

Published in *Miscellanea Heraldica I. Mengelingen over wapenkunde en aanverwante ter gelegenheid van het vijftienvigtiarig jubileum van Heraldicum Disputationes, kwartaalblad voor heraldiek* *Miscellanea Heraldica, (Mixtures of heraldry and related subjects to celebrate the 25th jubilee of the quarterly magazine for heraldry)*. Editor **Marc Van de Cruys**. Homunculus, Wijnegem (B). 2020. 328p. p 132-139

SOME EXAMPLES OF PAINTED WAXSEAL IMPRESSIONS IN MEDIEVAL MINIATURES

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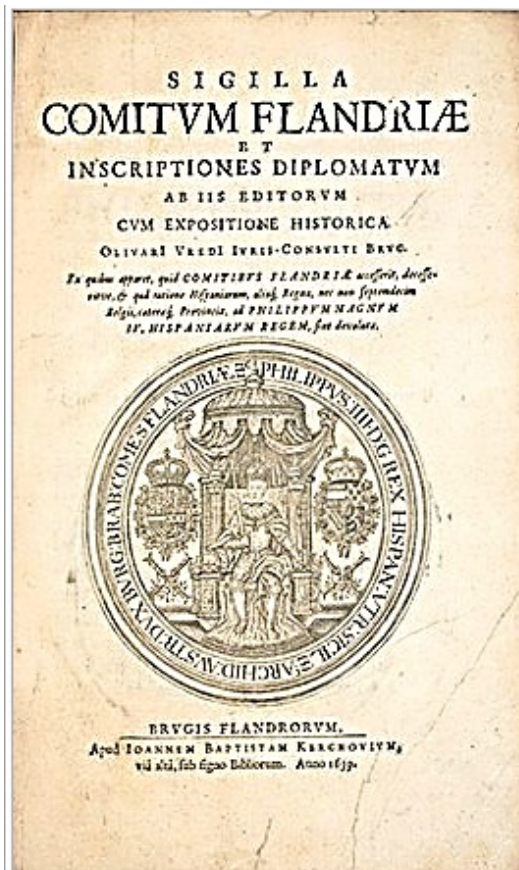
Keywords: Middle Ages, painted miniature, seal impression, miniature seals

Introduction

In former centuries seals in publications were presented mostly in black-and-white drawings. These drawings were made by artists. In addition to complete drawings sketches were also

made to show the appearance of the seal.

Examples are the notebooks by Buchelius, who extracted archival documents of the first half of the 17th century adding sketches of the attached seals. Others were also active making engravings. An example is Olivarius Vredius (Olivier de Wree, 1596-2652) who illustrated his book *Sigilla Comitum Flandriae* ---- with more than 300 engravings.



First page of *Sigilla Comitum Flandriae* --- (1)

Later the seal drawingss could also be made in colour. As example I present a 20 century painting of a fantasy-charter with seals of various periods by the heraldist T. van der Laars (1861-1939).



Not attached/floating seal

A fantasy-charter by T. van der Laars. *Wapens, vlaggen en zegels van Nederland*. 1918. (2)

The development of photography made depicting of (coloured) seals possible.

This article deals with seals in medieval painted miniatures. The subject of another article will be seals in 17th century paintings. (3)

Research

No documentation was found when searching on internet with the keywords “painted miniatures”, “medieval miniatures” and similar words (4). This means that a personal search of internet was required.

Examples of medieval miniatures with seals

King Edward the Elder? ca 900

On the website of the Pierpont Morgan Library & Museum at New York we found the here copied miniature. It shows a messenger handing over a sealed charter to a king. Or did the king seal a charter, giving it to a messenger? The text is shown by written scribbles. The green seal is a heraldic seal, possibly showing a cross. The legend exists of ten and six little crosses.

According to the caption the king is possibly king Edward the Elder. His reign lasted from 28 October 899 until 17 July 924. On 6 June 900 he was crowned as king of the Anglo-Saxons. He sits at ease which may mean that the content of the charter is acceptable. The text adjacent to the picture refers to the papacy of pope Formosus (pope of October 6th, 891 to his death on April 4th, 896). The reigns of the king and the pope do not coincide, but are quite close.

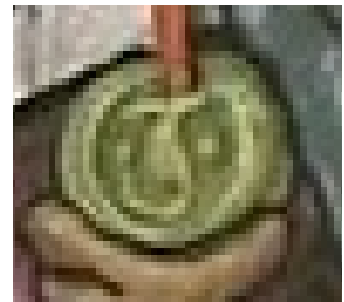
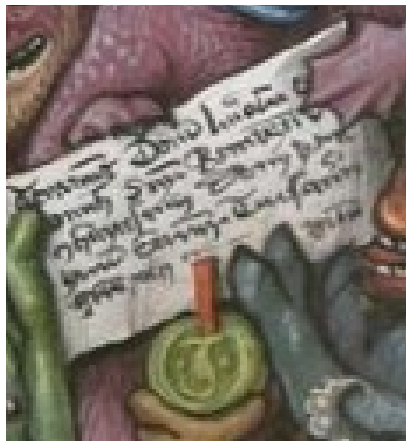


King Edward the Elder and a messenger

Source: Morgan Library & Museum Abrégé des histoires divines MS M751.fol. 087v.

