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SIGILLOLOGIA.  
BEING SOME ACCOUNT  
OF THE  
GREAT OR BROAD SEAL  
OF THE  
CONFEDERATE STATES OF AMERICA.  
A MONOGRAPH.



NON OMNIS MORIAR.

DEDICATED TO THE SACRED MEMORY OF

"The gallant cavaliers who died in vain,  
For those who knew not to resign or reign."

BY IOANNES DIDYMUS ARCHEOLOGOS.

*(Honi soit qui mal y pense!)*

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PRICE 25 CENTS.  
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WASHINGTON, D. C.

PUBLISHED BY KERVAND & TOWERS.

PRINTED BY POWELL & GINCK,

630, 632 F Street.

1873.



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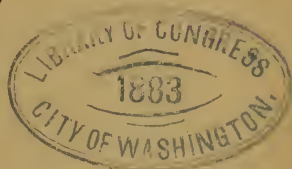
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# THE GREAT SEAL

OF THE

## CONFEDERATE STATES.

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In Harper's Monthly Magazine for February, 1869, there is an interesting paper entitled "The Executive Departments and Seals," in which occurs the following passage:

"In our day the extraordinary spectacle has been seen of the efforts of an oligarchy, small in numbers, but powerful in influence, to establish another nation within the bounds of the Republic—*imperium in imperio*—and to give to it the symbol of sovereignty in the form of a Great Seal. The youngest of us, old enough to reflect and reason, have seen that 'nation,' so-called, spring up from the late slave-labor States which formed the northern portion of the great golden circle of empire devised by conspirators. It was a Caliban in features; barbaric in its proclivities; awfully potential in mischievous works; protesting with fire, sword and torture against the civilization of the age; and yet impudently insisting upon its recognition as one of the family of legitimate and respectable sovereignties. Its titular initials were 'C. S. A.' Its fathers resolved that it, like the nation it was attempting to overthrow by internal convulsions, should have a Great Seal, and in 'Congress' resolved, in the spring of 1863, that it should bear 'a device representing an equestrian statue of Washington (after the statue which surmounts his monument in the capitol square at Richmond), surrounded with a wreath

composed of the principal products of the Confederacy, and having around its margin the words ‘Confederate States of America, Feb. 22, 1862,’ with the following motto: ‘*Deo Vindice,*’ God, the protector, defender, deliverer, or ruler—indicative of the expected longevity of the ‘nation’ because of divine protection and sustenance. Alas! that ‘nation’ so notably ‘conceived in sin and born in iniquity,’ died of political and moral marasmus in its infancy, un-honored by any recognition of its existence excepting by a Latin ghost of sovereignty. It had repeated history\* by a delay in providing itself with the usual symbol of nationality. That symbol—the Great Seal of the infant Confederacy—sent to it by its nurse, England, reached the appointed seat of the empire of the ‘C. S. A.’ just as its self-constituted guardians were flying from the wrath of God, whose protection they had impiously invoked. The ill-favored bantling died, and was left to decay, without real mourners, without burial, and without a monument, for no true man desired to perpetuate its memory. Antiquaries, in the future, will search in vain for any impression of an emblem of sovereignty of the ‘C. S. A.’ None was ever made. The broad seal of the Republic kindly covers the dishonored ashes of that child of sin.”

Although we cannot but think the language of archæology should be more temperate than the foregoing, yet it is not the intention of the writer of this simple monograph to take any exceptions thereto. The *de mortuis nil nisi bonum*, is wholly out of fashion, at least in this land, both as to States and statesmen. In fact an amiable friend of the writer lately published a newspaper article in the endeavor to prove the generous, time-honored latin maxim to be a delusion and a snare, or, to speak after the American manner, a humbug and a fraud.

Ours be it, therefore, to show, with moderation of style,

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\*An allusion to the delay of the United States in procuring *their* broad seal.

that the paper from which we have quoted is in error when it says "antiquaries, in the future, will search in vain for any impression of an emblem of sovereignty of the 'C. S. A.' None was ever made."

