

# THE ARMS OF FITZWALTER ON LEATHER SCABBARDS FROM LONDON

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In the collections of the Museum of London are a number of knife scabbards upon which are engraved shields of arms and other heraldic motifs. It seems hitherto to have been tacitly assumed either that these were purely decorative in intent, or, if representative, that it would be impossible to identify them with any family arms. It is suggested below that in at least one case it is possible to identify a coat of arms with that of a family of particular importance in 13th-century London, the FitzWalters.

The most frequently occurring device on scabbards of this kind is *a fess between two chevrons* (Fig. 1). These arms appear on 6 out of 22 scabbards. They are described below and illustrated in Fig. 2.

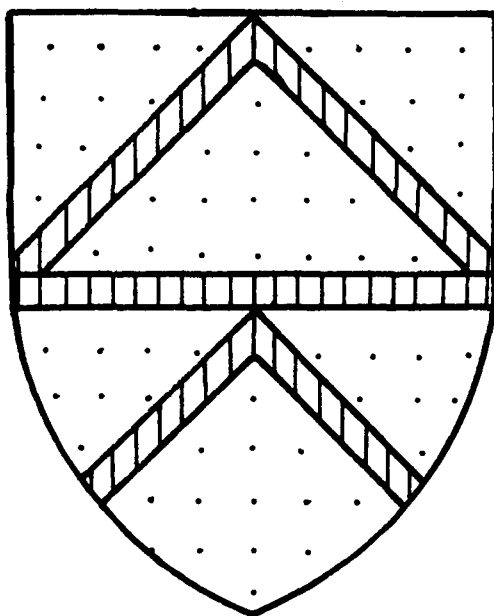


Fig. 1. Arms of FitzWalter: The Arms.

