

The Ridware Cartulary and the Great Seal of England

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‘The seal is the essence of the royal letter’.¹

A cartulary made for the knightly family of Ridware in the early fourteenth century, now London, British Library Egerton MS 3041, contains a number of drawings inserted to accompany documents.² These drawings are in at least three hands, one of them belonging to a trained artist. The largest and most elaborate represents Edward II enthroned in majesty (f. 8v), and is closely based on the image on the front of the Great Seal (Figs 1, 2, 3). It stands at the beginning of a copy of a royal charter of 1311, granting Sir Thomas Ridware (d. c. 1327) and his successors the right to hold a weekly market and annual fair at their manor of Seal in Leicestershire.³ The artist did not include the round form or inscription of the Great Seal, but the resemblance is nevertheless obvious, and is likely to have been significant given the drawing’s incorporation into a copy of a document issued by royal warrant. As such, the drawing qualifies as a reproduction in the useful terms proposed by Jonathan Alexander: its accuracy in a specific context implies admiration for and a belief in the canonical status of its model.⁴

The drawing was probably executed in or shortly after 1313. It belongs to a preliminary gathering of eight leaves added to the original core of the manuscript (ff. 9-55), and follows another charter granted by Edward II in 1313 which is the latest document in this gathering (f. 7v). Both of these royal charters, plus a non-royal one of

the thirteenth century (f. 5r), were transcribed in the same elegant hand. The same artist did another drawing to accompany this thirteenth-century document, and he evidently intended to insert one on f. 7v, too, as a large blank space has been left for the purpose. Much of this preliminary gathering is occupied by a history of the Ridware family from the reign of William II, copied, so the compiler states, from an old scroll found in a chest ('ceste chose fut troue en une huche escrist sur une veyl escrouwe'). There is also a memorandum in red ink stating that Thomas Rideware had the cartulary made in the second year of Edward II's reign (so, 1308 or 1309) (f. 3v).⁵ While the charters granted by this king arrived slightly too late to be copied into the original cartulary, Thomas found a neat way of incorporating them by tacking them onto his family history, where they served as flattering appendixes, as well as an appropriate opening to the series of documents that follow (cartularies routinely commence with royal documents). There is no reason to think that he waited long after 1313 to do this, and nothing obvious in the style of the script or image to suggest it.

The aim of this essay is briefly to consider this drawing of Edward II in relation to its manuscript and some other images and descriptions of seals. Effectively, this will introduce it to the current scholarship on English medieval seals, and also the literature on manuscript illumination in the period of the Decorated style, both of which it seems to have eluded thus far.⁶ It can claim attention in these fields on the one hand by virtue of its conceptual interest, and on the other by the fact that it is a fine quality and relatively large image that can be closely dated and in all likelihood localised. With this said, I do not intend to dwell on its broader scholarly significance. For the present, I am simply turning over a stone to show what lies underneath, and also doing a little mild prodding. Any

well-balanced assessment would have to proceed from investigation of the cartulary's other images, as this drawing was evidently conceived as one of a series that would enliven and solemnize the manuscript. The thoroughgoing historian would also want to consider the relationship of the Ridware drawings to images found in other English cartularies and registers. While this work would hardly involve an infinite regress – the number of such manuscripts is limited, if larger than usually recognised – this is not the place for it.

Although the leaves of the Ridware cartulary have been cropped, the drawing has not suffered. Its height and width are more than half those of the text-block, and at 135×84 mm it occupies almost a quarter of the total surviving area of the page. It is executed in a lighter ink than was used for the text, and there are points of overlap with the script. Evidently, and conventionally, the text was inserted first, and it seems very unlikely (if not actually impossible) that scribe and artist were identical.⁷ However, there are indications of close collaboration. The blank space at the head of the charter on f. 7v, which is one of only two such blanks in the manuscript, is taller but significantly narrower than the drawing on f. 8v.⁸ One way of explaining why it was left unfilled is that the cartulary's makers realised its shape would not accommodate a drawing recognisably based on the Great Seal, and, learning by their misjudgement, left a larger space at the head of the following royal charter. Folio 8v was not the obvious place for it: one would expect the monarch to appear where his authority is first invoked in favour of Thomas Ridware. In support of this idea, it should be pointed out that the lack of an initial 'E' at the beginning of the document on f. 7v does not show that an elaborate capital letter was intended for the blank space. While the royal name on f. 8v is complete,

drawings stand in for the initial letters of documents throughout the cartulary. The charter on f. 5r, copied and embellished by the same combination of artist and scribe, supplies an example.

