The Re-use and Copying of Ancient Intaglios set in Medieval Personal Seals, mainly found in England: An aspect of the Renaissance of the 12th Century

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In the High Middle Ages, between the 12th and 14th centuries, ancient gems were frequently re-set for use in personal seal-matrices (*secreta*) in order to serve as signets.[1] The fashion, for the display of jewels in general, including ancient gems, was continuous throughout the Middle Ages,[2] but gem-seal usage reached its height of popularity during the second half of the 12th century.[3] Consequently, it may be seen as one small aspect of what it is still convenient to call the '12th -century Renaissance', with its intellectual ferment and enhanced interest in the literature and art of Rome and the Classical world.[4] Gem-set seals thereafter continued to be employed well-beyond the end of the century, although, in England at least, not much beyond the earlier 14th century.

Earlier, during the Migration period and up to the 11th century, Roman gems, both intaglios and cameos, were worn in rings, brooches and pendants, where they would have served as amulets, and were also mounted into crosses, reliquaries, bookcovers and other Church metalwork (*ars sacra*),[5] but they were not in regular use as seals, at least in the British Isles. The gold ring, set with a nicolo (blue onyx) intaglio depicting the Roman god, Bonus Eventus, from the boat-burial at Snape, Suffolk is a possible exception. It is of gold-filigree and of 6th-century date and Merovingian manufacture; it is closely paralleled by a ring from Krefeld-Gellep. On the Continent the ancient and even contemporary use of the seal as a symbol of Romanitas may not have been wholly lost.[6] The later mounting of Roman and Classical-style gems into signet rings from the 15th/16th century onwards is, of course, part of the general history of the Renaissance.

Gem-seals were often employed as additional 'secret' seals (*secreta*) by their owners, or as counter-seals (*contrasigilla*) by others called to witness the official seals of officials, ecclesiastic or lay, and were, of course, far more intimate and personal in nature than these.[7] They were, in addition, well adapted for such a purpose, because they had originally been cut in Roman times precisely for use in such situations, in order to witness all manner of documents including wills, deeds of gift, land indentures and loans, or simply to authenticate the signature on a letter.[8] In size, variety, colour and properties of material gemstones appealed to the 12th- and 13th-century mind as much as they had to the Roman, as is shown by the popularity of the verse lapidary written by Marbode, Bishop of Rennes who died at the very beginning of the 12th century.[9] Ancient engraved gems are mentioned in lapidaries as *objets trouvés,* introduced by such phrases as 'si inveneris lapidem' or, in old French, 'vus trouerez' where the amuletic power of the device and of the stone upon which it is cut has a primary significance.[10]

The meaning of devices

The *Good Impressions* exhibition, together with the conference papers published here, have demonstrated beyond doubt that medieval seals possess an intrinsic interest in themselves, revealing as they do a great deal about contemporary art and life. My own academic experience, working on Roman signet rings – the predecessors of our seals – has revealed to me an equally fascinating world, even though few enough scholars (certainly far too few classicists), seem to have taken as much of an interest as they should have done in these intriguing objects, which were employed in precisely the same way as the later seal matrices to sign letters and authenticate legal documents.[11]

In some ways the subject of the re-use of Roman gems in the Middle Ages is even more fascinating, because it concerns the influence of one civilisation upon another, and the ways in which the later culture tries to understand the former and, wherever necessary, adapts it. Sometimes, to take the title of a review of gem-set seals by John Cherry, it may simply be a case of 'Antiquity misunderstood',[12] but far more often we find ourselves dealing with cases of subtle re-interpretation, not by illiterate peasants but by clerks, including leading ecclesiastics, who comprised a subtle intelligentsia, employing a sophistication which we can still relish today. Latin classics such as Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, the Elder Pliny's *Naturalis Historia* and Boethius' *De Consolatione Philosophiae* were available as contact with the minds of the great writers of Antiquity.[13] In the same way that a major intellect like Aelred of Rievaulx revisited and adapted Cicero's *De Amicitia* to produce his own *De Spirituali Amicitia,*[14] one of the most moving classics of early Cistercian spirituality, so, in a more minor way, were the users of signets able to use their imaginations to re-interpret images which had reached them from a distant past. In doing so they had every incentive to find in the varied devices images of God the Father, Christ or the Virgin. At the same time the devices might serve, as they did in Antiquity, as personal badges of identity or else as protective charms. The contemporary inscriptions surrounding the gems are informative and have where possible been included in this paper. The subject is a large one which should be extended to cover the many intaglios and cameos mounted upon ecclesiastical metalwork, shrines, book covers, crosses and crosiers. Although our primary concern here is, of course, with seal-matrices and signet-rings, the conscious choice of particular high-quality stones on, for instance, the Shrine of the Three Kings in Cologne Cathedral demonstrates how the selection of gems with regard to both quality and subject-matter was anything but casual.[15] In its original form, the central (Hellenistic) cameo depicting Ptolemy II and his consort Arsinoë II was interpreted as two of the three kings while on the large intaglio Mars, who is portrayed confronting

Figure 1 (left) Sard intaglio depicting Venus with a youth, set in a silver gilt seal (34 x 28mm). British Museum P&E 1865,2-8,1

Figure 2 (right) Sard intaglio depicting Bacchus, set in a silver seal (29mm x 25mm). Stoke by Clare, Suffolk. British Museum P&E 1923,5-8,1

Venus and Cupid, is taken to be the third king making obeisance to Our Lady; it is balanced on the other side of the Ptolemy cameo with a cameo of Agrippina and Nero, unlikely as it might seem, transmuted in medieval eyes to become Christ at the Last Judgement.[16]

The élite owners of many of the signets set with gems may have been at least as well versed in classical mythology as the average student of Classics today, and in some instances they certainly knew what they were actually looking at. This is implied in for instance early 13th century Anglo-Norman lapidaries, mentioning such deities as Mars and Mercury;[17] it is also apparent from the combination of device and legend on a number of seal-matrices. A sard intaglio, set into a fine silver-gilt matrix, now in the British Museum's collection (**Fig. 1**), depicts Venus contemplating a statue of a beautiful youth and the legend in old French identifies it as in part a love token: + IE SVI SEL DE AMVR LEL (I am the seal of loyal love).[18] However the medieval wearer of a signet was under no obligation to interpret the device in the same way as his/her ancient counterpart. The same legend was inscribed on another silver gilt matrix from Shenley Church End, Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire set with an Italian gem, a cornelian dating to the period of the Roman Republic, showing Argus working on the Argo but possibly interpreted by the medieval owner as a knight.[19] In the first instance loyal love is exemplified by the goddess, clearly recognised as she would have been by its original owner a millennium earlier; in the latter in masculine comradeship.

From the Walbook, London comes a black-jasper intaglio depicting a bust of the goddess Minerva, set in a silver gilt seal inscribed: + QVI TIMET DEVM FACIET BONA (The man who fears the Lord will do good); the inscription is adapted from a verse in *Ecclesiasticus (Sirach)*, which is actually concerned with Holy Wisdom, and the seal nicely shows how the original pagan meaning has been elided into a Christian one.[20] An even more conscious shift of meaning from Antiquity to the Middle Ages is to be seen in the case of a silver seal from Stoke by Clare, Suffolk, [21] containing a sard intaglio (**Fig. 2**) which depicts Bacchus with a small infant satyr. The god is clearly identified by his thyrsus and vine, but the accompanying legend: + IESVS: EST: AMOR: MEVS (Jesus is my love) reveals that the ancient wine god was now re-identified as Jesus, the 'good vine': in other words the seal has acquired Eucharistic overtones, and is thus to be seen as a good example of 'interpretatio Christiana'.[22] Further the infant satyr probably evoked Christ's love for children: 'Let the children come to me, do not hinder them; for to such belongs the Kingdom of God'.[23] A silver seal found near Stratford-on-Avon and now in the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust collection was set with a beautiful cornelian intaglio depicting the head of the god Apollo; and the surrounding inscription: + CAPVT + OMNIVM + XPĈ (Christ the head of all things), shows that the image was seen as Our Lord, not unreasonably, for the classical (1st century BC), idealised rendition of the head agrees with the youthful conception of Christ as a young man of 32 years of age. The seal was associated with a gold ring containing an uncut sapphire, belonging to a high ecclesiastic (presumably also the owner of this personal seal) and with coins dating to *c.* 1214–16.[24] From Fordingbridge, Hampshire, comes another gem in a silver matrix whose legend reveals the way in which a thoroughly pagan theme might be re-interpreted to illustrate a central episode in Christian belief; the intaglio actually depicts two figures of Tyche (Fortuna) greeting one another, but to the mind of its early 12th-century owner, it brought to mind the Angelus, as the surrounding legend reads: + VERBA :SALVTIS : AVE (The word of salvation: Hail!).[25] Here the two Tyches were re-interpreted as none other than Gabriel and the Virgin Mary.

Some devices appear to be self-explanatory. It is easy to see that the lion as king of beasts, like the one from Ludgershall Castle, Wiltshire engraved upon a Roman cornelian, might appeal to a knight. The stone, which shows a lion killing an antelope, is set in a mid-13th-century silver seal matrix and is inscribed: +SECRETVM MICHAEL' DRVIB' (Personal seal of Michael Drew).[26] It is one of many seals which depict lions, like that of John de la Val found at St Albans which reads on the outer rim: + SIGILL IOHANNIS : DE : LAVAL, and inside that: +ECCE :VICIT [*sic*] LEO: (Behold, the lion conquers), the gem being a red jasper depicting a lion with a bull's head between its forepaws.[27] Another silver seal found in Kent and containing a lion intaglio reads more forcefully: +SVM LEO QVOVIS EO NON NISI VERO VEO (I am a lion; wherever I go, I only carry the truth).[28] The lion can indeed be seen as symbolising Christ and

that is surely the meaning of the more explicit legends. The essence of knighthood was that one was mounted, and so the device of a horse would have had relevance to William de Melcombe whose seal matrix which is, likewise, of silver, was inscribed: +SIGILLVM WILELMI DE MELEC̄BE (Seal of William de Melcombe), and contains a Roman onyx intaglio depicting a racehorse.[29] William's son Richard is known to have held Melcombe from the Earl of Warwick for the service of a knight in 1212 and this seal is presumably somewhat earlier. A silver matrix with the legend: +SIGILLVM WILL'I: DE BOSCO (Seal of William de Bosco) is set with a yellow jasper figuring the winged horse Pegasus. The seal, which was found in a garden at Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk, might doubtless have been taken to reflect the 'divine' horsemanship of William, for after all mounted knights were common devices on contemporary secular seals,[30] but beyond such literal interpretations lies the concept of the warrior saint, such as St George, certainly figured on the Byzantine intaglio from Winchester mentioned below. In short the process of Christian re-interpretation was both continuous and continuously inventive.

Gemstones as medieval finds on Roman occupation sites
Classical gems have often been regarded as casual finds, picked up by peasants tilling the fields on Romano-British sites, which ended up gracing the signet of the local lord. Indeed this might have happened quite often. A very large number of gems in medieval seals indeed date from the Imperial period and would be relatively easy to match as site-finds from Roman Britain.[31] That would be true, for instance, of the cornelian intaglio depicting Mercury with his purse and caduceus set in an English silver seal matrix inscribed: + SIGILLVM : SECRETI (Secret seal);[32] and even in the case of what I take to be a chrome chalcedony also depicting Mercury set in a gold ring evidently employed by King Richard I (1189–99) as his personal seal.[33] A cornelian depicting Mars 'gradivus' (the type of the striding Mars), is also very like a number of gems found on Roman sites in Britain, and is set in a silver seal reputedly from Essex, reading: + FRANGE. LEGE: TEGE (Break, read, conceal).[34]

The silver stamp seal of William of Louth – a 13th-century courtier who became Bishop of Ely at the end of the century – contains a cornelian intaglio depicting the goddess Roma with an inscription on the surrounding frame reading: + S'. MAGISTRI: WILLI :DELVDA (Seal of Master William of Louth); it is thought that the seal dates from relatively early in his life, perhaps *c.* 1258. The gem is well cut, but paralleled by intaglios found at Colchester and Wroxeter and elsewhere.[35] A silver seal inscribed: +OVE . TEGO .FRACTA. LEGE (I conceal with a shell; read when it is broken) from the Eastbourne area contains a green jasper gem showing Ceres enthroned, comparable to others from Roman sites in Britain.[36] Other goddesses include Venus Victrix on a chrome chalcedony intaglio set in a gold ring found at London Bridge, Nemesis on a chalcedony intaglio from South Loftus,Yorkshire and a bust of Diana on a nicolo stone from Chester, all set in gold rings with the popular legend: +SIGILLVM : SECRETI (Secret seal) around the rim.[37] Of these it is tempting to think that Nemesis with her wheel was read as the type of Fortune who with her wheel was an ever-popular concept in the Middle Ages.[38] Likewise well matched in provincial glyptics are a nicolo intaglio showing a satyr, from North Walsham in the Castle Museum, Norwich, inscribed: + LECTA TEGE (Read, conceal);[39] the similar satyr on a wax seal of Elyas de Hertford Senior, +SECRETVM ELYAS DE HERTE (The secret seal of Elyas de Herte) of 1301 in Oxford;[40] and, from near Lichfield, Staffordshire, a red jasper depicting Bonus Eventus set in a silver signet ring with its bezel rim inscribed: +SIGILLVM . SECRETI (Secret seal).[41] Another characteristic type is represented by the onyx intaglio showing a herdsman watching his goat nibbling at the branch of a tree, of which there is an example set in the seal matrix of William de Flamenville.[42] William's father Roger is recorded to have received a charter from King John in 1200, so the seal must date to the early 13th century. One of the lapidaries mentions the possibility of 'finding' a gem showing a ram or a lion, there clearly conceived as signs of the zodiac,[43] and this recalls the cornelian-set seal matrix of Michael Drew from Ludgershall discussed above.

None of this evidence, however, really answers the question as to whether these late 1st or 2nd century gems of types which would have been by no means unexpected from archaeological sites in Britain or north-west Europe, were actually found locally or imported. They could equally have been products of the well-organised international gem market which is attested by cameos like the Ptolemy cameo which stars in the Shrine of the Three Kings,[44] or the Great Cameo of St Albans,[45] and also clearly evidenced by the more unusual and spectacular intaglios in English gem-set seals, to which we must now turn.

The quality of re-used gems
What strikes the student of ancient glyptics suddenly confronted by gem-set seal-matrices and seals (i.e. sealings), is the superior quality of many of the surviving examples, which would hardly have been expected from a casual combing of ploughed fields in Britain and the occasional discovery of a gemstone. This can be illustrated very clearly in the case of two splendid seals recently acquired by, or placed on loan to, the British Museum, both of them set with Imperial portraits dated to the 2nd century AD. The first (**Fig. 3**) is a silver seal matrix of *c.* 1200–1300 from Swanley, Kent inscribed: + PONITE : LITERAS : ISTAS : INSIGA : SILLV. SECRIT (Place your letter under a secret seal). It is set with a red jasper intaglio engraved with the

Figure 3 Red Jasper intaglio depicting the head of Emperor Antoninus Pius, set in a silver seal matrix (25mm x 19mm). Swanley, Kent. P&E 2006,10-4,1

Figure 4 (left) Nicolo intaglio depicting the bust of the Emperor Lucius Verus, set in a gold seal matrix (26mm x 16mm). Laindon, Essex. British Museum on loan from Mr A.R. French and Mr R.W. Terris

Figure 5 (right) Sapphire intaglio, depicting the head of a Ptolemaic queen or goddess, set in a gold seal-ring (25 x 24mm). Hereford. Victoria and Albert Museum, Waterton Collection 89-1899. © V&A Images/Victoria and Albert Museum, London

portrait of Antoninus Pius (AD 138–61) (**Fig. 3**).[46] The second is a nicolo intaglio depicting Lucius Verus (Emperor AD 161–169), mounted in a 13th-century gold setting inscribed: SIGILLVM SECRETI (Secret seal), found in Laindon, Essex (**Fig. 4**).[47] These two intaglios are amongst the best portrait gems of the period in the British Museum and it should be remembered that Imperial portraits are, in any case, remarkably rare as subjects on Roman gems. In fact, the only example of a 2nd-century portrait gem from any Roman site find from Britain is the moulded glass intaglio (again a portrait of Lucius Verus) from Droitwich, Worcestershire, but this is inferior both in material and in style.[48] A third example of such a seal matrix is preserved as the personal seal of Prior Walter of Leominster Priory, Herefordshire attached to an indenture of 1220; its vesica-shaped surround cites St Luke's Gospel:[49] + QVI. SE. HVMILIAT EXALTABITVR (He who humbles himself, shall be exalted), a sentiment which worked for Walter who was subsequently elected abbot of St Mary's, Shrewsbury. The very high quality ancient gem-setting displayed a clean-shaven Julio-Claudian male portrait, possibly Tiberius, in profile to the right, with, behind the head, a priestly *lituus*.[50] Thus, it is clear that people carefully searching local Roman sites would have had to be quite incredibly fortunate to find three such treasures of the gem-cutter's art. Unfortunately the legends on the two British Museum seal-matrices do not bear the names of their owners, but the connections of the Leominster seal demonstrate that such items belonged to the very highest in the land, the sort of people whose wealth and position allowed them to travel.

The great discrimination and connoisseurship employed by members of the élite in selecting gems for their secreta may be further demonstrated by two gold seal-matrices in Cambridge University collections, which contain two fine Augustan intaglios; both were local, Cambridgeshire, finds. Although such items were valued over the centuries as heirlooms, early gems of the very highest quality are certainly not very often encountered on Romano-British sites, even though, as it happens, there is one from an early Roman villa at Shepreth, not far from where the seal of Adam of Newmarket was found.[51] One of the Cambridge seals comes from Great Eversden, Cambridgeshire (and is now in the Fitzwilliam Museum); it contains a cornelian intaglio depicting a clean-shaven male head in profile, probably a youthful Hercules, analogous in style to portraits of the middle quarters of the 1st century BC. It was set in a gold vesica-shaped seal inscribed: + S'. SIMONIS : PASSELEVWE (The seal of Simon Passelewe).[52] The owner was a clerk in the employ of King Henry III and a diplomat who visited the French court in 1260, 1263 and 1265. The other gem, likewise a cornelian (in the Cambridge University Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology) depicts a profile head of Medusa, even more exquisitely cut. It was set in a gold seal ring from Shepreth, it is inscribed: + S'SECRETI : ADE : NOVIFORI (The secret seal of Adam of Newmarket).[53] Adam of Newmarket was a powerful Lincolnshire knight of the baronial faction. Incidentally, another supporter of de Montfort was Richard de Mepeham who in 1263 was Archdeacon of Oxford. His seal, inscribed: + SIGILL RIC D'MEPEHAM (The seal of Richard of Mepeham), was found at Richborough, Kent and was set with a minutely engraved little plasma of two cockerels fighting above a cupid and behind a *meta* (circus turning post).[54] Although the gem, which is of 1st-century date, could notionally have been excavated on the Roman port site of *Rutupiae* near where the seal was later found, it is very much more likely that it was an import. What is clear is that such seals inevitably belonged to very wealthy people in the upper echelons of society who could afford to pay large sums for masterpieces of glyptic art, from an international market.

Imported glyptics: Hellenistic, Roman Republican and Oriental

Thus, these examples all appear to testify that we are generally not dealing with casual purchases from peasants but with a well-organised trade which we may guess, indeed more than guess, was centred on Italy though it certainly encompassed the East Mediterranean as well, especially as a result of the Crusades. William of Malmesbury, in describing the aftermath of the Battle of Ascalon on 12 August 1099, mentions the acquisition of 'multum gemmarum quarum raritas in nostris regionibus incognita, ibi nativo decore refulgurat'.[55] Venetian, as well as Pisan and Genoese, merchants (*gemmarii*) must have often been intermediaries, especially with regard to the

Orient, as is suggested by the trade network suggested by ceramic finds from the major Crusader port of Acre on the Levantine coast in which there were important assemblages of pots from the western Mediterranean (Venice, Genoa and Sicily), suggestive of trade with Italy.[56] The infamous Fourth Crusade which culminated in the Sack of Constantinople provided a further source but this was after the *apogee* of gem-use in seals. However we can guess that many gems were purchased, especially by ecclesiastics, on their visits to Rome and that a large proportion of these may have come from central Italy.

Amongst gems from the Crusader kingdoms or Constantinople we can probably include a sapphire, set in a 13th-century gold ring excavated from a well in Hereford in 1824, which is inscribed: TECTA. LEGE. LECTA TEGE. (Read what is written, hide what is read) (**Fig. 5**).[57] The intaglio, which depicts a veiled female head, was published in the 19th century as a medieval Italian depiction of 'the head of a monk',[58] and has more recently been assumed to be of contemporary French manufacture, though the analogues to it are in fact Hellenistic: the subject may be a Ptolemaic queen, for these rulers were often depicted veiled; there is for instance a dark violet amethyst intaglio in Oxford, perhaps as early as the 3rd century BC, depicting a queen (or a goddess) wearing a similar veil. Purple stones would have been regarded as appropriate to royalty, although sapphires like the Victoria and Albert Museum's gem did not come into use much before the 1st century BC, so the subject might even be Cleopatra VII. It is a good assumption that it was re-interpreted by its medieval owner as the Blessed Virgin, who is generally depicted in art wearing a blue or purple veil as Queen of Heaven. The open-backed mount allowing the wearer's finger to be in contact with the stone, would have accentuated its virtue. The provenance of the gem, assuredly ancient, must be the East Mediterranean.[59]

This is certainly the case with the magical intaglio depicting the Graeco-Egyptian deity with the head of a lion and the body of a serpent known as Chnoubis; it is datable the 2nd century AD, carved upon a beautiful translucent green stone and set in a non-inscribed gold signet-ring evidently belonging to Archbishop Hubert Walter at Canterbury (*ob.* 1205) in whose tomb it was found.[60] Here too the wearer's finger was brought into direct contact with the stone whose reverse was engraved with the 'triple S' sigil associated with Chnoubis; presumably Hubert Walter expected to derive some magical or therapeutic virtue from the stone. In the same connection we should note another 'gnostic' gem, the Abraxas /Iao amulet (or perhaps a medieval copy of such) engraved on a bloodstone and mounted in a bishop's ring recovered from a tomb in Chichester, once erroneously ascribed to Bishop Seffrid.[61] Henry of Blois, the famous and powerful 12th-century Bishop of Winchester (1129–71) was a noted connoisseur who collected 'veteres statuas' in Rome as well as acquiring other precious items such as Saracenic textiles.[62] His signet used as a counterseal on a grant to Hamble Priory dated somewhere between 1153–71 depicted confronted busts of Zeus Sarapis and Isis, without surrounding legend, so presumably, like Hubert Walter's Chnoubis seal made with a simple gem-set ring. The provenance is almost certainly the East Mediterranean though Henry probably acquired it in Rome.[63]

Another Sarapis gem, depicting the head of the god being crowned by two figures of Nike (Victory) with an eagle and cult (*semeion*) standards below, was the subject of the personal seal of Earl William of Gloucester (1147–83), which is known only from impressions. Earl William's main seal gives him the title of Consul, which had evidently been used by his father, Robert, illegitimate son of King Henry I, but certainly suggests an inherited personal interest in the past. It should be recalled that Geoffrey of Monmouth had dedicated his *History of the Kings of Britain* to Robert, The accompanying legend surrounding the Roman gem reads: + AQVILA SV'ET CVSTOS COMITIS (I am the eagle and keeper of the earl); interestingly the intaglio gem passed to his daughter the Countess Isabel who married Prince John in 1189. She changed the legend to: + EGO SV'AQILA : CVSTOS D'NE MEE (I am the Eagle; Lord be my guide).[64] Presumably the eagle was read as referring to St John the Evangelist, as is the case of other eagles in *ars sacra*, for example lecterns.[65] There is one example of the Serapis and eagle gem from a Roman site in Britain (Beckford, Bredon Hill, Gloucestershire) but again an East Mediterranean provenance, such as the Crusader kingdom is far more likely; there are no less than three close parallels from a collection of gems from Gadara in the Pentapolis.[66] Likewise, almost certainly from the East, was a cornelian depicting Cybele with her lion supporters, reset in the silver seal of Philip Pule of the Poole family from the Wirral.[67] The figure on the Tyche (Good Fortune) of Antioch on the Orontes embellishes Hubert Walters' crosier, from his tomb in Canterbury cathedral, and this too is likely to have come from the Levant.[68]

The earliest Italian intaglio, mounted in a 13th-century medieval seal, preserved in the British Museum's collection of matrices is an Etruscan scarab of '*a globolo*' type, datable to the 3rd century BC. *A globolo* gems are characterised by rather schematic cutting and the devices are not always easy to elucidate; however this one appears to depict a team of two horses with, between them, a charioteer.[69] The silver seal has sustained considerable wear and so the legend is not very easy to read. Scarabs are fairly thick objects, as they needed to be because they were threaded onto their rings by means of lateral piercings; thus they are not entirely suitable for medieval seals, except, as here, for stamp seals. Although the device is not amongst the most beautiful of intaglios, its strangeness may have appealed to its owner rather in the same way as the Chnoubis gem clearly appealed to Archbishop Hubert Walter.

