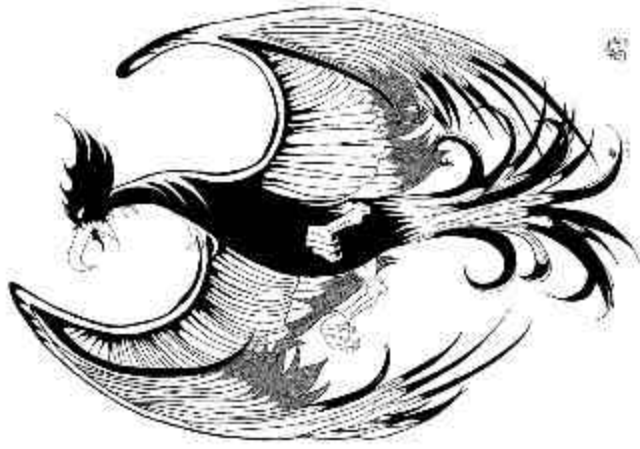


# *The Phoenix*

*The Barony of the Sacred Stone*



*December 2005 ASXXX*

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Barony of the Sacred Stone, SCA, Inc.  
Kathryn Evans  
4493 Leepers Street  
Iron Station, NC 28080

# *Unto the Populace*

## **From the Baroness**

Greetings to the People of Sacred Stone! We are knee deep in the holiday season and also the event season. I hope that everyone is doing well and keeping safe and sound with all the traveling. I want to thank everyone in Crois Brigitte for their hard work on Runestone Collegium. I know it was a super event.

Also, as a reminder, Unevent is happening this month. If you hold an office at the Canton or Baronial level, please plan on attending this event. If you are unable to attend make sure you notify your Kingdom superior and arrange for a proxy to take notes. This is an important time of updates and information that you will need to uphold your office.

Finally, it is December and time for our Baronial Meet and Greet. The meeting will be held on the 11th at Bunker Hill School (the Hickory winter site). There will be the most basic of meetings and then a chance for the populace of Sacred Stone to meet the candidates for the Baronial Polling. This is a chance to talk to the candidates and get their ideas about the future of Sacred Stone. Please come out so that when the time comes, you can make an informed decision on your polling. More details will be available from our wonderful Seneschal, Master Robear.

Thank you all and have a wonderful December!

Kisaiya Zingara  
Baroness

## **From the Exchequer**

Greetings to the populace of the Barony of the Sacred Stone,

As Baronial Exchequer, I wanted to share some of my thoughts with you about controlling food expenses at SCA events.

As some of you know, especially if you have autocratted an event lately, I am a big proponent of requiring that event feast spaces be pre-reserved. Requiring pre-reservations takes much of the guesswork out of figuring the number of people attending a feast. Consequently, there is much less wasted food and money.

In that same vein, I would like to recommend that lunch tavern costs be included in the event site fee, since it may be difficult to predict how many attendees would otherwise pay for lunch. While we do not traditionally require pre-reservations for lunch taverns, including lunch costs in the site fee limits confusion over whether the tavern is baronially sponsored, or self-funded. For event reporting purposes, it is much easier on your autocrat and exchequer, whether local or regional, to account for event costs this way.

While we always hope for a large turn-out, circumstances beyond our control can affect the door count, such as natural disasters and subsequent problems, like soaring fuel prices. However, good event planning can help us minimize our losses. As always, I am at your service,

Lady Lidia de Ragusa  
Exchequer, Barony of the Sacred Stone

## **From the Chronicler**

Greetings to our fair barony,

I hope everyone is well and enjoying these winter months and the holiday season. It's a time to rejoice and enjoy the company of good friends and spend long nights around the fire telling tales and singing songs.

I would like to thank Lord Jonathan Blackbow for his next installment of DRH\_LMD, I cannot wait to read the conclusion in next month's issue. I would also like to thank Lord Christophe of Gray, our baronial archery champion, for his article on How to Practice Your Archery and I look forward to future articles about the art of archery.

Always in service,  
Katerina

# Regnum

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# *Baronial Letters of Intent*



Unto Her Excellency, Kisaiya Zingara, our Seneschal, Master Robear de Bardoulf and the gracious populace of the Barony of the Sacred Stone do we, Marc and Alianor, send greetings.

As requested, we seek to share some words as to why we desire to place our names on the polling of our beloved Barony's next Coronets, and felt it time to publicly announce our intention as well as our hopes for the future.

