

How To Enter a Wooden Bowl in A & S
being a
Description of the process of choosing an entry,
including the questions that need to be considered
as the choice of item to be created is narrowed
down to a final project

Eowyn de Wever and Hollis Turnage

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Abstract

This narrative paper describes the outcome of a long conversation between the authors regarding the thought processes that can go into choosing a project for a judged regional or kingdom level arts and sciences competition.

These choices are not definitive, and much depends on the person planning the project, but we hope that the newcomer enjoys this insight into the results of one very long conversation during an even longer drive home.

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1 Introduction

This how-to paper was inspired by a long conversation between the two authors E. and H., where H. expressed confusion as to the methods and processes by which he should – or at least could – approach an A & S entry for the Gleann Abhann judged A & S competitions. What follows is a recapitulation of the discussion that followed, with links added, for the edification of the reader who finds herself wondering where to start in the creation of an object intended for A & S competition. The choices presented in this paper as the project is refined are neither exhaustive nor compulsive; rather, we hope the reader will benefit from the specific example H. first introduced in that long conversation.

We note in passing that H.'s background includes woodworking, and that E.'s background includes writing but *not* wood working.

2 Choosing the Project: A Set of Choices

2.1 The First Choice: Deciding on the General Scope of the Project

H. decided, for purposes of the discussion, that he would like to enter a bowl. Bowls are used throughout history, and examples of extant bowls abound, including the cauldrons used to make stews and soups in the grand kitchens as well as the humble wooden bowl found anywhere someone had access to wood and a means to carve that wood. After a moment of soul searching, H. decided that he had no desire to work with ceramics, or to make an extensive study of metallurgy, so the first decision he made was that his bowl would be made of wood. This had the added benefit that he would be able to use his wood shop once fabrication started¹.

¹This was a good moment to remind H. that he would lose authenticity points if he used modern tools exclusively.

Our first step was to consider the guidelines and criteria for the bowl. Turning to the Kingdom Arts and Sciences guidelines[KMo08] we perused the general guidelines, with particular attention to the general guideline that

*Entries must be appropriate to one specific time period, country or region, and culture of origin. This specific time period, country/region, and culture of origin should be explicitly stated in the documentation for the entry.*²³

Clearly we needed to narrow the focus down further than simply “a wooden bowl”, particularly as wooden bowls occur throughout most of the SCA-relevant time period, in most regions and cultures⁴. Turning to the woodworking section of the guidelines, we learned that

Woodwork⁵ *This category includes constructed pieces, furniture, musical instruments, and treen (useful objects carved of wood, such as spoons or combs). Wooden weapons also fit into this category. (Note: Weapons and armor that are composed of wood AND other materials can also be entered under the Miscellaneous category, but the guidelines that apply to woodwork should still be considered.)*

Guidelines:

- *Appropriate substitutes for period woods are acceptable.*
- *No factory pre-finished wood.*
- *Document the process and tools used at each stage.*
- *Hardware should be appropriate and period.*

²[KMo08] p. 1

³This paper was started before the new guidelines came out, and any reader wishing to use this as a template should read the updated guidelines.

⁴A strictly desert or tundra environment might not have access to sufficient wood to make wooden bowls. Vague memories suggest that most of these cultures either used bone, or leather, or traded. Given the wide variety of options however, we decided not to worry about these extreme cases. We were going to use wood!

⁵[KMo08] p. 14

- *Finishes should be period or a reasonable substitute.*
- *Pictures of period exemplars are encouraged.*
- *Ornament should be appropriate to the time and place of the item.*
- *Modern materials such as plywood and MDF are strongly discouraged.*
- *Document all joinery to period.*

Since H. had no specific time period or region in mind, he decided to start by focusing on methods by which the bowl could be produced; he wanted to take advantage of skills he already had. Wooden bowls were generally produced by either carving or turning on a lathe, and carving was not his forte. Obviously, he would be making a turned wooden bowl.

2.1.1 Choices Made At This Point And the Questions That Follow

To recap; H. decided that he was going to make a wooden bowl, by turning it on a lathe. He had not chosen a time period or location for his wooden bowl yet; his only restrictions were that the bowl be made of wood using a lathe.

