, the most common Norman shape, being well adapted to admit men on horseback, kings on thrones, and architectural types, which were so general in the 12th century. Then came the *vesica*, or pointed oval, at first peculiar to ecclesiastical devices, it being a feature of Early English character, and just large enough to allow the figure of a virgin and child, or a saint erect with halo round them. (Figs. 1 and 3, page 48.) The earliest instance of this shape is the seal of Theobald, Archbishop of Canterbury, 1139. Afterwards all ladies of title used them,

\* Of course when the Clergy were permitted by law to have their wife and family, like other people, which has proved to be more advisable in the main, all the contingencies of such connexions would follow, such as the rights and symbols of inheritance. How general the rule was, however, in Norman times, appears from the fact that Hugh Lupus had other sons besides Richard, who died, and that they would naturally have succeeded to the Palatinate dominions; but the only survivor of them, being Abbot of St. Edmondsbury, could not inherit the earldom, which passed accordingly to his nephew, Ralph Meschines. I believe that the first privy seal of any kind used by ecclesiastics (as distinct from the common seal of their community) was about 1128, A.D. Permission to use them was given by special license by the Pope; and, in later times, *prior to the Reformation*, we find many exceptions to the more general practice above alluded to, and I have given instances in the plates of heraldic seals used by ecclesiastics. (Pl. at p. 160, fig. 12. 18, 19.)



Examples of private seals chiefly, - to face page 160.



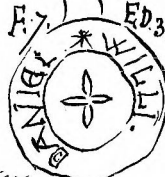
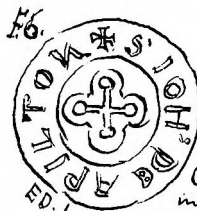
Badges & arms from the name



John le Crowton Chaplain 1392.



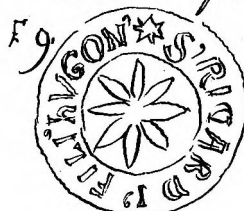
SEAL OF PRIORY OF ST. JOHN. This is another plain allusion to the equestrian seals.



Crosses in various forms not to be mistaken for coats of arms.



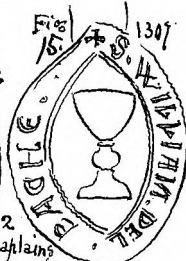
This is also only another form of cross, fleur.



These below are mostly priory seals of ecclesiastics, not heraldic.



after Dei Memento mei



2 Chaplains The Bache

Seal of Roger Davenport Rector of Haverhill 1411.



51. William de Bronbros.



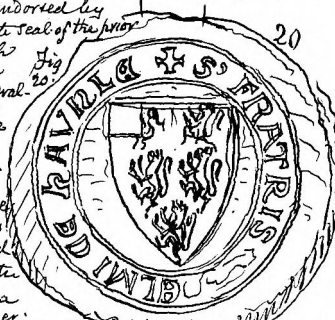
William de Medes Rector of Tarporey.



Nicholas Scott chaplain.



These 2 are the seal and counters of St John of Jerusalem hospital or the seal endorsed by a private seal of the prior which has a full heraldic device.



The Obverse seal in the head of John the Baptist in a charger.

18. Almost all the above private seals are rude sketches of originals among deeds of Sir Philip Gorton, of Oulton park.

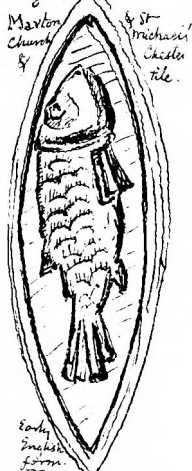


It is in green wax appended to an original deed in Mr. Lancaster's possession granting land in 1412 de Barche. Virgilium commune apponi de. William de Hamley - prior.





Fig. 1.



Early Michael form.  
Vesica piscis on a tile as above. In the catcombs a fish often occurs with the word  $\text{IXOVS}$  a Christian symbol bearing the initials of  $\text{IHSVS XPI OTOS}$   $\text{OVS IHSVS XPI OTOS}$  Jesus Christ Son of God the Saviour.

Fig. 2.



Counter seal of the Abbot of Vale Royal from Albert Way.

Fig. 4.



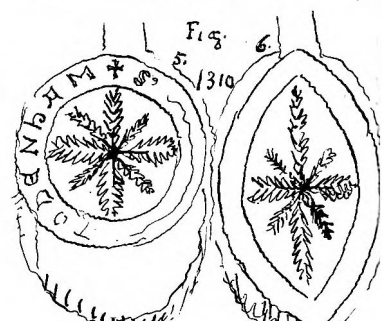
Seal of the White Friars or Carmelite Heron from the Marsh.

Fig. 3.



Bigillum Hawisie Domine du Keveoloc. Edw<sup>d</sup> 2<sup>d</sup> called Hawise Gadarn. Heiress of Powys. Found at Oswestry by Mr Penson Architect

Fig. 6.



These two seal & counter seal of husband & wife are given to show how the form is meant to indicate the sex, the device being alike in both, a floriated cross

Fig. 7.



It is given here as an example of a civic seal in Vesica form. The seal of Richard 2<sup>d</sup> is given as an early instance of the appearance of the moon & star or sun.

Fig. 8.



great seal of Richard 1<sup>st</sup> the 1<sup>st</sup> in place of the one lost in Crusades.



Return of Richard 1<sup>st</sup> 2<sup>d</sup> seal. Shewing the first appearance of 3 lions of England as shield, & in the cross a lion.

Fig. 10.



in early Vesica and Virgin. Ely. Compare the first seal of St. Mary's nunnery. & page 48. Fig. 3

This figure shows how the virgin got the Vesica & so this form seal adopted by monks & nuns all joined of rank & whence the lozenge now for women

(fig. 1 to 10, p. 161,) whence the Widow's Lozenge still; and so they became less exclusively ecclesiastical, and were used by men also. I could wish that such distinctions had not been lost sight of; and, indeed, it must be plain from the foregoing observations, what a convenience it would be, were seals, as a sort of art, not only restored to former order, but brought even to a more regular system than ever, so as to make these instruments historically expressive as once they were, and also so methodical as to enable any jeweller to grave them correctly for any object with little trouble or danger of mistake, and any person to interpret them at once. At present engravers work as if they knew nothing about their business; things not essential are made much of, while the device or charge upon the shield is so feeble that it melts into a blank, from the warmth of the wax itself, the instant the mould is taken up. In short, in *everything*, and not in seals only, we want the essentials to be made more of, and the non-essentials to be made less of, if we would become Englishmen again.

But—having thus given a general account of official and private seals—I shall return to the former, in order to elicit some few principles of general application. I would put the question, whether the present Prince of Wales possesses a specific seal as Earl of Chester, framed on the like plan as his predecessors? Perhaps since the abolition of the Palatinate Courts, there is no document possible which could require to pass under the seal of the Earldom as distinct from that of the Crown? How is this? Do the yeomanry commissions issue from our Earl?† or does any other license? The Palatine seal-keeper's office is gone; yet, at all events, by way of illustration, I would point out what the seal of the Earl would be. It would have the equestrian obverse and heraldic reverse, the latter combining the arms of the county (three sheaves) on the sinister half, and the royal arms on the dexter half, with the usual supporters and coronet of the Prince, whose name and title as Earl of Chester would be written on the legend round. I give (in fig. 1, at p. 162) an example from a charter of Prince Edward to the cordwainers of Chester. A more perfect one of Queen Elizabeth, on the same plan exactly, on both sides, is to be seen among the county records. But we must not confound the bearings on such a seal with those of the county itself. This has been a fruitful source of error, mistaking the device of the individual in temporary possession of an office for that of the office itself. The many badges and supports of swans, dragons, stags, bulls and boar,

\* Formerly the King's license might not come into the county of Chester or Lancaster, but under the seal of the Palatinate.

† I perceive that the Militia Commissions have only the private seal of the Lord Lieutenant attached.

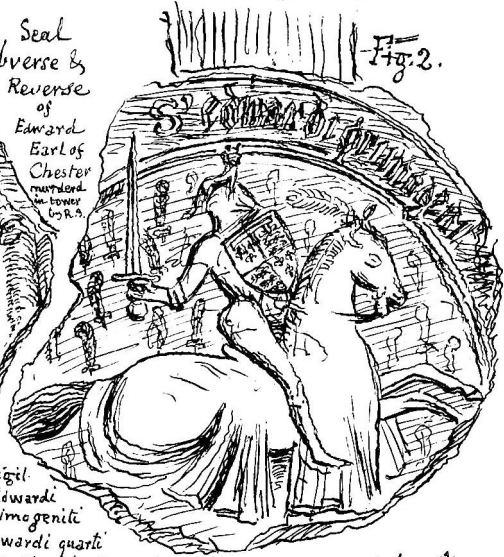
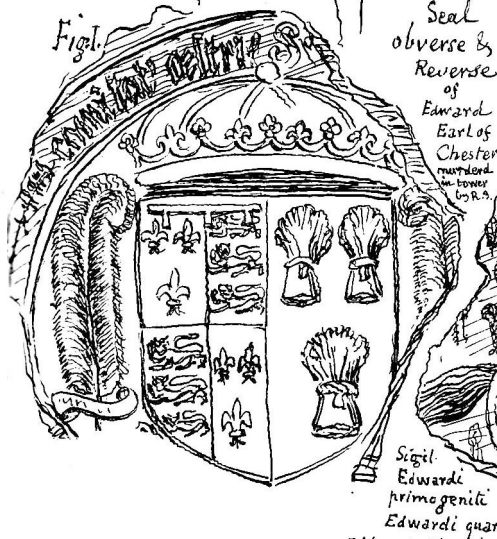
with single or more feathers, fleur de lys, or roses, in the background, may vary, and have varied, as the Prince himself, while the abstract arms of the palatinate have always been, since the time of their first appearance on the seal of Randal Blondeville, three garbs gold on an azure field. (Fig. 7, p. 158.) In the *county*, the sword, however suitably introduced, is, I imagine, only an optional badge,\* the crest itself (as distinct from the personal coronet,) being really a garb also, according to the following authoritative record in the "MSS. of Flower Norroy King of Arms, and with him Robert Glover, Somersett herald, his marshall." At page 31, he says, "The booke out of which these blazons following were taken was bought of the widdow of Marche King of Armes, by Garter Roy d'armes des Anglois, An<sup>o</sup> 6th, H. VI. This booke is of parchment, and is in the hands of Robert Cooke, *alias* Clarencieux King of Armes—Anno Dni. 1583."