To those who know us, the answer of why should be clear. We love this Barony and it long has been home to us both. Long before Hindscroft returned to Her embrace, did I, Marc make Sacred Stone home. Long before I moved within Her borders, and lived in other lands did I, Alianor, find warmth and comfort here, and also called it home. Sacred Stone has always been that to us. The gentles that live here are like our extended family. Many are warm and genuine. Many others intricate, but full of heart; but it is the warmth and diversity, brought together, that make this a family, and we have always found ours here.

For those who are not familiar with us, know this: We come before you with much to offer and nothing to gain beyond the pride of governing a Barony and Her populace rich in talents, strong of arm, wit, and ready and willing to aid any and all within Her borders as well as to hearken to the call of the Monarchs of Atlantia. We are not looking for riches, glory, praise or tribute. In our hearts, we know that the wearing of the Coronets is not an easy course, nor is it something to go into without deep reflection for the work and obligation it entails. The true honor of the Coronets is foremost to support the lands of this vast Barony and the Crown of Atlantia. To facilitate and encourage all that live within Her borders, and to raise the fair lands of Sacred Stone to the esteem that is rightfully Her due within our Kingdom. That is the responsibility of those who will wear the Coronets; to serve the lands, the populace, and ultimately the Crown.

No, we are not the individuals that you have seen in the front, shouting we have done this, helped here, or planned that. We have been amongst the solid few who have been elated to support from the foundations. Offering our help, knowledge, talents, encouragement and energies away from the stage front, but no less devoted. Assuring others receive the credit they so deserve, and being overjoyed we could assist when and where needed.

Marc has been the Warlord of Sacred Stone and supporter of Her fighters. As Marshall of Hindscroft, Southern Regional Commander, previous member of Saint Aiden, and Knight of the Kingdom of Atlantia, he has long sought to unite the fighters, encourage them to come forward and enjoy the art, that is fighting, every bit as much as he does. Having also served as Queen's guard, he is fully aware of the work and time involved in any position, be it Coronet or Crown.

Alianor is a Companion of the Phoenix Eye, the Boreas (Windmasters' Hill), the Pearl and the Order of the Laurel; has stood as the A&S Champion for Sacred Stone, as well as Sacred Stone Pennsic camp steward. Currently serving as Minister of A&S and Chatelaine of the Canton of Hindscroft, as well as once Chatelaine of the (then) incipient Canton of Niemenfeld, she has sought to encourage all artisans to find and enjoy the arts, and enjoys sharing her time, talents and energies with any who wish, while inviting newcomers and helping them to familiarize themselves with the SCA, as well as anyone else who has needed assistance. She has also served as retainer to Coronets and Monarchs of Atlantia and knows the time and effort involved.

On our own, and with the support of the other, we have proven to the Monarchs of Atlantia and the orders of the Chivalry and Laurel, our heart, our determination and desire to develop and nurture, and become Peers of this land. Always we have worked to support the Crowns of Atlantia, the Coronet(s), and each other. There is nothing we cannot achieve together, nor more could we wish for than to support our Barony and Crown any way we can.

We know it is time to continue to combine our energies, knowledge, talents, time and heart. To give back to the lands from which we have been given so much love and support. Our deepest desire is to serve the populace and lands of Sacred Stone, who so rightfully deserve it. To bring heart, continuity, energy, imagination and a feeling of pride to a group who cries out for it. This is a group where you can feel it simmering just beneath the surface, but needs a means to bring it to the light of day.

Within this land, we have come across many who share our dreams for the future of this Barony. Where there are detachments that separate Her people, we would work to offer feelings of togetherness. Where there are those who do not feel a part, we would work to bring them forward and have them know that their time and talents are appreciated. When we are beyond our own borders, we wish to show a united front; not as individual groups who happen to be part of the same zip code listing. We desire to have units from all the marshaled genre, proud to fight under the banner of the Phoenix, and to have Her artisans gain the recognition for their talents and pride of creation. To Her children, we envision a happy place full of love and laughter, for that is what they bring to us, to spread encouragement to those new to our "family", and to give all the desire to bring in more to our numbers; to share in this Dream.

This is only a small fraction of our hopes and dreams for The Barony of the Sacred Stone. We hope others share in and will help us make this a reality.

Lastly and sadly, as it seems to be the nature of things; certain rumors, which have been circulated amongst the populace, have been brought to our attention. We wish to quash these immediately and directly. At this time, we also wish to put all minds to rest that there are absolutely no issues (be them of a personal, financial, health or any other) which would prevent us from serving this Barony to the fullest extent of which it deserves. If there were any reason which would keep us from giving our all for the entire length of the term, we would not even consider placing our names on the polling, for we take this that seriously.

