TRANSACTIONS

MERCHANTS' MARKS AND OTHER MEDIÆVAL PERSONAL MARKS

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Read 24th November 1910

OCCASIONAL questions by some members of the Society and other friends in regard to the meaning and origin of merchants' marks suggest that a paper on the subject, albeit an imperfect one, may not be unacceptable. The most that can be accomplished, however, in the present attempt will be the bringing together of some of the opinions expressed by heraldic authors from time to time concerning personal marks, and the figuring of a few typical specimens of marks, with occasional comments.

But little has been printed in this country[1] on the subject of these ancient marks, and before the materials requisite for a satisfactory account of them can be obtained it will be necessary to collect particulars of many examples in addition to those that have already been engraved, which are scattered through various publications. It will be important, when possible, to note the names and occupations of the persons by whom they were used, where they occur,

[1] The following foreign works (which, however, have not been seen by the writer) treat of marks, viz., *Revue des Traditions Populaires*, 1901, &c.; *Die Haus- und Hofmarken*, by E. G. Homeyer, Berlin, 1890; *Göttinger Hausmarken und Familienwappen*, by Lüder Borstmann, Göttingen, 1904; *Hausmarken von Altona, Ottensen und Umgegend*, by P. Piper; *Schleswig-Holsteinische Hausmarken*, by P. Piper.

whether on seals, in windows, or on the walls or woodwork of churches or houses, and their dates, or approximate dates, if procurable.

It is hardly possible to assign a definite origin to merchants' marks. There can be little doubt that, in the days when reading and writing were very uncommon accomplishments, personal marks of some kind were almost indispensable to men who were engaged in any occupation or business, and might be used by them for a variety of purposes; so that many marks would be well known, in the places where their owners lived, by neighbours who were unable to read a name written in the clearest and boldest letters, and some marks would be almost as easily recognised as we know the arms and badges of the nobles were by their followers and others. Probably all the different classes of personal marks were derived from a common source, though some of them occupied an honourable distinction never attained by others.

Mr. Benjamin Williams, F.S.A., in a letter *On the Land of Ditmarsh*[1] *and the Mark Confederation*, printed in *Archæologia*, vol. xxxvii. pp. 370–390, refers to the use of personal marks in very early times, on the division of common lands, and describes the mode of division by lot by means of runes cut on small pieces of wood in the North of Europe—a similar mode being used in England for the common meadows, except that the mark was cut out on the turf itself. He also mentions that Professor Michelsen traces these marks to a prehistoric period, and considers armorial bearings to have been originally little more than decorated marks engrafted as it were upon the system.

[1] The republican community of Ditmarsh dwelt on land between the mouths of the Elbe and the Eider, on the western coast of the province of Schleswig, and existed for centuries until the promulgation of the new Danish Code of Laws in 1554.

Regarding the different purposes for which personal marks were employed, we may notice that, besides their possibly earliest use for the division of common lands, they served for :—

1. Signatures to deeds and documents, either as marks made with the pen or as seals engraved with the owner's mark.
2. Attestations by notaries public.
3. Marks for the wares of merchants.
4. Marks on the work of craftsmen and artists, and from these trade-marks may be said to have been derived.
5. Indications of ownership upon houses, furniture, personal articles, farming implements, cattle, swans, &c.
6. Commemoration of their owners on the fabric, or in the windows of churches and religious houses, and on brasses or other monuments.
7. Details of decorative design.

That the term *Merchants' Marks* was applied to these symbols as early as the latter part of the fourteenth century, is evident from the *Creed of Piers Plowman*, where, in describing a monastery, (line 347), he says :—

> " Wyde wyndowes y-wrought,
> Y-written ful thikke,
> Shynen with shapen sheldes,
> To shewen aboute,
> With merkes of merchantes
> Y-medeled betweene,
> Mo than twentie and two
> Twyse y-noumbbred.
> There is non heraud that hath
> Half swiche a rolle,
> Right as a rageman
> Hath rekned hem newe."

On the continent of Europe similar marks were used in the same way as in England; the French term them *Marques de Propriété*, and the Germans *Hausmarken* and *Hofmarken*.

Dallaway, in his erudite and interesting work on Heraldry,[1] written, according to Moule,[2] "with the pen of a Tacitus," says:—

"About the middle centuries after the conquest, when the legitimate bearers of arms were so jealous of their paternal escocheon, it was customary for many who were not entitled to coat armour to invent and use certain symbols or marks, of no heraldic adaptation. As every man was the fabricator of his own conceit, the variety of them was almost infinite. . . . To arrange or class them would be no easy task. . . . Nothing can be more fanciful than their form, composed of lines joined together in a shapeless figure which defies description, but in which the distorted initial letter of the merchant's name who used them may sometimes be decyphered. This invention was at first practised for the purpose of marking merchandize, to which armorial ensigns, if possessed, could not have been applied without debasement; yet when these symbols were displayed upon an escocheon, they became as appropriate, and appear to answer a secondary design of arms. In an old system of heraldry is the following illustration under a shield of this sort: 'Theys be none armys but a marke as marchaunts vse, for every man may take hyme a marke but not armys, without an herawde or purcyvaunte.'"

Dallaway's reference (MSS. Harl. 2252, 9, fol.

[1] *Inquiries into the Origin and Progress of the Science of Heraldry in England*, &c., by [The Rev.] James Dallaway, A.M., of Trinity College, Oxford, and F.S.A.: Gloucester, 1793, p. 120.

[2] *Bibliotheca Heraldica Magnæ Britanniæ*, &c., by Thomas Moule: London, 1822, p. 119.

110) is inaccurate, and Lower follows him in his *Curiosities of Heraldry*, page 42. The true reference was discovered, after much difficulty, by my brother; it is Harl. MS. 2259, pencil page 10, and he has made the annexed drawing of the mark to which Dallaway refers. The actual wording which accompanies this mark is: "Theys be noñ armys but A marke as marchaunts vse for eny mañ may take hyñ a marke but nõ armys w^{t}owt an herowds or p$\tilde{o}$y$\tilde{u}$awãt'."



This manuscript contains several heraldic papers, the portion from which the above extract is taken being a treatise on Heraldry entitled *Regula Aurea*. At folio 121^{b} are "Les Armez le Roy d'Engletere & Fraunce, & Margarete sa Compayne," and above them this inscription:—"Iste libellus fuit compilatus A° 32° H. vj^{ti}." It is interesting to find a clear statement by an heraldic author in 1454, that arms might not be assumed without the sanction of the heralds, and it seems probable from the internal evidence of the manuscript that this author was John Smert, Garter King of Arms.[1]

Mr. Benjamin Williams, in his letter on the land of Ditmarsh and the Mark Confederation, already mentioned, says:—

"In England individual marks were in use from the fourteenth to the middle of the seventeenth centuries, probably much earlier; and when a yeoman affixed his mark to a deed he drew a *signum* well known to his neighbours, by which his land, his cattle, and sheep, his agricultural implements, and even his ducks were identified. In the twenty-fifth year of Queen Elizabeth a jury at Seaford, in Sussex, presented John Comber 'for marking of thre[e] ducks of Edw^{d} Warwickes and two ducks

[1] See the description of Harl. MS. 2259 in the printed catalogue.

of Symon Brighte with his owne marke, and cutting owt theire markes.'[1] Cows and oxen were marked on the near horn. Our swans retain their marks to the present day."

In a paper respecting Merchants' Marks read before the Literary and Philosophical Society of Hull in November 1839, by Mr. Charles Frost, F.S.A., it is stated that "the Law of England . . . has thrown its protection over the use of these symbols for commercial purposes, by extending its aid to prevent their piracy. An instance of judicial recognition of the right of individuals to assume exclusively peculiar marks occurred so early as the twenty-second year of the reign of Queen Elizabeth in the following case related by Mr. Justice Doddridge :—'An action was brought upon the case in Common Pleas, by a clothier, that whereas he had gained reputation by the making of his cloth, by reason whereof he had great utterance to his great benefit and profit; and that he used to set his mark to his cloth, whereby it should be known to be his cloth; and another clothier perceiving it used the same mark to his ill-made cloth, on purpose to deceive him, and it was resolved that an action did well lie.' Courts of Equity, as well as Law, have in various instances of recent occurrence supported the principle of this decision."[2]

In 1611 Thomas Fella, of Halesworth, in Suffolk, who apparently belonged to the yeoman class, wrote a folio manuscript of fourteen pages, in a beautiful hand, with some curious illustrations, giving an account of the kindred of one Robert Launce, of Metfield, in the same county,[3] and marked it in

[1] *Sussex Archæological Collections*, vol. vii. p. 103.

[2] Willis's *Current Notes*, 1851, p. 2.

