

The late 13th-century chapter seals of Dunkeld and Oslo Cathedrals†

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ABSTRACT

The seals of Dunkeld and Oslo Cathedrals are compared. The origins of the representations of reliquary shrines upon them are considered. The source of these images, and of the seals themselves, in France and the Low Countries is discussed in the context of cultural and political contacts between Scotland, Norway and France.

The handsome 13th-century seal of the chapter of Dunkeld cathedral was first published by Laing (1850, 181–2, nos 1017–18). He recorded that ‘the original brass matrices [are] in the possession of Mr Macdonald, at Scoone [sic], who purchased them among a lot of old brass a few years since’. The same information was repeated nearly 60 years later (Birch 1907, 37–8, figs 73, 74). Nothing else is known of Mr Macdonald and his lucky find, but he was very probably the clerk of works of the same name working at Scone Palace in the mid-19th century.¹ Good impressions taken from the matrices after their discovery are in the collections of the National Museums of Scotland, the British Library, the Society of Antiquaries of London and other public collections. Sadly however, the ‘brass’ artefacts themselves have disappeared.

The double-sided seal, 74mm in diameter, was a sophisticated design. The more conventional reverse has an architectural layout in two storeys under three gables joined by transept roofs and flanked by two turrets (illus 1). In the centre of the upper register St Columba with an identifying scroll, sits



ILLUS 1 The late 13th-century chapter seal of Dunkeld Cathedral, reverse, 19th-century impression (Copyright, Trustees of the National Museums of Scotland)

enthroned with mitre and crozier, his right hand raised in blessing. In a niche on either side is a censuring angel with a shield bearing the lion rampant of Scotland within a tressure. An arcade of five arches below contains four standing monks and a seated tonsured figure

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ILLUS 2 The late 13th-century chapter seal of Dunkeld Cathedral, obverse, 19th-century impression (Copyright, Trustees of the National Museums of Scotland)

with a book in the centre. The legend on the rim reads SANCTE : COLUMBA : TUIS : PASTOR : BONUS : ESTO : MINISTRIS.

The obverse is a much more unusual example of medieval seal iconography² (illus 2). At the top the gables and turrets of the reverse expand into a full representation of the three bay upper façade of a church with transepts. Filling most of the central space is a pointed trefoil arch framing a detailed and very distinct representation of a major reliquary shrine similar to the *châsses* of later 13th-century northern France. It is clearly shown as a free-standing object raised on four legs with animal paw feet. In the centre mounted above it is a crozier of distinctively Celtic form. This is flanked by a single arch on each side from which an angel kneeling on the shield of Scotland casts a censer on long curving chains into the central space over the reliquary. In the centre bottom is a shrine base with three round-headed arches, trefoils in the spandrels and foliate decoration at the ends, where three male figures pray to the relics above. The rim inscription is SIGILL' :

COMMUNE : CAPITULI : ECCLESIE : DUNKELDENSIS.

Both faces of the seal celebrate the fact that major Columban relics were a focal point of Dunkeld cathedral from the ninth century until the Reformation (Skene 1867, clxii, 8). Traditionally, his body had been taken from Iona to Ireland for safekeeping during the Viking raids of the eighth century. The main portion of it was believed to have been brought back to Scotland by Kenneth mac Alpin in 849 when he established Dunkeld as the principal bishopric in his nation, superseding Iona itself (Reeves 1874, lxxix–lxxxiii). By the mid-11th century, the renown of its relics had confirmed Dunkeld as a widely recognized place of pilgrimage (Rollason 1978, 62ff).³ As late as the early 16th century, water in which the saint's bones had been washed was being drunk in the diocese to ward off the plague (Mylne 1823, 43). Presumably it was these bones which were enshrined in the large architectural reliquary.

The croziers of holy men and saints were among the secondary relics particularly venerated in the Celtic church along with their bells, books and occasional items of clothing like sandals (Ó Floinn 1994, *passim*). Attached to the cult of Columba we have the account of his meeting with St Kentigern where they exchanged croziers as gifts, Columba's being long preserved as a relic at the church of St Wilfrid, Ripon (Jackson 1958, 326–7). Whether another of Columba's croziers was supposed to be preserved at Dunkeld (Reeves 1874, xc–xcix) or whether what is shown on the seal is a relic of a different early saint cannot be ascertained.⁴ One modern writer firmly states, 'In the High Middle Ages Dunkeld still possessed the *Cathbuaid*' and maintains that this is what is represented on the seal (Henderson 1987, 190–1, pl 260). Henderson's theory is reiterated as 'the *Cathbhaidh* must be the crozier shown on a 13th-century seal of the chapter of Dunkeld Cathedral' (Bourke 1997, 174). The *Cathbuaid* or 'battle victory' is mentioned in only one source, the rather



ILLUS 3 The late 12th-century chapter seal of Dunkeld Cathedral, impression of c 1221 (Copyright, Perth & Kinross Council Museum and Art Gallery)

doubtful 17th-century Irish writer Duaid MacFirbis (Reeves 1874, xcix; Anderson 1990, lii, 407–8) copying ‘Fragments’ which Anderson describes as ‘legendary rather than historical’. He gives the story, which was that before the men of Fortriu in Alba (which would have included Dunkeld) went into battle against the Norwegian invaders in AD 918, they prayed to Columba and carried his crozier as a battle standard, ensuring a lasting victory over the Vikings. If Dunkeld had believed they possessed such a celebrated item, surely Myln would have mentioned it along with their other relics,⁵ for it would certainly have been credited with powers similar to or greater than the crozier of the much less renowned St Fillan preserved by the Dewars in western Perthshire (Anderson 1889, 110–18; Glenn, forthcoming, no H6).

The significance of the relics to the cathedral was already clear from an earlier seal used by the chapter. A detached impression in Perth Museum⁶ has a hand-written label on the plain reverse reading ‘3.44 (6) Coupar c. 1221’ (illus 3). The matrix, probably dating from the late 12th century, was still in use in 1238/39

when a further impression was attached to a charter of Inchaffray (*Inchaffray Chrs*, 312, item 14). This seal also showed a reliquary on an arcaded base with a crozier behind, under a simple rounded arch. However, the contrast between the two croziers and the two reliquaries shown is very marked.