Good gentles, in the up and coming weeks, you will read and hear the words of the diverse individuals who all wish to preside as the next Coronets of this great Barony. Sadly, as is the nature of the beast, you will likely also hear rumor, innuendo, and any number of falsehoods pertaining to any, each or all of those same said individuals. At this time, we ask you to please take into consideration the motivation for these potentially hurtful words, especially before taking them as truth or passing them on. If you hear anything that causes you concern, ask yourself if you truly believe those words to be true. If you still have concerns, then talk to the individual(s) to whom they are about, rather than passing them on and perpetuating the chain. To this end the Barony, as well as all the individuals involved, will be best served, and make this an enjoyable experience for everyone.

At this time, we wish to open the lines of communication to one and all. If you have questions or concerns, please feel free to seek us out and we will be happy to answer, to the best of our ability.

To this end we remain in Service to Barony and Crown

Sir Marc d'Aubigny and Maitresse Alianor atte Red Swanne

\* \* \* \* \*

Unto Baroness Kisaiya Zingara, Master Robear de Bardoulf, and the populace of Sacred Stone do Milord Edward Shirebrooke and Lady Reyna Camlo give greetings and warm blessings!

We would like to submit to all, our letter of intent for the position of Baron and Baroness of Sacred Stone. We believe that our unique backgrounds and experiences will be most beneficial to all the inhabitants of the Barony should we be honored enough to receive the positions. We look forward to serving the Barony as well as the Kingdom in humble service.

#### From Edward Shirebrooke

Greetings all! I could bore you all with my background and pedigree, but I don't really have one! So instead I will tell you about myself. I am a martial artist, it is what I do and who I am! I am the current reigning King of Fools! That's right, act now and you can have your very own (pretend) quasi-ROYALTY sitting as your new Baron! (I even come with my own crown!) I am the Autocrat for the Canton of Baelfire Dunn's annual event Below the Salt, you know, the ONE event that can be trusted to be a huge party! I am a brewer! While I am attempting to get as much alcohol into my beers and wines as possible, I have finally gotten to the point that you don't need a lime and some salt to drink them!

If I am chosen to be Baron I promise this.

1. I can be found every evening at an event by simply listening to the sound of the drums!
2. 2. 9 out of 10 events will be held at \*wet-wet-wet\* sites!
3. 3. I will ensure all Baronial event costs are reduced. (More money for beer!)

#### From Lady Reyna Camlo

Ok, I have somewhat of a resume in the SCA, but you don't need to hear those infamous details. \*insert big smile here\*. I am all about having fun. I live for middle eastern dancing. It is what I do and who I am.

I have but two promises to make if I were to be graced enough to be chosen as the next baroness.

1. Middle Eastern dancing at every event!
2. All half naked cabaret dance costumes shall be outlawed in the barony. You know who you are, I have an abaya waiting for you.

In Service to the Dream,  
Edward Shirebrooke  
Lady Reyna Camlo

P.S. Any and all rumors or innuendo you have heard or may hear about us is more than likely true. Except for that one story about Achbar and the tub of Jell-O..... that's not true. Unless of course, you have pictures.

\* \* \* \* \*

Unto Her Excellency Kisaiya, Master Robear and to the Baronial Populace do Lord Jonathan Blackbow and Lady Maeve Griffinsward send warmest greetings!

We hereby submit our names in consideration to serve as the next Baron and Baroness of Sacred Stone.

Jonathan has been the Baronial Heavy Champion and is the Principal of the Order of the Phoenix Claw, our barony's fighting order, as well as being a Companion of the Phoenix Eye, the baronial A&S order; a recipient of the Baronial Award of Excellence, and twice a recipient of the Flame of the Phoenix. Maeve has been the Baronial Archery Champion, Her Excellency's head retainer, is a Companion of the Phoenix Eye and the Yeomen of the Sacred Stone, a recipient of the Flame of the Phoenix and is currently Her Excellency's Baronial Arts and Science Champion. She is also currently the Seneschal (with an able deputy in the wings) and Minister of Arts and Sciences of Aire Faucon, as well as onetime Chronicler for both Aire Faucon's "Aire Currents" and Guardians of the Sacred Stone's (before they were Charlesbury Crossing) "Legend". It is with great joy that she shares her time and talents and encourages others to do the same. As well, we have served many of Atlantia's Crowns and understand the work and time required to serve Atlantia and Sacred Stone in this manner.

Our platform, should we be chosen, consists of the following.

