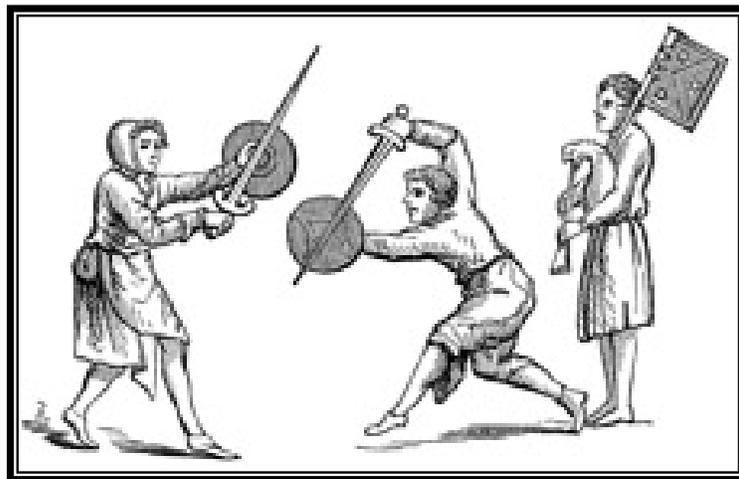


The Althing



Sword Dancing
with
Bagpipe Accompaniment

April as xliii

THEIR EXCELLENCIES OF THE DEBATABLE LANDS

Thomas Byron of Haverford and Ariella of Thornbury
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baroness@debatablelands.org

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ae.queen@aethelmearc.org

Their Royal Highnesses of Æthelmearc
Sir Maynard von dem Steine and
Líadain ní Dheirdre Chaomhánaigh
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Cour d'Or Seneschal (11/09)
Rosalia Iuliana Andrere

The Althing's submissions deadline is the first Friday of the month – send your contributions to Elss at chronicler@debatablelands.org.

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Disclaimer

This is the Althing, a publication of the Barony-Marche of the Debatable Lands of the Society of Creative Anachronism, Inc. It is not a corporate publication of the Society of Creative Anachronism, Inc., and does not delineate SCA policies. Opinions are those of the authors and may not reflect or imply the view of the Althing or any member of its staff. Content is used with permission.

Publication

The Althing is published every month except August, with an Arts and Sciences issue published once a year. It is available for free on the Barony web site www.debatablelands.org. Paper copies are available for those without Internet access. Please contact the chronicler with an address for a paper copy to be mailed to you.

Submissions

Any gentle wishing to submit articles, artwork, poetry, etc, to the Althing is invited to do so. Please send your work to the chronicler. All material in the Althing is copyrighted to the individual contributors. The chronicler reserves the right to edit, refuse, or reprint any submissions. The submission deadline for the Althing is the first Wednesday of the month.

Baronial Discussion E-List

Need more info on an upcoming baronial event? Just want to chat? To subscribe to the barony discussion list, send an email to majordomo@lists.andrew.cmu.edu with the line `subscribe sca-bmdl` as the message text. In the confirmation email, you will be asked to confirm your subscription; just follow the instructions.

Art Work

Arms and Armor CD-ROM and Book,
Dover Publications, 2004

The Pennsic Traceable Art Project, © 2004-
2009, Erin E Childs (Ailis Linne)

Medieval Illustrations CD-ROM and Book,
Dover Publications, 2001

Medieval Life and People CD-ROM and Book, Dover Publications, 2007

Mythological and Fantastical Creatures CD-ROM and Book, Dover Publications, 2002



From the Baron and Baroness

Unto the Good Gentles of our Barony Marche of the Debatable Lands do Byron and Ariella send Fond Greetings!

Events and activities here in our Barony have been focusing us more on the Society after a few months' diversion in winter. We applaud the hard work and research that led to February's Minohi event, a novel experience of a Japanese-themed event that was enjoyable and interesting for all.

We thank all who turned our Barony meeting into a Barony gathering for the day at our home. We hope all who attended had a very good time whether sewing, cooking, eating, fighting, fencing, consulting, and just enjoying each others' company. We were heartened by those who volunteered to add more activities to the day and hope they and others will do this again at future gatherings!