Two centuries later, late Republican gem-cutting retained some of the features of earlier Etruscan glyptic art (although the ringstone was by now universally employed). Gems of this period are characterised by a strong feeling for linear form combined with a liberal use of pellets (circular depressions made with the drill) which accentuate various features. The style is well represented in the Bacchus intaglio from Stoke by Clare (**Fig. 2**). Amongst the other gems mounted into medieval metalwork is a cornelian reset in Archbishop Hubert Walter's crosier, whose device depicts a quadruped, its leg-joints accentuated by such pellets.[70] In this case it appears likely that Hubert Walter, who possessed both eastern and 'Italian' gems, acquired his 'collection' from more than one source, in a gem-market which must surely have been centred on Italy. Amongst the Italian gems of late Republican type are several showing satyrs. A fine example is set in a 13th-century silver seal from

Cold Harbour Farm, Crowmarsh, Oxfordshire, inscribed: + S' NICOLAI DE PADDEHALE (Seal of Nicholas of Padworth).[71] The leached cornelian gem depicts a satyr holding a thyrsus and looking towards a column. Contemporary, but simply inscribed: + S' SECRETVM, is a silver seal in the British Museum set with a gem depicting a satyr facing a trophy.[72] It is interesting to compare a gem depicting satyrs, executed in the same Roman style set in a silver matrix inscribed: S.MATEO DICENINO PALMIERI, which served as the seal of the Florentine statesman and writer Matteo Palmieri (1406–75).[73]

The counterseal of Bishop Nigel of Ely (1133–69) was a beautiful circular gem of 1st-century BC date, which depicted a seated image of a satyr leaning against a sacred column; the satyr is accompanied by a goat; the satyr's characteristic staff or *pedum*, with its curved handle is shown behind the column.[74] There are numerous parallels from Italy to gems cut in this more idealised, classical manner, which is characteristic of the Augustan age, and probably a decade or so later than the gems just mentioned.[75] Nigel travelled to Italy in 1144 and this counterseal was not brought into use until after that date. The surrounding legend reading: + CLAVDVNT MORE SVO SCRIPTA SIGILLA DVO (As by their custom, the two seals close the writing) refers to the use of seal and counterseal. Not surprisingly Thomas Becket had what must have been a very impressive gem seal, again of Augustan date, depicting a standing image of Mercury leaning against a column set in a matrix reading: + SIGILLVM TOME LVND (The seal of Thomas of London). It is only preserved on a document concerning Holy Trinity, Aldgate dated 1162.[76] I end this section by recalling another wax impression of a top-quality Augustan gem of the later 1st century bc, which depicts Venus and Adonis, and is closely paralleled by one of the star pieces preserved in the Dutch Royal Collection. This sealing is attached to an Oxford land deed of *c.* 1220 associated with the Hospital of St John in Oxford (on the site of the later Magdalen College); it is the *secretum* of Henry [son of] Simeon,[77] perhaps one of the reeves of Oxford in the time of King John. It was his infamous son, Henry son of Henry, who was charged in 1242 with the homicide of a clerk and was never forgiven by the University: every Bachelor of Arts from 1264 to 1827 had to swear 'never to be reconciled with Henricus Simeonis'![78]

How the gems were regarded: pagan and Christian interpretations

We have already encountered the reinterpretation of subject matter to accord with medieval Christian belief, and there are numerous examples of this, some more inventive and sophisticated than others. A very interesting example of a Republican gem found on the Thames foreshore at Southwark is a chalcedony intaglio depicting two peacocks, one of them on a globe.[79] The legend on the matrix: + DVLCIS : AMORIS : ODOR (The perfume of sweet love) shows that this was a love token but just possibly alluding to divine love as peacocks with their marvellously patterned tail-feathers were thought to allude to the cosmos, and their flesh was said to be incorruptible. There was a piece of vegetal material inserted into the matrix behind the stone, which may have been a relic of a saint or a token of love, but that too serves to show that the object meant a great deal to its owner. A very similar legend reading: * I . A . ODOR . DVLCIS . AMOR was inscribed around a silver seal matrix found in 2007 at Leziate, Norfolk. It contained a cornelian intaglio depicting Mercury, the messenger of the gods and in the 14th century perhaps still regarded as the guardian of communication between lovers.[80] A different message is given by a silver seal matrix from Bayston Hill just outside Shrewsbury which is inscribed: + SERVITE DOMINO IN TIMORE (Serve the Lord in Fear).[81] The nicolo intaglio shows a half-kneeling figure, probably a warrior, but presumably the gem was selected because the figure's posture was suggestive of the normal attitude of prayer.

In the Roman period, the image of Hercules would, in itself, have been a potent talisman. There is a silver seal matrix in the British Museum with an Irish provenance, which might seem to display medieval reaffirmation of such knowledge; it is dated by Heslop to soon after 1200, and is inscribed: + QVI ME PORTE SIEST LE MVS (Who carries me, fares best), and contains a cornelian intaglio of early Imperial date depicting the head of Hercules, here bearded (**Fig. 6**), unlike the youthful image upon Simon Passelewe's seal.[82] However, such a bearded head could equally have been taken via a process of 'interpretatio

Figure 6 (left) Sard intaglio depicting the head of Hercules, set in a silver seal (28.5 x 22mm). Ireland. British Museum, P&E 1932,2-9,1

Figure 7 (right) Sard intaglio depicting the head of Jupiter, set in a gold seal-ring (19mm x 15mm). British Museum, P&E AF 558

Christiana' for a saint or even God the Father. A gold ring-seal, perhaps of early 14th-century date, inscribed: + EGO : SECRETA : TEGO (I hide secrets), contains a beautiful sard intaglio cut with a bust of Jupiter (**Fig. 7**).[83] Once again, this may represent the Christian God. Indeed, another gold ring, this time provenanced from the site of St Martin le Grand, London, set with a garnet depicting a seated figure of Jupiter, is inscribed on the bezel: AGLA; this is a Latin transliteration of the first letters of the Hebrew invocation 'Atha Gebri Leilan Adonai' (Thou art mighty for ever, O Lord) confirming a re-interpretation of Jupiter as God the Father.[84] Here it is worth commenting that these letters are often inscribed on charms, brooches and bracelets and appear to have been endowed in the Middle Ages with a magical significance.[85] The use of Hebrew (albeit transliterated into the Roman alphabet) is likewise significant because of the language had been employed in magic since Antiquity.

Female heads (images of goddesses or ancient portraits) might have served as miniature icons of female saints such as Our Lady, but alternatively they could have been seen as surrogate portraits of real fair ladies. An early 14th-century seal in the Schøyen collection, found in Kent, set with a red jasper, displaying a beautiful head of the generic type of Augustus' daughter Julia and a gold ring from Chester in the British Museum, containing a nicolo intaglio depicting Diana,[86] and both inscribed: +SIGILLVM SECRETI, could have been interpreted in either way; but a fine 14th-century analogue, from Bedfordshire, cut on red jasper (**Fig. 10**, see below), was surely intended as a portrait of a lady of fashion. Perhaps we should not expect private seals always to be exemplars of 'interpretatio Christiana' rather than the world of Arthurian romance.

One of the most striking images on a Roman gem was found very recently. It is a 2nd-century red jasper intaglio, set in the 13th-century silver seal inscribed: +SIGILL WALTERI DE LONGEDVNE (Seal of Walter of Longdown), found in Arreton Parish on the Isle of Wight, and figures a first-rate portrayal of Victory standing on a globe and shouldering a palm and holding a wreath while, in front of her are displayed the crescent moon and three stars representing the cosmos (**Fig. 8**).[87] The device was possibly taken by its medieval owner to be an allusion to Christ as reflected in one of the striking images in the Book of Revelation though the number of stars is admittedly not the same.[88] There are several intaglios from Roman sites in Britain depicting Victory standing on a globe, but none of them is of this interest and quality. From Barham Down, Kent comes a cornelian showing the goddess Minerva, set in a silver seal inscribed: +ANGELVS CONSILII FORTIS GLADIATOR (The Angel of wisdom is a strong gladiator).[89] It would seem that the owner was well acquainted with the fact that Minerva was the ancient goddess of wisdom, though the reference has been turned to reflect Christian Divine Wisdom. Another example of erudition is provided by a cornelian from Welbeck Abbey, Nottinghamshire, depicting a Bacchic herm (**Fig. 9**) but very possibly equated with a bust of the philosopher Plato, widely revered (though only his *Timaeus* was readily available to medieval scholarship).[90] The inscription on the silver matrix, which with its engrailed edge probably served as a pendant, reads: +IGNOTA NOTO (I write about unknown things), and this seems entirely appropriate to such an interpretation.

One class of gemstone which was exceedingly popular in Antiquity was the combination of human and animal forms sometimes, incorrectly, called a 'gryllus' but certainly possessing an amuletic function. A very fine example engraved on a red jasper intaglio, set in a silver vesica-shaped matrix, was found at Scartho, Lincolnshire. Here the medieval legend comments on the cockerel-like form and horse head and neck in a playful manner: + SCRIPTVS SIGNAT EQVVS. MITTIT DEVEHIT . ALES (The horse signs the letter; the bird sends and delivers).[91] Another example, dating from the 1160s or early 1170s is provided by the seal of William Barbedavril II, probably the son of the chaplain to Hugh II, Earl of Chester, whose seal he witnesses. This depicts two conjoined heads of Silenus and a youthful Pan; The surrounding legend reads: +SIGILLVM WILELMI BARBEARILL.[92]

Figure 8 (left) Red Jasper intaglio depicting Victory, set in a silver seal (28.5 x 23.4mm). Arreton Parish, Isle of Wight. British Museum Treasure number IOW 2006-68

Figure 9 (right) Cornelian intaglio depicting Bacchic herm, in a silver seal setting (35 x 23mm). Welbeck Abbey, Nottinghamshire. British Museum P&E 1925,2-9,1

Figure 10 Red Jasper intaglio depicting a female bust, set in a gold seal (25 x 22mm). Wootton, Bedfordshire. British Museum, P&E 1881,3-12,1.

Medieval copying

The employment of gemstones in seals was by no means confined to ancient intaglios, for there are plenty of medieval examples cut in emulation of their ancient prototypes. One of the finest, as mentioned above, was found at Wootton, Bedfordshire and apparently dates to the early 14th century.[93] It is of red jasper and cut with the bust of a woman in profile to the right, with a head-dress tied under the chin in contemporary style (**Fig. 10**). One hint that it was partly copied from ancient prototypes is the manner in which the hair is plaited and knotted at the back like portraits of Faustina II, and another is the vegetal spray in front of her which is matched by the plant spray shown in front of the bust of Diana figured on the Roman gem set in the seal from Chester cited above. It is mounted within a gold seal-setting inscribed: + CLAVSA. SECRETA.TEGO (I conceal the enclosed secrets). Many years ago Wentzel wrote about similar seals made in France,[94] though such copying and adaptation by 'tailleurs de amans' was certainly also taking place in London, to judge from a statute of Edward I of 1300 addressed to 'cutters of stones and of seals' which concerned the quality of their products.[95] In his paper Wentzel illustrates a carved relief, the personification of idolatry, upon a portal at Notre Dame, Paris in which the idol seems to have been based on another Faustina portrait-gem.[96] In the Victoria and Albert Museum there is a beautiful sard portrait of a youth which, from the boy's hair-style, appears to be medieval, contemporary with the 13th-century English gold ring in which it is set; once again it is classicising and obviously based on a Roman prototype. The inscription reads: * IOHANNES : EZT : NOMEN : EIVS (John is his name), which appears self explanatory, referring to the owner, unless there is also meant to be a reference to the saint.[97]

A silver seal from Diss in Norfolk contains an amethyst depicting a winged creature which has been taken to be a classical sea-horse (or *hippocampus*) but stylistically does not look Roman at all but is rather a high-quality medieval copy, perhaps to be taken as a wyvern. The legend: +ROB'TI SIGNŪ : NIL : SIGNANTIS : N : DIGNV̄, is a Leonine hexameter saying that he will not use it to sign unless worthy to do so.[98]

Several intaglios depict knights, not surprisingly as such devices are common on of medieval seals, but perhaps when we see them as the subjects of gems they are useful reminders that equestrian figures are frequently the subject on Roman gems, though the material was also found employed for slightly earlier Byzantine seals, including an 11th-century example discovered at Oram's Arbour, Winchester, which depicts St George slaying the dragon. If this link were to be accepted it would provide further confirmation of that east Mediterranean trade-link already suggested.[99] Three examples, all in green jasper and datable to the 13th century, are known to me, two of them in silver seals, respectively from Potterne, Wiltshire, inscribed: + QVE : TIBI : LEGO : LEGE (Read what I send to you),[100] and from Middle Harling, Norfolk inscribed: + SIGILL' GALFRIDE FURNEVS (The seal of Jeffrey de Furneaux)(**Fig. 11**).[101] The third is unset and from Newstead, near Brigg, North Lincolnshire.[102]

Green jasper seems to have been especially favoured in the Middle Ages, probably because there was a good source and it was relatively cheap; certainly it was employed for other simple gems including two preserved in the Norwich Castle Museum. One is a winged 'hippocampus' from Norwich Castle, not unlike the creature on Robert's seal from nearby Diss cited above, and likewise. set in a silver seal; it is inscribed: +SIGILL' GILBERTI DE HVLCOTE (The seal of Gilbert de Hulcote).[103] Another green jasper depicting a chicken in a silver seal, from Thwaite, Suffolk, is inscribed: * AMICE CRISTI IOHANNES (John, the friend of Christ).[104] There are ancient gems depicting cockerels and such may have been the prototype here, though a cockerel would perhaps bring St Peter's denial, and perhaps John's loyalty which should be emulated by the wearer. Alternatively it might represent Our Lord as the mother hen guarding her brood. There is another cockerel engraved on blue glass and in a silver matrix inscribed: +SIGILLVM : THOME. (The seal of Thomas), found at Maer near Newcastle-under-Lyme, Staffordshire.[105]

Of course there were familiar medieval religious themes, notably the *Agnus Dei*, as depicted on a green glass gem set in a silver 14th-century seal from London inscribed: *SIGILLVM AMORIS (The seal of [divine] Love) (**Fig. 12**).[106] Amethyst with its vinous colour would have been a more suitable recipient and there is an unset amethyst intaglio engraved with this theme, unfortunately not provenanced, in the Ashmolean Museum, once in the Fortnum collection; although Fortnum thought it was early Christian, it is surely a work of the High Middle Ages, lost from a contemporary ring or seal matrix.[107]

The devices on gems were used to display the owner's learning, his or her loyalty, notably to the king; his or her piety and his or her amorous affections, as well as for punning and for personal reasons. For such purposes gems could be ancient or contemporary. The material and colour of gems could at the same time display the owner's artistic discrimination and possess her or him of magical/ amuletic power as detailed in the *Lapidaries* which describe the properties of the different varieties of stones and devices. These are the self-same reasons

Figure 11 (left) Green Jasper intaglio depicting a horseman, set in a silver seal matrix (28 x 23mm). Middle Harling, Norfolk. British Museum P&E 1875,20-1,1

Figure 12 (right) Green glass intaglio depicting the Agnus Dei (23 x 18mm). From London. British Museum P&E 1875,20-1,1

gems were worn in Roman times. Indeed this conference has demonstrated the sophistication of a society which discriminated in a highly intelligent and inventive manner whether ornamenting a shrine for a great church or a personal seal. One can imagine the men (and women) who set out to purchase a gem-seal poring over trays of engraved stones in the merchant's shop whether in Rome or nearer to home, and then commissioning a seal-cutter to make a seal or seal-ring in silver or gold and engrave his or her name or an appropriate motto upon it; if the last a sacred text or a pun commentating on the sigil would often be chosen.

If this short contribution has done no more, it hopefully serves to highlight for the medievalist the importance and rarity of the engraved gems used, and to signal the existence during the period of a well-organised quality trade in ancient gems from Italy and the Levant, probably centred on Rome and perhaps other great Italian cities; it should also signal to the few classical archaeologists who care to look at Roman gems, that those reset in the Middle Ages and preserved in matrices or simply as sealings in archives, are some of the best.

Although the seal-matrices and sealings discussed here are all provenanced from England or Ireland, the same wealth of material can be found in many other European lands, sometimes as in Hungary and Italy seeming to continue later.[108] This emphasises the potential importance of the subject, although its proper appreciation requires scholars who can view western culture as a single entity, both in its Graeco-Roman and medieval phases, and move effortlessly between sympathy for classical myth and appreciation of Christian imagery. Those who persevere in such a task will be guaranteed to find wonders, while at the same time enlarging their knowledge of iconography, art and culture over at least a millennium and a half.

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I am enormously grateful to all those who have discussed gem-set seal matrices with me over a great many years, and have brought and continue to bring new ones to my attention from time to time, especially Frank Basford, Martin Biddle, Marian Campbell, John Cherry, Rachel Church, Debbie Ford, Lauren Gilmour, Paul Harvey, Sandy Heslop, Nicholas Karn, Laurence Keen, Adrian Marsden, Julian Munby, Nicholas Palmer, Peter Reavill, Nigel Ramsay and Richard Sharpe.

Notes

1 Demay 1877; Henig 2000; Henig 2007, 72–4 and 191–3 and other references cited in text below.
2 Greenhalgh 1989, 229–32.
3 Heslop 1991, 191.
4 Haskins 1927.
5 Henig 2007, 71–2, fig. 3a, pl. xxxvii no. 231; pl. xl no. 264 and pl. lii no. 734 (cameo). For the use of gems in early medieval *ars sacra* see Snijder 1932; Sena Chiesa 1997 97–114; Sena Chiesa 2002.
6 Bruce-Mitford 1974, 123–4 and 126, pl. 21 and see pl. 22, and most recently, Filmer-Sankey and Pestell 2001, 195–8.
7 Jenkinson 1968, 8. Many *secreta* were, of course, made entirely of metal and were contemporary works of art.
8 Henig 1997.
9 Hinton 2005, 187–91.
10 Evans 1922, 99; see also Studer and Evans1924 and Evans and Serjeantson 1933.
11 Henig 1997 88–106 and compare with Cherry 124–42 in the same volume.
12 Cherry 1999.
13 *English Romanesque Art* 1984, 83 and *cf.* cat. nos 31,32,57.
14 Aelred of Rievaulx, *Spiritual friendship*.
15 Zwierlein-Diehl 1997, 62–83; *idem* 1998, especially 50–102.
16 Ibid. 1997 and 1998, 50–61.
17 Studer and Evans, 1924, 279.
18 Inv. P&E 1865, 2–8,1; Tonnochy cat. no. 721; Cherry 1997, 133 and 136 pl. 8/25, col. pl. v.
19 Babb1992, 83–4; Henig 2000, 3–4, fig.5.
20 Nelson 1936, 18 no. 27, pl. ii,5, citing *Ecclesiasticus* 15, 1.
21 Inv.P&E 1923,5–8,1; Ton 897.
22 Zwierlein-Diehl 1998, 61–102.
23 Mark 10,14.
24 Palmer and Seaby 1983–4, 105–10, pl. i and fig.i and see Henig in the same article on 109 for the gem.
25 Nelson 1936,18 no. 26, pl. ii,2.
26 Cherry and Henig 2000, 157–8, no. 6, figs 6.37 and 6.38.
27 Nelson 1936, 24–5 no. 31, pl. ii,8; Henig 2007, 193 no. M26.
28 Cherry 1997,128 and 136, col. pl. v no. 8/15.
29 Henig 1976, 67–9, fig. 11.
30 BM P&E 1956,12–03,3; Henig 2007,193 no. M 28; Campbell 1998, 72, pl. xxiiif.
31 Ibid, *passim*.
32 BM P&E 1878,3–20,1; Tonnochy cat. no. 703.
33 BM P&E 1962,11–1,1.
34 Linenthal and Noel 2004, 64, no. 401, pl. xxiv.
35 Nelson 1936, 22–4, no. 30, pl. ii,13; compare Henig 2007, 122, nos 250,251,pl. viii.
36 It was brought to my attention by Irene Szymanski of the York Archaeological Documentation Centre.
37 Dalton 1912, 38 nos 223,225 and 224,pl. iii. Henig 2007, 191–2 nos M6, M9 and M18.
38 Courcelle 1967, 113–58, pls.lxv–lxxxvi.
39 Henig and Heslop 1986, 305–9, pl. 1, 1 and 2.
40 Henig, M.1974, 'A medieval sealing in Exeter College archives', *Oxoniensia* 39,98–9,pl. viii,b and c = Henig 2007, 192 no. M13, pl. lxii.

41 Ford and Henig 1998.
42 Tonnochy cat. no. 579.
43 BL 210 fol. 103v –105.
44 Zwierlein-Diehl 1998, 50–61.
45 Henig and Heslop 1986, 148–53, fig. 1, pl. xliii.
46 BM P&E 2006,10–4,1. Its Treasure reference is 2005/T75 4476.
47 M & LA Loan 89.
48 Henig 2007, 198, no. App. 45, pl. xxv.
49 Luke 9, 48.
50 Indenture in The National Archives, PRO, E329/186 cf. Hillaby and Hillaby 2006, 61 and pl. 19a.
51 Ibid.,199, no. App. 48, pl. xxv.
52 Henig 1994, 116, no. 218.
53 Ibid., 116–7, no. 218a.
54 Nelson 1936, 19–22 no. 29,pl. ii,7 and 10.
55 *De gestis regnum anglorum* 4.371.
56 Lightbown 1992, 26. I am indebted to Edna J. Stern of the University of Haifa for information on the Acre ceramics which will be fully published in due course. For the vast quantities of gems in metalwork other than seals see Lasko 1994.
57 Victoria and Albert Museum, Waterton Collection 89–1899; Bury 1984, 28, no. D; cf. Cherry in Ward, Cherry, Gere and Cartlidge 1981, 66 no. 134 and Cherry in *Age of Chivalry* 1987, 486, no. 654.
58 Faussett 1860, 52–3,fig. 2.
59 Plantzos 1999, 119, nos 177–9, pl. 31 and especially 127, no. 387, pl. 58. In style of cutting the Victoria and Albert gem is superior to all except the Oxford stone, 119 no. 178 but its material is much rarer.
60 Henig 1983, 57–8 no. 1, pl. 1a. The ring is in Canterbury Cathedral Treasury.
61 Cherry in Ward, Cherry, Gere and Cartlidge 1981, 61, no. 116. The ring is in Chichester Cathedral Treasury.
62 *Historia Pontificalis*, 81; cf. Boase 1953, 170.
63 Franklin 1993, 35–6, pl. iv.
64 Patterson 1973, 24 and pls xxxib and f.
65 Revelation 4, 7. (St John the Divine was generally confused with the Evangelist).
66 Henig 2007,135 no. 357,pl. xii; Henig and Whiting1987, 10, nos 34–36; see Henig 1983a, 109–12,pl. c, for semeion standards.
67 Nelson 1936, 18, no. 25, pl. ii,4.
68 Henig 1983, 58, no. 3, pl. 1c.
69 BM P&E 1956,12–3,1, *ex* Philip Nelson Collection. Cf. Boardman and Vollenweider 1978, 63 no. 268, pl. xlii.
70 Ibid., 58, no. 2, pl. 1b.
71 Henig and Gilmour 2004, 419, fig. 2 (medieval silver gem-set seal from Crowmarsh).
72 Ton.145 no. 702, pl. xiv.
73 Maaskant-Kleibrink 1978, 173, no. 348, pl. 69.
74 Karn 2005, cxlvi–cxlvii, pl. iv.
75 Maaskant-Kleibrink 1978,171 no. 339 (also no. 338 but the satyr is standing), pls 66–7; Henig 1994, 102–3, nos 186–8.
76 Burtt 1869, 84–9 especially 85–6 and illustration; Cheney and Jones1986,13–14, no. 23, pl. iv.
77 Salter 1914–17, I, 276–7, no. 275 and illus. in III, pl. op. 434. For the gem compare the beautiful example of the type in the Dutch Royal Collection, Maaskant-Kleibrink 1978, 370 no. 1166, pl. 184.
78 Madan 1925, 29–30 (note); and especially Poole 1912, 515–17.
79 Spencer 1984, 377–9, no. 6, fig. 3.
80 Information from Adrian Marsden, PAS Norfolk.
81 Treasure reference 2006 T126.
82 BM P&E 1896, 3–26,1; Tonnochy cat. no. 760, pl. xvi; Heslop in *Age of Chivalry* 1987, 398 no. 456.
83 BM P&E AF 558; Dalton 1912, 38, no. 226, pl. iii.
84 BM P&E 1932,2–9,1; Cherry 1997, 133 and 136, pl. 8/24; Cherry 1999,144–5, fig. 1.
85 Evans 1922, 125; Lightbown 1992, 99, pl. 57, a 14th-century inscribed brooch from Devizes.
86 Linenthal and Noël 2004, 63 no. 400, pl. xxiv; Dalton 1912, no. 224, pl. iii
87 IOW 2006–68. Information F. Basford.
88 Revelation 2, 1. 'To the angel of the church in Ephesus write: 'The words of him who holds the seven stars in his right hand…' .
89 See Nelson 1936, 18 no. 24, fig. ii,3; Cherry 1999, 143–4.
90 BM P&E 1925.2–9.1; Tonnochy 154–5, cat. no. 765.
91 Henig 2007,193 no. M23, pl. xxiii (from Claude Blair's collection).
92 Heslop 1991, 188, no. 2, pl. v.
93 BM P&E 1881,3–12,1; Tonnochy cat. no. 705; Heslop in *Age of Chivalry* 1987, 276 no. 198; Cherry 1997, 128 and 136, pl. 8/16, col.pl. v.
94 Wentzel 1953, 342–50.
95 *Statutes of the Realm,* I,1810,141; Lightbown 1992, 24.
96 Wentzel 1953, 342 and pl. 48a.
97 V&A M290–1962, cf. Bury 1984, 28, no. B.
98 Nelson 1936,19, no. 28, pl. ii,6.
99 Publication in *Winchester Studies 8, The Winchester Mint,* forthcoming dealing with the Winchester mind and related material, including seals.
100 Tonnochy cat. no. 704.
101 Rogerson 1995, 62–3, no. 81, fig. 44.
102 Henig and Leahy 2003, 167–9, fig. 1.
103 Henig and Heslop 1986, 306, pl. 1,5–6.
104 Ibid., pl. 1, 3–4.
105 Ford and Henig 1998; Henig 2000, 5–6, fig. 12.
106 BM P&E 1875,2–1,12; Tonnochy cat. no. 717, pl. xv.
107 Fortnum 1885, 167, fig. 6. As Arthur MacGregor and I both thought it was medieval we omitted it from the recent catalogue of Roman Gems in the Ashmolean Museum.
108 Demay 1877; Tamás and György 2006.