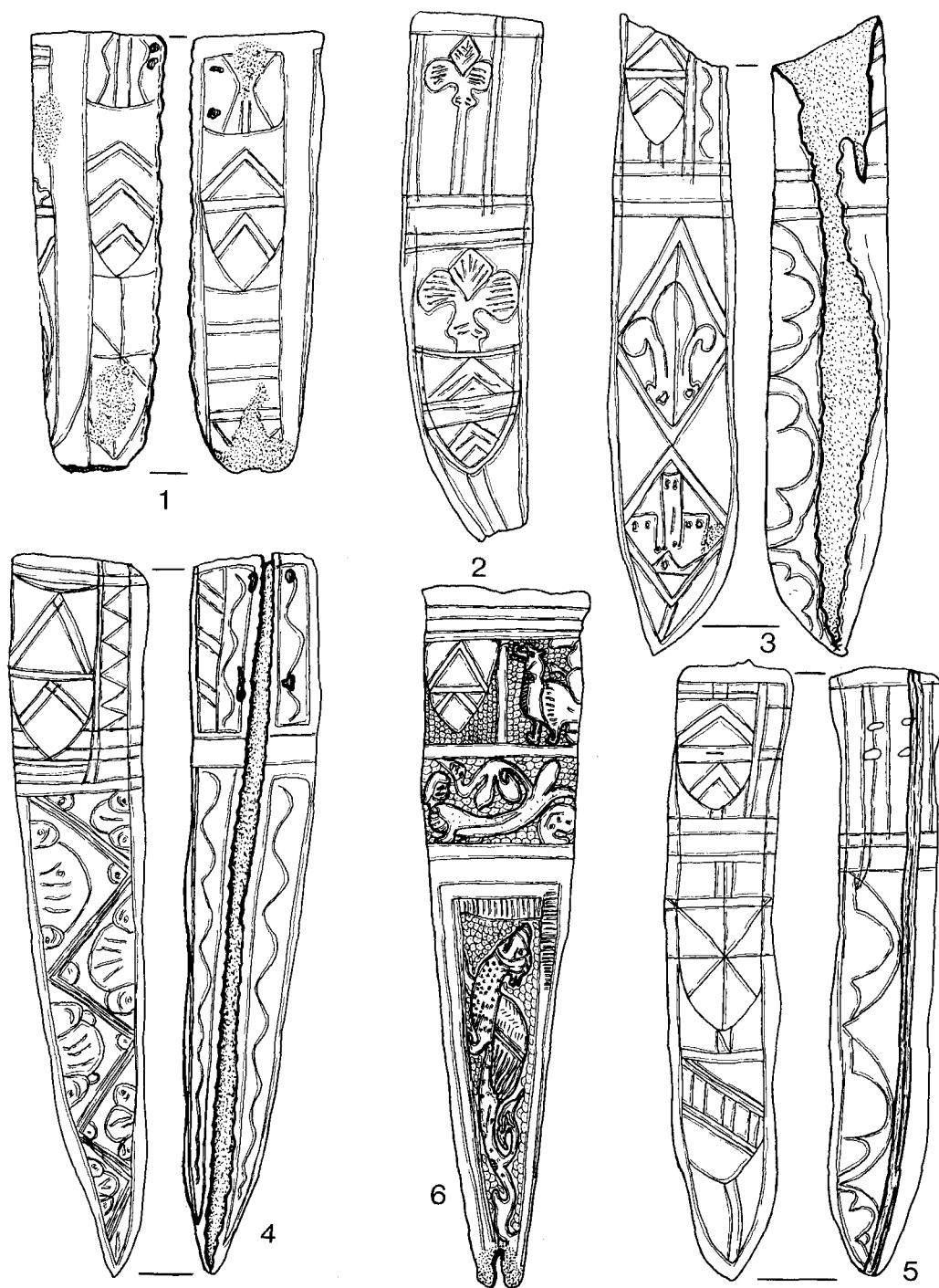


Fig. 2. Arms of FitzWalter: The Leather Scabbards (1/2).

## THE SCABBARDS

1. Baynard's Castle 3521 Scabbard 125mm long, 35mm wide at the top, side-stitched, with two thonging holes for suspension in front and back. Decorated with two shields on each side placed on a horizontal bar. Shields were blazoned (1) *A fess between 2 chevrons* (2) *3 bars* (3) *3 chevrons* (4) *quarterly, and per bend*.
2. Baynard's Castle 3660 Scabbard 210mm long. Decorated in two zones to accommodate handle and blade. The handle section is 61mm long, and decorated with a shield bearing, *a fess between 2 chevrons*, and a compartment with a zig-zag line. The blade section features zig-zag lines, in each of which is a trilobate design decorated with lines. The scabbard is back-stitched, and has four thonging holes in the back, and a decoration of wavy lines on each side of the seam.
3. Museum Acc. No. 4638 Scabbard 150mm long and 40mm wide at the mouth. This scabbard also is divided into decorative zones for handle and blade. The handle section is 55mm long, and is decorated with a vertical bar terminating in a fleur de lis. A similar bar on the blade section is surmounted by a shield bearing *a fess between 2 chevrons*. The back is decorated with vertical and horizontal bars, and is pierced with four thonging holes. The scabbard is stitched up the side.
4. Museum Acc. No. A.3664. Scabbard 175mm long and 34mm wide. Divided into zones for handle and blade sections. Handle section at the front decorated with a shield *a fess between two chevrons* on vertical and horizontal lines. Blade section has two shields, *gyronny*, and a *bend gobonny cotised*. The back, which is stitched to one side, and pierced with four thonging holes has the blade section decorated with trilobate motifs in semi-circles.
5. Museum Acc. No. 4659. Scabbard 188mm long and 35mm wide at the top, back-stitched. Front decorated in two zones for handle and blade. The handle section is decorated with a shield bearing *a fess between two chevrons* and a compartment with a wavy line. The blade section has two lozenges containing a *fleur-de-lis* and a *triple towered castle*. The back is decorated with a pattern of enclosed trilobate devices similar to those on scabbard 4.
6. Museum Acc. No. 4643 Scabbard 203mm long, 47mm wide at the mouth. The scabbard is back-stitched, with four thonging holes in the back. This is the most highly decorated of the scabbards. It is divided into the conventional decorative areas of handle and blade. In both areas the backgrounds are scaled. The blade part is engraved with a monster, which seems to represent a wyvern, a creature with a dragon's body, an eagle's wings, and only 2 legs. The three panels on the handle section carry (1) a shield bearing *a fess between two chevrons*, (2) a *wyvern statant*, (3) another monster appears to have a human head, possibly intended as a harpy.