The artist scaled up his exemplar, and departed from it in minor ways that would be expected in light of his training, artistic environment and the space he had to work with. On the Great Seal, the frontal pose of the king is rigid, but the drawing suggests a slight rotation of the torso to the left (i.e. the viewer's right), together with a moderate elevation of the left leg. The feet are cocked, and the left one shown in three-quarter profile. As might be expected given the greater fluidity of his medium, the artist has made the drapery more mobile, and has also extended the stems of the orb and sceptre held by the king relative to the height of the composition. Altogether, the drawn figure is proportionately taller than its counterpart. The adjustments to its length and torsion are precisely in line with trends in contemporary manuscript illumination, and it would automatically appear that the artist simply referred to a model-book or painted exemplar were the resemblance to the image on the Great Seal not so obvious and the manuscript context not so peculiarly suited to that image's reproduction.⁹ The architecture of the throne has also been adjusted, so that it is taller in relation to its width than what is represented on the seal. Most of its components are the same, but the base of the drawn throne does not taper at the sides, and its foliate finials are less fleshy. It is fundamentally simpler, and elegant in a 'Decorated' rather than 'Early English' manner. The architectural motifs are comparatively larger, the artist preferring elaborate tracery to the stratified arrangement of small panels and geometrical motifs found on the seal. A Gothic pattern of lozenges has been applied to the cushion the king sits on, and the crocket on

the wings of the throne is of a later, more flamboyant type. Omitted from the drawing are the corbel on which the throne on the seal is shown to rest, and also the lions which bracket the base of the throne. However, most of the distinctive features of the seal are reproduced, including the long-tailed lions under the king's feet and the dove at the tip of his sceptre.

As noted, the artist did not try to suggest the seal's round form or inscription. Instead, to frame the figure, he invented a Gothic tabernacle, defined on each side by a slender column with vines winding up the shaft. This has a castellated canopy with turrets of fictive masonry, crocketed gables and a shallow, pendant arch with elaborate cusping in the centre. The suspended bases of the two inner turrets have the lion's head masks widely found in book-art and embroidery of the period. No use is made here of ogee arches, although ogees do appear in the tracery of the throne. While everything about this tabernacle corresponds to the taste reflected in Court art of the period, the immediate manuscript context for the architecture is unclear. Some features are broadly paralleled in manuscripts like the Tickhill Psalter (New York Public Library, Spencer Collection MS 26: *c.* 1310) and Brussels Peterborough Psalter (Brussels, Bibliothèque royale MS 9961-2: *c.* 1300-15), neither of which seems to be a London product.¹⁰ But the tracery of the throne includes split cusps of a type usually associated with south-east England (although there are examples in window tracery and microarchitecture further north and west, including in Leicestershire).¹¹ For present purposes, this conundrum may be set aside with the simple observation that whatever the style of the drawing implies about the provenance of its artist, the work is most likely to have been done locally, on or near one of the Ridware estates in Staffordshire, Leicestershire or Derbyshire. It seems *prima facie*

unlikely that Thomas Rideware sent a few leaves of his cartulary far afield to have pen and ink drawings added to them; if, indeed, he sent them anywhere at all. The artist may just as well have come to him.¹²