On the earlier seal the crozier has a plain spiral crook with an oval terminal and a large spherical knob at the top of the shaft. The shaft is long enough to reappear below the reliquary behind the arches of the shrine base. The reliquary in front of it is a fairly simple house shrine, the sides and lid covered with diagonal trellis decoration, standing on square block feet at the corners and with an openwork cresting along the top. Large finials curl upwards at each end. The proportions of the casket and the pronounced end pieces are characteristic of Celtic (*Work of Angels* catalogue 134ff, nos 128–32; Crawford 1923, I 74–93, II 150–76) or Scandinavian (Braun 1940, pls 24, 25, nos 81, 82, 84) house shrines of the earlier Middle Ages.

The metalworker who made the later Dunkeld seal also appears to have been the maker of a single 76mm diameter copper alloy matrix (illus 4 & 5) in the Historisk Museum in Oslo (Horgen 2000, 55, 67, no III.39). It was made for the chapter of St Hallvard’s cathedral in that city, replacing one of the early 13th century.⁷ The legend is S’. CAPITVLI : ECCLESIE : SANCTI : HALWARDI : DE : ASLOIA (Trætterberg 1977, 31–3, 123–4, no 29). Like the Dunkeld seal, Oslo’s has a bold striking design again showing a reliquary shrine not with feet, but with a base studded with quatrefoil headed nails, standing on a coursed masonry platform.⁸ Some Scandinavian writers, including Trætterberg, have questioned whether this is in fact a representation of a reliquary or an idealized view of a church. A feature which might suggest the latter is the crowing cockerel, like a weather vane, which intrudes into the border at the top after ‘ASLOIA’.⁹ But equally it can be seen as an unusually spirited substitute for the kind of



ILLUS 4 The late 13th-century chapter seal of St Hallvard's Cathedral, Oslo, modern impression (*Danmarks Nationalmuseum*)



ILLUS 5 The late 13th-century bronze seal matrix of the chapter of St Hallvard's Cathedral, Oslo (*Danmarks Nationalmuseum, reproduced by permission of the Universitetets Oldsaksamling, Oslo*)

dove which was a central feature on the middle of the roof of the shrine of Ste Gertrude at Nivelles (illus 6) and the earlier Châsse d'Ambazac (*L'Œuvre de Limoges catalogue*, 208–12, no 55). The close similarities between the Dunkeld image with its obvious feet and the Oslo structure are almost conclusive on their own.

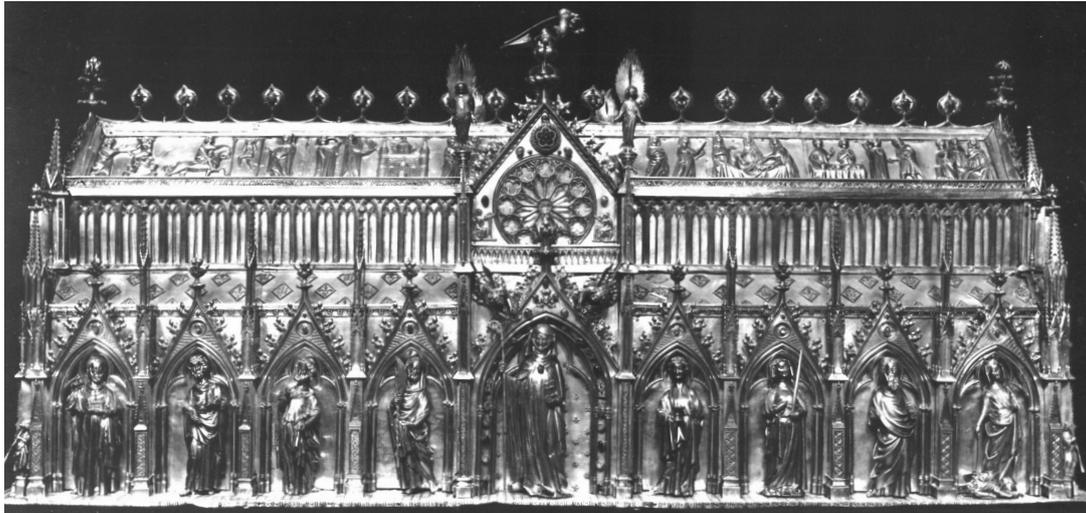
The shrines engraved on the matrices have many features in common, Greek cross finials, diaper patterned roofs with dots in the lozenges, gables turned towards the spectator, simplified rose windows, quatrefoils in the clearstorey and trefoil filled spandrels. St Hallvard's shrine was represented in a very similar way to St Columba's. A notable characteristic of all the quite elaborate architectural features of both seals is an almost complete absence of decorative cusps or crockets.

The inscriptions, within identical knobbly beaded borders, are even closer although the Oslo letters have been enriched with an extra line shadowing the uprights. Particularly comparable are the close regular spacing, the robust proportions, the fat colons,¹⁰ the long serifs on the C's, the chunky triangular stems

and tubular cross bars on the T's and the curly left hand side to the flat topped A's. Some of the figures on the reverse of the Dunkeld seal and the Oslo matrix are almost identical. The standing figures under triangular arches, some profile, some front facing match closely, in particular the figures to the extreme right and immediately to the left of the central niche in both cases (illus 7 & 8), while the swooping censing angels are very similar in conception.

Oslo also had an earlier chapter seal or seals in use by 1224 and at least until 1264, but no impressions have been found and the appearance is unknown (Trættemberg 1977, 123). The first impression from the matrix under discussion, however, is attached to a document of 1299 (Trættemberg 1977, 32), giving us a clue to the dating of the Dunkeld double seal which has not itself come to light in a medieval context.

