



# The Murmurs

Unto the Populace of Aquaterra and Bearwood do we, Geirleikr and Zahra,  
Coronets of Aquaterra, send Greetings,

This summer was filled with wonderful delight as we traveled from Three Mountains to Lion's Gate and from Dragons Laire to Wealdsmere. It was glorious that we were able to travel to these reaches of An Tir and all the places between to share the word fame of our great lands. We would like to thank everyone who has joined us under the Aquaterra Banner for camping and near the erics. We have found so much joy and laughter with you. As travel to these amazing camping events slows, we shift our view to enjoying the Hearth & Hospitality that is the feasting season.

We hope to see everyone at our Good Yule, November 23rd. We look forward to celebrating with you.

In joyful service,  
Geirleikr Vedrsdon Hersir  
Sheika Zahra bint al-Rammah

## **Tentative Progress**

**Harvest Feast** - Oct 19th - Shire of Midhaven - Geirleikr Vedrsdon Hersir

**Kingdom Heraldic & Scribal Symposium** - Oct 19th- Barony of Adiantum -  
Sheika Zahra bint al-Rammah

**Collegium** - Oct 25th to 27th - Barony of Glymm Mere -Sheika Zahra bint al-  
Rammah

**Baroness's Inspiration Tournament** - Nov 16th - Barony of Lions Gate -  
Geirleikr Vedrsdon Hersir and Sheika Zahra bint al-Rammah

**Good Yule** - Nov 23rd - Barony of Aquaterra - Geirleikr Vedrsdon Hersir and  
Sheika Zahra bint al-Rammah

**An Tir 12th Night** - Jan 10th to 12th- Barony of Adiantum - Geirleikr Vedrsdon  
Hersir and Sheika Zahra bint al-Rammah

**Ursulmas** - Jan 24th to 26th - Barony of Aquaterra - Geirleikr Vedrsdon Hersir and  
Sheika Zahra bint al-Rammah

*Following victory at September Crown, Congratulations to  
Crown Prince Christian Bane and Crown Princess Helene  
d'Anjou!*

*Congratulations to Our New Baronial Champions!*

Decimus Marius Gavinius Brittanicus Equis - Heavy Combat Champion.

Pan Mieczysław Czarnecki - Rapier Champion

HL Torn of Frog Haven - Archery Champion

HL Etolé Marchant - Thrown Weapons Champion

Lady Eibhlin inghean Sheain - Games Champion

Refr Gunnarsson - Youth Armored Combat Champion



*Upcoming Major Events for 2019*

Canton of Bearwood Pre-Hibernation Feast – November 9, 2019

Good Yule – November 23, 2019 –

Event Stewards: Lady Heilve Fridriksdottir and Lady Camilla Valerian

**This event will feature the Baronial Bardic and Arts and Science Championships!**

## Looking Toward 2020

**An Tir 12th Night** – January 10, 2020 to January 12, 2020

– Eugene, OR – Hosted by the Barony of Adiantum

**Ursulmas** – January 25, 2020 to January 26, 2020 - Monroe, WA

Event Stewards: Jade Redstone and Volund Ingennam



## *Regular Events*

*All regularly scheduled monthly events can be found on the Baronial website. Please subscribe to the Reeds to hear about last minute changes to these events.*

Heavy Fighting Practice: Saturdays, 1pm

Thrown Weapons Practice: Second and Fourth Saturdays, Noon

Scriptorium/A&S Night: Second Wednesday of the month, 5pm

Newcomers Night: Third Wednesday, 6pm

Culinary Guild: Third Tuesday, 6pm

Medieval Games Day: Third Sunday, 1pm

Baronial Business Meeting: Fourth Tuesday, 6:30pm



# *Halloween, Medieval Style*

by Lady Muireann ni Riordain, MOAS Ponte Alto, Silver Nautilus  
(From "Il Tempo", October 1997, with thanks to Stefan's Florilegium)

Actually, the title of this article is something of a misnomer. Many of our modern Halloween customs have continued from the Middle Ages virtually unchanged. Activities that were practiced then are still carried on today, though the spiritual emphasis is no longer as important to us. All Saint's Day and All Soul's Day, the two days following Halloween, are not as widely celebrated now, while in the Middle Ages they were just as or more important. In fact, during the Reformation, the feast of All Souls was removed from the Church calendar, since many of its activities were considered distinctly un-Christian. It was placed back on the calendar in 1928; by that time the general feeling was that it was no longer a superstitious danger.

