

Chronique

The Journal of Chivalry

Articles, Essays, Reviews

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Arms and Armour

Chronique
The Journal of Chivalry
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Chronique

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Many thanks must be extended to all of the above contributors and to everyone who helped bring Chronique #6 into being.

THANK YOU!

Introduction

It is with great sincerity and exhaustion that I welcome all of our readers to this issue of *Chronique*. The special elements of armour have been one of the key points of development in my own education about the Middle Ages, and I believe that they hold a special importance for those who engage in tournament re enactments. We have an especially diverse set of articles this time, and much FORUM response. Of particular note are the pieces by Bruce Metcalf, *On Abandoning Ignorance*, that discusses the importance of education to the practice of art; and the piece on the *English Longbow* by Jack Greene, a professional boyer working in period styles.

Many of you will be receiving renewal notices this time-- it will be our practice, given the expense of *Chronique*, not to continue to send issues to subscribers who have expired. This has been a lean year and *Chronique* does not yet quite break even, so I cannot afford to support others. Please renew your subscription if you like what we are doing! On the back of each renewal notice, you will find a questionnaire posing queries on a number of elements on *Chronique* content and style. We are considering a move to a more magazine-like format, and would deeply appreciate your ideas.

Special thanks for work on *Chronique* #5 must go to my Fiancee Ann-Marie Storz (we are to be married on October 16-- at long last!), AKA SCA Mistress Ann of Alanwyck, who also printed most of the issue; Anthony J. Bryant for proofreading issue #4 and generally helping during the production of #5, AKA SCA Baron Master Edward of Effingham; Steve Beck, for world class proofreading at lightening speed, AKA SCA Duke Sir Stephen of Beckenham; and Donna Green, for her continued support of our efforts and in particular for assistance with collating and stapling, AKA SCA Countess Juanna Isabella de Montoya y Ramirez.

I am particularly excited by the surge of interest in more authentic formats for tournament re enactments and by the Armour Symposia scheduled for July of 1994. As of this writing the Company of Saint George held another very successful pas d'armes in Berkeley, CA, and has another planned for November 6, 1993. The Company of Saint Michael will hold a form of SCA pas d'armes at the great Pennsic War, and the small Shire of Canale is holding a 15th century tourney in September. There is much to do, and we hope to offer reports in the 4th Quarter issue. Enjoy!

-Brian R. Price
Editor *Chronique*

FORUM

CONTRIBUTING TO FORUM

The FORUM section is intended to provide a place to discuss any issue concerning knighthood, chivalry, or the tournament. The QUESTIONS are meant to act as a spark to direct discussions towards a particular topic related to the theme of the next issue, but they are not meant to stifle the discussion on other topics. IF YOU FEEL STRONGLY ABOUT SOMETHING WE ARE DISCUSSING OR HAVE DISCUSSED IN THE PAST—WRITE! I hope that many of these discussions will continue for years.

ON CHRONIQUE AND CHIVALRIC ROUNDTABLES

"I would first like to offer my admiration for *Chronique*. I feel it does an excellent job of fulfilling its subtitle 'The Journal of Chivalry'. I would first like to address the issue brought up in *Chronique* #5 about 'chivalric roundtables becoming *de rigueur* for young combatants seeking knighthood' and asking if we believe that 'recommending an interest in these topics could have a negative impact on the SCA'. My answer is a resounding NO! There is absolutely no way that discussion of chivalric matters could harm the SCA. I think that such discussions can only enrich the Society. While I agree that such roundtables should not be *de rigueur* for those striving towards Knighthood, I think that having a well developed philosophy should be, and that chivalric roundtables are one of the best ways for developing this philosophy. Other excellent methods include reading primary and well researched secondary sources, and observing those whom you respect. It is my opinion that the more of these methods one is involved in, the better centered one's philosophy becomes. I was a member of HRM's Mari's Guard and I found the chivalric round tables which we held to be instrumental in bringing my philosophy together and preparing me for Knighthood."

John M. Chamberlain

AKA SCA Viscount Sir Garick von Kopke

Kingdom of the West

JAMES ELLIOT, AKA SCA DUKE SIR HANNO VON HALSTERN, DISCUSSES SOME ASPECTS OF CHIVALRY.

"I opened the mail today and there I saw the latest copy of *Chronique*. Looking through the replies I was amazed at what the respondents had written. While I had written replies to the same questions, which I never got around to sending, I was always of the opinion that 'chivalry' was a geographically-based set of ideas. What worked and what was considered polite here, just wasn't there. But upon looking at all of these geographically diverse replies, I realize that maybe geography isn't the key. You have all of these replies from all over, but they all basically say the same things. Is this the final blending of SCA cultures, to the extent that there are no real differences between us? Or is it more simple. Is right and wrong basically right and wrong, no matter where you go?

"Maybe cultural geography would be a better way to say it. You have to remember that all our

chivalric ideas are colored by the Judeo-Christian ethics that we were raised under. If not at home, then at school, work and in our general social stratus."

James Elliot

AKA SCA Duke Barak Elandris Hanno, Knight
Kingdom of Caïd

QUESTIONS FROM CHRONIQUE #4

Question #1: What is the most important element of the knighting ceremony as practiced in your re-enactment group? Why?

"I would have to say the dubbing. It is the ultimate showing of trust. The King is taking responsibility for your actions, forever. He is loosing you upon the world to make decisions, without any real checks and balances, that will eventually reflect back to him."

James Elliot

"In my opinion the most important part of the Knighting ceremony is the 'adoubement' which we accomplish in the SCA with the laying of the flat of a sword upon the left shoulder, then the right, and lastly upon the head, while the sovereign names the candidate 'Knight'.

I feel that this is important because of its instrumentality in period ceremonies, either with the sword or with the hand, both being variations of the same act. This was the central part of the ceremony throughout the high and late Middle Ages, replacing the earlier rite of girding on the sword. Indeed, in battlefield Knightings it was frequently the only aspect of the ceremony.

"As to why we, in the SCA, use both the hand and sword in many ceremonies, I suspect that it stems from early confusion as to period forms that, over time, developed its own traditional significance in the SCA context."

John M. Chamberlain

Question #2: Why is a white belt chosen for SCA knights? What should it mean?

"The white belt was chosen as a symbol of your purity, either actual or attempted. Your goodliness. I leave mine an off-tan color just to hedge my bet."

James Elliot

"According to Duke Sir Siegfried von Hofflichkeit, one of the founders of the Society, the reason that the white belt, chain and spurs were chosen for SCA knighthood was that their research showed that these, among other things, were things that Medieval knights wore and these particular sigils were both available and affordable to a young SCA. I am uncertain how the white belt came to be a symbol of prowess or of chivalry in the SCA, but that is what it symbolizes now."

John M. Chamberlain

Question #3: What symbolism should the sword have for SCA knights? Should it ever be used in real fighting?

"The sword can carry many different meanings. My favorite is the allusion in the Ordene de Chevalerie that the two edges of the sword should remind the knight to blend right and royalty. I can think of no circumstances under which I would feel comfortable with real swords being used in non-choreographed combat. Speaking of unreasonably dangerous acts, is anyone else

out there dying to try jousting? It seems that if the lances were made light enough to break easily it wouldn't be that dangerous. Although the idea scares me, I have often longed to try it."

John M. Chamberlain

Question #4: What do spurs mean to SCA knights? Should squires wear them? Equestrians?

"Spurs are a symbol of the knight's original station as simple mounted warriors. Society then elevated them to fit the civilized ideas that were currently prevailing. We should always remember that we are just culturally-aware 'gunslingers'. As far as squires wearing spurs, mine do. The SCA has established criteria for knightly regalia, and in some kingdoms, squirely regalia. As long as it is worn for what it is and no assumptions are intended, I see no problems with it. Same for equestrians."

James Elliot

"According to SCA tradition the spurs are representative of one's membership in the Order of Chivalry. Therefore, I am not comfortable with squires wearing them. I do not, however, agree with His Excellency Edward of Effingham's assertion that the BOD should regulate their issue. Different kingdoms have different customs and that is as it should be. It adds depth to our experience, even if some of the customs out there disturb us."

John M. Chamberlain

Question #10: Is fealty sworn to the man or to the office?

"In my opinion fealty is a personal issue between individuals. However, one of those individuals is in some way different from the man he is when he steps down. This is what it means to me when the Royalty's personal arms are reversed as the Crowns touch their heads for the first time."

John M. Chamberlain

"I see fealty as delivered from a station to a station, knight to king, squire to knight, etc. Homage is more of personal respect and feelings that a person could give to another person who they feel a particular way for. Fealty is sworn to the office, but can be made to include the person currently in the office."

James Elliot

QUESTIONS FROM CHRONIQUE #5 CONCERNING ARMS, ARMOUR, AND FIELD APPEARANCE

Question #1: Where should the line be drawn between safety and authenticity in armour standards?

"As much as I support and appreciate field authenticity I do not think that it should be regulated by armour standards. We cannot afford to be elitists. We need not to scare away new people with lots of requirements. New people are what keep our groups dynamic. As their understanding and love of what we do improves, so will their field appearance and their authenticity."

"As for safety standards I think that the written SCA corporate standards as they are written are just fine. Problems come in with local additions and, worst of all, marshal's personal interpretations and their attempts to enforce their own opinions and fears. I disagree with the editors' opinion that the knee and hand are not critical areas. While it is true that neither the

knee not the hand are life threatening, they can be permanently disabling. Rigid material, however, is sufficient for these areas. Fans, bridges, etc. are not necessary."

John M. Chamberlain

"Naturally we should make every effort to be safe. On the other hand, we are recreating — to a certain extent — an historical sport, not football. We should certainly have some armour minimum standards. The closed face requirement, meaning we cannot legally reproduce an accurate Norman or Norse helm, and certain forms of celata, is an unfortunate point. Still, my eyes are important to me. These helmets may be reproduced with a grille, unlike others which may be properly reconstructed otherwise. (Actually, I think we bend over too far in the other direction in "allowing" the use of grilles on helmets that should be enclosed, but that is another response for another question.) What are critical places — other than the head, groin, and kidneys — that must be protected? As we add to the list of body parts to be covered, we potentially limit the kinds of armour and periods that may be properly recreated (as in question one above). For example, Vikings didn't wear cuisses with knee-cops, neither did Anglo-Saxons wear heavy gauntlets. All in all, I feel the SCA makes a good case for what should be protected, but they have gone a bit overboard. Head, kidneys, and groins should be protected. Major joints like elbows, knees, and wrists, are also sensitive, but to my mind that should be a case of common sense over regulation. Knee-pads worked fine for years. Why now must we wear steel? If you never get hit there and are a good fighter (and have signed the waiver and made your informed decision to participate in a dangerous sport) you should be able to get away with wearing less armour in places not so critical to life. What all this means is that I favor *as authentic harness as possible* within the safety constraints under which we must operate."

Anthony J. Bryant

AKA SCA Baron Edward of Effingham
Kingdom of the West

"My feeling is that the line should only be drawn where the SCA "style" of combat would make period armours unsafe. An example of this is the requirement for openings in helmet [ocularia] not to exceed one inch. The common use of blows to the face in SCA combat would make true open-faced helmets unsafe.

Robert C. Holland

AKA SCA Viscount Sir Robert of Woodsend
Kingdom of the West

"For the purposes of the SCA at large, I believe that something like the following would serve us well: At the corporate level, the standard should insure that combatants would not normally be subjected to life-threatening injuries. Beyond that, the Society Marshal should tabulate injury reports and recommend additional restrictions to Kingdoms where fighting styles or conventions of combat regularly present a risk of debilitating injury (blinding, crushed hands, severely traumatized knees and elbows, concussion). These restrictions should be in response to reasonably perceived need rather than preceding any example of an injury the marshallate wishes to prevent. Having said that, I must say that there are few existing standards (society-wide) that I would like to see changed."

Thomas G. Moore

AKA SCA Sir Thomas Logan
Kingdom of the West

Question #2: To what degree should "sporting equipment" rather than period armours be allowed on the field?

"Since we are ostensibly attempting to recreate armoured combat, I feel that armour should be worn. I think the big difference here lies in whether the participant views fighting as a "sport" or as something different. Wearing armour of non-period materials (plastic, aluminum), or wearing only padding on the torso allows obvious advantages in speed and stamina. However, I also think it detracts from some of the medieval atmosphere of the SCA. Some of this can be

disguised by the wearing of surcoats, but there is still the knowledge that the participant is wearing non-period materials. Light armour can also be made from period materials (i.e. leather). I am also aware that in certain individual cases, physical problems may require a participant to use non-period materials for lightness, or other properties. I have also been reminded by my lady that if she were to wear all period materials, she would be carrying a higher percentage of her body weight in armour than I do. I do not necessarily feel that we should force those who choose not to wear full armour to do so, it is just a different approach to what we do.”

Robert C. Holland

“Sporting equipment on the field does not bother me, especially if it is being used by a new fighter. As a courtesy, however, any sporting equipment should be covered with at least a simple surcoat.”

John M. Chamberlain

“I personally don’t mind sporting equipment if it is for safety and verisimilitude (for example, elbow pads worn under a long-sleeved hauberk), but not as armour qua armour (as in baseball greaves being worn out there for everyone to see- shudder).”

Anthony T. Bryant

“Most SCA newcomers’ pamphlets state that we require that all event attendees ‘...make an attempt at pre-1600 dress...’; likewise armour should at least make an attempt. Sporting equipment such as hockey gloves and football shoulder pads do nothing for our image. I would not fight, however, if I were not permitted to wear a modern cup. I do not believe that it is right to outlaw all anachronistic (modern) armours in our anachronistic sport as this will prevent many from ever getting started— some of whom might otherwise become valuable contributors to our culture. I think of ‘period’ as an ideal to strive ever to achieve but would not insist that all those around me feel the same way.”

Thomas G. Moore

“I believe that new combatants should be given a good deal of latitude in their choice of armoured defense for tournament combat. However, I think it important that the more experienced combatants, and armourers in particular, should endeavor to lead them, both through example and through instruction, towards the magic that a crisp, authentic set of gear can generate. Experienced combatants have a responsibility to increase the quality of the field appearance, because they are the example to which the new combatant and novices look for inspiration.

