

Il Tempo

Newsletter of the Barony of Ponte Alto-Volume 17, Issue 4^Q April 2008

Barony of Ponte Alto, April 2008, Chronicler* Lady Wulfwyn Ælfwines dothor



The [Book of Dimma](#), an 8th century Irish pocket Gospel Book

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From the Chronicler...

Please forgive the delay in publishing this month's issue of the Il Tempo. Sickness, travel, a new job and a plethora of basic life issues have just swamped me this month. No excuse, but there it is none the less. My poor kitties are even beginning to look at me when I come home at night and wonder just who that woman with the red hair is.

I did manage to trek to the Coronation of Their Royal Majesties Sinclair and Kari, and a wet and chilly weekend it was. A big thank you to the now Baroness Dryw for your company and use of your car on the long trip down and back; I thoroughly enjoyed the time with you. And a personal thank you goes out as well to Countess Rowan for allowing me to get to know you better.

I would like to urge all Pontoons to come to the Tournament of Chivalry this weekend. All fighters, artisans and populace are needed to show your support for the Kingdom, the King and Queen and the Barony. Our fighters have been working hard and are sure to make our Baron and Baroness proud. The site is in neighboring Storvik, just a short drive north into Maryland. I'll be there, will you?

The Sunday Fighter Practice and A&S Social continues to be very popular. If you're a fighter and haven't made it out yet, or are interested in starting, please contact our Warlord, Baron Maximilian Von Halstern for more information at maxntropy@att.net for more information. If you're working on a sewing project, would like to learn a new craft or just spend time with other likeminded gentles, come to the Social. See the weekly calendar of events for information and directions.

And finally, I am looking for a new deputy chronicler to help out when I get totally bogged down (like this month...). If interested, please contact either myself or our seneschal for information.

Lady Wulfwyn AElf wines dohtor
Chronicler, Barony of Ponte Alto

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Baronial Meeting Minutes

Business Meeting Minutes – March 30 Start Time 6:00

Seneschal

Waiting for more information regarding the background check from the Minister of Minors. Looking for 2 new deputies, Deputy Chatelaine and Deputy Chronicler. If interested or you would like more information, please contact the Seneschal.

Exchequer

Currently, we have \$11,574.72 in the account. The Sunday Social fund is paid through April, and has a balance of \$749.84 currently, not counting any funds from This Sunday's meeting.

Profit from Investiture is \$486 plus some change, lunch profit from Investiture is \$253, which will be applied to the new coronet fund. The profit from Bloodbath is around \$300. Voted on and approved \$110 for new checks, stamps and deposit forms.

Heavy Marshall

Sunday fighter practice will continue through April at Lemon Road School, then will move back to the park. Duke Valharic was in attendance at the practice this Thursday evening.

Rapier Marshall

Practice continues. Would like to begin melee practice on the 17th in the park.

Archery Marshall

Currently working on a project to obtain an outdoor practice range in Fairfax County. Information has been posted on the Ponte Alto list and everyone is encouraged to send an e-mail the Parks Commission to urge them to give

us space to practice. An excerpt of the posting, with e-mail addresses for the parks department, follows:

The other option we are pursuing is to petition Fairfax County to provide land for us (as other counties in the area do have archery targets on county lands). In order to be heard that we need use of this land - which we all pay for with our taxes, mind you, there is now a way to suggest that Fairfax County put an archery range on one of their park lands. The more people that are heard from, the better the chance that the county would provide for us. So please... help us one and all!

If you would all be so kind as to go to: <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/plandev/greatparks.htm> and see the website that they have put up asking for input for the park system. On the bottom of this page, there is an email link to the planning and development office at: Parkmail@fairfaxcounty.gov. If we all send them emails to let them know what we'd like, maybe they'll allow us to use some of the land that they have.

A&S

KASF was very productive for Ponte Alto; Lady Iohanna won the Persona Pentathlon. Belphoebe is our newest Laurel.

Lady Sophia held an impromptu A&S meeting at her home where Baroness Leidan gave a demonstration of soap making.

Looking for a replacement as A&S Minister will be stepping down in September, if interested, contact the Seneschal for more information.

Chatelaine

A newcomers meeting was held, but no one new attended; had a good attendance of current and returning members. The Newcomers meeting

for April will be held at Luce and Miles' home, date and time will be posted to the list.

Minnie Howard School in Alexandria as asked us to work with them on their annual Renn Faire. Anyone who is interested in volunteering for the Renn Faire should contact Lady Luce for information and she will post further information to the list when available. Due to a relationship with the school, this could be a possible site for University.

Herald

At Bloodbath, Sir Guy won in Rapier, Baron Max won Heavy, Matthew Dredge stepped down as Heavy Champion, Thomas Schreiber is the new Rapier Champion and recipient of the Sea Dragon. Edwin of Warwick was awarded a delayed AoA scroll. Lady Sian is the new Deputy Marshall.

MoL

At Bloodbath, there were 47 heavy fighters with 9 authorizations; 3 of them were previously in other kingdoms or expired. There were 10 rapier fighters.

Chronicler

Please continue to send articles, photos, stories, anything you would like to see published. We need your work. Currently looking for a new Deputy Chronicler; please contact the Seneschal or the Chronicler for more information.

Minister of Minors - Not Present

Webminister

Still in the process of updating the website; would like everyone to check the current information on the site and let him know if any changes need to be made.

The monthly calendar has been changed from a 4 to a 6 week format to move into the following months events.

Heavy Champion - Not Present

Rapier Champion - Not Present

Baron and Baroness

Her Excellency thanked Lady Wulfwyn for autocrating Investiture and Lady Delphina for autocrating Bloodbath, as both were wonderful events. She also thanked everyone in the Barony for their support.

Both B&B will be attending Tournament of Chivalry, and urge to everyone to attend if possible. They will also be at Blackstone Raids – this is a Call to Arms from His Majesty, and urges all fighters to attend to make a good showing for the Barony. Information will be posted to the site regarding hotels, carpooling, restaurants, etc.

Wulfwyn has offered to make tabard kits and will bring them to fighter practice and the next business meeting for distributions so those interested in sewing can take a few home for completion.

Warlord

Training is going well; the school is popular and people are turning out for practice. Information will be included in the Il Tempo regarding exactly what is taking place. The curriculum is almost done and they are working on the next phase, which will go into effect after Pennsic.

War practice is going well, but more participation is needed. Would like to transition to melee practice when practice is moved back to the park. Recruitment posters will be sent to local game and comic stores in the hopes of getting new recruits.

Looking for interest in moving the Sunday A&S Social to the park during Sunday practice and perhaps having weekly pot luck at that time. They would like to also have a centralized Baronial location with a day shade where the populace can gather and rest or visit with other members during events.

Mistress Sophia is organizing a Logistics Committee to be sure the fighters, and others, have plenty of water, Gatorade, etc., during fighter practice. It was suggested that perhaps we set up a container during the practices for donations to fund the cost of the supplies for logistics/hospitality.

