



The Baronial Shaft

www.al-barran.org



The official newsletter of the Barony of al-Barran November 2011 (AS XLVI)



Day of A&S

November 19th 2011



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The Baronial Court

Countess Slaine inghean Vi Sheanain Baroness of al-Barran

Baroness' Champion	Tam Grimm
Lord Commander	Earl Cameron Blackswan
Captain of the Guard	Ld Kaz de Rhode
Guardsmen	Ld Bardolf Gunvaldtson, Ld Loður Havskjold, Ld Thomas de Carisbourg, Ld Gwydion McKay, Ldy Sof"ia of al-Barran, Bernhardt, Cassidy, Fferyll, Petr, Skalgrim Egillson, Xone Rabson, THL Albrek Yngwieson
Captain of the Condotierri	Ld Geoffrey fitz Robert
Condotierri	Ldy Michelaine Du Dauphine, Ld Cornelius Fitz Reynold, Ld Conn mac Eoghain, Ld Cuinn, Akilina of Blaiddwyn, Kanna al Tanmerc'h
Chatelaine	Master J. T Whoreschum
Secretary	Ldy Sof"ia of al-Barran
Mistress of the Robes	THL Ceridwen de Gyrlington
Camp Coordinator	THL Ceridwen de Gyrlington
Camp Coordinator Assistant	Ldy Coupier le Rainette
Largess Coordinator	
Plenipotentiary	THL Bronwen Blackwell
Principal Lady in Waiting	Ldy Elisabeaux
Ladies in Waiting	Ldy Shazadi of the Barking Spyder, Ldy Miasa McDuff, Ldy Hrefna Feilian, Ldy Catherine Shadowcraft, Ldy Se'arlaith inghean Robeaird, Ldy Arabella of the Barking Spyder, Ldy Sayidda Rashida bint Rashid, Ldy Hagamore Foughts-a lot, Nuala
Sheriff	Ld Bjorn Thunarwin
Master Swordsman	Duke Walrick
Premier Blade	Garlton de Sepatura
Lord of Outlandish	Duke Walrick
Lady of May	Astrid Hafdanarsdottir
Outlandish Blade	Don Michael M'Quilline
Flower of Chivalry	Beatrice de Craire
Rapier Flower of Chivalry	Sorkhan Aratai
Bard of al-Barran	Fynn of Blaiddwyn
Protector of the Baroness' Heart	Lord Vicente Ferrer
Champion Archer	Beau Marishka of the Romanies
Baronial Arts & Sciences Champion	Ldy Quillion Cambell
Cut and Thrust Champion	Godrick

Calendar of Events

Please visit www.outlands.org or see the Outlandish Herald for more information.

November:

<i>12-13</i>	<i>Fall Coronation</i>	<i>Fontaine dans Sable</i>
<i>19</i>	<i>Day of A&S</i>	<i>al-Barran</i>
<i>20</i>	<i>Toys for Tots</i>	<i>al-Barran</i>

December:

<i>17-18</i>	<i>Midwinter and War Practice</i>	<i>al-Barran</i>
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Websites

Society: [http:// sca.org](http://sca.org) **Kingdom:** [http:// www.outlands.org](http://www.outlands.org)
Baronial: [http:// www.al-barran.org](http://www.al-barran.org)
College of Blaiddwyn: <http://www.unm.edu/~sca/index.html>

Discussion Lists

outlands@yahoogroups.com al-Barran@yahoogroups.com
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Publication Information

This is the November 2011 edition of the Baronial Shaft, the official newsletter of the Barony of al-Barran (Albuquerque, NM), a chapter of the Society for Creative Anachronism, Inc. ***Submissions for the Baronial Shaft may be sent via email to: chronicler@al-barran.org. Hard copy must be typed.*** Artwork submitted via email must be in jpeg or bitmap format. All submissions are due on the 20th of each month preceding publication month, unless otherwise stated in this publication. Articles may be edited, shortened or not printed at the discretion of the Chronicler. **All submissions or artwork, photography and writings must be accompanied by a permission to publish form: Please contact Anzelm Kowalski at chronicler@al-barran.org to obtain a form.** The Baronial Shaft is not a corporate publication of the SCA and does not delineate official policy. Art credits October 2011: Microsoft clip art, Wikipedia, medieval manuscripts, Lady Jorhildr Hrafnskald Cuilleann

Officers' Reports:

From the Seneschal:

Greetings al-Barran!!

