

# Hurst & Horn

SEASONAL NEWSLETTER FOR THE KINGDOM OF ATLANTIA ROYAL FORESTRY GUILD



Trap making, from *Livre de chasse* (1387) by Gaston III, Count of Foix

## Beginning the summertime harvest

BY ISOBEL OF CARNEWYTH, HIGH CHRONICLER

As we move out of quarantine, I feel that strong urge to get outside and find others who are also emerging. We recently launched a virtual Challenge to help give some ideas and inspiration to focus on the wide world of medieval forestry. I hope they provide a bit of a spark in igniting our re-entry to the wider world. May your summer be full of fresh air and sunshine and safe comradery.

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## Rechate: Missive from the Warden

BY FINNE BRETH, HIGH WARDEN

*A Forest is a certain territory of woody grounds and fruitful pastures, ... replenished with ... great coverts of vert, for the succour of the beasts there to abide; for the preservation and continuance of said place ... there are particular officers, laws, and privileges belonging to the same, requisite for that purpose.- John Manwood, Treatise of the Forest Laws, 1598*

The air is heavy and full of frog song as I sit down to write this missive a week before solstice. It is dusk, and my hens are settling down for the night.

Much has transpired since the cool Spring passed to a mild Summer up here in Northern Atlantia wherein lies my small personal bailiwick; five ancestral acres of oak-hickory forest bounded by two wetlands, all of which bears the scars of a century of familial carelessness.

Here too, my family; our home: all this a forester's jurisdiction indeed.



When we moved back to the family land a year ago I decided it was my last move. That I had come home not just to heal from disaster but to heal this land itself, and I knew it would take at least the rest of my life.

As Foresters we talk a lot about survival skills and camping rough. But primitive fire starting and cooking, for example, were everyday skills in period, and not specific to foresters (they're essential for us to learn, of course- it's part of what makes this Guild special). But our medieval counterparts weren't just bushcrafters; they were stewards. The guardians of a place—a bailiwick-- part of a forest that was entrusted to them to manage and keep healthy.

That defines me as a Forester on my own land; it's my duty to steward and manage it properly. Not for a monarch, but, perhaps, for monarchs—and tree frogs, and chickadees, and black snakes.

It sounds poetic, but in reality this has meant dragging heavy debris out of the swamp, many filthy trips to the dump (and I haven't even gotten to the tires yet) and pulling out stands of invasives or covering them with black plastic for a year to kill them so something native can be planted.

The fun part is planting the natives, of course, and creating habitat. I have planted a small but growing sunny pollinator garden with Joe Pye Weed, Butterfly Weed, Swamp Milkweed, Common Milkweed, and others, along with tasty greens for me like lamb's quarters and wood sorrel. Planned but not yet planted is a small meadow for various native wildflowers. Fifteen young trumpet vines are reaching upward in sunny spots around the yard. Hopefully, they'll be enticing hummingbirds in a year or two.

Many of us care about pollinators, native plants, and habitat; fellow forester-folk post impressive photos of the work they

are doing on their own lands. We often consider this “agricultural” rather than forestry work, but we are tending the vert. Protecting the greenspace from the invasives, pollutants, and entropy that is leading to loss of habitat and species at an unfathomable rate. What are we if not stewards of the Green and the beasts who dwell there?

I have a bigger piece of land and a lifelong job-- putting in pawpaws and serviceberries, obliterating the stiltgrass, and returning the once plentiful red mulberry trees that were wiped out by a blight when I was a child—but even if your bailiwick is a sunny patch of ground 2 feet square, you can provide water, cover and good things to eat for some very small, very important species that could use a forester's help.



Beginning a pollinator garden

Chronicler Isobel's Atlantia Quarantine Challenge (p. 6) has a section on Environmental Stewardship that can help you get started. Speaking of the challenge, I hope you've taken a look at it! Many of the activities are things you will want to do as a forester!

In a week we will hold our virtual Solstice Court to oath new members and give updates, including on a new hiking group to the north of me that hopes to become a forest! I am happy to see them grow and look forward to welcoming them into the Guild.

