

Chapter 6

**The Bute or Bannatyne Mazer
– two different vessels**

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THE medieval drinking vessel known as the Bute Mazer, or less commonly the Bannatyne Mazer, is a Scottish national treasure, prized for its supposed association with King Robert Bruce (fig 6.1). It is a large drinking bowl, 110mm high and 254 to 258mm in diameter, with a whale-bone lid. It takes its name from ownership by the Marquises of Bute as well as earlier associations with the Isle of Bute and the family of Bannatyne of Kames. Since 1998 it has been one of the pre-eminent items on exhibition in the National Museum of Scotland, Edinburgh, and before that was long displayed in the National Museum of Antiquities of Scotland.



Fig 6.1 The Bute Mazer (© National Museums of Scotland).



Fig 6. 2 Photo-montage of the inscription on the rim of the Bute Mazer (© National Museums of Scotland).

The Bute Mazer consists of a turned, maple wood bowl with a deep silver rim, plain inside but decorated on the exterior with an untidy inscription reserved against a cross-hatched background: NINIAN [mullet] bANNACHTYN [ihs] LARD OF YE CAMIS [cinquefoil] SOUN TO UMQhIL RObaRT bANNACRIN OI YE CAMISI [mullet] (fig 6. 2). The bowl is set on a rolled silver foot connected to the rim by six hinged and pinned straps. In the interior is a large silver-gilt print or boss set with six enamelled medallions containing shields around a lion couchant in full relief (fig 6. 3). The shields are heater-shaped (like an old-fashioned flat iron) and are described here clockwise, starting with the one between the lion's fore paws. We have, however, preserved the numbering used by earlier commentators:

1. Or, a fess chequy azure and argent, for Stewart, High Steward of Scotland, prior to about 1369 when the Steward's arms were augmented by a royal tressure.

2. Argent, on a chief azure three stars of the field. These are the arms of Douglas prior to the addition of a heart in commemoration of James Douglas' death in Spain in 1330, where he had taken Bruce's heart in a crusade against the Moors.

5. Gules, three cinquefoils ermine, for Gilbertson/ FitzGilbert /Hamilton.

6. Gules, a chevron ermine between three cinquefoils or.

4. Gules, a fess ermine, for Crawford.

3. Or, a bend chequy sable and argent, for Menteith, a branch of the Stewarts.

The lid consists of a disk of whale-bone carved on its top surface with an elaborate design of foliage and flowers, which is fitted with a central silver knob or handle (fig 6. 4).



Fig 6. 3 The silver-gilt print, with enamelled shields around a lion, in the base of the Bute Mazer (© National Museums of Scotland).



Fig 6. 4 The carved whale-bone lid of the Bute Mazer (© National Museums of Scotland).

Previous accounts of the Bute Mazer

The earliest record of the Bute Mazer is in a book on Ayrshire families by George Robertson published in 1823. Robertson identified it as an antique bowl, probably a baptismal bowl, then in the possession of Lord Bannatyne, and on the basis of the rim inscription, associated it with Ninian Bannatyne, Laird of Kames in Bute, whose father Robert had died in 1522. He assumed that shields three and four were those of the family, and that the other four related to Ninian's ancestry, thus:

On the principle of an escutcheon, representing the alliances of the family, it is natural to suppose, that of the four upper, the two on the right represent the paternal arms of Ninian's mother and grandmother and the two on the left, the arms of their mothers; under which view it would appear that Ninian was the son of Robert, by his second wife, whose father had borne the name of Douglas, and her mother that of Crawford; and that Robert had been the son of a former Ninian, by a lady whose father carried the name of Stuart, and mother that of Menteith (Robertson 1823: 60–1).

Lord Bannatyne – Sir William Macleod Bannatyne – was a Lord of Session (judge), the son of Roderick Macleod and Isabel Bannatyne. He adopted the name Bannatyne on succeeding to the estate of Kames through his mother, from whom, no doubt, he also inherited the mazer. Robertson's explanation of its ownership by Ninian, son of Robert Bannatyne, in the sixteenth century has not been disputed. His heraldic interpretation is not unreasonable, but unproven. If shields five and six represented the Bannatynes they might be expected to have been charged with mullets in place of cinquefoils.

