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THE HERALDIC LEGACY OF SIR ISAAC HEARD

Clive Cheesman

An ingenious king of arms, even when childless, may find a way to transmit his own armorial bearings. An investigation into the legacy of Sir Isaac Heard (1730-1822; Norroy 1774-80, Clarendon 1780-84 and Garter 1784-1822: **Figure 1**), pursued to its fullest extent, takes one into unexpected fields. The story will touch upon the sexual *mores* of British India, military exploits in the high Himalayas, an independent fiefdom in the North West Provinces, a beautiful but murderous Begum, the Italian *Risorgimento*, electoral corruption in the Home Counties, a notorious marital dispute, a declaration of lunacy, and a huge fortune acrimoniously contested in several major jurisdictions of western Europe.



Figure 1: Ange-Denis Macquin, caricature of Sir Isaac Heard (CA Ms Heard's grants 2 fo. 160).

For a man whose right to arms by descent was never established, Heard was able to distribute a rich heraldic patrimony. The supposed ancestral arms were *Argent a chevron gules between three water bougets sable*, with a demi goat gorged with a crown for the crest. But they do not appear after 1762, when he was granted the first version of the autobiographical, ponderously allegorical, shield that was to be associated with him ever after: *Argent issuant from a stormy ocean the figure of Neptune proper crowned with an eastern crown or holding in the dexter hand a trident sable headed gold and in the sinister the head of a ship's mast appearing above the waves as part of a wreck proper and on a chief azure the Arctic polar star argent between two water bougets or* (**Plate 5a**).¹ All Garters, doubtless, are fixated with aspects of their personal history and image; and if Heard's younger colleagues ever groaned inwardly to hear again how he barely avoided drowning when washed from the deck of HMS Blandford, off the Guinea coast in 1750, the constant reference to it in his arms must have been grimly inescapable. As his Gartership wore on into its fourth decade, much as they loved him, they could perhaps be forgiven for wondering how their careers might have turned out had Neptune not been so kind.

With these arms, Heard was granted a quartering for his grandmother's family of Masey, of Bridgewater in Somerset. He cited an escutcheon in his possession as evidence that the Maseys had borne *Quarterly argent and gules a mullet in the first*

¹ CA record Ms Grants 10/445.

quarter sable. As this needed distinction (from the arms of De Vere, for one) the version granted had a sable, pierced mullet in each of the first and fourth quarters.

Finally, for a crest, Heard received, 'in honour of the Royal house of Lancaster institutor of his office', *A swan wings elevated argent beaked and membered sable charged on the breast with a rose gules barbed and seeded proper ducally crowned and chained or*.

Eight years after this grant, in 1770, Heard married for the first time, at St. Anne's Blackfriars. His wife was an American lady whom he had probably first met in earlier days when he was trading between Bilbao and the New England colonies: Katherine, daughter of Andrew Tyler of Boston, Massachusetts, gent., and widow of David Ochterlony, also of Boston, gent., who had died in St. Vincent in 1765.² The occasion was an opportunity for a further grant, and the tying up of some loose ends. First, Heard no longer liked the water bougets in his chief, and the kings of arms excised them for him. Secondly, and one might have thought a trifle embarrassingly, the arms he had been granted as a quartering for his Masey ancestors had turned out to be wrong; the escutcheon in his possession was irrelevant, and better research among the shields of the past mayors of Bridgewater, hanging up in the Town Hall there, revealed that the Maseys had really borne *Quarterly sable and or in the first quarter a lion passant guardant argent*. He was granted this replacement quartering unaltered. Thirdly, arms were granted to his wife and the other descendants of her father and his brother: *Sable on a fess erminois between three mountain cats passant guardant ermine a cross formy between two crescents gules*, with a crest of a demi mountain cat as in the arms. For these various operations a single patent sufficed.³

In marrying Katherine Tyler, Heard acquired three Ochterlony stepsons: David (aged 12), Gilbert (6) and Alexander (5). These boys he enthusiastically incorporated into his genealogical and heraldic interests and ambitions. He conducted vast, time-consuming researches into their ancestry and that of families they were allied to,⁴ researches which fitted well with his existing interest in American genealogy and drew him into Scottish areas also.⁵ He had Gilbert and Alexander appointed esquires in the Order of the Bath in 1779, and in 1784 the latter became Blanch Lyon Pursuivant Extraordinary, the first and so far the only American-born officer of arms. Also in 1779 Heard seems to have issued some kind of patent or certificate exemplifying the three boys' arms as *Azure a lion rampant argent charged on the flank with a key in pale azure and holding in the dexter gamb a trident erect or* (the key and trident being references, respectively, to his office of Norroy and his own arms: **Figure 2**), and assigning them his own crest of a chained swan with a rose on the breast, as granted to him in 1762 (**Figure 3**). There is no trace of this curious docu-

² CA record Mss Howard 139 and 3.D14/28.

³ CA record Ms Grants 13/33.

⁴ Collected in CA Mss Beltz-Pulman A.VII fos. 242-264 and JP.83 fos. 435-638. A brief account is given by W. K. Watkins, *NEHGR* 56 (1902), pp. 187-195. Heard's obsessive interest in the Ochterlony ancestry refutes before it is made any suggestion that he was his stepsons' real father.

⁵ On Heard's American researches, see A. Wagner, 'An eighteenth-century King of Arms' collection of American pedigrees', *NEHGR* 95 (1941), pp. 20-28.