Seals and Status in Medieval English Towns: A Case-study of London, Newcastle and Durham

Elizabeth New

In recent years there has been much debate about medieval perceptions of identity. It is now accepted that seals can provide helpful insights into how such identities were expressed.[1] Civic seals are no exception, and can contribute to wider debates about urban societies. Personal seals from towns are another rich source, important even for comparatively well-known figures. While the public life of London's famous mayor Richard Whittington can easily be traced, for example, little is known about his private life, and his choice of seals is one of the few ways in which one may catch a glimpse of the man himself.[2]

This paper focuses upon on one aspect of urban seals, namely their function as expressions of status and authority. A full discussion of English urban seals would be prohibitively long, so instead civic and personal seals from London will be considered, with comparative material drawn from Newcastle-upon-Tyne and Durham.[3] Seals previously have been used by historians to examine ideas of urban governance and identity in London,[4] while the connections between seals and status in the late 12th and early 13th century have received recent attention.[5] This latter study has shown that, while some Londoners of the period utilised the sigillographic vocabulary of the contemporary nobility, others started to experiment with different designs in a manner which suggests a growing consciousness of urban identity and the distinct status of the citizen.[6] It is these ideas of status within the town, and of a developing communal consciousness, which will be explored here for the mid-13th to mid-15th centuries. What can official seals tell us about civic identity? Do the seals of citizens reflect urban-specific ideas of status, or do they operate within much wider paradigms? And, in London, were they used consciously to express the status of being a citizen of England's premier city?

Scholars have noted that the image on a seal, particularly a corporate seal, was designed to be understood by a wide audience through the employment of a limited range of iconographic types, with the legend functioning as the prime individual identifier.[7] Urban seals fit within these parameters.[8] Buildings, a significant landmark, a patron saint, or ships are the main images found on urban seals.[9] From the mid-13th century heraldry, either specifically civic or that of an overlord, began also to be employed.[10]

Both Newcastle and Durham had town seals which fall into one of these main categories. The Common Seal of Newcastle is early for an English town, possibly dating from the mid-12th century, but its design, a castle or castellated gateway with (blank) shields displayed above the gate, is conventional and appropriate.[11] Newcastle became increasingly important as a commercial, military and political centre from the 1080s and, despite a devastating fire in 1248, witnessed great commercial success in the 13th century which culminated in its designation as a customs port in 1275.[12] The town's burgesses were engaged in significant internal and overseas trade from at least the 12th century, and by the time of the Lay Subsidy of 1334 the taxable wealth of Newcastle citizens was exceeded only by London, York and Bristol.[13] Although a constant reminder of royal power, the garrison appears to have aided the development of the town, as well as providing much-needed security.[14] The Bishop of Durham was no more than a passing figure, while most of the religious houses in the town were founded by citizens rather than clerics or magnates. In this context the Common Seal is very much an individual identifier, acting as a declaration of the town's place as a strong regional centre protected by its eponymous castle. The personal seals of Newcastle citizens, which are discussed below, reveal patterns of common identity in keeping with the secular civic matrix.

Unlike Newcastle, Durham's medieval town seal survives only as a matrix apparently copied from the original (**Fig. 1**).[15] It shows a bishop flanked by shields of arms (England) with mitres above, and a shield of arms (a cross fimbriated) below. The figure is sometimes identified as the actual Bishop of Durham, but in fact probably represents Cuthbert, Durham's principal saint. The lack of a nimbus may be the result of post-Reformation censorship, while the object above the bishop's left arm is almost certainly the head of St Oswald, one of Cuthbert's attributes but an image with which a seal-engraver of the early 17th century might not have been familiar. The town of Durham developed in size and wealth in the 13th century, with two large fairs every year and a range of merchants and artisans as citizens.[16] It was the bishop, however, who was the most important power in the town and

Figure 1 Seal of the City of Durham; a copy of the medieval matrix presented to the City in 1608 (diam. 58mm). Society of Antiquaries of London

Figure 2 Common Seal of London, obverse (diam. 72mm); note the star on the gateway, added in 1376. Society of Antiquaries of London

Figure 3 Common Seal of London, reverse (diam. 72mm)

region, with great temporal as well as spiritual authority.[17] This explains the mitred shields and the incorporation of the family arms of one of the bishops. It is, however, of interest that the town's patron saint is given pride of place. St Cuthbert was a major saint in medieval England and his shrine a site of great pilgrimage, something which brought both financial and spiritual benefits to the town. It may be suggested that, while the Bishop probably influenced the design of the Common seal, it may have been the citizens who ensured that their saint, rather than their spiritual and temporal overlord, who featured on the matrix.

At first glance, the early 13th-century Common Seal of London also fits the standard pattern of town seals.[18] The obverse depicts the walled city with St Paul, the city's patron, looming above (**Fig. 2**). The legend: SIGILLVM BARONUM LONDONIARVM (Seal of the barons of London), further identifies it. The reverse has another townscape beneath the seated figure of the city's other patron, St Thomas of Canterbury (**Fig. 3**). The legend: ME QUE TE PEPERI NE CESSES THOMA TVERI (Do not cease, Thomas, to protect me who brought thee forth) might not seem an obvious identifier today, but would have been intelligible to a medieval audience familiar with the fact that Thomas was born in London.

Dating from *c.* 1216, London's is not the earliest English urban seal and it fits within the expected paradigms.[19] Unlike the town seals of Durham and Newcastle, however, those who commissioned the London Common Seal did not rely only upon established iconography, but adapted the imagery and wording to make a remarkable statement of civic identity. The Common Seal can in effect be seen as a declaration of London's central place within the realm in unambiguous terms and for reasons which have everything to do with status, power and authority.[20]

The late 12th and early 13th centuries were significant times for English towns, when they were developing a sense of urban identity and sought increased self-government.[21] London led the way, demanding unprecedented rights from the crown.[22] This culminated in the granting of the Commune in 1191, and of the right of the barons of London to elect their own mayor in 1215.[23] Although the Commune did not last, the city was able to extract further concessions from King John, and no subsequent monarch could afford to take London for granted.

These moves towards greater autonomy were not met with enthusiasm by the King. Barron has summarised the relationship between city and crown by saying that 'At the simplest level the king needed money and the Londoners wanted self-government'.[24] Although London provided essential financial support for the crown and could play an important role in national affairs, the fact that the king usually had the upper hand is neatly summed up by Barron's comment that 'it was clear to all who was... the cat and who the mouse.'[25] On occasion, however, the mouse roared. The design of the Common Seal and the decisions Londoners were making about their personal seals illuminate this relationship between crown and city at crucial stages in London's history.

The reverse of the Common Seal is, in one respect, a seal of devotion, although the design and legend project more than simple piety. When he wrote his *Life of Becket*, William FitzStephen made much of the fact that both he and the Saint were Londoners, and prefaced his work with a vivid description of the city.[26] In the design and legend of their seal, the Londoners who commissioned the matrix were also claiming Thomas as their own, ensuring that no-one could fail to make the connection between England's saintly superstar and the city. The lack of a barrier between Thomas and the Londoners both reinforces their importance in relation to the Saint, and acts as a notable precursor of the personal seals of devotion where individual Londoners placed themselves beside their patron, something which is discussed at length below.

It is, however, on the obverse that London's significance and power is most clearly manifest. The legend refers not to the whole urban community or to the city, but specifically to the 'barons' of London, just as the charter of 1215 granted the 'barons' the right to elect a mayor.[27] Although there is much debate as to exactly who constituted this group, the message is clear; the top people in the city wanted to ensure that everyone recognised that they were the equal of others who served the

king in a military, financial or political capacity. It is also of note that, although the term 'barons' was replaced by 'commonality' in documents by the later 13th century, the legend was never altered.

The design provides equally important evidence for the status of London. The magnificent cityscape has elicited frequent comment, but St Paul is usually described as presiding over the city as patron with little further discussion.[28] While he is certainly a holy guardian, it may be suggested that St Paul is not simply providing spiritual protection; if read carefully, his image can also be seen to project the power and status of the city. Parallels have been suggested between the obverse of this matrix and that of the Great Seal of England, with the image of St Paul with sword and banner borrowed from the majesty image.[29] This idea is supported by further details in the design. While a few other English civic seals depict the banner of England, London is unique in the manner in which it is displayed.[30] By showing St Paul holding the banner, the message would appear to be that the kingdom and the city are inextricably linked, with the saint planting the symbol of England at the heart of London, just as the city was at the heart of the country.[31] Another implication seems to be that without St Paul and the wall, that is London, to support and to protect it, the banner – the king and realm – would be vulnerable.

London's Common Seal is recognised to be one of the finest matrices from medieval England, and was probably engraved by Walter de Ripa, a leading goldsmith who engraved Henry III's Great Seal in 1218.[32] That the Londoners sought out such a skilled craftsman is indicative of the importance of the matrix. The early 13th century was also a time when Londoners were starting to experiment with the designs on their personal seals, relying less on the established types used by the nobility.[33] It is this combination of factors – the experimentation with personal seals, the granting of crucially important rights of the City, and the economic and political dynamism and confidence of the leading Londoners – which surely explains why such powerful and innovative designs were used for the corporate seal.

The Common Seal matrix remained in use until the Reformation, but in 1376, following a period of unrest when some feared that it might have been misused, a group of London aldermen insisted that the obverse was differenced with a star.[34] The decision not to make more radical changes may in part have been because of the exceptional quality of the matrix, but probably had more to do with the need to ensure stability and continuity by changing as little as possible. If so, then it is further evidence that the Common Seal really was seen both to represent and to embody the commonalty of London.

In addition to the Common Seal, by 1278 London possessed a seal of the Mayoralty (**Fig. 4**). This single-sided matrix depicted Saints Paul and Thomas Becket, who invoked divine protection on the mayor and at the same time would also have brought to mind the commanding iconography of the Common Seal.[35] Although small, the leopards in the spaces between the design and legend band also echo that other seal by recalling the Banner of England. In the context of status and power, the date of the matrix is significant. This seal was commissioned soon after the restoration of London's liberties, including the right to elect the mayor, following their suspension between 1265–70.[36] In this way the seal can been seen as a celebration of the return of civic self-government, and a statement of the divine protection for the city and its mayor.

Unlike the Common Seal, the seal of the Mayoralty was replaced after only a century. In April 1381 the existing matrix was declared to be 'ancient, ugly and unworthy of the honour of the... city' and a new one was commissioned by the Mayor, William Walworth (**Fig. 5**).[37] As scholars have noted, the old seal was in fact of a high standard, so clearly there were other factors at work.[38] During the later 14th century there was unrest in London, related to the control of government and the power of different groups which created factions.[39] There was also national unrest, culminating in the Peasants' Revolt in the summer of 1381. This might not seem to be the best time to change such an important symbol of civic office, but in many ways the new mayoral seal does make sense.[40] It embodied the status and authority of the office regardless of the incumbent, and in a time of insecurity projected the idea of power and stability.[41]

Figure 4 First seal of the Mayoralty of London, *c.* 1276 (diam. 46mm). Society of Antiquaries of London

Figure 5 Second seal of the Mayoralty of London, 1381 (diam. 60mm). Society of Antiquaries of London

Below the saints on the 1381 seal of the Mayoralty, and appearing for the first time, are the arms of the city (*argent, a cross gules, in the first quarter a sword in pale the point upwards of the second*).[42] It is not clear exactly when London adopted these arms, but the cross of St George had political significance by the later 14th century. St George was embraced with enthusiasm as a patron by Edward III, and the Order of the Garter was established under the saint's protection in 1348. By the 1380s the cross of St George was therefore imbued with royal and national associations, and it cannot have been by chance that London adopted it. Just as with the leopards of England on the first seal, the new symbol of king and country was included in the 1381 matrix. The incorporation of the sword of St Paul, the city's patron, adapted the royal and national symbol and created a specific identifier, intimately connected with civic history, identity and pride.[43]

The appearance of heraldry on a civic seal at this date has further layers of significance. As will be discussed below, it was in the 14th century that armorial and pseudo-armorial devices and shields with merchants' marks became increasingly prevalent on the personal seals of Londoners. Indeed it may be suggested that the use of armorial devices on Londoners' seals influenced this change in civic iconography. It is certainly clear that communal and personal representation and expressions of status were intimately interconnected in medieval London.

The personal seals in this study date from *c.* 1250–1450, and have been extracted from a number of catalogues.[44] Only laymen who can be identified as citizens, and the wives of such individuals, are included. Following these criteria, the seals of 253 Londoners and 68 burgesses of Newcastle and Durham have been extracted (**Table 1**).

Table 1 Seals and status in medieval English towns

Type of design	London seal-owners		Durham & Newcastle seal-owners	
Armorial	44	(17.3%)	10	(14.7%)
Gems	7	(2.7%)	2	(2.9%)
Merchant marks	17	(6.7%)	12	(17.6%)
Merchant marks on shield	9	(3.5%)	6	(8.8%)
Pseudo-armorial	12	(4.7%)	5	(7.3%)
Religious	39	(15.4%)	1	(1.4%)
Trade-related devices	7	(2.7%)	6	(8.8%)
Other miscellaneous designs	118	(46.6%)	26	(38.2%)

In common with men and women across medieval England, townspeople used a wide variety of images on their seals.[45] There are, however, certain designs which can provide particularly pertinent information about perceptions of status. Seals with intaglio gems, both ancient and medieval, have frequently been cited as having talismanic value, and are generally accepted as a high-status choice for seal-owners.[46] Two of the most famous instances of gem seals are the signet ring attributed to Richard I and the matrix of Thomas Becket, both of which used re-set ancient gems.[47] Richard Whittington, a wealthy merchant as well as famous civic office-holder, is also known to have used an intaglio gem for one of his seals.[48] In the current sample seven Londoners and two Newcastle burgesses used seals with gems. Both Newcastle men were leading merchants in their city. Hugh Carliol was among the burgesses of Newcastle sent to the 1295 Parliament, while Richard of Emeldon served as mayor of his city in the early 14th century.[49] Three of the five Londoners who used gem seals were wealthy landowners, while one, Alice de Lenne, was the wife of Ralph

Figure 6 Seal of Joan de Honeylane, with the owner in a donor-figure pose next to the Virgin and Child (diam. 22mm). Drawing by the author

de Lenne, Sheriff in 1349–50.[50] Although numbers are limited, this evidence suggests that those in London and Newcastle who used gems fit within the expected social strata of seal-owners with intaglio stones, and were perhaps using their seals as a mark of this status.

Other types of seal suggest ideas of identity, some less immediately obvious than others. From the sample of Londoners 39, or over 15%, used seals with religious imagery; only one citizen from Newcastle or Durham did so. While this may not suggest that Londoners were particularly pious, other important status-related issues are highlighted by the discrepancies involved here. A significant indicator of status is the detail of the design. Seven of the 39 religious seals used by Londoners are seals of devotion, with a figure praying to a saint.[51] These seals of devotion may be divided into those which depict the owner beneath a division of some sort, and those with a suppliant figure within the main field.[52] Five of the seven London seals, including that of Joan de Honylane (**Fig. 6**),[53] place the owner in the field next to the saint, a far higher proportion of this type than normally found among personal seals of devotion.[54]

The visual association between such seals and donor figures in other media is immediately apparent. Donor figures appear principally in manuscripts and glass, where patrons commission depictions of themselves at prayer before Christ or a saint. Many examples survive from the 13th century, and this visual language of piety and status became even more prevalent in the 14th century. The wealthy urban elite as well as gentry and nobility commissioned manuscripts and glass with donor figures, although the surviving material has frequently led scholars to suggest that this happened only from the mid-14th century.[55] Seals provide evidence that this became an urban fashion at a slightly earlier date, since Londoners commissioned seals with a donor-figure image by the 1330s.[56] Another important influence on the London citizens may have been the iconography of the Common Seal. The reverse, which was widely seen by Londoners throughout the medieval period because of its use on documents related to the City, depicted citizens at prayer next to, rather than below, St Thomas Becket. This striking image may have resonated with Londoners, providing an exemplar for their own seals of devotion. Moreover, these London 'donor figure' seals are of a very high standard, further reinforcing the connection between sigillographic image and status. Such seals projected an image of piety intrinsically linked with the elites, while the quality of the matrix demonstrated that the owner could afford a skilled seal-engraver.

It has long been accepted that seals with armorial or pseudo-armorial devices conveyed concepts of social standing.

Armorial seals were first used by the highest levels of English society in the 12th century, and their adoption by the wider nobility, knights, and gentry has been the subject of much scholarly debate.[57] The discussion of the use of armorial seals by urban elites has tended to assume that successful citizens used heraldic devices as a sign that they had arrived in the wider social arena, and were shrugging off their mercantile origins. For example Thrupp used sigillographic evidence in ground-breaking ways, but discussed the armorial seals of Londoners in a chapter entitled ‘Trade and Gentility’.[58] It may be, however, that the factors influencing the use of armorial seals in an urban context were more complex than a simple sign of the gentrification of townsmen. Successful citizens were certainly not reluctant to use this badge of status, although it is important to remember that some citizens came from armigerious families. For example Richard Whittington used his Gloucestershire family’s arms on one of his seals.[59] As with religious imagery, however, when the use of armorial seals is considered in more detail fascinating patterns emerge.

The armorial seals in this study constitute roughly one quarter of all those used by Londoners and citizens of Newcastle and Durham (**Table 1**).[60] This category includes seals which use conventional armorial devices, those with suspect blazoning which may be termed pseudo-armorial, and those with shields blazoned with merchant marks, condemned by a 15th-century herald as ‘not armes’ but widely used in the later middle ages.[61] The earliest armorial seals in this survey appear in the 1240s, but they are most numerous in the mid- to later 14th century.

The majority of London armorial seals display identifiable arms or follow heraldic conventions, a higher proportion of the armorial category than is found on the seals from Newcastle and Durham. The presence of heralds in the capital may have been influential, although the vastly different size and status of the towns themselves may have been a significant factor. London was a major city whose leading merchants regularly supplied the royal court and traded with international clients.[62] It therefore was likely to have had a number of citizens who belonged to armigerious social groups. Almost all Londoners who used heraldic devices were prominent merchants, many of whom held civic office. An early example is Nicholas Bat, who served as Sheriff in 1244–46.[63] In the 14th century, several sheriffs owned armorial seals, including the mercer, William de Caustone (Sheriff 1316–17) and the grocer, John Aubry (Sheriff 1373–74).[64] When the London Mayor, William Walworth, was knighted, following his role in quelling the Peasants’ Revolt in 1381, he was also awarded a grant-of-arms, although he was already using an armorial seal in 1377.[65] This suggests that the use of armorial devices by leading Londoners was accepted without much comment by contemporaries.[66]

The grey area of pseudo-armorial devices, along with shields charged with merchant marks, can also provide an insight into concepts of status in later medieval English towns. Scholars have noted that a number of Londoners simply created devices with which to charge a shield, sometimes following a general heraldic lexicon or using a trade-related device.[67] This is certainly the case from the sample under discussion in this paper. Some devices are a rebus, a pun on a person’s name, such as the three small fish employed by London saddler William Pickerel on his mid-14th-century seal (a pickerel is a young pike) (**Fig. 7**).[68] A few pseudo-armorial seals were religious in nature, such as the shield charged with three wheels accompanied by the legend [OR]A’ PRO. ME. PIA. KATERINA (Pray for me holy Catherine) used in 1374 by fishmonger John Longney.[69]

Figure 7 Armorial seal with a rebus design; William Pickerel (diam. 21mm). Drawing by the author

Far more common among the pseudo-armorial category are seals which use trade-related blazons; cloves for grocers and apothecaries, as in the case of the apothecary John de Sellinge, who sealed with a shield with three cloves.[70] Goldsmiths can be found with seals engraved with buckles and goblets.[71] The seal of the surgeon Adam le Rouse is particularly striking, with three flasks in chief.[72] He was a royal surgeon in the 1360s, and the use of the emblem of his profession as a charge fits well with his status as a man who served the king. The use of fish as a pseudo-armorial device by fishmongers was also popular.[73]

Londoners certainly seem to have employed pseudo-armorial and trade-related devices on shields more frequently that citizens in Newcastle and Durham. All date from the 14th century, the period in which heraldry was being used on an increasingly wide variety of media, armorial devices were rapidly adopted by lesser knights and, significantly, arms appeared on one of the City’s civic seals. The armorial shield was a status symbol, and it is no surprise to find prosperous merchants and citizens using it to full effect.

Shields charged with a pseudo-armorial device fit within a national vocabulary of status, but merchants’ marks are urban-specific devices. The use of such marks on shields was barred by heralds in 1478, and even some modern scholars have been rather disdainful about them, Thrupp commenting that such use turned an otherwise plausible shield of arms into ‘a mere trade mark’.[74] This is to miss the point. Even if they were ‘trade marks’, they were deliberately used by wealthy merchants and artisans on seals at a time when the status of townsmen, particularly when access to the freedom – that is citizenship – was sharply contested.[75] Indeed McGuinness makes the important point that, among the Newcastle burgesses, merchants’ mark seals give an ‘impression of common identity’.[76] This fits well with the strong, secular, imagery of Newcastle’s Common Seal discussed above.

A far higher proportion of Newcastle citizens than Londoners used merchants’ marks, both on a shield and as a main design, on their seals – 26.4% of all Newcastle and Durham sigillants in contrast to only 10.2% of London seal-owners in this sample.[77] The reasons for this are not clear, although overall a higher proportion of Londoners used armorial, pseudo-armorial and religious designs. Merchant marks were not a poor man’s shield of arms, however, for prominent citizens chose to use them when their contemporaries were using correct armorial devices. As early

Figure 8 Seal of John de Stodeye, with a merchant's mark in place of a crest (diam. 25mm). Drawing by the author

as 1300 the wealthy London cloth merchant and sheriff Reginald de Thunderle used a seal with a shield charged with his merchant mark.[78] This became more common later in the 14th century, and the seal of John Pounfreyt, used in 1392, displaying a merchant mark on a shield within a cusped border, provides a distinctive example.[79] On occasion, a merchant's mark was even incorporated with a legitimate armorial design. The mid-14th-century seal of John de Stodeye, a London vintner, who served both as sheriff and mayor of his city, has as its main design a shield of arms with his mark above in the place usually reserved for a crest, deliberately emphasising his mercantile credentials (**Fig. 8**).[80]

Some seals used a trade-related image as the main design. Several such seals from Durham and Newcastle show the seal-owners engaged in their occupation, but no such images appear on London seals in this sample.[81] Instead, Londoners seem to have favoured a more symbolic trade-related vocabulary. A fine example is the 14th-century seal of Roger Raby, a London goldsmith, which depicts a large ring-brooch or buckle.[82] In the 15th century the goldsmiths adopted the buckle as a device on their company arms,[83] but Raby's seal suggests that this device was a symbol of the craft at a much earlier date.[84] Whether such seals were precursors of later guild arms is debatable, but they are however unmistakable statements of a specifically mercantile identity. Whether using an urban-specific merchants' mark or drawing on the national language of armorial devices, all these town-based seal-owners were expressing their sense of status, authority and power as understood in an urban context.

Conclusions

This brief survey suggests that the close connection between seals and status in medieval towns has much wider implications for debates about urban identities than previously has been noted. By looking both at civic seals and the personal seals of townspeople in tandem, an urban-specific sense of identity, with its own paradigms of status and authority, emerges. There is still much work to do in this field, but it is clear that seals were making good impressions in towns as elsewhere, and that scholars ignore them at their peril.

