

the

Second Folio

of

(the works of)

Gerhardt von Nordflammen

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(This version typeset by Hirsch von Henford using WordPerfect and Adobe Acrobat to make these works accessible to the populace of the SCA as an historical document and made available with permission by Master Gerhardt von Nordflammen, spring/summer of 2004 ...)

Introduction

This is the Second Folio of my plays, songs, poems, political pieces, etc. As I write this introduction I am no longer resident in the Barony of Westermark, a group which I helped to found and which played a major role in shaping my personality and talents. I have got to say that, in a very real sense, what is in this folio is as much the product of the Westermark as of me personally. For, just as you can't get a redwood tree to grow in a desert, you can't get a particular kind of art without a supportive environment.

This is what I had in Westermark, and it's something that I will always be grateful for. Being away from Westermark for some time now has made me realize in full the debit I owe this group; for at present, I feel like a hot-house plant, transplanted in foreign soil: in shock from the roots up. Odds are, I'll recover, most transplants do, but I shan't ever be what I was before.

But then, none of us ever are, right?

I'd like to especially thank several people who were instrumental in putting this thing out. Heading the list is Master Richard of Seahaven who prodded and poked me with patience that was nothing short of miraculous and who coordinated the efforts of the production staff with graceful and elegant efficiency. Next I'd like to thank the people who typed, printed, proofed, supplied computer and printer time for, and collated this work: Mistress Grün der Spitzenklöppler, Megan Silverstar, Masae Lorane, Krysta of Starfall, Jade of Starfall, Paul yn Darrach.

Gerhardt von Nordflammen
2 January, A.S. XIX

Gerhardt beat me to the thanks. Without your help, you couldn't be reading this. I would also like to thank Master Gerhardt for giving me something to do during the long winter months and tolerating my prodding and poking.

The astute reader might note that the introduction was written four days before distribution. This is not an error or oversight; it is Westermark Tradition.

Richard of Seahaven
3 January, A.S. XIX

Table of Contents

The Plays

Two Provenceaux in Rome	1
The Steingrim Saga	15
The Court of Love Meets the Court of France	31
A California Vacuum Cleaner Salesman In The BOG Court	49
Once Upon a Time in the Crusades	67
The Faire Play	83
The Fabulous Furry Fealty Brothers	115
You Prayed For It	133

Various Political Screeds

145

From the Board of Guidance	146
Westermark/Golden Rivers War	148
Westermark/Lions Gate War	154

Poetry and Songs

161

In Her Eyes	162
My Hair's Greasy	163
Lord, In Truth I Deserve Favor	165
Water Rushes, Or Is Still	166
Have I Known Too Much of Sorrow?	167
Damn, Baron, You're a Lucky Dog	168
Night Came and Fell Into Her Eyes	170
Oh Gentle Friends, I Have a Mystery	172
There Is a Girl From My Barony	174
I Say in Love, Folly's Supreme	175
We All Make Vers and Cansos To the Spring	177
If A Bird Could Live Without Singing	178
My Awards Go Jingle, Jangle, Jingle	179
Hail Kingdom of the West	181
P.P.F.U.F. Forever	182

In Defense of Feudalism

185

Culture Corner (Real Medieval Fealty Oaths)	193
---------------------------------------------------	-----

A Lexicon of Progressive Feudalist Terms

195

Two Provenceaux in Rome

This bit of fluff was written after I had done a bit of reading on the Borgia Popes. The plot outline took shape in the form of a drunken skit at a little Westermarck get together. It was an awful lot of fun to do, although, and here I must warn anyone who attempts it, the seamier sexual jokes were not appreciated by everyone in the audience.

Two Provenceaux in Rome
or
“Knock, Knock”
“Who’s There?”
“Pius”
“Pius Who?”
“Pius Inum Facum de Vatican”

CAST:

Gerard d’Anjou – A Troubadour	Cardinal Marcello – Puppet
Jocelyn de Toulouse – A Troubaritz	Cardinal Giuseppe – Puppet
Pope	Cardinal Vincenzo – Puppet
Cesare	Cardinal Giovanni – Puppet
Lucretia	Cardinal Emilio
Cardinal Ugo	Cardinal Paulo
Cardinal Pasquale	Cardinal Fritz
Mehmet ibn Tribai	Father Bonhomme
Populace, Swiss Guards, and Angels	

SCENE 1 – Prologue, a road outside Rome. Mehmet is seated on the ground. Enter Gerard.

Gerard: “Blessed be He who has set in heaven constellations,
“And has set among them a lamp,
“And an illuminating moon.
“And it is He who made the night and day a succession
“For whom He desires to remember
“Or He desires to be thankful.
“The servants of the All-Merciful are
“Those who walk the earth modestly ...”

Mehmet: “... and who, when the ignorant address them, say;
“Peace”. Gerard, my dear friend, how are you?
Well met, it’s been too long a time.

Gerard: Mehmet, well met, you have spoken true.
And how’s our master of the rhyme?

Mehmet: Oh, passing here and passing on,
From passing time in Sicily.
Fair court, fair souls, fair land, far gone.
Got fat on liberality.
I set myself upon the road,
To feast on air and rest on toil.
To cast my crass temporal load,
Unto the sky and wind and soil.
And you?

Gerard: I'm going to see the Pope.

Mehmet: God! Why would you want to do that?

Gerard: My mission lies in duty's scope.
Queen Elanor's own caveat.
I'm to settling things 'twixt the two.
The Pope it seems abhors her sins,
Though they're the ones that he likes too,
But publicly we've souls, not skins,
He doth denounce her appetites.

Mehmet: I see, a wise and holy man ...
All souls must shun the world's delights,
Save those who forge and force the ban.

Gerard: Something like that.

Mehmet: Well, good luck. I ...
Shall wend my way to Aquitaine.
When summer comes, we'll meet again.

Gerard: Thanks Mehmet. Farewell.

Mehmet: Jocelyn!

Jocelyn: Must a minute, I'm taking a dump.

Gerard: Is that ... what is she doing here?

Mehmet: She's come with me from Palermo.

Jocelyn: There, that's done.

Gerard: Joc', where'd Achmed go?

Jocelyn: Another dump I had to take.
A gilt turd left 'pon life's highway.
Ingest false love, that's what we make.
Where's Ayesha?

Gerard: What can I say?
Ran off with a Burgher.

Jocelyn: Oh no!

Gerard: Oh yes.

Jocelyn: Where are you heading now?

Gerard: To Rome and to the Pope I go.

Jocelyn: Want company?

Gerard: I would I'll vow.

Jocelyn: Your pardon, Mehmet.

Mehmet: I'm content.
May good fortune bless your efforts.

Gerard: So, off to make the Pope relent.

Jocelyn: And teach him tolerance of sorts.

(All exit)

SCENE 2 – A street in Rome. Enter Gerard, Jocelyn and Father Bonhomme.

Gerard: Ah Rome, now to the Holy See.

Bonhomme: Pardon my son, have you water?

Jocelyn: Of course friend, drink and blessed be.

Bonhomme: Thank you, blessings on you daughter.

Gerard: I'll have some too. Ah, Chianti.
You bear the fruits of Italy.

Jocelyn: What! Gerard do you jest with me?
'Tis water, or ... well ... it should be.

Jocelyn/Gerard:
(Falling to their knees)
Oh pious sir, we wish thee well.

Bonhomme: All souls are so good! God be praised.
All tales of sin they do dispel.

Gerard: The good see good, be not amazed.
Friend, this is Jocelyn, I'm Gerard,
Come from Provence to see the Pope.

Bonhomme: Father Bonhomme, in like regard.
The Pontiff's sight is my sweet hope.
Will you join me?

Jocelyn: Sure!

Gerard: Delighted.

(Enter Cesare and Lucretia pursued by Swiss Guards)

Lucretia: 'Scuse me, can we hide behind you?
Thanks.

Guards: They must have gone that way! C' mon!

Bonhomme: Well, shall we go and meekly sue
For blessing from the Vatican?

Lucretia: Wait! Don't go yet ... alright, it's safe.

Jocelyn: Who are you?

Lucretia: Lucretia's the name.
He's Cesare, my little waif.

Cesare: Hi there.

Lucretia: By the by, too bad you came.
The Pope just died, you're out of luck.

Cesare: Thank God you're safe my sweet love.
If thou we'rt harmed, I'd die my chuck.

Gerard: The Pope is dead! Oh God above!
How do you know, for we've heard naught?

Cesare: Ah, it just happened, we were there.
T'was sad ...

Lucretia: "No sex!" he cried, then sought
His sweet reward in heaven's care.

Jocelyn: Bleah.

Bonhomme: Say friends, how came you by his side?
Are you a priest? Are you a nun?

Lucretia: No!

Cesare: We're his kids. His greatest pride.

Lucretia: Being there's the least we could have done.

(Enter mourners)

Mourners: Papa! Papa! Papa!

Jocelyn: What's that?

Gerard: 'Tis what the Romans call the Pope.

Cesare: Nah! They're all his kids too, right sis?

Lucretia: We're legitimate.

Bonhomme: Oh my hope!
Is all holiness illusion?

(Enter Cardinal Pasquale and Swiss Guards)

Pasquale: Aha! There they are, seize them, men!

Bonhomme: Is serving God mere delusion?

Pasquale: At last I've got you.

Lucretia/Cesare: Don't kill us.

Bonhomme: Is prayer just so much false effusion?!

Pasquale: Will you shut up you ancient pus!

Gerard: Pardon please his gross intrusion.

Jocelyn: He's from the sticks ... believes in God.

Pasquale: Hey, so do I.

Gerard: That's nice.

Pasquale: I just
Don't take it too seriously.
Now then, as for you two, I must ...

Cesare/Lucretia:
Oh please Cardinal Pasquale!
Spare us!

Pasquale: Silence! I've offer here
You can't refuse. I need you two.
I want to be Pope, yet I fear
Cardinal Ugo might win through ...
But help me and your lives I'll spare.

Cesare/Lucretia:
 What can we do?

Pasquale: Come, I'll tell you.

Cesare: Okay, boss.

Lucretia: We are in your care.