Artisan

She is very excited about her new position, and is currently speaking with the Barony of Dun Carraig about having an artisan's row at Challenge of the Heart this year as soon as they have a site.

Bloodbath

The profit for this year's event was close to \$300. The autocrat thanked everyone that stayed and helped with set up as well as breakdown, but would like to see more people volunteer next year.

Sapphire Joust

There will be camping with the Barony. Suggested the possibility of a pot luck supper.

University

There is a possibility of having the use of the Minnie Howard School in Alexandria. Details were discussed at length, and it was eventually voted on and approved to set \$1000 for the site fee for a Summer University bid. The Kingdom will provide up to \$400, and we can usually expect around \$200-\$300 in donations from attendees, as there is no actual fee charged. Lady Iohanna is willing to organize a fundraiser, perhaps a luncheon, for help cover some of the cost. Sir Thomas and Baron Max suggested that the fighters would perhaps be willing to donate \$200-\$300 from their fighter fund, which currently has approximately \$900. They will check with the fighters and see if this is agreeable.

Pennsic

The group has been registered as Barony of Ponte Alto. You need to register as soon as possible if you will be camping with the Barony. There will be a nominal fee charged to anyone camping with the Barony for camp supplies. The possibility of renting a truck for the transport of Baronial equipment was brought up and will be discussed further during a later meeting.

Chalice of the Sun God

The event flyer has been posted for the Acorn, and information will be on the website as well. The site fee will be sent in May and the budget has been set. There is a possibility of having an Artisans Row this year, depending on available space.

Crown Tournament

The site is the Scout Camp in Haymarket Virginia where coronation was held last year. The budget for the site fees is around \$1200-\$1500, the dining hall is \$325 per day/\$700 for the weekend. Alicia has agreed to be the head cook for feast, assisted by Tirloch; they are planning a feast for 150 at a cost of approximately \$7-8 per person. Marcellus is checking on the availability of the site.

Tournament of Love and Beauty

We again would like to use the Loudoun County Fair Grounds as they are happy with use, and the site is usually free during the winter months. The autocrat will see if we can have the heaters in the equestrian center turned on. Baroness Graciela has agreed to be the head cook for feast.

Old Business

Coronets – the committee will be putting bid packets together for interested parties for proposals. Those that submit bids will be given 30 days for design proposals. The proposals will be collected and sketches will be brought to

the business meeting for inspection. The committee will evaluate the designs and bids.

New Business – None

Announcements

Alle Psallite is back having practice on Monday nights. In the Fall, Mistress Anne will be sending out music on midi files to those that are unavailable to come to practice every week.

There will be meeting formally every other week, but there will still be a weekly practice held.

There is a group of instrumentalists going to St. Vitas Dance this month.

Meeting ended 7:15

18 attendees

Monthly Calendar

April 2008

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
	1	2	3 6 pm Rapier Practice 6 pm Heavy Weapons Practice	4 4:30 pm Archery Practice 7:30pm Ponte Alto/Steirbach Bardic	5 Coronation	6 1:00 Indoor Social – Fighting & Arts
7 7:30 pm Alle Psallite	8	9 7 pm Armor Night	10 6 pm Rapier Practice 6 pm Heavy Weapons Practice	11 4:30 pm Archery Practice 7:30pm Ponte Alto/Steirbach Bardic	12 Night on the Town*	13 1:00 Indoor Social – Fighting & Arts
14 7:30 pm Alle Psallite	15	16 7 pm Armor Night	17 6 pm Rapier Practice 6 pm Heavy Weapons Practice	18 4:30 pm Archery Practice 7:30pm Ponte Alto/Steirbach Bardic	19 Tournament of Chivalry*	20 1:00 Indoor Social – Fighting & Arts
21 7:30 pm Alle Psallite	22	23	24 6 pm Rapier Practice 6 pm Heavy Weapons Practice	25 4:30 pm Archery Practice	26 Barnacled Bullfrog* Beltane XXVII	27 1:00 Indoor Social – Fighting & Arts
28 7:30 pm Alle Psallite	29	30 7 pm Armor Night	1 6 pm Rapier Practice 6 pm Heavy Weapons Practice	2 4:30 pm Archery Practice 7:30pm Ponte Alto/Steirbach Bardic	3 Crown Tournament	4 1:00 Indoor Social – Fighting & Arts
5 7:30 pm Alle Psallite	6	7	8 6 pm Rapier Practice 6 pm Heavy Weapons Practice	9 4:30 pm Archery Practice 7:30pm Ponte Alto/Steirbach Bardic	10 Tir-y-Don Baronial Birthday	11 1:00 Indoor Social – Fighting & Arts
12 7:30 pm Alle Psallite	13	14 7 pm Armor Night	15 6 pm Rapier Practice 6 pm Heavy Weapons Practice	16 4:30 pm Archery Practice 7:30pm Ponte Alto/Steirbach Bardic	17 Hidden Mountain Baronail Birthday	18 1:00 Indoor Social – Fighting & Arts

* = Baronial Progress

Events

Baronial Progress for April 2008

Date	Event
April 12 th	Night on the Town
April 19 th	Tournament of Chivalry
April 26 th	Barnacled Bullfrog

April 2008 Calendar of Scheduled Events

Date	Event	Group	Location
4-6	Spring Coronation (R,H)	Hawkwood	Hendersonville, NC
11-13	Night on the Town X (Q)	Lochmere	Crownsville, MD
18-20	Tournament of Chivalry	Storvik	Chettenham, MD
25-27	Beltane XXVII	Berley Court	Sedley, VA
26	Barnacled Bullfrog	Marinus	Suffolk, VA

ARCHERY PRACTICE NEEDS A NEW SITE—Archery practices are still on Friday night - but we need to put in a plea that if anyone knows of any land that we can use to practice archery on, please have them contact Lord Miles de Locwode (archery AT pontealto.atlantia.sca.org) or Lady Brigid O'Hara (mill3rs AT yahoo.com). Archery is still shooting indoors at Bull Run and can only shoot 20 yards - most events have 20, 30 and 40 yard targets but that is not available to us with the indoor range. I believe we need over an acre and no houses to hit in the path!

