



A Cleftlands (Middle Kingdom) Newsletter - 1/23/2023

Historical January Holidays Around the World

by Lady Claricia de la Mere

A new year is here, but celebrating the changing of the calendar isn't the only thing that is worthy of note in January. While turning over a new year is important (and you can see examples of these festivities in the [January 2022 issue](#)), there's more to help us get through the winter. So, as we do in the SCA, let's see what was done in the past...

Twelfth Night - Many events use this name, but what does it mean? As it says in the song "The 12 Days of Christmas" (although it's post-period, from 1780), there were (and for some, still are) twelve days of Christmas. December 25 was only the beginning of the holiday, with Twelfth Night at the end. The following day is Epiphany; said to be the day that the three wise men visited baby Jesus. Twelfth Night was a time of merriment and mischief, when things were turned upside down before getting serious again the next day. A king/queen of misrule was determined via right of cake - whoever found the dried bean or pea in the cake became ruler for the night. People might also go wassailing, going door to door with mulled cider or wine to wish good health to their neighbors.

Kakizome - This Japanese holiday is celebrated around or on January 2. The name means "first writing", and recognizes the first calligraphy of the new year. Ink would be made with the first water drawn from the well, and writers would scribe poems composed of words that would bring positivity. The poems would be burned a few weeks later as the writers eagerly watched - how high their burning poem sailed indicated how attractive their calligraphy hand would be.

Lohri - Is a holiday celebrated in northern India and marks the end of winter with the arrival of longer days. It falls on January 13 because it is held at the end of the month of the winter solstice. The lunisolar nature of the Punjabi calendar puts this into January. Traditionally, bonfires were lit and people danced and sang together. The folk hero Dulla Bhatti is often featured in these songs, which are performed by children who go around singing in exchange for treats. Lohri is also associated with the winter crop season.

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An illuminated letter "e" showing the three wise men giving gifts to Jesus, from a 13th century Italian choir book. In the book, this letter started a chant used at Epiphany.

News of the Barony

- Cleftlands will be hosting Fall Coronation! It will be held on September 23 at the Ashtabula County Fairgrounds. THL Jolicia and Lady Jaquelinne are the event stewards for this momentous occasion, so look for more information from them about the event and how to help.
- The Barony is accepting applications for the Minister of Youth position. A background check will be needed at some point, but you do not need it completed to apply. Apply here: <http://www.cleftlands.org/officer-application/> Or read more about what the position does in the last newsletter, on page 5 <http://wiki.cleftlands.org/images/7/7f/Internebbles-Nov20-2022.pdf>
- The positions of Gold Key and Chatelaine will open on February 1. Keep your eyes open for more details!
- Want to know more about being an officer, but don't want to step up just yet? Be a deputy! Our Minister of Arts & Sciences is looking for deputies.
- The February dessert revel on February 22 will be an A&S display. Bring your projects that you've started in the last year - they don't need to be complete or have documentation.

Historical January Holidays - continued

Berchtoldstag - Celebrated in Switzerland and Liechtenstein, Berchtoldstag is of unknown origin. There are many theories, ranging from celebrating a 12th century Duke's hunting trip, to honoring Perchta, the leader of the wild hunt. Whatever the source, on or around January 2 celebrants hold feasts. Nuts are associated with the holiday, both eaten and used for games. In some areas, parades are held where masked participants wish good luck to anyone they meet. They may be dressed as holly, a straw man, a snail shell, or others.

Makar Sankranti - A Hindu observance that is known by many names and marks the transition from Sagittarius (dhanu) to Capricorn (makara - the "makar" in the holiday's name). "Sankranti" means the movement of the zodiac from one sign to the next. Makar Sankranti is dedicated to the solar deity Surya and represents a new beginning as winter is ebbing away. It is celebrated over 4 days, around January 13-16. Practices include decorating cattle then leading them on a procession. At the end, they jump over fire, as a form of protection against evil and to symbolize the bonds between the human and natural worlds. Today, many also fly kites and eat sesame treats.