Then follows a list of blazons, the first being as follows: †—"Le Counte de Chester port d'azure trois garbes d'or band de gules et sur son heaume une garbe." (See fig. 1, p. 163.)

About the same time also the County of the CITY of Chester (being a county in itself), had received a special grant of arms from Elizabeth, or rather those which had been adopted in Edward the Third's reign and granted by Richard the Second, were confirmed and defined by the Collège of Heralds to be the three lions of England dimidiated with the three garbs of Chester, supported by a lion on one side and a wolf on the other, with a sword and strap for crest, the motto being, *Antiqui colant antiquum dierum*—"Let the ancient people worship the 'Ancient of Days,' or the Father of all antiquity." (Fig. 7A, page 180.) And this, or rather the shield itself alone, would form a most suitable counterseal to the great seal of the Corporation. The above comparison will, however, shew how the city seal would differ from that of the earldom, the three garbs in the latter not being dimidiated with the three lions of England, but impaled, *i.e.* placed entire, side by side with those of the existing Earl or Prince of Wales, under his appropriate coronet, while

\* Sir E. Cust quotes—"At the Coronation of Queen Eleanor, wife of Edward I. it is stated, '*Comite Cestrie gladium Sancti Edwardi qui Curteyn dicitur ante Regem bajulante in Signum quòd Comes est Palatinus.*'"—Mat. Par. It is well known that he bore the sword in token of the terms of grant from William the Conqueror, that the Count should hold his palatinate by the sword as truly as the King held England by his Crown, "*jure et dignitate gladii.*"

† The earliest roll of arms (Henry III. 1240, A.D.) gives "*d'azur à trois garbes d'or,*" as the coat of the earldom of Chester; and in the roll of arms of Edward II. 1308—14, occurs "*Le Conte de Cestre,*" to whom "*de azure à trois garbes de or,*" is attributed.—SIR E. CUST.



Teste meiso apud Cestre vicesimo die januarii anno regni dñi palvis nostri vicesimo secundo. 1161.  
Cordwainers of Chester. lent to me by Mr Edwards of Blin school.

Fig. 3.  
Shield of County.

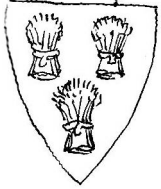


Fig. 4.  
Shield of City.

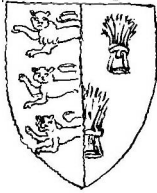


Fig. 5.  
False shield, still ignorantly  
used -  
see now  
Cattle-  
market.

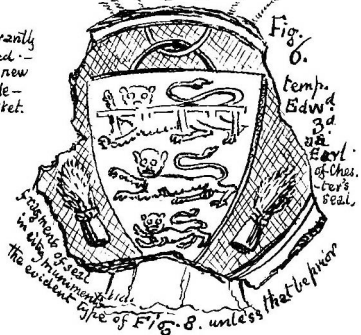
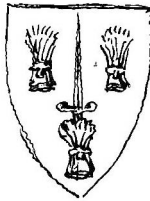
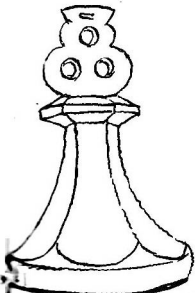
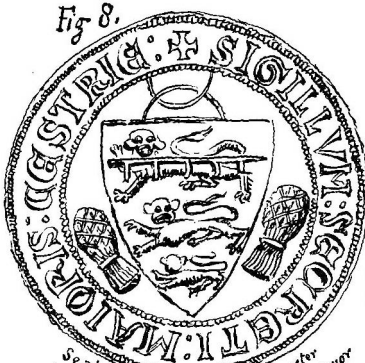


Fig. 7.



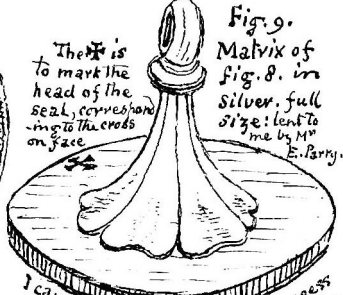
Seal of the priory of  
Ranhoe. 15<sup>th</sup> cent.  
an example of a common  
form of matrix.

Fig. 8.

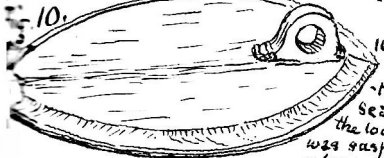


Seal belonging (now) to Mr Broder  
probably the original secretum of the Mayor  
as it seems to express authority derived from  
the Royal Earl. I think it earlier than 6.

Fig. 9.  
Matrix of  
fig. 8. in  
silver, full  
size: lent to  
me by Mr  
E. Barry.



I can see no token but of genuineness  
in the seal, though it has been doubted.



10. is the back  
of silver ma-  
trix of the Powys  
seal, shewing  
the loop by which it  
was suspended to the wrist  
or breast. See loops fig. 8.



Fig. 12.  
Matrix  
of 11.  
14<sup>th</sup>  
cent

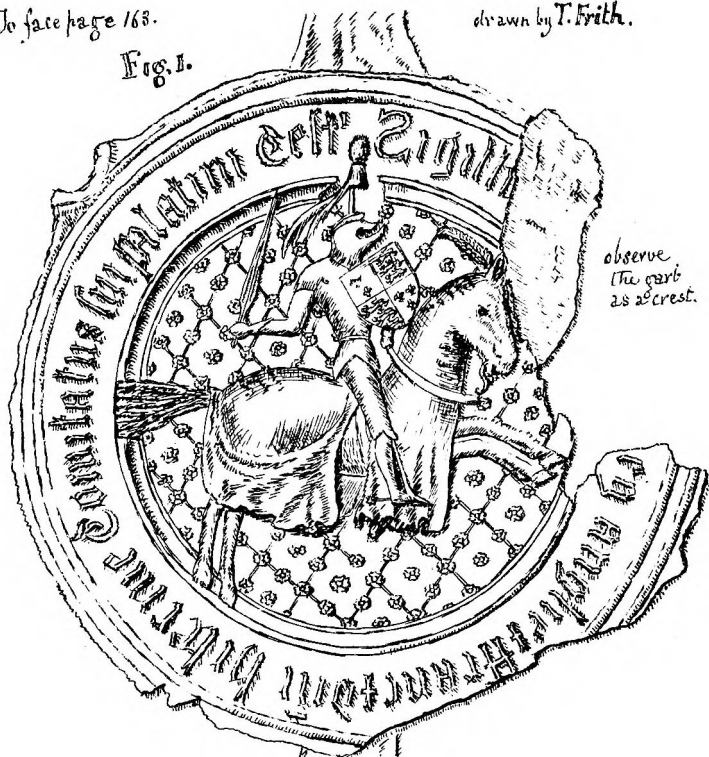
Ecce signus Dei. found in Abbots of  
1851. Executing  
mostly of rude execution, letters illegible.





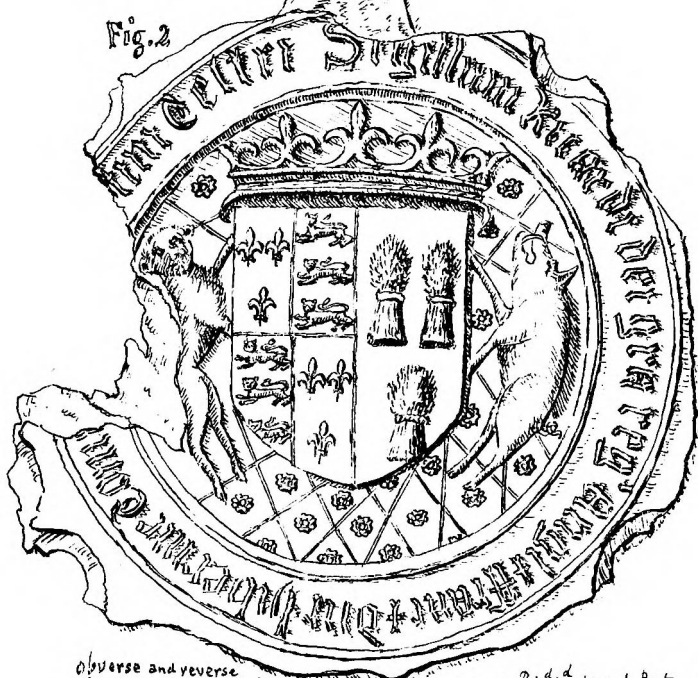


Fig. 1.



observe  
the carb  
as crest.