Among the designs on the scabbards the only common factor is the representation of the arms of *a fess between two chevrons*. In all cases these arms are placed at the top of the scabbard, except 3, where the arms have prominence on a relatively plain scabbard.

Scabbards of this type appear to be uniformly dated. Armorial sheaths engraved with a blunt tool have been held to be typically 13th century<sup>1</sup>—a date which is substantiated by archaeological evidence. Scabbards 1 and 2 above were found in the dumping predating the construction of the dock at Baynard's Castle, laid down in the early 14th century.<sup>2</sup> The other scabbards listed were not found in dated archaeological contexts, and were chance finds from Thames Street (4), Westminster (5) and Moorfields (6). Though these were not themselves dated they can be compared with other dated scabbards. The Baynard's Castle dock deposit yielded a scabbard engraved with a *fleur-de-lis* like that on scabbard 3, and several scabbards decorated with trilobate designs

like those on 2, 5, and 6. The arms *a bend gobonny cotised* (5) also appear on a scabbard from a cess pit at Dukes Place in the City<sup>3</sup> dated to the late 13th to early 14th century. The *fleur-de-lis* and *castles* in lozenges shown on scabbard 6 are a frequently occurring design, and a sheath bearing this device was found in a context dated to the late 13th to early 14th century at the Custom House site.<sup>4</sup> Other examples of this date from Custom House include a design featuring a monster similar to that on scabbard 4, while monsters also appear in the Baynard's Castle dock group, and on one scabbard from a context at the Public Cleansing Depot also dated to the later 13th to early 14th century.<sup>5</sup>

The scabbards in the above group are, it appears, characteristic of a type of armorial engraved scabbard which has been often found in the City, and which, when recovered from archaeological deposits can invariably be dated to the late 13th to early 14th century. This date range is the date of deposition, when the scabbards were disposed of as rubbish. Thus, perhaps, the date of manufacture and use should be placed in the latter half of the 13th century.

## THE ARMS

The identification of uncoloured representations of arms is a contentious process owing to the wide variety of tinctures which could be applied to a basic linear design.

Parallels have been sought only in rolls of arms contemporary with the period in which these scabbards were in use, up to and including the great Parliamentary Roll of 1312.<sup>6</sup> By this means, modern variants of the arms *a fess between two chevrons* have been eliminated. Alphabetical references given to rolls below are given in accordance with C.E.M.R.A.<sup>7</sup> (Appendix). Variants of the arms appear as follows.

FitzWalter: *Or, a fess between two chevrons gules* (MP, A, B, D, E, H, I, J, K, N, ME).

Filliol: *Or, a fess between two chevrons gules* (N).

Baynard: *Sable, a fess between two chevrons or* (N).

de Pecche: *Argent, a fess between two chevrons sable* (MP, A, B, G, J, L, N).

de Lisle: *Or, a fess between two chevrons sable* (A, D, G, ME, J, N).

Bomstede: *Azure, a fess between two chevrons or* (N).

de Cornerth: *Azure, a fess between two chevrons or* (N).

de Molington: *Argent, a fess between two chevrons azure* (N).

de Galeys: *Gules, a fess between two chevrons or* (G, N).