2.2 The Second Choice: Finding a Specific Time and Place

At this point, E. went online and started looking for interesting pictures of turned wooden bowls to serve as inspiration, and as a source for his project. After all; he needed a time and place for his wooden bowl. A good place to start is the Victoria and Albert Museum; they have a searchable database of the items in their collections at <http://collections.vam.ac.uk>. It is possible to search on a simple phrase such as “wooden bowl” or to expand the search options. We started by limiting the search to pre-1600 AD, since we wanted to enter something from the SCA period. That restriction led to five wooden bowls in the collection, and we will briefly discuss each of them in turn.

2.2.1 A Florentine Dish



This painted bowl⁶ was manufactured between 1530 to 1540, in Florence Italy, by Giovanni Battista Franco. These bowls were known as “tafferie di parto” and used to serve refreshments. They were first turned, and then decorated with birth scenes based either on the Nativity or ancient Greek myths. They are closely related to ceramic

bowls in maiolica.

H. felt that this bowl was quite lovely, but somewhat beyond the scope of what he was envisioning. Also, neither he nor E. are good at painting figures, although this project had promise if we could find an illuminator willing to do the painting as a joint project. The decision was made to file this in the “Someday in the future folder.”

2.2.2 A French Chalice



This pewter sepulchral chalice⁷ dates back to 1300-1350, and comes from France. These chalices were traditionally buried with priests, abbots, and bishops as a symbol of their office used to identify them at the Last Judgement. Common practice since at least the 11th century was to use outdated silver chalices or substitutes made of base metals such as pewter.

Although our search had specified bowls made of wood only, this one was included in the search results. H. decided he wanted to keep an eye open for this shape because the shaping of the chalice was both pleasing to his eye, and looked reasonably

⁶<http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/058644/dish-battista-franco/>

⁷<http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/073151/chalice-unknown/>

straightforward to turn on a lathe. For now, though, this cup was disqualified from consideration.

2.2.3 A Cup and Cover

This hardwood cup and cover⁸ was made by Paulus Hubner (1545-1614) and Paulus Flindt (born 1567) in Augsburg, Germany. The information handout is included in Appendix A⁹. This is a gorgeous cup with a turned stem, and a lid. The cup and lid are covered in pierced silver filigree, and the interior is lined with silver gilt.

The pictures were much admired, but this cup is the work of masters; somewhat beyond the scope of our current skill set.

2.2.4 An English Mazer

A mazer is a shallow turned wood bowl with a metal – often silver gilt – lip. The Victoria and Albert museum dates this specimen¹⁰, described in Appendix B to ca. 1480, based on the date of comparable bowls found in Europe. This particular bowl was made of maple wood and a silver gilt lip. The lip is decorated using a variety of metal working techniques, including engraving, hatching, and stamping among others.

This mazer is much plainer than the cup and cover created by Paulus Hubner

2.2.5 A Wooden Bowl

This wooden bowl¹¹ particularly intrigued H. At first glance it looks like a simple wooden bowl, and is turned from *lignum vitae* – a hard, smooth wood imported from the West Indies. Perusing the description, H. noticed the description of the small copper fitting in the bottom of the bowl which allowed it to be used as a “shaker” of sorts, to distribute pounce over paper before writing.

⁸<http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O157650/cup-and-cover-hubner-paulus/>

⁹The images of this cup are restricted in copyright and only the pdf handout is available for general use.

¹⁰<http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O156645/mazer-unknown/>

¹¹<http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O79018/bowl-unknown/>



Sadly, reading the description more carefully, this bowl dates strictly to the 17th century, possibly even the late 17th century, and does not fall within the SCA period.

2.2.6 Making a Choice

Considering these five finds – and determined not to spend months down the rabbit holes of the internet – H. decided that the English Mazer could well be a good choice for a project, *especially* if he could find a metalworker to collaborate on the silver-gilt lip.

In period, the wooden bowl would first be created by the turner, using a lathe, before the metalwork was added by a silversmith, so that these bowls were often collaborations between multiple skilled artisans.