Weekly Activities

SUNDAY	
Ponte Alto Baronial Business Meeting	Fourth Sunday of the month at 6 pm at St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Idylwood Road, Falls Church. Baronial Business Meeting (Fourth Sunday of each month, except December) The meeting is at St. Paul's Lutheran Church, 7426 Idylwood Rd., Falls Church. Take your best route to I-66. Get off at the exit for Route 7 West (Tysons Corner). Turn left at the first light after the interchange onto Idylwood Rd. The church is up the hill on the right about 1/4 mile.
Sunday Social – - Heavy Weapons Practice - Arts/Sciences	Lemon Road Elementary: Indoor Winter Practices for Heavy Weapons, Rapier, and an area for A&S activities are all included. Come and join the gathering and bring whatever you're working on. This is a great time to meet & socialize with other people in the barony. Activities held at Lemon Road Elementary School on Idylwood Road, 1pm-4pm. Contact the Baronial Knight Marshal for more information. Indoor Heavy Directions. This is a school location activity. From Southern Virginia, Maryland and Alexandria, VA Take I-495 (the beltway) to the VA-Route 7 East exit at Tysons Corner labeled Leesburg Pike/Falls Church, Exit #47B. Continue on Leesburg Pike towards Falls Church for 1.2M. Turn left onto Idylwood Road for 0.3 miles. * Turn left into the Lemon Road Elementary School front parking lot.. From Northwestern Virginia and Washington, DC Take I-66 to the VA-Route 7 West exit for Leesburg Pike/Tysons Corner exit #66B. Continue on Leesburg Pike under 0.1M towards Tysons Corner. Turn right at the first light onto Idylwood Road for 0.3 miles. Follow from * above.
MONDAY	
Alle Psallite (Vocal Music)	Every Monday, 7:30-9 pm in Herndon. Contact Mistress Anne of Carthew (anne AT ravenstreet.org) For more information or directions. Music files can be found at http://www.ravenstreet.org/ Anne/alle_psallite/alle_psallite.htm and on the Yahoo Group AllePsallite.
TUESDAY	
Ponte Alto Scriptorium	Meets the first Tuesday of the month at 7 pm. Contact Lady Brigid O'Hara (mill3rs AT yahoo. com, (703) 620-4945 (H)) for information and directions.
WEDNESDAY	
Weaving Night	Second Wednesdays of every month from 7-9 pm, at the home of Lord Jürgen van der Vols (Joorkin Volz) (jcfrench AT mac.com). Contact Lord Jürgen van der Vols for information and directions.
Armoring Night	Fourth Wednesdays of every month from 7-9 pm, at the home of Lord Jürgen van der Vols (Joorkin Volz) (jcfrench AT mac.com). Contact Lord Jürgen van der Vols for information and directions
THURSDAY	
Rapier Practice	Every Thursday at Shreveewood Elementary school from 6 pm to 9 pm. Please use the rear entrance to the cafeteria. Please contact the Baronial Rapier Marshal for more information. Indoor Rapier Directions. This is a school location activity.
Heavy Weapons Practice	Lemon Road Elementary School on Idylwood Road, 6 pm - 9 pm. Practice is geared to developing beginning and intermediate fighters through intensive hands on training with experienced instructors, as well to providing ample opportunity for more advanced fighters to sparr with knight level combatants. All are welcome. Contact the Baronial Knight Marshal for more information. Indoor Heavy Directions. This is a school location activity.
FRIDAY	
Ponte Alto/Stierbach Archery Practice	Fridays from 4:30 pm until 8 pm, the indoor season archery practice site is Bull Run Regional Park's shooting center. Archery Practice Directions. Practices are jointly held with Stierbach. You may also contact the Baronial Archery Marshal for carpool or other information. Contact and practice time/location information for Stierbach practices can be found at the Stierbach Archery website: http://mysite.verizon.net/vze4ks38/archery/main.html .
Ponte Alto A&S Night	May meet on a Friday during the month. Contact Lady Perronelle la peintre (dwatsonirwin AT cox.net, (703) 455-0298 (H)) for information and directions.

Stierbach/Ponte Alto Bardic	Come and share your songs and stories! Meets the fourth Friday of the month at 7:30 pm. Contact Baroness Briana Maclukas (darbyjanieAT hotmail.com) for information.
MONTHLY	
SCA Newcomer Meetings	Newcomer Meetings occur once a month on a weeknight from 7-9 pm at the homes of various members of the Barony. March's meeting will be Wednesday April 30th at the home of Luce Antony Venus and Miles de Locwode Contact our Chatelaine for information and directions., This month we will discuss Camping Events, expectations and what you need to have with you.

*** Note on school locations for activities:** There will be no activities at schools during school holidays or on other days when Fairfax County schools are closed or all nighttime school recreational activities are cancelled. Notification of cancellation or alternate site location will be posted on the web as soon as possible. You can visit the Fairfax County Public Schools Emergency Announcement page for school closure status: <http://fcps.edu/news/emerg.htm>

Special Thursday Night parking instructions at: We have received some complaints about lack of parking spaces from residents of the Peachtree of McClean apartment complex which adjoins our practice site. After some informal negotiations we have arrived at an agreement with the building management. We beseech those attending Thursday night practices to adhere to the following procedures from now on:

You may unload your gear from parking spaces adjoining our practice area. But then please move your car to another space either at least a block further away from Route 7 in the complex parking lot or in the library parking lot closer to Route 7. At the conclusion of practice you may once again move your car to a space adjoining the practice area in order to reload your gear before exiting the site. In this way we hope to be able to continue to use the parking facilities of the complex without inconveniencing the residents.

the Real Middle-Ages

We all enjoy playing in it, but what was it, really...



This page (folio 292r) of the [Book of Kells](#) contains the lavishly decorated text that opens the [Gospel of John](#).

In the Beginning...

The Middle Ages form the middle period in a traditional division of European history into three "ages": the classical civilization of Antiquity, the Middle Ages and Modern Times. The Middle Ages are commonly dated from the fall of the Western Roman Empire (or by some scholars, before that) in the 5th century to the beginning of the Early Modern Period in the 16th century, marked by the rise of nations-states, the division of Christianity in the Reformation, the rise of humanism in the Italian Renaissance, and the beginnings of European overseas expansion which allowed for the Columbian Exchange. There is some variation in the dating of the edges of these periods which is due mainly to differences in specialization and focus of individual scholars. Commonly seen periodization ranges span the years ca. 400–476 AD (the sacking of Rome by the Visigoths to the deposing of Romulus Augustus) to ca. 1453–1517 (the Fall of Constantinople to the Protestant reformation begun with Martin Luther's 95 theses). Dates are approximate, and are based upon nuanced arguments; for other dating schemes and the reasoning behind them, see "periodization issues", below.

The Middle Ages witnessed the first sustained urbanization of northern and western Europe. Modern European states owe their origins to events unfolding in the Middle Ages; present European political boundaries are, in many regards, the result of the military and dynastic achievements in this tumultuous period. The Middle Ages are referred to as the "medieval period." The name is from the Latin *medium* (middle) and *ævum* (age).

Some early historians have described non-European countries as "medieval" when those countries show characteristics of "feudal" organization. The pre-Westernization period in the history of Japan and the pre-colonial period in developed parts of sub-Saharan Africa, are also sometimes termed "medieval." These terms have fallen out of favor, as modern historians are reluctant to try to fit the history of other regions to the European model.

Origins: The later Roman Empire

The Roman Empire reached its greatest territorial extent during the 2nd century. The following two centuries witnessed the slow decline of Roman control over its outlying territories. The Emperor Diocletian split the empire into separately administered eastern and western halves in 285. Under his arrangement, the Western Roman Empire was governed from Ravenna by a lesser emperor, and the region was considered subordinate to the wealthier east. The division between east and west was encouraged by Constantine, who refounded the city of Byzantium as the new capital, Constantinople, in 330.