Pasquale: I'll be like a father to you.

Lucretia: Oh good!!

(Exit Cardinal Pasquale, Lucretia, Cesare, Swiss Guards)

Bonhomme: I can't stand it!

Gerard: There, there.

Jocelyn: Want some wine?

(Enter Cardinal Fritz)

Fritz: 'Scuse me sirs so fair.
 Vould you mit me directions share
 To der Vatican ... aughhhh!

(Cardinal Ugo stabs him)

Gerard: Careful there.

Jocelyn: He's dead!

Ugo: One more down. Now we're tied.
 That maggot Pasquale and me.
 And soon I toss that worm aside
 And be Lord of the Papacy!

Paulo: Cardinal Ugo!

Ugo: What is it?

Paulo: Don't count on any votes from France.
The three French Cardinals are dead.

Ugo: Oh no! How came this fell mischance?

Paulo: Lucretia's by Pasquale led ...
What they ate disagreed with them.

Ugo: That's it then, three votes down the drain.
I am cut down, root, branch and stem.
No chance for Peter's Throne remains.

Paulo: Poor guy.

Ugo: I could'a been somebody!
I could'a been a contender!
What am I now ... a bum!

Jocelyn: Aw, gee.

Ugo: Wait ... you three! I won't surrender!
How'd you like to be Cardinals?

Bonhomme: Not really.

Jocelyn: No thanks.

Gerard: Rather not.

Ugo: If you refuse, I'll kill you all.

Bonhomme: On the other hand ...

Jocelyn: Just my spot ...

Gerard: We'd look good in red ...

Ugo: That's better.

Gerard: Wait, I'm not a priest.

Ugo: No matter.

Gerard: I'm mired in sin.

Ugo: So, say a Hail Mary.

Jocelyn: And I'm not Christian.

Ugo: I fast, that God might grace extend,
And guide the choice with which we grapple.

Pasquale: Too bad.

Ugo: Isn't it?

Pasquale: Shall we vote?

Ugo: Let's.

Emilio: Where's my pretty choirboy?
Oh! On his rosy cheeks I'll dote.
Where is he? You promised me!

Pasquale: Okay! Cesare ... Oi!

Cesare: No hold on!

Pasquale: Get on with it.

Cesare: Oh my, hello.
I'm your choirboy nice old man.

Emilio: Take my lap you pretty fellow.

Marcello: Vote! Vote! I vote for Cardinal Ugo!

Giuseppe: I vote for Cardinal Pasquale!

Vincenzo: I vote for Cardinal Ugo!

Giovanni: I vote for Cardinal Pasquale!

Paulo: I vote ...

Lucretia: Hey big boy, change your mind?

Paulo: Well, I ...

Lucretia: Lemme talk you into it.
I'm very eloquent you'll find.

(She goes down on him)

Vito: I vote for aughhhh!

(Cardinal Vito drops dead)

Ugo: He's not running, twit!

Emilio: I vvvvvote ... I vvvvote ... OH GOD!!!

Gerard: He's not running either.

Jocelyn: Too bad.

Pasquale: What have you done?!

Cesare: I am sorry.

Paulo: I vote for oooooo ... oooooo ...

Gerard: Don't spare the rod.

Paulo: I'm loyal! Ooooooooo ... OOOOggg ...

Jocelyn: Gone to glory.

Lucretia: *GULP*

Cesare: How about you guys?

Lucretia: Take your pick.

Gerard: No, we're all prudes.

Jocelyn: We're from Provence.

Marcello: I vote for Cardinal Ugo!

Giuseppe: I vote for Cardinal Pasquale!

Vincenzo: I vote for Cardinal Ugo!

Giovanni: I vote for Cardinal Pasquale!

Ugo: We're tied. Hey, you three take your pick.

Pasquale: Aye, t'will be settled in a nonce.

Bonhomme: Oh, God help the Church!

Gerard: God help God.

Jocelyn: God help us,
We must give the nod.

Bonhomme: I must pray for Divine guidance.

Gerard: That's a great idea, me too.

Jocelyn: Me three assume the holy trance.

Vincenzo: Hey, I've got fifty proxies who ...
Vote for Cardinal Ugo!

Giovanni: Wait, I've got a hundred proxies ...
Who vote for Cardinal Pasquale!

Vincenzo: I've got a million proxies who ...

Giovanni: I've got a million gillion jillion proxies ...

Vincenzo: You do not!

Giovanni: I do too!

(Puppets fight degenerating to Cardinal Ugo and Cardinal Pasquale grappling on the ground. In the middle of the fight, the old Pope gets off his throne and stabs Ugo, Pasquale, Vincenzo, Giovanni, Marcello and Giuseppe)

Pope: There. 'Tis done. All my foes have died.
What I could not do all alone,
They have done for me ... put aside,
All the pretenders to my throne.

Cesare/Lucretia:
Daddy!

Pope: Thanks children, you've edone well.

Cesare/Lucretia:
Thanks, Daddy.

Pope: Guards! Take them to a dungeon cell.

Cesare/Lucretia:
Daddy?

Pope: You're my offspring, I know you well.
For proper price, your dad you'd sell.
Ta, ta.

Cesare/Lucretia:
Aieeeeeee.

Pope: Now to dispatch these praying fools.
The last who might dispute my rule.

(Enter Angels)

Angels: La, la, la, la, la, la, la, la.
La, la, la, la, la-la-la-la, la, la.

(Angels stab Pope with lightning bolts and exit)

Bonhomme: I am answered, I'm not your tool!
I vote for none! God scorns your duel!
Oh my goodness, what has come to pass?

Gerard: In truth my friend, your goodness has.

Jocelyn: The cross, it seems, has foiled the crass.

Bonhomme: But who'll be Pope my dearest lass?

Vincenzo: I vote for Cardinal Ugo! Ugo! Ugo! Ugo!

(Angel runs in and spikes Cardinal Vincenzo)

Jocelyn: Oh well, it's up to us, I guess.

Gerard: We are Cardinals after all.

Jocelyn: Well ...

Gerard: Right.

Gerard/Jocelyn: We vote for Father Bonhomme.

Bonhomme: What! Me the Pope? I am too small,
Lest help from Heaven High doth come,
I'll surely falter, fail and fall.

Jocelyn: Fear not my friend, for God loves thee,
Thy good heart shall sustained be.

Gerard: Oh, 'bout Provence ...?

Bonhomme: What about it?

Gerard: The inquisition and crusade ...
Anathema and interdict.

Bonhomme: All removed, undone, unmade.
Live and let live shall be my creed.

Jocelyn: Then thank you kind and swift depart,
To tell our folk of your great deed.

Bonhomme: Farewell my friends. God bless thy heart.

(Exit Father Bonhomme)

Jocelyn: Well, well, a Saint on Peter's Throne.
How long do you think that'll last?
The sharks will have him quick I own.

Gerard: Perhaps. In truth the peril's vast.
A saintly Pope may not live long.
His goodness draws the evil on,
To snuff the light and birth the wrong,
And lay him in his grave anon ...
Still ... think of the retirement benefits.

(Exit All)

CURTAIN

The Steingrim Saga

This play was done on commission. In the Kingdom of the West, we have something called the Land Fund, which is a little non-profit nest egg to be used someday for the purchase of a permanent tourney site. I auctioned off a play at a fund-raiser for the Land Fund, and given my usual lackadaisical work methods, got around to writing and presenting it about 18 months later (actually, two plays were auctioned off at the event, one of which still has not been written, which goes to show that a certain artist is a lazy bum).

Anyway, the play is about Duke Steingrim Stallari of the Kingdom of An Tir ... sort of. There are actually some references to Duke Steingrim, who, for those who have not been privileged to meet him, is a really neat person, but in the main, I lifted the plot structure right out of Prince Valiant, with some assists from SCTV and various and sundry other sources.

The work was very well received and a real joy to perform as only pieces of off-the-wall nonsense can be.

The Steingrim Saga

or

The Tale of Prince Valiant The Valiant Prince

A Play By

Gerhardt von Nordflammen

This play is dedicated to His Grace Duke Steingrim and to those who commissioned it and waited so long
– Gerhardt von Nordflammen, AS XVI

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(Original illustrations not included here, due to not having originals to scan, and the ones in Hirsch's copy of the Folio are okay, but have holes in them where bound, etc.)

Cast: Prince Steingrim
Sterno, King of the North
Thorwald - Advisor to Sterno
Guy le Dulle - King of the Best
Lady Patrice Therese - Daughter of King Guy
Lady Domina - A Lady fighter of the North
Sir Roland d'Honneur - Earl Marshal of the Best
Lord Squeak - Seneschal of the Best
Minstrel
King Bob - The Usurper King
Queen Dotty - The Usurper Queen
Sir Joe - Champion of the Usurpers
Brunhilde - A Valkyrie
Hildegarde - A Valkyrie
Skald
Knights 1, 2 and 3
Warriors 1 and 2
Courtiers, servants, ogre and Gojira the Dragon

SCENE 1 – Prologue. A Viking feast at the court of King Steingrim.

Steingrim: Our feast is done. Friends, put food behind thee
And ale before. Now do I, King Steingrim
Call upon our Skald's sweet singing.
Call upon his mighty lyric
Call upon his clear voice ringing.
That we should list all enthralled
To the sounding of his measure.
Come and let this bard be called,
All for our digestive pleasure.

Skald: Now come I to meet thy calling,
High-born King and most dread sovereign.
Now my sweet words shall be falling
And air about us hover in.
AHEM (clearing throat) THE STEINGRIM SAGA:
Once this realm so free and fertile,
Once this high and hallowed land,
Was encompassed like a kirtle
By grim foemen, base-spawned band.
From the snow girt-land that bore them,
From the northlands drear and cold,
Came they down to conquer our gem.
Our dear homeland did they hold.
And these foemen were so many
That our warriors fought and fell,
And at least there were not any

To usurper's horde expel.
Then spoke up our good King Sterno,
Then a mighty oath swore he ...

Sterno: By Odin's testicles, Thorwald,
I swear these northmen breed like flies.
A thousand times have they been mauled,
Still ten more come when one man dies.
What is a poor Viking to do?

