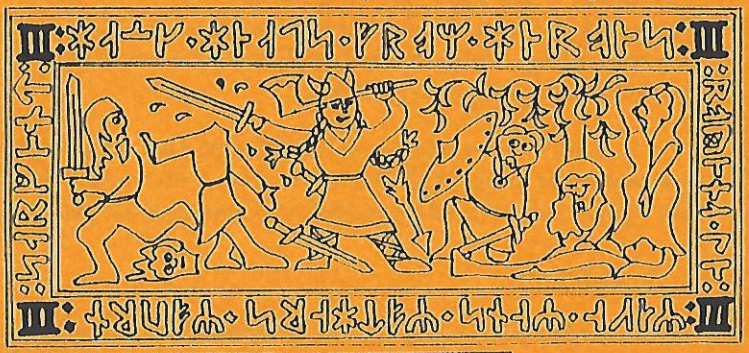
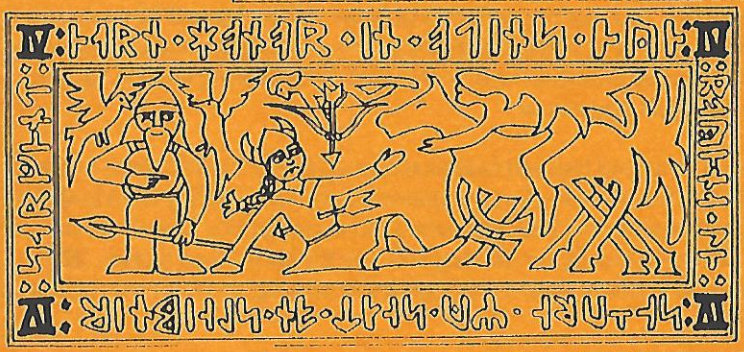
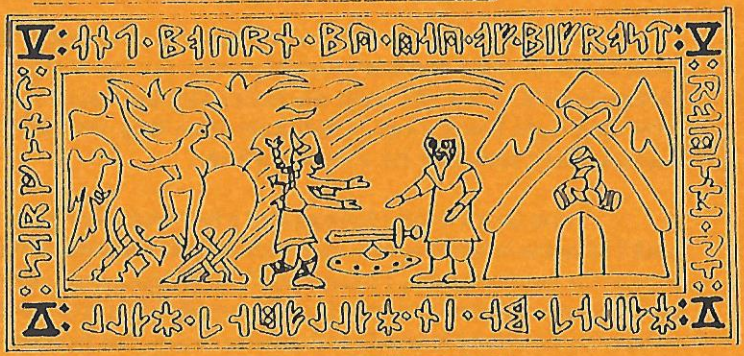
FLOWER OF SOUVENANCE

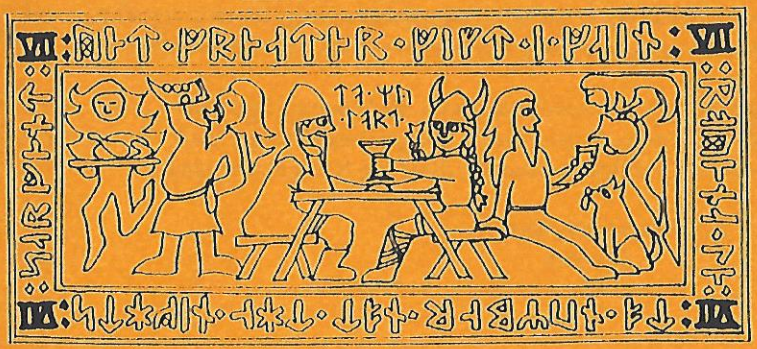
#13

letters for the falcon gentle









Letter From the Editor;
Greetings!

First, let me extend my apologies to all who subscribe to the Flower of Souvenance. This issue will be quite late, up to two weeks. Unfortunate and unexpected mundane occurrences, not the least of which is my walking pneumonia. This issue is more my husbands (H.G. Christopher of Hoghton) doing than my own, and for that I am extremely grateful.

Also, I must apologize to H.L. William Blackfox for accidentally including a caricature order form in #12. His new mundane job does not allow him the time to do such things. All order forms are null and void as of this printing.

Onward:

At TFYC I had the pleasure of renewing my acquaintance with an old friend, Sir Mikaru of Atenveldt. In speaking with him of other things, I asked him to write some articles for the Flower of Souvenance. His normally smiling face took on aspects of seriousness and he started on a short lecture of his beliefs in training women fighters and anti gender separation arguments.

At one point I stopped him and looked at him sidelong. I asked him if he had seen a copy of the FOS. He said he had but number one only. I nodded my head in slow understanding. Opinions which I had held when I first started this newsletter have changed. Then it was to be mostly for training and tips for the woman fighter. Since then it has progressed into a newsletter for all fighters, encouraging an open forum for women in particular.

Although my attitudes and opinions have changed over the last several years, I hold on to the 'women's forum' part for reasons of my own. When I was just starting to fight in 1982-83, there was only one other female fighter in the Outlands, more than eight hours away. I had little or no help with some of the more subtle nuances of say, armoring for a woman's body.

Years later I think I have gained a few tricks along the way. If not, I like to think I have the wisdom to ask others who might and learn thereby. To spare others some of the harder lessons, I started the FOS. Judging from continual subscriptions I believe there are those out there who have benefitted from this publication. According to the complimentary letters I receive occasionally, the women's forum aspect is the most appreciated. This has never excluded men from entering the sharing of ideas and information. The only thing stopping anyone from doing so is themselves.

Getting back to the conversation with Sir Mikaru; I gave him a few of the latest issues and bid him look them over. He promised to get back to me on his thoughts of the current publication and the direction it might be going.

In Service to the Ideal,
Cymber

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This is issue #13, May 1991, of the Flower of Souvenance. This is not a corporate publication of the Society for Creative Anachronism, Inc., and does not dictate or delineate SCA policy. The opinions of the articles contained herein do not particularly express the opinion of the editor, but are the opinion of the authors of the individual articles only as well as those that might agree with them. Except where otherwise stated, any other articles in this publication may be reprinted without special permission in newsletters & other publications of branches of the SCA Inc., subject to the following conditions: a) text must be printed in its entirety, without additions or changes; b) author's name & an original publications credit must accompany the text; c) you must send a letter to the editor of this newsletter, stating the articles you have used, and in which publication the material has been reprinted. A copy of said reproduction would be greatly appreciated, so that the author might be notified.

All submissions may be subject to editing. If requested, the author of a submitted article will receive a copy of the issue in which that article appears. Editorials will be printed occasionally with a response from the editor, this response is the editors current opinion and should not be viewed as factual unless suitable documentation is given.

Publication falls in the following months; February, May, August, and November. All submissions must be received before the first of the month of publication the author wishes that article to appear. Publication will commence regardless of submission allotment or the lack of it. All mailing of current and back issues will occur at the same time, on or about the end of the month of publication. If any problems occur with mailing to subscribers, they are encouraged to write the editor for clarification.