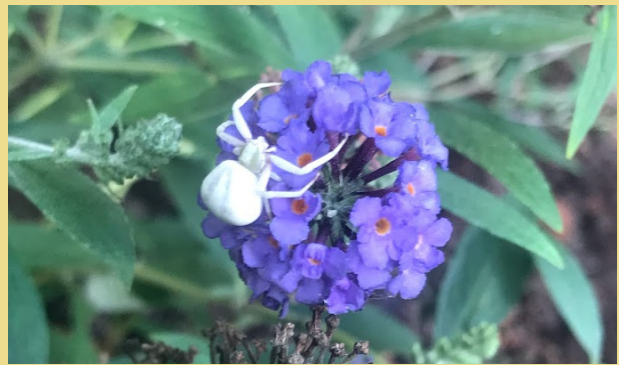
In the meantime, the Kingdom is reopening! Events are coming back, and folks are getting together again. Please remember to sign up in our directory created by Preceptor Elias so it's easier to find folks near you to get together with. It's optional, but helpful.



Tiger swallowtail on joe pyeweed

It's nearly midnight now. Leaving my office shed, I go out into the overgrown yard, shaggy with plaintain, dock, clover and dandelion to find the frogs quiet and the air pleasantly cool. The hens cluck sleepily as I say goodnight and close them up tight against predators. I walk around and make sure things are at peace in the quiet darkness before shutting out the porch light and going inside.

YIS,  
Warden Finnebreth



Crab spider on sage



Young trumpet vine at the base of a white oak

# Spring Moot Recap

BY ISOBEL OF CARNEWYTH, HIGH  
CHRONICLER



Marginalia from *The Romance of Alexander* 1338–1410.  
Bodleian Library MS. Bodl. 264 122v CC BY-NC 4.0

The first virtual moot was held this Spring on the Equinox, March 20, 2021. Three oaths were heard, from novices Eirik Gralókk and Kalara of Lochmere, as well as new junior forester Dag Hrafnarson.

Warden Finnebreth announced a new office of Preceptor which serves as a liason to the University of Atlantia and serves as a promotor of learning within the guild by coordinating demos and classes to learn new skills. Keeper Elias de Birton has been filling the role unofficially and was formally named to the position of Preceptor.

There is still a position open for a Warden of the South and foresters living in NC, SC, or GA are eligible. Please contact Warden Finnebreth if you are interested.

## Officer reports:

- Warden of the North Morgan reported that it had been rainy but nothing else had occurred of note.
- Chronicler Isobel reported on the release of the inaugural newsletter, published online shortly before the moot.
- Preceptor Elias reported on open course submissions for the University of Atlantia which also hosted Known World Science Symposium. As Keeper of the Forest of Caer Mear, he shared their plans to check out trails as soon as the barony re-opens.
- Steward Asta shared updates on the development of the youth program including positive feedback from Lady Katherine of the Doves on the modified youth oath. She suggested coordination with the SCA's Youth and Family Achievement (Yafa) Program and Steward Asta is investigating.

# Atlantia Forestry Challenge 2021: staying active during quarantine

**Please follow CDC and local safety guidelines at all times.**

## Rules:

- Item completion must be verified by an officer, photo, video, or document attachment as appropriate by email to atlantiaforesters@gmail.com
  - Activities may be completed any time from 2020 to 2021 (quarantine initiated activities are eligible)
  - Points may only be earned once for each activity and correspond to one item on the list. (E.g. a single backpacking trip does not simultaneously earn points for the basic camping trip option but a second backpacking trip would qualify for it).
- Completion of 3 *activities* earns a special participation badge that can be linked to other tokens or badges (e.g. wood burned challenge coin)
- Completion of 15 *points* across a minimum of 3 categories earns a “challenger” badge.
- Completion of 25 *points* across categories earns a “completionist” badge (e.g. metal charm or pewter badge)
- Feel free to tailor the difficulty based on age or experience level, this is for fun and education and to encourage forester activity during quarantine and beyond.
- If your submissions are to be shared in the newsletter or youtube channel, please include relevant waivers.
- Participants must have at least applied to join the Kingdom of Atlantia Royal Forestry Guild or be an affiliate member.

## Focus Areas:

### Research:

- (3 pts) Write an article for our Forestry Guild newsletter on a Medieval Forestry related topic.

### Recreation:

- (2 pts) Create a persona-appropriate tinder pouch.
- (3 pts) Use calligraphy and/ or illumination to recreate forestry related depictions or documents such as Gaston Fébus' Le livre de chasse.