Neither seal resembles other 13th-century Scottish or Norwegian examples, although there is some evidence of their influence in both countries after 1300. Large round double-sided seals had also been made for the chapters of Glasgow and Aberdeen and for the abbeys



ILLUS 6 The shrine of Sainte Gertrude of Nivelles, 1272–1298, silver gilt, enamels and gems, before the fire of 1940
(Copyright, *Institut Royal du Patrimoine Artistique, Brussels*)

of Arbroath, Dunfermline and Inchaffray (Renwick & Lindsay 1921, pl facing 129; Birch 1907, 88, 100, 101, pls 67, 68, 87; Glenn 1999, 146–62). Although the matrix for Dunfermline is very finely executed (one side survives in the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford) it probably dates from before Queen Margaret's canonization in 1249 as her figure is shown without a halo, and it is consequently in a very different early Gothic style, as is the seal of Arbroath. Glasgow chapter seal shares the rare subject of three kneeling pilgrims before a reliquary on its reverse, in this case a bust reliquary of St Kentigern, but is again treated in a much less evolved manner architecturally. Inchaffray, which is copied from the town seal of Kings Lynn, dates from between 1260 at the earliest and 1302 at the latest and although possibly contemporary with the Dunkeld chapter seal is cruder in execution (Tonnochy 1952, 202–3, no 938, pl XXVIII). Likewise, none of the Scottish bishops' seals show signs of having come from the same source, including those of Dunkeld itself (Hunter Blair 1919, 160).¹¹

In Norway the influence of England can be seen in Norwegian wood sculpture during the 13th century (Andersson 1949, *passim*) and the stone figures from Trondheim cathedral

also strongly reflect that of France, particularly Reims cathedral, the Sainte Chapelle (Ekroll et al 1997, 38–42, nos 72–6) and Notre-Dame in Paris (Fischer 1965, 316–21, 350–4, 581–2). Other French stylistic developments are reflected in the series of painted altar panels in Bergen and Oslo (Morgan 1995, 13–14). As in Scotland, little metalwork of high quality survives from the period and the evidence of seal matrices and impressions is therefore particularly important.

Enough other late 13th-century Norwegian chapter seals are known to provide a context. An impression of 1280 shows that the chapter of Trondheim cathedral had acquired a large round seal showing Christ in Majesty above the enthroned figure of St Olaf, with four flanking figures within a Gothic structure (Trættemberg 1953, 44–7). Superficially, this is a similar arrangement to the St Hallvard seal, but the enclosing architecture is not coherently articulated and the columns without bases melt away at ground level (illus 19). This idiosyncratic approach is echoed in the matrix for the chapter of St Magnus cathedral in Orkney of about 1300 (Glenn, *forthcoming*, no J2). Bergen's late 13th-century chapter seal with St Sunniva in a Gothic church is copied



ILLUS 7 The late 13th-century chapter seal of Dunkeld Cathedral, detail of reverse, 19th-century impression (Copyright, Trustees of the National Museums of Scotland)



ILLUS 8 The late 13th-century chapter seal of St Hallvard's Cathedral, Oslo, detail of modern impression (Copyright, Danmarks Nationalmuseum)

from the reverse of the abbey seal of Inchaffray (Glenn 1999, 157–60, illus 12). The Scottish preference for double-sided chapter seals does not seem to have been shared in Norway.

None of these ecclesiastical seals has a carefully balanced and realistic image remotely similar to the Oslo chapter matrix; nor do Norwegian bishops' seals, some of which had adopted a fold style which was markedly

French by the end of the 13th century, but without an architectural framing. A notable example is that of Eyvind of Oslo (1288–1303) (Trætterberg 1977, 12, 104–5, no 5; Morgan 1995, 16–17).

The royal seals of both countries came into use about 1100. By the later 13th century they were large and imposing, sharing the dignity of those of other European monarchs. For

example, the first seal of King Erik Magnusson from about 1280 shows the monarch enthroned on a Gothic bench with fleur de lis finials facing forward and holding aloft an orb and sceptre (Thorkelin 1786, pl ii; Træteteberg, 1964, col 46–61) with the shield of Norway on the reverse. The pose, the drapery, the throne and the epigraphy derive from a similar model to those on the Great Seal of his father-in-law, Alexander III of Scotland (Birch 1905, 28–33, 121, no 13). Haakon V had adopted an animal headed X-framed seat by 1308 (Brinchmann 1924, pl xiii), a device which Scottish kings did not import from France until the second seal of Robert I, probably made in 1316 (Duncan 1988, 181–6). However, these creations mostly belong to a mainstream northern European norm apart from the chapter seals under consideration here.

If both the Dunkeld and Oslo seals were highly unusual in their own countries and so strikingly alike, what are the historical circumstances which might have connected them? Links between Norway and Scotland were amicable if complex after the Treaty of Perth in 1266. With the approval of the English, King Erik married first Margaret, daughter of Alexander III and then Isabella sister of the future Robert I. Trade across the North Sea was frequent and varied.

However, a more specific connection presents itself. In 1289 Matthew Crambeth became Bishop of Dunkeld, supported by the politically powerful William Fraser, Bishop of St Andrews (Barrow 1988, 34). Fraser, one of the Guardians of Scotland, and Crambeth were sent to Paris in 1295 to negotiate a treaty with Philippe le Bel and Crambeth did not return to Scotland until after 1304. In fact, he received a pension of 200 *livres tournois* for several years while evidently serving as permanent Scottish agent in the French capital (Barrow 1988, 350, n90).

As English relations with both Scotland and France became strained, the treaty with Philip was witnessed on 23 October 1295, forming a defensive and offensive alliance

against England. The previous day Audun Huggleiksson had made an interlocking treaty with the French monarch on behalf of King Erik of Norway (Nicholson 1959, 116–17). In theory no direct negotiations took place between the Scottish and Norwegian delegations, but the participants would surely have met. Huggleiksson had established important and recent contacts with Scotland and Dunkeld itself, when he took official delivery of the trousseau of Isabella de Brus as she in turn came to Bergen to marry the Norwegian king in 1293 (Bain 1884, 158–9, no 675). In 1284 or 1285 he already appears to have travelled here to negotiate outstanding payments from the dowry of the deceased Queen Margaret of Norway (Helle 1972, 579). Acting with him in 1293 was Weyland de Stiklawe, formerly a canon of Dunkeld cathedral (Anderson 1990, 564), whose brother Henry was among the envoys sent by the bride's father the Earl of Carrick with the silver, crowns, bed hangings and other items. Both the Stiklawes stayed in Norway and were employed as royal officials (Crawford 1990, 176–83). Huggleiksson would certainly have been anxious, or at least curious to make contact with Crambeth and his colleagues.