The most thorough report on the mazer was published in 1931 by the heraldic expert, John H Stevenson, with support from several other specialists. Stevenson identified it as a work of the early fourteenth century, remodelled for Ninian Bannatyne in the sixteenth century with the addition of the silver foot, straps and rim. He identified the lion in the centre of the print as representing King Robert Bruce and the shields roundabout as those of some of his leading barons. Since the arms of the Stewart are positioned between the lion's forepaws it is clear that he was regarded as the most important of the six and therefore the man for whom the mazer was made. Stevenson further believed that the mazer could be tied down in date to late 1314 – January 1317/8. It could not be any earlier than that given the presence of the Gilbertson arms, since prior to the Battle of Bannockburn in 1314, the head of that family, Walter son of Gilbert (of Hamilton), had commanded Bothwell Castle as a supporter of the English. It could not be later than January 1317/8 since on or about the fourth of that month the heiress of Sir Reginald Crawford of Loudoun, Sheriff of Ayr, executed by the English in February 1307/8, married Sir Duncan Campbell, and he retained a version of the Campbell arms for his own use.

Stevenson went on to speculate that the arms on the sixth shield, given their similarity to those of Gilbertson, might be those of John son of Gilbert, known to have been Bailie of Bute in or about 1322–5. In this role, or perhaps in another official capacity within the household of his master, the Steward, as Lord of Bute, it may have been incumbent upon John to supply a mazer for use at table in Rothesay Castle, the Stewart family residence in Bute. This line of reasoning, certainly the association with the Gilbertsons, was apparently strengthened by some of the other decoration on the print – three cinquefoils ('or' as on shield six rather than 'ermine' as on shield five) around the edge and scrolling, stylised, strawberry plants with leaves and fruits. Stevenson pointed out that the flower of the strawberry plant was one of the originals from which the heraldic cinquefoil was derived. Also, the mazer lid has a silver knob in the form of a cinquefoil and its overall decorative scheme includes a pentagon with five segments, comparable to a cinquefoil.

In appendices to Stevenson's paper Lionel Crichton, a respected London dealer in antique silver and a retail silversmith specialising in fine quality reproduction silver, opined that the mazer was Scottish work, while William Brook, an Edinburgh goldsmith, thought the print was of eastern origin but re-worked by a Scottish craftsman (Stevenson 1931: 35–7). Brook drew particular attention to the way the heraldic shields are on separate disks which have been soldered into holes cut into the print and saw this as evidence that the print and shields are from different sources. The view that the mazer is totally a Scottish work has prevailed.

Stevenson's paper has continued to form the basis of the National Museum of Scotland's view on the mazer as expressed in gallery texts, especially for an exhibition on Scottish medieval art in 1982 (Caldwell 1982: 37–8), and another on Scottish silver in 2008 (Dalglish & Fotheringham 2008: 32). In the latter case, a date of about 1565 was suggested for the

rim, foot and straps, and attention was drawn to evidence for a relationship between Ninian Bannatyne and a Glasgow goldsmith, Peter Lymeburner, in whose house Ninian conducted business on 22 April 1567. So possibly Lymeburner was responsible for the present form of the mazer.

In a paper published in 1999 Professor Geoffrey Barrow looked in more detail at the social background of the mazer. He accepted Stevenson's suggestion that shield six bears the arms of John Gilbertson, the Bailie of Bute, and identified him as the son of Gilbert who was either the brother or nephew of that Walter who commanded Bothwell Castle for the English in 1314. Gilbert had acquired from Walter the Steward the lands of Kilmacholmac (now St Colmac) in Bute by 1312–13 and his son John was granted further lands in Bute. Barrow suggested that this John was the predecessor and, very probably, the ancestor of the Bannatynes of Kames. He speculated further that the inclusion of a chevron ermine in the arms on shield six is in honour of marriage with an important family, and he guessed that it might have been between John's father Gilbert and an heiress of Reginald Crawford of Crosbie in Ayrshire. That would also explain the presence of the Crawford arms on shield four. So for Barrow the heraldic scheme actually indicates John's ownership of the mazer, with his arms positioned between shields five and four, Gilbertson and Crawford, those of his paternal and maternal ancestors. The other three shields are understandable as those of his lord, the Steward, and the latter's close allies, Sir James Douglas and Sir John Menteith the younger, Lord of Arran and Knapdale. Given his particular identifications of the arms on shields three and four, Menteith and Crawford, Barrow only felt able to date the mazer to 1314–27. His reasoning for a start date in 1314 is the same as Stevenson's. The end date depends on the assumption that the Stewart arms are those of Walter the Steward who died in 1327, rather than his son Robert, still only 11 at the time of his father's death.