- (3 pts) Create a piece of garb related to the Forestry Guild garb requirements.\*
- (2 pts) Create and test a piece of persona appropriate forester related gear such as a canteen.

#### Education:

- (3 pts) Teach an online course, webinar, or in person class on a forestry topic.
- (4 pts) Create a video demo of a medieval forestry topic for inclusion on the Guild youtube channel, either by sharing to the playlist or direct upload.

#### Safety:

- (3 pts) Complete a certified first aid course.
  - E.g. <https://www.redcross.org/take-a-class/first-aid/first-aid-training/first-aid-online>
- (2 pts) Create a first aid kit.
  - Can be a belt based small kit for minor cuts, etc., a larger kit for in camp, or for a backcountry situation where first responders may take a long time to reach you.
- (3 pts) Navigation: take an online course in land or marine navigation, hunt a geocache, or demonstrate proficiency with compass and map.

- (1 pt.) Compile 3 pieces of safety equipment for use hiking or camping, either medieval or mundane (e.g. solar blanket, compass, whistle, first aid kit, etc.).

#### Camping:

- (2 pts) Leave no trace camping trip.
- (3 pts) Leave no trace backpacking trip.
- (3 pts) Collect a kit of campsite tools and containers that would have been feasible pre- 1600, such as cookpots and utensils.
- (1 pt.) Set up a tarp based shelter.

#### Hiking:

- (1 pt.) Field test medieval appropriate gear on a day hiking trip or saunter.
- (1 pts) Go for a 3 mile (minimum) hike.
- (2 pts) Go for a 3 mile (minimum) hike in garb, including period(ish) shoes - turnshoes/moccasins with insoles and leather or thin modern soles are acceptable, but heavy lugged soles are not.

#### Bushcraft:

- (1 pt.) Display knowledge of at least 3 different knots useful in outdoor situations.
- (1 pt.) Find local knappable stones and cut a stick with it.
- (1 pt.) Collect material and make twine.

- (2 pts) Identify 3 edible plants that would be safe to forage, and explain why and how to prepare them for consumption (if necessary).
- (2 pts) Build a pack frame.
- (2 pts) Build a natural shelter.

#### Firecraft/ Outdoor cooking:

- (1 pt) Build three types of wood structures for a fire.
- (1 pt.) Create fire starters.
  - E.g., char cloth, whittled wood shavings, wax based, etc.
- (1 pt.) Demonstrate a safe fire set up including a method for quick fire extinguishing.
- (1-3 pts) Light a wood fire safely.\*
  - (1 pt.) for matches or magnesium fire starter (qualifies for Underforester testing)
  - (2 pts) Flint and steel or fire glass (qualifies for Forester testing)
  - (3 pts) Friction method (e.g. bow drill, hand drill, etc.) (qualifies for Forester testing)
- (3 pts) Cook an edible meal for four people over a wood fire.\*

#### Environmental Stewardship:

- (1 pt) Learn about and fulfill a wildlife habitat program for your home.
  - Purchase not necessary, just show that your habitat meets the

qualifications for the program's checklist

- E.g. <https://www.nwf.org/certify> or <https://www.xerces.org/pollinator-conservation/pollinator-protection-pledge>

- (1 pt.) Go on a litter campaign.
- Spend a few hours cleaning up your neighborhood by picking up trash
- (1 pt.) Plant a tree.
- (1 pt.) Learn about managed forests in your area, take a field trip if possible.
- (1 pt.) Learn about hunting or fishing regulations in your area and why limitations are in place.

#### Additional options for Junior foresters:

- (1 pt. each) Complete 1-3 of the forester activities from East Kingdom's Tyger Camp: edible campfire, blowing a horn, or creating a salve: <https://chancellorminor.eastkingdom.org/tygercamp/forestry/>

*\*Items that also qualify for Guild ranks must be witnessed by an officer, virtual options are available (if you want them to count for rank eligibility as well). This round is sponsored by High Chronicler, Forester Isobel of Carnewyth.*



# Plant Amulets

BY MEISTERIN AMIE SPARROW

Those of us in the SCA who engage in experimental archaeology are good at creating the clothing and tasking of pre-1600 cultures. Learning how to start fires without modern equipment is a pragmatic way to recreate a way of life that we don't have to live today, as is cooking over an open fire or collecting plants to eat. All of these things happen outside of ourselves. What we do not often engage in what was happening inside the heads of the people we are trying to emulate. This article delves into some of the pre-1600 beliefs in magical cures provided by plant amulets.