It seems extremely likely that both seal matrices were acquired at the time of the treaty, perhaps to mark the auspicious occasion or possibly even as gifts from their French hosts. A seal for Dunkeld would have been a natural acquisition as the bishop was a signatory to the Scottish treaty and the abbey laid claim to long and close associations with the royal family. This relationship is reflected in the prominent presence of no fewer than four shields bearing the tressured lion of Scotland.

No clerics are recorded in Paris with Audun Huggleiksson (*Diplomatarium Norvegicum* 1914, 436–7), possibly because there was a prolonged power struggle between church and aristocracy in 13th-century Norway. Indeed in the 1280s Archbishop Jón of Trondheim along with Bishops Thorfinn of Hamar and Anders of Oslo went into exile. A

somewhat sinister figure, greedy and ambitious, Hugleiksson was a kinsman of the king and a highly skilled lawyer (Gjerset 1927, 473–5), whose own flamboyant 42mm round equestrian seal on the 1295 treaty testifies to his aspirations (Huitfeldt-Kaas 1899, pl lxviii, no 1341b). He would have represented the interests of both King Erik and his more gifted and effective brother Haakon. The two ruled jointly, and it was obvious by the mid-1290s that Haakon would succeed Erik, which he did in 1299 – executing Hugleiksson in 1302, probably for treason (Helle 1990, 156). About 1287 Haakon built the castle of Akershus in Oslo and enlarged the city, then of growing strategic importance, as his future capital. Then, in contrast to all his predecessors who had chosen Trondheim or Bergen, his coronation was held in St Hallvard's cathedral, shrine of one of his own 11th-century ancestors, confirming Oslo's status as the main centre of royal government (Sawyer & Sawyer 1993, 64). A new seal for its chapter would have been a very acceptable trophy to receive from Paris in 1295.

The Paris tax list of 1292 includes at least 70 probable Scots, one of whom might have been involved in the making of the new Dunkeld seal (Géraud 1837, *passim*). Most are recorded without their trade, but Richart l'Escot lived alongside five goldsmiths in the parish of St Nicholas des Champs just outside the city walls and may have shared their calling (Géraud 1837, 63).

Much more likely candidates are Huitache l'Escot, *chasublier* and Robert, his son (Géraud 1837, 136). A *chasublier* does not merely supply ecclesiastical vestments, but can be a maker of church ornaments and furnishings of various kinds. Huitache and Robert paid the comparatively high taxes of 48 and 18 *sous* respectively, compared with Richard's 20. They were situated on the Ile de la Cité, in the rue de la Barillerie directly opposite the gates to the royal palace and the Sainte-Chapelle. Thirteen of the 23 persons paying taxes in the street were goldsmiths, including a craftsman

of English origin and another who was German. In general their dues were rather higher than those paid by members of the craft elsewhere in central Paris (Glenn 1990, 249–50). The rue de la Barillerie backed on to the abbey of St Eloi, patron saint of the *orfèvres* and their *confrerie*. In other words, Huitache and Robert operated in the midst of the most exclusive community of goldsmiths in Paris, virtually on the doorstep of their most important clients and their many guests.

It is not possible to identify any similar Norwegians on the tax list, although from time to time the clerks were sufficiently baffled to describe individuals as simply *outré-mer*.

The obverse of the second chapter seal of Dunkeld (illus 2) delineates two very specific and distinctive objects. Unlike its predecessor used by the chapter (illus 3), it depicts only the crozier head, which is shaped like a curved walking stick richly decorated with a raised lattice containing small round bosses. There are two prominent round collars at the top and bottom of the shaft. This form of crozier is well known to us from Irish examples made before the Norman invasion (Macdermott 1956, *passim*; Bourke 1987, *passim*) and from the two Scottish examples from the same period (Robertson 1857, 14–15, 125). St Fillan's Crozier and the bulky silver gilt reliquary in which it was encased between the 13th and the early 16th centuries, now in the Museum of Scotland, has elements which closely parallel those on the Dunkeld seal (illus 9). Recent analysis suggests that the similarity was particularly striking before the 14th-century cresting was added to the silver tubular casing with its lozenges of filigree decoration (Glenn, forthcoming, no H6). If my contention is right and the matrix was made in Paris, this raises the intriguing probability that a sketch was provided for the engraver to follow. Certainly a crozier reliquary of this form would have been quite unknown in France.

The shrine chest below the crozier reliquary on this Dunkeld seal is a fully articulated



ILLUS 9 St Fillan's crozier reliquary, 12th, 14th and late 15th centuries, silver gilt (Copyright, Trustees of the National Museums of Scotland)

architectural design with a two storey elevation, a pronounced transept and gabled ends which the artist has turned at right angles to make them visible. The roof has a decorative diaper pattern. There is a rose window in the transept gable above two quatrefoils and three round-headed arches, while the ends of the shrine have trefoils in the gables with two tiers of similar arches below. The main side elevation has an arcade of gabled pointed arches with clearly defined capitals and bases standing on a high plinth, with a clearstorey of trefoils above. There is no indication of figurative decoration, but as the entire image of the reliquary is only 30mm long by 20mm wide this has probably been omitted in the interests of clarity.

At least one large reliquary shrine, elaborately decorated with gems and enamels, sometimes incorporating precious metals, featured prominently in any major medieval church. No Scottish or English examples survived the 16th-century iconoclasm of the Reformation and most of the French were systematically destroyed at the end of the 18th century following the Revolution. The appearance of the French shrines, however, is known to us from prints and drawings (Glenn 1990, 105–13; *Le trésor de la Sainte-Chapelle* exhibitor catalogue, 107–37) and until May 1940, when it was partially destroyed in the war, by comparison with the actual silver shrine of Ste Gertrude of Nivelles in Belgium, finished in 1298 (Kurmman 1996, 135–53) (illus 10). The latter is remarkable in that the 1272 contract for its design and making is one of the very few such documents extant.

