
D U C T U S

Newsletter of the Lochac College of Scribes

Volume 6 Issue 2

August 2000

Editorial

Unto the Scribes of Lochac does Giles de Laval send greetings, and welcome you to the first issue of the new-look newsletter. *Ductus* will serve the same function as *Scribe Notes* has in the past, namely to keep the scribes of the Principality up to date with assignments and news from the Office of the Provost, and scribal events such as workshops and exhibitions. *Ductus* will be published quarterly, in May, August, November and February.

It is also my first issue as acting Provost. I served for a year as deputy for Lady Branwen of Werchesvorde, who did an excellent job running the College, and am now acting in her stead while she is overseas in the Kingdom of Atenveldt. I hope that I am able to do as good a job as she has.

So who am I? My name is Giles de Laval (formerly known as Frae Fitzalleyne), and I have been in the Society since the early Jurassic period. I have been a scribe for all that time, and am looking forward to the experience of administering and co-ordinating the work of the college. Mundanely I work as an artist and art teacher in medieval art, especially the scribal arts.

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Please feel free to get in touch with me any time, I am always happy to hear from scribes and will do my best to attend to any queries as quickly as possible.

State of the Office

I am pleased to report that the College is currently functioning well. The admin and armoury files have been brought up to date, and

the database has been beaten into shape with a blunt object. The backlog of outstanding work currently looks like this:

Award of Arms

Assigned	74
Available	23
Subtotal	97

Leaf of Merit/AA

Assigned	2
Available	2
Subtotal	4

Rose Leaf/AA

Nil

Grant of Arms (including RCA & RCY)

Assigned	4
Available	2
Subtotal	6

Patent of Arms-KSCA

Assigned	10
Available	9
Subtotal	19

Patent of Arms-Laurel

Assigned	10
Available	15
Subtotal	25

Patent of Arms-Pelican

Assigned	9
Available	24
Subtotal	33

Patent of Arms-Viscounty

Assigned	10
Available	11
Subtotal	21

Grand Total 205

At the moment, the AA's are pretty much under control; the most urgent priority is the originals backlog. If you are an experienced scribe, I *really* need you to be working on original scrolls.

Overdue Assignments

The following assignments are long overdue and **will be recalled at the end of this month.**

Please check this list carefully; if you currently have one of these assignments under way please contact me *urgently* to arrange an extension by that date, otherwise it will be returned to the available list.

Name	Award	
Assignment date		
Everard de Brieuse	OP	1/2/90
Johanna Wendover	OP	1/2/90
Steveg Stevegsson	OP	1/12/91
Gareth of Greymarch	AA	1/1/92
Snorri Ottarson	KSCA	1/6/93
John of the Hills	AA	
1/2/94		
Roland Lofthjalm	AA	
18/11/94		
Gabriella della Santa Croce		
	VIS	1/12/94
Tanw the Confused	AA	
15/12/94		
Artos Barefoot	GA	1/1/95
Tako Jiro	AA	1/1/95
Janeta of Lindisfarne	AA	14/1/95
Gunnar Njalsson	AA	4/3/95
Tovye Woolmongere	OP	7/3/95
Alfar of Attica	KSCA	20/4/95
Nicolette du Loire	AA	1/6/95
Peter du Gaunt Noir	VIS	9/9/95
Muirghein ni Ghrainne	VIS	9/9/95
Sihtric Silfror	AA	4/11/95
Benedetta de Spenser	AA	1/1/96
Eleonora de la Birche	AA	1/1/96
Hrolfr Hreggvidarson	AA	1/1/96
Johanna of the Beechwood	AA	1/1/96
Pedair MacPharlain na Cluaine Bige		
	AA	1/1/96
Ramon de Castellon de la Plana		
	AA	1/1/96
Sebastian of Ventbarre	AA	1/1/96
Marguerite de Chemille	AA	12/1/96
Oriel of the Gypsies	AA	12/1/96
Randall Mallard de la Guerre		
	AA	12/1/96
Roheis Ireton of Attenborough		
	AA	12/1/96
Snorri Blodhdrekkur or Odhinslundi		
	AA	12/1/96
William Castille	AA	12/1/96
Cairistiona nic Bheathain	AA	1/8/97
Eric Alard	AA	1/8/97
Charles of the Park	AA	28/9/97
Athelstan of Tilbrook	AA	6/10/97
Hrothgar Breaksword	AA	20/2/98
Katryn yr Allt	AA	20/2/98
Elizabeth of Malta	AA	30/4/98