Thorwald: My Liege, Truth is, we are done for.
Now only thyself and they guard
Are left to face the conqueror.
I must advise thee, though 'tis hard,
To flee and save thyself at least.

Sterno: What? Flee?! Never!! I spurn this course.
I am the King, my duty drives
Me fight and die without remorse.

Thorwald: Then Sire, ere the foe arrives,
Ere thou dost face the final test,
Another plan might I suggest:
To send thy son, they seed's bequest,
Unto the Kingdom of the Best,
Where he may reared and raised be
To man's estate and moiety
Then to our realm might turneth he
And, by his prowess set it free.

Sterno: Aye, do it Thorwald, I agree.
The Prince shalt thou accompany
Unto the Best and good King Guy
To beg his mercy for Steinee.

Skald: And thus did one ship masted high
Southward turning, dragon-prowed,
Set sails aloft to touch the sky,
Flee defeated, but unbowed.
Set out south to bear our Princeling
To the Kingdom of the Best.
Till that day of which skalds since since
Landed Steingrim and the rest.

SCENE 2 – The Court of the Best. King Guy and Peers examining velcro¹, a zipper and a bra.

Guy: Ah yes, but are they period?

Peers: This is serious, this is very very serious.

(Enter Sir Roland)

Roland: Your Majesty! Your Majesty!
Sound the alarm, call forth the knights
To swiftly armed and armored be,
To an grim battle set their sights,
For Viking ship has touched our shore.

Guy: Vikings! Come men, to arms!

Knight 1: My leg!
I've got a cramp I can't ignore.

Knight 2: My heart, my heart, thy leave I beg.

Knight 3: It seems I just can't shake this flu.

Roland: Come now, the realm is in danger!

Knights: Ohhhh. *Cough, cough* Ohhhh. Etc.

Guy: Speak, good Peers, what are we to do?

Peers: This is serious: this is very, very serious.

Guy: Ohhhhhh.

Roland: Liege, to fear I am a stranger.
I'll go alone if needs must be
To face this mighty Viking horde.
Grim men and fell, and probably
Their women too they've got on board.
Aye, that would be a fearsome sight,
Aye, they would be the sternest tests;
For when these wives and daughters fight
They bare their large, firm, Nordic breasts!

Knight 1: My duty calls, I must obey!

Knight 2: A miracle! My strength repair!

¹ Replaced at Egils Tournay performance by a garish disposable lighter.

Knight 3: My flue is fled!

Roland: On to the fray!

(Enter Thorwald and Steingrim)

Thorwald: Hello? Hello?

All: Vikings!

Thorwald: My! Where?

Roland: There. You are Vikings, are you not?

Thorwald: Well yes, but of the friendly sort.
We're Sterno's folk, me and the tot.
They allies at my last report.

Guy: And still 'tis true, my welcome friends.
I, Guy le Dulle, King of the Best,
Do welcome thee; now, what portends
Thy journey here?

Thorwald: My King's behest.
Before he fell 'neath foemen's sword
T'was Steingrim Sternoson, his child,
An exile 'til his throne's restored
Be reared by thee with mercy mild,
In puissant rites of chivalry
That he may someday be knighted be
And set his dearest homeland free.

Guy: King Sterno's son shall sit by me.
Be reared as would my dearest lad.
To knightly duty and renown.
To love the good and spurn the bad
And suit his soul for Kingly crown.

Thorwald: King Guy, thou hast my humble thanks.
My task is done, so now I die.

Skald: And so fell Thorwald counselor,
Thus this servant high fell dead.
His part was done, and his actor
Had to be recyléd.

Guy: Come now young Steingrim, come and hear,
From Roland d'Honneur, Earl Marshal
The battle wisdom knights hold dear.
Begin.

Roland: Now, watch my hand old pal.

Skald: Now swiftly passed the running years,
Came Steingrim to young manhood.
No longer wet behind the years,
As squire now his rank stood.

Roalnd: Now, watch my hand.

Steingrim: Ha!

Roland: Very good.
There is no more I can teach thee.
All I could show, you've understood
So come and join the chivalry.

(He knights Steingrim)

Steingrim: Oh joy. I am a knight at last!

Patrice: Congratulations, Steingrim dear.

Steingrim: Be still my heart, beat not so fast!
'Tis King Guy's daughter doth come near!
Patrice Therese, that Lady high,
The fairest flower of the Best.
She spoke to me. I'm like to die.
Thank you, m'Lady. *My pounding breast!*

Patrice: Why, you're welcome.

Steingrim: Oh, I love you!

Patrice: Oh, my, really?

Steingrim: Yes, yes, 'tis true!

Patrice: Well then, I guess I love you too.
As Ladies must when young knights woo.

Steingrim: Oh Joy!

Patrice: You can kiss me, you know.

(They kiss)

Wait, wait, it was so beautiful.
Let's not spoil it.

Steingrim: Ergf.

Patrice: Be chaste for now.

Steingrim: Grrk.

Patrice: And proper and most dutiful
Until we take our wedding vow.

Steingrim: Ummmmppfff.

Patrice: I mean, why have mere hamburger
When you can have steak? One more kiss?

Steingrim: That's okay, later.

Guy: Steingrim! Sir!
Come sit and list, there's much amiss.
Now that art knighted and betrothed,
'Tis time to learn to be a King,
Of duties by this rank imposed,
Of all the cares that it doth bring.

Steingrim: Yes, sire.

Guy: Come Peers, attend me!
Now Lord Squeak, explain our quandry.

Squeak: The Lady Fluff so high and free
Called Lady Snotte a bitch you see.

Peers: Oh, oh, oh.

Squeak: And Lady Snotte 'pon hearing this,
Called Lady Fluff a slutty mite.

Peers: OH, OH, OH.

Guy: Such slanders we may not dismiss!

Steingrim: Why not? In truth, they're both quite right.

Guy: But still my son, propriety.
Each of these Ladies is a Peer,
And in our realm such rank must be
Synonymous with staid and drear.
Well Peers, what do you think?

Peers: This is serious; this is very, very serious.

Guy: Then I must think 'pon what to do.
Pray let my minstrel come and sing,
For when I weighty thoughts review,
My heavy heart needs lightening.

Minstrel: Still I sing bonny boys, bonny mad boys,
Bedlam boys are bonny ...

Skald: Full five more years did come and go.
Years of training for a crown.
As Steingrim to full stature grow,
Great in wisdom and renown.

Minstrel: For to see mad Tom of Bedlam
Ten thousand miles I'd travel.
Mad Maudlin goes on dirty toes
For to save her shoes from gravel.
Still I sing bonny boys, bonny mad boys
Bedlam boys are bonny ...

Guy: Did you ever have a tune ...
That just kept running through your head?

Steingrim: Auuuggghhh! I can't stand it!
Sire, I must seek my birthright.
Pray, let me leave now, or sooner,
And on my homeland set my sight.

Guy: Pray cease exalted crooner.
But Steingrim, I am wondering
If thine imperiled enterprise
Needs ten more years of pondering.

Steingrim: No! Now's the time I must arise,
And seek to free my Viking land.
Death and danger mean naught to me
I gotta get outta here ... and ...
Oh, let me go! Please! I beg thee!

Peers: This is serious; this is very, very serious.

Guy: Very well, thou hast leave to go.
Mayhap some knights will go along
To aid thee 'gainst thy dreadful foe
And help thy sword aright this wrong.

Knight 1: My armor's at the cleaner's.

Knight 2: My sword is sick.

Knight 3: Gotta take the kids to the zoo.

Patrice: I'll go with thee dear fiancé.
My gentle sight will bear thee up.
We shall as in a Romance play.

Guy: Come, let us tope the parting cup.

Skald: And now, at last, Steingrim went forth.
Sword girt, mail glad, blood in eyes.
To free his homeland in the north
Whose rulers fell, plot his demise.

SCENE 3 – The Usurper Court

Bob: G'day, he.

Dotty: G'day. Ahhh, we're the
We're the Usurper rulers, eh.

Bob: Yeah, and right now we're plotting, see.
To get Steingrim out of the way.

Dotty: We've heard that he's a coming, y'know.

Bob: Yeah, yeah, a little bird told us.

Dotty: Oh take off, eh, that isn't so.

Bob: So what? Lay off, eh? What's the fuss?

Dotty: Anyway, Steingrim's gotta die,
But that's gonna be tough to do.
Our army went north last July.

Bob: Yeah, right, that's a great story too,
Seems we left the water running
And ...

Dotty: They don't want to hear it, eh?

Skald: Look, this dialogue is stunning,
But could we get on with the play?

Dotty: You hoser.

Bob: You're a hoser, eh.

Dotty: Well, we got one guy we can send.

Bob: And he's our champion, okay.
This guy will be Prince Steingrim's end.

Dotty: And there's another knight who'll go.
Some Viking guy who saw the light
And fights for us.

Bob: Doesn't talk though.
We call the guy the "silent knight".
Pretty good, eh?

Skald: Please!

Bob: Okay, eh.
Go.

Skald: Thank you very much.

Bob: Hosehead.

Skald: Now turn our eyes in Steingrim's way.
Stars deserve the most exposure.

Patrice: Oh Steineeee, my feet hurt. Steineeee,
I'm cod. Steineeee, I've got a bite.
Steineeeeee ...

Steingrim: You asked to come with me.
T'was love that brought you with me, right?

Patrice: Well, I don't know.

Steingrim: What do you mean?

Patrice: Well, you said "I love you," first, and ...

Joe: G'day, eh. I'm from King and Queen
Of the, y'know, Usurper land.
Who goes there, eh? Tell me your name.

Steingrim: My lineage I now declaim:
I am Steingrim Sternoson.
Born of the line of Fafnirsson
Who our fair Viking realm begun
Sir'ing two score generation.
Then came Ragnar Fafnirsson.
Who fought a battle, which he won.
Then came Loki Ragnarsson,
Who married Freida, had a son.
Then came Thorfin Lokisson,
Who had a cap of silver spun.
Then came Norsee Thorfinsson,
Who didn't kill a big dragon.
Then came Torvald Norseesson,
Who made a very nasty pun.
Then came Losse Torvaldsson,
Who was quite tall, 'bout six foot one.
Then came Olaf Lossesson,
Who dressed in women's clothes for fun.
Then came Eric Olafsson,
Who ate a lot and weighed a ton.
Then came .. Are you listening?