Advertising is printed as space allows. Rates are $20.00 full page, $10.00 half page, $5.00 quarter page. *All checks and money orders must be made payable to KC Lancaster.*

Fighting From a Female Fighter's Perspective

by Sir Hilary of Serendip

March, 1979, AS XIII. I take a thoroughly unnecessary stroll around the Lists field, to make sure nobody misses the sight of me in my first armor—a random collection of plates hacked and pounded out of old computer skin, with the cream and olive-drab paint still on it—of which I am insanely proud.

"Hilary!" croaks a voice from knee-level—"What are you doing dressed like that?" I look down to see one of my new sisters of the sword, armed in a compound of burlap and sweat, glaring up at me from the ground.

"Why, I'm going to be fighting, of course," say I, somewhat surprised at the query.

"Fight?!? Why?" "Why not? You do it—" "But you're a lady!"

I wander off in a fit of puzzled laughter, and amusement and bemusement have remained my first reaction when anyone raises the issue of special concerns about being female and a fighter in the SCA, right up to the time Mistress Asahla asked me for this article. Does it really make such a difference?

Well, yes, I suppose it does, if only because people persist in assuming that it must. I was extremely fortunate—especially for the time—in that my local practice took my participation for granted. The people who ran the practice were the ones who had trained Sir Trude and Sir Mary, and they made anyone who had a problem with women on the field feel distinctly unwelcome, so I was insulated from the worst of the pressure for the first few months, while I was most vulnerable.

None of my teachers tried to deny that there are both physical and psychological differences between the genders, but they maintained that a participant's personal plumbing shouldn't make any difference to our game, and I've seen nothing to contradict that over the years. It's true that on the average human females do tend to be smaller than males, with less muscle mass and thickness of bone for any given size... but there's a lot of overlap between the ranges for males and females. Females tend also to be raised to value nurturing over competition, and males to be raised to expect to compete among themselves while protecting females... but none of these attitudes are inborn or universal. People fight as individuals, not as members of averages—and each individual has to cope with a personal mix of size, strength and aggressiveness.

And quite without intending to, the Society has built its combat into a contact sport with an unusually wide range of effective solutions. I tell my trainees as my teachers told me, "It's good to be big and strong. It's good to be really fast. It's good to be really sneaky. And failing any of that, you can make it on sheer, blind determination!" The SCA didn't set out to create an equal opportunity sport—it just happened, as a byproduct of our emphasis on chivalry. Our rules prohibit grappling and require that a fallen foe be

allowed to resume fighting stance unmolested, so sheer mass gives much less advantage than it does in most contact sports, and the custom of kneeling to acknowledge leg blows reduces the impact of differences in height. With proper technique, almost any human can swing a 3-lb sword hard enough to dent steel plate, and our rules step in again by mandating that hard enough is hard enough—that is, that you don't have to pound your opponent into mush, you merely have to establish that you could have gotten a blade past or through the armor. There are plenty of little Dukes around to testify that our sport is an exception to the rule that "a good big man will beat a good small man every time", and a great many women will find that they're well within the range of size and strength needed to take the field successfully.

Some of the physical stuff actually favors the female participant. Those who do find themselves smaller than the average fighter can get extra mileage out of their muscles, because armor for a small body can be lighter in proportion to the wearer, not just absolutely lighter, than armor for a large one. The small size and deep curvature of the pieces allows armor for the petite to be made out of relatively thin, light materials and still give adequate protection. And despite the myth of feminine frailty, the direct sexual differences are normally much to a woman's advantage—after all, she has nothing sticking out that requires suspension engineering to protect. The rigid cover for both breasts is a common feature of many styles of armor, regardless of the gender of the wearer—it just needs to be a bit more globose if she's very buxom. A padded flap or skirt will serve her well enough for groin armor, because her primary genitalia are behind a wall of bone and need only the protection accorded other internal organs.

The extra, ah, biological compactness does make it complex for an armed female to take a leak... but no one is entirely free from the risk of having to sit that particular throne. Advance planning is a good idea for anyone! It is of course entirely possible to disarm if the awful moment arrives—nine tourneys out of ten, it won't. Fighters sweat so much they rarely have to visit the privy, so leaving matters in the hands of fate isn't too much of a risk. However, it's also possible to build armor with the contingency in mind. After trying several arrangements, I use a leg harness consisting of cuisse-and-knee combinations buckled onto my arming pants at the hip joints, with straps on the lowest lames taking part of the weight, and separate greaves. This lets me undo the knee straps and proceed as usual. Fastening everything back together isn't easy—and the privy doubtless sounds like a pair of raccoons fighting in a dumpster—but it's still simpler than peeling down!

There is one real exception to the advantage of the female physique—maternity armor is NOT a good idea. The chemical changes that loosen the pelvic ligaments in preparation for delivery start about mid-term and are not specific about the ligaments they affect, so an expectant mother's joints are apt to be unusually weak. (Viscountess Tamsin of the Raven Tresses found out the hard way—she sprained her right wrist in an unarmored sword exercise about the fourth or fifth month of her first pregnancy, and her doctor

explained that the injury was due to her condition.) There's no special danger to the fetus, which is no more at risk from fighting than from any other form of moderately strenuous exercise, and (based on Sir Trude's early research) we used to maintain there was no physical problem with fighting during a normal pregnancy. However, it's best to avoid unnecessary stress on the joints—assuming the stress on the father and grandparents wasn't argument enough to hang it up during pregnancy.

The psychological stuff falls into two categories—things that make it hard for men to fight women, and things that make it hard for women to fight at all. Both sets apply to everyone to a greater or lesser extent, however. Male or female, most of us were raised with at least parental lip-service to the premise that we shouldn't hit anybody—but taking on a member of the opposite gender was clearly a much worse offense than hitting one of our own. This leads to a very real problem for a lot of men—fighting a woman triggers all sorts of "hitting girls" reflexes from far before they can remember picking them up. Women can have the same problem—I remember one lass who could attack me flat out, but was too dainty and hesitant to live when facing a male opponent. When called on this, she looked up at her current partner, a Knight easily double her mass, and said, "Oh, well, I guess I'm afraid of hurting him!" But it's less common—the whole prohibition was much more sincere for most girls, so women who are still working through their "don't hit" reflexes rarely differentiate by the gender of the target.

It seems to me that the gentlemanly prejudice against hitting ladies is something a female participant in SCA combat should treat gently, as a minor disability. Our goal should be to help the men redefine this sport in their own minds as one like tennis where gender doesn't matter—not to make them set aside their childhood training entirely. There are plenty of situations where it still applies!

The best way for a woman to get men to take her participation for granted is to do so herself. She should avoid aggressively female armor—it's downright rude to take advantage of someone's weakness, which is what it amounts to when there are breasts on the breastplate to forcibly remind a man that he's hitting a girl. Her attitude should be calm and cheerful—no need to out-jock the guys, but she shouldn't expect them to watch their language or give her special consideration, either. If someone doesn't want to fight a lady, a lady won't push him—unless they meet in a Lists where he can't get away, in which case it's his tough luck and he'll have to work around the disability as best he can. (By the same token, I wouldn't give special consideration to a man who demanded it, either. I cherish the memory of the Knight who ran up to me in a melee and ordered me to yield because he couldn't hit a lady. "That's your problem," sez I, and hit him over the head—which wouldn't be worth relating, except that he tried the same thing again in the next melee, and got hit over the head again for his pains! I had no sympathy, since he had free choice to engage whom he pleased.)