Along with all the local fun activities, Pageantry in the Park, Ta Ta tourney, A & S, and so on, comes a REMINDER.

When planning a local, just for fun tournament or activity, remember to contact the baronial officer (as well as the Seneschal) in charge of the area you are considering. The Baronial officer needs to be included in your planning. The officer may have additional suggestions, reminders about what is legally acceptable and is responsible for reporting to the next level as well.

And remember too that you can post an article in The Shaft as well as the discussion list, the more people that know about a fun event, the more people will come and participate.

YIS

***THL Diana of Llanberris OFO
Seneschal, al-Barran***

From the A&S Minister:

Greetings unto our fair Barony! It has been a pleasure to see how talented the good folk of our populace are. What a wonder to see the creativity pour at Champions, when a number of folks created works of art out of random art supplies! How heartening to see the people of our Barony, at fighter practice and at events, working in divers arts and sciences.

Now I ask that you bring that talent and creativity to al-Barran Day of A&S! On November 19th we will gather to celebrate the arts and sciences in a number of ways. What will be YOUR role? Will you teach a class, or learn a new skill? Will you enter a project-- perhaps a number of projects? Or come to view some of the best creative works in the Barony? Will you bring items to display and educate the masses, or perhaps be the next A&S Champion of al-Baran?

Please remember that if you intend to enter the Champion category, you have a pre-registration deadline of November 10. Please send information and documents to: Quillon Campbell

111 Jaramillo Road, unit A Belen, NM 87002

or: quillonflyingfox@gmail.com

We have a wonderful day planned. Now, all we need is YOU!

Lady Jorhildr Hrafnskald Cuilleann (Quillon,) Minister of Arts and Sciences, al-Barran

From the Hospitaller:

Greetings, all!

For those who were unable to attend Champions, I have officially stepped up to serve al-Barran as Hospitaller. Being a recent transplant to the Outlands from our neighboring kingdom of Ansteorra, I would like to thank my predecessor, Lord Randolph, for the effort he put in to this office; the Newcomers Meetings played a large role in helping us learn about our new SCA home!

My first Newcomers Meeting went very well; we had 10 people in attendance. I am already looking forward to the next one! I would like to encourage everyone to attend the Newcomers Meetings, if you can. I feel it helps newcomers feel more at ease to meet people in a more relaxed setting – approaching someone at fighter practice can be a bit daunting, especially when that person is wearing armor and carrying a sword!

All kidding aside, I hope to see some of you at our next meeting – it will give me a chance to get to know you all better, as well!

In service of the dream,

***Pipa de Blakemere
al-Barran Hospitaller***

Monthly Activities

Citizens Meetings: Held on the 3rd Tuesday of every month at the Manzano Mesa Multigenerational Center located at 501 Elizabeth St. SE, Albuquerque, NM. Meetings begin at 6:30 pm. For information email seneschal@al-barran.org

Fighter Practice: Sunday from 11:00 am until 4:00 pm at Montgomery Park located on Comanche near San Mateo. For heavy weapon fighting information, contact Viscount Sir Eldr Fredrikson. For rapier fighting information, contact Don Michael M'Quilline.

Archery Practice: Archery Practice is held at The Summer Mountain Archery Range at Sir Tore's. Archery Practice Saturdays at 10:00 am unless there are other in-town events. Please contact Druid Aukring for time and directions.