“In neither case do I think that regulation is a very effective form of control. Increased regulation causes an increase in “rules lawyering,” which denigrates the chivalric philosophy that is supposed to dominate the tournament field. Peer pressure and what I like to call “chivalry by example” seem to be more effective, though regulations here in the West kingdom have been effective in removing blue jeans and tennis shoes from the field. It is the example of our fighting elite, however, which has increased the quality of the helmets on the field and it is this which has, and will, continue to raise the quality of field appearances in general.”

Brian R. Price, Editor Chronique

Question #3: What responsibility, if any, should armourers bear for field authenticity?

“In practical terms, armourers are usually merchants to one extent or another. As such they will make what sells. If period is popular, then we have no problems. If period is not popular, then I think the spirit of attempt should apply. I would be unhappy to see an armourer selling tourney legal fantasy helmets (i.e. with horns or à la ‘Excalibur’ film props) but I am happy to say that this has been quite rare in my experience.”

Thomas G. Moore

“The first responsibility for authenticity on the field should be the fighters, for if they don’t

express an interest in looking right, surely few of the armourers will make the effort. There are, in my opinion, three kinds of fighters: the kind who care about the authenticity of their gear; the kind who don't know and don't care, but can be guided; and the kind who just don't care and will continue to wear ancient beat up slag pieces of armour of questionable ancestry. That large number of fighters who don't really care about the authenticity factor but are capable of being guided in the proper direction are at the mercy of armourers who make sport gear (e.g.; vaguely sugarloaf helmets with permanent bar grilles, "generic legs," etc.) or don't bother to attempt to properly design or make reconstruction pieces. There are some very bad helmets out there that are being called sallets: though they are more sallet-like than anything else, they are like nothing I've ever seen in *any* of the museum catalogues I've looked through. And this is the fault of the armourer. Here the fighter needs guidance as to where to get the "real thing," and the encouragement from his peers and others that it would be best to wear the real thing. Only then, when orders get fewer, will some armourers shape up and start making reconstruction armour instead of sporting equipment."

Anthony J. Bryant

"Armourers are responsible for field authenticity only so far as their customers request and they agree to attempt it."

John M. Chamberlain

"As I stated in my essay last issue [Chronique #4], armourers have the responsibility to provide the most authentic, safe equipment available, choosing from the historical record pieces that will be well-suited to our form of combat. Particularly if they are members of the Order of the Laurel, they ought, in my opinion, to be instructors to their clientele on what works and what does not; what is authentic and which authentic pieces will work best for the style of combat we engage in."

Brian R. Price, Editor Chronique

Question #4: If "auto-repair technicians" charge from \$25-\$75 per hour, why do you think armourers can expect only \$10-\$15 per hours for their best work?

"The answer is, sadly, all too clear: economics. Most people are simply unable (or unwilling) to pay for what good armour is worth. You *need* your car to work, and there may be a cheaper garage in the area, but you will pay what you must. You don't need that wonderful raised great bascinet with a mirror finish for \$800 when for \$100 an armour shop down the road can slag out a composite sugarloaf/grille with a riveted skirt. It's sad, isn't it?"

Anthony J. Bryant

"It is an unfortunate fact that most of us need our cars to pay our bills but we probably couldn't support ourselves with our armour. The moral is that one charges what the traffic will bear—talent, effort, and artistic excellence have precious little to do with it."

Thomas G. Moore

"There are three main reasons for this. One is that most armourers started as hobbyists and still don't approach armouring as much like a business as they think they do. Another is that because of the traditionally low prices for SCA armour, some people expect prices to be at about the same level. The last reason is simple free marketing. Armourers who charge \$50 per hour for their work would be unlikely to sell much, as someone else will still charge much less. Do skilled armourers deserve better recompense? Undoubtedly, but they are unlikely to get it soon unless they sell to non-SCA clients. Witness McKenzie-Smith Armouries."

John M. Chamberlain

Question #5: Should armourers strive to copy authentic pieces or should they try only to work in a period style? Should they bother at all?

"To copy an existing piece takes skill; to adopt a period style, however, requires an understanding of the 'why' as much as the 'how'. If making authentic reproductions is an admirable goal, and I believe it is, I think armourers should work with a style or a 'school' in mind but do their own work and not copy someone else's."
Thomas G. Moore

"Both. While some people seem to want copies, others want originals. Copying also teaches period style. No doubt the period apprentices began with copying their teachers' work and then moved on to original pieces. If the armourer is working for love and art and not just for profit, most re-creationists would pay considerably more for something authentic."
John M. Chamberlain

"The Editor agrees wholeheartedly! Novice armourers should begin by copying the time-tested designs from the historical record, and then move into trying to identify the elements of style in a particular period, for a particular piece. It is this identification that allows the armourer to claim a piece is *in the style of* and should guide the development of original pieces."
*Brian R. Price, Editor Chronique
Armourer*

"I'm confused by the question. I think that the armourer should — for the development of his craft — try to do a period reconstruction using whatever period means are at his disposal, but for his profession he should do whatever his conscience will allow him to do. (I would like to hope that would preclude batwing helms for Ren faires- mundanes need the same guidance new SCA people do, and if given a little education they would probably be just as willing to buy a real helmet as something out of a bad fantasy film.)"
Anthony J. Bryant

Question #6: What matters most to you as a combatant-looking authentic or having equipment that is more competitive in function?

"Considering that anyone who has seen me hold a sword in the past several years knows that I am not competitive (>sigh<), it is far more important to me to look *good*, and I here define good as authentic. I am currently in the process of upgrading my gear, and hopefully within the twelvemonth I will look spiffy and authentic. Basically, what I lack in skill I hope to make up in looks. Maybe that can intimidate an opponent into making a mistake."
Anthony J. Bryant

"Both are important to me. I moved my persona into a later period to make the armour I prefer more authentic for me."
John M. Chamberlain

"Looking good is more important to me, as evidenced by the fact that I don't fight in just a padded gambeson for body armour. However, I do try to make my armour as functional as possible while still looking period."
Robert C. Holland

"Authentic appearance on the field is very important to me personally. I have made several compromises in my kit for various reasons but I find that as I replace pieces I almost invariably do so with more correct and historically accurate ones."
Thomas G. Moore

Question #8: What responsibilities does an armourer bear, if any, for the durability and adherence to local rule standards, and workmanship?

"An armourer's responsibility for his work should be the same as any other merchants'. If satisfied, happy clients are desired, then the product produced should be durable, and pass the marshal's inspections. Otherwise it should not be sold as armour intended for combat."

Thomas G. Moore

"If an armourer is selling predominantly to SCA fighters, he has an implied commitment to meet corporate standards and those of his kingdom unless he specifically states that a certain piece will be otherwise (exclusively show armour, play props, etc.). That is what an SCA consumer expects and is part of the reason he pays a professional to do the work. As for the durability of workmanship, this is dependent upon the skill of the armourer and the grade of the piece. The armourer's responsibilities in this field lie in making any custom piece with the same care that he made the standard pieces that his customer used to decide if the armourer's skill was what he was looking for."

John M. Chamberlain

"Certainly the armourer should be aware of the armour standards he is supposed to be meeting. If the rules call for ocularia to be no larger than a certain size, it is naturally up to him to make certain that the helm he produces fits that, and that no sword point can enter. As to durability and workmanship, this is the more difficult part of the question. The gear should not fall apart, so he may over-engineer. I know many armourers who make helms out of 16 gauge steel because the rules say 16 gauge steel. I know others who use 12, because after dishing and noothing, 16 is aluminum foil, and 12 is still serviceable. Guess who I will buy a helmet from? Armourers know what we do, so their product should be able to survive it. But what is the life span of a helmet? I know people who've been fighting with the same helmet since they started over a decade ago (and it looks like it, too!), and I know people who buy a new helm every few tourney seasons. Perhaps the armourer should ask questions: how often will the client use it, where will it be used, is the fighter skilled enough not to take many shots to that part, etc. Armed with information about the client, it would be easier to arm him. Unfortunately, few care, and fewer ask."

Anthony J. Bryant

Question #9: There seems to be a trend, expressed over time, of armour regulations in the SCA gradually pushing the "plate" requirements higher and pushing many of the "period" armours out. What do you think of this trend? What would you do about it?

"I am uncertain that the regulations are actually changing. In my 6½ years in the SCA the corporate armor standards have not changed, even once. What I think has changed is the way Marshals tend to interpret the standards. Marshals should stop trying to keep us from getting hurt. We have all signed waivers—more on this under Question #11."

John M. Chamberlain

"I don't believe there is a trend towards regulating plate. The only pieces of plate (rigid) armour that have been added to the requirement list since I started fighting (A.S. XVI) are the demi-gauntlet and the shield side elbow (West Kingdom standards). These hardly constitute a major move towards plate. Rigid materials may be recommended for many areas, but are only required for a relatively few. My armour contains only plate at the knees, elbows, and head, and is very close to the armour we are all 'supposed' to be wearing (an open helm, chain hauberk, leather arms and legs)."

Robert C. Holland

"I have fought in a transitional armour composed of plate, mail, leather and areas covered only in heavy cloth for over 10 years. It has served me admirably and while I intend someday to make and wear a full plate suit I would never condone requiring this of all combatants. With ingenuity and care a suit that appears to be from the first crusade can protect quite adequately. I think that these issues may eventually need to be taken up with the Society Marshallate least

we devolve from the Society for Creative Anachronism to the Society for 16th Century Re creationists.”

Thomas G. Moore

“As I have stated in other responses above, I think the trend in armour requirements is getting too severe. I miss the lighter armour days of my youth in Trimaris. We also seemed to hit lighter then—I wonder if there’s a connection. Naturally, the lower the armour requirements, the more options are open for recreation. And this would be a Good Thing. I have already written a letter to the SCA Earl Marshall recommending lighter regs, favoring common sense over regulation.”

Anthony J. Bryant

Question #10: It has been ruled by the SCA marshallate that “finger gauntlets” popular in the 14th and 15th centuries are disallowed. Do you agree with this?

“My heart agrees with Brion when he calls for personal responsibility. In a perfect world, we would need only to regulate those pieces of armour which prevent life threatening injuries. However, in the real world of lawsuits, I am not sure that is far enough. However, if it could be shown to my satisfaction that the gauntlets could protect the wearer from broken fingers under the expected circumstances (nothing works under all circumstances) I would be willing to allow them.”

Robert C. Holland

“It may come as no surprise that I like finger gauntlets, and would very much like to see their ban lifted. Fingers should be on the list of “recommended” protection, not required. I am adult enough to judge my risks, and will not fight with substandard finger gauntlets. At least it could be judged on a case-by-case scenario, wherein a ruling could be made when armourers submit a sample of the gauntlet in question to the marshallate for appraisal.”

Anthony J. Bryant

“I have a problem with finger gauntlets because if my hand is crushed to the point where I cannot use it I would have to stop fighting. I consider this to be a remote possibility when wearing accurate finger gauntlets so while I like they way they look I would never fight with them. In the end my opinion on this issue parallels my attitude regarding the California motorcycle helmet law: I would ride without a helmet but that doesn’t mean that I believe that everyone else must.”

Thomas G. Moore

“No, I do not agree with this ruling. Frankly, finger gauntlets scare me, and I would not wear them as my sole hand protection but they do fulfill my definition of ‘rigid protection’. Hockey gloves are still considered legal. How is it possible to argue that hockey gloves are safer than finger gauntlets? Hockey gloves are, basically, finger gauntlets, and they also lack rigidity. They are made up of foam which breaks down over time. I do not understand this silly double-standard.”

John M. Chamberlain

Question #11: How much armour should be regulated and how much should be up to the discretion of the combatant? Should there be more than one standard?

“The litigious nature of our nation makes the adoption of minimum armour standards a necessity. A reasonable assurance of safety on the field is the only thing that allows us to continue competing year after year. The regulation of appearance, however, is another matter entirely. Demanding that any standard other than safety and the attempt to be period be met

would easily cause widespread disaffection and possibly destroy the society."

Thomas G. Moore

"As I stated before, I am a great believer in personal responsibility, and feel that only the minimum amount of armour should be regulated. The only driving reason for standards beyond those required to protect life seems to be the fear of lawsuits."

Robert C. Holland

"Any armour, the lack of which is likely to lead to death or permanent disability should be (and is) mandated. All other risks, (broken bones, bruises, freak accidents, etc.) are the risk of the combatant and are the reason we all sign waivers. While I am not comfortable with multiple standards, I do believe that the inexperienced fighter should be strongly encouraged by his trainers to wear more than the bare minimum."

John M. Chamberlain

"I concur with Sir Garick's assertion that in addition to areas where death can occur areas that may likely cause disability should also be defended, although I think the combatant should bear more of the responsibility for arming themselves than they do currently. I believe strongly in individual choice, and would like to see more pressure put on the combatants themselves to act in a manner that is safe and courteous. Rules-Lawyering destroys this responsibility and is something that eats away not only at our chivalric experiment in the SCA but at our larger society as well."

Brian R. Price, Editor Chronique

Question #12: In a fight, who bears the primary responsibility for the safety of your opponent?

"Safety is a consensus achieved equally by both combatants. The person struck must be properly trained and protected with gear that is in good condition. The person striking must also be properly trained, using an appropriate weapon in an appropriate manner and must be in control of his or her temper."

Thomas G. Moore

"I bear the primary responsibility for the safety of my opponent. This is not a universal constant, however. If he is ill or injured and determined to fight, and I don't know his condition, he could get badly injured, and the onus would be upon me. I don't like getting blamed for wrecking a borrowed car when the owner didn't mention the bad brakes. It is up to my opponent to tell me that he's not wearing his glasses, he has a sprained ankle, or a badly bruised leg. That will let me know what not to do, so I can keep from hurting him (hopefully). I should be on my guard at any rate to avoid putting him in a dangerous or bad situation. And he should be watching out for me."

Anthony J. Bryant

"Each fighter bears the primary responsibility for his own safety. It is his responsibility to make sure that his armour and his skills are up to the encounter. When I face an opponent, I do not make a point to check his armour, though I do consider it my responsibility to stop the fight if I see an unsafe situation arise. If I am injured in the course of a fight, through the use of a legal technique, no fault is due to my opponent. A caveat I would place on the above, however, is that it is incumbent upon myself not to use unnecessary force."

