

Tuesday, October 29, 2013

## A Heraldic Consult Table Is Coming to You!

Did you know there are eight warranted heralds in Nottingham Hill Coill, four in Hidden Mountain, and one in the Shire of Border Vale Keep? Why is this something you would want to know?

If you are interested in registering a name, a device, a badge, or a household name, you will need a warranted herald to submit the paperwork and fees for you. Only a warranted herald can conduct heraldic business in the Kingdom of Atlantia.

With 13 warranted heralds between the two baronies and the shire, one would think finding assistance with all the research and submission guidelines would be fairly easy. Too often that is not the case.

One of the best places to obtain assistance is at a Heraldic Consult Table at an event.

### What to expect at a Heraldic Consult Table

No matter what stage you are at in developing your persona, a name, or a device, one of the heralds at the consult table will be able to assist you. However, depending on the resources at hand, you may not be able to complete all the research needed to submit your device. All is not lost, however. You may get enough information to take back to your local herald for the finishing touches. Maybe the research and paperwork has been done, but you have not been able to submit it. That can be done at the consult table.

A small library of resources will be available for name and device research. The heralds will be able to assist with name construction and device composition. Interpreting the rules for submitting names and devices is the purview of the herald.

If there is internet access, there will be greater access to acceptable resources. More importantly, the heralds will be able to provide preliminary conflict checking.

Hanging around a consult table is also a great way to learn about heraldry. Volunteers are always welcome. People who can draw and color are in great demand.

### Finding warranted heralds and heraldic consult tables

The roster of warranted heralds and their contact information is available on the website of The Atlantian College of Heralds, found here: <http://heraldry.atlantia.sca.org/roster.htm> A warranted herald is required for submissions to the College and accepting fees.

Other gentles in the Kingdom are also heralds, and they can assist you with your research. Don't hesitate to speak with one of these heralds.

To inquire about a heraldic consult table at your next event, please contact me. As Silver Shark, I arrange to have tables at as many events as feasible.

In Service to the Dream,  
Catguist! Silver Shark  
catguist! (at) gmail.com

## October 2015 Volume 35, Issue 10

From The Seneschal's Pen

Baronial Missives - September

September - Master Efenwealt

## Persona of The Month

October - Master Efenwealt

July - Cian Triton

## Upcoming Events

Schedule

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Canton of Brockore Abbey

St. Georges

Ritterwald

Falcon Cree

Cyddlain Downs

## Contact Information

Baronial Regum

Canton Seneschals

Chatelaines

## Links!

Nottingham Hill Coill

Email lists/Forums

## Luminaries Illuminated

Lord Jonathen Hawke

Rohesia Anven

Lady Sithmaith NicAoidh

Lady Millicent Shiveley

Lady Katherine d'Orleans

Syr Richard de Montbrai

Baroness Morwenna and Baron Bardulf

Lord Ivar Ulfsson

Jack Black of Flint

## Songs and Poetry

The Marshall's Cross by Sir Bryce

## Fiction





## The Medieval Almanac



Pietro de' Crescenzi, *Liber ruralium commodorum* (The Book of Rural Benefits), 1304-1309

# The Medieval Almanac

## Life on the Farm

By Barunin Gisela vom Kreuzbach  
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Farming came to Europe about 11,000 years ago, apparently in two waves from the Middle East where the science of deliberate agriculture originated. It allowed the hunter-gatherer peoples who populated the vast European Continent to settle into permanent stable holdings, villages and, eventually, cities.

In our period of study agriculture moved from being a matter of mere subsistence to become the primary economic engine and source of wealth for all of Europe. Everyone, from the meanest serf to the pope danced to the rhythm of the seasons.

Coaxing grain, fruit and vegetable from the thin layer of top soil in the Middle Ages and Renaissance was a highly labor intensive prospect. At certain times of the year nearly everyone, save the vicar and the lord of the manor himself, was involved in producing the best possible harvest. Most of the year, however, those we would call peasants and serfs worked the land.

Peasants generally contracted with the local lord for protection and support and farmed land they might own outright or they owned the rights to in exchange for labor in the lord's fields and pastures. It could not legally be taken from them without good reason based on criminal act or abandonment on the part of the farmer.