Notes

1 See for example Rubin 2006 and the essays in von Moos 2004. An important article about French urban seals addresses the difficulties of the 'conceptualisation of communality' faced by those producing the earliest town seals (Bedos-Rezak 1990, 39).
2 Barron 1969, 230–2. Whittington's seals are discussed below.
3 The civic seals are recorded in BM Seals, nos 4579–5546; personal seals in this study are drawn from Ellis 1978, 1981; Blair 1911–13 and 1914–19; Blair 1923, 1924. The choice of Newcastle and Durham for comparative samples is dictated largely by the limited availability of catalogues of urban seals.
4 Thrupp 1982, 249–55 and Appendix A; Barron 1969; Barron 2004, 38; Barron 2004a, 113–15; Goodall 1959; New 2008.
5 McEwan 2006.
6 McEwan 2006, 82–7. Henry FitzAilwyn, London's first mayor, drew upon noble seals in his use of an equestrian seal which depicted him hawking.
7 Bedos-Rezak 1990, 34.
8 BM Seals, nos 4579–5546. See also St John Hope 1894–5; Pedrick 1904; Harvey and McGuinness 1996, 107–12. For French seals see Bedos 1980 and Bedos-Rezak 1990.
9 Harvey and McGuinness 1996,109; St John Hope, 'Municipal Seals', 438; Bedos 1980.
10 St John Hope 1894–5, 447.
11 BM Seals no. 5193; Blair 1922, 171–2, fig. 1. Blair notes a suggestion that the Newcastle town seal may be as early as 1135, but is justifiably cautious about endorsing this.
12 Wade 1995, 3; Mackenzie 1827, 7, 9, 10–14.
13 Wade 1994, 31, 38.
14 Wade 1995, 3; Mackenzie 1827, 7, 9, 11–13.
15 BM Seals no. 4899; St John Hope 1894–95, 451. The arms below the bishop may have been those of Bishop Skirlaw, but were later adopted as the civic arms. Birch and St John Hope clearly state that the matrix, given to the city in 1608, was copied from the medieval matrix and this analysis appears to be correct, although Gee (1928, 34) described the die as 'an excellent piece of medieval art'.
16 Gee 1928, 15–16, 23.
17 Gee 1928, 10–11, 18; Lapsley 1924, 31.
18 Heslop (1987, no. 193) describes this seal as 'one of the outstanding civic seals of medieval Europe'.
19 Exeter's town seal dates from the last quarter of the 12th century, although that of Newcastle-upon-Tyne may be earlier, St John Hope 1894–95, 435; Blair 1922, 172.
20 Barron 2004a, 113–14.
21 Good introductions to English towns in this crucial period are Campbell 2001, especially 69–75, and Britnell 2006.
22 For the development of London in the 10th to 13th centuries, see Brooke Keir 1975, Williams 1962 and Keene 2001.
23 Brooke and Keir 1975, 47–9. There had been a mayor of London from the late 12th century, but the right to elect such an officer was only granted by the crown in 1215; I am grateful to Prof. Caroline Barron for clarification on this matter and other aspects of the development of London government.
24 Barron 2004, 9.
25 Barron 2004, 10, 16–18.
26 Riley, 1859–62, vol. 2, 1–15. For a translation of the Description see Stenton 1934.
27 Contemporary documents refer to citizens and aldermen as well as barons, but the charter of 1215 granted only the 'barons of London' the right to elect the mayor. Scholars have recently concluded that the 'barons' of London were leading Londoners who were landowners in the City, that is, demesne barons of the king, Caroline Barron, pers. comm.
28 London 1987, no. 193; St John Hope 1894–95, 439.
29 Barron 2004a, 115.
30 The seals of Rochester, Kent, and Appleby, Westmoreland, depict the banner of England, the first showing it flying from a castle and the latter (which was a site of the Royal Exchequer) incorporating it in a rather clumsy manner within the martyrdom of St Lawrence, BM Seals, vol. 2, nos 5331, 4587.
31 For the relationship between crown and city in the early 13th century see Barron 2004, 9–42, and McEwan 2007.
32 London 1985, no. 193.
33 McEwan (2006, 87) suggests that 'changes in the governance of the city encouraged leading members of the community to identify more strongly with the London community', while Barron (2004a, 113) cites the Common Seal as 'one of the earliest expressions of 'political thought' from London.
34 Barron 2004, 134.
35 This matrix was engraved to a high standard, and art-historians have made comparisons between it and details of the magnificent Westminster Retable (*Age of* Chivalry 1987, no. 194.
36 Williams 1962, 242; *Age of Chivalry* 1987, no. 195.
37 *Age of Chivalry* 1987, no. 195.

38 Barron 2004a, 114.
39 Bird 1949 is an accessible introduction to this complex period.
40 Barron (2004a, 113–15) suggests that the replacement of the seal in 1381 was an important stage in the corporate identity of the body politic.
41 Barron (2004a, 114) notes that the legend on the first seal referred to the office of the mayor and not to the individual.
42 It is sometimes suggested that the sword is in fact the dagger used by William Walworth to attack Wat Tyler. This cannot be true because the sword appears on the City arms before the Peasants' Revolt, a fact which was noted a century ago (St John Hope 1894–95, 451). Concurrent with the new seal are provisions for the Midsummer Watch to wear liveries of red and white, the heraldic colours of the City, Barron 2004a, 114.
43 Barron describes the City arms as an expression of the civic identity of the Londoners, Barron 2004a, 115.
44 Ellis 1978, 1982; New unpublished; Blair 1923, 1924; Blair 1911–13, 1914–19.
45 Good introductions to the imagery on personal seals are Harvey and McGuinness 1994, 77–93 and Heslop 1987. Numerous examples foliate motifs, birds and animals, grotesques, rebus and canting designs are found on urban seals; for discussions of the types of design on London seals see Thrupp 1982, 253–5 and New 2008.
46 Cherry 1997, 133; Clanchy 1993, 316–17; Harvey and McGuinness 1996, 14, 36.
47 Harvey and McGuiness 1996, fig. 30 (British Museum, P&E 1962, 11–1,1); Clanchy 1993, 316 .
48 London, Guildhall Library, Mss. 2903, 5457, discussed in Barron 1969, 250 – 1, figs V.a, V.b.
49 Blair 1923–4, nos 531, 889. Carliol was the son of Thomas Carliol, Mayor of Newcastle in 1260 and 1264–65, while Emelden appears as a burgess of Newcastle from 1296 and Mayor in 1305–08, 1311–12 and 1313 (Blair 1940, 2–4).
50 Ralph and Alice de Lenne used their seals to attest a document of 1324, BH Deeds F. 85 seal 2 (Barron 2004, 331). Jolan de Durham (d. 1314) used his gem seal in the later 13th century, and bequeathed silver plate in addition to land, Sharpe 1890, vol. 1, 251; John de Middleton, who impressed his seal in 1306, was the sole heir of the wealthy clerk, William de Middleton (d. 1300), Sharpe 1890, vol. 1, 149; Margaret de Lindeseye, (d. 1349) widow of John, used a gem seal in 1333, and bequeathed a considerable amount of land (Sharpe 1890, vol. 1, 62).
51 Ellis 1978, 1982, P11, P674, P921, P1295 and BH Deeds E.18, G.34, G.36 seal 2. The total number of seals of devotion is somewhat lower than the average of 23% of religious seals which are seals of devotion, a proportion calculated from the author's postdoctoral research on the sigillographic religious iconography. This research was based on a survey of all the main published catalogues of British seals which produced a sample of 1,004 personal seals with religious elements.
52 From the late 13th-century episcopal seals of dignity feature a suppliant figure beneath a barrier, for example, St John Hope 1885–7, 277–8.
53 TNA DL25/1463.
54 This is based on the seals of devotion extracted from the author's sample of personal seals with religious iconography, of which 89 depict the suppliant figure in the field but 143 (62%) have an architectural division between the suppliant figure and the saint.
55 The earliest identified example of a merchant as a donor-figure in glass is Robert de Skelton, a leading York merchant, who appears in a window of *c.* 1350 in the church of St Denis, Walmgate, York, Coldstream 1994, 160.
56 Alice, wife of goldsmith Richard de Ramsey, used a donor figure seal in 1332 (BH Deeds G. 36 seal 2).
57 Useful introductions are Crouch 2002 and Coss 1995. Blair 1943 remains a key introduction to the development of heraldry on seals.
58 In an appendix Thrupp lists all identifiable seals which belonged to aldermanic families, but although she noted when a merchants mark was used only the designs of armorial seals are actually described (Thrupp 1982, 234–87, Appendix A).
59 Barron 1969, 231, fig. VI c.
60 In a study based solely on Ellis's catalogues almost half of Londoners were found to have used armorial seals; this was . probably biased by the predominance of wealthy merchants attesting the sample documents. See Barron 2002, 232 and n. 71. In his survey of personal seals in TNA DL25 collections, Prof. Harvey identified only 16% of the seals as armorial (Harvey 1991, 117–27).
61 Thrupp notes the use of pseudo-armorial devices, which she suggests were often designed by seal-engravers (Thrupp 1982, 252). Merchant marks were banned as charges in 1478, Goodall 1959, 20. Armorial seals in London are discussed in other contexts in Barron 2002 and New forthcoming.
62 As early as *c.* 1300 London was an international centre for trade (Keene 2002, 205–6).
63 BH Deeds A.4.
64 Caustone used his seal in 1311 (TNA E329/59); Aubry impressed his armorial seal on a document of 1377 (TNA E329/33); Henry Nasard, a wealthy merchant who possessed an armorial seal, resigned as alderman in 1322 because of the demands of royal service (Barron 2004, 142, no. 149).
65 Thrupp 1982, 251; Walworth impressed his armorial seal on at least one document in 1377 (TNA E329/3).
66 Armorial bearings of London aldermen are mentioned as early as 1215, while aldermen were expected to use heraldic devices in the 14th century (Goodall 1959, especially 17–18; Thrupp 1982, 252–3).
67 Thrupp 1982, 252–3; Barron 2002, 233–4. The question of what constituted a correct blazon in the 14th century is a complex one, as heraldic devices were often adopted by an individual and gradually became accepted as formal devices. The research origins of this practice of inherited heraldry is summarised in Crouch 2002, 28–30.
68 TNA E42/295 (Ellis 1978, P618); Pickerel appended his seal to a document in 1350.
69 TNA E329/57 (Ellis 1978, P488); Longney died in 1383 (Sharpe 1890, vol. 2, 233).
70 BH Deeds G. 10 seal 1, impressed in 1333; Selling may be identified with the man of this name who is mentioned in the will of apothecary John Dachet (d. 1316) (Sharpe 1890, vol. 1, 270).
71 Thrupp 1982, 252–3
72 TNA E42/13 (Ellis 1978 or 1981, 672). Rouse (d. 1379) was royal surgeon in the 1360s (Sharpe 1890, vol. 2, 211–12; Barron 2004, 282 n. 86, 88).
73 Thrupp's suggestion (1982, 252) that this clearly had pious connotations seems rather overstated; although the fish clearly had resonance as a Christian symbol, there was plenty of scope for far more explicitly devout imagery on seals if the owner wished to express piety.
74 Thrupp 1982, 253.
75 Rigby and Ewan 2001, especially 300–4; the situation in London was particularly complex and fraught (Barron 2004, 204–6).
76 McGuinness 1986, 172.
77 McGuinness found that almost half his Newcastle sigillants employed merchants' marks (McGuinness 1982, 127).
78 TNA E213/49; Thunderle was sheriff in 1305–6 (Barron 2004, 352). He was a prominent merchant, and supplied rich fabrics to the crown (Quinton 2000, 170, no. 209).
79 BH Deeds C.50, H.11.
80 TNA C148/48 (Ellis 1978, P751); Stodeye was Sheriff in 1352–3 and Mayor in 1357–8.
81 Examples from Durham and Newcastle include the well-known seal of Eustace the Brewer mashing at a tub (Blair 1911–13, 1914–19, no. 344). Londoners did on occasion use such designs; the seal of Reginald of Friday Street apparently depicts him tapping a barrel of wine, for example, Warwick Castle, Charters, no. 233, cited in Bloom 1906, 179.
82 BH Deeds F. 70.
83 The Goldsmiths' Company arms incorporated 'buckles', which look very similar to Raby's ring-brooch, by *c.* 1470 (Reddaway and Walker 1975, pl. 1). I am grateful to John Clark for drawing my attention to this early use of the ring-brooch on the Goldsmiths' arms, and for information regarding examples of ring-brooches in the Museum of London.
84 For further discussions of trade-related devices see New 2008.

Glasgow, Italy and France: 13th- and early 14th-century Seals from the Cathedral

Virginia Glenn

Of all the nations represented at the 'Good Impressions' conference, Scotland has suffered the greatest losses to its medieval art. In the Reformation, Scandinavia adopted Lutheranism, while Scotland chose Calvinism. The newly Protestant Scots, forming what John Knox himself described as 'the rascal multitude', wrought even more total devastation of churches, monasteries and their contents, than Henry VIII's systematic Commissioners achieved south of the Border.[1] This iconoclasm followed centuries of intermittent warfare with England, which had also resulted in much destruction. A comparison of the collections of the Museum of Scotland, where most surviving medieval material with a Scottish provenance is preserved,[2] with those of the national museums in Copenhagen,[3] Oslo,[4] Stockholm[5] or Reykjavik[6] is a very depressing exercise. Consequently, our deductions from Scottish seals are particularly valuable, in assessing the taste, aspirations and foreign contacts of their owners.

By 1300, the boundaries of the Scottish dioceses, which prevailed until the Reformation, had been established for over a century (**Fig. 1, opposite**).[7] The largest and richest were St Andrews and Glasgow, covering the most fertile and accessible areas of the country. The first datable Bishop of St Andrews was Melduin who died in 1055, but he probably had 10th- and 11th-century predecessors. David I and Malcolm IV as kings, tried to have it made a metropolitan see, but it only gained independence from York by 1192, after which it remained directly subject to Rome.[8] Much earlier than the 12th century, the relics at St Andrews were accepted as those of the apostle who became the patron saint of Scotland.[9] Consequently, although the town of Glasgow, in the north of that diocese, occupied a strategic central position in southern Scotland its bishopric always took second place.

However, Glasgow also achieved the status of *filia specialis* under the immediate authority of Rome, during the episcopate of the Cistercian bishop, Jocelin.[10] Elected in 1174, he vigorously enhanced the reputation of St Kentigern, Glasgow's patron, commissioning a new *Life* from Jocelin of Furness[11] and commencing the rebuilding and enlargement of Glasgow cathedral, which housed Kentigern's shrine. A choir was consecrated in 1197, only to be replaced in the mid-13th century, under Bishop William Bondington.[12] Keenly aware of developments at St Andrews – already rebuilding their cathedral – the bishops of Glasgow rivalled and imitated the senior diocese, a situation also apparent on their seals.

In the 13th century two successive Glasgow bishops, Walter of St Albans (1207–32) and William de Bondington (1233–58) adopted a seal design, which had been introduced into Scotland by Roger de Beaumont, Bishop of St Andrews (1198–1202)[13] (**Fig. 2**). More a grand courtier than a religious cleric, he came from the wealthy Anglo-Norman family of the Earl of Leicester and was Chancellor to King William the Lion of Scotland, who happened to be his cousin. Roger's ties with the family estates in Normandy remained close and his visits to them on business are well documented.[14]

Although copied by at least 10 other Scottish bishops, over 50 years, no instances of the motif of a figure standing in profile seem to have occurred in England or France. The fine looping drapery folds and the sense of movement as the figure turns away from the viewer, while stepping forward with his right foot, relate to French sculpture, notably voussoir figures of the 1180s and 1190s.[15] The brilliance of execution and the originality of Roger's matrix suggest that it was actually engraved in the Ile-de-France. Walter's version retains some of the same movement and plasticity, along with the detail of the crozier head imposed in front of the framing legend, thus emphasising the effect of the bishop stepping out into another space (**Fig. 3**).[16] By comparison, Bondington's copy is very wooden, with a disproportionately large head and his crozier is cautiously contained within the plain inner border of the lettering (**Fig. 4**).[17] The greater sophistication of the image and the elegant even epigraphy of the earlier seal, probably owe much to Walter's close court connections, while William seems to have employed a more local Scottish craftsman, who understood the impact of the image, but had no real grasp of the underlying anatomy.

As elsewhere in Europe, specially engraved metal counterseals, replacing reused gemstones, were introduced by both St Andrews' and Glasgow's bishops from the early 13th century.[18] Walter of St Albans who was royal chaplain from 1195 until 1207, is described in the *Melrose Chronicle* as 'the Lord King's Chaplain' even when elected bishop.[19] His counterseal continued to be in use in 1227, when he had been bishop for 20 years, still carrying the legend: WALTERI CAPELLANI GLASGUENSIS (**Fig. 5**).[20]

William, on his counterseal, kneels before Kentigern with a legend asking for his prayers: ORA PRO NOBIS BEATE KENTEGERNE.[21] This is the first attempt to honour the saint on a seal and rather crudely carried out. The figures have huge, almost comic heads, the letters are unevenly spaced and uncertainly formed. A very local artist seems to be struggling with a novel conception (**Fig. 6**).

Comparable developments occurred in the seals of the Chapter of Glasgow cathedral, which replaced its 12th-century matrix (**Fig. 7**),[22] probably under Bondington. The obverse is a conventional cross-section of the cathedral, with a standing figure on either side of an altar, one with his hands raised in prayer, the other a priest reading from a lectern (**Fig. 8**).[23] A similar arrangement had been used by Dunfermline abbey for its Chapter seal earlier in the century.[24] The large clumsy heads and formless hands with outspread fingers could have come from the same workshop as Bondington's counterseal, but the lettering is more regular and evenly spaced, suggesting a more

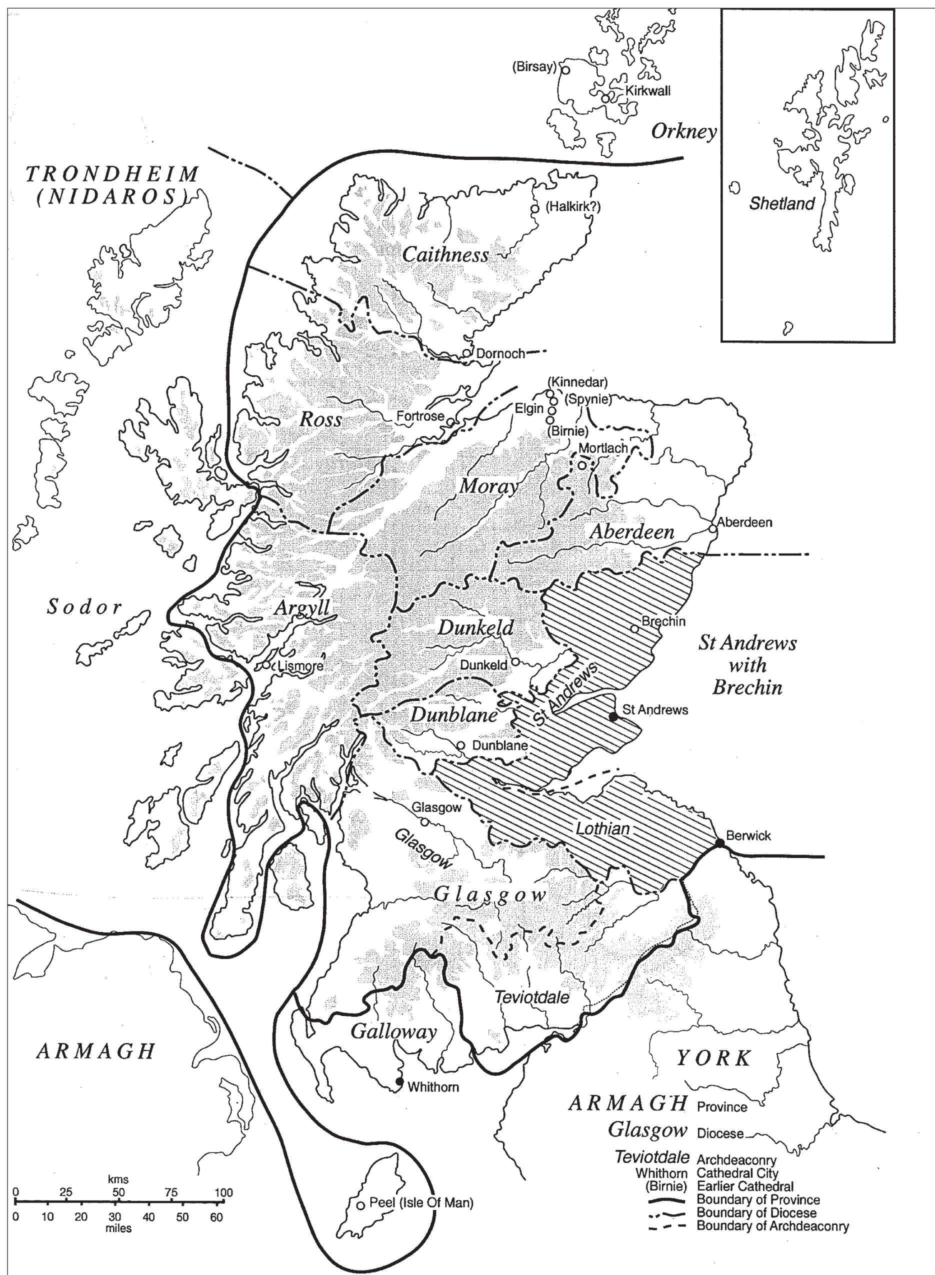

Figure 1 Scottish dioceses about 1300. © Trustees of the Scottish Medievalists 1986, *Atlas of Scottish History to 1707*, 337, D.E.R. Watt

Figure 2 Roger, Bishop of St Andrews (1198–1202) (86 x 54mm). Durham Cathedral Chapter Archives

Figure 3 Walter, Bishop of Glasgow (1207–32) (78 x 47mm). National Archives of Scotland (NAS) and Buccleuch Estates

Figure 4 William de Bondington, Bishop of Glasgow (1233–58) (78 x 47mm). NAS and Buccleuch Estates

Figure 5 Bishop Walter counterseal (50 x 29mm). NAS and Buccleuch Estates

Figure 6 William de Bondington counterseal (49 x 30mm). NAS and Buccleuch Estates

Figure 7 Glasgow Cathedral Chapter 1190s (75 x 53mm). NAS and Buccleuch Estates

accomplished or more practised engraver. The Bishop presided for 25 years and this seal would have been consistent with a workshop or individual craftsman, whose skills had evolved during his episcopate.

The reverse of the Chapter seal celebrates Kentigern (**Fig. 9**).[25] Around the edge is a prayer for the cathedral clergy and on either side of the central scene: SANCTUS KENTEG'NUS. It has been argued that this spelling of the saint's name, which also appears in the inscription around the edge, proves that this matrix came from the same source as Bondington's counterseal.[26] This has three pilgrims wearing characteristic hats kneeling before the niches in a shrine base, below a half length figure of a bishop, his right hand raised in blessing. Duncan made the tempting suggestion in 1998, that the object above represented a head reliquary. However, with the spires on either side it could be a diagrammatic rendering of an architectural shrine with figures, like, for example, that of St Taurin at Evreux.[27]

If the Chapter seal shares the rather unsophisticated style of the bishops', the town seal is decidedly rough and cursory (**Fig. 10**).[28] The iconography, nevertheless, is of very considerable interest. In the centre is, presumably, the head of Kentigern with a small bird singing on a bush to his right, a Celtic bell to his left and a fish with a ring in its mouth below.

Joceline of Furness collected his material from oral and early written sources to compile his *Life of Kentigern* (also known as Mungo) including the bird and fish episodes.[29] The saint was a 6th-century monk and bishop, who converted Cumbria and Strathclyde to Celtic Christianity. A series of highly coloured, folkloric legends recorded his numerous miracles.

The person who devised this seal rejected more sensational episodes such as Kentigern's pregnant mother being pushed off Traprain Law in a chariot, then set adrift on the Firth of Forth in a coracle and her subsequent voyage to the Island of May, followed by all the fish in the estuary;[30] not to mention the saint's own use of wild stags for ploughing, the wolf which ate one of them and obligingly took its place between the shafts, the white boar which led him to found the monastery of St Asaph and his exchange of croziers with St Columba.[31] Instead the iconography commemorates the saint's first miracle and a dubious tale lifted from early Irish romances in the *Yellow Book of Lecan*.

Kentigern's first miracle occurred as a boy in the care and tutelage of St Serf. His master's pet robin died and Kentigern restored it to life. This impression is too poor for the detail to be

Figure 8 Glsgow Cathedral Chapter, obverse, mid-13th century (diam. 72mm). NAS and Buccleuch Estates

Figure 9 Glsgow Cathedral Chapter, reverse, mid-13th century (diam. 72mm). NAS and Buccleuch Estates

Figure 10 Glsgow town seal, early 14th-century impression (diam. 55mm). NAS and Buccleuch Estates

Figure 11 Robert Wishart, Bishop of Glasgow (1271–1316) impression of 1274 (55 x 32mm). Archivio Segreto Vaticano

Figure 12 Counterseal, Robert de Prebenda, Bishop of Dunblane (1259–1284) impressions of 1260 and 1268 (48 x 30mm). Durham Cathedral Chapter Archives

distinguished, but other Glasgow seals clearly show the little bird looking up at his saviour and singing to him. The miracle concerning the fish with the ring, which is recounted below (p.47) is rather more improbable for a saint credited with dissolving incestuous marriages and changing concubinage into legitimate wedlock. It is illustrated in remarkable detail on two later 13th-century seals discussed below (**Figs 14 and 16**).

The inclusion of a bell shrine shows that Glasgow adhered to some customs and traditions of the earlier church in Ireland and Argyll where, along with croziers, books and other items associated with particular saints, bells were enshrined in portable reliquaries.[32] These secondary relics were believed to be almost as potent as corporeal remains in the curing of illness in humans or animals and the taking of oaths.[33] Even if its bishops were of Norman or English extraction, the Glaswegian populace, then as now, tended to look westwards.

All these seals were fairly unsophisticated and may have been made locally. In view of the comparative grandeur of the cathedral itself, with its English and Continental references, this is quite surprising.[34] The records for Scottish goldsmiths are very scant before the 15th century, but some deductions can be made from the known distribution of mints and moneyers. It seems fair to assume that these craftsmen would in many cases have applied their skills to other forms of fine metalwork during the frequent periods when new coinage was not being issued. During the reign of Alexander III (1249–86) some coins were minted at Glasgow under Walter, a moneyer who also occurs at a number of royal burghs.[35] Overwhelmingly, however, they practised in Berwick, Aberdeen, Edinburgh, Perth and Roxburgh. There is also evidence of one master striking coin at Stirling and one at St Andrews.[36] In other words, the mints followed the patronage of the peripatetic royal court.

Between 1258 and 1270, there was a hiatus in the consecration of Glasgow bishops. First Nicholas de Moffat (1259 and 1268–70) and then John de Cheam (1259–68), were the subject of wrangles between the Scottish crown and the papacy, although Moffat was accepted by King Alexander III and enthroned in late 1260.[37] No seals have been found for either.