At the third session of the first Congress\* of the Confederate States of America, the necessary legislation was had for the establishing of a seal, as follows:

[No. 4.] *Joint resolution to establish a seal for the Confederate States.*

*Resolved, by the Congress of the Confederate States of America,* That the seal of the Confederate States shall consist of a device representing an equestrian portrait of Washington, (after the statue which surmounts his monument in the capitol square at Richmond,) surrounded with a wreath composed of the principal agricultural products of the Confederacy, (cotton, tobacco, sugar cane, corn, wheat and rice,) and having around its margin the words: "The Confederate States of America, twenty-second February, eighteen hundred and sixty-two, with the following motto: "*Deo vindice.*"

APPROVED, April 30, 1863. [C. S. Statutes at Large.]

And thus we have a succinct and accurate description of that which symbolized the once formidable but ephemeral Confederacy.

Accordingly the Hon. J. P. Benjamin, Secretary of State of the Confederate States, in his dispatch of May 20, 1863, (No. 23) to the Hon. James M. Mason, Commissioner of the Confederate States near the government of Great Britain, expresses the will of Congress with regard to the proposed seal in the following very judicious and interesting manner:

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\*It must be borne in mind that the previous and original Congress was provisional; the permanent government of the Confederate States not having been established until February 22, 1862.

[ " No. 23. ]

“ DEPARTMENT OF STATE,  
 “ RICHMOND, *May* 20, 1863.

“ HON. JAMES M. MASON,  
 &c., &c., &c.,  
 “ *London.*

“ SIR :

\* \* \* \* \*

“ Congress has passed a law establishing a seal for the Confederate States. I have concluded to get the work executed in England, and request that you will do me the favor to supervise it. You will receive herewith a copy of the act of Congress describing the seal, and a photographic view of the statue of Washington. The photograph represents the horse as standing on the summit of an obelisk, but in the seal the base ought to be the earth, as the representation is to be of a horseman and not of a statue. The size desired for the seal is the circle on the back of the photograph. The outer margin will give space for the words ‘The Confederate States of America, 22d February, 1862.’ I do not think it necessary that the date should be expressed in words, the figures 22, 1862, being a sufficient compliance with the requirement of the law. Indeed, I know that in the drawing submitted to the committee that devised the seal, the date was in figures and not in words. There is not room for the date in words on the circumference of the seal without reducing the size of the letters so much as to injure the effect. In regard to the wreath and the motto, they must be placed as your taste and that of the artist shall suggest, but it is not deemed imperative, under the words of the act, that *all* the agricultural products (cotton, tobacco, sugar cane, corn, wheat and rice) should find place in the wreath. They are stated rather as examples. I am

inclined to think that in so small a space as the wreath must necessarily occupy, it will be impossible to include all these products with good effect, and in that event I would suggest that cotton, rice and tobacco, being distinctive products of the southern, middle and northern States of the Confederacy, ought to be retained, while wheat and corn being produced in equal abundance in the United States as in the Confederacy, and therefore less distinctive than the other products named, may better be omitted, if omission is found necessary. It is not desired that the work be executed by any but the best artist that can be found, and the difference of expense between a poor and a fine specimen of art in the engraving is too small a matter to be taken into consideration in a work that we fondly hope will be required for generations yet unborn.

“Pray, give your best attention to this, and let me know about what the cost will be and when I may expect the work to be finished.”

Monographic as we have designed this paper to be, we cannot refrain from transcribing the remainder of this dispatch of Mr. Benjamin, affording, as it does, a vivid picture of those times, as well as of its writer's hopeful and somewhat credulous nature, and of his ardent devotion to the now Lost Cause.\*

“I am happy to apprise you that the information from all parts of the Confederacy is most encouraging as regards the growing crops. In the more southern portions of our country they are just beginning to gather the wheat harvest, and no complaint is heard from any part of the country of rust or other injury. The production of wheat

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\*The present writer is not one of those who expects ‘to go to Mr. Benjamin when he dies,’ and although regarding at the time and still regarding the undue influence which he (Mr. B.) exercised over Mr. Davis as a great calamity to ‘The Cause,’ justice requires that he should be vindicated from the suspicion of unfaithfulness to the Confederacy.

and other small grain will be very large this year, while that of corn will be enormous, probably enough for two year's consumption, unless some very unexpected and unusual calamity shall occur. Our enemies must find some other instrumentality than starvation before they succeed in breaking the proud spirit of this noble people. How it makes one's heart swell with emotion, to witness the calm, heroic, unconquerable determination to be free, that fills the breast of all ages, sexes and conditions.

