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MEDI 445

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## MEDI 445 Final Project: Early Modern English Wax Seals in the Brown Collection

### **Documents**

-Doc.Brown.5.Seal

-Seal.Brown.1

-Doc.Brown.7.Seal

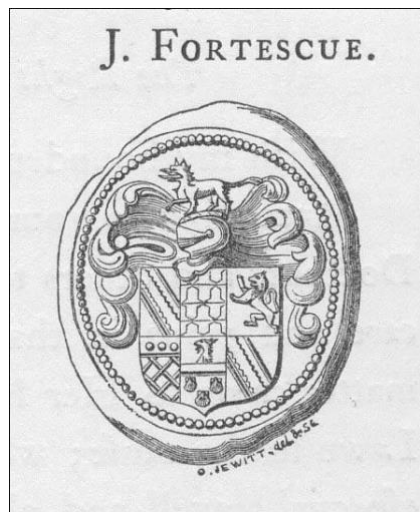
For information on Doc.Brown.1.Seal, not covered in this project, see:

Boyarin, Adrienne Williams, Ravana Eagleheart, James Kendrick, Lynnea Ness, and Merridy Peters. "Medieval Manuscripts and Fragments at the University of Victoria: An Early Grant of Hubert de Burgh, Constantine the African's Translation of Isaac Israeli, and a Mendicant Breviary between Italy and Croatia." *Florilegium* 33 (2016): 193-232. <https://dspace.library.uvic.ca/handle/1828/11170>.

### **Doc.Brown.5.Seal**

Doc.Brown.5.Seal dates to March 15, 1592 and features the seal of Sir John Fortescue of Salden, the seventh Chancellor of the Exchequer of England from 1589 to 1603 (The History of Parliament 1981). The seal is attached to Doc.Brown.5 via a parchment tag; an additional tag on Doc.Brown.5 once held the seal of William Cecil, Lord Burghley, Lord Treasurer of England (University of Victoria Special Collections). Doc.Brown.5 is described by the McPherson Library Special Collections as a "Mortgage of Manors between Queen Elizabeth I and Sir Martin Frobisher for 500 pounds" (University of Victoria

Special Collections). John Fortescue of Salden entered into the service of Queen Elizabeth I in 1555 in his position as Keeper of the Great Wardrobe after he had directed her learning as a youth under Mary I's reign (The History of Parliament 1981). Fortescue was knighted in 1592, served as a member of Parliament from 1588 to 1598, and was the chancellor to the duchy of Lancaster from 1601 to his death in 1607 (Rodgers 2022, The History of Parliament 1981). Doc.Brown.5.Seal is one sided and may have been imprinted with a signet ring or a matrix (Clemens and Graham 2007). The seal features the coat of arms for John Fortescue surrounded by a thin border. Fortescue's heraldic achievement includes a crest of a dog or lion *passant*, a helmet and mantling, and a quartering of six arms: two bend cottises, one vair, one lion *rampant*, and two additional arms, with one featuring three seashells below a fess and an animal's head, and the other featuring three dots above a lattice pattern.



Arms of Sir John Fortescue of Salden from (potentially) Thomas Orlando Sheldon Jewitt

Image Source: <http://www.fortescu.net/page-4/blog-73/files/6e896f9343ccd88a6467696d2fe10e35-7.html>



Artwork by Jewitt with Similar Signature

Image Source:

[https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/818538?sortBy=Relevance&ft=\(Thomas\)+Orlando+Sheldon+Jewitt&offset=0&rpp=40&pos=1](https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/818538?sortBy=Relevance&ft=(Thomas)+Orlando+Sheldon+Jewitt&offset=0&rpp=40&pos=1)