In pre-modern times, many cultures believed in amulets to help cure their physical and mental illnesses. In the modern day, we rely upon Western medicine to help cure our ills. In no way does this article propose that amulets will cure anything.

It is important to note the difference between amulets and medicinal cures, which existed side-by-side. A medicinal cure often requires that the sick person ingest a drink or food made from a plant.

An amulet is a piece of plant applied to a part of the body or worn around the head or neck by the sick person. Amulets are strictly for the outside of the body. Do not ingest anything discussed in this article.

The research done for this article is based on the book "Anglo-Saxon Amulets and Curing Stones" by Audrey L. Meany published in 1981 by BAR. This book was started as a short article in 1965 and took on a life of its own. Meany, an Australian, took 16 years working with sources all over England and Europe to research amulets. This article is based on only one section of her work, "Vegetable Amulets" (pages 38-58). Note that she does not use the word "Vegetable" in the way that we would use it. She is referring to plants, not edible produce.

The following list is compiled from Meany's book. I take no credit for her translations from Latin or Old English into Modern English, she (and her sources) have done that work by themselves. I have attempted to simplify her text, which is both academic and meandering. The magical cures that follows are taken, almost verbatim, from her book. There is no reason for me to add color commentary. The magical instructions

speak for themselves, though as Meany points out, many times the magical instructions are nonsense words or gibberish. She believes that text may have been meaningful at one time but the copying over and over into new sources made the text lose meaning. Some words of Latin, Greek or Old English may be understandable, but much is without meaning.

Many of the plant names will be familiar to you but some will not. Most of the sources researched by Meany were written before the birth of Carl Linnaeus, the father of taxonomy, so the names used for plants were local and often not in agreement with different names for the same plant found in another location. For these plants, Meany uses the name found in the original text since she could not always trace the plant names to modern plant names. Sometimes Meany and her prior researchers used drawings in Herbariums that are hundreds of years old to try to identify the plants.

Meany's sources for her research are listed at the end of the article. Meany concludes, by looking at many sources, that old Greek and Latin documents were copied almost verbatim into English

texts. And because plants found around the Mediterranean were not found in England, authors simply substituted English plants for the originals. This led her to the conclusion that it wasn't the plant that provided the magical cure, but rather the ritual of how the plant was used. Please enjoy!

**Acanta leuce** (Plant unknown) – But they say it being worn as an amulet, drives away poisonous creatures of itself. Astertoum or lunarie (possibly moon wort) – Yif he have the fallynge evyl...quo-so bere it abowte his nekke on hym, he shall nogt falle and it hath many other vertuys'.

**Betony** (*Betonica officinalis*) – This plant... is good both for man's soul and his body: it shields him against dreadful walkers by night and against frightful visions and dreams.

**Bistort** (*Polygonum bistorta*) – This plant, which is called basilisca, and by another name adderwort is produced in the places where the adder is, which is called by the same name basiliscus. Indeed, there is not only one kind of it, but there are three kinds. One is olocryseis, that is, said in our language, that it all shines with gold.

The second kind is stillatus, that is in our language 'spotted'; it is as though it had a golden head. The third kind is sanguineus, that is, 'blood-red'; it also may like wise be golden on the head. This plant basilisca has all these kinds. If anyone has this plant with him, then none of these kinds of adders can hurt him. The first snake olocryssus is called criseos; whatever it sees it breathes upon and sets on fire. The second, stillatus, is rightly called crysocephalus asterites; whatever sees this shrinks up and dies. The third is called hematites and crysocefalus; whatever sees or touches this dissolves, so that there is nothing left but bones. This plant basilisca has all their powers. If any man has this plant with him, he is secure against all kinds of snakes.

This plain is like rue; and it has red juice like celandine, and it has bright reddish blossoms. And let him who would take it wash himself, and enclose it in gold and silver, an in stag's antler and in ivory and with boar's tusk, and in bull's horn, and lay thereabout fruits sweetened with honey.