[3] See *Miscellanea Genealogica et Heraldica*, new series, vol. iv. p. 104. The late Dr. Howard, Maltravers Herald Extraordinary, who discovered the manuscript in the Halesworth parish chest, had it lithographed in facsimile for private circulation.

several places with his mark (Fig. 51). Here, then, is an example of the use of a mark by the pen. A churchwarden of St. Lawrence's Church, Bristol, and John Vaughan, churchwarden of the Church of St. Mary Redcliffe, Bristol, both signed a document in 1553 with their marks.[1]

It was only natural that persons who, being civilians, were incapable of obtaining armorial bearings in the middle ages, should wish to display on their seals, their plate,[2] and in their houses,[3] and also in the churches[4] or religious houses to which they were benefactors, some personal mark that might serve the like purpose with the armorial shields of their military contemporaries. In the case of merchants, the marks by which their wares were known answered well for such purpose and were used accordingly, so that other persons, not actually engaged in commerce, also found the convenience of similar marks and displayed them in like manner. Gradually these symbols acquired more importance, and appear to have become secondary only to armorial bearings. In Germany they seem to

[1] *The Armory and Merchants' Marks in the Ancient Church of Cirencester*, by Sir John Maclean, F.S.A., printed in the *Transactions of the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archæological Society*, vol. xvii. p. 268, which only came under the writer's notice after this paper was written.

[2] Two marks on spoons belonging to the Armourers' Company will be found in the *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries*, new series, vol. i. p. 202, and a mark on a goldsmith's touchstone in the same series, vol. v. p. 51. In *Archæologia*, vol. l. p. 167, there is figured a mark on a mazer at St. Giles' Church, Cripplegate.

[3] At Witney, in Oxfordshire, a woolstapler's mark, with the date 1564, was carved in stone over the principal door of a house, and numerous merchants' marks were so cut at Norwich and Yarmouth (*Archæologia*, vol. xxxvii. p. 384).

[4] There is a merchant's mark carved in stone in Wigan Parish Church; and in *Archæologia*, vol. x. p. 191, reference is made to a font at Barnard Castle, in Durham, which has in the upper part merchants' marks and initials. The mark of John Crosse, Mayor, 1394, is engraved on a brass plate on the font in St. Michael's Church, Coventry, and is figured in Willis's *Current Notes*, 1856, p. 90. See also the lines of Piers Plowman already quoted.

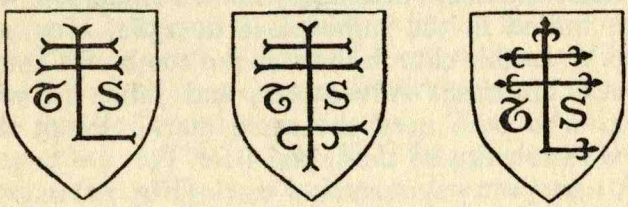
have become hereditary, as they probably did in many cases in England and France.

In the *Strand Magazine* for April 1910[1] there is an interesting paper on Marks by Mr. J. B. Williams. Among other points, the writer refers to and gives illustrations of the systematic differencing of the mark of a German family, the number of additional lines to be noticed in these examples being occasioned by the junior members of the family varying and increasing the lines in the mark in order to distinguish themselves from others of the same name. The illustrations to this paper include sixteen English marks dating from 1309 to 1602, and three others from English houses, one of them being that of Sir Richard Gresham, Lord Mayor of London, 1537, from his house at Intwood in Norfolk (Fig. 30). In the Gresham mark we have distinct evidence of its hereditary use, for Sir Richard's son, Sir Thomas Gresham (1519–1579), the founder of the Royal Exchange, sealed with the same mark with the addition of his initials (Fig. 31).[2] Sir Thomas may perhaps have used two marks, for a ring, found during the construction of the approaches to new London Bridge, which it has been suggested belonged to him, is engraved with the letters T. and G. at the sides of a merchant's mark composed of an upright mast or pole with a bifid base interlaced with a V, the top of the mast being a figure 4 finishing at the sinister side as a cross pattée.[3]

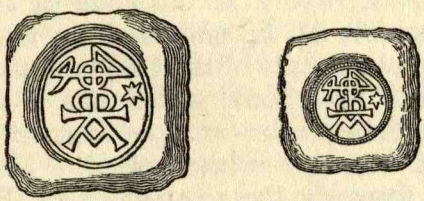
Another example of a differenced mark is seen in the marks of a father and son at Stamford in Lincolnshire, copied by my brother. John Browne, of Stamford, merchant of the Staple of Calais, who died in 1442, is remembered by a brass which bears his

[1] No. 232, vol. xxxix.
[2] *Miscellanea Genealogica et Heraldica*, new series, vol. iv. p. 256.
[3] *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries*, vol. xv. p. 239.

mark (Fig. 84). William Browne, who died in 1489, restored All Saints' Church at Stamford, and was also the founder of Browne's Hospital, also known as the Bedehouse. He was six times Mayor of Stamford between 1435 and 1470, and thrice Sheriff of Rutland. His mark, which is differenced by a crescent (Fig. 85), may be seen in a window of the Bedehouse. Again, in the marks of the Gee family of Chester (Figs. 13, 14, 18, 19, and 20) there are lines added to the same mark which have the appearance of differences for the purpose of distinction. Three distinct varieties of the same mark of the Spring family may be seen at the base of the tower of Lavenham Church, Suffolk.[1]



In 1580 two brothers, James and John Master, of the county of Kent, sealed with two different seals each bearing the same mark.[2]



This suggests that this device came to them by descent. The very slight variation shown in these

[1] *The Visitation of Suffolk*, 1561, edited by Joseph Jackson Howard, 1866, vol. i. p. 190.

[2] *Some Notices of the Family of Master*, by the Rev. George Streynsham Master, 1874, p. 60.

two marks seems to be too inconspicuous for a difference. Among English merchants' marks, however, so far as it is possible to judge from the limited number of examples under observation, there is no evidence of such a systematic mode of differencing as the German method mentioned in the *Strand Magazine*, although in many English marks certain little lines are observable, which may well have been additions made by relations to difference their family mark.

In some families the different members used quite distinct marks. An example of this may be seen in the Church of St. Nicholas, at Newcastle-on-Tyne, where a tomb displays three totally different marks for three members of a family named Anderson, who were buried in the same place in 1582, 1605, and 1606.[1] In this church there is the tomb of Thomas Bowes, Merchant Adventurer, and Jane, his wife, 1624, who both used the same mark, except that the wife substituted the initial I for T.

A very pretty symmetrical mark (Fig. 72) may be seen in High Street, Totnes, on the woodwork of a picturesque old house now occupied by the Naval Bank. The mark is between the initials N B, with the date 1585. Inside the house the same mark occurs in plaster-work at the ends of two beams, with the initials M E, entwined by an interlaced cord, at the other ends of the beams in the principal room on the first floor, which has a particularly fine Elizabethan plaster-work ceiling, once coloured and gilded but now whitewashed. Mr. Edward Windeatt, formerly the town-clerk of Totnes, has kindly communicated the following information regarding this mark :—

Nicholas Ball was M.P. for Totnes in 1584, and Mayor in 1585 ; his burial is recorded in the register

[1] *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle-on-Tyne*, vol. viii., 1899.

of Totnes on the 30th March 1586 as "Mr. Nyco. Ball, Maior of Totnes." The book of Constitutions of the Merchants' Company in Totnes, about the year 1579, contains the name of "Mr. Nics. Ball" as one of the merchants and as one of the officers, and the records of the Proceedings of the Merchant Venturers of Exeter, 11th June 1583, when there was a conference with the other merchants, contains the name of Mr. Nicholas Ball as one of those summoned from Totnes. The Balls appear to have been an Exeter family, and were of Chudleigh and Mamhead, near Exeter. Mr. Windeatt finds among a list of merchants of Totnes the name of Matthew Everie or Every, who was made a freeman on the 22nd October 1593, and belonged to a leading family in the town, four of whom were Mayors of Totnes between 1559 and 1611; but no evidence is forthcoming to connect the Balls and the Everys. The use of the same mark by N.B. and M.E. suggests that the latter may perhaps have been the successor in business of the former.

Some marks were evidently designed to give the appearance of coats of arms, without being actually heraldic in character. Examples of such marks are Figs. 1, 3, 6, 7, 9, 21, 27, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 54, 57, 58, 68, 76, 80, and 83. This was quite contrary to the strict heraldic rule, and Francis Thynne, Lancaster Herald, writing in 1605, on the duty and office of a herald,[1] enjoins heralds "to prohibit any merchant or any other to put their names, marks, or devices in escutcheons on shields, which belong and only appertain to gentlemen bearing arms and to none other." Probably,

[1] *A Discourse of the Dutye and Office of an Heraulde of Arms*, written by Francis Thynne, Lancaster Heraulde, 3rd Mar. 1605 (*Lansdowne MSS.* 254), printed in Hearne's *Collection of Curious Discourses*, 1775, vol. i. p. 153.

however, this rule was a growth of the early part of the sixteenth century. Many of the early marks, as we have seen, were placed upon shields.

