

THE GIRON SEAL FOUND AT
HACKINGTON.

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I am indebted to Mr. Charles Cotton, O.B.E., F.R.C.P.E., of Briarfield, Canterbury, for particulars of the discovery of the seal and for photographs of it. "It was found on Mr. Edwards's brickfield, which lies on the north side of Broadoak Road, which leads from St. Stephen's Road to Broadoak; about 3 or 4 feet below the surface of the field; in the Parish of Hackington." The seal is on view at the Canterbury Royal Museum and Free Library.

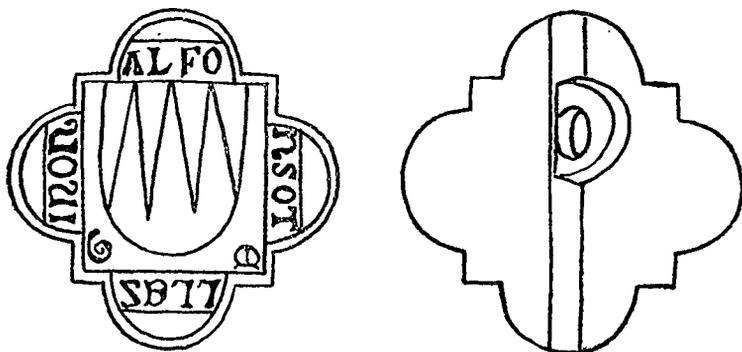


FIG. 2.—Seal inscribed "ALFONSO TELLEZ GIRON" (from Gudiel, 1571).

The object, which is of latten [Fig. 1], bears, on a central shield between three smaller ones, the arms: *Three girones or piles conjoined issuant from the base*. Between the outer and inner escutcheons, and as it were superimposed over the trilobe enclosing the [smaller shields, is a broad frame of inverted triangular shape, inscribed:—

i.e. S(igillum) Pero Alhonso Giron.

The insignia and inscription accord in designating as the



Fig. 1.—SEAL
found at Hackington, inscribed S. Pero Alhonso Giron.

original owner of the seal, Pedro Alonso Girón, a fourteenth-century member of the old Castilian house of Girón, a race of grandees which drew its male origin from the royal line of Leon, and more than once held the office of high chamberlain and high chancellor of Castile, ere it failed in the male line about the third quarter of the fourteenth century. The arms of gold, with three girones or piles rising from the base gules, have been figured and described in more than one heraldry book, but almost invariably, as borne by the ducal house of Osuna, with a chief per pale of Castile and León, and a bordure checky or and gules charged with five escutcheons from the arms of Portugal. In this marshalling, the Téllez-Girón—lords of Urena (countship, *c.* 1466) and of Osuna (dukedom, 1562), issue of the Girón heiress Teresa, daughter of Don Alonso (II.) Téllez-Girón by her marriage (*ante* 1364) with the Portuguese Martin Vazquez de Acuna, count of Valencia de Don Juan—are seen to have revived the use of the *checky of fifteen points or and gules*, which were the original arms of the old Giróns of Cisneros, to the family of which latter name also they were related by blood. The known story of the Girón name and arms is as involved as it is fragmentary. It includes the assumption of the surname Girón by Rodrigo Gonzalez (*flor. c.* 1170), lord of Cisneros; his descendants' bearing of the coat *checky*, now more usually associated with the great Cardinal Ximenes de Cisneros, until the mid or late fourteenth century; and the adoption of the *girones* about the period of the decimation and disruption of the house during the civil war which convulsed Spain in the days of *Pedro, el Justiciero* (Peter II., the Cruel). On Pedro's murder in 1369, when his bastard brother and competitor, Enrique of Trastámara, mounted the throne as Henry II. (1369—1379), certain of the Giróns transferred their allegiance to Ferdinand I. of Portugal, who claimed the throne of Castile as a great-grandson, through a female, of the Castilian Sancho IV. Among them were two by the name of Pedro Alonso Girón. and also a Don Alonso Téllez (II.) Girón, eventually father of the family heiress already mentioned.

