VIII.—A NOTE UPON MEDIAEVAL SEALS WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THOSE IN DURHAM TREASURY.

By C. H. Hunter Blair, F.S.A.

I.—THE CHARTERS AT DURHAM.

The documents,[1] to which the seals in this catalogue are attached, formed the title deeds and other muniments of the Benedictine monastery at Durham, and the private collection of the Rev. William Greenwell.[2]

The monastic charters were originally preserved in the old treasury of the monastery situated under the dormitory at the north end of the crypt, the entrance being at the north end of the west cloister. Towards the middle of last century they were found to be perishing from damp and were removed from their ancient resting place and placed in a closet in the old library of the dean and chapter, the former refectory of the convent. The Rev. William Greenwell was appointed librarian of the cathedral in the year 1863. They then came under the direct control of one who well knew their great value. He found them in much disorder, piled carelessly away without any method so that they were quite inaccessible for reference, many seals had been irreparably damaged and some of the documents lost. He resolved to have them properly housed and arranged. At his suggestion the then dean and chapter of Durham caused the

[1] In the notes to the seals references are given to where any of these documents have been printed.

[2] Since his death the local section of his collection has, by the generosity of Mr. W. Parker Brewis, F.S.A., become the property of the city of Newcastle-upon-Tyne and is now housed in the reference department of the Public Library. Those having no local connection now belong to the present writer.

ruinous chapel of St. Helen above the great gateway of the monastery to be repaired and fitted with suitable presses and drawers for their reception. This chapel, so renovated, is now known as the treasury of the dean and chapter. The work was done from the plans and under the superintendence of Dr. Greenwell who, upon its completion, put the documents in their proper places, arranging them in their various classes, as detailed on page 2.[3]

This was the classification used in the original catalogue made by the monks and known as the *Repertorium* into which the royal, papal and episcopal charters were copied, as well as those relating to the property of the convent. The charters of the sacrist, almoner and hostillar and those of the priory of Finchale were in separate catalogues.

There are also preserved in the treasury a number of deeds of the family of Claxton deposited, with the prior, for safe custody.[4] Dr. Greenwell's charters were arranged in parcels, marked with the letters of the alphabet; the contents of each parcel being numbered consecutively.[5]

Whilst these muniments were yet in the old treasury of the monks, the Rev. Joseph Stevenson began a catalogue of those not in the *Repertorium*, or the other catalogues; this he did not finish. It therefore fell to Dr. Greenwell, when he had arranged the documents, to complete the work. This he did, making at the same time descriptive notes, on slips, of the seals attached to them. It is upon these notes that the present catalogue is based. The slip catalogue was not prepared with any intention of publication and Dr. Greenwell only gave his consent to its use, by the present writer, on condition that he should examine again all important seals, or those about which there could be a possibility

[3] See *Arch. Ael.*, 3rd ser. VII, p. 268. [4] Surtees, *Durham*, I, p. 17.
[5] *Arch. Ael.*, 3rd ser. VII, p. 269.

of error. This, so far as possible, has been done; the descriptions have been amplified and in many cases re-written. The present writer is therefore alone responsible for the work as now printed. It should be noted that the catalogue does not contain a description of every seal in the treasury; it omits as of no interest, either artistic or historic, those of a common type. Possibly a few worthy of record have been missed, some of these, that the writer found by chance, are contained in the supplement nos. 3745-3755.[6]

II.—EARLY HISTORY OF SEALS.

The documents range in date from the last quarter of the eleventh to the middle of the sixteenth centuries. During this period sealing, either by affixture or by suspension, was the ordinary process of authenticating documents and of closing them so that their contents might be kept private. Both these uses of seals come down from remote antiquity.

To trace this in any detail would take us too far afield, it must suffice to say that the use of seals, both for authenticating and closing, descends, in unbroken succession, from the cylindrical seals of Assyria and Babylon and the cone-shaped ones of Persia and the Sassanians, through the scarabs of the Egyptians and Etruscans, to Greece.[1] There in the earliest ages the scarab and scaraboid forms were used, but by the fourth century B.C. the Greeks had evolved from them the beautiful works of art, engraved on thin slices of precious stones or pebbles, cut to fit the bezel of a finger ring, known to us as engraved gems. In this form, either from Greece or Asia Minor, the seal passed to the Romans with whom the impression of the signet (*signum*) was an essential part of the authentication of a document, but the

[6] *Arch. Ael.*, 3rd, ser. XVI, p. 203.

[1] See 'Durham Seals,' plate A (facing this page).

KEY TO PLATE A [I]

1. Assyrian cylinder seal, of larger size than usual.
2. Impression from the cylinder (no. 1).
3. Assyrian cone-shaped seal with figures engraved on sides as well as device on base.
4. Assyrian cone-shaped seal, with device on base only.
5. Phoenician flat perforated seal, with inscription on convex base.
6. Sassanian circular seal with large perforation, ornamented sides and device on base.
7. Square 'Hittite' seal, perforation partly worn through, and with device on base (not shewn).
8. 'Hittite' seal with rough handle for holding it.

9-11. Egyptian scarabs shewing upper part.

12 Egyptian scarab shewing device on base.

13-14. Egyptian scarab shewing upper part and device on base; belonging to the writer (actual size).

15-16. Etruscan scarab in carnelian and device on base; belonging to the writer (1½ times enlarged).

17-18 Matrix in latten of the seal of William de la Lie; belonging to the writer (exact size).

19-20. Square Egyptian seal perforated for suspension; with devices on both sides; belonging to the writer (1½ times enlarged).

21-22. Cast of the matrix of the capitular seal of the church of the Holy Trinity, Brechin. No. 21, the ornamented back with loop at top for suspension; no. 22, the device (exact size).

23. Ancient gem shewing mediaeval setting (Cat. no. 2339) (slightly enlarged).
24. Ancient Greek gem, Ares; with mediaeval legend (slightly enlarged).
25. Ancient Greek gem; with mediaeval legend (slightly enlarged).

Nos. 1 to 12 are from the collection at Alnwick castle; they have been photographed and reproduced by special permission of our president, the duke of Northumberland. The photographs are the exact size of the originals.

DURHAM SEALS.—A.

Early Seals Scarabs, Ancient Gems, and Seal Matrixes.

From photographs by Mr. C. H. H. Blair.

signatures of the parties to the deed were also required and these eventually superseded the use of the signet for this purpose, though it continued to be used for closing or securing a document.[2] In the dark ages, owing to the increase of illiteracy, a mark, attested by witnesses was affixed in place of the signature and a cross, being easily made, was its most usual shape. The Frankish kings of the Merovingian race, in addition to the cross or sometimes a monogram, affixed a signet to their acts, thus forming the connecting link between the use of the signet by the Romans and its revival as a seal in mediaeval times. They used a signet of rude and barbarous design showing a full faced bust of the king surrounded by lettering giving his name and title.[3] When the Carolingian kings succeeded to power they subscribed with a plain cross but used a new type of seal made from the impressions of an ancient engraved gem and without a surrounding legend.[4]

Charlemagne[5] introduced a monogram of his name made round a cross and sealed with an engraved gem of the head of Marcus Aurelius with the legend in form of a prayer

+ XPE PROTEGE CAROLVM REGE FRANCR.

He used another seal for judicial purposes, also an engraved gem representing Serapis, but without a legend.[6] His successors used similar gems, with monogram subscription, until the emperor Otto I[7] (A.D. 962-973) changed the motive by using a portrait bust of himself holding the imperial insignia and surrounded with

[2] 'Seals and Documents, by Reginald L. Poole (*Proc. Brit. Acad.*, IX, pp. 3 and 6).

[3] Douët D'Arcq, *Collection de Sceaux*, I, nos. 1-10; Mabillon, *De Re Diplomatica liber* V, pp. 381-385.

[4] Douët D'Arcq, *op. cit.*, nos. 11-14; Mabillon *op. cit* p. 387 and *Eng Hist., Rev.* 34, p 198.

[5] Douët D'Arcq., *op. cit.*, no. 15; Mabillon, *op. cit.*, p. 387 and *Eng. Hist. Rev.*, 34, p. 198.

[6] Demay *Sceaux de la Picardie*, plate facing p. XXIV; Douët D' Arcq., *op. cit.*, no. 16

[7] De Gray Birch, *Seals*, plate 43, nos. 1 and 2.

a legend giving his name and title. The next change was made on his fifth seal by the emperor Otto III (A.D. 996) [8] who first used the type known later as the seal of majesty; it depicts the emperor robed and crowned, seated on his throne holding a cross sceptre in his right hand and an orb in his left, the legend giving his name and title. His successor Henry II used a like seal.[9] Henry I [10] (A.D. 1031-1060) of France, following this example, used a very similar seal; but all had only a single face. It has been necessary to trace, thus briefly, the use of seals from Roman times through those used by the emperors and the Frankish kings because in England we have no evidence of their use before the time of Edward the Confessor. Two earlier seals, one attributed to Offa, king of Mercia (A.D. 790) and the other to Edgar, king of England (A.D. 959), catalogued by Douët D'Arcq,[11] have been conclusively shown by Mr. W. H. Stevenson [12] to be forgeries. With St. Edward (A.D. 1043-66) begins the history of English seals. His first seal, used *circa* A.D. 1053,[13] shows the king, robed and crowned, seated on his throne holding the royal insignia, the surrounding legend giving his name and title. The design is evidently derived from that of the emperors or of Henry I of France, for with both Edward had considerable connection. Unlike its prototypes Edward's seal was a pendant seal, having two faces, an obverse and a reverse. This appears to be his own invention, probably suggested by the double-faced papal bull.[14] William the Conqueror [15] adopted

[8] 'Seals and Documents,' p. 17, by R. L. Poole.

[9] *Seals, op. cit.*, plate 43, no. 6

[10] *Ibid., op. cit.*, plate 37, no. 6; Douët D' Arcq., *op. cit.*, no. 32.

[11] *Op. cit.*, nos 9995-96 They are engraved by Wyon, *Great Seals of England*, plate I. nos. 1 and 4.

[12] *Eng. Hist. Rev.*, VI, 740-41.

[13] Wyon *op. cit.*, plate I, nos. 5 and 6. He used three seals all very much alike in style, See also 'Durham Seals,' plate B, nos. 3 and 4.

[14] 'Seals and Documents,' p. 17.

[15] Wyon *op. cit.*, plate II, nos. 11-14 and 'Durham Seals,' plate B, nos 1 and 2.

KEY TO PLATE B. [II]

1-2. Rev. and obv. of the seal of William the Conqueror from a cast in Black-gate museum.

Legend obv.:

+ HOC NORMANNORVM WILLELMVM NOSCE PATRONVM SI.

Legend rev.:

+ HOC ANGLIS REGEM . SIGNO FATEARIS EVNDEM.

(Reduced in size, it is $3\frac{1}{8}''$ in diameter).

3-4. Obv. and rev. of the seal of Edward the Confessor from a cast in Black-gate museum.

+ SIGILLVM EADWARDI ANGLORVM BASILEI

(Reduced in size, it is $2\frac{3}{4}''$ in diameter).

5. Seal of William Spring of Houghton (Cat. 2286) shewing small sized equestrian type (exact size).

6. Common seal of Shrewsbury, illustrating the topographical type (exact size). From a cast in Black-gate museum.

+ sigillu̅ + comune + libertatis + bille + salopesburie + factu + ano + gre + m° ccc° xxb +

7. Seal of John, earl of Huntingdon and lord of Ivry, illustrating the naval type (exact size), *circa* A.D. 1435. From an impression by original matrix.

+ s'johis comit' hutygdon dni de ibory et admiralli angl' hibne et acquatani.

DURHAM SEALS.—B.

Seals of Edward the Confessor William the Conqueror, &c., &c.

From photographs by Mr. C. H. H. Blair.

the type of majesty for the obverse of his seal, but on the reverse he had the happy inspiration of representing himself, on horseback and fully armed, as duke of Normandy. This two-faced type, with the needful changes in costume and armour remains, through all the vicissitudes of the royal titles and possessions, that used by all our sovereigns from the Conquest to the present time. The double-faced type was not adopted by the kings of France till Louis VII [16] (A.D. 1137-80) who, being duke of Aquitaine in right of his wife Eleanor, used the type of majesty on the obverse, and the equestrian type as duke on the reverse. The emperors did not adopt the style till Sigismund [17] (A.D. 1433). Such in briefest outline is the history of seals before the foundation of the Benedictine house at Durham, by bishop William of St. Calais, in A.D. 1083. Before this time the possession of seals was confined to the king and the higher ranks of the nobles and clergy, but by the end of the eleventh century their use had become more general until, by the thirteenth century, almost everybody possessed one, even down to the humble peasant artificer and tradesman for, by then, sealing was practically the only method used in England for authenticating documents.[18] Persons who did not possess seals, or had not them to hand when needed, used those of people of importance or well known official seals. The attestation clause always mentions such usage.[19] Sometimes for the greater authentication of a document a public and official seal is used in addition to the grantor's private one

[16] Douët D'Arcq, *op. cit.*, no. 36 [17] Seals and Documents,' p 18.

[18] The use by private persons of a notarial act drawn up by a notary public, attested by him and authenticated by his mark, was never very general in England. There are a few charters thus authenticated at Durham dating from A.D. 1321 to A.D. 1420, all of them deeds of the archbishops of York. There is a short note upon them, a copy of one of the attestation clauses and a plate illustrating the marks in *Proc. Soc. Ant. Newcastle*, 3 ser. VII, p. 56. See also *Chapters in Mediaeval History*, by Prof. Tout, I, pp 122-123; and *Manuel de Diplomatique*, by A. Giry, pp. 603-608.

[19] See 2110, 2772 and 2840 and notes upon them.

So William of Durham, sheriff and alderman of London, uses in addition to his own seal, that of the mayoralty of London for its greater security and witness (*maiorem securitatem et testimonium*).[20]

III.—THE STUDY OF SEALS.