Serfs, on the other hand, were bound to the local noble by debt of owed labor, rent and levies. Debt that was, at times, deliberately structured to keep individuals and their families indentured. Land ownership might be hereditary but so was debt.

Through the early part of the Middle Ages in Europe, most land was assigned to manors of various sizes, generally about 600 acres according to several sources. After the Norman Conquest there were more than 9,000 such manors in England. Nobles held at least one, often more, manors.

The part of Europe that is now Austria, Switzerland, Germany, France and the Low Countries, had

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[The Last Saxon Queen](#)

[The Raptor's Tale, Chapter 1](#)

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## War Stories/There I Was

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## Blog Archive

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## Followers

## Comments? Questions?

Do you have any comments, questions, or suggestions for *The Quill*? We want to know! Please send them to [quill\(AT\)nottinghillcoi11.org](mailto:quill(AT)nottinghillcoi11.org) or directly to my e-mail at [dater2187\[at\]gmail.com](mailto:dater2187[at]gmail.com)

You may also leave comments directly in any of the comment sections.



a population that fluctuated between 10 and 15 million from 1 CE to 600 CE. That more than doubled to 36 million by the 13<sup>th</sup> Century. Some attribute the faster growth to the introduction of new, more effective plow designs that allowed more land to be brought to till. Just to give you an idea of how sparsely populated the area was at that time, the same area now supports 250 million.

Farm yield of the manors was vital to keep the staff and families of the castle, hall and village fed. Sale of surplus yield and finished goods became increasingly important as the economies grew. As weather improved, so did productivity. As the economy and trade strengthened and the population increased, so did the need for cleared arable land.

More land and more productivity required more labor. Serfs who owed debt obligations were cheaper than hired workers or freeholders who sold their goods. It benefitted the nobility to make it harder to remain a freeholder ... a free land owner and to drive more of the local population into servitude.

"At the beginning of this period (900 -1200 CE) the main source of wealth was agriculture, and it remained so throughout. Lords had established their control over it in much the same way that they had established their rights over men, amalgamating rights, which had been theirs on their own estates with public rights and then extending them over as many people as possible within their lordships. The control of local justice and of obligations to forced labour, the offer of 'protection' and levying of taxation, were the essential means by which free peasants were reduced to servitude, hereditarily bound to their tenements and liable to arbitrary levies and labour services. Poor harvests and flight from marauders were both factors which could lead a freeman to surrender his liberty, but it was likely that the pressure came from above and was not willingly conceded from below, because the most rapid subjection of the peasantry came not in the tenth century, at the time of greatest instability, but rather in the eleventh when harvests were improving and lords looking for the means to build in stone rather than wood." (Holmes, 1988)

This author illustrates his point by noting that 80% of donations received by the Chartres cathedral between 940 and 980 were from peasant freeholders. That figure dropped steadily but slowing until the time of the Conquest when it held at about 38% for 30 years. Between 1090 and 1130, however, only 8% of donations to the cathedral were given by free peasants.

The eleventh-century bishop of Laon called peasants the class that "owns nothing that it does not get by its own labor and provided the rest of the population with money, clothing, and food ... Not one free man could live without them" (Gies & Gies, 1978)



BKOFFF Alamy Images

So they worked. All of them. From toddling child to elderly grandmother, each worked at tasks suited to their strengths and limitations.

Men being, in general, physically stronger than women and unhampered by pregnancy and small-child care, worked in the fields and forests, clearing land, plowing, setting fences, building structures, bringing in harvests, shearing sheep and butchering livestock.

Women generally kept the home and village, tending livestock and gardens, carding, spinning and weaving wool, making ale, cheese and butter. At times women helped in the fields as well, sowing, helping with the harvest scything, tying, and winnowing.

Children began to work nearly as soon as they could walk. Very young children would be stationed in gardens (tofts) and fields (crofts) after planting and sowing to scare birds away. As they aged, they'd be tasked with climbing to the top of trees to get the fruit adults could not reach, feeding livestock, tending herds at pasture, weeding fields and garden plots, gathering wood and helping with the harvests.

winnowing.