Directions: Take I-40 east to Tijeras, stay in the middle lane and continue straight after the stop light, (Highway 337, old So. 14) continue south to mile marker 20 you will see a sign for the town of Yrisarry. Turn right at the second Woodpecker Circle turnoff and it's the first house on the left. The range is at the bottom of the steep drive.

Archery After Work: Thursdays from 5:30 pm – 7:00 pm, Stefan's in town range; contact the Captain of the Archers or the website for site information, archery@al-barran.org.

Scribal Workshop: The Scribes meet on the second and fourth Tuesdays of the month at 6:00 pm. The workshop is held at various places around the Barony. Please contact Mistress Ymanya.

Weaving Knowledge & Exchange Workshop: Held on the third Friday of each month at 7:00 pm. Contact Baroness Monika the Fair.

Newcomers Household Meeting: Meetings are held on the second Tuesday of each month at 7:00pm. For more information, please contact Lord Randolph Victorson. Their information is listed on the Officers page of this publication.

The College of Blaiddwyn's Populace Meeting: Held on the first Tuesday of each month at 7:00 pm at the Frontier Restaurant across from UNM at Central and Cornell. Contact Caltsuna via email at either sca@unm.edu for more information.

The College of Blaiddwyn's Fighter Practice: Heavy and Rapier fighter practice are held on Wednesday starting at 7:00 pm at Johnson Field on UNM campus. Please contact the officers of Blaiddwyn at sca@unm.edu.

The College of Blaiddwyn's Dance Practices: Court Dance and Middle Eastern Dance practices at Blaiddwyn will be held on the second and fourth Monday evenings in the SUB between 6:30 – 8:30 pm.

The College of Blaiddwyn's A & S Night: First and third Wednesday nights from 7 – 9 pm in the 3rd floor of the SUB. Contact the College at sca@unm.edu.

Day of A&S / Baronial Polling

**November 19, 2011
Sandia Preparatory School
532 Osuna Rd
Albuquerque, NM 87113**

Autocrat: Lady Quillion Campbell, *quillionflyingfox@gmail.com* and THLady Cerydwen de Gyrlington (Melanie Templet), *outlandsdeputy@yahoo.com*, 505-994-4892

Please no calls after 9:00 pm

Site is **Dry** (*allowance made for alcoholic entries only*), No pets.

No site fee but we will be collecting items for Toys for Tots

Please join the Barony of al-Barran and our lovely Baroness by celebrating the artistic talents of the members of the populace as they vie for the title of al-Barran's Arts & Sciences Champion.

This event will also be our baronial polling with an opportunity to express your opinions to TRMs about our upcoming baronial coronet change and to vote for your choice to carry the Scorpion of al-Barran onward.

Classes on various subjects will take place throughout the day for anyone wishing to explore a new skill or hone a current one. A donation lunch will be provided to benefit the Toys for Tots program. Also, a dessert competition will be held with the winner chosen by the populace. The desserts can be period or not and no documentation is required but please list ingredients.

Requirements for al-Barran **Champion** competition pieces **only** are as follows:

- ❖ Three completed pieces (in at least two different categories) must be entered in order to vie for Baronial A&S Champion. The artisans are strongly encouraged to enter new works of art (within the last year).
- ❖ There must be documentation (3 copies) for each piece entered.

** In addition to the Champion competition winners will be chosen in each individual category, there will be Her Excellencies' Prize and newcomers' winner chosen as well. **The requirements for entry for Champion do not apply for these competitions.**

ALL ENTRIES FOR CHAMPION HAVE A PRE-REGISTRATION DEADLINE OF NOVEMBER 15, 2011. NO EXCEPTIONS!

BACK BY POPULAR DEMAND.... A contest will be held for the **BEST SCORPION IN ANY MEDIUM**. Let your imagination run wild and the best entry depicting a scorpion will be chosen during the day by popular vote. Entries for **this competition only do not have to be pre-registered** and documentation is not required!

A scroll display area will be set up -- so look at your wall and bring your favorite scroll (or scrolls) for us all to see!

