

A Cleftlands (Middle Kingdom) Newsletter - February 2024

Fabulous Fun at Cleftlands December and January Revels

If you were not able to attend the last two Cleftlands revels, or just may not have seen everything going on, never fear! Here's a brief summary of the latest festive monthly gatherings - just one more thing that makes our local Barony awesome!

The annual Yule Revel was held on December 20. There was food a-plenty to share, including the lovely sugar-spun ornaments (pictured at right) made by Lady Katherin verch Rhys. Musica Nebulae performed a concert set, while revelers chatted, played games with Count Nikolai, and exchanged tokens.



At the "Not Necessarily a Cookie" exchange organized by Dame Elizabethe, participants contributed items from lantern lights to muffins. For those not familiar with this new tradition, each person who wishes to participate brings an item or items equivalent to a dozen cookies. For each such item you bring, you get to take another item home. It's fun to play and fun to watch - you can see the gifts on offer in the photo on the left.



After a brief Baronial Court where Their Excellencies presented Duke Eikbrandr with the Cleftlands sword for his victory at the November rapier tournament, some sprightly dancing finished off the evening.

The Midwinter Solemnities revel on January 31 was planned to be a break in the long winter with all the trappings of a big event - and with the population of Cleftlands, it promised to have just as many attendees as many of the events on the Kingdom calendar! There was to be a Baronial court, a puppet show, and a feast from Lady Dorothea Weaver.

As the bard (Meat Loaf) said, two out of three ain't bad. Unfortunately Their Excellencies caught the plague and were unable to hold court, and the youth puppet show was postponed.

But revelers were still treated to a wonderful evening, as Lady Dorothea and her many helpers served a sumptuous Italian feast. Dishes were from the Opera of Bartolomeo Scappi, full of 16th century recipes from the pope's kitchen. Lasagna, mushroom tarts, bread from Lady Elizabella, and more filled candlelit tables. Cleftlanders supplemented the delicious food with a table full of sweet treats of all types.

Their Excellencies were not forgotten! Their portrait looked over the festivities from the sideboard (as shown in the image to the right, courtesy of Lord Tarmach). The noblesse largesse exchange saw crafters giving handmade gifts finished over the Yule season, and the night finished with dancing, as is right and proper. Tune in for the February A&S-themed revel!



Examining Personas: Get to Know the Rus

by Lady Claricia de la Mere

When a new King and Queen come to the Throne, they often choose to reign with a “theme” that matches their personas. That might mean garbing themselves and their retinue in that persona style, using alternate titles, and otherwise leaning into the look and feel of their chosen time and place.

Our current Prince and Princess, Katalena and Ivan, are already using “Tsarevitch and Tsarevna” as their titles; which are alternate ways to say “Prince” and “Princess” in Russian. This aligns to their representation of Rus personas. It’s not the first time a local Crown has chosen Rus, either, as Count Nikolai and Countess Serena also embraced Rus aesthetics during their reign. But who were the Rus, and what does it look like to dress like one of them? Here we present some very basic, simplified history and garb ideas.

The Rus were a people who lived along the river routes in the Baltic and Black Sea regions of eastern Europe from the 8th century on. We can trace their influence to Russia, Belarus, and Ukraine. It is believed that they were originally Scandinavian Vikings who settled in the area and assimilated with the local Slavic population. However, some scholars think the Rus were a Slavic tribe and that they, not the Vikings, founded the Kievan state.

The scholars who favor the Viking origin use “The Russian Primary Chronicle”, a 12th century source that says the Rus were invited to the area by the locals to end the terrible feuds they were known for. The Norse stayed and extended their rule to Kiev, which became the Kievan state in the 9th century. However, modern Russians reject the source as unreliable, and claim instead that the Rus were a local tribe themselves, so-called because they made their home on the Ros River.

