



A Cleftlands (Middle Kingdom) Newsletter - 12/13/2020

News of the Realm

December is a month of celebrations - wishing you a safe, happy season!

SCA News -

- The SCA board issued a resolution to suspend all in-person SCA activity in North America through May 31, 2021. Read it here: <https://www.sca.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/2020-12-04-Resolution-Continuation-Letter.pdf>
- The BoD voted to remove the requirement of paid membership for access to the sca.org e-newsletter online portal. This became effective December 1, and does not affect subscribers to paper copies. <https://www.sca.org/news/kingdom-e-newsletters-available-to-all-december-1-2020>

Kingdom News

- Royal University of the Midrealm is looking for classes for January. If you would like to teach, PM Sean Wilson or email rum@midrealm.org with your suggestions.

Baronial News

- Yule celebration is going virtual this year! Join us on Friday, December 18 at 7:30 PM, for trivia and other games. Grab your garb, draw near with your drinks, and plan for some pandemic-safe fun. Details to come.
- The Yule court will be delayed, due to unforeseen 2020. You can still submit your recommendations for future court awards here: <http://www.cleftlands.org/award-recommendation/>
- Please note that, due to the restrictions on SCA activities, and the expected vaccine timeline, NOWM is not currently being planned for this year.

A Medieval Hanukkah

By Lord Tarmach ben Yehuda al-Khazari

Hanukkah (Sunset, 10 December – nightfall, 18 December)

Hanukkah, actually considered a minor festival, commemorates the re-dedication of the Second Temple in Jerusalem at the time of the Revolt by the Maccabees against the Seleucid Empire, about 165 BCE. Antiochus IV Epiphanes had invaded the land two years earlier, ordered Judaism outlawed, had an altar to Zeus installed in the Temple, and, on that altar, pigs were to be slaughtered. Several sources allude to the events and the celebration, include the New Testament (John10:22-23).¹

Medieval rabbis decided to make Hanukkah into a holiday as a balance to the Jewish holiday of Purim, and based it on the Book of Judith. Since the traditional Purim of the Middle Ages made drinking and eating for joy and pleasure a religious obligation, so it was to be for Hanukkah (there's a somewhat painful truism that most Jewish holidays are, "We're threatened!" "We're saved!" "Let's eat!"). Both the Book of Judith, and the poem "Even Bohan" by French Rabbi Kalonymos ben Kalonymos (1286 to sometime after 1328), indicate particular kinds of food associated with the celebration of Hanukkah, including pan-fried cakes and honey porridge.^{2, 3, 4}

There is one Hanukkah-associated food not just from the Middle Ages, but specifically associated with medieval Hanukkah: cheese. Fourteenth-century Iberian rabbi Rabbenu Nissam wrote, commenting on the Book of Judith:

Continued on page 2.

A Medieval Hanukkah - continued

[Judith] gave the chief enemy cheese to eat to make him drunk and they cut off his head and everyone fled. Because of this, there is a custom to eat cheese on Hanukkah.

No head cheese jokes, please... The pan-fried cakes evolved into Sufganiyot, which are doughnuts filled with strawberry jelly. The Ashkenazis (Eastern European Jews) went with latkes (potato pancakes)(mmm), while the Sephardim (Iberian) and Mizrahi (Middle Eastern) have their own preferred fried dishes.

The toy top called the dreidel dates back to ancient times, possibly a part of a game developed by Jews who illegally studied the Torah in seclusion as they hid, sometimes in caves, from the Seleucids under Antiochus IV. The more modern version developed from an Irish or English top introduced into Germany, known as a *teetotum*.⁵

Footnotes/References:

- 1) <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hanukkah>
- 2) <https://www.medievalists.net/2018/12/celebrating-hanukkah-middle-ages/>
- 3) https://www.researchgate.net/publication/274834816_Food_Sex_and_Redemption_in_Megillat_Yehudit_the_Scroll_of_Judith
- 4) https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kalonymus_ben_Kalonymus
- 5) <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dreidel>

Virtual Classes for December 13 through December 27:

- Sunday December 13 5pm EST - Painting on Fabric with Raven Mayne: <https://zoom.us/j/92943532932?pwd=eHpIRGITdElpMGIUcGtSRHVpVjlUdz09>
- Monday December 14 7pm EST - Barrels and Barrel Aging with Oswyn: <https://zoom.us/j/97389227160?pwd=MTBvSEhCc3IHRktPZ2hvbGUzbUd6Zz09>
- Tuesday December 15 7pm EST - Charlemagne and the Matter of France with Reinhold von Glier: <https://zoom.us/j/95543977999?pwd=d3ZIY2JicHVUeWJTWDR0THFH0F4UT09>
- Wednesday December 16 7pm EST - Feast Horror Stories & What You Can Learn with Llewellyn ap Tiernon: <https://zoom.us/j/94939677866?pwd=Y1BGa0xMQ24yMWhVZWtla0RTdUNFQT09>
- Sunday December 20 5pm EST - Illumination Shading with Raven Mayne: <https://zoom.us/j/92859235243?pwd=M3R4bHRVeXdJQTdLM1JmMTd3L2hhZz09>
- Monday December 21 7pm EST - Unmaking a Boar - Butchering with Duchess Vukasin: <https://www.facebook.com/events/3692783804115257>
- Tuesday December 22 8pm EST - German Pronunciation with Livia von Baden: <https://zoom.us/j/98742089208?pwd=Um1JM1A1QVFZdIZqcXhmUnZWRHcxUT09>
- Wednesday December 23 7pm EST - Flying Chariots & Dragon Kings: The Chess of Medieval Japan with Niccolo: <https://zoom.us/j/96875124504?pwd=WkdubldEaE1aL0JlelZWMDk3UDhRUT09>

Random Period Object - Cleveland Museum of Art



Portrait of Hottō Enmyō Kokushi, Japan, 1295-1315).

Hinoki cypress wood with lacquer, metal staples, and fittings.

The title Hottō Enmyō Kokushi, meaning “perfectly awakened national teacher of the Dharma lamp”, was given to Zen Buddhist monk Shinchi Kakushin by emperor Go-Daigo after his death in 1298. This style is “Kamakura realism,” where the body’s details are minimized but the face is highly detailed.

This piece was once found at the temple Kōkokuji in Wakayama.

<https://www.clevelandart.org/art/1970.67>

For the Combat & Ranged Arts

Armored: Duke Eik's Videos: Longsword 2 Hand Thrusting
<https://youtu.be/EbpxIfEq5E4>

Longsword Satori Thought Processes (Eik's Ox)
<https://youtu.be/9i0ld6CcGq4>

Longsword Vertical Cuts and Cutting Correctness
https://youtu.be/g5F_57c1YZc

Ranged: Plumbata (war darts used by Ancient Greece and Empire Romans: Part 1:
<https://youtu.be/EfgMfSZiQSU>

Part 2:
<https://youtu.be/vNlgb79A4mM>

How to Throw Sharp Things (RUM):
<https://youtu.be/x3JvDicNPwE>

Introduction to Combat Archery (RUM):
https://youtu.be/vbw_bfs5Zoc

Arrow's Flight (RUM):
<https://youtu.be/xvSgcZSXJ80>

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!

Featuring Cleftlanders - Galactic Hellcats Blast Off in Cleftlander's Debut SF Novel

By *THL Jolicica atte Northclyffe*

Cleftlands member and science fiction author The Honorable Lady Lyonnete Vibert (mka Marie Vibbert) can still picture the childhood sketch that inspired her upcoming debut novel, "Galactic Hellcats" (Vernacular Books, \$15.99, publication date March 9, 2021).

When they were 12, Lyonnete's twin sister, Mistress Milesent Vibert, sketched three punk women gathered around a motorcycle on the back of a notebook. Lyonnete immediately commandeered the notebook — along with her sister's purple pen — and filled the notebook with a proto-novel about sassy women who ride space-going motorcycles.

Years later, after establishing herself as a leading short story author, Lyonnete dug out that old notebook and fleshed out the story until "Galactic Hellcats" was born.

In the novel, a petty thief from Cleveland named Ki and an anxiety-plagued military vet named Margot take a joy ride on their solo-flyers — think personal spaceships with custom-painted flames — to planet Ratana, where Margot is arrested by border control.

Ki enlists Ratanese local Zuleikah, a bored rich girl who can think of no stupider, and therefore better, way to spend her time than busting Margot out of jail. Once that's accomplished, the women decide to kidnap—er, rescue—Prince Thane from his dreary role in the crumbling Ratanese monarchy, but that leads to a chase across the desert and into the farthest reaches of the universe.

If the repo men, cops, and three different galactic governments don't catch them, the Galactic Hellcats might just use their solo-fliers to carve a place for themselves among the stars.

"I wrote the book that 12-year-old me wanted when I pretended my bike was a spaceship and I was a criminal as I biked around my neighborhood," Lyonnete said. "This is a culmination of all of that."

The novel sold in spring 2020 to Vernacular Books, a new imprint, after an editor read Lyonnete's tweet about her project. "The editor bought it like that," she recalled.

There's a pre-order page for the ebook on Amazon right now. <https://www.amazon.com/Galactic-Hellcats-Marie-Vibbert-ebook/dp/B08LNQLX4S/>

Lyonnete is well-known to science fiction audiences through more than 60 short stories published in leading genre magazines. Her short story "Knit Three, Save Four" was selected for the "Best Science Fiction of the Year for 2019" anthology.

At a time when the world feels upended and the future uncertain, Lyonnete believes that science fiction is more important than ever.

"In order to make a better future, we have to visualize a better future," she said. "Science fiction gives hope to the hopeless, encouragement in dark times and strength to work to make better times."



Archeology News: Viking Genes, Polish Battle Axes & Cooking Pots

By *THL Jolicica atte Northclyffe*

New facts about the ancient, Medieval and Renaissance worlds are continually being discovered. Here is a selection of the latest developments from the world of medieval archeology:

Shakespeare Book Found: The University of Barcelona has uncovered a 1634 printing of “The Two Noble Kinsmen”, a play written by William Shakespeare with playwright John Fletcher, BBC News reports. The play was collected in a book of English plays held at the Royal Scots College, which is now located in Salamanca, Spain.

“Two Noble Kinsmen,” written around 1613, was based on Geoffrey Chaucer’s 14th-century poem *The Knight’s Tale*. “Two Noble Kinsmen” may have been one of Shakespeare’s last works before his death in 1616. The book remains in its original leather binding.

Source: <https://www.archaeology.org/news>

Viking Genes Analyzed: A recently published genetic study of the Vikings suggests that they were more genetically diverse than previously thought. Researchers led by the University of Copenhagen sequenced the genome of 442 bone fragments from the Viking Age, from throughout Europe and Greenland and found at archaeological sites dating between the Bronze Age to about 1600. The data was compared to modern-day individuals.

Vikings had more genes from Southern and Eastern Europe than anticipated, and tended to be dark-haired, not blond, the study found. The research paper was published in the journal *Nature*.

Source: <https://www.medievalists.net/2020/09/viking-genetics/>

Polish Battle Axes: Archeologists working in Poland have found two battle axes, along with dozens of other artifacts, from the area where the Battle of Grunwald took place in July 1410. In one of the largest battles in medieval Europe, where the combined troops of Poland and Lithuania defeated the Teutonic Knights.

This year’s dig near the battlefield uncovered axes designed for hand-to-hand combat. They were so well made that they still had the original rivets that attached them to the hafts. Previous digs at that site found more than 1,500 artifacts, including arrow and quarrel heads, pieces of swords, knights’ belts, spurs, and Teutonic coins.

Source: <https://www.medievalists.net/2020/09/axes-battle-grunwald-discovered/>

Clues in Cookpots: Ancient ceramic cooking pots can hold food-related secrets of the past, researchers have found. Unglazed cookware can retain the residue of dishes cooked during a pot’s lifetime, according to a research team. Ancient food practices can be reconstructed by analyzing the chemical compounds adhering to and absorbed by the earthenware in which meals were prepared, according to a paper published in the journal *Scientific Reports*. This can reveal clues to social, political and environmental conditions in communities.

Source: <https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2020/09/200911141651.htm>

This Week in History

December 13 1577 - Sir Francis Drake sets sail from Plymouth, England, to begin his trip around the world.

December 14 835 - Emperor Wenzong’s plot to kill the powerful eunuchs of the Tang court is foiled.

December 15 1270 - After 17 yrs, a Nizari Ismaili (Assassins) garrison at Gerdkuh, Persia, surrenders to the Mongols.

December 16 1598 - The final battle in the 7-Year War is won by the China/Korea alliance over the Japanese.

December 17 497 BC - The first Saturnalia festival was celebrated in Rome.

December 18 1271 - Kublai Khan begins the Yuan dynasty of Mongolia and China.

December 19 1490 - [Anne, Duchess of Brittany](#) marries 1st of 3 royal husbands: Maximilian I, Holy Roman Emperor.

Cleftlands Officers' Contact Information

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Upcoming Cleftlands Events

- Thursday, December 17 8pm EST Virtual Armorers' Guild Meeting - <https://www.facebook.com/events/327411918397483/>

Photo credit of THL Lyonnete Vibert credited to Lord Miguel Garcia de Santa Ana.

Engraving of St. Martin on page 1 and the Italian spoon on page 3 are from 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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