An example from the “Demonagerie period”?

A second picture also deals with a sealed charter. It is a devils scene.



A seal of green wax hanging on a red tail shows the letter J or T (5).

To me the source of the drawing is not clear which means that I cannot identify and date it. A violet devil with blue head and golden horny comb shows a sealed document. The green seal is held by a sitting brown devil with silvery horns. In addition six more devils and a “devilish” depiction are also present. The seal shows a J or a T.

The *Espigurnantia* or seal room of The Court of Chancery, London ca 1460

One of the Lords in red dress holds up a sealed charter. The seal itself cannot be identified. (6)

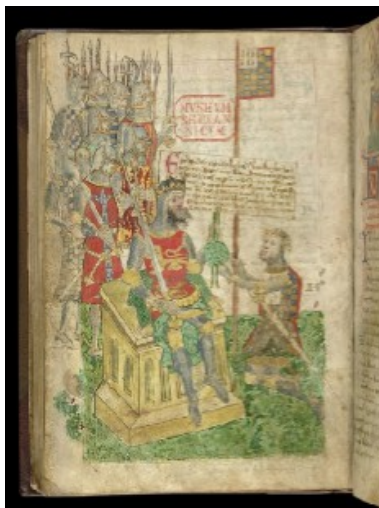


A picture borrowed from
 Corner, G.R. *Observations on four Illuminations representing the Courts of Chancery, King's Bench, Common Pleas and Exchequer, at Westminster, from a MS. of the time of King Henry VI.* *Archaeologia* 19, 1863: 375-377.

Corner is according to John Cherry (mail London, August 2018) the only one who wrote a good paper about these four pictures. Corner was especially interested in the clothing of the pictured persons. At that time the sigillant was named *spigurnel* and the sealing room *Espigurnantia*. (7)

William the Conqueror and Alan Rufus (Alan the Red, le Roux), ca 1071

William the Conqueror invests in 1071 Richmondshire to Alan Rufus, count of Brittany as gratefulness for his assistance with the conquest of England Rufus becomes through this act the First Lord of Richmond. To confirm his deed William hands over een charter with a green seal. The charter starts with "I, William, named "The Bastard", King of England give and concede to you -- (8)



A charter with William the Conqueror and "lower" Alan Rufus
 Coll. MVSEVM BRITTANICVM. Source: commons.wikimedia.org/



Seal of William the

Conqueror

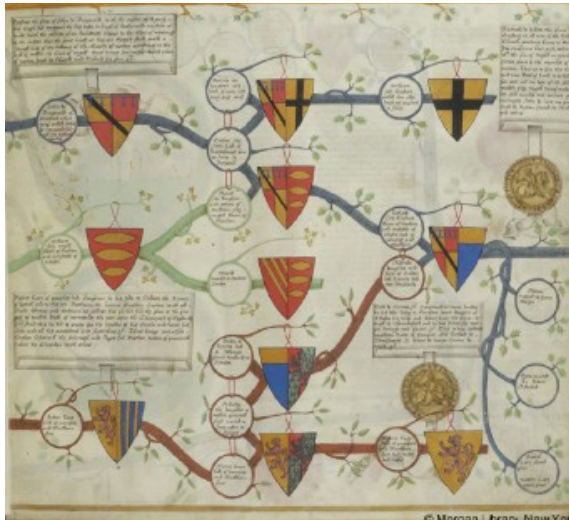
Source: National Archives, London.

The seal of of Richmond William “The Bastard”, King of England.

The green unrecognizable seal certifies the charter. I am quite sure that the painted seal resembles a seal of that period. I present an example. In the miniature the size of the seal equals that of a human head, but this will not have been the case.

Members of the Royal Houses of Warwick and Essex

In the collection of the Morgan Library & Museum a scroll is conserved showing royalties of Warwick and Essex, their genealogical relations and their coats-of-arms or seals. (9)



A quarter of the scroll. 1140 . *Descents of the houses of Warwick and Essex, England, 16th century*. Bron: Morgan Library & Museum, New York, MS M.956 fol. 4r.

The members of the royal houses of Warwick and Essex are presented. In this document we observe eight drawings of seals. I assume that no other depictions of these eight persons were available. Therefore the drawing of the seal served as a “portrait” of the seal owner. In this article I show two of these eight seals. According to Bevan (2004) the genealogical data are not always correct. However, for this paper it does not apply. (10)



Lisours



Seal of Richard de FitzEustace of Halton

Seal of Euso de

The seal of Eudo de Lisours (ca 1097-1113) is an equestrian seal with the legend + SIGILLVM : EVDO : DE : LIZVRES. The other seal top right shows an equestrian seal of Richard de FitzEustace of Halton (various 12th century dates). The legend runs + SIGILLVM : RICARDI : DE : HELLETO. Richard de FitzEustace Claverling, Baron of Halton is the above-mentioned Alan Rufus. However, other sources refer to him as having one daughter, when he died at an age of 16 years.