### **Seal.Brown.1**

Seal.Brown.1, recorded as the great seal of King Edward VI by McPherson Library Special Collections, was determined to be the second great seal of King Charles II. This misidentification can be attributed to the broken edge of the seal disrupting the legend where the king's name was inscribed on both the reverse and obverse sides of the seal. Additionally, the similarity in the designs of English great seals can present challenges in correctly identifying them. The seal of Edward VI, who died in 1553, would be a century older than that of Charles II (The Royal Household, Edward VI (r. 1547-1553)). Seal.Brown.1 is dated to 1653, two years after Charles II succeeded Charles I and was crowned by the Scots in 1651 (The Royal Household, Charles II (r. 1660-1685)). The union between England and Scotland would occur in 1652 but would not become legally recognized until 1657 (The Royal Household, Charles II (r. 1660-1685)). Charles II served as both King of Scotland (1649-1651) and King of England, Scotland, and Ireland (1660-1685). This position is reflected in his seal's reverse depicting him enthroned between a lion and unicorn holding the flags of England and Scotland respectively. The dark green color of the seal may indicate its associated document, not included in the Brown Collection,

was a letter patent that “[elevated] individuals to the peerage” (The Royal Household, Great Seal of the Realm). The obverse of Seal.Brown.1 depicts a greyhound above a thistle running under Charles II and his horse, alongside a crowned Tudor rose to the right of the horse’s head and the coat of arms of Charles II to the left of his raised arm. Additionally, to the left of the coat of arms is a slight obtrusion in the seal, reflected on the reverse side with a small square-shaped indent. This may be the result of an error with the matrix, an intentional mark, or accidental damage caused to the seal in contemporary times before it entered the Brown collection.

Second Great Seal of Charles II from Sandford’s Genealogical History, 1707



Images’ Source: <http://www.mernick.org.uk/seals/stuartandorange/charles2.htm>

### **Doc.Brown.7.Seal**

Doc.Brown.7.Seal depicts Mary I of England and Philip II of Spain in a rarer design of great seal where both king and queen are illustrated. The initials of Mary I and Philip II can be found on the seal’s reverse under the Sovereign’s Orb, of which both Mary I and Philip II have their hands placed. Both Mary I and Philip II bear swords on the reverse and obverse of the seal. Despite the egalitarian nature of the seal, Mary I is featured behind Philip II on the seal’s obverse, reinforcing traditional gender norms despite

Mary I's position as the inheritor of the English crown and *suo jure*. Mary I ruled from 1553 to 1558 as Queen Regnant and married Philip II in 1554 in her effort to have a Catholic heir (The Royal Household, Mary I (r. 1553-1558)). Philip II held several titles, including King of Spain from 1556 to his death in 1598 to *jure uxoris* King of England and Ireland until Mary I's death (Parker 2000). Doc.Brown.7.Seal features the combined arms of England and Spain on both obverse (located to the right of both Mary I and Philip II) and reverse (located directly between the king and queen). The seal's obverse also features horses outfitted in caparisons and a decorative background; this alongside Mary I and Philip II bearing swords but not having them raised like the depiction of Charles II in Seal.Brown.1 may speak to the rulers wanting to cultivate a peaceful image. This would starkly contrast with the persecution of Protestants under Mary I's reign (The Royal Household, Mary I (r. 1553-1558)).

Great Seal of Mary I and Philip II from John Speed's 'Historie of Great Britaine'



Great Seal of Mary I and Philip II from Sandford's Genealogical History, 1707





Images' Source: <http://www.mernick.org.uk/seals/tudor/philipandmary.htm>

### **Heraldry, Symbology, and Use of Seals**

Doc.Brown.7.Seal, Seal.Brown.1, and Doc.Brown.5.Seal are wax pendant seals dating to the early modern period in England. Pendant seals are attached to their associated document with a thin parchment tag, piece of paper, or cord (Surrey 2022). This is opposed to applied seals, which are directly affixed to a document. Pendant seals attached via cords, such as Doc.Brown.7.Seal, are done so in a variety of ways. Paul Dryburgh writes “The methods by which cords are knotted to the parchment vary widely and suggest gradations of quality and status of the recipient” (2016). The two-tone braided cord used with Doc.Brown.7.Seal may indicate its association with royalty. Seals served as “object[s] of authentication,” offering a physical means through which royals, and non-royal elites and the public after the thirteenth century, could express “identity, power, agency, and legitimacy” (Whatley 2019). Seals were used to validate documents in place of or alongside of signatures; this was a crucial function for those with limited literacy (Surrey 2022, Whatley 2019, Clemens and Graham 2007).

