



A Cleftlands (Middle Kingdom) Newsletter - 4/25/2021

News of the Realm

SCA News -

- The Agenda for the BoD Meeting held on April 18 was posted: <https://www.sca.org/news/agenda-for-april-18-2021-bod-meeting-available-registration-open/>
- Then the video from the April 2021 meeting was posted: <https://www.sca.org/news/board-of-directors-april-2021-meeting-video-available/>
- The SCA welcomes the new Principality of Vindheim in the Kingdom of Ansteorra, which includes parts of Oklahoma and Texas. <https://www.sca.org/news/new-principality-of-vindheim/>
- The SCA has issued a request for commentary for a possible new pan-activity patent order: <https://www.sca.org/news/a-call-for-commentary-peerage-committee-proposal/>
- The Society has issued a statement that proof of vaccinations, negative COVID tests, and temperature checks will not be required to attend an SCA event, except where required by federal, provincial, state, or local laws. <https://www.sca.org/news/memorandum-statement-regarding-proof-of-vaccinations-negative-covid-tests-and-temperature-checks-of-attendees-at-society-events/>
- The BoD is seeking to fill the positions of Project Management Officer and Volunteer Recruitment Officer: <https://www.sca.org/news/open-positions-pmo-and-vro/>
- The Pennsic Mayor made the difficult decision to cancel Pennsic for this year (2021). Pennsic 49 is being planned for 2022. Learn more on the Baronial Facebook page.

Baronial News -

- The incredible Lady Shahzada Isfahani will be stepping down as Baronial Chatelaine, which means that the Barony is looking for a new Chatelaine. If you enjoy meeting new people and talking up the SCA, apply here: <http://www.cleftlands.org/officer-application/> Or reach out with questions about the position!
- THL Jolicia atte Northclyfe was recently featured on Simply SCAdian, hosted by Tanárnö Sofia Tyzes. <https://youtu.be/EBxu7zzXHl8>
- Cleftlands is humbled and honored to be home to SEVERAL champions chosen to participate in the upcoming Bardic War. A well-deserved congratulations to: Lord Tarmach ben Yehuda al Khazari, Tanárnö Sofia Tyzes, Ollav Brendan O Corraidhe, THL Juliane Bechaumpe, and Lord Rojhon the Wanderer.

Cotton - “The Other White Fiber”

By THL Nadyezhda the Simple

The use of cotton as a fiber for spinning can be traced to at least 5,000 BCE in Mexico which makes its documented usage almost as old as flax. While not known in Northern Europe until late in the SCA period, cotton has been found in African, South American, Middle Eastern, and Asian historical finds.

There are four main cultivars of cotton, two of which originated in the New World! Strangely enough, this is the cotton now grown as Egyptian pima, known for its long fibers, strength, and luster. It is assumed that the Herbacious variety from Africa is what was known early in Europe. There is also a tree cotton used primarily in India. Cotton cross pollinates so easily that in many cotton-producing states in the US, it is illegal to grow cotton for personal use there. This also helps prevent the spread of uncontrolled boll weevils.

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Pictured above: a cotton square, or blossom.

Cotton - Continued

Cotton has several natural colors other than white. Brown, yellow, green, and even a red color cotton seeds are common. While the plants require long, hot summers to produce well, it can be grown in NE Ohio – as long as you protect it from raiding parties of deer!

Cotton seeds have a hard outer casing and require soaking for them to germinate. The plants begin to produce blossoms, called squares when they reach about a foot. The blossoms then open for about a day and set small pods that produce the cotton itself.

Every story you have ever heard about cotton being painful to pick is true. The edges of the pods that hold the actual cotton are hard and razor sharp.



Pictured above: a cotton flower.