It is unlikely that the scabbards were intended to depict the arms of the last four families. Three, Sir William Bomstede,<sup>8</sup> Sir Richard de Cornerth<sup>9</sup> and Sir John de Molington,<sup>10</sup> were knights of Essex. The fourth, Sir William Galeys, could be either of two knights of that name in Leicestershire and Worcestershire.<sup>11</sup> None of these men had any known connection with London. The arms of de Lisle are recorded first in 1275, for Sir Robert de Lisle, who died in 1285 to be succeeded by his son Warin.<sup>12</sup> Again no link between this family and London is known.

The most likely family to be represented on the London scabbards are the FitzWalters. The family was founded by Robert FitzRichard (c. 1134), younger son of Richard FitzGilbert the founder of the house of Clare<sup>13</sup> (see Fig. 3). It is usually asserted that the FitzWalter arms of *or, a fess between two chevrons gules* was a differenced version of the de Clare *or, three chevrons gules*, in which the centre chevron became a fess,<sup>14</sup> and that this was a direct result of the family relationship with the de Clares. In 1110–11 FitzRichard received the lordship of Baynard's Castle from the crown, on the forfeiture of William Baynard.<sup>15</sup> This event is of considerable importance in the present context as not only was Baynard's Castle one of the fortresses built to control London for the King,<sup>16</sup> but its lordship included the position of hereditary standard bearer to the City militia.<sup>17</sup> FitzRichard was succeeded on his death by his son Walter FitzRobert, whose son, Robert FitzWalter I succeeded to his lands, and to the Baynard's Castle lordship in 1198.<sup>18</sup> Robert FitzWalter I was of considerable importance in London as one of the leading barons in opposition to John in the early 13th century. The loyalty of Baynard's Castle and the Londoners to FitzWalter was instrumental in bringing about John's capitulation in 1215 leading to the issue of Magna Carta. The Londoners also had their own grievances against John, including the demand for funds to repair the City wall.<sup>19</sup> It is likely that FitzWalter championed this cause, since he, as holder of Baynard's Castle, had a personal interest in the defence of the City. Robert FitzWalter I is also the first member of the family to be recorded as holding the arms noted above (MP II 32).

It is likely that the arms of de Pecche were derived from those of FitzWalter by virtue of a family connection. The first de Pecche armiger, Hamon de Pecche, was Robert FitzWalter I's nephew,<sup>20</sup> and their arms are first mentioned in the same source (MP II, 32, see Appendix).

After Robert I, the various lands and titles of the FitzWalters, including the lordship of Baynard's Castle, descended through Walter FitzRobert (d. 1258)<sup>21</sup> to Robert FitzWalter II.<sup>22</sup> Both men were recorded as holding the arms. Robert II most often.

*'Robert de FitzWalter ke ben sout des armes le mester, se en fesoit kanques in devoit. En la baner jaune avoit fesse entre deus cheverons vermaus'.*<sup>23</sup>

A marital connection with the family of Baynard existed at this time, and it is likely that, as in the case of de Pecche, this was the origin of the Baynard arms. Robert Baynard, the lord of Great Hautboys in Norfolk was married to Maud, Robert FitzWalter II's daughter (Table 1). It is probable, though not definitely established, that a family connection existed between Robert, and Sir Fulk Baynard, his contemporary, part of whose feudal requirements for holding two Norfolk manors of Robert FitzWalter II was to pay 28s every 24 weeks for the guard of Baynard's Castle.<sup>25</sup> It is similarly probable that this family was related to that which forfeited Baynard's Castle to the FitzWalters in 1111.

