

Ouachita Baptist University

Scholarly Commons @ Ouachita

Honors Theses

Carl Goodson Honors Program

2016

Sealing Practices: Impressions of the Past and Their Contemporary Significance

Lana Grace Rose

Ouachita Baptist University

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarlycommons.obu.edu/honors_theses



Part of the [History of Science, Technology, and Medicine Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Rose, Lana Grace, "Sealing Practices: Impressions of the Past and Their Contemporary Significance" (2016). *Honors Theses*. 231.

https://scholarlycommons.obu.edu/honors_theses/231

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Carl Goodson Honors Program at Scholarly Commons @ Ouachita. It has been accepted for inclusion in Honors Theses by an authorized administrator of Scholarly Commons @ Ouachita. For more information, please contact mortensona@obu.edu.

SENIOR THESIS APPROVAL

This Honors thesis entitled

**“Sealing Practices: Impressions of the Past and Their
Contemporary Significance”**

written by

Lana Grace Rose

and submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for completion of
the Carl Goodson Honors Program
meets the criteria for acceptance
and has been approved by the undersigned readers.

Dr. Bethany Hicks, thesis director

Dr. Ray Granade, second reader

Mrs. Summer Bruch, third reader

Dr. Barbara Pemberton, Honors Program director

April 18, 2016

**Sealing Practices: Impressions of the Past
and Their Contemporary Significance**

Lana Rose

Carl Goodson Honors Program

Ouachita Baptist University

April 17, 2016

Introduction

If you take a walk around London's Bloomsbury Park, you will come upon a bronze statue of Charles James Fox. Fox was the Secretary of State in Britain three times in the later part of the 18th century.¹ He fought for a stronger Parliament that would support the constitution and introduced the bill that became the Slave Trade Act, abolishing slavery in the British Empire.² The persona of Fox memorialized in the statue is a testimony to his years of service to Britain. A curious curator from the British Museum came upon the statue one day and noticed something strange. Fox's bronze hand held a document which would have been unidentifiable if not for the seal impression dangling from it. The impression was an exact replica of one from the great seal of King John used to seal the original Magna Carta in 1215 AD.³ This medieval seal impression seems to be out of place except for the fact that it symbolically identifies Magna Carta, which has become a symbol of freedom and liberty. The document on the statue would be arbitrary if the replica of King John's seal impression were absent. "Magna Carta was invoked symbolically through the authentic use of the king's seal," so that observers of the statue can not only identify the important document, but also discern the longevity of the principles of Magna Carta.⁴ The sealed impression on the statue serves as an example of how seals identify and carry the authority of their author.

¹ "Past Foreign Secretaries," Accessed April 5, 2016, <https://www.gov.uk/government/history/past-foreign-secretaries/charles-fox>.

² Ibid.

³ Lloyd DeBeer, "Magna Carta, Bloomsbury and the British Museum," British Museum, 2015.

⁴ Ibid.

Seals were a symbol of authority in medieval times because of their longevity and verification purposes. In the 21st Century, seals continue to be authoritative because of their adaptation to modern technology. Wax seal impressions were used to prove authenticity and to ensure the authority of documents. They were prevalent in the ancient world and are still utilized in modern times.

Many individuals had their own personal seal. The 12th century was the earliest known time that seals were used by people other than royalty.⁵ Personal seals at that time usually depicted the owner's coat of arms.⁶ As cultures have



Signet displaying the coat of arms of the Baronnet family, Paris.

changed, seals have adapted to maintain their authoritative status. This adaptation shows that seals have and will continue to hold significance in the modern era.

Seals have been a part of history since antiquity and it is worth studying how their use has evolved into what is today a sophisticated form of authenticating. Seals were once used widely on an individual basis, but now are commonly used by organizations through the forms of embossed seals, watermarks, and institutional seals. Individual sealing practices have also changed to be based more on logos, signatures, and copyright. Modern technology has provided a desperate need for authenticating documents and products, therefore seals have been consistently important for authorizing from their advent and continue to be today.

⁵ Terence Mitchell, "Sigillography," *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 2016.

⁶ Ibid.

