

## THE CITADEL

JANUARY A.S. LVIII



## WE HAVE HEIRS!

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*And MORE!*

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HEAR NOW THE WORDS OF THEIR EXCELLENCIES  
BARON BJARKI AND BARONESS VALKA

Greetings unto the Barony of Cynnabar!

The cold winds of winter are upon us, but our hearts are filled with the fire of excitement and the warmth of the welcome we have received. We, Bjarki and Valka, wish to extend our gratitude. We are honored to be Baron and Baroness, and as the sixth Baronage, we hope to live up to the examples of our predecessors; each of which has provided a different set of virtues we hope to continue, be it enthusiasm, community, hospitality, authenticity, or pageantry. We will strive to prove your faith in us justified.

We were invested at Grand Day of Tournaments in this year two-thousand and twenty-three. The chill of fall was barely felt, and instead we were gifted with beautiful sunny weather, following a spectacular full moon, timely for the hallowed observance of Samhain. Their Majesties Wigthean and Neassa released TE Olaf and Malachy from their tenure as Cynnabar's Barons in the morning court, and We were then called to place our hands upon Oathbinder and repeat the words that would place Us in the privileged position of representing our Barony.

The day was busy and fun. HE Bjarki promptly got to work sorting and determining how prizes should be distributed. We were greeted by our cousins in neighboring Baronies, and were pleased to have productive discussions about Youth and the Pentamere Pearl at 12th Night, as well as receiving much appreciated advice. There was excellent fighting and fencing to watch, with a record turnout of rapier fighters, thanks due to Birke and her work spreading the word of the fun to be had. An embroidery salon and an A&S greenspace facilitated by Ulfrun saw several participants, as well as the gaming table. The solar provided by HE Jorun provided a quiet space removed from the rest of the room, and was very well received. We thank Jorun for elevating Cynnabar in the realm of inclusivity with her planning and work to include it. THL Ceara put on a quest for the youth to participate in, which HE Valka can attest was popular and enjoyed. The Baroness was one of the stops on the quest, and the pumpkin filled with the charms they received was quickly emptied and had to be refilled! Evening court was Our first court as the Baronage. HE Bjarki distributed the prizes from the tournaments, and we witnessed the Elevation of a Knight and a Master of Defence, as well as the elevation of our own Barons to Court Barons for their work in service to the Barony.

The day was a testament to the planning and work that went into it; it was well attended, attendants enjoyed their time there, and things ran smoothly, including set up and tear down. As always, the prevailing emotion of the day was pride, watching the machinery that is the Barony at work.

Our next event was Wassail. It was held at the Chelsea Fairgrounds, and everyone we talked to thought the event at that site was a success. Despite the near constant rain, the temperature was back up above freezing, contrary to the days proceeding, and camaraderie and joy filled the building with such warmth that it was necessary to open the doors.

*[CONTINUED ...]*

Event Steward Ceara put much work and time into communicating with the site contact and ensuring the hall was well decked with greenery, banners, and candles. In Our first court, we awarded a Defender of the Tower to THL Caryn of Cynnabar for her time as Archery Champion, serving the Barons Olaf and Malachy. THL Throckmorton was gifted the artifact from Our travels, The Golden Saw, as befitting someone who has the tools on hand at any given time to assist in woodworking emergencies. Specifically, Her Highness arrived at Grand Day as her first event as HRH, sans wedges for her throne. Throckmorton stepped up and was witnessed whittling new wedges. He also assisted Us with shortening Our banner pole, when it was inadvertently taller than TRM. THL Ceara was gifted a Wassail themed birthday circlet and we had the opportunity to wish her a Happy Birthday from the Barony at large, as her birthday was only two days after the event itself.

We were so happy and grateful to spend the day with our beloved Barony; sharing food and drink, laughing and talking. There was dancing, and music and caroling far into the evening. It cannot be overstated what the music and singing adds to the atmosphere, and we are so appreciative to have such skilled artisans in our midst. The dessert auction was also an incredible success; through the generosity of the delicious donations we raised enough to provide over seventy new-member discounts, and we want to recognize the importance of the work of HE Hannah to make new participation more accessible.

We have received good advice and information from our predecessors, and offers of support from many different members of the Barony, and for that we would also like to express our gratitude. At no point have We ever felt like We were entering into this endeavor alone, and we hope to make our Barony feel supported and proud of our efforts.

