

THE SHADOW PRESS



Official Newsletter for the Barony of Shadowed Stars

Constellation Region of the Middle



Vol. 3, Issue 1, 2017 Spring/Summer Edition

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FROM THE SENESCHAL

Greetings unto Shadowed Stars!

Well, what a month we have going right now. In just a few short weeks we will be hosting our second Kingdom event in twelve months. I am so very proud of how the Barony has come together to make this event happen while keeping my panic levels at their minimum, thank you. We just had our first regularly scheduled officer elections and I would like to take a moment and thank everyone who stepped up and showed such enthusiasm for helping to steer this great Barony onward. I would also like to extend my deepest appreciation for those outgoing officers that served so nobly in their offices, HOOBAH! I'm excited to see members of the Barony participating in so many different activities at so many great events. Recently our Golden Seamstress team won their category, which is amazing, congratulations to you all. Thank you again for everything you all do to make this hobby of ours such a wonderful adventure and I look forward to seeing where this year takes us.

Yours in Service,
Ulrich

CONGRATS NEW OFFICERS!

MOAS: Lady Aveline de Ceresbroch

Exchequer: Lord Gavin Hawkerton

Thrown Weapons Marshal: Lady Prudence of Col-leah

Archery Marshal: Lord Velos tou Patmos

Chronicler: Lady Zilia degli Giudici

FROM THE BARON & BARONESS

With bright eyes turned to spring's new growth do we, Maggie and Fergus, Baroness and Baron, Shadowed Stars, bid you greetings,

As we write this missive, the ground outside is covered in a deep blanket of green grass with the flowering buds that predict the Summer Solstice peeking through.

A.S. LI is done and was been quite a year for our Barony. At the beginning of the Society year, we celebrated with the kingdom as we hosted the Coronation of Cameron II and Amalie II. This event was a great opportunity for our group to shine and we did just that, showing the mighty Midrealm that we are truly a Barony, ready to pull together and answer the call of King and Kingdom. We had a large group attend the 50 Year Celebration, near Indianapolis, taking advantage of classes, workshops, learning and fun. The summer started to wind down with Pennsic XLV, again with many of the Barony attending and volunteering.

As autumn's call began to beckon, we once again hosted the King, and representatives from several Kingdoms, at our own event, Mounted War Games VI presents Day of the Dragon. At this event, several people were recognized in both Kingdom and Baronial court. If you asked Fergus or me what our favorite part of being your Baron and Baroness is, we would both answer the same. The very best part of the role is being able to advocate for and recognize those Shadowed Stars members who truly make the dream so real for so many. The picture included here is one from the Baronial court we held on Sunday. Having the opportunity to recognize Halldora for her many years of service will be a memory we will both cherish forever.

As we prepare for the New Society Year, we are planning for Midrealm Crown Tournament and Kingdom A&S, which we will host on Memorial Day weekend. We look so forward to this event, as William and Isolde are truly wonderful people and we are excited to help them, in any way we can. We are excited to work alongside you all, to once again give the Kingdom great memories of their time visiting us. We also will celebrate the elevation to the Chivalry of our own Seneschal and Baronial Champion, Ulrich Halfdan Ulffson. We hope you will be present to see this, the first peer made in our group since we were made a Barony.

After that, Fergus and I will be in attendance at: Baron Wars (6/23-25), Simple Day (6/30-7/2), Swine and Roses (7/14-16), Pennsic (7/29-8/13), Mounted War Games (9/1-4), Harvest Days (9/9), and Fall Coronation (9/23). While this list is subject to change, we would certainly welcome any of you who might be able to join us!

We are closing our second year of service as your Baron and Baroness and would welcome the chance to talk with anyone who might be interested in stepping into that role next year. Please, seek us out, at your leisure, so that we might help you prepare for all the wonder, joy, and work that is involved.

Good people, the long, hot days of summer are here, but know that we hold you all in our thoughts and hearts, and anxiously await the time when we will all to be together again.