In stating that an image on the Great Seal served as exemplar for this drawing, I do not mean to imply that the artist copied directly onto the page from the three-dimensional, dark green impression of that object attached to the original of the charter on f. 8v. This was suggested by a Miss M. Gresley, who published a list of the drawings in the cartulary in 1860 illustrated by copies she drew herself, but the idea is dubious.¹³ While there is no need to doubt that the artist knew an impression of the seal (as opposed to someone else's drawing of an impression), he must have made one or more preliminary designs before executing the finished image. Getting everything in proportion while simultaneously scaling up the composition, elongating the figure and throne and adding and subtracting various minor details surely required some planning. Moreover, he could as easily have worked with the seal of another document (for example, that attached to the original of the charter copied on f. 7v), and an impression of Edward I's seal would have served him just as well. Edward II used the same die for the front of his own Great Seal, adding only a small castle motif on either side of the throne.¹⁴

The claim that Thomas Rideware and his artist intended viewers to recognise this drawing as a reproduction of the image on the Great Seal is obviously distinct from the manifest use of that seal as a model. There is good evidence for this claim, but as it is not provable it should not simply be accepted. Two common-sense caveats arise in relation to it, first, that the claim seems to put a lot of pressure on a small, private, presumably rarely

viewed work of art, and secondly, that it suggests an interrelationship of images of a sort often wished for and guessed at by art historians but seldom demonstrated. A tamer hypothesis would be that the iconography was only meant to be generically appropriate to the document it accompanies, just as images of kings in chronicles, books of statutes and cartularies normally are. Other drawings in the Ridware cartulary might be produced in favour of this conclusion. These illustrate standing figures of knights and clerics, in or out of tabernacles, none of which is recognisably based on a seal or any other work of art. It is always possible that some of the clerics were drawn with reference to images on seals, as later medieval ecclesiastical seals often represented standing figures holding books and pastoral staves. But it is unlikely that they were supposed to remind viewers of specific seals, if only because no ecclesiastical seal other than the pope's was widely recognisable in the way the Great Seal was. The neat little drawing on f. 5r helps to make the point (Fig. 4). This shows a tonsured cleric in an elaborate tabernacle, clutching a book in his right hand and pointing to it with his left. If the text of the adjacent charter is a guide, then the figure is meant to represent the prior of the Cluniac house of St James at Dudley in Worcestershire. However, while the surviving impression of Dudley's common seal dates from around the time the charter was issued, the rudimentary figure shown on it does not occupy a tabernacle. It does hold a book, but in its left hand, while the right hand holds a staff.¹⁵ The tabernacle on f. 5r is paralleled on seals from more important institutions, including those of various bishops.¹⁶ As a number of documents in the cartulary were issued and witnessed by prelates, it is possible that Thomas Ridware owned impressions of such seals. Equally, the tabernacle here may have nothing to do with a seal.

However, the drawing of a king on f. 8v is different, for reasons that have already been mentioned or implied. These can be quickly summarised. First, and in spite of the differences noted above, it closely imitates the image on the Great Seal. The only likely reasons for such imitation in manuscript decoration would be artistic insecurity leading to slavish copying or else a desire to recall the model. Insecurity can be discounted on the grounds of manifest technical facility, together with the fact that the artist was confident enough to adjust his exemplar while remaining close to it. Secondly, the image of a king in majesty used on the Great Seal was widely familiar by virtue of its prestige, longevity, and the large number of impressions of it in circulation. No argument is needed for its prestige, and its longevity was such that it had already been in use for over 250 years when the Ridware cartulary was made, albeit the elaborate throne and the sceptre (replacing a sword) were innovations of Henry III.¹⁷ The printed calendars of enrolled royal letters give some idea of the number of impressions that were made. Here, it is worth emphasising that the main intended users of any cartulary were people already familiar with documents, and thus familiar with the Great Seal's appearance. And thirdly, this reproduction of the seal's majesty image forms part of a composition whose other component is a charter issued on behalf of Edward II to the man who commissioned the cartulary.¹⁸ The charter establishes a prominent, remunerative, perpetual entitlement. Thomas had every reason to be proud of this royal endorsement of his interests, and to wish to signify it as distinctly and officially as possible. Hiring an artist skilled enough to reproduce the image on the seal in a recognisable manner was apparently his way of achieving this.

