

The Aerie



Ruth and Boaz by Hans Holbein II. From *A History of Woodcut*, Arthur Hind, 1935.

AUGUST A.S. LIV (2019) Cum An Iolair Calendar (Events in bold are local)

August 2019

- 1** Shire Meeting: St. Thomas the Apostle 12251 Antioch Rd.-7pm
- 9** Cook's Guild 7:30 at Marguerite's 7216 Cottonwood Shawnee, KS
- 15** Shire Meeting: St. Thomas the Apostle 12251 Antioch Rd.-7 pm.
- 17** Heraldshill Annual Event—Heraldshill (Mason City, IA)
Regional Marshal Event—Crystal Mynes (Joplin, MO)
- 24** Cattle Raids—Mag Mor (Lincoln, NE)
- 30** Valor—Vatavia (Wichita, KS)

September 2019

- 5** Shire Meeting: St. Thomas the Apostle 12251 Antioch Rd.-7pm
- 7** King's Companie of Archers—Aston Tor (E. Jackson County, MO)
- 13** Cook's Guild 7:30 at Marguerite's 7216 Cottonwood Shawnee, KS
- 14** Masters of the Duel—Amlethsmor (Hallsville, MO)
- 19** Shire Meeting: St. Thomas the Apostle 12251 Antioch Rd.-7 pm.
- 28** Vertigo—Lost Moor (St. Joseph, MO)

October 2019

- 3** Shire Meeting: St. Thomas the Apostle 12251 Antioch Rd.-7pm
- 5** Autumn Arrows—Calanais Nuadh (Rolla, MO)
Regional Fighter Practice—Coeur D'Ennui (Des Moines, IA)
- 11** Cook's Guild 7:30 at Marguerite's 7216 Cottonwood Shawnee, KS
- 12** Fall Crown Tournament—Forgotten Sea (Kansas City, MO)

17 Shire Meeting: St. Thomas the Apostle 12251 Antioch Rd.-7 pm.

26 Grimfells Event—Grimfells (Fayetteville, AR)

Shire Birthday List

August

- 12 Dunstan Godricson
- 24 Garsiyya al-Andalusi

September

- 2 Gianlupo delle Bande Neri
- 15 Bronwen ferch Lloid

October

- 21 Alfgeirr Skytja

Note from Chronicler

We need articles, book reviews and event reports for *The Aerie*. Please submit those by the 25th of each month to chronicler@shirecai.calontir.org. It would be especially helpful if people wrote event reviews. It is so simple to write them since you go to events already. We have new Officers. Everyone had a great time at Feast of Eagles and some of our shire members got awards. John was announced as a candidate for Knighthood, Adelaide received a Calon Cross and Giraude received a Leather Mallet. Our Birthday event had almost 250 people at it. That is the highest attendance we have seen. The black, red and gold feast was enjoyed by all. Our webminister and our Seneschal needs a deputy. Please talk to them if you are interested!

The Daily Garden:

Orchards, Nuts & Berries

by HL Fiona nic Gormliatha
(used with permission)

The study of fruits of the period begins with the Romans, as their traditional meal would start with eggs & end with fruit. They would eat watermelon & melon, not the same sorts that we have now, the watermelon starting out with yellow flesh for example, & most vines being of the white-flowered variety. As mentioned before in the section on cider, the apple was bred up from the crab apple to the 30 varieties they had then. Not to mention 12 kinds of plums (dried to prunes), 41 kinds of pear, quinces, pomegranate & 29 varieties of fig—grafting was known to the Romans so that you could have several varieties on one tree, if you wanted.

Grapes were often served fresh at the table, candied or sugared or dried into raisins—there is a difference between table grapes and wine grapes, Concord grapes by the way are from the new world. Dates were imported from Northern Africa or Syria, if one notes the pie recipes from the Middle Ages, most pies would contain one or two chopped dates—this acted as a sweetener, as sugar or honey was expensive & hard to come by. The Romans also introduced several Asian fruits into Europe, the peach, apricot & cherry trees—as for citrus they only knew the citron, which looks like a lemon but is even more bitter than one (I have only ever eaten citron candied, in fruitcakes!).

Lemons (citrus limonicum) & bitter orange (citrus aurantium), were introduced to Europeans from Arabic countries, especially during the Crusades. A bitter orange is VERY bitter, & must be cooked or candied to taste good, the sweet orange (citrus sinensis) that we know today appeared in the 1400s & was not found in cookery before the 16th century.

There was also the very necessary olive (for the oil as well as the fruit), of which there was 15 different varieties in Roman times. And stone pines for the cones that carried pine nuts used in cooking throughout the Mediterranean.

Then there were the bush fruits, raspberries, blackberries, gooseberries (very popular), currants (red & black) & elderberries (this last was often used to make a tonic, syrup or cordial—it is the basis for sloe gin) & used medicinally. Then there are cranberries—there is a lot of contention that cranberries are from the New World but in Scandinavian countries we have cranberries, cloud berries, bounceberries (apparently they bounced when ripe), lingonberry, bogberry—it had a lot of names!