Barrow also called into question Stevenson's interpretation of the lion on the print as representing King Robert. In strict heraldic terms it should have been shown rampant rather than couchant. While not totally dismissing the royal symbolism he drew attention to the documentary evidence for one Leo son of Gilbert, one of the 28 esquires serving in Bothwell Castle in 1311–12 under the command of Walter son of Gilbert, and suggested the possibility should be kept open that the lion represents him. If that were to be the case, Leo might have been a brother of John the Bailie who died young, and the mazer might have been made to celebrate an important event in his life. It is not necessary to accept any more of Barrow's speculations on Gilbertson genealogy and heraldry than that the mazer was made for John the Bailie (or just possibly Leo) to understand his conclusion that the mazer is evidence for wealth amongst the lesser landed families of Scotland in the early fourteenth century. The mazer, indeed, may only be exceptional in having survived.

Barrow's analysis and views were followed in two accounts of the mazer by Virginia Glenn (1999 and 2003) which focussed on an artistic analysis. In the former she took issue with Brooks' assessment that the heraldic shields are from a different source than the print, giving as her reason the results of analytical analyses carried out in the research laboratory of National Museums Scotland (NMS). They show that the silver of the shields is virtually identical to the silver of the print. Also perhaps of relevance in this context is the fact that the red enamel of the eyes of the lion matches the red enamel in the shields. Glenn also, in her 1999 paper, drew attention to the conservative appearance of the lion, seeing it as being more like twelfth-century representations of lions rather than the more realistic shaggy

beasts seen in fourteenth-century heraldry. The explanation, she suggested, is because the mazer was added to an existing collection of hanaps (drinking vessels) with similar lions; but the lion, she believed, must nevertheless have been of the same date and made in the same workshop as the rest since its silver is identical. Glenn's 2003 account covered the same ground. She added the assertion that the identification of the lion as King Robert Bruce is fanciful, and dated the rim, straps and lid to about 1500.

Ninian Bannatyne's Mazer

There are, then, differing views on the mazer and its significance. All are agreed that, at least to some extent, it is a work made or refashioned for Ninian Bannatyne in the sixteenth century. The word 'mazer' is dealt with in the following paper by Molly Rorke. Suffice it to record here that, while the word mazer was in use in Scotland in the sixteenth century and earlier, it is possible that many would have preferred to call a vessel like Ninian Bannatyne's mazer a tass, a generic term for a drinking cup that might be of a variety of materials including metal, wood and glass. Certainly the contexts in which tasses are encountered suggests as much – for instance, a 'litill tas of masar [maple wood] set in siluer' left to a daughter in a testament of 1575 and 'ane tas of trie [wood] with ane siluer fuit' mentioned in 1578 (both cited by DOST s.v. Tass).

The prevailing view is that it incorporates, or is mostly, work of the early fourteenth century but there is much less certainty on whether it is a noble piece of work that graced the table of the Stewart or is representative of what minor landowners and officials aspired to. These are issues which we hope to resolve here by a new examination of the piece. It may not be possible to clarify any further the speculations involved in identifying particular owners of the arms displayed on the print but a further consideration of the mazer's artistic context is overdue.

The first thing to notice is the finely turned wooden bowl itself, assumed to be of maple wood. It is remarkable that previous commentators have not drawn attention to a unique design feature, the lack of a base. Mazers at their simplest are turned wooden bowls with a slight base ring to allow them to stand steady on a table. Where they have been fitted with a print or boss these are invariably attached to the inner surface of the wooden bowl. In the case of the Bute Mazer the silver-gilt and enamelled print is in place of a wooden base. A visual examination of the underside of the mazer shows that its silver foot is added to a silver foot ring that forms the underside of the print (fig 6.5). It acts as a rim for a large basal opening in the wooden bowl. This unusual arrangement suggests that the bowl was fitted to the print, rather than vice versa.