Sigillography and Related Fields

The Latin word *sigillum* is where we get our word “seal” and also the word “sigillography.”⁷ The study of seals and imprints is known as sigillography.⁸ The study of seals can resemble a science, but the seal itself is a work of art. In order to study seals, it is important to understand how one is created and applied. A seal is impressed into a soft surface such as clay, wax, or plaster. There is a misconception that the wax impression is the seal, when it is more correctly identified as the impression of a seal. Transferring the seal’s image to the pliable surface is the most important aspect of the sealing process because it provides a relic of physical contact.⁹ The presence of the one who imprinted the seal is required in order for the impression to be created. In addition, “the authorship and authority of the seal depended on the person and the personal participation of its owner.”¹⁰ The seal’s owner must be present for originality because that presence gives authority to the seal. Without this relic of physical contact, the seal itself would be insignificant.

What makes sigillography so interesting is that it combines related fields such as archaeology, history, and art. For example, archaeologists recently uncovered an impression of

⁷ Terence Mitchell, “Sigillography,” *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 2016.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ Noel Adams, John Cherry, and James Robinson, eds., *Good Impressions: Image and Authority in Medieval Seals* (London: British Museum, 2007), 2.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

King Hezekiah's seal, which has been dated to 2,800 years ago.¹¹ King Hezekiah was an iconic King of Israel, and finding an artifact from the time that he ruled Israel is significant. This particular artifact is important to archaeologists because it "links the artifact to the location" in Jerusalem where they are excavating near the Temple Mount, suggesting that the King's palace was around the same location where sources such as the Bible have typically placed it.¹² The seal impression was made out of clay and had thin markings on the back like it had originally been tied to papyrus.¹³ Archaeologists can determine a seal imprint's original purpose by the markings on it. If it was attached to papyrus or a *bullae*, the imprint's back and sides would have cord marks that give evidence of previous attachment to a document. If the imprint is broken, it could mean that it was originally attached to a letter and broken when opened.

Sealing practices have opened the door for research into ancient cultures. For example, ancient Crete was known for its highly decorative seals.¹⁴ Crete, an island in the Mediterranean Sea, was home to the Minoans between 3000 BC and 1100 BC.¹⁵ It was known for its palaces, writing, art, and trade.¹⁶ Minoan civilization influenced mainland Greece and the rest of the Aegean world because of its extensive trade relations.¹⁷

¹¹ Adam Chandler, "Unearthing King Hezekiah's Biblical Era Seal," *The Atlantic*, December 2, 2015, accessed March 13, 2016, <http://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2015/12/jerusalem-king-hezekiah/418431/>.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ "Minoan Civilization," *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 2016, accessed March 16, 2016, <http://www.britannica.com/topic/Minoan-civilization>.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

V.E.G. Kenna, author of several works on Cretan seals, says that, “Apart from their aesthetic quality, they have great scientific value. They enable scholars to detect evidence of the various cultural movements that were current in that great nexus of trade and diplomatic relations in the Late Bronze Age of the central and eastern Mediterranean.”¹⁸ The Cretan seals to which Kenna referred were valued pieces of art that reflected Cretan culture during the Early, Middle, and Late Minoan periods. The seal pictured here is a Minoan one

dated around 1800-1700 BC, which falls under the Middle

Minoan period.¹⁹ The seal portrays what resembles



hieroglyphics, showing the influence of Egyptian culture on

Crete. Cretan seals were made of a variety of materials, including ivory, gold, and volcanic glass.

The Minoans did not have a customary shape for their seals, but instead they used a great variety.²⁰

The seals pictured below are examples of the uniqueness of shape and material of seals that one can find even around the same geographical location and culture. The first image shown below is an example of the Parading Lions-Spiral style group.²¹ The seal was made out of bone, soft stone, or hippopotamus ivory.²² The second seal is an example of a petschaft seal which is a

¹⁸ V.E.G. Kenna, “Cretan and Mycenaean Seals,” *Archaeology* 19.4 (1966): 250, accessed March 12, 2016, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41670511>.

¹⁹ “Seal From Malia,” accessed March 12, 2016.

²⁰ Kenna, “Cretan and Mycenaean Seals,” 250.

²¹ Judith Weingarten, “Minoan Seals and Sealings,” *Oxford Handbooks Online* (2012): 4, accessed March 12, 2016, doi: 10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199873609.013.0024.

