LONDON AS ILLUSTRATED UPON THE GREAT SEALS, UPON MEDALS, AND IN ALLIED ENGRAVINGS.

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THE main object of this paper is to draw attention to a source of information, hitherto somewhat neglected, concerning the appearance of London in Stuart and later times. By so doing, a lead may perhaps be given to the discovery or recognition of the original views from which the illustrations upon the Great Seals were drawn, as well as those upon certain selected medals and in engravings which I desire to put forward.¹

As historians and students of the past, we are favoured in the possession of a number of attempts to depict, during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, London as it appeared to our ancestors. It would seem that the re-birth of the Old Learning had for one of its immediate results the representation of localities, representations which sometimes approximated to plans, but which more often were more nearly allied to pictures. In the fifteenth century, people had seemingly tired of the pictures which served as backgrounds merely to the painting of events in the lives of the saints and of events upon which religion was based. Although these

¹ I wish here to thank the Society of Antiquaries of London for permission to photograph the casts which they possess, and to Mr. George Clinch, F.G.S. My thanks are also due to the authorities at the Guildhall, and to Mr. Kettle and Mr. Lambert for allowing me to illustrate the specimens in their custody. I was also kindly permitted to obtain copies of engravings in the Crace Collection at the British Museum.
backgrounds were admirable paintings, conventionally expressed, of groups of dwellings and interiors with which the artists and their wealthy patrons were acquainted, yet the desire at length asserted itself for viewing these buildings in their true relation to one another and the groups of buildings in greater and more faithful detail. Satisfaction of this desire proceeded to the length that interest in the picture was, in the main, centred upon the distant view. The figures then, occupying but a subordinate situation, were relegated to the rank of ornamental detail, or were employed for the adornment of borderings. In other instances, the saints vanished wholly, leaving behind them the cartographic element of the picture; and then a label might be attached denoting what was left to be this place or the other place as fancy dictated. An example of a picture without saints, produced at a time when saints were considered of prime importance, can be seen in *The Nuremberg Chronicle* of 1493. In this work, a view of a city is shown in conjunction with a description of London, the intention evidently being to create the impression in the mind of the reader that London was illustrated in the woodcut. Casual inspection, however, is sufficient to show that no part can be identified with our Tudor City. There is, indeed, a walled enclosure with a river at its base, but there is not another feature in the picture to identify it with London of the fifteenth century.

When, however, we reach the Elizabethan period of a hundred years later, artists were shaking off tradition and striking out on the new lines. Backgrounds, through having been brought to the front of the picture, became improved topographically, and more faithful illustration of cities, as well as of many individual buildings of which those cities were composed, was secured. Although the general trend of the development of the backgrounds of early pictures was thus from the illustration of uninteresting detail to securing virtually the whole attention of the onlooker, yet there remained a class of picture which failed to move with the times and continued to retain, as background, architectural or cartographic detail. In consequence these backgrounds did not receive the attention which
would have been bestowed upon them had they fallen into fashion so as to stand by themselves and had they not been made to appear as merely accessory. In this conservative type of picture, the figure in the fore-front remained paramount, while the prospect beyond, relatively of trifling importance, competed with flat ornamental detail. It is, however, this background which, when cartographic, I desire to emphasise and to bring forward for close consideration.

If these backgrounds are to be treated as serious contributions to information they must, in common with other sources, be dealt with on systematic lines, and must be considered in their relation to some type we possess or the existence of which we surmise. For present purposes, it is sufficient to say that the map-views of the late Tudor and of the Stuart periods fall into well-defined groups, each of which is distinguishable by a prototype of comparatively independent origin. It is by the fidelity, accuracy, and authenticity of the prototype that its successors must be judged; and it is foolish to dogmatise from the representations of a single map when no comparison is made or is possible with the original representative of the group or family to which it belongs. It is a common fault among writers upon the period now in question to secure a single specimen of a view of London, and, without reference to the history of the specimen or to its family, to base conclusions on its literal representations. The single specimen may, of course, be an original, or what may safely serve as an original, but, on the other hand, it may be but a copy of a copy, with all the degradings, comparatively speaking, from the original which seem to be inseparable in successive copyings. Views and maps of this derivative character may well be styled "degraded views," meaning that the view in question is not an original representative of the family to which it belongs, but is a copy, first hand, second hand, and so on, as the case may be.