**Caster oil** (*Ricinus communis*) – To ward off hail and tempest, if you have this plant or you hang its seed in your house, it will ward off the tempest of hail; and if you

hang it or its seed on a ship, it is wonder to the degree that it quietens every tempest. You shall take this plant, saying thus, "Plant ricinum, I pray you that you be present at my singing, and that you ward off hails and lightnings and all tempests through the name of the Almighty God who commanded you to be born. And you shall be clean when you take this plant.

**Cinquefoil** (*Potentilla*) – A man who wished for a royal favour should have cinquefoil with him, for it would make him eloquent and obtain what he desired.

**Columbine** (*Verbena officinalis*) – For wounds and malignant ulcers and swollen glands, take the roots of the plant and tie about the neck; then it will be very effective. 2) For a headache take the plant and bind it to the head, and it will make the headache grow less. 3) Against the bite of an adder, whichever man has on him this plant uermanaca with its leaves and roots, he will be strong against all adders. 4) If anyone have this plant with him which we called peristereon, he cannot be barked at by dogs.

**Coriander seed** (*Coriandrum sativum*) – Gather this before sunrise and put under the head to prevent malaria.

**Garlic** (*Allium sativum*) – If a nightmare ride a man, take garlic, betony and incense, and tie them together in a fawnskin; let a man have them on him, and let the nightmare go into these plants.

**Gorgonion** (Plant unknown) – He who has this plain with him avoids every evil foot print coming against him; indeed, because of it the evil man turns aside, or gives way to him.

**Heraclea** (Plant unknown) – He who will travel a long way, let him have with him on the road this plant called Heraclea, then he will not fear any enemy but it puts them all to flight.

**Hound's Tongue** (*Cynoglossum*) – If you put this herb under your big toe, dogs will keep silent.

**Lettuce** (*Lactuca leporica*) – Also tak this herbe and ley it to a mannys syde, qwyl he slepygt [sleeps] or ellys that he wete [know] it nogt by hym. And yef he fave the feverys he shchal ben hol.

**Lupins** (*Lupininae Lupinus*) – 1) Against food taken away [i.e. if a cow runs dry]: take lupins, lay them under the altar, sing nine masses over them. That ought to

prevail against food taken away; lay them under the pail which you will milk into. 2) If ale is spoiled: take the lupins, lay them in the four corners of the house and over the door and under the threshold and under the ale-vat, and put the plant with holy water into the ale.

**Mandrake** (*Mandragora officinarum*) – If anyone sees any serious evil in his house, let him take this plain mandrake in the middle of the house – as much of it as he has then; it will drive out all evils.

**Marigold** (*Calendula officinalis*) – Gathered with due ceremony, is to be carried with a wolf's tooth against danger of any kind, against angry or bad words spoken against the bearer, and to discover thieves by dreams.

**Molin** (plant unknown) – Against the temptation of the devil, a plan red molin grows near running water: if you have it on you and under your pillow and over the doors of your house the devil cannot harm you indoors or out.

**Mugwort** (*Artemisia*) – For a long journey over land, lest he tire: let him take mugwort in his hand or put it in his shoe lest he weary; and when he wishes to pick it, before sunrise, let him say these words

first 'Tollam te artemisia, ne lassus sum in via'. Sign it with the sign of the cross when you pull it up.

**Mulberry** (*Morus*) – Against a flow of blood: when for all men the moon is seventeen nights old, go after sunset, before moonrise, to the tree which is called morbeam and take from it a berry with your left hand, with two fingers (thumb and ring finger) lift up a white berry which is not yet turning red, and get up. It is useful for the upper part of the body. Put it down again, and bow over it; it is good for the lower part of the body. Before you use this berry, say these words 'aps.aps.aps.sparare rose pros pasam. emorragiam pantosani. opum temesstanes'. (This incantation is thought to be Greek.) When you have said these words, take the berry and wrap it in fine purple cloth and sew it again with a piece of other fine cloth, and take care that this medicine does not touch water or earth. When there is need, and the upper part of the body is troubled with any pain or suffering, tie it on the forehead; if it be on the lower part, fasten it on the stomach.

**Orbicularis** (usually identified with *Cyclamen*, not native to Britain) – For pain in the spleen take also a root of this plant and hang it about the man's neck so that

it hangs in front against the spleen: he will be quickly healed.