The reliquaries shown on both later chapter seals combine features of several Parisian *châsses* and of the shrine of Ste Gertrude. A radical design change occurred in Parisian metalwork in the mid-13th century which is clearly illustrated by the *châsses* provided for the 1242 translation of the relics of Ste Geneviève and the 1262 translation of those of St Marcel. Ste Geneviève, who died about AD 500, was patroness of Paris with her own abbey near the site of the modern Panthéon. Marcel was not only patron saint of the diocese, whose relics stood on the high altar of Notre-Dame, but also attracted the particular veneration of the *orfèvres* who treated the cathedral largely as their guild church. One can therefore assume that both reliquaries represented the height of fashionable Parisian taste in metalwork design of their period. Ste Geneviève was given a straightforward rectangular silver sarcophagus with figures in niches along the sides and a pitched lid (Bapst 1886, 180–5), a form which had evolved since the 11th century (illus 11). St Marcel's relics were encased in a fully articulated miniature building (MCPG 1763, 212ff) (illus 12). The appearance of the Paris shrines is known to us



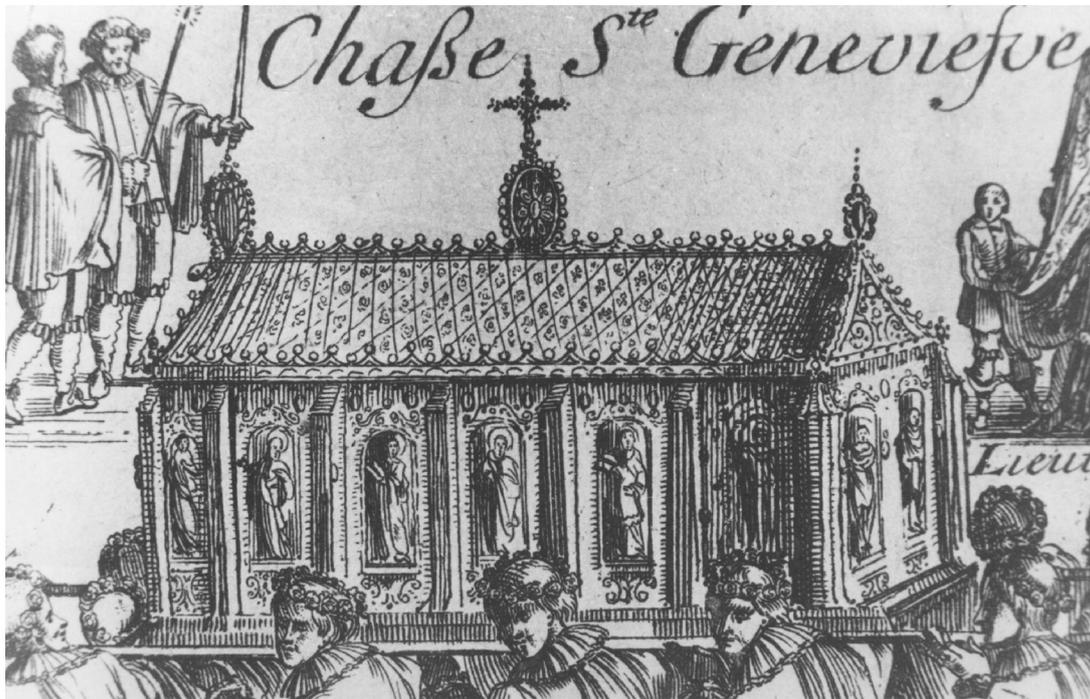
ILLUS 10 The shrine of Sainte Gertrude of Nivelles, 1272–98, silver gilt, enamels and gems, before the fire of 1940 (Copyright, Institut Royal du Patrimoine Artistique, Brussels).

from drawings and a series of popular prints (illus 13) showing the regular processions of the principal reliquaries of the city from the church of Ste Geneviève to Notre-Dame (Auzas 1951, pl 85; Colombier 1966, 138). The large scale of these objects is clear from illus 11–13.

The application of coherent architectural design to smaller scale metalwork was a feature of the *Grande Châsse* and other objects commissioned by St Louis for the Sainte-Chapelle in Paris, which was finally dedicated in 1248. It was tentatively adopted by the makers of the shrine of St Taurin of Evreux (Bonnenfant 1926, *passim*; Taralon 1982, 41–56) probably in the early 1250s and appears fully fledged on the shrine of St Marcel which was a focal point of the French capital's cathedral.

The Dunkeld and Oslo seals show shrines of the thoroughly architectural type, sharing