Andrew Favine, Parisian and Advocate in the High Court of Parliament, in his *Theatre of Honour*, 1620, translated and printed in London in 1623, refers to marks as follows:—

"The honour of bearing shields, that is to say, armes, belongeth to none but noblemen by extraction, or by calling or creation. And it is not yet an 100 years since such as were not of noble condition were punished with great fines & amercements if they but attempted to bear any. It was permitted to them to have only markes or notes of those trades & professions which they used: as a tailor to have his sheares, a cutler a knife, a shearman his cloth sheares, a mason his trowell & the compasse or squire, and so of other. Merchants (for their more honour) might beare the first letters of their names & surnames enterlaced with a crosse: as is to be seene in many ancient epitaphes, and as yet to this day, upon their packes or burthens of merchandises. All these were called but markes: they were not permitted to have shields but only targets, hollow at the chiefe and flankes, like them which are given to villages at the feast of the saint their patron, to manifest that they were not shieldes."

The importance attained by merchants' marks is illustrated by the fact that, in numerous cases where a German family who were possessed of a mark subsequently obtained armorial bearings, their old family mark was made the basis of, or was introduced into, their new coat of arms; and the arms and mark were sometimes used concurrently. This appears from the paper by Mr. Williams already mentioned,[1] and also from a curious and interesting work by M. Arnold van Gennep, entitled

[1] *Archæologia*, vol. xxxvii. p. 385.

De l'héraldisation de la Marque de Propriété et des Origines du Blason.[1] And, in England, we find from two shields over a Tudor arch in West Hampnett Church, in Sussex, that the Tawke family, of Hampnett, who had been engaged in trade and owned a merchant's mark with rather heraldic elements (Fig. 47), on taking armorial bearings when they became landed gentry, about the end of the fifteenth century, converted their old mark into a new coat of arms, "according to a practice not uncommon at that period [whereby] the merchant's mark grew into a regular armorial ensign and was blazoned a cross tau and in chief three chaplets."[2] Again, the seal of Bartholomew Elys, of Great Yarmouth, used in 1393, gives his family arms with his merchant's mark in place of a cinquefoil in base.[3] It would be reasonable enough for a grantee of arms to wish to perpetuate the ancient mark of his family by an adaptation, but he would not be likely to have the same wish if the mark was merely one of his own invention.

The traditional arms of Roger Fitz-Alwyn, the first Lord Mayor of London, A.D. 1213, display five martlets on a saltire, between four objects which are blazoned as weathercocks, but may well be representations of his mark. Another coat, at present unidentified, is azure, two chevronels or, between three castles argent, and in chief a merchant's mark or. Another unidentified coat is, Per bend sable and or [*sic*], a bend azure, in chief a wheel-cross argent; and this cross is very suggestive of a mark. Yet another unidentified coat has a chevron between three merchants' marks. These are from a series of water-colour drawings of merchants' marks which belonged to the late John Gough Nichols.

[1] Paris, aux bureaux de la Revue Héraldique, 8 Rue Daumier, 1906.
[2] *Sussex Archæological Collections*, vol. xviii. p. 81.
[3] *Archæologia*, vol. xxxii. p. 396.

That merchants' marks should, in time, be placed on shields, together with armorial bearings, as impalements or quarterings, was only to be expected, though such a proceeding was clearly quite unheraldic. Mr. Mill Stephenson, F.S.A., says[1] that merchants' marks are found on brasses "as early as 1360 (Newark). The earliest on brasses were of the fourteenth century, but seals were still earlier. As a rule such marks on brasses were late, and were very rarely impaled and quartered with the arms of merchant companies; in one or two instances they were impaled with the personal arms."

Masons' marks go back to very early times, but never seem to have been used except for the purpose of identifying work. Carpenters, also, had their marks, of much the same type as those of the masons, and they are occasionally met with on old woodwork.

Some artists and engravers signed their work with marks. A number of these will be found in the plates to Bryan's *Dictionary of Painters and Engravers.*

Printing was not introduced until the middle of the fifteenth century, and consequently printers' marks did not appear until merchants' marks had been in use for certainly more than a century. Of printers' marks, much has been written, and many examples have been accurately engraved. Of late years masons' marks have attracted some attention.[2]

Bellfounders' marks occur in the fifteenth century upon bells. Examples are shown in Figs. 56, 57, 58, 59, and 60.

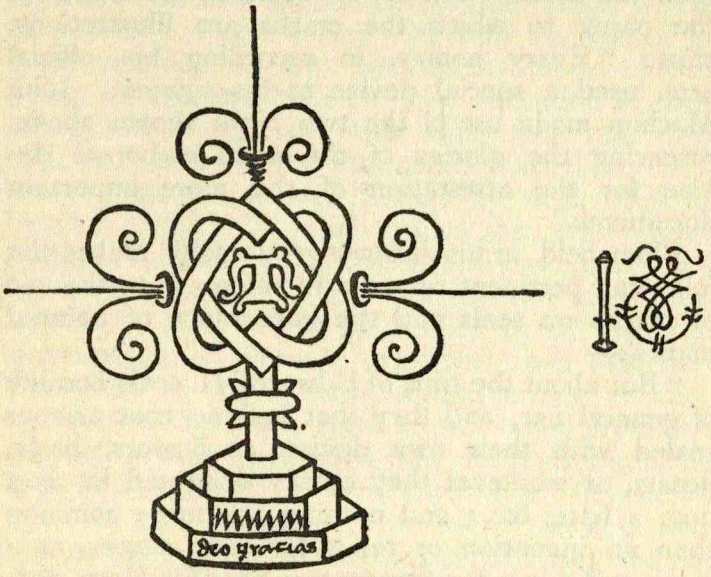
Swan marks were personal marks designed to fit the form of the beaks of swans, upon which

[1] *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of London*, new series, vol. xxi. p. 430.

[2] *Transactions of the Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire*, vol. xliii. pp. 123 and 325; vol. xlv. pp. 56 and 57; vol. xlvii. p. 53; vol. xlviii. p. 239.

they were branded. They were subject to official supervision.[1]

Notaries' marks were usually very elaborate in form. Fig. 55, copied from a drawing by the late Mr. Beamont of Warrington, represents the notarial mark of John de Barwe (*i.e.* Barrow), clerk, of the diocese of Coventry and Lichfield, appended, in ink, to a certificate setting forth that on the 14th



Marks of John Machon, reproduced from *The Ancestor*, by kind permission of Messrs. Constable & Co., London.

February 1365, in the church at Manchester, Gilbert de Culcheth acknowledged his marriage with Katherine, daughter of Thomas del Bothe of Barton.

Examples of two notarial marks of the Wedder-

[1] See *Archæologia*, vol. xvi. p. 153, for a paper on "Ordinances respecting Swans on the River Witham, with a Roll of Swan Marks." The ordinances were made in the reign of Henry VIII., and the roll is dated 1570. Henry VIII. had two swan marks, and Queen Elizabeth's was identical with one of them.

burn family of Dundee, used in 1575 and 1582, will be found in *The Ancestor*, vol. vi. pp. 55–6.

In *The Ancestor*, vol. ix. p. 29,[1] there are figured two marks of "Johannes Machon clericus Wigornensis dioceseos Apostolica et Imperiali auctoritatibus notarius," who lived in the latter half of the fifteenth century; one of these marks, it will be noticed, is much smaller and simpler than the other. Mr. A. R. Malden, the writer of the paper to which the marks are illustrations, says: "Every notary, in recording his official acts, used a special device as his *signum*. John Machon made use of the two *signa* shown above, reserving the glories of the more elaborate device for the attestation of the more important documents."

Blomefield, in his *History of Norfolk*,[2] makes the following pertinent remarks in reference to the use of marks on seals and the importance of notarial marks:—

"But about the time of Edward III. seals became of general use, and they that had no coat armour sealed with their own device, as flowers, birds, beasts, or whatever they chiefly delighted in, as a dog, a hare, &c.; and nothing was more common than an invention or rebus for their names, as a swan and a tun for Swanton, a hare for Hare, &c., and because very few of the commonalty could write (all learning at that time being among the religious only), the person's name was usually circumscribed on his seal, so that at once they set both their name and seal, which was so sacred a thing in those days, that one man never used another's seal without its being particularly taken notice of in the instrument sealed, and for this

[1] "A Salisbury Fifteenth-Century Death Register," by A. R. Malden.

[2] Edition 1739, vol. i. p. 106; edition 1805, vol. i. p. 159.

reason every one carried their seal about them, either on their rings or on a roundel fastened sometimes to their purse, sometimes to their girdle; nay, oftentimes when a man's seal was not much known, he procured some one in publick office to affix theirs, for the greater confirmation . . . and when this was not done, nothing was more common than for a publick notary to affix his mark, which, being registered at their admission into their office, was of as publick a nature as any seal could be, and of as great sanction to any instrument, those officers being always sworn to the true execution of their office, and to affix no other mark than that they had registered to any instrument; so their testimony could be as well known by their mark as by their name; for which reason they were called *Publick Notaries, nota* in Latin signifying a mark, and *publick* because their mark was publickly registered, and their office was to be publick to all that had any occasion for them to strengthen their evidence. There are so few of these officers among us now, and such as we have, have so far varied from the original of their name, that they use no mark at all, only add *N.P.* for *Notary Publick* at the end of their names. Thus also the use of seals is now laid aside, I mean the true use of them, as the distinguishing mark of one family from another, and of one branch from another. . . ."