Robert C. Holland

"My opponent bears the responsibility for his own safety. He chooses his armour and knows his ability. While I would never try to hurt an opponent and actively try not to if I notice an unarmoured target, the ultimate responsibility is his."

John M. Chamberlain

"Both you and your opponent bear mutual responsibility for safety on the field—your opponent can neither direct nor stop a blow that you make, and it is your responsibility to control your blows such that severe injury is not caused. The ultimate responsibility, I believe, is held

by every combatant for both themselves and their opponent."

Brian R. Price, Editor Chronique

Question #13: Is a "pignose" visor unsafe? Spurs worn on the field? Gothic elbows?

"A pignose visor is not unsafe, though if I wore one I would take extra care to limit my neck's movement. The only danger to spurs is that one might sit on them or trip over them, neither of which is exactly life threatening. Gothic elbows—How long? How sharp?"

John M. Chamberlain

"This gets into a matter of degree. It is impossible to make every piece of equipment to meet the 'standards' (for example, most elbow or knee wings are capable of going into eyeslots). I have no problem with pignoses or prick spurs, but 12 inch gothic spurs or elbows might give me pause."

Robert C. Holland

"I defy anyone to prove to me that any of these three items poses an undue hazard to anyone on the field. These statements are ridiculous but I have heard worse—I was strongly admonished for wearing my chain of fealty on the field of combat—despite the fact that it rides beneath my breastplate and under my aventail. Prove to me that there is a hazard and then we'll talk."

Thomas G. Moore

"Pignose visors are not unsafe. They're fine, and they add to the proper flavor of the armour. just like small stub spurs. I'd not recommend fighters going out with serious prickspurs or rowel spurs, but the little stubby one are all right. I'd be more concerned about members of the Chivalry fighting with their chains than their spurs."

Anthony J. Bryant

Question #14: What is your opinion of the apparent dominance of "grilles" on SCA helmets? Why is this true? What do you suggest?

"Grilles don't bother me. I just think of them as our version of the open-faced helm. Open face helms were quite common, in period, but they are they one form of period armour that I would consider unsafe."

John M. Chamberlain

"I believe this is due to people wanting the better vision, regardless of whether or not an open-faced helmet matches the rest of the harness. Again, I have no desire to force people to wear a harness from a particular time period of their own choosing, but I do encourage it."

Robert C. Holland

"I fight in a closed-faced helm. I don't like to use open face helms but don't fault others for doing it. Issues of breathing and vision are, however, as much a factor of training and experience as of helm design. Authentically constructed helms look better and perhaps the best way to promote their use is to have the Crown honour it. The West Kingdom's Order of the Silver Mantle is an example of such Royal patronage though I am sorry to say it has become an unused order in recent years."

Thomas G. Moore

Question #15: What dollar value would you place on a high-quality, serviceable helmet, that is well-made but does not have much embellishment?

"I paid \$225 for my last helmet. I think I got a good deal. I would put its off the shelf market value

at a major SCA even at between \$250 and \$325."

John M. Chamberlain

"This is a really tough one. What is a serviceable helmet? A dog-faced klappvizer bascinet, a sallet, a barrel helm? What is high-quality? Rivets, welds, raising? Considering that I think in terms of authentic, I would not be thinking about a barrel helm: it is not period for me. I would be thinking bascinet. Then I would be considering four things: (1) looks, (2) fit, (3) construction, and (4) style (not in order). Fit is key for comfort, and fit and construction are primary for serviceability. For the "high-quality" part, I expect fit and comfort to be a given, but a *better* fit and *more* comfort, along with looks and style. (The latter two may seem the same, but they are not.) This "more than the standard" is a concept the Japanese call "plus alpha," and something that I wish more craftsmen — especially armourers — would acquaint themselves with. So— what value do I place on a well-made, serviceable, high-quality bascinet? Probably \$500. And for a raised one, or one with all sorts of artistic bells and whistles, fitted for a camail? I don't even want to think about it."

Anthony J. Bryant

Question #16: How much do you think swords from the 14th and 15th centuries weighed? Shields?

"Without looking at a reference I would estimate a standard broadsword at about 2lbs 10 ounces, a metal shield at almost 6 lbs, a wooden shield at 10 lbs and a metal covered wooden shield at about 15 lbs."

John M. Chamberlain

"Documentation is available for period swords and I believe that weights ranged from .75 to 1.8 KG for a typical one-handed broadsword depending upon the style. I would expect shield weights to be similar to ours, (less the basket grips, fiberglass, steel and hose edging.)— probably 6 to 12 lbs or so depending on shield size."

Thomas G. Moore

Question #17: What would you do if you met an opponent whose armour was correct in every detail, but was illegal by your rules system?

"My responsibility as a knight and as a warranted Marshal does not include breaking the rules of the kingdom no matter how much I think the armour is safe nor how correct it is. As an opponent, I could not allow such a fight to proceed without the permission of the Marshallate or the Crown."

Thomas G. Moore

"I would mention to him that he was likely to have trouble with the marshals. If I thought that the defect was likely to lead to serious injury, I would decline to do combat with him."

John M. Chamberlain

Question #18: What constitutes a "safe" helmet? A comfortable one?

"A safe helmet is one that substantially reduces the chance of cranial and cervical trauma in normal (and most abnormal) SCA fighting situations. A comfortable helm is one that its owner will enjoy wearing."

Thomas G. Moore

Question #19: What would you do if you met an opponent who fought with a clear lexan or plexiglass shield? What would you think about such a combatant?

"I would kill him. [ed. I assume in an SCA sense, although I can't really speak for someone else...] Then I would ask him to paint it in order to be rid of its jarring effect. If he was using its clarity to see while remaining protected, I would think that he was taking unfair advantage."

John M. Chamberlain

"I'd probably refuse to fight him. That is a very unfair advantage, and someone willing to do that might be willing to do other things. I would consider it unchivalrous, to say the very least. I would question his attitudes and goals, and his very reasons for fighting. Such a person is fighting to win, not fighting for the greater glory or honor."

Anthony J. Bryant

"I would fight such an opponent assuming that to do so did not conflict with the issues raised in question #17. I think that such a fight would be interesting; I admit that I would have little respect for my opponent's commitment to our ideals as a society but that would not stop me from accepting the challenge."

Thomas G. Moore

"Luckily we have a rule against such shields in the West (as giving unfair advantage). It would definitely offend my sense of esthetics. I would assume that the person carrying the shield was more interested in the 'sport' aspect of fighting. I would then take great pleasure in finding a way to kill him anyway."

Robert C. Holland

Question #20: What does a combatant's armour tell you about them?

"My opponent's armour tells me many things. I can deduce by looking if he is interested in the pageantry and glory of the tournament. I can tell if he cares about his gear. I can also learn more surface things, like: "Oh, he's fourteenth-century French." I would like to think that people with good, attractive, well-kept, authentic gear are all good guys, my type of people. This is not a constant, however, as several people I know have crappy armour, but very good attitudes, and they are very honorable. I also know several sons of Satan who wear mondo spiff armour. I guess you really can't judge the book by the cover other than in the most superficial terms."

Anthony J. Bryant

"A person's armour tells me relatively little about the person when I first meet them. There are too many reasons for good or bad looking armour to draw any conclusions. Over time, however, if shoddy does not improve or if fine armour allowed to waste suggests a lack of concern for field appearance, authenticity, or the honor of a fighter would show on behalf of their consort. I do not find that people who wear nice gear fight more honorably or with more skill and only rarely does one's armour provide a glimpse of the other combatant's style."

Thomas G. Moore

"In general, a fighter's armour says a lot about how long he's been in, his period, his philosophy, etc. However, one must be wary of judging a fighter by his armour. His gear may have been beautiful until the rainstorm last week. He may be unable to afford what he really wants, etc. Beware of judging a fighters prowess by his armour—some fighters just prefer their old, comfy, scummy-looking armour."

John M. Chamberlain



QUESTIONS

Below are some suggestions made by our readers over the past few months - the thematic questions for the next issue, this time on Courtly Love, appear following.

1. To what degree has your participation in these tournament re-enactment groups affected the other aspects of your life?
2. How do Knights who have high standards of conduct improve the standards of those who appear to have very low standards?
3. Have you ever seen a Knight, publicly or privately, reprimand another Knight for his conduct? Have you ever done it?

Questions on the *Art of Courtly Love* and regarding *Consorts*

4. How is courtly love as practiced in the SCA different from how it was practiced in period?
5. Should we strive towards an ideal of courtly love that is closer to the medieval model and how would or should this be done?
6. What makes a Lady or a Lord worthy of Love?
7. Passion, sincerity, admiration. Which of these is most important to Love, and why?
8. What is a consorts most important duty to her fighter?
9. What should a consort do when she believes her representative on the field is acting poorly? With dishonor?
10. Why do you, as a consort, allow yourself to be fought for?
11. Should a tournament combatant be allowed to compete for his own honor rather than that of a consort? Why or Why not?

Calendar

If your group is planning a tournament re-enactment or you know of a special event relevant to *Chronique's* readership, please do not hesitate to submit a copy of the event announcement or other information.

- August, 1993 Pennsic War: Slippery Rock, PA
 Company of St. Michael Pas d'Arms
- Sep. 10-12 1993 Seven Deadly Sins Pas d'Arms
 *Challengers fight a Pilgrim's Progress against the tenans, each
 representing one of the Seven Deadly Sins*
 Turlock, CA (Shire of Canale)
- Oct. 7, 1993 Deadline for *Chronique* #7
 Courtly Love
- Nov. 6, 1993 St. Crispen's Day Pas d'Arms
- Nov. 11, 1993 The Black Swan Tourney
 *A Judged Combat over a barrier in the Tudor manner. Held in honor
 of the Lord and Lady of the Swan of Cynuaga.*
 Turlock, CA (Shire of Canale)
- Jan. 10, 1994 Deadline for *Chronique* #8
 The Squire
- Feb-Mar. 1994 William the Marshal Tourney Fundraiser (For the PAGE)
 CA
- Apr. 10, 1994 Deadline for *Chronique* #9
 William the Marshal Tournaments
- July 1994 Deadline for *Chronique* #10
 Arms and Armour #2
- July 22-23 Arms and Armour Symposia
 Berkeley, CA

UNTO ALL CHAMPIONS IN
THE KINGDOM OF THE
WEST WHO HAVE ANY
CLAIM TO THE VIRTUES OF
CHIVALRY, COURTESY AND
PURITY

Let it be known by these presents
that We, the Seven Knights some-
times called Black, do intend to
hold the field against all challeng-
ers in a Pilgrim's Progress as the
Seven Deadly Sins.

Let each Champion come against
these Sins in Single Combat and
prove to one and all that they can
Overcome this said base sin in
Honorable Combat.

Let each Champion who defeats a
Sin receive a token to show the
Virtue that this champion upholds.

Let all challenges be fought with
weapons a la plaisance and let each
Champion fight with the noblest
of effort.

Let this Pilgrim's Progress take
place at the McConnel Camp, in
the Shire of Canale, on the 11th
day of September, A.S. XXVIII.

Contact Kevin Brink, (209)-668-
4131 for more information.

Armourer's Symposia

Given the recent expressed interest
in topics in arms and armour, Earl
Sir Brion Thornbird, Armourer,
is to host an Armourer's Sympo-
sia on History and Technique
during July, 22-23, 1994.

Armourers are encouraged to bring
their pieces for display, to compete
in various contests, and to share in
a guild-style feast. We will be
trying to fly in several well-known
authorities in the arms and armour
field, and invite others to give talks
and seminars on arms and armour.

We envision a sort of "armour-
faire" along with scholastic and
philosophic discussions important
to the field both within and outside
of the SCA.

A souvenir-style program is also
planned.

The event will be held in Berkeley,
CA and is open to armourers, col-
lectors, combatants, and anyone else
interested in arms and armour.

Brian R. Price
1134 Tamalpais Place
Hayward, CA 94542

On Abandoning Ignorance

Bruce Metcalf

Reprinted from METALWORKING
Spring 1989

Editor: In my early armouring days I ran across this article, and found that it articulated much of what I felt and should strive for as an armourer and as an artist. The essay originated as a presentation at the Society of North American Goldsmiths' conference in Flagstaff, Arizona in 1986. It has been revised and edited for publication in "Metalsmith". Metcalf's theme concerning the value of ideas as part of the metalsmith / jewelers' repertoire, expressed in his previous essays, "Crafts, Second Class Citizens?" (Metalsmith, Fall 1980) and "Techniques for the Head" (Metalsmith, Winter 1983) is further explored here. Although he speaks of jewelry and metalworking, I think his points about education and art are well-stated and important.



At a party some time ago, I was talking to a young metalsmith who is presently making a very successful series of lamps. I like him and his work. He is intelligent and articulate, so I was surprised when he made a statement that summarized an entire constellation of questionable values and attitudes. I was speaking, as I often do, about the necessity of reading and writing and theorizing, and his response was neatly encapsulated in one short sentence. He said, "I just want to work."

Because I am a craftsman too, I understood him perfectly. His greatest pleasure is working in his studio, concentrating on his craft, making decisions about technique and materials and placement of elements. Like most craftspeople who work year-in and year-out, he loves his labor. After all, the sheer manipulation of material is frequently more gratifying than the enigmas and puzzles posed by criticism and art theory. This man made a singular decision to be a craftsman, and not a scholar. Had he been fascinated with specula-

tion about the nature of visual art, perhaps he would have become an art historian, but as it is, the activity of designing and constructing is far more satisfying to him. Time spent considering more philosophical problems is a distraction, eating into his studio time. Thus, he implied that anything more cerebral than executing a successful design is of no value to him.

Obviously, he's entitled to his opinion, and a diversity of convictions is necessary to a vital community. But I believe there's a problem in the view he expressed, and it's one that pervades the entire field of jewelry and metalsmithing. Much as I admire this artist's work, he places altogether too much faith on his powers of imagination, and too little on his intelligence. He proposes a value system that glorifies pleasure in labor, but not in thinking. He maintains that good design and good craftsmanship is enough. He proposes that his decisions are guided by seat-of-the-pants intuition, not questioning and analysis. He implies that he has no struggle with serious issues, no critical examination of what he really intends to accomplish with his career. He "just wants to work," and he is satisfied with going no further.