Directions:

From the North: take your best route to I-25 exit 231 (Ellison-San Antonio/Osuna). Continue on frontage road to Osuna. Turn right onto Osuna. Site is on the left at 532 Osuna Rd.

From the South: take your best route to I-25 exit 230 (San Mateo/Osuna). Turn left onto Osuna (San Mateo turns into Osuna). Site is on the left.

<p style="text-align: center;">I. Visual Art</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Calligraphy Only 2. Illumination Only 3. Calligraphy & Illumination 4. Ceramics 5. Pottery 6. Decorative Metal Work 7. Glasswork 8. Decorative Leatherwork 9. Heraldic Design 10. Sculpture 11. Miscellaneous Crafts 	<p style="text-align: center;">II. Fiber Art</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Costuming (all periods) 2. Costume Accessories 3. Needlework 4. Lace Making 5. Spinning Only 6. Weaving Only 7. Spinning & Weaving 8. Miscellaneous Crafts
<p style="text-align: center;">III. Domestic Arts and Sciences</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Brewing 2. Vinting 3. Breads 4. Sweets 5. Side Dish 6. Main Dish 7. Herbalism 8. Miscellaneous Crafts 	<p style="text-align: center;">IV. Performing Arts</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Dramatic Reading 2. Poetry 3. Prose 4. Instrumental Music 5. Vocal Music 6. Dance – court, ethnic, etc. 7. Miscellaneous Performances
<p style="text-align: center;">V. Letters</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Poetry 2. Prose 3. Research Papers (including persona) 4. Original Song Lyrics 5. Miscellaneous Written Entries 	<p style="text-align: center;">VI. Functional Art</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Armor 2. Ironwork 3. Tool Making 4. Woodworking 5. Musical Instruments 6. Scientific Instruments 7. Weapon Making 8. Miscellaneous Crafts

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TOYS FOR TOTS
EVENT!!


SUNDAY NOVEMBER 20, 2011
10:00 TO 4:00 AT
MONTGOMERY PARK

THE BARONY OF AL-BARRAN INVITES
YOU TO COME WATCH THE MEDIEVAL
KNIGHTS IN ARMOR

AND DASHING FENCERS VIE TO WIN THE
TOURNAMENTS!!

WE ARE COLLECTING TOY
DONATIONS FOR THE MARINES TFT
PROGRAM AND THEY WILL BE THERE
TO DO THE FINAL COLLECTION IN
THE AFTERNOON.

BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE
SOCIETY OF CREATIVE
ANACHRONISM,
BARONY OF AL-BARRAN



**Santa Lucia (Festival of Lights)
al-Barran Midwinter and War Practice
Saturday & Sunday, December 17-18, 2011**



Moose Lodge # 1680, 19482 HWY 314, Belen
NM 87002

Autocrat: His Excellency Sebastian Taylor (Joe
Jarman), lordsabat@aol.com

Fees: TBD

No outside alcohol or removal of alcohol from
indoors will be permitted

War Practice: Montgomery Park, Comanche and
San Mateo, Albuquerque, NM 87110

December 19, 2010 - Practice starts at 11:00 a.m. -

Please try to carpool to ease parking

No fee for War Practice

When the nights are long and dark, the Barony of al-Barran invites you to join us in our celebration of the Festival of Lights to brighten your spirits and get you ready for the holiday season. There will be feasting and reveling reminiscent of the Scandinavian countries in the 14th century and many countries beyond who remember this wonderful celebration. Craftsmen and merchants will also provide their wares for your shopping pleasure. Dancing and other activities are planned.

From the North: Take I-40 West to the Big I interchange in Albuquerque. At the interchange, take I-25 South (sign will say Las Cruces). Travel South to Exit 195 (BUS-Belen). Merge onto I-25 BYPASS South. Turn Left onto NM 314 East. Travel approximately 1/2 mile, make a U-Turn at Los Chavez Loop. Building will be on your right.