Looking at the pictures more carefully, E. suggested that it was possible that the silver gilt was only a thin layer of metal and might be easy to manipulate, especially if the decoration was kept to a minimum. The Victoria and Albert description stipulates that – although only about 80 mazer bowls remain – they were once very common.

H. also raised the concern, going back to the woodworking guidelines, that the metalwork might confuse the issue, particularly since he wished to showcase his woodworking skills rather than his (non-existent) metalworking skills. As such the decision was made to make the silver gilt layer very simple indeed and, in fact, use a simpler metal such as copper.

2.3 Continuing the Research

At this point H. vanished into Google again, and found the website <http://www.larsdatter.com/mazers.htm> which is an entire page of links devoted

to mazers¹². Wikipedia, too, provided some useful information; the body of a wikipedia article¹³ may provide additional inspiration, but the links included at the end of the article can be extremely helpful. In this case, there was a link to <https://archive.org/stream/archaeologiaopt150sociuoft#page/128/mode/2up>, which is a treatise “On the English Medieval Drinking Bowls Called Mazers” [Hop87] published in *Archeologia* in 1887, as well as a short overview paper written by Robin Wood in 1999 at http://www.robin-wood.co.uk/pdf/mazer_history.pdf and included as Appendix C¹⁴. This is an excellent way to vanish down the rabbit hole.

3 Making the Project Happen

Having settled upon an object that would serve as our inspiration¹⁵, it was time to consider tools, techniques, and materials.

Please note that this section, especially, will be subject to change as H. discovers which choices are effective, and which choices do not work. Simply put, this section is short, and subject to change as the project progresses. It is, in E.’s experience, rare for these choices to survive the entire process unscathed¹⁶.

¹²Including an example of a wood-only mazer circa 1580 at http://www.christies.com/LotFinder/lot_details.aspx?intObjectID=4800154. Since E. was already more than halfway through this paper, she decided to mention that find to H. in the footnotes.

¹³[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mazer_\(drinking_vessel\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mazer_(drinking_vessel))

¹⁴Robin Wood’s paper is probably a tertiary source, but useful as a starting point, especially considering it includes several sources.

¹⁵We made sure to be very careful when describing our choice of object, especially in our eventual documentation: if you choose an object to *recreate* or *reproduce*, you will be judged on how close you come to recreating that exact object. On the other hand, if you choose an object as your *inspiration* then you have room to argue that changes made could and would have been made in the time and place that your inspirational object was created based on circumstances like cost. A less expensive metal might be substituted, for instance, or a plausible change in colours.

¹⁶If the choices survive unscathed, they are sometimes still regretted as hindsight suggests what better choices might have been made. Thus also is the next project born, as the artisan decides to “do it right” the next time.

3.1 Choosing the Materials

Our inspiration was made of maple wood, with a silver-gilt lip. Maple wood is readily available online in seasoned blocks of adequate size. Silver-gilt is harder to source, but then E. found a reference to a french copper-gilt mazer[[urla](#)] dated to the late 14th/early 15th century, suggesting that we could use thin copper sheeting for the mazer.

3.2 Choosing the Techniques

The bowl would have been turned from a block of wood, after which thin metal sheets are applied and molded into shape before they are manipulated to create the decoations. We decided that the decorations would be kept very simple.

3.3 Choosing the Tools

The choice of tools was driven by the choice of techniques as well as the capabilities of the artisan.

Most important is the choice of the lathe: H. was faced with the choice of either using a modern lathe or building a foot-powered lathe. The advantage of the former is that it can be acquired, or borrowed, fairly easily, that it works consistently, and that it is not necessary to build the tool before using it.

On the other hand, building the foot powered lathe would allow H. to enter an entire second entry¹⁷, particularly as the 2015 Criteria introduced the new category of Historical Technology.

After a long, thoughtful silence H. decided to use the modern lathe, cognizant of the fact that this would likely cost him some points.

As for manipulating the metal; H. considered that snips, a file or two, and a few hammers and punches would be sufficient. These tools have hardly changed in the

¹⁷E. got really excited at the thought of adding a second entry. H. got correspondingly skeptical. Sigh. Especially when E. started talking about the “Demonstrating a Period Activity” category, and making that a third entry

intervening centuries, so there was less debate about the authenticity of the tools.