**Pennyroyal** (*Mentha pulegium*) – Against the fever which comes on a man on the third day [malaria]...if anyone will wrap his head around with this plant, it relieves the headaches.

**Peony** (*Paeonia officinalis*) – For lunacy if a man lays this plant peony over the lunatic as he lies, straight-away he will lift himself up in good health; and if he has the plant with him, the illness will never again approach him.

**Periwinkle** (*Littorina littorea*) – This plant is good for many things.... First agains devil-sicknesses and agains adders, wild animals, poisons, every kind of thread, and malice and terror, and so that you may have grace; and, if you have this plant with you, you will be prosperous and welcome. This plain you shall gather thus, saying, "I pray you uica peruica to have many useful qualities and that you come gladly to me blossoming with your powers and that you equip me so that I be protected and ever prosperous and unharmed by poisons and anger." When you gather this plant you shall be clean from every impurity, and you shall gather it when the moon is nine nights old and

eleven nights and thirteen nights and thirty nights and when it is one night old.

**Plantain** (Musa) – 1) If a man's head ache or be sore, let him take the roots of plantain and bind them on his neck. Then the pain will go away from the head. 2) Against the wound of a scorpion, take the roots of plantain: bind on the man; then it is to be believe that it will be a good help to him.

**Plantain** (Musa) and **Madder** (Rubia) – In case a man ache in the head; take the lower part of madder, put it on a red thread and let him bind the head with it.... For the same [migraine] dig plantain without iron before sunrise, bind the roots with madder about the head with a red thread. Straightaway he will be better.

**Rosemary** (Salvia rosmarinus) – Also yif a man or woman bere on him a stalke or a staf ther of, it kepyth hym fro thresse [supernatural monster?] and fro wykked spritys, as well be nyth [night] as be day, for kyndely [of its nature] it is contrarious to deuelis and to wikkyd spritys, as the ston that is callyd jet.

**Scordean** (plant unknown) – For fever which comes on a man daily or every third

day take the same plane, scordean, and tie it around a man's body; it takes away both the quotidian and tertian fever. [This is for malaria.]

**Sweet Clover** (Melilotus) – This plant you shall pick during the waning of the moon in the month which is called August; take the root of this plant then, and tie it to a thread for weaving, and hang it on your neck. That you will not experience dimness of your eyes; or if it happens to you, it will quickly cease, and you will be healthy. This medicine is proved.

**Uerbascum** (plant unknown) – If anyone carries with him a sprig of this plant he will not be frightened by any horror, nor will a wild animal nor any approaching evil harm him.

**Water Crowfoot** (Batracion) – For a lunatic, take this plant and tie it with a red thread\* around the man's neck during a waning moon in the month which is called April, and in the early part of October. Straightaway he will be healed.

**Wood Thistle** (carduus silvaticus) – To prevent any evil coming against you, you are advised to carry the plant wood thistle which has been gathered at sunrise when the moon is in Capricorn.

\* As the author points out, “Sometimes elements of folklore have entered into these remedies; for example, the red threads ... belong to superstition as much as the plants themselves.” Pg 55.

**Meany and her sources**

Meaney, Audrey L., “Anglo-Saxon Amulets and Curing Stones” (BAR., 1981)

Note: Meany’s bibliography contains 101 books and articles. Listed below are the books that she referred to most in her discussion of vegetable amulets.

1. Apuleius, Antonii Musae, De Herba Vettonica Liber; Pseudi-Apulei Herbarius; Anonymi, De Taxone Liber; Sexti Placiti, Liber Medicine ex Animalibus etc., ed E. Howald and H.E. Sigerist (Corpus Medicorum Latinorum IV; Leipzig and Berlin, 1927).
2. Best, M.R. and Brightman, F.H., Book of Secrets of Albertus Magnus (Oxford, 1973)
3. Dioscorides, The Greek Herbal... Englished by John Goodyer A.D. 1655, ed. R.T. Gunther (Oxford, 1934).
4. Pliny, Natural History, ed. And trans. H. Rackham, W.H.S. Jones and D.E. Eichholz (10 vols., Cambridge Mass. And London, 1962-1967)
5. The Herbal of Pseudo-Apuleius, in facsimile, ed. F.W.T. Hunger (Leyden, 1935)
6. Wright, C. E., Bald’s Leechbook (Copenhagen, 1955).