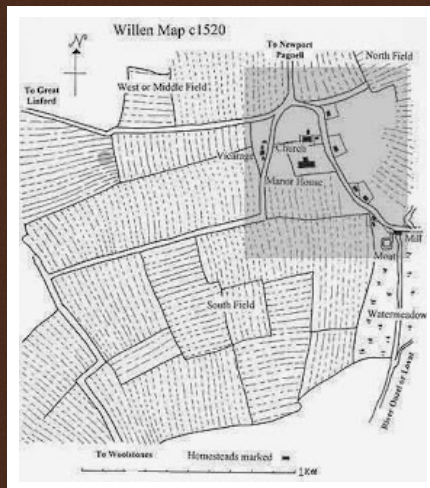


Life was work. Work was life. There was little distinction made for most people. All danced to the rhythm of the seasons.

Even though land was usually allotted to individual families based on seniority, type and amount of work as well as need, fields were most often worked communally allowing for larger

plots ... usually ten times as long as they were wide which made tasks such as plowing ... And turning a team of oxen ... a much easier endeavor.

Oxen, some more specialized tools and some larger equipment were generally owned by the entire village and sometimes were stored in the church.



Fields were laid out around the village in such a way to contain both good and poor soil in each. With crop rotation, this gave a greater chance of good harvests each year.

A three-field system of crop rotation was used during much of our period in which a plot was sown two years in a row and let fallow the third to allow the soil to recover. Crops were rotated as it was long-noticed that if wheat or rye (Wintercorn) followed peas, beans or oats (Springcorn) the yield was greater. They didn't understand the cause but today we know those crops are nitrogen-fixing crops that replenish the nutrients used by the wheat. During the fallow year fields were fertilized with

livestock dung and marled, a process of spreading clay for the carbonate of lime.

Using the map of Willen to illustrate, this year the Middle Field might be sown with winter wheat, the South Field with oats and the North Field left fallow. Next year the North Field would be sown with wheat, the Middle with Oats and the South left fallow.

What type of crops were planted or livestock kept and the timing of agrarian activities varied from one region to another based on everything from local traditions and preferences to availability of certain plant and animal varieties to climate based on elevation or latitude.

Wheat, rye, barley and oats were fairly ubiquitous as were peas, cabbage, beans and turnips. Eggplant came from Persia and generally stayed in the warmer climes. Cattle were widely raised for meat and, in Europe, for milk.

Sheep were just as widely tended for wool and meat but in the Near and Middle East sheep and goat's milk was preferred. Europeans have the genetic ability to digest cow's milk into adulthood. Those of Middle Eastern descent tend to lack the ability and use the much easier digested fermented goats milk.

Barley was largely used for beer. Rye and wheat for flour and as a cash crop. Hay and oats generally went for animal feed, though, of course, not always and not everywhere. A quip from period says, "Oats, food for horses in England, but men in Scotland," to which the reply was, "Aye, and where do you find better horses or finer men?"

A minimum of 36 bushels of wheat (the yield of four acres in an average year) was required to support a peasant's family for the year. An acre produced about 7 - 8.5 bushels of grain per acre in Medieval Europe where modern farming methods, on the same land, yield four times that at 42.5 bushels.

That yield was only about double the amount of seed used, 4 bu per acre. Barley would bring about 20 bushels per acre ... leaving about 15 after taxes and seed were pulled ... from only 2 bu of seed. Oates yielded a 300 to nearly 400 percent increase giving 10 -11.5 bu an acre from 3 bu of seed.



Peas, an important component in the medieval diet across Europe as a protein source, gave 8.5 - 10 bu per acre from 3 bu of seed.

"Because of relatively small yields, medieval agriculture was highly sensitive to adverse weather conditions, both summer droughts, winter freezes, and periods of overabundance of rain. This meant that a certain level of crop variety was necessary as insurance against the possible destruction of an important staple." (Glick, Livesey and Wallis, 2005)

#### What did they grow?

"Sour and sweet cherries of all kinds, both cultivated and wild, grow in such great quantity that sometimes it happens that more than sixty carts of them are in one day brought through the gates of the city, and they are available for sale in the city at any hour from mid-May until almost mid-July. Plums, too, white, yellow, dark, damascene, likewise in almost infinite quantity, are distributed ripe from shortly before the Kalends of July until the month of October.