Yours in Service to the Midrealm and the Barony,
Maggie and Fergus



Photographer Owner: Jennifer Mahocker

DRACO INVICTUS!

by Baron Fergus MacPherson

Draco Invictus!!

Once again the season of war is upon us! This year at Pennsic, we will be joining with 2 other kingdoms to face the Known World. What will you be doing to support the cause?

Some of us will be taking the field as warriors. However, points are not won on the field of battle alone. Volunteering, archery, thrown weapons, A&S... All help the war effort. Even if you can't make Pennsic this year, volunteering at other events this summer can help others prepare. Please get out to as many events as you can.

First though, we must help Their Royal Majesties find new heirs. Shadowed Stars is very lucky to be hosting the spring crown tourney. We will need as many volunteers as possible to make this as successful as we can. We are one of the smallest Baronies, but I believe we are just as strong as any in the Known World.

Feel free to contact Baroness Maggie or me if you want to help.

In Service, Baron Fergus MacPherson

BARONIAL CALENDAR AT-A-GLANCE

April 2017

(see NOTE below)

May 2017

(see NOTE below)

June 2017

(see NOTE below)

NOTE:

For the times, locations, class information, and most up-to-date info on these and other Shadowed Stars activities, please visit the Baronial Calendar online at: <http://shadowedstars.midrealm.org/calendar>.

Also check recent posts on the Shadowed Stars Facebook group page for last-minute updates and possible cancelations or schedule changes.

BEING JAPANESE IN THE SCA

Being Japanese in the SCA:

By Shimazu Mitsunaga

Japan is something of an oddity. The Japanese people are not native to Japan. They came over from China. The native population are called Ainu. The Japanese, much like our own history, put the local population to the sword or moved them to the least desirable locations in remote areas. The Japanese we know today borrowed most of their early culture from the great dynasties of China.

The Alphabet

The Japanese had no writing system prior to the introduction of the Chinese one, which was originally used by Chinese people who lived in Japan during the early Christian era. Later, the educated Japanese used it to write the Chinese language. The earliest known examples of Japanese writing, dating back to the 5th and 6th Centuries A.D., are proper names inscribed with Chinese characters on a mirror and a sword. But by the 8th and 9th Centuries A.D., Chinese characters began to be used to represent the Japanese language. Since the two languages are so different in their syntax and phonology, Chinese loanwords and characters began to be "Japanified" for more convenient use. The earliest known Japanese records of any length are the Kojiki (A.D. 712) and the Man'yōshū (after 771) (Komatsu 1970). These works are valuable in revealing the evolution of the Japanese writing system from Chinese to a specialized system for recording spoken Japanese. The Kojiki largely maintains Chinese syntax, while using character combinations specific to Japanese for their semantic content. The Man'yōshū, on the other hand, begins to use Chinese characters for their pronunciations to indicate Japanese words (Encyclopedia Britannica 1997).

The Stirrup

The Japanese would take another Chinese invention and make it their own: The stirrup, or in Japan, The Abumi. While Romans were still running the show in Europe, the Japanese were using stirrups as early as the 5th century, nearly a hundred years before the Europeans. Early abumi were flat-bottomed rings of metal-covered wood, similar to European stirrups. The earliest known examples were excavated from tombs. Cup-shaped stirrups (tsubo abumi) that enclosed the front half of the rider's foot eventually replaced the earlier design. During the Nara period, the base of the stirrup which supported the rider's sole was elongated past the toe cup. This half-tongued style of stirrup (hanshita abumi) remained in use until the late Heian period (794 to 1185) when a new stirrup was developed. The fukuro abumi or musashi abumi had a base that extended the full length of the rider's foot and the right and left sides of the toe cup were removed. The open sides were designed to prevent the rider from catching a foot in the stirrup and being dragged.

The Sword

Easily identifiable is the Japanese long sword. The Japanese didn't begin to curve swords until the Koto period of sword making, basically around 900 CE. The sword technology available to them before that, were Chinese and Korean knockoffs. During this time, the sword still wasn't as important to the samurai as the bow was. It wouldn't be for another four centuries before the sword became "the soul of a samurai". Clearly somebody was trying to sell more swords.