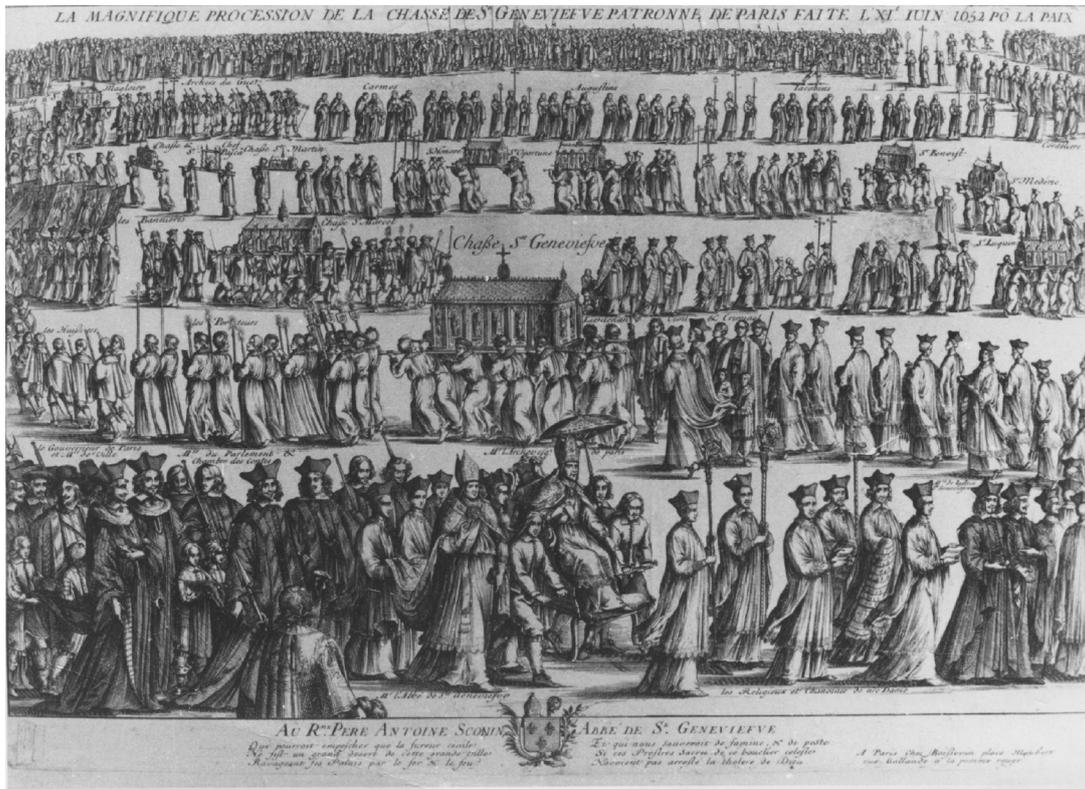
the two storey side elevation and the gable ends of the shrine of St Marcel, although with patterned roofs harking back to Ste Geneviève. What they do not have is the tall central spire as at Evreux, or the flying buttresses which became a regular feature in Paris. A characteristic which none of the French designs incorporated, but which is common to the reliquaries on both seals and the shrine of Ste Gertrude, is the very pronounced transept, in the cases of Dunkeld and Nivelles with a rose window. The shrine of Ste Gertrude was designed to conform with the conservative architectural tastes of Flanders and Brabant, but strongly influenced by Paris (and probably the shrine of St Marcel itself) and some at least of the applied silver decoration on it was imported from the French capital (Glenn 1990, 219–22). If this were a realistic attempt to portray an actual shrine made for Dunkeld an



ILLUS 11 The shrine of Sainte Geneviève, 1242, detail of illus 13 (Virginia Glenn, reproduced by permission of the Musée Carnavalet, Paris)



ILLUS 12 The shrine of Saint Marcel, 1262, detail of illus 13 (Virginia Glenn, reproduced by permission of the Musée Carnavalet, Paris)



ILLUS 13 *LA MAGNIFIQUE PROCESSION DE LA CHASSE DE STE. GENEVIEFVE PATRONNE DE PARIS FAITE L'XI IJUN 1652 PO. LA PAIX*, engraving by Nicholas Cochin (Virginia Glenn, reproduced by permission of the Musée Carnavalet, Paris).

exactly parallel artistic situation might well have existed, where the Scots wished to maintain local building customs but combined with fashionable Parisian taste. However, complete reliquary shrines were imported into England from France and could also have been brought ready made to Scotland. For example, it is documented that about 1305 Bishop Walter Langton commissioned a new shrine for the relics of St Chad in Lichfield cathedral to be made in Paris (Beardwood 1964, 27).

However, as the two reliquaries depicted are so similar, a stronger possibility is that the seal engraver, although working in Paris, actually came from further north and was guided by the preferences of his native area. *Orfèvres* in the rue de la Barillerie and the adjacent streets included three called 'l'Alemant', two

'l'Englois' and Richart d'Arraz. We know from the contract that a drawing for the shrine of Ste Gertrude was to be provided by Master Jaquenez d'Anchin (Anchin was a monastery on an island in the river Scarpe) and that the goldsmiths were called Colay of Douai and Jacquemon of Nivelles (Donnay-Rocmans 1961, 201–2). Nivelles itself is just under 30km south of Brussels, but Douai lies well to the west in Artois, Anchin is nearby and both are about 25km from Arras. Richart or a fellow immigrant to Paris might well have engraved our two seal matrices portraying *châsses* as they would have been designed in his own homeland.

If the seals with the views of the reliquaries are extremely unusual, the tiered arrangement of arches engraved on the reverse of the



ILLUS 14 Seal of the University of Paris, mid-13th-century, cast (Copyright, Society of Antiquaries of London).

Dunkeld matrix (illus 1) is also very distinctive. Not only does it not correspond with Scottish or Norwegian examples, but English designs with architectural framing made around 1300 have only minor and superficial features in common with either Dunkeld or Oslo (Heslop 1986, 276, pls 156, 157) none of them sharing the pared down articulation and the notable aversion to cusps and crockets.¹²

Nor is it straightforward to establish a Parisian background. The model could possibly have been the seal of the University of Paris (illus 14), which similarly has a central enthroned figure – the Virgin and Child – under a trefoil arch with angled transepts above, the roofs patterned with dot and diaper lattice. Flanking the Virgin are tall rather awkward pointed arches with standing figures, which equate with the spaces containing the heraldic shields and the censing angels under asymmetrical gables on the Dunkeld seal. The lower part of the University design has two tiers of smaller-scale scholars seated at desks under arcades, in the same way as the clerics of Dunkeld are dwarfed by Columba above.

An architectural detail which is directly comparable with the Scottish example is the use of little trefoils to fill the arcade spandrels.

The University of Paris is recorded as having its own seal as early as 1221 (Verger 1982, 830–1) when the pope ordered that the masters must have it broken (Rashdall 1936, 317). This was solemnly carried out by Romano, Cardinal of S Angelo, the papal legate in 1225, and the university was forbidden to make another (Post 1934, 438–43). The prohibition had, however, been lifted by 1253 when the design shown in illus 14 appeared on a university charter (Gandhilon 1952, 83–4, pl xiii). It had presumably been recently introduced, as in 1249 an agreement to elect a rector still carried the separate seals of the four ‘nations’ of the university (Rashdall 1936, 318, n1). A gap of over 40 years would be consistent with the differences in epigraphy, architecture and figure style between the Paris and Dunkeld seals and there were probably other variations on the design made in this intervening period.