As an example of the degradation of a simple feature, I may mention a case where a fence or paling, which, in the original view, shows a portion at right angles to one extremity, appears in a remote copy like a huge flagstaff with flag flying. Sometimes these representations of old London partake more of the nature of maps than of
views; sometimes they are more views than maps; and sometimes they present equally the character of both maps and views. A convenient term, therefore, for use in discussion, which would include the whole of them, is "map-view."

With these prefatory remarks in mind, the consideration may be entered upon of that variety of London views which, from the time of Charles I to the time when Windsor, more delectable to George III than London to his predecessors, was substituted for London on the Great Seals. Whether the City was honoured by being seen between the horse's legs on the Great Seals, or whether the City conferred dignity upon the monarch who bestrode the horse, I know not; probably the combination of a London view with an impression of the reigning monarch was of mutual benefit.

In order to give a truer idea of the value of these views of London upon the Great Seals, I propose in the first place to deal with a few map-views which have attributes in common with those on the Seals.

An early example of cartographic attempt at portraiture occurs on the well-known corporate seal of the City of London, c. 1224. In the showcases of the Guildhall Museum, well-executed reproductions are on exhibition, and prints of these have often been published. At present, I am without information as to the making of the casts; the full extent, therefore, of their authenticity and accuracy must be in abeyance until this knowledge is forthcoming. There is nothing, however, to indicate that they are other than exact copies of the original seal. The obverse shows in the foreground the river at the foot of the city wall. The wall has a central gate with flanking towers, while other towers appear at intervals along the length of the wall. The buildings shown include what may be the Tower on the one extremity, and possibly Baynard's Castle on the other extremity of the City. The spire of old St. Paul's is ingeniously worked into the front fold of the outer garment of St. Paul, who conspicuously presides over all. The other buildings have not been recognised, although doubtless they were known when the seal was executed. The reverse is also interesting.
TWO VIEWS OF CITY SEAL.
cartographically. To some extent it reproduces features of the City as they appear on the obverse, the central gate, however, being less elaborately indicated, while the flanking towers are absent.

With these views, on the common seal of the City, may be compared the attempts in the Matthew Paris manuscripts, c. 1236, as figured in Gough’s *Topography.* Both these sets of views are of importance as illustrating the condition at the time of the art of representing topography.

A later example of a borough seal, one in which the town is well represented, can be seen in the case of Shrewsbury. The whole field of the seal, which is some three inches in diameter, is occupied by a view of the town in bold relief. In the centre stands the Abbey, protected in the foreground by the embattled walls of the town with its three gates, each of which has a portcullis. The gates open to bridges which span the full-flowing Severn. The seal bears date 1425, and is thus some two hundred years later than the London example. (*26* Journ. Brit. Arch. Assoc. [1870], p. 215, Plate 13, Fig. 1.)

These views, however, preceded representations of London on the Great Seals by a considerable interval. Coming nearer to the period in question, there is a series which should briefly be considered in order that the addition to cartographic knowledge contributed by the Great Seals may still better be realised.

Passing various isolated attempts, we arrive at the great work of Saxton, whose maps of the counties of England and Wales were published as a complete collection in 1579. One of these is of special interest here—that which includes a bird’s-eye view of London. The map containing London bears date 1575, and arrests attention by reason of its possible connexion with one of those five celebrated county tapestries by Richard Hyckes of Barcheston in Warwickshire. It will be remembered that William Sheldon set up a factory in the time of Henry VIII for tapestry-weaving at Barcheston under the management of Hyckes. From the tapestry

1 *British Topography* [1780], vol. i, p. 85.
which includes London, we can gather what our forefathers thought London and the surrounding area looked like when plotted as a map. We may smile at the attempt to depict London, but I wonder how many of us who are not cartographers or artists, if called upon to sketch London as seen from a height, would succeed in producing a picture which was beyond reproach. In the tapestry we may note what attracted the attention of the map-maker. Thus old London Bridge, old St. Paul’s, and Lambeth Palace were emphasised, as also the Tower, while in Southwark the hall of the Palace of the Bishops of Winchester—always a notable feature in later maps—can be picked out with ease. Other erections can also be named; but, manifestly, before one could venture to describe the actual external appearances of these edifices, much additional and confirmatory evidence would be necessary.

The loss of many maps and views which has taken place has often been attributed to their having been affixed to walls and having perished with them. This opinion that maps were used as wall-coverings receives a slight measure of confirmation from the existence of cartographical tapestry.

