## A Cleftlands (Middle Kingdom) Newsletter - 19 November 2023

# The New Prince & Princess of the Middle Kingdom



Photo of Their Highnesses at Crown Tourney. Photo courtesy of Master Philip the Pilgrim.

Congratulations to Prince Ivan Shishov and Princess Katalena Ivaniaia zhena Shishova! His Highness won the Crown Tourney on October 21, facing off in the finals against fellow local hero Count Nikolai. The Prince and Princess will ascend to the Dragon Thrones in May. Learn more about them: https://trh.midrealm.org/

## Dressed to Kill III - The Finishing Touch to a Year of Cleftlands Events

by Lady Claricia de la Mere

Saturday, November 11 found Cleftlands hosting their fifth and final (?) event of 2023: Dressed to Kill III. Master Milesent Vibert was the Event Steward, an excellent choice considering she was also the event steward at the first Dressed to Kill in 2016 (the second Dressed to Kill was in April of 2022 and doubled as the Cleftlands Baronial investiture). Despite the short notice she managed to

gather a crack staff team and put on a fantastic day of learning. The theme of this event was "coup de grace", or finishing touches for armor and clothing. Classes included everything from making a longbow to acid etching armor, to Norse dress by century and region. Over 100 attendees gathered for a day of sharing knowledge and camaraderie, finished by an evening court with His Majesty Wigthegn, who elevated former Cleftlander Marc Rengarth to the Order of the Laurel. Several other Cleftlanders were also honored:

- Baroness Madelaine Bouvier Order of the Sapphire
- Cleftlands Needleworkers and friends Order of the Purple Fretty (for contributing to Their Majesties' garb for Pennsic Opening Ceremonies)
- Molly Louise Award of Paws
- Maggie McMasters Award of Arms
- Eleanore van Tyne Order of the Purple Fret
- Rhiannon filia Catell Order of the White Lance
- Ezra de Barcelona was given his scroll for the Royal Vanguard
- Kjartan Eikbrandsson King's Chalice



Former and current Kings of the Midrealm present at Dressed to Kill III. Standing, left to right: Duke Cellach, Duke Laurelen, Count Nikolai, Duke Eikbrandr, Duke Alen. Kneeling, left: Earl Emrys of Gwyntarian. Center: King Wigthegn. Photo courtesy of Lord Tarmach.

Immediately after the doors closed, many were already taking to social media to praise the Event Steward and her staff for their excellent work. There seemed to be many people already looking forward to the next one - so there may be a Dressed to Kill IV coming soon to a Barony near you!

# A Look at Local Laurels - Cleftlands A&S Experts Explain It All (or at least some of it)

by Lady Claricia de la Mere

As Cleftlands just hosted the elevation of a former local member Marc Rengarth to the Order of the Laurel, this month seems to be the perfect time to discuss the Barony's Laurels. Perhaps Chivalry will be next?

The Cleftlands wiki shows that 17 Laurels currently reside in our area (<a href="http://wiki.cleftlands.org/Category">http://wiki.cleftlands.org/Category</a>:Order\_of\_the\_Laurel), and six of them gave feedback about what that means. The responses showcase the great variety of skill housed within Cleftlands, as well as a range of excellent advice.

But first, the basics. A Laurel in the SCA is someone who is recognized as a Peer (the highest level award, the same as a Pelican, Knight or Master of Defense) for their skills in the arts & sciences. They have demonstrated a high level of craftsmanship and/or knowledge, and share it with others via teaching and service. Members of the Order of the Laurel may wear the symbol of a wreath of laurel leaves, often as a circlet or medallion. (Official SCA groups may also display laurel leaves in their arms.)

Why laurel leaves? The association goes back to ancient Greece, where poets and musicians used it as a symbol in homage to Apollo wearing such a crown. The Romans, as they liked to do, adopted the Greek tradition and crowned

Baroness Constanza being elevated to the Order of the Laurel in 2015. Photo by Lady Elizabella Marchant.

victors with laurel leaves. More recently, academics use the leaves as a symbol for a master's degree. The SCA found it an obvious way to mark artistry and mastery.

"To my non-SCA friends, I explain that it's sort of like getting a Ph.D., tenure, and a lifetime achievement Oscar all in one," said Ollamh (an alternate form of address for a Peer) Brendan O Corraidhe, who became a Laurel in 2020. "It means that I've worked hard to excel at what I do, that other people have recognized that, and that now I'm expected to serve as an example to others,"

Being a Laurel is more than just crafting, Master Milesent Vibert (elevated in 2010) explained, "It is an honor to be recognized, of course, but being a Laurel is also a job. You need to support the diverse arts, teach and lead, but also watch upand-coming artisans and try to encourage them to grow into Laurels themselves. And there are meetings."

So, what does it take to become a Laurel? An existing Laurel may ask craftsperson/scholar to enter into a mentoring relationship where they guide their progress to master their chosen discipline and share their knowledge to make the Society a richer place. These trainees can start as a Student, and then make the relationship more formal as an Apprentice, often marked by the wearing of a green belt. Generally the Peer initiates the relationship, but it could go the other way as well. It can be a long-term and close commitment, so, as Master Aiden Elfëadur (elevated 1988) said, "choose wisely."

Dame Elizabethe Alles (elevated 2016 - "Dame" being another alternate to the traditional title) detailed further advice: "Every peer-dependent relationship is different, and an apprentice should look for a Laurel who can provide them with the kind(s) of support that they need. Some apprentices want to be given quests or challenges. Some are self-motivating but want a Laurel who will help them network. The most important thing is to find a relationship that works for you."

One important thing to note is that, as Countess Serena Kimbalwyke (elevated 2011) says, "you can apprentice to a Laurel who doesn't necessarily do your art but your personalities align well. The best advice I can give is for both of you to state your expectations up front and to keep good lines of communication going before and during your relationship."

There is no universal standard in seeking out an apprentice, and depending on the relationship, it does not have to be the only thing you do in the SCA. An apprentice could already be a Peer, a squire or protege (apprentice to a Pelican), or even a sitting Baron/Baroness (as Master Milesent was when she was elevated). Or, someone could be elevated without ever being an apprentice.

"Everyone has a slightly different idea of what The Order (™) is All About," said Ollamh Brendan.

Our Laurels displayed a variety of ways they were recognized. Mistress Angharad ferch Tangwystl (elevated 2022) was recognized for her research on feasts and her work in presenting them. It might be a very niche interest, like Countess Serena, who was elevated for her work with silkworms and processing the silk from the cocoons that they produce. Or Dame Elizabethe, who was recognized for her focus on western European prayer beads (paternosters) and jewelry. *Continued on page 4.* 

# 5 Questions for Cleftlanders: Dagny (modernly known as January Luberger) (she/her)

#### 1) How did you and your family get involved in the SCA?

Many years ago, before my husband, I had actually looked into the SCA in Houston, TX. Due to life circumstances I was not able to join. A few years later, and one or two Renaissance Festivals, I met some more SCAdians and attended a camping event. Again, circumstances prevented me from joining. I still have my event favor though!

Fast forward just a little... Before we (husband, daughter and I) moved to Ohio in 2016, we enjoyed the Texas Renaissance Festival. We loved making our costumes, dressing up and camping after the festival (oh and all the parties). We were unable to find anything like that here, until my husband's cousin told us about Pennsic. After researching this 'Pennsic' thing, we sought out our local Barony, having no idea what that meant.

As a family, we walked into our first meeting, clueless. We were greeted by Angharad and the rest is, as they say, history.



I feel like the SCA has been tapping me on my shoulder my whole life! Finally, circumstances are in my favor. We love that we can attend as a family and each explore our own paths. I love the inclusivity and creativeness I find in the SCA. To quote my husband, 'these are our people'.

#### 2) What are your 2 favorite SCA activities?

I enjoy crafting circle and the various classes. I love that I can bring any random craft and sit around with fellow crafty people and learn and share. Since joining the SCA, I have learned nalbinding, lace-making, knitting, and how to make a Turks-head knot. I have even learned more about the SCA and how it works, and am still learning.

From a spectator's view, I enjoy watching practice while listening to the music (as I craft).

Bill really enjoys all the classes available and opportunities to play his drums and board games. Izzy has taken a few classes that have shown her new jewelry making techniques.

#### 3) What SCA activities are you looking forward to trying in the future?

I am considering archery. I briefly tried many years ago with my daughter's bow and did not do so well. I really like darts, and have enjoyed the shooting range, so its not too much of a leap:)

Bill enjoys drumming, woodworking, and brewing. Izzy has been practicing archery some but would like to get more time in and has considered throwing weapons.

We all struggle with having enough hours in a day to do all the things we want!

# 4) Do you have an SCA persona? Tell us about them and/or what period in SCA history (before 1600) draws you in?

We are all working on building our personas. We are currently looking at Viking personas (my heritage traces back to Norway and my husband's goes back to Germany). What I have learned of their way of life is intriguing. Our daughter is looking at an Egyptian persona, but finding that difficult to fit it into SCA timeline.

#### 5) What's your favorite way to spend a fall evening?

Halloween parties and bonfires (if it's not TOO cold). We also enjoy family time on the couch with the fireplace & a good movie or show.



A table of armor at Dressed to Kill III. Photo by Lord Tarmach.

### A Look at Local Laurels - continued

It isn't just being focused on a physical art or craft that earns recognition by the Order.

Master Milesent was elevated for "Mad Science," for example. Okay, AC-TUALLY it was for "experiential research," but that's what she calls it, because it involved doing research on a lot of different things - from Persian dance to recreating gold thread to costuming. Ollamh Brendan became a Laurel for his work as a bard; that is, performing songs and stories.

This also shows that one does not have to focus on one point of research above all others to become a Laurel. Another example is Master Aiden, who was recognized for his illumination, but is also considered a master cook, as well as a dance expert.

There are a variety of ways to be a teacher as well. Master Milesent, for example, had websites and a blog for her research. Participating in A&S Faires and serving as A&S officers or champions also might help, should you wish for more recognition.



The symbol of the Order of the Laurel is a simple wreath of laurel leaves.

"Do what you love," said Master Aiden. "If you don't love it for its own sake, you will never have a passion for it. Without that passion, you'll never be happy or succeed in it. Put the thought of all that you love into all that you make."

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"My advice to anyone on the path to Peerage is that there is nothing wrong with wanting to be worthy of Peerage and working towards that goal," Mistress Elizabethe said. "But if your path is nothing but a miserable slog, it's time to take a step back and reevaluate. It's also 100% okay not to want to be a Peer."

As with Pelicans, the Order meets to discuss candidates and propose those who might be ready to be elevated. This may only happen twice a year. When the vote and the Crown both affirm a candidate, the person is notified, and a vigil and elevation are planned. We went over vigils and elevations in the Pelican article, and they follow the same idea for any of the Peerages. They can be different, but generally the vigil is a time for the vigilant to talk to people and get congratulations and advice; the elevation is when they are called into Court before the Crown to be raised into the Order and take their vows.

Our Laurels had very different vigil experiences. Countess Serena had a "standard" ceremony, where a Peer from each Order spoke of her readiness to be elevated. Master Milesent felt it was a commitment ceremony, and carefully planned to wear white and enter court humbly with bare feet and her hair down. Some elevations are planned in less time, as with Dame Elizabethe - her husband (Master Dmitrii) and her Laurel (Mistress Zsof) had less than 24 hours at Pennsic from when the elevation was announced until Midrealm court, and they somehow managed to find speakers and organize a ceremony. Some, like Mistress Angharad, are notified and elevated on the same day!

"In the elder days," said Master Aiden, now a Laurel for nearly 40 years, "elevations were very simple. I promised to improve my labors nobly and to teach. No vows. Just a promise and a medallion. It was well and properly done."

Then there is Ollamh Brendan, who was elevated early in the pandemic shutdown, via Zoom, after making his own medallion out of a tuna can lid. So, each journey to elevation can be very different!

Like Pelicans, after becoming a Laurel there is more to do. Countess Serena broke it down like this:

- Continue their scholarly pursuits
- Teach what they know
- Promote the DIVERSE arts that means ALL the arts, not just THEIR art
- Be involved in the A&S Community
- Get to know & support the candidates
- Advise the Crown to do this you must know the candidates

"No matter how far you progress," said Mistress Angharad, "there's always more to learn or a greater level of skill to acquire; things you didn't even know existed to learn until you achieved your current level of skill."

Many of the Laurels who responded had similar things to say about their status: Laurels are just people with passion, and they enjoy geeking out about things too.

Continued next page.

### **Upcoming Midrealm Events**

Dec 2 - Christmas Tourney LI; Armored, rapier, Crafter's Green, embroidery and bookbinding salons, feast. \$20, feast \$20. Elizabethtown, KY https://baronyoftheflame.org/ christmas-tourney-2023

Dec 2 - North Woods Wassail; Singing, dancing, potluck. \$15. Sterling Hts, MI https://northwoods.midrealm. org/activities/canton-and-baronial-events/hmwassail/

Dec 9 - Yule Feast; Armored, rapier, classes, gaming, A&S competition, feast. \$15, feast \$15. Toledo, OH <a href="https://hrodgeirsfjordr.midrealm.org/yule-feast-2023/">https://hrodgeirsfjordr.midrealm.org/yule-feast-2023/</a>

Dec 16 - Carraig Ban Winter Revel; Dancing, Crafter's Green, potluck lunch, winter gift exchange, dessert revel. \$10. DeKalb, IL sites.google.com/view/carraigbanwinterrevel

Jan 6 2024 - Ayreton Twelfth Night; A relaxed day of gifts and gaming. \$15. Hinsdale, IL https://ayreton.midrealm.org/ twelfth-night/

Jan 6 - 12th Night in Pentamere; Dancing, classes, music, merchants, feast. \$25; feast \$18. Saline, MI cynnabar.org/twelfthnight/

Jan 13 - Middle Marches
Twelfth Night: Marco Polo
East Meets West; Gaming,
youth activities, classes,
lunch, Middle Marches A&S
Championship, feast. \$15,
feast \$12. Delaware, OH
middlemarches.midrealm.org/
events/twelfth-night/

### A Look at Local Laurels - continued again

"There is often a misconception that Laurels are meanies," said Countess Serena, "and are 'authenticity police' who will shame you for your artistic attempts. Most Laurels are delightful, helpful, A&S geeks who really just want to talk about your art (or their art!), so don't believe all the rumors! Talk to a Laurel first and see for yourself that we're not scary!"

Mistress Angharad went further to say, "We want you to tell us when we're wrong. Analysis is how we all learn: digging into the work of masters and students and everyone else to understand what's going on. So if you see we've missed something, tell us. We may disagree, but you'll have started a conversation. Both of us will know more than we started with and that's what learning is all about."

"Even role models make mistakes, but they own up to it and try to set things right," Ollamh Brendan said.

"In the long haul," said Dame Elizabethe, "being a peer can be very fulfilling, but it's not glamorous. As a peer, you're held up as an example to others, which means you're never invisible anymore, and your words and actions can have a great impact on others' experiences, for good or bad. I think it's worth it, but it can be emotionally and mentally taxing. Being a Laurel gives me opportunities to make the SCA more magical and wonderful for others, and I find that satisfying."

Want to learn more? Ask a Laurel!

### News of the Kingdom

- The next edition of the Armored Combat Handbook is available <u>here</u>.
- The Kingdom is looking for our next Midrealm Exchequer. If interested, please send a letter of intent, your SCA resume, and your mundane resume either by email to <a href="mailto:Exchequer@midrealm.org">Exchequer@midrealm.org</a>; or via USPS to P.O. Box 198, Bellbrook OH 45305.
- Also seeking a replacement is the Kingdom Minister of Arts & Sciences. To submit your interest, send a letter with your modern and SCA resumes to <a href="mailto:kmoas@midrealm.org">kmoas@midrealm.org</a> by 31 December 2023.
- The next Tournament of the Arts will be 3 February 2024 in Fairborn, OH.
- The Kingdom seeks bids for Crown Tournaments and Coronations! Talk to Mistress Angharad to learn what it's all about.
- An updated Youth Rapier Handbook is available <u>here</u>.

### **News of the Barony**

- Lord Tryggr is seeking a replacement as Iron Key, the person who manages the lending store of Baronial arms and armor. <u>ironkey@cleftlands.org</u> for details, apply for the position at: <a href="http://www.cleftlands.org/officer-application/">http://www.cleftlands.org/officer-application/</a>
- Lady Jaquelinne is collecting contact information from members of the Barony to update our contact list. Contact her to add your information.
- November 29 is the Baronial rapier tournament and dessert revel. Bring a cranberry dish for season's eatings.
- December 20 will be the annual Yule revel. Come close out another year in the Cleftlands with dancing, a gift exchange, music, children's activities, and general merriment. Bring a dish to share, or answer the Cooks' Guild food challenge: edible ornaments.
- Want to hold an event in 2024? Contact Mistress Angharad about submitting a bid. Bids are being accepted for the usual Cleftlands suspects: Regular Event, NOWM, and Standard Bearers - but additional events are always an option!

### November-December 2023 Cleftlands Events

- Wed. Nov 23 NO MEETING Thanksgiving break
- Thurs. Nov 30 7:00 pm Armorers' Guild Meeting Ealdred &Sat. Nov 25 10:00 am Garb-a-Thon Twinsburg Public Library. Get details on the Facebook event: <u>Link</u>

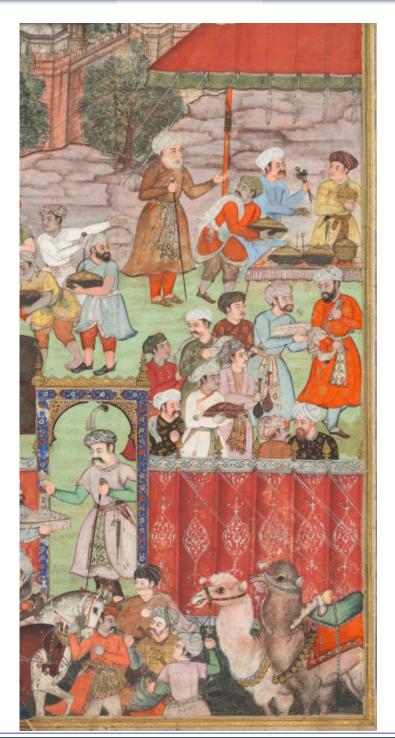
- Wed. Nov 29 6:30-9:45 pm Cleftlands Rapier Tournament and Baronial Dessert Revel St John of the Cross School, 140 Richmond Rd, Cleveland OH 44143.
- Thurs. Nov 30 7:00 pm Armorers' Guild Meeting Ealdred & Clairiel's Garage: 234 Adams St, Berea, OH 44017; https://bit.ly/3vBVzBR
- Tues., Dec 5, 6:30-8:30 pm Heraldic Consult, Scroll Cases, Needleworkers' Guild Meeting Critical Hit Games; 13433 Cedar Rd, Cleveland Heights OH 44118.
- Wed. Dec 6 6:30-9:45 pm Baronial Meeting- St John of the Cross School, 140 Richmond Rd, Cleveland OH 44143.
- Thurs. Dec 7 7:00 pm Armorers' Guild Meeting Ealdred & Clairiel's Garage: 234 Adams St, Berea, OH 44017; https://bit.ly/3vBVzBR
- Sat. Dec 9 10:00 am Garb-a-Thon Twinsburg Public Library. Get details on the Facebook event: <u>Link</u>
- Wed. Dec 13 6:30-9:45 pm Baronial Meeting St John of the Cross School, 140 Richmond Rd, Cleveland OH 44143.
- Thurs. Dec 14 7:00 pm Armorers' Guild Meeting Ealdred & Clairiel's Garage: 234 Adams St, Berea, OH 44017; https://bit.ly/3vBVzBR
- Wed. Dec 20 6:30-9:45 pm Yule Revel! St John of the Cross School, 140 Richmond Rd, Cleveland OH 44143.
- Thurs. Dec 21 7:00 pm Armorers' Guild Meeting Ealdred & Clairiel's Garage: 234 Adams St, Berea, OH 44017; https://bit.ly/3vBVzBR
- Wed. Dec 27 NO MEETING Holiday break

#### Yule Revel - What Is the Not Necessarily a Cookie Exchange?

On December 20, Cleftlands is hosting its annual Yule Revel. Come wish everyone a merry season, bring a treat to share, and participate in the "Not Necessarily a Cookie" exchange. What is that? To participate, bring an item, or multiple, equivalent to a dozen cookies. For each item you bring, you can take another home. It CAN be cookies - or something else entirely. Beaded mug covers, fudge, a candle...

#### **Last Week in History**

- Nov. 12 1555 Chinese official Zhang Jing is executed despite leading a victory over the troublesome wokou pirates earlier that year.
- Nov. 13 1093 Malcolm III of Scotland is defeated and killed, along with his son, after they are ambushed at the Battle of Alnwick by the forces of English King William II.
- Nov. 14 332 BCE Alexander the Great is crowned pharaoh of Egypt.
- Nov. 15 459 Birth of B'utz Aj Sak Chiik, ajaw (ruler) of the Maya city of Palenque. His name is thought to mean "smoking white/resplendent coati".
- Nov. 16 1292 Prince Edward becomes King of England in absentia while he is traveling during the 9th Crusade.
   Edward I "the Longshanks" will not return to assume the throne for almost 2 years.
- Nov. 17 1183 The Japanese Taira clan defeats the forces of the Minamoto clan at the naval battle of Mizushima.
   The Taira were very prepared they turned their ships into a battlefield by securing planks across them, and even had horses, which they swam to shore to rout the remaining Minamoto.
- Nov. 18 1421 A dike in the Netherlands fails, releasing a flood that kills about 10,000 people in what is known as St. Elizabeth's Flood.



### Random Period Object -Cleveland Museum of Art

A feast for Babur hosted by his half-brother Jahangir Mirza in Ghazni in May 1505, from a Babur-nama (Memoirs of Babur); by Basavana and Madhav Khurd; India; c. 1589

https://www.clevelandart.org/art/2013.300

Size: ~11 x 7"

Paper with gum tempera and gold

This work depicts the serving a of a great feast, including the manager who is directing servers in the upper right (note the spoons in his hand).

Babur (1483-1530) was a descendant of both Timur and Genghis Khan, born in present-day Uzbekistan, and founder of the Mughal Empire in the Indian subcontinent. When Babur took control of Ghanzi, his half-brother, who controlled the region, threw a lavish party in honor of his arrival. Drinking and feasting took place in ornate movable tents.

Babur left behind a descriptive autobiography, the Babur-nama, which told of his life but also detailed other learned topics such as poetry and astronomy. This illustration is from one of several later, Persian translations of the Babur-nama, which were commissioned after his death.

### News of the Society

- The Society is accepting applications for Society Seneschal/Vice President for Operations. If you love bureaucracy, learn more: <a href="https://www.sca.org/news/applications-open-society-seneschal-vice-president-for-operations/">https://www.sca.org/news/applications-open-society-seneschal-vice-president-for-operations/</a>
- Dr. Megan O'Shea (THL Sumayya al Ghaziyya) as been selected as Director-Elect for Seat B: <a href="https://www.sca.org/news/people-on-the-move-director-elect-seat-b/">https://www.sca.org/news/people-on-the-move-director-elect-seat-b/</a>
- The Board issued commendations to individuals and groups whose good works were recommended to them, including Countess Serena for her work in the A&S community! See the complete list: <a href="https://www.sca.org/news/commendations-to-the-board-quarter-3-2023/">https://www.sca.org/news/commendations-to-the-board-quarter-3-2023/</a>
- The Society has appointed two new Deputy Society Marshals one for Thrown Weapons and one for Target Archery. Learn more about them: <a href="https://www.sca.org/news/deputy-society-mar-shals-for-thrown-weaps-and-target-archery-appointed/">https://www.sca.org/news/deputy-society-mar-shals-for-thrown-weaps-and-target-archery-appointed/</a>

### Cleftlands Officers' Contact Information

- Baron: Barone Pietro Nicolo da San Tebaldo; baron@cleftlands.org
- Baroness: Baronessa Aurelia Rosetti; baroness@cleftlands.org
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- Exchequer: The Honorable Robert atte Northclyfe; exchequer@cleftlands.org
- Castellan (Chatelaine): Rav Ezra de Barcelona; chatelaine@cleftlands.org
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- Minister Arts & Sciences: Dame Elizabethe Alles; moas@cleftlands.org
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- 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: <a href="http://wiki.cleftlands.org/Publications">http://wiki.cleftlands.org/Publications</a>

If you have an idea for content, please contact me: clariciadlm@gmail.com.

Thank you and stay well!

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The image of "A feast for Babur..." 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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