Several seals within the Brown Collection feature armorial bearings. These range from complex armorial achievements in royal coats of arms, as seen in Doc.Brown.7.Seal and Seal.Brown.1, to the personal heraldry of Doc.Brown.5.Seal. Heraldry originated from practical utility; heralds in the Middle

Ages utilized armorial bearings to distinguish armored warriors, allowing them to perform their ceremonial and message-bearing duties (Giles and Brooke-Little, 1963). The hereditary aspect of armory led heralds to genealogy, which is reflected in the longstanding relationship between heraldic insignia and seals serving as symbols of identity (Giles and Brooke-Little 1963, Whatley 2019).

Doc.Brown.7.Seal and Seal.Brown.1 are examples of ‘great seals’. The great seal was utilized by English monarchs beginning after Edward the Confessor in the eleventh century (The Royal Household, Great Seal of the Realm). Rich with symbolism, the seals served as significant tools of visual propaganda for the crown (The National Archives, Seals). The seals have designs on both the obverse and reverse sides, requiring a circular double-sided matrix or sealpress to create (Clemens and Graham 2007). The Great Seal of the Realm is considered the “chief seal of the Crown” and depicts the ruler(s) in two positions: enthroned, known as “in majesty”, and on horseback, referred to as the “equestrian” position (The National Archives, Seals). These positions represent the dual responsibilities of the king or queen as the civil and military ruler of the realm. The “equestrian” position typically depicts the monarch in armor and their horse in “full bard”, however, the amount of armor on both the rider and horse varies; the obverses of Seal.Brown.1, Doc.Brown.Seal.7, and the seal of Edward VI feature different degrees of armor and bard (Breiding 2010). Edward VI’s horse is completely barded, while the horses of Mary I and Philip II are depicted in decorative caparisons. Caparisons could be utilized for protection, but most were designed to bear heraldry and coats of arms (Breiding 2010).

Doc.Brown.7.Seal, Seal.Brown.1, and Doc.Brown.5.Seal feature three common colors for seals. Doc.Brown.5.Seal is red, indicating its status as a personal seal; the most common color for seals was red, with red used for privy seals (Emery 2020, Clemens and Graham 2007). Red pigment for seals was created by mixing beeswax and mercury (II) sulphide while dark green seals, such as Seal.Brown.1, were often composed of beeswax and copper (II) acetate, or verdigris (Clemens and Graham 2007). While

shellac resin is another component of many seals, it is typically used for applied seals (Woods 1994).

Doc.Brown.Seal.7's brown color may be the result of discoloration from chemical deterioration over time or may be colored with a copper-based pigment (Cwiertna and Dryburgh 2016).

### Coats of Arms



Fortescue Coat of Arms

Image Source:

[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Fortescue\\_arms#/media/File:Fortescue\\_arms.svg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Fortescue_arms#/media/File:Fortescue_arms.svg)





Left: “16th century stained glass displaying the arms of Fortescue (*Azure, a bend engrailed argent cottised or*) impaling *Vair* (Beauchamp of Ryme in Dorset). The shield represents the marriage of William Fortescue (died after 1411), of Whympston in the parish of Modbury in Devon (the earliest recorded English seat of the Fortescue family) and his wife Elizabeth Beauchamp, daughter of Sir John de Beauchamp, of Ryme, Dorset, by his wife, Margaret de Whalesborough.”

Image Source:

[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Fortescue\\_arms#/media/File:Fortescue\\_Impaling\\_BeauchampOfRyme\\_BucklandFilleighChurch\\_Devon.PNG](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Fortescue_arms#/media/File:Fortescue_Impaling_BeauchampOfRyme_BucklandFilleighChurch_Devon.PNG)

Right: Arms of Fortescue impaling various additional coats of arms symbolizing marriages. This stained glass is located in Buckland Filleigh Church, Devon, England.