So, if the print is essentially of fourteenth-century date, how old is the mazer itself? It has been noted, at least in the case of English mazers, that changes of shape in mazer bowls reflect changes in fashion with time, with those of fourteenth- and early fifteenth-century date generally being deeper than later ones (Hope 1887: 135). This, however, is clearly an inexact science. In fact, the bowl of the Bute Mazer does not look markedly different in appearance and profile from those of sixteenth-century Scottish mazers like the St Mary's Mazer of about 1556–8 or 1561–2 or the Fergusson Mazer of about 1576 (Dalgleish & Fotheringham 2008: 35), albeit they are smaller. It is therefore not improbable that the mazer itself dates to the time of Ninian Bannatyne. The turning of wooden bowls as fine as this

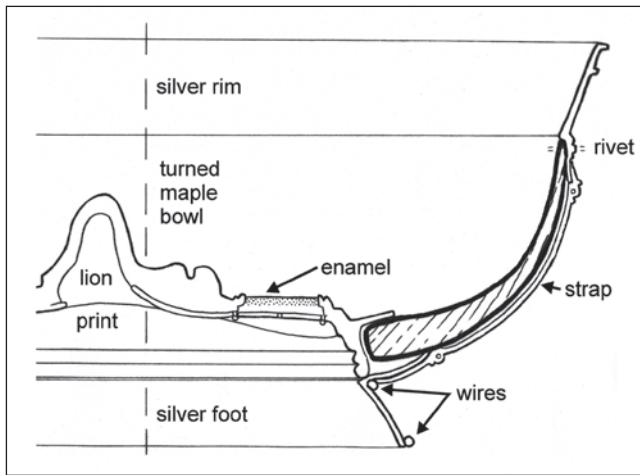


Fig 6. 5 Diagram showing the relationship between the silver foot, silver-gilt print and wooden bowl of the Bute Mazer (© David H Caldwell).

mazer demanded great skill and was no doubt in the hands of specialists, such as the copper (cupmaker), John Hunter in Newbottle, Midlothian, who was supplying cups to Mary Queen of Scots in 1562 (*TA* 11: 174).

Perhaps a goldsmith was commissioned by Ninian Bannatyne to create a mazer using an antique – the print – preserved by the family. It would seem more probable that an inscription so untidily and inaccurately rendered as that on the rim of the Bute Mazer would be the work of a goldsmith based in a provincial centre like Glasgow than one in Edinburgh or Canongate. Other Scottish mazers of the late sixteenth century with marks are all products of those latter two towns, have better quality engraving and are technically more competent. They include the Watson Mazer of about 1540 with a mark attributed to Adam Leys, Edinburgh; the Tulloch Mazer of about 1557 and the Galloway Mazer of about 1569, both by James Gray, Canongate; St Mary’s Mazer by Alexander Auchinleck, Edinburgh, about 1556–8 or 1561–2; the Fergusson Mazer by John Mosman II, Edinburgh, about 1576; and the Craigievar Mazer, probably by either John Cok or John Cunningham, Edinburgh, possibly about 1575–91 (Dalglish & Fotheringham 2008: 32–6). All these mazers are of the standing variety, that is they are supported on tall stems. The bowl of the Bute Mazer may well have been considered too large for such treatment.

The actual date for the commission is difficult to pin down with any accuracy. The style of the lettering in the inscription ought to offer some clues as to date, except that there is nothing with a Scottish provenance that is directly comparable. Stevenson (1931: 227) believed the lettering indicated a date not long after Ninian succeeded his father as laird of Kames in 1522. It is not unreasonable to argue that the gothic lower case letters, for example b, c and h, should not be much later than 1522, and some of the capitals, especially I, M and N, with knops or bars mid-stroke, are likely to have been forms current in 1522. They might, however, especially if the work of a provincial goldsmith, be rather later.