I GODHIT WRITE THIS: *Commentary by THL Godhit of Cynnabar, Chronicler*

A PARTICULAR and conspicuous moment in the Cynnabar Baronial lineage has arrived: not “just” that we have heirs ... but *such* heirs. Let me introduce them to you starting with Baroness Valka, whose father and mother are legacy folk of Cynnabar.

You’ll have to go back to 1982/1983 in the Cynnabar history and read about Ian MacIan of Annandale, MOAS and armorer, to know the auspicious parentage of our Baroness. The sadness of A.S. XXIII (1988) is now ended, with revels! Writes Baron Dabhid Ruadh of that parting ...

“**T**he year began with the loss of two of our longest-serving, generous members  
(*Ian MacIan of Annandale*  
and *Catriona of Leslie Tower*) And, of course,  
their children. They have moved back to  
Cheboygan to join the family business.”\*

Not that our Baron should get short shrift: He returns to a position of leadership, having spent the last 10 years on hiatus from his previous vocation as Seneschal (2010-2013), though having jobbed around at other pursuits in the meantime, like Baronial Armored Champion. Huzzah for Their Excellencies Cynnabar, Valka and Bjarki! WELCOME HOME!

[\*citation: “The True History of the Royal Borough (‘Shire’) of Cynnabar” ... 4<sup>th</sup> Edition, 2021.  
Accessed via Internet 12/22/23, p. 57]

DID YOU KNOW?

From 1979 to 1986, what became the Barony of Cynnabar met in the William Cook Room on the 9<sup>th</sup> floor of the Legal Research Building of the University of Michigan Law School.



[Photo credit: Godhit of Cynnabar]

# COURT REPORTS

Members of the Populace Recently Noted:

**A Grand Day of Tournaments at the Barony of Cynnabar, October 28, A.S. LVIII**

**Baron (Cynnabar):** Bjarki Bjornson, Valka Iansdottir

*Court report for Evening Court of Their Majesties Wigthegn and Neassa at Grand Day of Tournaments in the Barony of Cynnabar on 28 October (AS 58).*

**Dragon's Barb:** Olafr Igulbjarnarson

**COURT (Territorial Retired):** Malachy von Ulm, Olafr Igulbjarnarson

**Baronial Wassail, December 3, A.S. LVIII**

*Court report for Baronial Court of Their Excellencies Bjarki and Valka*

**Defender of the Tower:** Caryn of Cynnabar, Baronial Archery Champion

**Golden Saw:** Thomas Throckmorton

*“Le Roman de Gregoire de Lyon,” by Sir Gregoire de Lyon, KSCA*

Editor’s note: The development of the literature of courtly love is a conspicuous feature of the late thirteenth century, in France most notably. “Unlike genres such as the *chanson de geste*, which focused on military prowess, romances took love, and courtly love in particular, as their central theme.” [<https://library.missouri.edu/specialcollections/exhibits/show/science-of-love/courtly-love-in-medieval-roman>] What could be more chaste than a Knight’s love for his wife and his desire to be reunited with her after removes and adventures? What follows is “persona” writing at its finest as Sir Gregoire de Lyon makes his way home from summer campaigns in the east, relishing the prospect of a grand day of martial entertainment among friends in lands adjacent to his own holdings. [Compiled from Facebook posts to A Grand Day of Tournaments event discussions, August-October AS LVIII (2023).]

**14 August.** Greetings unto you my fair wife. I hope this missive finds you in good health and preparing our lands for the upcoming harvest without worry or concern. I’ve missed you dearly while on campaign and only the thought of being reunited with you kept me from sinking into despair while the storms raged above our pavilions and the arrows rained down upon us on the field of battle.

I can now say with great joy that His Majesties’ chevauchée into the Debatable Lands has drawn to a successful close for the season. With the protection of Saints Michael and Guinefort, I can report that I have retained my health and increased our wealth from the spoils of several captured towns.

I have begun the long voyage home through Aethelmarc and the eastern reaches of the Midrealm. It is my stalwart wish to return to our lands in time for the Grand Tournament in October to be held in the Barony of Cynnabar. Alas, while the war may be done, I fear my adventures have not yet drawn to a close. I will send updates of my voyage whenever I can. May the saints of heaven protect and keep you, until I can once again hold you in my arms. I remain your loving husband,  
-Gregoire.