One of the hardest things for many women to learn about SCA

combat is that it's all right to fight and win. Even now, there's a cultural bias against females competing successfully, especially against males, and little girls absorb it without noticing or acknowledging it. When a female novice loses a lot of fights, there's an awful tendency for this to confirm an expectation that she's supposed to lose fights—which blinds her to the observation that all novices put in most of their time getting trashed, regardless of gender, and that the situation is or ought to be temporary. The surest way to lose a fight is to expect to lose it, and many fighters will themselves to defeat long after their technical competence has reached a level that could gain victories—again, this is a problem that can hit anyone, but it's likelier for a woman and harder for her to get out of because of the residue of early lessons. But she's had to set aside a lot of early lessons just to fight at all, and once she spots this one in action, it becomes possible to set it aside too—then, look out, world!

What it boils down to is that fighting from a female fighter's perspective is pretty much like fighting from any other perspective. Some things make life harder; others make life easier... but the game is still one of the most enjoyable and exciting around, and there's no overriding reason not to go out and enjoy it!

The Attainment of Peerage

By Sir Gunthar Jonsson - Ansteorra

A peerage is a goal almost all members of the Society strive to attain and many never achieve. Articles on the requirements for elevation to the peerages abound in kingdom newsletters, The Known World Handbook, and Tournaments Illuminated, as well as various other sources. Dance, chess, heraldry, courtly graces are required along with the particular area of interest. It is true these are important to becoming a well-rounded gentle of the Society; but there are other subtle clues which are taken into consideration. Please remember that the attainment of a peerage is created through a recommendation or vote, and the grace of the Crown. Each member of the circle will have different standards they look for in a candidate, and items which I stress may have no importance to someone else. This is simply an overview of what is going on in my mind. Since I am a knight my outlook will be primarily based upon the fighting arts, but it is hoped that Masters and students of the other orders may see some hints for their own use.

The knowledge of chess, dance, etc. are of importance because it makes a person more than a simple stick jock who may be able to cream opponents on the field but then goes back to camp and ignores the rest of the SCA. Perhaps in the pursuit of learning the nuances of dance a gentle will discover a whole new area of skill and interest. I have also heard of candidates being shot down with "X is a good fighter but that's all X does". It really does help to be seen in other areas.

Now that I have skimmed the better known areas, I'll get into being "picky". Imagine that you have been nominated for elevation. When I hear your name, what goes through my mind? Please score yourself as we go along. First, what is my immediate mental image? Do I see a drunken newcomer? a friend? a student? an equal? a better? Do I even recognize the name? Are you skilled to the ability of peerage? This may sound simple, but how many times have you heard of people nominated or considered simply because they act like one.? These people may only be a mid-level fighter but they are considered. The pure skill is important. Okay, you have the skill but do you have the knowledge? Is your skill based on a couple of effective techniques and natural ability or can you discuss the strategy and technique of your style? Can you fight other styles and discuss their strengths and weaknesses? Are you authorized with all weapon types and can you pick up a new weapon or shield and figure out how to use it competently? To quote one of the Rocky movies "You fight great. But I'm a great fighter!" Can you tell the difference? Do you teach? Does your advice and opinions have merit with the peers? This is important to me personally. A peer is an instructor and part of being a knight is the requirement to train others. Do you work only with knights or do you spend your time assisting other fighters to improve? Conversely,we also notice if a fighter only spars with those of lesser ability in order to look good.

How long have you been a member of the SCA? I don't wish to set time limits but you should know how people in the kingdom think. Are you still thought of as a new fighter or can you be of assistance when problems arise? Peers are not only masters of an art, but they are administrators and advisors to the kingdom. Decisions of a peer should be based upon the knowledge of the area and experience. Another factor in this area is how well you are known to the peers and the kingdom. Travel is very important to any individual in the SCA. Hard work and travel are the surest ways to be known throughout the kingdom. Be seen, and get to know other people from all areas, this alone will add to your enjoyment of our life and can't hurt your reputation. Another factor in your experience in the SCA is that it helps the peers determine whether you are a flash in the pan or someone who will help the Society grow. Consider, if you are granted a peerage, how will you help this kingdom? If you disappear after your elevation nobody benefits, not even you.

Another topic which arises is "handicaps". Don't expect special consideration just because you happen to be the best lady fighter or the best left-handed fighter in your kingdom. If your ability doesn't measure up to knighthood then it doesn't. Queen Rowan of Ansteorra isn't a good fighter "for a woman". Rowan is a damn good fighter, period. I don't care what sex my opponent is; a fighter is a fighter while in armor. Impress me with ability, not "handicaps".

Question yourself. What is your opinion of yourself as a peer? Would the kingdom take pride in declaring you as one of its finest? The

question is harsh, but important. Everyone will watch you, so you need to watch yourself.

As I said earlier, many of these questions are picky, they are also important. Whenever there is a gathering of minds, opinions, and egos (mine included) the discussion will go anywhere. The thoughts I have written are mine and mine alone. I am no expert on the human condition, or knighthood for that matter. I only pray that I have helped someone think. The belt and chain are only symbols of what you are. Enjoy the fighting. You may be surprised when you attain your goal.

WOMENS TOURNEY

The Third Annual Women's Tourney will be held at Pennsic XX!
(To be held at the same time as the East Kingdom Tourney!)

For the third time this controversial list will be held to encourage women as participants in the art of heavy weapons combat! Everyone who has attended over the past two years, has enjoyed themselves thoroughly! Come and be a part of this women's fighting consortium!

Men are encouraged to offer their assistance in armor inspection, marshalling, field heraldry, list running and/or training but entrants for this list are restricted to *women only*.