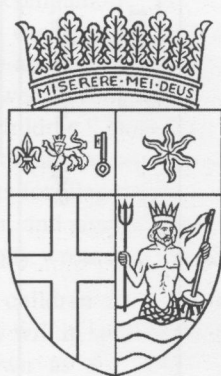


Figure 2: Arms of Isaac Heard as Norroy King of Arms, 1774 to 1780.



Figure 3: Arms and crest 'exemplified' to Isaac Heard's Ochterlony stepsons, 1779.

ment in the official College records, although a summary appears in the great Beltz-Pulman manuscript collection (which incorporates the surviving paperwork from the Heard practice), according to which it was dated 17 April 1779.⁶ It is also picked up in Burke's *General Armory*, in the entry for Ochterlony.

Neither Gilbert nor Alexander progressed much in life, despite Heard's efforts. Gilbert died in 1780 and was buried in St George's Bloomsbury, where he was joined in 1783 by his mother, Mrs Heard (**Plate 5b**). Alexander survived until 1803, without making much of a mark beyond the Jamaican revenue service, in which he toiled for years as a land waiter and searcher.⁷ But the eldest boy, David Ochterlony, repaid Heard in full. A major-general in H.E.I.C. service, he was for many years British resident at Delhi, and led the famous march on Kathmandu in 1815, defeating the Gurkhas and annexing Nepal to British India. He was created a baronet and K.C.B. in 1816, and eventually (in 1822, the year of Heard's death) G.C.B.; he also received in 1817 a grant of a chief and crest of augmentation⁸ and another of supporters,⁹ both silently confirming the arms and crest of 1779 (**Plate 6a**).

Sir David Ochterlony was a prime example of a class and style of European characterized as 'white moghuls': not merely tolerant of and interested in the social and sumptuary customs of India, but sharing in them, often in preference to the usages of their own culture.¹⁰ Addressed in Delhi by the mughal designation 'Nasir ud-Daula', or Defender of the State, he wore *choga* and *pagri* at home and rich

⁶ CA Ms Beltz-Pulman A.VII fo. 251.

⁷ A petition from Heard to Pitt on his behalf, dated 31 October 1794, is among the Chatham papers in the National Archives (PRO 30/8/144 fo. 3).

⁸ CA record Ms Grants 30/87.

⁹ CA record Ms Grants 30/92.

¹⁰ W. Dalrymple, *White Mughals. Love and betrayal in eighteenth-century India* (London 2002).

Table 1

Sources in footnotes 4 and 14

James Ochterlony
of Tellafrisky, co.
Aberdeen. Died 1727.Elizabeth, daughter and heir
of James Gairdn of Midstrath
co. Aberdeen. Died 1730.

David Ochterlony = Mary Forbes

Alexander Ochterlony = Elizabeth, daughter of David
of Pitforth, co. Angus
1695-1736
Tyrie of Dunnydeer, co.
Aberdeen. Died 1749.**Table 2**Gilbert Ochterlony
of Pitforth
1722-1786
Died s.p.David Ochterlony =
of Boston, Mass.
1723-1765Kathleen dau of =
Andrew Tyler
of Boston.
Died 1783.
Sir Isaac Heard
Garter King of Arms
1730-1822James Ochterlony
1726-1760
Died s.p.m.John Lyon = Jane
of Castle LyonUnnamed
concubineSir David Ochterlony,
1st Bt., GCB.
Major-Gen., HEICS.
1758-1825Mahrutun Mubarak
ul-Nissa BegumGilbert Ochterlony
1763-1780Alexander Ochterlony
Blanch Lyon Pursuivant.
1764-1808David Lyon of = Isabella dau
Portland Place, and coheir of
co. Middlesex John Read of
CairnieRoderick Peregrine =
Ochterlony
Died 1822Sarah dau of John =
Nelley, Col. HEICS
Died 1832Frederick Mackenzie
Capt. 64th NI, HEICS
1791-1829James
LyonDavid Lyon
of Goring,
co. SussexWilliam
Lyon2 other
sonsCharlotte
Born 1812Sir Charles Metcalfe
Ochterlony, 2nd Bt.
Born 1817Henry Fisher Salter, =
CB, Lt.-Gen.
HEICS. 1792-1865Harriet
Born 1797Henry Johnson = Mary Ann
Middleton
Born 1791

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shawls and furs with a mughal cap when travelling at the head of his caravan through Rajputana. Like many others of his generation and situation, he did not marry a western woman of his own background, but maintained a collection of *bibis* or native women companions. Tales that he regularly transported them around Delhi of an evening, each one to her own elephant, may well be apocryphal; but together they certainly amounted to a sort of harem (**Plate 6b**).¹¹

Between 1788 and 1806 Ochterlony's *bibis* bore him at least one male and six female children.¹² Now from the western point of view, of course, these children were not legitimate, as the general himself knew. As the nineteenth century unfolded, prospects for illegitimate half-castes, be their fathers never so famous, were getting gloomier, and simply bringing them up among the British of India did not help. As Ochterlony wrote to a friend in 1803:

My children are uncommonly fair, but if educated in the European manner they will in spite of complexion labour under all the disadvantages of being known as the NATURAL DAUGHTERS OF OCHTERLONY BY A NATIVE WOMAN – In that one sentence is compressed all that ill nature and illiberality can convey ...¹³