“What effect may be produced in Europe by the repulse at Charleston and the defeat of Hooker is not now even the subject of speculation among the people. It is the evident purpose of foreign governments to accord or refuse recognition according to the dictates of their own interests or fears, without the slightest reference to right or justice, and we have thus learned, at heavy cost, a lesson that will, I trust, remain profitable to our statesmen in all future time.

“We have now, by our system of taxation, so arranged our financial affairs as to be entirely confident of the ability to resist, for an indefinite period, the execrable savages who are now murdering and plundering our people, and no prospect of peace is perceptible from any other source than the growing conviction among all classes in the United States that they are waging a war as ruinous in the present as it is hopeless for the future.”

We have been unable to find anything among the Confederate archives, from Mr. Mason, in reply to the foregoing instructions as to the seal, until his dispatch to Mr. Benjamin, dated London, February 18, 1864, wherein occurs the following passage:

“In regard to the seal, too, I have now a report from Mr. Foley, who, it seems, has been some time absent from London. He says that the artizan, Mr. Wyon, employed to engrave it, informs him that it will yet require six

weeks or two months to finish it, as he is very anxious to bestow upon it all the pains so important a work demands. He is executing it in silver, (the metal the state seals of England are executed in) which offers the advantage of proof against rust so often destructive to seals executed in steel.

“The above is from Mr. Foley’s note of the 10th instant, from Dublin, to me at Paris. He tells me, further, that the cost of engraving the seal, including the press for working it, will be eighty guineas, and that it is customary in England to receive one-half the amount on commencing the work. He advises that I should conform, as it will at least prevent excuse for delay, and which I will do as soon as I can obtain the address of Mr. Wyon.”

We next hear from Mr. Mason, on the subject of the seal, under date of Paris, April 12, 1864.

Mr. Mason to Mr. Benjamin :

“Before I left London I called on Mr. Wyon, the artist employed to make the Confederate seal referred to in my No. 4, and paid him forty guineas, equal to forty-two pounds, one-half the cost of the seal, in advance, and arranged that when it was ready it should be carefully packed, with the press, &c., in a box lined with tin, and put in charge of Mr. Hotze until it could be sent over. He promised it should be ready by the middle of May.”

We again indulge in a little episode by admitting the following illustrative paragraph from the same dispatch of Mr. Mason :

“In regard to the spurious report of Mr. Mallory, as Secretary of the Navy, about which I wrote in my No. 5, Lord Russell took occasion, a few days since, to say in the House of Lords, that since it was communicated to him Mr. Seward had admitted that it was a forgery, fabricated, as he said, by some ‘gentleman’ in New York!!!!!!!!!!!!  
!!!!!!!!!!!!”

We give the precise number of his notes of exclamation. Noble old Virginian! we fear he was not the man for that place and those times. But one cannot read his dispatches without a feeling of profound admiration for his exalted character.

The official and pecuniary history of the seal ends with the following dispatch from Mr. Mason to Mr. Benjamin, and its appendix—being the bill of the engraver, amounting to 122 pounds 10 shillings, equal to about \$700 United States currency, at present (July, 1873,) price of gold. Other appendices, being “directions for using the Great Seal of the Confederate States,” we omit, as they relate to a purely mechanical subject:

“LONDON, *July 6, 1864,*

“24 UPPER SEYMOUR STREET,

“PORTMAN SQUARE.

“HON. J. P. BENJAMIN,

“*Secretary of State.*

“SIR: I have the pleasure to inform you that I send by Lieutenant Chapman, C. S. A., who bears this, the seal of the Confederate States, at last completed. It is much admired by all who have seen it here, and I hope you will approve it as a fine work of art.