Cotton can be spun directly off of the boll, or can be ginned to remove the seeds before spinning. Because the fiber is very short in length (called staple), it needs to be spun very quickly to make yarn. Supported spindles are most commonly used so that the weight of the spindle does not pull on the thread. Charka spinning wheels were also used in India for cotton, which probably date back to about 500 BCE. Ginning was probably accomplished by rolling a heavy stick over the fiber to separate the seeds, taking care not to crush them in the process.

In some respects it is easier to process and prepare for spinning than other plant (bast) fibers. It doesn't require anything other than removing the seeds and perhaps combing in order to make thread or yarn. Once spun tightly and quickly, it produces an extremely strong strand, more than three times stronger than wool. It also becomes even stronger when wet.

In order to dye cotton, it is necessary to soak the spun fiber in hot water to remove the waxy coating on the fiber. Cotton takes many dyes very well, often resulting in brighter colors than what could be achieved when dyeing flax.

Cotton has a higher cellulose content than other bast fibers such as linen or hemp, which means it produces a cloth doesn't need to be washed many times to soften the fabric. It also transfers heat away from the body and wicks moisture away, making it perfect for hot weather wear. It can also be washed in high temperatures and will not felt, as wool will.

Much like flax, cotton produces a fabric that is perfect for wearing in the climates that can support it. There is little that is more comfortable than a cotton t-shirt on a hot summer day. Unless it's a linen t-tunic!

References:

- Fox, Heather, The Compleat Anachronist Medieval Fiber Survey, Issue No. 186 Fourth Quarter 2019, Society for Creative Anachronism
- Gaustad, Stephanie, The Practical Spinner's Guide to Cotton, Flax, and Hemp, Interweave Press, Loveland, CO, 2014
- Ruane, Joan, <https://cottonspinning.com>, 2021



Pictured above: an unripe cotton boll.



Pictured above: an open cotton boll.

For the Combat & Ranged Arts

Armored: Duke Eik's Videos:
Advanced Longsword Kata #1:

<https://youtu.be/zBIATDZzKr0>

Movement "Step-Pivots:

<https://youtu.be/nYKJF59BeA4>

Pole/Dane Axe Parrys
Against Thrusts:

<https://youtu.be/l7GFgQY-qqQ>

Sir Wigthehn's Memories:
Midrealm Fall Crown Tournament 1996:

<https://youtu.be/cJU599BijwY>

The Known World SCA Virtual Fighter Practice Page:

Backyard Basics #54 - Meyer's Break-Window #4

https://youtu.be/B_XsFdaUO7A

SCA Coaches' Corner: A conversation with Duke Radnor:

<https://www.facebook.com/vesper.ofatlantia/videos/293041325614225>

Rapier: Masters of Defense
Get Good:

<https://youtu.be/PxAgoU7jNW0>

Call for Content

We want to make sure there's a central place to get information and see posts that might get buried, or resources that might not be shared.

If you have info to share - an upcoming virtual gathering, activity ideas, or a great website, please contact me: clariciadlm@gmail.com.

Thank you and stay well!

5 Questions for Cleftlanders - THL James Barkley (mka Charles E. "Chuck" Minch) (he/him)

How did you get involved in the SCA?

I first heard of the SCA from my eldest brother Don, known in the SCA as Karl von Koln. He started out in his college group, The March of Three Towers. After my brother graduated from college and moved to Cleveland, I started taking classes at that same college. One evening after class, I decided to go to the student union and see what this SCA thing was all about. I walk into the room where the meetings were held. I set only one foot in the door and I see this man who is my height but three times as wide. He looks at me, and in a booming voice says "WELCOME" and starts coming towards me! I turn around and start to leave. Someone else says laughingly, "Quick, stop 'im, he's getting away!" I did go back in, and I was introduced to many great people - people who I still know and am friends with to this day. The large man with the booming voice was (at the time) the Three Towers chatelaine, Og.



What are your two main activities in the SCA?