The Japanese, never really seemed to innovate technology as adapt technology. The alphabet, religion, war technology, agriculture, all come from China. It is the ability of the Japanese to adapt these items to their environment, that make them stand out. A nation low on natural resources makes the finest swords in the world and, in my opinion, some of the most beautiful armor on the planet. It is a testament to the ingenuity of the people to make more out of less.

Works Cited:

Encyclopedia Britannica. 1997. s.v. Languages of the world: Japanese language.

Komatsu, Isao. 1962. *The Japanese people: Origins of the people and the language*. Tokyo_: Kokusai Bunka Shinkokai [The Society for International Cultural Relations].

HOLIDAY SPECIAL

EASTER CELEBRATIONS IN EARLY MEDIEVAL IRELAND

By Lady Muirenn ingen Fáelchon Uí Cléirigh

In modern America, the most celebrated Christian holiday is Christmas, although mostly for non-religious reasons. In Early Medieval Ireland, however, Easter was the most important holiday.

It is recorded in multiple texts from the period that the Irish fasted during Lent (the six week period ending with Easter Sunday). However, I was unable to determine the nature of the fast in Early Medieval Ireland; but from my research, I know that their monastic traditions were famously austere. I can only speculate that their fasting practices would have been equally severe.

After six weeks of fasting, the community would gather on the evening of Easter Eve (Holy Saturday) to light the Paschal Fire, in the tradition of St. Patrick. In the year 433 AD, the High King of Ireland, who followed the Old Religion, decreed that all fires in Ireland were to be put out, and no other fires lit until after the lighting of the Ostarra fire on the Hill of Tara in honor of the Spring Equinox. On Ostarra, the young sun god is joined in hierogamy (sacred marriage) with the young maiden goddess. On Easter eve, St. Patrick traveled to the Hill of Slane at the opposite end of the valley from the Hill of Tara and lit the Paschal Fire, in defiance of the king and obedience to the command of God.

When the king was informed of Patrick's audacity, he assembled the Brehons and Druids and marched against Patrick. The Brehons threatened Patrick with imprisonment, even death. The Druids tried by incantation and magick to put out Patrick's fire, but the fire wouldn't die. They tried through magickal means to kill Patrick, but the power of God shielded him. After this display of God's might, the High King gave Patrick permission to preach Christianity throughout the whole of Ireland.

Remnants of the confrontation may be inferred from *The Prayer of St. Patrick*, alternately known as *The Deer's Cry*, or *The Breastplate of St. Patrick*:

I bind to myself today the power of Heaven, the light of the sun, the brightness of the moon, the splendor of fire, the flashing of lightning, the swiftness of wind, the depth of sea, the stability of earth, the compactness of rocks. I bind to myself today God's Power to guide me, God's Might to uphold me, God's Wisdom to teach me, God's Eye to watch over me, God's Ear to hear me, God's Word to give me speech, God's Hand to guide me, God's Way to lie before me, God's Shield to shelter me, God's Host to secure me, against the snares of demons, against the seductions of vices, against the lusts of nature, against everyone who meditates injury to me, whether far or near, whether few or with many.

Many Christians, particularly Catholics, are familiar with the story of St. Patrick's fire. However, the most historically significant aspect of the Irish Easter celebrations has to do with the calculation method for the date of Easter. In 664 AD, at the famous Synod of Whitby, one of the pieces of business to be decided was whether or not the British Isles would accept the new calculation method for the date of Easter, as Continental Europe had. The majority of the kingdoms accepted the new calculation method, with Ireland being the lone holdout. Ireland continued with their calculation method, known as Insular Lactercus or Celtic 84, for many more years. It was based on an 84 year cycle, which means that the dates of Easter repeated themselves every 84 years.¹

One could hardly fault Ireland for refusing to accept the new calculation method, as they are historically known as a stubborn and proud people. However, multiple factors could have been at play. From 663-664 AD, the Buide Chonaill ("Yellow Plague"), a virulent form of jaundice, swept through Ireland, killing two thirds of the population. It could be easily surmised that the Irish either didn't want to or couldn't deal with such a big change in their religious traditions when they were still mourning the loss of two thirds of their kith and kin.

