

PROCEEDINGS

of the
Society of Antiquaries
of Scotland



Our full archive of freely accessible articles covering Scottish
archaeology and history is available at
<http://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/archives/view/psas/volumes.cfm>

Society of Antiquaries
of **Scotland**

National Museums Scotland
Chambers Street, Edinburgh

www.socantscot.org
Charity No SC 010440

10. AN EMBOSSED SILVER STANDING DISH OF 1667-9

THE MUSEUM has purchased, with the aid of a most generous anonymous donor (see p. 329), the upper part of a standing dish (Pl. XLV) made by Alexander Scott between 1667 and 1669, when he was deacon of the Edinburgh silversmiths. The rim has embossed decoration, $1\frac{3}{4}$ in. broad, consisting of plain oval bosses linked by acanthus leaves; the space between the leaves and the ovals is filled with chased lines and granulated with a small punch. Embossing, borrowed from Holland by English silversmiths during Charles II's reign, is not at all common in Scottish work.¹ The dish, 12 in. in diameter, is fairly substantial, but the embossing had weakened the rim, and it has been torn in one or two places and crudely repaired; it is noteworthy that in at least two places where repairs have obliterated chased lines an attempt has been made to replace the pattern with the 'rocked' lines so beloved of Scottish silversmiths. There is also an assay 'rocking' on the back of the dish.

The silver marks, on the face, are AS, once on each side of the Edinburgh castle mark. There is no date letter, but the repetition of Scott's mark presumably means that the dish was made during his deaconate, 1667 to 1669. (After 1681 the deacon's initials as a second mark were replaced by those of the assay-master.)

The centre of the dish is depressed, and it is evident that a stem has been attached to the underside. The missing stem and foot may have broken away from the dish, but it has been suggested that changing fashions caused many standing dishes to be deliberately altered. The depression is filled with an engraved armorial shield, surmounted by an earl's coronet, between crossed leaf sprays. The arms are a lion rampant within a double tressure flory counter flory, signifying that the dish belonged to a Lyon Earl of Kinghorne.

The most likely owner is Patrick, third Earl of Kinghorne, created Earl of Strathmore in 1677. The Earl gave a pair of communion cups to the Church of Glamis in 1676, and on the bowls of these the Earl's arms and the date are engraved.² As *The Scots Peerage* remarks of Earl Patrick, 'Many details of his useful and happy life are to be found in the *Glamis Book of Record*', his autobiographical diary,³ written between 1684 and 1689. The Earl tells how he restored the family fortunes, which included making 'a considerable collection of silver plate'.⁴ In 1689 he made a selection from 'a parcell of his plate' brought to him by 'Mr Cockburn the Goldsmith'.⁵

It is possible that the dish was included in this selection, for the Earl records that 'some of the dishes being splite new and the rest very little worse, he puts out the former graving and do's myne of new'.

STUART MAXWELL

¹ Ian Findlay, *Scottish Gold and Silver Work* (1956), 118.

² Rev. Dr T. Burns, *Old Scottish Communion Plate* (1892, smaller paper edition), 396 and facing plate.

³ Scottish Historical Society, vol. ix, 1890.

⁴ *ibid.*, 50.

⁵ *ibid.*, 95.



Embossed silver standing dish made by the Edinburgh silversmith Alexander Scott
between 1667 and 1669

MAXWELL: EMBOSSED SILVER STANDING DISH