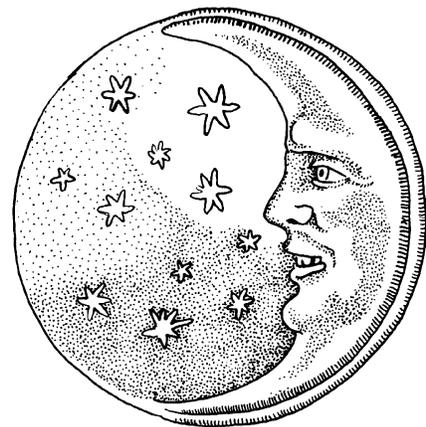
This month of March sees Byron traveling to Gulf Wars in the warm southern lands of Gleann Abhain, then both of us at Ice Dragon in the North of our Kingdom. In April, we shall watch Crown Tournament and lead the Baronial unit at Blackstone Raids in April. It is not too early to think about some Pennsic celebrations and plans! We hope to register battlefield space for our Barony to sponsor a two-man spear tourney and the Iron Rose (all women) tourney. If you would like to help with either tourney, other Pennsic plans, or the Siege of Harlech Castle II on May 30th, please let us know!

We have one more fighting and fencing practice scheduled at our home before we move outside. Thank you to all who have traveled to visit us and keep the practices going this winter. Please search out potential indoor sites for Barony meetings next winter as well as fighting and fencing sites. As always, we appreciate any award recommendations you can offer and any introductions to new people exploring the Society.

Yours In Service,
Byron and Ariella

Baron and Baroness of the Barony-Marche
of the Debatable Lands

Written this Wednesday March 18th during Lent



Greetings from Your Friendly Neighborhood Exchequer!

Important Announcement:

The Barony is now actively searching for a new Exchequer, who will formally take office in July. From now until that time, I would welcome the opportunity to work with the incoming Officer for as long as possible to ensure their complete success. This a great job for someone who can't get to a lot of events, but who still wants to contribute their talents and help the Barony run smoothly.

Simply stated, the Exchequer of a local SCA group is responsible for the group's money. The duties and responsibilities of the position are not difficult or hard to learn: there are quarterly reports to prepare and submit, deposits, receipts and checks to handle, event reports to read and adjust, and the budget meeting to lead once a year. (See below for more information on this exciting event!)



Please contact me if you'd like more information, or just submit a Letter of Intent describing yourself to the Seneschal and me as soon as you can.

I would of course be happy to answer any questions about the position of Exchequer, or about budgets or other details. My email is [exchequer at debatablelands.org](mailto:exchequer@debatablelands.org)

~Hilda

Greetings from Cai, your new Baronial Web Minister!

I take over this office with many ideas of my own about changes to make to the Baronial web site. However, aside from serving as a way for new folks to find the Barony, the most important function of the web site is that it serve you, the people of the Barony.

As such, I would entreat members of the Barony to send an email to me at webminister@debatablelands.org with your answers to two questions:

What do you currently use the Baronial web site for?

What would you *like* to be able to use the web site for?



Also, some of the information on the web site has atrophied, so I will be undertaking an effort to ensure things are up-to-date. If you run a practice, a guild, or any other activity, you may hear from me to make sure the information on the site is accurate.

Thank you in advance to those who provide responses, and look for changes to the site in the coming months!

In service,

Cai o'r Llyn

Greetings from the Baronial Rapier Marshal!

As a reminder, in April we will resume practices at our outdoor site, at the Washington Boulevard Park in Pittsburgh. Those who need directions can find them on this website:

<http://www.dementia.org/~djl/sca/bmdl/marshal/marshal.html> under the section "Directions to Washington Boulevard."

All fencers who wish their names and photos put up on the Kingdom rapier page, please go here (<http://www.aerapier.org/myinfo.html>) to see how to submit them.

Ice Dragon will be upon us by the time you read these words, so I hope you had the opportunity to head to the Northern sections of our Sylvan lands (do not fear passing the lair of that great serpent named I-80!) and visit with friends. Soon, thoughts will turn towards meeting in the Southern reaches of our Kingdom, and I hope to see our Barony well represented at Blackstone Raids to face our friends of the Midrealm.

