



The Osprey
azette

The Monthly Newsletter
of the Barony of the Osprey



2011

MAY

A.S. XLVI

Calendar of Events

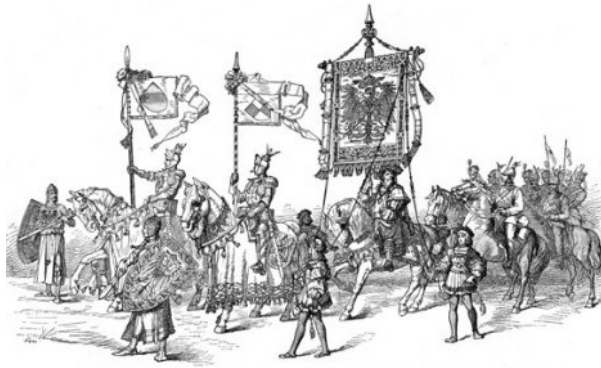
All Times, Dates, and Locations are Subject to Change

May

- 7th - Spring Crown List
- 14th - Thor's Mountain -
May Tourney
- 14th - Talmere -
Lusty Month of May
- 21st - OOK - Border Raids
- 23rd - Baronial Business Meeting
7:00pm West Regional
Library

June

- 4th - Sedracus -
Kingdom Arts & Sciences
- 11th - Owls Nest -
Crossroads of Myth and
Legend
- 11th - Nant-Y-Derwyddon -
Birds & Bruises
- 18th - Vulpine Reach - Saltare
- 25th - Loch Cairn -
Textile Arts Collegium
- 27th - Baronial Business Meeting
7:00pm West Regional
Library



All events listed on this calendar were drawn from Volume 34 Issue #5 of Popular Chivalry.

Unto the populace of the Barony of the Osprey come these greetings from the
Vicar of Osprey Yesugai Naran called Ucla.

I hope that this missive finds everyone enjoying the return of spring. With Fools Wars now behind us we can focus to the taste of readying our fields for the plow.

I wanted to take this time to thank everyone who attended and/or helped with Hit List this weekend. It led to a very successful event. I wish to congratulate all of our A&S entries and I look forward to seeing all of you again at Crown List and Kingdom A&S. I look forward to seeing all of you at Hit List next year and Gatalop later this year.

I also would like to drum up support for Border raids. This event is being held the 20th thru 22nd of May and is in Kentucky. Ld Lokotes has volunteered to be the point man for organizing the Barony for this endeavor. This will no doubt take much sacrifice to accomplish, but I feel very strongly that this event will be well worth it. At this time the plan is to have an early crew that can leave Mobile and arrive on site as close to 5pm as possible. This crew will set up tents and basic bedding for the rest who cannot leave early. By doing this, those who arrive very late, can simply go to bed and not worry about putting up tents in the dark. This should also free up space in cars for carpooling since their tents will be leaving before their owners. With gas prices being what they are, Its very difficult to travel this far without spending a fortune.

Meal plan. For Fools War the 10 of us simply brought stuff to put on the grill and shared cooler space to save on truck and trailer space. I would like to do that again. Loko will be running this as well.

After Border Raids the next few events on the Grand tour are all local.

In Service
Ucla

Hello fair barony on this wonderful April day,

We have had a great showing at several events. We did awesome at Gulf Wars and Fools War. Big congrats to Ld Jochi on his victory at Hit List and his most honorable actions when his opponent could not continue.

Coming up we have Black Axe that some people may be planning to attend. If you want to be part of the war efforts, let someone know and we will get you on the baronial war band list to facilitate event caravans and carpooling.

The next big war event is Border Raids. We have a large caravan assembling for this. Ld Lokotes is the primary contact if you want to go please contact him.

At fighter practices we have had a continual growth of fighters from all over. In the next several weeks we will be getting some visitors from out of kingdom visiting with us as well who have expressed an interest in fighting with the Osprey Machine.

We now have 2 solid cohorts for the shield wall. Any fighter who wants to join the shield wall or the cavalry unit, please let us know. In a few weeks it would be nice to have 2 units for the wall and a cavalry unit ready and rolling.