With the arrival of the powerful Norman family of Wishart,[38] bishops' seals in Glasgow were transformed. William Wishart was elected Bishop in 1270, already having been Archdeacon of St Andrews and royal Chancellor, but before he could be consecrated, he was promoted to the see of St Andrews and Robert (presumed to be his nephew) was elected to Glasgow in his stead, where he presided from 1271–1316.[39]

Robert Wishart was to play a leading role in Scottish religious and political affairs. After his election, he went to the Curia to seek confirmation for his uncle and himself and was consecrated at Aberdeen in January 1273. Presumably, he provided himself as soon as possible with a new seal in order to conduct his business as bishop. By July 1274, he was at the Council of Lyons.[40] His seal attached to an *Actum* presented there (**Fig. 11**) is in marked contrast to the clumsy counterseals of Walter of St Albans and William de Bondington.[41] In an elegant architectural layout, Saints Kentigern and Laurence occupy a pair of cusped pointed arches in the upper tier, with the kneeling bishop in voluminous, carefully detailed vestments below under a curved gable with delicately moulded decoration. Wishart's neatly modelled head and hands, the elegant realistic lappets flowing from his mitre and the crocketted Gothic crozier which he holds belong to a different world from that of his predecessors in office. There is a very obvious source for the whole design – it is an almost direct copy of a seal used by Robert de Prebenda, Bishop of Dunblane (1259–84) (**Fig. 12**).[42]

Wishart acquired his matrix in the 18 months between his consecration and his attendance at the Council of Lyons. Given the short time scale, it is most likely that his seal was made by a Scottish engraver, who knew of, or had actually made, Prebenda's. By the time both bishops were at Lyons in 1274, Prebenda himself was using a formal seal of dignity showing a standing bishop against a ground of foliage and rosettes.[43]

Dunblane was the smallest diocese in medieval Scotland, tucked between the north of Glasgow and St Andrews. However the town of Dunblane was strategically placed just about 8 km north of Stirling. Stirling was one of the principal royal strongholds in the 13th century, where at least one

Figure 13 William Fraser, Bishop of St Andrews (1279–97) and Robert Wishart seals of dignity 1292–93 (80 x 50mm and 70 x 45mm). National Archives, Kew

probable goldsmith called Henri was recorded in 1260.[44] Robert's title *de Prebenda* identifies him as formerly a senior functionary in the king's household, with responsibility for major expenses including those of the Clerk of the Wardrobe, who looked after relics, jewels, vestments and treasure among other things.[45] He would have been well placed to commission an innovative and skilfully engraved piece of metalwork. If the rather unsuccessful diagrammatic treatment of St Laurence's gridiron,[46] suggests that the matrix may have been made in Scotland, the inspiration appears to have come from Rome.

Dunblane cathedral is dedicated to St Blane (a 6th-century Scottish bishop) and St Laurence, one of the rare dual dedications in Scotland, hence the two standing figures in the upper register. The kneeling bishop prays below, facing left towards the name saint of town and diocese. Comparison of the architectural layout with the paired arches, the very intrusive lower niche and the rigidly vertical poses of the saints is very comparable with the seal of Cardinal Giordano Pironto, Cardinal Deacon of SS Cosma e Damiano, Rome (there is a recorded impression of 1263).[47]

Robert de Prebenda was an Englishman, who had probably come to Scotland in the 1250s, had been Dean of Dunblane, a Canon of Glasgow and Dunkeld and a papal Chaplain. Possibly already familiar with Italy, he was there in 1256 to secure the election of Gamelin as Bishop of St Andrews. He returned in 1259 for his own confirmation, with Nicholas Moffat, Bishop-elect of Glasgow.[48] Consequently, he would have been familiar with this Roman device for honouring a pair of saints to celebrate the dual dedication of a church.

Wishart was still using the matrix for the Lyons impression, showing considerable signs of wear, on a charter of Melrose Abbey concerning land rights, which has a historical context pointing to a date in Alexander III's reign, in other words before 1286.[49] Apart from its evolved and sophisticated style, another novelty for a Scottish episcopal seal of this period is the inclusion of St Laurence, whose significance was personal to the bishop and not part of the dedication of his cathedral.[50]

Like Robert Wishart, clerics in Rome also came to use the layout with paired saints for more personal reasons. It was employed twice, for example, by Benedetto Caetani.[51] Elected Cardinal of S. Nicola in Carcere in 1281, he followed the design of Pironto and had himself portrayed on his seal kneeling in a niche below the figures of St Benedict in monastic habit (his own name saint) and Nicholas the dedicatee of his church as a mitred bishop, whom he faces to receive his blessing; just as earlier Laurence and Kentigern had been combined for similar reasons by Wishart. When Caetani was elevated to the cardinal presbytery of SS Silvestro and Martino in 1291, his new seal bore a more elaborately Gothic version of the lay-out and contained two bishops. These are identified by scrolling labels as Martin and Nicholas (the latter perhaps in honour of Pope Nicholas IV, who had transferred him to his new church) displacing the titular Silvester.[52]

In due course, Alexander III's only direct descendant, Margaret 'the Maid of Norway', succeeded him, but died in 1290 at the age of about seven, on her way to Scotland. Edward I then intervened on behalf of English interests, selecting John Balliol as the Scottish king. This arrangement lasted only from 1292–6.[53] The seals of dignity of William Fraser, Bishop of St Andrews and Robert Wishart are attached to the 'Letters patent by John de Balliol giving a general release to Edward I' a document of 1292–3, also sealed by seven of the principal nobles of Scotland (**Fig. 13**).[54] Like Wishart, Fraser was a major political figure, serving for seven years as Chancellor of Scotland, after Alexander III died and they were fellow royal Guardians.[55] Their relative positions in the national hierarchy and the pecking order of their dioceses are quite clear in these two seals. That of St Andrews came first in line and was larger.

The impression shown on the right in **Figure 13** is from the second seal of William Fraser, as Bishop.[56] It is an elaboration on his first, to which a cusped architectural niche around the figure has been added. The earlier seal already carried not only his surname in the inscription, but also the family arms and emblem – the *fraise* – on the lattice ground.[57] Strawberry flowers also decorate the apparels of his alb. Hunter Blair claimed in 1919, that Fraser's was the first British episcopal seal with a shield of arms.[58] Both seals give a strong indication of the self image of their owners as much as the importance of the see over which each of them presided, including the innovatory appearance of their own family names in the legends.[59]

Figure 14 Robert Wishart detached seal, with tag (1289–95) (55 x 35mm). The National Archives

Figure 15 Impression of Robert Wishart second seal of dignity, obverse 1316 (88 x 50mm). NAS and Buccleuch Estates

Figure 16 Impression of Robert Wishart second seal of dignity, reverse 1316 (74 x 40mm). NAS and Buccleuch Estates

Wishart's figure, without a niche, has more movement than that of the Bishop of St Andrews, and is more naturalistically modelled, but also has finely engraved details, for example the glove on his right hand, the stole knotted on his left wrist, the diaper embroidery on his hem and the cross hatching on the plinth. The bird and the fish, to right and left of him, are delicately and naturalistically portrayed.

Robert Wishart's seal of dignity used in 1292–93 has a small engraved Classical gem as a counterseal.[60] However, another seal known from a detached impression in The National Archives may have been intended for use with it (**Fig. 14**). The size is appropriate and the distinctive subject matter was used again for the counterseal of Wishart's final seal of office (see **Fig. 16**). The designs, however, are so dissimilar that it is impossible to decide if they are by the same engraver or even contemporary. The epigraphy is quite similar, but different in size and function so comparison of that is also inconclusive. This may simply be a quite separate matrix intended for less formal documents.[61]

The enthusiasm for Gothic architectural design, already evident in Wishart's first seal as bishop, is taken to new lengths on a detached impression in The National Archives at Kew. The buttresses have spires, the main arcade has a central niche, trefoils and cusping abound. The overall layout, however, the heavy beading, the epigraphy and the bishop in his foiled gable, suggest strongly that this could still be the maker of Wishart's original matrix of two decades before, expanding on his theme while giving the figures added movement and more flowing draperies.

The legend: REX FURIT : HEC PLORAT : PA/TET AURUM : DUM SACER ORA[T], announces that this tells the story of Kentigern's most famous miracle in full. Although detached from its original document, it still has the tag showing that it was accompanied by the seal of the Bishop of Dunkeld, which must have been Matthew Crambeth, consecrated in 1288 and co-opted by Fraser and Wishart as another Guardian after 1289.[62] Crambeth and Wishart jointly sealed an *Inspeximus* at Norham on 14 June 1291, which like this impression is in the National Archives, Kew, but lacking its seals.[63] Crambeth left Scotland in 1295, with Fraser, to negotiate a treaty with Philippe le Bel and remained in Paris until 1304.

The narrative is as follows: Riderich, the Cumbrian king whose kingdom had been Christianised by Kentigern, gave his wife Langueth a ring, which she passed to her lover. When the lover was asleep, the King retrieved it and flung it into the Clyde, then challenged the Queen to produce it on pain of death. In desperation, she called on Kentigern for help, who dispatched a messenger to fish in the river. The messenger obligingly caught a salmon, which had swallowed the ring. Marital bliss restored, Langueth learnt her lesson and Kentigern kept a discreet silence.[64] In the top register we see the messenger delivering the fish, the ring in its mouth, to an enthroned Kentigern with mitre and halo. Below are the King with raised sword and the Queen with the ring at the top of a long staff under a Gothic arcade. At the bottom Bishop Wishart prays under a cusped gable, facing right towards the saint above.

This arrangement of a story in three separate registers, with strong horizontal divisions between the episodes is seldom, if ever, encountered elsewhere in seal design of this period. The inspiration for the abbreviated narrative cycle may possibly lie in contemporary sculpture, particularly tympanum design. As building progressed on French cathedrals, porches were added to the transepts and the eastern parts, during the 13th century. These often included highly original scenes from the lives of saints, sometimes local in horizontal registers above the doors.[65] There is documentary evidence that building work was still going on at Glasgow under Wishart and sculpture might well have been included.[66] Faced with the lack of stone figurative sculpture surviving from 13th-century Scotland, one can only speculate whether it might have been similar in style to Wishart's remarkable seal.

Even if one is not quite convinced by Marinell Ash's theory that Robert was the son of William Wishart, Bishop of St Andrews and one of a small family of bastard children,[67] he does not emerge from the documents as an ascetic model of simple piety.

In the confused political situation after the departure of John Balliol, war broke out with the English and lasted on and off until the Scots victory at Bannockburn in 1314. During this time, Robert Wishart was clearly plotting a rising in 1297. In 1306 having exonerated Robert Bruce for the murder of his rival Comyn, he exhorted his flock to fight against England saying it was just as meritorious as to go on crusade to the Holy Land. That same year, he also played a major part in the inauguration of Bruce as King of Scots at Scone, providing robes, vestments and a royal banner for the ceremony, from his own treasury.[68] At the same time, Wishart was accused by the English of using timber given to him for the repair of the cathedral bell tower, to build a siege engine.[69] For his pains, the enemy captured him shortly afterwards at Cupar Castle in battle armour and took him off to Porchester Castle in irons. (At this point, even if he had been consecrated at the minimum age of 30, he must have been 65 years old.)

Eventually, Clement V extricated him in 1308 and Wishart was escorted to the Curia by the Bishop of Poitiers.[70] The Pope and his entourage were in Bordeaux until March 1307. They then proceeded up the western coastal area of France staying in Jonzac and Saintes, finally arriving in Poitiers and remaining for 16 months until mid-August 1308. Two meetings took place there with Philip IV of France, on the serious matters of the Templars, crusades and peace with England. The Curia then travelled by way of the Garonne valley to Toulouse, where they spent Christmas 1308 and the following Epiphany, finally moving by way of Clement's former Bishopric St Bertrand-de-Comminges, Béziers and Montpellier to Avignon, whence the Pope first addressed a bull in March 1309. For the rest of his life, he only left Avignon twice, to attend the Council of Vienne (September 1311–May 1312) and to die in Roquemaure on 20 April 1314.[71]

It is quite likely that Wishart joined them in Poitiers, at a point when the French royal court was there, probably with attendant merchants, artists and craftsmen. Presumably, he followed in their wake to Avignon and was still there until January 1311, when he was returned to England.[72] It must have been between 1308 and 1311 that he acquired his last and grandest seal of dignity and matching counterseal (**Figs 15 and 16**).[73]

The obverse shows the customary standing, blessing bishop with a crozier in his left hand. It retains the bird and the fish of Wishart's earlier seal of dignity, but adds two bust length figures with large haloes, presumably Kentigern and Laurence who had appeared on his first seal as bishop. Above his head is an elaborate architectural canopy composed of layers of slender uprights, behind three pointed arches, the largest central arch under a tall gable with concave sides. The outer parts of the canopy are canted back to make the structure half of an elongated hexagon in plan. The inscription is in very regular, elegant *majuscules gothiques*,[74] with pronounced contrasts in weight between the uprights and the cross bars, curling profiles to the letters A, N and R, and exaggerated long pointed tails to the Ds, Ss and Gs. This is in considerable contrast to the clear but chunky epigraphy of Wishart's seals of the 1290s.[75] It is quite close, however, to the legends on the seals of the Comtesse de Valois (1305) and Guillaume de Flandre (1307),[76] two examples which illustrate how epigraphy had developed in French aristocratic circles.[77]

The design of the reverse of Wishart's last matrix followed closely the subject matter of the earlier narrative seal and was bordered by the same inscription. It places the figures in a new fictive architectural setting, hexagonal in plan, with realistic perspective and elongated figures wearing fantastic headdresses in the resulting illusionary space. This highly sophisticated conception has much in common with major examples of Parisian *orfèvrerie* surviving from around 1300, such as the Herkenrode monstrance[78] and the Reliquiario della Veste Inconsutile in Assisi.[79] Both of these larger objects have the flattened hexagonal plan, on the reliquary in particular, used to give an illusion of greater depth. The seal engraver has taken a further step in employing the device to create an impression of three dimensions on a flat surface. This use of perspective made its appearance in the work of Parisian *orfèvres* considerably before it was attempted by contemporary manuscript illuminators. It appears therefore, that Robert Wishart's last seal was commissioned from a French engraver from the capital, during the royal visit to Poitiers or following in the wake of the Curia. The likelihood is that he, and any secretariat he had with him, would have required a seal as soon as possible after their arrival in France, to resume communications. It is unlikely that any of the other matrices would have survived, if they had been with Wishart when he was captured.

Clement V's own wealth is revealed in his legacies of money, books, gold vases and textiles to favoured churches and family members.[80] Information about artists and craftsmen serving the Pope's household is patchy, as only three of his registers survive, covering periods in 1307, 1308–9 and 1309–10.[81] However, these do refer to '*magistro Toro servienti aurifabro*', who supplied silver vessels and a golden rose between July 1307, soon after the Pope arrived in Poitiers and June 1309, when the Curia had finally settled in Avignon. It is assumed that this is the same man as '*magistro Toro de Senis*', still in Avignon and receiving a pension in 1325.[82] Italian merchants were also in Avignon by 1309, supplying fine metalwork, vestments, furnishings and '*aliis necessariis pro libro consecrationis prelatorum*'.[83] If it was in Avignon that Wishart's seal was commissioned, its style shows little consciousness of contemporary Italian taste and no resemblance to Italian seals of the period. Nevertheless, an artist conscious of the leading edge of fashionable design, whatever his precise origins, had been commissioned on behalf of the Bishop of distant Glasgow.

These architectural designs are original and innovative enough, but the reiteration of the Riderich and Langueth legend is quite startling on a piece of ecclesiastical metalwork of the late 13th century. When in the late 12th century, the Arthurian romances of Chrétien de Troyes were the height of courtly fashion, it is extremely unexpected that the pious Cistercian, Jocelin of Furness, included something so similar in his compilation for St Kentigern's *Life*. The same conundrum obviously unnerved the Catholic Archbishop of Glasgow in 1890, when he read a paper at the Glasgow Archaeological Society. He suggested the figure with the sword might be King David I, not an avenging husband and the lady his mother St Margaret (who, he says, is not 'in tears or sorrow'). However, he admitted that REX FURIT HEC PLORAT etc. presented him with 'the greatest difficulty'.[84]

Robert Wishart finally returned to Glasgow after Bannockburn and died, aged and blind, two years later. We have lost Glasgow's medieval sculpture, the books,[85] the wall paintings,[86] the *orfèvrerie* and textiles,[87] but these seal impressions give just an inkling of what the major political figures of Scotland aspired to in its Age of Independence.

Appendix: The Wisharts

G.W.S. Barrow

During the opening decades of the 13th century a small group of families of Norman origin found a home in Scotland through the favour of William the Lion (1165–1214), his son Alexander II (1214–49) and King William's brother David, Earl of Huntingdon (d. 1219). Their surnames are Bisset (origin unknown), Montfort (Montfort-sur-Risle, dép. Eure?), Friville (perhaps from Fréville north of Beaumontel), Le Chien (Latin *canis*, Scots Cheyne), connected with Creully east of Bayeux, de Mesnières (Scots Menzies), from Mesnières-en-Bray north-west of Neufchatel-en-Bray, and Guichard (Giscard, Wiscard, Scots Wishart).[88] St Aubin-le-Guichard is about 8km south-west of Beaumont-le-Roger, seat of the major baronial family ('de Meulan') which in the 11th and 12th centuries acquired the English earldoms of Warwick (from 1088) and Leicester (from 1118).[89] As much or perhaps more to the point, the parish of St Aubin d'Ecrosville east of le Neubourg (about 17km north-east of Beaumont-le-Roger) was known in the 13th century as 'Crovilla Guichardi' or 'Sanctus Albinus de Crovilla la Richart [read Gichart?]'.[90] In this parish, in 1266, John called Guichart, knight, sold to the Dean and Chapter of Evreux all his tithes for 45 *livres tournois*.[91]

In November 1265 an agreement was made between Arbroath Abbey and Alexander Comyn, Earl of Buchan.[92] By this the Abbey granted the Earl the whole of six named lands or farms and portions of three others, in the parishes of Fordoun and Glenbervie, 'in such a way (the charter concludes) that the tenor of the charter which Sir John Wischard has from Arbroath Abbey of the land of Balfeith (in Fordoun) shall remain secure according to the law and assize of the land.'[93]

The family of Guichard (henceforth Wishart) were surely drawn to Scotland by a link with the lords of Beaumont. The mother of William the Lion and his brother David was Ada de Varenne, daughter of William, second Earl of Surrey, and Elizabeth (Isabel) of Vermandois.[94] As well as being grandmother of King William and Earl David, Elizabeth, because of her two marriages, was great-grandmother of Roger, brother of the fourth Earl of Leicester, whom the King of Scots made his Chancellor and then (1189) Bishop of St Andrews (consecrated 1198).[95] Bishop Roger (who had ambitions to become Bishop of Lincoln) was well aware of his connection with the Norman lordship of Beaumont-le-Roger. His presence in Normandy on numerous occasions before 1202 is well attested.[96]

Earl David, to whom his brother, the King, granted the lordship of Brechin in Angus, had an illegitimate son known as Henry of Brechin who founded a notable baronial family.[97] This family's coat of arms was 'or three piles gules'.[98] The arms of the Scottish family of Wishart were 'argent three piles gules'.[99] Taken in conjunction with the fact that the earliest landed settlement of the Wisharts in Scotland was Conveth (afterwards Laurencekirk), about 16km north-east of Brechin, this virtual heraldic identity must be more than coincidence.

A John Wishart appears in record of the early 13th century relating to the Stirling area.[100] It might seem unlikely that he was closely related to the family settled in the Mearns because later in the same century there are references to John Wishart 'of the Carse' (i.e. the Carse of Stirling), distinguished from John Wishart of the Mearns.[101] But it is worth noting that besides Henry of Brechin, Earl David had a second bastard son known as Henry of Stirling.[102] Perhaps both Henrys acted as magnets attracting two different Wishart males from Normandy, or perhaps there was only one John Wishart settled in early 13th-century Scotland and separate branches of the family emerged later.

A charter dating to *c.* 1219 or not long after, relating to Pittengardner 5km north of Conveth, was witnessed by the Bishop of Brechin, the Abbot of Lindores and others, with John Wishart witnessing in a relatively subordinate position.[103] But within a few years we find Sir John Wishart, Sheriff of Mearns, witnessing charters at or near the head of the list.[104] By the 1240s a Sir John Wishart, possibly son of the earliest recorded Scots John Wishart, appears as a knight – in the household – of William Lord of Brechin, son of Henry and grandson of Earl David.[105] In 1255 John Wishart was a member of the Comyn-dominated council of Alexander III, along with William Wishart, Archdeacon (later Bishop) of St Andrews.[106] In 1267 Sir John Wishart was the second layman to witness the important charter whereby William lord of Brechin founded the Maisondieu of that city.[107] By this time, clearly, the Wishart family had arrived.

William Wishart, who died 28 May, 1279, having been Bishop of St Andrews since 1273, may have been a younger brother of the Sir John Wishart active in the mid-13th century. A problem so far partly unsolved is the identity of Robert Wishart who died 26 November 1316. Robert was Bishop William's nephew, possibly son of Sir John or of another sibling.[108] Robert and his uncle were both university graduates, William certainly of Paris, Robert most probably of Paris also.[109] Before his promotion to St Andrews in 1271 William Wishart had been Bishop-elect of Glasgow, to which see his nephew immediately succeeded (consecrated January, 1273).[110] In the summer of 1274 Robert attended the Council of Lyon.[111] By the end of his long life he had become a widely-travelled man, and we can safely assume that he was fluent in Latin and Middle French – probably in Middle Scots also.

On a seal which Bishop Robert Wishart used early in his long tenure of the see of Glasgow is shown the figure of St Laurence, identifiable by the gridiron displayed beside him.[112] On 19 October, 1244, David Bernham, Bishop of St Andrews consecrated the parish church of Conveth, the estate in Mearns which by this date had certainly come into the hands of the Wisharts.[113] Although the record of Bishop Bernham's consecrations does not normally give the actual dedication of the churches involved we know that Conveth was dedicated to St Laurence the martyr. In later medieval times, most unusually, the parish name became Laurencekirk. Laurence was by no means an uncommon dedicatee in medieval Scotland, dedications to him being found in Gowrie, Angus and Mearns as well as at Dunblane cathedral.[114] It does not seem possible to say whether Bishop Robert put St Laurence on his seal because of the link with Conveth *alias* Laurencekirk or

because he was friendly with Robert de Prebenda, Bishop of Dunblane (1259–84), with whom he travelled to the Council of Lyon.