If this idea is sound, then the drawing represents an unusual way of recalling an original document and the privileges it signified. Later medieval artists and scribes had various ways of evoking the original which authorised the copy, but it is hard to think of an exact parallel for the approach adopted here. The commonest method was written description. Accordingly, a scribe would note an aspect or aspects of the seal of a document, or else some peculiarity of text, script or parchment, in order that his record of this document could be checked against an original, or else to give the reader a concrete sense of something that was inaccessible. The basic form of a seal or the colour of its wax might be mentioned, as well as how it was attached. So, for example, transcripts of royal documents in a fourteenth-century abbatial register from Glastonbury Abbey include the information that they have oblong seals hanging from them.¹⁹ John Peckham's archiepiscopal register mentions a letter with a seal of Henry III attached, the seal being of green wax. Statute books and chronicles also yield examples: there is a detailed fifteenth-century description of an impression of the Great Seal of William II in a customary from Salisbury Cathedral, while the chapter act book of Beverley Minster goes into similar detail about an impression of the seal of a bishop of Coventry and Lichfield attached to a document issued in 1306.²⁰ Also common, and involving artists, was the practice of inserting next to a document a drawing or painted miniature of a grantor handing a sealed charter to a beneficiary in the form of an oblong motif, often with a roundel appended to it to suggest a seal. There is an example of this in the Ridware cartulary (f. 17r), by the artist who did the Edward II drawing, showing a cleric handing a sealed charter to a layman. The associated document records the grant of a messuage in Seal by the prior and canons of Church Gresley in Derbyshire to William Rideware (d. c.

1274), including the fact that the original instrument had been sealed with the common seal in the priory's chapter-house in testimony to the grant.²¹

Occasionally, the attempt to evoke the form of a sealed document was more ambitious. The facsimile of a supposed bull of St Augustine of Canterbury in Thomas of Elmham's *Speculum Augustinianum*, made in 1414 (Cambridge, Trinity Hall, MS 1, f. 24r), is a well-known and unusually candid example.²² It was commoner to introduce only a round, inscribed motif signifying a bull next to a transcript of a papal document in a cartulary.²³ Another semantically and artistically complex example is the series of figures of patron-kings holding sealed charters in the tail margins of some of the pages in the Sherborne Missal. These have recently been studied by Jessica Berenbeim, who explains their sophisticated relationship to the historical and legal claims of Sherborne's monks.²⁴ In this case, the bottom-edge location of the seals corresponds to that of seals on independent, single-sheet documents. As the images in the Missal are compositionally self-contained, this was probably not why they were painted at the bottoms of pages. In other cases, however, scribes and artists did try to get viewers thinking about the form of a document by placing an image of a seal at the bottom of a page. A distinctive, 'documentary' *mise-en-page* that is frankly suggestive rather than precisely replicative was the result. Two fifteenth-century English examples may be mentioned, one incorporated into a chronicle, the other in a secular cartulary. Both incorporate inscriptions which make the artist's intention absolutely clear. At the bottom of f. 164r in the copy of the Fitzhugh chronicle now Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 96 (c. 1425-50), there is a large drawing of a yellow seal 'attached' to the text above it by two black tags (Fig. 5). This text is that of a charter ratifying the marriage of Henry II's

daughter Joanna to William II of Sicily in 1177, and the seal is labelled ‘Sigillum aureum Regis Sicilie’. The location and tags of the seal as well as its form make the imitative intention obvious, but the inscriptions on the seal are written in a fifteenth-century hand: this is not a facsimile of the sort made by Thomas of Elmham.²⁵ The other example is in the cartulary ‘wretyne mad and bownd by y^e handys of mayster Thomas Anlaby’, probably in the 1440s, for the defence of his family’s rights (Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum, MS 329).²⁶ On f. 43r there is a transcript of an eleventh-century document, with (as usual in the manuscript) a heading in English in red ink which explains the text’s importance to posterity: ‘Here makys mencyon how Sir Robert of Meus come into yngland at þe conquest (ac wyttnes hys sell of þis dede, qwher he ryddis on hys hors wyth hys swerd in hys hand) hes gyff to þe monkkis of Mews þes tenementis yn Myton under wrytyng.’ The parenthetical clause about the seal – I have added the brackets – is answered in the outer margin at the bottom of the page by a drawing in red and black ink of a seal with a mounted knight who brandishes a sword on it, along with the circumferential inscription ‘+ Sigillum Roberti de Melsa’ in Lombardic lettering (Fig. 6). Again, this is no facsimile, but it is an attempt to do more than provide a copy of a document that could be checked against its original. It evokes an object whose form, layout and materiality were thought to contribute to the effectiveness of the volume into which it was copied.²⁷