This value system isn't unusual. In fact, I suspect it's typical of contemporary jewelers and metalsmiths. There are only a handful of individuals in this field who can develop a provocative idea, speak knowledgeably about current issues in painting and sculpture or systematically analyze their own work. Even our workshops and conferences are usually devoted to learning technique, to viewing work and to catching up on gossip—not to creating forums for the discussion of new ideas. And only rarely do metalsmiths sit down informally to talk about esthetic questions. Those who call themselves jewelers are often appallingly ignorant of the history of the world's jewelry, or even European jewelry. (How many people know in which century faceted gemstones started to be used, for instance?) Those who call themselves designers suffer equal ignorance of the history of design. We are well informed as to the how and what we do, but terribly deficient as to the what and why.

I must emphasize that I am not dismissing intuition. Not so long ago, I argued that only intuition could make the crucial difference, that art without the magical presence of the artist's deepest feelings is always missing an essential ingredient. I claimed that discourse and debate in art is merely an interesting sideshow for a select group of initiates, but all that talk and theorizing is irrelevant to real excellence in art. I believed that "soul"—in the sense that we speak of soul music—was the single most important element in art. Thus, if an artist could pour his soul into his work, no further examination would be necessary. Like my friend, and artist could, "just want to work" and the results could still be extraordinary. To this day, I believe that some type of pure intuition and inspiration is important, because an artist becomes a machine without it. However, I no longer believe that intuition, by itself, is enough. For art (or design, or jewelry) to reach the highest level, intelligence must modulate intuition.

Intelligence, not ignorance.

In all the visual arts, the best work demonstrates intelligence, visibly expressed. Masters in every field use their technical facility to communicate an idea or a perception in a relatively conscious manner. The great artists and designers were never inarticulate dullards; usually they were eloquent and full of fascinating notions. The prototypical goldsmith Cellini had a sharp intelligence along with his predisposition towards exaggeration. The people who led the post-war revival of American jewelry and metalsmithing are all bright—Margret Carver, Kenneth Bates, Alma Eikerman, Phil Fike—and their innovations are based on wide learning as well as hard work and a sure instinct. I have never heard of a great artist who claimed that ignorance was critical to his or her contribution.

Knowledge Modulates Intuition

The typical jeweler knows something of the history of art, and she's familiar with the propositions of Western philosophy. She might make claims about the primacy of intuition, but she has already learned too much not to be influenced by her education. She operates in a

state of awareness that alters and distorts pure, naive impulses. A naive posture can be assumed, and the ideology of fine art can be rejected. But knowledge cannot be jettisoned, any more than reading can be unlearned. In a manner of speaking, most of us lost our intellectual virginity long ago.

As a teacher, I watch my students go through a progression from ignorance to self-awareness to intelligent observation. Beginning students are raw and naive but excitable and

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receptive to almost any new information. The best enthusiastically try on all manner of styles and concepts in an effort to find out what fits. For the most part, however, their thoughts are predictable and unoriginal, and all but a few are controlled by their emotions and received ideologies.

In the course of education, students are pressured to internalize all kinds of opinions and value systems, often without their direct knowledge. A group of assertions, theories, and aims can constitute a political ideology as well as an artistic one, and teachers (along with parents, peers and the media) compete to indoctrinate students with their belief systems. But, at least in academy, the contention between ideologies makes the nature of the game clearer, and students eventually realize that they can't possibly believe everything they hear. They start to question what they are asked to receive, they examine what they once might have accepted uncritically.

Outside of the schools, ideologies are every bit as potent but more subtly camouflaged. Each practitioner believes his or her approach to be right and proper, and nobody can deny their liberty to say so. But these beliefs are frequently nothing more than conventional wisdom, assumed unsuspectingly from the surrounding culture. For instance, many jewelers maintain that jewelry must be small in order to be wearable, and they speak for the vast majority of their customers when they voice this opinion. Yet alternatives exist. Men and women of the Dinka tribe in the Sudan or the Wodaabe tribe in Niger wear corsets, bodices, armlets and bracelets that are enormous by American standards, but jewelry nonetheless. A quick perusal of *Africa Adorned* will prove that much of the world does not subscribe to the middle-class American definitions on the limits of jewelry. Such definitions are culturally determined, and they operate only within a certain context. The assertion that jewelry must be small is nothing more (or less) than a received ideology, one that is unfortunately sometimes raised to the status of truth.

If ideologies are not called to attention, analyzed and questioned, a student risks becoming a puppet of someone else's program, a mere operative for an anonymous authority. The band "Oingo-Boingo" puts it this way: "We make ourselves like clay from someone else's dream." Just as the women's liberation movement asked women to look at all the self-defeating ideas they were taught to believe, so students must question the rules of the game they have been taught. Is the place of the woman really in the home? Is perfect craftsmanship truly appropriate in every situation?

It's amazing how many restrictions are voluntarily self-imposed, taken on simply because an authority said it was so. Some of my students are fearful of freely expressing themselves, because they think such impractical activities will not help them get a job later. I tell them that the objective at college is not strictly vocational but also a process of self-discovery and gaining flexibility. The notion of making only practical things because the economic payoff is better is a myth, I tell them, and they are better off discarding such restric-

tions. I frequently think I'm not talking to the students at those times but to the voices of their parents implanted in their brains.

Perhaps one of the difficulties of metalsmithing is that the skills take so long to learn, and we are so demanding, that we avoid examining our thoughts. Through the 50s and 60s, metalsmiths struggled to gain control over the tremendous range of techniques that comprise the craft of the jeweler and smith, as if the collective energy of the field was concentrated on a single point. The skill of conceptualizing was neglected so that the craft could be mastered. But, like my students, craftsmen risked becoming slaves to received ideologies. If artists and designers and jewelers refused to think for themselves, they lose control over half of their work. Thinking demands facility, too. Now that the field insists on a certain level of technical sophistication, (simple twisted and forged wire just won't cut the mustard anymore) competence in thinking can be demanding, too. After all, the responsibility of the designer and artist extends to the idea implicit to the work, just as much as to the planning and execution.

I urge my students who arrive at a sound understanding of their values and priorities to start looking outside themselves, at works and readings. They sift through the information to find bits and pieces that support and enlarge upon what they already believe. A student interested in contemporary design might read Charles Jencks on Post-Modernism, or Barbara Radice on the Memphis Group. Another student drawn to the Japanese craft might research Cha-no-yu, the tea ceremony, and its traditional elements. They are not required to believe everything they read; in fact I recommend a healthy skepticism. In spite of their complaints that research takes away from the work in their studio, this self-directed education is essential to the student's growth. Eventually, most students realize that new information expands their horizons, suggests new alternatives and forces them to make intellectual connections they would otherwise miss. As a result, their work becomes richer and deeper, and often more satisfying to the student.

Remedy the I'm-too-Busy-Syndrome

The point is this: self-education is not a luxury, it is a necessity. Abandoning ignorance is difficult and it necessitates time away from the bench. It requires a reordering of priorities.

People who have heard me make this point in public complain that I ask too much, that most jewelers are too busy to tackle such a difficult project. It's OK for professors like myself to read and write because we have so much free time, they say. (Another myth—that teachers are less busy than “real” jewelers!) Of course, a person who makes a livelihood from his craft must pay his bills, meet deadlines, create new designs and produce his wares. But all instruction comes in small increments and a great deal can be learned in only 20 minutes per day.

One of the best devices for self-education is talking. Ideas flourish in an atmosphere of discussion and debate, and thinking evolves most easily in a communal, participatory process. This is the reason why cities became art centers: a ground for the growth and exchange of ideas, which in turn stimulates the growth of art itself. Artists isolated from the intellectual marketplace are handicapped because their thinking is not challenged and sharpened by discussion. It's curious, but one must exercise the mouth to develop the brain.

Unluckily, the metals community is not concentrated in a single city, and there's no Cedar Street Tavern we can all retire to each evening for a session of heated debate. To air our ideas, jewelers and metalsmiths must rely on conferences, workshops, and informal visits. Luckily, the crafts disciplines have ready-made context for the commerce of ideas because of the tradition of workshops created to share technical knowledge. Outside of the arts schools and universities, which contain only a minority of the practitioners in the field, these gatherings are the only forum for the verbal exchange of new concepts. The annual Society of North American Goldsmith's conference and the “Conversations” weekends developed at State Univer-

sity of New York, New Pfalz are valuable for precisely that reason.

For those who must stay at home, there's always reading. A reader of this magazine is making the effort to educate herself, but I don't believe the project should stop when *Chronique* is put down. The magazines that focus on other crafts offer a wealth of ideas. I find the rich surfaces of ceramics and the seductiveness of glass to be intriguing, and I'm curious to see how artists in these disciplines exploit these properties. Art magazines offer both thoughtful insights and verbose nonsense, but it's useful to sample both. Actually, intelligent commentary on any subject can stimulate the mind, particularly for those with an inclination towards analogies. Fiction, poetry, even *Scientific American*, can serve as a point of origin for a productive train of thought.

The Transforming Power of an Idea

Having collected one's thoughts, having questioned one's assumptions, having read and thought, does it make any difference? Some will maintain that it is better to do, than to think. They will say that time in a studio is far superior to time in a library. But all my experiences, as an artist and as a teacher, indicate that exercising the hands without stretching the mind leads to imbalance: Thoughtless work is mindless work.

One of the characteristics of the crafts that perplexes and fascinates me is the range of things we don't know. Crafts have a history in every culture, the sum total of which can be traced to the times before recorded history began. What is the extent of this material, and what implications does it have for us today? Why, with such an extensive background—one that far exceeds the history of painting and sculpture—are the crafts still the 90-pound weakling of the arts scene? Why is loyalty to material so strong among craftsmen? Why are jewelers so compelled to work on a tiny scale, and what are the implications of small objects? What is the meaning of fine craftsmanship? Is the craftsman really an anachronism, or do we have something of vital importance

to offer contemporary society?

The answer to these questions might provide an enlightening insight to the craft. On occasion, such an answer comes as an idea with the power to transform everything it touches.

An example of how an idea has had a profound impact on a discipline can be found in the "vessel-oriented clay object" by Garth Clark and Betty Woodman. In the mid-70s, a number of ceramists were making pots and potlike clay objects, but no binding theory gave their activities a common focus. Michael Frimkess made pots that referred to classical Greek and Roman vessel forms; Ron Nagle made small decorated cups without bottoms; Wayne Higby was making open forms that could be regarded as landscapes. Many other clay artists made objects that similarly recalled the simple pot but also served as a vehicle for agendas not traditionally associated with functional pottery. While all these artists shared a common background and a common enthusiasm for clay, there was no conceptual marker that pointed either to the differences or to the similarities of their work. Ceramic artists sensed their ideas were related, but nobody could give the relationship a name. Without a name, the connections could not be discussed; without discussion the issue remained mysterious.

The story goes that Clark and Woodman were talking with a group of students in Colorado, trying to put their collective finger on the relationship that had so far eluded them. In looking at functional pots, hollow forms that used the pot as a point of departure for sculpture, and forms that alluded to pots without actually being a pot, the group produced a name and a concept: the vessel-oriented clay object. The phrase contained a fascinating accuracy and inclusiveness that attracted wide attention: it was shortly abbreviated to "VOCO" so that conversations could proceed without the long phrase being repeated interminably. The concept neatly raised an umbrella over a vast array of ceramic art, calling attention to the over-riding similarity while also allowing for diversity.

It could be said without exaggeration that the "VOCO" prompted a whole generation of

artists and students to look at the clay pot differently. Suddenly, the humble pot was clearly seen to be a starting point for a variety of explorations. The artist could concentrate on historical reference, on sheer development of form, or on using the container form as a metaphor, but the relationship was finally made clear. By 1980, it was fashionable for neophyte clay artists to declare themselves to be "vessel-makers," for the name had the sound of validation. The vessel-oriented clay object had become ubiquitous. Despite the eventual trendiness of the concept, it brought a cohesiveness and direction to ceramic that had been lacking since the 50s.

A single incisive idea can alter the way hundreds of artists (or designers or jewelers) look at themselves. When ideas are marshaled into a cohesive whole, or when they become more speculative than a simple observation, a theory emerges. A great theory can change the way we look at the world.

The intimate relation between theory and practice can be illustrated by a bit of history. The Arts and Crafts movement in 1880s England was the first to examine craft apart from the simple production of wares for the working classes and decorative items for the rich. John Ruskin and William Morris both perceived craft to have more importance than technique and salesmanship, and their ideas laid the groundwork for a popular enthusiasm for craft that continues to this day. Every present-day craft practitioner owes a profound debt to Ruskin and Morris, not so much for the objects they made (Ruskin did not work in any traditional craft media, although Morris mastered several), but for the ideas they advocated. Our accomplishments rest on theories developed a century ago, and many of our contemporary debates were first delineated then.

William Morris in particular did not confine his thinking to craft alone. He was interested in the relationship between labor—the physical labor of craftsmen—and social structure. Being a socialist, he opposed capitalist factory production especially in how mass production forced workers to perform meaningless, repetitive tasks. Morris speculated that the craftsman in the antiquated guild system had an advantage over the factory worker, be-

cause the guildsman could invest pride and care in his work. Ideally, the traditional craftsman controlled his own production, too: he decided what to make and he kept the profits from the sale of his wares. To Morris, the older system was superior to industrial-age manufacturing. Not only was the laborer happier and more dignified in his work, but he was also the primary beneficiary of his production.

In this manner William Morris drew a number of connections between the making of crafts and the much larger social issues. Weaving a tapestry or throwing a clay pot suddenly became more significant than just making a beautiful thing; it was also a gesture that criticized the capitalist economy and proposed a more humane alternative at the same time. Craft became a form of protest and Utopian injunction.

Previously, craft was often regarded as dumb manual labor, the activity of peasants and commoners. Because of the idealistic overtones that Morris and his followers associated with craft, and because Morris and his followers promoted their ideas with religious zeal, a generation of talented young visionaries joined the movement. Just as anti-war activism attracted a huge number of concerned and intelligent young people in the 60s, so the crafts appealed to thoughtful people who envisioned a better world in Morris' day. The appeal was not so much the labor of craft by the meaning invested in it. Morris's theories gave the body of craft an idealistic luster that proved irresistibly attractive. The movement, and its fervent message of improving the world, was exported to the United States, where it became the American Arts and Crafts Movement.