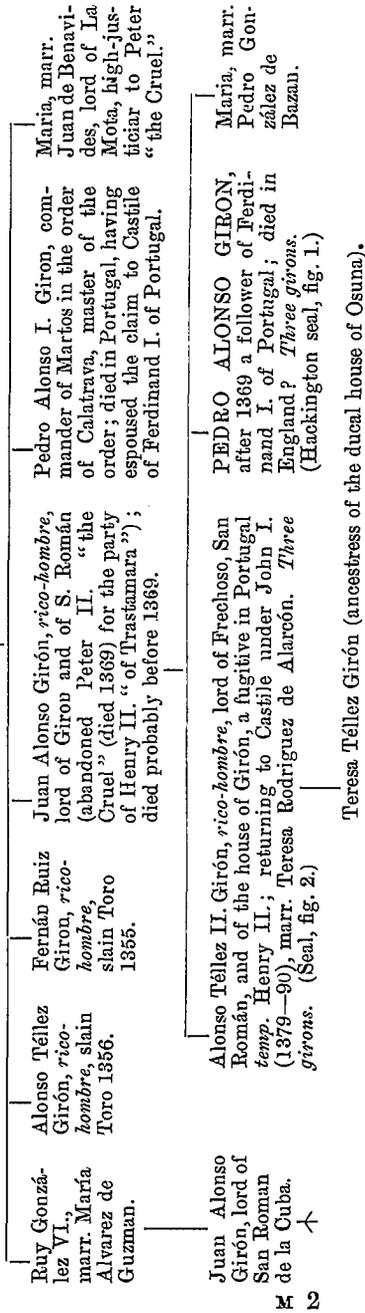
GIRÓN GENEALOGY (late thirteenth—fourteenth centuries).

Gonzalo Gonzalez IV. Girón, a *rico-hombre* (grandee) of Castile, high chancellor of Castile, lord of Cisneros; dead 1258.

Gonzalo Ruiz V. Girón, lord of Girón, master of Santiago 1275; died 1280; previously marr. to Elvira Diaz de Castañeda.

Rodrigo Gonzalez V. Girón, lord of S. Román de la Cuba, flor. 1282—98, *Checky or and gules*; marr. Elvira . . .

Gonzalo Ruiz VI. Girón, lord of the house of Girón, Cisneros, etc.; flor. 1325—46; marr. Maria Téllez de Meneses, called Raposa.



It is a truly remarkable stroke of fate that has unearthed in Kent a seal similar to the one [FRG. 2] of Alonso Téllez (II.) Girón, discovered in 1571, which has figured as one of the principal armorial evidences for this important house since Geronymo Gudiel reproduced it in his *Compendio de algunas historias de España, donde . . . se da noticia de la antigua familia de las Girones* (Alcala, 1571). And if very remarkable in the circumstance of its discovery, the provenance of the Hackington seal is at least fortunate, because it places beyond doubt the worthy Spanish historian's surmise of the fate of one of the two members of the family whose name it bears. Him we will call Pedro Alonso (II.) Girón, because the other Pedro Alonso—whom the modern genealogist, Fernandez de Béthencourt,* revising Gudiel's somewhat confused and erroneous affiliation, makes uncle of the individual we here connect with the Hackington find—had been constituted by Peter the Cruel, master of the military-religious Order of Calatrava, which style he continued to use although never again resident in Castile, nor *de facto* master of the order. The seal with its legend, lacking the cross of the order and a mention of the dignity, are both against its attribution to this Pedro Alonso (I.) Girón.

PEDRO ALONSO (II.) GIRÓN was (according to Fernandez de Béthencourt) a younger brother of Alonso Téllez (II.), lord of Frechoso, of the house of Girón, and of San Roman de la Cuba, in the province of Palencia, Old Castile. At the latter's death in 1369 he, with his relative the master of Calatrava, embraced the faction led by Ferdinand I. of Portugal as claimant to the Castilian throne. The elder brother, Alonso Téllez (II.), is also described as a fugitive to Portugal after that event and the accession of Henry II. The ensuing war of succession ended to the advantage of Castile in the Peace of Alcoutin (1371), a stipulation of which accorded a full pardon and restoration of their estates to the Castilian partisans of the Portuguese king. This

* F. Fernandez de Béthencourt, *Historia genealogica y heráldica de la Monarquía española, casa real y grandes de España*, ii., 1900, pp. 501—513; for the two Pedro Alonsos, pp. 511-12.