Mathilde, empress of the Holy German Empire, picture of 14th of 15th century



Portrait of empress Mathilde in the "*History of England*", composed by monks of St. Albans in the 15th century. The manuscript is also referred to as "*Liber benefactorum de l'abbaye de St. Alban*", made in the 14th century. Source: internet British Library MS Cotton Nero D VII.fol. 7. Coll. British Library.

Empress Mathilda, also empress Maud (1103-1167), married as an about 12 years old girl to Heinrich V, emperor of the Holy Roman Empire. She remarried as widow with Godefry

d'Anjou. After an eventful life she died in 1167. The picture shows a blank charter with a horizontal oval red seal. A blank sealed document may mean that there had been a text.

Libro de los estampas de los Reyes de León

The *Libro de los estampas de los Reyes de León* is also called *Libro de los Testamentos de los Reyes de León*. This codex contains the depictions and last wills of the kings of León, and is kept in the Archives of the cathedral of León. It was compiled at the end of the 12th or the beginning of the 13th century. It includes the last wills of the kings as its second title already indicates. As they financially contributed to the construction of the cathedral their depictions and biographies of the kings and of countess Sancha Muñiz were included. The first mentioned king is king Ordoño II. He is born ca 873, and was king from 910 until his death in 924. He is depicted without a seal impression). The other seven depictions are illustrated with a seal. I include two of them. The first one is the depiction with seal of Ordoño III, and the second is the one of countess Sancha Muñiz. The years of reign, mentioned in the caption indicate that the Codex was made some 200-300 years after the life of the mentioned persons. Maybe the certified charters with the seals and the seal matrices of these kings were lost during that period. Therefore they could not be drawn. (11)

For this publication I selected the depiction of king Ordoño III and that of countess Sancha Muñiz. Other depictions are of the kings Ramiro III, Bermudo II, Fernando I, Alfonso V and Alfonso VI.



King Ordoño III



Ordoño III was born in 925, became king in 951 and died in 956.



The murder of countess Sancha Muñiz

A picture of the murder of countess Sancha Muñiz by hand of her nephew in 1045. Sancha was a rich daughter of the count of Astorga Munio Fernandes de Saldaña.

It appears that the seals are made of gold and they all show the same drawing, viz a cross looking like an anchor cross with a legend showing circles. Perhaps the small circles may represent a tekst, like the seal of 1230.



A royal seal



Pointed lily cross of ca 1230

Searching on internet for seal pictures of medieval kings of León resulted in seals which were expected. Namely an equestrian seal or a throne seal (not shown here). Maybe the León kings used the same type of seals as protector of the cathedral, and used another seals as landlords as the pointed lily cross. I could not find e-information on this subject.

Discussion

The number of “miniatures with seals” is extremely small, when comparing with miniatures in general. It is conspicuous that most “miniatures with seal” come from Normandy/England. From Spain I only found “León”. Only one of France and none from Germany. Of course, we depend on e-sources.

The seals we found are of an empress, kings and other important persons, and of devils to support their “devil’s practices”.

Because of their smallness seals in miniatures will be difficult if not impossible to be identified.

I expect to find more e-information in due course.

Notes

1. Vredius, Olivarius. *Sigilla Comitvm Flandriæ et Inscriptiones. Diplomatum ab iis editorvm cum expositione historica*. Uitgeverij Jan van den Kerckhove, Brugge, 1639. His name was also spelt out as Oliverio Vredio.
2. See also A.C. Zeven. Van de Laars’ zwevende zegel. *Heraldisch Tijdschrift* 23 (2017): 80. Several seals of different periods with one “floating”.
3. Zeven, Anton C. Some examples of seals in paintings. In preparation.
4. Add painted, otherwise you will get miniature cars and such.
5. [daniel keller demonagerie.tumblr.com/](https://danielkellerdemonagerie.tumblr.com/) and <https://nl.pinterest.com/daniel4643/chartes-et-diplomes/>
6. I am grateful to John Cherry, Londen mail May 2020.
7. Zeven, Anton C. Multizegeldocumenten en hun mogelijke ontstaan en het vervoer van prefab zegels. *Blazoen* 5 (2019): 15-20, and Zeven, Anton C. 2019. Multi-seal documents, their possible origin and the transport of prefab seals. www.antonzeven.nl
8. Bastard as he was an illegal son of duke Robert I of Normandy and Herleve, also named Arlette, a tanner’s daughter at Falaise. The names Rufus and Roux means red. He probably had a ruddy face. However, this is not shown by the picture.
9. The scroll is broad and probably painted at both sides. Therefore the Morgan Library “cut” the scroll into four parts.
10. Bevan, Rosie. 2004. A realignment of the 12th and 13th century pedigree of the earls of Warwick
11. Source: several internet websites.



Classical education in Byzantine Empire. The Byzantine education system was and always remained classical based on the seven liberal arts

<https://www.google.com/> en dan eindeloos

In the printed version four examples were added by the editor.