Military expenses increased steadily during the 4th century, even as Rome's neighbors became restless and increasingly powerful. Tribes who previously had contact with the Romans as trading partners, rivals, or mercenaries had sought entrance to the empire and access to its wealth throughout the 4th century. Diocletian's reforms had created a strong governmental bureaucracy, reformed taxation, and strengthened the army. These changes bought the Empire time, but these reforms demanded money. Rome's declining revenue left it dangerously dependent on tax revenue. Future setbacks forced Rome to pour ever more wealth into its armies, spreading the empire's wealth thinly into its border regions. In periods of expansion, this would not be a critical problem. The defeat in 378 at the Battle of Adrianople, however, destroyed much of the Roman army, leaving the western empire undefended. Without a strong army in the west, and with no promise of salvation coming from the emperor in Constantinople, the western Empire sought compromise.

Known in traditional historiography collectively as the "barbarian invasions", the Migration Period, or the *Volkerwanderung* ("wandering of the peoples") specifically by German historians, this migration of peoples was a complicated and gradual process. Some early historians have given this period the epithet of "Dark Ages". Recent research and archaeology have also revealed complex cultures persisting throughout the period. Some of these "barbarian" tribes rejected the classic culture of Rome, while others admired and aspired to it. Theodoric the Great of the Ostagoths, as only one example, had been raised in Constantinople and considered himself an heir to its culture, employing erudite Roman ministers like Cassiodorus. Other prominent tribal groups that migrated into Roman territory were the Huns, Bulgars, Avars and Magyars, along with a large number of Germanic, and later Slavic peoples. Some tribes settled in the empire's territory with the approval of the Roman senate or emperor. In return for land to farm and, in some regions, the right to collect tax revenues for the state, federated tribes provided military support to the empire. Other incursions were small-scale military invasions of tribal groups assembled to gather plunder. The most famous invasion culminated in the sack of Rome by the Visigoths in 410.

By the end of the 5th century, Roman institutions were crumbling. The final independent, ethnically Roman emperor in the west, Romulus Augustulus, was deposed by the barbarian king Odoacer in 476. The Eastern Roman Empire (conventionally referred to as the "Byzantine Empire" after the fall of its western counterpart) maintained its order by abandoning the west to its fate. Even though Byzantine emperors maintained a claim over the territory, and no barbarian king dared to elevate himself to the position of emperor of the west, Byzantine control over the west could not be sustained. For the next three centuries, the region of the former western empire would be without a legitimate emperor. It was, instead, ruled by kings who enjoyed the support of the largely barbarian armies. Some kings ruled as regents for titular emperors, and some ruled in their own name. Throughout the 5th century, cities throughout the empire declined, receding inside heavily fortified walls. The western empire, particularly, experienced the decay of infrastructure which was not adequately maintained by the central government. Where civic functions and infrastructure such as chariot races, aqueducts, and roads were maintained, the work was frequently done at the expense of city officials and bishops. Augustine of Hippo is an example of a bishop who acted as an able administrator. One scholar, Thomas Cahill, has dubbed Augustine the last of the classical men and the first of medieval men.

The Early Middle Ages

The end of the 8th century found the former western Roman empire an overwhelmingly rural and decentralized region that had lost its privileged position as the centre of a great power. Between the 5th and 8th centuries, new peoples and powerful individuals filled the political void left by Roman centralized government. Germanic tribes established regional hegemonies within the former boundaries of the Empire, creating divided, decentralized kingdoms like those of the Ostrogoths in Italy, the Visigoths in Hispania, the Franks and Burgundians in Gaul and western Germany, the Angles and the Saxons in Britain, and the Vandals in North Africa. The social effects of the fracture of the Roman state were manifold. Cities and merchants lost the economic benefits of safe conditions for trade and manufacture, and intellectual development suffered from the loss of a unified cultural and educational milieu of far-ranging connections.

The breakdown of Roman society was dramatic. As it became unsafe to travel or carry goods over any distance, there was a collapse in trade and manufacture for export. The major industries that depended on long-distance trade, such as large-scale pottery manufacture, vanished almost overnight in places like Britain.

The Muslim conquests of the 7th and 8th centuries, which conquered the Persian Empire, Roman Syria, Roman Egypt, Roman North Africa, Visigoth Spain and Portugal, and other parts of the Mediterranean, including Sicily and southern Italy increased localization by halting much of what remained of seaborne commerce. Thus, whereas sites like Tintigel in Cornwall had managed to obtain supplies of Mediterranean luxury goods well into the 6th century, this connection was now lost.

The patchwork of petty rulers was incapable of supporting the depth of civic infrastructure required to maintain libraries, public baths, arenas and major educational institutions. Any new building was on a far smaller scale than before. Roman landholders beyond the confines of city walls were also vulnerable to extreme changes, and they could not simply pack up their land and move elsewhere. Some were dispossessed and fled to Byzantine regions, others quickly pledged their allegiances to their new rulers. In areas like Spain and Italy, this often meant little more than acknowledging a new overlord, while Roman forms of law and religion could be maintained. In other areas where there was a greater weight of population movement, it might be necessary to adopt new modes of dress, language and custom.

The Catholic Church was the major unifying cultural influence, preserving its selection from Latin learning, maintaining the art of writing, and a centralized administration through its network of bishops. Some regions that were populated by Catholics were conquered by Arian rulers, which provoked much tension between Arian kings and the Catholic hierarchy. Clovis I of the Franks is a well-known example of a barbarian king who chose Catholic orthodoxy over Arianism. His conversion marked a turning point for the Frankish tribes of Gaul. Bishops were central to Middle Age society due to the literacy they possessed. As a result, they often played a significant role in governance. However beyond the core areas of Western Europe there remained many peoples with little or no contact with Christianity or with classical Roman culture. Martial societies such as the Avars and the Vikings were still capable of causing major disruption to the newly emerging societies of Western Europe.

The Early Middle Ages also witnessed the rise of monasticism within the west. Although the impulse to withdraw from society to focus upon a spiritual life is experienced by people of all cultures, the shape of European monasticism was determined by traditions and ideas that originated in the deserts of Egypt and Syria. The style of monasticism that focuses on community experience of the spiritual life, called cenobitism, was pioneered by the saint Pachomius in the 4th century. Monastic ideals spread from Egypt to Western Europe in the 5th and 6th centuries through literature such as the Life of Saint Anthony. Saint Benedict wrote the definitive Rule for western monasticism during the 6th century, detailing the administrative and spiritual responsibilities of a community of monks led by an abbot. Monks and monasteries had a deep effect upon the religious and political life of the Early Middle Ages, in various cases acting as land trusts for powerful families, centers of propaganda and royal support in newly conquered regions, bases for mission and proselytization, or outposts of education and literacy.