To the above is appended this foot-note:—

"The use of these marks was found so beneficial, that at that time all merchants of any note had their peculiar marks, with which they marked all their wares, and bare in shields impaled with, or instead of arms; witness the abundance of merchant-marks to be found on the houses, windows, and gravestones, in all cities and great towns, as Norwich, Lynn, &c., by which the memory of their owners is still preserved, it being very obvious to all that

search into the records of those places, to find who used such a mark; and then, if we see it on a house, we may conclude it to have been that man's dwelling; if on a disrobed grave-stone, that it was his grave, if on a church window, or any other public building, that he was a benefactor thereto; and nothing is of greater use than ancient deeds to make out their marks by, for they always sealed with them."

Notarial marks in France go back as far as the eleventh century.[1] At first they were very simple, but became more and more complicated in each succeeding century down to the fifteenth, when in these marks, besides the cross, there were such things as a monstrance, the keys of St. Peter, heraldic figures, &c., and sometimes a rebus on the owner's name.

There were notaries in England as early as the time of Edward the Confessor,[2] but probably they signed with a plain cross.

[1] See *Manuel de Diplomatique*, by A. Giry, Paris, 1894, p. 944, where there are woodcuts of sixteen notarial marks from the eleventh century downwards. See also *Clavis Diplomatica*, by Daniel Eberhard Baring, Hanover, 1754, which contains copperplates of eighteen fine German notarial marks used between the years 1345 and 1521, following page 228. These are accompanied by a dissertation on notaries delivered at Elmstadt, in 1723, by J. W. Goebel.

German notarial marks are figured in *De signis seu signetis notariorum veterum*, by J. G. Th. Büsching, Breslau, 1820; and *Die Notariatssignete*, by F. Leist, Leipzig, 1896; also in *Das Notariat*, by F. Osterley, Hanover, 1842. The writer has not, however, seen the above works.

Numerous examples of Italian notarial marks, of varied forms, will be found in a fine work entitled *Archivio Paleografico Italiano*, by Ernesto Monaci, Rome, 1892–1910, and still being published; and very many lithographic representations of Spanish documents, with curious notarial marks attached, are given in *Manual de Paleografia Diplomatica Española de los siglos xii al xvii*, by D. Jesús Muñóz y Rivero, Madrid, 1889, 2nd edit.

[2] For an account of English notaries see *A Treatise on the Office and Practice of a Notary in England*, by Richard Brooke, of which there were six editions between 1839 and 1901. The author was a member of the Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire, and several of his papers appear in the *Transactions*.

On the border-line between marks used as a sign-manual and as an actual signature is the *Ruche*, or "bee-hive," which follows signatures in many Frankish and other documents of early date, but the subject is too extensive and difficult to be dealt with here.[1] The *Ruche* was the successor of the monogrammatic personal mark found on early documents. A charter made between the years 988 and 996 A.D. has, at the foot, "Signum gloriosissimi Hugonis Regis," followed by a large monogrammatic mark, and "Signum Rotberti incliti Regis," followed by another large mark which has much the appearance of the merchants' marks of later times.[2] These are the signatures of the French kings Hugues Capet and his son Robert, who were both crowned in A.D. 987.

If the date assigned to it is correct, the earliest local personal mark that has come under my notice is that of Robert de Ley of Chester, shown in Fig. 1, which is sketched in Harl. MS. 2063, and there stated to be *circa* 8 Edward I. (1280). This mark, no doubt, occurred on a seal, and is very heraldic in character; indeed, but for the perpendicular mast with conventional streamers and the two feet into which it branches, the shield might be blazoned as an estoile issuant from the horns of a crescent and in chief two mullets. This date is suspiciously early, but by the middle of the fourteenth century merchants' marks had become fairly common, and so we find in the manuscript referred to above the mark shown in Fig. 6, from a seal, inscribed SIGILL' GALFRIDI DE FLINT, attached to a deed granting land in Northgate Street, Chester, 38

[1] See Giry's *Manuel de Diplomatique*, pp. 593, 594, and 634; and also the numerous plates in Mabillon's *De re Diplomatica*, Naples, 1789, where there are also engravings of some monograms which have something of the character of personal marks.

[2] See Silvestre's *Paléographie Universelle*, 4th part, p. 255, where a facsimile of the charter is given.

Edw. III., 1364, and the seal of Robert Coly, citizen of Chester, 49 Edw. III., 1375 (Fig. 5).

Fig. 8, also from Harl. MS. 2063, is from the seal of William Broughton, gent., son of Thomas Broughton, of Chester, barber, deceased, and was used in 4 and 5 Ph. & Mary, 1557–8.

The seal inscribed S. THOME DE TRENT, from the same MS., was used by Cecilia, wife of Nicholas Fastolf, in granting land in Ironmonger Row, Chester (Fig. 9). Her husband sealed with a stag.

Fig. 10 is from a seal (Harl. MS. 2063) used by Ralph Cotgreave, son and heir of John Cotgreave, of Chester, deceased, 4 and 5 Ph. & Mary, 1557–8.

Fig. 11 is from a circular seal, inscribed IOHN RAIVEN, used by John Raven of Elworth, co. Chester, gent., in 1611. The letters N. and R. in the mark do not appear to relate, as might be supposed, to an ancestor, for no person having those initials occurs in the Raven pedigree printed in Earwaker's *History of Sandbach*.

The mark of Ralph Cardiff, with the date 1611 below, was in Audlem Church in 1672 (Harl. MS. 2151). This mark resembles the staff-sling borne in bend between two pheons by the family of Cawarden, or Carden, and may be either a mark or an example of bogus heraldry (Fig. 12).

In Manchester Cathedral, carved on the ends of the book-desks, in front of the stalls at the west end of the choir, given by Richard Beck between 1485 and 1508, there is a curious jumble of heraldry commemorating the donor. The shield is divided per pale and the dexter side per fesse; on the dexter side in chief is Richard Beck's mark and in base the arms of the Grocers' Company, the sinister side of the shield being occupied by the arms of the Mercers' Company.[1]

There was a better appearance of heraldry in the

[1] *Manchester Foundations*, by Dr. Hibbert, 1834, vol. ii. p. 281.

shields of the Gee family at Chester, sketched in Harl. MS. 2151. Figs. 18, 19, and 20 were "In the parlour and hall of Alderman Ince's house, Watergate Street, Chester, 1527." In Fig. 18 we have the arms of the Sneyd family and some blundered quarterings, impaling the mark of a member of the Gee family; in Fig. 19 are the arms of the Drapers' Company impaling the Gee family mark; and Fig. 20 represents this mark alone.

"In Holy Trinity Church, Chester, 1600 & 1663" were Fig. 13, for "Henry Gee twice Mayor of Chester . ob: 6 Sep: 1545"; and Fig. 14, for "Edmund Gee, died Mayor of Chester, 12 June 1551."

The mark of Randal Mainwaring (Fig. 15), from the same MS., was "in the Common Hall, Chester." This was probably Randal Mainwaring, Alderman of Chester, a grandson of Nicholas Mainwaring of Nantwich. Randal's son, Henry, was living at Chester in 1580.[1]

"In the Common Hall of the City of Chester, formerly St. Oswald's Church,[2] in a window on the south side," was the mark of some local draper, in which the letter S is conspicuous, impaling the arms of the Drapers' Company (Fig. 16).

Fig. 17 was in the same hall, and perhaps commemorates a Chester glover, the initial of whose name was the letter B. It may be noted that, where a single letter occurs in a mark, it frequently stands for the owner's Christian name, especially in the earlier marks.

The Lancashire marks shown in Figs. 21 to 25 are from seals. Plaster casts of these, made by the

[1] *Visitations of Cheshire*, 1580, &c. Harleian Society, vol. xviii. p. 164.

[2] It was the Chapel of St. Nicholas that was purchased by the citizens and converted into the Common Hall (see Ormerod's *History of Cheshire*, vol. i. pp. 194, 363). It is still standing, a detached building to the south of the Cathedral.

late Mr. William Langton of Manchester, are now in the Warrington Museum.

Fig. 21 represents the mark of Adam de Kynkenale, whose name, also spelt Kynknall and Kynkenhall in deeds of the time of Edward III., was derived from a place now called Kinknall in the township of Culcheth.

Fig. 22 is from a circular seal, inscribed S' WILLI. LOWIS, used by Richard le Serjeant de Walton in 1424.

Fig. 23 is from a circular seal, with an almost illegible inscription, used by Christopher de Pemberton in 1434.