Sir Joe: *Zzzzzz.*

Steingrim: What the hell. *(He kills Sir Joe)* Ah, another foe.
Surrender Sir, or meet thy end.

(Steingrim and Domina fight)

Domina: I yield. I yield. I am laid low.
At last my prideful knee I bend.

Steingrim: Why, you're a woman.

Domina: You're a man.
Lady Domina is my name.
As meekest maid my life began.
All sweet and soft and mildly tame;
But these usurpers gnawed my heart,
With all their base, oppressive wrongs.
No Viking lords revolt would start.
Forgetting deeds for tales and songs.
So I betook my bitter hand
And trained it to the bloody blade,

And by usurpers did I stand
For Viking men seemed all unmade.

Steingrim: I hope you see how wrong you were.

Domina: And how! And now my mighty lord,
Would I thy heart and loins bestir.
For thou hast mastered me with sword
And I do wish thy mastery
Be made complete in heated love;
My woman's gift, I give to thee.

Steingrim: If you insist ...

Domina: I do, my dove.

Patrice: Well! Don't let me get in your way!

Domina: Don't fret, we won't.

Patrice: Tramp. You're the kind
With which men like to toy and play,
While mine good men in marriage bind.

(Steingrim and Domina enter the bushes, with Domina giving Lady Patrice Therese a shit-eating grin)

Well, I never! Daddy warned me.
These Vikings have it on the brain.
But I'll forgive my poor Steinee,
To be big 'bout this lapse I'll deign.

(Three mighty horn blasts sound. Steingrim and Domina reappear.)

Well, I hope you had a good time.
I ...

Domina: Will you shut you, you stupid cunt!

Patrice: Ohhhh!

Steingrim: Wait a minute, you've gone too far.
That was an unchivalrous stunt.
Knights of the Best much such acts bar.

Domina: Yes, you're right. I'm sorry. – Prithee,
Silence, retarded vagina.

Steingrim: That's better.

Skald: So Steingrim set out once again,
 To face at last his final test,
 And smite at last his father's bane,
 And be triumphant in his quest.

Bob: Look, eh, it's Steingrim.

Dotty: Take off, eh.
 He's dead.

Bob: No, eh, call out the guard.

Skald: Round Steingrim's lips a smile doth play.
 To win this fight will not be hard.

Warrior 1: Hey, you got my sword, eh!

Warrior 2: Oh yeah.
 Well you got my sword, you hoser.

Warrior 1: Leggo, eh!

Warrior 2: No, you leggo!

Skald: Steingrim and Domina draw swords
 To send these jerks to their rewards.

Bob: Hey, wait a minute, eh!

Dotty: Yeah, let's talk this over.

(They pay off the Skald)

Skald: Ahem. Suddenly fortune doth reverse.
 Gojira the dragon joins the fray,
 His very eyes a hellish curse;
 Poor Domina faints dead away.
 And now an ogre doth attack,
 But Steingrim doth not courage lack
 He'll fight with hand behind his back
 And both legs tied, on head a sack.
 From fear his mighty heart's exempt
 As now his mortal foes draw nigh,
 He proudly thunders his contempt
 And sounds his mighty battle cry!

Steingrim: HELP! HELP!

(Enter Valkyries)

Skald: Valkyries come, his soul to bear
Unto Valhalla's lofty halls.

Brunhilde: Guess kain choker. Skalt bevare,
Tis you ve'll take if Steingrim fallss.

Hildegarde: Yah, ve mit you make ze bratvurst
Iff your zaga not fair bekomss.

Brunhilde: Zo! Zet it straight, or you're accurst.

Dotty: Hey, what about our vasty sums?
Surely bribes are not outmoded?

Hildegarde: Shut up hosshets. Take off, eh.

Brunhilde: Now!
No falss mofes, zis swort iss loatet.

Hildegarde: Yah, Steingrim better vin zis row.

Skald: Now Steingrim's virtue finds reward,
Gojira falls upon his sword,
Grim ogre dies, his black blood poured
By Domina to aid her lord.
Usurper guards then run away.
And noble Steingrim wins the day.

Brunhilde: That's better.

Steingrim: Aw, hey,
For knights of the Best ... mere child's play.
Now, as for you two.

Dotty: Gee Steingrim,
We were just gonna leave, eh?

Bob: Want a brew? Auuuuggggghhhh.

Dotty: Hosehead, you're dim.

Bob: Way to go, make me look bad, eh!

Steingrim: Silence! I shall let thee depart,
For gentle mercy rules my heart.
Touch my realm more, the merest part,
And then you'll leave it in a cart.

Dotty: That's fine with us, Steingrim; but wait,

The Court of Love Meets the Court of France

This is probably my best work to date and it is one of the few plays that I would really like to do again. Aside from saying this, I think I should shut up and let the play speak for itself. For, you see, it's either that or write a very long introduction detailing the background and research that went into it ... something that I am too lazy to do right now. So I'll stop with but one additional tidbit: the play is set in one of the many small courts in Provence a few years before the beginning of the Albigensian Crusade.

The Court of Love Meets the Court of France
or
The Jury Finds The Defendant Innocent
And
Condemns Her To Death

CAST:

Elanor of Aquitaine – Queen of Love and Beauty
Philip Augustus – King of France
Countess Marie de Champagne – Daughter of Elanor
Lady Iris – Advisor to Elanor
Lord Albert – Advisor to Elanor
Lord Simon de Montfort – Advisor to King Philip
Lady Agnes – Mistress to King Philip
Lady Ingeborg of Denmark – Queen of France
Gaston la Bouche d’Or – Court Poet of France
Mehmet ibn Tribai – A Troubadour
Gerard d’Anjou – A Troubadour
Renee de Leon – A Troubaritz
Lise de Courthézon – A Troubaritz
Peire d’Anduze – A Troubadour
Sir Raimbaut de Roussillion – A Troubadour
Countess Jocelyn of Toulouse – A Troubaritz
Gausbert d’Albi – A Troubadour
Joglar – A Joglar
Guards, Attendants.

SCENE 1 – The road to the Castle of Lord Albert. Enter Mehmet and Renee.

Mehmet: At, at least, we are here Renee; Provence!
 Oh blessed land! Do you feel it Renee?
 ‘Tis a sense and savor of enchantment.
 A gentle breeze that doth banish harshness
 And wanders through the heart whispering of joy.
 Oh Lord! Here the very light seems a spell,
 That weavest o’er this grim and passing world
 A shining veil, aglow with destiny,
 Empyrean effulgence that sings out;
 “I am real ... friend, what is not fair is false.”
 As though by the body of my beloved.
 My thoughts of life all one subtle vigile,
 One summation of sublime tenderness ...

Renee: Hey there! Hey! Don't trance out on me Mehmet!
It's fine. I love it, but I'll love it more
When we have reached our fair destination;
The yearly gathering of Troubadours.
'Tis then I shall relax and savor all.
Forget our footsore journey from Castille
And bathe my ...

Mehmet: Renee, you're a philistine.

Renee: True enough, and a very tired one.
'Tis beautiful, I grant ye. I'm impressed.
But ev'ry flea and louse twixt here and Spain
Is feeding on me now. True philistines,
They are not movéd to cease their munching.
I fear their gross and worldly appetites
Have impingéd 'pon my poetic ones
To such degree I'm near unhinged.

Mehmet: Renee.
Discipline. Though flesh may crawl, the heart can sing.

Renee: You're right. It's singing now ...
A flea, a flea,
A flea is eating me.
A louse, a louse,
A louse is in my blouse.
Oh shit, oh shit
It's chewing on my tit ...

Mehmet: Alright, alright.
Let's go, the castle's just beyond that
hill.

(They exit)

SCENE 2 – The castle of Lord Albert. Raimbaut, Lise, Peire, Gausbert, and Joglar gathered around a table eating.

Peire: Truly my friends, all who hear my verses
Die of envy. Why Bohemia's King
Once offered me half his lands, his daughter,
And five thousand men at arms for mine own
That I might make a single song of praise.
"Peire," said he, "should you laud my prowess,
"I'd have no foes, for they would hear your song
"And blanch and flee, e'en until the antipodes
"Lest they should meet your epic's dread model."

Lise: Half his lands, eh? And what did you reply?

Peire: I said, "Sire, for love, I'll work for naught.
"But for money ... ah well, I don't come that cheap."

Raimbaut: Ha, ha. I drink to you Peire. The great purist!

Gausbert: Or the great liar.

Peire: Gausbert, you wound me.

Lise: Gausbert, don't mock Peire, he is not false.

Gasbert: Oh my no, just inventive with the true.

Raimbaut: What of it? My but you're a moody one.
I'm a knight. I do deeds, then sing of them.
And when I do them, they are mighty deeds,
Yet when I make them songs ... they are passable.
Peire does no deeds ...

Peire: Ha! I eat. I screw.

Lise: And drink.

Raimbaut: No deeds of arms then, but his verse
Is like to Achilles in its boldness.
Daunting, daring, exultant in its power,
It doth lend the brave heart greater courage
Through exaltation of the mighty deed.

Lise: What matter the singer doth not the deed?
There's many who can neither do not sing.
We perforce practice where our talent leads.

Peire: Thanks ... I guess.

Gausbert: Pah! 'Tis so much sophistry.
I ... Joglar!

Joglar: Master!

Gausbert: Take it down! Get it!

(Enter Gerard and Jocelyn)

Gausbert: It is forestalled, this storm of longing.
Held back by two suns, one true, one not.
The skys weep not for wanton wronging.
For each has a sun that suits its lot.
And one sun is bright, the other dark ...
Get it?

Joglar: Got it.

Gerard: So Gausbert, still writing sour songs, eh?

Lise: Guiraut!

Raimbaut: (*embracing Jocelyn*) Guiraut and Jocelyn are here!