According to “The Russian Primary Chronicle,” Rurik, a Varangian prince, was the leader of the Vikings who arrived in the region. Whether he was invited or invaded is debated, but the Rurik Dynasty claims to trace their roots to him. His line were princes of the Kievan Rus and Muscovy from about 862 until 1598 when Feodor I of Russia died without issue,

The Rus kingdom was at one point the largest territorially in medieval Europe. It stretched from the Baltic sea in the north to the Black Sea in the south. The capital was Kyiv, but trade was strong throughout the kingdom, strengthened through marriages into the English, French, Hungarian, Polish, Swedish, Byzantine, and other royal families.

The Norse influence remained strong in the region for centuries. Much of the culture, dress, and ornamentation were taken from Viking society. Many people comparing garb between the two will notice the similarities. However, the Rus turned Orthodox Christian by about 1000, when a Rus king married a Byzantine princess. Byzantine culture showed a significant influence on the Rus from this point.

The great Rus kingdom is considered to have ended with the Mongol siege and sack of Kyiv in 1240. After that, Rus states continued as part of the Mongol Empire. This actually led to the rising importance of Moscow as a new focus for taxes and trade on their way to the Mongol capital of Sarai.

Under Mongol rule, artistic and cultural life continued in the Rus’ lands. Religious icon painting and mosaics retained their spiritual importance with naturalistic and emotive elements introduced. Architecture also flourished, with stone tent-roofed churches built in Vladimir, Rostov, and elsewhere.

Folk culture like oral epic songs, usually accompanied by the gusli lyre-like instrument, preserved pagan themes intermixed with Christianity. Woodworking, metal embellishment, embroidery, lace-making and vibrant textile arts continued in both peasant and urban settings.

Continued on page 4.



Their Royal Highnesses and Queen Neassa sporting Rus/Viking garb at the Cleftlands Rapier Tournament. Photo by Lord Tarmach ben Yehuda al-Khazari.

5 Questions for Cleftlanders: Know Your Officers - Gold Key Lady Léonne de Fresne (modernly known as Juliana Leis) (she/her)

1) What got you into the SCA?

A friend of mine, Giovanni, got me into the SCA after we found out about the SCA from a mutual friend. He got a message from this mutual friend last summer asking how Pennsic was that year, assuming that my friend had gone. When Giovanni was confused and looked up Pennsic and the SCA, it resulted in a rabbit hole spiral looking into the group as a whole, local baronies, and sharing videos from Pennsic 49 (specifically the Skilltree video) with our friend group. It was not a question of if I would go but when, since the SCA seemed right up our alley. My first meeting was the middle of last September, and I've been able to attend meetings regularly since!



2) Which 2 activities are you most interested in so far?

The two activities I'm most interested in so far are rapier and armored combat, though target archery is a close third. I started rapier almost immediately last year with loaner gear, and I was able to authorize before Standard Bearers in April and participate in all the war points battles at Pennsic this year. I'm working on my Marshal in Training right now and hoping to learn more about the command structure for rapier throughout the year. I'm starting to learn armored this year as well and am looking forward to being able to get out there and try another form of combat!

3) You recently stepped up to be the Barony's Gold Key - what was it about the position that appealed to you?

When Angharad had to step down last winter and announced looking for a replacement, I remember thinking "that seems like a good position to get involved without needing prior experience or knowledge of how the SCA works." But I didn't apply right away while I was working through a move and had only just joined the group. By the time early summer rolled around, I knew I was sticking around and had more space to house the loaner garb. I've spent a lot of time in the past year around the rapier fighters and now the armored group, so I was also looking forward to a way to connect with other parts of the Barony that I haven't been able to yet. Being Gold Key lets me interact with new members in getting outfitted and old members in taking in donations, and I look forward to reaching out to other groups like the Needleworkers' Guild for assistance or projects in the future.

4) What is something in the SCA that you'd like to try or do someday?

I would love to be able to try any of the equestrian activities sometime. I think it's so cool that we have that as an option within our society, and I've always loved horses. Aside from that, I'd like to learn more about sewing and embroidery, since I have beginner's knowledge of those topics but struggle learning more about both of those things on my own.

5) Tell us about your persona or period in history that most interests you.