Norbert of Iken AA 30/4/99
Kendrick Robilard AA 19/6/99

Just a reminder that an AA assignment is due six months after the assignment date, an original assignment is due twelve months after assignment. If it looks like you are not going to get your assignment finished in time, *please* contact the Provost to arrange an extension.

Scrolls Ahoy

Now for some good news, a batch of scrolls has just returned from the West, and will be on their way to their rightful owners as soon as possible.

They are:

Diana the Dismal, AA, by Frae Fitzalloyne
Agro of Riverhaven, KSCA,

by Branwen of Werchesvorde

Jean le Montbank, AA,

by Bryony Beehyrd

Evelynne van der Haagen, OL,

by Beatrice Delfini

Hrolf Herjoflssen, OP,

by Richard of Dunheved

Caitlin de Courcy, AA

by Rowan Perigryne

Gregory of Loch Swan, KSCA,

by Rhianwen ni Dhiarmida

Rohese de Fairhurst, AA

by Bartolomeo Agazzari

Torold of Hawkhurst, KSCA,

by Rowan Perigryne

Thanks to Mistress Isabeau and Mistress Yseult for being couriers, and Duchess Juana (West Kingdom Chancellor, my boss) for getting them signed, sealed and delivered in such a timely fashion. That leaves only five in the West (2 originals and 3 AA's) which will hopefully return soon.

New Scribes

I would like to extend a welcome to:

Adrienne Walker

Bethan of Brockwood

Cairistiona nic Bhethain

Drake Morgan

Helga Rau_tik Leosdottir

Keridwen the Mouse

Meliora de Curci

Morag Freyser

Nicholas Bawcock

Sybille la Chatte

Wilhamina of Winchcombe

Welcome, good gentles, we are pleased to have you as part of the College. May your association be an enjoyable and productive one.

The College desperately needs new scribes. With only 25 scribes currently registered (and less than 12 of those having turned in work during the last twelve months), we have a serious manpower shortage, especially when you consider the estimated population of the Principality (1300+). Despite the heroic efforts of the working scribes, more are needed. If you know of anyone who might be interested in working for the College, please encourage them to get in touch with me.

Workshops

The recent scribes' workshop held recently at Bakerswood was a pleasant and productive day. Only a few hardy souls made the trek to the Mountains undeterred by the snow that week, so the attendees were (in no particular order):

Giles de Laval (me)
Yseult de Lacy
Marit the Wanderer
Bartolomeo Agazzari
Wilhamina of Winchcombe
Scott of Rowany
Adrienne Walker

My thanks to all who attended and worked so hard. I am looking at holding a workshop in Rowany sometime in October or November, and another one at my home a month or two after that. I will keep you informed of dates and places.

Recognition

As things stand now, scribes are very much overworked and undervalued. I am looking at several possible ways to increase recognition for scribes, and have proposed an award be instituted when Lochac becomes a Kingdom recognising outstanding service to the College/ excellence in the scribal arts. If you have any other ideas or suggestions please let me know.

Handbook

Copies of the 1999 edition of the Lochac Scribe's Handbook are still available from the Provost. The handbook features articles on calligraphy, illumination and colour theory, and guides for analysing a style, gilding and fixing common mistakes. Also included are guides for completing the Lochac pre-printed AA blanks, and the scroll wordings used by the Lochac College. At the negligible price of \$6.00, the

handbook is a valuable resource and an asset to any scribe.

World Wide Web

Master Richard de la Croix has very kindly given permission for Lady Branwen (and subsequently myself) to take over and update the scribe's webpage. I have overcome my technofear and begun work on the new webpage, which I am hoping to have up and running by November this year.