In other news, I will be working at practice to raise awareness and interest in Cut and Thrust rapier fighting. Anyone interested in trying this out, please peruse the rules (<http://www.aerapier.org/Cut%20and%20Thrust%20rules%20for%20the%20Kingdom%20of%20AEmearc%202-06.pdf>), and then email me or see me at practice. If you are unfamiliar with the concept of Cut and Thrust combat, imagine rapier combat with slightly more armor and the addition of percussive blade attacks. The force of these attacks must still be controlled in an appropriate manner. Please be aware that you must have either a current rapier authorization or a current heavy weapons authorization to become authorized in cut and thrust combat.

Also, for those interested in competing in the next Queen's Rapier Championship, it will be held on Saturday, May 15 at War Practice. Please see the War Practice website (<http://warpractice.steltonwald.org/fencing.shtml>) for exact details. I will not be running it, as Lady Fredeburg von Katzenellenbogen (our Seneschal) and I are expecting our first child that day! My thanks to Baron Quinn Kerr and Lord Will Parris for taking over the tournament for me.

Our keys to all combat are number one: be safe, and number two, have fun!

YIS

Clewin Kupferhelbelinc

Rapier Champion to Her Majesty

Queen Morgen of Rye II

BMDL Rapier Marshal

Parent-to-be



Oye, Oye!

Greetings to the populace! I am Pavel Dudoladov, your new Comet Pursuivant, in other words, the new baronial herald. Please do not hesitate to contact me for all your heraldic needs.

For those with whom I have yet to be acquainted, I have been in the Barony for around seven years. I am involved with the Debatable Choir and I Genesisii. I am also co-director of the Debatable Consort, which meets Thursdays at 7:30, contact me if interested. Additionally, I can be found regularly at Barony Dance Practice held Thursday evenings on the Carnegie Mellon Campus.

I am currently seeking a deputy, please let me know if you are interested in the position.

I look forward to serving the Barony to the best of my abilities.

In service,

ПАВЕЛ ДУДОЛАДОВ
Pavel Dudoladov



From the Captain of Archers:

A review of the Archery Schedule...

- April 19th (Day after Coronation) - Practice starts at 11:00. Site cleanup will start 1/2 hour earlier.
- April 26th - Practice starts at 11:00.

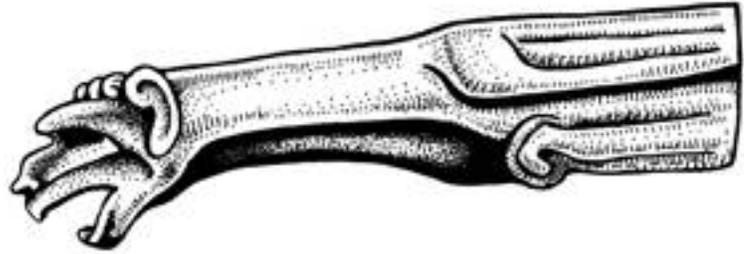
As always, practice is subject to weather.

In service to the Barony-Marche,

THL Urho Waltterinen



*From the Chronicler:
An Art Competition
for the Youth of the
Barony!*



*Rules for the Art
Competition:*

Original drawings based on the artwork found in the Althing shall be submitted on 8½ “ by 11” white or cream paper. Include with each entry a note of the contestant’s mundane and SCA names (as applicable), home address, phone, age, grade, and the date the drawing was completed.

Entries shall be grouped according to these rules so that all may be judged fairly:

Children who are not yet attending first grade

Those children presently in first, second or third grade

All children who are in fourth, fifth or sixth grade

Any entrants who are in seventh or eighth grades

Best of all, the Winning four drawings will Each be featured on the Cover of the Althing!!

All questions about the Contest may be directed to chronicler@debatablelands.org



All entries will be displayed at the Siege of Harlech Castle II on May 30th, and the winners will be announced that day.

Submit as many entries as desired by mailing them to:

Els of Augsburg, BMDL Chronicler

Rocky Hayeslip

221 Pine Road

Pittsburgh, PA 15237

By submitting an entry, the contestant and their parent(s) or legal guardian do agree that the drawn image can be freely reproduced in the BMDL Althing.

Best Wishes for Success to All who Enter!

Els of Augsburg

Chronicler

Barony Marche of the Debatable Lands

Greetings from the College of Cour d'Or

Please permit me to take a few brief moments to explain what the Seneschal of the College of Cour d'Or does. My most important duty is keeping in touch with the liaisons to the Universities where we hold club status, that is, at CMU and at Pitt.