Outside of Italy, building in stone was rarely attempted – until the 8th century, when a new form of architecture called the Romanesque, based on Roman forms, gradually developed. Celtic and Germanic barbarian forms were absorbed into Christian art, although the central impulse remained Roman and Byzantine. High quality jewelry and religious imagery were produced throughout Western Europe, Charlemagne and other monarchs provided patronage for religious artworks and books. Some of the principal artworks of the age were the fabulous illuminated manuscripts produced by monks on vellum, using gold, silver and precious pigments to illustrate biblical narratives. Early examples include the Book of Kells and many Carolingian and Ottonian Frankish manuscripts.

Carolingians

A center of power developed in a region of northern Gaul and developed into kingdoms called Austrasia and Neustria. These kingdoms were ruled for three centuries by a dynasty of kings called the Merovingians, after their mythical founder Merovech. The history of the Merovingian kingdoms is one of family politics that frequently erupted into civil warfare between the branches of the family. The legitimacy of the Merovingian throne was granted by a reverence for the bloodline, and even after powerful members of the Austrasian court, the mayors of the palace, took de facto power during the 7th century, the Merovingians were kept as ceremonial figureheads. The Merovingians engaged in trade with northern Europe through Baltic trade routes known to historians as the Northern Arc trade, and they are known to have minted small-denomination silver pennies called sceattae for circulation. Aspects of Merovingian culture could be described as "Romanized", such as the high value placed on Roman coinage as a symbol of rulership and the patronage of monasteries and bishoprics. Some have hypothesized that the Merovingians were in contact with Byzantium. However, the Merovingians also buried the dead of their elite families in grave mounds and traced their lineage to a mythical sea beast called the Quinotaur.

The 7th century was a tumultuous period of civil wars between Austrasia and Neustria. Such warfare was exploited by the patriarch of a family line, Pippin of Herstal, who curried favor with the Merovingians and had himself installed in the office of Mayor of the Palace at the service of the King. From this position of great influence, Pippin accrued wealth and supporters. Later members of his family line inherited the office, acting as advisors and regents. The dynasty took a new direction in 732, when Charles Martel won the Battle of Tours, halting the advance of Muslim armies across the Pyrenees. The Carolingian dynasty, as the successors to Charles Martel are known, officially took the reins of the kingdoms of Austrasia and Neustria in a coup of 753 led by Pippin III. A contemporary chronicle claims that Pippin sought, and gained, authority for this coup from the Pope. Pippin's successful coup was reinforced with propaganda that portrayed the Merovingians as inept or cruel rulers and exalted the accomplishments of Charles Martel and circulated stories of the family's great piety. At the time of his death in 783, Pippin left his kingdoms in the hands of his two sons, Charles and Carloman. When Carloman died of natural causes, Charles blocked the succession of Carloman's minor son and installed himself as the king of the united Austrasia and Neustria. This Charles, known to his contemporaries as Charles the Great or Charlemagne, embarked in 774 upon a program of systematic expansion that would unify a large portion of Europe. In the wars that lasted just beyond 800, he rewarded loyal allies with war booty and command over parcels of land. Much of the nobility of the High Middle Ages was to claim its roots in the Carolingian nobility that was generated during this period of expansion.

The Imperial Coronation of Charlemagne on Christmas day of 800 is frequently regarded as a turning-point in mediaeval history, because it filled a power vacancy that had existed since 476. It also marks a change in Charlemagne's leadership, which assumed a more imperial character and tackled difficult aspects of controlling a mediaeval empire. He established a system of diplomats who possessed imperial authority, the missi, who in theory provided access to imperial justice in the farthest corners of the empire. He also sought to reform the Church in his domains, pushing for uniformity in liturgy and material culture.

Carolingian Renaissance

Charlemagne's court in Aachen was the centre of a cultural revival that is sometimes referred to as the "Carolingian Renaissance". This period witnessed an increase of literacy, developments in the arts, architecture, jurisprudence, as well as liturgical and scriptural studies. The English monk Alcuin was invited to Aachen, and brought with him the precise classical Latin education that was available in the monasteries of Northumbria. The return of this Latin proficiency to the kingdom of the Franks is regarded as an important step in the development of mediaeval Latin.

Charlemagne's chancery made use of a type of script currently known as Carolingian minuscule, providing a common writing style that allowed for communication across most of Europe. After the decline of the Carolingian dynasty, the rise of the Saxon Dynasty in Germany was accompanied by the Ottoman Renaissance.

Breakup of the Carolingian Empire

While Charlemagne continued the Frankish tradition of dividing the *regnum* (kingdom) between all his heirs (at least those of age), the assumption of the *imperium* (imperial title) supplied a unifying force not available previously. Charlemagne was succeeded by his only legitimate son of adult age at his death, Louis the Pious.

Louis's long reign of 26 years was marked by numerous divisions of the empire among his sons and, after 829, numerous civil wars between various alliances of father and sons against other sons in an effort to determine a just division by battle. The final division was made at Crémieux in 838. The Emperor Louis recognized his eldest son Lothair as emperor and confirmed him in the Regnum Italicum (Italy). He divided the rest of the empire between Lothair and Charles the Bald, his youngest son, giving Lothair the opportunity to choose his half. He chose East Francia, which comprised the empire on both banks of the Rhine and eastwards, leaving Charles West Francia, which comprised the empire to the west of the Rhineland and the Alps. Louis the German, the middle child, who had been rebellious to the last, was allowed to keep his subregnum of Bavaria under the suzerainty of his elder brother. The division was not undisputed. Pepin II of Aquitaine, the emperor's grandson, rebelled in a contest for Aquitaine while Louis the German tried to annex all of East Francia. In two final campaigns, the emperor defeated both his rebellious descendants and vindicated the division of Crémieux before dying in 840.

A three-year civil war followed his death. At the end of the conflict, Louis the German was in control of East Francia and Lothair was confined to Italy. By the Treaty of Verdun in 843, a kingdom of Middle Francia was created for Lothair in the Low Countries and Burgundy and his imperial title was recognized. East Francia would eventually become the Kingdom of Germany and West Francia into the Kingdom of France, around both of which the history of Western Europe can largely be described as a contest for control of the middle kingdom. Charlemagne's grandsons and great-grandsons divided their kingdoms between their sons until all of the various *regna* and the imperial title fell into the hands of Charles the Fat by 884. He was deposed in 887 and died in 888, to be replaced in all his kingdoms but two (Lotharingia and East Francia) by non-Carolingian "petty kings." The Carolingian Empire was destroyed, though the imperial tradition would eventually give rise to the Holy Roman Empire in 962.

The breakup of the Carolingian Empire was accompanied by the invasions, migrations, and raids of external foes as not seen since the Migration Period. The Atlantic and northern shores were harassed by the Vikings, who forced Charles the Bald to issue the Edict of Pistres against them and who besieged Paris in 885-886. The eastern frontiers, especially Italy, were under constant Magyar assault until their great defeat at the Battle of Lechfeld in 955. The Saracens also managed to establish bases at Garigliano and Fraxinetum and to conquer the islands of Corsica, Sardinia, and Sicily, and their pirates raided the Mediterranean coasts, as did the Vikings. The Christianization of the pagan Vikings provided an end to that threat.