²² *Ibid.*

stamp seal with a handle.²³ The petschaft seal was used by palace bureaucracies in the Middle Minoan period.²⁴ All three Cretan seals pictured here show a variation of seal types and art styles, which hints at the influences of Egypt and Greece during Minoan Crete's cultural peak around 1600 BC.²⁵



Seals are an art form that is commonly used on pottery. Potters use seals to imprint personal identification on their work while simultaneously expressing their personality. Just as signet rings and personal seals bear the owner's mark, so a potter's stamp bears the artist's mark.²⁶ They function as tools to change the clay's surface. They can be made either as a trademark or with the potter's initials.²⁷ Stamps used on pottery and ceramics are typically made

²³ "Petschaft," Heidelberg University, accessed March 12, 2016, <http://www.uni-heidelberg.de/fakultaeten/philosophie/zaw/cms/seals/glossary.html>.

²⁴ Weingarten, "Minoan Seals and Sealings," 6.

²⁵ "Minoan Civilization," *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 2016, accessed March 16, 2016, <http://www.britannica.com/topic/Minoan-civilization>.

²⁶ David Hamilton, *Van Nostrand Reinhold Manual of Pottery and Ceramics* (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold Co., 1974), 98.

²⁷ Hamilton, *Van Nostrand Reinhold Manual of Pottery and Ceramics*, 50.

from “plaster of paris, wood, metal, or bisquited clay.”²⁸ These stamps have a similar purpose to wax seals in that they are meant to be a means of authenticating the pottery. It is also another way for the potter to display creativity and to identify the potter as the craftsman. Clay stamps are still used by potters today to mark their work. The process of stamping a piece of clay can be tedious. Potters have to be careful not to press too deeply into the clay, otherwise they might get the edge of the stamp in it.²⁹ The clay should be somewhat firm when impressed so that the clay does not stick to the stamp.³⁰ Two helpful hints that Tools 4 Clay gave were to put vegetable oil on the stamp to keep it from sticking and to support the clay on the opposite side while you stamp it.³¹ The Tools 4 Clay website offers custom-made stamps. Customers can draw their own designs or signatures and have it made into a stamp. The usage of the potter’s stamp is the same in this case, but the method of making the stamps has largely changed to a digital format.

Researching Seals

Researching ancient and medieval seals proves tedious when the sealed document is not preserved along with the impression. Due to age and various types of material, it is hard to date seals and seal impressions. Since the material for impressions was usually more durable than what it was applied to, an impression could remain intact for years. An impression could be made today from a seal that is hundreds of years old. Some seals were re-cut and restored in order to preserve the image or to make a new one.³² Depending on the family, seals became

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ “How to Use Clay Stamps and Rollers,” Socwell LLC.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Dominique Collon, *Near Eastern Seals* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 19.

heirlooms that were handed down through generations and buried with more recent family members, which makes their study and dating tedious because there are inconsistent time gaps.

Significantly more wax impressions have survived than the surfaces on which they were impressed. The impressions were many times put on perishable items that did not survive over time. The material in which impressions were made was typically more resilient matter like wax. One reason that fewer seals are found is because they were often destroyed at the owner's death. Whether seals were handed down as heirlooms, lost, or destroyed at the owner's death, it makes it difficult to research their origins.

Time and location can also make sigillography difficult to study. In Near Eastern society, stamp seals were precursors to writing, which makes it tough to research. They were the main form of seal starting in the 6th century BC and were used to seal lids of containers for transported goods.³³ Stamp seals were adapted to cylindrical seals with the introduction of writing to the Near East. Cylindrical seals, common in the Near East between 400-100 BC, are long and usually have some sort of inscription because of their larger surface area. This provides more information for cylindrical seals and has enabled scholars to research and track their development over time.³⁴ One way that historians can gather clues about what the impression was originally attached to is by looking at the back of the impression.³⁵ If the back of the

³³ Holly Pittman, *Ancient Art in Miniature* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1987), 10.

³⁴ Dominique, *Near Eastern Seals*, 18-19.

³⁵ Ibid.

impression has remnants of fibers, then historians can assume that it was originally placed on a document using string.

