

## A note on some hangers possibly of Scottish origin

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In the catalogue of arms and armour at Waddesdon Manor C Blair (1974, Cat no 19) drew attention to a group of short swords or hangers with simple guards consisting of a rear quillon, a half knuckle-guard, a shell-guard on the outside of the hilt, and an all-metal, one piece, grip terminating in the stylized head of a bird, either a hawk or possibly a parrot. He suggested that these might be English on the evidence of a number of portraits of the English School. The present writer illustrated and discussed a number of hilts of this group and a portrait illustrating one in the *Festschrift* for Dr H Schneider (Norman 1982, 79-86).

Mr Blair has recently drawn my attention to yet another English-School portrait of an unknown man, dated 1607, which shows a gilt hilt of this type not unlike Tower Armouries Inv No IX. 759 (Christie's 1984, Lot 143). The period covered by the portraits is 1603 to 1632. All the portraits show hilts with bird's head tops to the grips, but one actual hilt formerly in the collection of FH Cripps Day and now in a Suffolk private collection has heads of lions as terminals to the grip and to both the knuckle-guard and the rear quillon (wrist-guard). Its hilt differs from most of the others in the group by not being fitted with a shell-guard of any sort on its outer side. This particular weapon has not

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ILLUS 1 Hanger, possibly of Scottish type, in Armouries of the Tower of London

previously been mentioned in the discussion of this group of hangers. An example of such a hilt now in the Armouries of HM Tower of London (Inv No IX. 759) is shown in illus 1.

Mr Blair and the present writer have both suggested that this group of hangers might be English, the former tentatively, the latter more positively. However, there is one small clue that this type of weapon might have originated in Scotland or at least might have been worn as a compliment to Scottish fashions. It is perhaps significant that so far their appearance is not recorded in English portraits before the Union of the Crowns. In the Second Volume of his extraordinary encyclopedia of heraldic terms, *The Academy of Armory* of 1682, Randle Holme lists what he calls a 'Scottish Hanger' or a 'Scots fauchion' (Holme 1682, 126).

'Some will say a Scots fauchion Argent and onely mention the handle and pommel (leaving the hilt out) because in these kind of semiters, or short crooked swords, the Scots aunciently had the handle and pommel, all of Iron, and in one peece, as many such may be produced to this day: on the pommel was vsually chased the figure of some beast, bird, fish or mans head'.

#### REFERENCES

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