The new website will have most of the features of the existing one, including articles by and for scribes, back issues of *Scribe Notes*, and on-line manuscript collections. The main feature of the new website will be a gallery of Lochac scribe's work-Lochac has long had a proud reputation for the best scribal work in the Known World, now it's time to show them! I will be contacting scribes individually for permission to display their work on the website, if you have something that might be suitable please get in touch.

I'll leave you with an interesting tale of books, betrayal and battle. Until next time, good scribing!

your servant

Giles
14th day of August AS XXXV (2000)

The Battle of the Books

Everyone who has beheld them realises that the manuscripts of the Dark and Middle Ages are magnificent works of art, imbued with mystical reverence and greatly treasured by their owners. Yet few people realise just how much they were treasured - even to the point of going to war over.

In 561 AD, the abbot Columcille (whose name was later Anglicised to Columba), paid a visit to Finian, abbot of the monastery at Moville. Unbeknownst to the abbot, Columcille remained

wakeful for many nights, secretly copying a manuscript Finian had brought from Whithorn monastery in Scotland. Some historians claim that Columcille copied the Bible, others believe it was the Gospel of St Martin. Whichever it was, Finian discovered the deceit of his guest and demanded that Columcille hand over the copy he had made. He refused, and fled into the night before Finian's monks could seize the unauthorised copy.

Finian appealed to Diarmuid Uí Neill, high king of Ireland and kinsman to Columcille. After considering what may have been the world's first copyright case, the high king rendered his judgement: "to every cow belongs its calf, and to every book its copy". He ordered Columcille to turn the copy over to Finian, and that should have been that.

However, even though Columcille was a member of the Uí Neill clan and kinsman to the high king, he identified with his mother's family the clan o Donnell, according to Celtic custom. The o Donnells did not recognise the right of the upstart Uí Neills to hold the high kingship of Ireland, so Columcille felt justified in defying Diarmuid's order, declaring "the wrong decision of the judge is a raven's call to battle!"

This sparked the Cul Dreimne, the Battle of the Books. (The copy Columcille made became known as the cathac, or battler.) On one side ranged the high king and his formidable clan and allies, fighting to enforce his royal edict; on the other was Columcille and his clan and allies, fighting (ostensibly) for their perceived right to disregard the law of the land when it conflicted with their spiritual mission. The opportunity to humble the Uí Neil forces and possibly restore the o Donnells to their royal status was also something of a bonus. Although religious issues were at the heart of the dispute, the battling sides were formed along family lines and political connections, the two armies were composed of mixed pagan and Christian troops, their religious differences momentarily set aside by political concerns. Monks and druids fought on both sides, adding missiles of prayer and curse to the swords and spears of their allies. When the fighting was over, the blood of the Christians soaked the ground as much as that of the pagans.

Columcille won the day at Cul Dreimne, but did not get to enjoy his victory. According to the Beatha Colaim Chille (Life of Columba), written by an o Donnell in 1532 AD, Columcille felt deep remorse when he saw the slaughter caused

by his pride. He vowed to leave Ireland, to become a White Martyr and live out his days in foreign lands. Far more likely, however, is that he was forced into exile by the Synod of Teltown, a meeting of loyal Uí Neill clergy summoned by the high king. Columcille was almost excommunicated for his theft by copy of Finian's book: it was only the eloquent arguments of his friend Brendan of Birr that convinced the Synod to impose banishment as an alternative punishment.

Whichever the reason, Columcille gathered twelve disciples to him to form the nucleus of a new monastery, and in 565 AD embarked in coracles on the Irish Sea. In the manner of a druid, he abandoned himself to the elements, letting the winds and ocean currents dictate his course. Finally the frail hide boats reached the island of Iona off the coast of northwest Scotland, and Columcille and his monks established a monastery and scriptorium there. It was there, more than two hundred years later, that the most famous of all insular manuscripts, the Book of Kells, is thought to have been written, before the monastery had to be abandoned in 807 AD in the face of increasing Viking raids on the British isles.

Bibliography

Peter Cherici, *Celtic Sexuality*, Duckworth 1994

Simon James, *Exploring the World of the Celts*, Thames and Hudson 1993

David M Wilson ed, *The Northern World*, Harry N Abrams 1980