From the South: Take I-25 North (sign will say Las Cruces/Albuquerque). Take exit 190 toward I-25 BUS-Belen. Merge onto NM 314. Make a U-Turn at Los Chavez Loop. Building will be on your right.

ARTS AND SCIENCES—DOCUMENTATION REMINDER AND ADVICE—

Al-Barran Day of A&S (November 19) is coming up quickly—is the documentation for your entry ready? Some people have expressed concern about documenting their work. Fear not! There are a good many articles online (and in books such as the *Known World Handbook*) on documenting for A&S. I have also found, however, that it's nice to have an example to work from. Here is a copy of the documentation I used for one of last year's Kingdom A&S entries (Medieval Masks/ Masks of Novgorod.)

Don't forget—when putting together your bibliography, PLEASE don't use Wikipedia as a source. There's nothing wrong with GOOD Internet sources, but try to use books and other media as well. Primary sources are best! Don't forget museums!

Leather Masks in Medieval Times

By Lady Quillon Corbie Campbell

Masks have been used by humans since prehistoric times for rituals of both life and death, and in dramas both merry and sad. The earliest mask discovered was created in stone by Neolithic Man, and masks have been used in cultures around the world-- from stone and wooden masks in ancient Rome and Japan to masks of neoprene and paper mache in modern Europe and North America (McCarthy and Nunely, 1999). Masks of today are celebrated in books and art, and on the Internet. Leather masks in the medieval ages, on the other hand, are a mysterious commodity; we know they existed and were used, but there seems to be little written documentation to support this. Performances using masks, especially those that aped the forms of beasts, were frowned upon by the Church as Paganistic—which they often were.

Masks, with features both human and bestial, are featured in many paintings throughout medieval times. Although these may capture the forms of masks as they were used by the people of the times, they do little to tell us the medium from which the masks were formed, or how they were painted.

Leather is a rare material in archaeological context, for it does not often survive unmarred for thousands of years—we can always consider ourselves lucky to uncover a complete leather artifact from medieval times. That we have unearthed few leather masks may be less a sign of the times and more a reflection of the fragile nature of leather in the ground.

The Masks from Novgorod

There *are* leather masks that have survived from medieval times that prove their existence. Excavations in Novgorod, Russia, beginning in the 1950s, have uncovered over twenty leather masks. Some of them, at least, were found in a cobbler's shop ("Archaeology," 2000).

The leather faces are humanistic, some with pointed lower teeth. At least one has awl- or stitch-marks around the bridge of the nose area, indicating that the mask once had a separate nose-piece attached ("Medieval," 2006). Another mask—a face whose smile and merry crescent-shaped eyes are evocative of the "comedy" half of the iconoclastic comedy/tragedy masks—is interesting in that it was cut so roughly. The eyes, in particular, show slicing knife-marks that extend above one eye and into a corner of another. The holes made to receive a cord or thong to hold the mask on are apparently bored with a knife blade, and are placed high on the mask, which would thrust the lower part of the mask away from the face. Was it created by an apprentice? Or in haste by a cobbler, making it to amuse a child? Other leather items recovered from Novgorod, such as footwear, knife sheaths, and purses show a higher level of skill and incorporate such techniques as embossing, intricate decorative stitching and openwork ("Medieval," 2006), making such rough work seem out of place. A least one 12th century Novgorod mask seems to have been cut from the leather of an old boot ("Archaeology," 2000).

The overall color of the Novgorod masks is black, but this could be due to their long burial rather than man- made pigment. One mask (see photos) bears traces of pigment—a series of pale lines on the nose and cheeks and a sun-like circle on the forehead.



Leather Novgorod Masks, State Historical Museum,

Moscow.



Craftsmen of Novgorod clearly had skill in shaping leather, and the tools at their disposal were similar to those we use today—knives and awls, leatherworking needles and wooden lasts (Thompson, 1967). What we *don't* know is why they created these masks. Speculations by archaeologists include children's amusement, Pagan festivals, and props of the *Skomorokhi*, Russian entertainers and comedians.