In the event he decided to send some of his daughters, at least, back to England, and in 1812 four of them were in London. At this particular juncture, colour prejudice was higher in India than at home. One died there and is buried in Marylebone New Cemetery, while two soon after married H.E.I.C. men and returned to India. The son, Roderick Peregrine Ochterlony, was settled in Allahabad, and in 1808 he married the daughter of Major Nelley, the Company's commissary there, by whom he had a son called (in an explicit declaration of allegiance to the new, reformed India of the nineteenth century) Charles Metcalf Ochterlony.¹⁴

This was all of considerable importance to the status of the family, and indeed of genealogical interest to Sir Isaac Heard. But it was of no legal effect whatsoever. The legitimate line was dying out, and with it not only the title but the compound Heard-Ochterlony arms; Heard had to act.

The heraldic point was resolved first: in 1818 Roderick Peregrine Ochterlony received a Royal Licence granting him his father's arms and crest, without the augmentations and with due differences (**Figure 4**).¹⁵ The question of the baronetcy took a little longer. The patent of creation of the original title could not be altered, so a new title had to be granted to Sir David with remainder to his illegitimate issue. The

¹¹ Dalrymple, *op. cit.* pp. 30-31 (with note 53, pp. 514-5). Dalrymple has since repeated the tale without the *caveat* (*The Times* weekend review 15 Nov. 2003, p. 24) so further evidence may have emerged. A. P. Coleman in the *Oxford DNB* says 'the tradition ... probably owes much to folklore'.

¹² CA Ms Beltz-Pulman A.VII fo. 250.

¹³ Dalrymple, *op. cit.* pp. 382-3, quoting Ochterlony to Major Hugh Sutherland, undated but 1803: BL (OIOC Sutherland papers) Mss Eur D547 pp. 133-4.

¹⁴ CA Ms Beltz-Pulman XIX fo. 329 (John Nelley to G. F. Beltz, 5 Dec. 1823). Sir Charles Metcalfe succeeded Ochterlony as resident at Delhi; he served later (1835-6) as provisional governor-general of India and was subsequently raised to the peerage.

¹⁵ CA record Mss I.42/123-4 and Grants 30/420.

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first moves towards this were undoubtedly made by the nonagenarian Heard, but in April 1822 he died, leaving matters in the hands of his junior colleagues; and on 11 August the same year Roderick Peregrine was carried off too,¹⁶ so that when the new patent of creation came through, in 1823, it named the young Charles Metcalf Ochterlony as heir.

The matter was accomplished in the nick of time. Sir David himself was not long for this world. He had resolutely declared he would never leave India. A letter of 1817 in the Beltz-Pulman collection shows that his step-father's researches into Ochterlony history (and his new-found wealth) had inspired him to look for a property in the Highlands, preferably one with family associations;¹⁷ but this idea was never realised, perhaps never deeply believed. Under political pressure for his handling of a diplomatic crisis in Rajputana, he died ('broken-hearted', according to the old *DNB*) at Meerut in 1825. Not only his vague notions of returning to Britain were left unfulfilled. Dying away from Delhi, he could not be interred in the splendid, half-Christian, half-Islamic tomb he had built there for himself and his senior *bibi*, Mahruttun Mubarak ul-Nissa Begum, mother of his youngest daughters. The 1816 baronetcy duly became extinct, the 1823 one passed to his grandson, who was able to sidestep the H.E.I.C.'s 1791 ordinance against employing men of native descent, and to hold junior administrative office in the Behar district. The title endured until 1964. As to General Ochterlony's corporeal assets, he left most of them in trust for Mubarak Begum and her daughters; among the trustees named in the will was G. F. Beltz, Lancaster Herald and associate in Heard's practice.¹⁸ The Begum, who was much younger than the general, to whom she had been 'presented or sold' at the age of twelve, lived on in rather prominent (indeed slightly scandalous) fashion in Delhi for many years, married a muslim princeling and found herself on the rebel side in the Great Mutiny.¹⁹



Figure 4: Arms and crest granted to Roderick Peregrine Ochterlony, 1818.

¹⁶ Nelley to Beltz, loc. cit. In 1825 Peregrine's widow married Capt. Frederick Mackenzie, H.E.I.C.S.; he died in Bengal on 24 Apr. 1829, and she herself died aboard the *Thalia* on 10 Feb. 1832: Major V. C. P. Hodson, *List of Officers of the Bengal Army 1758-1834* (London 1928) vol. 3, pp. 154-5, 379-80.

¹⁷ CA Ms Beltz-Pulman XIX fo. 330 (Mrs Susan Carnegie to G. F. Beltz, 27 May 1817).

¹⁸ PCC: PROB 11/1725 fo. 19v-24r. Bengal: OIOC L/AG/34/29/37 pp. 185-205.

¹⁹ Dalrymple, op. cit. pp. 183-4, citing the Gardner papers in the National Army Museum and the Mubarak Bagh papers in the Delhi Commissioners' Office. Ochterlony himself (the protagonist of the 2003 play *A Taste of Mangoes* by Jatinder Verma) is currently achieving a modest burst of celebrity as an icon of multiculturalism.