4 Conclusion

At this point H. was quite certain that he had a clear idea of what he wanted to make¹⁸, and what the effect of the various choices would be on his score, roughly speaking¹⁹.

As far as scoring went, E. pointed out that he would probably lose points for authenticity for using a modern lathe, as well as the choice of copper over silver, since E. was able to find only a singleton example of using copper rather than silver. There would also be a reduction in complexity since the basic design was a relatively simple shallow bowl, and H. was not planning on including any especially fancy metalworking.

Nonetheless, E. and H. were both happy that this would be a reasonably interesting novice entry²⁰. E. went ahead and wrote up some notes for the documentation, and included them in Appendix D, since it is always better to start documentation early.

¹⁸That, and we had just pulled into the driveway after the longish trip home, which was where this all started.

¹⁹Judging being subjective, it is difficult to predict precisely how the judges will react to the entry, but it is usually possible to make broad predictions.

²⁰And this being 2016, and the original conversation dating back to 2014, E. still has high hopes of seeing the entry some day, but then life got busy. Again. Sigh. Life's inconvenient that way.

A The Paulus Hubner Cup



Search the Collections



cup and cover

Place of origin: Germany (made)
Augsburg, Germany (made)
Nuremberg, Germany (made)

Date: circa 1590-1595 (hallmarked)
1609-1619 (made)

Artist/Maker: Hubner, Paulus, born 1545 - died 1614 (maker)
Flindt, born 1567 (maker)

Materials and Techniques: Silver, filigree piercing, silver-gilt, turned wood

Credit Line: The Rosalinde and Arthur Gilbert Collection on loan to the Victoria and Albert Museum, London

Museum number: LOAN:GILBERT.62:1-2008

Gallery location: In Storage

Public access description

This exotic hardwood cup was considered a precious rarity and first mounted in Augsburg in the late 16th century. Natural materials from outside Europe were sought-after rarities which were treasured, collected for cabinets of curiosity and mounted in precious materials.

Cups with silver-mounts of this type would hold a variety of exotic materials, including coconut shells and lignum vitae (wood of life), one of the hardest and heaviest woods known. It was considered to have been the wood used for the cross of Christ. The wood used for this cup is significantly lighter, but also from a tropic region. Such woods were imported into central Europe from the mid sixteenth century onwards.

This cup was acquired by Sir Arthur Gilbert and his wife Rosalinde. They formed one of the world's great decorative art collections, including silver, mosaics, enamelled portrait miniatures and gold boxes. Arthur Gilbert moved his extraordinary collection to Britain in 1996, it is now on long-term loan to the Victoria and Albert Museum.

Descriptive line

Standing cup and cover, silver, silver-gilt and wood, South Germany, early 17th century.

Physical description

Standing cup and cover, the cup with a baluster stem, the wooden bowl and lid covered with pierced silver filigree, the interior lined with silver-gilt

Museum number

LOAN:GILBERT.62:1-2008

Object history note

The lid of this cup bears a Nürnberg mark while the cup has been punched with the hall mark and maker's mark of Augsburg goldsmith Paulus Hübner. His set of marks is known to have been used in the late sixteenth century while the Nürnberg hall mark was in use between 1608 and 1618. The difference in dating is a possible indication for an alteration which included the introduction of the intricate piercing.

The ornament of the intricate pierced work is close to designs by Paul or Paulus Flindt (baptised on 6 October 1567) whose Nürnberg maker's mark is also on the lid of this cup. Flindt excelled in particular as a designer and published several volumes of designs for goldsmiths work between 1593 and 1618. Only in 1601 he became a goldsmith master. The ornament on this cup is comparable to some of his early designs, published in 1593 (V&A object numbers E.4287 & 4292-1907 in particular).