Another Robert Baynard, a London draper,<sup>26</sup> was the brother of Roger Baynard who witnessed an agreement of Baldwin Filliol of Essex in 1281.<sup>27</sup> Baldwin's son Thomas was the heir to Roger Baynard's lands at Little Maldon,<sup>28</sup> and the Filliol armiger in the Parliamentary Roll. The allocation of

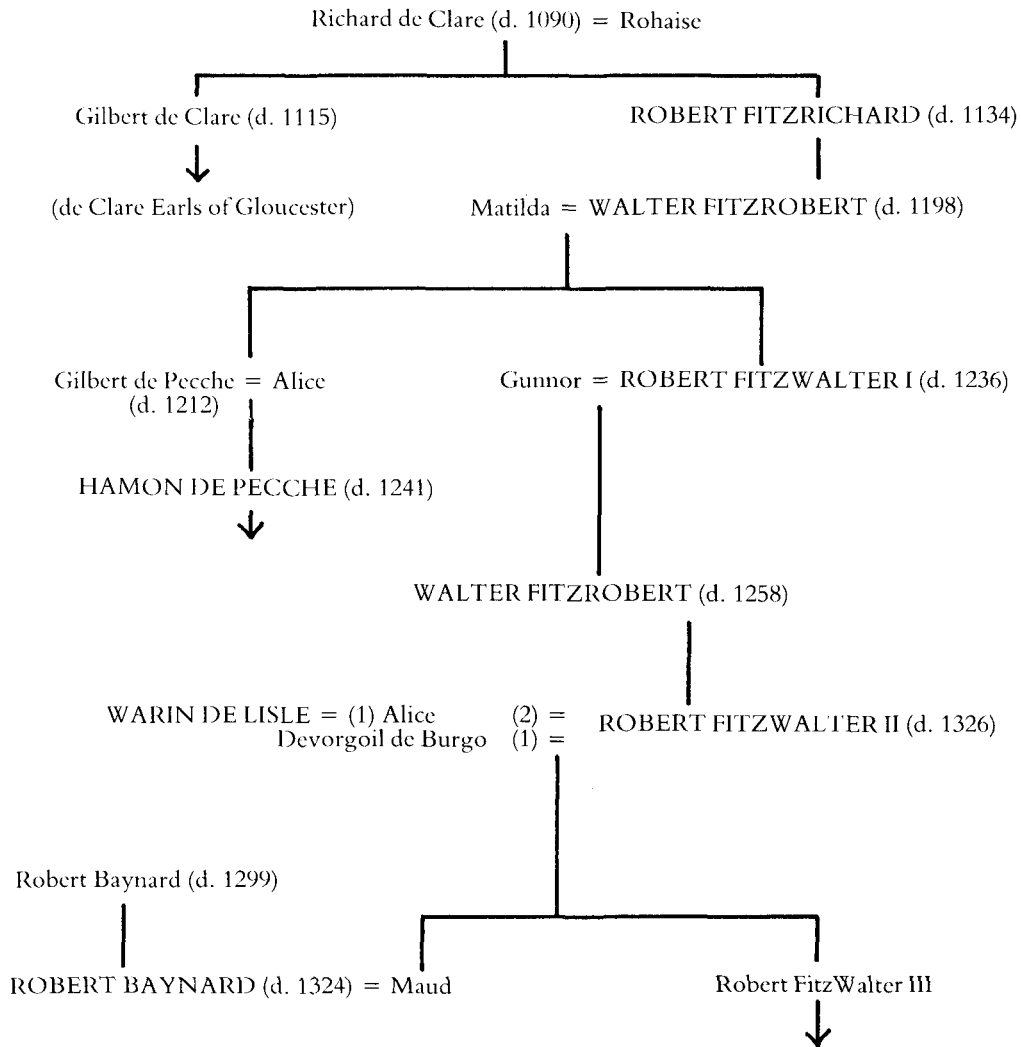


Fig. 3. Arms of FitzWalter: Genealogical Table Showing Family Alliances.