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Notes

1 McRoberts1959, 126–72.
2 Glenn 2003.
3 Grinder-Hansen and Posselt 1992; *Margrete I* 1997.
4 Horgen 2000.
5 Andersson 1983; *Viking Heritage*1996.
6 *Church and Art* 1997; Ingvarsdóttir 2005.
7 McNeill and MacQueen 1996, 336–7. There was no diocese of Edinburgh before 1634; St Giles' 'Cathedral' is in fact the High Kirk of the Church of Scotland.
8 Watt and Murray 2003, 376–377.
9 Ash and Broun 1994, 16–24.
10 Duncan 1998, 9–24.
11 Forbes 1874, lxii–cv, 27–119, 123–33, 162–242, 245–52; Jackson 1958, 273–357; Anderson 1990, 1, lxxiv–lxxv.
12 Fawcett 1996, 57–72; Driscoll 2002, *passim*.
13 Durham Dean and Chapter Muniments, Misc. Ch. 1341; Glenn 1999, 146–151. I am very grateful to Alan Piper for his expert guidance and generous help with photography during my visits to the Muniments in 1997 and 2007.
14 Barrow 1950; see also n. 88 below.
15 Sauerländer 1959, 53–69.
16 NAS GD 55/246/1A.
17 Durham Dean and Chapter Muniments, Misc. Ch. 831; NAS GD 55/274/1A & B.
18 Harvey and McGuiness 1996, 70; Demay 1877.
19 Barrow and Scott 1971, *passim*.
20 NAS GD55/246/1B; *Liber Melros*, ii, 1837, vi, pl. IV, item 4, 220–1, no. 246.
21 NAS GD 55/274/1B; *Liber Melros,* vi, pl. IV, item 5; Harvey and McGuiness 1996, 71, pl. 65.
22 NAS GD55/122/1A, *Liber Melros,* vii, pl.VI, item 1.
23 23 NAS GD 55/387/1A, 55/429/1B, 55/1B, 55/403/1B; *Liber Melros,* vii, pl. VI, item 2.
24 Birch 1907, II, no. 100.
25 NAS GD 55/387/1B, 55/429/1A, 55/1A, 55/403/1A; *Liber Melros,* vii, pl. VI, item 2.
26 Duncan 1998, 14.
27 *Trésors des Églises* 1965, 111–13, cat. no. 217, pl. 113; J. Taralon in *Trésors des Abbayes* 1979, 263–71, cat. no. 290.
28 GD 55/392/1A; *Liber Melros,* vii, pl. VI, item 3.
29 Anderson 1990, 126–39, n. 4.
30 Ibid. 127–30.
31 Ibid. 132, 137.
32 Glenn 2003, 94–104, cat. nos H1, H2 (Guthrie Bell Shrine, Kilmichael Glassary Bell Shrine).
33 Giraldus, *Itinerarium* 6, 7, 13, 14; Thorpe 1978, 86–7, 253–4.
34 Wilson 1998, 55–76.
35 Stewart 1971, 180,186–7; Stewart 1976, 19.
36 Ibid. 1971, 209, Table G; ibid. 1976; 207–8.
37 Watt 2003, 189–90.
38 See Appendix by G.W.S Barrow, **71–2.**
39 Watt 2003, 190.
40 Ash 1990, 43, 51, n. 63.
41 Archivio Segreto Vaticano, Rome, A.A.Arm., I–XVIII, 2190 (13). I am deeply indebted to Monsignore Aldo Martini for his erudite assistance, when I visited the Archivio to discuss this and other related seal impressions.
42 Durham Dean and Chapter Muniments, Misc. Ch. 821, (1269); Misc. Ch. 4549, impressions of 1260 and 1268.
43 Sella and Laurent 1937, vol. I, 103, no. 362.
44 Stewart 1971, 208; Stewart 1976, 208.
45 Duncan 1992, 601–2.
46 Sella and Laurent 1937, III, no 392, catalogued the Wishart copy as showing 'un santo che regge una scala'.
47 Blancard 1860, 283–4, no. 5, pl CV; Gardner 1975, 72–96, 83, n. 61.
48 Ash 1990, 39.
49 NAS GD/ 55/ 327/1.
50 For the Wishart family and the village of Laurencekirk see Appendix by G.W.S. Barrow.
51 Sella and Laurent 1937, 25, nos 99,100; Gardner 1975, 83, 87, pl. 10j, 12 d.
52 Bascapé 1955, 109.
53 Barrow 2003a, 219.
54 NA E 39/29; Laing 1850, 165, no 948, pl XVII, fig. 1; Bain 1881–8, vol. II, 1272–1307, 154, no 658.
55 Barrow 2003, 183–5.
56 Blair 1919, no 3624, 166–7.
57 Birch 1895, iv, 48–9, no. 14, 925; Glenn 1999, 148–51.
58 Blair 1919, 166, n. 34.
59 59 Ash 1990, 47. The obverse of Fraser's second seal reads: S' WILLI:FRASER:DEI /GRA:SCOTTORV':EPI, THE REVERSE S'.WILL'I. FRASER:EPI. SCI. ANDREE; his first seal already carried the same legend on the obverse. Hope (1887, 289) credits William de Wykeham (Winchester 1367) with being the first English bishop to use his surname on his seal.
60 This is not easily decipherable, but does not appear to have any Christian significance.
61 This impression, NA SC 13 / D 48, has no counterseal of its own; it is unpublished apart from a probable description of a sulphur cast without an illustration; Birch (1887–1900, IV, 106, no. 15, 123), describes it as 'derived from' the reverse of Wishart's final seal of dignity.
62 Barrow 2005, 36, 84.
63 NA DL 36/1/183; Simpson and Galbraith 1986, 145–6, no. 91. Adrian Ailes kindly re-examined this document for me and confirmed that it had two slits for seal tags and they were both too small to have accommodated the tag of SC 13/D 48.
64 Forbes 1874, chap. 36, 222–6, 'Quomodo sanctus anulum a regina indecenter datum et ab ipso Rege in flumine Clud projectum, mirabiliter regine restituit'.
65 Sauerländer 1970, pls. 244, 245, 269, 279, 291.
66 Fawcett 1996, 68–9.
67 Ash 1990, 40, 42, n. 47.
68 Barrow 2005, 93–4.
69 Fawcett 2002, 335.
70 Barrow 2005, 343.
71 Guillemain 1951, 143.
72 Barrow 2005, 343.
73 NAS GD 55/403A & B; *Liber Melros,* vi, pl V, item 1.
74 Demay 1881, 5, Abbé de Doest (1295), Abbé de Hasnon (1296), are close to GD 55/403, but less stylised without the long tails.
75 Scots letter forms of the 13th century were similar to English.
76 Coulon 1912, 5, pl. III, no. 19, 71, pl. IX, no. 403, NB letters N,R,S,G and E.
77 It is hardly possible that Wishart had an elaborate new seal made while an English prisoner of war; Kingsford 1929 includes no closely similar D, E, G, O, R, or W shapes.
78 Didier, Robert, in *Trésor gothique* 1996, 330–1, no. 27.
79 Gaborit-Chopin in *L'art des rois maudits* 1998, 193–5, no. 120.
80 Ehrle 1889, 61–79; Mollat 1950, 54.
81 Guillemain 1951, 142, n. 1 & 2.
82 Faucon 1882, 40–1.
83 Ibid. 41–3.
84 Eyre 1891, 7–10, item VII.
85 Dillon 1831, 8–22.
86 Park 1998; Park and Howard 2002, 96–98, pls. 1–21.
87 Dowden 1899, 280–329.
88 Two of these families are dealt with by Loyd 1951, 26–7 (Montfort) and 63, 73–4 (Mesnières). For Friville see le Prevost 1862–69, i, 391, ii, 189; Deville 1912, nos 65, 67, 79, 93; *Registrum vetus* , 6, 27, 62–4, 73. In Normandy and Scotland a Richard de Friville occurs in records of *c.* 1200–40. For Le Chien or Cheyne (with whom the characteristic baptismal names are Reginald and Henry) see Delisle and Berger 1916–20), ii, 179, lines 28–9; *Registrum vetus*, 164, 166–7, 207, 312.

89 Cokayne 1929, vii, 520–36; 1959, xii, 357–64. The pedigree chart on p. 520 of vol. vii is especially useful. See also C.W. Hollister, 'The greater Domesday tenants-in-chief', in Holt 1987, 219–48. Roger de Beaumont contributed 60 ships to the Norman invasion of England in 1066 (ibid., p. 243).
90 Le Prevost, 1862–9, iii, 75.
91 Ibid., *loc. cit.*
92 *Registrum vetus*, no. [247].
93 I have found no proof that Sir John Wischard of the Arbroath agreement of November, 1265 was identical with the John Guichart in the St Aubin d'Ecrosville document of 1266, but it seems likely.
94 Cokayne 1929, xii, 496 and n.(g).
95 *Fasti Ecclesiae Scoticanae*, 379.
96 Le Prevost 1862–9, i, 419; D'Anisy 1834–5), i, 418; *Inventaire sommaire* 1886, 63, no. 100; *Carte Antiquae*, nos 61, 123, 146, 154, 188; *Rotuli Chartarum*, entries from 4 August to 24 November 1199; Round 1899, nos 306, 607.
97 *Chartulary of Lindores,* xxvi–xxvii; Nisbet 1816 (1984), 31.
98 Bain 1884, ii, Appendix III, no. 60; *Scots Peerage* 1905, ii, 224.
99 Nisbet 1816 (1984), i, 201.
100 *Registrum de Cambuskenneth*, no. 79 (sometime between 1228 and 1234).
101 Bain 1881–8, ii, no. 335 (1288), no. 832 (1296), p. 195: 'John Wychard del Miernes' (1296).
102 Stringer 1985, 82, 155.
103 *Registrum vetus*, no. [242], perhaps *c*. 1221.
104 Ibid., nos 138, [261].
105 *Chartulary Lindores*, no. LV (1245).
106 Bain 1881, i , no. 2013.
107 *Registrum Episcopatus Brechinensis*, i, 7, no. 3.
108 Watt 1977, 585.
109 Ibid., *loc. cit*.
110 Ibid., *loc. cit*.
111 Ibid., *loc. cit*.
112 Laing 1850, no. 949, pl. xv, no. 6.
113 Anderson 1922, ii, 525.
114 Mackinlay 1914, 393. The fact that Bishop Wishart displayed Laurence the Martyr on his seal confirms Dr Mackinlay's belief that he was the saint revered at Laurencekirk.

The Seals of the Order of St Lazarus of Jerusalem in England

David Marcombe

This paper sets out to explore the English seals of the little-known medieval military order of St Lazarus of Jerusalem by way of an examination of its extant seal matrices and surviving wax impressions on documents. It asks why the Lazarites selected the images they did and how they used seals in the context of their national and international operations. The research underpinning this paper rests heavily on the work of the Burton Lazars Research Group and the author would like to acknowledge, in particular, the contributions of Terry Bourne and Judy Smithers in making this article possible.[1]

The Order of St Lazarus

The origins of the Order of St Lazarus appear to have been in a leper hospital located outside the walls of Jerusalem, an institution which existed long before the crusaders captured the city in 1099. However, the events of the First Crusade were to alter fundamentally its purpose and sense of identity. Though lepers from amongst the local community continued to be cared for, as time went on the hospital became increasingly colonised by leprous knights, from the Latin Kingdom and beyond, who wished to continue the struggle against the infidel, even in view of their infirmities.[2] This was possible because lepromatous leprosy, the most dangerous strain of the disease, has a gestation period of about seven years and during this period it was accepted that a leprous individual was capable of continuing his role as a fighting man.[3] Some of these early inmates appear to have been Templars, and as the knights of the hospital strove for a greater sense of cohesion and identity during the first half of the 12th century, so a new military order, the Order of St Lazarus of Jerusalem, gradually emerged.[4]

The identity of the saint to whom this hospital and new military order was dedicated is not immediately clear. Though there are several saints by the name of Lazarus, there are only two serious contenders – Lazarus the Beggar, the man 'full of sores' who appears in a parable in the gospel of St Luke; and Lazarus of Bethany, brother of Mary and Martha, who is mentioned in the gospels of Matthew, Mark and John.[5] Lazarus the Beggar is almost certainly a mythic character, designed to persuade the rich of the virtues of giving to the poor, but Lazarus of Bethany has some claim to reality and persistent legends soon built up around him. After his spectacular resurrection at the hands of Jesus it was believed he went on to become Bishop of Marseilles (in the western tradition) or Bishop of Kition (in the eastern tradition). There has been a good deal of speculation as to which of these Lazaruses the Jerusalem order took as its patron, because both embraced appealing qualities. Lazarus the Beggar reminded potential benefactors of their duty of giving to the poor; Lazarus of Bethany carried considerable moral authority both as a bishop and friend of Jesus. Both had associations with leprosy which drew them closer still to the founding ideologies of the Order. The most likely explanation is that the Order venerated both Lazaruses in the hybridised fashion that was not uncommon amongst medieval saints, the emphasis being placed on different qualities according to the demands of time and space.[6] It is probable that Lazarus of Bethany, or Lazarus the Bishop as he was also known, emerged as the dominant force as time went on and this is certainly suggested by the sigillographical evidence that will be discussed in this paper.

Organisationally, the Order of St Lazarus shared a good deal with the Templars and Hospitallers, but it never matched the two larger military orders in terms of wealth and status. Nor did it do so in terms of military prowess, since the record of the Lazarites in this area was singularly undistinguished. By the middle of the 13th century, by which time Jerusalem had been lost and the crusaders had resettled at Acre, most of the original leper knights had perished and the decline of the disease meant that there were fewer newcomers to take their places. For the last phase of its existence in the Holy Land – up to the fall of Acre in 1291 – the Order of St Lazarus recruited healthy knights in much the same way as the Templars and Hospitallers.[7] The collapse of Acre was a major watershed for all the military orders and following that event the Lazarites took the decision to relocate in western Europe under the special protection of Philip IV of France. From the chateau of Boigny, near Orleans, the master of the Order sought to retrench and attempt to stem a growing tide of disintegration. The most persistent problem was that all of the territories in which the Order owned land soon cultivated ambitions of national autonomy and nowhere was this more marked than in the growing antipathy between England and France. The Order had important estates in both countries but the events of the Hundred Years War caused an irrevocable split and by *c.* 1400 the operations in England and France had become, effectively, separated.[8] In England, the Order sought to reinvent itself in line with the social and religious priorities of the late Middle Ages and demonstrated its new independence by adopting the title 'Order of St Lazarus of Jerusalem in England'. During this period it became increasingly interested in chantries and obtained the support of growing numbers of lay people by way of its confraternity.[9] But none of this could withstand the disapproval and eventual assault of the government of Henry VIII. The Order in England was suppressed in 1544 and its lands distributed amongst lay speculators.[10] In other parts of Europe, which did not succumb to the Protestant Reformation, the Order fared better and even enjoyed something of a revival in 17th-century France. Indeed, as an order of chivalry, it still exists today and strives to carry out medical work in line with its founding ideology.[11]

More so than many religious orders, the Order of St Lazarus depended very heavily on the laity for its prosperity and well

being. Like more conventional orders of monks, the Lazarites drew income from lands and tithes, but they also raised significant sums by way of collections, taken locally and nationally, and the sale of indulgences.[12] This meant that if people were to contribute in this fashion they had to have a very positive view of the Order and what it stood for. Indeed, esteem, in the eyes of the laity, was an important factor for all of the military orders. Fortunately, for the Lazarites, they had some powerful weapons in their armoury to make them acceptable to a medieval mindset, chiefly that they were an order founded upon leprosy and crusading. Both of these words carried highly charged messages. To be a crusader was to be one prepared to give his life for the survival of Christendom against an Islamic horde threatening to engulf it; to be a leper carried little of the stigma attached to the disease in recent times, certainly in the early Middle Ages.[13] In fact, in some circles lepers were regarded as being closer to God because of their suffering, people, literally, who were enduring a form of purgatory on earth.[14] Crusaders and lepers could therefore be seen as the chosen of Christ and in order to maintain its well being in this world the Order of St Lazarus had to do its utmost to exploit these other worldly advantages. And these were not perceptions that wilted and died after the fall of Acre, even though that cataclysmic event might have challenged them. As late as the 15th century the Lazarites in England were still harking back to the old rallying cries of chivalry and leprosy which had worked so well for them during the glory days of the crusade.[15]

There has been a tendency amongst historians to view medieval religious orders as other-worldly groups of individuals, passionately devoted to the service of God. In some cases this was certainly true, but they were also commercial organisations, preoccupied with their survival and the maximisation of monetary rewards. There were many ways in which such an order could project its image, and one of these was by the use of seals, effectively the company emblem or logo. One need only consider the huge sums of money paid out to marketing and public relations consultancies today – in the UK, for example, the shift from Royal Mail to Consignia and back again – to understand how the projection of state-of-the-art imagery has stood the test of time in terms of saying quickly and concisely what a big corporation wants its customers to believe. Most marketing consultants today would be of the opinion that the purpose of a logo is to describe the product and draw public attention to it. It was similarly important that seals fitted in with how a medieval religious order perceived itself and with how it wanted to be viewed by the outside world. It might be asked, in a world before mass communications, how effective was all this? How widely would seals have been viewed in the Middle Ages? And did people take much notice of them in any case? It is impossible to provide case-specific and quantifiable answers to these questions but certainly many fewer people would have been aware of seal imagery than that on coins, for example. But, on the other hand, it would be unwise to underestimate the impact that seals would have had. Patrons and tenants would have been aware of them on land grants and transfers; and in the case of the Order of St Lazarus, indulgences and letters of confraternity (which will be considered in detail later) would have had a wide circulation across the social spectrum. It was therefore well worth giving careful thought to the images projected, especially, as in the case of the Lazarites, if you were particularly dependent on putting over a positive image to as wide a range of people as possible. Indeed, given the limitations of mass communications in the Middle Ages, a seal was probably the best means of conveying this message in a visual and instantly recognisable form.

Seals in the Holy Land and Europe

The seals of the Order of St Lazarus in the Holy Land and Europe have received little analytical attention, though illustrations and engravings of some of them have been published, mostly for houses in the German province. Doubtless there are many more to be discovered, especially for France where the Order was strong. Stylistically there is a clear divide between the 12th and 13th centuries, when the seals were relatively simple; and the 14th and 15th centuries, when they become more complex. Moreover, the surviving Middle Eastern and European examples provide an insight into the hierarchy of seals deemed important by the Order; and also the types of imagery it employed.

The earliest seal, that of the leper hospital in Jerusalem, dates from the 12th century and is the only example to incorporate a counterseal.[16] The obverse, showing a figure, presumably leprous, holding a clapper in the right hand, bears the legend: D[omus]: LEPROSARUM (House of the Lepers); the reverse, showing St Lazarus delivering a blessing and holding a crozier in his left hand, has the legend: S: LAZARI: DE: IERUSALEM (St Lazarus of Jerusalem). The figure is probably wearing the low mitre characteristic of the 12th century, leaving little doubt that this is supposed to be a representation of Lazarus the Bishop. There is a possibility, of course, that the figure on the obverse, rather than being a generic depiction of a leper, is supposed to be Lazarus the Beggar, and if this is indeed the intention then it is the only representation of this unusual dual identity in Lazarite sigillography.

Moving from the centre to the periphery, there are two examples of seals of the preceptory, or province, of Germany, one a vesica (1273) and the other circular (1282).[17] Both bear the central device of a cross, the 1273 example with a hatched background and that of 1282 having foliage sprouting from its angles. Another seal (1287), with the legend: LAZARUS: EPISCOPUS (Lazarus the Bishop), shows Lazarus the Bishop seated, with a book in his left hand and a crozier in his right.[18] He wears the *pallium* or pall, a vestment associated with high-ranking ecclesiastics in both the eastern and western churches from the 6th century onwards. Though the owner of this seal is not specifically identified, Hyacinthe suggests it belongs to the commander of the Swiss house of Schlatt along with its satellites Seedorf and Gfenn. This may represent a temporary arrangement, since Schlatt, Seedorf and Gfenn also generated their own, individual, seals. That of Schlatt (1274) shows a plain cross, very similar to the provincial seals;[19] Gfenn (1274), unusually for a Lazarite house, opts for a Virgin and Child with a praying figure beneath;[20] and Seedorf (1289) shows Lazarus the Bishop, wearing a vestment with a large cross patée on the front, delivering a blessing with his right hand and holding a crozier in his left.[21] All of these examples are vesicas. The nature of the cross on these early seals is generally of the type described by Fox-Davies as a 'sacred cross' or 'long cross', in

other words the type of cross that would have afforded well with the elongated shields used by 11th- and 12th-century warriors and the early crusaders in particular.[22]

The seals of the preceptory of Germany (1273) and the commander of Schlatt (1274) both show this sort of cross with the terminals broadening out into something like a reduced cross patée, with the lower arm elongated.[23] On both examples the four ends of the cross terminate in a crescent shape. By contrast, the cross on the seal of the preceptory of Germany (1282) is different. Though it has the broadening ends, it is regular in shape and has no crescent terminals, an adapted form, in fact, of the cross patée worn by St Lazarus on his vestment on the seal of Seedorf (1289).[24] It would not be possible, therefore, to speak of a cross distinctive to the Order of St Lazarus in the 12th and 13th centuries. Though there is a generic similarity, there are also subtle differences.[25] The survival of these seals demonstrates a chain of command from the central headquarters in Jerusalem; via a provincial organisation in western Europe; to a network of individual houses in the localities.[26] All of these institutions had their own seals for the validation of business, the most recurring images being the cross and the figure of St Lazarus the Bishop.

After the fall of Acre in 1291 and the gradual disintegration of the international Order, published examples become fewer but are uniformly more ambitious in their design, reflecting the more flamboyant architectural styles of the late Middle Ages.[27] The presumed seal of James de Besnes (1382), Master-General of the Order, shows a knight on a caparisoned horse holding a shield on his left arm and brandishing a sword with his right. The shield and the horse's trappings show the couped cross which became characteristic of the Order of St Lazarus in the late Middle Ages. The comparisons between this and the 12th-century seal of the Jerusalem hospital are very striking, though both represent the central authority of the Order. The early seal is poorly worked, simple and economical in all its manifestations; the later one is ostentatious and finely engraved and has many similarities with the seals of the European nobility. It demonstrates that the Order had moved a good deal in its self-perception and sense of image over 200 years; indeed, on the seal of Besnes, apart from the heraldic cross there is no religious imagery at all. The seals of Gfenn (late 14th century) and Gfenn and Seedorf (1443) are similarly decorative, though less secular. Gfenn has a central motif of the Virgin and Child with two angels dangling censers each side of the Virgin's body. Beneath the figure, under an arch, is the arms of the Order, a couped cross.[28] That of Gfenn and Seedorf is actually the seal of John de Schwaber, Master of both houses in the mid-15th century. The central device shows an episcopal, possibly archiepiscopal, figure holding a long cross in his right hand and a crozier in his left.[29] The long cross is generally taken to be an archiepiscopal adjunct, certainly in the late Middle Ages, and, if this is supposed to be Lazarus the Bishop – the most likely interpretation – why he should be holding it is not immediately clear. Beneath the figure, under an arch, there is an individual at prayer, presumably the master himself. These Middle Eastern and Continental seals provide a useful context and comparisons for the main focus of this paper, the seals of the Order of St Lazarus in England.

The seal of Prior Robert (Fig. 1)

The earliest English seal dates from the mid-12th century and is attached to an undated charter by which Robert, son of Hugh, Prior of the hospital of St Lazarus, confirms to Alice de Chare lands in Wymondham, Norfolk.[30] The first lands held by the Order in England were at Wymondham, granted by William d'Aubigny, Earl of Arundel, before 1146, but it is unlikely that the Order had any sort of provincial organisation in the country before the granting of a major estate at Burton Lazars, near Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire, by Roger de Mowbray *c.* 1155–62.[31] The seal appears to be attached to the charter upside down, assuming the legend begins at 1 o'clock, as is traditional. It is engraved in Roman capitals and reads: S: POR: PRECEPTORIS: SANCT: LAZRI (Seal of the Prior of the Preceptory of St Lazarus). It therefore has clear similarities with the 13th-century examples which refer to the preceptory of St Lazarus in Germany, though these are preceptorial seals, rather than priors' seals. It is important to remember that descriptive terms were still fluid in the 12th and 13th centuries. The word 'preceptory' here may be referring to a province (i.e. an area of national or supranational jurisdiction) or, alternatively, a house within that province which had pre-eminence (i.e. Schlatt or Burton Lazars). The probability here, taking into account the wording the charter (i.e. 'Prior of the hospital of St Lazarus'), is that Prior Robert was the first head of Burton Lazars, which, even at this early date, had probably assumed responsibility for the English province or 'preceptory' of the Order.[32] The design of Prior Robert's seal is also very similar to some of the German and Swiss examples discussed above. It shows a plain cross with pellets in the two upper quarters and down turned crescents in the lower ones. The cross is particularly reminiscent of those of the preceptory of Germany (1272) and the commander of Schlatt (1274), with the important difference that on this occasion all the arms are of regular length and there is no suggestion of crescents at the terminals. For its date, the seal is in a remarkable state of preservation and is the only example of this early/continental type amongst surviving English seals and matrices.

The Common Seal (Fig. 2)

By the early 13th century a more elaborate, and unusual, seal had been introduced as the Common Seal of the Order in

Figure 1 Seal of Prior Robert, *c.* 1160. Impression on document (13x12mm). ROLLR, DE 2242/5

England.[33] This was in line with the growing wealth and prestige of the Order and also its increasingly complex organisation. It bears the legend in Lombardic script: S: COMMUNE: ORDINIS: MILICIE: HOSPITALIS: SCI: LAZARI: DE: BURTONE (Common Seal of the Military and Hospitaller Order of St Lazarus of Burton); Burton Lazars by this time being clearly established as the chief house of the English branch of the Order. This seal, which was used for the validation of significant documents of common interest, was to continue in use up to the Dissolution, though the matrix seems to have been re-engraved *c.* 1350.[34] The original may have vanished during a power struggle between rival masters of the Order in England which was going on at about that time.

The whole of the face of the matrix, exclusive of the legend, is placed within a sexfoil, a design which may have had some religious significance since it is often replicated on medieval patens. The identification of the central figure is not immediately obvious. Burton, a 17th-century Leicestershire antiquary, believed it to be St Augustine; Birch thought it was St Lazarus the Bishop; and Ellis, more cautiously, described it simply as 'a priest'.[35] Though the Order latterly followed the Rule of St Augustine, his depiction on its seals is unprecedented and the image also lacks the main accoutrements traditionally associated with Lazarus the Bishop, i.e. the crozier and episcopal mitre. It is reasonable to assume, therefore, as Ellis has done, that this is not the figure of a bishop at all and, to be specific, probably not a priest either. More likely the tonsured head and vestment is suggestive of a brother of St Lazarus, a supposition which is supported by the fact that the distinctive collar from which is suspended a large cross is repeated on a sculptural representation of brothers of the order at Grattemont, in France.[36] Brothers of St Lazarus, who carried out the main work of the Order, were only rarely in priest's orders and, if this identification is correct, the Common Seal provides one of the few unambiguous representations of such a person in medieval Europe.[37]

The face of the seal is laden with significant imagery. The initials BZ, below the figure, probably represent the abbreviated form of Burton Lazars. The two crosses, to the left and right of the figure's head, are problematical and, aesthetically, a needless addition to the composition. However, if not mere space fillers, they may have had some significance, now lost. The heraldry represents the arms of the Order (a couped cross); and those of the Mowbrays, the principal English patrons (a lion rampant).[38] The figure is holding a clapper in his right hand and a book in his left. The book is odd and is reminiscent of the book held by St Lazarus, also in his left hand, on the seal of Schlatt, Seedorf and Gfenn (1287). In line with the other military orders, the Lazarites had no scholarly tradition and the book may simply represent the New Testament, making the point that Lazarus was one of a select minority of saints who traced his roots back to a personal relationship with Christ. Alternatively, it may simply be a reminder of the Rule of St Augustine, which the Lazarites followed after the 12th century; or the Rule of St Basil which some authorities allege the brothers of the hospital followed prior to that. The clapper, on the other hand, is an unambiguously iconic object commented upon by many historians of medieval leprosy, though in a sigillographical context it has been the subject of persistent misinterpretation, having been described as a three-pronged fork, sceptre, or trident.[39] The generally accepted view is that the clapper was designed to warn people away from an infected individual lest they become infected themselves. However, it is now conjectured that this instrument was more a call to almsgiving, in other words, an invitation to the faithful to draw close and provide charitable donations.[40] (Leprosy is actually considerably less infectious, by casual contact, than used to be believed, so this sort of social intercourse with lepers could have been carried on with relatively little risk to healthy people.) As has been argued, the Order of St Lazarus was heavily dependent on such charitable giving and the clapper could be seen as symbolic of it.

Figure 2 Common Seal of the Order of St Lazarus in England, c. 1200–1544, modern cast impression (diam. 57mm). BL, Seal lxvi 47

In fact, the whole of the face of the seal, within the sexfoil, might usefully be read as a statement of what the Order stood for, each of the six segments containing a significant symbol connected with the present or the past. The head of the brother, encapsulating much of the thinking about the divinity of the human head which stretched back to prehistory and was continued in the head shrines of significant Christian saints.[41] The book, either the New Testament or the Rule of Augustine or Basil, connecting the Order with more ancient Christian ideologies. The heraldic crusader's cross, borne in battle against the Infidel. The acronym of Burton Lazars, bringing the focus of attention back to England and the landholdings of the Order in the Midlands. The arms of the Mowbrays, making the link with one of the country's leading feudal families.[42] And, finally, the clapper, symbolic of leprosy and almsgiving. The seal was saying that here was a religious order with history, aristocratic patronage and unerring commitment to the crusade. However, it was also poor because of its duty to carry out good works and because of that it needed financial support to carry on. So it was all there: history, present state and aspiration, all rolled into the circle that was symbolic of eternity and changelessness. These were carefully thought out messages which would not have been lost on the people who viewed this seal in the Middle Ages. The Common Seal is without doubt the most sophisticated piece of imagery associated with the Order of St Lazarus either in England or overseas.