Fig. 2



Obverse and reverse  
of a seal on a charter in City muniments. It is endorsed Ric<sup>d</sup> 2. Anno 1. But  
it is given at Chester. this surely must be a mistake for Ric<sup>d</sup> 3.

the arms of the county in the abstract would be three garbs gold in an azure field.\* (Fig. 4, p. 162, and fig. 2, p. 163.)

By the same rule, the seal of the Bishop of Chester for the time being combines his own family arms with the arms of the see (three mitres) upon one shield, side by side. (Fig. 7, p. 165.) This is, however, properly the privy seal or counterseal only, though now used for all general purposes,—there having been formerly also a great official seal used by the first Bishop, which, I suppose, is still in existence. (Fig. 5, p. 164.) So likewise the Dean and Chapter have their corporate seal, while the Dean himself might also properly wear a privy signet of his own, of expressive character. I have given in a plate the private seal, or *sigillum secreti*, formerly used as such by the Mayor of Chester, as distinct from the great seal of the Corporation, in those cases where the latter was not needful, but only his own authority; it may serve well for an example of what I mean. (Fig. 8, p. 162.) Thus, as offices of deputed authority have been subdivided, whether ecclesiastical or civil, so legal seals of office have multiplied also, so as to be very numerous even in our small city. In addition to the great corporate seal (its only legal signature,)<sup>†</sup> the various subordinate departments might use a special seal, as the Exchequer Court, the Sheriff's, the Coroner's, (figs. 3, 4, p. 164, and fig. 9, p. 147;) nay, every minor guild, constituting a chartered society, would have its common symbol, while also the various principal officers might add their own *secretum*, embodying often the leading features of the chief seal and badges of the county or city. Hence have arisen frequent mistakes, from the indiscriminate use of these various seals, and wrong inferences have been also drawn from confounding seals with coats of arms—the two being often much alike, as in the case of Bristol. Something of this kind is alleged against the civic authorities of Chester by Flower, in the deed defining the bearings of the town; and indeed, ignorance, and consequent disorder on this trivial point, are universal. Such official seals were sometimes expressly assigned by Royal grant, or were named by the donor of endowments in his deed, as Bishop Sherborne gave an express device to the Churchwardens of Rolleston for their Grammar School, directing that its impression should always be stamped on the receipt of stipend (see also fig. 3, p. 165); or they may have originated in any other definite way, and yet may have been ignorantly changed or forgotten as time

\* The Exchequer, or any other court of the county, would naturally use on its seal the abstract arms, with badges appropriate to the territories included within its jurisdiction. (See plate of Exchequer seal of *Cheshire* and *Flygte*.) (Fig. 3, p. 164.) In fact, the seal of the Earl was the Exchequer seal, varying with each Earl.

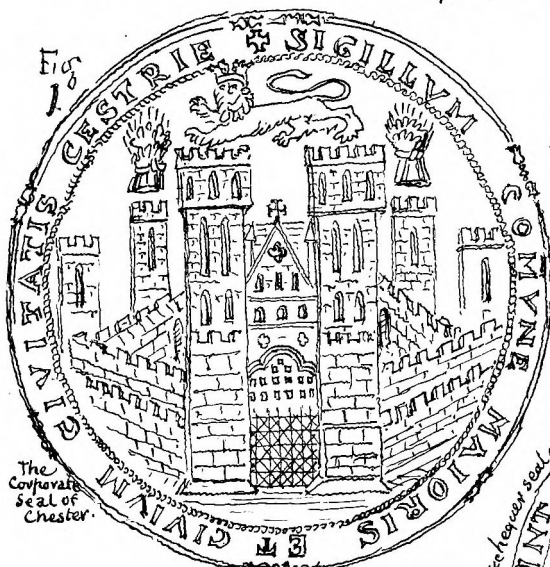
† The name given to a Corporation in its charter, is, like the name given to a Christian at baptism, essential to its identity, and its "seal" is equally essential to its acts, as being the only way in which a corporate body can express its united signature. (Fig. 1, p. 164.)

went on. There was formerly a seal-keeper in the Exchequers of the Palatine Courts, which of course secured some degree of exactness, the seal of the palatinate being as essential to certain deeds in the county as the seal of England elsewhere; nor could the latter interfere with the prerogative of the former, until the separate jurisdiction was recently established. But we must recollect that such seal, however authoritative, would not necessarily be identical with the *escutcheon* of the county. At present seals are granted to corporations by the Act of Parliament which incorporates them. So the 1st and 2nd Vict. c. 94, enacts "That the Master of the Rolls shall cause to be made a seal of the said record office, and shall cause to be sealed or stamped therewith all certified copies of any record in his custody." The design, however, appears to be left to the discretion of the officer himself. The usual system followed in such cases, to judge from the seal upon their letters, seems to have been, to use the arms and supporters of England, with no difference except in the superscription which describes the particular Government office from which the document proceeds. I confess, simple as this plan is, I would rather see some further badge of distinction obvious at once to the eye, as the Admiralty seal has an anchor on it. Sir Francis Palgrave has shewn a curious use of this last emblematic plan to classify the various heaps of muniments in the record rooms of old (fig. 6, p. 166). On a label over against Papal bulls, was a Pope's head with triple crown; on rolls of the Woods and Forests, an oak tree; on those of the Assay of Mint, a pair of scales; on those of Wales, a man with one shoe on and one shoe off (interpret it as you please); and (*most evidently expressive of all*) the obligations entered into by the men of Chester for obedience to Edward, when made Earl of Chester, were ticketed with the sign of the gallows, to punish traitors! What says the ancient and loyal city unto this? Of course many incorporated societies have seals formed upon this speaking plan. Fortified towns, ancient castra or cities, have generally castellated devices. The rebus, or punning allusion to the name was common, and sometimes grossly absurd, as in the case of our Cheshire town of Congleton, which exhibits on its seal two conger eels and a ton (fig. 2, p. 166). Ridiculous as this kind of device seems, it was a most easy help to memory, and, therefore, more frequent than any other, and had been in use from most remote antiquity.\* Hirondelle or swallow, for Arundel; three calves, for Calveley; the brock or badger, for Brooke; the fleur de lys or luys, for Louis of France; *wheat*, for White, Le-white, Whitley or *Blondeville*; † *bear* and club, for Barkley; *corvus* or crow, for Corbett, and Le-crow;

\* In the catacombs at Rome, a figure of a pig is drawn over the tomb of "Porcella;" of a ship, over "Navira;" over "Doliens," a cask; over "Leon," a lion; in examples of the 3rd or 4th century. (Fig. 9, p. 166.)

† Planché has traced the garb of Chester to *Blonde-ville*, or Whitechurch

A series of <sup>seals of</sup> corporate & other offices subordinate to the city, to face page 164.  
also episcopal of Chester



The Corporate Seal of Chester.

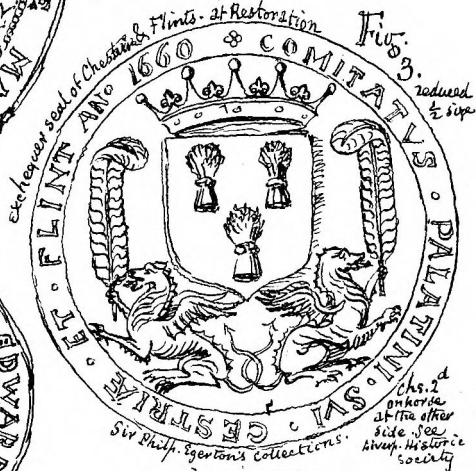
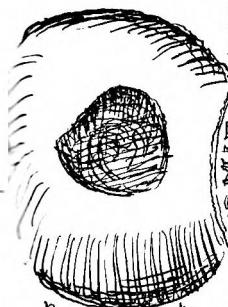


Fig. 4. exchequer seal Chester in 1371.  
Sigilla seaccarii nostri signat. de E. et de Cestria 6 maj. An. regni d. n. Edw. patris nostri 44 (1371.)



Reverse of Fig. 4. showing deep impress of finger.



Seal of Signature of John Bird, Bishop of Chester, first after Reformation, seal of Sir Philip Egerton.



Curious seal of Bishop Bridgman, most unfortunate in his suggestions. Supremacy personified. It is from Sir Philip Egerton's deeds.

Temp. King James I.









the white swan of Queen Margaret from Sweyn or Swanus, a Saxon ancestor; the liver or seaweed in cormorant's mouth, for Liverpool;\* a pansy for Fitton or *Phyton* (φυτον); in short, half of our badges may thus be traced back to a mere verbal pun, even where the origin is lost sight of in the name of the present representative. (Figs. 1, 5, p. 160.)

In the same way as I have just explained the law of civil seals, so also every subordinate ecclesiastical office would have its own symbol—not only the Episcopal and Decanal powers, but Rectorial and other minor *corporations sole*† or social. Also, the Chancellor, Archdeacon, Rural Deans, &c. might naturally use the general badges of the superior power whence they derive their deputed authority, with appropriate marks of difference, or even quite distinct (figs. 1, 4, 6, p. 165). In the plates I have given instances of these: one taken from Sir Philip Egerton's collection exhibits the *official* seal of the Archdeaconry, while another from Mr. Marsh, of Warrington, (*sigillum* Robti de Redeswell,) is a good example how a particular Archdeacon would combine the official with his own individual symbols in forming his own privy signet. Both of them introduce the garb of Chester, proving the wheat sheaf to have been used on ecclesiastical types as well as civic. The canopies so common on such seals are intended to represent the *stalls* set apart to the various officers, being exactly similar to those which we see in abbey churches and cathedrals over the seats of dignitaries.