We would like to increase recruitment overall and specifically in the martial arts by setting a goal of one new heavy/rapier/archer per canton per 6 months. This is fairly self-explanatory but we would like to state at the outset that we are of the belief that establishing some sort of goal is the best way to advance as a group. Whether we meet, exceed, or fall short of that goal, we at least have provided a benchmark for the purpose of establishing measurable progress. Further, we would like to grow the sense of camaraderie within the barony by essentially cross-training all martial participants as much as possible; i.e., train any interested fencers in spear fighting, thus increasing the number of available spears (which Atlantia is chronically short in); training any interested heavies in combat archery, to support the fencers where possible, and providing loaner armor for both groups. This way, instead of having (for example) 5 heavy fighters, 8 fencers, and 3 combat archers, we'd have 16 people who could go to any war and fill in any way they might be needed.

We would like to increase participation at events by having more variety at events. Specifics to be discussed, but we would include more melee events (see below), more A&S focus at established events, etc. We would increase martial variety by making it our responsibility to teach as many weapons forms as possible and find a use for them on the field. [Our theory is that it isn't our job to tell fighters that they can only bring weapon/shield or spear to a war or melee; it's our job to find ways to fully utilize the styles that people want to fight.] We would explore ways to increase A&S variety. For example, several years ago, Maeve created a spreadsheet that listed multiple A&S categories, and encouraged the artisans of the barony to indicate which categories they would be willing to teach, as well as those that they wished to learn. She would like to have each of the cantons' MoAS update it to use as a resource for A&S participation and growth at collegiums as well as events.

We would do our best to add more melee events by actively encouraging the populace to support these events by attendance and participation. For example, we plan to work with Windmasters Hill, should they wish to restart Boat Wars.

Other Goals:

We would like to see the Regional A&S symposium budget be split among the participating baronies. For those that haven't heard, the southern Baronies have decided to rotate a regional A&S symposium similar to In a Phoenix' Eye / Collegium / Kingdom Arts & Science Festival. Splitting the budget would have several positive results, namely:

- increased motive for participation among the baronies due to financial commitment.
- Able to use larger/better sites due to increased budget.
- No one barony responsible for the entire budget, therefore a lower financial exposure overall.

Expansion and Recognition: We would work to achieve official status for the Elkin group and attempt to start another canton in the Rutherfordton area.

Our End Goal is to increase numbers, participation, and activity levels. The best way we know of to accomplish this is by striving to create an atmosphere where anyone can and will recommend anyone for recognition regardless of political affiliations, and end up with a situation where we succeed as a Barony instead of partially succeeding as Cantons.

In Service to Sacred Stone, and through her to the Kingdom of Atlantia and the SCA as a whole,

Lord Jonathan Blackbow  
Lady Maeve Griffinsward

\* \* \* \* \*

Unto Baroness Kisaiya Zingara, Master Robear de Bardoulf, and the Barony of the Sacred Stone, do Baron Achbar ibn Ali and Asszony Bessenyei Rozsa send warmest greeting!

The hour has arrived for new leaders to be chosen to guide the community of Sacred Stone into the future. We would like to add our names to those that would thank Your Excellency for the time, energy and sacrifices that You have made helping this barony grow and blossom. It is a wonderful place to live and a privilege to call this cornerstone of Atlantia home.

The Barony's future -- and the need to keep improving, keep growing -- is of tantamount importance. To lead Sacred Stone on that quest would be both an honor and a heavy burden, yet one we would happily bear. Therefore, we respectfully announce our intent to be the next to lead Sacred Stone forward.

One of our strengths is our institutional knowledge. Between the two of us, we have called Sacred Stone home for many years.

As a fighter and a marshal, Achbar has been a driving force in the heavy community, attending practices all over the Barony, teaching people to fight, never hesitating to take on the position of marshal when one was needed, and encouraging people to attend the Baronial practices while assisting with the formation of a Baronial levee. Achbar has been the Marshall in Charge for numerous events over the years, autocrated Desert Wind to promote archery and autocrated the last two Novice Tourneys, an event that focuses on a section of the SCA that is near and dear to him, that of the newcomers.

Before, and during, his tenure as Baronial Castellan Achbar has devoted a great deal of his time and energy to meeting newcomers, hosting and attending demos, teaching newcomers classes, putting them in touch with those that can help expand upon their interests, and even going so far as to take time out of his personal life to meet them for dinner or in their homes with the desire to introduce them to the SCA. Anyone who knows Achbar knows how much of himself he gives, only expecting a smile in return.