Fig. 24 is from the octagonal seal of Nicholas del Rylands of Westhoughton, appended to three documents relating to lands in Pemberton, dated 1436.[1]

Fig. 25 is a mark of unusual form; it was used by Nicholas de Risley in sealing a submission to arbitration in 1437.

Fig. 26 represents the mark of Henry Garstang, A.D. 1464, mentioned in Colonel Fishwick's *History of Garstang*, p. 257. Henry Garstang was buried in the church at Cirencester, and this mark, between the initials H G, on a shield, is upon his tomb.

Fig. 27 is from the seal of Daniel Holland, *ante* 1468, among the Langton seals mentioned above.

The mark of Thomas Beri (Fig. 28) is from his brass in the Church of Walton-on-the-Hill. No explanation of the figures 4 and 2 has been suggested.[2]

The figure 3 occurs with a mark on a derelict brass shield in Hereford Cathedral, which once formed part of a monument (Fig. 74).

The mark of Sir John Crosby, the great London

[1] See Earwaker's *Local Gleanings*, vol. ii. p. 299, and *The Genealogist*, vol. iv. p. 173.

[2] See Thornely's *Monumental Brasses of Lancashire and Cheshire*, 1893, p. 243, and Willis's *Current Notes*, 1856, p. 48.

merchant and the builder of Crosby Hall, who died in 1475 (Fig. 29), is from the neighbouring Church of St. Helen, Bishopsgate.

Fig. 32 is the mark of Thomas Bate, citizen and mercer of London, from a seal used in 1571 (British Museum, *Cart. Harl.* 48 *D.* 42).

Figs. 33 to 38 are from Taylor's *Antiquities of King's Lynn, Norfolk*, 1844. All of these marks occur on monumental brasses. The brass of Walter Coney is a very fine one, representing him habited in a long gown, with a hood and scarf, and about his waist a plain belt, from which hang a gipcière and a rosary. This figure is below an elaborate canopy with the mark repeated on four shields. The mark of Thomas Waterdeyn also appears on his seal used in 1410.[1]

Figs. 39 to 42 are from Palmer's *History of Great Yarmouth*, vol. ii. p. 395. A writer in the *Penny Magazine*, 1842, vol. ii. p. 503, says: "No other two counties in the kingdom contain so many existing specimens of merchants' marks, in connection with monumental brasses, as Norfolk and Suffolk."

The Coventry marks (Figs. 43 to 46) are from seals engraved in *Miscellanea Genealogica et Heraldica*, new series, vol. i., 1874.

Fig. 48 is from the brass of Richard Byll, merchant, in Holy Trinity Church, Kingston-upon-Hull. He died of the plague in 1451.[2]

Fig. 49 is from the brass of Thomas Pownder, merchant, in the Church of St. Mary's Quay at Ipswich.[3]

Fig. 50 is the mark of Thomas Barnesley, merchant, of Wolverhampton, lord of the manor of Trysull, co. Stafford, in 1597, and was copied

[1] *Archæologia*, vol. xxxix. p. 505.
[2] *Yorkshire Archæological Journal*, vol. xii. p. 24.
[3] *Manual for the Study of Monumental Brasses:* Oxford, J. H. Parker, 1848, p. lviii.

from late sixteenth-century glass at Trysull Manor House, in 1904, by Mr. W. Fergusson Irvine, M.A., F.S.A. This is the ordinary type of mark of the unimaginative merchant, who was content with the figure of 4 and his initials. There are many marks of this kind.

Fig. 52 is from Palmer's *History of Great Yarmouth.*

Fig. 53 is from Parker's *Glossary of Heraldry*, 1847, p. 222, where the author says: ". . . the mark of John Halle of Salisbury, merchant of the Staple (whence the staple which forms a portion of his mark), in the reigns of Henry VI. and Edward IV. Having likewise a coat of arms (argent on a chevron sable, between three columbines blue stalked vert, an estoile or), he sometimes impaled that and his mark (argent in a field sable) together, as in the hall of his house at Salisbury (Duke, *Prolusiones Historicæ*, &c., p. 41)."

Fig. 54 is from a palimpsest fragment at Trunch Church, Norfolk.[1]

The bellfounders' marks (Figs. 56 to 60) are mostly from the *The Reliquary*, edited by the late Llewellynn Jewitt, F.S.A. Fig. 56 is from the *Sussex Archæological Collections*, vol. xvi. p. 151. It will be found that many bellfounders' marks and printers' marks resemble merchants' marks very closely, but, so far, examples of such marks do not appear to have been discovered on seals or monumental brasses. Notaries' marks, of course, from their form, do not admit of use on seals or monuments, and masons and carpenters seem to have used their marks for the purpose of the identification of their work only.

The Bristol marks (Figs. 61 to 70) were copied by my brother in 1909.

Fig. 61 is the mark of William Canynge, and is

[1] Boutell's *Monumental Brasses and Slabs*, 1847, p. 149.

upon a shield, held by an angel, in the Church of St. Mary Redcliffe, which he rebuilt. Canynge, a successful merchant, was five times Mayor of Bristol, M.P. in 1451 and 1455, and ended his life as a monk.

The mark of Robert Kitchin, who died in 1594 (Fig. 63), is from his brass in St. Stephen's Church, and is accompanied by two shields—(1) a chevron, charged with three fleurs-de-lys, between as many birds close, and (2) three curious charges (Fig. 62), probably intended for three bows bent, and in each five arrows points upwards. The first of these coats is apparently for Kitchin, and the second is perhaps for Sacheville.[1]

On a stone in the Church of St. Mary Redcliffe there is an ornamental cross,[2] and pendent from a hook at one side is a shield bearing the mark shown in Fig. 64; on the edge of the stone is "*Hic jacet Johannes Babbecar*," the rest illegible. It was found buried near the base of the tower when the foundations were strengthened.

Robert Aldworth, Merchant Adventurer and Alderman, was born 1561 and died 1634; his wife Martha predeceased him in 1619. Their tomb, in St. Peter's Church, displays the arms and supporters of the Merchants Adventurers of Bristol and also his mark (Fig. 65), accompanied by two curious devices on panels, the one being three tuns in pale, and the other five plummets, or weights, in saltire.

The brass, in the Church of St. Mary Redcliffe, to the memory of John Jay and Joan his wife, has four shields, two of them bearing his mark (Fig. 66), and the other two an object which may be a curry-comb or carding-comb.

[1] Rowland Searchfield, Bishop of Bristol, 1619–1622, bore a similar coat with a chief.

[2] Figured in *Sepulchral Cross Slabs*, by K. E. Styan, 1902, where it is assigned to the fourteenth century.

In the chancel of the Church of St. John the Baptist is an altar-tomb inscribed "*Hic jacet Gualterus Frampton Huius Ecclesiæ Fundator qui obiit año. Dñi. mccclxxxviii,*" with seven shields of arms and the mark shown in Fig. 67. The shield bearing the mark is in a central niche over the full-length recumbent figure of Frampton, the shields of arms being on the altar base.

In the same church is a brass having upon it the figures of Thomas Rouley and Margaret his wife; between them is a shield of a quadruped statant, perhaps a roe, and at the corners of the brass, above the figures, the shield Fig. 70 is repeated. Rouley was a merchant and Sheriff of Bristol, and died in 1478.

Fig. 68 is from the Temple Church, Bristol. It occurs on a stone slab with an ornamental cross, and is accompanied by a shield of arms of a chevron between three moorcocks.

On the rood-screen in the Cathedral, erected about 1547, there is a shield displaying the mark shown in Fig. 69, upon another shield the letters T.W. linked together with a girdle, upon a third one the same mark impaling a coat of arms which has perished, and upon a fourth shield the same mark impaling a coat of arms which is indistinct but seems to be sable, guttée d'eau and three birds argent. This is said to commemorate one Thomas White.

Fig. 71 is the mark of Thomas Horton, 1530, from his brass at Bradford on Avon,[1] upon which it is stated that he was "sūtyme ffunder of this chawntry." Leland, who visited Bradford in 1540, speaks of him as a rich clothier.[2]

Fig. 73 is from a mutilated recumbent stone

[1] Jewitt's *Reliquary*, vol. i. p. 245.

[2] *The Itinerary of John Leland, 1535 to 1543*, edited by Lucy Toulmin Smith, 1907, vol. i. p. 135.

effigy of a civilian, with long hair and wearing a gown, now placed in St. Andrew's Chapel, in Exeter Cathedral. The mark is incised on the end of a tasselled cushion for the feet of the effigy, and the corner has been broken off.

Fig. 76 is from the brass, at Chipping Campden, co. Gloucester, of William Grevel, the flower of the wool merchants of all England, who died in 1401.

Fig. 77 is from the brass of Henry Scolows, 1515, at St. Michael Coslaney, Norwich.[1]

Fig. 78 is from the fine Flemish brass of Andrew Evyngar, 1536; there are two other shields on the brass which bear the arms of the Merchant Adventurers' Company, and the Salters' Company.