There are several resemblances between the tapestry-map of London and adjacent counties to the west and the map of Middlesex by Saxton with the south-eastern counties of 1575; but although Saxton’s map cannot well have been without its influence upon the cartoon for the tapestry, yet the resemblances are not sufficiently close to enable the tapestry to be styled a copy.

The next view in my list is as picturesque as its origin is doubtful. It occurs as an inset to the map by Hondius of Great Britain and Ireland, a map included in Speed’s compilation of 1610. The inset is allied to the representation which surmounted one of the triumphal arches erected in honour of James I when, in 1604, he entered the City. (The Arches of Triumph by Stephen Harrison, 1604.) In what material the adornment was executed is not clear, nor indeed whether it was in the “flat” or in relief. The probabilities are that it was in the nature of a model. The inset to Hondius’ map may perhaps have been taken from the draft for the triumphal
INSET TO HONDIUS' MAP.
EQUESTRIAN PORTRAIT OF CHARLES I.
The Great Seal of James I.

arch; it certainly has the appearance of the copy of a model. The inset, however, shows Southwark, a suburb absent from the representation on the arch.

But whoever was the originator of the inset, its presence leads up to the engraving of a picture by Delaram, who died in 1627, and the first of the equestrian portraits, whether on the Great Seals or elsewhere, which have London as a background. In all the backgrounds St. Paul’s is the dominant feature, London Bridge and the River also standing out prominently. The Tower, however, comes in for less attention. Perhaps this was due to the successive monarchs preferring to show their claim to the affection of Londoners through the medium of the Cathedral rather than through the Royal Fortress which commanded the south-eastern extremity of the City. If we are fortunate enough to see Southwark retained in our backgrounds, we can readily identify St. Saviour’s Church, the cathedral of the new diocese of Southwark of to-day, while occasionally we observe what appear to be a theatre and a bear-pit. In the equestrian pictures these and other buildings such as churches are seen in plenty. The background in Delaram’s picture of James I contains enough of Southwark to show a rotund structure with a basal enlargement which, in the absence of positive evidence, we may label, provisionally, the Globe Playhouse of Shakespeare. It will be noticed how the artist has painted out much of Southwark in order to secure a mound of sufficient dimensions and dignity for the proud horse to be shown forth. In many of the other equestrian portraits which employ this mound in their composition, the artist has raised its height and left us with nought in Southwark or with scarcely more than soaring chimney-pots. We must, therefore, be thankful that, in the James I picture, Southwark, with the round theatre like that in the Hondius inset, has been left us.

The next in the series to which I wish to refer is an equestrian figure of Charles I with the foreground largely occupied, as before, by the mound. In the example, it will be seen that, in Southwark, the Bishop of Winchester’s Hall is absent, but at the extreme west, an open-topped round structure with unusual buttresses is drawn.
This same view occurs in substance in other equestrian portraits of the same period. What these buttresses really serve is not clear. It is likely enough that they are not buttresses merely but some degraded representation of a feature which was present in the original sketch from which by stages they were derived. Possibly they are views of external staircases to the playhouses, if the structures are what they seem to be. A buttress not unlike one of these occurs in that unfaithful view of the playhouse which is found in Hollar's panorama of London of 1647. Occasionally, the background in question is detached from an equestrian figure. When this is the case, two round structures are discovered. Whether these detached views precede the execution of the equestrian portraits or whether the views have been taken from the portraits is difficult to say. I have some recollection that they have occasionally been attributed to Hollar; but if this were so, it by no means proves that Hollar was their originator. It will be noticed that, when detached, these views show more than do the portraits. This raises the question whether the additions to the houses which fringe the southern bank of the River were added by the engraver after having detached the picture, or whether they were copied from the earlier view from which the backgrounds may have been taken. With some hesitation, I incline to the opinion that the view was independent of the portrait and that the additions are referable to a derivative specimen of a view then extant. At any rate, this background, whether accessory to a picture, or forming the picture itself, may be recognised by the absence of the Bishop of Winchester's Hall and by the presence of those unadorned and buttressed circular towers, playhouses, or bear-gardens to which allusion has been made.

With the foregoing in mind, we are now in a better position to consider the backgrounds upon the reverses of the Great Seals and upon certain selected medals. We may commence with the reign of Charles I.

It would appear that on his accession Charles I issued a proclamation stating his intention to employ the Great Seal of his father until a new Seal had been made. A late date for the
DETACHED BACKGROUND OF BANKSIDE.
SECOND GREAT SEAL OF CHARLES I.