identical arms to Filliol as to FitzWalter is clearly an error. Elsewhere the Filliols are recorded as holding *or, on a fess between two chevrons gules, three trefoils argent*,<sup>29</sup> clearly not the coat represented on the scabbards. Another mention of the Essex Filliols held manors of Robert FitzWalter II by payment of 18s 4d every 24 weeks for guard of Baynard's Castle,<sup>30</sup> and it is probable that the arms recorded above derived from a feudal connection with the greater house. The assumption of arms similar to those of feudal superiors was frequent in the medieval period, and it is not unlikely that the three obscure Essex knights mentioned above, living in an area of great FitzWalter influence, also derived

their arms from those of the FitzWalters. It is further possible that the feudal relationships of the original Baynard family on its Essex properties<sup>31</sup> were transferred to the FitzWalters after 1110–11, and that the families mentioned above were those of Baynard's original tenants, many of whom owed guard duties at the Castle. These duties were later changed to monetary payments like those rendered by Fulk Baynard and the Filliols. These payments would help in the support of a liveried garrison at the Castle. Though the de Lisles assumed their arms a generation before any known link with the FitzWalters (the marriage of Robert FitzWalter II to the widow of Warin de Lisle,<sup>32</sup> mentioned briefly above), it is possible that some link existed before this.

In 1275 Robert FitzWalter II received a licence to demise the site of the first Baynard's Castle at Blackfriars to the Archbishop of Canterbury,<sup>33</sup> but in 1303 was still claiming the position of City standard bearer.<sup>34</sup> He died in 1326.<sup>35</sup>

The discussion above demonstrates that the arms *a fess between two chevrons* were held by a family of considerable importance and influence in London during the period when the leather scabbards under consideration were in use. Other holders of this coat frequently derived it from family or feudal connections with the FitzWalters. The arms of FitzWalter would, as a result of the family's office of the standard bearer, be extremely familiar to Londoners. It is doubtful that the arms on the scabbards would have been mistaken for those of any other family, especially if they were painted in their correct colours, as may have been the case.<sup>36</sup> It is likely that these arms would be displayed as a part of the livery of the paid FitzWalter retainers garrisoning Baynard's Castle, and it is in this context that the scabbards should be seen. It is significant that of the 6 scabbards, 2 were found in dumping at the new Baynard's Castle, which was in the area of the FitzWalter lordship.<sup>37</sup>

In conclusion, it could be suggested that the arms which share the position on the top of scabbard 1, a shield bearing *three chevrons* may represent the arms of the FitzWalter's allied house of de Clare.

I am grateful to my colleagues John Clark, Tony Dyson, Peter Marsden and Brian Spencer for their help in the preparation of this note. All interpretation remains the responsibility of the author.

#### APPENDIX

##### Rolls of Arms

- MP. Matthew Paris shields c. 1250–59: ed. T. D. Tremmllett in *Rolls of Arms of Henry III*. Publications of the Harleian Soc. 113 (London 1961).
- B. Glovers Roll c. 1255.
- C. Walfords Roll c. 1275: ed. M. Stanford, London in *Rolls of Arms of Henry III*. Publications of the Harleian Soc. 113 (London 1961).
- A. Dering Roll c. 1275: eds. J. Greenstreet and Charles Russel *The Reliquary* XVI (1875) 135–40, 237–40; XVII (1876) 11–16, 209–12; XVIII (1877), 23–28, 89–92, 171–5.
- ME.. Heralds Roll c. 1270–80: ed. James Greenstreet *the Genealogist* New Series Vols. III (1886) 148–55, 240–4; IV (1887) 17–22, 197–203, V (1888) 173–9.
- D. Camden Roll c. 1280 ed. G. J. Brault in *Eight Thirteenth Century Rolls of Arms* (Pennsylvania 1973) 68–77.
- G. Segars Roll c. 1282 ed. (as an ordinary) James Greenstreet *The Genealogist* IV (1880) 50–8, 90–7.

