



A Cleftlands (Middle Kingdom) Newsletter - 3/7/2021

News of the Realm

SCA News -

- The SCA Marketplace 40% off sale has been extended: <https://www.sca.org/news/the-sca-marketplace-40-sale-extended/>
- The Savage Daughter Project is live - this compilation of over 70 videos from people all over the Known World celebrating the anthem of the same name by Mistress Wyndreth (mka Karen Haakenson-Kahan): <https://www.facebook.com/drewishdrewid/videos/10157663886406128>
- The deadline to sign up for The Great Performances: An SCA Bardic Showcase 2 is 11:59 on Friday, March 12. Bards throughout the Society are invited to select and share their best performances. Fill out this questionnaire: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/2Z55KQT>
The event page is here: <https://fb.me/e/gLbNhgGfb>

Kingdom News

- RUM classes will be ending on March 24. Take a look at the lineup on the next page for your last chance at the virtual classrooms (for now) - including a symposium on carriages!

Baronial News

- March A&S Challenge: Lencten, from Baroness Angharad. The early English saw the lengthening days as a time of preparation - what are you doing to prepare for returning to the SCA? You can post your plans and progress to the Baronial Facebook, or contact Baroness Angharad at moas@cleftlands.org

Pursuing a Dream [or, How “The Players from Italy” was Made]

By Lord Tarmach ben Yehuda al-Khazari

I suspect there are a lot of people in the Society who think, after many years, “wow, I never imagined I would be doing (insert unique skill here) in my life.” Never thought I’d be making a sallet helm. Exploring 15thC Italian feast recipes. Constructing a rope bed.

Never thought I’d be writing plays. Especially an original Elizabethan drama. Especially in iambic pentameter.

That latter part was a holdover bit of education I’d received in my last playwriting project, “Hector of Troy,” an Elizabethan treatment of Homer’s “The Iliad.” I had taken it to an A&S competition, and the idea of writing in iambic pentameter was suggested during the Kingdom-level commentary. Unsurprisingly, there was someone who could teach and guide me in learning this new format, my good friend TH Lady Ursula Mortimer. After that, the unique poetic style was irretrievably suffused into my noggin. What next to do with it?

Inspiration came, per my notes, in 2017, after which I began researching elements of the new piece. The story would be about a troupe of commedia dell’arte players who had come to England in late period, less than one hundred years after the original invention of commedia. To learn more about the form, I found I had an issue of *Compleat Anachronist* that addressed that very topic. Turned out our good [THL] Niccoló Bartolazzi was a contributor to that article, adding reason to consult with him.

There was also research to be done about the English towns of the time, and other elements that would add depth and dimension to the play. There were to be evil nobles and decent locals. A dictionary I own of medieval English words and phrases has been, remarkably, excellent reading.

Continued on page 2.

Pursuing a Dream - continued

As I am not a degreed, professional writer, and with Life throwing curves (as it often does), putting together the script took many months. Elizabella will attest to my jotting notes on paper scraps in restaurants, and my waking up in early hours, saying, I gotta go write something... Patient wife. There were several months where I set the play completely aside. Then it was time to take it back off the shelf, assess what I had, and begin the journey again. The Muse is quite flirtatious.

Then there was a First Draft. Just in time for the Pandemic.

It should surprise no one that no theater group wants to discuss a new play when there is no theater. But, four months into the plague, Zoom meetings and performances were gaining popularity, so I asked a group of friends to help me by doing a Zoom "read-through." This is an incredibly helpful tool because the characters that only exist as a voice inside one's head, are now performed by real people. Makes a big difference. This play has 13 roles, but I knew people both in, and outside of, the Society who were well-suited to these characters. The team was assembled, a schedule made, and we had a read-through. I then asked the assemblage, could we do this as a live reading? Assent all around. Better still, excellent suggestions were offered up to fine-tune and improve the script.

We had our live reading of "The Players from Italy" on Zoom this past January 17th, following minor changes to personnel (scheduling conflicts). The Midrealm hosted the program, and has recently posted it to YouTube. It has its imperfections, but it's work in progress – it needs a stage, for one thing, to visually tie it all together. You will likely recognize most of the players in the recording — good talented people, all. But I have fulfilled a personal, decades-long dream – to write, direct, and produce a serious piece of theater. Thank you, SCA.