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Among the other trustees named in Ochterlony's will was one of his two European sons-in-law, a man who was himself to come into contact with the College of Arms shortly afterwards. This was Henry Johnson Middleton, a civil servant on the H.E.I.C.'s Bengal establishment, who married Mary Anne Ochterlony in October 1816.²⁰ Middleton was at that time Acting Assistant Secretary in Behar and Benares, and later (after an extended period at home in 1828-31) rose to be civil and session judge at Moorshedabad, where the Nawab of Bengal had kept court and his uncle Samuel had succeeded Warren Hastings as British resident.²¹ The Middleton family, it seems, had used for arms *Argent fretty sable a canton azure*, with a garb between two wings as a crest.²² These arms, and variations on them, were common currency amongst Middletons, and Henry's family could presumably show no right to them, so in 1818 a new grant was made to his elder brother John Charles Middleton (of Baker Street and Weybridge in Surrey) and the other descendants of their father; and though Henry is not named in the text at all, certain elements in the design suggest that he was involved.

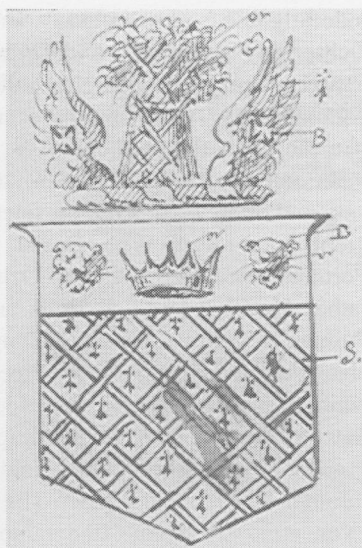


Figure 5: Arms and crest granted to Henry John Middleton, 1818 (CA Ms Heard's grants 2/145).

The arms granted (**Figure 5**) were *Ermine fretty sable on a chief azure an eastern crown between two tiger's faces or*; the crest was *A garb or fretty gules between two wings ermine each charged with a cross formy azure*; and under the shield in the grant book is ALLAH AKBAR (i.e. *Allahu akbar*, 'God is greater').²³ Now the references to the Indies are obvious, of course: an eastern crown and a pair of tigers, not to mention the motto. But the eastern crown does double duty: it cannot but recall the one worn by the kindly Neptune in Heard's own arms. And the chief *as a whole*, with its blue background, its crown and its feline faces, seems unmistakably regal; that is to say, befitting a king of arms. Is this another reference to Heard? If so, it may not perhaps be pushing it too much to see the formy cross on the wings in the crest as a faint recollection of the one in the arms of Sir David Ochterlony's mother.

More distant relations than the Middletons also came within Heard's purview. Among Sir David Ochterlony's cousins were some worthy individuals by the name of Lyon, descended from his aunt. Heard became aware of them in the course of his

²⁰ CA record Ms 11.D14/60.

²¹ E. Dodwell and J. S. Miles, *Alphabetical List of the H.E.I.C.'s Bengal Civil Servants from the year 1780, to the year 1838* (London 1839), pp. 326-7.

²² See for instance Burke, *LG* 1871, 'Middleton of Bradford Peverell'.

²³ CA record Ms Grants 31/38.

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indefatigable researches into the Ochterlony family, and presumably pumped them for genealogical information. Although they were an Aberdeen family, like the Ochterlonys themselves, some of them had migrated to London, and at the very end of Sir Isaac's life the question of a grant was raised with David Lyon of Portland Place, first cousin of Ochterlony's father. Handled by G. F. Beltz and James Pulman, Portcullis, Heard's younger associate, the grant lingered in the pipeline for a while (there were lengthy discussions about how to describe the landholdings of the grantee's ancestors) and finally went through on 18 April 1825.²⁴ The standard Lyon arms are a blue lion rampant on a white shield, which the Strathmore family differences with a blue Scottish tressure;

the crest is a demi woman between two laurels or other encircling foliage. For David Lyon the tressure was replaced with a red orle, with thistles and roses on it, and the lady in the crest was given a key and a thistle to hold (**Figure 6**). The key, of course, is the explicit reference to the Ochterlony connexion. Now it is quite hard to make a clear cross-reference from one coat principally consisting of a lion rampant to another, and the key was convenient. But it is striking nonetheless that a symbol initially devised as a motif for Heard's brief-lived status as Norroy was now being used to symbolize his step-son's family.

The desire to make some reference to the glory of the Ochterlonys had in fact been part of the delay. Aside from describing precisely the lands of which Alexander Ochterlony (the grantee's grandfather) had been laird, the heralds had wanted to include a laudatory reference in the text to the martial exploits of his most conspicuous descendant. This did not meet with the approval of the grantee, however. On 14 December 1824 Lyon wrote to Pulman, saying 'I have erased any mention of Sir D. Ochterlony for reasons I will give you when I see you.'²⁵

What Mr Lyon's objections were, we do not know: perhaps disapproval of the general's resolution of the Rajputs crisis, or perhaps a squeamish distaste for the details of his private life. At any rate, if there was an objection to verbal reference to him in the text of the grant, there ought by rights have been a similar reaction to the pictorial one; the key, after all, was only an Ochterlony symbol at all inasmuch as it



Figure 6: Arms and crest granted to David Lyon of Portland Place, 1825.

²⁴ CA record Ms Grants 35/63. Three months later, another grant was made (the agent being Nayler) to James Wittit Lyon of South Audley Street, David Lyon's first cousin, and the descendants of his father: Grants 35/172. The orle was replaced by a red bordure with roses and anchors on it, and the lady held a thistle and an anchor.