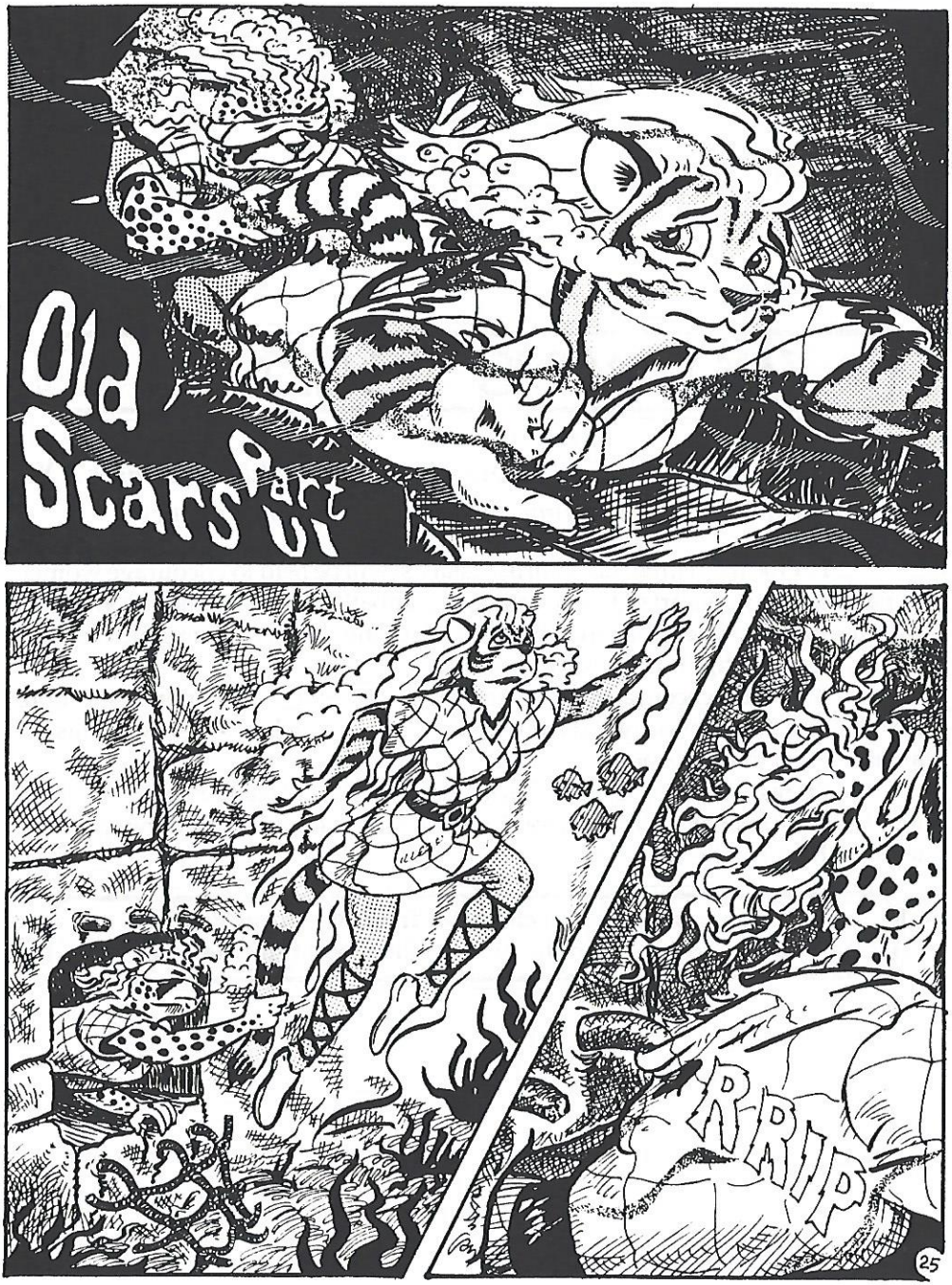
Prizes will include *Most Chivalrous, First Place, Second Place, Best Death, Best-looking Armor and Lord's Choice.* Prizes are, as yet, undisclosed, but promise to be well worth the effort!

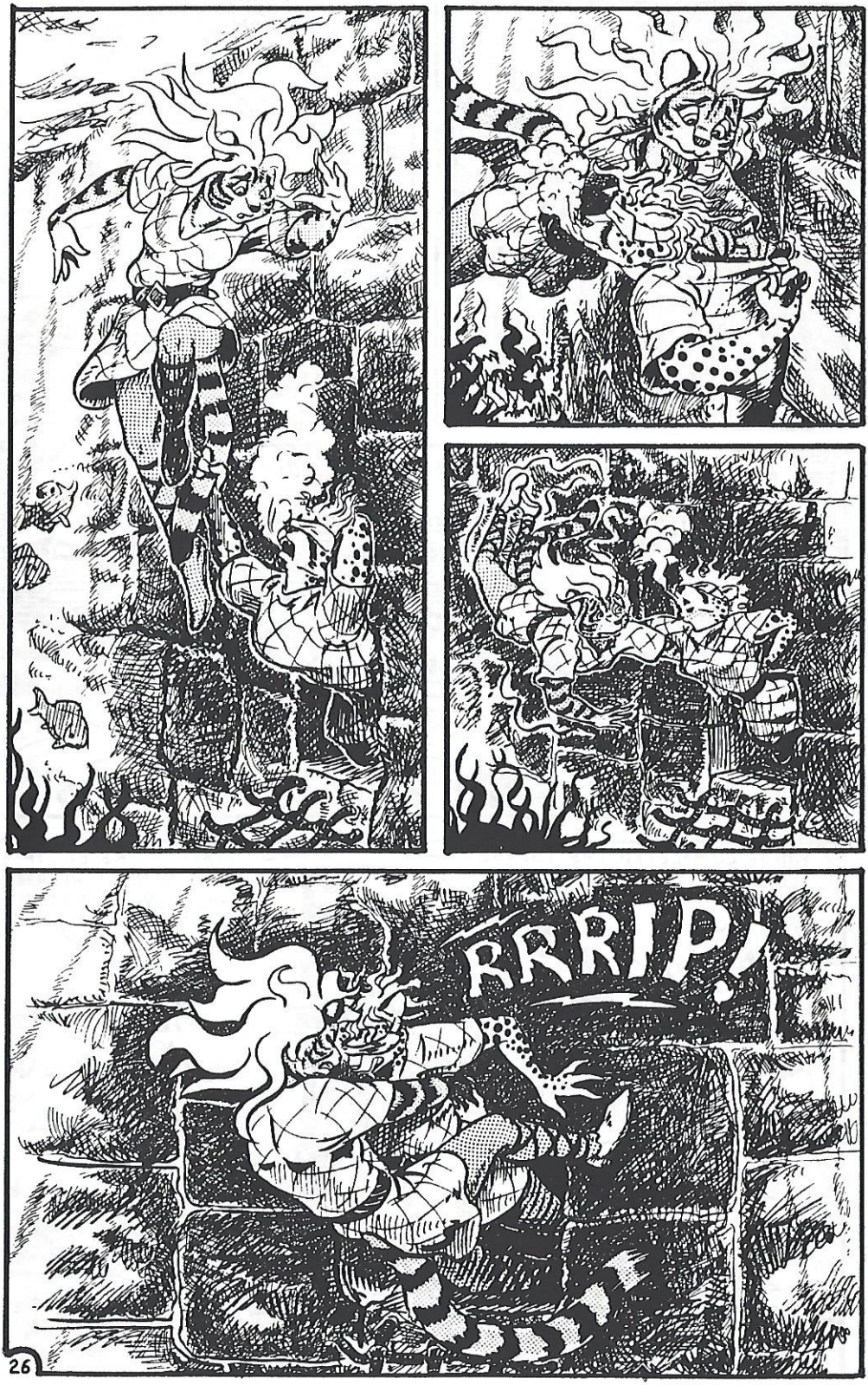
For more information, check for flyers on site at Pennsic and the ad to appear in the next publication of this newsletter!