None of these examples of the evocation of original documents within books had any hard forensic status. Medieval standards of proof in relation to documents usually seem to have been high, to the extent that an original charter might not be admissible if its seal were damaged.²⁸ Awareness of this helps to explain why some medieval

archivists went to lengths to repair chipped and broken seals in their custody, and also why bags and skippets were routinely used as protection for important impressions.²⁹ On the other hand, sealed documents were sometimes produced in trials to insinuate entitlements which they did not actually prove. The examples that spring to mind involve those cases of disputed arms tried during the late fourteenth and early fifteenth century in the Court of Chivalry.³⁰ In these trials, seals with the disputed arms on them, or seals without the arms but bearing on the honour of a given disputant, were routinely described by deponents, and also brought into court attached to documents. When, for example, canons of Bridlington priory in Yorkshire testified to Sir Richard Scrope's right to bear the arms *azure, a bend or*, they produced a number of twelfth-century charters sealed with what the deposition record describes as 'solemn' seals. This meant large seals with equestrian figures on them, 'like those used at the time of the Conquest' ('come ceux de Conquest userent'). None of these charters is said to have borne the disputed arms: at least one of them was not even issued by an ancestor of Richard, but only had a Scrope name in its witness-list.³¹ The reason for exhibiting them was not directly to prove that the Scrope family had used the disputed arms since the reign of Henry I. The point was rather to suggest the integrity of Richard Scrope in a way that would make his claim to the arms more appealing. Essentially, the solemnly sealed documents were produced to make a sentimental impact on those charged with recording the evidence.

I submit that this sort of metaphysical appeal to the viewer helps to explain why the drawing of Edward II in the Ridware cartulary looks the way it does. While there is no evidence, or probability, that Thomas intended the manuscript to be exhibited in a court of law, he did intend it to be seen by others, both in his lifetime and in the future.

To viewers of the sort he envisaged, the drawing on f. 8v must have signified a positive exercise of the royal will in the service of Ridware interests. Fundamentally, it marked out an important document and attested the existence of an original, sealed charter in the Ridware archive, but it also validated the Ridware family history it rounded out. It did this in an impressionistic, ‘fuzzy’ way which is not amenable to precise definition; but this is not, perhaps, to venture a lot, for the relationships of medieval viewers to medieval images were broadly and routinely of this nature, and even today are often more effectively felt than understood.

¹ A fifteenth-century judgement, quoted in Brigitte Miriam Bedos-Rezak, ‘In Search of a Semiotic Paradigm: The Matter of Sealing in Medieval Thought and Praxis (1050-1400)’, in *Good Impressions: Image and Authority in Medieval Seals*, ed. Noël Adams, John Cherry and James Robinson (London, 2008), 5.

² See, most informatively, *British Museum, Catalogue of the Additions to the Manuscripts 1926-1930* (London, 1959), 222-23 (with further references); also Godfrey R. C. Davis, *Medieval Cartularies of Great Britain and Ireland*, rev. edn (London, 2010), 275 (no. 1316). The cartulary is more expansively discussed, and its contents partially printed, in Isaac H. Jeayes and George Wrottesley, ‘The Rydeware Chartulary’, *Collections for a History of Staffordshire*, 16 (1895): 229-302. Other detailed descriptions are Isaac H. Jeayes, *Descriptive Catalogue of the Character and Muniments of the Gresley Family* (London, 1895), xi-xii, 112-19; John Nichols, *The History and Antiquities of the County of Leicester*, 4 vols in 8 (London, 1795-1815), III, 979-1008.