**21 August.** Unto the fairest light in all of the lands of the five seas, the beacon that guides me home across distant lands, I send greetings to you my lady Giovanna -

It has been one week since my last message was sent, and I am sad to report that my journey back to you has not made much progress. After leaving His Majesty’s war camps in the Debatable Lands and heading north toward the main pilgrim’s route back to our lands, we were beset by a gentleman bandit and his band of merry miscreants! I assure you now, so that you know no fear, that we all remain unharmed, and in fact have had quite the adventure which I shall relay to you now!

At first, seeing a man so finely bedecked in the cote armor of a nobleman, I thought perhaps he was another knight looking for a few passes at the crossroads, as was in days or yore. It was then that I saw the rest of his men slink out of the bushes and surround my squires and I on all sides! Seeing that we were outnumbered with no clear path of escape, I drew my sword and issued challenge, “My good man, you stand before me arrayed as a knight, but wear no arms by which I could identify you. State your name and face me, one on one. If you best me, you shall have whatever riches we carry upon our persons without a fight, however if I am victorious you and your men will allow my squires and I to pass.”

The bandit king lifted his visor, a twinkle in his eye and a grin on his lips, “Ah, Sir Gregoire! I am known by many names along these roads... Nissan Maxima... Daimler von

Benz... Sir Daniel... but today, today you may call me Royce Bentley! I accept your proposal – let us fight to three blows well struck and then we shall settle our business.” The Bandit King then shuttered his helm and drew his two keen swords, assuming a stance that clearly told a story of having trained under the tutelage of a great German master.

For my part, I settled my shield, gripped my sword tight, and vaulted from my mount to face Royce upon the ground. Our blades came together, sparks of steel flying like Hephaestus himself were trying to reforge our blades. The fight was furious, neither of us wishing to give ground to the other. My shield stopped many blows that assuredly would have rent my hauberk to shreds, while the second sword of the brigand was always prepared to parry even my most powerful of blows. Eventually, one of my strikes found purchase upon Royce’s forearm. I thought for sure that it would slow him down and rob power from his fight, but alas, it only seemed to enrage him. With a hearty laugh, he struck out as fast as lightning and landed two swift blows to my head. I was stunned and about to drop to my knees in defeat, when my foe caught me in his arms and bade I remain standing!

“Sir Gregoire, long have we known one another and always have our fights been thus! I shall send my men to bed tonight, denied of riches, but only if you and your squires will be our guests in camp.”

Stunned by the largesse of an outlaw, but not willing to risk my life and those of my squires, I accepted the invitation, “Royce Bentley, you are a great man. Had your path in life been different, surely I would have bent my knee to you as King! I shall accept your hospitality, but I shall not do so without giving your men at least a token of what you have earned here today! Take this rasher of bacon we have provisioned ourselves with and split it amongst your bandits for they are fine men and deserve to eat well!”

We were taken to the bandit camp. There we tarried for nearly a week, so fine were the accommodations and hospitality! The food, the drink, the music – all served and performed by the fairest of maidens! The jousting and feats of arms were a site to behold – my squires all comported themselves well and did me great honor with their courtesy and prowess! It was hard to leave the Clovenshield camp, but knowing that you were waiting, I was drawn away. Before leaving, I made sure to regale Royce Bentley and his men with tales of chivalric deeds performed in the past at Grand Day of Tournaments in Cynnabar. The great tournaments on foot, the spear duels, the pas d’armes where legendary heroes of Cynnabar held the field against all comers, and of course the fabled fights of the Faithful against the vicious lions! All were very impressed, and some even made plans to journey to the tourney as well.

The time is late, and we must gain ground if I am to see you before the harvest is in and in time to take the field at Grand Day of Tournaments. I leave you now with fond wishes of health and safety.

May Saint Guinefort watch over you.

I remain your loving husband,

-Gregoire.

**30 August.** To my dearest Giovanna, whose love acts as a lighted beacon in the tower guiding me home, greetings and warm wishes. I apologize for the tardiness of this missive; another adventure has befallen us on our journey home, one that I shall relate to you now.