And then there is the strawberry, which was symbolic during the Middle Ages of perfection & righteousness & was often found in Church carvings & the Virgin Mary is often portrayed with strawberries as she was considered perfect & righteous. Strawberries were often gathered wild & weren't really cultivated until the 1300's in France by peasants in their garden plots. Then in 1368 King Charles V had 1200 strawberry plants set in his garden at the Louvre & then cultivation really took off! Most fresh fruits were eaten by peasants, tree fruits since they were closer to heaven were eaten raw by the elite, but melons & strawberries, since they grew on the ground were suspect & should be cooked to eat!

Then we have our candied/sugared/dried fruits that were to be found at the apothecary, as they were medicinal in nature & often combined with what we would have thought of as savory dishes. This was because some fruits were considered dry & cold—like pears which should be cooked with wine & spices to warm it up & make it easier to digest. Apples being cold & wet were better eaten cooked than raw & like melon was better eaten in combination with meat & cheese. Jams or compotes were also medicinal, cooked in wine, sugar & spices added & eaten at the end of the meal to aid digestion (especially candied ginger!). And then we have our nuts, walnuts (the English—really the Persian variety--black walnuts are New World, no pecans either!), hazelnuts, chestnuts and the almond, all also candied. The almond in particular was the queen of the kitchen, used for sauces, as a substitute for butter or milk on fast days & also prescribed as medicine.

Bibliography:

Websites: Oldcook: fruits in Medieval Europe

Food In the Middle Ages

“Eyewitness Books series: Medieval Life”

“Back to Basics” How to Learn & Enjoy Traditional American Skills (Readers Digest 1981).

“Food in History” by Reay Tannahill

Copyright 2019 Jane Nichols

The Tale of Airmid, Diancecht & Miach

by HL Fiona nic Gormliatha

(used with permission)

Diancecht was the head of a family of healers—he had four sons, Cethan, Cu (which, by the way, is Gaelic for “dog”), Cian & Miach and a daughter, Airmid. Not much is known about Cu or Cethan—Cian the firemaker found a wife, Eithne, while looking for a lost cow, & fathered Lugh of the Long Arm. More is known about Airmid & Miach, for they & their father & Cethan when they first came to Erin found themselves drawn to a well, called Slane, which became their Place of Power.

During the first Battle of Moytura, these four chanted such spells of power over the waters of the Well, that not only did it heal the wounded of the Tuatha de Dannan, but it would restore life to one dead! But it happened that a Formori chieftain, one Octriallach, son of Iduach found out about the Well of Slane & its powers. He & his men went to the place at night, each with a stone from the river Drowes & dropped so many stones into the Well that it was ever after known as the Cairn (stone mound) of Octriallach.

During the battle, Nuada, King of the Tuatha de Dannan, lost his hand, a blemish that disqualified him as king. Diancecht put forth his skills & made a replacement for Nuada's hand out of silver—a prosthetic that moved as well as a real hand. But in spite of this, Nuada still could not rule, for it was held that if the king had a blemish, so was the Land & his rule. So the Tuatha chose Bres of the Beautiful face (who was half Tuatha, half Formori) to be their new king—who turned out to be pretty on the outside, but not at all pretty on the inside.

Miach was concerned about a metal hand being put onto an arm of flesh, so he was not surprised when Nuada sent for him. Miach & Airmid traveled together to Nuada's fortress, where they were stopped by the gatekeeper who had lost an eye at Moytura himself. He stroked a cat dozing in his lap as he asked Airmid & Miach their business there.

“We are good doctors.” Miach replied.

“If that is so, perhaps you can give me my eye back.”

“We can give you one of the cat's to replace it.”

“I should be very pleased if you would do that!” The porter exclaimed (nobody cared what the cat thought, apparently). So they did the job right there & then, so the restored gatekeeper took them in to Nuada, who was groaning in pain since his arm had festered where it joined the silver hand (Miach had been right to be worried).

The porter was only pleased with his new eye only for a short while, as he found that the cat's eye was always starting at the sound of mice & the flying of birds, and when wanted to watch something, it would choose that time to be asleep!

Meanwhile, they cured the festering arm by driving a chafer beetle out of it, then asked Nuada if he would like his original hand back. The answer was “Yes!” of course, so they went to where the hand was buried & dug it up. Fixing it to the stump & applying healing herbs, Airmid & Miach chanted over it for 3 times 3 days.

“Bone to bone/Vein to vein/Balm to balm

Sap to sap/Skin to skin/Tissue to tissue

Blood to blood/Flesh to flesh/sinew to sinew

Marrow to marrow/Pith to pith/Fat to fat

Membrane to membrane/Fiber to fiber/Moisture to moisture.”