“The seal is carefully put up in a separate small box, and Lieut. Chapman is charged, under no circumstances, to run the risk of its being captured. He takes the route to Bermuda, via Halifax, to sail on Saturday, 9th instant, and I ship through Messrs. Fraser, Trenholm & Co., by the steamer that takes him to Halifax, two boxes containing the iron press, with a full supply of wax and other materials for the use of the seal. Although not expressly ordered, in the difficulty of obtaining these in the Confederacy at present, at least of approved quality, I have thought it best to have them supplied here, all which I hope you will approve.

“The enclosed *duplicate* bill will furnish a list of those



materials, with the prices. The *original* I have paid and retain.

“I have requested Lieutenant Chapman to take charge of the boxes at Bermuda, and to see to their safe delivery. To relieve him of expenses on the route, I have further requested Messrs. Fraser, Trenholm & Co., here, if they can do so, to pay the freight all the way to Bermuda, and write to Major Walker at Bermuda to pay the freight thence to the Confederacy, should they not go in a Government ship.

“Still it is possible that some part of this may not be done, and I have accordingly told Lieutenant Chapman, should any expenses in the transportation devolve on him, it should be paid promptly at the Department of State, which oblige me by having attended to.

“I have the honor to be, &c., &c., &c.,

[Signed.]

“J. M. MASON.”

[Duplicate Account.]

J. M. MASON, Esq.

To JOSEPH S. WYON,  
Chief Engraver of Her Majesty's Seals, &c.,  
287 Regent Street, London, W.

1864. July 2.—Silver Seal for the Confederate States of America, with ivory handle, box with spring lock and screw press... £84  
3,000 wafers..... 4 10  
1,000 seal papers..... 7  
1,000 strips of parchment..... 18  
100 brass boxes..... 16 5  
100 cakes of wax..... 7  
100 silk cords..... 6 5  
1 perforator ..... 5  
3 packing cases lined with tin.. 3

£122 10

By cash, 21 March, £42.

Settled by cheque for balance, 6th July, 1864.

The article in Harper's Magazine from which we have quoted, lays stress upon the fact that, "that symbol, the Great Seal of the Confederacy, was sent to it by its nurse, England." But the author seems to have forgotten that in his paper on the Great Seal of the United States, which is in the same magazine, for July, 1856, he dwells with some complacency upon the fact that the earlier and more enduring symbol was "invented by an English aristocrat, Sir John Prestwich." He will accord to the Confederates at least the merit of having "invented" their own symbol; though it must be confessed there is not much that is heraldic about it beyond the inevitable man on horseback. And it will be noted, that the Confederates were indebted to England solely for the mechanical execution of their Great Seal. We (the writer speaking as a quondam Confederate) should have been too happy to have found an *alma mater* in old England. *Eheu!*

It may be not out of place here to observe that there are two faces to the Great Seal of the United States, but only the obverse is used, and, as in the case of the moon, we never see the reverse; the design of which consists of a truncated pyramid with the Omniscient eye above; at the base of the pyramid "1776" in numeral letters. Over the eye the words *Annuit Cœptis*, and underneath all the legend *Novus Ordo Seclorum*.

It is quite germane to our subject that we make some reference to the seals of the mother country. We find in the Congressional Library a curious little book published just 200 years ago. The following is its title:

*Jus Sigilli* or the *Law of England*, Touching His Majesties four principal *Seales*, viz: the *Great Seale*, the *Privie Seale*, the *Exchequer Seale*, and the *Signet*. Also of those grand officers to whose custody these *Seales* are committed.

London, 1673.

Consecrated to the Clarissimo, Consultissimo, Dissertissimoque Viro, Domino *Johanni Churchill*, In agro *Somersetensi* Equiti Aurato, &c., &c., &c., by *Johannes Brydall*, Armiger, ac *Somersetensis*.

[We will now give the leading sentence of each of the several chapters.]