Az~

A Brief Note on Largesse

by Baron Hrolf Herjolfsson OP

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Seeing that we are coming up to our first Coronation, we should be starting to seriously think about the ceremony and the customs we wish to have in our new Kingdom. One that we could look at is the issue of largesse. In the Lochac this is typically done in chocolate coin, although some groups have struck their own coin for this purpose (1). In the West Kingdom the Moneyers and Coiners Guild has operated for some time for the main purpose of producing coin for this purpose.

According to the Macquarie Dictionary, largesse is the “generous bestowal of gifts”. In the SCA it means the distribution of coins or goods to various groups. Typical examples would be processing Royalty either themselves, or through servants, casting coins to the populace as they enter Court or the same Royalty afterwards conferring mead upon a group of Guardsmen. Where does this practice come from? Is it something we have evolved ourselves, or does it have historical roots?

Rest assured, what we see in these examples is exactly historical practice. The giving of gifts in money or kind to the soldiers dates from tribal and pre-period times in most cultures. For example, the Romans (and later the Byzantines) formalised the institution under officials, called the *largitones*, who gave out their largesse (often called a *donative*) at appropriate times, such as the ascension or anniversary of an Emperor. This money was very distinct from the annual distribution of wages (called the *annonae*) and of allowances (*sitēresia*). A particular early example of largesse is that the loot gained from the sacking of pagan temples was used by Constantine to ensure the loyalty of the army during the period where Christianity was made the sole and official religion by broadcasting it widely. So institutionalised was the practice that there was a special name for the ‘day of an imperial largesse’ – the *dōreas basilikēs hēmera*. Liutprand of Cremona records the activity of one such occasion where the distribution took three days.

This distribution could be very sizeable. Tiberius II, in 578, gave 7,200 lb of gold, or 518,400 solidi, besides silver and silk. There was an inevitable trickle down effect as other persons than the Emperor started to hand out largesse. This prompted legislation to control the practice. “It shall not be permitted for a private individual to distribute a pure silk garment as largesse at any performance of the games. We also confirm by this law that, ordinary consuls excepted, absolutely no one else shall have the right of giving away a gift in gold, or a diptych in ivory. When public ceremonies are enacted, silver coin shall be used for gifts, and another material for diptychs. Nor is it permitted to expend a silver coin larger than that which is customarily formed when a pound of silver is divided into sixty

pieces of coin. And We permit those who wish to give a smaller one to do so not only freely, but even honourably.” Emperors Valentinian II, Theodosius and Arcadius, Augusti, 25 July 384.

This law remained on the books (although sometimes largesse was banned) until it was superseded in 538. The new law said that “And so We better regulate the consular scattering of largesse to the people in these seven processions, just as the law of Marcian of Blessed Memory states (2). This law forbids entirely the exercise of munificence, but We amend it, acting at the suggestion of the individual who has the honour of holding the consulship. Now if the holder does not wish to scatter anything We do not compel him to do so, and if he wishes to restore the situation and honour the people with gifts of money We do not forbid him to do so. Nevertheless We command him not to scatter gold, whether small in form or – and more particularly – large, whether of medium size either struck or simply weighed, but to scatter silver only, just as We have commanded above. For to scatter gold is reserved for the emperor, since it is to him alone that the summit of fortune has given the capacity to despise gold. Silver, which is considered most precious directly after gold, is a suitable largesse for other consuls. Therefore We command them to scatter largesse in what are called *miliarēsia* and *mēla* and *kaukia* and *tetragōnia* and so on. For the smaller the objects that are scattered, the greater the number of recipients.” This law continued in use for some time.

Largesse continued through into our period in the only state wealthy enough to institutionalise it (and it seems that our SCA custom of casting coin derives from these Byzantine examples). However the coins used declined in value. A late thirteenth century example (after the stripping of wealth from the Empire by the treachery of the Fourth Crusade) talks of silver and copper *nomismata* being thrown to the populace during a Palm Sunday procession. It is also interesting to note (for our purposes) that largesse did not come from public funds, but from private ones. It does appear that it became institutionalised that, as well as the bounty to the populace, officers of the Emperor were given a separate largesse (or *donative*) upon a Coronation.