The earliest mediaeval seals are roughly engraved and barbarous in design; there is little improvement till the coming of the thirteenth century brings with it a new art plain, and unpretentious, firm of line, natural and restrained in expression but full of grace and charm—proportion and form are its distinctive qualities. With the advent of the fourteenth century comes an increase of decoration, the simplicity of the earlier art gives place to a more elaborate, possibly a more superficial style. This was the period of elaborate architectural sculpture shown on the seals in canopied niches with crockets and finials and all the rich tracery of fine tabernacle work. Some of the seals of this period have a fineness of detail and beauty of decoration unsurpassed in any other art. The next period carries the decorative tendency to greater excess and elements of decay appear. Then comes the Renascence and the Reformation, we pass from the traditions of mediaeval art, classical influence predominates, and the art of the mediaeval seal engravers is lost. Small signets take the place of seals, the wheel has gone full circle and in the sixteenth century we return to the signet ring as used by the Romans and the Carolingian kings. From the artistic side they have no interest. But the study of seals is not only nor mainly the study of the evolution and decay of an art, they are something more than interesting and beautiful works of art; they are original and dated monuments, an integral

[20] 3737 and note. In response to the urgent prayer of 'Roger de Toenis and Gilbert Crispini de Telleriis' Richard I seals a grant from them with his own seal—as they were about to leave for Jerusalem and had not their seals with them (*Cal. Doc. France*, no. 646).

part of the document they authenticate and inseparable from it. They are of definite date [1] and of known locality, a personal and prized possession of their owner; made under his direction, a portrait of himself as he most wished to be depicted, reflecting his culture, his tastes and sometimes even his playful fancies. In short the study of seals is a legitimate, useful and interesting branch of archaeology, it is one of the smaller studies auxiliary to history, serving, so to speak as a beautiful, though at times rather frivolous, handmaiden to the stately lady whom the Greeks called Clio. For the study of genealogy, armorials and the history of costume their help is invaluable for on them we can follow almost from year to year the vagaries of 'that deformed thief fashion.' In episcopal vestments and ornaments we can trace the gradual evolution of the mitre and crosier, the varying shapes and embroidery of the chasuble and amice, the use and abandonment of the rationale, the form of the maniple and the other mass vestments, whilst the dress worn by the clergy, whether regulars or seculars, can be clearly seen in the many seals of abbots, priors, archdeacons and others. For the early details of knightly armour there is no better guide; on the fine series of equestrian seals the knight appears completely armed as he went to battle or, later, with his crested heaume, his emblasoned shield, surcoat and horse trappings, as he flashed through the lists at the stately and brilliant ceremonial of the tournament. For such details seals are more to be trusted than other authorities such as miniatures, painted glass, or monumental effigies. These are all apt to be of a set pattern and fashioned in the regular attitudes demanded by custom, they have not the life and variety shown on the seals, they are not of such definite date nor have they the personality of the seal

[1] This does not always apply to the seals of corporate bodies which are often much earlier than the charter they authenticate.

From seals too we can best realize the beauty of the art of the early heralds. Their certainty of date and ownership is an invaluable help to the study of its growth and varying styles of ornament. On them also we can trace the various differences used by members of the same family, or learn the alliances and feudal connections of different families. They form indeed, apart from the few early blasoned rolls of arms, almost the only original guide to its study; it is to the greater knowledge of seals gathered in recent years that we owe the restoration of this beautiful little art to its former high standing, and its cleansing from the foolish imaginings of the Tudor and Stuart heralds. For the every day dress of the man in the street they are also useful for on them he is shown labouring at the work he has laboured to do under the sun, with his proper tools and utensils. The housewife shows her distaff[2]; the lady of high degree pictures herself in her ceremonial gown or clothed in armorial robes blasoned with her husband's and her father's arms,[3] or again in hunting dress goes hawking, her 'Fawcun gentil' on her wrist.[4] For the student of mediaeval architecture they can also be of use; the many pictures of towns, churches, castles, and monasteries,[5] are conventional and lack perspective but they can give hints, which, in the absence of other knowledge, are of great value. They can also be used profitably for studying the shape and build of ancient ships,[6] their sails, their rigging and fighting arrangements. The historian working upon the documents will also find a knowledge of seals helpful; to be able to distinguish between an authentic or a forged seal will help to decide the authenticity or otherwise of a charter, he will also

[2] 192, plate 4. [3] 2537, plate 29. [4] 213, plate 6.
[5] 3679, plate 68 and 3744, plate 71; and Durham Seals, plate B (facing page 248), no. 6.
[6] *Arch. Ael.*, 3rd ser. XII, p. 332 and XXXV; and Durham Seals, plate B (facing p. 248), no. 7.

find that the seal may help to interpret a document, it may supplement the deed by giving the grantor's name in full which the document only gives as an initial, or it may give fuller details of the parties' titles and fiefs.

IV.—THE SEAL MATRIX.

The word 'seal' is more properly used to denote the die or matrix by which an impression is made in relief upon wax or some other ductile material. It is, however, loosely used to denote both the die and the impression; it is in the latter sense that it is generally used in this paper. The seal matrix consists normally of a deeply incised central design surrounded by a border upon which the letters forming the legend are engraved The greater number of the seals at Durham are made from the impression of a metal matrix. These were commonly of bronze or of an alloy called latten,[1] the higher ranks used silver, and lead was often the metal used by poorer people. Matrices of jet, ivory and hard stone are occasionally, but rarely, met with, whilst impressions from ancient or mediaeval engraved gems are fairly common. The metal matrix had usually a ridge across the back for holding it whilst sealing, and also a hole or ring through the ridge for suspending it: some have the backs very beautifully chased.[2] These seals were carefully guarded and great care was taken to prevent loss[3] or breakage or their fraudulent use by unauthorized persons. The seals of civil and religious corporations were the subject of stringent regulations for their care and use. The Statute of Carlisle[4] (A.D. 1306)

[1] See 'Durham Seals,' plate A., nos. 17 and 18 (facing p. 246).

[2] 'Durham Seals' plate A., nos. 21, 22 (facing p. 246).

[3] Henry I caused his first seal to be broken in order to invalidate a charter under it (Matt. Paris, *Hist. Min.*, I, 217). It will be remembered how Richard I raised money by causing charters under his old seal to be invalid unless resealed by the new seal he had adopted in A.D. 1198 (*Ibid.*, II, 75; Round, *Feudal England*, 539)

[4] *Statutes of the Realm*, I, p. 151.

enacted that every abbey must have a common seal which was to be kept in the custody of the prior and four of the most worthy and discreet men of the house so that the abbot may not establish anything of himself. At Newburgh priory[5] the common seal was to be kept under four keys, three of which were to be in the custody of three of the oldest and wisest brethren, whilst the prior kept the fourth; documents were only to be sealed with it in the presence and with the consent of the whole convent in chapter assembled. This was the general rule for the keeping and use of seals of monasteries and similar common seals.[6] The Statute merchant seals of the towns were to be kept locked in a box under the seals of the mayor and two constables.[7] Many other similar regulations might be given but these are sufficient to show how carefully seals were guarded. They were made by goldsmiths of whose work or names little appears to have survived though they must have been masters of their art, The name of only one of them, and the costs of some of the seals of the priors of Durham appear in the account rolls.[8] When for any reason a seal ceased to be valid it was customary either to break it into pieces or to deface it. The seals of the bishops of Durham were broken for it is recorded in the 'Ornamenta Willelmi episcopi primi'[9] that 'Audita morte istius, statim

[5] 109 Surt. Soc. publ., p. 330.

[6] For an interesting instance of the breaking of this rule see *Visitations of Religious Houses in diocese of Lincoln*, II, p. 29 (Lincoln Record Soc. 1918).

[7] *Statutes of the Realm*, I, 99.

[8] The cost of two new seals for prior John Fossor (A.D. 1341-74) was 13*s.* 8*d.* (Durham Rolls p. 539. 100 Sur. Soc. publ.). Those of prior William Ebchester (A.D. 1446-56) cost 26*s.* 8*d.* (*ibid.*, p. 631). The bursar's roll of 1456-57 accounts for 21*s.* 8*d.* paid to Joss, the goldsmith for making the seals of prior John Burnaby (A.D. 1456-64). The present day value of these amounts would be about twenty times more, they were therefore very costly to make, and would certainly be of silver.

[9] *Wills and Inventories*, p. 1 (2 Sur. Soc. publ.). It is interesting to note the use of the plural. As only the one seal of dignity of his immediate successors is known it would seem that he and they had at least another seal possibly a *secretum* or privy seal.

fracta fuerunt ejus sigilla et sancto Cuthberto oblata,' a similar statement is made about those of many of his successors.[10] The further fate of the four seals of bishop Richard of Bury is known to us; we are told that, after they had been broken and offered as an oblation to St. Cuthbert, Richard of Wolveston, the feretrar, made from them a silver gilt chalice, for the altar of St. John Baptist, upon which was inscribed :—

> Hic ciphus insignis fit Praesulis ex tetra signis
> Ri. Dunelmensis quarti, natu Byriensis.[11]

Likewise the seals of bishop Thomas of Hatfield were, after being broken and offered, made into a silver gilt image of the bishop which was hung at the head of the shrine of St. Cuthbert, upon it was inscribed :—' John Alvervilla monachus capiendo sigilla ex Hatfeld Thomae sic disponit bene pro me.' [12] Similarly the seals of the abbots of St. Albans are recorded to have been broken ' on the day of his (*i.e.* the abbot's) burial it [the great seal] must be brought out before all the people, after high mass to be broken with a hammer.' [13] The comparative rarity of mediaeval matrices shows that the innumerable ones belonging to private persons must also have been usually destroyed.

V.—MATERIAL AND COLOUR OF THE SEAL.

The only material which need concern us here is beeswax, for it is of wax that all the seals at Durham are made,[1] though they vary greatly in composition,[2] thickness and colour. There are

[10] *Ibid., passim.* [11] *Ibid.*, p. 26. [12] *Ibid.* p. 37.

[13] Defuncto abbate prout mos exigit nostri monasterii sigillum ejus magnum in quodam loculo reponendum est cum sigillis suis minoribus; cum sigillo communi signabitur custodiendum usque ad diem sepulturae suae. Quo quidem die, coram omni populo post missam majorem ante altare proferendum. In prioris vero magni dispositione constat quod de aliis sigillis suis sit agendum' (*Mon. Ang.*, II, p. 236).

[1] Excepting one bull of pope Martin IV (see Catalogue no. 3680[a] and note 1[a]).

[2] Professors Dobbie and Fox recently analysed the material of certain mediaeval

numerous entries in the Durham account rolls for wax and other materials for sealing. In A.D. 1330 the bursar[3] pays 12*d.* for 'terbentyn' for making wax for the seal of the lord prior; in A.D. 1336 the same official pays 20*d.* for 'gumme' (? resin) for making green wax[4]; in A.D. 1300-01 3*s.* is paid for three lbs. of 'gumme' and ½ lb. of vermilion[5]; whilst in A.D. 1386 2*s.* is paid for 1 lb. of 'vergresse' (verdigris). There are also entries in which green wax is purchased apparently ready prepared for sealing. In A.D. 1336 42*s.* is paid to the under sheriff of York for it and in the four years 1375-78, 13*s.* 4*d.* is paid each year to the sheriff of Northumberland for 'le Grenwax'; from which it seems as if this material was a government monopoly at that time. Payments for red wax are also numerous, a typical one is in A.D. 1356-57 when the 'wardrobe' accounts for 2*s.* spent on 1 lb. of red wax for the prior's seal.[6] The earliest seals are of natural coloured wax apparently mixed with a chalky material which makes them friable and easily broken, they are usually varnished over to preserve them. This is the colour and material used in the great seals of the kings of the Norman race, at Durham.[7] With the accession of the house of Anjou there is a change; different types of documents are differently sealed as though the royal chancery was becoming more organized. The charter of Henry II[8] to the monks of Durham 'de omnibus terris et libertatibus,' given at York, is sealed with reddy brown

seals of various dates. The report is too technical to quote here, it is sufficient to say that in some, mostly of early date, pure beeswax only was found, in others it was mixed with a resin, probably colophony or 'Venice turpentine.' (The bursar's roll at Durham in A.D. 1330 accounts for 12d. spent upon turpentine for making wax for the seal of the lord prior). The green seals were found to be coloured with verdigris, the brown had a little verdigris and a dark coloured organic matter of ndefinite character, vermilion was the colouring matter of the red wax (*Trans. Chem. Soc.*, vol. 105, pp. 795-800)

[3] *Durham Account Rolls*, p. 518 (Surt. Soc. publ.).

Ibid., p. 533. [5] *Ibid.*, p. 503 [6] *Ibid.*, p. 575

[7] 'Durham Seals,' plate C (facing p. 257), nos. 1 and 2. [8] *Ibid.*, no 3.

KEY TO PLATE C. [III]

1. Charter of Henry I, first seal—No. 2da 1^{mae} Regalium 11.
   Natural coloured wax varnished, suspended from document by a strip partially cut from it and passed diagonally through seal. The reverse of the impression is uppermost. (Cat. 3014).

2. Charter of Henry I, third seal [1]—No. 2da 1^{mae} Regalium 5.
   Suspended in same manner as No. 1 and seal of same colour and varnished. The obverse of seal is uppermost. (Cat. 3016).

3. Charter of Henry II, second seal—No. 3^{cia} 1^{mae} Regalium 7.
   Reddy brown wax with traces of red colouring matter, suspended by fine cords of thread passed through an incision in the document. The earliest royal seal so fastened at Durham. (Cat. 3021).

4. Charter of Henry II, second seal—No. 3^{cia} 1^{mae} Regalium 7.
   Of light coloured natural wax varnished, attached to the charter by a double strip of parchment passed through an incision in its lower edge. (Cat. 3021).

5. Charter of Henry III, second seal—No. 1da 2^{mae} Regalium 6.
   Dark green wax,[2] attached by woven silk cords of red and green, plaited through the document. (Cat. 3026).

6. Letter Patent of Edward I, in French—No. 2da 2^{dae} Regalium No. 12.
   Brown wax attached by strip partially cut off document. (Cat. 3027).

7. Richard Marsh, bishop of Durham (1217-1226); dark green wax attached by woven cords of green silk and silver thread. He is the first of the bishops of Durham to use red wax, using natural coloured, green and red wax apparently indiscriminately. (Cat. 3118).

[1] An example of this seal (No. 2-1, Reg. 1) is attached to document by a double thong of parchment passed through an incision in the lower edge. But the charter is suspect partly for that reason.

[2] Richard I is the first to use green wax for the royal seals at Durham.

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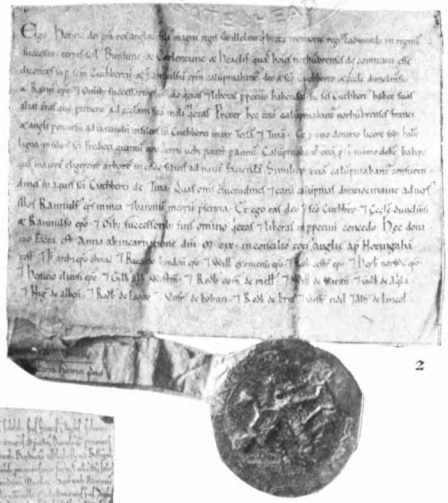

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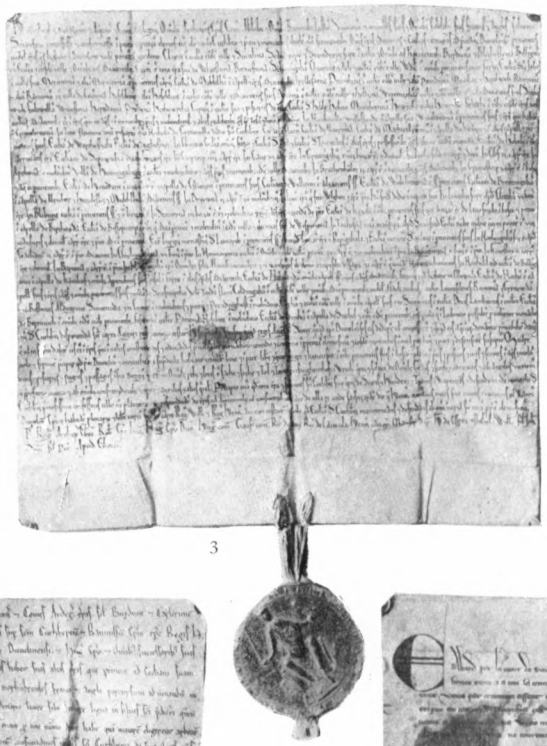

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DURHAM SEALS.—C.

Charters shewing different methods of attaching the Seals.