The various incorporated societies, for purposes of education, missions, church building, &c., must have, of course, each its corporate seal; though they use also other optional devices for minor occasions, as a nurse and child, a figure of Faith, or of an apostle preaching. The Society for Propagating the Gospel have recently published their genuine seal, which is allegorical,—St. Paul in a ship approaching a heathen land, with the motto, "Come over and help us." The New Canterbury settlement has an elegant composition, but somewhat incongruous, from the fact of its mixing up allegory and heraldry in too great a jumble (figs. 8, 9, p. 165).

And this brings me at last to the subject I set out with—the choice of a common seal for our own Society. The design I leave to the artists who are more competent. I should only recommend that, whether we prefer the allegorical, symbolic, architectural, heraldic, or other basis, they should not be mixed, but be wholly in one kind. The heraldic shield will,

\* When I gave the lecture, I spoke of the *liver* as a fabulous animal, stating my belief that no such bird was known, the word signifying rather a *leaf*, or flag. I was overruled at the time, but have since found my remark verified by the Peerage and heraldic coat of the Earl of Liverpool, which included a cormorant sable holding in the beak a branch of seaweed (called layer or laver, and livre), being the arms of Liverpool. (See Journal of Liverpool Historic Society.)

† The seal is not, however, *essential* to a corporation *Sole*, in the same way as to a corporation combining many members.

I think, hardly be adopted, since, in order to legitimate use, it ought to pass through the Herald's College, and we must not sanction irregularity.\* The canopied or vesica form would rather imply that the association is ecclesiastical, which is not the case. The objection to allegory is that it generally requires an interpreter, or else many neat compositions might be suggested, such as, Time reaping and gleaners gathering what his sickle had left, the sheaves of corn also marking our Cestrian locality, as well as social union. I should however myself prefer some simple and characteristic badge, with double circle of appropriate inscription, but sufficiently ornamental to give it a bold and rich character when printed on the back of our journals. With these general observations I leave the matter in other hands.

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I have added in the appendix a numerous selection of local examples, and of others recently brought to light, by way of illustrating this paper, and also to make a record of such discoveries for public and future preservation. An explanation of each is given.

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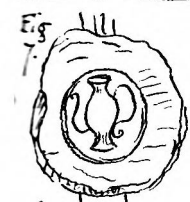
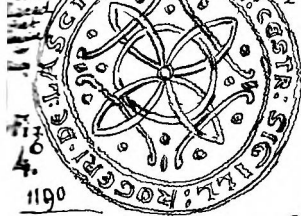
\* It is true that coats were assumed long before the Herald's College was incorporated under Richard III. ; though Henry V. had disallowed their use by any who could not show a valid title to them. All ensigns, however, which had been borne at Agincourt were confirmed by his special grant. There is little scruple now again to adopt heraldic pretensions, *ad libitum*; but it would not do for a Society like this to set the example.

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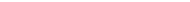
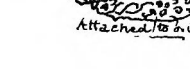
Fig. 2 coat from M. M. M. M.



Griffin for Wales  
Griffin at  
Allegorical.  
1/2 size



Seal of Henry  
Horne (w) Sheriff  
of Chester. 1449  
Sir P.E.'s deeds.  
a Rebus?





## A P P E N D I X .

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I HERE add a few descriptive remarks on the foregoing plates, many of which are well known, and are only given in illustration of the lecture. Many have, however, never been published before.

### PLATE AT PAGE 148.

Fig. 1—Seal of St. Mary's Nunnery, Chester. An impression of this was sent by Mr. Ormerod from a deed exhibited at Bristol Congress, and a still more perfect one from a lease in possession of Sir P. Egerton. The two together supply the inscription complete. Mr. Ormerod considers it to be of Edward the Third's date. Fig. 3 is the seal of the same nunnery at its first foundation by Randal Gernons, soon after 1155. It was procured from the Brit. Mus. by Sir P. E. Thus the old seals, like our churches, seem to have been renewed from time to time, preserving the original device, but varying in detail, as the styles of architecture changed.

Fig. 2—Shews the impress of the Lady Abbess on the back, which, while compacting the wax into the mould, left also the token of her act and deed. They are knuckle marks, as the deep wrinkles shew. The same three indents appear in both impressions, proving them intentional. When the seal was round, one finger only was sufficient (as appears from page 164, fig. 4). In earlier times the *tooth* performed this office, as I have explained in the text. The custom is verified by several instances like the one there quoted. Stowe gives one as authentic, on the testimony of an old chronicle in Richmond Library;—

“To the heirs of Hopton, lawfully begotten—  
From me and from mine, to thee and to thine,  
While the water runs and the sun doth shine,  
For lack of heirs to the King again,  
I, William, King, in third of my reign,  
Give to thee Norman *Huntere*,  
To me that art both leafe and deare,  
From me and from mine, to thee and to thine,  
As good and as fair, as ever they mine were,—  
To witness that this is soothe,  
I byte the wax with my toothe,  
Before Meg, Maude, and Margery,  
And my third son Henery,—  
For one bow and arrowe,  
When I come to hunt on Yarrowe.”

—(*See Blount's Ancient Tenures.*)

From this the family of Hopton are said to claim their estates, But as the very same names of Hopetown, Hopland, and Yarrow, occur in the similar grant in note at page 146, and other instances, I am disposed to think that Hopetown and Hoplands, answer to Upton and Uplands (up being in root the same as hop), and so imply all moors and shooting ranges; and that yarrow has a like meaning from the Saxon yr, an arrow. Upton and Yarrow occur still in the old forest ground of Wirral, alluded to in the latter grant. And Baines, in his history of Lancashire, quotes from Harl. MSS. No. 6079, fol. 109, another to the like purpose:—

“I, William, geve to thee, Powsen Rowdn,  
My Hope and Hoplands, with ye boundes up and downe,  
From heaven to earth and earth to helle,  
For thee and thine to dwelle,  
From me and myne to thee and thyne,  
For a bowe and a broade arrowe,  
When I come to hunt upon Yarrowe,  
In witnesse this is soothe,  
I byte the wax with my foretooth.”

The form from heaven above to hell beneath was a phrase implying the absolute fee-simple of the soil, with all above it and below it, without limit.

Fig. 4—The Saxon seal of Ælfrie, *I suppose Earl of Kent*, (not Mercia,) and father of Ælfrie whose devotional writings of tenth century are published. It was found by a labourer near Winchester in 1832 and is well known. I only give it as a specimen of a decided Saxon seal. The seal of Ethelwald, Bishop of Dunwich, about the middle of the ninth century, was found close to the monastery of Eye in 1821, and is now in the British Museum. The cast was given to me by Mr. Marsh, of Warrington.

Fig. 5—An Egyptian signet exhibited at the Chester Congress by Mr. Fairholt, who described the device as “the name of Amunoph III. within a cartouche.”

Fig. 6—Is a very perfect Roman bronze signet, with a device of either a half-length cupid, or I know not what, graven in a blue onyx stone. The outline is more smooth in the original. It was found some years ago near to the present Training College, and is in the collection of Mr. Hastings, Abbey Green.

Fig. 7—A gold signet, with amethyst jewel, found in one of the Abbot's coffins at Chester Cathedral, together with a pastoral crook. The latter is lost, but the former is in the possession of the Dean of Chester.

Fig. 8—Is from Henry's history of England, who quotes out of Pancirollus a full account of these castellated symbols of vicegerency, which were stamped on the books of mandates of the Roman governor, with some slight difference in the form of castle for each province.—Civic

devices of this character were general throughout the empire in the fifth century, and were probably the type of similar architectural seals for chief cities to this day (see p. 164, fig. 1). Compare also fig. 9, p. 148, which is drawn beside it on purpose. This is from a silver wafer "toppe" (in possession of Mr. Broster), and is the evident matrix of many impressions still attached to Coroner's inquests in the city (so I am told). But there is another very like it, only somewhat larger and without the garb, in the Under Sheriff's office (of the county), who happens to be also Coroner. (Page 167, fig. 9.)

#### PLATE AT PAGE 156.

These are none of them new, and are only sketched to explain the lecture. The inscriptions on the plate tell all about them.

#### PLATE AT PAGE 158.

Fig. 1—A full description of this deed is given by Planché in the *Journal of the Archæological Association*. Its discovery was singular; Mr. Planché had been searching in vain for seals of the earliest Counts Palatine; at the Chester Congress I expressed to him my conviction that a deed existed of the kind among the archives of Lord Westminster, having a green seal with an equestrian figure on it. I had seen it named in some guide-book, but could not recollect where. Inquiry and search were diligently made, but no one knew of any such thing, so that I was supposed to "have dreamed it." At length, however, a tin box was discovered by Mr. Allen, in the muniment-room at Eaton, containing the very document, with the green seal appended, but not the chief seal. The charter, though not the original grant of Hugh Lupus to St. Werburgh's monastery, yet contained that grant in full, with a confirmation by Anselm, and by Randal Gernons, and is not found either in Dugdale or Ormerod. Mr. Black, on inspection, pronounced it one of the most perfect and beautiful deeds he had ever seen, and its matter is of utmost *local* interest, so many places and churches being named in it. It is witnessed finally by "Roberto Dapifero, Chadwaladro Rege Nort Wal-liarum, Willelmo de Manulwarien, Roberto de Maci, Gilbert de Venables," and afterwards by the very "Ricardo Pincerna" (whose seal appears in fig. 3 at page 159). The green seal, which alone remains entire, is assigned by Planché to some one of the witnesses (not to the Earl), and yet I cannot help thinking the termination *IN*, still legible, may be part of the title "*de Meschin*," which belonged to the family of Randal Gernons, whose seal may have been used (*i.e.* of some member of it).