<https://www.tavistockhistory.co.uk/single-post/2017/08/01/a-brief-history-of-twelfth-night>
<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kakizome>
<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lohri>
<https://web-holidays.com/blog/2020/01/08/january-2-berchtoldstag/>
<https://hindulife.yale.edu/makara-sankranti>

News of the Society

- After a brief hiatus, reduced armor experiments in rapier continue, on condition of timely reporting. <https://www.sca.org/news/status-of-reduced-armor-rapier-experiment/>
- A reminder that applications for the important position of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Officer are due by January 25. <https://www.sca.org/news/dei-officer-applications-closing-25-january-2023/>
- SCA statement of commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion: <https://www.sca.org/news/commitment-to-sca-diversity-equity-inclusion/>
- At the Board meeting this weekend, an initiative for DEI was announced. Read the article for more: <https://www.sca.org/news/diversity-equity-and-inclusion-2023-strategic-initiative/>
- The Honorable Lady Amytis de la Fontaine has been appointed Society Youth Activities Officer. <https://www.sca.org/news/people-on-the-move-society-youth-activities-officer/>
- Due to unforeseen personal events, the Society Chatelaine needs to step down sooner than expected. <https://www.sca.org/news/people-on-the-move-society-chatelaine-2/>
- A limited edition SCA merchandise design is available only through January 30. <https://www.sca.org/news/ring-in-2023-with-official-sca-merchandise/>
- The Grand Tourney of the Kingdom of Meridies raised \$22,000 for the Trevor Project at their Francois Duvant Memorial Tournament. <https://www.sca.org/news/sca-memorial-tournament-raises-22000-for-charity/>
- Do you like scavenger hunts? SMASH IV is a week-long, inter-kingdom, online event. See more information: https://www.facebook.com/groups/720703218826421/?ref=share_group_link
- Registration for Gulf Wars is open: <https://www.gulfwars.org/registration/>
- Pre-registration for Pennsic opened January 8. It's never too early to plan for next Pennsic. News and registration link here: <https://www.cooperslake.com/prereg/account/index.php>

News of the Kingdom

- An updated Armored Combat Handbook is available for the Middle Kingdom! Get it, read it, love it: <https://bit.ly/3JdeCJB>
- And an updated Middle Kingdom thrown weapons handbook is also available to read and love: <https://bit.ly/3R8iTzZ>
- Oh, and an updated Midrealm target archery handbook was posted as well for the same purposes as the above: <https://bit.ly/3J693N6>
- Many thanks to Master Milesent for her service as Regional MoAS for the North Oaken region (where Cleftlands is), and congratulations to Sir Crispin for stepping up to replace her (more Cleftlanders!).
- The Middle Kingdom Event Coordinator is looking for bids for the following events: Martial/Youth RUM by March 1 and Spring Crown with Kingdom A&S (May 27-28). Email kingdomevents@midrealm.org for information.
- Brianne of Greenlea is the new Aethon Signet and Ulfrun Barefooted will be the new Fenris (Pentamere) Regional Signet as of Val Day. Congratulations!
- The Barony of North Woods opened their poll for their next Coronet and has three candidates. If you wish to provide counsel on this matter, you can see the poll here: <https://northwoods.midrealm.org/2023-north-woods-baronial-polling>

5 Questions for Cleftlanders Meet the Officers - Dame Elizabethhe Alles (mka Ashley Smith): Minister of Arts & Sciences

1.) How did you find your way to Cleftlands?

I joined the SCA as a graduate student down in Marche of the Unicorn (Miami University of Ohio) in the Barony of Flaming Gryphon in about 2001, and I was down there for about eight years. I met Dmitrii when Constanza invited me up to a Cleftlands field trip to the Cleveland Museum of Art, and then I moved to Cleveland to join him.

2.) You are known for many things, but what would you consider your two main activities in the SCA?

Probably teaching and service. Teaching is my very favorite thing to do, because I'm just so happy and excited to share things with others, and service is just natural to me. If I'm not busy doing something, I start to feel restless, and most of my service feeds into my teaching, and vice versa.