It is tough to narrow it down, but I would have to say archery and bookbinding. I started bookbinding out of necessity; I had all these old books I wanted to read, but could not because they were falling apart. I concluded the best thing for me to do was to figure out how to fix them so they would be readable again. With a bit of research and know-how, I figured out how to repair books, and later how to bind them from scratch. I've made many of the tools I use, and now have several repair projects in the works - many of which have publication dates in the 1600's. I started archery at my first Pennsic War, Pennsic 23. Earlier that year I tried using a crossbow owned by a very short guy. He pulled back the bow by putting one foot on either side of the stock and on the prod. The bow had no stirrup. This was fine for him with his small feet. But me, with my large-footed German ancestry? I had a little trouble. After that I made up my mind to buy myself a crossbow. I decided that for a couple of reasons: because I enjoyed it, and so I wouldn't have to borrow that guy's bow again.

What are some things you'd like to try in the SCA, but haven't yet?

A good question. I'm an avid Middle Eastern drummer, but I have not tried belly dancing yet. (If having two left feet is not a hindrance for it, I'll give it a try.) Another one would be learning to play a stringed instrument, like a mandolin. It could be good for dance music.

What is your favorite part of going to an event?

There are so many things! I'll have to say the arts and sciences. I have many fond memories of A&S classes I've taught and participated in, as well as performances I've been a part of.

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5 Questions With a Cleftlander - THL James Barkley - continued

Tell us about a favorite project!

Without a doubt, my favorite project has been the book that I made for the Barony. The title on the cover is "Barony of the Cleftlands Book of Miscellany"; I picked that title to help guide people in filling the book. The contents are not meant to be in any particular order, and anyone, of the Barony or not, who has a really good story to tell or a picture to share that's about our Barony, may contribute their memories. I enjoyed this project a great deal because I learned a lot about leather crafting while doing it. I was taught by a man with over three decades of experience, by the name of Charles of Manx Hall.

I look forward to when I can see all of you again in person.

Binding of "Barony of the Cleftlands Book of Miscellany".



Random Period Object - Cleveland Museum of Art



Bowl with Fish; Mogollon people; Mimbres region (New Mexico); 11th-12th century

Pottery painted black and white; ~4 x 9.5" in size - <https://www.cleveland-art.org/art/1930.49>

Thousands of bowls produced by the Mogollon have been found. While the art on them is all in black and white, the designs can be sophisticated shapes and patterns or abstract humans and animals. This bowl depicts either a freshwater garfish or coastal Pacific swordfish.

The bowls may have been ritualistic. They were shaped like a dome and punctured after being completed, then placed over the heads of the deceased. The Pueblo believe that the sky is a dome pierced to allow for passage between worlds, so the Mogollon may have had a similar belief.

The Mogollon flourished in what is now the south of New Mexico and Arizona, Northern Sonora and Chihuahua, and western Texas. The name comes from the Mogollon Mountains. The Mimbres pottery is particularly well-known.

Medieval Archeology News

By THL Jolicica atte Northclyfe

Archaeologists and other scientists are continually making new discoveries about our favorite historical period. Here are some of the latest news items in medieval archeology:

Extreme Constipation and Grasshoppers - A man who lived in what is modern-day Texas during the 6th or 7th century may have died from an extreme case of constipation, according to scientists who studied his mummified remains.

A disease caused by a parasite created a blockage in his colon, causing it to swell and making him unable to digest food. The researchers think that in the last few months of his life, family or friends cared for him by feeding him grasshoppers with the legs removed. The man probably died from malnutrition, scientists found. His remains were naturally preserved and mummified by the hot and dry conditions in that part of what is now Texas.

Source: <https://www.livescience.com/mummy-constipated-man-ate-grasshoppers.html>

Climate Change Wiped Out Asian City-States - Invading Mongols may have been incorrectly blamed for the destruction of Central Asia's medieval river civilization. Central Asia's Aral Sea basin in Central Asia once supported advanced civilizations that used floodwaters from the major rivers in the region to irrigate farmland. It was believed that the fall of those groups was a direct result of the Mongol invasion in the 13th century.