Fig. 3—I give another impression, among the Chester records, of the seal of John, when Earl of Moretaine, in Normandy. It is noted as the earliest indications of the *lions* on a royal seal, being in the time of

Henry II. The obverse is nearly obliterated, but the counterseal (fig. 4) is plain enough, being an antique so frequent in that Earl's period.

Fig. 6—Seal of Randal Blondewille. Though well known, this is given as first exhibiting the garb, or wheat sheaf, in connexion with Chester, and also as a good example of the heraldic counterseal, which became presently so universal. The garbs assigned to his predecessors rest on no positive authority, and were probably assigned to them in after time, just as the wolf's head erased was assigned to Hugh Lupus long after his death. But Mr. Planché's view that the *wheat* was given in allusion to the name of "*Whitchurch*," where Randal was born, and so was called "*Blondewille*," is most probable. (See also fig. 1, page 160). There is abundant proof that the *general* principle upon which arms were given was "*mere alliteration*,"—some distant resemblance in the sound of the name,—as the "*Clarions*" of "*Clarence*," and many other instances given in the text. We still see the same punning system followed,—as for "*Gamon*," three pheasants suspended by the neck; for "*Arnútsstead*," a bent arm stayed by a spear; and so on, which (however ridiculous it seems) was intended as a sort of *memoria technica*, so as at once to suggest the name of the person to whom the arms belonged. The principal exceptions are badges of office, held before heraldry commenced,—as the covered cup for "*Pincerna*," or "*Butler*;" the blood-hound for Grosvenor, the "*great hunter*;" the horn and arrow for Done the Delamere Forester; and the stag, for Silvester, the Wirral Forester, and thence for Stanley. I think too, that the royal lion, which was all at once adopted by the Kings of England, Scotland, Norway, and native Princes of Wales, &c. were (if partly from *Leon*) yet eventually from the fact that, as the Roman empire bore the king of birds, so our Sovereign would bear the king of beasts. Nevertheless, in the main, the "*pun*" was evidently the more general rule, and often very far fetched indeed!

PLATE AT PAGE 159.

Fig. 1—The seal of Guthlac de Riblie serves well, at all events, to illustrate the period of transition from the simple Saxon cross to the Norman custom of seals and badges. It would, of course, have been more valuable were it verified by any deed; but the trifling sum I gave to the labourer who found it could never remunerate any one for a forgery. The matrix is a greasy brown stone, flat and rough on the back, as if it had been imbedded in some more weighty mass. The name Guthlac is Saxon (as we know from the history of Guthlac of Croyland); but the "*De Riblie*" seems a Norman title. The letters are very early, and much like those on the seal of Henry I. (fig. 5). Mr. Roach Smith considers it much earlier. The letters read the wrong way round, and are turned with the foot outwards, which, however, may be also seen in the genuine



seal of Pincerna, next to it (fig. 3). I have added in fig. 2 shields from the Bayeux tapestry, to prove the Norman shape of the seal. The monogram upon it, the symbol of Christianity used on the banner of Constantine (fig. 15, p. 166), is abundant in the catacombs, and is continued in the same form to this day.

Fig. 3—Seal of *Ricardus Pincerna*, was brought to me by Mr. T. F. Maddock, whose kindness in allowing me to inspect the city charters I am glad to acknowledge here. The deed to which it is attached belongs to Mrs. Lancaster; it is short, perfect, and beautifully written, addressed by Richard Pincerna to Walter Durdent, *Episcopo Cestrensi* (as the Bishops of Lichfield were sometimes called), who excommunicated Randal Gernons, Earl of Chester. The deed grants land to Egidio de Calch (St. Giles). The same Richard is a witness to the deed of Randal Gernons before named (fig. 1, p. 158), and he also granted therein St. Olave's Church to the monastery of Chester. Pincerna was the old Roman name for "cup-bearer," and was an hereditary office in the Palatinate, whence the name became Butler, in his descendants of Bewsey, Lords of Warrington, whose arms appear in that church, as well as on the tomb of Robert Curthoys at Gloucester (three covered cups on the shield of Abbot Butler). I adduce it as a good example of the transition from the badge of office to the heraldic bearing. I add also, in fig. 5, the seal of Henry I. to shew the flowers in the same position upon both. Some of the Pincerna race almost invariably witness to the charters of the Norman Earls. The word is derived from "pinax," a cup.

Fig. 6—The seal of William de Romare, through whom Lincoln came to the Earl of Chester, is from a splendid MSS. in the City Library (about A.D. 1600), containing an emblazoned pedigree of Hugh Lupus. The perfect development of the shield of arms upon it is not compatible (surely?) with the apparent date of the charter to which it is attached. The facsimile there given (in part) is witnessed by Alexander, the magnificent Bishop of Lincoln, who died in 1137, which would make it indeed an early instance of an heraldic seal; but I imagine the deed (if entire) would prove it to be a *confirmation* (embodying the original grant of the first William de Romare) by his son of the same name.

Fig. 7—Is named by Planché as an early instance of the bend used for difference, and of the rebus kind of device. It is the seal of William de Filgeriis, or Fougères, which signifies "fern," that plant appearing upon the shield. We have already seen that this pun upon names was the almost universal rule of design, except where badges of office had previously marked the family. The seal is of Cestrian interest, as being attached to a covenant between this William de Filgeriis and Randal Bloudeville Earl of Chester, in 1200. The blazing star of Anjou appears on each side of the shield.—(*Archæological Journal*, July, 1851.)

## PLATE AT PAGE 160.

Fig. 1—Shews the garb or wheat sheaf for “Wheatley,” from a deed of Sir P. Egerton’s, confirming the view taken of the garbs of Chester as derived from Randal Blondeville (or Whitchurch)—white and wheat being the same word radically in most languages.

Fig. 4—*Secretum celat Agnus idem que serat*, is an evident allusion to the 6th chapter of Revelations, “And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals,” &c. It is given in support of the interpretation before put upon the equestrian device. The “*Ecce Agnus Dei*,” in fig. 12, was a very common subject in the fourteenth century, and generally affected a rudeness of engraving, as if each person cut his own (see fig. 11, p. 162). The letters are so square as to be barely legible, having the unfortunate link from point to point of the letter, which makes the C like D, and the E like B.

Figs. 14 and 15—Are interesting as the seals of chaplains, “del Bache.” (I suppose of the Bache, as being attached to deeds concerning Upton.) The first shews an heraldic shield over an ecclesiastic device. (Compare figs. 19, 20, and p. 165, fig. 2.) The second has just such a chalice as we find incised upon chaplains’ tombstones.

Fig. 16—Is the seal of the Peculiar Rectory of Hawarden, the canopy over it being of an elegant pyxlike form. It is from Sir P. Egerton’s deeds.

Fig. 18—Is given as one out of a variety of floriated initials. The first letter of the name with a crown over it was very common in the 15th and 16th centuries, even where the rank of the person did not require the coronet. (See plate at page 179, fig. 7.)

Figs. 19, 20—Are the obverse and reverse of the seal of the fraternity of St. John of Jerusalem (in England), attached to a deed belonging to Mrs. Lancaster. The word “pinace” (I suppose) refers to the head of John in a charger, which is the device on the chief seal. The counterseal of Brother William de Haunley is thoroughly heraldic. It exemplifies also the manner of endorsing the common seal by the *secretum* of the individual bearing office at the time.

## PLATE AT PAGE 161.

Fig. 1—Is from tiles found at both Marton Church near Congleton, and St. Michael’s, Chester, which have been taken as patterns by Mr. Minton. It is here given to explain the form called “Vesica piscis,” as peculiar at first to ecclesiastical seals.

Fig. 2—Is the only example I possess actually marked “*Contra-sigillum*,” a gutta percha cast was given to me by Albert Way. The composition is elegant, though I do not quite trace the meaning of it, except the crown and pastoral staff as symbols of an Abbey Regalis.