Next month, the High Middle Ages, the Crusades and beyond...

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Dispatches

From Baron Maximilian Von Halstern
Tribunus Angusticlavius and Warlord of Ponte Alto

Great and auspicious have been the activities underway amongst the fighters of Ponte Alto, Stierbach, and the Northern Army (of Darkness) of Atlantia (Legio del Tenebras Borealis). I shall endeavor to maintain an ongoing dialogue of these activities so that all may be informed of what is going on and so that those that wish may join in any and all activities for which they are inclined and which are appropriate for them to do so.

The War Council

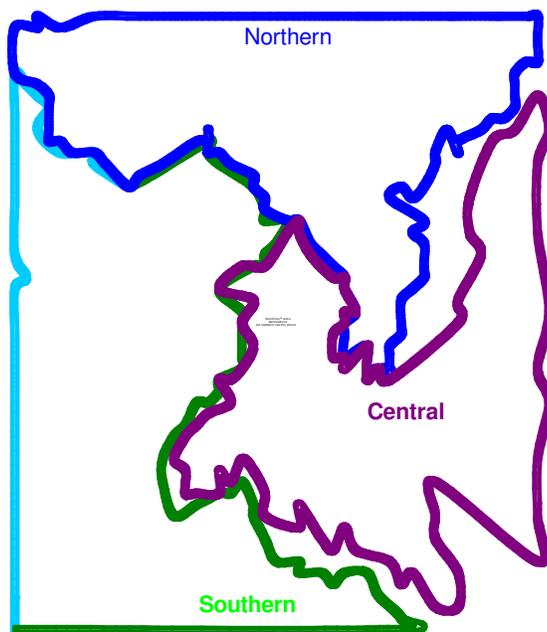
The War Council was first convened and comprised a number of the most senior fighters and members of the Chivalry from our region – both active and inactive – to discuss broad matters concerning the health, status, and future of the area; and actions to take regarding those matters. Remarkable consensus was achieved and led to real progress and next steps. Members include Sir Strykar, Sir Grethferth, Sir Brian, Sir Thomas, Sir Guy, Duke Bedouin, Baron Max, Baron Jurgen, Mistress Sofia, Sir Michael, Sir Tascius, Sir Eldrid, Lord Conner, Lord Finn, Lord Aethilgar.

Ponte-Bach Co-Baronial Prosperity Sphere Alliance

One of the actions resulting from the War Council was the development of the greater Pone-Bach Co-Baronial Prosperity Sphere Alliance with both Baronies working in harmony for the greater good through integrated efforts of their units and other personnel efforts. Both Baronies have agreed that the units will work together to mutually support each other and to integrate as separately commanded units within a broader structure with Stierbach acting as an independent sub-command within the broader command structure.

The Grand Army of the Potomac/Northern Army (of Darkness)/Legio del Tenebras Borealis

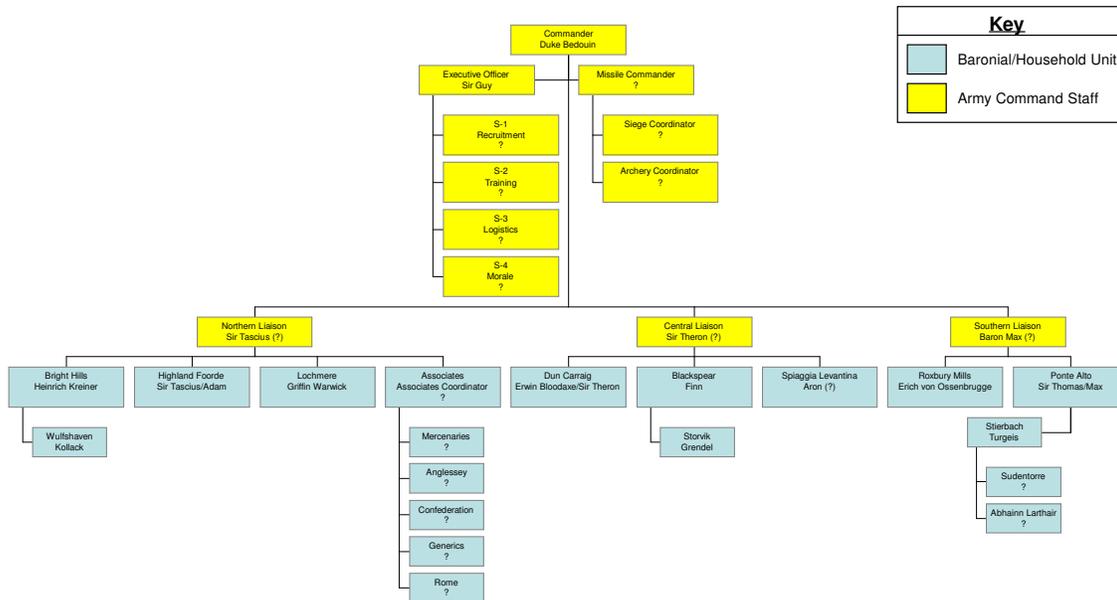
War Council efforts have also led to the creation of three Military Districts within the Grand Army of the Potomac. Our Southern Military District consisting of Ponte Alto, Stierbach, and Roxbury Mills (led by Baron Maximilian Von Halstern, the Tribunus Angusticlavius for the District); the Northern Military District consisting of Lochmere, Bright Hills, and Highland Foorde (led by Sir Tascius as their Tribunus Angusticlavius); and the Central Military District consisting of Storvik, Dun Carraig, and Spiaggia Levantina (with Sir Theron as their Tribunus Angusticlavius). The Grand Army



itself is led by his Grace, Badouin, Dux et Legatus Legiounus who is ably assisted by our very own Sir Guy, Praefectus Castrorum of the Legio del Tenebras Borealis (Northern Army of Shadows).

The Northern Army (of Darness) itself is thus broken into a unit structure as follows:

Northern Army (of Darkness) / K.I.S.S. Army aka Grand Army of the Potomac



The Logistics Corps (Copiis Militaribus)

As the Romans demonstrated and as Napoleon most recently explicated, an Army is ruled by its stomach. To sufficiently care for our on-field logistics needs (water, gatoraide, pavilions, pretzels, pickles, chairs, etc...), we have called for creation of a Logistics Corps with any and all who might be willing to volunteer and assist our units and our army in these vital tasks. Mistress Sofia Mikhailovna Wofsguard (OP) has volunteered to take a stab at the role of Copiis Militaribus so we might get our Logistics Corps off-the-ground and organized. Anyone willing to help out in this regards, please see her immediately and offer whatever you might to help get our on-field capabilities the best that they could be. I know she's looking for all the help she can get. You may have noticed they have already taken the lead in getting things organized for our war practice last month. They need help getting things ready for ToC, Sapphire Joust, and Blackstone Raid.