Left: Plantain, Herbal, Add. 41623, f.47, N. Italy {Balluno?}; early 15th century, British Library, CC0.

Right: Mandrake, De materia medica by Dioscorides 5-8th c. <https://www.wdl.org/en/item/10690/view/1/181/>

## To carry water (if you have no ale)

BY ELIAS DE BIRTON, PRECEPTOR

Hydration is important year-round, but summers in Atlantia really highlight the value of a canteen! Even folks who are not interested in hiking or camping in their kit can benefit from being able to carry water in period (or period-looking) fashion at outdoor events. A canteen was not something that was carried all the time in the Middle Ages, but period examples can be found in extant collections and medieval European artwork, especially in depictions of hunters and pilgrims. While there are many different forms of canteens, and the style that is best for any individual will depend on their specific needs and impression, three broad categories of canteens sometimes depicted in representations of pilgrims and hunters of the Middle Ages are gourd canteens, cylindrical costrels, and flattened or disk-shaped flasks.

Gourd canteens are closely associated with pilgrims in Europe; they appear almost nowhere else in the art of the



Figure 1. Gourd Canteens. Pilgrims in the a) 12th century [2] and b) 16th century [3] are depicted with similar gourd canteens.

Middle Ages [1]. In Figure 1, pilgrims in artwork of the 12th and 16th centuries have been depicted carrying them (3a and 3b, respectively). Gourd canteens are lightweight and relatively inexpensive, qualities that may make them attractive to individuals looking to carry water over long distances (then and now!), but they can be fragile. The link between gourd canteens and the iconography of the medieval pilgrimage may also be worth keeping in mind when considering including this style of canteen in a non-pilgrim, later-period European impression.

A style of canteen that seems to be more widely used is the cylindrical costrel,





Figure 2. Costrels. a) Hunters are depicted with costrels [11] that resemble extant examples made of leather [7, 8], while b) Joseph (depicted as a pilgrim) [9] and c) a shepherd [10] appear to carry cooped costrels.

appearing in depictions of hunters (Fig. 2a), pilgrims (Fig. 2b) [4], shepherds (Fig. 2c), and other travelers. Extant examples of this style of canteen are made from leather [5, 6] and clay [7, 8], but some depictions appear to be cooped wood [9, 10].

Costrels (especially those made from leather) are quite sturdy and can be made to hold a relatively large volume, which may be helpful for those looking to hike or camp in their kit. These larger versions can be a bit bulky, and reproductions are expensive, but for those who want an easily documentable canteen that would be appropriate for many impressions of the late Middle Ages, a costrel may be a good choice!

Another type of canteen present in medieval European depictions of hunters has a flattened or disk shape (Fig. 3).

Some of these (Fig. 3c and d) appear to be turned wood, and may be of a similar construction to the earlier turned canteen from Oberflacht (Fig. 3a). Figure 3e is a detail from a scene of a hunters' meal [11] that includes a canteen cooling in a stream. This canteen may be made of metal, a medium supported by extant examples [16, 17], and appears to be of a similar construction to the ones being made by a bottlemaker ("flaschener") in the Mendel Hausbuch [18]. Other extant examples show that this style of canteen was not limited to wood or metal construction, including the Winchester costrel [19], which is believed to be a



Figure 3. Flasks. a) The canteen from Oberflacht, c. 580-620 [12], was turned from maple, and it is possible that examples depicted in later art (b and c) were made in a similar fashion [13, 14]. d) A 16th century woodcut depicting a turner [15] includes several similar canteens. e) Some flasks depicted [11] could be made from metal, rather than wood.

ceramic skeuomorph of contemporary leather examples [20], and the ceramic flask [21] and leather flackets [22] found

aboard the Mary Rose. It is easiest to find ceramic and leather reproductions of this style of canteen, and a few are available in metal. Of these, the ceramic versions are the most affordable, but they also tend to be the heaviest. While these flasks generally do not have the capacity of barrel-shaped costrels, they can be more comfortable to carry and seem to have been used across a long period of time in Europe.

These sorts of canteens may be appropriate for many personas, but they do require a fair amount of investment, either in money spent purchasing reproductions or in the time and resources required to learn the skills necessary to reproduce these items.