Another factor was the Romani, or Roman Party, the bishops of the Irish church who for many years had been slowly losing power to the local abbots. The bishops, of course, preferred the Roman model of ecclesiastical hierarchy, which put bishops in power over the local abbots, churches, and monasteries. The bishops pushed for acceptance of the new Easter calculation method in order to solidify Ireland's ties with the Roman church, and to establish a precedent for accepting other forms of Rome's ecclesiastical power, namely the oversight of the bishopric as opposed to allowing the abbots to control local parishes.²

The bishopric oversight model worked well on Continental Europe because bishops were based out of cities, and therefore had a defined area of ecclesiastical power. The Irish had no cities per se, which led to disputes among the bishops in regards to the boundaries of their territories. The abbots had no such disputes, as they each were in charge of their own parish, as well as any "daughter houses" (new parishes) the abbot started, regardless of where they were located.

HOLIDAY SPECIAL CONTINUED: EASTER CELEBRATIONS IN EARLY...

Yet another factor is that St. Columbanus, one of the Early Irish Christian fathers, expressed a concern which I believe many Irish Christians shared, that the Easter computus be “scripturally and mathematically consistent.”³ My research on the Early Medieval Irish Christians indicates that they were like the Bereans, who “examined the Scriptures daily” (Acts 17:11) to determine for themselves the truth of the Scriptures. They did not want to follow an Easter calculation method they believed to be Scripturally inaccurate.

It wasn't until the Synod of Birr in 697 AD that Ireland accepted the new calculation method for the date of Easter. This time, the Isle of Iona was the only detractor. Iona was home to the oldest Christian monastic community in Ireland, so it's understandable why they resisted changing their traditions. Iona did not accept the new calculation method until 716 AD, and the Western Church still uses this method today. Much to the dismay of the bishops, even with accepting the new Easter calculation method, the abbots retained their power. This maintained the unique ecclesiastical system peculiar to Ireland which lasted for many more centuries.

Another Easter tradition that was peculiar to the British Isles is the custom of well dressing. There are many holy wells throughout Ireland, the majority originally being dedicated to a god or goddess of the Old Religion or “Elder Faith.” When the British Isles were Christianized, the holy fathers and mothers re-dedicated the wells to Christian saints. The local god or goddess was replaced by a saint, who became the patron saint of that locality. On holy days like Easter and Christmas and on the saint's feast day, the locals would go to the well in the early morning before Mass to festoon the well with flowers, garlands, and ribbons. It was not uncommon for a food offering to be left at the well.

According to W.S. Corder, “That the Christian missionaries found well-worship a powerful influence in Great Britain and elsewhere is beyond dispute. Instead of trying to wean the heathen from their superstition, they adapted the pagan shrines and ceremonies to their own purposes and gave them a Christian veneer, though they remained essentially pagan. Thus the saint superseded the deity or spirit of the well. Apart from the evidence of folklore, we have evidence from the lives of the saints that pagan wells were sanctified and dedicated to what the missionaries considered Christian rites. Such a ceremony is described in St. Adamnan's *Life of St. Columba*.”⁴

St. Erc's well in Slane, County Meath is one of the few holy wells in Ireland not originally dedicated to a god or goddess of the Old Religion. The well was dug by order of St. Patrick, of whom St. Erc was a disciple, when Patrick instilled Erc as the first Bishop of Slane. After Erc died and was made a saint, the well was dedicated to him. To this day, he is the patron saint of Slane, and a few more places in the area are named for him.

For centuries, there has been a rich mixture of folk and religious traditions surrounding Easter celebrations in Ireland. Some would say that the two don't mix well, but the Irish would disagree, and that's just how they like it.