From photographs by Mr. C. H. H. Blair.

wax fastened to the document by a number of thin unplaited cords of bobbin. Another charter[9] of the great Angevin, of less importance also given at York to the Durham monks, is sealed with white varnished wax attached by a double strip of parchment. A third document of this king, of the nature of a letter patent, though not so called, is written on a narrow strip of parchment and the seal of white wax attached by a strip partially cut off the document itself. Richard Coeur de Lion is the first, at Durham, to use green wax for sealing. His successors John[10] and Henry III[11] use green wax, attached by cords of woven silk of different colours, to their formal charters and seals of light brown wax, attached to the documents by strips partially cut off it, to letters patent. Edward I[12] continues this style of sealing which is also followed by succeeding kings to Henry VI after whom, at Durham, green wax disappears and brown only is used, sometimes almost white, sometimes of a deep rich colour. Except for privy seals and signets (of which later) no red wax is used for the royal seals at Durham. The episcopal seals of the bishops of Durham give much the same colour results; from Flambard (A.D. 1099) to Puiset (A.D. 1153) natural coloured wax, covered with brown varnish, is used. Puiset first uses green but most of his are still of natural wax but unvarnished. Richard Marsh (A.D. 1217) is the first to use red, and his immediate successors use brown, green and red, apparently indiscriminately, though green predominates. The beautiful late thirteenth-century seals of Bek, and the fourteenth century ones of Beaumont, Bury and Hatfield, are mostly of red wax of a very fine

[9] *Ibid.*, no. 4.

[10] John in Durham documents first uses the term letters patent—'has litteras nostras patentes' (3 cia 1 mae Regalium 22).

[11] Plate C (facing p. 257), no. 5.

[12] Plate C (facing p. 257), no. 6, is a letter patent by Edward I in French, the formula reads 'en testamoign des queux choses nous avioms fet faire cestes notres lettres ouvertes.'

hard nature. The chancery seals of the bishopric, except Hatfield's which is red, are nearly always brown, the earlier ones are of a light shade and have a considerable mixture of chalky material and are in consequence very friable; the later ones are of a deep rich tone of brown or, more rarely, dark green. In the fifteenth century some seals are impressed on a thin facing of red or other coloured wax placed in a naturally coloured cup giving a pretty effect. This fashion is well represented in the seals of Berwickshire [13] and on a very beautiful deed of the Elvet family.[14] It does not, however, seem that the colour of the wax used had any significance, it appears to have been largely a matter of fashion or individual taste and convenience. The only evidence of method in the use of colours apparent in the seals at Durham is the above mentioned use by the royal chancery of green for formal charters, of brown for less formal documents,[15] and of red for privy seals and signets.

VI.—SHAPE AND SIZE OF SEALS.

There are two typical shapes of mediaeval seals; the round used by laymen of all ranks, and the oval used by ladies and ecclesiastics, but to this last there are many exceptions. No symbolic meaning attaches to this shape, it was used because the artist found it the most convenient to contain the standing figures used both by ladies and by the clergy. Some of the episcopal seals of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, which depict only a demi-figure of the bishop,[1] are round and so are many of the seals of ladies which do not show a standing figure of their owner; examples of these are in the catalogue. The earlier ecclesiastical seals are nearly a true oval,[2] but this gradually

[13] See plates, nos. 36 and 37. [14] Cat., no 874, see plate D (facing p. 261), no. 5.
[15] The two kinds are appended in different ways, see p. 261.
[1] D'Anisy's *Chartes Normandes*, plates 3 and 4.
Durham Seals,' plate 48, 3110-3112.

becomes elongated until it assumes the beautiful pointed oval form [3] of the fourteenth century, which returns to the truer oval shape [4] in the sixteenth. Other shapes, more or less rare, are sometimes found such as shield shaped, hexagonal, octagonal, lozenge-shaped, quatrefoiled and square examples of each of these are to be found in the catalogue chiefly in small seals and signets. The thickness varies greatly, the earlier seals are rather thick, flat on the face and the back spherical, in an attempt to secure permanence by bulk. A seal of the chapter of York [5] is like an egg cut in half along its longer axis and measures 30 millimetres through. With the use of harder better mixed material they became thinner and the use of a counterseal did away with the rounded backs. Some of the hard red wax seals of the fourteenth century are less than a millimetre [6] in thickness. The earliest of the royal seals were from 70 to 80 mill. in diameter; succeeding sovereigns gradually increased the size until in the second seal of Elizabeth they reached the unwieldy size of 140 mill. The equestrian seals of the nobles followed the same course until, towards the end of the thirteenth century, the use of armorial seals caused a diminution in size, the end of the fifteenth century brought the general use of small signets, usually worn in a finger ring, of only from 13 to 20 mill. in diameter and so in size returning to the style of the Romans and of the Carolingian kings. Speaking generally the size of the seal indicated the importance of its owner; thus the royal seals were larger than those of the nobles and they again than those of the gentry. Episcopal seals were larger than those of archdeacons or other officials, whilst those of abbots and priors were larger than those of their obedientiaries. The seals of sons were smaller than those of their fathers. Thus the seal of prince Edward measures

[3] *Ibid.*, plates 51 and 52. [4] *Ibid.* plate 59, 3246. [5] 3356. [6] 3130, 3132.

80 mill.[7] in diameter whilst that of his father Henry III [8] measures 98 mill.; the seal of Patrick, son of Patrick earl of Dunbar, is of 55 mill.,[9] his father's being 72 mill.[10] It was considered one of the proofs of the treasonable aspirations of earl Thomas of Lancaster that he used a great seal (122 mill.) larger than that of the king (98 mill.)

VII.—METHODS OF ATTACHMENT AND PROTECTION.

Great care was used in fastening seals to documents so that they could not easily be lost or wilfully detached.[1] A charter without its seal was invalid and a detached seal might be, and indeed sometimes was, used upon a forged charter.[2] The earliest mediaeval seals were affixed to the face of the document, the wax was rivetted through a cross shaped incision cut in the parchment and the device impressed on the face[3] but this method was too early to be represented in this catalogue. Before the date of the foundation of the convent of Durham sealing by suspension had become general so the earliest seals there are fastened by partly cutting off a strip of the parchment, from the lower edge of the document, upon which the seal was fixed.[4]

[7] Sandford's *Genealogical History*, p. 120. [8] 'Durham Seals,' plate 42, 3025.
[9] *Ibid.*, plate 34, 2806 [10] *Ibid*, plate 34, 2805

[1] Inspeximus of a grant in tail by Anthony, late bishop of Durham, to his bachelor, Sir Brian son of Alan, knight, and Matilda his wife, of the manor of Belestre in Tyndale, and testification that on 25 October, 13 Edward III, when the writing was exhibited for confirmation in the Chancery at the great marble table and was in the lap of Richard, bishop of London, the chancellor, the seal of the said Anthony attached to it was accidentally torn off in the presence of William de Clynton, earl of Huntingdon, John de Grey Rotherfeld and the king's clerks of the Chancery, John de Sancto Paulo, Michael de Wath, Thomas de Baumburgh and others, and with their consent was sewn to the writing. (*Cal. Pat. Rolls*, 1338-40, p. 226.)

[2] *Cal. Pat. Rolls*, A D. 1307-13, p. 49. [3] Douët D'Arcq, I, XXIII.

[4] Seals of the early bishops to the time of Hugh Puiset, are fastened to this strip through their shorter axis and the early round seals horizontally, so that they appear upright when reading the document See 'Durham Seals,' plate C (facing p. 257), nos. 1 and 2, and plate D (facing p. 261), no. 1.

KEY TO PLATE D. [IV]

1 Bishop Ranulph Flambard (1099-1128) No. 2da 1^{mae} Pont. 4.
All his seals are of whitey-brown wax, varnished and all affixed to document by a strip of the parchment partially cut off and passed transversely through the seal.[1] (Cat. 3110).

2. Bishop Philip of Poitou (1197-1208) No. 1ma 2^{dae} Pont. 9.
Dark olive green wax [2] attached by woven ribands of dark blue silk. He is the first of the bishops of Durham to use this method of attachment. (Cat. 3117).

3. Misc. Charter No. 1317, A.D. 1204. Eight seals of whitey-brown wax, with chalk added, brown varnished and attached by double strips of parchment. The third seal (bishop of Dunkeld) has been destroyed. The names of the sealers are written on the tags. The last two slits in the document have not been used.

4. William fitz William No. 3^{cia} 5^{tae} Eboracensia 11 ; A.D. 1386.
Seal impressed on facing of red wax with a foundation of whitey-brown, attached by very finely woven ribands of light blue silk, 16 mill. in width. (Cat. 2662.)

5. Elvet family—No. 4ta 16^{ae} Specialia No. 34 ; A.D. 1404.
Seals impressed on a facing of black in beds of white, chalky wax, attached by woven cords of black and white silk. (Cat. no. 874.)

6. No. 2da 4^{tae} Pont. 8.
There are thirty eight seals attached to this document all of whitey-brown chalky wax attached at right angles to the writing by strips of the parchment.

[1] Bishop William of Sainte-Barbe is the first of the bishops of Durham to use a double strip of parchment which passes through the longer axis of seal.
[2] Puiset is the first to use green wax.

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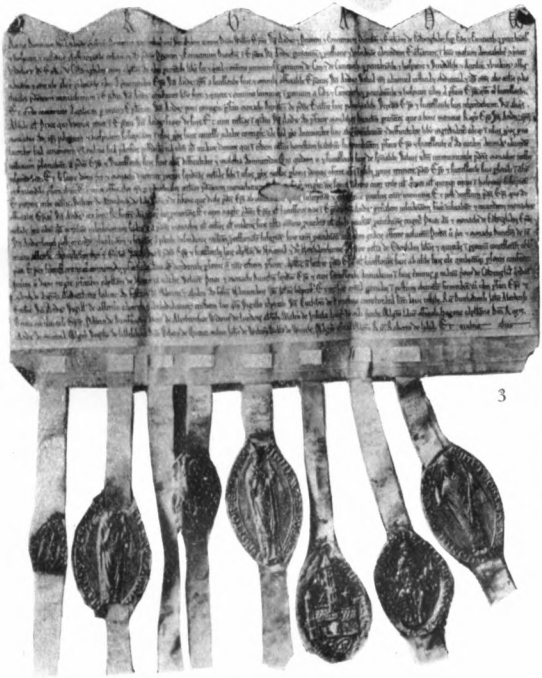

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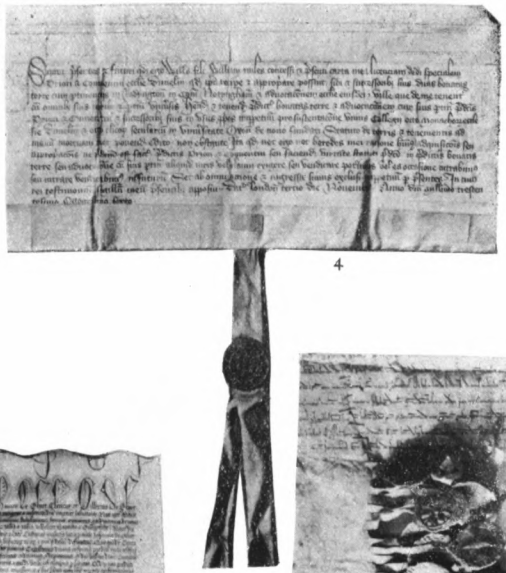

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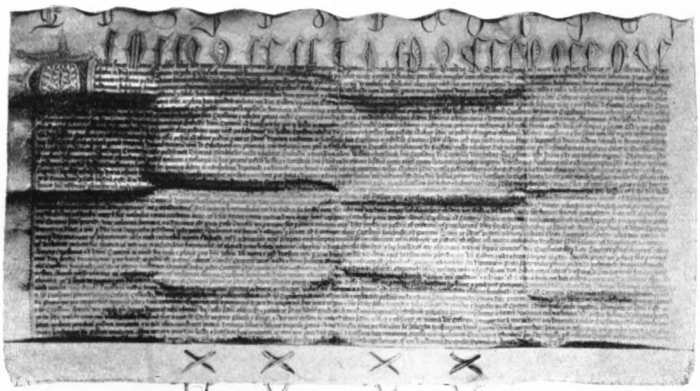

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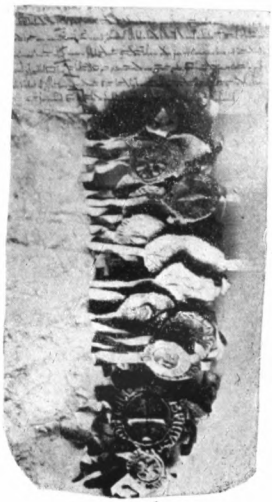

6

DURHAM SEALS.—D.

Charters shewing different methods of attaching the Seals.

From photographs by Mr. C. H. H. Blair.

Another method, which came into general use nearly as early, was to cut an incision in the fold of the parchment at the foot of of the deed, to pass a narrow strip of parchment or leather through this, then to affix the seal upon the two loose ends. Both these methods were used all through the period covered by this catalogue and by either it was possible to fix several seals to one deed. The number of seals fastened to one charter was sometimes considerable, at Durham the greatest number I have found is thirty-eight [5] which are affixed, at right angles to the script, by strips partially cut off. These strips, both the single and double, were also sometimes used to write the names of the sealers upon above the place where their seals were placed.[6] From about the end of the twelfth century silk and wool cords [7] of various colours were used by the higher ranks for their more important charters. These cords are either loose from the skein, or woven into round cords of varying thickness or in ribbon form; cords of different colours were often plaited together producing very pleasing effects. The royal seals,[8] at Durham, from William Rufus to Stephen, are all attached either by single or double strips of parchment. In the earlier examples these strips are passed diagonally through the seal. Henry II is the first whose seals are attached by woven cords, which are used by his successors, generally red and green plaited together, to important charters sealed with green wax, to the documents of less importance (letters patent) the seals of whitey-brown wax are invariably attached by a single strip of the parchment.

The great seals in chancery of the palatinate of Durham are also

[5] No. 2-4 Pont. 8. See Durham Seals,' plate D (facing p. 261), no. 6.

[6] Misc. Charters, no. 1317. See 'Durham Seals,' plate D (facing p. 261), no. 3.

[7] Philip of Poitou (1198-1208) is the first of the Durham bishops to use such cords; one of his seals of dark green is attached by four narrow ribands of dark blue silk. 'Durham Seals,' plate D, no. 2

[8] See 'Durham Seals,' plate C, nos. 1, 2 and 4 (facing p. 257).

usually attached by finely woven cords of silk.[9] In many of the private charters this care of beauty as well as safety is evidenced; a deed of William fitz William[10] dated A.D. 1386 has the armorial seal impressed on a facing of red contained in a cup of natural wax and attached by a finely woven ribbon of lustrous light blue silk, 9 mill. wide. The Elvet deed, before mentioned, has the seals on a facing of black in beds of white wax attached by woven round silk cords of black and white plaited together; it is a noble deed beautifully written and the seals are intentionally used to embellish it further.[11] It should here be said that when there were numerous seals to one document they were attached according to the precedence of the parties, usually the most important is placed at the bottom left hand corner of the document, the other parties of lesser degree follow in order to the right hand corner. Sometimes the most important is placed in the middle, the others arranged on either side in their due order of precedence. The protection of the device on seals was also of importance and various means were adopted for this purpose. The earlier suspended seals were often thick masses of wax convex shaped on the back, difficult to destroy from their bulk, others of early date are 'dished,'[12] that is the matrix was cut convex on its face so leaving a cup-shaped impression on the wax, the edges of which stood above the central device. This type ceased after the early twelfth century, probably because the surrounding legend was difficult to cut or to read when impressed. Another way was to impress the seal on a layer of coloured wax enclosed in a cup of hard natural wax, the sides of

[9] Usually of one colour only. The later seals of the archbishops of York are attached by cords of two colours, blue and green, red and blue, or purple and green.