#### I. OF THE GREAT OR BROAD SEAL\* OF ENGLAND.

This Great Seal is in the custody of the Lord Chancellor or Lord Keeper, and there is a special officer in the High Court of Chancery, called *Sigillator*, who hath the sealing of writs, and other things that pass the Great Seal.

#### II. OF THE PRIVIE SEAL.

*Parvum Sigillum*, the Little or Petit Seal, after called *Privatum Sigillum*, the Privie Seal, is a Seal that his most Sacred and excellent Majesty useth sometime for a warrant, whereby things passed the Privie Signet and brought to it are sent further to be confirmed by the Great Seal of *England*. Sometime for the strength or Credit of other things, written upon Occasions more Transitory and of less continuance than those be that pass the Great Seal.

#### III. OF THE EXCHEQUER SEAL.

The seal belonging to the Court of Exchequer is in the custody of the Chancellor, of whom these following authors speak thus, &c. :

[We can give only one, and choose him for his quaintness.]

3. PLOWDEN: *L'eschequer ad Chancellor et Seal et les Briefes usuall en le Chancery en L'eschequer de seiser le Terre en tiel Case, sont pluis antient, que le Register, ou le Treatise Prærogativa Regis.*

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\*It will be observed that the orthography of the English language was not fixed at that time, nor is it at the present.

## IV. OF THE SIGNET.

This Seal is in the custody of the Principall Secretary, as well for Sealing his Majesties private Letters, as also such grants as pass the King's Hands by Bill assigned. And there are four Clerks of the Signet called *Clerici Signeti*, attending on this Secretary in their Course, and were used to have their Dyet at his table.

Our subject is not, strictly speaking, connected with numismatics, but by referring to Prime's work on coins, medals and seals, (Harper & Brothers, 1861,) plates will be seen of many of the Great Seals of England, beginning with William the Conqueror, and including Magna Carta John. It seems that each succeeding sovereign of that realm has his own broad seal.

The use of the seal is very ancient, almost coeval with historic man, for antique *intaglii* are found wherever the least degree of art has flourished. These antiquated seals, especially Etruscan, Grecian, Roman, Carthaginian, &c., are become almost common, even in this country, of late years, the more prized, perhaps, by reason of the fact that the polishing of the *intaglio* ranks among the lost arts, although there is now an artist in Paris whose work passés even with the *virtuosi*, but it is more expensive than the genuine, except as to those specimens which are so costly as to be termed "priceless." We have before us at this writing an impression from a head of Antinous, for which gem the owner has refused \$2,000; and we, ourselves, have a head of Jupiter valued at \$500. But very handsome ones can now be had in New York, for \$100 or so.

But turn we now to high antiquity.

From the "Sabæan\* Researches" of John Landseer,† Fellow of the Royal Society, &c., and engraver to the King, a work published in London just fifty years ago, and for the use of which we are indebted to the well-furnished library of that Learned Theban, Genl. Albert Pike, we extract the following in illustration of our theme :

Mr. Landseer, in a letter to Sir Joseph Banks, in reference to certain cylindrical gems (*intaglii*) disinterred at Babylon and in Phœnicia, proceeds most satisfactorily to his reader to show why he conceives the gems to have been *originally* not worn as talismans or amulets, but used as *signets*, that is to say, impressed for the purposes of ratifying such social and religious transactions as called for a sacred pledge.

He then treats of them with reference to the ancient customs of Chaldea and Assyria, (Sabæan nations of course), and observes that Herodotus, in detailing those customs as they existed in his time, says that every Assyrian possessed a signet or seal. But this father of history does not inform us as to the shape of the seal, nor the manner in which mounted.

Reference in the Pentateuch to the engraver's art shows that in the time of Moses, it was no recent invention, and

\*This word signifies worshippers of the stars, and is applied to all those very ancient nations which cultivated astronomy, deified the sun, &c.

†The Sabæans are frequently mentioned in the Pentateuch, the book of Job, &c.

The charmingly poetical expression of "Sabæan odors from Araby the Blest," refers to the Arabian town of Saba, famed for its aromatic plants. Arabia Felix.