The Seal of Burton Lazars (Fig. 3)
The rest of the surviving seals and matrices are late-medieval, predominantly dating from the 15th and 16th centuries when the Order in England was free from the French motherhouse at Boigny. For this period some of the imagery is crudely worked, especially that on the Indulgence Seal, and legends are sometimes blundered and ungrammatical, suggesting the engravers employed were not of the highest calibre. Though the Common Seal remained in use throughout, a separate seal was used by the main preceptory at Burton Lazars to conduct the business of the house. Some of the daughter houses, too, may have had their own seals, especially the important hospital of St Giles, Holborn, but none of these has survived and even for St Giles the only known example predates the Lazarite takeover of the house in 1299.[43] The Burton Lazars seal takes the form of a flattened oval and bears the Black Letter legend: SIGILLM: DOMS: BOTNI: SCANTI: LAZAR: ILM (Seal of the House of Burton St Lazarus of Jerusalem).[44]

The imagery is notably less complex than that of the Common Seal and significantly different. The composition is dominated by an episcopal figure seated under an architectural canopy and delivering a blessing. Beneath the main figure there is a smaller one, in a niche, with his hands raised up in supplication in the *orans* position, an image which, once more, may well represent a brother of the Order. The identity of the main figure is not immediately evident, but, in view of the earlier, less ambiguous examples, it almost certainly represents Lazarus the Bishop. The image thus illustrates the transmogrification of a biblical character into a figure of authority instantly recognisable to a late-medieval audience, the Order's very own quasi-episcopal patron and protector. And such implied support could be considered very important, especially to an organisation that operated nationwide and was largely exempt from the jurisdiction of local bishops.[45] To have one's own bishop, shadowy and antique though he may have been, was a positive advantage. Another way in which this seal breaks fresh ground, in an English context, is the mention, on the legend, of the Order's place of origin, Jerusalem, which was to become a regular feature on a range of seals. The reason for including this detail – often in an abbreviated form – was because, in reality, the Order was now far separated from Jerusalem, both geographically and ideologically, and it suited the English Lazarites to remind their supporters about their noble origins and where they came from. It was, in effect, an extension and endorsement of the St Lazarus image discussed above.

The Indulgence Seal (Fig. 4)
The episcopal theme is carried on in the Indulgence Seal, which, once more, adopts the form of a flattened oval.[46] It bears the Black Letter legend: SIGILL: DE: INDULGENCIE: DE: BORTONI: LAZARI: ILLM (Seal of the Indulgence of Burton Lazars of Jerusalem), its purpose quite clearly being to validate the indulgences that the Order was entitled to issue under the authority of the Pope.[47] The central figure of the bishop is significantly different to the previous example. First, he is standing beneath a baldachin, or fabric canopy supported by poles, rather than an architectural canopy. The word 'baldachin' is derived from the Latin word *balakinus*, signifying a rich fabric of silk and gold originating from Baghdad and widely used in the crusader states. Second, the bishop is holding a crozier, as one would expect, but in his right hand the iconic leper's clapper appears once more. Third, the mitre on this occasion is surrounded by a circular nimbus, indicating that this was no ordinary earthly bishop; he was a saint. If this image is without doubt Lazarus the Bishop, his identification helps reinforce the identity of the episcopal figure on the Burton Lazars seal and other seals of the Order, since it is reasonable to assume some measure of consistency. Indeed, this seal picks up not just on the idea of episcopal authority, evident in the previous example, but also on the notions of crusading and leprosy derived from the Common Seal. On a document such as an indulgence, which changed hands for hard cash, it could be seen as circumspect not to underplay ones hand so far as image building assets were concerned. In practice this Indulgence Seal may not have been widely used, since surviving indulgences are invariably sealed with versions of the Confraternity Seal which will be discussed next.

Figure 3 (left) Seal of Burton Lazars, 15th/16th century. Modern impression (57x29mm). BL, Seal D. CH.37

Figure 4 (right) Indulgence Seal of Burton Lazars, 15th/16th century. Modern impression in wax (54x38mm). BL, Seal xxv 169

Figure 5 (left) Confraternity Seal, 15th/16th century, modern impression (60x35mm). BL, Seal lxvi 48a

Figure 6 (right) The Robertsbridge matrix, early 15th century, gilt-bronze matrix (53x34mm). Author's collection

The Confraternity seals (Figs 5 and 6)

Confraternities were groups of people – clerical and lay – who, in this instance, stood in a special relationship with a religious order, essentially a religious club or society which operated for mutual benefit. Burton Lazars received membership fees and all of the advantages accruing to it from a raised profile in society; the members received prayers for their good estate in life and for their souls after death, speeding their passage through the gloomy realms of purgatory towards ultimate salvation. There were probably also social benefits that came by way of membership, such as feasts, support in old age and the attendance at organised festivals and pilgrimages. At Burton Lazars a confraternity existed from at least the 14th century and probably earlier. However, in line with other confraternities nationwide, it became unprecedentedly popular in the late Middle Ages and reached its zenith *c.* 1450–1520.[48] When an individual or group joined the confraternity they received an official document – letters of confraternity – which effectively comprised a membership certificate. These took two forms, documents handwritten on parchment, which proliferated in the 15th century;[49] and versions printed on paper, which were beginning to come into fashion in the 16th century, presumably because of increasing demand.[50] Whatever their form, letters of confraternity were invariably sealed with the Confraternity Seal of the Order 'in our chapter house at Burton Lazars'.

Confraternity seals adopted a generic form.[51] They were invariably vesicas; their legends identified them as Confraternity Seals of the Order of St Lazarus, often 'in Anglia'; and they all had the central figure of Lazarus the Bishop holding a crozier and delivering a blessing.[52] Less obvious is the question of how many of these seals existed and what they tell us about how the Order conducted this part of its business. It might be assumed, as in the previous examples discussed, that the Order would have need of a single seal to validate letters of confraternity, but documentary and archaeological survivals point to a much more complicated picture. In terms of artefactual survivals, there are two matrices which are still extant and there is evidence that a further two existed in the 19th century, all of these examples being different in detail. Thirty-two letters of confraternity survive in archive repositories spread across the UK and 13 of these provide fragments of wax impressions large enough to draw some conclusions about the matrices which generated them. Though this can be challenging work, since the wax seals are often badly impressed or in poor condition, three diagnostic indicators tend to survive, often because they are located on or near the tag, generally the last part of the seal to degenerate. These are: the architectural detail of the canopy; the corbel on which the central figure is standing; and miscellaneous significant details – for example, the angle at which the crozier is held or idiosyncratic motifs in the field.[53] This analysis proved that three different, identifiable matrices had been used on six documents; and there were a further seven documents where a different matrix had been used in each case. None of these could be related directly to the four surviving matrices or good quality modern impressions of the lost ones. In other words, the Order of St Lazarus was using 13 generically similar but detail-specific Confraternity Seals between 1455 and 1526 and there was another (the Robertsbridge matrix) probably of earlier date, 14 seals in all. Taking into account the fact that only the tip of the iceberg survives in terms of extant letters of confraternity – there must have been hundreds, even thousands in the late Middle Ages – the number of seals in circulation before the Reformation would have run to dozens and perhaps many more.[54]

It is important to try to assess what this evidence is telling us about late-medieval seals and particularly the management of the Burton Lazars confraternity. The first point that emerges is that management styles changed over time, a point borne out by the discovery of a gilt-bronze Confraternity Seal matrix by a metal detectorist at Robertsbridge, Sussex, in the 1990s. This example was larger and earlier than any previously known seal, dating from *c.* 1390. Though no known documents are sealed with this matrix, it is reasonable to conjecture that it was a template or prototype which served the Order before the confraternity took off in popularity *c.* 1450.[55] After that, it seems, many less professionally executed versions of the matrix were

produced. It is clear that during this period 'pardoners', or agents, were working on behalf of the Order in parts of the country as far flung as Hereford, Durham and north Wales. Some of them may have been contracted directly by the Order; others were almost certainly freelance, having obtained the right to sell indulgences and letters of confraternity from a number of institutions.[56] Were these agents issued with their own seals to maximise profits? Another explanation of the explosion of numbers of matrices after 1450 is that the Order suffered widespread problems with fraud and forgery. There is documentary evidence that this was going on in the 13th and 14th centuries and the poor quality of some of the surviving impressions suggests they may have been generated from hastily produced, substandard matrices which raises the question about low-grade matrices surviving in museum collections today.[57] It has generally been supposed that such examples are forgeries, either on stylistic grounds or because other versions of a particular seal are known to exist. The example of the Burton Lazars Confraternity Seal, multiplied to include the many religious orders and institutions that enjoyed similar privileges, could lead to a long overdue reappraisal.

The second point is less quantifiable and takes us back to the question of seals as manifestations of 'image' and how our medieval ancestors related to them. On face value the Confraternity Seals of the Order of St Lazarus repeat the message of the other seals that depict Lazarus the Bishop – in other words, this was a respectable investment, likely to bear fruit. In the popular perception it probably mattered little whether, as an investor, you were looking at a living bishop or a long-dead one. Such people epitomised the respectability of the late-medieval establishment to all but a few. More important, perhaps, was the question of what a letter of confraternity carried with it and here a clue is provided by an anecdote in Jocelin de Brakelond's *Chronicle of the Abbey of Bury St Edmunds*. Jocelin is sharply critical of the fact that William the Sacrist secretly borrowed 40 marks from Benedict the Jew, 'to whom he gave a bond sealed with the seal that used to hang on the shrine of St Edmund and was normally used for sealing documents of guilds and confraternities'.[58] The proximity of the matrix to the shrine of St Edmund suggests it was believed to be charged with some special spiritual power which, by implication, could be transferred to the wax seals it generated. Hence Jocelin's outrage that such a seal could be misused and, above all else, handed on to a Jew, an unbeliever. In the secular world it was commonplace for seals to carry personal and environmental tokens of the people and places they represented, such as fingerprints or rings of plaited straw, so it is not too farfetched to conjecture that the same thought processes may have been represented in the ecclesiastical sphere too.[59] Seals on letters of confraternity could therefore have been regarded as spiritually symbolic, a talismanic bond between the recipient and the house that issued them, and in this light it is easier to see why the peripatetic pardoners of St Lazarus maintained the fiction that the sealing had been done 'in our chapter house at Burton Lazars' long after this had ceased to be a reality.

Masters' Privy Seals (Fig. 7)

It was accepted that masters of the Order could make use of Privy Seals, or signets, to validate business of an individual or 'private' nature. Several of these signets have been encountered in the context of the master in his capacity as Warden of the hospital of St Giles, Holborn. St Giles was a royal foundation, originally for 40 lepers, which traced its roots back to the early 12th century. In 1299, "after protracted negotiations, Edward I gave it to the Order of St Lazarus to compensate it for losses sustained in the withdrawal from the Holy Land. Thereafter, the London properties of St Giles became the most valuable possessions of the Order and it is probable that masters spent a good deal of their time there.[60] The surviving Privy Seals of St Giles date between 1486 and 1523 and relate to two masters, Sir George Sutton and Sir Thomas Norton.[61] The seals take the form of an oval and show St Giles, as an abbot, with a wounded hind leaping up to him to seek protection.[62] Unfortunately all of the surviving examples are in poor condition. Also surviving for Sir Thomas Norton, and conversely in excellent condition, is a Privy Seal attached to a Leicestershire charter which proves that such signets might be varied according to the circumstances in which they were being deployed.[63] Two corresponding indentations in the wax impression indicate that this was a seal almost certainly made with a signet ring. The design is a shield, within a circular rope work border, bearing the device of a St Julian's cross. This was an apt emblem for someone like Norton. In the 15th century the Lazarites had been actively cultivating their image as the charitable and genteel heirs of a bygone age of crusading. St Julian the Hospitaller, whose life is recounted in *The Golden Legend*, was a young nobleman remarkable because of his charity to the poor and to lepers.[64] Even at this lowest level in the sigillographical hierarchy, the seals of the Order of St Lazarus could be seen as saying something relevant about how it perceived itself, its history and its role in the world.

Though the Order of St Lazarus was relatively small and its seals were not always of the highest quality, they were clearly critical to its *modus operandi* and warrant the careful attention of scholars for three reasons. First, by virtue of their design, they illustrate the aspirations and priorities of the Order and how these changed over a period of time, especially in terms of dealing with the wider world. Second, they clarify the priorities for the conducting of business and, in the case of the Confraternity Seals, by a multiplicity of seals and matrices provide valuable clues about how some aspects of that business were, in practice, carried out. Third, a detailed study such as this holds out the possibility of comparison with other religious

Figure 7 Privy Seal of Sir Thomas Norton, early 16th century, impression on document (11x12mm). ROLLR, 10D 34/123

and particularly military orders. For example, were the Lazarites typical in their use of seals and choice of imagery? Only further academic studies can shed light on this question and others like it. Finally, it must be acknowledged that more remains to be discovered even about the seals of the Order of St Lazarus. Though the English seals have been thoroughly reviewed, the survival rate of both documents and matrices has been relatively poor and the continental seals have only been superficially dealt with from secondary sources. The discovery of the Robertsbridge matrix proves that the study of seals is a constantly changing dynamic depending on a chance signal through a set of headphones as much as anything else.

Notes

1. What follows, on the Order of St Lazarus in the Holy Land and Europe, is based on: Hyacinthe 2003; Jankrift 1996; and Barber 1994. There are also older, less reliable, sources, for example: Pétiet 1914 and Bertrand de la Grassière 1960. For England, the only major study is Marcombe 2003 which also sketches in the international background.
2. Marcombe 2003, 6–13
3. Ibid., 135–41
4. Ibid., 9, 11, 13
5. Ibid., 3–6; Farmer 1992), 190; *The Book of Saints* 1994, 339.
6. Marcombe 2003, 5–6.
7. Ibid., 12–20.
8. Ibid., 20–21, 75–85.
9. Ibid., 86–100
10. Ibid., 215–46
11. Ibid., 23–5
12. Ibid., 175–214.
13. In the 13th century collections were taken 'for the maintenance of the standard of St Lazarus against the enemies of the cross' (*Calendar of Patent Rolls*, 317).
14. Touati 1998, 631–746.
15. Marcombe 2003, 88–92, 166–8.
16. Hyacinthe 2003, 22, 24.
17. Hyacinthe 2003, 83–4. The 1273 seal has the legend: S: PCEPTORIS: SCI: LAZARI: IN: A[-]IE (Seal of the Preceptory of St Lazarus in Germany). That of 1282 has the legend: S: PCEPTORIS: SCI: LAZARI: IN: ALEMANIA (Seal of the Preceptory of St Lazarus in Germany).
18. Hyacinthe 2003, 83–5.
19. Hyacinthe 2003, 83–4. The seal of Schlatt (1274) has the legend: [S]: COMMENDATORIS: DOM: SCI: LAZARI: T: SLATTEN (Seal of the Commander of the House of St Lazarus at Schlatt). Beside the lower arm of the cross are the words: ZURAH (left); and VENIE (right).
20. Hyacinthe 2003, 83–5. The seal of Gfenn (1274) has the legend: S: FRM: DOM: SCI: LAZARI: IN: GEVENNE (Seal of the Brothers of the House of St Lazarus at Gfenn).
21. Hyacinthe 2003, 83–5. The seal of Seedorf (1289) has the legend: S: DOMUS: FRM: SCI: LAZARI: IN: VRANIA (Seal of the Brothers of the House of St Lazarus at Seedorf; Hyacinthe's translation).
22. Fox-Davies 1993, 128.
23. Hyacinthe 2003, 83.
24. Ibid*., loc. bit.*
25. The same could be said of the cross used by the Templars which is similar to that adopted by the Order of St Lazarus. For the typical 'Templar cross' see Koninklijke Bibliotheek, The Hague, Ms 76 F3, f.1.
26. For the chain of command and contacts between the centre and periphery in the Order of St Lazarus, see Marcombe 2006.
27. The shorter or couped cross (i.e. with arms of equal length) is believed to have developed because of the changing shape of shields in the 13th and 14th centuries. As they became shorter, the need for a shorter heraldic cross automatically followed (Fox-Davies 1993, 128). For the seal of James de Besnes, see Marcombe, 2003, 30. It is to be found in the Smitmer-Löschner collection in the Osterreichischen Staatsarchivs and has the Lombardic legend: SIG: IACOBI: D: ARCRIS: MILITIS: MAGRI: S: LAZARI: ELLTRII (Seal of James de Arcris, Master of the Knights of St Lazarus of Jerusalem). The legend poses a difficulty since it appears not to relate to James de Besnes, whose seal this is taken to be. Nor is there a known master of the Order at about that time who has a name similar to 'de Arcris'. This might be a Latinised form of 'Acre' and could in some sense relate to the Lazarites use of this place as a base in the 13th century.
28. Hyacinthe 2003, 121. The seal of Gfenn (late 14th century) has the legend: S: CONVENTUS: DOM: I: GEVENNE: ORDINIS: MILICI: SCI: LAZARI (Seal of the Convent and House of Gfenn of the Military Order of St Lazarus).
29. Hyacinthe 2003, 147. The seal of John de Schwaber (mid-15th century) has the legend: S: FRS: IOHS: SWABER: CEMENDATOR: DOMORU: SCI: LAZARI: IGEVENE: ET: SEDOVE (Seal of Brother John Schwaber, Commander of the House of St Lazarus at Gfenn and Seedorf).
30. ROLLR DE2242/5. The charter evidently arrived at the former Leicestershire Record Office under the mistaken belief it related to Wymondham in Leicestershire.
31. Marcombe 2003, 34–5.
32. Early descriptions of the person who appears to be the master in England are 'Preceptor of all the alms of St Lazarus in England and warden of the brethren in England' and 'Preceptor and custodian of all the alms of St Lazarus on this side of the sea'. The word preceptor seems to suggest some sort of leadership of the English preceptory or province of the Order (Marcombe 2003, 66–7).
33. For the earliest version of this seal, see TNA E327/50.
34. For the later version of this seal, see TNA, E329/334; British Library (hereafter BL), Seal lxvi 47; BM Seals no. 2789; Ellis 1986, 15.
35. Burton 1622, 64; BM Seals no. 2789; Ellis 1986,15
36. For an illustration and discussion of the Grattemont sculptures, see Marcombe 2003, 25–7.
37. Ibid, 66–75. Other representations of brothers of St Lazarus are on one of the door stops of Burton Lazars church, Leicestershire (possibly) (ibid., 70); and a more definite (late-medieval) depiction in Huntingdon Library, S. Marino, California, USA (HM160, f. 129). See Marcombe 2003, 186.
38. Actually, 'gules, a lion rampant argent'.
39. Ellis 1986,15; BM Seals no. 2789.
40. Touati 1998, 113–14, 417–20; Satchell 1998, 166.
41. For example, St Hugh of Lincoln and St Chad of Lichfield. For a discussion of the head cult in pre-Christian times, see Ross 1993, 94–171 and Green 1992, 114–18. A tonsured head is a common motif on medieval priests' personal seals with the legend: CAPUT: SERVI: DEI (Head of the Servant of God) or similar.
42. For the significance of the Mowbrays, see Marcombe 2003, 35–40.
43. Ibid., 52. The seal shows St Giles as an abbot.
44. BL, Seal D.CH.37
45. For the privileges of the Order, see Marcombe 2003,175–8. These often invoked the wrath of local bishops.
46. BL Seal xxv 169.
47. For the importance of indulgences, see Marcombe 2003, 181–6.
48. For the confraternity, see ibid. 186–94.
49. Ibid., 190.
50. Ibid., 191.
51. For Confraternity Seals, see Marcombe 2002.
52. The legend on the illustrated example reads: SIGILLIE: FRATINITATIE: SCI: LACNI: IERUILELEM: IN: ANGLIA (Seal of the Fraternity of St Lazarus of Jerusalem in England).
53. Marcombe 2002, 49–54.
54. Ibid., 54.
55. The Robertsbridge matrix has the Lombardic legend: SIGILLU: FRATNITAT: DE: BURTO: SCI: LAZARI (Seal of the Fraternity of Burton St Lazarus). The legend was deciphered by Christopher Whittick, Senior Archivist with East Sussex County Council. The matrix is now in the keeping of the author.
56. Marcombe 2003, 183–4
57. Ibid., 181.
58. Jocelin de Brakelond, 4.
59. Harvey and McGuinness (1996, 21) suggest a functional interpretation, though there may well be more to it than that.
60. Marcombe 2003, 161–6.
61. For example, BL, Harl. Charters, 44B 18, 24, 26, 27, 28, 33, 34, 36.
62. For the legend of St Giles and the wounded hind, see Farmer 1992, 205–6.
63. ROLLR no. 10 D 34/123.
64. Farmer 1992, 273–4.

The Judicial Seals of the Welsh Courts of Great Sessions

David H. Williams

The courts of Great Sessions

The Act of Union of 1536, uniting England and Wales, supplemented by a further act in 1542, established county boundaries in the Principality of Wales which endured until local government reform in 1974. More recently, in further administrative changes, some of those boundaries are once again on the political map, chiefly in north and west Wales. To counter the then prevalent state of lawlessness in parts of Wales, the Act of 1542 divided the country (Monmouthshire excepted) into four judicial circuits of three counties each, for the purpose of holding the newly established Great Sessions. The judicial circuits comprised: Anglesey, Caernarfonshire and Merioneth; Denbigh, Flint and Montgomery; Cardiganshire, Carmarthenshire and Pembrokeshire; and Breconshire, Glamorganshire and Radnorshire.[1] The writer and antiquary, George Owen (1603), told how 'thear is in every sheere a great sessions or assisses houlden every yeare twyce, and a justice of assise for every three sheeres'.[2] Monmouthshire was attached to the Oxford assize circuit.[3]

The Act indeed provided 'that there shall be holden and kept Sessions in every Year, in every of the said Shires in the Dominion and Principality of Wales'. The Justice of Chester was 'for the time being' to keep the Sessions in the counties of Denbigh, Montgomery and Flint, and 'have nothing but his old fee of an hundred Pounds yearly for the same'. The Justice of North Wales was to keep the Sessions for the counties of Caernarfon, Merioneth and Anglesey, and to be paid £50 annually. 'One Person learned in the Laws of this Realm of England' was to be appointed Justice of the Counties of Radnor, Brecknock and Glamorgan; and another was to serve the shires of Carmarthen, Pembroke and Cardigan; both were to receive a yearly fee of £50. Various officials were responsible for administrative matters, but 'no Welshman was to have any office unless he speak English'.[4] The language of the courts was indeed English, but some Welsh words did appear in the official Latin record.[5]

The courts of Great Sessions (which met in rotation in their respective county towns) had an extensive jurisdiction, and were enabled to hear actions 'ranging from the most trifling debt to high treason'.[6] They became very popular, and their increasing work-load meant that, from 1576, the number of justices for each court was raised to two; but they sat together, not separately.[7] The courts had their limitations; they could not summon parties or witnesses resident outside their circuit, and each session was limited to six days, though they were not necessarily consecutive.[8] In course of time their usefulness and the recourse made to them declined, and the courts were abolished in 1830. The commission which heard evidence leading to their extinction, were told by some that 'Welsh judges are men of inferior ability'.[9]

The original seal

The Act of 1542 provided for four 'original seals' to be used to seal all original writs and process returnable at the Sessions. One such, for the counties of Merioneth, Caernarfon and Anglesey, was to remain in the custody of the Chamberlain of North Wales; another for use in the shires of Carmarthen, Pembroke and Cardigan was to be in the keeping of the Chamberlain of South Wales; that for use in the shires of Brecknock, Radnor and Glamorgan, was to be given into the custody of the Steward and Chamberlain of Brecknock; whilst that for Denbighshire and Montgomeryshire was to be in the keeping of the Steward and Chamberlain of Denbigh. Flintshire was to be served by the 'original' seal of Chester.[10]

It is likely that the 'original' seals were, in fact, the seals of the several chanceries. No seal impression has been located which bears the word 'original' in the legend, although a draft exists of a royal command by Charles II in August 1660 for the engraving of an original seal for the counties of Radnor, Brecknock and Glamorgan; to be 'agreeable to that… in the time of the late King of blessed memory, adding only in the inscription immediately after the word *Carolus*, the word *Secundus*'.[11] Earlier, in 1649, the House of Commons had ordered the engraving of new original seals for Wales.[12]

Numerous writs returnable at the Sessions, held amongst the manuscripts of the National Library, bear no seal whatsoever. On the records of The National Archives very few claims for payment for the engraving of specific 'original' seals have been located. One request for payment in 1709 by John Roos, chief engraver at the tower in the time of Queen Anne, confuses the issue by describing as a 'judicial seal' a matrix engraved for the Chancellor of Denbigh and Montgomery, and bearing (in Latin) the legend: 'for the Chancery for the counties of Denbigh and Montgomery'. This was, in effect, an original seal.[13] Thomas East (1686) had engraved a like seal for the same chancery.[14] Known impressions of Welsh chancery seals are extremely rare.

The judicial seal

The *Method of Proceeding in the Court of Great Sessions for Glamorgan, Brecon and Radnor* noted, as late as 1817, the provisions of the Act of 1542 that there be an original seal for issuing writs, and a judicial seal for witnessing judicial process.[15] There are numerous examples of impressions made from the latter seals; the great majority being attached to exemplifications of fines and recoveries (especially the latter) which had passed through the courts of Great Sessions. They were sometimes termed the 'Broad Seals for Wales' (as in 1689),[16] or 'ye Greenwax Seale' (as in Carmarthenshire in 1650 – from the colour of the wax invariably used when they were impressed).[17] Each group of counties had its judicial seal (including now Denbigh, Montgomery and Flint), changing

from reign to reign.