³ The villages of Overseal and Netherseal, now in Derbyshire, lie about five miles southwest of Ashby-de-la-Zouch.

⁴ Jonathan J. G. Alexander, ‘Facsimiles, Copies, and Variations: The Relationship to the Model in Medieval and Renaissance European Illuminated Manuscripts’, in *Retaining the Original: Multiple Originals, Copies and Reproductions*, ed. Kathleen Preciado (Washington DC, 1989), 64.

⁵ Jeayes and Wrottesley, ‘Ridware Chartulary’, 261.

⁶ I thank John Cherry and Elizabeth New for advice on this point.

⁷ Elsewhere in the manuscript (e.g. f. 9r) scribe and artist seem to have been identical. In these cases the hand, though different, is equally practiced, but the drawings are amateurish.

⁸ The other is on f. 54r, next to a non-royal charter.

⁹ These observations apply, *mutatis mutandis*, to a majesty drawing derived from the French royal seal, inhabiting the initial ‘C’ of a charter issued by Charles V in 1364. In this case, the drawing reproduces the image from the front of a new royal seal made in the same year: see Ghislain Brunel, *Images du pouvoir royal. Les chartes décorées des Archives nationales XIII^e-XV^e siècles* (Paris, 2005), 125-28 (no. 16). However, the semiotic of this drawing is different from that of the drawing discussed here, for it is on a single-sheet document apparently once sealed with its iconographic exemplar, and was kept in a royal archive rather than in the hands of an individual who wanted to insinuate royal favour. For an elaborate analysis see Brigit Miriam Bedos-Rezak, ‘Image as Patron: Convention and Invention in Fourteenth-Century France’, in *Patrons and Professionals in the Middle Ages*, ed. Paul Binski and Elizabeth A. New (Donington, 2012), 224-26.

¹⁰ The Tickhill parallels are clearer with reference to the tabernacle in the drawing of f. 5r of the cartulary, with which compare particularly the Jesse Tree composition on f. 5v of the Psalter. On these illuminated manuscripts generally see Lucy F. Sandler, *Gothic Manuscripts 1285-1385*, 2 vols (London 1986), nos 26, 40.

¹¹ See e.g. Stephen Hart, *Medieval Church Window Tracery in England* (Woodbridge, 2010), 68-69.

¹² The sense of this will obviously depend on what the reader chooses to believe about the logistics of manuscript illumination in the period. From any point of view, the evidence is slight.

¹³ M. Gresley, 'Drawings in the Rydeware Chartulary', *Anastatic Drawing Society*, 4 (1860): 8 and plates XLV-XLVII. Most of the notes and drawings in this obscure publication are by the same author, to whose family the Ridware cartulary belonged in the nineteenth century.

¹⁴ The lack of these castles does not indicate use of an impression of Edward I's seal. The artist had no room to include them, and could anyway be confident that omission of such minor features would not disguise the status of his drawing. For comparative illustrations see Alfred and Alan Wyon, *The Great Seals of England* (London, 1887), 26-27 and plates VII (no. 47), VIII (no. 49).

¹⁵ Walter de Gray Birch, *Catalogue of Seals in the Department of Manuscripts in the British Museum*, 6 vols (London, 1887-1900), I, 538 (no. 3076), illustrated in *Victoria History of the County of Worcester. Vol. 2*, ed. John W. Willis-Bund and William Page (London, 1906), plate III.

¹⁶ See e.g. *Victoria History Worcester*, plate I. A good parallel in a seal for the heavy architecture of the tabernacle on f. 5r is the common seal of Osney Abbey (c. 1290), illustrated in Sandy Heslop, 'English Seals in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries', in *Age of Chivalry: Art in Plantagenet England 1200-1400*, ed. Jonathan J. G. Alexander and Paul Binski (London, 1987), 115.