Rozsa has served Sacred Stone as a water bearer, retainer, autocrat, and as her Baronial Seneschal. As retainer she was devoted in her duties serving the Barony through her Baroness. Rozsa then moved on to serve the Barony more directly by becoming Her Seneschal. During that time she learned a tremendous amount about how the society is run, the duties and responsibilities of the Baronial officers, and the behind-the-scenes endeavors taking place to create this world that we all share. She established the monthly business meetings and Baronial practices, developed an event bid system that mirrors the Kingdom's, assisted with the formation of a financial committee, and assisted with updating the Baronial charter to coincide with Kingdom law. She included the Canton Seneschals in all Baronial Officer discussions in order to bring about a more unified Barony. During her time as Seneschal she realized the importance of events and their management, and took on the duties of autocrat for Baronial Birthday so that she could learn first hand all that goes into autocrating an event. She later took that knowledge and taught an autocrating class, assisted other autocrats, and then autocrated Baronial Birthday a second time. Now she is taking that knowledge and assisting to autocrat a mini-war with the hope of showcasing the tremendous talent of Sacred Stone.

Over the years Rozsa discovered her artistic talents and an adoration for the pageantry that made up the romance of the Medieval world. She has created banners, garb, fighting surcoats, and mantles for Peerages, Squirings, the Rapier Academy, and many others. She has sponsored competitions for heraldic display, both on and off the field, and has offered to teach classes at A&S nights throughout the Barony.

We feel that we have much to offer the Barony, and see each other as a team that would work well -- not only together, but also for the benefit of the populace.

Between Achbar's welcoming nature and his desire to help nurture the martial arts in the local community, and Rozsa's knowledge of how the Society is governed and love of heraldic pageantry, we hope to inspire the members of the Barony to strive to new levels of greatness.



Sacred Stone is the home to former Kings and Queens, top artisans and sportsmen/women, Kingdom Officers, and the Principals of Kingdom Orders. We intend to continue the tradition of excellence that these people have begun and to assist others to achieve these heights and their own personal goals.

Our desire is to help guide the local community in their effort to achieve their dreams and goals; to encourage the ideals of courtly love and chivalry; and help boost the public perception of Sacred Stone by increasing the levels of fighting prowess, artistic achievement and humble service. Our goal is for Sacred Stone to become a barony both admired and envied by people throughout Atlantia.

In Service,

Baron Achbar ibn Ali and Asszony Bessenyei Rozsa

\* \* \* \* \*

Unto Her Excellency, Baroness Kisaiya Zingara; Master Robear de Bardoulf; and to the Good People of the Barony do Lord Otto von Schwyz and Lady Maeve Griffinsward send greetings.

We, Otto and Maeve, do hereby submit our names in consideration to serve as the next Baron and Baroness of Sacred Stone.

Otto has served as the Baronial Archery Champion and is a Companion of the Yeomen of the Sacred Stone, a past Baronial Chronicler, Webminister for Hindscroft and the Kingdom Exchequer's page, and currently the Exchequer for Aire Faucon and Kingdom Deputy Chronicler, as well as a Companion of the Opal. Maeve has also been the Baronial Archery Champion, Her Excellency's head retainer, is a Companion of the Phoenix Eye and the Yeomen of the Sacred Stone, a recipient of the Flame of The Phoenix and is currently Her Excellency's Baronial Arts and Science Champion, as well as a Companion of the Opal. She is also currently the Seneschal (with an able deputy in the wings) and Minister of Arts and Sciences of Aire Faucon, as well as onetime Chronicler for both Aire Faucon's "Air e Currents" and Guardians of the Sacred Stone's (before they were Charlesbury Crossing) "Legend". It is with great joy that she shares her time and talents and encourages others to do the same. As well, we have both served many of Atlantia's Crowns and well understand the work and time required should we be chosen to serve Atlantia and Sacred Stone in this manner.

Should we have the honor to be chosen we would like to do the following.

Reestablish the Baronial army. We have many wonderful and skillful fighters that reside within the Barony; we would like to challenge the Baronial Warlord to create a cohesive unit of all the heavies, rapier, and archers. This project will create the need for new membership, cross training and training of combatants, and develop tactics to help the Kingdom with any war.

We would like to encourage the further development of the arts and science community. Currently Sacred Stone is known for its fiber arts, we would like to expand on that expertise by encouraging all members to take up an art or a science project. By doing this, we all learn from each other and from that we expect a handful of "diamonds in the rough" to shine. Several years ago, Maeve created a spreadsheet that listed multiple A&S categories, and encouraged the artisans of the barony to indicate which categories they would be willing to teach, as well as those that they wished to learn. She would like to have each of the cantons' MoAS update it to use as a resource for A&S participation and growth at collegiums as well as events.