MEDAL, 1633.
The Great Seals and Medals of Charles I.

use of the Seal of James I was the 24th May, 1626. The first Seal of Charles I was used between 25th May, 1626, and 24th May, 1627. (26 Journ. Brit. Arch. Assoc. [1870] 164.) It contains on its reverse a running greyhound, but does not include a view. The second Great Seal, bearing date 1627, introduces for the first time a general or panoramic view of London. It forms the background of the reverse, and is seen between the legs of the horse on which the king, in full armour, sits. It is impossible not to suppose that the designer or engraver of the Seal had in mind some such equestrian portrait with distant view as is to be seen on the engraving of James I by Delaram. In the impression under examination, London stands out well, many of its buildings being clearly defined. Thus there appear St. Paul’s, with churches and stately erections in the vicinity. From the houses at the side of the River many “stairs” lead down to the water. Boats are seen above Bridge, while, below, sailing vessels are anchored. The heights to the north of London are raised mountains high, so as to form a screen behind the horse and its rider. In this example also we find that the artist has raised the mound, thereby expunging Southwark from the view. What was behind the mound we have, at present, no direct means of knowing. Surmise suggests what is shown Conventionally in the same situation on other map-views.

On a medal, commemorative of the King’s return to London, in 1633, after the coronation at Edinburgh, a model executed by Nicholas Briot (Medallic Illustrations of British History, I, 266–7), we have a curious picture of London. The sun is breaking through the clouds and, on the River, swans as large as boats are sailing, while the buildings in the City are suggestive of Chinese habitations.

The third Seal of Charles I, 1640–1646, also bears London upon its reverse, but the impression of the seal in Wyon is not good, the view being ill-defined.

At the death of Charles I, there emerges the Commonwealth with its Seals. Since, however, the Protector’s seals which contain London are virtually reproduced in the Seal of Richard Cromwell, to which I refer later, further allusion to them is unnecessary.
Instead, I am submitting an equestrian portrait of Oliver Cromwell with London and Southwark in the field. In passing, we note how much of Southwark has, as usual, been brushed over and how, on the Middlesex side of the River, there are to be seen the water-tower of Bevis Bulmar (1594–5) at Queenhythe and the Temple Hall with a church in the Strand behind it. The distance, however, between Queenhythe and the Temple has in the engraving been much compressed.

On the Seal of Richard Cromwell we have a fine portrait of horse and rider, both of which are distinctly comparable to the statue of Charles I at Charing Cross. The field stands out with clearness, but not so clearly that we can identify all the buildings. London Bridge is not happily conceived; but possibly the cast or the original have not faithfully performed their task.

We come now to Charles II. An engraving with London, as well as a portion of Southwark, is available for comparison with the views on the Seals. It shows incidentally another variation in the fashion of representing the sovereign on horseback upon a mound behind which the Capital can be observed. In many respects the view reflects Visscher’s panorama of London, while in other respects it suggests Merian’s representation of 1638. Along the southern bank of the River are to be seen the Church of St. Olave, shipping, the south gate to the Bridge with its impaled heads, St. Saviour’s Church, Winchester Hall, and, where the mound on which the horse is standing is lowering towards the west, a playhouse or bear-garden with flag flying.

Passing now to the Great Seals of Charles II, from the solitary shapeless mass which the Wyons illustrate of the first Seal of this Monarch (Plate XXXV), it was impossible to say whether it had borne a view of London. The rediscovery, however, of a nearly complete specimen of the first Seal in one of the volumes of the Clarendon State Papers (MS. Clarendon, 37, fol. 94) shows that

1 *The Great Seals of England*, by Allan Benjamin Wyon and Allan Wyon [1887].
EQUESTRIAN PORTRAIT OF OLIVER CROMWELL.
EQUESTRIAN PORTRAIT OF CHARLES II.
no view of London was present. (The Times, October 19th, 1915; Bodleian Quarterly Record, No. 7 Supplement, 3rd Quarter, 1915.)

The second Seal is also not of interest in our connexion, since the region between the horse’s legs is occupied with a coursing greyhound above which there is an absence of ornamental background. But the third Seal contains, with tolerable precision, London and Southwark. Among the other buildings huddled together in Southwark there appears a windmill at the western end of Bankside. The design of the Seal is feeble as compared with that of Richard Cromwell.

The reverse of the fourth and last Seal of Charles II also bears a view of London and Southwark, but judging from Wyon’s Plate XXXVIII, it does not add to our information.