These concepts were transferred poorly to the barbarian West through ambassadors, mercenaries and merchants who visited the civilised Byzantine Empire. I cannot find any repeated examples in the West of the main form of largesse used in the SCA despite it being lauded as one of the prime virtues of a knight. In most Western cases largesse became a matter of donation or charity to individual recipients or to the Church. However this was not always the case. Although Marc Bloch cites examples that note that largesse was the “lady or queen in whose light all virtues shine”, he goes on to show how this became reduced to an almost potlatch mentality with many nobles (3). In a cited example in Limousin several knights competed in largesse. One had a plot of ground sown with silver coin. Another had meals cooked with wax candles and a third had thirty of his horses burnt alive.

This behaviour is not however universal, and was condemned by many. Machiavelli wrote: “So as a prince cannot practise the virtue of generosity in such a way that he is noted for it, except to his cost, he should be prudent nor mind being called a miser.” A middle path was however preferred. John of

Salisbury, who was well thought of in our period, wrote in 1159 that “Although prodigality is palpably at fault, I think there should be no place for avarice ... If, however, one possesses wealth, there is nothing more glorious than the type of liberality which expresses itself in giving.” This is the attitude I believe that we should look towards in our rulers.

Notes:

- (1) Ynys Fawr at least.
- (2) Marcian, in 452, forbade largesse and instead commanded that the customary distributions be paid into a fund to maintain the aqueducts.
- (3) ‘Potlach’ is a North-Western American Indian term that describes how wealth is used in a society of abundance to gain prestige through excessive gift giving and the destruction of valuable property.

Sources:

Liutbrand of Cremona *Legatio Constantinopolitana* (1915) edited J Becker, Hanover

Michael F Hendy (1985) *Studies in the Byzantine Monetary Economy c300 – 1450* Cambridge University Press, Cambridge

Marc Bloch (1971) *Feudal Society Vol II Social Classes and Political Organisation* translated by L. A. Manyon Routledge and Kegan Paul, London

Niccolò Machiavelli *The Prince* (1961) translated George Bull, Penguin, Middlesex

John of Salisbury *Politicratus* (1979) edited Murray Markland, Frederick Ungar Publishing, New York



14th Century Finger Foods

by THL Kateryn de Develyn
(reprinted with permission from www.florilegium.org)

Recipes from 14th century sources which have been redacted and used as finger foods. While not originally intended as finger foods, I have found that they were easily converted. These recipes have been redacted by Her Ladyship Kateryn de Develyn, of the Kingdom of Calontir.

For to Make Cryppys/Crisps Ancient Cookery

Nym flour and wytys of eyryn figur other hony and fweyng togedere and mak a batour nym wyte grees so yt in a pofnet and caft the batur thereyn and ftury to thou have many and tak hem up and meffe hem wyth the frutours and ferve forthe.

1 cup flour
2 egg whites
1/4 cup honey
1/4 cup lard

Mix flour, egg whites, and honey together into a thin batter. One that is thin enough to go through a stainer. Melt lard in a hot pan, griddle, waffle iron, or pizzle-iron. Drop spoonful of dough and cook until done - crisp on both sides. Should be crisp not soft or spongy. More like an ice cream cone texture than a pancake or waffle.

These can be made in various sizes from dollar, to large platter-sized crisps. They are good for one to two days if stored in a sealed cool dry place.

Black White and Blue

By Lokotes

It's the smell of the rust
The taste of the blood
The rush of adrenaline
The force of the flood
The crash of the waves
Shield upon shield
The axes and blades
Neither will yield

Feet pushing down
Arms pushing out
Head pushing forward
Never a doubt
The other side loses
We have to hold out
Never surrender
Force them to rout

They call it a game
'Living the dream'

A shield man in levy
Is short lived it seems
But a veteran is born
After every great war
The harder they hit him
He'll just beg for more

Like work hardened brass
A shield man takes shape
They beat on his ass
Till his shield straps break
But his backbone is stronger
His shoulders are rocks
His teeth are like daggers
His feet are stone blocks

A year from his first war
He's a beast on the field
He's fast and he's strong
He's one with his shield
Of nightmares the worst
Spears he will protect
An unstoppable force

An immovable object

The enemy's teeth hurt
Their armor is broken
Their weapons are warped
Their worst fears spoken
They've met their match
They've admitted their fall
The veterans have hatched
On the Osprey Shield Wall...



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Acknowledgements and References:

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<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/baronyoftheosprey>

Baronial Website: <http://www.baronyosprey.org>

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