†Father of Sir Edwin Landseer, the celebrated painter of animals, especially canines, to whom the Rev. Sidney Smith said, when asked by him to sit for his portrait, "is thy servant a dog that he should do this thing?" When Landseer was presented to the King of Portugal that youthful monarch said, "I am delighted to make your acquaintance, Sir Edwin; I am so fond of beasts!"

that among the surrounding nations signets were then common and in well-known use.

Josephus, too, informs us that some ages before the time of Moses, when Pharaoh invested the youthful Joseph with power over the land and people of Egypt, he entrusted to his discretion the use of the royal *signet*, along with and as the ostensible mark of the royal authority.

The Chaldean progenitors of the Jews were engravers; and it is by no means improbable—considering the numerous uses to which the signet may have been applied in a rude age, when writing could have been practiced but by few persons; considering too, the great number of signets that must in consequence have become necessary—that Terah, the Chaldean, the father of Abraham, and the first artist whose name is anywhere upon record, was an engraver of signets as well as a sculptor or modeller of such small idols as Rachel, in three generations from Terah, is recorded to have hidden under the furniture of a camel.

The dimensions of these curious antiques are various, some being ten times as large as others. Speaking generally, they are from three-fourths of an inch to more than two inches in length. These elaborately wrought instruments of ratification, these pledges of honor or of superstitious faith, were easily portable and served as personal ornaments.

Ferdosi, the poet, records that when Sohrab, the son of his hero, (Roostum) had received his death wound from the hand of his unknown father, he tore open his coat of mail, and showed the seal which his mother had placed *on his arm* when she revealed to him the secret of his birth, and bade him seek his father. “The sight of his own *signet* (says Ferdosi) rendered Roostum quite frantic,” &c.

The passage in the Idyl of Solomon, “set me as a seal upon thine arm,” doubtless alludes to the same oriental custom, and is of a date between Judah and Roostum.

“Hast thou commanded the morning since thy days?

Hast thou caused the day-spring to know his place, that it might take hold of the ends of the earth? It is turned as clay to the seal," &c. Job., chap. 38.

The sealing substances of the land of Uz and probably that of the nations on the banks of the Euphrates, at this remote period, was clay, the ooze of that river, the very same substance, levigated, perhaps, of which the stamped Babylonian bricks are formed; and our instructive author adds, that of the various substances (such as wax, pastes, &c.) on which he has tried to impress these ancient signets, he has found clay the fittest both for receiving and retaining the impression. The durability of well-made bricks, whether burnt in the fire or in the sun, is well known.

Our excellent author gives us much learned discourse on the philology of the noun *signet*, and the verb *to seal*, showing how the latter came to be used, both as a noun and as a verb. When the King of Babylon closed up the entrance to the temple of Baal, and that of the den of lions to which the prophet Daniel was consigned, by application of the royal signet,—in the latter instance there were added impressions from the signets of his nobles. The sacred text also alludes to the irrevocability of the seals of the Medes and Persians, by adding "that the purpose might not be changed."

*Signet* is from the same root and belongs to the same verbal family, with *Signal*, *Ensign*, *Signature*, *Insignia*, *Assignment*, *Signify*, *Assignation*; and the root, or etymon, from which all these, with a long *et cetera*, have grown lies deep, far deeper than the later *signum*, from which the dictionaries derive them, but which is itself derived, along with them, from the Hebrew root *Ath*, by some Hebraists pronounced *Oth*, but he believes more properly *Ath*, which, in our language, is rendered with sufficient fidelity by the word *Sign*. And by the expression of Hebrew root, is meant that from which the idea or *meaning*, not the *word* signet, has grown. It is not pretended to trace, with the

etymologists, the progress of a sound from one language, age and country to another, but rather the progress or transmission of an idea from the primitive ages to the present. Anything so anomalous as that the English word *Sign* can have been derived from a sound so dissimilar as the Hebrew *Ath*, it is hoped he will not be supposed to mean. If our *word sign* came from the Hebrew at all, it probably came, with the Greek *Sema*, from *Shem*, which is Name.