[10] No 2662. 'Durham Seals,' plate D (facing p. 261), no. 4.

[11] No. 874, 'Durham Seals,' plate D (facing p. 261), no. 5.

[12] See nos. 3665, 3670.

which were thick, and rose well above the impression—walling it in as it were.[13]

There are no seals at Durham contained in boxes except some of the fifteenth century Italian ones,[14] which are enclosed in boxes of iron or of wood the exact shape of the seal they contain; judging by the Durham seals this method does not seem to have been used in this country in mediaeval times. Seals were also occasionally sewn up in bags of silk, canvas or parchment, or wrapped in cotton wool. There are examples of each in the treasury, but the effect was disastrous as the seals so treated have entirely perished, nothing but a few broken fragments remaining. Signets of the fifteenth century and later were surrounded by a twisted straw or by threads of silk or cord to prevent them being rubbed by the folding of the document.[15] So far as the Durham collection is concerned all these methods are exceptional; by far the greater number of the seals there are unprotected in any way, except by the careful folding of the documents and their storage in properly made presses and drawers. In our temperate climate other protection was not so needful as in warmer countries.

VIII.—TYPES OF SEALS.

1 *Royal Seals.*

The type of seal used in the royal chancery, and known as the king's seal (*sigillum regis*) or the seal of majesty (*sigillum majestatis*) [1] and later, upon the introduction of the 'small seals,' as the 'great seal,' had become established (as described in section II p. 249) on the seal of William the Conqueror. Thenceforward,

[13] A seal of the chapter of York is egg-shaped, about 30 mill. in thickness with edges surrounding the device 7 mill. high, and about the same in breadth; and see also plate 59, no. 3235.

[14] Nos. 3693, 3701.

[15] Nos. 3035, 3039, see 'Durham Seals,' plate F (facing p. 267), no. 4

[1] See *Chapters of Mediaeval Administrative History*, by Prof. Tout, I, p. 124, *n*4.

though the costume and armour change with the changing fashions, and legends alter with the alterations of the sovereigns' titles and dominions, the type remains the same; on the obverse the king robed and crowned seated in majesty upon his throne; on the reverse on horseback, fully armed as leader of his army. There is a splendid series of these seals of our English kings at Durham, from William Rufus to Charles I, as well as many of the kings of Scotland from Edgar II to James I. They make a valuable commentary upon our national history, greater from the greater trueness to life and larger size than the aid that can be derived from coins or medals. As the royal administration became more centralized and complex, more than one seal was found to be necessary, especially for the exchequer, during the frequent absences of the king with his chancellor and seal.[2] We therefore find that by the time of Henry II there was a seal for exchequer business, kept in the exchequer[3] and distinct from that which accompanied the king in his journeyings.[4] This was at first probably a duplicate of the great seal though possibly smaller, but by the time of Henry III. a special exchequer seal had developed distinct in motive and in legend from the great seal.[5] The earliest perfect example of this type is no. 3029 in this catalogue. It is there used by Edward I but there can be small doubt that it is the same seal that Henry III used, with the legend only altered. This can be seen by comparing the equestrian figure on the obverse with the same on the great seal

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 142-146 and 291.

[3] 'To the chancellor belongs the keeping of the king's seal which is in the treasury (*quod est in thesauro*) and goes thereout only when, by order of the justiciar, it is taken by the treasurer or chamberlain from the lower to the upper exchequer for fulfilling exchequer business' (*Dialogus de Scaccario*, ed. 1902, I, V D; p. 71.

[4] 'The exchequer seal has the express image and inscription which are upon the seal which goes on journeyings with the court (*cum deambulatorio curie sigillo*),' (*ibid.*, I, XV, p. 107).

[5] 'Hic incipit currere sigillum de scaccario.' (*Cal. Close Rolls*, A.A. 1230, p. 351.)

KEY TO [illegible]

1. Privy seal of Robert Devereux, [illegible] India head crest of Knights of [illegible] [illegible] (British Museum case B, no. 70).
2. Privy seal of Edward [illegible] (British Museum case B, no. 70).
3. Privy seal of Edward III; Ancient Roll [illegible] (P.R.O.).
4. Privy seal of Edward; [illegible] in the British Museum.
5. Privy seal of Edward II; Ancient Roll [illegible] (P.R.O.). Covered with fine green [illegible].
6. Privy seal of John Beaufort, Marquis [illegible] (P.R.O. [illegible]).
7. Signet of William Scarborough, [illegible] (P.R.O.).
8. Privy seal of Edward III; Ancient Roll [illegible] (P.R.O.).
9. Privy seal of Edward III; A contra Roll [illegible] (P.R.O.).
10. Privy seal of Edward III; Ancient Roll [illegible] (P.R.O.).
11. Privy seal of Thomas, Earl of [illegible].
12. Privy seal of Edward [illegible], King of Scots. (P.R.O.).
13. Signet of John and in alliance [illegible] (P.R.O.). [illegible] his name. (P.R.O.).

KEY TO PLATE E. [V]

1. Privy seal of Robert Neville, bishop of Durham, A.D. 1438-57. The bull's head crest of Neville rises between the horns of the noble mitre; on a ribbon behind it is the bishop's motto en grace affie. (From a cast in the museum of the Society of Antiquaries, London).

2. Privy seal of Richard II; Ancient Deed W.S. 630, A.D. 1378 (P.R.O. Museum case H. no. 79).

3. Privy seal of Edward III; Ancient Deed W.S. 277; A.D. 1362 (P.R.O.).

4. Privy seal of Edward I attached to Harl. Chart., 43 B 8 (A.D. 1296) in the British Museum.

5. Privy seal of Edward II; Ancient Deed W.S. 342; A.D. 1317-1318 (P.R.O.). Covered with fine gauze for protection.

6. Privy seal of John Fordham, bishop of Durham, A.D. 1382-88. (Cat. 3143).

6*a*. Signet of William Senhouse, bishop of Durham, A.D. 1502-05.

7. Privy seal of Edward III; Ancient Deed, L.S. 303; 14 Feb. A.D. $1339\frac{40}{40}$ (P.R.O.).

8. Privy seal of Edward III; Ancient Deed, W.S. 221; 19 April A.D. 1335 (P.R.O.).

9. Privy seal of Edward III, Ancient Deed, W.S. 182; 16 May A.D. 1339 (P.R.O.).

10. Griffin seal of Edward III, Ancient Deed R.S. 128; A.D. 1344 (P.R.O.).

11. Privy seal of Thomas, earl of Lancaster. (Cat. no. 3070).

12. Privy seal of Edward Baliol, king of Scots. (Cat. no. 3084).

13. Signet of Richard II, chancery warrant I, File 1343; A.D. 1384 (P.R.O.). It bears his name richard.

DURHAM SEALS.—E.

Royal and Episcopal Privy Seals and Signets, &c.

From photographs by Mr. C. H. H. Blair.

of Henry III (no. 3025), they are almost identical. It is also very similar to the figure of Edward himself on his seal as prince during his father's lifetime.[6] The shield of arms on the reverse is typically of mid-thirteenth century date and is practically the same as the reverse of prince Edward's seal. It was this type which all the later exchequer seals followed.[7]

The next of the royal seals to come into use was the privy seal that is the secret (*secretum*) or private seal of the king. This instrument originated for use in the king's household when the personal attendance of the chancellor, with the great seal, upon the king had become difficult if not impossible. It became the seal of the 'Wardrobe' kept in the custody of the wardrobe clerks.[8] There was soon (*circa* A.D. 1350) an office of the privy seal, forming a new department of state, its keeper eventually becoming an important minister.[9] There is only one example of this type in the catalogue and that as late as Henry VI[10] but it had come into use certainly by the time of John,[11] possibly even earlier. It should be noted that John, when earl of Mortain, used a counterseal[12] which from its legend—SECRETUM JOHANNIS—may well have been used as his later privy seal of which there is no known example, nor is there an impression extant of that of Henry III. Its motive is however known, for, when in A.D. 1242 Henry was about to go into Gascony, he ordered that, during his absence, 'The king's writs . . . . . shall be sealed with the

[6] Sandford's *Geneaolgical History*, plate p 120. For document with seal attached see 'Durham Seals,' plate F, no. 1 (facing p. 267).

[7] *E.g.*, no 3047 in Catalogue and no. 4 on 'Durham Seals,' plate G.

[8] *Cal. Pat. Rolls*, 1292-1301, p. 125.

[9] For a full and illuminating account of the origin and diplomatic of this seal see Prof. Tout *op. cit*, vol 1, pp. 151-157; and *ibid.*, pp. 284-292.

[10] No 3041 There are examples of two of the privy seals of the kings of Scotland—nos. 3083, 3084

[11] See Madox, *History of Exchequer*, vol. 1, p. 86; *Rot. Lit. Claus.*, 1, pp. 102, 103; *Rot. Lit. Pat.*, 1, pp. 138, 155.

[12] No. 3023. See 'Durham Seals,' plate F (facing p. 267), no. 6.

seal which was formerly at the exchequer . . . . . Writs of the exchequer shall be sealed in the meanwhile with a certain *privy seal* of the king *with a shield of the king's arms* and with the circumscription of the exchequer seal.' [13] This seems to mean a seal similar to, if not identical with, the reverse of no. 3029. The difficulty of identifying it with this is the legend and the size; even if one reads the word 'circumscription' to mean circumference [14] one has still to face the difficulty of its large size, three inches compared with the one inch diameter of the privy seal of Edward I.[15] It can only definitely be said that Henry III possessed a privy seal and that it was charged with a shield of his arms. This was the motive of that of Edward I and, arguing from the similarity of his great seals to those of his father, it does not seem probable that any great change in style would be made by Edward for his privy seal. From his time, at least, the type was settled; it is that of a single faced seal charged with an armorial shield, the legend stating it to be the *secretum* of the king [16] (see 'Durham Seals,' plate E facing p. 265). These seals seem first to have been affixed to a strip cut off the document as pendent seals in which case a narrower strip was also sometimes cut off by which the folded document could be secured. This strip was possibly sealed with a small signet to secure it but of this no proof remains.[17] By later custom the privy seal was used itself to close the document, being affixed on the outside of the folded paper—'en placard.' By this method a strip of paper was passed through two incisions cut in the folded document and the loose ends fastened beneath the wax, so that the letter could only be opened by either breaking the

[13] *Cal. Pat. Rolls*, 1232-47, p. 290 [14] See Tout, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p 291.

[15] *Brit. Museum Cat.*, vol. I, no. 709, plate E, no. 4.

[16] For examples of writs under the Privy Seals see H. Hall's *Formula Book of Diplomatic Documents*, vol. I, p. 91 *et seq.*

[17] Tout, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 147 and *n*2.

KEY TO PLATE F. [VI]

1. Treasury Writ of Edward I. with seal of the exchequer in green wax appended on strip of parchment partially cut off deed (Cat. 3029), 2da 2^{dae} Regalium No. 9.

2. Charter of queen Maud (C.A.D. 1115) 1ma 2^{dae} Specialia 23. Seal in natural wax attached transversely by strip of parchment (Cat. 3018).

3. Letter from Joan of Navarre, queen of Henry IV, to the prior and convent of Durham. The letter opened. Locellus XXV, no. 102.

4. The same letter folded and fastened by a strip of paper passed through two incisions cut in the paper and the loose ends joined under her signet which is protected by a twisted straw and placed at the intersection of a cross of red wax. (Cat. 3035.)

5. The same letter folded again with the signet inside and the address on the outside 'A nos tres chere en Dieu Le priour et convent de Duresme.' When so folded and addressed it would probably be again fastened by a picee of silk tied round it.

6. Secretum of king John, used when he was earl of Mortain (Cat. 3023), 2da 4^{tae} Eboracensia no. 20.

7. Privy seal of Henry VI, Locellus XXV, no. 99. (Cat. 3041.)

8. Signet of Henry IV, Locellus XXV, no. 106.

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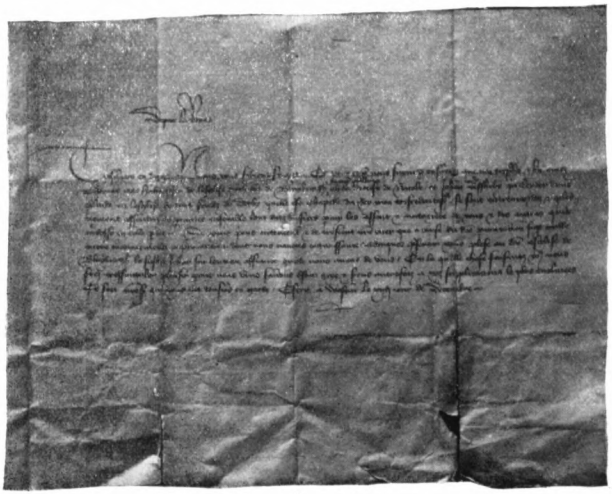
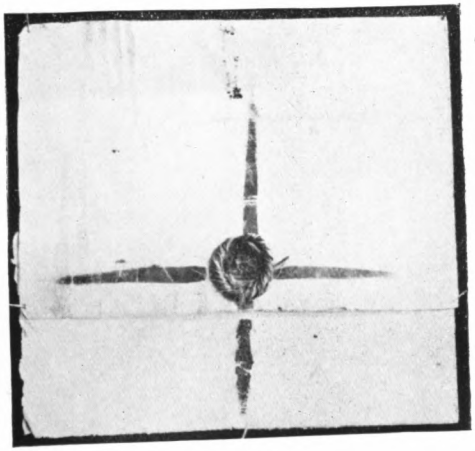


3



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DURHAM SEALS.—F.
Treasury Writ and Seal, Privy Seals, Signets, &c.
From photographs by Mr. C. H. H. Blair.

wax or cutting the strip at the back. The letter of Henry VI at the treasury is so secured by his privy seal.[18] By the time of Edward III the privy seal had become a public administrative office and ceased to be available for the use of the court. A new private seal then came into use called the signet; it was smaller than the privy seal but, like it, armorial in motive. The earliest royal signet at present known to me is that of Richard II [19] but they were probably in use much earlier than this. In France as early as A.D. 1312 Philip the Fair [20] used one called 'notre plus secret signet.' They were used to close folded documents in the same manner as the privy seal described above.[21] Other types of royal seals contained in the catalogue do not require more comment than has already been made in the notes. It is sufficient here to name the seal of Edward I for Scotland,[22] the seals of the courts of King's Bench and Common Pleas,[23] for the palatinate of Durham [24] *sede vacante*, for the duchy of Lancaster [25] and the seal of Henry VIII '*ad causas ecclesiasticas*.' [26]

2. *Ecclesiastical Seals.*

Only the higher ranks of the clergy used seals in the eleventh and twelfth centuries; it was not until well into the thirteenth century that they were used by them generally. The legatine constitutions of Otto [1] issued A.D. 1237 no doubt caused a great increase in their use; the part concerning the use of seals by the

[18] 3041 and No 7, on 'Durham Seals, plate F, facing p. 267.