Utility of Seals

Seal impressions have been used as a closure of correspondence and authentication of documents for thousands of years. Sealed impressions made on documents were “a recognized usage in Western Europe by the end of the 10th century.”³⁶ Letters were sealed for privacy and identification. Secrecy was promoted but not expected in many nations, even after nations passed regulations for postal secrecy. Governments and individuals have often read correspondence that was not intended for them. In the 1800s, surreptitiously opening personal letters became a job for people in London and in other large cities. Rooms where they opened the letters were called “black chambers.”³⁷ The chambers were set up so that the monarch could catch wind of any dangerous activity. The black chambers included tea kettles which were used to soften the wax impression so that it would not crack during the process.³⁸ Workers in the chambers would slide batons under the envelope’s flap without removing the sealed section, twirl the letter around the baton, remove it, and replace it in similar condition.³⁹ Keeping the impression intact was crucial to avoid any suspicion of tampering. European governments continued to systematically read personal correspondence until people in France started complaining around 1789 that their rights

³⁶ Hilary Jenkinson, “The Great Seal of England,” *Journal of the Royal Society of Arts* 101.4902 (1953), 551.

³⁷ David Kahn, “Back When Spies Played By the Rules,” *New York Times*, January 14, 2006, http://www.nytimes.com/2006/01/13/opinion/13kahn.html?_r=0.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ *Ibid.*

were being violated.⁴⁰ Many countries signed Article 12 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in the years following World War II. The Article states, “No one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his... correspondence.”⁴¹ This protection helped increase individual privacy. Along with the universal rights, the United States included a right in the Bill of Rights that protects the security of papers.

Seals and Government

Seals are used to represent national pride and power. With national seals, size is often a crucial factor. Such was the case with the Great Seal of England. The Great Seal was meant to command respect by its mere size, which was 3 ¼ to 6 ¼ inches in diameter.⁴² The chancellor was responsible for the Great Seal and he had a staff at his disposal.⁴³ He had to be present anywhere the king might want to use the seal. Additional seals were eventually designed for various functions and involved their own bureaucracy. The Privy and Signet seals were smaller and used generally for secret affairs.⁴⁴ Size indicated importance or function. The Great Seal of England was known as the "*Clavis Regni*, the key of government."⁴⁵ There are stories about it being stolen and thereby delaying Parliament. Without the *Clavis Regni*, government in England would have been deprived of one of its outward symbols of power and authority.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

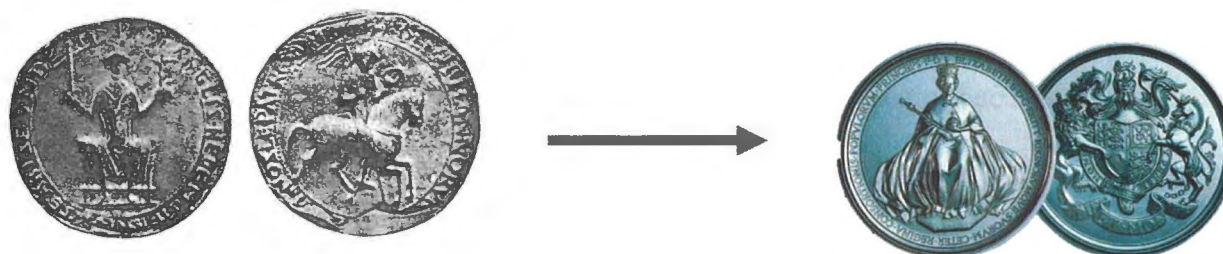
⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Jenkinson, “The Great Seal of England,” 553-555.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid.



Above left: The Great Seal of William I of England, 1066 AD.

Above right: The Great Seal of Elizabeth II of the United Kingdom, 1953 AD-present.

The *Clavis Regni* changed with each English monarch. When the United Kingdom was formed in 1922, the seal's name was changed to the Great Seal of the Realm. It is now used for about one-fifth of Department business, including the issuing of charters.⁴⁶ A royal charter gives the monarch's permission for a company to exist. Royal charters are commonly used today in the United Kingdom, and must include the monarch's seal. Two United Kingdom royal charters created the British Council and the British Broadcasting Company (BBC). The bylaws of the British Council specifically state regarding the seal, "The Board may empower the Chair to appoint persons by name or by office to authorize the affixing of the Common Seal of the British Council to any instruments on its behalf."⁴⁷ The British Council actively uses their own Common Seal, which shows that the formality of sealing a document is still relevant. The Common Seal gives a visible sign of approval for items that the council supports.⁴⁸ BBC was granted a Royal Charter in 1922 and is the largest public media company in the United Kingdom. The

⁴⁶ Ibid., 560.