A number of miniature 'beneficiarius lance' badges have been found on military sites in Northern Europe, and would have been attached to leather belts or strap ends and showed that the person was an official of the governor and operating on his behalf. The origin of the design is otherwise

The Expeditionary Corps (Beneficarius Militaribus)

Not only do both Baronies need to be taken care of on the field, but first we have to figure out how to get ourselves to the field, where we're staying after the fighting, and how we're getting home. Those tasks fall on the Expeditionary Corps. Kat has thus far been willing to take a shot at acting as the Beneficarius Militaribus attempting to gather all the information together about what our travel options are, select amongst those options, and coordinate and juggle the needs of all those who plan on attending. This information gathering, coordinating and decision-making job can be overwhelming and any and all help would be tremendously appreciated in helping manage the constant barrage of issues that crop-up. Please contact Kat with any offers of assistance you might be willing to provide to help us get where we need to go and to keep things running smoothly. You may have note they have already taken the lead in trying to get things organized for Blackstone Raid.

War Council Event Agenda

In consultation with their Excellencies and the Legatus, the War Council has developed a calendar of Optional, Recommended, and Must-Attend events for the unit that we urge all fighters to work towards and hope to see as many support personnel, fencers, archers, youth fighters, artisans, and baronial members at to demonstrate as much Baronial pride as possible.

Date	Event	Unit	Newcomers	Logistics	Expeditionary
4/8	Mini-Tourney	Optional	Should/Push	Should/Push	Optional
4/18	Mundane Social?	Optional	Should/Push	Optional	Optional
4/18-4/20	Tournament of Chivalry & War Practice	Should/Push	Should/Push	Heavy Push	Optional
4/25-4/27	Blackstone Raid	Should/Push	Optional	Heavy Push	Heavy Push
5/2	Movie Night	Optional	Optional	Optional	Optional
5/6	Mini-Tourney	Optional	Should/Push	Should/Push	Optional
5/23-5/26	Sapphire Joust	Should/Push	Optional	Should/Push	Heavy Push
Early June	Regional Practice	Should/Push	Should/Push	Heavy Push	Optional
6/13-6/15	Highland River Melees & War Practice	Should/Push	Optional	Should/Push	Should/Push
6/20-6/22	Assessment	Heavy Push	Heavy Push	Heavy Push	Heavy Push
Early July	War Practice	Heavy Push	Heavy Push	Heavy Push	Optional

Pontoon Unit Awards (Incentive Committee)

The Incentive Committee (led by Sir Eldrid and Baron Jurgen) has proposed a three-tiered incentive structure for Pontoon Soldiers:

Initiation Incentive – The Soldier of Ponte Alto/Stierbach

Given upon the ritual after the request to join the army and demonstrated intent to be a member of the army and the unit

A Yellow/Black (Ponte Alto) or Red/White (Stierbach) rectangular favor is given to the new soldier and Baronial colors are distributed.

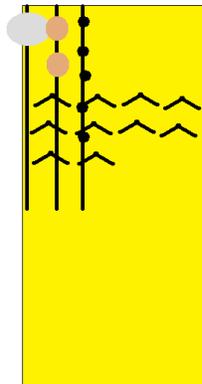
Practice Attendance – The String of Progress (Knots/Beads/Centuries)

A short thin black and gold cord (Ponte Alto) or red and white cord (Stierbach) of 1/8th inch at 10 inches long attached to the top of the Soldiers favor with a single knot at 1/2" from the top. Each 4 consecutive fighter practices attended one more knot is added to the cord. Once 10 (a decade) knots are acquired the commander of the individual will present the soldier with a "Bead". The original cord is untied or removed and replaced with one cord with a bead. When the soldier earns a new knot a second string is added starting a new decade. Once 10 beads are rewarded the baron will present the soldier with a metal token (TBD) called a century that fits on the cord. It is placed on a cord similar to a bead or knot.

Participation Attendance – The Arch of Veterans

Attend a war with the unit and fight with or support the unit in at least 50% of the battles.

In the upper left corner of the soldiers favor a chevron shaped object shall be added for each arch "A". Arches are added from left to right top to bottom 4 across. Arches can be stitched in with black thread or light cord

**Stierbach Alliance**

We have formed a bond with Stierbach whereby we are integrating our combat forces through shared practices and training behind-the-scenes and integrated command structures on-the-field. Ponte Alto and Stierbach will fight as a unified command, with Stierbach acting as an independent lance under the overall command of the Ponte Alto unit. We are extremely proud of the ties we are building with our neighbors and allies and hope to continue building ever-broader and deeper ties with our friends and partners. We are strongly supporting their new Tuesday evening practice at the Prince William Fencing Academy (8440 Kao Circle in Manassas) and urge anyone with any interest in Armored Combat, Fencing, Western Martial Arts, or just joining us for a fun evening to join us in Manassas!

Magister Scholum Artis Bellum (Fighter School of the Syllabus Committee)

The Syllabus Committee of the War Council has been and continues to put together an ongoing series of classes designed to construct or deconstruct and reconstruct fighters in an integrated and holistic, analytical and scholastic, inclusive and syncretic school of fighting oriented around continuous improvement in a fun and enjoyable atmosphere. The Lanistae of the school are commitment significant time and effort to the development of the curriculum and the training of the students. And thus they expect commitments from the student who pledge to study and train at the Novicius level until they pass the school's test and become authorized fighters. After the Novicius level, fighters can move on to the Scholum's 201 "Legionnaire" level of training where they are taught more advanced "how-to" techniques prior to even more advanced training at the 301 level. The syllabus and lessons of the Scholum are provided online in an interactive forum at scholumartisbellum.pbwiki.com where students are encouraged to provide interactive updates to the material and help develop the material as they learn and grow. I encourage everyone to checkout the Scholum website and see the wealth of material about armour, fighting videos, the approach to training, etc...

Sunday Socials

Armored practice at the Sunday Socials continues to grow apace and the A&S activities continue to attract practitioners. Lack of access to the gym has slowed our ability for interactive communication across groups, but we have been increasingly more interactive in post-practice dinner events. Our Fuddruckers Viking Long-Tables have become increasingly legendary and soon we will need our own long hall. While we still suffer from the lack of integration with the fencers, we hope some day we can have a fully integrated Sunday Social. We understand that the "Lord of the Dance" might soon bring dance practices to the Sunday Socials. We encourage everyone to come-out with us on Sunday to spend some time with us chatting, doing A&S, watching the fighting, or just coming out to eat with us at Fuddruckers.

Mundane Socials

The first Mundane Social at Sir Grethferth's in mid-March was a smashing success and great tales of yore were told and great ideas for today were generated and much merriment and amusement was had by all. We are currently discussing plans for another Mundane Social around 4/18 or a Movie Night on 5/2 (Iron Man is coming....). Thus far Kat has been helping coordinate the Mundane Socials and Sir Grethferth, Baron Jurgen, Sir Eldrid, Lady Sophia, and some others may have offered their homes for Socials. If you are willing to help coordinate or to offer your home for a gathering, please let us know, as we can use the help!