About 1565 is the date of manufacture for the mazer previously suggested by Dalglish and Fotheringham (2008: 32). Given the way the rim and foot are secured together by six straps a case might even be made that the mazer is even later in date. This method of construction was commonly employed by Scottish goldsmiths when mounting coconuts and shells to form cups. The straps were fixed by hinges and pins to avoid damaging delicate nuts

and shells by the application of solder. The earliest surviving Scottish examples of coconuts and shells so mounted date no earlier than the early seventeenth century. They include a coconut cup of about 1600 by Thomas Lindsay I, Dundee, in a private collection; a coconut cup of about 1610, possibly by James Hart, Canongate, in NMS; a coconut cup of the early seventeenth century, probably by Robert Gardyne II, Dundee, in a private collection; and the Heriot Loving cup (a mounted nautilus shell), 1611–13, by Robert Denneistoun, Edinburgh, on loan to NMS. On this basis a late sixteenth- or early seventeenth-century date might be considered more appropriate for the mazer. It is not known when Ninian died, but he was certainly still alive in 1587 (*RMS* 5, no 2160) and, for what it is worth, the Glasgow goldsmith, Peter Lymeburner, suggested as the possible maker, survived until 1606 x 1610 (Robertson 1823: 59; Dalgleish & Fotheringham 2008: 224).

Whether Lymeburner or another, the goldsmith asked to mount the print in a mazer with a silver rim and foot may already have had experience of mounting coconuts and shells. He would have perceived the task of assembling and securing the different elements of the mazer to be a similar task, albeit on a larger scale. Straps are unusual on mazers and in Scotland unique to the Bute Mazer. It might even be considered as a possibility that the straps are not an original feature, although there is no evidence for that other than the composition of the metal. On the basis of recent X-ray fluorescence analyses (Tate & Kirk 2011) the straps are about 92% silver while the other main silver elements are about 95%. This may result from reusing metal from different sources, a point to which we shall return.

If the straps are indeed an original design feature, the goldsmith who mounted the mazer may have lacked confidence that the attachment of his rim would prove secure enough without this extra help. As on other mazers, the silver rim sits on top of the wooden rim of the bowl, not much more than 2mm in thickness, and is fixed with rivets. The goldsmith must certainly have been aware that the attachment of the bowl to the print was a botched job. It does appear that it is the straps that keep the bowl, print and foot together. Perhaps it was not just inexperience or incompetence that produced this result but a refusal by the client to allow too much tampering with his antique. To fit it effectively into a mazer the goldsmith would have had to remove its base ring.

Despite the obvious comparisons to be made with coconut cups this is not sufficient reason alone to date the mazer much later than 1522. There is plenty of evidence for early sixteenth-century and earlier coconut cups in England (Glanville 1987: 16–21) and it may be inferred that it is merely the accident of survival that has denied us comparable Scottish material. Two features of the inscription, not hitherto commented on, lead us to believe that a date between 1522 and 1560 is the most likely for the mazer.

First, there is the appearance in the inscription of a stop in the form of the sacred monogram of Christ, *ih̄s*, which post-1560 might have been seen as making a political or religious statement. Ninian had aligned himself with Clan Campbell, being granted a bond of maintenance by the Earl of Argyll in 1538 (Robertson 1823: 57; Wormald 2003: 123–5; Campbell 2002: 18), and is likely to have supported the protestant cause. The *ih̄s* may have appeared unfortunate after 1560, even if a gratuitous addition by the goldsmith.

Second, there is the insistence in the inscription that Ninian is the son of the late Robert. How long after 1522 would it have been relevant to record this piece of genealogy? There are no hard and fast rules, but it is certainly not a typical cognisance in recording ownership of objects, and one that might only have been used in the immediate aftermath of the father's

death. So a date of 1522 for the Bute Mazer is perhaps most likely. In that case the attribution to Peter Lymeburner can be dismissed, though a Glasgow provenance is an attractive idea.

The date of the lid has always been in doubt. Stevenson (1931: 21) considered it to be early fourteenth-century while Glenn (2003: 191–2), has suggested the early sixteenth century, the date she assigned to rim, straps and foot. It seems most reasonable to the present authors that it belongs with the mazer made for Ninian Bannatyne about 1522. It is 240mm to 243mm in diameter and has eight rivet-holes around its rim to secure a now missing metal mount. It sits lightly within the rim of the mazer, an intentional arrangement, since its function may have been largely ritual. As it was passed around the table the lid would ceremoniously have been taken off by each guest prior to drinking a toast, and then put on again before being passed on to the next person. Mazer lids are now very rare, and there are none very comparable. A wooden one of about 1350 from St Nicholas' Hospital, Harbledown, Canterbury (Alexander & Binski 1987: 436–7), now in the Museum of Canterbury, may similarly have sat within the rim of a now missing mazer.