⁴⁷ "Royal Charter and Bye-Laws," British Council, accessed April 17, 2016, <https://www.britishcouncil.org/organisation>.

⁴⁸ "Our Organisation," British Council, accessed April 16, 2016, <https://www.britishcouncil.org/organisation>.

foundational charter gives BBC the power to act according to its mission to “inform, educate, and entertain.”⁴⁹ Royal Charters still incorporate the Seal of the Realm because it shows the monarch’s approval, which is needed for the continuation of the corporation.

The primary usage of seals today is not in correspondence, but to mark ownership and to provide a visible sign of authority. The Great Seal of the United States as pictured here is a

representation of the American ideals of justice, peace, and valor. The seal as shown here depicts an eagle behind a shield. When



shown in color, the shield is red, white, and blue. The blue at the top of the shield represents justice and the red stripes represent valor.⁵⁰ The eagle’s right talons hold olive branches, which are a symbol of peace.⁵¹ The Great Seal was meant to convey ideals to the American people when the government was founded. Specifically, the Great Seal is used for commissioning Presidential appointees, ratifying treaties, and authenticating any documents of State.⁵² The Department of State is responsible for the Great Seal of the United States and can use the seal for its intended purposes. As expressed here, seals

⁴⁹ “Broadcasting,” Department for Culture, Media, and Sport (Norwich, United Kingdom: Crown Copyright, 2006), 3.

⁵⁰ Judd Patton, “The Real Meaning and Significance of the Great Seal of the United States,” Bellevue University, 1987, accessed April 23, 2016, http://jpatton.bellevue.edu/biblical_economics/greatseal.html.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² “Why Does the Department of State Have Possession of the Great Seal of the United States?” U.S. Department of State, accessed February 18, 2016, <https://history.state.gov/about/faq/great-seal>.

are not only a form of authenticating for individuals, but also a source of conveying a message as a nation.

Forgery

Since the owner's approval is symbolized by their seal, a forged document threatens the owner's identity. Forged seals are not easily detectable and therefore have similar, if not identical roles in history as original seals do. According to Frank Arnau, author of a book on art forgery, "Only one seal of unquestioned authenticity survives from the first millennium, the signet of Emperor Lothair I."⁵³ His signet was made out of crystal and is now located in Aachen Cathedral. Oftentimes replicas were made of signet rings and seals that people owned, especially if they were worn down.⁵⁴ There is proof that seals have been forged in the past. A seal in the 11th century was used to seal the "Dagobert Parchments."⁵⁵ The seal turned out to be a copy of the original seal which meant the parchments were not officially approved.

During medieval times, people began to confuse replicas with original seals. The replicas were forged which meant that they had no validity. Similar seals started to share equal authority and validity, which caused misidentification.⁵⁶ The growing relativity between similar impressions and seals produced confusion when it came to verifying originality. The seals themselves began to validate without a tie to human authority because "they were all considered

⁵³ Frank Arnau, *The Art of the Faker* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1959), 167.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Brigitte Bedos-Rezak, *In Search of a Semiotic Paradigm: The Matter of Sealing in Medieval Thought and Praxis (1050-1400)* (London: British Museum, 2007), 4.

to function as originals generating their own accuracy, truth, and validity.”⁵⁷ The importance of human authorship is apparent when realizing that medieval confusion came because seals became their own form of verification, without a clear link to the original owner.