Vixens' Keep™

Art	*H.L. William Blackfox*
Story & Script	*Master Cadfan ap Morgan, O.L.*
Story Editor	*Mistress Alanna of Caer du Pard, O.L.*
Story Consultants	*Mistress Catrin ferch Gwillym, O.L.* & *Soaba ni Sionnach*

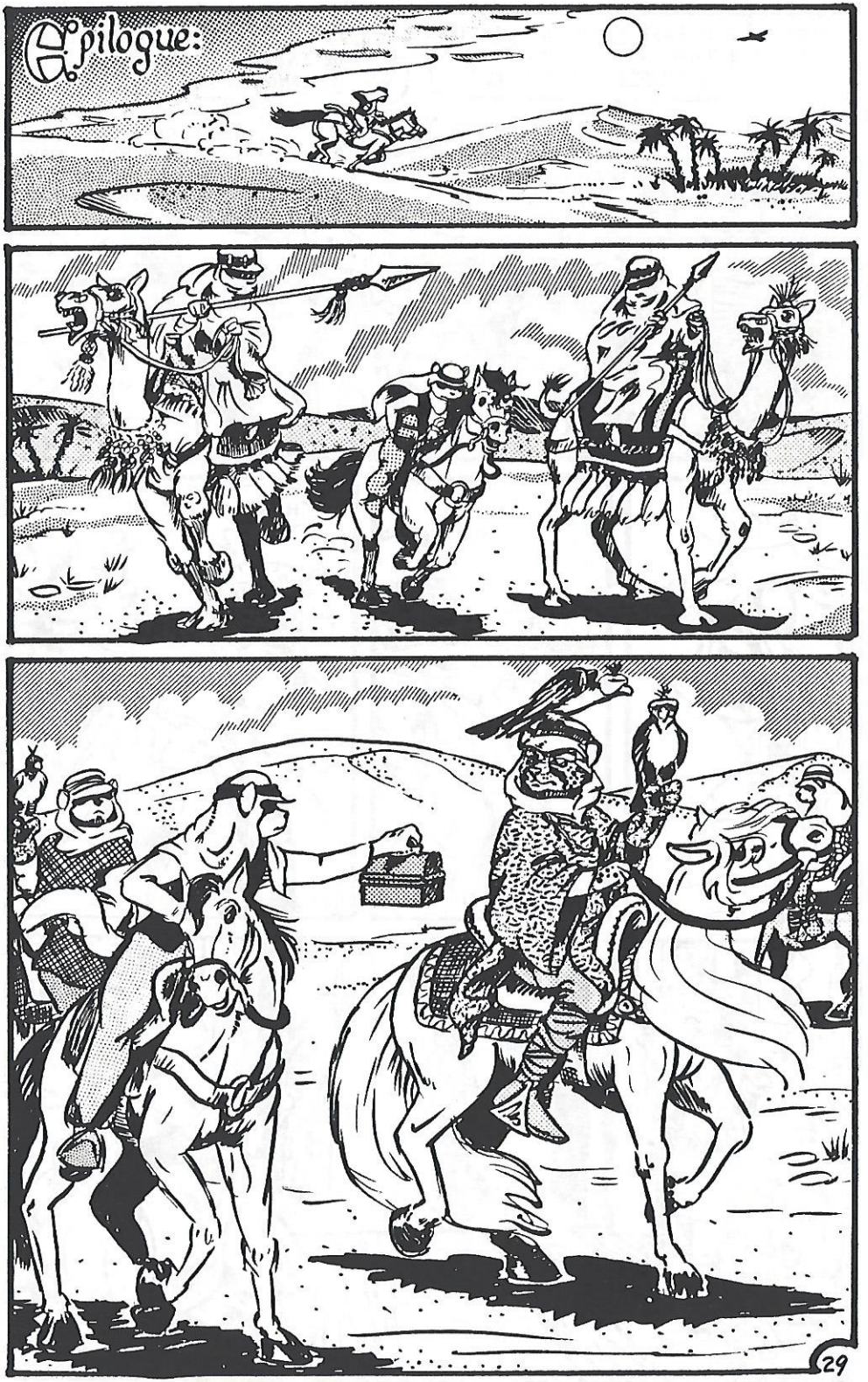
SYNOPSIS: Alix has been compelled by Capt. Rose to lead Marphisa blindfolded and silently on an obstacle course which wends its way through the castle. The path leads to a deep cellar room with a flooded tunnel leading to the outside. With some trepidation but much courage, they both submerge and swim into the tunnel.




RRRIP!

GASP
SPLUT
GAG
ACK
GASP
GAK
MARPHISA! ARE YOU ALL RIGHT? I CAN'T SEE!
QUIET, YOU FOOL! WE'RE NOT SUPPOSED TO SPEAK!
NOT TO WORRY, LADIES...
YOU'VE COMPLETED THE COURSE... SUCCESSFULLY, I MIGHT ADD!
MAYA...LORELEI... IF IF YOU WILL PLEASE HAUL IN OUR "CATCH OF THE DAY"?

LATER...
PLEASE REMEMBER, LADIES, THAT THIS WAS NEITHER A PUNISHMENT NOR A TEST.
IT WAS AN EXERCISE AND, AS SUCH, WAS INTENDED TO MAKE EACH OF YOU STRONGER.
NOW, IF YOU'RE QUICK ABOUT CLEANING UP, I BELIEVE YOU'LL HAVE TIME TO JOIN THE OTHERS FOR DINNER.
ALIX...?
THANK YOU.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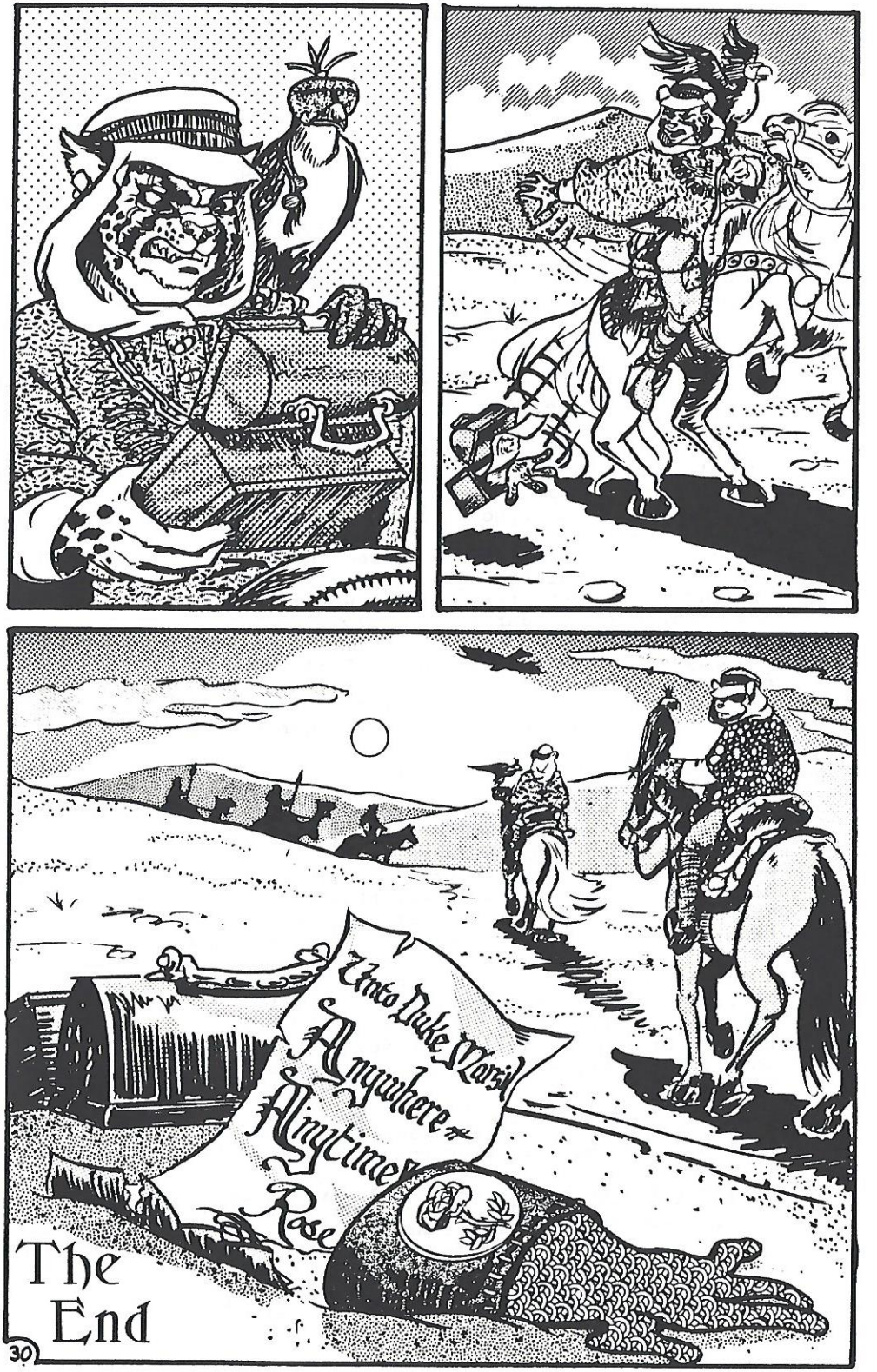