Uillec, Ionnis, Collette and I were riding our way toward the Midrealm border when we spotted a white stag in among the trees off the path! The beast had a magnificent set of antlers and appeared to glow with an inner light. Surely it was an omen and we were all excited to relieve the tedium of the road and give ourselves over to the joy of the hunt.

The deer stood still and watched us as we picketed our pack horses and prepared to give chase. As soon as Uillec sounded his horn, the stag leapt into action and ran away from us. Armed with

stout spears with hardy crosses, but alas no hounds, the four of us spurred our horses into the forest to give chase. The trees were dense, but the undergrowth was far worse – this was no lord’s hunting land, but true wilds. The going was slow and assuredly we would have lost our quarry if this had been any ordinary deer. For great periods of time we would lose sight of the stag, only to find it waiting for us again, in the distance, at some stream or pond.

Eventually, we saw a clearing in the woods ahead. We made our way slowly into the bright light of the noon-day sun to find the majestic stag lying next to a maiden in naught but a dirty and torn shift. As we crossed the glade, the deer eyed us warily, but did not move. Out of the gloom of the woods, a coronet bearing twelve pearls was clearly visible around the stag’s neck.

Seeing us advancing and brandishing our spears, the maiden cried out, “Do not hurt him! He has saved me and brought you to me for aid!”

Collette asked, “How is it that you come to be lost so deep in these woods in naught but your shift?”

The maiden replied, “I was headed to market when my cart broke an axle on the road. A horrible storm came up with rain and wind and hail. I sought shelter in the woods, but the sudden darkness and the wind quickly made me disoriented, and I grew lost. Pushing through the dense foliage my dress was reduced to tatters. I assuredly would have perished if the stag had not found me and guided me to this clearing where I could drink from the spring and eat the berries on yonder bush.”

“This is a truly remarkable tale! From whence do you hail?” asked Ionnis

“Verily, I live but across the border in the Midrealm, in a small unnamed hamlet where a magnificent tourney was recently held.”

“Aye, I know the place, having been at that tournament and seen Sir Wigthege claim victory there. It is along our path and we would be happy to accompany there if you would like,” I said.

Hearing this, the stag let out a gentle snort and gave a sage nod. He turned once in place and then with a leap disappeared into the forest.

The maiden agreed to our assistance. We clothed her as best we could and allowed her to ride upon my mount as we made our way slowly back to the picketed pack horses and the road home. As we journeyed to the maiden’s home, having heard her appreciation of the tournament, the squires and I regaled her with tales of the annual Grand Day of Tournaments in Cynnabar. She was particularly fond of the stories of the new fighting styles from Italy – the rapier, I believe it is called. We spoke to her of the bright clothing, and swirling capes of the duelists and their witty repartee and biting challenges, all of which made her eyes glow with longing to see it for herself.

When we left her at her homestead she bade us farewell with much gratitude for seeing her safely home. Before we departed, she implored us all to keep the image of the noble stag close to our hearts forever, which has given me an idea for a badge of our household...

Now that you have heard our latest adventure I shall leave you, for the road rises up early tomorrow morn to carry me home to you. Until I am there, may all the saints of heaven preserve you and keep you.

I remain your loving husband,  
-Gregoire

**5 September.** My dearest Giovanna, the queen bee in the hive of my heart, regretfully I must tell you that we have once again been delayed and I will be kept from you a little longer.

From across the miles, I can hear your laughter at the story I am about to relay to you.



As you know, I am not so good with maps, and while the squires tried to tell me that we were headed in the wrong direction, I was so lost in story and cheer that I chose not to listen, continuing in the wrong direction for days! Despite being in the Midrealm last week, as is typical, I became lost and turned around and our whole caravan has somehow found itself upon the Road to Rouen!

As we travelled down the road, engaging in friendly banter and recounting tales of the glories of the chevauchee, we heard in the distance the unmistakable sounds of an army on the move. The gentle clink of articulation and the rattle of harness, the rhythmic pounding of boots on the march, voices calling out orders. The thrice-damned English were once again invading – thousands of archers with their infernal longbows, hundreds of men-at-arms, and a host of knights in the finest, shining harness, all marching down the highway!

We quickly headed into the trees, off the road, to avoid any conflict with King Edward's mighty force, and made our way around the army to find an inn where we could rest until the line had passed. As we rode into the yard of the hostel, I spied an odd banner flying above a table where three men were seated conspiratorially. Dismounting, I walked to where the group was conversing.