Fig. 79 is from Aylsham, Norfolk.

Figs. 80 and 83 are from Wright's *History of Rutland*, 1684, pp. 101 and 102.

Fig. 81 is from the brass of John Orgone and Ellen his wife, dated 1584, in the Church of St. Olave, Hart Street, London, and the mark is shown upon a bale of wool, with this inscription:—

> "As I was, so be ye,
> As I am, you shall be,
> That I gave, that I have,
> That I spent, that I had,
> Thus I end all my coste,
> That I leffte, that I loste."

Fig. 82 is at Cranbrook, Kent, and belongs to the latter part of the fifteenth century.

Fig. 86 is from Neyland, Suffolk. It will be noticed that this mark is formed, in part, of a bale of wool and the hooks used in handling the bales.

In Fig. 87 the hooks also appear. It is from Chipping Norton, Oxfordshire.

Merchants' marks were not overlooked by our

[1] *English Church Brasses from the 13th to the 17th century*, by Ernest R. Suffling, 1910.

Cheshire genealogist, Randle Holme. In his *Academy of Armory*[1] he says:—

"In the *Vltimum Vale*, or last adew to Armes, or signes and tokens representing armes I shall as a farewell giue you some marks and Tokens used by persons occupying Merchandizeing trades, and these though they be set in escochions, Lozenges, ovalls or squares: yet they are not Armes, neither can be any wayes brought into the rules of Blazon; therefore they are fittly termed Merchants Markes, or Tradesmens characters, seales, or tokens to know their goods of which I shall giue you some few examples of their various Kindes, by which the reader may in his braine forme multitudes of the like."

He then proceeds to deal with initial letters, "Sheaphards markes, for soe generally new shorne sheep are marked by them," the marks of "Tradesmen, Chapmen, and Heardsmen," the marks of Bakers, &c.; and he continues, "Seaventhly, and for a conclusion of the whole matter touching Seales, Signes, Tokens, Symbols, or Marks I shall giue the reader some few examples of Merchants markes, which are of a different nature from the marks and characters of other chapmen."

Merchants' marks are then discussed and references are made to a plate in which they were figured. Unfortunately this plate cannot now be found. Some of Holme's references to the plate are as follows:—

"21. This mark I find was used by the Great and Rich Merchant *Richard Whittington*[2] who was

[1] Book iv. chap. ix. p. 411 of the second volume of the *Academy of Armory*, printed in 1905 by the *Roxburghe Club*. This is the work of which Randle Holme wrote, in the first volume printed at Chester in 1688, ". . . what remains (and is ready for the Press) is as followeth in the succeeding Contents, which if encouraged by Liberal and free Contributors may appear in the World, or will sleep in the Bed of its Conception, and never see the Glorious Light of the Sun."

[2] Richard Whittington was Lord Mayor of London 1397–8, 1406–7, and 1419–20; he died 1423. He was a son of Sir William

thrice *Lord Maior of London*, who being at first but a poore boy in a Merchants Kitchin, by the Providence of God and the help of his cat, rose to be a vast rich cittizen" (Fig. 75).

"26. I have obserued amongst our English Merchants of old, and to this present, especially them in Chester with whom I haue the most conversation, that their generall marke is a long perpendicular line, on the top of it is made a signe like the number foure, and at the bottome thereof a Roman V reuersed, and sometyme an other V in its right posture fretting it. Now to this generall, each particular merchant addeth some devise, or letters of his name whereby to distinguish his goods from an other merchants. As this example doe in part shew where in the head ther is an addition of a small figure of foure, and the streight line crossed with two paralell lines, this was the marke of David Midleton in former tymes a Merchant in Chester."

"27. The like Merchants Mark with a Text E and T, on the down right line, with the sinister side of the reuersed Λ crossed: was the marke of Thomas Eton in the tyme of E. 4 a Merchant in Chester."

"28. The like with a Saxon, or old English R and D, on the same line, with the V reuersed so crossed as aforesaid: which is againe crossed in the head, is the marke of Robert Dawson, a merchant aunciently dwelling in the Citty of Chester."

"29. The like Merchants marke with a Text T on the right line with an ouer crosse line vnder it and the reuersed V fretted with an other did belong to Thomas Thomasin, Merchant."

"30. This marke belonged to Henry Gee, thrice Maior of Chester, he was a great marchant, and a

Whittington (see *Dictionary of National Biography*). The mark here figured is from a portrait of Whittington engraved by Reginald Elstrack about the year 1617.

good Maiestrate: who from the generall marke of merchants, used these additionalls: he crossed the end of the top figure, set a Text G on the perpendicular line; crossed the dexter side of the V reuersed, and the sinister side with an S turned the wrong way" (Fig. 13).

"31. Henry Hardware,[1] a Merchant whose dealeing consisted most in Iron-wares used a marke contrary to all other of our merchant; which consisted only in one perpendicular stroak, at whose top on the sinister side was fixed a W, vnder it on the right side the line an H, on the left an E, both conioyned, vnder them a D, and at the bottome an A with the line throwe it."

As might be expected, a desire has arisen to discover the object that suggested what may be called the framework of personal marks, but, so far, the results of the consideration of this point rest in conjecture only.

That the perpendicular line in most merchants' marks is intended to represent the mast of a ship, or some staff or pole, seems probable, and that the bifid base seen in many marks is a survival of the two wooden stays or props used to support the pole, seems a likely explanation. And if a mast or pole is represented, the flag, vane, or streamer at the top of some marks is appropriate enough. Conventional streamers or vanes will be noticed in a number of the marks figured in the plates.

Many merchants' marks are in part formed of what is known as the figure of 4, sometimes reversed, and opinions vary as to its origin. The late Dr. Howard, Maltravers Herald Extraordinary, who formed a large collection of marks, writes:[2]—

[1] Henry Hardware was Mayor of Chester in 1559 and 1575, and died in 1584-5. He married a daughter of Henry Gee of Chester, whose mark is figured No. 13.

[2] Letter to the writer of this paper, dated 22nd February 1890. Unfortunately, Dr. Howard's collection of marks is not available for reference.

"The earliest examples I have met with are at Lynn. These date from the 13th century. . . . I trace the marks from Lynn, commencing with the *Agnus Dei*, next the abolition of the Lamb and the retention of the standard, leaving only the triangle, which develops into what is called the figure of 4."

This was the opinion of Mr. Haines, the author of *A Manual for the Study of Monumental Brasses*, Oxford, 1848, who wrote (p. lvii), in referring to merchants' marks on brasses: "This sort of mark is common on the brasses of woolmen, and was perhaps adopted by them from the cross and banner borne by the *Agnus Dei*."

Mr. Walter de Gray Birch suggested the same origin,[1] the Holy Lamb being the usual emblem of St. John Baptist, the patron saint of wool merchants. Mr. J. G. Waller, however, disagreed with this view, and mentioned that this device is not peculiar to the wool merchants, or merchants of the Staple, but is found equally with the Merchant Adventurers, Drapers, Salters, &c.

Mr. W. H. Rylands thinks the figure of 4 may be a somewhat fanciful representation of the machinery for turning round the winding-drum of a crane, and the footboard upon which the man stood who worked the crane. A panel, dated 1678, at Aberdeen, shows a crane with men turning the drum, with a ship close by, and in appearance it certainly much resembles a merchant's mark.[2]

In an article on Early Scottish Merchants' Marks contributed to Willis's *Current Notes* (1857, p. 3), and signed A. J., reference is made to "the old idea that the common sign 4 was symbolical of mercantile

[1] *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of London*, vol. xii. p. 7.

[2] Frontispiece to *The Pynors, Historical Notes of an ancient Aberdeen Craft*, by John Bulloch, Aberdeen, 1887.

trading to the four corners of the globe," in which the writer thought there might be some truth.

Mr. Harold Bayley, in his recent work, *A New Light on the Renaissance displayed in Contemporary Emblems* (n. d.) says of the figure of 4: "By the Ancients the Universe was regarded as a living arithmetic in its development, and a realised geometry in its repose. They accepted numbers as the best representations of the laws of harmony that everywhere prevail. The figure 4 was held sacred as the emblem of moral justice and Divine equity, on account of its forming the perfect square, none of the bounding lines of a square exceeding the others by a single point in length. All the powers and symphonies of spiritual and physical nature, it was believed, lay inscribed within a perfect square, hence the figure 4 was employed to express the ineffable Name of an otherwise unexpressible Deity."

The object resembling an annulet, which occurs in some merchants' marks, has been supposed to symbolise the world, and so to represent the large extent of the enterprise of the owner. This seems rather far-fetched, but symbolism goes a very long way.

Mr. J. G. Waller has pointed out[1] that one essential feature is seen to prevail in the marks of merchants down to the seventeenth century, namely, the cross, and that the primitive form of merchants' marks was a cross, which was used because the cross was feared by demons. Demons were supposed to bring tempests and other evils.