URL

<http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O157650/cup-and-cover-hubner-paulus/>



B An English Mazer



Search the Collections



Mazer

Place of origin: England, Great Britain (probably, made)

Date: ca. 1480 (made)

Artist/Maker: Unknown (production)

Materials and Techniques: Turned maple wood and silver-gilt, raised, moulded, engraved, hatched and stamped

Credit Line: The Rosalinde and Arthur Gilbert Collection on loan to the Victoria and Albert Museum, London

Museum number: LOAN:GILBERT.576-2008

Gallery location: In Storage

Public access description

Mazer bowls were popular drinking vessels until the 16th century. Favoured for their inexpensive materials and versatility of use, they were typically plain in their design. This example is engraved with the sacred IHS monogram, which suggests that it belonged to a religious community.

Sir Arthur Gilbert and his wife Rosalinde formed one of the world's great decorative art collections, including silver, mosaics, enamelled portrait miniatures and gold boxes. Arthur Gilbert donated his extraordinary collection to Britain in 1996.

Descriptive line

Turned wood, silver-gilt mounts, England, ca.1480

Physical description

Plain, turned maple wood mazer bowl with a shallow rim foot and a broad, spreading silver-gilt lip. The lip is engraved around the lower border with a band of hatched chevrons; above this are stamped pellets arranged in crosses. The upper lip is stamped with another band of crosses, and there are traces of pricked initials, apparently CF. The print in the centre of the bowl has a molded surround and a sunken centre engraved with a quatrefoil containing the sacred monogram IHS surrounded by flowers.

Museum number

LOAN:GILBERT.576-2008

Object history note

Provenance: Purchased from S. J. Phillips, Ltd., London, 1982.

Historical significance: A number of surviving mazers display prints engraved with the sacred monogram IHS, which would have originally have been enamelled, as was this one. It is presumably an indication that this example belonged to a religious or quasi-religious institution, such as a monastery or hospital. Mazers with similar prints are still in the possession of St. John's Hospital, Canterbury and Holy Trinity Church, Colchester (Schroder, T., p. 34)

Historical context note

Shallow turned wooden drinking vessels known as mazers, frequently enriched with silver mounts, were a common form in England until the early sixteenth century, although only about eighty survive today (Clayton, 1985, p. 243). Monastic inventories, for example, record 182 at Canterbury in 1328 and forty-nine at Durham in 1446 (Pinto 1949, p. 17).

URL

<http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O156645/mazer-unknown/>



C Drinking Bowls and Mazers

A SHORT HISTORY OF ... *Drinking Bowls and Mazers.*

THE FRENCH CONNECTION

At the time of the Norman Conquest in 1066 the practice of drinking from wooden bowls was introduced to Britain and overnight it seems the turned wooden cups favoured by Saxons and Vikings became obsolete. Pottery throughout the medieval period was mainly restricted to jugs, storage and cooking pots.

The first images of drinking bowls in use are from the Bayeux tapestry where, as is common in pictorial evidence, the bowls are very large. To me today drinking from a bowl seems a strange practice, especially if the bowl is large and I tend to miss and dribble the contents out of the side of the mouth! The practice continues today in France where particular drinks such as

cider or the breakfast café au lait are often drunk from a bowl.

I have studied many hundreds of turned wooden bowls from the medieval period and most of them are small (less than 8" diameter) and

very few show knife cuts inside. It is my feeling that these bowls were either purely drinking bowls or if they were also used for eating they were used for food which did not need to be cut before eating.

WHAT IS A MAZER?

Now to discuss mazers, a term which seems to have become rather confused over the years. Owen

Thomas writing in 1932 wrote, "Among wooden drinking vessels, the most important and the earliest known of any consequence is the mazer." Mr A. St. John Hope in an earlier paper on the subject (*Archaeologia*, Vol. 50) says that of all drinking vessels in use from the 13th to the 15th century, none were so common or so much prized as those known as mazers. A strange statement since common things tend not to be prized.

Mazers sometimes appear in wills and inventories. The following list gives the number of mazers in the inventories of certain monastic houses, dating from the 14th to 16th centuries.

1328 Canterbury 182 mazers,
1427 Battle 32 mazers, 1446
Durham 49 mazers, 1540
Waltham 15 mazers, 1540
Westminster 40 mazers.