Image Source:

[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:FortescueHeraldicWindow\\_BucklandFilleighChurch\\_Devon.png](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:FortescueHeraldicWindow_BucklandFilleighChurch_Devon.png)



Left: Royal Coat of Arms of Mary I of England and Philip II of Spain

Symbols of Philip II: Black Eagle *rampant* as the sinister, Pomegranates in compartment

Symbols of Mary I: Lion *rampant guardant* as the dexter, Tudor roses in compartment

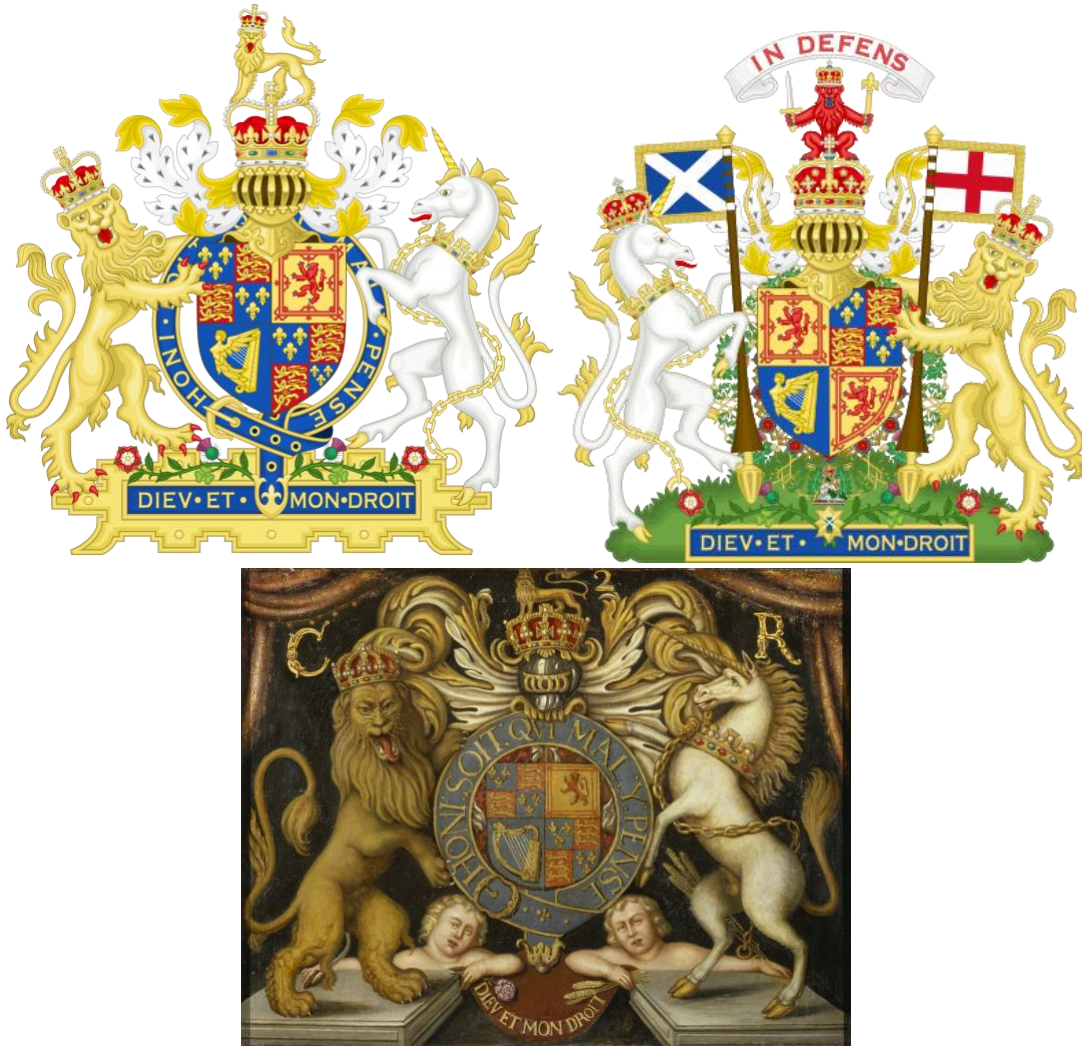
Motto reads COLIT · ARDUA · VIRTUS

Image Source:

[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Coat\\_of\\_Arms\\_of\\_Mary\\_I\\_of\\_England\\_\(1554-1558\)\\_and\\_Philip\\_II\\_of\\_Spain\\_Variant\\_1\\_Shield\\_1.svg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Coat_of_Arms_of_Mary_I_of_England_(1554-1558)_and_Philip_II_of_Spain_Variant_1_Shield_1.svg)

Right: Royal Coat of Arms of Mary I of England and Philip II of Spain on Windsor Castle

Image Source: [https://www.stgeorges-windsor.org/image\\_of\\_the\\_month/royal-arms-philip-mary/](https://www.stgeorges-windsor.org/image_of_the_month/royal-arms-philip-mary/)



Left: Royal Coat of Arms of Charles II of England (used outside of Scotland)

Symbols: Lion *rampant guardant* as the dexter representing England and Unicorn *rampant* as the sinister representing Scotland. Tudor rose and thistle in compartment represent the union between England and Scotland.

Motto reads DIEV · ET · MON · DROIT

Image Source:

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles\\_II\\_of\\_England#/media/File:Coat\\_of\\_Arms\\_of\\_England\\_\(1660-1689\).svg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_II_of_England#/media/File:Coat_of_Arms_of_England_(1660-1689).svg)

Right: Royal Coat of Arms of Charles II of England as King of Scotland

Image Source:

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles\\_II\\_of\\_England#/media/File:Coat\\_of\\_Arms\\_of\\_Scotland\\_\(1660-1689\).svg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_II_of_England#/media/File:Coat_of_Arms_of_Scotland_(1660-1689).svg)

Below: Royal Coat of Arms of Charles II of England as depicted in an oil painting dating to between 1671-1685

Image Source: <https://artcollection.culture.gov.uk/artwork/0-15/>

### **Brown Collection**

The Bruce and Dorothy Brown Collection, also known as the Brown Collection, is one of several collections within the McPherson Library Special Collections at the University of Victoria. The Brown Collection is named for Dr. Bruce L. Brown and Mrs. Dorothy E. Brown, who collected rare items during their extensive travels. Many of these items were donated to the university by the Browns to provide students with opportunities to study “a range of artifacts of aesthetic and historical interest” (University of Victoria Libraries). The Brown Collection consists of eighty-seven artifacts, twenty maps, and sixty-four medals and decorations representing history from ca. 2000 B.C.E. to 1970.

Included within the collections’ medieval and early modern manuscripts are several wax seals and documents with evidence of wax seals. Information on these seals is provided through the University of Victoria Special Collections digital catalog. The entries corresponding to these items are largely comprised of the information provided to the Browns by the dealers from which they purchased the seals and documents, apart from Doc.Brown.1. This offers student and faculty researchers a unique opportunity to examine this information and assess its validity utilizing their knowledge of art history, transcription, medieval studies, and symbology.



Mrs. Dorothy E. Brown and Dr. Bruce L. Brown

Image Source: <https://www.uvic.ca/library/about/support/donors/BruceandDorothyBrown.php>

## **Transcriptions**

### Transcription of Doc.Brown.7.Seal - Obverse - Top Right to Top Left

ARCHIDVCES · AVSTRIE · DVCE · BVRGVNDIE · [MED]IOLANI · ET · [BARBANCIE ·  
COMITES · ] HASPVRGI · ET · [FLAN]DRIE · ET · TIROLIS ·

### Transcription of Doc.Brown.7.Seal - Reverse - Top Right to Top Left

[PHILIP · ET · MARIA · D · G · ] REX · REGINA [ · ANGL' · HISPANIAR' · FRA]NC ·  
VTRIVS[Q'] [ · SICILE · ] IERVSALEM · ET · HIB · FIDEI · DEFEN[S]OR