Randle Holme seems to have had this in mind when he finished his descriptions of marks in these words :—

"These with thousands more of seuerall veriaties

[1] *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of London*, vol. xii. pp. 6–10.

might be produced; but these may suffice, frō w^{ch} any merchant may make his owne devise without offence to Armes, or the rules of Herauldry: these things as I sayd before, being but markes, seales, or tokens by wh^{ch} one mans goods are distinguished from another. So I shall conclude this chapter with my prayers for the happy & florishing estate of all such who endevour to liue by these foresaid Imploys, that their Marks may neuer faile them, That stormes & Tempests may not sink or wrack them, nor the Pyrat or cōmon enimy haue power to assaile them; but y^{t} still they may arrive at their wished Haven. Amen."

The kindness of friends, some of whom have, during a number of years, communicated rubbings, tracings, drawings, and notes of marks, and of others who have directed my attention to books in which marks are figured, makes the duty of acknowledging such help a particularly pleasant one. My thanks are due to Messrs. George Grazebrook, F.S.A.; Robert Gladstone, junior, M.A., B.C.L.; J. A. Twemlow, M.A.; W. Fergusson Irvine, M.A., F.S.A.; F. C. Beazley, F.S.A.; A. H. Arkle; and G. H. Parry; and last, but not least, to my brother, W. H. Rylands, F.S.A.

Two valuable papers on merchants' marks escaped my attention until after the present paper was in type. These are (1) *Notices of the Norwich Merchants' Marks*, by William C. Ewing, printed in the publications of the Norfolk and Norwich Archæological Society, vol. iii., part 2, 1850, which is illustrated by eleven plates containing figures of upwards of three hundred marks, with the names of their owners and the dates; and (2) *Merchants' Marks*, by Cecil T. Davis, printed in the Journal of the British Archæological Association, vol. xlix., 1893.

From Mr. Davis' paper the following are extracts :—

"Marks were recognised at an early date by Act of Parliament, *e.g.*, in the two statutes of uncertain date, one of which may be 51 Henry III. (1266) or 13 Edward I. (1285), and the other, 14 Edward I. (1286). In the former it is enacted that 'every baker shall have a mark (*signum*) of his own for each sort of bread'; and the latter, speaking of bondsmen, stipulates 'each shall have a seal' (*e ke checun eyt seal*). The former custom may be noted in the *Old Usages of Worcester* (fourteenth century), when it was required that 'euerych bakere habbe hys seal y-knowe vpon his loff.' In 13 Edward III., c. vii. (1363), every master goldsmith 'shall have a mark by himself' (*un merche a par lui*)."

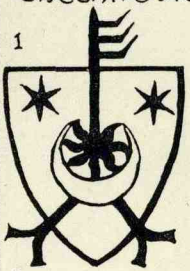
"I show a sheet containing the marks appended to an ordinance for marking barrels, 7 Henry V. (1420), and preserved by the Coopers' Company."

"In 1465 a statute was made to ascertain the length and breadth of bales of cloth, all of which were to be sealed with leaden seals. Specimens are occasionally dredged up in the Thames."

Representations of two of these leaden seals are among the illustrations of Mr. Davis' paper.

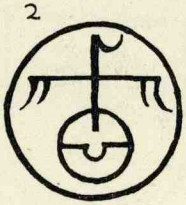
That marks, of the same type as merchants' marks, were used by bookbinders in the sixteenth century is clear from the illustrations to a catalogue of *Bookbindings and Rubbings of Bookbindings in the National Art Library, South Kensington*, printed for H.M. Stationery Office in 1894.

Cheshire Marks. Harl: MS. 2063.



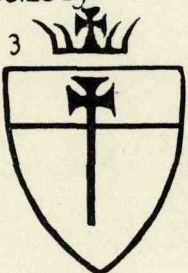
1

Robert de Ley, Chester, c 1280.



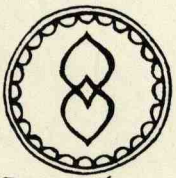
2

1445-6. Thomas Barrs, of Eccleston.



3

1928-9.



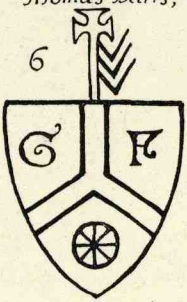
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Nicholas Barrs, of Great Trafford 1436.



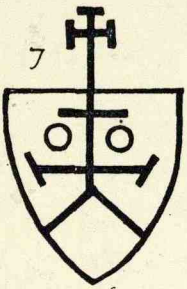
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Robert Coly, Citizen of Chester, 1375.



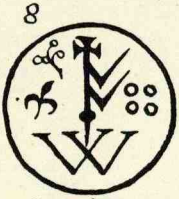
6

Sigill' Galfridi de Flint, 1364.



7

Henry del Holt, 1432-3.



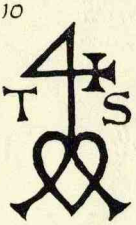
8

William Broughton, gent. 1557-8.



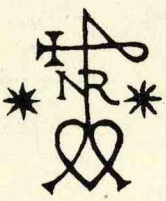
9

S' Thome de Trent.



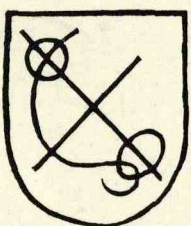
10

Ralph Cotgreve, 1557-8.



11

John Raven, of Elworth, gent. 1611.



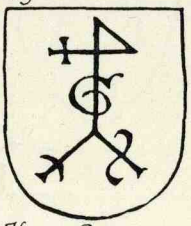
12

Raphe Cardyffe, 1611.

Cheshire Marks, Harl: MS. 2151.

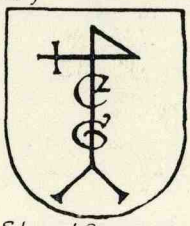
Holy Trinity Church, Chester, 1600 & 1663.

13



Henry Gee, mayor. died 1545.

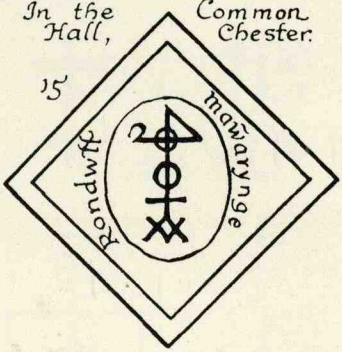
14



Edmund Gee, mayor. died 1551.

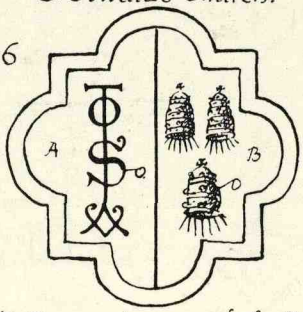
In the Hall, Common Chester.

15

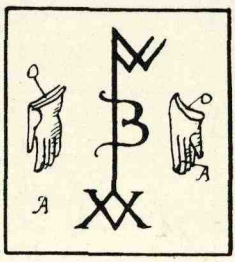


In the Common Hall of the City of Chester, formerly St. Oswald's Church.

16

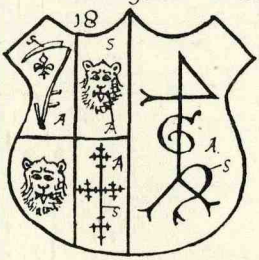


17

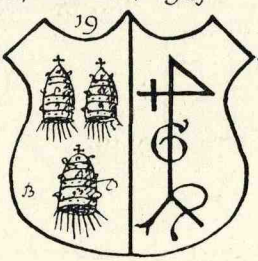


In the parlour and hall of Alderman Ince's house, Watergate Street, Chester. 1527

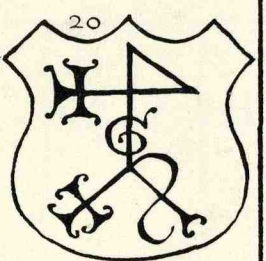
18



19

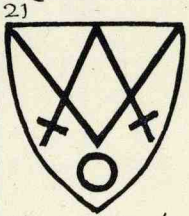


20



Lancashire Marks.

21



Adam de Kynkenale, 1353.

22



S'Willi Lowis, 1424.

23



Christ. de Pemberton, 1434.

24



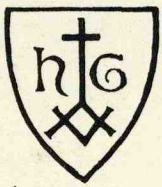
Nicholas del Rylands, 1436.

25



Nicholas de Risley, 1437.

26



Henry Garstang, 1464.

27



Daniel Holland, before 1468.

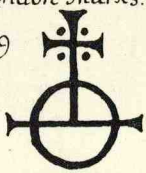
28



Thomas Beri, 1586.

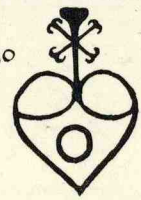
London Marks.

29



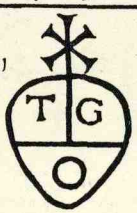
Sir John Crosby, 1471.