Jocelyn: Lemme go! I love you, but I see food.

Gerard: In truth we're famished.

Gausbert: Well, hello Gerard.
And how's our transplanted Frenchman doing?

Lise: Gausbert! Don't be rude.

Gerard: It's alright Lise.
I answer to both: Guiraut and Gerard.
One by choice, the other by birth, it matters not.

Jocelyn: Gerard d'Anjou is his right name.
Born in France and raised in Spain.
Hooked on verses and romance.
His heart doth linger in Provence.

Raimbaut: Admirable!

Gausbert: Doggerel!

Jocelyn: Oh dry up.

Peire: Admirable doggerel ... what a line!
What a sound! It has possibilities.

(*Enter Mehmet and Renee*)

Lise: An epic is born!

Renee: Ahhh! A mock Arab!

(*Renee tackles Gerard*)

Gerard: Renee! God! Renee! How are you? You've grown.
When last I saw you, you were still ... so small.

Renee: Do you approve?

Gerard: What if I don't, what then?

Renee: I ... smother you!

Gerard: Mehmet! Are these manners?

Mehmet: The master blamed for the student's excess.
Typical. Still, I taught the courtly rites.

Renee: We're not at court!

Lise: She has a point.

Renee: Guiraut ...
Dear Guiraut. Still searching for true love?
Still broken hearted?

Gerard: A thousand times o'er.

Renee: Oh good!

Gerard: Thanks.

Gausbert: Behold Gerard the oft spurned.
Brother, you and I have much in common.
Yet I sing truth, you prate of worldly love.
Foreswear false dreams! Don't you see what's real?

Gerard: Not as you do, no. The world's not more real
When 'tis seen through eyes stained with bitterness.
There is loss, aye, and sorrow, I grant ye.
But also joy and wonders in abundance.
And I, pray God, should be alive to all.
Both joy and sorrow, good estate and bad.
Not cling to one, nor make any idol,
But to appreciate and love them all.
For, all that is of life is a lesson
Of nature and measure to make us whole.

Gausbert: What utter drivel.

Mehmet: Gasubert, have a drink.

Renee: Guiraut.

Gerard: Renee ... Renee ... I ...
Renee: Yes! Yes, I shall.
Gerard: As God wills. 'Tis done then.
Peire: Hoorah!
Fate takes a hand!
Gausbert: Bah!
Jocelyn: Have another drink.
Renee: I'm so happy.
Gerard: Me too ... you've lots of lice.
Renee: I want to share everything with you.
Raimbaut: Makes me feel romantic.
Jocelyn: Makes me hungry.
Gerard: We should take a bath.
Renee: That's a great idea.

(Enter Elanor, Albert, Iris and Marie)

Albert: The Queen!
Elanor: Hello! Greetings. Ahh, 'tis Gausbert.
I'm glad you could come. Peire, Raimbaut,
Lise, Jocelyn, Renee, Gerard. Mehmet!
Well, we are honored my dear friend.
Mehment: My Queen,
The honor's mine.
Elanor: My goodness! I'm so pleased.
Welcome everyone. Welcome one and all.
To this year's gathering of Troubadours
And Troubaritz. Have you enough to eat?
All: Yes!

Elanor: Good. Now then, eat, and rest and make ready.
And when the air of even' stirs the boughs,
When its light's pale tide washes o'er the earth
Cleansing the soul with its fleeting sweetness,
Then come, and loose thy songs, thy bolts of love,
Thine arrows of longing and fulfillment.
That we should enter in the vault of night
With full and refreshéd hearts.

All: Yes Lady.

Elanor: Fine. I'll see you later. If you've a want ...
Ask. It shall be provided.

Raimbaut: We thank you.

(Exit Queen and Court)

Well, this is a pretty pass.

Lise: Aye, 'tis true.
We must list with smiles, in rapt attention
To braying by some half-lettered yokel,
While that gross and pufféd toad, King Philip
Gloats and swells before our eyes.

Jocelyn: Icky poo.

Gausbert: 'Tis too vile! It makes me sick! I ... Joglar!

Joglar: Master?

Gausbert: Get it!
The former a shallow, wanton flash.
The latter all secret, sere and stark.
One is truth, the other hollow trash.
Friend, our times the false sun doth enmesh,
Their preferment; vain display and lies,
This bauble that warms the passing flesh,
Yet doth chill the heart until it dies.
And that darker sun is all despised,
For disdain of sham and shame and show.
True warmth is closed, covered and disguised ...

Joglar: Got it.

Gausbert: Good.

Peire: My, you are in a good mood.

Marie: She said she was a “true cod”, the fish kind
And sleeping with him was like lying with chilled slime.

Iris: How disgusting.

Marie: Isn't it? Anyway,
By that time mother had married again.

Iris: Henry Plantagenet?

(Enter Simon)

Marie: Yes. An asshole,
But hung like a horse. He ...

Simon: Hello Ladies.

Iris: Paws off froggie! Keep your pads to yourself!

Simon: I ...

Iris: And save the honeyed-tongue stuff for the flies.
I'm not interested.

Marie: Iris, don't be rude!
Lord de Montfort is our honored guest.
Lord Simon, how might we be of service?

Simon: I can think of lots of ways.

Marie: Now, now, now,
I'll just bet you can.

Simon: Huh, huh, huh, huh, huh.

Iris: Oh Goddess!

Marie: I know.

Simon: Oh yeah, I'm to tell you my Lord, the King
Now fast approaches with his entourage
That our conquest ... contest might soon begin.

Marie: Then we shall go at once and inform the Queen
That she and hers might make swift attendance
Upon your most illustrious sovereign.

(Exit Marie and Lady Iris)

Simon: Thank you ... maybe later ... shit. Stuck up tarts.

(Enter Philip, Agnes, Ingeborg, Gaston and attendants)

Philip: Well Lord Simon, where is everybody?

Simon: They're gathering now liege, t'will be here soon.
Aye, all the gaudy songbirds of Provence
Flock hither to amuse thee with their chirps.
Winging now to entertain an eagle,
To be his diversion and then his prey.

Ingeborg: Philip, honey, I ...

Philip: Oh shut up you cow!
Yes, but soft friend, the day is not yet ripe.
For some time more we must conceal our plans,
Ere this race of insolent parasites
Shall meet doom at our unswerving hands.
Leave them twitter in their bower some years more,
Then this plump and pleasing land shall be ours.

(Enter Elanor and everyone else)

Elanor: Philip! My dear boy! How are you? Welcome!

Philip: Hello Elanor.

Elanor: And this is your Queen!
My, isn't she lovely. Hello my dear.

Ingeborg: No, I ban de Queen.

Philip: Will you be quiet!
I can't take you anywhere! You're always
Lowing and mooing. You make me sick!

Ingeborg: Ohhhh!

Raimbaut: How base to treat a lady thus.

Marie: Shhh.

Elanor: Oh my!
You're not the Queen then?

Agnes: Nah, I'm Agnes.

Elanor: Oh.

Agnes: I'm the King's mistress, yah know.

Elanor: Oh ... yes.
Well, welcome anyway. Shall we sit down,
And let our noble poets have the field,
That we may be blessed by their sweet devise?

Philip: An excellent idea. By the way,
What's the prize?

Elanor: Prize? There is no prize.

Philip: No prize!
What kind of contest is that? No prize?

Elanor: Tisn't a contest. They do not compete,
But rather meet to share their art and love.
Not one would be master of the others.
Brothers and sisters all, they are not led
By any, save their guiding muse.

Philip: What's that!?
Why that's dangerous. It's ... it's ... anarchy!

Elanor: Well, I do give them some little leeway.
But then, artists are such peculiar sorts.

Philip: Mine aren't.

Elanor: Oh ... yes, of course.

Philip: Look Elanor,
We've come a long way. Gaston la Bouche d'Or
My court poet, my great and mighty bard,
Desires to compete for the honor
Of his northern home and her noble King.
So let it be a contest. We shall judge.
I shall myself provide a fitting prize.
What do you say? Pit your best 'gainst mine own.

Lise: Jesus! He makes it sound like a cock fight.

Marie: Shhh. Please.

Elanor: Oh ... well ... alright. If you approve.

Peire: If you wish it Lady, it is our joy.

Elanor: Very well, choose from your ranks a champion.

Peire: Well friends, who shall it be?

Gausbert: I think ... Joglar!
But who seeks the truth? Who wants to know?
Oh friend, my words seem strange, dark and occluded.
Pray you live in your sun, I'll live in mine.
Enjoy it well friend, your day deluded.
True hearts spurn false, for sun of love divine.
Get it?

Joglar: Got it.

Jocelyn: Are you quite done?

Gausbert: Sorry.

Lise: It's alright Gausbert. Come friends, we've one choice.

(They huddle)

Your Majesty, Mehmet ibn Tribai;
Sheikh and slave of many forméd love,
Trobar, wise interpreter of the heart,
Veiler and unveiler of mysteries,
Shall be our voice, our chosen champion.
List well, for in the fabric of his verse
Runs a fair and once refinéd filament
Which is at once, our path and destiny.
Our end and means, our end of means and ends
Shall be eschewed, forgiven and forgot.
For 'tis the nature of love, his art
And ours, to still and then draw on the heart
Unto its desire and dissolution,
Its infinite essence and inmost spark.

Mehmet: Comes nigh my love, I unlearn sorrow.
Comes she and frees me from my forlorn dreams.
Cancels all, then, now and 'morrow.
Casts down all; illusions, plans and schemes.
For my love is real and what she seems.

One glimpse of my love, I'm filled with joy.
Her sight transmutes to gold the stones and air.
And when we touch, 'tis an alloy,
Each sweet caress makes my base soul more fair,
Raised up that we might the same soul share.

Oh love, thou fulfill'st more than hope.
Hope was my snare and brought my heart to heel.
Thine unkeen blade cut that encoiling rope.
And freed my heart and taught it how to feel
The flame within that is thy dulcet seal.

Mehmet is saved friend, be not amaze,
Not one is safe when love inveighs.

Elanor: Beautiful.

Philip: Very nice.