It may not be superfluous to mention, that the ordinary sense in which the names of common things are the accredited signs of those things is not here treated of, nor of that other branch of the meaning of *Shem*, which the English word *Notoriety* would best express, but more reconditely, of mystic signs, prophetic of the future, or emphatically denoting the past.

*Ath* or *Sign*, then, primarily meant and still means—What? A mystic mark, denoting and bringing to mind something absent, or some material essence intellectually apprehensible, but not cognizable by the senses.

To this family of words (*Signal*, *Ensign*, etc.), then belongs, and from this genealogical root springs the word *Signet*. Its termination *et* meaning no more in the abstract than advancement to the accomplishment of a purpose intended, which purpose, in the present case, is the manifestation of the sign; or else this termination is merely a diminutive, like the *ette* of the French, in which case *signet*, or *signette*, can mean no other than literally a miniature *sign*.

It is well known that our Saxon ancestors, soon after the introduction of Christianity, when few men were clerks enough to execute a written deed by the subscription of their names, were accustomed instead thereof, as illiterate persons do at present, to *sign* with a cross; of which it may be said either that they made the mystic sign of the



cross, or that the cross which they made was the sign\* of their plighted faith.

[Another entertaining work, *Oriental Fragments*, by the author of the *Hindu Pantheon*, London, 1834, says:

The impressions of seals or rings, which I suppose may be called signets, were in days of yore extensively applied in lieu of manual signature. In such days it was not usual for any but the clergy to learn to write or read. Not many centuries, say four or five, have elapsed since reading and writing were in *England* deemed ungentlemanly acts. Those must have been glorious days for the reverend clergy.]

During the middle ages when the profession of arms was regarded as the only pursuit worthy of a gentleman, and learning was mostly confined to the ecclesiastical orders, it was looked upon as an effeminacy for men to know how to write their names; and this habit of thought lasted among the French noblesse long after the art of printing had disseminated intelligence amongst the middle classes. Even as late as 1789 a deed is of record in France signed by a member of a noble family with his † mark, to which the Scribener has added as explanation: "Cannot write his name for too much nobility."

To resume Landseer: That mark of the cross was the ordinary mode of signature among the Anglo Saxon Christians, who were, with regard to their inability to write, in the predicament of most of those Sabæans of old, whose signets, or instruments of signing we are about to consider, and some of whom lived, in all probability before writing was invented.

\* \* \* \* \*


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\*Thus, John (his † mark) Smith, and hence, from the *form* of that mark, the popular error as to the meaning of the expression to *sign* one's name, as though it were derived from the sign of the cross.

In the dark ages, which succeeded the overthrow of the Roman power, not only few men could write, but there were no artists capable of cutting seals; signature with the cross was therefore among the Christians, in a great degree, a thing of necessity, though they sometimes made use of other ceremonies as signs or tokens. But when art began to reappear, and engraved stones to be raked up from the ruins of past ages, sealing was added; and as writing gradually became more known and practised, subscription of names came also into vogue, introduced at first, perhaps, by learned clerks, and by way of noting *whose* signature had ratified the deed that might be in question, for even Charlemagne was not penman enough to subscribe his own name, but was accustomed to sign with an antique gem, which had been set for that purpose in the pommel of his sword, saying, as he impressed it, "what I sign with the hilt I will defend at the point of my sword."

But it ought to be noted here that regal signets, used as instruments of authority in the signature of public edicts, appear to have crept into use after the age of Solomon,\* and perhaps from the time when the monarchical power of Saül was superinduced on the republic of Moses. Whether they contained celestial signs, or more than verbal inscriptions of the names and office of the kings, is nowhere recorded, but with one of these, Jezebel appears to have signed her forged letters to the elders; and in the time of the prophet Jeremiah, very particular mention is made of another signet, used as an instrument of legality in the purchase of a field, from which it would appear to have been the custom of the Hebrew conveyancers in the

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\*We have been unable to ascertain why the cabalistic star composed of two equilateral triangles interlaced thus  should be called "the Seal of Solomon;" much less why, having *six* angles, it should be called a *pentacle*, *i. e.* pentagon, as though it had but *five* angles. [See the Ingoldsby Legends. A Lay of St. Dunstan.]

reign of Zedekiah to deposit a sealed copy of every deed of transfer of landed property in some public office.