We would do our best to encourage service within the Barony by, among other things, aiding autocrats and finding new autocrats to host events. We would also like to see more creative events and would like to revisit some of the older event ideas that were done in the past.

We would like to actively work with our sister Baronies by establishing a regional event that will rotate from Barony to Barony with all to share the costs, such as the Banner War being worked on now or a Regional A&S symposium down the road. We would like to increase our membership by establishing an active demo calendar; to establish a canton in the Elkin area and to increase recognition of the hard work, dedication and artistic talents of our fair Barony.

Otto started in the SCA 20 years ago. He has seen how the Dream has grown and changed as time progressed. Maeve has called Sacred Stone home since she began her SCA journey. We would like to revisit with everyone to remind us all what made us become members of the SCA and specifically citizens of Sacred Stone. We would endeavor to keep that spark alive for all members, both old and new and to recreate that excitement.

In Service to the Barony, Kingdom and the Dream.

Lord Otto von Schwyz and Lady Maeve Griffinsward

May the ravens of Odinn bear greetings this day unto Michael and Seonaid, mighty Prince and fair Princess of mighty Atlantia from Lord Talorgen nei Wrguist and Baroness Arnora Olafsdottir. May this missive find you in good health as you prepare to reign over our beloved land.

Know ye that we declare our willingness and intention to serve as Landsmenn for your Barony of Sacred Stone, should Your Highnesses be so pleased as to name us to this position. We are both minded to swear our Fealty unto the rightful rulers of this Kingdom for so long as we should hold the position, and to serve both You and the populace of this Barony to the best of our abilities in this wise. It is our desire that this Barony should capitalize upon the varied talents of its populace and serve as a shining beacon in these lands, moving towards the future while never forgetting our past, the Stone upon which we must always build.

Many are the duties of true Landsmenn, and many are our ambitions in service to this Land.

We would strive to raise a true levy of at least forty warriors fierce and strong, as ever was the law in days of old. The encouragement of all arts Martial is the duty of every Landsmann, be it in the arts of Armored Combat, the graceful sweep of Rapier fighting, or the swelling ranks of our Combat Archers.

We would encourage all newcomers, and strive to swell the numbers of this Barony through expansion of our Cantons as well as encouraging the formation of new groups where appropriate. We support the efforts that are well underway in the Elkin area to form a new group, and will welcome them whether they seek to become another Canton in this Barony, another Barony, or an independent shire.

The Populace of Sacred Stone is well known for her artisans, and ever shall we be gracious patrons of the fine Arts and Sciences. Be it the arts of the fiber, the Scribal arts, the Skaldic pursuits, the arts of the smith or any of the other numerous ways in which those who create enrich this Society, we shall make all who would enrich Your Kingdom through these pursuits know that they are welcome and loved in this land.

Numerous and notable are the ideas for this Barony which have been put forward by others who would also serve in this position. The vision that has been put forth of a unified group, moving forward as a Barony, is one that we share. We believe that all should bring their ideas and their energy, and hope that all who have already put themselves out in the public eye by declaring their intentions to lead this Barony will continue to champion these good ideas regardless of whom might be asked to bear the happy burden of leading the group.

As has already been noted, the job of Baron is far more a responsibility than a title, and we do not put forward our names lightly. It is our desire to shoulder this burden, to strive always to hold Sacred Stone higher than our own purpose and identities, and ever to increase the word fame that rightfully belongs to both this Land of Sacred Stone and the fair Kingdom of which she is a part.

In service to Sacred Stone and Atlantia, we are  
Lord Talorgen nei Wrguist  
Baroness Arnora Olafsdottir

Vivant! Sacred Stone! Vivant! Atlantia!



# DRH\_LMD

## Chapter Two

### By Lord Jonathan Blackbow

#### \*Disclaimer\*

This is a work of fiction. Any resemblance to any actual events, or to persons, living or dead, is purely coincidental. Any inaccuracies are purely for the sake of fiction and not intended to be presented or taken as fact.

“And your name is...” prompted Marie, attempting to steer the conversation back to something she could interact with. For some reason the late-middle-aged stranger (the person, not the outfit, although the outfit was too) gave the impression of power being held deliberately in check, and she wasn’t sure she wanted anybody sitting at her table that had more power than she did.

“I would have thought that the nameplate would give ample notice, my lady, but allow me to apologize for the oversight. *Il mio nome e* – oh, wait. I’ve done it again. My name...is Asclepius.” He pointed to a small enameled symbol on his left shoulder and smiled gently. “Just so you don’t forget.”