[19] Plate E, no. 13. This bears his name in block letter, the later royal signets known to me are armorial. See also 3034, 3035, 3036 and 3039.

[20] Douët D'Arcq, vol. I, no. 48.

[21] 'Durham Seals,' plate F, nos. 3, 4 and 5 are photographs of a letter from Joan of Navarre, queen of Henry IV, to the prior and convent of Durham. No. 3 is the letter open; No. 4 folded square and closed with the queen's signet placed at the centre of a wax cross; No. 5 is the document folded again and addressed, the seal being inside. It would probably be secured again by a piece of silk tied round it. See also no. 8 on the same plate.

[22] 3028 [23] 3048 and 3051. [24] 3044. [25] 3038. [26] 3057

[1] Matt. Paris, *Chron. Majora*, Rolls Series, vol. III, p. 438.

clergy is of considerable interest for the history of this type, and reads as follows :—

Since there is no employment of notaries in England, in consequence of which it is very necessary to have recourse to authentic seals, we decree, in order that there may easily be plenty of them, that not only archbishops and bishops, but also their officials, shall have a seal ; also abbots, priors, deans, archdeacons and their officials, rural deans, and chapters of cathedral churches, and all other colleges, and convents, together with their rulers or severally according to their custom or statute. To ensure, further, the variety of each of the aforesaid, let each several person have as his seal the name, say, of the dignity, office or college, and also the proper name of such as enjoy the honour of the dignity or perpetual office, engraved with clear marks and characters : and so shall they have an authentic seal. Lastly, those who shall undertake temporal office, such as rural deans and officials, shall, when their office is over, resign their seal, which should have only the name (of the office) engraved upon it, forthwith and without delay to him of whom they hold the office. We verily charge that diligent care be taken of the custody of seals ; to wit, that each single person shall take care of his seal by himself or commit it to the keeping of one person only in whose faith he trusts : who also shall swear to guard it faithfully and grant it to no one for sealing anything, nor even he himself shall seal with it anything from which prejudice may be engendered to anyone, without that his principal shall read it beforehand and inspect it carefully and so order it to be sealed. In making use of the seal, there shall be faithful and prudent precaution—faithful, that so the needy may be readily supplied, prudent, that so false and fraudulent persons may be utterly denied. At the beginning, also, or at the end of each authentic writing we ordain that the sufficient date of day time and place be inserted.

Ecclesiastical seals, broadly speaking, are all of the same general type and follow similiar lines of development. The earliest are round,[2] depicting only a demi-figure of their owner (of these there is none at Durham) but by the eleventh century

[2] D'Anisy, *Chartes Normades*, plates 3 and 4.

they were usually an elongated oval,[3] which gradually assumed the graceful narrow pointed shape,[4] this, in the sixteenth century Renascence seals,[5] returned again to the early oval form. The most important section of ecclesiastical seals is that of bishops, generally known as their seals of dignity; they show the bishop standing [6] blessing and holding his crosier, vested in full *pontificalia*. The history of episcopal vestments could almost be written from a study of these seals. They represent the bishop as he himself wished to be shown, in his most solemn moments, and faithfully reproduce his ceremonial vestments.[7] In the notes to the long series of the seals of the bishops of Durham I have pointed out the changes in the vestments and noted the gradual change in the motive of their seals. They begin with the unadorned seal of Ranulph and his successors to the beginning of the thirteenth century,[8] then they change gradually by the addition of canopies, flanking saints, architectural niches [9] with tabernacle work and armorial shields [10] until, by the middle of the fourteenth century, the patron saints of the church are predominant whilst the bishop,[11] kneeling beneath adores them. Sometimes the bishop's shield of arms [12] represents the kneeling figure. The *ad causas* or business seals of the bishops are of the same type as the seal of dignity, though of considerably less size, and follow in the main the motive and development of that

[3] 3110-3112. [4] 3133, 3136, 3144.

[5] 3246 These examples are taken from episcopal seals but the same development may be traced on those of the lesser clergy:

[6] They are usually full-faced but some are represented in profile (3599, 3618) and occasionally seated (3125 3107)

[7] In this connection it is interesting to compare the vestments of the bishops of Durham, which passed to the cathedral at their deaths, with those shown on their seals. See *Wills and Inventories* (Surt. Soc. publ., 1835).

[8] 3110-3114. [9] 3121-3124, 3127

[10] These first appear on the shield of bishop Fraser of St Andrews (3624) *circa* A.D. 1280; Bek's seal (3125) A.D. 1284 has armorials but no shield.

[11] 3140. [12] 3144, 3152.

seal. They were in use from the beginning of the thirteenth till towards the end of the sixteenth century.[13] At Durham the first is that of Richard of Bury, the latest that of Robert Neville.

The bishops of Durham, as lords palatine, had a chancellor and chancery of their own where their writs and charters were sealed with their great seals in the same way as royal writs were sealed. Their type is the same as that of their royal prototype though they are of smaller size as befits the lesser potentate; on the obverse the lord bishop is seated upon his throne in full *pontificalia*; on the reverse he is on horseback armed cap-a-pie as the military leader of the men of the palatinate. They begin with the episcopate of Hatfield[14] (A.D. 1345) and continue till Tunstall[15] (A.D. 1559), the last preserved in the treasury, with which alone this catalogue deals. I have annotated them fully in the notes upon each seal and, as they are adequately illustrated,[16] it seems needless to write more upon them here.[17] The seals of the officials of the bishop are also a pointed oval in shape and being used by inferior dignitaries are smaller again than the *ad causas* seals. They are alike in type, representing stories from the Bible,[18] or Our Lady and the Christ Child, or the great Durham saints Cuthbert and Oswald. The legend states the office or official for which the seal was made, or by whom it was used.[19] Seals of archdeacons and their officials follow generally the same type and range in size from 38 to 70 mill. along their longer axis. The earliest at Durham is that of Hugh Sotevagina[20] on which he is depicted robed and seated bearing a rod in one hand and the *textus* in the other. The later seals

[13] *Proc. Socy. Antq. Lond.* XI, p. 298.

[14] 3138, plate 53. [15] 3170, plate 56. [16] Plates 53-56.

[17] The bishops, like other important people, used counterseals, privy seals, and signets which I have thought better to discuss under those types.

[18] No 3173 and inset. [19] Nos. 3172-3186. [20] No. 3285, plate 61.

follow almost exactly the line of development [21] that we have already noted for the seals of dignity of the bishops, though armorial shields do not appear upon the Durham series till that of Neville.[22] There are a few of them which, leaving the beaten track, show a more original design; those of William of Beverley, Alan of Lynn, and of the officiality of the archdeacon of Durham, are instances in point.[23] The numerous seals of canons and the lesser clergy generally are almost impossible to classify, they vary as greatly as do the seals of laymen, their only outstanding characteristic is that they are usually oval in shape and the motive most often a religious one. The seals of hospitals, colleges and collegiate churches, as a rule, represent their patron saint [24] or founder, the legend giving their name and dedication.

The Statute of Carlisle [25] (A.D. 1306) before mentioned, made it compulsory for every abbey to have a common seal, but many of them had seals long before that date. That of Durham priory, the oldest in the catalogue, dates probably, before the foundation of the Benedictine house there, and there are numerous eleventh and twelfth century monastic seals comprised in it. Monastic seals do not, as a rule, follow the regular development in motive that has been noted on episcopal and other individual ecclesiastical seals. Just as the popes used always the dull and barbarous device representing SS. Peter and Paul on their bulls so we find many convents, either from pride in their antiquity or from that conservatism and dislike of change innate in all corporate bodies, using the same seal from early times all through their history. The simple cross paty of St. Cuthbert, with the very early legend, was so used by the great house of Durham; [26]

[21] See plates 60 and 61.

[22] No. 3258 A.D 1334. The earliest shield of arms on an archdeacon's seal I have noted is on that of Thomas of Chartres (3635) A.D. 1267.

[23] Nos. 3271, 3275 and 3263.

[24] Nos. 3338 *et seq.* and plates 62-63.

[25] See above p. 253.

[26] 3427, plate 64.

the equally great house of St. Albans used a rude and archaic figure of the protomartyr.[27] The crudely designed seated figure of Our Lady used by the Austin canons of Guisbrough [28] also clearly dates back to the time of their foundation.

This type of seal does not conform so invariably to the oval shape, many of them are round. Nor are their motives greatly varied, they depict usually the patron saint or saints of the convent. There are the fine series of the Cistercians and Austin canons representing Our Lady with the Christ Child of which the best known and most beautiful are those of Merton priory [29] and Oseney abbey [30]; or the earlier Benedictine ones of Lindores and Kelso.[31] There are St. Peter and St. Paul of Brinkburn, St. Mary and St. Oswin of Tynemouth, St. Agatha of Easby, St. Mary Magdalen of Lanercost, St. Nicholas of Drax, St. Bartholomew and St. Guthlac of Croyland, St. Edmund of Edmundsbury, St. John of Helaugh, St. German of Selby and many others. Some, such as that of Evesham,[32] represent legends of their foundation, whilst another series uses for seal a representation of their church, like those of St. Andrew's priory.[33] The vested arm of the abbot holding his crosier in his hand, issuing from the side of the seal, is a not uncommon motive.[34] The seals of abbots and priors are similar to those of bishops; they are of about the same size and shape. The earlier ones represent their owner in monastic dress standing, full face, with the *textus* in his hands, or, if he be a mitred abbot or prior, he stands arrayed in full *pontificalia*. The decoration of the seal, such as the introduction of saints, architectural niches and armorials, follows the same line of development we have already

[27] 3537.
[28] 3481, plate 63.
[29] *Proc. Soc. Ant. Newc.*, 3rd ser. VIII, p. 140.
[30] 3532, plate 65.
[31] 3670, 3665, plate 68.
[32] 3465
[33] 3678, 3679; plate 68.
[34] 3661, 3673.

traced on those of bishops and archdeacons. There are also certain seals common to the abbot and the convent but they do not differ, except in the legend, from the general type.

3 *Equestrian Seals.*

The earliest seals of laymen were of the well defined type called equestrian, they show their owner, in full armour, mounted on his war horse as he went to battle. They date from the later half of the eleventh century and no doubt derived their motive from the reverse of the royal seals, indeed the only two of this early date at Durham are those of William Rufus and Duncan II.[1] This type in the twelfth century was of considerable size, those of Alan and Conan [2] of Brittany are larger than the contemporary royal great seals. The tendency was to lessen this inconvenient size; and during the thirteenth century the average is from 55 to 65 mill. in diameter. One delightful example [3] of the type (A.D. 1270) has a diameter of only 22 mill.; one of mid-fourteenth century date [4] is 26 mill. but these are exceptions, by far the greater number are considerably larger. There is only one exception to the round form at Durham, that namely of William Thorp,[4a] which is oval, the result from the artistic standpoint is not pleasing. Those of early date are rough in execution, rude and archaic in design,[5] but as time passes they become more natural and the type clearer.[6] The knight is clothed to his knees in a hauberk of mail, he wears a pointed helmet with nasal and bears on his left arm a long kite-shaped shield, with rounded top and pointed base, showing the inside; in his right hand he brandishes a long and heavy sword, or sometimes the greater nobles bear a lance with pennon,[7] or are shewn

[1] 3013, plate 40 and 3073, plate 46. [2] 397, 398.
[3] 2286 'Durham Seals,' plate B, no. 5 (facing p. 248). [4] 1112. [4a] 2433.
[5] 40· plate 9 3017, plate 40. [6] 1838, 1900, plate 20.
[7] 1420 plate 12 . 3075 and 3078, plate 46.

on one side of the seal with a sword, on the other with a spear.[8] Towards the middle of the twelfth century the helmet becomes more rounded and the shield shorter, concave in shape, often with a central boss from which bars radiate to the constructional border, it is usually held, suspended by a strap so that it appears in profile.[9] It is in the last half of this century that armorials first appear on shields.[10] The early years of the thirteenth century bring great changes; then comes the great cylindrical war helm, flat topped and visored; over the mail hauberk a loose and flowing surcoat [11] is worn, at first undecorated but very soon embroidered with armorials.[12] The shield is smaller and held almost full-faced thus allowing its armorial changes to be better seen; the horse receives housings,[13] plain and loose flowing, but soon also covered with armorials [14] and sometimes taking the form of a stiff and heavy caparison.[15] In the early fourteenth century the loose armorial surcoat gives place to the tight fitting short skirted jupon, and crests become the ordinary adornment of the conical shaped heaume [16] which is protected at the back by dagged edge mantling and often surrounded by a crest coronet or wreath. These fashions can best be seen, in the Durham collection, on the reverse of the royal great seals (plate 43) or on the like seals of the lords palatine of Durham (plates 53-55). Except for these two classes equestrian seals ceased to be used towards the end of the fourteenth century, they then gave place

[8] 397, 398, plate 1.

[9] 1177, 1178, plate 11; 206, plate 9; 897, plate 10; 1989, plate 20; 2551, plate 29; 2812, plate 35.

[10] 1003, plate 11; 2804, plate 34.

[11] 1002, plate 11; 1970[a], plate 19; 3025 and 3029, plate 42.

[12] There is not an armorial surcoat of the loose flowing style depicted on the seals at Durham but Demay (*Le Costume d'apres les Sceaux*, p. 117) notes A.D. 1225 as the earliest one he had seen.

[13] 2807 and 2808, plate 34.

[14] 2045, *ob.* plate 21; 3027, rev. plate 42; 3082, rev. plate 47.

[15] 3081, plate 47.

[16] 2814, plate 35.

almost entirely to the smaller armorial seals.[17] From the artistic side the best period for this type, as for others, is the later thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries; then the rider and his horse are real and lifelike—a warrior and a war horse ready for battle or for the mimic warfare of the tourney; later the treatment becomes artificial—lay figures clothed in ceremonial costume, thus their historic and artistic interest passes.

4. *Armorial.*

The motive of this type is a shield of arms and its accessories There are some seals armorial in spirit, but, as they do not display a shield of arms, they cannot be placed in this section.[1] Some interesting examples depict badges, canting or other, which later, formed the armorial bearings of their owners.[2] The earliest shield of arms appears on the equestrian type shortly after the middle of the twelfth century and armorial seals soon followed. It is this type that is of importance to the genealogist historian or herald, and not less so to those who delight in the beautiful mediaeval art of heraldry. Not only does it share with other types a comparative certainty of origin and date, but the devices show their owners' arms as they themselves used them and desired them to be represented, they give the differences used by cadet branches.[3] Their impalements, quarterings[4] and groupings[5] show family relationships and alliances; the charges on the shield often tell of blood connection[6] or feudal dependence.[7] For the herald, from their personal character and known date, they are the earliest and most authentic source for the forms of shields, charges, crests, helmets, with their mantling and supporters, and all that goes to make a complete

[17] The latest in the catalogue is no. 2814.
[1] 26, 27 468 and 2831 are good examples.
[2] 608. 1275, 1276, 1922 and 2510 [3] 2508, 2511, plate 30. [4] 1963, plate 19
[5] 1728. plate 23 [6] 225, 226, plate 8. [7] 770, plate 8 and 2362, plate 22.

armorial achievement. For the artist they are original monuments upon which can be seen at first hand the finest work of the mediaeval engraver unsurpassed in its fineness and beauty of detail by any other form of mediaeval art. In the notes to the catalogue I have, where possible, blasoned the arms and spoken of any peculiarities of the armorials; here I propose to trace the development of the type leaving out of account the details of the blason. The conclusions are based entirely on seals in the catalogue and for the most part on those illustrated. The collection is large and varied and covers many centuries, it may therefore be taken to represent the general evolution of the type, at least in England. It is, of course, not possible to arrange them, as it were, in watertight compartments, there is very considerable overlapping amongst the various styles and some persist right through the period, but none the less they fall into clearly defined groups and a regular development can be traced.