Before proceeding to the Seal of the next reign, a view on a curious medal may receive attention. The medal commemorates the acquittal, by a Middlesex Jury in 1681, of the Earl of Shaftesbury of an accusation of suborning witnesses on behalf of the Crown in “The Plot” as it was called. The copy exhibited is from the Guildhall Collection and shows well the buildings between London Bridge and the Tower.

The example which Wyon gives of the only Seal of James II (Plate XXXIX) is too battered for useful observation to be made thereon. The Seals of William and Mary, and of William, also illustrate a view of London and Southwark. Good impressions of these Seals are desirable for close study. No view appears on the Seals of Anne.

Before treating of George I, mention may be made of a medal of James III, as that ill-fated Prince desired himself to be called. The medal was probably issued from The Hague for distribution among Jacobites in this country. It is dated 1721 and gives St. Paul’s as rebuilt by Wren. It illustrates the Hanoverian Horse trampling upon the Lion and the Unicorn, while Britannia, seated hard by, deplores the misfortune. Fugitives carry off their goods. It was executed by Otto Hamerani when great exertions were being
made secretly to raise troops and to supply arms to insurgents in Britain. (*Medallic Illustrations of British History*, II, No. 63, 454.)

As regards the Seal of the first king of the House of Hanover, in place of old St. Paul’s, Wren’s structure is introduced, while the Pool below London Bridge is crowded with shipping. The mound on which the horse is standing is sufficiently low not to expunge the southern bank of the River with its buildings. In the view which the Seal of George II bears, the style of the buildings, as also of London Bridge, although somewhat similar to that on the seal of George I, seems to have changed. Presumably a new draft from which the engraver worked had been supplied. The Custom House below the Bridge has come in for attention, otherwise the buildings on the northern bank occur with monotonous regularity.

In the instance of the first Seal of George III, the mound at the base of the reverse has wholly obliterated Southwark. The second and third seals, as shown by Wyon, are much battered, but the accompanying note states that there “is a view of London, its Bridge, and the River Thames with many rowing and sailing boats thereon.” In the fourth seal can be detected London Bridge with numerous boats on the River above the Bridge. Although by this date, January 1, 1801, when the seal was first used, the houses on London Bridge had been removed, their removal having taken place in 1757–8, houses above the arches of the Bridge are prominent.

When the next, the fifth seal, of George III was used on August 1, 1815, London and Southwark were found to have given place to Windsor. Wyon says that this change “may, perhaps, be a token of His Majesty’s love for Windsor, where he took pleasure in being regarded in the locality as a country gentleman” (p. 128). Thenceforward, London with its adjunct across the Water, was banished from the Great Seals of England and, in consequence, for the London topographer, interest in the Great Seals ceases.

By means of the foregoing series of illustrations, I have been able to direct attention to a class of panoramic views which deserves close consideration. So far as the views on the Seals and medals are concerned, it is clear that, in order that they may yield up the
GREAT SEAL OF GEORGE I.

FOURTH SEAL OF GEORGE III.
The Views not originated by the Engravers.

utmost information of which they are capable, the examples for examination should be selected on account of the excellence of their background, the condition of the primary subject of the seal being of minor importance. The examples illustrated in Wyon’s *Great Seals of England* seem to have been chosen by reason of their all-round quality rather than by reason of this feature or of that showing superiority in execution. If, however, a component received priority of attention, it was probably the figure of the monarch which led to the selection of the example. It is hoped that specially fine examples of backgrounds in which London and Southwark are present will be brought forward in order that they may receive adequate attention at the hands of topographers.

That the backgrounds require interpretation before definite conclusions can be reached respecting the exact disposition and conformation of the buildings represented, scarce a person will gainsay. How they are to be interpreted is a long story and cannot be entered upon here. Suffice it to repeat that map-views, of which these backgrounds form a class, must be allocated to their families and be judged by the aid of the prototype or representative of that family. That the backgrounds are not of a family is obvious, although many of them are closely allied to each other. By what prototype, then, can they be judged? I am not sure. It is one of my objects, as mentioned in the opening of the Paper, to elicit this information. Personally, I am without doubt that the engravers of the equestrian portraits and of the Great Seals did not themselves originate the views. The styles and subject-matter are so different that I am sure the views were borrowed. If we could find their originals, we should be adding to that magnificent collection of early London Views of which we are the inheritors, and possibly be adding originals which intrinsically may be of great worth by reason of the wealth of accurate detail which they contain concerning Elizabethan and Stuart London.