I haven't crafted a solid persona yet other than vaguely 16th century French to keep with the French names. I did however get both parts of my name from two different stories that were my favorites in college during my Medieval Literature and Arthurian Literature classes. "Léonne" is for "Yvain the Knight of the Lion" by Chrétien de Troyes, and "de Fresne" is from my favorite Breton lai by Marie de France "Le Fresne". Both are 12th century authors whose works I enjoyed immensely, and I will likely spend time researching and learning more about both of them and their works in the future.

News of the Kingdom

- Congratulations to Cleftlands' own Forester Cadfan, who will be serving as the Kingdom Historian!
- Yet more congratulations to Armiger Ragna stórráða Úlfisdóttir, who will be stepping up as Opinicus Herald.
- January 6 marked the 45th anniversary of Carraig Ban becoming a barony! It was the sixth barony created in the Middle Kingdom, just seven months after Cleftlands and ten months before Flaming Gryphon. Carraig Ban is located in northwestern Illinois.
- Registration for Pennsic is live! <https://www.cooperslake.com/prereg/account/index.php>

Get to Know the Rus - continued

As the grip of the Golden Horde weakened in the late 15th century, the Grand Duchy of Moscow emerged as the strongest Rus successor state, with Ivan III calling himself “Ruler of all Rus” after throwing off Mongol control. Moscow embraced traditional Rus cultural and artistic traditions.

Now on to costuming. Very little actual clothing finds have been found from early period, so recreation of Rus garb depends on what has been found, along with artistic representations, written sources, and knowledge of later period clothing.

Linen and wool would have been used for fabric, woven either plain or in patterns. By the 13th century, woolen checkered fabric became widely used. The clothing of noblewomen was depicted as being brightly colored, with red greatly favored. More than half of all fabrics found are some shade of red. Green, blue, and yellow were also found, while dark colors were reserved for mourning and widows. Most linen may have been white, or undyed, with dyes being used on wool instead. Due to their extensive trade, silk and gold brocade were available from the East or Byzantium. Block printing was also common, which is where repetitive patterns are stamped onto fabric. Geometric and floral patterns were common, in blue or black. Furs and skins were used for trim, outer clothing, or footwear - although lower classes might wear bark shoes.

For women in early period, under-dresses were made of bleached linen, wool, or silk with narrow sleeves. Sleeves might be pushed up and held by bracelets so that work could be done without the sleeve fabric getting in the way - but then let out for festive occasions. The hems might be embroidered, especially in red. The under-dresses were likely belted with trim or twisted cord. Over this was worn a “ponieva”, or a wrap skirt. Those known were made of plaid wool in three panels, gathered at the waist and held with a belt. However, only married women would wear the ponieva.

Noblewomen would have worn loose, straight dresses with wide sleeves. They would have been the ones making use of the silk and brocade, with rich gold embellishments at the hem and collar. Fabric belts would have been used, often embroidered with, or made from, gold. In later period, pearls became widely used, with Byzantine influence (see Countess Serena in the photo above).

Women’s headwear is distinctive, and might be your clue that someone is dressing in a Rus or Slav style instead of Viking. Women covered their hair with a headwrap, secured with pins or bands of woven trim. Women also wore veils, especially later. Large rings, often decorated with stamps/engravings, beads, or other embellishments, hung from the headwear. These are known as “temple rings”, although later they may also hang strings of beads or pearls.

Men’s dress is less well-known, but they wore a similar undershirt to women, which would have been at least knee-length. Their undershirts were also decorated with embroidery, worn over pants that were narrow at the legs and wide at the waist. Over the pants and below the footwear, men wore leg wraps secured by leather strips or hemp cords.

Both men and women wore capes of coarse linen or hemp cloth, or, in winter, animal skins or furs. The rich would cover these in luxurious fabric, and decorate them with gold and precious stones. Want to know more? Follow Their Highnesses and see what’s Rus and in style!