A statute to solve the problem of forgery, a result of many petitions and complaints, was finally passed by parliament in 1413 and signed by King Henry V.⁵⁸ The statute “allows the owners’ of manors, lands, or tenements whose title has been extinguished, altered or threatened by a forged title deed to sue for the recovery of damages.”⁵⁹ Many times forgery involved ownership of land and property deeds because forgers would name themselves as beneficiaries of wills.⁶⁰ A woman named Isabel complained to authorities that forged documents had been submitted in her name.⁶¹ Forgers had submitted the faulty documents prematurely, thinking that Isabel would die of an illness from which she had been suffering.⁶² Forgery had become an extensive problem and laws were gradually passed to deal with the issue. The replication issue in the Medieval Ages was considered to be forgery which led to modern-day copyright laws involving institutional seals and trademarks.

One ongoing research project in Wales involves taking fingerprints from medieval seals and recording them. The research is projected to solve medieval forgery cases by comparing fingerprints from different documents. Along with solving forgery cases like the story of Isabel

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Alfred Hiatt, *The Making of Medieval Forgeries: False Documents in Fifteenth-century England* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), 27.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Ibid, 29.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Ibid.

mentioned above, research is predicted to discover more information about medieval social structure and the uniqueness of fingerprints.⁶³ Researchers on this project will use artifacts from cathedrals, the National Library of Wales, and Westminster Abbey to build up their database of impressions and fingerprints.⁶⁴ Once the medieval fingerprint database grows, historians will have a better chance of solving forgery cases because they can compare and match fingerprints from different documents. Focusing on wax impressions in the forensic research project shifts the study's emphasis; normally the seal itself is considered more historically valuable than the impression. The document that is sealed is also more important than the wax seal. Fingerprints on seal impressions give an example of the human aspect of sealing as well as its unique nature.

Modern Sealing Practices

When sealing practices were common, very few seals were alike. Today, companies manufacture seals for various industries or individuals. Companies like WaxSeals.com offer “personalized” seals and stamps. The companies advertise that you can “create your own” seal. Making your own seal involves perusing a page of standard outlines and images, choosing the image you want, and combining certain elements on the website. The website does not offer the same uniqueness that a personally handcrafted seal made in ancient or medieval times would have possessed. Wax seals are making a comeback as part of a trend for using seals on invitations (especially for weddings). In fact, one invitation website even listed seals as part of what makes a good invitation. Today, the simple charm of a sealed invitation seems to attract

⁶³ Rachael Misstear, “Wax Seals Study Key to Solving Medieval Crime,” *Western Mail*, January 6, 2016.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

people once again to wax seals, although repeated accounts show that the wax impressions can fall off due to modern sorting methods.

Wafer seals solve the problem of wax seals falling off in the mail. They are not decorative, but are designed to function the same way as wax seals. Essentially, they secure a piece of mail so that it stays together during the process of mailing. Ever since the invention of the wafer sealer in 1993, the United States Postal Service (USPS) prefers using wafer seals, saying, “It is necessary to glue or seal these types of mailings so that they will not jam automatic mail sorting machines.”⁶⁵ The USPS now specifies how mail should be sealed and where the wafer seal should be located on the package.⁶⁶ Wafer seals are an example of a seal that was adapted to function better with modern technology.

Trademarks represent a modern method of sealing. The essential principles of a trademark “include words, names, symbols, and logos that businesses use or intend to use in commerce for the purpose of distinguishing their goods from those made or sold by competitors.”⁶⁷ Trademarks distinguish from one good to another. The Lanham Act of 1946 (also called the Trademark Act) is a Federal law that deals with trademarks. It covers different types of trademarks, the rationales behind them, and the necessity of their originality. The most important thing that a mark must have in order to claim trademark status is distinctiveness.⁶⁸ To determine distinctiveness, the Trademark Act looks for marks that are descriptive, suggestive, arbitrary, or

⁶⁵ John W. Slater, Wafer Seal.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ “The Lanham Act,” US Legal, accessed February 16, 2016, <http://trademarks.uslegal.com/trademark-law/the-lanham-act/>.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

fanciful.⁶⁹ A genericized trademark is one that has lost its distinctiveness over time. For example, a thermos now describes a generalized product, not just a specific brand. A product's ability to be distinctive creates a sense of higher value and worth. This ties in with sealing practices because seals also have intrinsic value as something rare and unique. Just as trademarks in the modern world have to be distinctive, an individual's seal was unique to the person who owned them. The seal's uniqueness contributes to its value and decreases the likelihood of successful forgery because it is more difficult to replicate.