Although the socialist analysis that Morris prescribed has since fallen out of favor, his theories in their own day had a powerful motivating force that changed the crafts in the Western world forever. Morris looked at far more than the production of hand-made objects, he considered the whole society. The scope of his vision encompassed a great web of causes and effects, some of the questions he raised are still being debated. We still question the role of the machine in crafts, for in-

stance, because we are not sure of mass production is an efficient way to generate income or just a compromise to the values of handiwork. The same issue was one that Morris addressed. It is a credit to his imaginative reach that the issues he raised continue to be relevant.

Not everybody can be as farsighted as William Morris, nor can most of us hope to work such profound changes on even a tiny corner of society. But we can seek to comprehend ourselves and the culture in which we operate. One of the strengths of any craft is that its producers are not alienated from the larger culture: we make the pots and clothes and jewelry that hundreds of thousands of people use. While many aspects of this relationship are only dimly grasped, what crafts people understand of themselves, their work and society has resonance. Naming these connections and comprehending their logic is vitally important. After all, what we do affects people.

That being so, we might as well accept our condition and proceed to become informed about the world. As artists or jewelers or whatever one chooses to label, it is no longer forgivable to live in ignorance. The innocent period in American metalsmithing is over. Now that we have learned the technologies, we must prepare to exercise our skills intelligently. We must go about educating ourselves. Just as the past three decades have been dedicated to learning how to use the tools, the succeeding 30 years can be devoted to understanding why we use tools. Those who "just want to work" are tackling only half the enterprise the complete metalsmith will also want to understand.



Bruce Metcalf is a former teacher of metalworking and jewelry at Kent State University and is a contributing editor to METALSMITHING magazine. Currently he is a practicing artist in Philadelphia, PA. "On Abandoning Ignorance" reprinted with his permission; C. 1989 Bruce Metcalf.

Of Ye Eye and Ye Hammyr
Master Brion Thornbird Ap Rhys, knight

Editor: This piece is something I thought to include if we had space, as a curiosity, although it alludes to the more serious distinction of learning to calibrate and train both the hammer and the eye I discuss in the other article. It was composed for the West Kingdom Arts and Sciences publication, Spring 1993.

By ye grace of Godde e knyght yis both defendyth
myne Kynge jade, I have from hys enemies and
hereaftyr put downe knowne to hys friends,
wyrdes about ye arte of doynge hys duty to Godde
armurynge, beyng of two and to hys Kynge.
thynges, ye eye e ye
hammyr.



Be thes wyrdes knowne to alle gentilmen who prac-
tise ye arte of amurynge, beyne the most noble crafte
by ye grace of Godde and When a man yis apprent-
beiower patron St. George, yced to a notter hammyr-
best arte in ye worlde a man or helmemythe, he
cause bei hys armure a sholde loke to hys bettyrs
e to those excellent exam-
ples yat went afore to styde
hys craft.



DOCUMENTATION

Marianne H. Hansen

AKA SCA Mistress Niccola Sebastiani, East Kingdom

Half of the Laurels, Manches, and arts officers in the Kingdom of the East were approached in the month before Ice Dragon by persons who wanted help "documenting" the pent entries they had already made. These people were thinking about documentation too late. When you document *post facto* you are wasting your time and you probably wasted your time making the thing you hope to document.

*Documentation
is a process
which happens
before you
make an
object.*

If you think of making a new-medieval object of any sort you should begin by gathering all the information you can think about the real ones—that is, the medieval examples. Items on display in museums, photographs of pieces in collections, archeological reports, all of these are useful and this information is, in fact, the "documentation" of your project (as opposed to the documentation being the forty-two words you can fit on a 3 x 5 card). Many persons who do careful and excellent work make files of photocopies and / or sketches. If you adopt this practice, be sure to write down on your copies and sketches where you got the information—museum, bibliographical information, whatever.

If you then work from your file of information you can be far surer that the object you're making has some kind of historical authenticity. And if you then have to produce "documentation" for a comp, examination, or display, you just go to your file, pull out your photocopies and citations, and condense the information there onto a tiny bit of paper. No problem. ♦

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REGULATIONS OF THE HELMERS

21 EDWARD III, 1347

City of London Letter Book F, fol. cxlii

Also found in Appendix B of Charles Ffoulkes *The Armourer and His Craft*

Editor: There are many interesting points which can come from these simple regulations—that there was a problem with inferior workmanship and the failing of helmets, which apparently angered the armourer's patrons enough to create pressure on the group; that to counter such a problem the guild was granted the power to inspect and regulate all helmets sold in the City of London, under the guidance of three of their most highly skilled artisans; that the counterfeiting of makers' marks was or was perceived to be a potential problem; and that there was a problem with apprentices leaving their master's service after less than seven years (this could be a collusion between a local and a foreign armourer to elude the normal restraints against foreign armourers—the newcomer could 'apprentice' to a local master for a brief time and then go about his business); and that apprentices sometimes left with a debt to their old master.

Obviously there is much room for abuse in regulations that are this loose, but they apparently viewed the problem as dangerous enough to warrant this much power to such a small group. Indeed, European guilds often possessed this sort of power, and although detrimental to trade they were prevalent throughout much of the later middle ages.

The points of the Articles touching the trade of Helmetry accepted by Geoffrey de Wycheingham, Mayor, and the Aldermen at the suit and request of the folks of said trade—

In the first place that no one of the said trade shall follow or keep sold of the trade aforesaid within the franchise of the City of London until he shall have properly bought his freedom, according to the usages of the said City, on pain of losing his Wares.

Also forasmuch as heretofore some persons coming in who are strangers have intermeddled and still do intermeddle in the making of helmetry, whereas they do not know the trade, by reason thereof many great men and others of the realm have been slain through their default, to the great scandal of the trade: It is ordained that no person shall henceforth intermeddle with or work at helmetry if he be not proved to be

a good, proper, and sufficient Workman by the Wardens of the said trade on pain of forfeiture to the use of the Chamber.

Also that three or four if need be of the best Workmen of the said trade shall be chosen and sworn to rule the trade well and properly as is befitting for security and safety of the great men and others of the realm, and for the honor and profit of the said City and of the Workers of the said trade.

Also that no apprentice shall be received by any master of the said trade for less than seven years; and that without collusion or fraud on paying to the said Chamber 100 shillings.

Also that no one of the said trade or other person of the Franchise shall set any stranger to work who is of the said trade if he be not a proper and lawful person, and one for whom the master will answer as to his good behavours, on paying to the said Chamber 20 shillings.

Also that no apprentice of the said trade who shall be indebted to his master a any sum of money at the end of his term shall serve henceforth any other person than his own master, nor shall he depart from such service or be into the service of another person any way received until he shall have fully given satisfaction for his debt to his master. And he who shall receive in any other manner the servant or apprentice of another person shall pay to the said Chamber 20 shillings.

Also that helmetry and other arms forged by the hammer which are brought from the parts without this land beyond the seas, or from any other place unto the said City for sale, shall not from henceforth by in any offered for sale privily or openly until they have been properly assayed by the aforesaid Wardens and marked with their mark, on pain of forfeiting such helmetry and arms to the said Chamber as shall be so offered for sale.

Also that each one of the makers aforesaid shall have his own mark and sign, and that no one of them shall counterfeit the sign or mark of another on pain of losing his freedom until he shall have bought the same back again and made satisfaction to him whose sign he counterfeited, and further he shall pay to the Chamber 40 shillings.

Wardens of the same trade chosen and sworn,

Robert de Shirwode Richard Briddes Thomas Canoun

The Knighting of Sir Seosaidh mac Seosaidh

Joseph Latta

AKA SCA Sir Seosaidh, Earl Claidgh Dhu

Kingdom of Trimaris

Editor: *This is one of the two pieces that arrived only a brief time following the deadline for Chronique #5, so I have moved them to Chronique #6 in the hopes of continuing the discussion on knighting ceremonies. I do not believe this is the official ceremony of Trimaris but rather one that Sir Seosaidh customized to meet his tastes and beliefs. It makes an interesting comparison with the ceremonies both of the other SCA kingdoms featured last issue and the traditional elements presented.*

The Knighting of Sir Seosaidh

On Saturday the Thirteenth of August, AS XXI, Sir Kopple did release his squire Seosaidh from his oath of fealty in the Court of Their Majesties, Erin and Branwen.

That evening at feast Seosaidh did serve the first dish of the feast unto Their Majesties at their table.

After feast Seosaidh did receive his ritual bath and begin his Vigil dressed in the traditional white tunic of innocence.

The Vigil began with Mass said by the Bishop. The sermon was on the virtues of knighthood:

"Hearken we beseech thee, O Lord, to our prayers and bless this teaching of the virtues of knighthood that Thy servant will be a good and just Knight.

The first of the virtues is courage. Grant Thy servant the courage to face Thy enemies and those of the King, to stand fast and strike strong and sure for that which is Right and Honorable.

Grant Thy servant prowess and the determination to train himself and to attain the prowess needed to vanquish the enemies of the Church and of the King.

Grant Thy servant the virtue of loyalty. Grant that he always be loyal to his King, to his Oath, to his Word.

Grant Thy servant fidelity, faithfulness to the Holy Church and to You, O Lord.

Grant Thy servant the virtue of obedience that he will faithfully

obey those placed over him in this life to the benefit of the Church and of the King.

Grant that Thy servant shall always seek after glory that by wielding his sword for glory he might glorify his King and his Church.

Grant Thy servant generosity that he will be most generous in his treatment of his foes, in combat, in capture, and in ransom.

Grant Thy servant courtesy that he may never attack an unarmed Knight and that he may always show every courtesy to all ladies.

Grant Thy servant chastity that he may keep only unto his own wife that his joy may be full.

Grant Thy servant largess that the guests in his house may know his kindness and partake of his feast and drink, and of his gifts.

Grant Thy servant the virtue of beneficence that the poor might benefit from his gifts and his kindness.

Grant Thy servant humility that he may know the difference between strength and arrogance and that he will stand humbled before his King and before You his God.

Thank you for your blessing, O Lord."

After the Mass Seosaidh did receive visitors. First was all of Claidgh Dhu and then his friends did visit with their words of inspiration and encouragement. Then did the Knights of Trimaris sit through the night and teach Seosaidh of Knighthood.

Dawn did end the Vigil and Seosaidh said a prayer of thanksgiving and retired to his pavilion to rest and to dress for the ceremony that would dub him Knight.

From his pavilion Seosaidh proceeded to the Lyst Field accompanied by his Sponsor, Sir Kopple. Before them was the Blacksword and the spurs with which Seosaidh would be knighted. The Blacksword Guards did escort them to the field.

At the field the Blacksword was given to the Bishop who did bless it.

BISHOP: Harken, we beseech Thee, O Lord, to our prayers, and deign to bless with the right hand of Thy Majesty this sword with which this Thy servant desires to be girded, that it may be a defense of churches, widows, orphans, and all thy servants against the scourge of the pagans,

that it may be the terror and dread of other evildoers, and that it may be just both in attack and defense.

Then the Bishop did ask Seosaidh these vows of knighthood:

BISHOP: Will thou take the vows of Knighthood?

SEOSAIDH: I Will.

And Seosaidh knelt and placed his hand on the sword.

BISHOP: Do you vow to fear God as a Christian Knight and to serve your King and good faith and with Valor?

SEOSAIDH: I do.

BISHOP: To protect the weak and defenseless and to live for honor and glory?

SEOSAIDH: I do.

BISHOP: To shun unfairness, meanness, and deceit, speaking always the truth?

SEOSAIDH: I do.

BISHOP: And finally to guard the honor of Knighthood, refusing no challenge and running from no foe?

SEOSAIDH: I do.

Then did the Bishop hand the sword to the King who held it with the point resting upon the ground. And Seosaidh did rise to stand before the King.

KING: Lady Erika, come and gird your lord with the Knight's white belt of chastity.

Sir Ropesdale and Sir Erik bring spurs that Our Knight will be swift to battle.

Sir Rieken bring Our Knight a lance that thrusts only straight forward, as does truth.

Sir Kopple bring Our Knight a helm, the Knight's Crown of Honor.

Seosaidh, will you swear fealty to our King?

SEOSAIDH: I will.

And then did Seosaidh give the helm and lance to his man and did kneed before his King and place his hand upon the Blacksword, the same sword upon which was sworn the first Oath of Fealty to a King of Trimaris. And then did Seosaidh swear this Oath as the King did bid him.

SEOSAIDH: Here do I, Seosaidh mac Seosaidh, swear Fealty and Service to Trimaris and to the Crown of Trimaris, to speak and to be silent, to do and to let be, to come and to go, in need and in plenty, in peace or in war, in living or in dying, from this hour henceforth, until my lord release me, death take me, or the world end.

KING: And this do I, Erin, King of Trimaris, hear and I will not forget, nor fail to reward that which his given: fealty with love, valor with honor, and oath-breaking with vengeance.

Then did the King place the Chain of fealty around Seosaidh's neck. The King did then raise Blacksword, and with he hand of Sir Kopple also upon the sword, did the King dub Sir Seosaidh.

KING: I dub thee Knight in the name of God, Saint Michael, and Saint George. Rise Sir Seosaidh.

Then the King did sheath the sword and gird it about Sir Seosaidh's waist.

KING: Take this blow and no other without answer.

And then did the King smite Sir Seosaidh. ♦

**Sword Hilt Reproductions
for Rattan or Wooden Weapons**

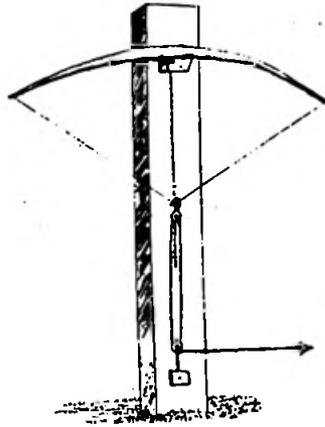
These hilts, produced to avoid the "sporting" look of a popular basket hilt, allow the user to insert a shaved stick of rattan and instantly create an SCA legal sword with a more authentic look and feel. A proper sword grip yields new dynamic to a sword's movement and provides a pronounced improvement in field accoutrement.