Halloween has its origins in ancient Celtic culture. It was the end of the Celtic year, the end of the harvest season and the beginning of winter. It was believed that on this night demons, witches and evil spirits roamed about, playing tricks on unsuspecting humans. One could avoid being the victim of such pranks by either offering sweets or other foods, or by disguising oneself as a demon and roaming the night alongside them. Hence, our modern custom of trick-or-treating in costume. The theory was that the demons would take the human for one of their own and not disturb him.

There is also a Roman influence on the holiday. The custom of eating apples, or giving them away, or bobbing for them stems from a celebration of the Roman goddess Pomona. Children still bob for apples by floating them in a large tub of water and attempting to grasp one with their teeth and pull it out. In the Middle Ages, it was a divination game. Each apple would be given the name of a potential lover, and the number of tries it took to bite the apple foretold how long the love would last. There is another, somewhat alarming in my opinion, tradition that did not survive, or at least not as widely, in which an apple was placed on one end of a stick, and a lighted candle on the other. The stick was spun about at the end of a string, and children standing in a circle had to try to grab the apple with their teeth as it went past. They were often splattered with flying wax and grease from the candle.

Other divination games were played on Halloween night. Nutcracking was very popular for this purpose. A couple soon to be married would place two whole walnuts or hazelnuts in the embers of a fire. When the nuts burst, if they make a loud crackling noise, it was considered a sign that the love between the couple would be strong. If the nuts only burned, that meant the love would soon fade and die. Guests at Halloween revels would crack walnuts to foretell their future. If the shells cracked cleanly and the halves remained whole, the person would have good luck in love. If the shells shattered into pieces, so would the love. Another interesting medieval tradition was a type of mummer's play that was performed at night.

One person dressed as King Crispin, who was actually Saint Crispin, the patron of Cordwainers, or shoemakers who used Cordovan leather from Spain. He wore regal robes and a gold chain, and carried a scepter. After the feast, a person acting as the Surveyor asked King Crispin whether the mummers were allowed in.

Then the St. George's Play would commence. Afterwards, seven people acting as "soulers" would collect soul cakes, which were small shortbread cookies with currants, cinnamon and nutmeg. These were considered to be refreshment for the souls of the dead, who were thought to walk among the living on All Hallows Eve.

The day after Halloween, November 1, was All Saints Day. This was a day to remember all of the saints, whether known or unknown by the Church. It was a day of contemplation and pious devotion. At this time it was recognized that there were any number of Christians who were worthy of sainthood but for whatever reason were not sanctified by the Church. All Souls Day, on November 2, all people who have died are remembered. A legend has it that a pilgrim returning from the Holy Land was shipwrecked on an island that was inhabited by a hermit, who told the pilgrim that a cleft in the rocks led to Purgatory. The monk said that he could hear voices of the souls claiming that Christians did not pray hard enough for them to make a quicker journey to heaven. Apparently they particularly wanted to monks of Cluny to pray for them. So the pilgrim went to Cluny and told his tale to Abbot Odilo, who immediately declared All Souls Day as a day of prayer and commemoration of those who have passed before us.

So while the origins of Halloween and its religious emphasis have lost some of their significance in our modern society, many of the practices and customs have continued on in unbroken tradition. Many people no longer believe in demons and evil spirits who roam the night, but our school children still disguise themselves as such and are offered sweets and candy in exchange for exemption from pranks. And we still take at least a moment or two to remember our loved ones who have gone before us, in silent commemoration.

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Cosner, Madeleine Pelner, *Medieval Holidays and Festivals: A Calendar of Celebrations*. Charles Scribner's Sons, New York; 1981. ISBN: 0684171724.

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Weiser, Francis X., *Handbook of Christian Feasts and Customs: The Year of the Lord in Liturgy and Folklore*. Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., New York; 1958.



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