While not everyone may be able to make those sorts of investments, everyone needs to stay hydrated! A modern water bottle tucked away in a satchel or bag is always acceptable, but it is also possible to “disguise” such containers. While this does not make them authentic to the SCA’s period, it allows for canteens to be openly carried while still maintaining a sense of immersion. Modern bota bags can be a good base for such a project, since they have a plastic liner that can be removed and re-covered (Fig. 4). A suede split is a sturdy, inexpensive way to



Figure 4. Disguising a bota bag. a) The inner liner of a modern bota can be removed and re-covered. A wooden mouthpiece can be turned or b) shaped from a candle cup, then c) attached to the plastic mouthpiece with a waterproof, food-safe glue. After d) a new cover is sewn, e) the liner can be inserted. f) Some cordage to hold the cover to the mouthpiece, a cork, and a strap complete the look.

approximate the look of traditional botas, but other materials could be used. Adding a wooden mouthpiece (Fig. 4c and f) and a cork can improve the illusion. While still anachronistic, re-covered bota bags can provide a relatively inexpensive way of carrying water that does not stand out (Fig. 5).

Hydration is always important, and having a method for carrying water in period (or period-looking) fashion can be helpful for anyone attending outdoor events during

Atlantian summers! This is even more important for those interested in hiking or camping in their kit, and while a modern water bottle tucked away in a bag or bedroll is certainly better than going without, a period canteen can add another layer of immersion. While it may require some research and investment to acquire an impression-appropriate way to carry water, a canteen is a very useful piece of kit!

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[https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/P\\_1904-0206-103-85](https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/P_1904-0206-103-85).

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Figure 5. Forester Elias de Birton with a canteen in the field. The waterskin in this picture is a bota bag disguised using the method shown in figure 4. Despite its modern construction, it does not look out of place hanging from the walking stick supporting his plow point tarp shelter.

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The title of this article is a reference to an exchange in Ælfric of Eynsham's (c. 955-1020) Colloquy, where the teacher asks a student what he drinks and he answers, "Ale if I have any, or water, if I have no ale."



## Upcoming Events

**Summer Moot** is scheduled for June 20th at 5 pm, EDT. Guild officers and those with official business such as oath taking or rank conferral are invited to attend directly; a live stream will be available for all facebook group members.

<https://fb.me/e/4aBAXF60u>

**Armistice:** The Cooper Lake Campground event is scheduled for July 29 - August 9 in lieu of Pennsic. The SCA is not officially sponsoring the event, but many of the same staff and merchants will be there along with multiple foresters.

<https://www.facebook.com/CoopersLakeArmistice>

**University of Atlantia Fall Session:** is currently scheduled for September 18, 2021 with location tbd. Watch their website for more information:

<https://university.atlantia.sca.org/>

**Gardens of Thyme** previously scheduled for Labor Day weekend has been postponed.

**War of the Wings:** The annual favorite is back and scheduled for October 10 -17 at Elchenburg Campground in Boonville, NC. Great opportunity for oath taking or skills demonstration or learning more about us.

<https://warofthewings.atlantia.sca.org/>

Gaston Thèbus instructs pages in the art of the hunt signal-c, from Livre de chasse (1387) by Gaston III, Count of Foix



## Contact Information

### Guild websites:

<https://karfg.weebly.com/>

[https://www.wiki.atlantia.sca.org/index.php?](https://www.wiki.atlantia.sca.org/index.php?title=Kingdom_of_Atlantia_Royal_Forestry_Guild)

[title=Kingdom\\_of\\_Atlantia\\_Royal\\_Forestry\\_Guild](https://www.wiki.atlantia.sca.org/index.php?title=Kingdom_of_Atlantia_Royal_Forestry_Guild)

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/AtlantiaRoyalForestryGuild>

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCvryzA24YqXKsbiamMcsZGg>



The Atlantia Forestry Guild is devoted to research, recreation, and education of forestry and outdoors skills regarding no trace camping, protecting the green spaces, self-reliance, wood craft, camp craft, bush craft, overland travel, inland water travel, outdoor cooking, survival, and other outdoor and primitive skills all in period fashion. It is the purpose of guild to research, recreate, educate and demonstrate historical tools, methods, equipment and techniques for living, camping, traveling and cooking, in the outdoors or in wilderness locations.

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