Sources:

1. Britannica: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Rus>
2. Wikipedia: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rus%27_people
3. OSU.edu (Ohio State University); Origins: Current Events in Historical Perspective: https://origins.osu.edu/read/ky-iv-rus-ukraine-russia?language_content_entity=en
4. <https://rezansky.com/medieval-russian-garb/>
5. <http://www.scarussian.com/costume.html>
6. <https://athenaeum.baronyofmadrone.net/exhibits/early-medieval-slavic-garb-a-beginners-journey-into-embellishment/>



Upcoming Midrealm Events

Feb 17 - Candlemas XXXIV; Armored combat. \$15. Shelbyville, KY.

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

Feb 17 - Herald's Pointe and Scribal Colegium; Learn about heralds and heraldry, take scribal classes. Tea.

Lunch. \$15. Howell, MI.

<https://wealdlake.org/pointe/heraldsPointe.html>

Feb 17 - Snowshoe Hare Culture Faire; A&S salons. Classes. Persona displays.

Bardic. A&S competitions. Feast. \$10 gate, \$10 feast.

Greenfield, OH.

<https://www.facebook.com/events/647355040807139>

Feb 17 - Better Hearths and Baileys; Winter solar A&S, lunch included. \$15 w/o member discount. Logansport, IN

<https://placeforstuff.net/events/2024/BHAB/>

Feb 17 - Midlands Village Green III; A&S with Craftsper-son's Green (indoors). No fee. Springfield, IL

<https://swordcliff.midrealm.org/events/midlands-village-green/>

Feb 24 - Masque of Courtly Love - Medieval Murder Mystery; Classes, gaming, performances. \$10, feast is \$15. Canton, OH

<https://alderfordsocialmed.wixsite.com/masque>

Mar 2 - Winter War Maneuvers X; Armored combat, lunch, court, feast. \$15, lunch \$5, feast \$5. Marion, OH

<https://pferdestadt.midrealm.org/winter-war-ma-neuvers-23/>

Mar 2 - Courting on the River; Armored, rapier, A&S, lunch, feast. \$15. Moline, IL

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

News of the Barony

- The current Baronial meeting site will be unavailable between approximately March 20 and August 31. A proposed alternate meeting site is under consideration at Sss Robert and William Catholic Parish at 367 E. 260th St. in Euclid. More details to come as they are known.
- On January 3, reporter Mike Polk Jr. of WKYC Channel 3 came out to talk to Cleftlanders and film their activities for a segment that aired January 30. Many thanks to all who came out and wore garb to show off what we do! Watch it [here](#).
- The February dessert revel will be an A&S display. More details to come.
- The March dessert revel is on the theme of "Martial Madness".
- Lady Leonne is updating the Cleftlands contact booklet. Contact her to update or add your information.
- Mistress Constanza is stepping down from her position as the Baronial armored combat marshal. To apply, go to <http://www.cleftlands.org/officer-application/>
- THL Jolicia is stepping down from the Chronicler's position in March. Send questions to chronicler@cleftlands.org, and apply on the Baronial website: <http://www.cleftlands.org/officer-application/>
- April 13 Cleftlands will be holding the Standard Bearers event in Euclid - potentially combined with the North Oaken Regional A&S Fair. See event stewards Lord Tarmach, Lady Ginevera, or Sir Crispin for details.
- May 19 brings another tradition, the Fletchings of Spring archery event, hosted by Lord Tarmach. This will also be the Baronial archery championship.
- September 28 Cleftlands hosts another Kingdom event, Midrealm Fall Coronation. THL Jolicia, Lady Jaqueline, and Lady Lupa are the event stewards.