“I don’t get it, “ said Marko, staring at the emblem. “What has one of those medical symbols got to do with...I thought his name was Hippocrates?” You could see his confusion growing by the second. Asclepius rescued him. “Close, my young friend, very close,” he said, still smiling, “but this symbol is *one* snake wound around a rod, not two. Asclepius’ staff is symbolized by one snake, where the caduceus, which is what you’re thinking of, is symbolized by two intertwined snakes.”

Marie looked over at Robert, waiting for him to launch into a confirmation or denial of Asclepius’ narration, but Robert, for once, was shaking his head. “Not my department, I’m afraid. Richard would have known all about it, but he’s not here. ...Come to think of it, I haven’t seen Richard in a week or so. Anybody know where he is? You’d think that if nobody had seen him that they’d at least have *heard* from him in one of the chat rooms...” He looked around for confirmation, but quickly realized he was just exposing his geek side by talking about a chat room that nobody else in the canton would care about, let alone have enough time to waste talking in it.

Then Asclepius spoke just about the last words anybody expected to hear him say. “What was his handle, *Roberto*?” If he had jumped up and danced a Russian jig on the table he couldn’t have dropped a bigger bomb. At least the jig would have been period.

Robert’s mouth twisted derisively. “IMGR8,” he muttered. “Not that he was that great at anything.” He realized he was defending himself for no reason and settled back into a sullen lump.

“Ah, yes. I spoke- or chatted, rather- with Richard just last week. He was very passionate about defending what he believed to be right. Unfortunately for him, I was able to prove my points most convincingly.”

“About what, Asclepius, if I may ask?” Marie couldn’t believe that this cultured stranger and a boor like Richard would have anything in common to discuss. *Maybe* Robert and Asclepius, or Richard and Robert (more likely), but Asclepius and Richard? The mind boggled.

“Certainly you may, my dear lady. It was a long, convoluted, emphatic discussion about the merits of *La Boheme* vis-à-vis the political schools of thought of the time.” Apparently unaware that he had just left his entire audience in the dust, intellectually, Asclepius launched into a spirited narrative in which Richard was revealed to be much more of a *bon vivant* than any of them had ever suspected. Over the next few minutes, as the bread/herbed butter/honey butter came out and was parceled around, the description of the discussion took on mythic proportions. Marie didn’t understand most of the discussion but was starting to think that maybe Richard had just been the victim of bad press; he certainly hadn’t ever been as loquacious around her as he apparently had been in his online discussions with Asclepius. Hesitantly waving a hand, she was able to interrupt Asclepius in mid-diatribes. Smiling at her, he stopped, looking expectant. “If you wouldn’t mind, Asclepius, I’m sure we’d all like to hear more, but I have two requests.”

Nodding his head, Asclepius said, “anything, my lady. ...Within the bounds of good taste, that is.”

Marie waited a beat to give the flirtation time to breathe (and incidentally have everyone else notice that this handsome stranger was flirting

with her), and smiled. “One, the first remove is coming out, and somebody needs to get it picked up, or we’ll never eat.” When no one made a rush for the kitchen she none-too-subtly nudged Marko in his sore thigh. Stifling an *ouch!* he made his way towards the kitchen, limping slightly. “Two, as charming a name as Asclepius is, it’s rather a mouthful for me, at least...” she waited until Asclepius had smiled and bowed in her direction to indicate that he’d caught the return fire. “so I’ll ask...is there another name we might know you by, *Signore?* Something more...um...”

“Modern, my lady? Certainly. You may...no, I think I may go so far as to say you *all* may call me Geoffrey. Yes, that will do nicely.” Settling back into his chair just a bit, the newly named Geoffrey looked at Robert and smiled. “It may interest you to know, Mr. Fahnbain, that Richard and I were normally on the same side of those chats of which you are so inordinately fond. Did you spend much time in them, with Richard, or any other people?”

Robert recovered as much as he was ever going to. “I did, for a time, Geoffrey. I’m afraid I haven’t had much time for it lately, though. Too much work piling up, new servers coming in, setup, et cetera...work does take us away from the activities we would rather be doing. I’m afraid that’s why it’s called *work*.” Robert nodded his head just a bit to acknowledge the quiet laughter circling the table.

Geoffrey was shaking his head slightly, though. “Not in my case, Mr. Fahnbain. I am one of those lucky enough to be able to play at my work, and work at my play, and ever the twain shall meet.” When no one fed him the straight line of asking him what he did, he waited just another beat, then said, “I am lucky enough to be a graduate of *Le Cordon Bleu*.”