The silver seal matrices were engraved in the Tower of London to a specified design, and the accounts of at least three royal engravers survive: those of Thomas East for three of the groups of shires, necessitated by the accession of James II in 1685,[18] that of Henry Harris for adjusting the judicial seals after the accession of William III,[19] and those of John Roos for numerous matrices executed during the reign of Queen Anne, and for the early seals of George I.[20] They mostly display the same engraving skill which impressed Samuel Pepys, Secretary of the Admiralty, on a visit to the Tower in 1666, when he saw 'some of the finest pieces of embossed work that ever I did see in my life, for fineness and smallness of the images therein.'[21]

Another engraver known to have worked on seals for Welsh usage included Thomas Rawlins (Chief Royal Engraver in 1647–48 and 1662–70). His work included five judicial seals for the courts of Great Sessions. They were necessitated by the restoration of the monarchy, and Rawlins worked on them from 30 July 30 to 24 September 1660, receiving a payment of £274 (in to-day's values worth about well over £20,000).[22] He deserved the money; he had fled to the Continent after the downfall of Charles I, and returning to London was, in 1657, imprisoned for debt. It has been said of Rawlins that he was 'although a talented artist, an uneven worker, and some of his productions betray [no doubt] the great haste with which he had to execute the king's commands.'[23]

Silver matrices were not inexpensive items. John Roos charged £60 each for his workmanship in engraving the judicial seals for Queen Anne. A further £8 was expended on the necessary silver, and £1 for each shagreen case to hold and protect the seal[24] ('shagreen' was untanned leather with a rough granular surface and frequently dyed green).[25] The total cost for each judicial seal which Roos claimed of the Treasury thus came to almost £70, equivalent to well over £5,000 today.[26] Of Roos' craftsmanship, the officers of the Mint reported that 'the work is good, and he deserves the prices set down'.[27] The late date (1708) in Anne's reign of Roos' claims may reflect the order given in 1702 after her accession that the judicial seal of William and Mary for the Caernarfon group be used until a new one was made.[28] Presumably this applied to the other shire groups also, whilst the term 'of William and Mary' implies that no change was made in their judicial seals after Mary's death.

When silver seals became obsolete, as on the death of a sovereign, or a change in title necessitating an alteration in the wording, the silver (once defaced to prevent fraud] became the perquisite of the holder of the relevant office. In the 18th century, the silver was frequently refashioned in the form of a salver. One such salver, engraved with the Thomas Roos' 1708 judicial seal of Queen Anne for the counties of Denbigh, Montgomery and Flint, was fashioned in 1721 by Paul de Lamerie for Sir Joseph Jekyll, Chief Justice of the County Palatine of Chester; and another seal, that of George I for the same shires, was made into a salver in 1739 by Thomas Parr II for a later Chief Justice, Sir John Willes.[29]

Not all judicial seal matrices were refashioned, a few survive in their original form, like that of the reign of George IV for the counties of Caernarfon, Merioneth and Anglesey, which was presented in 1942 to the National Museum of Wales by A.J. Sylvester, CBE, on behalf of Sir Henry Fildes, JP, MP, who did not want his name publicly mentioned. It had been engraved by Thomas Wyon the elder, whose family name throughout the 19th century was synonymous with the engraving of seals of state. As the courts of Great Sessions were abolished in 1830, this seal was one of the last of its class to be engraved. The two matrices (for the obverse and reverse sides of the seal) bear the lugs allowing them to be correctly positioned as the seal impression was formed. On the exterior appears the inscription: T. WYON FECIT. The other set of matrices the National Museum holds – for Glamorgan, Brecknock and Radnor in the time of George II, were purchased by the Museum in 1955 at a Sotheby's sale for £26 – infinitely less than the cost of the original engraving (**Figs 1 and 2**).[30]

Judicial seal imagery.

The judicial seals were always circular in shape and, whilst always smaller than the Great Seals of England, their size varied. Those for the reign of Henry VIII had a diameter of 74mm, in the time of Elizabeth I of 62mm, but in the reign of James I of 100mm (**Figs 5 and 6**). Thereafter the diameter fluctuated between 90 and 105mm. As the accounts of John Roos tell, the matrices were always double-sided. The obverse had an equestrian scene, the monarch on horse-back; the reverse displayed a shield of the royal arms surmounted by a royal crown. The obverse generally portrayed (somewhere in the field) the crest of three ostrich feathers, used by the Princes of Wales ever since the Battle of Crécy (1346), and taken then from the arms of the captive King John of Bohemia. The base of the reverse also displays the Prince of Wales' feathers, accompanied by his equally ancient motto, ICH DIEN (I serve).[31]

Whilst the details and presentation differed from reign to reign, the judicial seals always retained the same pattern, save during the Commonwealth (1649–60) when the imagery of the Great Seal (a map of the British Isles and a view of Parliament in session) was adopted. Unfortunately, most of the known impressions of judicial seals from the time of the Republic possess but an indistinct image of the map.[32] It was in February 1649 that the House of Commons called in the Welsh judicial seals used during the reign of Charles I, passed an Act requiring their alteration (in fact, replacement), and required the Committee of the Revenue to pay for the necessary work involved.[33] On the accession of William and Mary (1688) the judicial seals were called in to London, so as to be 'altered to their present Majesties' style'.[34]

On the obverse equestrian side of the judicial seal, the monarch's horse sometimes rides (as seen on the impression) towards the left *(dexter)* side of the seal – as on the seals for Elizabeth, Charles I, Charles II, James I, William III, Anne and George IV; on other seals towards the right *(sinister)* side – as on the seals of Henry VIII, Edward VI, George II (**Fig. 2**) and George III (**Fig. 3**). The male sovereigns are all depicted in some form of body armour, though the helmet disappears from the reign of James I (**Fig. 5**). Queen Elizabeth's seal for the Denbigh group of counties shows her 'clothed in complete armour like a man, and seated astride the horse in masculine fashion.'[35] Might this have been an earlier seal with altered legend, for her seal for the Carmarthen and Glamorgan groups of shires depicts her wearing a long dress and riding sideways seated on a pillion? Anne wore 'royal vestments'.[36] The helmet of the earlier monarchs generally bears the crest of England, a lion statant. The later sovereigns display a variety of head-gear – Charles II,

Figures 1 and 2 National Museum of Wales, Seal Dies E 45-46. Judicial Seal for the Counties of Glamorgan, Brecknock and Radnor, *temp*. George II (1727–60). Engraved in 1729. Silver dies, diam. 105mm. **Obverse**: The monarch on horseback riding to sinister, a sword in his right hand; the Prince of Wales's feathers and motto, ICH DIEN. In base, a representation of Cardiff, the Herbert mansion (Grey Friars) being prominent. The legend reads: GEORGIVS • II • DEI • GRATIAE • MAGNAE • BRITANNIAE • FRANCIAE • ET • HIBERNIAE • REX • FIDEI • DEFEN • ETC. **Reverse**: A shield: the royal arms of 1714-1801, ensigned by a royal crown. Supporters: dext. A greyhound collared, sin. A hind ducally gorged with coronet and chained. In base, the Prince of Wales' three ostrich feathers, and a scroll with the motto: ICH DIEN. SIGILL • UIDI • PRO • COMITA • GLAMORGAN • BRECKNOK • ET • RADNOR © National Museum of Wales

a large plume of seven feathers issuing from the back of his helmet (**Fig. 7**); James I, a crown; Georges II, III and IV are bewigged and helmetless (**Fig. 3**). The earlier monarchs brandish a sword, held at differing angles; Elizabeth holds a sceptre, George IV a short baton, but a sword is attached to his left thigh. The seal of Charles II for the Carmarthen group of counties has him having attached to his left arm in an horizontal position a small shield of the royal arms.[37]

A noteworthy feature of the splendid horse caparisons on the judicial seals of Henry VIII and Edward VI is that they are embroidered with the royal arms reversed; that is to say, the first and fourth quarters contain the three lions passant of England, the second and third quarters the three fleurs-de-lis of France. More than that, the lions passant are also reversed, facing to sinister rather than to dexter. The explanation is that the chest of the horse, to which they face, 'is taken as the place of honour'.[38] On at least some of the equestrian impressions of the judicial seals in the time of Henry VIII, a ball with a small spike on the top of it appears on the back of the horse. It also appears on the judicial seals of Edward VI, for these appear to be the same seals as used in the reign of Henry VIII, though with necessary adjustments in the legend. It has been suggested that a ball with a spike might have been fastened on to the caparison to stop others clambering up on to the back of the horse behind the rider, who would be 'powerless against any agile assailant from the rear'.[39] The head of the horse in some reigns (Henry VIII, Edward VI, Charles II and James I) bears a plume of feathers. In the field of the seal, above the horse's back and to the rear of the rider, are sometimes displayed, as during the reigns of Charles II, William III, Anne,

Figures 3 and 4 National Museum of Wales, seal casts W 36-37. Judicial seal for the Counties of Caernarfon, Merioneth and Anglesey, *temp*. George III (1760–1820), engraved between 1816–1820. Impressions made in 1934 from matrices held by the British Museum. Buff plaster casts, diam 90mm. © National Museum of Wales. **Obverse**: The monarch on horseback riding to sinister, in the field behind are the feathers and motto, ICH DIEN, of the Prince of Wales. Under the body of the horse is a landscape depicting Caernarfon Castle, with two three-masted ships on the Menai Straits adjacent. • GEORGIUS TERTIUS DEI GRATIA BRITANNIARUM REX FIDEI DEFENSOR. **Reverse**: A shield, ensigned by a royal crown, bearing the royal arms employed from 1816 to 1837, overall an inescutcheon bearing the arms of Hanover, and ensigned with the crown of Hanover: tierced, 1. Two lions passant gardant [Brunswick], 2. Semy of hearts, a lion rampant [Luneburg], 3. A horse courant [Westphalia], overall in an inescutcheon, the crown of Hanover. Supporters: dext. A greyhound, sin. A stag. In base, three ostrich feathers enfiled by a coronet, and a scroll bearing the motto: ICH DIEN. SIGILLUM IUDICALE PRO COMITATIBUS CARNARVON MERIONETH ET ANGLESEA

Figures 5 and 6 National Library of Wales, Edwinsford Deed 2084 (obverse) and 2085 (reverse). Judicial seal for the Counties of Carmarthen, Cardigan and Pembroke, *temp*. James I. As used in 1611. Green wax, diam. 100mm. (© National Library of Wales). **Obverse**: The monarch on horseback riding to dexter over hummocky vegetation , his right hand holds his sword aloft, his left hand grasps the reins. The horse trappings bear the royal arms. + IACOBVS • DEI • GRACIA • ANGLIE • SCOTIA • FRANCIA • ET • HIBERNIA • REX • FIDEI • DEFENSOR. **Reverse**: A shield bearing the royal arms and ensigned by a royal crown: quarterly, 1. and 4. quarterly, i. and iv. Three fleurs-de-lis [France Modern], ii. and iii. Three lions passant guardant in pale [England]; 2. A lion rampant within a double tressure [Scotland], 3. An harp stringed [Ireland]. In base, the Prince of Wales' feather and motto: ICH DIEN. Supporters: dexter: The red dragon breathing fire; sinister: A goat. SIGILLVM • IVDICALE • PRO • COMITATIBVS • CARMERTHEN • CARDIGAN • ET • PEMBROCK •

and Georges I, II and III, the Prince of Wales' feathers and motto. On the seal for George IV these appear in the exergue. On the seals of Elizabeth and James I, a portcullis ensigned by a crown appears in the field above the horse's rump.

John Roos' accounts for the judicial seals he engraved described how the monarch (be it Anne or George I) rode 'on horseback, with a landskip underneath'.[40] The landscape engraved beneath and beyond the horse was at first little more than a undulating surface with tufts of vegetation, but on the judicial seals of Charles II and George I, appropriately in the case of Wales, hills rise up quite sharply in the background (**Fig. 7**). In the reigns of George II and III, striking views of shire towns appear beneath and beyond the horse. These included a view of Cardiff with the Herbert Mansion on the seal of the Glamorgan group of counties (**Fig. 1**); a depiction of Caernarfon Castle on the seal for the Caernarfon group; a representation of Denbigh Castle with its circumventing wall for the Denbigh group, and a portrayal of the town of Carmarthen on the seal for its group.[41]

The Caernarfon seals for the reigns of George II and George III are very similar, showing town walls, a church spire, a water area, possibly a bridge with watch-towers and (according to Wyon) the masts and yards of ships (**Figs 11 and 12**). Around 1816, a new seal was engraved which gave a different portrayal of Caernarfon Castle (**Fig. 3**).[42] Both seals showed mountains in close proximity to the castle. Unfortunately, in the 18th century, as the wax hardened a paper cover was often pressed around the seal, presumably but mistakenly in order to protect the surfaces.[43] In this way, hundreds of fine images of Welsh urban landscapes are now hardly discernible, and very few fair

Figures 7 and 8 Denbighshire Record Office, Ruthin. Deed DD/WY/1037. Judicial Seal for the Counties of Denbigh, Montgomery and Flint, *temp*. Charles II. As used in 1673, but the legend tells of the engraving of the matrix in 1661 on the Restoration of the Monarchy. Pale-brown wax, diam. 94mm. © Denbighshire Record Office. **Obverse**: The monarch on horseback, facing the onlooker, and riding side-saddle to dexter over hummocky ground. His sword is unsheathed from its scabbard and held aloft by his right hand. In field, above the horse's tail, the Prince of Wales's feathers and motto, ICH DIEN. • CAROLVS • II • DEI • GRATIA • MAGNÆ • BRITANNIÆ • FRANCIÆ • ET • HIBERNIÆ • REX • FIDEI • DEFENS • **Reverse**: A shield bearing the royal arms and ensigned by a royal crown: quarterly, 1. and 4. quarterly, i. and iv. Three fleurs-de-lis [France Modern], ii. and iii. Three lions passant guardant in pale [England]; 2. A lion rampant within a double tressure [Scotland], 3. An harp stringed [Ireland]. In base, the Prince of Wales' feathers and motto: ICH DIEN. Supporters: dexter: A lion crowned rampant guardant; sinister: An antelope, gorged with a coronet and chained (but these accoutrements not clearly visible on this impression). SIGILLVM • IVDICALE • PRO • COMITATIBVS • DENBIGH • MONTGOMERI • ET • FLINT • 1661

Figures 9 and 10 University of Wales, Bangor. Baron Hill Deed 4269. Judicial seal for the Counties of Caernarfon, Merioneth and Anglesey, *temp*. George III. As used in 1774. Green wax, diam. 91mm. © University of Wales, Bangor. **Obverse**: The monarch on horseback, wearing the sash of an Order, holding a baton, and riding to sinister. Above the horse's rump, the Prince of Wales' feathers and motto, ICH DIEN. A view of Caernarfon is partly masked by the horse's legs. • GEORGIVS • III • DEI • GRATIA • MAGNÆ • BRITANNIÆ • • DEFENSOR • ETC. **Reverse**: A shield of the royal arms ensigned by a royal crown: quarterly, 1. Three lions passant gardant in pale [England] impaling a lion rampant within a double tressure [Scotland]; 2. Three fleurs-de-lis [France Modern]; 3. A cherub supporting an harp [Ireland]; 4. The arms of Hanover (as **Fig. 4**). Supporters: dexter: A greyhound, sinister. A stag. In base, three ostrich feathers enfiled by a coronet, and a scroll bearing the Prince of Wales' motto: ICH DIEN, though hardly discernible on this impression. SIGILL • IUDI • PRO • COMITATIBUS • CARNARVAN • MERIONETH • ET • ANGLESEY • + •

seal images of these towns and castles can now be traced.

On the reverse of every judicial seal (save in the time of the Commonwealth) was a shield ensigned by a royal crown. Beneath the shield were portrayed again three ostrich feathers with the motto, ICH DIEN. It has been pointed out that the ostrich feathers are strictly speaking not the badge of the Prince of Wales as such, but of the heir to the throne, who is usually created Prince of Wales.[44]

The arms displayed are those of the kingdom during each particular reign. In brief: the seals of the Tudor monarchs portrayed, quarterly, three fleurs-de-lis (of France) and three lions passant guardant (for England); the Stuart kings, quarterly, France and England quarterly; a lion rampant within a double treasure (for Scotland), and the harp of Ireland (**Fig. 6**); William and Mary ordered the arms of Nassau be placed in the middle of the royal arms 'on an escutcheon of pretence';[45] Anne had, quarterly, England impaling Scotland, France and Ireland separately; Georges I, II and III, displayed quarterly, England impaling Scotland, France and Hanover separately. On 1801, following the Treaty of Amiens and the Union of Ireland, the French fleurs-de-lis disappear, and the Hanoverian arms form an escutcheon ensigned with an Electoral bonnet. When Hanover became a kingdom in 1816, the bonnet was replaced by a crown, necessitating the engraving of new judicial seals towards the close of the reign of George III (**Fig. 4**).[46] They can have been but little used.

The supporters were different for each set of counties, but mostly remained unchanged during the life-span of the judicial seals, though with differing emphases in depiction. In brief these were, as seen on the seal impressions, dexter and sinister respectively: for the Glamorgan group, a greyhound (sometimes gorged), and a hind gorged with a royal coronet and chained (**Fig. 2**); for the Caernarfon group, a greyhound and a stag (**Fig. 10**); for the Denbigh group, a lion guardant crowned, and an antelope (or stag) gorged with a coronet and chained (**Fig. 8**); for the Carmarthen group, a dragon and a goat (**Fig. 6**). Only the seal of the last group has supporters rich in Welsh symbolism. The dragon is said to have been the ensign of Cadwaladar, king of Gwynedd (655–82) but whose exploits saw him attacking the Saxons as far afield as Somerset, whilst in Shakespeare's *Henry V*, there is reference to 'Cadwaladar and all his goats'.[47] A seal for the Carmarthen group, engraved very early in the reign of the newly restored Charles II – perhaps in haste – appears to show an antelope rather than a dragon in dexter position.[48]

John Roos in his submission for payment (1709), and describing the matrices he had engraved, lists the supporters, presumably in sinister and dexter positions respectively: for the Glamorgan group, 'A Grayhound collared and a Hinde gorged with a Crowne and chained'; for the Carmarthen group, 'An Antelope and a Stagg Standing on a Scroll'; for the Caernarfon group, 'A Grayhound collered and a Stagg Standing on a Scrowle'; and, for the Denbigh group, 'A Lyon crowned and an Antelope with a Crowne about his Neck and chained'.[49] There are occasional errors in Roos's accounts; for example, he requested payment in 1716 for a judicial seal for George I for

Figure 11 View of Caernarfon beneath the horse. University of Wales, Bangor, Bodorgan Deed 679, of 1782

Figure 12 View of Caernarfon beneath the horse. National Library of Wales Thorowgood and Hardcastle Deed 407, of 1792

'Carmarthen, Merioneth and Anglesey', when clearly he meant 'Caernarfon'.[50] There may, therefore, also be errors in his descriptions – particular in the case of the seal for the Carmarthen group. As hardly any recognisable images of judicial seals from the reign of Queen Anne can be traced, it is difficult to be certain.

The legend on the obverse of each judicial seal gave (in Latin) the name of the monarch, and listed his titles; these adjusting with political change. The legend on the reverse denotes that this is a judicial seal, and names the three counties to the court of which it is relevant. Occasionally, the legend on this side ends with the year of engraving: 1648, on the seals of the Commonwealth; 1626, on the seal of Charles I for the Denbigh group;[51] 1661, in the case of Charles II (**Fig. 8**);[52] 1686, in the instance of James II; and 1715, on the seal of George I for the Denbigh group.[53] William and Mary ordered Henry Harris to alter the 'broad seal' for Caernarfonshire, Merionethshire and Anglesey, 'by taking out the inscription referring to James II, and to replace it with: GULIELMUS III ET MARIA II DEI GRA MAG BRIT FRAN ET HIB REX ET REGINA FIDEI DEFENSORES'.[54] The sealing clause might typically read: 'our seal appointed for the sealing of writs in our said Court of Great Session'.[55]

Custody and protection

As has been noted, a number of 17th-century judicial seals were, mistakenly, preserved by shrouding them with a paper cover. Occasionally, however, they were protected in circular tin containers. In some of these instances the imagery remains in pristine condition;[56] in others, the wax is completely shattered.[57]

As for the seal matrices, the Act provided that the seal for the Denbigh group was to remain with the Justice of Chester, that for the Caernarfon group with the Justice of North Wales, and those for the Carmarthen and Glamorgan groups with the Justice of their respective three counties. It appears *(supra)* that they were kept in shagreen cases. By the 17th century, 'keepers' of the judicial seal were generally appointed. It is not clear that they had actual custody of the seal, very probably not; but it was their responsibility to collect in all fines and other emoluments. These they retained in return for a fixed annual payment to the Crown. In 1634, for example, Sir Thomas Morgan was assigned by letters patent the fines and profits of the 'original' seal of Carmarthenshire, Cardiganshire and Pembrokeshire, paying for this privilege £74 yearly (equivalent to about £6,500 today). He was also assigned the profits of the 'judicial' seal and monies called 'the king's silver' in the counties of Caernarfon, Merioneth and Anglesey, but no additional fee for this duty is mentioned.[58] How he managed to combine two groups of counties covering the whole of west Wales from north to south is unknown, but clearly he, and other like officials, benefited financially from their appointments.

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Notes

1 Williams 1916, 13; Williams 1899, 12–13.
2 Owen 1906, 40.
3 Chapman 1998, 192.
4 Williams 1899, 12–13.
5 Suggett 1997, 161, 168.
6 Parry 1995, v.
7 Chapman 1998, 194–5.
8 Parry 1995, xxviii; Williams 1916, 5, 57.
9 Parry 1995, xxv.
10 Williams 1899, 13–14.
11 NLW, Penrice and Margam Charter 5950.
12 *JHC* VI (1648–51) 199, 206, 228.
13 TNA, MINT I/7, p. 92.
14 NLW, MS 1396E.
15 NLW, MS 3854B.
16 *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series, William and Mary,* 363; TNA, MINT I/7, pp. 74–6.
17 Matthews 1913, 94.
18 NLW, Ms 1396E; *Calendar of State Papers, William and Mary,* 300 (No. 411); *Calendar of Treasury Books,* 1726–27.
19 TNA, MINT I/7, pp. 74–6; Harris sought the post of chief engraver after the death of Thomas Simonds in June 1665 (*Calendar of State Papers, Addenda,* 150).
20 TNA, MINT I/7.
21 *The Diary of Samuel Pepys*, II, 23–4.
22 *Calendar of State Papers, Charles II*, 299.
23 Forrer 1912, 38–9.
24 TNA, MINT I/7.
25 *S.v.* Little, (ed.).
26 Bank of England 2003.
27 Forrer 1912, V (1912) 210.
28 *Calendar of State Papers, Anne, I, 1702–03,* 505.
29 TNA, MINT I/7.
30 Williams 1993, 27.
31 Anson 1975.
32 Examples worth inspecting include, BL, Detached Seal XXXVII, 75 (fine); Carmarthenshire Record Office, 17/677 (dark brown/black wax, worn, 1658), Lort 17/679 (dark-brown/black wax, worn, 1650) – I am grateful to Mr John Davies, County Archivist, for his advice; Denbighshire Record Office, Ruthin, DD/WY/2684 (dark-green wax, 1654); National Library of Wales, Bronwydd Deed 2234 (darkened green wax, fair, 1657); Edwinsford Deed 670 (red wax, dulled, fair, 1557); Edwinsford Deed 1189 (red wax, only fair, 1650); Peniarth Deed, DC 111 (1659); Sotheby Deed 522 (detached in tin box, brown wax, only fair); Sotheby Deed 539 (brown wax, 1659, fairly fine, especially House of Commons representation); Talbot of Hensol Deed 92 (red-brown wax, only fair, 1658); for fairly good photographs of the seal of these years for Caernarfon, Merioneth and Denbigh shires, see: Wyon 1893, pl. III (opp. p. 4).
33 *JHC* VI (1648–1651) 151, *cf.* 161.
34 *Calendar of State Papers, William and Mary,*135–6, 144.
35 Wyon 1893, 5–6.
36 TNA, MINT I/7, p. 85.
37 Wyon 1893, 9.
38 Ibid., 5.
39 Ibid., 4.
40 TNA, MINT I/7, pp. 85, 99.
41 Wyon 1893, 11.
42 Williams 1993, 80, fig. 36.
43 One of many examples is the seal attached to NLW, Penrice and Margam Charter 6,484 (of 1741).
44 Pers. comm, Dr M.P. Siddons, Wales Herald Extraordinary.
45 *Calendar of State Papers, William and Mary,* 363.
46 Williams 1993, 27 (D. 48), 36 (W. 37, 43).
47 Wyon 1893, 12–13; Walter de Gray Birch (1887–1900) 230–3, gives an occasional differing description.
48 NLW, Edwinsford Deed 1535 (of 1661).
49 TNA, MINT I/7, pp. 85, 87 *et al.*
50 Ibid. p. 98.
51 Wyon 1893, 8–9.
52 Wyon 1894, 67.
53 TNA, MINT I/7, p. 95.
54 *Calendar of State Papers, William and Mary*, 363.
55 NLW, Penrice and Margam Charter 6,484 (of 1741).
56 E.g: NLW, Thorowgood and Hardcastle Deed 407.
57 E.g: NLW, Badminton Deeds, Group 2, no. 9089 (a seal of the Duchy of Lancaster).
58 NLW, Picton Castle Deed 217.