News of the Society

- It's finally happening - commentary is requested on the proposal of a fifth Peerage for target archery, combat archery, thrown weapons, equestrian activities, and siege engineers. <https://www.sca.org/news/commentary-request-draft-corpora-wording-omnibus-peerage-proposal/>
- The Society has proposed updates to the Chatelaine and Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEIB) offices. Currently the Society Chatelaine is a deputy. The proposal would elevate the office to a greater Society Officer. It proposes the creation of a Society DEIB Officer and aligning local and regional DEIB officers into one structure. Commentary is requested by March 1. <https://www.sca.org/news/commentary-request-proposed-changes-chatelaine-and-deib/>
- Want to recommend someone outside of the Middle Kingdom for an award? You can now get links all on one page to learn more about each Kingdom's award description list, Order of Precedence, award recommendations, and contact for the Royalty: <https://sites.google.com/view/unicorn-bard/kingdom-award-rec-list>
- Gulf Wars Registration is [live](#).
- A clarification has been issued regarding Kingdom Earl Marshals and authorizations: <https://www.sca.org/news/policy-clarification-kingdom-earl-marshals-and-authorizations-jan-22-2024/>
- The position of President, SCA Inc., is open for applications. <https://www.sca.org/news/applications-open-president-sca-inc/>

February-March 2024 Cleftlands Events

- Wed. Feb 21 6:30-9:45 pm - **Baronial Meeting** - St John of the Cross School, 140 Richmond Rd, Cleveland OH 44143.
- Thurs. Feb 22 7:00 pm - **Armorsers' Guild Meeting** - Ealdred & Clairiel's Garage: 234 Adams St, Berea, OH 44017; <https://bit.ly/3vBVzBR>
- Fri. Feb 23 10 am - **Garb-a-Thon** - Maple Heights Regional Library. <https://www.facebook.com/events/918730579639558>
- Wed. Feb 28 6:30-9:45 pm - **Baronial Dessert Revel: A&S Display** - St John of the Cross School, 140 Richmond Rd, Cleveland OH 44143.
- Thurs. Feb 29 7:00 pm - **Armorsers' Guild Meeting** - Ealdred & Clairiel's Garage: 234 Adams St, Berea, OH 44017; <https://bit.ly/3vBVzBR>
- Fri. March 1 10 am - **Garb-a-Thon** - Richmond Heights Library; 449 Richmond Rd, Richmond Heights OH 44143. <https://www.facebook.com/events/1285969198736519>
- Wed. March 6 6:30-9:45 pm - **Baronial Meeting** - St John of the Cross School, 140 Richmond Rd, Cleveland OH 44143.
- Thurs. March 7 7:00 pm - **Armorsers' Guild Meeting** - Ealdred & Clairiel's Garage: 234 Adams St, Berea, OH 44017; <https://bit.ly/3vBVzBR>
- Fri. March 8 10 am - **Garb-a-Thon** - Parma Snow Library, Conference Room A. <https://www.facebook.com/events/697415152562744>
- Wed. March 13 6:30-9:45 pm - **Baronial Meeting** - St John of the Cross School, 140 Richmond Rd, Cleveland OH 44143.
- Thurs. March 14 7:00 pm - **Armorsers' Guild Meeting** - Ealdred & Clairiel's Garage: 234 Adams St, Berea, OH 44017; <https://bit.ly/3vBVzBR>
- Fri. March 15 10 am - **Garb-a-Thon** - South Euclid Lyndhurst Public Library. <https://www.facebook.com/events/688101796845942>

Some January Dates in History

- Jan. 21 1535 - After someone infiltrated the palace of King Francis I to leave an anti-Catholic poster on his bedchamber door, the king leads an anti-Protestant procession through Paris.
- Jan. 22 1517 - Selim I defeats the Mamluk Sultanate and captures present-day Egypt for the Ottoman Empire.
- Jan. 23 1368 - The Ming dynasty of China begins when Zhu Yuanzhang proclaims himself Hongwu Emperor.
- Jan. 24 41 - After the Praetorian Guard assassinate his nephew, Caligula, Claudius becomes the Roman Emperor.
- Jan. 25 1477- Birth of [Anne of Brittany](#), the only woman to have been queen consort of France twice.
- Jan. 26 1564 - The Council of Trent establishes the official distinction between Roman Catholicism and Protestantism.
- Jan. 27 1596 - Sir Francis Drake dies of dysentery. He was buried at sea in a lead-lined coffin that has never been found.