Whale-bone was used in the West Highlands to make tablemen and caskets, two of which, dating to the fifteenth century, survive, decorated all over with interlace designs (Glenn 2003: 184–5, 186–91). The angular leaf work on the lid is reminiscent of some on West Highland sculpture of the sixteenth century, like the tomb-chest of Alexander MacIver at Kilmichael Glassary in Knapdale and the lid of a tomb-chest at the medieval cathedral of Agyll, Lismore, both possibly by the same carver (Steer & Bannerman 1977: pl 29F&E). It is not close enough, however, to make a convincing case that the lid is by the same craftsman.

Its decoration also has similarities to the carving on two wooden caskets believed to be of Scottish origin, one of which is in the British Museum, the other long in the possession of the Forrester family of Corstorphine, Edinburgh (British Museum 1924: fig 173; Caldwell 1982: 72–5). Both include crowned Gothic Rs and Ms encompassed by intertwining ribbed bands, interspersed with four-petalled flowers and leaves and berries. It is particularly the ribbed bands which are reminiscent of the Bute Mazer lid, but not a compellingly close match. Neither West Highland art nor the two wooden caskets provide obvious parallels for the large flower-heads on the mazer lid.

The Forrester casket is said to have belonged to King James IV's queen, Margaret Tudor, and to have been given to an ancestor by Mary Queen of Scots. Just possibly of more relevance than this tradition is the fact that the Forrester family briefly had a west coast presence through the royal grant to Duncan Forrester of Corstorphine of the barony of Skipness with its castle, in Kintyre, in 1495, retained by him until 1502 (*RMS* 2: nos 2261, 2669). Could it be that the caskets and the mazer-lid are products of craftsmen, influenced to some extent by West Highland art, working in the Clyde region in the sixteenth century?

In having this mazer made for himself about 1522 Ninian Bannatyne would have been at the front end of fashion in Scotland, both in respect of mazers and in harking back to his ancestry. He would no doubt have seen his mazer as a status symbol, one that would have reflected his ability to keep a good table for entertaining guests. This was of considerable importance in a country where there was a notorious lack of inns, and visitors and travellers might expect to be entertained in private houses (Brown 1891: 89, 104–31). In the person of Ninian the Bannatynes of Kames acquired status as considerable landowners in Bute and Argyll and reached a social highpoint with good marriages, firstly to Janet, a daughter of the Stewart of Bute, and secondly, Margaret, a daughter of MacDougall of Raray (Robertson

1823: 56–9; Reid 1864: 246–9). It was very probably Ninian who built or remodelled the family residence on Bute, Kames Castle.

None of the other surviving Scottish mazers overtly commemorates ancestors as the Bute Mazer does with its heraldry. Some English mazers which belonged to religious houses retained the names of dead members of their communities and perhaps were a deliberate focus for commemoration (Sweetinburgh 2010). Although the Bannatyne family had lost the meaning of their mazer's heraldry by the early nineteenth century it must have been of importance to Ninian Bannatyne when he had it done. How exactly he wished the print to be interpreted will probably never be known, but his act in incorporating it in the mazer bears comparison with the way some weapons were 'improved' with inscriptions in the sixteenth and early seventeenth century to link them with heroes of old or worthy ancestors (Caldwell forthcoming).

An early fourteenth-century covered cup?

We doubt that the print was originally designed for a mazer. Molly Rorke, in the paper that follows, notes evidence for four mazers that had belonged to Robert Bruce, in the collection of King James III at the time of his death in 1488. We can only conclude that they were not directly related to the Bute Mazer. We suggest that the print in the Bute Mazer was designed to be the lid of a silver-gilt cup. That would explain both the foot ring and the rim, together creating a tight fit on the lip of a silver vessel. The rim is now angled upwards to fit it to the wooden bowl (fig 6.5). The form of that silver vessel cannot even be guessed with any confidence but its metal may possibly have been used to fashion the mazer's rim and foot. This could not, however, be confirmed by recent analysis of the silver mounts of the mazer made in the NMS Analytical Research Laboratory (Tate & Kirk 2011).