became inoperative, owing to the less favourable terms which the latter had to accept (1373) after a further outbreak of hostilities. These terms enacted the expulsion from Portuguese territory within thirty days of twenty-eight Castilian nobles to be designated by the King of Castile, among these principal knights being Don Pedro Alonso (II.) Girón. Gudiel goes on to say that King Ferdinand gave the Castilians ships in which to make their escape. They got from Lisbon to Gibraltar, then in the hands of "el Africano" (*i.e.*, the Sultan of Morocco); Gibraltar was being besieged by the Moorish King of Granada, whom they assisted for fifteen days, as he had been an ally of Peter the Cruel. Thence they went to Valencia, the majority betaking themselves ultimately to England, where they died; among them was probably Don Pedro Alonso Girón.*

The elder brother, Alonso Téllez (II.), unlike the two Pedro Alonsos, returned to his country under Henry II.'s son and successor John I. His seal came to light, as has been said, in 1571, in the demolition of an old wall at the Premonstratensian abbey of Our Lady of Retuerta, between Peñafiel and Valladolid. The arms it displays are considered by Cotarelo, a writer who has dealt specially with the origin of the Girón coat, to have been probably new arms,† in con-

* *Compendio (op. cit.)*, f. 74 verso; see also f. 70 verso—72 for the other Giróns more especially in question here. I am indebted to Mr. R. P. Bedford for the copy of the outline of the seal preserved in Gudiel's cut (FIG. 2). It is described as of latten (*azofar*), and peculiar in its size and make.

† Emilio Cotarelo, *Las armas de los Girónes, estudio de antigua heraldica española*, in the *Revista de Archivos, Bibliotecas y Museos*, 3a época, ix., 13, Madrid, 1903. This paper gives the legend of the Girón arms according to López de Ayala, the chronicler of Peter the Cruel—a strip of cloth (*giron*) cut from the surcoat of Alonso VI., who reconquered Toledo (1085), and dyed in paynim blood by the monarch's rescuer, a certain Count Rodrigo, who himself remains a prisoner with the Moors. The rescue is claimed as his work by one of the monarch's courtiers, but the subsequent liberation of the count enables him to appear before the king with the strip, and to claim as his only reward for the deed the grant of a *giron* for arms. Instead, three *girones*, a fief and vassals, are given to him, and his descendants assume the name of Girón. Cotarelo also makes (p. 18) an important correction to a statement by Fernandez de Béthen-court (*op. cit.*, p. 509) as to the arms borne by Rodrigo González V. Girón, which were without the bordure of Cisneros, but leaves the all-important question of the date of the assumption of the *girones* in the place of the *chusky* practically unanswered. Nor does the nature of the Cisneros relationship transpire from either authority.

tradistinction to the old *checky*, henceforward, assumably, abandoned to the kinsmen of the name of Cisneros. The Hackington seal, of course, proves nothing except the common ownership of the charges by a younger brother in the same generation. The great-grandfather, Rodrigo González Girón (late thirteenth century), bore *checky or and gules*, and the two intermediate generations are armorially a blank. It would appear at least premature, therefore, to endorse this theory of the change of arms having been effected in this generation; to attribute it to the intermediate link which definitely discontinued the style, Lord of Cisneros, *i.e.*, apparently the grandson of the aforementioned Rodrigo González, Juan Alonso Girón, who is not so described by Fernandez de Béthencourt, would be more in keeping with the probable facts of the case. The place this authority assigns in the family to both Pedro Alonso Giróns is indicated by the accompanying genealogical table.

Whilst the number of impressions from Spanish seals that have been published is not inconsiderable, there exists, to the writer's knowledge, no study of the evolution of the Spanish seal-shape. Conjecture can but base itself meanwhile upon the examples already described and illustrated, in comparison with which the seal of Don Pedro Alonso Girón is certainly of a rare type in the seals of fourteenth-century Spain. That of Don Alonso Téllez Girón is less difficult to match. Cotarelo cites a seal of Don Pedro Manrique (1367), of which an impression is shown in Salazar y Castro's *Historia genealogica de la casa de Lara* (1694—97). This is of practically identical contour. I find nothing of either type as yet in my friend Don Francisco de Sagarra's Corpus of Catalan seals, but an anonymous, perhaps French, impression, of less pronounced but similar shape to the seals illustrated by Gudiel and Salazar y Castro, has been recently published in the Catalogue of the Schlumberger and Blanchet Collections (No. 89).