Agnes: Kinda spooky.

Philip: Now it is our turn, come forward Gaston.

Gaston: My love is like a morn in spring,
That doth the fragrant flowers bring,
That causeth all the birds to sing,
That makes my heart, a bird, take wing.

My love is like a gentle tune,
Heard in a summer's night in June,
Beneath a full and yellow moon
She ...

Peire: June!?! MOON!?! JESUS!!!

Jocelyn: The moon, the moon, the moon in June.

Peire: Beneath its light I want to croon.

Jocelyn: Oh if you croon, I swear I'll swoon.

Peire: The better fondle your balloon.

Jocelyn/

Peire: La, la, la, la, la, la, la.

Gaston: No fair, they've ruined my song!

Gerard: Oh, is that what it was!

Renee: Tough luck Gas-town.

Gaston: Oh clever, clever, clever! I understand.
If you can't beat them, drown them out!

Gausbert: Really!
 You low compiler of vulgar drivel.
 Oh God! Behold my friends! A tame poet!

Raimbaut: That's a poet?

Gerard: Oh my, yes, can't you see?
 He must be. He's a medal that says so.

Gausbert: Aye, a poet of a peculiar sort.
 No sooner does his master tell him, "sing",
 Than he presents a poem freshly killed.
 Stuffed and mounted, its shell facsimile,
 But inward; dead and rotten and corrupt.

Elanor: Gausbert! Why I thought it was quite ... metrical.

Renee: In truth M'Lady, it was shit.

Philip: Enough!
 I have had enough I say! Why you scum!
 You high and mighty pack of low born curs.
 So here's the heady freedom of Provence.
 Naught in it but insolence and insult
 For all those who are high born, safe or sane.
 But I suppose one could expect no less.
 Here synagogues and dens of heretics
 And even mosques stand side by side with churches.
 Here women are not silent ornaments,
 But harpies, shrieking e're their empty minds.
 Here there are no Kings, but only petty lords,
 Lax and lazy in matters of respect.
 Devoid of power, save their "people's love."
 Ha! What will that avail them when comes the storm?
 Naught! A sword will cut love as swift as flesh
 And only steely armor stays the blade.
 But thou'rt girded in songs, mailed in laughter.
 Aye, there is joy here, but no order,
 See which will aid thee most when doom comes nigh.

Elanor: Philip. Peace. Please, I beg thee, calm thyself.
 I am sorry.

Philip: Very well then. Hear me!
 The prize shall go to Gaston la Bouche d'Or,
 Greatest bard of the age! Do you object?

Elanor: No Philip, I don't object.

Gausbert:

I'll never write another song.

(All freeze save Gerard, Jocelyn, Renee and Mehmet)

Gerard: How strange to see the turning of a time.
Though we think it not, men are like mayflies,
Living but hours of the world's long day.
And our sires and theirs and theirs before
Were generations born unto the light.
A golden day so long ... seemed t'would always be.
But now it comes, the grim onrushing night,
And it falls to us to bear it witness,
Then light our lamps and flee and mourn our dead.
Peire d'Anduze, troubadour. Singer,
And, at the last, doer of great deeds.
Killed by the French at the butchery of Beziers.
Raimbaut de Roussillion, troubadour.
Gentle heart and most chivalric knight.
Killed by the French on the field of Muert
Fighting o'er the body of his liege lord
Pedro the Second of Aragon.
Lise de Courthézon, troubaritz.
Mother of sons, wise and gracious friend to all.
Died in the dungeons of the inquisition.
Gausbert d'Albi, troubadour. Grim Cathar
And last exemplar of the trobar clus.
Recanted, died in a monastery
At the age of eighty-four. The rest of us ...
Fled east or south as best we could. Raiséd
Our voices 'gainst the murder of Provence.
But our words were thin and shrill and heeded not.
Our time was passed and gone away ... and so,
One by one, fell we into the night of time ...
Passed on ... to wait the coming of the day.

Mehmet: Come Gerard, 'tis time.

Renee: It's become so cold.
How about a song? A song would warm us.

Gerard: What shall we sing?

Mehmet: An alba, let us sing an alba.

Jocelyn: Aye, 'tis meet. We depart singing a song to the dawn.

All: Bel companho, en chantan vos apel:
Non dormantz plus, qu'eu aug chantar l'auzel.
Que vai queren la journ per lo boscatge ...

(The four of them exit, the rest of the cast holds for five beats and then walks off.)

CURTAIN

This play is dedicated to Duchess Verena of Laurelin.

A California Vacuum Cleaner Salesman In The BOG Court

This play was originally conceived as a simple minded extrapolation of certain sociological idiosyncracies in the SCA to a time in the future where some sort of breakdown in the social order made them dominant. Let me make it clear that I am not one of those peculiar types one runs across in the SCA who thinks a nuclear war would be just peachy because it would leave all of us medievalists around to pick up the pieces. To my way of thinking, this is, at best, an amusing sophomoric fantasy which can only be indulged in by the sleek and fatuous scions of middle-class America who have never had any real contact with the impact of a real disaster.

Anyway, what the play turned into was an attack on the Hobbyist/Re-creationist wing of the SCA, prompted by me reading of an interesting little tome called: Trends of Change. I've got to admit that I was pretty worked up by some of the ideas contained in this document and even more over some of the psychological "trends" in the SCA that I felt they represented.

This play, therefore, should be viewed in this light. It does not represent a reasoned consideration of the views contained in Trends of Change, it is not even satire on those views; satire to my mind is not quite so heavy-handed. Rather, it is a burlesque or a lampoon, akin not so much to slicing at these ideas with a scalpel, as to hacking at them with a meat cleaver. It was meant to chop up the reeking carcass of burgherite combinationalism and toss it into the garbage can where I felt it belonged ... it was a rabble rouser.

In rousing the rabble it certainly succeeded. In the Kingdom of the West, which as everyone in the SCA knows, is the mighty fortress of old-fashioned "King's Word is Law"ism, it was received with wild enthusiasm. I am not so sure it would have been received as well in the parliamentary autocracies that lie to the east of our fair realm.

Notwithstanding these limitations, I like the play and it was a hell of a lot of fun to do. It was the opening salvo in an exposition of ideas that I continued on a more serious level in; "In Defense of Feudalism" and will continue in another series of articles and arguments I intend to unleash at the 20 year gathering of the SCA; the gist of which is "I don't give a rat's ass if you want to have peerage points, elected kings, parliaments, whatever, in your kingdom, just cut the crap about 'national policy guidelines' and keep your fuckin' hands off areas that don't want to put up with your shit".

A California Vacuum Cleaner Salesman In The BOG Court
or
Somewhere Over the Foul Line
or
The Twilight of the Gods

CAST:

Leo the Shrieker	Lord Tancred Tedium
Manager	Lady Priscilla de la Snotte
Old Woman	Duke Bull
Ick	Lord Reynard
Ook	Lady Rat
Announcer	Lady Weasel
Guard 1	Lord Crush
Guard 2	King Guy de Falle
Lord Alphonse the Pedant	King of the Best
Lord Wormwood Woodhead	
Duchess Losttouch	Attendants

ACT 1 Scene 1 – A major department store. Signs reading: "Pioneer Days Sale", and "Get a Cow of a Deal!!!". (The Manager is on stage.)

(Enter Leo)

Manager: Hey Leo! How's the boy?

Leo: Hey, Boss! Put 'er there!

Manager: Sell me that hand boy! Sell me that hand!

Leo: It's a great hand, boss! It's the best hand!

Manager: Alright! You gonna sell today?

Leo: I'm gonna sell!

Manager: YOU'RE GONNA WHAT?!?!?!

Leo: I'M GONNA SELL!!!!

Manger: Awright! Get it on!!!

(Exit Manager)

Leo: Dum de dum ...

(Enter Old Woman)

Old Woman: Por favor, señor ...

Leo: Good morning madam, can I interest you in the last word in fully automated home care vacuum cleaning systems?

Old Woman: Por qué?

(Leo grabs her purse)

Leo: Right you are, my good woman. No home can be without the autotonic duo-bivalve rotating suction action, the deep pile vibro beater bar and the sturdy plastic grip!!

Old Woman: Eh? Eh? Por qué?

Leo: A wise decision my dear, a wise decision. No, no ... no need to pay in cash. All you need is your handy credit card. Let's see, that's ninenineninenineninintynine and low, low monthly payments just twelve years and thank you, come again.

Old Woman: Eh? Eh? Eh?

(Exit Old Woman, Enter Ick and Ook)

Ick: Observe Ook, a perfect specimen.

Ook: Yes Ick, the High Supreme Zontar will be pleased.

Ick: Yes. He will reward us greatly.

Ook: Perhaps he will give us a pizza.

Ick/Ook: ERRRRRRRRRRRR!

Ook: I will freeze him with the stun ray.

Leo: Good morning gen ...

Ook: *(Stun Ray)* EEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE.

Ick: Let us carry him to the saucer.

Ook: Oh my, observe, the specimen is defective.

Ick: Yes, yes. There is an ugly ten inch growth between its legs.

Ook: How sad. We must leave it behind.

Ick: Shall we wake it?

Ook: No. It will only be asleep three hundred years. It will find the nap restful.

(Exit Ick and Ook, Enter Manager)

Manager: He there, Leo, how's it goin'? OH MY GOD ... he's been frozen solid. Leo ... Leo ... it's no use ... what to do ... what to do ...

(Manager runs to phone)

Ed, Ed, this is Bill. Look, ask men's clothing if they need another mannikin, yeah, thanks ... oh, oh, say Ed ... before you do anything else, punch Leo off the clock.

(Exit Manager. Twilight Zone Theme plays ...)

Announcer: Item: Leo Blareman, salesman extra ordinaire ... who has just lost his part as chief actor in his life only to be cast as a bit player in someone else's cosmic drama. Thrown forward into a strange and unknown world whose only reference point for a mind tenuously clinging to the shreds of sanity is membership in a rather obscure leisure time organization. Witness Leo the Shrieker ... thrown forward into the past ... into the Twilight Zone.

SCENE 2 – A field in the Kingdom of the Best. Leo is frozen on stage.

