

# A MEDIEVAL ARMORIAL BROOCH OR PENDANT FROM BAYNARDS CASTLE

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The medieval dock excavated in 1972 at Baynards Castle was constructed in the late 13th – early 14th century. The dumped make-up layers which were laid down during the construction of the dock were very rich in finds (pers. comm. P. Marsden). Under consideration here is one of the items from these deposits (Baynards Castle Find No. 3058: Fig. 1a).

The object consists of a copper alloy shield measuring 31mm long and 27mm wide. This was cast in one piece with a stud positioned in the centre at the back. The shield is fastened by means of the back stud to an iron object. This is made of an iron bar of rectangular section pierced to form a loop at one end. The bar is split, probably by sawing, up to 26mm from the pierced end. The two arms thus formed are bent into arcs such that the pierced hole is in the centre point of an 'M' shape. The end of each arm is treated in a different way. One is bent at right-angles to the arm and although broken appears to have been pierced with a small hole or slot: on the other side the arm was flattened and was also pierced and this hole too is broken across (Fig. 1a). The stud on the back of the shield was passed through the hole in the iron support and hammered flat after the fashion of a rivet. The shield was enamelled and the enamel has retained its original colours, though the red field has in places taken on a green tinge.

Stud fastened enamel shields occur relatively infrequently, the more usual fastening consisting of a pendant loop.

Shields with rear studs are often very small, like that mounted on a stirrup-iron from Warpsgrove, Oxon (pers. comm. N. Griffiths), which is only 18mm high. Two enamel shields of similar size to that from Baynards Castle have recently been found at Maison Dieu, Ospringe, Kent (Goodall 1979, 137). One of these, bearing the arms *England, a label* which probably predated 1340 (Pinches and Pinches 1974, 72) retained the stump of a rear stud fastening.

The most usual explanation of these enamelled shields is as part of a horse trapping, especially in the case of the pendant type (see e.g. Rimmington and Rutter 1967, 62), but it is difficult to match the shape of the iron portion of the Baynards Castle object with any part of a horse's furniture. However, a brooch published by Nelson (1940, 387) provides a close parallel to the Baynards Castle object and an alternative explanation of its function. This unprovenanced object was solid cast of bronze and was gilded. It was dated to c. 1320. It was the same shape and size as the Baynards Castle find and also had a shield of arms placed on the centre point. The ends of the arcs were connected with the brooch pin. The shield was so contrived that when the correct way up the arched support and the pin formed a 'B' shape. On the Baynards Castle item the stud of the shield turns in its socket and it is not certain which way up it should lie. The treatment of the ends of the iron piece is somewhat similar to those on Nelson's bronze

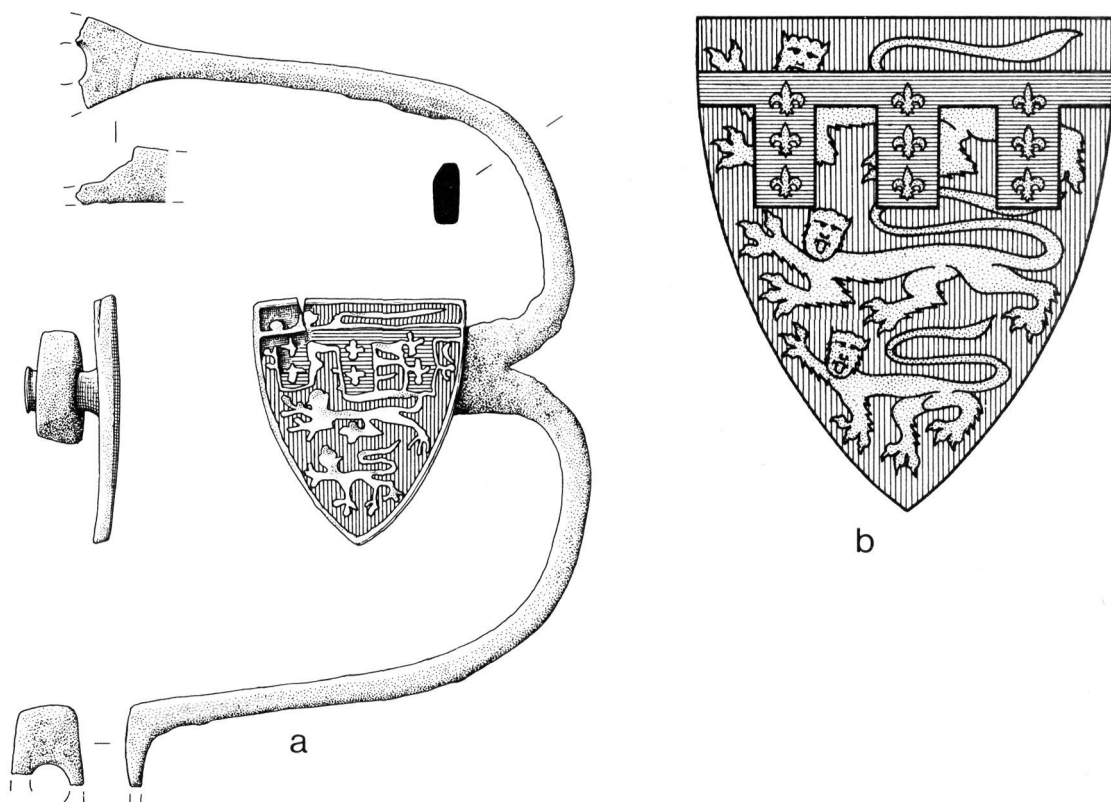


Fig. 1. Baynards Castle Brooch: (a) The Brooch (†) (b) The Arms of the Earls of Lancaster.

brooch. The flattened end here curved round to meet the support and retained the top of the pin. In the case of the Baynards Castle example, the pin may have been held in position with some arrangement connected with the small hole mentioned above. The end bent at right-angles was bent outwards again, the hole becoming a slot into which the pin would catch. Thus although of iron and copper alloy and hence of poorer quality than the gilded bronze of the earlier find, the Baynards Castle find may similarly be identified as a brooch.