"At the same time plums begin to appear, pears, summer apples, blackberries and the figs named 'flowers' appear in abundance; then follow cultivated filberts; afterwards the comel-berries, particularly appropriate for ladies; also jujubes and peaches amazingly abundant; likewise, figs and grapes of various kinds; also almonds, although few of them; wild filberts, nuts in unbelievable quantity, which all citizens who like them enjoy all the year round after all meals. Nuts can also be mixed, ground, with eggs and cheese and pepper to stuff meat in winter. Also an oil is obtained from them which is liberally consumed among us. Then again, winter pears and apples and crabapples grow, all of which abundantly supply our citizens through the winter and beyond. Also pomegranates appear, most useful to the sick. Grapes of many kinds are abundant, and they appear ripe about the middle of July and are available for sale until the Kalends of December or thereabouts."

Bovesin della Riva, *On the marvels of the City of Milan*. From the Latin. [1288]  
(Lopez & Raymond 1995)

His wonderfully descriptive PR letter aside ... crops generally produced in most of Europe in our period were:

Peas, lentils, fava beans, cabbage, onions, shallots, leeks, garlic, herbs, carrots, beets, turnips, rutabagas, parsnips, greens, parsley, chickpeas, navy beans, wheat, rye, barley, oats, millet, flax, hemp (for ~fiber~), apples, pears, cherries (sweet and sour), olives, figs, quinces, mulberries, walnuts, chestnuts, (Warmer climates had almonds, peaches, plums and in Italy and Spain, citrus)

Sheep, cattle, goats, chickens, pigs, horses, oxen

After the Muslim conquests in the East during the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> Centuries techniques and cultivars from the Subcontinent such as rice, sugar cane, citrus fruits and cotton were appropriated throughout the Islamic world. Crops cultivated in monsoon conditions, in Europe had to be irrigated. Something the Arabs called "Indian Farming" (filaha hindiyya). As these techniques and crops spread through Persia toward Europe, they picked up Persian cultivars ... eggplant and artichokes.

And so it continued until today, new technologies, and new varieties increasing our access to food and our enjoyment of it.

### 14<sup>th</sup> C English Poem

**Januar:** By thys fyre I warme my my handys  
**Februar:** And with my spade I delfe my landys  
**Marche:** Here I sette thyng to sprynge  
**Aprile:** And here I here the fowlis synge  
**Maii:** I am as lught as burdie in bowe  
**Junii:** And I wede my corn well mow  
**Julii:** With my sythe my mede I mowe  
**Auguste:** And here I shere my corne full lowe  
**September:** And with my flaylle I erne my brede  
**October:** And here I sawe my whete so rede



**November: At Martynesmasse I kulle my syne**  
**December: And at Chritemasse I drynke redde wyne**

## Winter

### JANUARY

Repairs to tools, buildings, fences, Some planting of early vegetables such as peas and onions depending on locale, Weaving, Crafting new tools, baskets, rope, nets, leather straps, Pruning Mature Trees, Clearing ditches, cutting wood, breeding sows, spreading fertilizer, early lambing



### FEBRUARY

Plowing in Southern lands, Planting, Fertilizing and amending soil with chalk and lime, Repairs, Clearing new fields, Pruning fruit trees and stalking vines, Lambing, Mending fences, Planting willows, Lambing, Calving

## Spring

### MARCH

Spreading Manure, Plowing, Planting early vegetables depending on locale, also flax and hemp, Sowing (scattering seeds in large fields such as grains for fall harvest and hay), Harrowing, Calving, Pruning Vines, Lady Day, March 25 marked the unofficial beginning of the new year for many as this day was the mile marker for returning to the fields.