Unto Duke Norsil
Anywhere
Anytime
Rose
The End

GRANUAILE Part III

Seamus Donn
Lough Devnaree (Ireland)

A grey old tower, by storm and sea-waves beat
Perch'd on a cliff, beneath it yawneth wide
A lofty cavern of yore a fit retreat
For pirates galleys; altho', now, you'll meet
Nought but the seal and wild gull; from that cave
A hundred steps do upwards lead your feet
Unto a lonely chamber! -- Bold and brave
Is he who climbs that stair, all slippery from the wave.

I sat there on an evening. In the west,
Amid the waters, sank the setting sun:
While clouds, like parting friends, about him prest,
Clad in their fleecy garbs, of gold and dun;
And silence was around me -- save the hum,
Of the lone and wild bee, or the curlew's cry.
An lo! upon me did a vision come,
Of her who built that tower, in days gone by;
And in that dream, behold! I saw a building high.

A stately hull -- lofty and carved the roof --
Was deck'd with silken banners fair to see.
The hanging velvet, from Genou's woof,
And wrought with Tudor roses curiously;
At its far end did stand a canopy,
Shading a chair of state, on which was seen
A ladye fair, with look of majesty,
Amid a throng, 'yclad in costly sheen --
Nobles and gallant Knights proclaim her England's Queen.

The sage Elizabeth; and by her side
Were group'd her counsellors, with calm, grave air,
Burleigh and Walsingham, with others, tried
In wisdom and in war, and sparkling there,
Like Summer butterflies, were damsels fair,
Beautiful and young: behind a trusty band
Of stalwart yeomanry, with watchful care,
The portal guard, while nigher to it stand
Usher and page, ready to ape with willing hand.

A Tucket sounds, and lo! there enters now
A strange group, in saffron tunics drest:
A female at their head, whose step and brow
Herald her rank, and calm and self possest,
Onward she came, alone through England's best,
With careless look, and bearing free yet high,
Tho' gentle dames their titterings scarce represt,
Noting her garments as she passed them by;
None laughed again who met that stern and flashing eye.

Restless and dark, its sharp and rapid look
Show;d a fierce spirit, prone a wrong to feel,
And quicker to revenge it. As a book,
That sun-burnt brow did fearless thoughts reveal;
And in her girdle was a skeyne of steel;
Her crimson mantle, a gold brooch did bind;
Her flowing garments reached unto her heel;

Her hair-part fell in tresses unconfined,
And part, a silver bodkin did fasten up behind.

'Twas not her garb that caught the gazer's eye --
Tho' strange, 'twas rich, and, after its fashion, good --
But the wild grandeur of her mien-erect and high.
Before the English Queen she dauntless stood,
And none her bearing there could scorn as rude;
She seemed as one well used to power -- one that hath
Dominion over men of savage mood,
And dared the tempest in its midnight wrath,
And thro' opposing billows cleft her fearless path.

And courteous greeting Elizabeth them pays,
And bids her welcome to her English land
And humble hall. Each looked with curious gaze
Upon the other's face, and felt they stand
Before a spirit like their own. Her hand
The stranger raised -- and pointing where all pale,
Thro' the high casement, cam the sunlight bland,
Gliding the scene and group with rich avail;
Thus, to the English Sov'reigh, spoke proud "Grana Wale".

Queen of the Saxons! from the distant west
I come; from Achill steep and Island Clare,
Where the wild eagle builds 'mid clouds, his nest,
And Ocean flings its billows in the air.
I come to greet you in your dwelling fair.
Led by your fame -- lone sitting in my cave.
In sea -- beat Doona -- it hath reached me there,
Theme of the minstrel's song; and then I gave
My galley to the wind, and crossed the dark green wave.

"Health to thee, ladye! -- let your answer be
Health to our Irish land; for evil men
Do vex her sorely, and have buklar'd thee
Abettor of their deeds; lyeing train,
That cheat their mistress for the love of gain,
And wrong their trust-aught else I little reck,
Alike to me, the mountain and the glen --
The castle's rampart of the galley's deck;
But thou my country spare -- your foot is on her neck.

Thus brief and bold, outspake that ladye stern,
And all stood silent thro' that crowded hall;
While proudly glared each proud and manly kern
Attendant on their mistress. Then courtly all
Elizabeth replies, and soothing fall
Her words, and pleasing to the Irish ear --
Fair promises -- that she would soon recall
Her evil servants. Were these words sincere?
That promise kept? Let Erin answer with a tear!

ON CHANGING THE WORLD AROUND YOU

Guidelines for your efforts

By Viscount Galen of Bristol KSCA - Ansteorra

As a long time reader and occasional contributor to this newsletter, I have often read about ladies who worked against various obstacles (both personal and institutional) to try to gain acceptance for themselves (or for women in general) as fighters. I've also seen a lot of advice on how to accomplish this. Let me add to it.

There is little anyone can do alone. For most activities of any kind in the SCA, more than one person is required. The art of getting other people to do what YOU want them to do is called "politics". (Don't flinch). If you live in a group where women can't get training and/or aren't taken seriously as fighters, and you want the people in that group to behave differently, the only way is via politics. Sounds scary, doesn't it? Relax, it's not so bad.