["The Players from Italy" can be viewed here: <https://youtu.be/RoI0NSCER7M>]

Virtual Classes for March 7 through March 24:

- Sunday March 7 at 1pm EST - Medieval Carriage Symposium begins: <https://www.facebook.com/events/486533772357226>
- 1pm: Ladies Luxury Travel Wagons with Lady Rachel of Bhakail
- 2pm: Using Art to Discover Medieval Driving Practices with Else Hunrvogt
- 3pm: Driving 101 with Danuta Bright
- 5pm: Sleighs, Sleds, and Sledges with Lady Kathleen RedRider
- 6pm: Oxen with Darin Neal Durham
- Monday March 8 at 7pm EST - The English Reformation with Mistress Elizabeth Alles: <https://www.facebook.com/events/2667935640164746>
- Tuesday March 9 at 8pm EST - Brewing 102 Little Yeastie Beasties with Verena: <https://www.facebook.com/events/255868146098630>
- Wednesday March 10 at 7pm EST - My Ukulele is a Guitar with Tommaso: <https://www.facebook.com/events/417804456176341>
- Sunday March 14 at 7pm EST - Cooking with Hadley - Alfred and the Oat Cakes with Hadley: <https://www.facebook.com/events/230439848724351>
- Monday March 15 at 8pm EST - Navigating the e-SCA with Sophia the Orange: <https://www.facebook.com/events/223492622852596>
- Tuesday March 16 at 7pm EDT - What to Consider When Choosing Your Name and Heraldry with Thory Vedardottir: <https://www.facebook.com/events/1462560600762396>
- Wednesday March 17 at 7:30 pm EDT - Start a Newsletter and Keep It Going with Claricia de la Mere: <https://www.facebook.com/events/1104667006664615>
- Sunday March 21 at 7pm EDT - Renaissance Perfumes - A Practical Approach with Dugu Jinan: <https://www.facebook.com/events/513458419624079>
- Monday March 22 at 7pm EDT - How to Create a Class from What You Know with Mistress Lucia Elena Braganza: <https://www.facebook.com/events/1097081117372265>
- Tuesday March 23 at 7pm EDT - Trans History with Lord Rojhon the Wanderer: <https://www.facebook.com/events/177424647168287>
- Wednesday March 24 at 7pm EDT - Introduction to Midrealm Page School with Mistress Elizabeth Alles: <https://www.facebook.com/events/1358179921216202>

Armored: Duke Eik's Videos:

9 Foot Spear 7 Range Voids:

<https://youtu.be/dS7qG2dAUj4>

9 Foot Spear 8: Targets:

<https://youtu.be/LXqGmLP7kEY>

9 Foot Spear 9: Final Comments:

https://youtu.be/kO_3U0o_iIU

RUM: Using a Back-Up
Weapon with a Spear

<https://youtu.be/Krm4ihUBOUg>

14th-15th Century Arming
Garments for Authenticity:

<https://youtu.be/iB8r2Lu66d8>

Train Like You Mean It Pt 1:

<https://youtu.be/G8MZSWDu9iU>

Train Like You Mean It Pt 2:

<https://youtu.be/8GYF4nhN-4o>

Principles and Techniques of
the Drop Step:

https://youtu.be/l8xxP_qeS1Q

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 - Lady Miriana of Cleftlands (mka Robin Hawkins) (she/her/hers)

1.) What first got you interested in the SCA?

So this is a long story: I first heard about the SCA when I was in middle school and a volunteer who worked with my mom at the Children's Museum was involved with Cleftlands. We attended one meeting on the Case campus where I swear I talked with [Baroness] Madelaine, but I was a bit too shy and my mom didn't really feel like ferrying me to meetings. Around 5 years later some high school friends were involved and invited me to a meeting at the Shore Cultural center where again I was too shy and my mom didn't want to be dragged along since I didn't drive yet. Neither time I was sure that I would really fit in or find things to do to make it worth going. In college I had a friend who was involved who invited me to the 2001 Regular Event feast because she had gotten a ticket for it but had a huge graduate level paper to complete so she wasn't going to use her ticket. The event theme was "A New World" and the feast was absolutely amazing, despite my being a somewhat picky eater still at the time. At that point I KNEW I should be involved, but I was at Kent State and didn't drive and didn't feel comfortable getting rides all the time from people I didn't know yet (plus college kept me super busy). In 2008 Cadfan (Eli) and I went to one meeting and were keen to start coming regularly but within the week found out that we would be moving to Japan shortly after our upcoming wedding. About a year after we moved back from Japan we went to the Mapleside Demo and were invited to come to Needleworkers' Guild at [Baroness] Angharad's house that week as well as the weekly meetings. We've been active ever since and it's been wonderful!



2.) What are your two main/favorite activities in the SCA?

All the A&S (especially sitting around with interesting people while we all work on projects), and feasting (yum).

3.) What's it like to be Baronial Champion? What do you do?

It's a great experience! When I was Champion I tried to be available to walk Their Excellencies into court at events because the pageantry helps set the mood for a more immersive time for everyone. I also looked for ways to encourage the populace to be more involved with A&S since that was what I was Champion for. I tried to come up with challenges that would appeal to both experienced people and those who hadn't explored the arts and sciences as much.

4.) What's your favorite event and why?

I have a soft spot in my heart for Regular Event. I love how intimate it feels while also having so much to be involved in. Also it's the event where I've gotten all of my awards so far, so it feels lucky. I also love NOWM and Pennsic for different reasons.

5.) What's your favorite period-adjacent book(s)?