References

- 1) 'The 'Lost' Irish 84-Year Easter Table Rediscovered' by D. McCarthy & D. Ó Cróinín, *Peritia* 6-7, (Cork, 1987-8), 227-42.
- 2) Corning, C. (2006). *The Celtic and Roman Traditions: Conflict and Consensus in the Early Medieval Church*, 97-98.
- 3) Orr, R. H., & Angland, S. (2015). Easter Celebration in Seventh-Century Britain: Resolving Conflict within the Church. *Southwestern Journal of Theology*, 57(2), 255-265.
- 4) Corder, W. (1946). The Cult of the Holy Well. *Ulster Journal of Archaeology*, 9, 24-36. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20566494>.

BARONIAL OFFICERS

Seneschal

*Captain Ulrich
Halfdan Ulfsson*

Chatelaine

*Warder Mael Duin mac
Gilla Ennae*

Minister of A&S

Lady Aveline de Ceresbroch

Herald

*Lady Muirenn Ingen Faelchon
Ui Clerigh*

Exchequer

Lord Gavin Hawkerton

Knights' Marshal

Lord Fergus McPherson

Rapier Marshal

Lord Rashid Al-Sanna

Archery Marshal

Lord Velos tou Patmos

Thrown Weapons Marshal

Lady Prudence of Colleab

Equestrian Marshal

*Lancer Gwendolyn of
Shadowed Stars*

Webminister

Lady Prudence of Colleab

Chronicler

Lady Zilia degli Giudici

Dance Coordinator

Lady Leandra Corzj

Historian

Lady Zoe Dukiana

Chief Armorer

Lord Gian di Fauro

List Mistress

Lady Zoe Dukiana

FROM THE CHRONICLER

THE BARONY WANTS TO HEAR FROM YOU!

- ◆ We need everyone to submit content for our newsletter! Things like: Editorials, pictures, Event Reports, Persona Bios, Artwork, and short stories up to 3,000 words for the quarterly newsletter!
- ◆ If you would like to create a regular or semi-regular column or have ideas of things we can include in future issues, please contact us at chronicler@shadowedstars.org



DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSIONS:

- ◆ **Submit by August 15, 2017, for inclusion in the 4th Quarter issue.**

RULES FOR SUBMISSIONS:

- ◆ Release Form types:
 - * Creative - For all articles, poems, original artwork that is not a photograph, and the like // We bring this to you and we keep on file.
 - * Photographer - Photographs // We bring this to you and we keep on file.
 - * Model - For the recognizable person(s) in the photograph(s) // You get signed by people in your submitted photograph, turn it in with your photo, and we keep on file.
- ◇ Model Release Forms are available for download from midrealm.org/chronicler.
- ◇ **If you are unable to print needed Release Forms, please let the Chronicler know and they will be supplied for you.**
- ◆ Pictures:
 - ◇ Submit as many photos as you can of our Barony activities as well as events and happenings of the SCA groups around us!
 - ◇ Needed with Submission: Name of Event, date, location, SCA titles and names of those in the photo
 - ◇ Appropriate Model Release forms for those who are recognizable
- ◆ Images from the internet:
 - ◇ If you include an image from the internet with your submission, please make sure to include the active URL link to it.

PUBLISHED MEETING MINUTES:

- ◆ Monthly Business Meeting and Officers Meeting minutes are being transcribed and are available for viewing after the meeting takes place.
- ◆ To view them, please access the online Files section on the Shadowed Stars Facebook group or at the links available on the Publications page at shadowedstars.midrealm.org.

This is the Spring-Summer 2017 issue of The Shadow Press, a publication of the Barony of Shadowed Stars of the Society for Creative Anachronism, Inc. (SCA, Inc.). The Shadow Press is edited by and available from Lady Zilia degli Giudici, email: ladyziliadelgiudice@gmail.com. It is not a corporate publication of SCA, Inc., and does not delineate SCA, Inc. policies. Copyright © 2014-2017 Society for Creative Anachronism, Inc. For information on reprinting photographs, articles, or artwork from this publication, please contact the Chronicler, who will assist you in contacting the original creator of the piece. Please respect the legal rights of our contributors.