Fig. 3—The seal of Hawise de Keveoloc, great grand-daughter to the famous Owen Cyveilioch, called Hawise Gadarn, or the Hardy, who appears on the splendid stained glass in the east window of St. Mary's, Shrewsbury. The matrix is in silver, of Edward the Second's date, and the engraving sharp, deep, and elegant beyond any I ever saw. The features, drapery, wimple, and head-dress of the original are far more perfect than my rough drawing could express. It is a good and early example of the manner in which a noble heiress bore her own arms in one hand and her husband's in the other, answering the end of impalement. It is an instance also of the use of the vesica (*soon*) in seals of titled females, the transition being from "our lady," as she appears in fig. 10. Fig. 6 shews clearly the appropriation of that shape to the female, where an identical device appears on a circle for the husband, on a vesica for the wife, whence the widow's lozenge is derived. However the Powys seal has created much interest. It was first shewn to me by Mr. Penson, having been found by men in his employ when excavating for a building at Oswestry. It is remarkable that there was also a Hawise, daughter of Hugh de Keveilioc, Earl of Chester, in the 13th century, to whom the lion rampant is in early MSS. assigned (and with greater probability than the six garbs). But the dress is of a later date, as well as the little "star" instead of a cross before sigillum; and, as Mr. Ormerod observes, the *Domine* de Keveoloc, expresses domain, and not the mere title which the Earl of Chester bore from birth. The true Hawise, then, was an heiress of the royal tribe of Powys (Gwynwyn) wife of Sir J. Charleton, who also (as well as the lady's ancestors) bore the lion rampant, the distinction of colour not being visible on the seal. Mr. Morris, of Shrewsbury (the admirable Welsh genealogist), explains the two lions on the other shield in a letter given below.\*

\* "Johanna, mother of Hawise Gadarn, was the only surviving child of Sir Robert Corbet, of Moreton, co. Salop, Knt. by Catharine, daughter of John Lord Strange, of Knockin. Thomas Corbet, brother of Johanna, avoiding the single raven of his family, bore for arms, 'or, 6 ravens, 3, 2, and 1 proper, a canton gules, thereon 2 lions passant argent.' He died s. p. before his father, and the Corbet estates having passed to the issue of Sir Robert's second marriage, Hawise appears to have followed her uncle's example, and to have adopted, in conjunction with the arms of her father ("gules, a lion rampant, or"), those of Strange, avoiding the Corbet arms altogether. This seal is very valuable, as it explains with certainty the intermarriage of her paternal line with the Corbet family, as to which almost every pedigree of ancient date differs: they all state the mother of Hawise to have been a Corbet, but differ as to her Christian name and the names of her parents."—"J. MORRIS, Shrewsbury."

And here let me add with regard to this interesting seal how the Welsh books state that four of her uncles claimed her estates, (by their law of reverting from the female to the male line,) and how Edward II. took her part, giving her in marriage to Sir J. Charleton, (whom he made Lord Powis at once,) and entailing the property of the four uncles on *her* issue, but not touching the inheritance of a fifth uncle,

Fig. 4—Seal of the White Friars or Carmelites of Chester, whose monastery stood between Whitefriars, Weaver-street, and Commonhall-street. It is from a cast sent to me by Mr. Marsh, of Warrington, who has given a beautiful collection to the museum of that town. The seal is quite new to me, and, I believe, hitherto unknown in Chester. The noble pair of candlesticks are enough to frighten some of us out of our wits in these days.

Fig. 7—The seal of the Liverpool Corporation has been the subject of much discussion (*vide* Journal of Liverpool Historic Society). The issue makes it out to have been originally the eagle of St. John, with the inkhorn in its beak, and label, inscribed Iohis, for Johannis, in its claw,—there having existed there, from the earliest date, an altar dedicated to St. John by “Johannis de Leverpole,” whose seal was probably made the basis of the civil seal attached to their first charter. Supposing this to be the case, I am still disposed to think that the inkhorn was at that time *purposely* changed into the “sprig of three leaves,” as it is obviously a *sprig* on the original seal; and this would account better for the present crest of Liverpool—a cormorant with a sprig of “laver” or “flag” in his beak—as having been suggested by the seal. I have, however, only given it as an example of a *civic* seal, in the vesica form, which may still be traced to its ecclesiastical origin. It would have been quite as good a pun, if the bird had been meant for the “dove and olive branch,” to represent Mercy, in allusion to the river. The real derivation of Liverpool, however, is most probably “Litherpool,” or “Lower-pool,” in affinity with “Litherland,” above the shore, and in opposition to “Overpool,” at the other extremity of the estuary. The star and crescent are thought by some to mean the star of the East and the crescent of the Saracens, as it first appeared at the time of the Crusades, and is seen on the seal of Richard the First (fig. 8) distinctly. Others interpret it as Christ the Sun of Righteousness, and the Moon for the Virgin Mary. Whatever its import, it was henceforth almost universal upon seals, (See the seal of St. John’s Hospital, and compare a device from the catacombs, fig. 11, p. 166.)

#### PLATE AT PAGE 162.

Fig. 1—Is an example of the usual style of seal used in the Exchequer of the Palatinate, which was, in fact, the seal of the Royal Count himself, a new one being made for every fresh Earl. It combines the ostrich

William, (as he had not joined the others,) whose grand-daughter and heiress, Hawys Enyon, by marriage with Hanmer became ancestress of Sir John Hanmer, who also bears two lions pass. gard. on his coat of arms. (Our Welsh friends best understand these intricacies.) W. E. Wynne, M.P. for Merionethshire, has also sent me a fine seal of Gray de Tanquerville, a true descendant and heir of Hawys Gadarn, in the 15th century; but I believe there is no direct line left on the Powys domains who could still claim relationship by blood with Hawys Gadarn, the original owner of the seal.

plume, in token that the Earl was also Prince of Wales. Prince Edward, (afterwards Edward V.) was at Chester when five years old, in 1475, but this deed is seven years later, in the last year of his father's life, and only a short time before the unfortunate youth was murdered by his uncle, Duke of Gloucester, afterwards Richard the Third. Some animal grasps the feather, but I know not what, as only the crown of the head is left. It is attached to a charter of the Cordwainers' Company, in care of Mr. Jones, their treasurer.

Fig. 8—Is from a silver matrix lent to me by Mr. E. Parry, the industrious author of the *Royal Visits to Chester and Wales*. The garbs are precisely in the conventional form of Henry III. or Edward I.; and the device is such as might naturally have been used by the first Mayor, as deriving his authority from the Royal Earl, whose arms are graven on it. The only impression I find among the records, at all like it, is in fig. 6, which is either parent or child to fig. 8. The elegance of the matrix and position of the cross argue its genuineness, *I think*. I wish it might be consigned to the office of the Mayor. Mr. Broster is said to own it now; and here I cannot help relating a little anecdote; I once used the seal in writing to Mr. Broster, who, in his reply, wrote thus:—"I cannot help telling you that the important seal excited the Post-office, London, to open it, and see if any treason was therein; but I also sent a large canister of potted prawns to a friend in Manchester, which they bored a hole in, thinking it might be combustible."

Fig. 10—Is the silver matrix of the Powys seal of "Hawise de Keveoloc." Such seals used to be suspended to the breast, (as indicated also in the loops of fig. 8,) or to the wrist more commonly; for in the *Public Mercury* of July 19, 1660, is advertised as lost, "a gold seal, being a coat of arms, cut in a piece of gold, in form of a lozenge, fastened to a black ribband to tie about the wrist."

#### PLATE AT PAGE 163.

Fig. 1—Is from a charter in the city muniments, invariably quoted as of Richard II. and so endorsed; but if so, how come there to be only three *fleurs de lys*, since the number was only reduced to three by Henry V. and the white boar was the well-known badge of Richard III. If this conjecture is right, we possess a charter of a reign not hitherto known. The garb for a crest confirms my view of the county arms at page 162. It is accurately copied by Mr. Frith, of the Town Clerk's office.

#### PLATE AT PAGE 164.

Fig. 1—Is the great corporate seal of Chester. It is a fine design, and very characteristic of the city. The lion and the garbs mark the royalty and earldom, while the castellated structure bears some probable resem-

blance to the gateway and walls of the town about Edward the First's date. I wonder whether any deed exists to confirm its antiquity, or whether it is a more recent design in imitation of mediæval style? I have already compared it with the badge of Roman vicegerency. (Fig. 8, p. 148.)

Fig. 2—I have added as an example of civic seals used in the subordinate courts of a corporate town. There are many good casts of it, this matrix being also in the hands of Mr. Broster. The impression is found attached to deeds under the statute of Merchants' Recognizances. The castles (badges of Castile) imply the date of Edward II. A little garb, instead of cross, marks the centre, whence the legend starts.

Fig. 4—Is the Exchequer seal of the Palatinate in 1371, when de la Pole was justiciary (as the deed states), which is another charter of the cordwainers. The reverse shews the deep impression of a single finger. This seal again serves to prove how the Exchequer seal was really the seal of the *Earl*, varying in each reign, and each Earl supplying a fresh one of his own. It was formerly under a seal-keeper, an officer of the Lord Chamberlayne of the county, whose vocation ceased with the Palatine courts. A very perfect impression of Queen Elizabeth's Exchequer seal of Chester is among the county records; the Queen on horseback forming the obverse, and the royal arms impaled with the three garbs of the county forming the reverse, between the Tudor supporters. No. 3 is the Exchequer seal, as renewed at the Restoration in 1660. It differs in shewing the escutcheon of the county *alone*. The Tudor dragons and Prince's feather are appropriate to an Exchequer of "Chester and Flynte," though hardly as suitable to an institution for Cheshire only. The obverse displays Charles on horseback (as usual), but not facing the usual way. Had the ancient rules of design been lost during the Commonwealth? Sir Ed. Cust's paper on this seal is worth reading in the Liv. Hist. Soc. Journal.

Fig. 5—The seal of John Bird, first an Abbot, and afterwards first Bishop of Chester. He seems to have been "*most accommodating*," being a Papist to begin with, a Protestant under Henry VIII. and a Papist again under Mary. It is remarkable that after three centuries the same name should be found on our list of Bishops in the person of John Bird Sumner. The Abbey, when made into a Cathedral was dedicated to Christ and the Virgin, who appear on the seal, but in attitude according with the Reformation, Mary being indeed surrounded with a flaming glory, but in posture of prayer to Jesus, whose fingers are raised in token of instruction.