Random Period Object - From the Cleveland Museum of Art

Powder Flask with Standing Figures; Germany, 1570

<https://www.clevelandart.org/art/1916.37>

Size: ~9.1875 x 4.625 inches

Elk horn with steel mounts

This powder flask was helpfully labeled with the year on the bottom. It depicts a man and a woman, who may have been the original owners. Neither the owners nor artist are known.

However, during the 16th century, powder flasks were also decorated with the images of mythological or famous historical figures. So the man and woman may not have been real people, but exemplars of meaning to the owner.

Powder flasks were used to hold gunpowder for firearms, and were in use from the 1400s until the use of pre-made paper cartridges in the 1800s. A decorative example like this one would likely have been used in sport shooting, not war.

Powder flasks could be made of a variety of material - preferably non-sparking like wood or copper, in addition to horn. Some use the term "powder horn" interchangeably, but a powder horn is specifically made from horn.

News of the Society - Continued

- The Corporate communications team is looking for help. See what positions they need: <https://www.sca.org/news/join-the-corporate-communications-team/>
- Applications are open for Deputy Society Seneschal for Investigations/Assistant VP for Operations. If you appreciate a challenge, learn more: <https://www.sca.org/news/application-open-deputy-society-seneschal-for-investigations-assistant-vp-for-operations/>
- Society has announced increases to membership fees and the non-member surcharge at events. On February 15, membership fees will increase from \$45 to \$55. <https://www.sca.org/news/membership-fee-increase-effective-february-15-2024/>
- On April 1, the non-member surcharge is increasing from \$5 to \$10. <https://www.sca.org/news/implementation-of-the-april-1-2024-increased-event-membership-rate-non-member-surcharge/>
- Unni Leino has been appointed as the Society's Laurel Principal Sovereign of Arms. <https://www.sca.org/news/people-on-the-move-laurel-sovereign-of-arms-2/>
- More kind words were issued as commendations to recognize just some of the hard work that SCA members do in service to the dream. A few Midrealmers were mentioned this time around - get the good vibes here: <https://www.sca.org/news/january-2024-commendations-to-the-board-of-directors/>

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
- Castellan (Chatelaine): Rav Ezra de Barcelona; chatelaine@cleftlands.org
- Herald: Sergeant Njall Orkneyjarsen; herald@cleftlands.org
- Minister Arts & Sciences: Dame Elizabethte Alles; moas@cleftlands.org
- Social Media Officer: Lord Hrafnkell inn Raudi Eykelsson; social@cleftlands.org
- Knight's Marshal: Baroness Constanza de Mendoza; knightsmarshal@cleftlands.org
- Rapier Marshal: Lord Reinhardt mit dem Bart; rapiermarshal@cleftlands.org
- Archery Marshal: Forester Gwyneth Cole; archery@cleftlands.org
- Web Minister: Baroness Gianna Vettori; webminister@cleftlands.org
- Chronicler: The Honorable Lady Jolicia atte Northclyfe; chronicler@cleftlands.org
- Youth Officer: Lady Chaiya Leah bat Dovid; youth@cleftlands.org
- Demo Coordinator: Lady Shahzada al-Zahra; demo@cleftlands.org
- Iron Key: Eofor; ironkey@cleftlands.org
- Youth Marshal: Sergeant Bastian Eychener; youthmarshal@cleftlands.org
- Quartermaster: The Honorable Lady Sarra Bossard; quartermaster@cleftlands.org
- Gold Key: Lady Leonne de Fresne; goldkey@cleftlands.org

Newsletter Content

Did you miss an issue? Want to review an old favorite? All copies of the newsletter are stored on the Cleftlands website. Find them here: <http://wiki.cleftlands.org/Publications>

For suggestions and comments, please contact the editor at clariciadlm@gmail.com.

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- Photos of the Yule Revel were taken by Lady Claricia de la Mere (Karin Strippel)
- Photos in the "Examining Personas: Get to Know the Rus" article and of Lady Léonne are used with gratitude to Lord Tarmach ben Yehuda al-Khazari/Richard Mandel

The image of the carved powder flask is courtesy of the Cleveland Museum of Art. 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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