If you visit museums in search of

mazers you will find some splendid examples surviving from the medieval period. Without exception these are small shallow wooden bowls embellished with large quantities of silver, always with a deep silver rim that doubles the capacity of the bowl

and often a raised silver foot too. The British Museum has several of these on display, it is easy to see how such a bowl would be "much prized" but difficult to imagine that they were ever

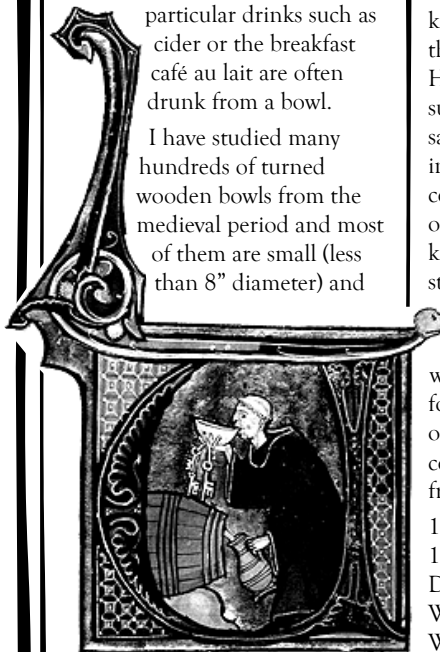
common.

WHAT'S YOURS CALLED?

Certain favourite mazers in medieval houses were given their own names. At Canterbury in 1328 certain mazers were known as "Salomon," "Austin," "Broke," "Hare," "Pilgrim," and I think my favourite would have been "Bygge". At Durham a great mazer was called the grace cup which the monks drank from round the table after grace every day and another great mazer called the Judas Cup was used by the same monks on Maundy Thursday night. Both the Durham cups and I suspect the named mazers at Canterbury were edged with silver gilt and were probably of the type to be seen in the British Museum, but what of the 182 mazers from Canterbury?



A banquet scene from the Bayeux Tapestry.



A Medieval monk enjoying a bowlfull!

more overleaf ...

VISIT TO GERMANY

Earlier this year I visited several

archaeological museums and storerooms in the Black Forest in Germany and I think I found the answer to the "common mazer" problem at Freiburg. In 1982 during building work on the site of a medieval monastery a large brick lined latrine was uncovered. It was several metres square and several metres deep and the waterlogged conditions had preserved the organic contents including several hundred beautiful pole lathe turned wooden bowls. All of them were small (less than 7" diameter) with no evidence of knife cuts and the design of most had a finely turned rim which makes for easier drinking. I am convinced that I was looking at a large collection of mazers of the common type mentioned in medieval inventories, though there are not such great numbers in Britain the pattern of medieval bowls is the same. In addition to these basic drinking bowls there were other forms not found in Britain. My favourite were "doppelkopfs" (double cups) which are a pair of cups, one small and one large, which fit together when not in use.

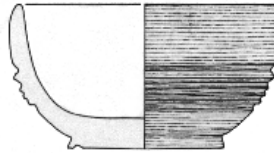
THE MEANING OF MAZER

Now some thoughts on the word maser itself. St John Hope quotes a Professor Skeat as suggesting that the word is derived from the old German word "masa" meaning a spot. The theory goes



that most mazers were made from burr maple which has a spotty grain, another theory has the word derived from the old Welsh word "masarn" for maple tree, these theories have been repeated ever since and now seem accepted as fact.

My problem with both theories is that whilst some, but not all, of the great mazers are burr maple very few common mazers are. I would say the commonest woods were ash, beech, alder, straight grained maple and fruitwoods, one of the nicest I have seen from 13th century Winchester was of burr box. In modern German there are two



words which I suspect could be linked to our mazer, one is maserung which means wood grain but maser means only grain (as in wheat?) the other maserkopf is wooden cup. If any German scholars are reading this I would be grateful for their comments.

WHEN DID THEY GO?