30



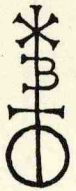
Sir Richd Gresham, died 1548.

31



Sir Thos Gresham died 1579

32



Tho: Bate, mercer, 1571.

King's Lynn, Norfolk

33



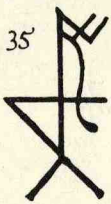
T. Waterdeyn 1397.

34



W. de Bittering. 1352.

35



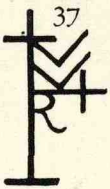
Walter Coney. 1479.

36



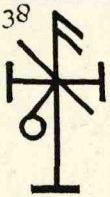
Simon Scotland. 1445.

37



Paxman. 1380.

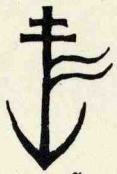
38



Edm Pepry. 1483.

Yarmouth

39



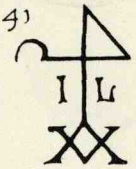
Barth: Ellis, Bailiff 1391.

40



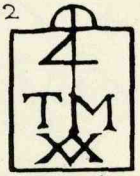
Nicholas Fen. Bailiff 1549.

41



John Lucas. Bailiff. 1664.

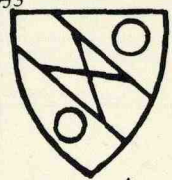
42



Sir Tho: Medowe, Mayor 1684.

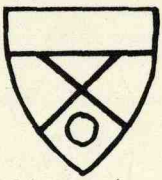
Coventry.

43



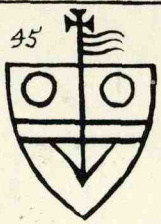
John Onley, 1395.

44



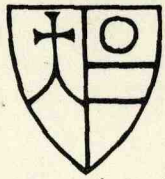
Adam Hyton. 1416.

45



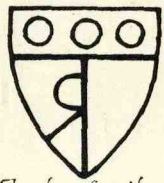
Tho: de Colsull, 1340.

46 t☆b



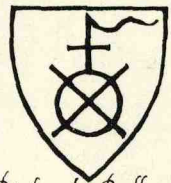
Thomas Bedford. 1427.

47



Jawke family, West Hampnett. Sussex.

48



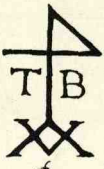
Richard Byll, Kingston-upon-Hull, merchant, 1451.

49



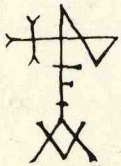
Thomas Pownder, Ipswich, merch^t. 1525.

50



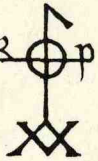
Thomas Barnesley, Wolverhampton, merchant. 1597.

51



Thomas Fella Halesworth, Suffolk. 1611.

52



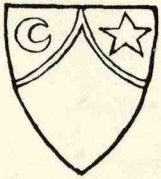
Robert Palmer, Sheriff of Norwich, 1537.

53

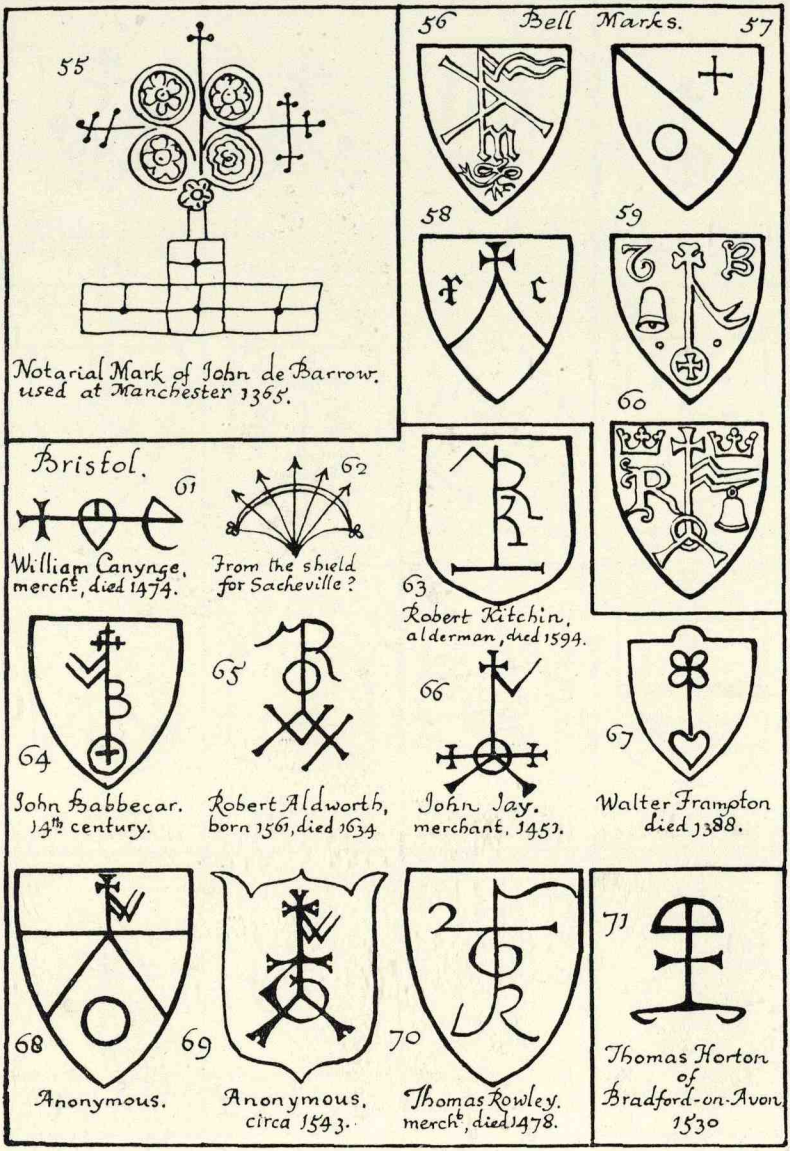


John Hall, of Salisbury, Merch^t of the Staple. 1461.

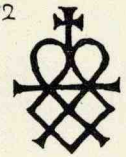
54



In Trunch Ch: Norfolk.

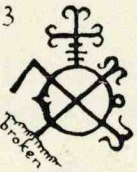

55
Notarial Mark of John de Barrow. used at Manchester 1365.
56 Bell Marks. 57
58
59
60
Bristol.
61
62
William Canynge, merchᵗ, died 1474.
From the shield for Sacheville?
63
Robert Ritchin, alderman, died 1594.
64
65
66
67
John Babbecar. 14th century.
Robert Aldworth, born 1561, died 1634
John Jay. merchant, 1451.
Walter Frampton died 1388.
68
69
70
71
Anonymous.
Anonymous. circa 1543.
Thomas Rowley. merchᵗ, died 1478.
Thomas Horton of Bradford-on-Avon 1530

72



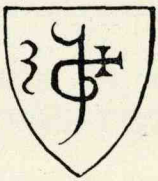
Nicholas Ball, Mayor of Totnes, 1585.

73



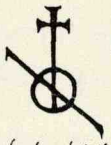
On a monument in Exeter Cathedral.

74



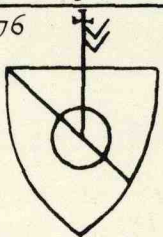
Brass shield in Hereford Cathedral

75



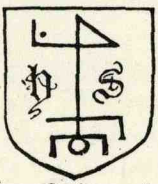
Sir Richard Whittington, Lord Mayor of London, 1397.

76



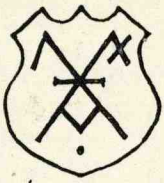
Wm. Grevel, of Chipping Campden, 1401.

77



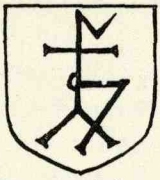
Henry Scolows, of Norwich, 1515.

78



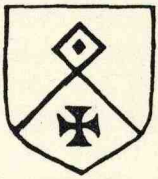
Andrew Evyngar, London, 1530.

79



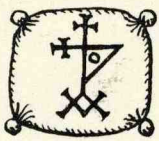
From Aylsham Church, Norfolk.

80



From Oakham Church, Rutland.

81



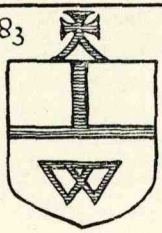
John Orgone, of London, 1584.

82



From a brass at Cranbrook, Kent.

83



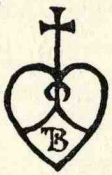
William Dalby, of Oakham, 1399.

84



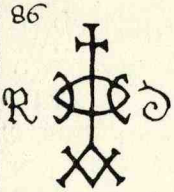
John Browne, of Stamford, Lincolnshire, died 1492.

85



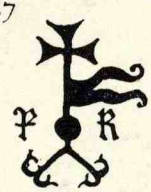
William Browne, of Stamford Lincolnshire, died 1489.

86



From Neyland, Suffolk

87



From Chipping Norton, Oxon: