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Society of Antiquaries
of **Scotland**

National Museums Scotland
Chambers Street, Edinburgh

www.socantscot.org
Charity No SC 010440

6. THE GALLOWAY MAZER (Pl. XLV).

The Galloway Mazer, acquired in March 1954 by means of a large Treasury grant and the aid of more than £1000 from each of the National Art Collections Fund, the Pilgrim Trust and this Society's Special Purchase Fund, is the most important addition to the Museum for many years.

As its marks and inscriptions show, the Galloway Mazer was made in 1569 by James Gray, silversmith in the Canongate, for Archibald Stewart, later Lord Provost of Edinburgh, and his wife, Ellen Acheson. It was inherited in the middle of the 18th century by the Earls of Galloway.

The mazer is a communal drinking bowl of maple-burr, with a broad silver-gilt rim, standing on a decorated silver-gilt baluster stem and foot. It is $8\frac{1}{2}$ ins. high, and the bowl $8\frac{3}{4}$ ins. in diameter. Standing mazers are uncommon in other countries, but six of the seven recorded Scottish mazers are of the standing variety. The two mazers bearing James Gray's mark, the Galloway and the Tulloch (1557), which is in the Bute Collection, have been claimed to be the finest and most beautiful of the Scottish type by the late Commander G. E. P. How, F.S.A.Scot., in a full discussion of most of these standing mazers in our *Proceedings* for 1933-4.²

James Gray is recorded as having engraved the brass to the Regent Murray in the High Kirk of Edinburgh.³ Another brass clearly by the same hand, formerly in Ormiston Kirk, to Alexander Cockburn, Knox's pupil, is now on loan in the National Museum;⁴ it bears foliage reminiscent of that on the mazer. Both have epitaphs by George Buchanan. Judging by these commissions, Gray appears to have been acknowledged by his contemporaries as one of the finest craftsmen of his day. He was later Master Coiner to James VI.

¹ Cf. J. Stuart Daniels, *The Woodchester Glass House*, pp. 7 and 9, pl. xi, fig. 16.

² *F.S.A.S.*, LXVIII, 394-411.

³ *Ibid.*, vi, 49-55; *R.C.A.M., Edinburgh*; date 1570.

⁴ *Ibid.*, iv, 225-7, and pl. vii; *R.C.A.M., East Lothian*; date 1564 or later. Its back is plain, unlike the other which is a palimpsest.

When it is recalled how little Scottish 16th-century Renaissance work remains—some dismembered wood carvings, wall paintings, less than a dozen buildings and about the same number of examples of metal-work—the importance of the Galloway Mazer in the country's art history will be realised. Its baluster stem is enriched with acanthus leaves in a typical Renaissance manner, while the mounts of the bowl have the scroll foliage which, though Renaissance in type, is a characteristic choice for Scottish taste, as the late mediæval West Highland monuments and the early 17th-century metal pistols show. Standing mazers are also claimed as the origin of the handsome wide-mouthed form of communion cup favoured by the 17th-century Kirk.

A stronger link with Scottish religious life is the vernacular quotation from Proverbs on the mazer's print (the round silver plate riveted to the inside of the bowl): "*Ane good mane (name) is to be chosen above great riches and loving favour is above silver and above moste fyne golde.*" The translated Bible played a great part in the Scottish Reformation, and it is significant that Archibald Stewart chose to remind himself in this way of his vanity in commissioning this work of art.

STUART MAXWELL, *Assistant Keeper in the Museum.*



The Galloway Mazer.