¹⁷ The introduction of the sceptre on Henry III's third Great Seal in 1259 was noted by contemporary chroniclers, testifying to a broad contemporary interest in the seal's design:

Lateinische Schriftquellen zur Kunst in England, Wales und Schottland vom Jahre 901 bis zum Jahre 1307, ed. Otto Lehmann-Brockhaus, 5 vols (Munich, 1955-60), III, 349-50 (no. 6399).

¹⁸ As well as the transcript of the charter, there is the note of warranty (‘[per breve de priv]ato sigillo’; or possibly ‘[per billam de priv]ato sigillo’) that originally endorsed the writ authorising the charter, and below this a memorandum about the entitlement detailed in the charter. Some of this text is missing due to loss of part of the leaf. The ‘sigillo’ of the note of warranty is, incidentally, not to be thought a catalyst for the drawing. It was a common form of authorisation: see A. L. Brown, ‘The Authorization of Letters under the Great Seal’, *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research*, 37 (1964): 125-55.

¹⁹ London, British Library, Arundel MS 2, ff. 48v, 52r.

²⁰ *Lateinische Schriftquellen*, III, 345, 347, 350-51 (nos 6372, 6388, 6404); and see in general the section on ‘Siegelkunde’, 344-51 (nos 6369-6404).

²¹ As well as the two figures, the drawing includes an oak tree and a pig, although the charter is not about pannage. Perhaps some mistake was made here, but in any case, the moral is that images associated with documents do not necessarily adumbrate the content of those documents.

²² Alfred Hiatt, ‘The Cartographic Imagination of Thomas Elmham’, *Speculum*, 75 (2000): 871-78; idem, *The Making of Medieval Forgeries: False Documents in Fifteenth-Century England* (London, 2004), 52-57.

²³ E.g. London, British Library, Cotton MSS Claudius C. IX, ff. 170v, 171v and Claudius B. IV, ff. 164v, 165v (from Abingdon Abbey); Kew, The National Archives, E164/24, ff. 142v, 143v (from Malmesbury Abbey).

²⁴ Jessica Berenbeim, *Art of Documentation: Documents and Visual Culture in Medieval England* (Toronto, 2015), 73-101.

²⁵ For the text, complete with an engraving of the seal (but with Roman lettering rather than Secretary), see *Historiæ Anglicanæ Scriptores X*, ed. Roger Twysden (London, 1652), cols 1112-14.

²⁶ This quotation is on f. 143v. See in general Francis Wormald and Pamela Giles, *Descriptive Catalogue of the Additional Illuminated Manuscripts in the Fitzwilliam Museum*, 2 vols (Cambridge, 1982), I, 317-19.

²⁷ Post-medieval antiquaries occasionally produced their own versions of this conceit: see e.g. Oxford, Bodleian Library, Dodsworth MS 146, f. 89r.

²⁸ Paul Brand, 'Seals and the Law in the Thirteenth Century', in *Seals and their Context in the Middle Ages*, ed. P. Schofield (Oxford, 2015), 111-19; Bedos-Rezak, 'Semiotic Paradigm', *passim*.

²⁹ See e.g. Sandy Heslop, 'Seals and Sealing', in *Leiston Abbey Cartulary and Butley Priory Charters*, ed. Richard Mortimer (Woodbridge, 1979), 47-49 (repairs); Elizabeth A. New, *Seals and Sealing Practices* (London, 2010), 23-25, 117 (bags, skippets); Henry C. Maxwell-Lyte, *Historical Notes on the Use of the Great Seal of England* (London, 1926), 302, 312 (bags and skippets for impressions of the Great Seal specifically).

³⁰ For an overview of these cases see Maurice H. Keen, *Origins of the English Gentleman: Heraldry, Chivalry and Gentility in Medieval England, c.1300-c.1500* (Stroud, 2002), 25-42.

³¹ *The Controversy between Sir Richard Scrope and Sir Robert Grosvenor in the Court of Chivalry*, ed. Nicholas H. Nicolas, 2 vols (London, 1832), I, 101; II, 281-82.

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