I.—The earliest form ranges in date from *circa* A.D. 1160 to 1200, the seals are circular in shape and rather large in size, measuring from 65 to 75 mill. in diameter. The field is plain and almost entirely filled by an upright pear, or heart-shaped shield [8] (plate G, no. 1).

II.—From *circa* A.D. 1200-1230 the seals become rather smaller in size, from about 40 to 45 mill., the field remains plain and the shield upright but its form is modified; it still shows the convex top but the sides have lost the rounded form and become straighter.[9] In these years also the seal itself takes the form of a shield, it is a rather exceptional type but examples are to be found till towards the end of the century and later [10] (plate G, nos. 2, 6 and 8).

[8] 443, 584, plate 2; 1064, 1184, plate 13; 1742, plate 21; 1708; C.A.D. 1200.
[9] 896, plate 10, 1340, plate 14; 1759 and 1854, plate 22; 2503, plate 29; 1501.
[10] 70, plate 2; 1872, 2325, plate 22; 1381.

KEY TO PLATE C. [VII]

1. Adam de Blundeville, son of Thomas, circa A.D. 1185.
2. Philip de Orreby, circa A.D. 1200.
3. William de Vesci, circa A.D. 1220.
4. Alexander, on the counterpane seal of Richard, probably of Henry III, circa A.D. 1242.
5. Alexander, the Scottish seal of William, circa A.D. 1250.
6. Ralph of Mundeville, circa A.D. 1250.
7. Robert Fitzwalter of Dunmow, circa A.D. 1255.
8. William de Horton, circa A.D. 1255.
9. Sir John Giffard, circa A.D. 1260.
10. Robert de Stockport, A.D. 1260.
11. Sir Roger de Trumpington, circa A.D. 1260.
12. Hugh de Tuis, A.D. 1270.
13. Guy Burtheyne, circa A.D. 1290.
14. Thomas de Pinchbeck, A.D. 1294.
15. Lord de Grey, Richard III, circa A.D. 1290.
16. Robert Fitzwalter, A.D. 1308.
17. John Cayron, A.D. 1318.

KEY TO PLATE G. [VII]

1. Ranulph of Blundevill, earl of Chester, *circa* A.D. 1181.
2. Philip of Ulcotes, *circa* A.D. 1200.
3. William of Vesci, *circa* A.D. 1220.
4. Reverse of the exchequer seal of Edward I (probably of Henry III, date *circa* A.D. 1240).
5. Reverse of the Scottish seal of Edward I, A.D. 1296.
6. Ralph of Amundeville, *circa* A.D. 1250.
7. Robert Ferrars, earl of Derby, *circa* A.D. 1255.
8. Walran of Horton, *circa* A.D. 1255.
9. Sir John Cumin, *circa* A.D. 1260.
10. Robert of Stockport, A.D. 1260.
11. Sir Roger Bertram, *circa* A.D. 1260.
12. Hugh of Eure, A.D. 1273.
13. Guy Darraynes, *circa* A.D. 1295.
14. Waleran of Lumley, A.D. 1334.
15. Seal of customs, Edward III, *circa* A.D. 1340.
16. Robert Umfraville, A.D. 1368.
17. John Conyers, A.D. 1378.

DURHAM SEALS.—G.

Development of Armorial Seals A.D. 1180-1378.

From photographs by Mr. C. H. H. Blair,

III.—The middle thirteenth century seals are of much the same size as the previous group, the field is still free from ornament but the shields become more triangular with straight top and sides, the upper corners only being rounded [11]; in some examples the top is slightly concave [12] and in others they are quite triangular.[13] By the middle of the century the corners have become angular, the top straight with the sides slightly convex; this shield is known as heater-shaped.[14] This is the beautiful form typical of the late thirteenth and the whole of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries; it is the prevalence of this shape which causes the charges of our English armorials to be so often three in number arranged two above and one beneath. Whilst this graceful shape predominates, another form, with straight top and side and rounded,[15] or with an ogee shaped curve in, base,[16] is also used from about the middle of the fourteenth century; shields of this form are always placed upright on the seal. They did not, I think, represent the shield actually used but were so drawn by the engraver in order to get more room for his design and so display the armorials better. This can be seen by comparing the small heater-shaped shields borne by Edward Baliol, and bishops Hatfield, Fordham and Langley, with the broad based shields on their privy seals [17] (plate G, nos. 3, 4, 5, 7-13).

IV.—From about the last quarter of the thirteenth century the seals become smaller, from 20 to 30 mill. The gracefully

[11] 1003, obv. plate 11 1593. plate 13; 1848, plate 21; 2540, plate 29 · 2529, plate 30; 929.

[12] 2552, 2085.

[13] 1186 plate 13; 2808, rev. plate 34.

[14] 226 and 674, plate 8; 750; 3028, rev. plate 47 is one of the most beautifully proportioned shields of this type and of later date the seal of Ed. III for customs here reproduced

[15] 2271, plate 22; 2196 plate 23; 3084, plate 47; 1004, plate 14.

[16] 1963 plate 19; 1547, plate 30, 1351. plate 14 is a shield *à bouche* that is with a notch cut in the dexter top side as a rest for the lance, the only example at Durham.

[17] 3139 and 3143, plate 51; and 3150, plate 52.

moulded heater shape predominates but the taste for decoration becomes apparent. The hitherto empty space between the shield and the bordering legend is filled with foliage,[18] tracery or small lacertine beasts [19] the beginnings of the later heraldic supporters. Early in the fourteenth century the shield sometimes hangs from the branches of a tree [20] with tracery, foliage, or small creatures at each side. Other examples of similar date show the shield in a border of fine tracery [21] more or less elaborate or placed within the spandrils or lobes of geometrical figures, trefoils, quatrefoils, sexfoils and the like, sometimes of singularly beautiful design.[22] All these various forms of decoration run parallel with each other and last well into the fifteenth century. (Plate G, nos. 15-17 and plate H, nos. 1-4.)

V.—From the latter part of the twelfth century some helmets were surmounted by fan-shaped decorations of the nature of crests.[23] There is also an example of a more developed type in the dragon on the cylindrical helm on the reverse of the seal of Roger de Quincy [24] *circa* A.D. 1235. The use of crests, however, did not become general until the introduction of the conical helm early in the fourteenth century. At first they were the personal choice of the wearer and varied with his taste; it was not until later that they became hereditary and of heraldic importance. The earliest I have noted on an armorial seal in this catalogue is that of Roger Mauduit [25] *circa* A.D. 1332. This has the early fan-shaped crest with the mantling of the helm floating and scarf shaped. The style developes rapidly and from

[18] 770, plate 8. [19] 324, plate 8.

[20] 96 and 686 plate 7; 2251, plate 22; 2271, plate 22; 1120, plate 15; 1970, plate 19; 2663 and 2388, plate 30; 3139, plate 51

[21] 87, plate 7; 930, plate 10; 1836, 2224 and 2287, plate 23; 2508 and 2511, plate 30

[22] 1 and 520, plate 8; of mid. thirteenth-century date Italian earlier than English. 1675, plate 10; 2084, plate 23; 2814, rev. plate 35.

[23] 3022, note 6. [24] 2045, rev. plate 21. [25] 1729, plate 23.

KEY TO PLATE H. [VIII]

1. Henry Percy, *circa* A.D. 1330.
2. Philip of Somerville, A.D. 1340.
3. Sir Thomas Wake, A.D. 1318.
4. John Willoughby of Eresby, A.D. 1350.
5. Sir John Lumley, A.D. 1418.
6. Roger Mauduit, A.D. 1332.
7. Roger Fulthorpe, A.D. 1353.
8. Robert Willoughby, of Eresby, A.D. 1382.
9. Henry, duke of Lancaster, A.D. 1358.
10. John, duke of Bedford, A.D. 1413.
11. Henry, lord Percy, A.D. 1388.
12. Henry, lord Percy, A.D. 1416.
13. Treasury seal, A.D. 1569.


12


13


9


10


11


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8


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4

DURHAM SEALS.—H.

Development of Armorial Seals A.D. 1330-1610.

From photographs by Mr. C. H. H. Blair.

this date onwards to the end of the fifteenth century there is a series of examples.[26] The type is well defined, the shield is placed couché, that is lying on its dexter side, the conical helm, with its mantling, becoming more ornate as the type developes and often embroidered with heraldic charges,[27] rests on the upper corner of the shield. The crest surmounts the helm, rising from a coronet,[28] a cap of maintenance[29] or a crest wreath.[30] Sometimes, though rarely, the helm is omitted and the crest placed on a cap of estate or coronet on the top of the upright shield.[31] The field is usually beautifully diapered with fine tracery or foliage or the whole design contained within elaborate geometrical panels. The type reached its perfection about the end of the fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries, after which the design becomes poor and the ornament overdone and meaningless.[32] (Plate H, nos. 5-10.)

VI.—From the end of the thirteenth century, as we have seen, the shield was often shown hanging from a tree with lacertine creatures creeping round its sides,[33] or small beasts,[34] or even angels,[35] in the spaces of the surrounding tracery, evidently so placed to fill a void. When the type of seal with shield couché and with the crested helm resting upon its upper corner came into favour the space left on each side was larger and so the supporters, as they came to be called, increased in size and importance. The design of the seal required that they should hold up the helm rather than the shield and this the earliest supporters always do.[36] It is from about the beginning of the

[26] 1113, 1659, 1662 1667 on plate 13; 1917, 1918, 2334 on plate 22.
[27] 1163, inset; 1918, plate 22.
[28] 1366, plate 14; 2199, plate 23.
[29] 1662, plate 13; 3038 and 3066 plate, 45.
[30] 627, plate 7.
[31] 3071, plate 45.
[32] 1785, plate 22; 2419[a], plate 30.
[33] 2251, plate 22, 1351, plate 14.
[34] 1970, plate 19.
[35] 3143, plate 51.
[36] 2664, plate 30. The two savage men supporting the Douglas shield (2796, plate 36) are an exception, the shield stands upright without helm or crest. 3139, plate 51, is a like exception. In later post mediaeval times the supporters usually uphold the shield, a good example is 3056, rev. on plate 45.

fifteenth century, and lasting until the end of the mediaeval period, that the final and most elaborate type of armorial seal appears. Upon it is shown the owner's full armorial achievement of shield, mantled helm, crest and supporters.[37] Beginning much earlier [38] than this final type, and running parallel with it, is a form of seal on which the upright shield is held by a single supporter placed behind it. These are of many and diverse varieties, angels,[39] birds,[40] animals,[41] savage men [42] and armed knights,[43] but neither these nor the double supporters, at first, had any heraldic significance (plate H, nos. 11, 12). They seem to have been chosen arbitrarily or it was left to the fancy of the engraver to ornament the seal as he thought best. It was not till well into the sixteenth century that supporters became hereditary and therefore of armorial importance. This type is rare on seals and there is only one [44] in the treasury showing such true heraldic supporters; a seal noteworthy for the fanciful cartouche shaped shield upon which the royal arms are displayed (plate H, no. 13). Of the later type of armorial seals there is only one [45] illustrated at Durham showing the quartered shield surrounded by the Garter, it is of unusually large size and is I think an exception, for by the end of the fifteenth century the civil wars had made an end of the old feudal nobility and so of the heraldic pomp of their seals. They gave place to small signets (of which later), usually deeply impressed on roughly shaped lumps of red wax, of little interest either to the artist or herald.

[37] 1964, plate 19; 2664, plate 30; 2733, plate 36; 2846, plate 36; 2853, plate 37.
[38] Early fourteenth century.
[39] 3150, plate 52; 3399, plate 63.
[40] 1806, 1807, plate 22.
[41] 1489, plate 13; 1965, plate 19.
[42] 2797, plate 36.
[43] 1963, plate 19, most probably the earl himself.
[44] 3056, rev. plate 45, it is interesting to compare these supporters with 3051 rev. plate 44.
[45] 1421, A.D. 1577.

5. *Counter-Seals.*

The use of pendent seals early suggested the idea of an impression upon the back of the wax. This acted as a guard to the seal (as some of the legends state), preventing its removal by slicing away the wax from behind ; it also made forgery more difficult. These seals were not used by the commonalty but only by the higher ranks both lay and clerical and even they do not use them regularly, there are many examples of the same person sealing with or without a counterseal, or even using it as a seal proper.[1] I have not been able to trace any method in this irregularity. Besides this use for security counter-seals brought in the element of personal authentication, the seal proper of the persons using them having passed into the keeping of a clerk or chancellor, in other words the idea of a private seal is present in their use. They also provided a place where their owner could represent himself under another aspect. This was the purpose to which, as we have seen, the Conqueror put the reverse of his seal. The greater nobles followed the royal style. There is an interesting example in the catalogue on which Conan, duke of Brittany and earl of Richmond, represents himself on the seal as duke and on the counter-seal as earl.[2] The great seals of the bishops of Durham also illustrate this use, their counter-seals representing the temporal lords palatine. These royal and quasi-royal counter-seals are the same size as the seal itself and it is usual to describe such seals as having an obverse and a reverse rather than as a seal and counterseal. Counter-seals, properly so called, are smaller than the seal and came into use early in the twelfth century. They are called *secreta* in the catalogue, but it would have been better to have used the more

[1] 1551.

[2] 398, plate I. Another example is that of Gilbert, earl of Hertford and Gloucester (A.D. 1262), (Sandford, p. 139).

general term to prevent confusion with the true *secretum* or privy seal. There is, however, much confusion between the use of the two and in any case, as said above, the idea of the secret seal is present in the counter-seal.[3] Engraved gems were their first form and continued to be used for the purpose all through the period by both clergy and laity.[4] From about the end of the twelfth century episcopal counter-seals [5] take the shape, in miniature, of the seal, their motive being nearly always the patron saints of bishop or church with the owner or his shield beneath. The motive of others than the episcopal is often armorial, representing a plain shield of their owners' arms usually smaller than the seal itself.[6] Their use dies out about the end of the fifteenth century though occasionally small signets are used for the purpose after that date.[7] It should also be noted that many seals have the marks of finger prints impressed on the back, sometimes one only placed at the centre [8] or on the upper part, sometimes three imprinted with care down the centre. These marks are so evidently intentional that we must conclude that they were placed there as a guard to the seal, in other words as counter-seals.

