



The Seal of the Court of Common Bench, 1648

SIMON, Thomas.

The Seal for the Court of Common Bench at Westminster A. D. ni MDCXLVIII.

London: George Vertue, 1753. 220 x 145mm.

£450

An engraving showing the two sides of the seal of the Court of Common Bench (or 'Pleas'), within an invented rococo border. The front shows a map of England, Wales and Ireland. It was a common law court that heard any case between two individuals which did not concern the king. It was often in conflict over jurisdiction with the Court of King's Bench: however this seal celebrates the reduction in the power of the King's Bench because of the Civil War. The reverse shows the Court of Common Bench in session in Westminster Hall, with the legend 'In the first year of Freedom, by God's blessing restored, 1648'. The court was abolished in 1880. The maker of this seal (and others for Charles I and Charles II) was Thomas Simon (c.1623-65), chief engraver of the Royal Mint. This engraving by Vertue was published in 'The Medals, Coins, Great Seals and other Works of Thomas Simon'.

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