"Hello friends. May I enquire about the banner you have flying?" I asked amicably.

"That's the banner of avarice – it's flown whenever we are casting dice..." said the first man.

"Might you have some spare silver you are looking to wager?" asked the second, as the third jingled a pouch of coin and tossed a pair of dice onto the table.

I looked to the squires, who all gave a shrug, and then responded, "I'm good for a wager or two, and will even stake my squires so that they might join in the fun, while we wait for the English army to pass! What is the game?"

"The game is Hazard," responded the first man, making room at the table. "I am Sir Crispin, and this is Master William and my squire Renault."

"Yes, we know Hazard quite well," I responded before introducing myself and the squires in turn.

Without boring you with all the details of the hours spent at the table and bottles of fine French wine we sent to their graves, I will summarize by saying that this Master William, a real shifty sort, has an uncanny ability to roll a nine and that the squires and I will be travelling home with fewer coins than we might have if I had only read the map properly...

The excitement of the game, the cries of joy at victory and the moans of disappointment in defeat did recall the sounds of the gambling tables at Cynnabar's Grand Day of Tournaments. The thrill of the bet, the despair of defeat tied to the speed of a combatant's sword! I must hurry now if we are to make it in time to experience the event this year for the road before us is still long and time is fleeting.

May Saint Christopher guide our way and may Saint Joseph watch over you and our home. Lovingly yours,

-Gregoire.

**20 September.** My dearest love Giovanna,

It has been too long since my last missive! In but writing these letters to you I feel closer to you, as if we are sitting side by side near the fire, casually discussing our days. I shall now relate to you what has kept me from you for so long.

As you know, we were delayed by my poor navigational skills and the English army. Once we were clear to travel again, the squires and I set off back down the long road toward home. Days passed uneventfully and we were making great time. Arriving back into the Midrealm, we found

a Cistercian monastery where we thought to spend the night. The monks and their prior were most welcoming, inviting us to join them both for our evening meal and Vespers. In the morning, as we broke our fast with the brothers the delay began...

One of the brothers began talking about hydraulic engineering. You know that I am very enthusiastic for all new inventions and methods of making work easier on our people, and that I myself have dabbled in various methods of storing and transmitting energy. Well, the conversation soon became an argument and I found myself in the middle, trying to moderate both sides. The debates of the merits of water wheels and distributed water, as well as new septic systems raged for three full days! On the fourth day, when everyone had finally had their say and was rested, the order asked us to stay for a few more days so that we might calmly disseminate what advances we have seen in our travels. We agreed to stay one day more, but that of course quickly turned into two days, and then a third.

We are now back on the road home to you, making all haste so that I might embrace you and prepare the fields in advance of Grand Day of Tournaments in the Barony of Cynnabar. I've heard news that Their Excellencies Olafr and Malachy have decided to leave on a great journey and that because of this Their Draconic Majesties will be in attendance to name a new Baronage! What a splendid ceremony that is sure to be!

With advice from locals, and after discussion with the squires, I believe we will book passage on a ship across the Inland Seas to cut some mileage from our voyage! The waters can be treacherous at this time of year, so I pray to Saint Nicholas for a safe passage.

Stay safe, stay well, and with the will of Heaven, we shall be together again soon!

Your loving husband,

-Gregoire.

**23 October.** My darling wife Giovanna, at last, I have returned home to your arms!

These many weeks have been spent lost upon the inland seas, praying to all the saints of Heaven that they would preserve us and bring us to land safely! But I get ahead of myself...

We set off across the water from the Cleftlands to calm seas, blue skies, and a steady wind, just enough to fill our sails. No sooner had we lost sight of land than misadventure again arose to meet us.

At first, the song was very faint, and we only caught snatches of it upon the breeze, but soon, it grew louder and louder. Eventually, it was as if the ship were surrounded by a chorus of angels, but these were no divine voices! No, these were songs of sirens! The sailors started throwing themselves overboard, to their deaths in the cold depths, trying to find the enchanting creatures calling to them. Our good friend Sir Midair happened to be on the ship as well and would assuredly have thrown himself into the waves, so wild was affinity for the mermaids' song, had we not restrained him and eventually knocked him unconscious! Truthfully, the squires and I saved each other by screaming a nonsense song about digging holes at the top of our voices, drowning out the diabolical melody!