By communicating with the liaisons at the Universities, the Seneschal ensures that the SCA/Barony maintains club status and is aware of upcoming Student Activities Fairs. In this way, the members of the Barony are able to participate in these events by displaying their arms, armor, skills, and accomplishments to the delight and interest of the student populace.

It isn't officially the job of the Seneschal to orchestrate the SCA's involvement at the Student Activities Fairs, but it happens, partly at least, because the Seneschal is most privy to the information of when and where the Fairs will happen.

As with any of the Official Positions, the Seneschal must have a paid membership, and must submit quarterly reports to the Kingdom Seneschal. These keep track of the activities in the College.

That said, my term is up in November, and I would like to begin working with my successor as soon as possible. I know this seems a bit early to be pointing it out, but if being the Seneschal of Cour d'Or is something that you might like to do, please don't hesitate to ask me about it.

In service,
Rosalia Iuliana Andere
Seneschal
College of Cour d'Or

Important News!

The Dark Pages Come Back to the Light

The Online Dark Pages, which is the barony's phone and address list, has been updated. You can access the Dark Pages from the Barony website (www.debatablelands.org) through the Links page, or directly at <http://sites.google.com/site/ariannaofwynthrope/>

Please take a moment to check your entry and verify that it is up-to-date and accurate. If not, please send me your changes and I will be happy to correct your listing.

In service to the Barony-Marche,
Arianna of Wynthrope

General Barony Meeting

May 3rd, 2009 at 1:00pm

This meeting will be held at the Washington Boulevard site, where fighter practice is held.

Event

War Practice XX

Cooper's Lake Campground

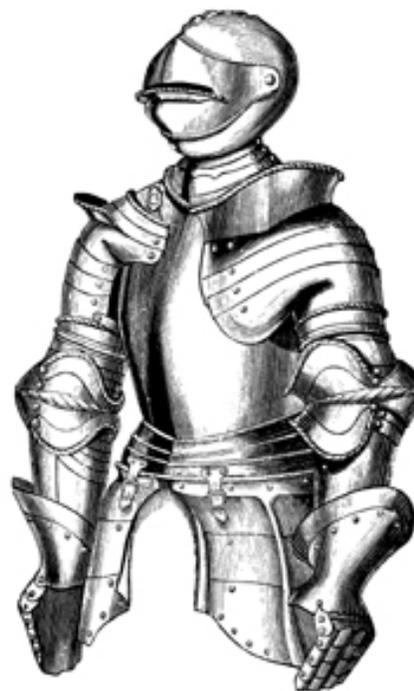
May 14 - May 17, 2009

It is time once again to prepare for the prospect of War, and to properly prepare the Canton of Steltonwald would like to invite all to join us for War Practice XX. We will be mustering once again at Cooper's Lake Campground, 205 Currie Road, Slippery Rock, PA 16057.

The event will run from noon on Thursday May 14, 2009 through Sunday May 17 at 3:00 PM. Troll will close on Saturday at 3:00 PM; all participants must be registered before that time or access to the site will not be granted.

The weekend will include many types of marshal activities, including Heavy Weapons, Combat Archery, Fencing, Thrown Weapons, Archery and Youth Fighting. Among the peaceful pursuits we will include Classes, Meetings, Shopping and More.

For all pertinent information, please check the official website at <http://warpractice.steltonwald.org/>



Directions:

From the North: **Take I 79 South to exit 99, NewCastle/Butler. Make a left at the end of the ramp onto 422 West towards New Castle. Travel about ¼ mile and turn right onto Currie Road (between the signs for 422 Auto Auction / McClymonds Transport). Follow Currie Rd for one mile.

From the East or West via Interstate 80: Take your best route to I 79 South and follow from **above.

From the West: Take your best route to 422East. When you go under the Route 19 underpass, you are getting very close. Make the left unto Currie Rd. (between the signs for 422 Auto Sales / McClymonds Transport). Follow Currie Rd. for one mile.

From the East: Take your best route to 422 west. When you pass the Moraine State Park South Shore exit you are getting very close. Go under the I79 overpass, travel approximately ¼ mile and turn onto Currie Rd (between the signs for 422 Auto Sales/McClymonds Transport). Follow Currie Rd. for one mile.