Finally, we no longer drink from bowls in Britain so when did the custom die out? Evan-Thomas suggests that the end was late in the seventeenth century when they were superseded by large lignum vitae wassail bowls. This is likely true for the ceremonial communal maser though I suspect the end of the common individual maser was a little earlier. The last significant collection of drinking bowls I know of are from the Mary Rose

which sank in 1545. These are all much larger bowls mostly between 8" and 10", again they have a thinned rim and no internal knife cuts (other than intentional decorative ones). Many are personalised with carved graffiti inside and out. They were found scattered around the ship as if they were personal property in contrast to the larger number of flatter dishes which all have innumerable knife cuts and were found mostly in the area of the galley.

What replaced the common mazer? I do not know. Aboard the Mary Rose there were also a smaller number of stave built tankards and pewter was also becoming available to the well off, by the eighteenth century turners were making fine wooden goblets, could these have been made earlier too and not survived?

Clearly further research is called for.

Bibliography:

Domestic Utensils of Wood - Owen Evan-Thomas.

Treen & other Wooden Bygones - E. H. Pinto.

Treen for the Table - Jonathan Levi

Holzfunde aus Freiburg und Konstanz - Ulrich Müller.



ILLUSTRATIONS: Top, an original mazer from Freiburg; Middle, an archaeological drawing of a mazer; Above, a pear-wood mazer made by myself.

ROBIN WOOD 1999

D Notes on Documentation

In Gleann Abhann, judged arts and sciences projects are judged on four criteria which essentially ask the judge to answer the following questions:

- Documentation: does the documentation explain what the project is, to which time and place it roughly dates, how it was made, etc. Special consideration is given as to whether the project is dated to the SCA period, i.e. pre-1600.

Note that finding actual exemplars of the project in museums would be considered an excellent primary source, particularly if the museum is close enough for in-person examination²¹.

When putting together final documentation, primary sources such as actual objects are preferred; secondary sources such as academic papers describing the object may be useful depending on how well the object is described. In period manuals are always wonderful; for instance Vannoccio Biringuccio's "Pirotechnia"[?] – a treatise on metals and metallurgy dated back to 1540 – might be a useful reference, although it postdates the English Mazer chosen as the inspiration by about 60 years.

- Authenticity: how likely is it that this object would have been made, and used²² at the time and place described in the documentation. If based on an inspiration but changes were made, how likely are those changes to be plausible? How authentic are the tools used to make the object?

Often authenticity points are lost by incomplete or unclear documentation; including a two column table comparing in-period techniques, tools, and materials with the techniques, tools and materials used in the accurate project often clarifies the question of authenticity quickly and easily

²¹Due to the fact that most artefacts we are interested in tend to be European, and we live on the other side of the Big Pond, in-person examination is wonderful, but not usually expected.

²²Basically, did you use as inspiration a unicorn – a very rare object that was almost never created, which can easily lead to misclassification by archeologists – or did you recreate something that was more commonly used and hence is more likely to be properly understood.

- Technique: How well is the object made?

This will be judged by the judges based on the appearance of the object, as well as their experience. This is where neatness on the final project can make a difference, although including prototypes in the display²³ can help the judges understand what the project entailed.

- Complexity: How difficult is it to make this object.

This question, too, will be judged by the judges. However, it is possible to point out in the documentation that the project would be a master or journeyman level project, rather than one that would be assigned to apprentices for practice.

Documentation is usually finalized after the project is completed, but much of it can be written before the creation of the object is started. In our case, we completed a (very limited²⁴) survey of possible inspirations, and found some links to pursue as to how the bowls might be made. H., with his knowledge of woodworking tools and skills, would be the one to expand on that information.

We will need to expand the tools section, especially, since there is a fair amount of data available vis a vis wood turning in the middle ages, paying especial attention to the authenticity and complexity of the techniques H. will use in the creation of his mazer. E. estimates that the complexity score will be relatively mid to low, but that the score can be maximized by making sure that the documentation is as complete as possible, including addressing authenticity.

Eventually we will also write a conclusion section, where we discuss the results of our choices throughout, highlighting what worked, and perhaps quietly and stoically bewailing what did not.

²³Gleann Abhann doesn't award "*bling*" points the way the Gulf Wars Champion A & S battle does, but better displays can make a strong impression on judges.

²⁴E. often spends months down internet rabbit holes before picking one or more projects; in this discussion she was originally limited to a five hour drive with a cell phone. Now she owns a battery pack.

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