We here reluctantly take leave of our most fascinating author, having extracted some of the the most apposite passages from thirty-four pages quarto of the original.

But we hear our impatient readers exclaim, what about that particular seal with the name of which your so-called monograph is headed? Kind friends, read on:

THE GREAT SEAL OF THE CONFEDERATE STATES.

To Col. CHARLES C. JONES, jr.,\*

*Attorney and Counsellor at Law,*

61 Wall street, New York.

MY DEAR SIR: At considerable trouble and expense, I have been so fortunate as to rescue this interesting memorial from oblivion, and, possibly, a vandalic melting pot (it is of pure silver, and weighs several pounds). I have had many electrotype impressions† of it executed, and in deference to your antiquarian and archæological tastes and devotion to the Lost Cause, have the pleasure of handing you, herewith, the first one finished, which you may regard as a proof-impression before letters.

My object has been two-fold; first, to afford many of our compatriots an opportunity of possessing and holding *in memoriam* the *fac simile* of so *unique* and charming—in spite of so many sad recollections—a *souvenir*, for which purpose they will be offered for sale; and, second, to use the proceeds of the sale, less bare cost of the medals, cases, &c., in the relief of as many as possible of the needy and

\* Author of "Monumental Remains of Georgia;" "Historical Sketches of the Chatham Artillery during the Confederate Struggle for Independence;" "Antiquities of the Southern Indians, particularly of the Georgia Tribes;" &c. &c.

† Very skillfully and faithfully executed by Mr. S. H. Black, No. 4. Marion street, New York.

afflicted of the South, whose name, alas! is legion. And with this motive I beg you to suggest the name of some one in Savannah and in Augusta who would be willing to assist me, as agents, in this benevolent *sigillary* undertaking.

With much regard, your friend, &c.,

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NEW YORK, June 20, 1873.

And where *is* that Seal? It is in the possession of the writer of this paper. Who rescued it? And to whom does it belong? We reserve a reply to these questions for another occasion. Suffice it to say, at present, *detur digniori*.

P. S.

We give the *fac simile* of Harper's wood-cut illustration of the Broad Seal of the Confederate States, which is not half the diameter of the original, but otherwise tolerably correct, by way of frontispiece to our *brochure*, they having kindly sent us an electrotype of the same. We would add that the writer in Harper is mistaken when he says "antiquaries, in the future, will search in vain for any impression of an emblem of sovereignty of the Confederate States of America. None was ever made." The truth is there were several documents, which went abroad, authenticated with it, also a few impressions given to officials, clerks and others.

We trust that the loyal heart of the North, which was so acutely sensitive to the sight of the Confederate gray shortly after the war, will not be distressed by the exhibition of this symbol of the long extinct Confederacy—*ære perennius* though it be. *Fuit Ilium!* The *alere flammas* is no part of our motive.

And we trust to be excused for indulging in this pleasant task, in the use of the first person plural. This treatise was designed as a newspaper editorial, but it has grown to an inordinate length for such purpose. The writer is not unmindful of the fact that Prentice, of the *Louisville Journal*, once said, "no man has the right to speak of himself as 'we,' unless he be a king, an editor, or have a *tape-worm*."

These medals of the Great or Broad Seal of the late Confederate States are now ready for delivery to such persons as may desire to possess a specimen. They are finished in gold, silver and bronze (i. e. *gilt, plated, &c.*) price five and seven dollars each—according to the cost of the cases in which mounted. Orders will be received by Messrs. M. W. Galt, Brother & Co., Jewellers, No. 1107 Pennsylvania Avenue, Washington, D. C.

*N. B.* They will not be furnished for speculative purposes; but to Charitable Institutions at half price—being about prime cost. The number executed is limited. A statement shall be published of the number distributed, and of the disposition made of the surplus proceeds.

WASHINGTON, D. C., *July*, 1873.











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