3.) Is there an SCA activity that you'd like to try but haven't yet?

The next thing I'm trying to get more into is heraldry, specifically name research. I think names are really cool, and choosing a name is such a big part of finding your place in the SCA that I want to be able to contribute to it.

4.) What's one thing you're looking forward to doing as the Cleftlands Minister of Arts and Sciences?

Getting to see people develop their skills and talents.

5.) Since you are known for your skill at jewelry-making, do you have a favorite piece of SCA-adjacent jewelry? (that you have made and/or was purchased)

Even though I had moved, I had spent enough years in Flaming Gryphon that when I was recognized as a Pelican, I was offered the Flaming Gryphon Legacy Pelican medallion to wear. By now, it's a little battered by time, but it's been worn by all the Pelicans made from Flaming Gryphon since AS 29 (1994). I was the 21st to wear it, and it's difficult to express the way it feels to join a noble lineage like that. Many of those who came before me were people I looked up to when I started out in the SCA. It's since been passed down several more times and I may never get to hold it again, but that medallion will always be special. Cleftlands did not share a similar tradition for the Pelicans that anyone I talked to could remember, so I got a medallion specifically to pass on to the next Cleftlands Pelican after me.



Random Period Object - Cleveland Museum of Art



Vulture Headdress Inlay; Egypt, Ptolemaic Dynasty; 100-1 BC

<https://www.clevelandart.org/art/1920.1991>

Size: About 1.25 x 1"

Gold with semi-precious stones adhered with resin.

This piece is made to represent a vulture headdress, something worn in depictions of goddesses and queens. It contains more than 100 stones, many set in their own partition to keep the detail of the piece more precise. You can see the body, wing, and tail feathers were carefully distinguished. This piece would have required incredible patience and skill to craft.

The stones include lapis lazuli, turquoise, petrified wood, as well as an unidentified white stone.

Upcoming Midrealm Events

January 27-29 - Bardic Skirmishes II; Virtual. Performers and audience or the curious are all welcome.

<https://sites.google.com/view/bardic-skirmish/home>

January 28 - Festival of Maidens; Classes, heavy and rapier, bardic. Urbana, IL.

<https://caergwyn.midrealm.org/festival-of-maidens-48/>

January 28 - Winter Wassail; Free evening event of dancing, feasting, and fun. Youngstown, OH.

<https://midrealm.org/events/winter-wassail/>

February 4 - Candlemas XXXIII; Heavy and rapier tournaments, BoD roundtable. Shelbyville, KY.

<https://dragonsmark.midrealm.org/candlemas/>

February 11 - St. Valentine's Day Massacre; Classes, music, dancing, and tbd. Kalamazoo, MI.

<https://threehills.midrealm.org/home/valday2023/>

February 18 - Courting on the River; Fighting, A&S competition, classes. Moline, IL.