The East India Company has existed for 416 years, and is still one of the world's largest trade networks. The East India Company has established trade networks and trade ports. Today, the East India Company seeks to continue fostering the pioneer spirit that encouraged those first entrepreneurs to open up trading networks.⁷⁰ The seal and logo shown above are an example of an enduring method of verification and sealing. The seal on the left was made in 1793. The logo

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ "Our Heritage," The East India Company, accessed February 18, 2016, <http://www.theeastindiacompany.com/index.php/24/our-heritage/?iframe=true&width=800&height=400&phpMyAdmin=nuqL7SGICRYlruX3W1VQYbLGvx1>.

on the right bears the same image, showing that the East India Company maintained the same symbol over its 416 years of existence. This is a powerful display of how the authority and power of a seal can span vast periods of time. The seal shown above has maintained its image and has been adapted into what is today a modern logo. The seal's authoritative nature still reminds those who see it of what the company stands for and who the company is. This is an example of a bridge between a seal and a modern logo.

The U.S. Department of Defense published a memorandum on October 16, 2015, regarding the use of insignias and Department seals on products. People had been illegally using seals on products in order to sell them. The memorandum clearly states that the seals are protected by law and that anyone who uses the Department of Defense Seals must acquire permission.⁷¹ Events like Veteran's Day observances may include the seals in the ceremony. The memorandum says that the Department of Defense knows that citizens often want to show support for the military and that is why they put the seals and logos on items. They stated that the best way to support the military (apart from a military event or getting permission from the Department of Defense) is to write out the branch name instead of illegally using the branch's seals without permission.⁷²

Conclusion

Even though seals are not commonly used for correspondence in the modern world, a seal still conveys a message. Whether in the form of a trademark, logo, or institutional seal, many still

⁷¹ "Important Information and Guidelines About the Use of Department of Defense Seals, Logos, Insignia, and Service Medals," U.S. Department of Defense, 2015.

⁷² Ibid.

value the authoritative properties of seals. Many types of seals have survived because of archaeological digs, and research is critical to understand the seal's cultural role. Today, seals are still appreciated as being unique. When the process of acquiring and maintaining a trademark is understood, it is easy to realize that trademarks are distinctive and can stand alone. Modern culture has grown used to seeing trademarks and logos, yet we do not stop to think about the process of acquiring them. Seals today have different uses because the cultural context is separate from ancient and medieval times. Though contemporary seals have different uses, they function similarly to ancient and medieval seals because they ensure the product's authenticity, just as wax seals verified that the message was approved by the owner. Usage of seals has evolved, but the function of seals remains that of authorizing and verifying.

Bibliography

- Adams, Noel, John Cherry, and James Robinson, eds. *Good Impressions: Image and Authority in Medieval Seals*. London: British Museum, 2007.
<http://www.britishmuseum.org/pdf/0%20Prelims%20experiment.pdf>.
- Arnau, Frank. *The Art of the Faker*. Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1959.
- Bedos-Rezak, Brigitte. "In Search of a Semiotic Paradigm: The Matter of Sealing in Medieval Thought and Praxis (1050-1400)." *Good Impressions: Image and Authority in Medieval Seals*. London: British Museum, 2007. Accessed January 5, 2016.
<http://www.britishmuseum.org/pdf/0%20Prelims%20experiment.pdf>.
- British Council. "Our Organisation." Accessed April 16, 2016.
<https://www.britishcouncil.org/organisation>.
- British Council. "Royal Charter and Bye-Laws." Accessed April 17, 2016.
<https://www.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/royalcharter.pdf>.
- "Broadcasting." Department for Culture, Media, and Sport. Norwich, United Kingdom: Crown Copyright, 2006.
http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/bbctrust/assets/files/pdf/about/how_we_govern/charter.pdf.
- Chandler, Adam. "Unearthing King Hezekiah's Biblical Era Seal." *The Atlantic*, December 2, 2015. Accessed March 13, 2016.
<http://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2015/12/jerusalem-king-hezekiah/418431/>.
- Collon, Dominique. *Near Eastern Seals*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990.
- DeBeer, Lloyd. "Magna Carta, Bloomsbury and the British Museum." British Museum, 2015. Accessed April 5, 2016.
<https://blog.britishmuseum.org/2015/08/04/magna-carta-bloomsbury-and-the-british-museum/>.
- Gov.UK. "Past Foreign Secretaries." Accessed April 5, 2016.
<https://www.gov.uk/government/history/past-foreign-secretaries/charles-fox>.
- Hamilton, David. *Van Nostrand Reinhold Manual of Pottery and Ceramics*. New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold Co., 1974.
- Heidelberg University. "Petschaft." Accessed March 12, 2016.