This, if accepted, would indicate that it was worn by a retainer of the personage or family whose arms it displays, as were the FitzWalter scabbards previously identified from London (Wilmott 1981, 132–

139). The arms depicted on the shield can be blazoned *gules, three lions passant guardant or, a label of three points charged on each point with two fleurs-de-lis or*. The arms well established as those of the medieval Earls of Lancaster (Brooke-Little 1978, 119) are identical except for the fact that these had three rather than two fleurs-de-lis on each point of the label (Fig. 1b). The first appearance of these arms is found on a seal of Edmund Crouchback, Earl of Lancaster 1245–1296 (Pinches and Pinches 1974, 32). From him the arms descended to his son Thomas the 2nd Earl (1296–1322); Thomas' younger brother Henry, the 3rd Earl (1322–1345); and thence to his son, the 1st Duke of Lancaster, Henry (1345–1361) (Pinches and Pinches 1974, 33). The heiress of the 1st Duke, Blanche

of Lancaster, used these arms until her marriage with John of Gaunt (1340–1399), who thus became Duke of Lancaster. Though the arms were not used by Gaunt himself (Stanford-London 1956, 25), they descended to his son Henry of Bolingbroke (later Henry IV), who bore them when Earl of Derby. (1386–1413) (Pinches and Pinches 1974, 86). The arms remain to the present day as those of the Royal Duchy of Lancaster (Pye 1962 a, 98) If the arms on the Baynards Castle brooch are intended as those of the Earls of Lancaster it is likely to have been as the arms of one of the first two earls, Edmund or Thomas (1245–1322). The date of the deposit in which the object was found, together with the fact that it must have been in use for some time before being disposed of as rubbish, make this almost certain to be the correct date range.

The presence of two, rather than three fleurs-de-lis on each point of the label on the Baynards Castle brooch does not affect the interpretation of the arms as those of the Earls of Lancaster, despite the fact that the full blazon with three fleurs-de-lis on each point of the label appears as early as 1298 as the arms of Earl Thomas in the Fakirk Roll (Brault 1973, 88). It was common practice in medieval heraldry to increase or diminish the number of charges represented according to the space available, especially if it did not matter how many were represented, for example when the blazon merely required 'many' (*semee* or scattered; Pye 1962b, 201). In the 1300 Caerlaverock Roll (Brault 1973, 111) the arms of Thomas of Lancaster are blazoned *England, a label of France*, or the arms of England with a label, the design of which is based on the arms of France. As the arms of France at this time were *azure, semee de lis* or (Pinches and Pinches 1974, 43) this alternative form of blazon logically

requires that the label should be scattered with fleurs-de-lis rather than be charged with a specific number, a requirement which is fulfilled by the representation on the brooch. During this period many rules of heraldry had not yet become inflexible. For example, the label was not exclusively the mark of an elder son, it merely denoted some form of kinship. In the case of Edmund Crouchback the relationship was as brother to the King of England whose arms he differenced. Although now generally shown with three points, in the 13th century either three or five points were shown depending on the space available. This flexibility is shown on a seal of Edmund Crouchback. Here, a shield of his arms on one side of the seal, is shown with a five-point label, the equestrian figure on the other side has three-point labels charged on both horse trappings and shield (Sandford 1707, 102). It would appear that the seal engraver recognised that to place a five-point label on the equestrian figure would obscure the rest of the device. It is equally likely that the enameller of the brooch would take advantage of the possibility of freedom in his design, with regard to the number of points on the label and the number of fleurs-de-lis on each point, in order to create a pleasing and uncluttered effect while ensuring that the arms were sufficiently correct to avoid confusion.

The fact that the brooch was found in a rubbish dump precludes any speculation on the occasion of its loss. The Earls of Lancaster did not hold much land in London. In 1284 Queen Eleanor granted to her son, Edmund Crouchback, the area on the north bank of the Thames between Westminster and Temple Bar known as the Savoy (Somerville 1953, 13). His successor Thomas acquired land in Holborn after his marriage to Alice de Lacy and the death of his father-in-law the Earl of Lincoln in 1311 (Maddicott 1970, 9),

while in 1313 the Earl of Pembroke bought peace with Thomas by releasing to him New Temple manor and the lands of the Templars outside Temple Bar (Somerville 1953, 24). After *c.* 1308 and the break with Edward II over Piers Gaveston however, Thomas was very infrequently in the City (Maddicott 1970, 11). Although very inconclusive, it may be noted that the main concentration of Lancaster lands was very close to the site of the second Baynards Castle where the brooch was found.

#### ADDENDUM

As this note was going to press three further brooches of similar shape were found on the site at Swan Lane (SWA 81; pers. comm. G. Egan). These brooches have identical terminals to that from Baynards Castle and the centre points of the 'M' shapes were all treated decoratively. None of the decorations were armorial.

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