²⁵ CA Ms Beltz-Pulman A.VII fo. 254**.

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was part of the arms of Sir David. Of course a non-herald might not notice this at first; but at length it was understood. Maybe David Lyon of Portland Place expressed himself on the matter; it was his three sons, however, who did something about it. In 1839 they were granted a new crest in which the lady has dropped the Ochterlony key, and clasps one hand to her chest, the other slightly petulantly on her hip.²⁶

The frosty disdain did not last, however. It may be that the charm and amiability of Sir Charles Young, the new Garter king of arms, worked as an antidote to the sterner attitude of Sir George Nayler (no approver of Heard and his ways),²⁷ or it may have been seen, with the passage of time, that memory of the old general's irregular home life would fade but his military glory remain bright for ever. Whatever the reason, the eldest brother of the three, David Lyon of Goring in Sussex, who was Sir David Ochterlony's heir at law, applied for a Royal Licence to bear the general's two crests — both the one of augmentation and the Heard-Lancastrian one. They were exemplified to him in 1843, for the term of his natural life only (**Figure 7**).²⁸

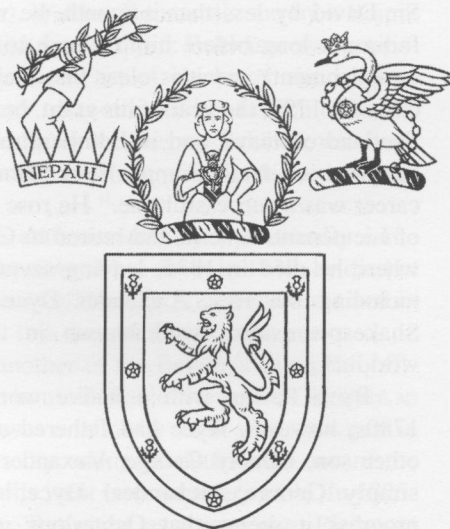


Figure 7: Arms of David Lyon of Goring, as borne from 1843, with the principal crest as altered in 1839.

The enquiry is not yet over. Indeed, it now enters its most interesting phase. In 1797 Sir David Ochterlony's second cousin, Major Alexander Dyce, H.E.I.C.S., was granted for arms *Per chevron embattled or and gules in base two battle axes in saltire argent on a chief wavy azure a lion issuant rampant argent holding in the dexter paw a trident gold*; the lion and the trident come straight from Ochterlony's arms, the trident being one of the two references made there to Heard. With these arms came a crest of a demi tiger, with a mural crown around its neck and an eastern one on its head, holding a banner with a distinctive *per bend embattled* division and a sword.²⁹ See **Figure 8** for a draft version, lacking the eastern crown.

Alexander Dyce was born in Aberdeen in 1758, the son of a merchant of that place by Mary Ochterlony his wife, first cousin of Sir David's father.³⁰ Younger than

²⁶ CA record Ms Grants 44/141.

²⁷ Young's involvement in the case is shown by CA Ms CGY 24 fo. 45. On Nayler's attitude to Heard, see Sir Anthony Wagner, *Heralds of England* (London 1967), pp. 432-4.

²⁸ CA record Mss I.54/196 and Grants 46/214. The petition had asked for the crests to be allowed to all three Lyon brothers and their descendants.

²⁹ CA record Ms Grants 20/29.

³⁰ CA Mss Beltz-Pulman A VII fos. 250-1 and JP 83 fo. 439.

Sir David by less than a month, he went out to India not long before him (though to a different establishment) and it is clear that they remained close. In 1797, the year of his grant, he returned to Scotland on leave, and in Edinburgh married the daughter of Neil Campbell of Duntroon. His career was a successful one.³¹ He rose to the rank of Lieutenant-General and retired to Cheltenham, where he died in 1835, leaving several children including the Rev. Alexander Dyce, editor of Shakespeare and 'well known in the literary world'.³²

By a liaison with a native woman in the 1780s, however, Dyce had fathered at least one other son, namely George Alexander David (or simply George Alexander) Dyce,³³ in whose progress it seems that Ochterlony, presumably mindful of his own half-caste offspring, felt an avuncular interest. Through his influence, the young Dyce entered the largely European-officered service of the Begum Sombre or Sumroo, independent ruler of Sirdhana or Sardhana near Meerut; the intriguing sequel, in part recorded by Garter Young,³⁴ is worth following. The Begum Sombre, by origin a nautch girl called Zeb un-Nissa ('ornament of woman'), and later baptized as 'Joanna Nobilis', had married first a Swiss adventurer called variously Walther Reinhard and Walter Sommer or Summers, who had arrived in India with the French army, become a mercenary against the Europeans and eventually carved out a small realm for himself around Sirdhana in the 1770s.³⁵ Known there as 'Sombre', he met his end in 1778 in classic style, at the hands of his wife.³⁶ Her second husband, a French officer in her service called Le Vassoult, was brought down in 1795 by a revolt among her troops,

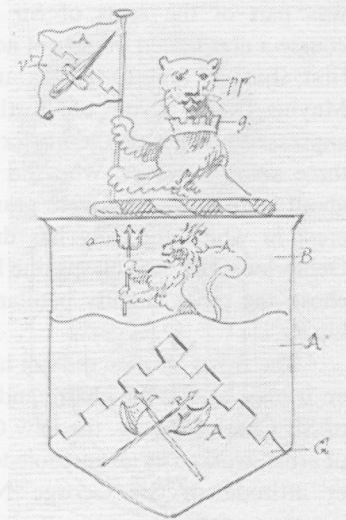


Figure 8: Draft version of arms and crest granted to Alexander Dyce, 1797 (CA Ms Heard's Grants 1 fo. 71v).