This research was limited to non-destructive surface analysis of the silver by X-ray fluorescence. The rim, foot and print were all shown to contain similar levels of silver; around 95%. The straps are slightly less pure, about 92%, while the decorative wires applied to the straps and around the foot are about 91% silver. Gold was present in all the mounts, about 0.8% on the print (underside where not gilt) and the bases of the heraldic medallions; about 1.2% and 0.3% on the rim and straps respectively, and 1.5% on the foot. The straps and wire thus conform reasonably well to the traditional Scottish standard of 91.6% purity (Dalgleish & Fotheringham 2008: 13, 15–17) while the rim, foot and print are significantly purer. Analysis of the base of the print and the underside of the enamelled shields and lion confirm the earlier analyses carried out by NMS in the 1990s, which indicated that the silver of the medallions and of the base is virtually identical.

We agree with Glenn that the print, including the lion, enamelled shields and their decoration, all appear to be of one phase of workmanship, assignable to the early fourteenth century. X-ray fluorescence analysis of gilding on the lion found significant amounts of mercury, indicating that the print had been fire gilded (Tate & Kirk 2011). X-rays also suggest that the print itself is made from two sheets of silver, one on top of the other. The heraldic medallions were set into circular holes cut through both layers of the print, held in place at the top by a lip and secured beneath by crudely cut and soldered wire tags. Small centrally located holes in the centre of the silver disks on the underside of the medallions might have been for the escape of superfluous cement when they were mounted in place.

The lion itself is composite, its front legs attached separately, and has clearly been made by a craftsman with limited understanding of what a lion looked like. He may have been reliant on images in books, on carvings, etc. A particularly apt comparison is the lion at the feet of the joint effigy of Walter, Earl of Menteith and his Countess, Mary, at the Priory of Inchmahome on an island in the Lake of Menteith. Barrow (1999: 128) dates it to either 1293–6 or 1298–1304. Earl Walter was the grandfather of Sir John Menteith the younger, whose arms are believed to be represented on shield number three of the print. Stevenson (1931: 15) drew attention to a similar lion, this time rampant, on the reverse of the first seal of Roger de Quincy, Earl of Winchester, Lord of Galloway and Constable of Scotland (1220–64) (Stevenson & Wood 1940: vol 3, 551).

An interesting feature of the Bute Mazer lion is the way its mane has been represented by rows of tightly packed annulets, impressed into the metal with a punch. Such a punch was also used to decorate the berries on a number of silver ring brooches of the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries which have a distribution covering Scotland and the north of England (Callander 1924: 172–3) and also the spines of the six wyverns around a gold brooch with a particular association with the Bute Mazer. The so-called Kames Brooch, now in National Museums Scotland, was for long kept with the mazer, also having belonged to the Bannatynes of Kames (Glenn 2003: 67). The eyes of the wyverns, like the lion on the Bute Mazer, are set with red enamel. The brooch may date to the late thirteenth century.

Writing in 1931 the goldsmith, William Brook, thought that the enamelled shields were made by a different craftsman from the goldsmith who made the print, and that their incorporation in the print represented a radical adaptation of an existing scheme of decoration. Brook may well have been right about the enamels being the work of a different craftsman but we can detect no evidence that they were not part of the original scheme of decoration. There is good reason for them to have been produced separately. Firstly, enamelling of this quality may only have been produced by a specialist, perhaps working in a separate workshop. Secondly, if the shields had been done as one with the print it would have been technically difficult to bake the enamel to a sufficiently high temperature without damaging the rest of the work.

The enamelling is of a high quality. The shields themselves are examples of *champlevé* work, the opaque enamel being set in hollows in the silver. Charges and fields required to be *argent* (silver), *or* (gold) or *ermine* (black marks against a silver background) are represented by silver, or silver gilt, as appropriate. The surrounds to the shields have *basse-taille* work, consisting of translucent enamel laid over foliage and geometric designs engraved in the silver base-plates.