In fact, politics is much like SCA fighting. Like fighting, when politics is done badly, then you, your opponents or your teammates can get badly hurt. Like fighting, you strive hard NEVER to hurt ANYONE. Like fighting, politics is done in broad daylight (that is to say, not in secret), for all to see; it's done chivalrously (like all SCA activities), and for clear, honorable goals. Never strike from behind, nor take unfair advantage, and call your blows. When you've lost an encounter, accept it with grace.

Never sacrifice your honor for your goal. Never hit harder than necessary, never strike a fallen opponent, and stop when you've won. Don't let emotions dictate tactics. And never, never let an opponents lack of chivalry, fair play, or sportsmanship inspire a similar lack in you.

Unlike fighting, you never play politics just to show how well you can. There are no marshals, but there are peers, nobles, and seneschals who may step on you if you step out of line (I'm one), so police yourself carefully.

Other rules:

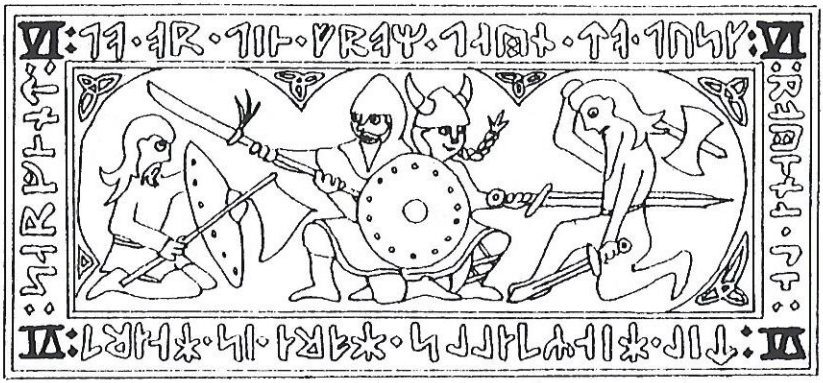
1) It is not possible for one person or faction to take control of a branch, but it IS possible to destroy a branch while trying to control it.

2) If the good of the group seems to demand that you take action that will inevitably hurt someone, don't do it.

So often I have seen a well-meaning individual walk in with a vision of what the game should be, and destroy his enjoyment of the game, and others', trying to help the group by bringing his vision about. These general guidelines are intended to help you avoid such a result. They are vague, so as to apply to many kinds of situations, so think hard about how these guidelines apply to your situation.

(By the way, I lied before. There is an alternative to politics as a method to altering others' conduct. It is the use —or threat— of aggressive force. As a tactic in our game of chivalry, I can't recommend it).

And, just like any other advice on chivalrous conduct, these suggestions don't ensure you'll win the game, only that you don't ruin it. And that's worthwhile.



Words weave a widow's lonely lament for my lost lord

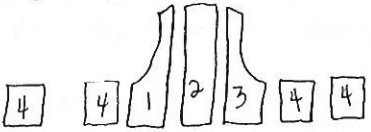
Art and poem by Rowena Le Sarjent, Shire or Southron Gaard, Caid

Sad sing I a skald's song
'Pon a pale parchment page
Wishing I was a warrior
For to fearlessly face foe
Hack heads from heros
Make men,s mothers mourn
Earn honor in Odin's eye
Secure my seat 'pon Sleipnir
And bourn by way of Bifrost
Hailed be in hallowed hall
Do or die from dawn to dusk
'Til Hiemdall's horn is heard
Yet greater gift I gain
To number not the nights
With hewn heart healed
I lay 'longside my lost love.

The Evolution of my Female Chest Armor

by Lady Celeste Cathan - Caid

My first breastplate was a hand-me-down. It had been made for a man, tall and thin; I am neither. It was a plastic brigandine which he didn't need. After a few months I commissioned a local armorer to make a breastplate that locked up when fallen on. This has saved my ribs many times! Unfortunately the armorer had never made female armor before. It ended up having gaps on the side of my chest, and I can jokingly call it my nursing armor, as you could fit a baby in the room left over. I covered the gaps with leather, but that didn't stay. Finally, with a little windfall and good luck, I got the best armor I feel is possible for me in my kingdom. It is stainless steel (very heavy, but worth it) done in an Italian style. It has a center, and two side plates for the front, and smaller plates for the sides and back. When I first got it, I felt it would not fit without a large center plate. However, surprisingly it worked with the small plates. Here is a sketch of all the pieces.



The 1, 2, and 3 pieces are the front. The 4's are the sides and back. The curves are the hardest part. I got the kit from a merchant in Santa Monica CA, and he got it from an Eastern Master who made these kits from road signs.

The sides of my chest are covered, and I can freely put my arms forward comfortably. For my body type (short, padded, etc.) I feel this is the best. I have been told by Western female fighters that this style will also lock up and prevent your ribs from being hurt. I suspect I shall find out soon enough!! If you have any questions or comments please let me know.

How to Care for Blued Steel

Recently, I was privileged enough to buy a blued steel helm from a sister of a friend, the product of an armorer that I personally admire and who has helped me on other occasions. He uses a torch to blue his armor, which he first makes sure is ABSOLUTELY clean. After I bought the helmet, I noticed it had duct tape marks. I was lucky to have the squire of the aforementioned armorer in my Barony. I was able to ask the squire how to clean the blued steel.

Here is the method he suggested:

First, peel off the old duct tape.

Second, use paint thinner on the duct tape residue. Use just enough to get rid of the adhesive.

Third, spray WD-40 on the mark. This should restore most of the normal color of the steel.

I hope this will help anyone else with the same dilemma.

Editorials

Thomas McFionn - Overseas

One day, several fighters were sitting discussing fighting (what else). Mainly, the more experienced were sharing stories. During one story of a demo crowds reaction to the one shot battle between Ichiban Diaz and Countess Sir Fern, one of the novices exclaimed, "I could never fight a woman! If I was paired up against a woman I would refuse to fight".

"Then you would automatically lose",came the instant reply.

The offended novice looked about the room and could not find a sympathetic eye.

Some time later, during a very real war, I heard of a problem that had ground an entire base camp planning session to a halt. While setting up a plan for hasty decontamination in case of chemical attack, it was discovered that there was not enough equipment to set up a separate women's station. Furthermore, there were no women on any of the decontamination teams nor time to train an entire female staffed team.

Although male, I have had many occasions where my personal preferences must bow to necessity. The disposal of the camps excrement, or more accurately my occasional part in it, is a perfect example. I know of no SCA female fighter who would feel otherwise.

I applaud Flower of Souvenance's refusal to champion anybody's "pro-myself" cause. Lady Llamrei Aethnen's article "On Getting Things Done" (FOS #10) is a beautiful example of common sense that is all too uncommon in the modern world.

In reply to Lindoret of Byrnn Myrddin's editorial, I suspect the reasons many male fighters encourage women to use the greatsword *(or polearm)* are the same as my preference for the weapon: reach and leverage.

The trade-offs for all this long distance power can be corrected with training. The greatsword is notably unforgiving of bad swings and can be unwieldy in close quarters.