³¹ *The East India Military Calendar*, vol 2 (London 1824), pp. 283-88.

³² *Gent.'s Mag.* 1836, p. 547.

³³ Hodson, op. cit. vol. 2, p. 111, makes George Alexander son of Alexander Dyce's younger brother David Dyce, a Lieutenant on the Bengal establishment who died at Calcutta in 1790 and was buried there. He is apparently alone in holding this view.

³⁴ CA Ms CGY 40 fos. 160-1, 191-5. Young's sources (apart, presumably, from some details from Beltz) were Bacon's *First Impressions and Studies from Nature in Hindustan* (2 vols., 1831-6) and the speech of Mr Bethell, counsel for Mrs Dyce-Sombre, as reported in the *Morning Post* 3 March 1849.

³⁵ There is a large literature on Reinhard *alias* Sombre and his wife, including Severin Noti, *Das Fürstentum Sardhana* (Freiburg 1906), Brajendranath Banerji, *Begam Samru* (Calcutta 1925) and John Lal, *Begam Samru: Fading Portrait in a Gilded Frame* (Delhi 1997).

³⁶ His MI (in Portuguese) and a summary of what was then known of his life is in E. A. H. Blunt, *List of Inscriptions on Christian Tombs and Tablets of Historical Interest in the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh* (Allahabad 1911), pp. 43-5, no. 128.

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led by Louis Balthasar (*alias* Zafar Yab Khan), Walther Reinhard's son by a Rajput woman.³⁷ But the revolt was just a cue for British intervention: Balthasar was imprisoned in Delhi and the Begum was restored. In an act of clemency she adopted Balthasar's children (by Miss Lefèvre, daughter of another of her French officers); and a few years later the daughter, Julia Anne (*alias* the Begum Sahiba), was married to the first Briton to command the Sirdhana forces, the aforementioned George Alexander Dyce.

Like all the Begum's previous European commanders, Dyce eventually came unstuck, and was banished from Sirdhana at the time of her death in 1836; he died in poverty in Meerut two years later.³⁸ But his three children by Julia Anne remained in the ruler's favour and were named in her will: two daughters and a son.

The elder daughter, Georgiana, married another of the Begum's European officers, a man who deserves a full treatment for himself: Paolo Solaroli, of Novara in the kingdom of Savoy. Solaroli (1796-1878) was a tailor by trade who took part in the anti-French disturbances of 1821 (supposedly acting as outfitter to one of the hastily raised irregular regiments) and afterwards went into voluntary exile. In 1825-26 he was in Egypt, whence he went to India. Returning as a general to Piedmont with his wife Georgiana in the 1840s, he was again caught up in political unrest. Appointed to general rank and created a baron by the King of Savoy in 1844, he served with energy and distinction in the struggle for Italian unity. Further elevated to the title of Marquess of Briona (a village near Novara where he was granted the fortress) in 1867, he was for many years a dependable if uninspiring member of the parliaments of Piedmont and Italy, known for his amusing asides and his 'complete ignorance of all subject areas'.³⁹ To this day, streets are named after him in Briona, Novara and Turin; and a line of descendants still possess the fortress of Briona (now housing a display of Indian artefacts collected by their ancestor).

The younger daughter, Ann or Anna, was to marry (as his second wife) another Scottish officer in the Sirdhana service, John Rose Troup, one of a large family of soldiers serving in India; to join the Begum's forces, which he apparently did at her personal request, he had had to leave H.E.I.C. service. Rising to the rank of major-general (though the rank was not recognised by the British authorities) he later retired with his wife to Porchester Square, near Paddington, and died there, without issue, in 1862.⁴⁰ His widow joined her sister in Italy, where she died five years later.

The son, and principal heir to the Begum's real and personal estate (though not to her kingdom, which was promptly annexed by the H.E.I.C.), was David Ochterlony Dyce-Sombre. With this intriguing personage the story outgrows the

³⁷ Le Vassoult's MI (or what remained of it in 1911) is in Blunt, *op. cit.* pp. 14-15 (no. 41).

³⁸ Holmes and Co., *Bengal Obituary* (Calcutta 1848), p. 204.

³⁹ The *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani* has not yet reached the letter S, so information on Solaroli is gathered from the following: G. Marsengo and G. Parlato, *Dizionario dei Piemontesi compromessi nei moti del 1821* (Turin 1986), vol. 2, p. 233; T. Sarti, *Il Parlamento subalpino e nazionale* (Terni 1890), p. 885; E. Michel, *Esuli italiani in Egitto (1815-1861)* (Pisa 1958), vol. 1, p. 17. Newspaper and magazine articles on him include those published in *La Stampa* 27 May 1962 (by P. Monelli) and *Il Nord* 13 July 1978 (by G. Omodei Zorlini).

⁴⁰ Hodson, *op. cit.* vol. 3, pp. 310-11. Will: dated 8 May, proved (PPR) 21 July 1862.