Eventually, the sirens had gotten their fill of man-flesh and moved along, but by that point the crew had been nearly wholly lost. With so few hands left to run the rigging, we were adrift when the storm came upon us. We were tossed about the waters like a rabbit in a hound's grasp. It assuredly would have been the end of us had Heaven not intervened on our behalf. The ship was wrecked, but upon a small island, where we were able to shelter.

As time passed and food and water ran low, a darkness fell upon my heart; to waste away upon an island, you not knowing my fate and me never seeing you again, was too much to bear. In a desperate effort, we fashioned a raft from the wreckage of the ship and set out once again to brave the Inland Seas.

After a day or two of paddling in what we hoped was the right direction, for the sun never rose fully upon us, and the moon never showed her face, a leviathan broke the surface near us. We feared for our lives once again, assuredly destined for his belly! But no, the great beast took pity upon us and pushed us gently forward in the direction we had been travelling. After what felt like days, we saw land ahead of us, the leviathan departed, and we paddled the rest of the way to shore.

We demanded our whereabouts of the first villein we found. Glory to God! The whale had driven us ashore in the Roaring Wastes, but a day's ride from our lands! We requisitioned horses and made our way to you in all haste.

Along the way, we learned that we had not yet missed the Grand Day of Tournaments in Cynnabar! My heart soared with joy! Not only would I be returned to you, but we would be able to celebrate together, in the presence of so many royal and noble gentles from around the world – tournaments, gaming, fine lords and ladies at court! Huzzah!

Now that I am here, I pray to Saint Guinefort that my adventures have come to an end and that we shall pass a calm winter together near the hearth of home.

Your loving husband,

-Gregoire

**FINIS**

## Butter Sculptures // Contributed by THL Johnnae Ilyn Lewis, CE

[Original copyright: 2014, 2018; revised extensively and updated 2023. The article in a slightly modified form appeared in *Tournaments Illuminated* in 2018 and in the *Cockatrice*, Winter AS 56 (August 2021)]

Butter poses interesting problems for Society feasts. What can be done with butter that makes it more interesting? Might I suggest the art of butter sculpting or butter molding?

Quite possibly the earliest instances of butter sculpting can be found in far off Tibet where devote Buddhists still fashion colored domestic yak butter into flowers, animals, symbols, or auspicious devotional figures. According to *Wikipedia*, yak milk has twice the butterfat of cow's milk, making a butter textually more like cheese. These butter or butter and flour figures are known as *torma* and are said to date from at least as early as the fifteenth century. Some even date the practice to the Song Dynasty. The origins are somewhat in dispute, and there are numerous myths or stories as to how or why the tradition began. Sources point out traditionally older butter sculptures are broken apart, and the butter reused; there are no surviving ancient or historical butter sculptures. The practice is especially associated with the Tibetan New Year or *Losar* which occurs annually in February or March. One of the modern highlights of *Losar* is the lighting of thousands of butter lanterns or butter lamps.

In Renaissance Europe, the great Italian mastercook Bartolomeo Scappi offers a tantalizing introduction to the subject of butter sculptures in Europe. In 1536 he created a banquet for the last day of May to be served in a garden. Between the courses were the introductory subtleties or *trionfi*. The first service began with "statue di zuccaro" or sugarworks. The third course featured pastry sculptures. Of most interest to readers here is the second course which began with "con le altre sei statue di butiro." These six butter sculptures included: "Uno Elephante con un castello su la schiena," "Hercule che sbranava la bocca al liono," "Il gran villano de Campidoglio," "Un Camello, con un Re moro sopra," and "Un'alicorno che habbia il corno in bocca al serpente." Readers in Cynnarbar should note the mention of the elephant with a castle on its back, as well as the mentions of Hercules fighting a lion, the villa of Campidoglio, a camel being ridden by a Moor, and lastly a unicorn attacking a serpent. Scappi's butter sculptures have been featured of late in many accounts, including *Wikipedia*'s entry on "butter sculptures". (*Opera*, p.398)

A lesser known but perhaps even more interesting source for butter sculptures can be found in the work *Le Ouverture de Cuisine*. In 1604, Lancelot du Casteau published in the city of Liege the small cookery book titled *Le Ouverture de Cuisine*. The work has been recently translated by Master Edouard Halidai/Daniel Myers. *Le Ouverture* ends with the description of butter sculptures created for the banquet "of Monsieur Robert de Berges Count of Walhain, Esquire & Prince of Liege, made in the palace in Liege, the year 1557 in the month of December." The list reads:

"There were four parks of two feet square, environed in a hedge of butter.  
The first was Adam & Eve made of butter, a serpent on a tree, & a running fountain, with little animals all around of butter.  
The second park was the love of Pyramus & Thisbee, the lion by the fountain, & the trees all around environed in a hedge of butter.