- H. Falkirk Roll c. 1298 ed. G. J. Brault in *Eight Thirteenth Century Rolls of Arms* (Pennsylvania 1973) 86–93.
- J. Guillims Roll c. 1295–1305 ed. (as an ordinary) James Greenstreet *The Genealogist* 1 (1887) 323–7, 355–62.
- K. Caerlaverock Roll c. 1300 ed. G. J. Brault in *Eight Thirteenth Century Rolls of Arms* (Pennsylvania 1973) 101–126. *Rendered into Rime*, C. W. Scott-Giles (London 1960).
- M. Nativity Roll c. 1300 ed. G. J. Brault in *Eight Thirteenth Century Rolls of Arms* (Pennsylvania 1973) 94–101.
- L. 1st. Dunstable Roll c. 1308 ed. E. Long *Collectanea Topographica et Genealogica* IV (1837) 389–95.
- I. Hollands Roll c. 1310 ed. James Greenstreet *Walfords Antiquarian Magazine and Bibliographer* I (1882) 147–9.
- N. Parliamentary Roll c. 1312 ed. Sir Francis Palgrave *Parliamentary Writs* (1827) i 410–20.

# NOTES

1. J. B. Ward-Perkins *Medieval Catalogue* London Museum Catalogue 7 (1940) 185.
2. I am grateful to Peter Marsden for access to unpublished material from Baynard's Castle.
3. DUK 77 Museum of London, Department of Urban Archaeology excavation. Pers. Comm. John Maloney.
4. Tim Tatton-Brown 'Excavations at the Custom House Site, City of London, 1973' *Trans. London Middlesex Archæol. Soc.* 25 (1974) 199; 26 (1975) 161–3.
5. Guildhall Museum Excavation Register ER.518.
6. See Appendix.
7. Sir Anthony Wagner *A Catalogue of English Medieval Rolls Of Arms* Publications of the Harleian Soc. 100 (London 1948).
8. C. Moor *Knights of Edward I vol. I* AE Publications of the Harleian Soc. 80 (London 1929) III.
9. *Ibid.*, 238.
10. *Ibid.* vol. III L–O. Publications of the Harleian Soc. 81 (1930) 165.
11. *Ibid.* vol. V T–Z. Publications of the Harleian Soc. 84 (1932) 144.
12. *Ibid.* vol. III, 46.
13. *Dict. Nat. Biog.* vii, 219.
14. Sir Anthony Wagner *Historic Heraldry of Britain* (London 1939) 106.
15. Christopher Brooke. *London 800–1216: The Shaping of a City* (London 1975) 215.
16. *Ibid.*, 30.
17. *Ibid.*, 30. Historical material on Baynard's Castle & FitzWalters also in *London Topographical Record* 10 (1916) 50–63.
18. *Op. cit.* in note 13, 220.
19. Mary Bateson 'A London Municipal Collection' *English Historical Review* 17 (1902) 726. For the career of Robert FitzWalter I *op. cit.* in note 13, 219–23.
20. G.E.C. *The Complete Peerage* 10 (London 1926) 336.
21. *Ibid.* V, 472.
22. *Ibid.* V, 473.
23. 'Robert le FitzWalter, skilled in arms and prompt to wield, in his banner, twixt two chevrons a red fess on yellow field', K. (Caerlaverock Roll) Appendix.
24. *Op. cit.* in note 8. 1, 61.
25. *Ibid.*, 1, 61.
26. G. A. Williams *Medieval London, from Commune to Capital* (London 1963) 338.
27. *Ibid.* 338.
28. *Op. cit.* in note 8. 1, 61.
29. J. Papworth *Ordinary of British Armorial* (reprinted London 1961) 812.
30. *Cal. Inquisition Post Mortem* vi, 47.
31. W. Page *London: Origins* (London 1923) 138, 199.
32. *Op. cit.* in note 20, viii, 71.
33. M. A. Harben *A Dictionary of London* (London 1918) 55.
34. *Op. cit.* in note 15, 216.
35. *Op. cit.* in note 8, 11, 65.
36. *Op. cit.* in note 1, 86.
37. *Op. cit.* in note 32, 127.