THE COAT OF ARMS

modest bounds of an article like this.⁴¹ Plump, awkward and fabulously rich, he is introduced in the old *DNB* as 'an eccentric character'. After bitter disagreements with his father, who had him arrested for a claimed debt of near 20 *lakhs* of rupees,⁴² he came to England at the age of 20 in 1838. He married the daughter of Lord St Vincent in 1840, was elected to Parliament for Sudbury in 1841, unseated for electoral malpractice in 1842, and declared insane at his wife's instance in 1843. Long, very public legal battles followed, not only with his wife,⁴³ but also with his sisters Mrs Troup and Baroness Solaroli; indeed he continually denied the latter's legitimacy and published extraordinary and (unless true) libellous accounts of her husband's antecedents.⁴⁴ At his death without surviving issue in 1851, his widow (later Lady Forester) had his will declared void;⁴⁵ save for some property in Sirdhana previously made over to his sisters, the whole estate passed to her. What claims there were against her were maintained for a decade by the two brothers-in-law from London and Genoa; but in 1862 John Troup expired, also childless, and his widow went to live in Italy where, in the year 1867, both she and her sister died.

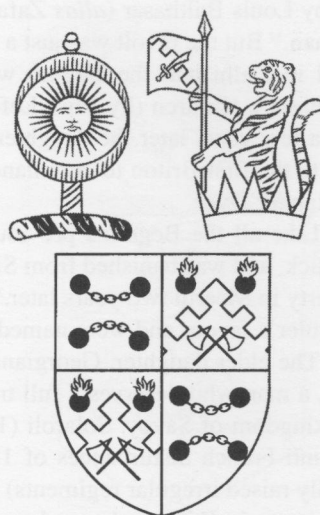


Figure 9: Quarterly arms and two crests granted to David Ochterlony Dyce-Sombre, 1838.

Disqualified by his father's illegitimacy, Dyce-Sombre could not use the arms granted to his grandfather Alexander Dyce in 1797. He was at least able to put this right; through the agency of G. F. Beltz, he was granted quarterly arms for Sombre and Dyce within months of arriving in England in 1838 (**Figure 9**).⁴⁶ The Sombre arms are grim indeed: two pairs of chain shot sable. Chain shot, used for generations at sea (according to the song, *Brave Benbow* lost his legs to it), was a savage weapon to deploy on land, associated in particular with the brutalities of the Indian Mutiny and the American Civil War; does its appearance here suggest that the landlocked

⁴¹ His privately published *Mr Dyce-Sombre's Refutation of the Charges of Lunacy brought against him in the Court of Chancery* (Paris 1849) makes lurid and rather melancholy reading. His diary for the years 1830-8 has been published under the title *From Nawab to Nabob*, ed. N. G. Shreeve (Arundel 2000). See also N. G. Shreeve, *Dark Legacy* (Arundel 1996).

⁴² *Bengal Almanack 1841*. A *lakh* is ten thousand.

⁴³ (1849) 1 Mac & G 116; 41 English Reports 1209.

⁴⁴ See for instance his *Refutation* pp. 265-7 (reprint of a 'Memoir' he had published anonymously in 1847): Solaroli's real name was Jean Muscat, and he was really a Piedmontese trickster who had worked as a domestic servant to Lord Hertford and John Croker, MP.

⁴⁵ Two large boxes of depositions, interrogatories, correspondence and other evidence (including what purports to be an address to the Begum Sumroo from Louis Philippe 'Empereur des Français') are in NA PROB 37/1700.

⁴⁶ CA record Ms Grants 43/92.

Table 2

Sources in footnotes 30-41

David Ochterlony == Mary dau of Peter Forbes
of Tellafrisky, co. Aberdeen Died 1739 of Balfour, co. Kincardine. Died 1739

Lucy Barra == Walther Reinhard *alias* == Julia Nobilis *alias* == Pierre Antoine Le
Bibi Sommer or Sombre. Zeb-un-Nissa, known Vassoult, Col.,
Died 1838 Ruler of Sirdhana Sirdhana Service
Died 1778 as Begum Sumroo, Died 1795
dau of Latif Ali Khan
Died 1836

Alexander Dyce == Mary
of Aberdeen Born 1731
Died 1773

Louis Balthasar == Julia Anne *alias* Bahu
Reynaud *alias* Begum, dau of Capt.
Zafar Yab Khan Louis Anthony Lefevre,
Died 1802 Sirdhana Service
Died 1815

Unknown == Alexander Dyce == Frederica Maria, dau
concubine Lt.-Gen., HEICS of Neil Campbell of
1758-1835 Duntroon, co Argyll
John Dyce
David Dyce
Andrew Dyce

Aloysius
Balthasar
1788-1802

Julia Anne *alias* == George Alexander David
Begum Sahiba Dyce. Col., Sirdhana
1789-1820 Service
1787/8-1838

Rev. Alexander Dyce,
MA Oxon. 1798-1869

John Neil Dyce, MA
Cantab. Sheriff sub-
stitute of Lanark.
Formerly Lt., HEICS
1808-1880

Paolo Solaroli, == Georgiana
Sirdhana Service. 1807-1867
Later a Baron of the
Kingdom of Savoy &
Marquess of Briona in
the Kingdom of Italy.
1796-1887

Various == David Ochterlony ==
concubines Dyce-Sombre,
Col., Sirdhana
Service
1808-1851