6. *Secret or Privy Seals.*

These, like counterseals, were never in common use but were confined to those whose seals had come, more or less, under the control of an administrative office and were therefore not available for the private use of their owner; as their name denotes they are *secret*, the opposite to *public* seals. As I have said above, it is difficult to separate this type from the counterseal. The earlier *secreta* of which examples have come down to us are used

[3] See counterseal of John (3023) and legend.
[4] 3219, 3220, 3615, 3616 and 1003, 1248, 2265, 2803.
[5] 3118, 3122, 3124, &c. The beautiful counterseal of Bek is an exception (3125).
[6] 443, 1004, 2808, 2814. [7] 1877, 1968a. [8] 3499.

as counterseals[1]; but there can be little doubt that they would be in regular use by their owners for closing missive letters and private correspondence; the fact that they had to be broken in order to open the document would account for their non-survival in that form. By the early thirteenth century the royal chamber[2] had evolved a *secretum* with an armorial motive used as a seal and never as a counterseal and it is this type which one usually refers to as privy seals. The royal example was followed by other great dignitaries and in this catalogue there is a very interesting series of the type used by the bishops of Durham[3] from Hatfield (A.D. 1345) to Dudley (A.D. 1476). There are also examples of the royal Scottish privy seals used by David II and Edward Baliol.[4]

7. *Signets.*

This is the name by which small personal seals, made to fit a finger ring or to be otherwise carried on the person, are known. They came into use about the beginning of the fifteenth century and were generally used for closing missive letters, the introduction of the more fragile material of paper in place of parchment no doubt also contributed to their use. When used for closing, the document was folded, a strip of paper was then passed through two incisions cut through the document and the loose ends secured into the wax of the signet, which was usually placed in the centre of a cross of wax. The letter was then folded again, so as to cover and protect the device, the address placed on the outside and it would probably again be secured by a strip of silk tied round it (plate F, nos. 3, 4, 5 and 8). These signets are often protected by a folded straw or piece of silk laid round them so

[1] 3023, 3224, 2805, 2807.
[2] See *ante* p. 265.
[3] 3139, 3143, 3150, 3161, plates 51-52. See also *Proc. Soc. Ant. Lond.*, 2nd ser. XI, 296.
[4] 3083, 3084.

that they should not be destroyed by the paper, when folded, rubbing off the wax. They are also used for authentication instead of the seal proper and sometimes as a counter-seal.[1] When used as seals pendent we find them impressed on unshapen lumps of red wax as though they were a mere survival of an ancient custom as indeed they were, for, by the sixteenth century, signature of documents with a signet added was rapidly replacing the old method of sealing in the presence of witnesses.

They are of small size from 13 to 20 mill. in diameter and of many shapes, round, oval, hexagonal, pentagonal, square and quatrefoiled, amongst others even more fanciful. The device upon them is often a part of the armorials of their owner,[2] his crest,[3] his initials[4] or merely a fanciful or pretty device chosen arbitrarily. Speaking generally, they are not of much interest.[5]

8. *Engraved Gems.*

The use of gems engraved in intaglio for seals goes back, as we have seen,[1] to the early age of Greek civilization, they were the forerunners of the mediaeval seal. It is therefore not surprising that we often meet with impressions evidently made by such gems amidst the rich display of chivalry, armoury, architectural tracery, and ecclesiastical art of the mediaeval seals. They represent subjects of Greek and Latin mythology or portrait busts of Roman emperors, ladies and senators. Their use was general and, though perhaps more favoured by ecclesiastics than by any other class of the community, a glance through the great numbers contained in the catalogue will show how wide spread was their use, especially for privy seals[2] (*secreta*) and as counter-

[1] 1968a. [2] 2349, 1959, 1966, 1969. [3] 1349, 1350. [4] 286, 2351.
[5] Good examples of the type are nos. 613-628 and 1652-1677. Also those of the bishops of Durham, nos. 3151, 3154-56.

[1] *Ante* page. 246. [2] 817, 1788, 3023.

seals.[3] There are, however, numerous examples of their use as seals.[4] Not only were they used in this way as the sole motive of the design but they are sometimes to be met with ornamenting the field of the seal, the chief design of which is mediaeval.[5] Their so general use and the fact that the most educated class of the community used them most, leads one to believe that the value of the gems and of the work upon them, as well as the classical beauty of the devices, must have appealed to their owners. They were also valued for the curative or magical virtues, to prevent illness or protect from evil influences, then commonly ascribed to them.[6] Impressions made from these gems can easily be known not only from their classical design and motive but from their fine finish and the clean hard impression they leave on the wax, showing that the device has been cut in a material harder than metal. It was customary to place the gem in a mediaeval setting of metal upon which the surrounding legend was engraved, the mark of this jointure can be seen upon the wax.[7] The men of the middle ages had small or no knowledge of classical history so, with a naïveté peculiarly mediaeval, many of the mythological subjects engraved on these intaglios or the portrait busts they portray are taken for the great figures or events of the Christian faith. Thus Pallas Athene with Niké in her right hand[8] is invoked for Our Lady (AVE MARIA GRACIA PLENA). Thalia, the comic muse, comes under the same invocation (1175). Niké herself, the winged figure of

[3] 2803, plate 35; 2805, plate 34; 3570, plate 62; 3563, plate 62; 3616, plate 66

[4] 283, plate 3; 481, plate 5; 821; 847; 481; 1977 and 2063, plate 28; 2402, plate 31; 2557, plate 31; 2657, plate 31.

[5] Vesci, *Seals*, plate II, 10 (B.M 17091); Boniface, archbishop of Cant. *Seals*, plate III, 15; Peter Brus (B.M. 15643). There are no examples at Durham of this custom.

[6] One direct evidence of this magical virtue is in this catalogue, 3631.

[7] 2339, plate 28: 1410, plate 18; 3563, plate 62 and 3224, no. 2, plate 37, three of the most beautiful of the gems in the catalogue.

[8] 3610, plate 66.

Victory, is an angel messenger (SUM NUNCIUS XTI).[9] The beautiful head of Jupiter Serapis,[10] whose face has so gracious and benign an expression that it has been considered to be the original from which the traditional head of Our Lord was derived, formed the judicial seal of Charlemagne; though without legend he doubtless used it for that of Christ; just as his first seal of the head of Marcus Aurelius also represented our Lord.[11] So a prior of Tynemouth uses the bust of a Roman emperor for the same Divine Person (no. 3552). The 'father of gods and men' under his aspect of the Thunderer[12] was chosen by the monks of Durham for the head of St. Oswald the king (CAPUT SANCTI OSWALDI REGIS). More strangely archbishop Roger of Pont-l'Evêque typifies the Holy Trinity, on his counter-seal, by the triple-faced Bacchic mask of Greek comedy,[13] one of his successors, archbishop Walter Giffard,[14] uses an intaglio of the heads of Marcus Aurelius and Plato to represent the apostles St. Peter and St. Paul, who are also invoked in the legend surrounding a gem of a Janus-like head of a bearded and shaven face joined at the back and facing different ways[15] (PETER & PAWIL PRAI FOR MI SAWL). But whilst there are many of these attributions the greater number of gems are simply used as seals or counterseals and called *secretum*[16] or *sigillum*.[17] There are at Durham a few gems of mediaeval engraving representing Christian motives which deserve notice. Typical of these are the Holy Lamb engraved on jasper used by a bishop of Whithorn[18] and the flight into Egypt used as a counter-seal by Robert fitz Roger.[19]

[9] 590. [10] 481, plate 5; 2402, plate 31. [11] Douët D'Arcq, vol. i, nos. 15 and 16.
[12] 3427, plate 64. In the catalogue I have called him Jupiter Serapis, but I think this is an error, on closer examination, there can be no doubt that the head is surrounded by thunderbolts and I have mistaken those on the top for the *modius* which is not there. The gem, I feel sure, represents Jupiter Fulgerator.
[13] 3220, plate 58. [14] 3224, plate 57. [15] 2718, plate 31.
[16] 1003, plate 11. [17] 2499, plate 31. [18] 3631, plate 67.
[19] 1003, plate 11

An example of a portrait bust is used by Thomas of Southwark.[20]

9. *Seals of Ladies.*

The use of seals by ladies of the higher ranks dates from the beginning of the twelfth century. The type is pointed oval in shape and represents the owner, in her robes of ceremony standing either full or three-quarter face, holding in her hand a flower, a fleur de lys,[1] or, later, a bird,[2] the field of the seal being at first quite plain. The type is not well represented in the catalogue but there is one which I think is the earliest known lady's seal, namely that of Maud,[3] queen of king Henry I, who died in A.D. 1118. Its evolution is on the same lines as the like-shaped episcopal seals of dignity, decoration appears on each side of the figure, canopies with their side shafts are added until, by a gradual process, the fifteenth-century seals present the lady standing in an elaborate architectural niche surrounded by fine tabernacle work upon which are armorial shields. Shields of arms are first used upon these seals about the middle of the thirteenth century when the owner is usually represented holding a shield in each hand, one that of her husband, the other that of her father, and often in robes also embroidered with armorials.[4] The seals of this date are amongst the most graceful and beautiful of all. Parallel with these pointed oval seals there runs a circular equestrian type which depicts the owner in hunting costume, seated side-saddle, with a hawk on her wrist, and often accompanied by a hound. This style is rare and is not found after the thirteenth century, nor is there an example of it in the catalogue. Another type of seal with an armorial motive comes into use about mid-fourteenth century. Leaving the pointed oval

[20] 2355, plate 28. [1] 200, plate 5. [2] 772. [3] 3018, plate 45.
[4] 2537, plate 29; 1536, plate 13; 2741, plate 36 an exceptional circular one of this type.

form with its 'counterfeit presentment' of their gracefully robed figures some ladies adopted a small circular armorial seal: They had no shields of their own to display so they grouped in one composition two or more shields of arms [5] representing their own and their husbands' families. It is an interesting type useful to the herald or the genealogist tracing family histories. By the beginning of the fifteenth century the small signets then coming into fashion began also to be used by women; they are of the same type as those used by men.[6] Such were the seals known specifically as ladies'; but there are many which, except for the legend, are not to be distinguished from those used by men. Thus Mabel Grenville uses a noble seal of the Holy Lamb,[7] Maud d'Audre a distaff and spindle,[8] Cecily Heworth a cross formed of lions,[9] Wimarc Papedie the canting device of a popinjay.[10] These devices are placed either on an oval or round seal, which ever best suits the design. Whilst women of high degree thus used motives so various, those of the lower ranks used seals either round or oval bearing crescents, birds, stars, flowers, crosses, hearts, clasped hands or other fanciful designs chosen as their fancy or caprice directed.

10. *Miscellaneous Devices.*

The type of seals we have so far been considering fall, in the main, into two divisions; they either bear a personal representation of their owner, or else they symbolize him by means of his shield of arms. There are a great number of seals which come under neither of these heads, the devices having no relation to him who uses them except that they are his choice. These various devices begin with the earliest seals and run parallel with

[5] 1728, plate 23; 2886, plate 36. See also *Proc. Soc. Antiq. Newc.*, 3rd ser. IV, p. 89.
[6] 3035, 3039, plate 45. [7] 1099, plate 12. [8] 102, plate 4.
[9] 1326, plate 16. [10] 1935.

the other types right through the period. Their use is by no means confined to people of little importance. A Brus [1] uses a nobly designed fleur de lys, an Escolland [2] a spread eagle, a Crevecoeur [3] a solitary lion, in each case it is the legend by which alone we can tell whose seal it is. Dragons of the prime, strange legendary beasts,[4] were, especially in early seals, much used. They are often presented with such intense imaginative power that one is tempted to believe that such primeval monsters actually roamed the forests of mediaeval England in all their fearful symmetry. Beasts of more certain origin are common; lions, bears, boars, wolves, deer, squirrels, hares, rabbits, dogs, monkeys, apes, in short, almost every animal known to men, in those days, is represented, the fiercer of them standing solitary in savage strength,[5] or like the lion, who was fabled to sleep with his eyes open, asleep in deceptive quietness. The more familar are in their natural habitat or engaged in some characteristic action, thus the stag ranges the forest [6] at speed, the squirrel [7] cracks a nut or sits in a tree's branches, the monkey [8] scratches himself, the dog,[9] is generally curled up asleep resting from the chase. Domestic animals such as the ox, sheep and lamb are commonly used. Birds are even more general; legend supplies the harpy [10] and the pelican [11] always represented tearing its breast and feeding its young with its own blood—the great symbol of the Atonement. Birds of prey, such as the eagle,[12] falcon and hawk, the last often shown upon his quarry [13] tearing it, are depicted; as well as ravens, herons, owls, doves and even the homely goose [14] and barn door cock [15] are not forgotten. Fishes also are not uncommon,

[1] 445. [2] 913. [3] 739.
[4] 1809, 2048, 2185, plate 24; 2533, 2603, plate 32; 2813, 2816, 2817, plate 38
[5] 739, 1592, 2607 [6] 2055 [7] 203, 1640, 2636 [8] 994, 1388. [9] 2241, 2156.
[10] 1319. [11] 1590, 2462. [12] 2801. [13] 999, 1297 and 1343. [14] 582.
[15] 3742 with the delightful motto, ser gallus cantat.

the salmon [16] often appears, a herring [17] is used by one of that name, whilst Simon Fishburn [18] presents a number of fish in a burn. The playful irony of the mediaeval spirit is well illustrated on some of these seals. The hunted becomes the hunter. A hare or rabbit [19] mounted on a hound and blowing a horn cheers his fellows on to the chase—So Hou, So Hou! Hawking is caricatured by showing an ape [20] riding on an ass, with an owl perched on his paw. Their love of the unusual or grotesque is also shown in many examples of strange misshapen monsters.[21] Whilst the world of living nature contributes to these devices, other natural objects are not less largely used. There is the sun [22] 'in his splendour,' the crescent [23] moon and the stars either singly or in clusters.[24] Trees and flowers of many varieties are common, often used in playful allusion to the name of the owner as the trees of Orchard,[25] the pear tree of Pirie,[26] the hawthorn bush of Hawthorn,[27] the quickset shrub of Quixwode [28] or often, as in the many beautiful forms of the fleur de lys,[29] telling only of the artist's desire for beauty. Men typify their office or their work by their devices. So the sheriff [30] marks his dignified office by a castle, upon which is his personal shield or badge; if he holds the same office in Durham,[31] being an officer of the bishop, he uses a mitre. The important post of forester [32] is symbolized by a hunter with his horn and dog or else by a single horn.[33] The brewer [34] brews at the vat, the butler [35] runs with his cup, the leech [36] mixes his drugs, the archer [37] bears his long bow. The craftsman shows his tools, as the hammer and pincers or horse shoe of the marshal,[38] the miller's pick, the butcher's axe,[39] the scissors of the tailor [40] or the candles [41]

[16] 1922, 3658. [17] 1266. [18] 997. [19] 1121, 1219, 2523.
[20] 1478, 1513. [21] 717, 728, 796, 2130. [22] 2870. [23] 2837. [24] 351.
[25] 1919. [26] 1983. [27] 1216. [28] 2941 [29] Plates 4, 17 26, 39.
[30] 2332, 2509. [31] 325, 1747, 2512. [32] 1070. [33] 1741. [34] 344.
[35] 500. [36] 2719. [37] 304. [38] 2888. [39] 536. [40] 2171. [41] 2773.

of the chandler. Canting devices abound, many of which, when ater placed on shields, become armorial bearings. Thus Roger Corbet [42] uses a corbie crow, Leo Heriz,[43] a hedgehog (O.F. heris), Jordan Heron [44] a nobly designed heron, Walter [45] of the monastery (de Monasteriis; O.F. Moustier), a family known later as Musters, actually depicts a monastery on his seals; a charge his descendants placed on their shield.[46] Orde shows [47] that he comes from a famous salmon river (Tweed) when he seals with a salmon; the field of Thomas Muscamp's [48] fine seal is strewn with flies (*muscarum campus*), Roger Merlay [49] picturesquely uses a bush on which blackbirds (merles) are perched, Eustace de Vesci [50] has a vetch plant, Cornhill [51] a sheaf of corn, Branxton [52] uses a pair of horse branks, Brand [53] a sheathed sword, Coxside [54] a cock, and finally, not to extend the list unduly, Capo [55] a skewered capon. There are many examples of the clearly defined marks used by merchants upon their merchandise and here placed on their seals.[56] Sometimes no device but the man's name [57] appears, or even the marks of his teeth [58] bitten into the wax. In this section should also be noted the broken knives attached in place of seals to the deeds of Robert of St. Martin [59] and of the chapel of Lowick.[60]

IX.—THE LEGENDS.