Leo: ... tlemen, can I interest you in ... what the ... where am I?

(Enter Guards and Lord Pedant)

Guard 1: Aughhh! What's that?!

Leo: Hi there.

Guard 2: 'Tis a man methinks, yet 'tis like no man
I have ever seen. Mark well its raiment:
Smooth and unwrinkled, with the dull luster
Of a fish belly wrought in it ... oh strange ...

Leo: Hello. Is there a tourney around here? Are you in the SCA?

Guard 1: Who are you?

Guard 2: Are you in a play?

Leo: No, it's my work suit.
Where am I? How'd I get here?

Guard 1: Well stranger,
You are in the Kingdom of the Best, but
As to how ... you would know better than we.

Leo: Oh, wow. Where's the Westermurk pavilion?

Guard 2: Westermurk? Is that where you're from?

Leo: Sure is.

Lord Pedant: Run for it!

Guard 1: Seize him!

Leo: Hey, what's going on?

Guard 2: What's going on? Your doom, you filthy spy.
You'll not see the Kingdom of Westermurk
Again.

Leo: What? Kingdom? It's a Barony!

Lord Pedant: It's been a Kingdom since A.S. Forty.

Guard 1: A rebel province, calling itself such!

Leo: Wait! Wait! Wait a minute, what year is this?

Guard 2: Why A.S. 319 of course.

Leo: My God!
I've been asleep for three hundred years!

Guard 1: Silence dog! Wait here with the prisoners.
I shall go and inform the Bee Oh Gee
That we bring two miscreants to judgement.

Guard 2: Alright you two, no funny business.

Lord Pedant: Hello.

Leo: Hi.

Lord Pedant: I'm Lord Alphonse the Pedant.

Leo: Leo the Shrieker.

Lord Pedant: Pardon me, you said
You'd been asleep three hundred years.

Leo: That's right. Last thing I knew, it was A.S. nineteen.
What happened?

Lord Pedant: Wait, just a minute, your name rings a bell.
Leo the Shrieker, right?

Leo: Yeah, that's right. Why?
Does it appear in the hist'ry books?

Lord Pedant: No, the heralds passed your device last week.

Guard 2: Get a move on.

(Exit All)

SCENE 3 – The Meeting Place of the BOG. The members are on stage.
The King of the Best is also on stage as janitor.

Snotte: Next.

Tancred: Um, let's see ... old business.

Bull: I vote no.

Snotte: Wait, Duke Bull, we haven't gotten that far yet.
Go on, Lord Tancred.

Tancred: Old bus ...

Bull: I still vote no.

Tancred: Old business! The shire of Seaspray
Would like to change the spelling of its name.

Woodhead: To what? 'E' spray? 'F' spray?

Losttouch: This proposal
Has been before us eight-seven years ...
Let's not be hasty.

Tancred: Say, that reminds me of a story.

All: Ha, ha, ha, ha.

(Enter Guards, Lord Pedant, and Leo)

Guard 1: Alright you, remember:
When you talk to the BOG,
(high, squeaky voice) you talk like this.

Leo: Like this?

Guard 1: That's right.

Leo: But that's ridiculous.
No one talks like that.

Guard 2: Of course, that's the point.
By ancient custom, those chosen to serve
As Gods upon the BOG must nevermore
Have any contact with reality.

Leo: Right.

Guard 1: Let's go. *Ahem* Let's go. Oh, exalted ones!

Snotte: Yes, what is it?

Tancred: We're still on old business.

Bull: I vote no.

Guard 2: Pardon the interruption,
But we bring Lord Pedant the heretic
And a Westermurk spy for your judgement.

Woodhead: Ah, Lord Pedant, still say we're not Gods, eh?

Lord Pedant: That's right.

Woodhead: A pity. It means you must die.

Lord Pedant: So be it!

Leo: Wait a minute. How in *hell*
Did you nurds get yourselves made into Gods?

(Lord Tancred slaps Leo)

Tancred: Silence you dog!

(Leo hits Lord Tancred)

Guard 1: Unhand him!

Guard 2: Let him go!

Tancred: Kill him!

Lord Pedant: Wait! Do not be hasty my Lord.
For this man is Leo the Shrieker,
Just awakened after three hundred years ...
You see, everything was different then.
In his day, Westermurk was merely
A Barony, and the BOG were not Gods.

Losttouch: Lies! Westermurk lies!

Tancred: That's right! I'm a God.
See, it says so on my membership card.

Leo: Mmmm. That's right. Tancred Tedium: O.L., O.P.,
K.S.C.A., O.L.M., G.O.D.

Tancred: Told you.

Leo: Nitwit! That doesn't prove a thing!

Tancred: It does to me.

Leo: What? That you're a vapid geek?

Tancred: That's enough! Kill him!

Lord Pedant: Wait! Wait! Please do not.
Think, here is a man from our distant past.
A time of which we know so little,
Brought by a miracle to our own day.
Don't kill him, please, think of what he can tell
Us of our past. Think of the truth, the facts.

Snotte: Truth? Facts? Truth?! Facts!? We don't got no
Truth, facts. We don't gotta know no truth, facts.

Leo: It's no use old pal. Not with these morons.
Wait. Look, before I die, tell me one thing,
How did this God stuff get started, anyway?

Woodhead: I'll tell you. Guards, you may leave us. Duke Bull
Shall watch the prisoners. Good, we're alone.
Just you and us, and your lips will be sealed
soon enough.

Leo: And who are you?

Woodhead: I'm Lord Wormwood Woodhead.

These are Lady Snotte, and Lord Tedium,
Duchess Losttouch, and Duke Bull, and we are
The Board of Gods. It was my ancestor
Who made us so. For in your day Leo,
The BOG was human and high rank and award
Were given to those whose efforts and talents
Were shown in measure great enough to earn them.
Yet my grandsire, many times o'er
Said, "What of the lazy, the talentless,
"The mediocre. What of these poor souls?
"Surely time serving and just turning up
"Deserve some reward. Let's make peerage points
"So that each plodding non-entity might
"In due course, be Knighted, Pelicaned, or
"Laureled simply by showing up at events."
The Kings and peers, elitists that they were,
Objected, so their power was broken
And these high titles are now open to all,
Not on the basis of something as unfair
As merit, but rather for anyone
Who has the points and passes the written tests.

Losttouch: And the pop quizzes.

Woodhead: Yes, well anyway,
Soon the lands were filled with Knights, Pelicans,
Laurels, Kings, Queens, Dukes, Duchesses, etc.
The new democratic Peerage! And then
My mighty ancestor looked at what he'd wrought,
And in his infinite wisdom he thought:
"Gosh, awards are cheap." And it came to him
There should be some award above the crown,
Above all else, to be given those brave souls
Who broke the power of royalty and
Nobility, and then instituted
Rule by the BOG and the boobocracy
In its place. For this deed, only Godhood
Was fit!

Leo: You've wrecked the SCA, you twit!

Woodhead: I see you Westermurkers haven't changed
One little bit in all these three hundred years.
Ah well, no matter, now you must die!

Bull: I vote no.

Tancred: Reminds me of a story ...

(Enter Guards)

Guard 1: Your worships! Flee! The Westermurk army is here!

Snotte: Oh horrors, and we are defenseless!
Our army is at war on the south border
'Gainst the Kingdom of Carrud.

Losttouch: Flee!

Westermurkers: Hooyah!

Tancred: Too late!

Snotte: We're trapped!

Westermurkers: All right you mothers, the Westermurk is here!

BOG: EEEEEEEEEEEKKKKKKKK!!

(Enter Westermurkers)

Reynard: Hahahahahahahahaha! Scrotum!

BOG: Oh! Oh! Oh!

Reynard: Aren't we clever? Aren't we cute?

Woodhead: You, you beasts!

Weasel: Shut up, Blockhead!

Woodhead: That's Woodhead!

Weasel: I said, shut up Pinebrain!

Crush: I'll kill 'em.

Guard 1/2: Leave them alone!

Crush: I'll kill 'em! I'll kill 'em!

(Lord Crush knocks guards unconscious)

King Guy: Alright you guys, where's the Westermurker?
We heard you're holding one of our people.

Leo: That's me! That's me! Leo the Shrieker.

King Guy: Hi there. I'm the King, Guy de Falle. These are:
Lord Reynard, Lady Weasel, Lady Rat, and
Lord Crush, my chief advisors, glad to see you.

Leo: That goes double for me.

Weasel: Your Majesty, we've got Leo.
'Ere we split ...

Crush: I'll kill 'em!

Snotte: Quick, Duke Bull shall save us!

Reynard: You don't scare me.

(Duke Bull crushes Lord Reynard's shield with his bare hands.)

Well, maybe you scare me a little bit.

Crush: I'll kill 'em!

(Lord Crush pounds on Duke Bull with no effect)

Bull: Ha! Gods don't have to count light.

Reynard: Um, knock, knock.

Bull: Who's there?

Reynard: Atenveldt.

Bull: Atenveldt, who?

Reynard: A-ten-veldt get 'cha twenty if you bet on Horseradish
In the fifth.

Bull: A funny man, eh?

Reynard: Where?
Take a card, any card.

Bull: Why you ...

(Westermurkers smash table over Duke Bull's head)

Light.

(Duke Bull falls)

Rat: Thus falls another slaving weasel
Of burgherite combinationalism!

Snotte: Huh? What?

Rat: And soon you shall meet the same fate!
You flatulent parcel of rabid squids!

Woodhead: What the hell are you talking about?

Weasel: Your doom, Balsa-noggin.

Woodhead: That's Wood ...

Crush: I'll kill 'em!

King Guy: Wait, you guys, do we gotta kill them?

Rat: Comrade King! Allow this leprous fungus,
This diseased excrescence, this fetid pus,
This malignant slime, this oozing ocelot ...

Weasel: Oh, get on with it.

King Guy: Oozing ocelot?

Rat: Anyway, allow them to live and then
They'll continue to poison the Knowne World
Until the SCA is nothing more
Than mundanes dressed up in funny costumes.

Tancred: Wait a minute, isn't that what we are?