Mini-Tournament of Honorable Elevation

We have worked hard to put together the first in an ongoing series of co-Baronial Mini-Tourneys of Honorable Elevation that jointly honor the friendship and alliance between the two Baronies; the recent elevations of both Barons and Baronesses; the continuing elevation in prowess of our Baronial fighters; and our respect for honor, chivalry, courtesy, and pageantry – traits which elevate us all. The first mini-tourney will be held at the new Stierbach Tuesday night practice on April 15th (to help elevate attendance at the new practice) which is held at the Price William Fencing Academy at 8440 Kao Circle in Manassas, VA. There is a \$5 floor fee per fighter, no street shoes or boots will be allowed, and attendees must arrive by 6:30pm to check-in by 7:00pm for a tourney which will start promptly at 7:30pm. Prizes will be given for the tourney winners, for the most honorable and chivalrous participants, and for the most improved fighters. Extra MoLs and Marshalls are sought for the Mini-Tourney, and all fencers, fighters, (regardless if you are authorized yet or still a youth fighter) are invited to participate, as the mini-tourney is simply a practice.

Armor and Weapon Workshops of the Armor Committee

Lord Aethilgar is leading the Armor Committee in its efforts to get our newer fighters the armor and weapons they need to become effective members of our fighting community. Body armor and shield-making workshops at his home. Swordmaking classes at Viscount Eldrid's Monday Night open houses in Sterling, VA. Loaner shields and loaner armor availability. Recent rattan runs up to NJ. Armor site recommendations on the pbwiki website. Personal consultations. You name it, the Armor Committee is here to make sure any newcomer has any and all answers met to

figure out the best way to get them into armour the fastest. If you have armor or armoring skills to offer the armoring committee, please talk to Lord Aethilgar. He could use the help!

Unit Structure and Membership

Finally, we are trying to finalize who is, should and should not be considered part of the core and surge components of the Ponte Alto war unit. We have large lists of people who were involved with us and our practices in the past, but seem to have become completely inactive for years. If anyone is willing to go through the large lists of names we have to make recommendations as to whether we should try to contact some of these individuals to see if they are still interested in participating (and are willing to attempt such contact), then we could **really** use the help! We're trying not to dismiss folks out-of-hand and are looking to get any and every able bodied hand into the unit that we possibly can. Your help would be **tremendously** appreciated!

As promised, there has been and continuous to be a tremendous amount of activity and progress with our fighters, in our units, and in the Northern Army.

With your support, encouragement, and assistance, this progress will continue and expand for the greater glory of Ponte Alto, the Northern Region, and Atlantia.

We deeply and sincerely hope you will join us as we do our best to make Ponte Alto and Atlantia a better place for us all.

In Service,

Baron Maximilian Von Halstern
Tribunus Angusticlavius and Warlord of Ponte Alto

Bread

Throughout the social classes of the 15th century in England

By Lady Katharine Devereaux

mka. Kimberly Barker

"Anyone, therefore, who does baking should use flour which is well-ground from wheat... from this, he should separate the bran and the inferior flour with a very fine flour sieve, then put the flour, with warm water and some salt, on a baker's table closed in at the sides, as the people at Ferrara in Italy are accustomed to do. If you live in damp places and a bit of leaven is used, [the baker], with help from his associates, kneads to that consistency at which bread can be made fairly easily. Let the baker be careful not to put in too much or too little leaven, for, from the former, bread can acquire a sour taste, and, from the latter, it can become too heavy to digest and too unhealthy, since it binds the bowels. Bread should be well-baked in an oven and not used the same day, nor is it especially nourishing when made from very fresh wheat and if it is digested slowly."

The late 15th century recipe book¹ contains a narrative on how bread is made. Note that there are no specific amounts of ingredients, just someone's experience written down for others to follow. From the description above, this Italian recipe provides a good overview on how good quality bread would be made during the era.

Bread has the advantage of being the food staple for most of history and can be found in almost all societies in one form or another, today and in our past. As described above, the bread consists of flour, water, some salt and a leavening (as is the desired result is a raised loaf). The variety of breads is provided through the quantity, quality and types of each ingredient.²

Flour:

This then provided that the in that the most expensive ingredients (whiter, more finely ground and sifted flour) went to those that could afford them and thus a lighter color of bread was the premium and the least expensive ingredients (whole grains that were not milled at all) for the poorest of townsfolk.

From these two extremes, we are able to see the picture of bread as displayed here today. The whiter, finer flour provided the most expensive bread and the darker; more course flour was the less expensive yet still allowed the middle class their heavy bread. Those that could not afford to have their grain milled ate the grains whole after boiling in water and created porridge or added vegetables for a pottage.³

By the 15th century, the milling process was able to produce wheat into flour then sifted the stone ground flour through linen⁴ and only the finest flour particles went into the finest bread – served to the highest status Lords and Ladies as part of the meal. The remaining wheat germ was not as highly prized and was added to flour for people other than that of the Lords and Ladies.

¹ *De honesta voluptate, book I.14, Platina, Venice L. De Aguila, 1475*

² *The Tudor Housewife, Alison Sim, p. 62*

³ *Daily Life in Medieval Time, Frances & Joseph Gies, p. 165*

⁴ *The Tudor Housewife, Alison Sim, p. 62*

Leavening:

A sourdough was used to provide fermentation from the flour and water mixture. This pulled the wild yeast out of the air which created carbon dioxide and allowed air to form within the loaf. This was done through a starter.

The Breads:**Leavening:**

Modern yeast cultures were separated out and packaged beginning in the late 1800s. The leavening for each of the breads was a sourdough base. I started this a few years ago using only water and stone ground, whole wheat flour. It is fed only stone ground flour and water a week before it is needed. Sourdough needs longer to raise than a modern yeast. Once the flour, water, leavening and other ingredients were mixed, each bread sat overnight to raise the first time, then was formed into shapes and again left overnight to raise.

Upper Class:

The finest and whitest of the flours were used to create the eating bread for this class of people. There are two types of bread: manchettes and trenchers.

Manchettes:

These raised white rolls were a highly prized presentation of wealth. To get the white flour, stone ground whole wheat was sifted with a very fine sieve to separate the bran from the fine flour. Also, honey was added to add a sweetener to the bread. At the time honey was less expensive than sugar as it was not imported.

Trenchers:

Made of heavy whole wheat sourdough, this 4 day-old bread was used to provide a personal cutting board⁵ for each person.

Eating Loaf:

This heavy loaf contains a combination of dark rye, wheat germ and some flour. The wheat germ was derived from the sifting of stone ground whole wheat flour to leave the white for the upper class manchettes. Since this was designed for the middle class family, salt was added could be afforded by the middle class.⁶

Pottage:

As discussed earlier, those that could not afford to have their grain milled ate the grain whole with vegetables as their daily food staple. Grains used were local grains. Some areas were more prevalent with barley, others wheat, and others rye. Types of vegetables added were root based vegetables including carrots (not the modern orange, but purple and white are some examples), turnips, and other hearty root vegetables.

⁵ The Boke of Keruyng, Wynkyn de Worde – introduction, p. 7

⁶ Private Life in the 15th Century

Bibliography:

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