One such, which is closely related to both Dunkeld and Oslo, is the town seal of Leiden (illus 15). Impressions of this from 25 September 1293 and 27 October 1299 survive in Holland (Brugmann & Heerings 1937–1940, 60, nos 604a & b, pl 101), neither apparently in good condition. Another of 17 October 1299 is represented by the *moulage* illustrated, but the original in the Archives de l’Etat at Mons has completely disappeared.¹³ A fairly pristine impression in the Archives du Nord in Lille, 18 March 1322 (Demay 1873, 439, no 3998) examined alongside good photographs of Dunkeld and Oslo probably provides the best comparison. The similarities are the general architectural layout with no cusps and a very few crockets confined to the outer gables of the top tier, the chunky beaded borders, the spandrel trefoils, most of the letter forms and the repetitive lines of praying figures grouped below a larger central enthroned figure in the upper register, flanked by kneeling angels in niches. The seal is round and at just over 72mm diameter very slightly smaller than



ILLUS 15 Town seal of Leiden, cast of an impression of 1299 (Copyright, Archives Générales du Royaume et Archives de l'État dans les Provinces, Brussels)

Dunkeld.¹⁴ The conclusion is that although it may be by a different workman, or one whose style steadily developed during the 1290s, the Leiden, Dunkeld and Oslo matrices almost certainly emanated from the same workshop.

Leiden was one of the towns in Holland and Zeeland which was established not primarily as a market place or a toll collection point, but like Haarlem and Delft, around the castle of a local grandee (Blok 1898, 237). Its political and economic progress was assured by the influence of his descendants, the counts of Holland, whose representatives governed it until the early 15th century (Burke 1956, 72). Both William II and his son Florence V were born there in the family residence of Gravensteen, in 1228 and 1255 respectively. The family further consolidated the prosperity of the town by fostering the local broadcloth industry which was to expand rapidly in the 14th century.

Florence had links with Scotland as a descendant of David I and a distant cousin to the Balliols and Bruces and thereby a contender for the throne after the death of the Maid of Norway (Simpson 1957, *passim*), but

was principally connected by marriage and politics to the dukes of Brabant and the counts of Flanders. Although not as powerful or prosperous as either, his family's ancient lineage stretched from Dirk I, who set up Egmond Abbey on the coast of North Holland shortly after 922, to William II who was styled king of the Romans and built an imposing residence at the Hague, which Florence extended (Kossmann-Putto 1996, 18, 21). From the later 1270s, the main alliance of his own turbulent career was with Edward I of England, marriages being arranged first between Edward's son and Florence's infant daughter and then (when the English prince Alphonso died prematurely) between the English princess Elizabeth and the count of Holland's heir, Jan. However, by 1295 their political interests were in conflict and Florence made a treaty with the French king similar to that of the Scots and Norwegians (Kossmann-Putto 1996, 20–5). Shortly afterwards he was murdered in the course of a kidnap attempt at the behest of Edward.

The seal of Leiden is in marked artistic contrast to that of most towns in Artois, Hainault, Flanders, Brabant and Holland. For example all the others attached to the 1322 document are more or less elaborate versions of a walled town except Mauberge and Zierikzee which are heraldic.¹⁵ It seems likely that Leiden's more adventurous design was introduced by its well-connected patron and may indicate that he already had important links with Paris and the French before relations with England broke down.

The influence of the Dunkeld and Oslo seals after their arrival in Scotland and Norway was less than might have been expected. Possibly the style was too unconventional for most patrons and in any case, by the end of the 13th century the majority of important chapters and abbeys had already provided themselves with large round matrices.

The chapter of Dunkeld themselves commissioned an *ad causas* seal about 1320 (Glenn, forthcoming, no J3) on which the composition



ILLUS 16 Bronze matrix for the *ad causas* seal of the chapter of Dunkeld Cathedral, c 1320 (Copyright, Trustees of the National Museums of Scotland)

of St Columba enthroned, flanked by censing angels (illus 16) is obviously taken from the large chapter seal of the 1290s. However, the artist has omitted the architectural framing and, probably being a more conservative Scot, has replaced the fashionable French X-framed throne with its animal head finials by a more sober square bench.

Robert Wishart, Bishop of Glasgow (1273–1316) had at least four seals during his episcopate, the designs and iconography becoming progressively more complex (Stevenson & Wood 1940, i, 110–11). The pointed oval counter seal of the fourth, known from documents of about 1315, shows a remarkable narrative sequence from the hagiography of St Kentigern under two tiers of plain pointed arches with Wishart praying in a gabled niche below (Laing 1850, no 946, 947, pl 16; Renwick & Lindsay 1921, vol 1, pl facing 142). This may have been inspired by the Dunkeld chapter seal, but the flanking round towers and the columns with spiral decoration are an original touch by the artist reminiscent of the much earlier chapter seal of Dunfermline.

In Norway, one chapter did have a round seal made which seems to have been a local reinterpretation of that of St Hallvard. The seal of Stavanger cathedral is best illustrated by two 19th-century drawings (illus 17 & 18) composed from fragmentary impressions, the earliest of which are from 1319 or 1320.¹⁶ At first glance the similarities between the Stavanger chapter seal and that of Trondheim (illus 19) are quite striking (Scheffer c1958, col 202). The architecture is arranged similarly with a wide central bay containing Christ in Majesty in an upper niche and an enthroned bishop below,¹⁷ with two standing figures under arches on each side. The gables are turned towards the viewer at each end and a gallery of rounded arches separates the upper and lower registers. However, this design was radically modified by the introduction of features from the Oslo seal. Two censing angels have appeared above the roof, which now has crosses as finials, and a cock and a dove as weather vanes at each end. Blind arches articulate the spires and quatrefoils decorate the level below the roof. Perhaps most noticeably, the whole edifice stands on a coursed masonry base. The very large crown and bell on top of the crossing tower of the Stavanger reliquary (or church) we must attribute to the personal taste of the presiding cleric or the inspiration of his provincial Norwegian craftsman.