The third park the hunt of Acteon, & the nymphs with Diana at the fountain, & then of the little dogs of butter.

The fourth park was two wild men, who battled one another with the masses by a fountain, & little lions of butter all around: each park had four banners.” (Myers)

So based upon these descriptions from Scappi and *Le Le Ouverture*, it seems that for special feasts in at least the spring and winter months, we can and perhaps ought to be creating sculptures of butter or diverse and lovely objects and animals of butter for our late Renaissance banquets. It should be noted butter molding and butter figures also continued into the early modern era. George Philipp Harsdörffer’s massive volume *Vollständiges und von neuem vermehrtes Trincir-Buch* was published in the German city of Nuremberg in 1652 and again in 1657. It includes napkin folding, carving and slicing diagrams, as well as instructions on sugarpaste, pastry, and butter works.

### Creating the Butter Sculpture or Molded Figures

Having grown up with parents and grandparents which owned and milked dairy cows, I have some background in dairies, butter making, and molding. I can’t recommend that one start with a cow and work one’s way up through churning and then into molding butter, except as a demonstration project and only if you already own the cow. Given the cost of numerous subtletie materials such as almond paste or sugar paste made with gun tracaganth, butter is a relative bargain. I often pay less than \$2.00 USD per pound and even post pandemic pay less than \$3.00 USD. The trick is to buy when it’s on sale and freeze it for use as needed. It’s certainly much cheaper to work with butter than marzipan or sugarpaste, and butter for most feasts is already a budgeted and necessary item.

Both John Murrell and Sir Hugh Plat mention cutters and moulds of tinne being used in the late 16<sup>th</sup> and early 17<sup>th</sup> century English kitchen, and we also know there were moulds and stamps of wood in use. Today there are a number of commercial butter molds which can be purchased. Flat carved butter stamps are quite common. Often made out of wood or ceramics these stamps impress or print a design on a butter circle or square. It would be possible to create kingdom or baronial arms in a carving and imprint the arms in butter. (Once made, uses could also extend to cookies or other items.) Small butter molding can be done using flexible rubber butter molds or flat plastic candy molds. They can be found in a variety of seasonal themes or as designs like suns, moons, flowers, etc. Instructions call for filling the molds with softened butter. Freeze until hard. Carefully pop out the molded butters and freeze until needed.

More complicated and expensive are the commercial food safe 3-D plastic molds. These two or three part molds enable one to make 3-D statues of butter. Provided that one can find the mold, one can make Easter lambs, bunnies, turkeys, cows, horses, deer, elephants, swans, lions, tigers, bears, etc. Be sure to check measurements carefully as many hobbyists have entered the market and are selling rather small home 3-D printed items via Etsy. My personal preference are the professional weight molds such as those sold by Tomric. When doing butter and honey butter sculptures for feasts, it’s perhaps best to order multiples and in different sizes. Professional molds, such as Tomric molds [<http://www.tomric.com/> ], can be expensive; there is also usually a minimum order size. Also the molds sometimes must be ordered well in advance as some

designs come from Europe. (These molds can be used also for molding chocolate, should that fact influence and make their purchase more attractive.)

One can also purchase molds off Amazon, but with warnings that imported inexpensive molds are often smaller than described and not intended for foods or food safe. Soap molds might offer the designs but should not be used for edible butter molding. Food safe molds for ices may be used, but may not unmold easily. They can be something of a toss-up. One can also create one's own molds using one of the many food safe molding compounds which are available these days. Allow time and practice if going this route. I have also created molds using or re-using plastic food containers. A Simple Orange drink container was used as the mold for a fountain for one Twelfth Night table. Scooped out in the center, it was filled with honey and surrounded with butter lions.