<https://darkriver.midrealm.org/courting-main-page/>

February 25 - Winter Solar - "A Day of Rest and Repose"; A&S. Logansport, IN

<https://midrealm.org/events/winter-solar-a-day-of-rest-and-repose/>

December January-February 2023 Cleftlands Events

- Wed. January 25, 7:00-9:45pm - **Baronial Revel** - St John of the Cross School, 140 Richmond Rd, Cleveland OH 44143.
- Wed. January 25, 7:30pm - **Noblesse Largesse Exchange at Baronial Revel** - St John of the Cross School, 140 Richmond Rd, Cleveland OH 44143.
- Thurs. January 19, 7:00pm - **Armors' Guild Meeting** - Ealdred & Clairiel's Garage: 234 Adams St, Berea, OH 44017; <https://bit.ly/3vBVzBR>
- Wed. February 1 7:00-9:45pm - **Baronial Meeting** - St John of the Cross School, 140 Richmond Rd, Cleveland OH 44143.
- Wed. February 1 7:30pm - **Class: The First Word - A Brief History of Olive Oil** - At Baronial meeting: St John of the Cross School, 140 Richmond Rd, Cleveland OH 44143.
- Thurs. February 2, 7:00pm - **Armors' Guild Meeting** - Ealdred & Clairiel's Garage: 234 Adams St, Berea, OH 44017; <https://bit.ly/3vBVzBR>
- Sun. February 5, 12:00pm - **Cleveland Museum of Art Trip to see The Four Seasons Tapestries** - Cleveland Museum of Art, 11150 East Blvd., Cleveland. <https://www.facebook.com/events/1005729367053439/>
- Wed. February 8 7:00-9:45pm - **Baronial Meeting** - St John of the Cross School, 140 Richmond Rd, Cleveland OH 44143.
- Wed. February 8 7:30pm - **Class: The Gazelle, Up Close: Golden Age Sephardic Sacred Verse** - At Baronial meeting: St John of the Cross School, 140 Richmond Rd, Cleveland OH 44143.
- Thurs. February 9, 7:00pm - **Armors' Guild Meeting** - Ealdred & Clairiel's Garage: 234 Adams St, Berea, OH 44017; <https://bit.ly/3vBVzBR>
- Tues., February 14, 7:30pm - **Needleworkers' Guild Virtual Meeting** - <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88261643621?pwd=UGx1TTdPcVdNNWtHZFhDZkxY-R0d5Zz09>
- Wed. February 15 7:00-9:45pm - **Baronial Meeting** - St John of the Cross School, 140 Richmond Rd, Cleveland OH 44143.
- Wed. February 15 7:30pm - **Class: Tudor History Crash Course** - At Baronial meeting: St John of the Cross School, 140 Richmond Rd, Cleveland OH 44143.
- Thurs. February 16, 7:00pm - **Armors' Guild Meeting** - Ealdred & Clairiel's Garage: 234 Adams St, Berea, OH 44017; <https://bit.ly/3vBVzBR>

Society Disclaimer: Although the SCA complies with all applicable laws to ensure the health and safety of our event participants, we cannot eliminate the risk of exposure to infectious diseases during in-person events. By participating in the in-person events of the SCA, you acknowledge and accept the potential risks. You agree to take any additional steps to protect your own health and safety and those under your control as you believe to be necessary.

This Week in History

- Jan. 22 1506 - The Swiss Guards first arrive at the Vatican, an order that can still be seen there today.
- Jan. 23 1556 - The deadliest earthquake in recorded history hits the Shaanxi province in China with an estimated death toll of 830,000.
- Jan. 24 41 - Assassination of Roman Emperor Caligula after reigning only 4 years.
- Jan. 25 1533 - Secret marriage of Henry VIII of England to Anne Boleyn.
- Jan. 26 661 - The Rashidun Caliphate, the first caliphate after the prophet Muhammad, ends when Caliph Ali is assassinated.
- Jan. 27 1302 - Poet Dante Alighieri is exiled from Florence after being condemned for corruption and refusing to pay a fine.
- Jan. 28 814 - Death of Charlemagne, first Holy Roman Emperor, from pleurisy.

Cleftlands Officers' Contact Information

- Baron: Barone Pietro Nicolo da San Tebaldo; baron@cleftlands.org
- Baroness: Baronessa Aurelia Rosetti; baroness@cleftlands.org
- Seneschal: Mistress Angharad ferch Tangwystl; seneschal@cleftlands.org
- Exchequer: The Honorable Robert atte Northclyfe; exchequer@cleftlands.org
- Chatelaine/Gold Key: Lady Jaquelinne la Deiciere; chatelaine@cleftlands.org
- Herald: Sergeant Njall Orkneyjarson; herald@cleftlands.org
- Minister Arts & Sciences: Dame Elizabethe Alles; moas@cleftlands.org
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- Youth Marshal: Sergeant Bastian Eychener; youthmarshal@cleftlands.org
- Quartermaster: The Honorable Lady Sarra Bossard; quartermaster@cleftlands.org

Call for Content

If you have an idea for content for the newsletter, please contact me: clariciadlm@gmail.com. Thank you and stay well!

Photo of Dame Elizabethe is credited to Lady Shahzada al-Zahra.

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