Broadsword Hilts from \$95
Bastard Sword Hilts from \$125
Available from the Editor

Some illustrations relating to articles in this *Chronique*

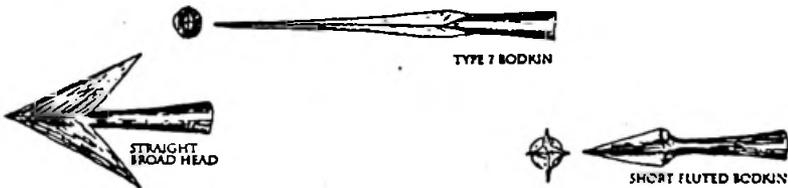
The tillering process represents the true art of the bowyer.

Using the tool pictured at right, the bow is mounted on a post and drawn by means of rope and pulleys, so that the bowyer can stand back and observe the way it moves.



Armet with reinforcing bevor, in the Florentine style, owned by Frederigo da Monettfeltro, Duke of Urbino. It is Milanese, C. 1475, as shown on an intarsia panel in the Duke's study. Drawing from Claude Blair's *European Armour*. This type of helmet developed during the early 16th century into the more internationally-styled close helmet, popular throughout Europe.

Various types of arrowheads used by Medieval archers. Some of the European re enactors have access to hand-forged replicas of these pieces forged by Hector Cole, with arrows done either by Richard Head (9 Kingsfield Grange Road, Bradford on Avon, Wiltshire, England, BA15 1BE Tel. 0225 862522) or Jack Green, whose advertisement may be found near the end of this issue.



Straight Broad Head

Bodkin

Short Fluted Bodkin

Poem of the Pell Analysis by Michael Lacy

Practice at the pell has long been used by SCA fighters for practice; this form of training goes back as far as the days of the Roman legions, and was used throughout the middle ages. Young knights and men-at-arms were first trained at the pell, under the supervision of an older, more experienced fighter, where they learned the blows that they would depend upon in combat.

This poem, written in the early 15th century (Cotton Library: Titus A, xxiii, fol 6 and 7), sheds some light on the use of the pell. Interesting points to note are the mention in lines 6-9 that the practice of shield and mace are to be of double weight, a technique that many SCA fighters have found to be very good for training. It also emphasizes the importance of this form of practice in lines 12-14, where it says that no man, "is seyn prevaile" in battle who has not spent time practicing at the pell. Take heed squires and novice fighters, to the wisdom of the past!

The Poem

Of fight the discipline and exercise
Was this. To have a pale or pile upright (pell)
Of manys light, thus writeth old and wise, (man's height)
Therewith a bachelor, or a young knyght,
Shal first be taught to stonde and lerne to fight
And fanne of double wight tak him his shelde, (practice shield)
Of double wight a mace of tre to welde. (wood)

This fanne and mace whiche either doubil wigt
Of shelde, and swayed in conflicte, or bataile,
Shal exercise as well swordmen, as knyghts,
And hoe man, as they sayn, is seyn prevaile,
In field, or in castell, though he assayle,
That with the pile, nethe first grete exercise, (hath not)
Thus writeth werrouis olde and wyse. (warriors)

Have eche his pile or pale upfixed fast
And as it were upon his mortal foe:
With mightyness and weapon most be cast
To fight stronge, that he ne skape him fro.
Oh hym with shield, and sword avised so,
That thou be cloos, and Preste thy foe to smyte, (ready)
Lest of thyne own dethe be to wite.

Empeche his head, his face, have at his gorge (attack, throat)
Beare at the brest, or sperne him on the side,
With myghte knyghtly poost ene as Seynt George (power)
Lepe o thy foe; look if he dare abide;
Will he not flee? wounde him, make wounds wide
Hew of his honde, his legge, his theys, his armys,
It is the Turk, though he be sleyn, noon harm is.





The English Longbow

Jack Greene

A Modern Bowyer

“And he was clad in cote and
hoode of greene
A sheef of pecok arrows brite
and kene
Under his belt he baar full
thriftilly
And in his hand he baar a
myghty bowe.”

If you would give an Englishman a stout stick as long as himself, and bid him stand still and deal such a deadly blow at 200 paces as would strike fully through an armoured knight or kill his horse under him, then you would shortly have a longbow. Such a bow would commonly discharge ten arrows a minute in battle, so that a company of only a thousand archers could rain down ten thousand steel points every minute onto an enemy, who might never get within challenging distance. Three times—at Crecy, Poitiers, and Agincourt—the proud and over-vaunting Princes of France, who believed that no army in Europe could withstand a charge of their mounted chivalry, fell in bloody confusion and shame before the ranks of grim-faced English archers.

The longbow was the weapon of the commoner. The nobility liked to fight and hunt on horseback with sword and hawk and hound—the longbow is too cumbersome to be used by a rider: it is a device whereby a man may put all the full heaving strength of his back and arms into a single lightening stroke, and he needs his feet well placed on the ground to do it. Recent research by Bote Kooi of Gronigen University, on the 450 year old bows which were raised intact from the wreck of the *Mary Rose*—Henry VIII's warship which sank off of Portsmouth, England in an engagement with the French—indicates that these warbows had draw-weights of upwards of 100 lbs, and some needed a pull of 180 lbs to draw them “to the ear” in the customary way (few modern archers can pull more than 70 lbs). Such bows can drive the 2 oz. bodkin-tipped shafts forward at speeds of 100 mph and more, for distances of over 200 yards, with great penetrating power.

Therein lies the reason why only the English were effective with the longbow in war: they loved the bow in peacetime. It featured in legend and song. The first academic work to be written in the English language (as against the Latin or Greek) was Roger Ascham's treatise on archery, "Toxophilus" (still in print in England) for which he was awarded a pension by the Crown. Every boy and every man, every serf and every freeman kept his bow by him and took great pride in his skill with it. Far from fearing a commonality so armed, the nobility encouraged the use and practice of the bow, passing laws that every man must shoot a specific number of arrows "at the butts" every Sunday, laws which have never been repealed to this day. Archery tourneys were frequent, with purses of silver and gold put up by those who knew well that England's safety and success on the battlefield owed everything to the strength and marksmanship of its common bowmen. To encourage the use of strong bows, "clout" shoots were held, where a square yard of cloth was laid on the ground and archers vied to drop arrows into it from 200 yards away. Though there were savage penalties for poaching, any man might get a wild rabbit or duck for the pot, and soldiers practiced at the butts so strenuously that the bonds of their arms and shoulders became moulded and enlarged for the work.

Bowstaves are taken by riving, i.e., by splitting along the grain:



The English longbow is almost, but not quite, round in section. This causes the phenomenon known as slacking, where the draw-weight suddenly increases at the end of the draw, giving the arrow a massive kick at the beginning of its journey.

Whereas a good sword might cost the value of half a village, a serviceable bow could be had from the forest for nothing. Although military bows were made from imported timbers, which were more uniform and suited to mass production

by professional bowyers, every ploughman and forester would have his eye tuned to spot a good clean bough of yew or wych elm growing in the thickets. The first roughing out would be done with the froe and side-axe while the wood was still green. The ample stave would then be put in a dry corner to bend and twist as it pleased, after which it would be marked out by means of a taught thread so that the handle and the two tips lay exactly along the same straight line. Then it would be shaved a little closer to its finished size and put aside again. After the second summer it could be safely brought to the tiller.

Now in the tillering of the bow is the art, the cunning, the pleasure, the poetry and the dance of the bowyer. It calls for the highest development of that seventh sense which is called, "a good eye": that ability to detect without measurement, a tiny imbalance in a line or curve almost before it happens; that empathy with a material which can sense the tensions and strains within it as it moves. The wheelwright (to give an example) uses no less skill in the choice and shaping of the wood, he deals in dead reckoning, with fixed curves and known angles, using gauges and templates which remained unchanging in his workshop for generations. But the bowyer, by contrast, deals with lithe and moving wood, balanced against itself and strained nearly but not quite to the breaking point. Tillering is also hard muscle work. The bow must be worked—that is, drawn again and again, each time a fraction of an inch further. To begin with it is a stolid straight staff, stiff and unyielding. The bowyer cuts notches at each end, puts a loose string on it and flexes it a little on the tillering-post. He takes a little wood off here and there where it is stiffest, and flexes it again a little more. Local weaknesses begin to show under stress, and have to be compensated for immediately before they become wracked into the wood. One limb of the bow will overcome the other if it can, and the bowyer must keep them in perfect balance throughout the shaping process.

The bow gradually becomes thinner and bends further, always nearly, but never quite, to its limit: not breaking at any point because no point is allowed to bend more than any other, "made round compass everywhere" as Robert Ascham puts it. It becomes a living thing, more vulnerable yet more invincible inch by hard-won inch, near to destruction but indestructible. Finally it is brought to a draw-length of some thirty-two inches, or a little more than it will be pulled to in use, and worked repeatedly to that draw until the bowyer is satisfied that it is safe. The bow is born.

Horn tips are glued on and a leather handle wrapped around the middle. The strength of the bow is checked with weights and the bowyer places his mark upon it. It is now ready to go to the field, to fling an arrow into that particular swift and slow soaring arc which is to the archer what the mount and stoop of the hawk is to the falconer: when time stands still while the hunter's breath, heartbeat and spirit soar with that flying thing and bear it up, guiding it to its mark, where will and skill become one.



The Art of the Armourer

Elements of Philosophy and Practice

Brian R. Price
AKA SCA Master Brion Thornbird Ap Rhys,
Earl, KSCA
Kingdom of the West

I had intended that this article center around a framework consisting of some major philosophic and practical elements that I wanted to comment on, bolstered with direct interviews with other armourers known to me to care greatly for the preservation of armouring as an art. Unfortunately, my continued recovery throughout the summer has precluded holding many of my intended interviews, and they will have to be addressed in the book on armouring that I am now working on. As a result, this piece represents my own views more than the survey it was intended to be, but I hope it proves of interest.

Writing as an armourer and combatant, there are important elements of philosophy and practice in armouring that I would like to elaborate on— hopefully sparking discussion in what I believe to be a very important field of artistic endeavor to those interested in recreating medieval tournaments. The why of what we do is as important as the how, so I want to spend some time looking at why we do what we do and then move on to overall guiding tenets that I think should lead the armourer in his quest for artistic excellence.

The task facing the medieval armourer was immense; to balance the defense of the knight with his mobility— his armour had to protect against the prevailing weapons of the day and at the same time provide the highest degree of suppleness possible to enable him to engage opponents under the most difficult of military conditions. This critical balance of mobility and defense forms the basis for the functional element of armouring, the element that probably formed the basis for a harness qualifying as a successful design. Within our own re-enactments we see something of this balance in the demands of clients who want armour that allows them to move and yet offers defense against the crushing blows caused by our adopted style of fighting.

To fight effectively the historical knight had to be able to fight both on horseback and on foot—for he was from time to time removed from his paramount position atop the war-horse and felled to the earth, and yet my readings of many period battles indicate that this was not often where he met his end; capture was a far more likely and expensive proposition. In our modern combats capture and the loss of an entire harness— which in history would be as expensive as a modern automobile— is not an issue; nor does the armour need to work in an equestrian environment. By our rules, however, we do have an odd convention which has imposed a striking difficulty on those who try to recreate many authentic pieces: our combat convention requiring the “acting out” of leg blows which has compelled our armourers to make leg harnesses that bend more than most of the historical examples are able to. Although this can be done with only two “lames,” it is a difficult task and most armourers for simplicity sake work with the far less authentic three or four lames as a result. The general point here is that armour must function for the intended purpose. In our societies, re-enacting “pas d’armes” and tournaments fought à la plaisance in the “behourd” style of the 14th and 15th centuries, the armour must allow for the maximum movement and provide defense against the blows a combatant is likely to encounter in the course of normal practice and tournament.

Beyond this functional balance, however, there is more: indeed much more. For an armourer who works only within the functional framework is, I believe, little more than a technician. If he works thusly but using period examples, he is a craftsman. If he tries to move beyond this, however, into something more; to take these period elements of style and make a statement about chivalry, knighthood, the character of his client, or of the medieval romance in general, he makes the effort to move beyond craft, the working tools of his trade, and into the higher plane of art. Whether he is a good and successful artist or not can be an entirely different question.

The historical armourer worked in an artistic community, blending the arts and techniques of the metalworker with the more pragmatic philosophies of the military man. What emerges is the portrait of an unusual class of artist whose works are chiefly influential in bringing the medieval images of chivalry through to the modern era. Through the armour of the medieval knight we can glimpse something of his world—and although historical tracts and documents exist to expand on the impressions left by the armour, those impressions are all that are transmitted to most people in our society at large and so it is the armourer, more than the chronicler or romancier, who has created the most enduring image of chivalry.

As young children, most of us in Western society come to know King Arthur and his knights through popular tales, the images of dragons, fair maidens, and knights in shining armour are the images that stay with us throughout our lives—indeed I would venture to guess that the power of these images, coupled with a growing appreciation for the true intent of the chivalric ideals, is what draws many to the art of armouring and is certainly what keeps many of us dabbling at it for years even when the economic prospects are limited.

Our historical counterpart engaged himself in his craft—or art—as a trade much as did other artists of the day. Indeed, that armour is not a fine art per se is not to say that some pieces—the better ones that do have artistic intent—are not works of art. The harnesses of

the Tommaso di Missiglia, the Seusenhofers, or of Anton Peffenhauser all stand in testimony to the contrary. Indeed, I use the phrase “sculptures in steel” to distinguish between armour that is more than merely an old tool of defense. The intent to communicate something of artistic value—to make a statement—is what is required of the artist. I think these armourers fully intended such statements and tried to get across such elements of nobility and chivalry such as grace, strength, elegance and in some cases, of the Italian “sprezzatura,” an unaffected making of the difficult look simple that is the hallmark of the best of armours from the 15th - 16th centuries. If you look at these armours carefully, I think you'll agree that there is something more here than just metal covering the body—there is an artistic style, and an underlying message akin to the more commonly known forms of expression such as sculpture and painting.