Apart from their intrinsic interest as exceptionally accomplished examples of engraving and highly original pieces of design, showing accurate observation of other contemporary artefacts, which is surprising for the late 13th century, the Dunkeld and Oslo chapter seals provide an intriguing sidelight to the documentary history of the period. It is unremarkable that Robert, comte d'Artois, who was the cousin of the King of France and divided his time between the capital and his castle of Hesdin¹⁸ should have bought jewellery, *orfèvererie* and a silver seal for his countess in Paris (Dehaisnes 1886, 101–17). However, it illuminates our vision of the senior Scottish clergy, the Norwegian court and the embattled Count



ILLUS 17 Early 14th-century chapter seal of Stavanger Cathedral, 19th-century drawing composed from later medieval impressions (Copyright, Riksarkivet, Oslo)



ILLUS 19 Chapter seal of Trondheim Cathedral, before 1280, 19th-century drawing composed from later medieval impressions (Copyright, Riksarkivet, Oslo)



ILLUS 18 Early 14th-century chapter seal of Stavanger Cathedral, 19th-century drawing composed from later medieval impressions (Copyright, Riksarkivet, Oslo)

of Holland that when they too journeyed south, they shared the same aspirations and had access to outlets of fashionable taste comparable to those favoured by their most powerful contemporaries.¹⁹

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text. Without either of them, this article would probably never have been written. Nonetheless, I am sure I have introduced numerous bangles entirely of my own invention.

NOTES

- 1 I am indebted to Morag Norris, archivist at Scone Palace for this information from the estate records.
- 2 Other published 13th- and 14th-century seals showing the unusual subject of reliquary shrines were those of the towns of Wilton in England (Pedrick 1904, 126, pl xxxi) and Besançon, Castres, Langres and Orban in France (Bedos 1980, 113, no 113, 168, no 187 *bis*, 267, no 336, 384, no 510). None closely resemble those under discussion here.
- 3 Rollason (1978) states that of the 89 saints' resting places given in the *Secgan* of the first half of the 11th century, Dunkeld is the only site in Scotland and only ten of the saints are other than English.
- 4 Reeves lists three books, three bells, the Ripon crosier, a 'pastoral staff' entrusted to the abbot of Durrow and the 'Caith-Bhuaidh' among the secondary relics of St Columba known from literary sources, but none of these are associated by him with Dunkeld.
- 5 Myln (1823, 40–3) describes the advent of the plague in Scotland in 1500, the supplications of the congregation of Dunkeld to Columba, and the drinking of water which had washed his bones as an inoculation. If the crosier of St Fillan was widely supposed to cure illness in cattle, surely had Dunkeld believed that they held the crozier of the much more celebrated Columba, they would have employed that also in the crisis.
- 6 Mark Hall of Perth Museum and Art Gallery first brought this impression to my attention and provided the photograph of it.
- 7 Professor Erla Bergendahl Hohler, Director of the Middelaldersamlingen of the Historisk Museum gave me the opportunity to examine the matrix and much other generous help and advice.
- 8 When Trætteberg was writing in 1977, the matrix was still in the Nationalmuseet in Copenhagen, who presented it to the Norwegians in 1979.
- 9 John Higgitt, University of Edinburgh, points out that cockerels as weather vanes appear in late Anglo-Saxon illumination and on the Bayeux Tapestry.
- By the late 13th century they would have been commonplace. The predatory looking bird on the top of the Châsse d'Ambazac has been suggested by one writer as the soul of the saint inside on its way to heaven (Gauthier 1987 152–5). That on top of the Nivelles shrine looked very much like a standard Limoges enamel eucharistic dove. Whether their iconographic significance as symbols of the Holy Ghost in the case of the doves, or St Peter and the Resurrection in the case of the cockerels was still intended when they were used simply as weather vanes or finials is impossible to say.
- 10 The colons in the Dunkeld legends are four or five petalled flowers, those on the Oslo matrix are diagonal crosses.
- 11 There are adequate impressions in the Durham collections for Richard (1251–72) Hunter Blair 3607, 3608 and William (c 1283–87) Hunter Blair 3606. Matthew Crambeth's seal (1288–1309) survives on a document of 1303 in the Public Record Office, Kew and in more complete form in the Archives Nationales, Paris (MS Arch de l'Emp J 457); Glenn 1999, illus 4.
- 12 Sandy Heslop, University of East Anglia, read my first notes on the Dunkeld and Oslo seals and contributed a number of valuable comments, particularly on contemporary English work.
- 13 René Laurent and M Vanrie of the Archives Générales du Royaume et Archives de l'État dans les Provinces, Brussels, arranged for me to examine the *moulage* and generously investigated the fate of the Mons impression.
- 14 Demay 1873, measured it at only 68mm.
- 15 Ghent, Bruges and Ypres are missing. The walled towns represent Valenciennes, Mons, Binche, Dordrecht, Middelburg, Delft, and Haarlem.
- 16 Hege Randsborg and Gunnar Petterssen at the Riksarkivet in Oslo devoted much time and care to assembling the drawings and impressions so that I could compare them.
- 17 St Øystein (Augustine, the second Archbishop of Trondheim who died in 1188) and St Swithin (one of the three dedicatees of Stavanger Cathedral) respectively.
- 18 Hesdin, in the Pas-de-Calais, is 50–75km from Arras and Douai and all three are about 170km

north of Paris. Robert and his wife also patronized craftsmen in Saint-Omer and Arras.

- 19 Gui de Dampierre, comte de Flandre, Florence V's political ally who later became his overlord was purchasing quantities of silver vessels from a Paris *orfèvre* in 1293–5, but it is hardly a coincidence that the craftsman's name was Mahiu d'Arras (Dehaisnes 1886, 81–7).

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