

Third Series Vol. VII Part 2

No. 222

Autumn 2011

ISSN 0010-003X

Price £12.00

THE COAT OF ARMS

an heraldic journal published twice yearly by The Heraldry Society



THE COAT OF ARMS

The journal of the Heraldry Society



Third series

Volume VII

2011

Part 2

Number 222 in the original series started in 1952

The Coat of Arms is published twice a year by The Heraldry Society, whose registered office is 53 High Street, Burnham, Slough SL1 7JX. The Society was registered in England in 1956 as registered charity no. 241456.

Founding Editor

†John Brooke-Little, C.V.O., M.A., F.H.S.

Honorary Editors

C. E. A. Cheesman, M.A., PH.D., F.S.A., Richmond Herald

M. P. D. O'Donoghue, M.A., Bluemantle Pursuivant

Editorial Committee

Adrian Ailes, M.A., D.PHIL., F.S.A., F.H.S.

Jackson W. Armstrong, B.A., M.PHIL., PH.D.

Noel Cox, LL.M., M.THEOL., PH.D., M.A., F.R.HIST.S.

Andrew Hanham, B.A., PH.D., F.R.HIST.S.

Advertisizing Manager

John Tunesi of Liongam

SHORTER NOTE

The arms of Mure. *Dirk FitzHugh writes:* The article 'Petticoat Propaganda' by Bruce McAndrew, in *CoA* 3rd ser. 6 (2010), pp. 57-64, is of great interest. There is however one point which could be questioned, namely, the following statement relating to the Mure arms (p. 59):

Using this contemporary evidence, it seems likely that the branch of the More family that held Rowallan added three Comyn garbs to differentiate themselves from the stem line, subtly altered by the sixteenth-century heralds, who removed the garbs from the More shield and placed them in a separate quarter.

The evidence cited is the presence of the Comyn garbs in the More arms on the seal of an Adam More/Mure, Lord of Rowallan, after the death of Walter Comyn of Rowallan (1372/82), whose heiress daughter had married an Adam More.

There had been much simpler means of differentiating branches of the same family (e.g. bordures of various types, and tinctures, fesses and addition of mullets, crescents and the like). Is it not equally likely, or more so, that, at a time when quartering was not customary, Adam More's prime wish was to demonstrate the alliance with the Comyn family and the inheritance of the Rowallan barony from that family? This would appear to be an example of 'compounding' arms, (Comyn into More/Mure), which occurred on occasions, before the practice of quartering was established. Furthermore, is it not likely that, when quartering became customary, it was the More/Mure family, not the sixteenth-century heralds, who chose to adopt the Comyn quartering in place of the compounded arms?

Alexander Nisbet, in his *A System of Heraldry*, vol. 1 (Edinburgh 1722), p. 58, gives examples of differences adopted by various 'junior' branches of Mures:

Mure of Caldwell, descended of the Mures of Abercorn in West Lothian, Argent, on a Fesse Azure, three Stars of the first, within a bordure ingrailed Gules.

Muire of Glanderstoun, descended of Caldwell, carries the same with Caldwell, with a Crescent in Base Gules, for a brotherly difference.

Archibald Mure of Riccartoun [...] carries as Caldwell; but for his Difference, ingrailes both the Fess and Bordure.

The principal bearing of the surname Muir, 'argent on a fesse azure three stars or', also appears: 'The chief of that name is Muire of Rowallan [...], who quartered the arms of Cumine upon marrying one of the Heiresses of a principal Family of that Name' (p. 45).

The shields of both Mure of Rowallan and of Caldwell so appear, one after the other, in the sixteenth-century Hague Roll (see Alexander Maxwell Findlater, *Aspilogia Scotiana* (2006), pp. 69-70).

In volume II of his *System of Heraldry* (part 3, p. 46), Nisbet notes that the first practice of quartering met by him on seals was in the reign of Robert II (crowned 1371).

THE COAT OF ARMS

As also did David Lindsay, first Earl of Crawford, assume the Coat of Abernethy, and quartered it with his own, upon the Account he was descended of that Family by the Mother's side: For his Grandfather, Sir David Lindsay, in the Reign of King Robert I, married one of the three Co-heiresses of Alexander Lord Abernethy [...]. A long time after, the Earls of Douglas and Rothes, being descended of the other two Co-heiresses of the above Alexander Lord Abernethy, marshalled the Arms of Abernethy with their own.

Thus there are precedents for families in Scotland later adopting quarterings from heiresses who had been married during the pre-quartering era. The sixteenth-century quartered arms depicted by heralds in their rolls would have been drawn originally from use by the relevant families, who were still extant then. Hence it would appear likely that the Comyn quartering resulted from a decision by the Mure family, rather than that of the heralds. John Mure of Rowallan had married Margaret Boyd, formerly mistress of James IV and niece of Thomas Boyd, Earl of Arran. John Mure of Caldwell (to which he succeeded in 1538), married first, Isabel daughter of the 1st Earl of Eglinton, and second, Christian daughter of the 3rd Lord Ross of Halkhead. The Mures were then in the public eye.

The quartering of the Comyn garbs by the Mures (and the retention of this as the only quartering generally used for generations) would support the view that the appearance of the three garbs on the 1384 arms of Adam Muir, Lord of Rowallan (see J. H. Stevenson and M. Wood, *Scottish Heraldic Seals* (3 vols., Glasgow 1940), p. 519, cited in *DBA* 3, p. 500), was in recognition of the important alliance with the Comyn family, through whom the Rowallan barony was acquired and held for centuries (rather than being merely a means of differentiating).

The principles of the above are confirmed by Sir William Mure in his *Historie and Descent of the House of Rowallan* (written in or prior to 1657, and published Glasgow 1825); admittedly much of the earlier history is based upon 'tradition' rather than documentary evidence.