"To produce art,
the armourer
must see the
magic. To see the
magic, he must
refine his eye and
his spirit."

For modern armourers, trying to capture something of this special atmosphere that surrounds our romances of the medieval knight and his tournaments, there is a special challenge to learn as much as we can about the society in which Chivalry grew and developed—and then, if we want to be artists, to communicate something to the populace and to the combatants taking to the field of honor in our equip-

ment. We must train the spirit—much as I will talk later about training the eye and the hammer—for this artistic quest which leads a lifetime of benefit and spilling over into many other aspects of the artists' life.

To develop this spirit, I would point the armourer first at the romances that have popularized chivalry since their inception since the days of the Carolingian Renaissance in the 8th century through the works of the Pre-Raphaelite traditions during the neo-medieval revival in the 19th century. Between these two dates; between the Song of Roland and the Tennyson's *Lady of the Lake*, there lies a rich body of chivalric literature which through *Chronique* I am trying to make available for the consideration of everyone interested in capturing something of medieval chivalry. The works of Chrétien de Troyes (Eric and Enide, Yvain, Lancelot, etc.); Wolfram von Eshenbach (Parzifal); Gottfried von Strassbourg (Tristan); Sir Thomas Malory (*Le Morte d'Arthur*) are of particular interest and are easily available through Penguin Books.

Beyond these, chivalry is explained in a few works that lay out clearly what many of the virtues of the chivalric knight were to be; the *Ordene de Chevalerie*, found in *Chronique* #5; the Book of the Order of Chivalry (13th C.) by Raymond Lull; and the questions and essay of Geoffry de Charnay, currently available only in French (but we are working on remedying this—honest!) all spell out rather strongly that the virtues of chivalry—loyalty, courage, prowess, humility, defense of the weak, piety, largesse, honesty, fidelity, and the rest—were inseparable from the office of knighthood. The armourer who wants to transcend the level of craftsman must try to capture something of these ideals in his work. Alternatively, he can make commentary on the personality of his client; on the nature of war or on nobility, or on the magnificence that should shine forth from someone who is trying with all his soul to strive for excellence through the demonstration of his prowess and the advancement of his Lady's honor on the tournament field. All of these things can form part of the statement, but the armourer needs to consider, consciously, what he would like to get across when someone faces the piece he is to make.

Does he want to communicate fierceness? Strength tempered by grace? Unaffected competence? These are all valid "tones" that an armour can have. Much of this is what gives rise to armour "schools" both in history and in the modern rediscovery of the armouring art. For the Milanese armourer, I would tend to say that grace was a primary virtue that was to be communicated—that the armourers of their finest—Antonio and Tommaso di Missiglia in particular, strove to demonstrate this in their creations. The German gothic armourers, it seems to me, tried to get across a message of a more martial spirit—there is a sharpness—a starkness if you will, to the line of the Gothic armour.

For the modern schools of armour style, I am familiar with but a few. The "schools" themselves represent stylistic similarities in interpretation, patterning, and in some of the philosophical approaches we are discussing. Techniques are also shared, enhancing the effect of stylistic similarity. Most of the schools seem to develop around the talents of a single, influential workshop that houses a Master armourer. By "master" armourer I mean the term not in the SCA sense of the word but rather in the sense of a guiding spirit to the other armourers in the area—armourers whose work inspires others to greatness and whose knowledge is sought out by others. Within the SCA, the works of Master Valerius and Master Wade of Wilshire, and Master Roberto di Milano are three such beacons. They in turn have trained and inspired others.

I began my work in the workshop of Master Valerius Paencalvus, in the Barony of Caer Antherth Mawr (Milwaukee, WI) in the Middle Kingdom. Although many years have passed since I worked directly with Master Valerius, and I have been accorded my own Laurel, I still consider myself a student in the "Valerius" tradition. There is always much more to learn.

How does one make the practical leap from the craft of armouring to the art? Virtue is a particularly difficult thing to show in basically unyielding and monochromesteel—and yet through the Missiglias and the Seusenhofers we see that it can be done. At the base, the armourer must refine his "toolbox" of skills that will enable him to manipulate

the material to his satisfaction and to achieve the desired effect. These skills, what I refer to as the refining of the "hammer and the eye," are both necessary to fill this toolbox.

In brief, the techniques of the armourer, what I call the skills of the "hammer," include hammerwork, finishing, filing, and all other physical elements of technique that go into shaping and articulating the metal. They can be learned while working on armour, but can also be transferred from other metalworking arts—silversmithing, jewelry, blacksmithing. Indeed, silversmithing books are a good place to find technical instruction. There are as yet no books on armouring technique, although I am working on that one. Working with other armourers on special projects or through seminars provides another invaluable tool.

Parallel to and as important to techniques of the hammer, however, is the refinement of the "eye." By the "eye," I refer to the study of period pieces, chiefly through museum catalogs, collections, and the like, using as much hands-on time as the armourer can jam into his schedule. In addition, however, is education and the development of knowledge of the tradition surrounding the armour in context—the art, literature, society and men of the historical framework. Lastly, to refine the eye and capture something of the magic in the work, an armourer should become acquainted with how the armour works through tournament and thus become acquainted with the magical, martial spirit that flows through the ideals of chivalry. He must savor this flavor to be able to communicate something of it in his work. To produce art, the armourer must see the magic. To see the magic, he must refine his eye and his spirit.

To move from craft to art is a road encompassing many years. If the student of armour wants quick results, he would be better off purchasing the work of other armourers—because the refinement requires what all other arts need as well—dedication, practice, and hard work. The reward for such dedication is a rich mix of satisfaction and challenge, to be a part of the knightly tradition extending back for hundreds of years and connected to the powerful distillation of Western values—the ideals of chivalry. ♦

Some Armouring Terms

Armor/Armour: In the pages of *Chronique*, we use the English convention using the "-our" ending to mean a harness of medieval equipment, instead of "armor" which I use to mean a modern tracked war vehicle.

Pauldron \Spaulder: A distinction we make to indicate the difference between the larger, encompassing shoulder defense typical of the late 15th and 16th centuries from the more compact defenses of the 14th and early 15th centuries.

Elmetto da uomo d'arme: The Italian name for what we know in English as an "armet." These helmets were developed in either Tuscany or Lombardy during the middle of the 15th century, and seemed to represent a strong leap forward in armour design, being a very successful transition between the earlier "bascinet" and the more internationally-styled close helmet of the 16th century.

An armet, lighter than the camailed and visored bascinet, was also more anatomical and provided a more complete defense for the head and neck. The Florentine *a visera* style, where the full-face visor was replaced with a smaller visor became dominant, similar to the drawing on page 35.

The Arms and Armour Society of England

Brian R. Price

The Arms and Armour Society is, as far as I know, the only world wide organization that has been successful in advancing, over time, the scholarly study and interest in arms and armour.

The Journal of the Society, published approximately quarterly, is a high-quality piece bearing a tan cover with a 15th century man at arms taken from a manuscript. The last copy in my possession is from September 1989, when I was last a member, but that issue contained a useful article by the renown Ian Eves on a Jack of Plate escavated from Beeston Castle in Cheshire. Numerous advertisements for dealers in real arms and armour and other military antiques fill many of the pages, but these advertisements do not detract from the quality of the journal in the least.

The Society also holds various talks throughout England, sponsoring discussion by the pre-eminent scholars in the field, and the Society sponsors a banquet in February at the Park Lane Arms Fair where they have in the past honored scholars in the field.

Membership in the Society was (in 1989) £20 per year for a full membership, £10 for a corresponding membership, which includes a subscription to the Journal. The Journal is \$20 per year sent surface, \$30 if it is sent air mail.

Through the journal an armouurer can be kept abreast of new publications, recent finds and analysis, and keep an eye on the dealers who specialize in authentic pieces. Clients might be found through these dealers and the shows they attend—but use caution—foreign exchange rates have made the advertising rates expensive in terms of dollars and it has been my experience that most collectors who can afford real pieces are not very interested in reproductions— But there are a few who are.

The last subscription manager I have is S. Durrant

135 Peterborough Road
Leyton, London, E10 6EL



More Letters regarding an Emprise between the Arragonese Squire
and the English Knight

Excerpted from the Chronicles of Engeourand de Monstrelet

Translated by Thomas Jones, Esq., 1867

Editor: The previous two letters; the squire Michael d'Orris' challenge and the English Knight John Prendergast's response, appeared in *Chronique* #4. The emprise has become difficult at this point; I have included two letters that I am afraid leave you on the edge of a cliff. More will appear in *Chronique* #7. What do you think will happen?

The Letters

The previous letter was sent to the Arroganian esquire; but the English knight not receiving an answer so soon as he expected, and the matter seeming to be delayed, he again wrote as follows:

*"To the honorable Michel d'Orris, John Prendergast, knight, sends greeting.
"Since to ease you from the penance you have suffered, and still do suffer, in wearing the stump of the greave on your leg, I have consented to deliver you by combat at arms described in your former letter, sealed with the seal of your arms; and in consequence of the request made by me and by my friends to my sovereign lord and king, who has ordained the most excellent and puissant lord of Somerset, his brother, governor of Calais, to be the judge of our combat, as I had written to you by Aly the pursuivant, in my letter bearing the date the 11th day of last June, and which you ought to have received and seen in proper time. This is apprent from the letters and that noble and potent man the lord de Gaucourt, chamberlain to the king of France, bearing date the 20th day of January, declaring that he had forwarded my letter to you, to hasten your journey hitherward. You will have learnt from it that the day appointed for the fulfillment of our engagement is fixed for the first Monday in the ensuing month of May; for so it has been ordained by the king, our lord, in consequence of my solicitations. I must therefore obey; and since it has pleased that monarch, for various other weighty considerations touching his royal excellence, to order by lord, his brother, into other parts on the appointed day, he has condescended, at the humble requests of myself, my kindred, and freinds, to nominate for our judge his cousin, my much honored lord Hugh Lutrellier, lieutenant to my aforesaid lord of Somerset, in the government of Calais. I am therefore ready prepared to fulfill our engagement in arms, under the good pleasure of God, St. George, and St. Anthony, expecting that you will not fail to meet me for the deliverance from your long penance; and, to accomplish this, I send you a passport for forty persons and as many horses. I have nothing more now to add, for you know how much your honor is concerned in this matter. I entreat*

therefore Cupid, the god of love, as you may desire the affections of your lady, to urge you to hasten your journey. Written at Calais, and sealed with my arms, the 2nd day of January, 1401."

THE THIRD LETTER WRITTEN AND SENT BY THE ENGLISH KNIGHT TO THE SQUIRE OF ARRAGON:

"To the honorable man Michel d'Orris, John Prendergast, knight, sends greeting. "You will be pleased to remember that you sent, by Aly the pursuivant, a general challenge, addressed to all English knights, written at Paris on Friday the 27th of May, 1400, sealed with the seal of your arms. You must likewise recollect the answer I sent to your challenge, as an English knight who had first seen your defiance; which answer, and all that has since passed between us, I have renewed in substance, in my letters sealed with my arms, and bearing the day of the last day but one of April just passed. I likewise sent you a good and sufficient passport to come hither, and perform the promises held out by your letter, addressed to you in a similar manner to that of this present letter. Know, therefore, that I am greatly astonished, considering the purport of my letters, that I have not received any answer, and that you have not kept your appointment by meeting me on the day fixed on, nor sent any sufficient excuse for this failure.

I am ignorant if the god of love, who inspired you with the courage to write your challenge, have since been displeased, and changed his ancient pleasures, which formerly consisted in urging on deeds of arms, and in the delights of chivalry. He kept the nobles of his court under such good government that, to add to their honor, after having undertaken any deed of arms, they could not absent themselves from the country where such enterprise was to be performed until it was perfectly accomplished, and this caused their companions not to labour or exert themselves in vain. I would not, therefore, he should find me so great a defaulter in this respect as to banish me from his court; and consequently shall remain here until the eighth day of this present month of May, ready, with the aid of God, St. George, and St. Anthony, to deliver you, so that your lady and mine may know that, out of respect to them, I am willing to ease you of your penance, which, according to the tenor of your letter, you have suffered a long time, and have sufficient reason for wishing to be relieved from it. After the above-mentioned period, should you be unwilling to come, I intend, under God's pleasure, to return to England, to our ladies, where I hope to God that knights and esquires will bear witness that I have not misbehaved towards the god of love, to whom I recommend my lady and yours, hoping he will not be displeased with them for anything that may have happened. Written at Calais, and sealed with my arms, the 2nd day of May, 1401."

The translator believes the following traditions to refer back to the earlier Courts of Love, which we will examine in more depth in *Chronique* #7. ♦



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When caring for arms and armour reproductions, I always advise my clients and students to use a wax to keep the surface free from the ever-present problem of oxidation. Johnson's Paste Wax works well in many circumstances, because it is easily available, tough, and inexpensive. In 1987 I discovered a new product, however, which is far superior for our uses. It is called Renaissance Wax, a micro-crystalline formula that is tremendously effective at keeping metal surfaces free from moisture contact. To quote from the official history of the wax:

"...Despite the sage forecasts of 'yet another' wax polish, the advent of Renaissance quickly proved to be of special significance.

At first the appeal was to the connoisseur of fine antiques and to the professional and amateur restorer. But the speed with which the public reacted to Renaissance was a delightful and rewarding experience for us. Letters of appreciation and orders flowed in from a wide cross-section of people in many countries, amply confirming the need for such a high-quality polish.

"The ensuing years have done nothing to diminish the enthusiasm--indeed, Renaissance is now specified throughout the world by important museums, art galleries, conservators, restorers, and a high range of public and private entities. Professional reference books and popular writings on restoration subjects now uniformly advise the use of Renaissance.

"The story behind Renaissance polish starts back in the early 1950's when conservation specialists gathering from museums all over the world began informally discussing the locally-produced waxes in use in their countries. They concluded that, as a serious research project, wax polishes had been given scant attention in an otherwise science-based discipline.

"It was a British conservation scientist, known internationally for his pioneering methods in the treatment of antiquities, who undertook the

investigation on behalf of his colleagues.