This is the name by which the inscription, usually placed round the border of the seal, is known. Except in rare instances [1]

[42] 690 [43] 608. [44] 1276, 1277. [45] 1857, 1858. [46] 1854. [47] 1922 [48] 1851.
[49] 1758, 1759. [50] 2539. [51] 698. [52] 389. [53] 371. [54] 722. [55] 2323.
[56] 23, 591, 2468, 2616, 2375. For account of these interesting marks see *Trans. of Norfolk and Norwich Arch. Soc.* III, 177; *Proc. Clifton Antiq. Soc.*, VII, 97; *Trans. Lancs. and Cheshire Hist. Soc.*, XXVI, 1.
[57] 1512. [58] 2323. [59] 2151. [60] 3366.

[1] 2539, the legend begins at the bottom. There are a few other examples of this in the catalogue.

First Period. Roman Capitals.	No. 3427: Durham Convent; obv. (?) early 11th century (Plate 64). No. 3110: Ranulf Flambard, *circa* A.D. 1100 (Plate 48). No. 3114[a]: Hugh Puiset, *circa* A.D. 1160 (Plate 48).
Second Period. Early Lombardic.	No. 3538: Simon, abbot of St. Albans, *circa* A.D. 1170. No. 3117: Philip of Poitou, *circa* A.D. 1198 (Plate 48).
Third Period. Fine Lombardic.	No. 3427: Durham convent, rev. (?) early 13th century (Plate 64). No. 3120: Richard Poore, *circa* A.D. 1230 (Plate 49). No. 3133: Richard of Bury, *circa* A.D. 1335 (Plate 51).
Fourth Period. Clear Black Letter.	No. 3140: John Fordham, *circa* A.D. 1383 (Plate 51).
Fifth Period. Close Black Letter.	No. 3144: Walter Skirlaw, *circa* A.D. 1390 (Plate 52).
Sixth Period. Renaissance Capitals.	No. 3169: Cuthbert Tunstall, *circa* A.D. 1530 (Plate 56).

First period.

✠ SIGILLVM CVDBERHTI PRÆSVLIS SHEI

✠ SIGILLVM: RAHNVLFI: DVNELMENSIS: EPISCOPI·

✠ HVGO: DEI: GRATIA: DVN ELMEN SIS: EPISCOPVS

Second period.

✠ SIGILLVM: SIMONIS: ABBATIS: ECCLIE: SANCTI ALBANI

✠ SIGILLVM: PHILIPPI: DEI: GRACIA: DVNELMENSIS: EPISCOPI:

Third period.

✠ CAPVT·SANCTI·OSWALDI·REGIS

✠ RICARDVS: DEI: GRA: DV NELMENSIS: EPISCOP'

S. RICHARDI: DEI GRA DVN ELMENSIS: EPI

Fourth period.

Sigill: iohannis: dei: gra: episcopi: dunolmensis:

Fifth period.

Sigillum: walteri: dei: gracia dunolmensis: epi scopi

Sixth period.

SIGILLVM: CVTHBERTI·

DVNELMENSIS: EPISCOPI

Robert Bertram
Delt 1920

this begins at the upper part of the seal and goes round it from right to left, the top of the letters facing outwards. The beginning is marked by a cross paty or sometimes by a fleur de lys, a cinquefoil, or a crescent. In very rare instances there is a legend round the edge of the seal,[2] occasionally it is continued in the field [3] and sometimes there are two lines of legend going round the border.[4] Their consideration divides itself into two parts, namely, the type of letter used and the matter they contain.

The lettering, if the impression is good, is clear and easy to read; at least until the advent of the small close type of black letter which is sometimes almost unreadable. There are not many abbreviations or conjoint letters used and the few there are are not difficult to make out. This clearness was of course needful as they were meant to be understood by all; not only by lawyers or learned clerks. For the various changes in the types of the letters [5] the seals of the bishops of Durham have been used; they can be dated fairly closely and also form a long consecutive series, the legends on the seals of other types follow the same general course of development. The types are as follows:—

I. Roman capitals [6] from the earliest to about the last quarter of the twelfth century when uncial letters gradually come [7] in and the type changes to—

II. A rude form of Lombardic [8] which lasts only for a short time at the beginning of the thirteenth century and soon gives place to—

III. The beautifully formed Gothic majuscule, usually called Lombardic,[9] the typical letter of the later thirteenth and the first half of the fourteenth centuries; towards the end of this period the letter becomes smaller [10] and changes to—

[2] See *Proc. Soc. Ant. Newc.*, 3rd ser. VIII, p. 141. [3] 3271. [4] 1478; 3056 rev.
[5] See also *Proc. Soc. Ant. Lond.*, 2nd ser. XI, 305. [6] 3427 ob.; 3013. [7] 3221.
[8] 3117. [9] 3120; 3247, rev. [10] 3130, 3132.

IV. The type called 'black letter' [11] but of a clear and legible form, this is replaced in the fifteenth century by the close,[12] very illegible letter the despair of most readers. At the beginning of the sixteenth century the style changes greatly and reverts to—

V. Roman capitals [13] of the beautiful form known as capitals of the renascence.

The legends on the earlier seals whether royal, ecclesiastical, or lay, are always in Latin and on the first named that language is used during our whole period. On royal seals it is nearly similar all through. The name is in the nominative,[14] the legend of the obverse [15] giving the king's English titles, that of the reverse his continental fiefs altered as occasion required. The ecclesiastical give the name of the owner and his title, usually beginning with *sigillum* [16] followed by the name in the genitive but sometimes, especially in the thirteenth century, *sigillum* is omitted [17] and the name given in the nominative. The earlier seals of laymen follow the same style, sometimes they give only the owner's name,[18] sometimes they add his parentage and titles,[19] occasionally they are more emphatic as on the seal [20] of Edgar, son of earl Gospatrick, HOC EST SIGILLUM EDGARI FILII GOSPATRICII COMITIS. The most common formula [21] right through the period is for the legend to begin with *sigillum* followed by the name in the genitive and the titles, if any. Occasionally in the fourteenth century and later such legends are in French,[22] but this formula is not found in English. When, in the late thirteenth century, seals came to be used by all sorts and conditions of men

[11] 3136, 3140. [12] 3239, 3242. [13] 3163, 3164. [14] 3013.
[15] 3021. [16] 3110; 1634[a] uses a rare form—*signum sigilli*, &c. [17] 3114[a].
[18] 1837. [19] 1900. [20] 2816.
[21] Rarely they refer to the object of the seal as in no. 1709 *Crede Micht*.
[22] 1112, 1785.

the legends, as well as the devices, are more diverse and fanciful. Sometimes they allude to the emblems they surround, sometimes they give expression to a pious wish or sometimes they are merely pretty jingling mottoes. Latin is used all through the series, but from the fourteenth century French and English are quite common, especially on the more fanciful seals. A few examples of each of these might be interesting: an eagle—SPIRITUS UBI VULT SPIRAT, or IN PRINCIPIO ERAT VERBUM, or merely AQUILA JOHANNIS. Examples of the pious edifying type are, TIME DEUM ET FAC BONUM; MEMENTO FINIS; MARIA FILIA ANNE ORA PRO JOHANN; VERITAS IN ME EST; TIMEO TE DEUM; VERBUM CARO FACTUM EST; PASTOR MEAS DELE CULPAS. Legends in French of this type are rare, I have noted only one in the catalogue—LA GRACE JESU EST VIESU—but those in the vernacular are more common—HELPE MODER OF MARIE; PETER & PAWIL PRAI FOR MY SAWL; MARIE HELPE ELLINGHAM; GO TO GOD GATESHEAD; BE WAR THE WORLD; GOD HELPE THE POPE. Those of the motto type have often a love motive—JE SUY SEEL D'AMOUR LEAL; LA DAMOISELLE EST LEAL; EN LEL AMOUR; IL EST OUSE BEL EST DE AMOUR LEL; GREET MOI EN BON FOY; or in English—LOVE ME AND LIVE. Others refer to the device they surround; thus a dog asleep—ICI GIST CORBIN LE BON; a hawk tearing a bird—ALAS JE SUI PRIS; a squirrel—I CRAK NOTIS, or I NOTIS CRAK ON LYON'S BAK; a ram—SO WILL I; an ape—HAYLE APE HAYL; a hare on a dog's back—ALONE I RIDE A REVERE, or SOHO ROBIN.

The legends of counter-seals and privy seals, which, as they are so often used interchangeably, are better considered under one head, either state the nature of the seal or refer to the device upon it. In the first style the legend almost always begins with the word *Secretum* with the name following in the genitive

thus—SECRETUM JOHANNIS [23]; SECRETUM ROBERTI DE BRUS [24]; SIGILL SECRETI DAVID [25]; SIGNUM SECRETI WILLELMI [26]; or else they omit the owner's name only stating the reason for their use thus—ARCHANI CUSTOS; SIGNUM VERITATIS; MUNIO SECRETA; SIGILLUM AMORIS; FRACTA REVELLO SECRETA; SIGILLUM SECRETI; SIGILLUM SECRETI FRANGE or, on the back of the Templars' seal TESTIS SUM AGNI.[27] Legends that refer to the device on the counterseals are often in Latin rhyming hexameter verse called Leonine, thus round St. Cuthbert [28]—PRESUL CUTHBERTE REGNUM SUPER ETHERA PER TE; or St. Cuthbert and St. Oswald [29]—HOC ONUS UT SIT HONOS TIBI LARGIOR HOS Q' PATRONOS; or Our Lady with Christ [30]—HEC SCULPTURA SONAT FINIS NŌ PUGNA CORONAT; or SS. Peter & Paul [31]—PROTEGE PETRE PETO WILLELMUM PAULE FAVETO. This type of legend is not confined to the counterseals but is often found on seals themselves, thus round the ash tree device of Roger of Esh [32] is—FRAXINE SUB FRONDE ROGERI CARMINA CONDE. Round an antique gem Richard of Eryum [33] places—SUB PRESENTE NOTA RICARDUS FERT SUA VOTA. Signets do not, as a rule, have legends or mottoes, but there are a few examples of the latter, thus bishop Neville's armorial signet has around it his 'word'—en grace affie.[34] The mottoes of the Percies [35] are often on their signets as je espoyr; esperance, or tout loyal; other examples have Tout passe[36]; aude, bide, tace [37]; offrance [38]; tynt, tynt [39], or others merely the initials of the owner's names.[40] Others have a flower or star-like device with a letter on each petal, thus bishop Langley's[41] has his name langley and so also has that of Peter Mauley [42] maulí, another similarly bears the Holy Name emanuel.[43] It will be seen that none of these is a true legend such as are on seals, they are rather mottoes or 'words' some of which, like

[23] 3023. [24] 443. [25] 3083. [26] 403. [27] 3388. [28] 3122. [29] 3118. [30] 3095. [31] 3229. [32] 917. [33] 904. [34] 3154, [35] 1959, 1966, 1969. [36] 78. [37] 1153. [38] 1679. [39] 309. [40] 620, 621. [41] 3151. [42] 1731. [43] 1154.

the *Esperance* of Percy, came to be an essential part of the armorial achievement.

X.—FORGED SEALS.

False seals authenticating forged charters are occasionally met with and the art seems not to have been unknown even to the religious of Durham. There are in the treasury a series of forged documents purporting to be the foundation charters of bishop William of St. Calais and those in confirmation of William the Conqueror and of archbishops Lanfranc of Canterbury and Thomas of York.[1] The seals of bishop William are undoubtedly forgeries, those attached to the charters of the archbishops are now destroyed whilst to the four charters of king William only a portion of one now remains, but that shews it to be part of the great seal of Henry II. Two methods of falsification are therefore illustrated by these deeds, firstly. that of making a false matrix for use on a forged document, and secondly, using a genuine seal which was not, however, what it purported to be, to a false deed.[2] We find references to both these methods in the patent rolls. Thomas of Pirecote was pardoned for removing the impression of the seal of the late king from a recognisance and illegally attaching it to another bond,[3] for which he had been convicted. John of Berneville [4] received a pardon for counterfeiting the privy seal of the late king and also that used by the present king; whilst John of Redinges [5] also charged with counterfeiting the king's privy seal was convicted and hanged.

It remains now, in conclusion, to thank those by whose interest and help I have been able to complete and to illustrate the catalogue. The dean and chapter of Durham have not only

[1] See F. P. D. (58 Surt. Soc. publ.), pp. xxxi *et seq.* where the evidence for this is set forth in full.

[2] No. 1495 in catalogue is suspect, it is apparently a thirteenth-century charter to which a seal, which cannot be earlier than late fourteenth-century date, is attached.

[3] *Cal. Pat. Rolls*, A.D. 1307-13, p. 49. [4] *Ibid.*, *p.* 20. [5] *Ibid.*, p. 20.

given generous financial aid but they have allowed me freely to inspect and to photograph the documents and seals. Without this sympathetic assistance from them, the work could not have been done. The unwearying kindness and courtesy of Mr. K. C. Bayley, M.A., has enabled me to make the fullest use of the facilities granted by the dean and chapter; to him my most grateful thanks are due. The advice I received from Mr. H. H. E. Craster, D.Litt., M.A., F.S.A., when beginning the catalogue helped greatly. To Mr. A. Hamilton Thompson, M.A., F.S.A., I have to acknowledge a large debt of generous help in the ecclesiastical sections. He has given freely of his unrivalled knowledge of mediaeval church history and, by reading the manuscript of these sections, has eliminated errors and added much of value to the notes. I have been able to illustrate the catalogue by so many plates chiefly from subscriptions received from the following gentlemen, whose help I now, with thanks, acknowledge:—The Dean and Chapter of Durham, The Very Reverend the Dean of Gloucester, The Reverend Canon Cruickshank, M.A.; Sir Arthur Middleton, bt., Lieut.-Col. G. R. B. Spain, C.M.G., Windsor Herald (Mr. W. A. Lindsay, K.C., M.A., F.S.A.), Carrick Pursuivant (Mr. Wm. Rae Macdonald,), and Messrs. Parker Brewis, F.S.A., William Brown, F.S.A., Walter S. Corder, H. H. E. Craster, F. W. Dendy, D.C.L., O.B.E., J. Crawford Hodgson, M.A., Edward Hunter, W. H. Knowles, F.S.A., A. M. Oliver, O.B.E., J. Maitland Thomson, LL.D., and the Newcastle-upon-Tyne Public Library (per Mr. Basil Anderton, M.A.).

No. 1327.

Legend.—FIAT · FIAT · AMEN.