Nuada's hand was restored & once again he could rule over the Tuatha de Dannan (the Tribe of the Goddess Danu), a job

that he soon gave up to Lugh of the Long Arm (remember him? Cian's boy).

When Diancecht heard about Miach & Airmid's success, he became mad with jealousy. Miach first learned about this madness when he stepped into the house when he returned home & his father struck him on the head with a sword. Fortunately, it was only a flesh wound that Miach soon healed—so Diancecht slashed him again, this time down to the bone, but once again, Miach cured it. Diancecht hit him again, this time cutting into the brain, but even this was not beyond Miach's skill to fix. Then with a great blow, Diancecht cut Miach's brain in two, an injury beyond any physician's skill.

Even after his death, Miach still wished to continue his healing partnership with Airmid, for after he was buried, 365 herbs (one for each of the nerves of the body) grew from his grave. Seeing this, Airmid spread out her cloak & carefully harvested the herbs, laying them onto the cloak in the shape of the body. But Diancecht, still mad with rage, grabbed the cloak & shook it, confusing the herbs.

Airmid, after she got over her shock & grief, brought suit against her father for breaking up her partnership with Miach—revealing that had she been able to catalog the herbs, no one need to die, for the herbs would have healed all ills, making mankind virtually immortal. Fortunately, Airmid remembered some of the herbs & their uses & taught this to others.

Diancecht claimed that he had done correctly then, for death needs to make way for new generations, nobody save the gods had any business being immortal. It was ruled that Miach had wrongly interfered with his father's case, but that Diancecht had no right to kill Miach, nor confuse the herbs. Therefore, he had to make reparations to Airmid, so that she could set up a life & practice independent of his, so that she never need to have contact with him again.

"Miach is no more, Airmid shall remain." Diancecht proclaimed, in agreement.

So Airmid was on duty at the well of Healing at Slane (which was set up near the one that had been turned into a cairn)—casting so many of her herbs into the nearby lake, that it was ever after known as Loch Luibe (=herbs). But after the second Battle of Moytura was over, Airmid never spoke to her father again, & soon surpassed him in medical skill.

Diancecht suffered through Cian's murder alone, & after he had to have the Morrighu's son, Mechi, killed because of the poisonous snakes near his heart—nobody wanted to deal with such a murderous healer. He faded into oblivion, while Airmid's herbal skills are still with us.

The famed Irish Brehon laws recognized 3 kinds of medicine, surgery, dietary control & herbal healing, kept alive by wise women herbalists, in the name of Airmid, fragile as a blackberry blossom, as tough as the thorny canes.

Bibliography:

Conway, D.J. The Ancient & Shining Ones Llewellyn Publications St. Paul, MN 1994.

Darkstar, Erynn Sage Woman, Issue #25 Spring 1994 "Goddess of the Growing Green—Airmid of Ireland Pp. 20-23 Point Arena, CA 95468.

McCoy, Edain Celtic Myth & Magick Llewellyn Publications St. Paul, MN 1995.

Mathews, Caitlin & John The Encyclopedia of Celtic Wisdom Element Books, Ltd. Boston, MA 1994.

Ross, Anne Druids, Gods & Heroes From Celtic Mythology Peter Bedrick Books, NY 1986.

Squire, Charles Celtic Myths & Legends Portland House New York, NY 1994.

Copyright 2019 Jane Nichols

OFFICERS

Seneschal	Mistress Giraude Benet E-mail: seneschal@shirecai.calontir.org
Chatelaine	Lady Eibhilin O'Beirn E-mail: chatelaine@shirecai.calontir.org
Chronicler	Lord Niccolo E-mail: chronicler@shirecai.calontir.org
Exchequer	HE Marguerite des Baux E-mail: exchequer@shirecai.calontir.org
Herald	Vacant E-mail: herald@shirecai.calontir.org
Knight's Marshall	Lord Gianlupo delle Bandi Neri E-mail: marshal@shirecai.calontir.org
Minister of Arts & Sciences	Mistress Lillian Boyer e-mail: artsci@shirecai.calontir.org
Webminister	HL Ysabel de la Oya E-mail: webminister@shirecai.calontir.org
Website	http://shirecai.calontir.org/

This is the August 2019 issue number 272 of The Aerie, a publication of the Shire of Cum an Iolair of the Society for Creative Anachronism, Inc. (SCA, Inc.). The Aerie is available from the Chronicler, Nicholas LeVine, 10317 Ash, Overland Park, KS 66207. It is not a corporate publication of the SCA, Inc. and does not delineate SCA policies. Copyright 2019 Society for Creative Anachronism.

Opinions expressed in articles, letters, etc. are exclusively those of the authors.

Copyright © 2019 Society for Creative Anachronism, Inc.
For information on reprinting articles and artwork from this publication, please contact the editor who will assist you in contacting the original creator of the piece. Please respect the legal rights of our contributors.