"Before the arrival in recent years of new man-made waxes, there had been no alternative to wax polishes based, for instance, on beeswax and carnauba wax. A major factor in favor of the new semi-synthetic materials was their freedom from acids normally occurring in natural saponifiable waxes. Laboratory evaluation of the semi-synthetic waxes showed also that such acids could not arise spontaneously through oxidation or hydrolisis. In lay terms, this meant that a polish based on these waxes would remain neutral, and therefore, completely safe on the most vulnerable surfaces. Their quality constancy and reliability made an obvious appeal in a field where only materials of unquestionable performance could be considered.

"The blend of highly refined micro-crystalline fossil-origin waxes which ultimately emerged from this research project won wide acclaim throughout the scientific community; at last, museum workers had a standard material on which to rely, rather than expose priceless national antiquities to ordinary commercial polishes.

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"Available from: Picreator Enterprises, Ltd., 44 Park View Gardens, Hendon, London, NW4 2PN, England, suppliers of professional conservation materials to museums throughout the world."

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

MARIANNE HANSEN: A prolific contributor to the arts, she is a frequent contributor to *Tournaments Illuminated*, she is a fiery advocate of authenticity and research. She is the Lady of Robert Mackenzie, AKA SCA Meistro Roberto di Milano. Known in the SCA she is Niccola Sebastiani, (Laurel, Maunch), a fifteenth-century Florentine living in Nuremberg, the daughter of a jeweler and the wife of an armourer.

JOSEPH LATTA: A professional armourer for the last 8 years, he has been working at armour reproductions for the last 12 years. Prior to that he served as a police officer for a decade. Known in the SCA as Sir Seosaidh mac Seosaidh, Earl Claidge Dhu, Viscount, Baron, Premier Order of the Trimarian Sword, Order of the Laurel, etc. He makes his home in Gainesville, FL.

BRUCE METCALF: Bruce Metcalf is a former teacher of metalworking and jewelry at Kent State University and is a contributing editor to METALSMITHING magazine. Currently he is a practicing artist in Philadelphia, PA, and has graciously offered his article for reprint in the pages of *Chronique*.

THEODORE F. MONNICH: Interned in 1984 at the Royal Armouries, H.M. Tower of London after serving apprenticeships in France and the United States. After a decade of work in conservation, and with exhibits design and curation at several institutions throughout the United States, he has recently served as Assistant Armourer in the Department of Arms and Armor at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, from 1988-1991, and Conservator to the Higgins Armory Museum, 1989-1992. He is now Chief Conservator at the South Carolina State Museum, and is the author of two articles which have been featured in *Tournaments Illuminated*. Address: Conservation Lab, South Carolina State Museum, POB 100107, SC 29202-3107

BRIAN R. PRICE: Editor *Chronique*, known in the SCA as Earl Sir Brion Thornbird Ap Rhys, OL. He has been a combatant and armourer for twelve years, and is a founding member of the American Company of Saint George. He is a graduate of UCLA in the field of Political Science, and is in the process of seeking an advanced degree and recovering from a prolonged fight with a form of cancer. He has worked on elements of armour for SCA combatants, other tournament re enactors, Renaissance Faire performers, collectors, museums, and motion picture clients. He was a founding partner of THORNBIRD ARMS, a company that produced armour, film props, and aerospace reproductions.

REVIEWS

European Armour

Mr. Claude Blair

C. 1958, B.T. Batsford, London

While it may seem odd to run a review of a book that is almost thirty years old and certainly out of print, I would offer the contention that this book is important enough that it should be required reading for anyone interested in arms and armour, and that unfortunately the book is unknown to many.

Although it is not available from current publishers, and Mr. Blair has tried with no success to find another publisher interested in reprinting an updated version of the book, it can from time to time be found from rare or military book dealers.

It is the first work on the subject that can be considered acceptable for modern scholars, and will be found in virtually every bibliography in every book on the subject. Mr. Blair, a member of the Arms and Armour Society (based in England), is considered to be the pre-eminent scholar in the field. He was curator of the curious Victoria and Albert Museum in London, and in recent years has written several articles on arms and armour, one of which is found in the next review *Studies in European Arms and Armor*.

This book traces the chronological and stylistic development of the complete harness, breaking down each element for detailed study. The work is crisply presented and precise in documentation, comparing many pieces now extant with citations from primary sources in literature, inventories, effigies, and manuscripts. A precisely drawn set of studies in the back of the book outline a rough scheme of development for helmets, arm and leg harnesses and cuirasses.

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REVIEWS

Studies in European Arms and Armour

The C. Otto Von Kienbusch Collection in the Philadelphia Museum of Art
Claude Blair, Lionello G. Boccia, Everett Fahy, Helmut Nickel, A.V.B. Norman, Stuart W. Pyhrr, Donald J. La Rocca

C. 1992, The Philadelphia Museum of Art

Since the release of David Edge's *Arms and Armour of the Medieval Knight*, there has been little of new interest published in the field of arms and armour. This work is a breath of fresh air, scholarly in tone and well turned-out with photographs. Some of the finest scholars in the field of arms and armour have contributed studies of pieces in the important Kienbusch Collection, studies that examine some of the more important pieces such as the fine collection of Milanese armours, small and court swords, a painted Renaissance shield with technical notes on the construction, pattern books for decorated firearms, and comments on the famous Crediton helmet.

Although the pieces are scholarly and technical in tone, definitely not something to wade into without first having a basic working knowledge (gained through Mr. Blair or Mr. Edge's books), there is a fine essay on Early Italian Armours introduced by the pre-eminent expert in the field (who unfortunately writes in Italian most of the time) that gives an excellent introduction to some elements of Milanese armour. Mr. Boccia's work is the most useful piece in the book for the modern tournament re-enactor, but it is certainly not the only piece of interest. Illuminating photographs of the painted Renaissance shield are accompanied with an interesting technical note on their construction by Melissa S. Meighan, giving some good points that would compliment Mr. Monnich's article to appear in the *Chronique*. Mr. Blair and Mr. C.A. Ralegh Radford's commentaries on the Crediton helmet also paint an enlightening portrait of how armour is determined to be authentic.

There are some color photographs as well, mostly of the Renaissance shield, but the high-quality black and whites show several armets, some Milanese arm harness, sallets, barbutes, a variety of small swords, the Crediton helmet, and more. At 200 pages, 8 1/2" x 11" the piece is well worth the price—a hard cover edition is also available.

Available in softcover @ \$37.00 from The Philadelphia Museum of Art, Mail Order Processing; Customer Service & Information; BOX 7646, Philadelphia, PA 19101-7646 (215)-236-4465

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There is a great deal to be said for the impact of high-quality, authentic armour on the tournament field. Although I am no longer interested in producing a large quantity of armour, I am seeking a few clients who are interested in high-level reproductions and I will, from time to time, produce stock pieces which I will offer for sale. Below is a listing of the pieces I have currently in stock:

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Bascinet w/hinged centermount grille-low point style of the middle 14th century, grille after the example on the Bohemian Altarpiece. 12g. steel

\$250

Etched Barbute w/open face and grille fitted for SCA combats. Extensive etching, brightly polished. 12g. steel \$285

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Books
Monographs

Free shipping for Chronicle subscribers!

Monographs

**1. Historical Forms of the Tournament
(or SCA Combat: History, Resources, Ex-
amples.**

Earl Sir Brian Thornbird Ap Rhys, OL

Notes prepared for the Collegium Occidentalis, Kingdom of the West, 1992. Contains analysis of modern and period tournaments, period challenges, and notes on how to hold these tournaments in the SCA.

36pp, Monograph, Illustrations \$5.00

2. Selecting armour for use in the SCA

Earl Sir Brian Thornbird Ap Rhys, OL

Notes prepared for the Collegium Occidentalis, 1992. A brief examination of the concerns for new combatants who are considering an authentic set of equipment.

16pp, Monograph, Illustrations \$2.50

3. King Rene's Tournament Book

Translated by Dr. Elizabeth Bennett

An excellent translation of an important 15th century tournament treatise. With equally competent illustrations by Will McLean, this work is a strong contribution to the literature available for tournament recreationists.

26pp Paper, 8 1/2 x 11, Illustrated \$6.00

4. Introduction to Swordsmanship

Earl Sir Brian Thornbird Ap Rhys, OL

Class notes provided for the fall session of Collegium Occidentalis, 1992. Thoughts on training oriented for the beginning combatant, including notes on philosophy, balance, focus, awareness, stance, movement and instructions for building the first offensive blow—the so-called "snap."

Available May, 1993

40pp, Monograph, photographs \$5.00

5. The Essence of SCA War

Earl Sir Brian Thornbird Ap Rhys, OL

Fall Collegium Occidentalis notes, these notes discuss the various philosophies of SCA war, attempting to get at the tension between war and tournament and offering a solution to the dilemma that balances single and group engagements. Looks at the impact of philosophy, conventions, rules and political arrangements.

Monograph \$4.00

6. Organization for SCA War

Earl Sir Brian Thornbird Ap Rhys, OL

Notes for the Spring Collegium Occidentalis, 1993, available May 1993. Examines techniques of organization for SCA units and armies, emphasizing solutions aimed at reducing the disruption to the chivalric intent of SCA combats. Discusses training and attitudes, period solutions and analyses the success of some SCA units.

Monograph \$5.00

7. The Company of Saint George

A guidebook describing the intent, philosophy, and practices of a modern tournament society. Although the book is intended as a guide for those interested in the order or curious about its intent, it may prove useful for those considering similar groups.

Monograph \$3.00

**8. Armouring Technique I: Metalwork-
ing basics**

Surveys the basic principles of steel and iron materials; stretching, doming, basic hammer technique, filing, riveting, some rudimentary leatherwork.

Available April, 1993

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Forthcoming Books

The Book of the Tournament

Brian R. Price

A collection of essays relating to all aspects of the re enactment tournament experience. Gives a mix of practical and philosophical points for tourneyers, marshals, consorts. There are plans for a calligraphed and illuminated version as well, and the first release will include some high-quality lithographs of some of the miniatures. The draft has been complete and edited for nearly a year now, and we are waiting only for the final production.

Paper and Hard editions, Pennsic 1994

A Western Dancing Master

Ann-Marie Storz

AKA SCA Mistress Ann of Alanwyck

Done in the style of the great treatises of the 15th and 16th centuries, this expansive work contains nearly 70 dances taken from authentic sources. Each dance includes written and and there is a wealth of historical information presented in the favored dialog format of the 15th century. Includes a particularly skillful and entertaining section on proper comportment and demeanor.

A Compact Disc will be available containing many selections.

Wire-bound for ease of use, Release date Pennsic 1994

Masterpieces of Medieval Armour Reproductions

Brian R. Price

Features essays on the armourers art, extensive photographs and comentary from the fines reproduction armourers, the book examines armour from many unusual perspectives. Th finest modern armourers talk about how and why they work.

Spring 1993

Sculptures in Steel: A Manual on the Armourer's Art

Brian R. Price

Drawing on twelve years of experience, this book is meant to serve as a compendium of techniques available to the modern armourer. Includes essays on philosophy, technical approaches, research, sources, balancing mobility and defense, form versus function, tool and material selection, patterning. The mix of prolific photographs and illustrations explain an exhaustive catalog of techniques including doming, raising, bouging, planishing, creasing, fluting, edge-rolling, piercework, sanding, buffing, articulation, riveting, and some leatherwork.

December 1994

TO ORDER

Checks Payable to Ann-Marie Storz.

Shipping free to *Chronique* subscribers, else add \$2 per monograph to a maximum of \$4 for shipping and handling.

BACK ISSUES OF CHRONIQUE

\$5.00 each or \$4.00 each with a *Chronique* subscription

Issue #1

Understanding the Tournament

Talks about the tournament and its role in history and in modern re enactments, including an original translation of a 15th century tournament treatise.

Issue #2

Knightly Orders and Tournament Societies

Features a long article on these knightly societies, with pointers on how to set up such a society within the SCA context, an detailed article on the 15th century Jack (cloth armour), and an essay on conduct around the field.

Issue #3

Points of Honor

The Battle of Poitiers

Features an extensive FORUM discussion on questions of chivalry, an excerpt from Froissart's Chronicles on the Battle of Poitiers, an article on the Company of Saint George, and an essay by I.S. Mill that addresses chivalry as an idea.

Issue #4

The Pas d'Armes

An exhaustive amount of detail on the pas d'armes in history, how to conduct one, and a report on the success of such a tournament held in Berkeley, CA, by the Company of Saint George. Four pages of high-quality photographs are included on glossy stock.

Issue #5

Knighting Ceremonies

Includes the text of three SCA knighting ceremonies, one period ceremony, and several essays on the symbolism and importance of ceremony to the making of a knight. An English translation of the very important Ordene de Chevalerie is also included, with margin summary notes.

FUTURE ISSUES

Issue #7

Courtly Love and the Consort

Issue #8

The Squire

Issue #9

William the Marshal Tournaments

Issue #10

Arms and Armour #2

Monographs and Class Notes

BRIAN R. PRICE

AKA SCA Earl Sir Brion Thornbird ap Rhys, OL

001 **Historical Forms of the Tournament for SCA Combat: History, Resources, Examples.** *Notes prepared for the Collegium Occidentalis, 1992. Contains an analysis of modern and historical tournaments, period challenges, and notes on how to hold these tournaments in the SCA.*

36pp. Monograph

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002 **Choosing Armour for the SCA: A brief introduction to some of the questions you should ask yourself and your armourer when considering an authentic set of equipment.**

16pp. Monograph

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004 **Introduction to Swordsmanship: (July 1, 1994)** *Class notes prepared for the fall session of Collegium Occidentalis, 1992. Thoughts on training oriented towards the novice combatant, including building a philosophy, balance, focus, awareness, stance, movement, and instructions for building the first offensive blow, the "snap."*

40pp.+ photographs. Monograph

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005 **Essence of SCA War** (Temporarily out of print)

006 **Organization for SCA War** (Temporarily out of print)

007 **The Company of Saint George (2nd edition):** *A newly expanded booklet containing a brief history of the company, it's goals, and philosophy. Although the book is intended as a guide for those who are curious about St. George, it may prove valuable for anyone considering the formation of such a group.*

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A survey of armour for use by re-enactors during the 14th century, including arming clothes and weapons

32 pp. monograph

\$5.00

--All of the above are available from the Editor--

CHRONIQUE

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