H.L. Pegasus Devona - An Tir

Above is a picture from the cover of Medieval Romances, Edited by

Roger S. Loomis and Laura H. Loomis, Modern Library / Random House, New York 1957. It shows five mounted women warriors, two of them are Queens, the others are knights. By the shield one of the Queens carry and the cross bow carried by the other, the date for this picture might be 14th Century Italy. There are no credits given.

Has anyone seen the original? If so, who did it, when, what does it illustrate, and where is the original now?

In reply to Celeste Cathan of Caid, the so called "Allergy to Skirts" comes out of the modern Women's Movement. Many women dressed as men, this cross dressing may have been promoted by the Church at the time as a form of flattery to the male ego. (ie Which imitation is the most sincere form of.) But, in all the research I have done on the topic of women fighters of the Middle Ages and Renaissance, I have found that the vast majority of the fighting women wore what was appropriate to the situation, whether it was for High Court or the battlefield.

May I suggest that instead of the typically SCA generic garb that you have suggested, the garb from around the time of Stephan and Mathilda of England (1135-1154) may be more to your liking. The Empress Mathilda fought Stephan every inch of the way to the throne of England to end up losing when her supporters were bribed to break their oaths to her. Or maybe you would like the garb found at the time of Joan of Arc (1340-50). A good book of patterns for English or French for this period can be found in Jeanne D'Arc ses Costumes, son Armure, Essai de Reconstitution by Adreien Harmand, Libraire Enest Leroux, Paris 1929. This book is written in French, but all the patterns can be expanded on a graph of 10cm. squares. You also might look up garb from the time of Caterina Sforza or Queen Isabella of Spain, whose armor is still in the Royal Armory of Madrid. She lead her own troops while pregnant.

The list goes on!

Elfach Myddfai - Lochac

It may be of interest that our last Coronet Tourney, (due to various unusual circumstances) at one stage, was to consist of three female and one male fighters. I believe the final count was 3 & 4, but have yet to confirm this.

NEXT ISSUE:

Notes from "Women and Fighting"
by HRH Rowan!

Flower of Soubenance
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Issue	*Subscriber price*	Non-Subscriber price
#7 & 9-12	*$1.50*	$2.00
#4-6, & 8	*$2.50*	$3.00
#1-3	*$3.50*	$4.00

#12 **28 pages.** Highlights include: *The 24th Ansteorran Crown by Master Cadfan ap Morgan Godrudd, Polearm Fighting Part IV by Sir Kazimier of Silesia, Granuaile Part II by Seamus Donn, Shark Infested Waters by Countess Cymber* and *Vixen's Keep.*

#11 **32 pages.** Highlights include: *Martial Arts female groin and breast protection suggestion and order form, Women's Armor Standards - Survey Results by Countess Cymber, Polearm Fighting Part III by Sir Kazimier of Silesia* and *Vixen's Keep.*

#10 **20 pages.** Highlights include: *Polearm Fighting Part II by Sir Kazimier of Silesia, On Getting Things Done by Lady Llamrei Aethnen, Women's Armor Questionnaire* and *Caravan.*

#9 **24 pages.** Highlights include: *Taking the High Ground by Sir Hilary of Serendip, Amazon Household Letter by H.L. Regina, Polearm Fighting Part I by Sir Kazimier of Silesia, Vixen's Keep* and *Caravan.*

#8 **20 pages, color cover and insert.** Highlights include: *Practicing the Tear Drop Return by Sir Hilary of Serendip, Studying Your Opponent by Duke Christopher of Hoghton, Personal Observations and Techniques by Kief av Kiersted, Vixen's Keep* and *Caravan.*

#7 **32 pages.** Highlights include: *Teaching Lessons by Brian Mac Braud, Pennsic Women's Tourney by Viscountess Yseult Summerhall, For the Aspiring Women Fighter by Marie Genevieve, Vixen's Keep* and *Caravan.*

#6 **28 pages.** Highlights include: *Tourney vs Practice by Sir William the Lucky, Spear Fighting by Duke Christopher of Hoghton, The Fletchers Jig by Valkyrja Skegglos, Vixen's Keep* and *Caravan by Vladimina Foxfire.*

#5 **24 pages.** Highlights include: *Personal Remarks by Master Pavel Josevitch, A Word on Comedy and Tragedy by Lady Llamrei Aethnen* and *Two installements of Vixen's Keep by H.L. William Blackfox.*

#4 **40 pages.** Highlights include: *Talking to Your Sword by Sir Hilary of Serendip, Basic Strapping Techniques, The Fighting Distaff by Mistress Elspeth MacNaughton* and *the Premier of Vixen's Keep by H.L. William Blackfox.*

#3 **40 pages.** Highlights include: *Knees and Knee injuries in the SCA by Lady Kateryne of Hindscroft, Macho and Macha, Attitudes in Fighters, Personal Comments Regarding Armor for Women* and *Women Gladiators of the Roman Empire by Lady Llamrei ap Pendaren.*

#2 **52 pages.** Higlights include: *Initial Trianing of a Fighter by Duke Erin Breck Gordon, Zen of Sword and Shield by Sir Hilary of Serendip* and *Training Ladies to Fight by Sir William the Lucky.*

#1 **68 pages. Original issue!** Highlights include: *Knightly and Chivalrous Manner by Viscount Galen of Bristol, Specifics on training by Sir Hilary of Serendip, Equality - Love it or Leave it by Sir Maythen of Elfhaven* and *Women Warriors by Adeetha Meara Bytha O'Braugh.*

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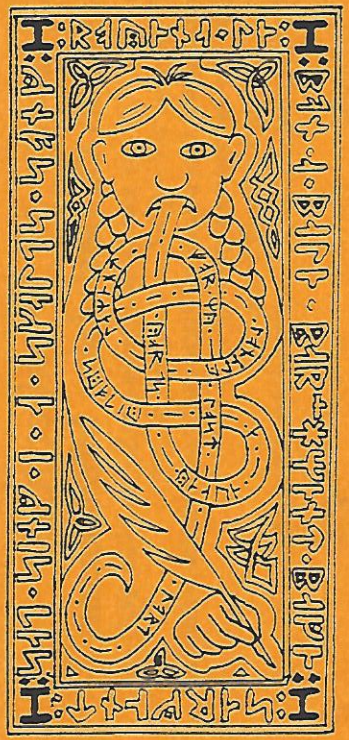

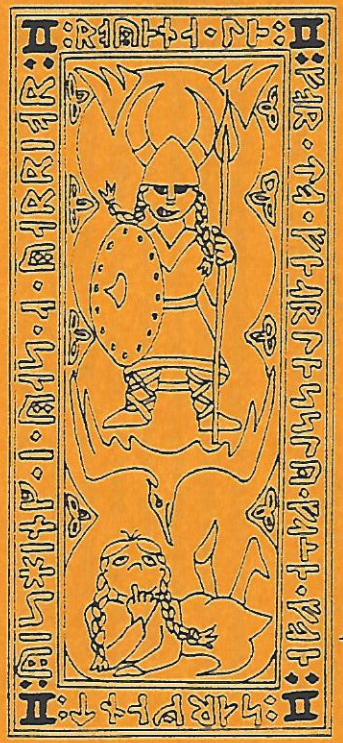

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