The ideas of the masks being *Skomorokhi* or Pagan festival masks may be one and the same. The *Skomorokhi*, with their masks, musical instruments and dancing bears, performed shows that integrated fortune-telling and other forms of “magic.” Their festivals coincided with those of the Church's Assumption of Christ and Easter. This, combined with dressing in “hairy animal masks and clothes to fit and in back they put tails, looking like devils, and on their faces they carry the shameful members and bleat devilish things like goats and reveal their shameful members” was surely enough to put the Church on edge (Bushkovitch, 1992).

Other Medieval Masks

Although we do not have many other concrete examples of leather masks being used in medieval times, we have paintings from the times like this one from an illustrated copy of the 12th century *Li Romans d' Alixandre* that depicts a tonsured monk attempting to stop dancing masked mummers wearing the guises of various beasts.



Masked mummers, Li Romans d'Alisandre Illustration

Medieval mummers' plays, which were found in many European cultures, were more holdovers of Pagan ritual, and therefore frowned on by the Church. There were many variations on the plays, but many consisted of a "combatant" pretending to kill or wounding another, after which a "doctor" would appear and "cure" the dead or wounded man. Often the "cures" would be reminiscent of Pagan remedies, such as pretending to draw a tooth from the "patient," then presenting the tooth of an equine or other animal to the audience. With the "abnormal" tooth gone, the patient could return to health or life (Kirby, 1975). The medieval "Feast of Fools" had masked peasants reveling, and priests turning their vestments inside-out and wearing bishop's masks (McNeill, 1998).

Hobby-horses, such as the one still used in Padstow, were also a part of these medieval festivities. The Padstow "horse" consists of a hoop of tarred cloth that encircles a hidden person. A carved horse's head with snapping jaws adorns the front of this contraption, and a black mask of a human face protrudes from the horse's "back" (Kirby, 1975).

A number of edicts were placed to discourage these "evil" practices, including the Council of Auxerre, 573-603 AD, banning "performing with hobby-horses and giving of presents to demons (Kirby, 1975)," and Pope Innocent III banning masks in 1207 (McNeill, 1998). The edicts apparently had little effect, however.

Shakespearean Masks

Later in period we have the plays of Shakespeare (d. 1616,) some of which require masks. Romeo could not go unnoticed without his mask at the ball of the Capulets in *Romeo and Juliet*, and it would be difficult to depict Bottom the weaver's transformation without the mask of an ass' head. These masks could have been created from a variety of materials, according to the

whim and funds of the play masters, but leather would still have been abundant and relatively easy to form into any needed shapes.

Venetian Carnival Masks

Some of the most famous and easily-recognized masks today are those of the Venetian Carnival. This festival, beginning in December, was a pre-Lenten extravaganza that allowed one last chance at feasting on meat (Hale, 1981). In modern Venice you can purchase exquisite creations of paper mache covered with gold leaf and draped in ribbons and feathers and veiled in multi-colored cloth, but early carnival masks depicted in paintings show much simpler creations.

The carnival was celebrated in Venice as early as the 1100s, and a Venice law cropped up in 1268 regulating the costume-goers—in this case forbidding the playing of the “egg game”—a practice in which masked noblemen would sling eggs full of scented water at passing ladies. Levels of debauchery and use of masks for reasons other than “partying” led to more laws being passed regulating the wearing of masks. You could wear them only during Carnevale. You could not wear them in a nunnery...masks were being used as “equalizers,” allowing peasants to mingle with nobles, spies to be privy to conversations they otherwise would not have, and debt-ridden noblemen to gamble without their creditors recognizing them (Editore, 2009).