Fig. 6—Is the seal of Bishop Bridgman, an earthly crown occupying the place of glory, where IHS, or the Dove of the Holy Spirit used once to hover overhead. The whole design thrusts the supremacy forward in a painful prominence, as if the Bishop had been proud of owing all, that constitutes episcopacy, to an earthly donor. How would good Queen Bess,

or our present beloved Victoria, have shrunk from the Uziah-like arrogance implied in the "glorified crown." It seems to have been the Bishop's own device, suggested probably by warm loyalty, but by taste most gross. The arms underneath are in the usual episcopal form, impaling Bridgman's own family coat with that of the Abbey (three mitres). These arms still exist on the carved oak in the Lady Chapel.

PLATE AT PAGE 165.

Fig. 1—The seal of the Dean and Chapter, not much better in design than the last—perhaps worse, if I understand it right. H. 8 marks Henry VIII. upon his throne. On one side the Virgin humbly stands, as the letter V denotes; on the other (I imagine) C designates a higher Being still: a figure kneels below, making the whole a sort of burlesque upon the ancient sacred seals. Perhaps a more complete impression would remove these apparent indecencies; and, no doubt, a complete one could be easily procured, as the seal is the legal one still in use.

Figs. 4 and 5 mark well the distinction between the *sigillum commune* and the *sigillum secreti*; the former being the official seal of the Archdeaconry (abstract), the latter the privy seal of the immediate holder of the office. The garbs, which are preserved in both, shew that the same badge was adopted in ecclesiastical as well as civil offices. There were several minor Archdeacons in the diocese, but the Archdeacon of Chester alone had a stall at the Cathedral, and exercised real jurisdiction, being called "The Eye of the Bishop." He seems in the seal to be setting out on an errand to discharge the "ocular office." The canopies on such seals represent the tabernacle work above their stalls in Church. The other examples in this page tell their own tale. The best sort of device for a Rectory, or other Church, is, I think, an image of the building itself.

PLATE AT PAGE 166.

Fig. 1—The seal of Roger Lacy, towards the end of the 12th century. It is from a cast given to me by Mr. Marsh. I give it as one example of an allegorical rebus. Lacy was hereditary Constable of Chester, and a sore foe to the Welsh Chieftains. The griffin is the badge of Wales, and a serpent (perhaps a *lœce*, or leech) has seized his throat, to suck his life's blood out. On the counterseal (fig. 4) is a fretted pattern of interlaced curves; in allusion still to the name of "Lacy."—This (if true) would be only a match for the next—

Fig. 2—Two conger eels and a ton, the seal of the borough of Congleton—(Conger-eel-ton).

Fig. 3—The *swan*, a Lancastrian badge of Henry IV. is derived (so Planché thinks) from Sweyne, or Swanus, a Danish ancestor of the Bohuns. I only introduce it, because it is so often spoken of as a gift

from Queen Margaret to each of the men of Cheshire who followed her cause. It was either fastened by a silver chain to the arm, or embroidered in silver on the sleeve (as the porter's number still). This is the peculiar distinction of the badge, being worn by retainers on the arm, sometimes with the motto or *cri de guerre* under it. The preachers, when enrolling crusaders, fixed on the shoulder of those who obeyed the call a red cross with the motto, "*Dei voluntas*" under it, one of the earliest badges known. Such was the silver swan of Margaret, given to the men of Cheshire, alluded to in Mr. Beaumont's paper on Blore Heath.

Figure 5 is only given to illustrate my recommendation of some simple and expressive emblem on a seal. Who can doubt what office the anchor comes from? The several images under fig. 6 shew the same rule, as formerly adopted to distinguish hampers of deeds in the Record Office. The Cheshire lot were known by a gallows, *leaving no room for doubt as to what county they belonged to.*

Fig. 11 to 15 are specimens of signets found in the catacombs at Rome, kindly placed in my hands by Miss Gresley, and serving well to illustrate the quotation from Cyril, at page 159, "Let our signets be the dove, the fish, the heavenward sailing ship." They shew likewise the very early origin of the *rebus*; the tomb of Navira being graven with a *boat* (*navis*); that of Doliens with a cask (*dolium*), corresponds exactly to the *Bolt* and *ton* for "Bolton Abbey," or to the *briar* and *ton* in the east window of St. Mary's, Chester, for "Brereton." The *urn* for Herne, in fig. 7, A.D. 1449, is another instance of a very bad pun.

Fig. 16 is an ecclesiastical device, its purple matrix having been found in excavations at Chester and brought to me. The pelican or eagle feeding her young with her own blood, is the ancient symbol of the Church.

Fig. 17—The next is a papal bulla attached to a deed in possession of Mr. Vawdry, of Middlewich, who sent me a rubbing of the leaden seal, here drawn.

#### PLATE AT PAGE 179.

Fig. 1—The seal of Henry VII. as holding the Palatinate, is another fine example of the Earl's Exchequer seal. It is added here to prove the origin of the dragons and plume upon the seal of Charles II. (fig. 3, p. 164), the red dragon having been adopted by Henry in token of his connection with Wales through Tudor blood.

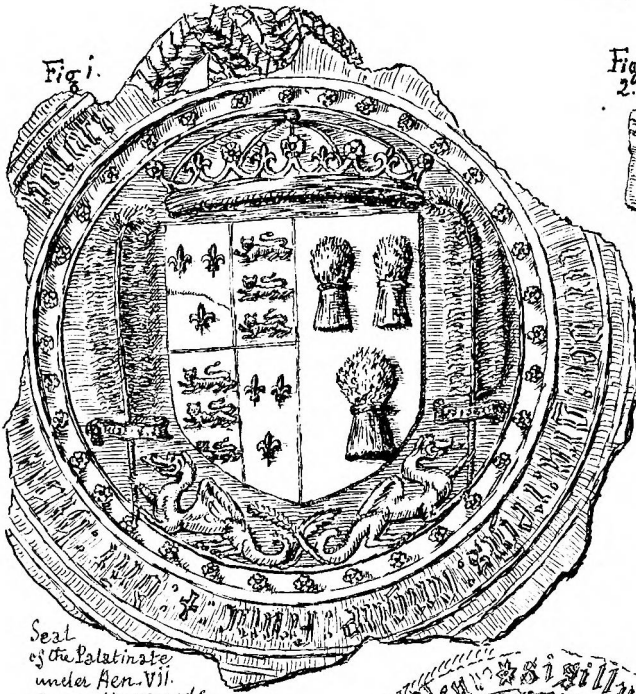
Fig. 5—The smaller privy seal of the Mayor would fall under the condemnation in a preceding note; but it does not appear to profess to be heraldic, but only combining on a stamp the principal badges of the city,—just as the buttons of the police do also.

Fig. 3—The brass seal of Adrien de Salevert (?) has long been absurdly exhibited under a glass case as the seal of Hugh Lupus, I suppose





Fig. 1.



Seal of the Palatinate under Hen. VII. from city records.

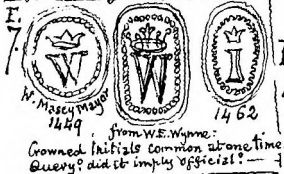


Fig. 6.



Seal of St. John's hospital in Chester. 1/2 size, best copy in silver. T. Frith. from a good original.

Fig. 2.

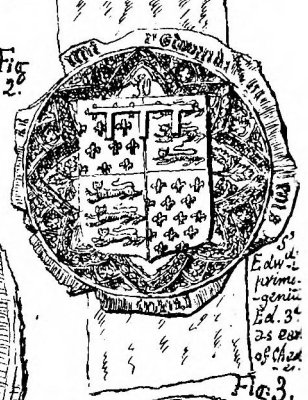


Fig. 3.



Sigillum Adrien de Salesbury, a borough, called "Hugh Lupus" seal.

Fig. 5.

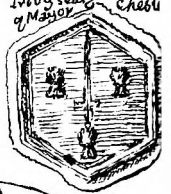


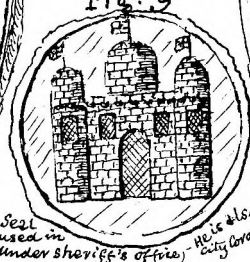
Fig. 8.



Seal of St. Mary's hospital in Chester. 1/2 size, best copy in silver. T. Frith. from a good original.

Seal of Mayor of Harfleur from brass matrix found at spital burial ground Boughton, in Chester

Fig. 9.



Seal used in Chester. Also used under sheriff's office. City Coroner.

from the shaggy supporters having been taken for wolves. Here is a complete shield of arms assigned to one who died near a century before heraldry was born! and Gothic letters of the 15th century on a seal of the 11th century!! Moreover, the real name of the owner is round it, written full length!!! And the error is not corrected yet at the Museum!!!!