New research, led by British scientists, suggests that changes in climate brought dryer conditions to the region. This change may have been an equal, if not more important, cause for the decline.

Source: https://www.eurekalert.org/pub_releases/2020-12/uol-ccc121520.php

Elephant Tusks from Shipwreck Are Traced - In 1533, A Portuguese trading vessel carrying 40 tons of treasure was shipwrecked in Namibia, making it the oldest known shipwreck in southern Africa. Now, an international team of researchers has traced the ship's cargo of more than 100 elephant tusks to many distinct herds that roamed West Africa in the past. The study was published in the journal "Current Biology" in December.

Scientists wanted to pinpoint the source of elephant ivory that was central to the trans-continental trade connecting Europe, Africa, and Asia in the 16th century. The study will also help biologists understand African elephants past and present

Source: https://www.eurekalert.org/pub_releases/2020-12/cp-si120920.php

Medieval Settlement Uncovered in Bulgaria - A medieval settlement, built on top of an early Bronze Age settlement, has been discovered in northwestern Bulgaria. The settlement, dated to the Second Bulgarian Empire (A.D. 1185–1396), was located near the Voynishka River and included kilns, dwellings and a moat.

Researchers also found animal bones, medieval coins, arrow tips, loom weights, pottery, buckles, crosses, metal and glass bracelets, and numerous other items.

Source: <https://www.archaeology.org/news?page=2>

This Week in History

April 25 1566 - [Diane de Poitiers](#), Grand Seneschal of Normandy & mistress of King Henry II of France, dies.

April 26 1564 - William Shakespeare is baptized, though his date of birth is unknown.

April 27 711 - Moorish troops led by Tariq ibn Ziyad land in Gibraltar to begin invading the Iberian Peninsula.

April 28 1192 - Conrad I, King of Jerusalem, is killed by Hashshashin 2 days after confirming his title to the throne.

April 29 534 - Birth date of Taliesin, Welsh poet, according to legend written in the Mabinogion.

April 30 642 - Visigoths name Chindasuinth king of Hispania (his line continues in the current Spanish monarchy).

May 1 1328 - Wars of Scottish Independence end with the Treaty of Edinburgh-Northampton.

Cleftlands Officers' Contact Information

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Upcoming Cleftlands Events

- Tuesday, April 27 7:30 pm EST Virtual Needleworkers' Guild - <https://www.facebook.com/events/256484249465490>
- Wednesday April 28 7:30 pm EST Virtual Cleftlands Gardeners - <https://www.facebook.com/events/884329225478430>
- Thursday, April 29 8pm EST Virtual Armorers' Guild Meeting - <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84704344487?pwd=UGJrZUxqNW5JQ05jeHBtYWdLQUl4QT09>
- Thursday, May 6 8pm EST Virtual Armorers' Guild Meeting -<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84704344487?pwd=UGJrZUxqNW5JQ05jeHBtYWdLQUl4QT09>
- Tuesday, May 11 7:30 pm EST Virtual Needleworkers' Guild - <https://www.facebook.com/events/2979307348947339>
- Thursday, May 13 8pm EST Virtual Armorers' Guild Meeting - <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84704344487?pwd=UGJrZUxqNW5JQ05jeHBtYWdLQUl4QT09>

Photos of cotton bolls credited to THL Nadyezhda the Simple.

Photo of THL James Barkley and of the binding of "Barony of the Cleftlands Book of Miscellany" credited to THL James Barkley.

As of January 23, 2019, the Cleveland Museum of Art is an Open Access institution, using the Creative Commons Zero (CC0) designation for high-resolution images and data related to its collection. This means the public now has the ability to share, collaborate, remix, and reuse images of many as 30,000 public-domain artworks from the CMA's world-renowned collection—all without asking permission. In addition, portions of collections information (metadata) for more than 61,000 artworks, both in the public domain and those works with copyright or other restrictions, are now available.

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