### APRIL

Pruning Young Trees to encourage stronger more productive growth, Weeding, Scaring Birds, Planting pulses (peas and beans), cabbages, onions, carrots, parsnips, beets, leeks, turnips. Orchard Trees, Harrowing, Household gardens would have been planted in this time with sage, basil, thyme, rosemary, fennel, Parsely, dill, mint, chives, daisies, dandelion, wormwood, nettle, primrose, rocket, spinach, lettuce, cress, borage, rocket. Weaning calves, Dairy work comes into full swing, Farrowing piglets

### MAY

Weeding, Scaring Birds, Planting New Trees, Gathering Early crops such as cherries, strawberries, Digging Drainage Ditches, First plowing of Fallow fields, Capturing new swarms of bees, Mark sheep, Plant garden vegetables and pulses in cooler climes, Roof thatch repair begins

## Summer

### JUNE

Wash and Shear sheep, Harvesting (two main harvests, hay, barley, vetches, oats, peas, beans in late spring - early summer, wheat, rye and grapes late summer. If a spring grain crop was planted then another grain harvest in late fall), Weeding, Shearing Festival



### JULY

Shearing continues, Hay Mowing continues, Harvest of winter crops continues, Plowing harvested fields and marled fallow fields under, Gathering berries, Weeding, Harvesting flax and hemp, Washing, Carding and Spinning the wool, Gathering Wood a nearly year-round task to ensure enough fuel for winter as well as resources to craft tools, fences and repair buildings

### AUGUST

Harvesting Grain (winter crop in cooler climes) and hay, Tying sheaves and storing for threshing and winnowing later, Washing, Carding and Spinning the wool, Plant turnips





## Autumn

### SEPTEMBER

Harvesting grains (spring crop), Honey and wax, peas, apples, pears, blackberries and grapes, Breeding cattle, Tying, Threshing, Winnowing, Milling (The first record of a windmill in England was 1185 in Yorkshire. Shortly

afterwards, Pope Celestine III declared the air used by windmills was owned by the church and so a tax must be paid to the church for their use.), Plow fields for winter grain planting, Sow winter grain, Washing, Carding and Spinning the wool, Pruning Fruit Trees, Harvest Festival, Sell excess livestock

### OCTOBER

Last Plowing, Tilling, Harrowing, Sowing winter wheat, oats and barley, Milling, Weaving, Carding and Spinning the Wool, Brewing, Drive pigs to forage on Acorns and beechnuts, Harvesting Grapes and begin production of wine and verjuice, Breed sheep.

"About nones on 2 Oct., 1270, Amice daughter of Robert Belamy of Staploe and Sibyl Bonchevaler were carrying a tub full of grout between them in the brewhouse of Lady Juliana de Beauchamp ... intending to empty it in a boiling leaden vat, when Amice slipped and fell into the vat and the tub upon her ... the household came and found her scalded almost to death. A chaplain came and Amice had the rites of the church and died by misadventure about prime the next day" (Amt, 1993, p. 189).



### NOVEMBER

Butchering begins (Nov. 11, St. Martins Day), Salting/Smoking Preserving, Weaving, Gathering Willow and Reed for weaving baskets, Gathering Acorns for pigs feed, Gathering fuel wood for winter, Threshing and Winnowing, ideally suited to rainy and cold days, comes into full swing.

## Winter

### DECEMBER

Butchering, Salting/Smoking Preserving, Weaving, Gathering Willow and Reed for weaving baskets, Digging drainage ditches, Graves, Solstice and Christmas Celebrations



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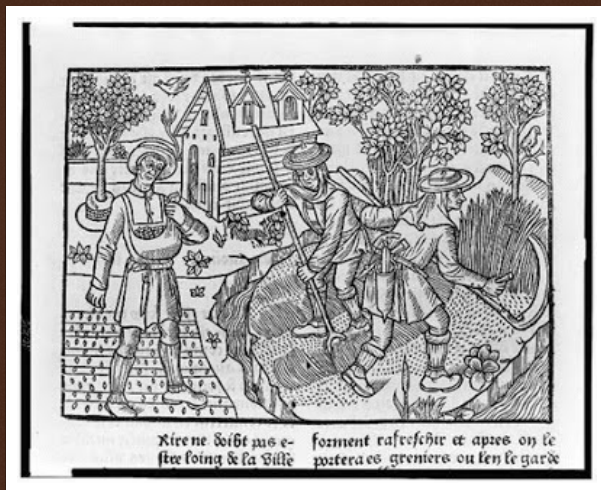
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## Legalese

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