Event

The Siege of Harlech Castle II

May 30th, 2009

All fighters and combat archers of these Sylvan Lands are called to the Barony-Marche of the Debatable Lands to besiege or defend the Castle! The year is 1409. Rebel Welsh forces under the command of Owen Glendower now hold Harlech Castle, which lies along the Western coast of Wales. If the Welsh rebellion is to be put down, the English must find a way to re-conquer this Edwardian stronghold. On May 30, 2009, heavy fighters and combat archers will once again choose sides as the English and the Welsh battle for dominance in Western Britain.



In addition to a traditional heavy weapons tournament, a two-man spear tournament shall be held on the drawbridge. New this year will be rattan melee in a flat, hourglass-shaped meadow near the castle. From the parapets and windows above, combat archers will shoot at fighters below. There will be competition to see which heavy fighter can deflect the most combat arrows with great sword or katana. There will also be a formal combat archery competition. Space will be provided for the populace to watch the combat archery from the parapets or from below.

The site opens, and armour/weapon inspections begin, at 10 AM. Fighting shall begin at noon. The site closes at 8 PM. This site is a private residence, and parking is extremely limited. Portions of the castle (including the great hall, but not the parapets) are handicap-accessible. The site is wet. Please contact the autocrats with any questions about site restrictions. Photos of the castle may be seen on the [autocrats' website](#).

A delicious all-day sideboard will be available for \$8 (\$4 for children 6-12, free for 5 and under). Dietary questions may be addressed to the head cook, THL Urho Waltterinen, mka Eugene Siren (crossbow1953 [at] earthlink.net). There is no site fee, and there is no feast. Since this is a free event, the non-member surcharge does not apply, though donations are welcome. Please send sideboard reservations to Master Dani of the Seven Wells (mka Dani Zweig) at 1767 Beechwood Blvd, Pittsburgh PA 15217. No calls after 10PM: (412) 421-5129. Checks should be made payable to "SCA, Inc. - BMDL" The sideboard is capped at 120 gentles, so pre-registration is recommended.

Please contact the autocrats, Baroness Ariella of Thornbury and Baron Byron of Haverford (Cara McCandless and Char Branstetter), with any questions (caram [at] pitt.edu or 724-933-4661 before 10pm). The site address (and autocrat mailing address) is 755 Stonegate Drive, Wexford, PA 15090. America's Best Inn, at 107 VIP Drive, Wexford PA 15090 is 1.4 miles from the site.

Directions: Take your best route to Interstate 79 toward the Pittsburgh area. Take exit 73 (Wexford exit), which is 20 minutes north of Pittsburgh. If you are coming from the north, make a left turn off the exit ramp, and go through 2 lights; at the third light, make a left onto Mingo Road. If you are coming from the south, make a right turn off the exit ramp from the center lane, and then go through one light; at the second light, make a left onto Mingo Road. Go 1.1 mile on Mingo, and then make a left turn onto Stonegate Drive. The second house on the left is the site. Street parking is available, but extremely limited; please park diagonally and heed the parking marshal. Carpooling is strongly encouraged.

Tenth-Century Byzantine Field Armies - Overview

(In recognition of the upcoming War Season, here is the first in a series of articles about the armies of Byzantium by Master Dani of the Seven Wells.)

The tenth century saw one of Byzantium's rare aggressive phases. Military doctrine was revised to support large armies capable of carrying out wars of conquest. In the latter part of that century, Byzantium expanded into lands formerly held by Moslems to the south and east, and by Bulgarians to the north and west. This article presents an overview of the units and formations prescribed in two Byzantine manuals of that time.

An idealized tenth-century expeditionary army of 25,000 soldiers consists of:

- 12000 infantry, organized into 12 *taxiarchies* of 1000 men each: 400 heavy infantry, 300 archers, 200 light infantry, and 100 heavy pikes (*menavlotoi*),
- Another 5200 heavy infantry and 1200 archers.
- 500 light cavalry (*prokoursatores*).
- 500 heavy cavalry (*kataphraktoi*).
- 5500 regular cavalry, including about 2000 archers.
- Supernumeraries (e.g., mule drivers, servants).

Numbers – especially those showing the army to consist primarily of infantry – may deceive: This is a medieval army (albeit a larger, better-organized, and better-trained one than most), and its striking arm is cavalry. The infantry is there to support the cavalry.