### Transcription of Seal.Brown.1 Legend - Obverse -Top Right to Top Left

II DEI DEFENSOR MAGNÆ BRITANNIÆ ET FRANCIA ET HIBERNÆ REX FIDEI [DEFENSOR  
1653 CAROLVS]

### Transcription of Seal.Brown.1 Legend - Reverse - Top Right to Top Left

[1653 CAROLVS] II DEI GR[A]TIA MAGNÆ BRITANNIÆ FRANCIÆ ET HIBERN · REX FIDEI  
DEFENSO[R]

## **Conclusions**

Seals offer critical insight and context for medieval and early modern manuscript studies. Rather than simply an associated item alongside a document or seen as a piece of ephemera with little scholastic use, seals are complete historic objects that deserve dedicated study (Woods 1994). SIGILLVM, the Network for Research into the history, art, preservation, and use of seals, supports the “restor[ation of] seals to their status as agents within the cultures that produce[d] and used them” and encourages research into the “sociology of seal usage” (Bedos-Rezak 2011-2020). This approach, alongside the interdisciplinary study of seals advocated by Elke Cwiertna and Paul Dryburgh, positions seals to occupy a similar position to fragments in medieval and early modern study. Studying select seals in the Brown Collection provided for an examination of the veracity of original provenance records, offered additional insight into Doc.Brown.5 and Doc.Brown.7 while introducing potential context for the associated, but severed, document of Doc.Brown.Seal.1, and encouraged the study of materiality within the archival



record of medieval and early modern manuscripts. The ability to utilize knowledge of transcription, heraldry, and sigillography in this research created a rich learning environment for a student of manuscript studies. Seals offer crucial context and visual information for manuscript studies; despite being historically overlooked, they have and will continue to leave their mark on the field.

### Associated Images



Funerary memorial for Sir John Fortescue of Salden in the Church of St. Mary the Virgin at Mursley.

Image Source: <https://www.steve-davison.co.uk/blog/?p=723>





Portrait of Sir John Fortescue of Salden by G. Sidney Hunt, 1879

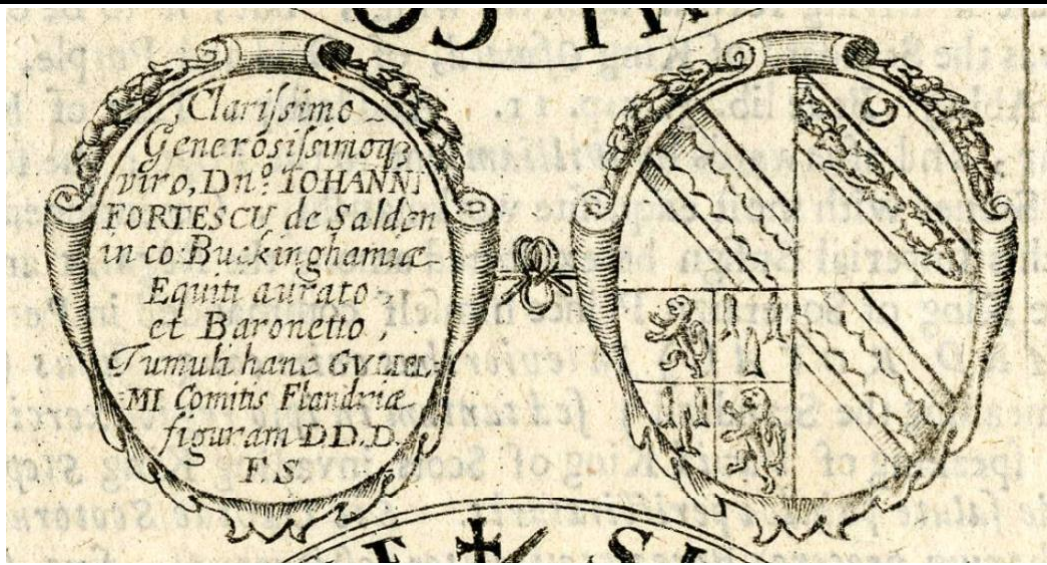
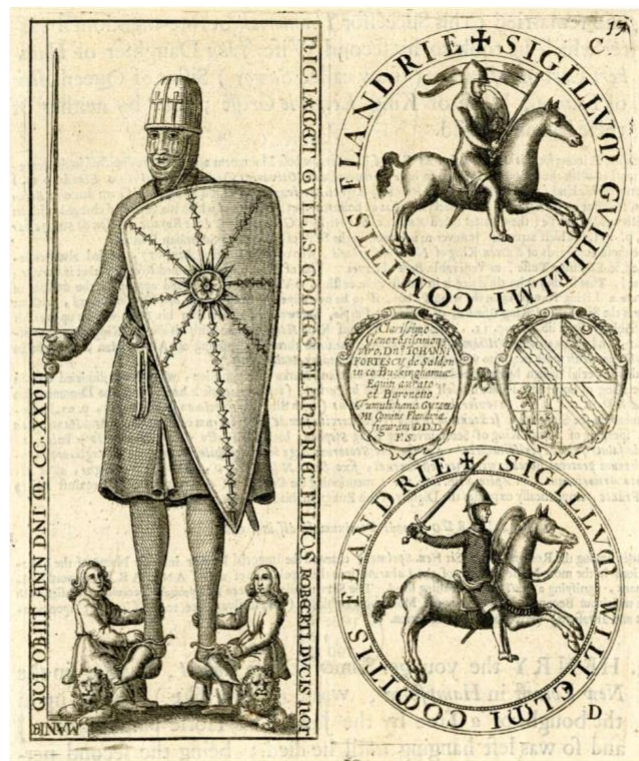
Image Source:

[https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/0/09/Sir\\_John\\_Fortescue\\_by\\_Sidney\\_Hunt.jpg](https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/0/09/Sir_John_Fortescue_by_Sidney_Hunt.jpg)



Similar style of braided, two-tone cord as seen on Doc.Brown.7.Seal

Image Source: <https://www.rct.uk/collection/about-the-collection/history-antiquities-religion-and-the-law>



“Brass memorial of William, Count of Flanders; at right, printed from separate plate, two sides of his seal at right, cartouche between them with dedication to John Fortescue [of Salden], tied to another, containing coat of arms; letterpress on verso; illustration to Sandford, 'A Genealogical History of the Kings of England' (London, 1677).” Two quarterings feature Fortescue’s blazon.

Image Source: [https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/P\\_2006-U-123](https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/P_2006-U-123)





Coin from the British Museum featuring the seal of Sir John Fortescue. Curator's notes state this coin was "struck" by Fortescue and potentially dates to 1603.

Image Source: [https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/C\\_BNK-EngM-26](https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/C_BNK-EngM-26)



Additional example of the above coin with Sir John Fortescue's seal. Dated to 1603.

Image Source: [https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/C\\_1864-0524-1-](https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/C_1864-0524-1-)



The great seal of King William III and Queen Mary, another example of two rulers sharing a great seal.

Image Source: <https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/44a970c0-2bd2-0132-0391-58d385a7b928>





A pair of circular seal matrices, similar to those used to create the double-sided great seals.

Image Source: <https://www.antiquetrade gazette.com/news/2017/government-issues-export-bar-on-scottish-seal-linked-to-robert-the-bruce/>



Coins depicting Mary I and Philip II of Spain and their shared coat of arms, also present on both sides of their great seal.

Image Source: [https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/C\\_E-5108](https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/C_E-5108)



The image shows two handwritten signatures in dark ink on a light-colored, aged piece of paper. The top signature is 'W. Burghley' and the bottom signature is 'John Fortescue'.

Signatures of William Cecil, Lord Burghley and Sir John Fortescue from a warrant dating to June 1594.

Image Source: <https://www.christies.com/en/lot/lot-5578664>



Diagram of Coat of Arms Terminology

Image Source: <https://britroyals.com/arms.asp>

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[ii#:~:text=The%20king%20had%20no%20legitimate,with%20the%20problem%20still%20unresolved.](https://www.royal.uk/charles-ii#:~:text=The%20king%20had%20no%20legitimate,with%20the%20problem%20still%20unresolved.)

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