I would add that butter molding is not as easy as it first looks. It can take a great deal of time to mold multiples of even small animals or objects in butter for a feast. I do use food safe non latex gloves when handling butter for feasts. The finished items do keep and if wrapped well and stored in plastic boxes, the butter figures can be made in advance and stored in a freezer until needed. Finished sculptures can be decorated with food safe color dusts or garnished with flower petals. (I won't go into the opinions pro and con or the history of honey butter in this article, but will note that it's long been a traditional item on Society tables and is still requested to this day.) Honey butter molding is trickier as the honey has a tendency to weep out if the proportions of honey to butter are incorrect. Use too much honey and the figure will weep honey. Use too little and the figure won't taste of honey. It's tricky. (As an additional word of warning, households with cats or dogs may want to not take up butter molding. I am told pets are attracted to the activity.) These days YouTube features numerous instructional videos on molding butter and even on creating or how to make one's own butter molds using molding compounds. Butter sculpture where one starts out with a block of butter and sculpts the figure from scratch calls for

the same skills as needed in artistic sculpture of other materials, with the added need for working in a cold environment or returning the item to the freezer for extended stays.



Lastly as someone born and raised in Midrealm (Illinois, Land of Lincoln and downstate farms), one must mention the famous life size “butter cows” of our summer state fairs. For those interested in “butter cows” there are any number of articles and photos, (plus streaming video, and live webcams during the actual fairs) which may be found online. Just search under “Butter cows.” Generally, they are sculpted over an elaborate framework of wire mesh, steel, and wood. The *New York Times* 2023 article “What’s inside a Butter Cow? It’s Not Just Butter” addresses the use of armatures necessary to create the large scale sculptures. Iowa uses about 600 pounds of butter for each life size cow. (The donated dairy butter is often recycled and reused by food banks or even converted into biodiesel fuel.) Illinois’s butter cows often decorate the fair posters. North Carolina used a reported 1200 pounds in their sculpture in 2000. It took ten days to sculpt. Butter people, butter celebrities, butter athletes, butter buildings, popular culture, including Harry Potter and Star Trek, as well as the cows and calves, are all explored in the Pamela Simpson article and her book cited below.

While we may not be able to recreate a life size cow, butter is still relatively inexpensive to buy and fun to work with. It’s edible, it’s decorative, and it’s not yet commonly done. I would urge more readers to take up the craft of butter molding.

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index. [It should be noted that while the book was initially published in 1604, it was actually written in circa 1585 or a generation earlier than the first printing. A French transcription based on the 1983 facsimile of the original text may be found on Professor Thomas Gloning's website. See p 153 for the butter sculptures. <https://www.uni-giessen.de/fbz/fb05/germanistik/absprache/sprachverwendung/gloning/tx/ouv3.htm>

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Contributed by THL Johnnae llyn Lewis, CE

## WEEKLY BARONIAL SCHEDULE

Business Meetings are held all Thursdays of the month but the first –  
see <https://www.cynnabar.org/>

Location: People's Presbyterian Church  
210 Smith Street  
Milan, Michigan 48160

Armored and Rapier Practice all Thursdays 7-9pm  
Social Gathering held on first Thursdays 7-9pm

## UPCOMING BARONIAL EVENTS

### 12th Night in Pentamere

**Saturday, January 6, 2024**  
*Hosted by the Barony of Cynnabar*

Location: 1200 N Ann Arbor St, Saline, MI 48176  
(First United Methodist Church, Saline)

<https://www.cynnabar.org/twelfthnight/>

- 9 am - Gate opens
- 10 am - Classes start - [Schedule of A&S Events](#)
  - 11:30 am - Lunch tavern opens
  - 1 pm - Lunch tavern closes
  - 4:00 pm - Classes end
- 5:00 pm - Court, at the pleasure of Royalty
  - 6:30 pm - Feast - [Menu](#) - [Allergy list](#)
  - 8:30 pm - Site closes - final clean up

## TERPSICHORE AT THE TOWER XXVII

**Saturday, March 16, from 9:00 am-10:00 pm**

NOTE NEW LOCATION!

Westminster Presbyterian Church, 1500 Scio Church, Ann Arbor, MI. 48103  
(approx. 2 miles north of I-94 and Ann Arbor/Saline Ed.)

Details Forthcoming on the Cynnabar.org website.

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