Fig. 4—Is a remarkable and interesting seal found in the Spital burial ground in Boughton. The matrix is in solid brass, but broken, the sculpture being, however, almost perfect. It is the only instance I have seen of the legend in intaglio (though the device is in cameo), a custom in occasional use from the 13th century. The effect is not good. This too has been mistaken for a seal of Chester, owing to a word on it which looks something like Devana. I was at first delighted to see a vessel bristling with guns, passing full sail between the towers of the Watergate, but the triumph was soon dissipated by a perusal of the writing, which ascribes the seal to the Mayor of Harfleur, "*Sigillum officii Maioris ville do. . . . regis de Harfleur.*" The description of the place in Sir H. Nicolas' Agincourt answers closely to the Representation of the city here; and as I perceive the lions and fleur de lys quartered on the sails, I take it to be the seal granted by Henry V to the city, after its conquest. The hare couching beside the gate, and the face looking out of a flower in the clouds, forming an English rebus, also seem to denote its English origin. It is a rich design, though too minutely intricate. The matrix was lent to me by Mr. Parry, who stated that it belonged to Mr. Broster.

Fig. 6—Is the seal of St. John's Hospital at Chester. The silver matrix, now held by the Corporation, is of modern date, though evidently copied from an original as old as the foundation of the Hospital by the second Randal in early English times. It exhibits John the Baptist under the discipline of the wilderness, represented by a scourge of thistles in the hands of angels. It is indeed a most coarse, clumsy imitation of a very striking original which might, I have no doubt, be found attached to some ancient deeds. The seal will soon pass with the property itself into other hands, who will, it is hoped, devote the estate more honestly to charitable purposes than its late guardians, who employed the proceeds in relieving their public rates. Would that the Court of Chancery, in restoring the almshouses, had paid at least so much respect to the memory of the original founder as to have built them in a style which would have answered to the age of its first institution, and so would at once have carried the mind back to the time when the founder lived! Solidity, comfort, and symmetry of form could easily have been so attained. But it is hopeless to expect anything beyond a cold combination of brick and mortar from those central powers, who, living at a distance, have no local care, feel no real interest, and can sympathize with none of those feelings of our citizens, which crave

something better in structures thrust upon their sight every time they pass that way!

Fig. 8—Is a seal found in excavations at the foot of St. Mary's Hill, Chester, and brought to me by Mr. Baylis, the city surveyor. It is an impression in lead, thick and heavy, from an early English seal. At first I took it for the seal of St. Mary's Nunnery, but I presently found it to be that of Luffield, which was established about 1130, and dissolved by Pope Alexander VI. at the instance of Henry VII. in 1498, for want of funds to support the establishment and buildings. Archdeacon Wood has sent me a full description out of Dugdale, who states that the revenues were applied to the maintenance of Henry VII.'s chantry at Westminster. I have only given it as an example of an impression upon lead. Mr. Dawes gives me other instances known to himself; and Mr. Roach Smith thinks it may be one of those fac-similies which were laid up with the registrar, in order to test and detect forgeries. (See Bigland on Registers). I wish, however, it had been attached to a deed, without which it is impossible to deduce inferences. The matrix (I am told) was in the hands of Mr. Prescott, of Stockport, formerly.

#### PLATE AT PAGE 180.

Fig. 1—" *Sigillum Henr. primogeniti Henrici quarti comitis Cestrie.*" I only adduce this out of the muniments of Chester, because I have somewhere heard it said that a seal of Henry the Fourth's time, exhibiting the swan and ostrich feather, is a desideratum. This is the seal of his eldest son, Prince of Wales and Earl of Chester, and may possibly be of interest on that account. It also supplies the badge of the white swan from our own local archives. Observe upon it the "*fleurs de lys semées*," i.e. sprinkled in indefinite numbers on the shield; whereas the seal of the same Henry when King has only three lilies, shewing the exact period when the change took place.

Fig. 2—Is the seal of the Black or preaching Friars of Exeter, which was sent to me by W. E. Wynne, Esq., M.P. It is a beautiful and well cut specimen. I give it on that account; and also because I have no local example of a Black Friars' seal to give from any document connected with the ancient monastery of that order at Chester.

Fig. 3—Is the pommel of the sword of Hugh Lupus, and fig. 4 the sword itself. The floriated pattern is on mother of pearl, probably of Tudor date, having been at some time renewed. It is kept under a glass case in the British Museum. The blade is, however, the original one, and "Hugo comes," is written in such letters as appear on the seal of William the Conqueror. The pattern on the round pommel is followed in the seal of the Society, as an appropriate device, especially as Charlemagne, the restorer of seals, is said to have used the pommel of his sword

Fig. 1.  
City records



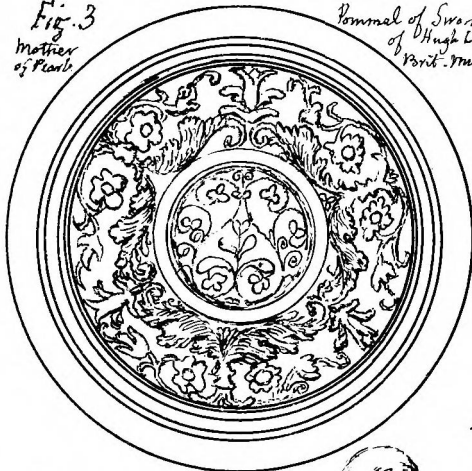
Seal of Henry V.  
when prince of  
Wales: as Earl of  
"Comitatus Cest."  
when King  
He radiate  
the fleur  
de Lys  
to 3.

Fig. 2.  
Siculum patris Thomae Brew' prioris  
Seal of a prior of the black friars' Peter  
Prior Thomas Brew'... Have none of the  
black friars  
of Chester  
W.H.H.



From  
W.E. Wynne  
M.P.

Fig. 3  
Mother of Pearl



Pommel of Sword  
of Hugh Lupus  
of North. Mund.

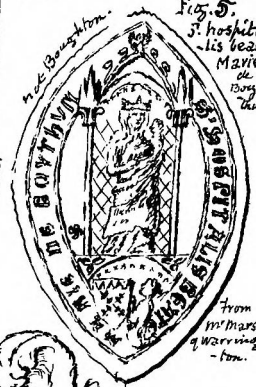
Fig. 4



Handle of the Sword of Hugh  
Lupus. The pommel stone  
has been replaced in Tudor  
date. The blade is original.  
The letters correspond to the characters  
with those on seal of William I.

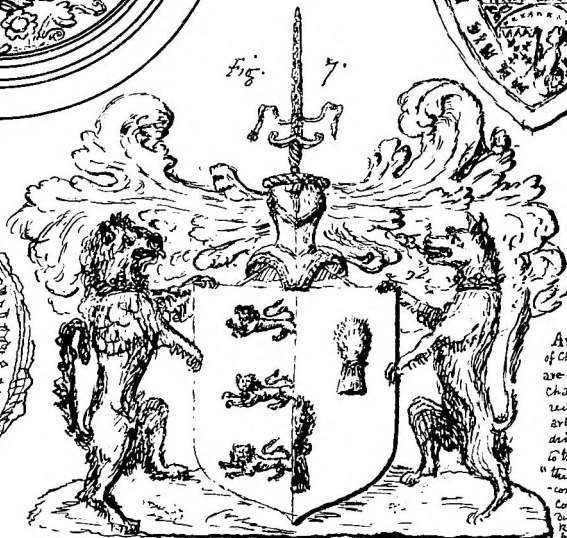


Fig. 5.  
S. hospitio  
his beate  
Marie  
de  
Burg'  
then



from  
M. Marsh  
of Warrington  
- from.

Fig. 7



In the infancy  
of Heraldry  
dimidiation  
was imperceptible  
as here. See  
Seal of Simon de  
Maugent

Fig. 6.  
Arms of the City  
of Chester as they  
are drawn on the  
Charter of Elizabeth  
reign: but by an  
artist who in his  
dimidiation gave  
to the lions more than  
"the lions of Shrewsbury"  
according to the most  
correct traces of  
dimidiation, (see  
Rogers, & White (1883)  
have them truly.



Seal  
of Richard 2nd  
as Earl of Chester



for the purpose, in token of his resolve to make good his engagements by his sword. The true explanation of which is, that a cross was often stamped upon the sword *hilt* to awaken the faith, and remind the warrior of his sacred obligations in the hour of battle; and this cross on the pommel might have been sometimes used by the warrior to seal with, (the cross having been from the earliest times a favourite device).

Fig. 5—Is a seal sent to me by Mr. Marsh, as the seal of the Spital at Boughton. The writing is *Sigillum . . . Beate Marie de Boytham*; but the Church of the Spital was dedicated to St. Giles (like most of such hospitals), not to St. Mary, and it evidently belongs to some other establishment.

Fig. 6—Is the seal of Richard II. who made the City of Chester a Principality, a privilege abolished by his successor. It is introduced here out of the archives of the city, in proof of what is well known, that the *fleurs de lys* were not yet reduced to three.

Fig. 7—The city arms are given with the supporters granted by Flower, in order to shew the true position of the sword, which is often inserted within the shield, quite contrary to the position assigned to it by authority of the College of Heralds. The lions should be properly dimidiated, though there is sufficient justification for making three of their legs visible on the dexter half instead of two, the "lions' share" being proverbial everywhere, and so drawn by Flower himself.

I may here observe that the grant of arms to the city of Chester has several endorsements on the back, as follow:—"A confirmacion of the creste and supporters to the auncient arms of the city given by King Richard II. but confirmed 1580." "Confirmed by St. George on my visitation, 1613." "Ensigns armorial, or bearings, commonly called arms, were first granted to the City of Chester by King Edward III. in the mayoralty of William Brickhill, A.D. 1329." "These bearings were re-granted and confirmed, and a city sword given, by King Richard II. in the mayoralty of John Armourer, A.D. 1394."—W. C.

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