Besides a regular cast of characters worn by Venetian carnival-goers, such as the Bauta, Larva/volto, and Moretta, There was a form of improvisational theater in Venice called “Commedia Dell’ Arte,” which began in the 1600s. These players used a cast of masked characters which included such memorable creations as the black-masked Arlecchino-- a foolish ,simple-minded Harlequin, Pantalone, the beak-nosed old merchant, and Pulcinella, a large-nosed, often hunchbacked buffoon (Editore, 2009).



Pulcinella in leather, c. 1700, The Theatre Museum, London.

Again, practices viewed by the Church as Pagan were carried out during carnival, including the sacrificing of animals and reveling in masks, and the Church tried to regulate the antics of the partiers. In 1797 Venice became part of the Austrian-held kingdom of Lombardy-Venetia, and the Carnival went into decline, to be revived around 1979 (Hale, 1981).

As far as the creation of Venetian masks, a number of guilds were ratified by the magistrates called the Giustizieri Vecchi, who were responsible for the “vigilance of arts and crafts,” in 1436. One of these guilds was that of the Maschereri, or mascareri—the mask-makers. According to a document in the Correr Civic Museum, Venice, eleven craftsmen were registered in the guild between 1530-1600. There was even a woman mask-maker registered, by the name of Barbara Scharpetta. Another, similar guild was that of the “Targheri—“craftsmen who created “faces” of paper mache or waxed canvas (Editore, 2009).

Argument for the Use of Leather in Medieval Masks

The Guilds may well have protected their mask-making secrets; at any rate, there is little physical evidence left of the original masks, and paintings have the disadvantage of not revealing the original composition of the masks they represent. Various mask-makers in modern Venice who use leather say that they are “copying the old way,” and even though neoprene is a cheap and common medium for producing masks today, there are those who are still willing to pay more for leather masks because they are more comfortable and longer-lasting.

In a society that ate a good deal of meat, leather would have been a common commodity even when paper was not. Leather can be molded into intricate shapes using tools and materials readily available—you need only water to soften the leather, and it can be prodded into shape with any rigid tools. The knowledge was clearly there, as shown by the Novgorod masks, and any culture that used vegetable-tanned leather and had knowledge of shaping it (as most European cultures did, into sheaths, containers, footwear, etc.) could shape a leather mask if they could shape a shoe.

In his *Craftsman's Handbook*, written in 15th century Florence, Cennino Cennini writes an account of how to produce both a life mask of the face in plaster and how to model a shaped crest or helmet in leather—both skills that easily translate to mask making.



Leather mask of Alexander Peden, outlawed preacher, in the National Museum of Scotland.

My Methods of Constructing the Masks

I used various weights of vegetable-tanned leather, from 4-8 ounces, depending on the intricacy and size of each mask. After designing the shape of the mask I drew it out on the leather, and cut the outline and eyes with shears and knives. The leather was then soaked in hot (not boiling!) water until no more bubbles rose from it, and then patted dry (I used the leg of my pants.) Where stamping of the surface was desired I used a variety of purchased stamps and some made by filing down pieces of steel, tapping the design in with a mallet which I made using a small maple log that I whittled down and a handle carved from ash. Bold designs were cut into the leather using knives and a v-tool similar to a gouge.

When the leather was stamped, and holes punched or bored for the ties, I molded the masks. This was done against a variety of forms of wood and metal, as well as my own face. Where the leather required more stretching, I used antler points and wooden tool handles to shape it. The shaped mask would then be set to dry.

I could find no documentation of the type of paint used on any of the extant leather masks. Dark coloration on excavated masks may well be attributed to darkening through age and exposure to elements. The acids in leather are detrimental to many pigments used in the medieval ages, and the flexible nature of a mask causes many paints to crack as the mask bends and conforms to the face, therefore I chose to use acrylic paint, which is flexible and safe for leather, and long-lasting. For the ties I used leather thong, which holds a knot well, but can also be undone if needed.



Early forms of the Larva mask. By Giacomo Franco, 1610. British Museum



*Commedia dell'Arte, Danilo Reato. Late 16th century. Printed in the book *Le Maschere Veneziane*.*

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