Marie was shaking her head. “You’re not...you *are!*” She looked at the rest of the table for confirmation and got pretty much what she expected: dumbstruck faces. “This is incredible, you people! This is the *feastocrat*.”

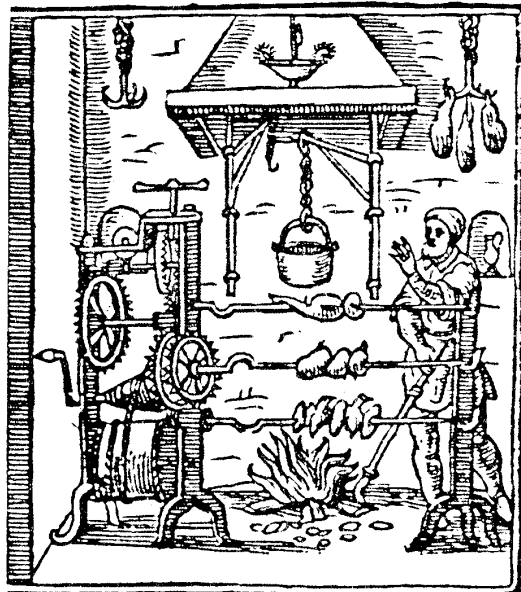
“Please, dear lady, I prefer the term ‘head cook’...I’ve never liked the SCA’s insistence on using substitute terminology merely to please its own sense of *le mot juste*.” Smiling at the table *en masse*, Geoffrey rose from his chair. “And now I must return to the kitchen to see to the second remove. If you’ll all excuse me?”

“Geoffrey, wait!” Robert piped up. “I’m curious... I thought I knew all the people in the chat rooms...what was your handle?”

Smiling inscrutably, Geoffrey began to walk away as though to keep the mystery just a little longer, then threw back over his shoulder, “It is Dee Are Aitch, Underscore, Ell Em Dee.”

Robert puzzled it out, then nodded. “I recognize it. Thank you, m’lord Geoffrey.”

To be concluded in Chapter Three in next month’s *The Phoenix*.



from *Il Trinciante* (The Carver), by Vincenzo Cervio, 1604.



# How To Practice Your Archery

“How do you get to Carnegie Hall? Practice, practice, practice.” It applies to archery as well. “Yeah, but.....” I’ve heard it all. “I live in an apartment”, “I don’t have an acre around my house”, “There’s two feet of snow outside!” All valid, however, you CAN still practice your target archery. Good and great archery is the product of lots of practice.

But first, what should you be practicing? The key elements to great archery are the draw, anchor and release. You should be able to draw your bow and hold the draw without excessive wiggling. You need to anchor your draw hand in the same spot every time. When you release it should be a smooth relaxing of the draw fingers. If you can not draw your bow and hold the draw without shaking, either your bow is too strong for you or you are out of shape. If you do not anchor your draw hand in the same spot every time, each arrow shot becomes a new experience. If you are not releasing correctly your arrows may be fishtailing down range or consistently hitting right or left of your aiming point. I’m going to discuss each of these aspects in future articles but let’s deal with the initial question “How do I practice without a range to shoot on?”

You need a target. First solution is a plastic trash can. Stuff the bottom of it with soft stuff- old blankets, pillows, your sister’s coat (just kidding!). Fill the bottom third of the trash can with this material loosely packed.

Second solution, get a burlap bag. If you have a Sagebrush restaurant in your area ask them if they will save you one of the bags their free peanuts come in. (They just toss them in the trash and you’ll be recycling!) Stuff the bag loosely with matting material. This is the stuff that mattresses, sofas, easy chairs, etc. are stuffed with. If you can’t get any of that, use a bunch of those pesky plastic bags you get from Wal-Mart, grocery stores, etc., etc.

Now sacrifice one of your arrows. Cut the point off leaving a blunt end. Hang your “target” at the same height as your arrow will be at draw. Stand about two paces away from the target. Draw, anchor, release. Yes, Virginia, you will be shooting into the trash can or the burlap bag. All you need to do then is step forward, recover the arrow and do it again. You don’t really need to see your arrow flying down range. Shoot about 10 shots, then take a break. Come back to it in a bit. During the course of a day or evening you could possibly “shoot” 50 - 70 “shafts”. As soon as you feel you are loosing it, stop, take a break. Come back to it. The whole focus here is to develop the feel of the “correct” draw, anchor, release. This needs to be instinctive when you go to the range for great scores.

In future articles I’ll discuss in more detail the draw, anchor, release. In the meantime,

Shoot straight,  
Christophe of Grey

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