These enamels are not the only examples of Scottish enamelling dating to the early fourteenth century. The Savernake Horn in the British Museum has a baldric with *champlevé* enamel arms of a Randolph Earl of Moray, probably the first, King Robert Bruce's nephew, companion and leading general, who died in 1322. Two of his sons succeeded to the earldom, the first dying within weeks, the second in 1346. Although the horn, which is carved from an elephant's tusk, has been claimed as English work and has long been associated with the wardenship of the Forest of Savernake, the presence of the arms on the baldric must surely indicate an earlier Scottish provenance (Caldwell 1982: 36–7). The most recent scholarship on it dates the medieval mounts on the horn to about 1325–50 (Robinson 2008: 261). They

are silver, decorated with *basse-taille* enamelled hunting scenes, a huntsman and a king with a bishop.

Remarkably, further copper-gilt enamelled mounts associated with a Randolph Earl of Moray, including the arms of the Earldom of Moray, have turned up in excavations at Dunstaffnage Castle near Oban. They may be from a horse harness (Caldwell 1996: 579–8). It is also worth recalling the account of King Robert I's death in 1329 given by John Barbour in his famous epic poem on the king's life. It describes how Sir James Douglas had a fine silver case, cunningly enamelled, made to contain the king's heart, which he could then wear around his neck when he took it on pilgrimage (Duncan 1999: 759).

This account and the surviving pieces demonstrate that leading Scots could command fine silver and enamelled work for themselves. The most likely explanation for its origin is one or more Scottish workshops in the early fourteenth century, perhaps also the source for silver and gold brooches, and more ambitious work like the print of the Bute Mazer. Barbour's *Bruce*, the Savernake Horn and the Dunstaffnage mounts are witnesses to the patronage of King Robert's right hand men, those closest to him and at the very top of Scottish society, but what about the mazer print? Who commissioned it?

The answer given to that question by Professor Barrow (1999), on the basis of the heraldic scheme, is John Gilbertson, the Bailie of Bute. Shield six, presumed to be his, includes *cinquefoils or*, and others feature in the design of the print, three of them alternating with wyverns. Gilbertson thus showed due deference to his lord, the Steward, by having the latter's arms placed between the paws of the lion, and added arms of his own forebears and Stewart allies to make up the design. Barrow, however, was not prepared to extend arguments for heraldic respect to the lion and recognise it as the Scottish king.

We would like to propose a different explanation for ownership and patronage, basically that first propounded by Stevenson in 1931. Firstly, we see no problem with identifying the lion as King Robert Bruce, in an allegorical sense. Heraldically it should have been represented as rampant, but it was clearly easier for the goldsmith to incorporate a lion couchant in his design. The Steward's shield is in the most honourable position in the design and he was the most important person by far in terms of status and landed wealth, also son-in-law of the king. That would make it most probable that he commissioned the work, having incorporated in the design the arms of leading supporters. We could envisage that the vessel represented here was one of a set that incorporated a variety of such heraldic references. In this case the vessel has been purloined by, or passed down to descendants of the Gilbertsons featured in the design.

An obvious objection to this hypothesis is the apparent inclusion of Gilbertson heraldic references in the print, primarily in the form of *cinquefoils or*, less certainly in the scrolling plant identified as strawberry and claimed to be the origin of heraldic *cinquefoils*. Identifying these *cinquefoils* with John Gilbertson's patronage or interest is not necessary. *Cinquefoils* are a common enough motif in medieval art with no apparent heraldic significance, like, for instance, the *cinquefoils* that decorate the obverse of the second common seal matrix of Inchaffray Abbey, perhaps not too different in date from the mazer print (Stevenson & Wood 1940: vol 1, 184; Robinson 2008: 61). It would seem to us more reasonable to associate the mazer print with the patronage of a great man like the Steward rather than speculate that a relatively minor figure like John Gilbertson could aspire to such riches.

Conclusions

As, no doubt, this paper has demonstrated, certainty on anything to do with the Bute Mazer is impossible to achieve. We propose, however, that it was made for Ninian Bannatyne of Kames in about 1522 by a goldsmith working in Glasgow or some other centre about the Firth of Clyde. Bannatyne required that an earlier piece of gilt and enamelled metalwork should be incorporated in his mazer as the print, because he believed it reflected on his ancestry or was an object of importance. That object was originally the lid of some other vessel commissioned by Walter the Steward in the period 1314-27, perhaps specifically for use in Rothesay Castle in Bute, or to commemorate an event there. The lion in the centre of the print surely represents King Robert Bruce himself.

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