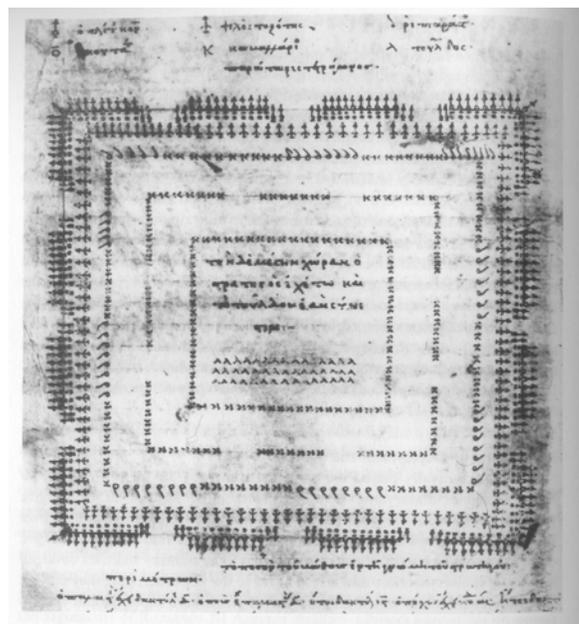
The diagram at right, taken from a tenth-century manual, shows an idealized defensive field formation.

Most of the infantry is arranged around the perimeter in twelve *taxiarchies* of a thousand men each. Each block is a strong defensive formation, and the gaps between the blocks are wide enough for a dozen or so horses at a time to sally out or retreat in.

The army does everything with variants of this formation: The infantry marches in this formation, fights in this formation, and camps in this formation. On the march, the infantry maintains the square and the cavalry rides alongside to guard and ahead to scout. On the field, this formation is designed to enclose the cavalry when the army is on the defensive and to allow the cavalry to ride ahead when it is on the offensive. The army camps in a variant of this formation, with two gaps left open on each side instead of three.

The basic tactic is for the army to play turtle – with infantry serving as the shell – until a good opportunity arises to win a major cavalry battle.

References: The diagram is from an 11th-century manuscript that reprints a 10th-century Byzantine military manual (*Syntaxis armatorum quadrata*). I copied it from Eric McGeer's "Sowing the Dragon's Teeth", about which more later.



Book Reviews

Tulipomania

Mike Dash

ISBN: 978-0-609-80765-1

When looking at a tulip bulb in your local nursery, have you ever been inclined to have it cooked in butter, with a little garlic? When tulips were new to Europe, in the sixteenth century, this happened a few times, until it was decided that they were not as tasty as onions.

When again looking at that tulip bulb, have you ever been inclined to trade your house for it?

When tulips became very popular in the early seventeenth century, this also happened a few times.



“Popular” is a weak word indeed to describe the fever generated by the tulip – tulipomania is a far more accurate one. This slim and scholarly book tells the story of the rise of the tulip as a symbol of wealth, breeding, taste, and social achievement. And in so rising, there were found to be many who wanted to ride on the tulip’s coattails to success, if you can ignore my scrambling of my metaphors.

At first there were just a few connoisseurs who grew and appreciated this exotic flower. After a time, there were those who wished the prestige of having an extraordinary and lovely bloom without all the work of actually developing it themselves, so they purchased bulbs from those who grew them.

Of course, once you had seen the lovely bloom in someone’s garden, you could not have it until the following autumn, when the bulbs could be dug up. In the meantime, however, you have paid for it, and it would be perfectly natural if the opportunity arose to sell that bulb to someone else for double what you paid for it.

This little book also tells of that inevitable day when bulbs were offered for sale, and there were no buyers at any price. Within days, the market for all but the rarest types of bulbs had crashed. Sellers despaired of getting even one percent of the contracted sale price for their offerings; buyers could not buy, since those they had sold to could not pay for the bulbs they had agreed to purchase. The tulipomania bubble had burst, and there was nothing left.

To me, the story of this first-ever futures market resonates down the centuries, and seems all too timely. I read it with interest and frustration, and with admiration for the excellent research and engaging writing of the author.



**Gardens of the World Video
Tulips and Spring Bulbs
1993**

ISBN: 1-883229-03-0

The only criticism I have of Tulipomania is that there were no pictures – I wanted desperately to see what all the fuss was about. Through blind luck, I happened on a videotape of a garden tour of a Dutch and an English garden. Produced by Jackson Perkins as part of a series, this tape included not only lovely views of unbelievable gardens, but also showed 16th century books and paintings from Holland that I recognized from the descriptions in Tulipomania!