Several offspring all died young

Hon. Mary Anne ==
Jervis, dau of Edward,
2nd Viscount St
Vincent
1812-1893

George Cecil
(Weld Forester),
3rd Baron
Forester
1807-1883

John Rose Troup, == Ann May,
Maj.-Gen., *alias* Anna
Sirdhana Service, Maria
formerly Lt., 1812-1867
HEICS Died s.p.
1802-1862

THE COAT OF ARMS

state of Sirdhana had tried it earlier, maybe in the dark days of Walther Reinhard? The crest, which shows the *chattri* or 'Parasol of State' of the little principality, is rather less forbidding. The Dyce quartering lacks the Heard-Ochterlony chief, but is otherwise the same as the arms granted to his grandfather, while the crest differs only in substituting a scimitar for the sword on the banner.

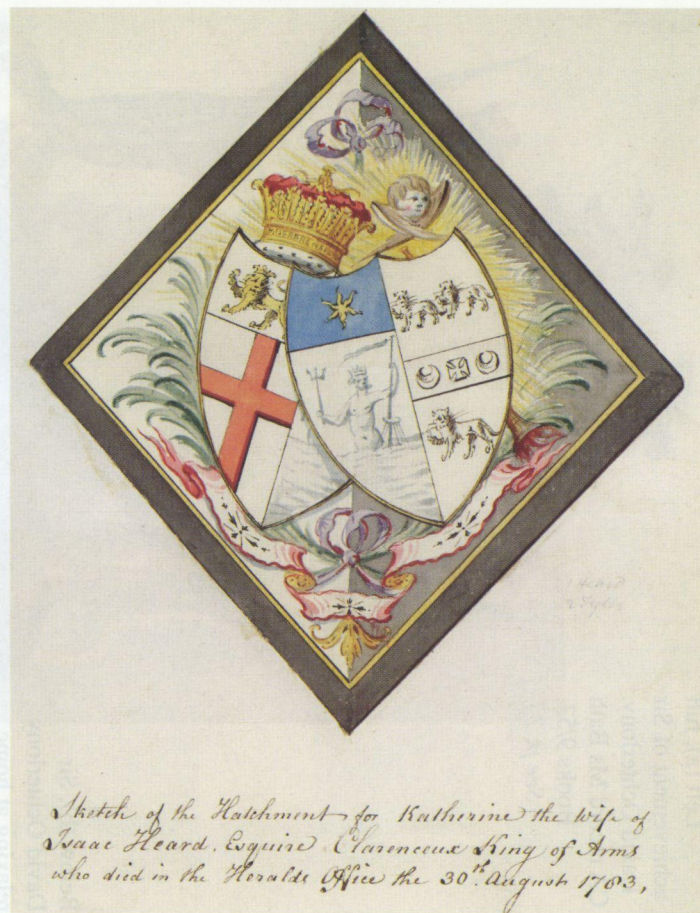
Sir Isaac Heard's arms may not have been inherited directly by anyone, but in the course of his life, and the years immediately after, certain elements from them, and in some cases entire component parts such as his rather vaunting crest, were disseminated over surprisingly large distances within the horizontally-spreading network of those who chanced to be connected to him. Undoubtedly this was in large part due to the fortune of having a famous warrior for a stepson, but the skill and persuasiveness of Heard and his adjutants, as well as a certain natural mind-set among heralds, would have ensured similar results even in different circumstances.

What could not be foreseen was that, despite all this effort, so many of the dispositions made directly or indirectly out of Heard's heraldic patrimony would be extremely short-lived. Of his step-sons, none had legitimate issue and the illegitimate line (the Ochterlony baronets) did not multiply greatly. Tracing even female-line descendants who might quarter the arms is unrewarding work: the family of Liston Foulis, baronets, seems to be the only one. The Middleton arms survive, although the family entry in the *Landed Gentry* is strangely reticent about the line descended from General Ochterlony; it can be traced for a generation or two in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, Crockford and the like, but seems to have petered out on the male side before the end of the nineteenth century. The Lyons survive, but of course all rights and interests in any of the Ochterlony or Heard heraldry were either resigned or came to an end on the death of David Lyon of Goring. And the relevant branch of the Dyce family was extinguished with the death of the unfortunate, litigious heir of the Begum in 1851. Only Baroness Solaroli has left descendants, and they do not quarter the Dyce arms as recorded in the College of Arms, the Marquess of Briona having been granted a striking achievement, rich in eastern reference but still clearly Italian in style.⁴⁵

⁴⁵ G. B. di Crollanza, *Dizionario storico-blasonico* (Bologna 1965), vol. 2, p. 544.



(a) Arms and crest granted to Isaac Heard, 1762.
CA record Ms Grants 10/445. See p. 23.



*Sketch of the Hatchment for Katherine the wife of
Isaac Heard, Esquire, Clarenceux King of Arms
who died in the Herald's Office the 30th August 1783,*

(b) Design for a funeral hatchment for the first Mrs Heard
(died 1783). CA Ms Pingo Heraldic Collns. 4, p. 5. See p. 25.

PLATE 6

Left (a), full
achievement of Sir
David Ochterlony.
CA record Ms Bath
Books 9/53.
See p. 25.



Below (b), Sir
David Ochterlony
relaxing at home.
BL (OIOC) Add.
Or. 2. *See p. 27.*

