

VI.—THE GREAT SEALS OF RICHARD I

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The first great seal of Richard is included in *The Catalogue of Seals in the Treasury of the Dean and Chapter of Durham*,¹ No. 3022. In note 6 on page 122 the present writer made two statements about it, which require correction. The first relating to the charge upon the reverse of Richard's first seal, the other, to the date of his second seal. The shape of the shield on his first seal (plate XII, fig. 1) is like that of the Crusaders described by Anna Commena in the *Alexiad*: "An additional weapon of defence is a shield, which is not just round, but a long shield, very broad at the top and running out to a point, hollowed out slightly inside, but externally smooth and gleaming with a brilliant boss of molten brass." (Bk. XIII, ch. 8, p. 341.)² This describes the shield on Richard's first seal very accurately, except that upon the upper part of it two rampant lions, fighting each other, were painted. That there were two lions, only one of which can be seen upon the seal, is, if not proved, at least strongly corroborated by the description of the king's dress and horse furniture when he visited the emperor Isaac at Cyprus in 1191.³

"Leaping upon this, the king sat upon a saddle with golden sparkles shining in many colours among the gleaming red; and on the hinder part there was a pair of small golden

¹ Arch. Ael., 3rd ser., vol. xiii, 1916, p. 122.

² Trans. Elizabeth Dawes (Kegan Paul, 1928).

³ *Itinerary*. Richard I, Rolls Series I, p. 197. Trans. P.H.B. A contemporary poet makes William de Barre say that he knew Richard "by the lions grinning on his shield". (*The Pursuivant of Arms*, J. R. Planche, 2nd ed., p. 107.)

lions gazing ferociously at one another, each with one of his forefeet stretched out towards the other as though to claw him. Golden spurs decorated the king's feet. And there was a tunic of red samite and he was covered with a cloak with semi-circular crescent moons picked out in rows and shining in solid silver, and gleaming discs shaped like the sun were thickly scattered about." This, besides confirming the use of two fighting lions, also shows that the badges of a sun and crescent moon at each side of Richard, as enthroned on the obverse of his first seal,⁴ and shown even more clearly on that of his second seal,⁵ were actually worn by him in barbaric splendour.

The date of "after 1194" for the second seal of Richard, given in note 6, should have been more precise. The reference quoted there to Round's *Feudal England*,⁶ where it is shewn beyond all doubt that this second seal, though made c. 1195, was not used until 1198, the year in which the old charters were regranted and the last of Richard's life. The confirming charters did not give the wording of their originals but only their gist (*tenor*) as shewn by the formula used on the charter to which the seal is attached, the reverse of which is shown here on plate XII,⁷ fig. 2.

"Given at Chinon by the hand of William, bishop of Ely our chancellor, 12th day of December in the sixth year of our reign" (1194).

"That was the sense of Our charter in Our first seal. The which seal has been changed, because it was lost for a time and was in another's power while we were in captivity in Almaine. The witnesses of this renewal are these, etc."⁸

This charter was originally granted to Alan Basset at

⁴ *Arch. Ael.*, 3, xiii, pl. 41.

⁵ Wyon, *Great Seals of England*, plate v, no. 30.

⁶ *Richard the First's Change of Seal*.

⁷ *Catalogue of Seals in the British Museum*, 1; p. 14. Note Seal No. 87.

⁸ "Datum apud Chinon per manum W. Elyensis Episcopi Cancellarii nostri XII die Decembris anno regni sexto (1194). Is erat tenor carte nostre in primo sigillo nostro. Quod quia aliquando perditum fuit, et, dum capti essemus in Alemannia, in aliena potestate constitutum mutatum est. Hujas autem inno nationis testes sunt, etc., etc." Trans. I.A.R.



REV. OF FIRST SEAL OF RICHARD I.



REV. OF SECOND SEAL OF RICHARD I.

Chinon on 12th December, 1194, and confirmed at Roche d'Orival, under the new seal, 22nd December, 1198.⁹

This is the first royal seal upon which the three leopards of England appear. A seal of John as lord of Ireland used before 1189 bears upon the shield either two or three beasts passant—probably leopards, but the impression at Durham is difficult to decipher.¹⁰ The royal leopards were strange mythical beasts begotten, as fabled, between the lion and the pard. Their long, lithe bodies and fierce aspect are very suitable for the shield their adorn. These arms are first blazoned in Glover's roll of c. 1255. In the curt, forthright words: *Le Roy d'Angleterre porte goules trois lup'des d'or.*

It was only in post-medieval times that they became lions with the cumbrous blazon-*gules three lions passant guardant in pale or.*

This seal is also noteworthy because of the change from the open-faced conical helm with nasal of the first seal to the cylindrical closed type with eye-slit and also for the large fan-shaped crest with a leopard on the lower part, which adorns it. An early example of the changed style of helm and of the use of a fan crest.

⁹ Round, *op. cit.*, p. 550.

¹⁰ *Durham Seals*, No. 3023.