If you are intrigued by this little book, as I was, I heartily recommend that you get the videotape, too – both are available from the Allegheny County Public Library.

**Flowers in Medieval Manuscripts
Celia Fisher
2004**

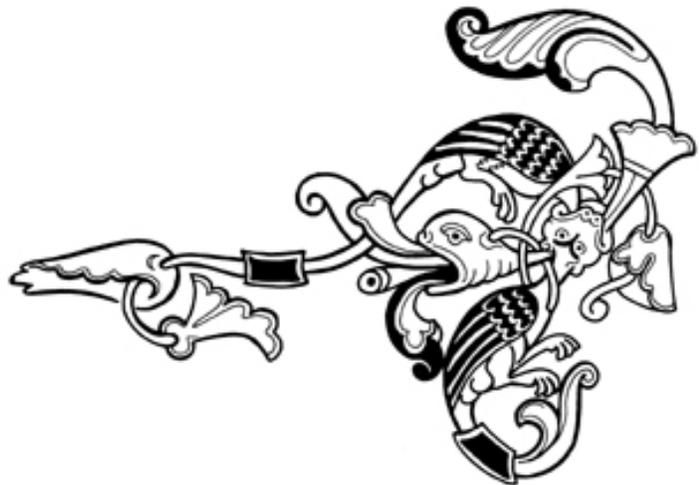
ISBN: 0-8020-3796-8

On a related note:

I was searching for more tulips when I came across this beautifully illustrated little book, which discusses the changes in manuscript illumination from stiff, flat drawings to realistic depictions of plants sprawled across the pages.

From ornate capital letters, vines begun to grow, and then grew and grew until they surrounded the text on the page. Gradually, the vines were populated with flowers, insects, berries, and even people and animals. Into the fifteenth century, the flowers and insects became even more prominent and easily recognizable, until reaching the peak of development in Bruges and Ghent.

Reproductions from fourteen English, Dutch, Italian, and Flemish manuscripts of the fourteenth through sixteenth centuries show the growth and development of plants as decorative and representational art. This is a lovely book, full of information and examples, and probably very familiar to those in our Society that practice the art of illumination. I thought it a pleasure to read, and certainly helped me appreciate the skills of those who did the original works, and also the skills of those who follow in their path.



This book is also available through the Allegheny County Public Library system.

THE CANTON OF STELTONWALD OFFICERS AND MEETINGS
(Beaver County)

Seneschal

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madeleinedlest at yahoo.com

Knight Marshal

Lord Gabriel Hawkes
battalion73 at yahoo.com

Arts & Science

Bonita of Steltonwald
novakbonnie at hotmail.com

Exchequer

Baron Master Geoffrey fitz David
chinaex at ccia.com

Captain of Archers

Lord Bóvi Farmaðr
david_black42 at yahoo.com

Castelain

Lord Bóvi Farmaðr
david_black42 at yahoo.com

Web Minister

Maestra Gianna di Aurelio
giannadiaurelio at comcast.net

Minister of Youth

Tomasia da Collina Ventuso

Canton Meeting

Third Wednesday of the month at 7 p.m.
Beaver County Courthouse
madeleinedlest at yahoo.com

A&S - Every Thursday

Bonita of Steltonwald
novakbonnie at hotmail.com

Archery

Sundays, 10 AM to 1:30 PM
Lord Bóvi Farmaðr
Beaver Valley Archery Club
captainofarchers at steltonwald.org

Fight practice

Every Tuesday, 6pm, at the Economy Grange
Contact Geoffrey

Sewing

Aoibheil of Dun Holen

<http://www.steltonwald.org/>

THE COLLEGE OF COUR D'OR OFFICERS AND MEETINGS
(Pittsburgh area colleges and universities)

Seneschal

Rosalia Iuliana Andrere

Pursuivant

Roana d'Evreux (Sara Gryger)

Knight Marshal

Maghnus de Cnoc an Iora

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Deputy Thistle

Arslan ibn Da'ud

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Els of Augsburg
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The Althing is the newsletter of the Barony-Marche of the Debatable Lands.