<http://www.uni-heidelberg.de/fakultaeten/philosophie/zaw/cms/seals/glossary.html>.

Hiatt, Alfred. *The Making of Medieval Forgeries: False Documents in Fifteenth-century England*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004.
<https://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=kIy0ksybMp8C&oi=fnd&pg=PR6&dq=%22making+of+medieval+forgeries%22&ots=EC9cAE0H1J&sig=i3Yv7JUG84Si8jlj8KNkUTfETWk#v=onepage&q=%22making%20of%20medieval%20forgeries%22&f=false>.

"Important Information and Guidelines About the Use of Department of Defense Seals, Logos, Insignia, and Service Medals." U.S. Department of Defense, 2015.

Interkriti.org. "Seal From Malia." Accessed March 12, 2016.
http://www.interkriti.org/crete_image_library/?keys=f3Malia%20f3Findings&cnty=p3

Jenkinson, Hilary. "The Great Seal of England." *Journal of the Royal Society of Arts* 101.4902, (1953): 550-63.

Kahn, David. "Back When Spies Played by the Rules." *New York Times*, January 14, 2006. Accessed April 18, 2016.
http://www.nytimes.com/2006/01/13/opinion/13kahn.html?_r=0.

Kenna, V.E.G. "Cretan and Mycenaean Seals." *Archaeology* 19.4, (1966): 248-50. Accessed March 12, 2016.
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/41670511>.

Lubetski, Meir. *New Seals and Inscriptions, Hebrew, Idumean, and Cuneiform*. Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2007.

Meyerson, Michael. *Endowed by Our Creator: The Birth of Religious Freedom in America*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012.

"Minoan Civilization." *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 2016. Accessed March 16, 2016.
<http://www.britannica.com/topic/Minoan-civilization>.

Misstear, Rachael. "Wax Seals Study Key to Solving Medieval Crime." *Western Mail*, January 6, 2016. Accessed March 10, 2016.
<http://www.pressreader.com/uk/western-mail/20160106/281797102976903/TextView>.

Mitchell, Terrrence. "Sigillography." *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 2016. Accessed March 16, 2016.
<http://www.britannica.com/topic/sigillography>.

- Patton, Judd. "The Real Meaning and Significance of the Great Seal of the United States." Bellevue University, 1987. Accessed April 23, 2016.
http://jpatton.bellevue.edu/biblical_economics/greatseal.html
- Pittman, Holly. *Ancient Art in Miniature*. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1987. Accessed March 12, 2016.
http://www.metmuseum.org/art/metpublications/Ancient_Art_in_Miniature_Ancient_Near_Eastern_Seals_from_the_Collection_of_Martin_and_Sarah_Cherkask#.
- Slater, John W. Wafer Sealer. John W. Slater, assignee. Patent 5,185,983. February 16, 1993.
- The East India Company. "Our Heritage." Accessed February 18, 2016.
<http://www.theeastindiacompany.com/index.php/24/our-heritage/?iframe=true&width=800&height=400&phpMyAdmin=nuqL7SGICRYlruX3W1VQYbLGvx1>.
- Tools 4 Clay. "How to Use Clay Stamps and Rollers." Accessed March 14, 2016.
<http://www.4clay.com/how.htm>.
- U.S. Department of State, Office of the Historian. "Why Does the Department of State Have Possession of the Great Seal of the United States?" Accessed February 18, 2016.
<https://history.state.gov/about/faq/great-seal>.
- US Legal. "The Lanham Act." Accessed February 16, 2016.
<http://trademarks.uslegal.com/trademark-law/the-lanham-act/>.
- Weingarten, Judith. "Minoan Seals and Sealings." *Oxford Handbooks Online* (2012). Accessed March 12, 2016.
doi: 10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199873609.013.0024.