Do you realize I've spent most of my working life in bookstores? It's so difficult to pick one favorite! I have loved the Tortall books by Tamora Pierce since I was a kid, and they definitely influenced my love for medieval themes. I also love the books by the Cleftlands adjacent author Megan Whalen Turner (recently interviewed by [THL] Jolicia for the newsletter). Her Queen's Thief series is more of a cross between Ancient Greek and Renaissance in setting (think similar pantheon and city state structures which lasted through until Renaissance time period instead of being supplanted by a different culture). I also LOVE Shakespeare, and some of the medieval lais and romances. Older myths and folktales are also wonderful (us humans have always loved good stories!). I'll stop there, but I'm always happy to talk books with people, if anyone is interested in more reading ideas.

Medieval Book Reviews

By THL Jolicica atte Northclyffe

There's no better companion for a Cleveland winter than a good book. Here are some new and upcoming historical fiction releases for your consideration:

"Cathedral" by Ben Hopkins: This debut novel by British screenwriter Ben Hopkins combines historical fiction and adventure in a sweeping story centering on the Cathedral being constructed in Rhineland in the 12th and 13th centuries.

The Cathedral project unites a number of vivid characters. Everyone, from the bishop and his treasurer to the local merchants and stonecutters, are affected over the years it takes to complete the building.

"Cathedral" has been compared to the works of Ken Follett, Umberto Eco and Hilary Mantel, which are familiar to lovers of medieval historical fiction.

Kirkus Review said, "Across the decades, no one character dominates this story of ambition, vanity, and power. A thoroughly engrossing, beautifully told look at human frailty."

Publisher's Weekly called the book, Ambitious and satisfying [. . .] This sweeping work is as impressive as the cathedral at its center."

From: <https://www.kirkusreviews.com/book-reviews/ben-hopkins/cathedral-hopkins/>

"Death and a Crocodile" by Lisa Betz: This lighthearted historical mystery sounds like a fun read for anyone who likes feisty heroines and sausage-stealing cats.

In Rome 47 AD, Livia Aemilia is determined to find her father's true killer before her brother is convicted of the crime. She has to accomplish this, with only a few servants to help, before powerful men figure out what she's doing and put a stop to it.

Betz worked as an engineer, substitute teacher, and play director before becoming an award-winning mystery writer. She is inspired by the people and places of first-century Rome.

From: <https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/54884492-death-and-a-crocodile>

"City of Vengeance," by D.V. Bishop: In 1500s Florence, a prominent moneylender is murdered. In the midst of his investigation, former soldier Cesare Aldo uncovers a plot to overthrow Alessandro de' Medici, the ruler of Florence. Aldo knows that a coup could endanger the whole city. But a rival officer of the court is threatening to expose explosive details about Aldo's private life that could lead to his ruin. Aldo must stop the conspiracy before anyone else falls victim to it.

According to Amazon, "City of Vengeance" is the first in a series of books about Cesare Aldo.

Random Period Object - Cleveland Museum of Art



Monstrance with a Relic of Saint Sebastian; Brunswick, Germany, 1484

Gilded silver and rock crystal - <https://www.clevelandart.org/art/1931.65>

"Monstrance" is from the Latin *monstrare* which means "to show." Made in the Late Gothic period, this monstrance holds a human metatarsal (foot) bone, said at the time to belong to Saint Sebastian.

It was made by goldsmith Werner Korff and displayed at the church of Saint Blaise. It was first displayed during a mass held on June 4, 1484, to try to ward off the plague.

Recent examination identified the bone and that its owner suffered from periostitis, an inflammation of the connective tissue that surrounds bone. It is common in people who repetitively jump or run.

Cleftlands Officers' Contact Information

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Upcoming Cleftlands Events

- Tuesday, March 9 7:30pm EST Virtual Needleworkers' Gathering - <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88261643621?pwd=UGx1TTdPcVdNNWtHZFhDZkxYR0d5Zz09>
- Thursday, March 11 8pm EST Virtual Armorers' Guild Meeting - <https://www.facebook.com/events/327411918397483/>
- Thursday, March 18 8pm EST Virtual Armorers' Guild Meeting - <https://www.facebook.com/events/327411918397483/>

This Week in History

March 7 1274 - Thomas Aquinas, Catholic saint and theologian, dies after hitting his head on a tree branch.

March 8 1010 - [Ferdowsi](#), a Persian poet, completes "Shahnameh" ("Book of Kings"), the national epic of Iran.

March 9 1500 - Pedro Álvares Cabral leaves Portugal for the Indies. He will "discover" Brazil on the journey.

March 10 947 - The Later Han, 4th and shortest of the 5 Dynasties in China, is founded by Liu Zhiyuan.

March 11 222 - Alexander Severus becomes emperor of Rome after his cousin Elagabalus is assassinated.

March 12 1270 - Charles of Valois is born. He will begin the House of Valois which rules over France for 260 years.

March 13 1591 - Moroccan forces of the Saadi dynasty defeat the Songhai Empire although outnumbered 5 to 1.

Portrait photo of Lady Miriana of Cleftlands credited to Lord Tarmach ben Yehuda al-Khazari,

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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