Rat: You may be, reeking hyena! Not us!!

Weasel: Right, they gotta go, they're not period.

Losttouch: Not period! It's you that aren't period.
Everyone says so.

Reynard: And who's everyone?

Losttouch: Well, we say so.

Woodhead: Yes, we've researched it.

Rat: Ha! We've researched it too, you pitiful stooge of the
Burgherite warmongering clique! We're the ones who
Are period!

Snotte: You're not!

Weasel: Are so!

Snotte: Are not.

Weasel: Are so.

Snotte: Are not.

Weasel: Are so.

Snotte: Not.

Weasel: So.

Snotte: Not.

Weasel: So.

Snotte: Not.

Tancred: That reminds me of an amusing little tale.
Seems that back in A.S. 169,
There was this Duke, or was it a Duchess,
From Atenveldt, or was it the Middle,
hohoho, who won, no, no, who lost ...

Reynard: If you don't shut up, I'm going to kill you.

Crush: I'll kill 'em!

Reynard: Hold on. We're not period, eh?
So c'mon, where did you do your research?

Woodhead: Why, in the standard reference works of course:
The Big Golden Book of the Middle Ages
And Trends of Change.

Rat: Lies! All Lies!!

King Guy: (*Looking at the Big Golden Book*) Look, big tits!

Reynard: (*Throwing it down*) Ha! Worthless drivel!

King Guy: Hey!
Aw, gee, you guys ...

Weasel: Enough, lets ...

Crush: I'll kill 'em!

Leo: Wait!
Hold on! I can't believe this. You're all SCA,
What has happened? How did this come to pass?
How'd things come down to killing each other?

Reynard: Listen Leo, it's a war to the death.
Long ago, in your day, the Bee Oh Gee
Was a body with little real power.
Real authority rested in Kingdoms,
With the Kings, councils of state and the peers.
But it came to pass that these groups fell out,
Squabbling for the petty prize of command.
Instead of cultivating tolerance
And cooperation, they battled
Like spoiled children for that passing bauble;
Worldly Might, until, at last, in each realm
Strife and stalemate and bitterness held sway.
Unable to settle their differences,
They appealed to the BOG, investing it
With supreme authority by their default
Of their responsibility to rule.
They surrendered the right to order their lives
And gave it to this tiny group
Whose members, becoming drunk with power,
Overlaid their concept of the SCA
Upon all others. T'was not the BOG's fault,
But that of those too blind to live with
Any conception of reality
Other than their own. E'en so, at this time,
'Tis the BOG, bloated with unnatural might;
Arrogant, corrupt, swollen with false grandeur,
Posturing as gods ... believing it and
Forcing others to believe. 'Tis the BOG
which is the source of all the poison
Killing the spirit of the SCA.
Thus we deem it no great loss that they perish.

Losttouch: Blasphemy! You'll go to hell for this!

Tancred: Or worse, you could go to Ansteorra.

Crush: I'll kill 'em!

BOG: No, no, no!

Westermurkers: Get 'em! Kill 'em!

King Guy: You guys ...

Leo: Wait a minute! Hold on! Look ... GIVE ME A BREAK!
There's got to be some way to work this out ...
Can I interest you in a compromise?

Snotte: Compromise with this vermin, never!
Besides, we don't have to listen to you.
You ... you mortal!

Weasel: See, you can't talk to them.

Rat: Death to the running dogs of Burgherdom!

Crush: I'll kill 'em!

Leo: Wait a minute, you see this?
A membership card from A.S. 19.
You latecomers. You won't listen to me!
I'm the SCA's oldest member!
You think *you've* got status? Ha! You're NOTHING!
I've so much seniority ... shit, I am God!

Woodhead: He's right! Think of it! Three hundred years worth
Of peer points!

Snotte: Oh! I'm coming! I'm coming!

Leo: Me, too, the second time!

Weasel: Give us a break.

Leo: Alright! Listen up! All of you! You're right,
But you can't just kill them! You talk about
Tolerance and cooperation,
Well show a little yourselves! Understand,
The people in the lands that the BOG rules
Are dependant upon word from on high
For order and direction. Kill the BOG
And you give them not freedom, but mere chaos.
Think, 'tis better that you hold them captive,
Keep them for show, but from behind the scenes
Make them use their great authority
To undo their works and wither their powers
By their own hands, 'tll by increments
Glorious Feudalism is restored.

King Guy: What a nice idea.

Rat: Bullshit! It's stupid.

Lord Crush: I'll kill 'em!

King Guy: No, wait, I'm your lawful King, 'tis my will
Lord Leo's plan be fulfilled.

Reynard: Your Majesty, we hear and obey.

Rat: Oh, okay.

Leo: Great, now first, we should restore the King's power.
Who's King here?

King: I am.

Leo: You're the King?

Weasel: How shameful.

Leo: Where's your crown?

King: Eighty points and three boxtops ...

Leo: Never mind, how'd you like to rule, my friend?

King: What's that?

Leo: Stick with me, you'll learn soon enough.
Now then, I'll stay here and supervise things.
Leave me some troops and Lord Crush to back me up.

King Guy: Of course.

Leo: Okay you clowns, one false move and ...

Lord Crush: I'll kill 'em!

Woodhead: Alright, you win.

Leo: Don't take it too hard guys.
You might learn something.

Losttouch: Never!

Weasel: Victory!

Rat: 'Tis true! At last out long toil finds reward!
The fair flower of feudalism has been snatched
From the slaving maw of the Burghers
And all their craven lickspittle lackeys!
Now, Progressive workers, peasants, and nobles
Shall march forward, united as one man,
Into the glorious feudalist future.
And the odious plots ... (*Lady Rat is smothered*)

King Guy: Oh, we fought the usurpations of the Burgher Bee Oh Gee,
With their democratic nonsense and their mediocracy,
Now we have restored the monarchs and the true nobility,

All: Feudalism makes us strong!
PPFUF forever. PPFUF forever. PPFUF forever.
Feudalism makes us strong!

King Guy: Everybody!

All: PPFUF forever. PPFUF forever. PPFUF forever.
Feudalism makes us strong!

CURTAIN

Once Upon a Time in the Crusades

This is a play that was never produced. It was rehearsed, it was ready to go, but at the first tournament at which it was to be given, most of the audience was first covered by a torrential downpour and then sank gracelessly into the mud, while at the next, the person playing the lead role disappeared for two weeks. Ah well, no great loss. I don't think that this is a major work in any conceivable sense of the word, but it is amusing, and I may get around to attempting it again one of these years.

Guiraut: Thanks.
Now listen, when first we came here,
Renee and I fleeing Provence,
We'd some adventures, as you'll hear.
No lions maybe, but all the rest;
Franks and war, the devil and sin,
And panoply and what was best,
That rascal, Mulla Nasrudin.

SCENE 2 – Some of the pervasive desert in the Holy Land.

(Enter Guiraut and Renee)

Renee: Oh gentle sun ...

Guiraut: Where?

Renee: Where what?

Guiraut: What?

Renee: Where what the where you asked what, hon?

Guiraut: The gentle sun, this one's too hot.
Do you know something that I don't?

Renee: No, it's just a song.

Guiraut: Renee, please,
If you have got to sing, I won't
Object, just sing of ice or freeze,
Of winter's bite, of anything
Save that fierce orb which flays us now.

Renee: Okay. It's raining, it's pouring,
The old man is snoring.

(Enter Nasrudin. He is in chains.)

Nasrudin: Oh waow.
You must be crazy.

Renee: Perhaps, still,
We are not working in this heat.

Nasrudin: So, I'd not boast of that until
I knew what end of the work fulfill.

Guiraut: Quite so, what is your purpose friend?

Nasrudin: Mine, well, that is one thing, you know.
The work is another, its end
Seems to making this lump go
From here to there.

Renee: Quite artistic.

Nasrudin: Isn't it? They're nice lumps ... don't gripe.
Moving lump's fit work for mystics.

Guiraut: Ah, you're a mystic.

Nasrudin: No, a type
That likes moving lumps 'round, that's all.
When the lumps see what's going on,
Then I'm a mystic.

Renee: You're a thrall,
A slave, or are those chains illusion?

Nasrudin: Well, there's a crusader says
He owns me, though who really does
For that matter, who holds his stays
Goes deeper than mere chains because
Movers of lumps wear what they will.

Guiraut: I like you. What's your name?

Nasrudin: I am
Mulla Nasrudin.

Guiraut: It is ill
I think that you are a bondsman.
What would you say if I bought you
And set you free?

Nasrudin: How'd you like it
If I, without buying you two
Offered freedom for which you're fit.

Guiraut: Oh come now, you're in chains, we're free.

Nasrudin: Are you now? There are other chains
Than these bits of steel that bind me.
You bear those that the soul detains.

Guiraut: Really?

Nasrudin: Really. Why I dare say,
If you were given half a chance,
You'd throw yourself in Satan's way
And push for a place in durance
In the most nether pits of hell.

Renee: Ha!

Guiraut: Oh, do get off it. No way.
We're not that dumb.

Nasrudin: Well, truth to tell ...
You are, and I'll prove it, okay?

Guiraut: Done!

Nasrudin: Shall we go then?

Renee: You're in chains!

Nasrudin: Things can be arranged.

(Enter Sir Strongwill)

Strongwill: Hey there slave.
Come on, I need you. I disdain
To linger more in peace. I crave
The serried splendor of battle,
The sun striking on sudden steel.
Mending roads designed for cattle;
I am a knight not commonweal!
War calls and I shall go! You too,
My infidel beast of burden.

Nasrudin: Yes Sir Strongwill.

Strongwill: Hey, who are you?

Guiraut: Guiraut.

Renee: Renee. We're minstrels when
The mood takes us.

Strongwill: Well come with me,
I'll give you deeds to make songs of.
I shall smite the heathen.

Renee: Really.
But, look, we mainly sing of love.

Strongwill: Well, could you of my great deeds tell
If I pay ...

Renee: How much?

Guiraut: Songs so high
As ours aren't things to buy and sell.

Nasrudin: Small lies ...

Strongwill: Ten crowns!

Guiraut: Done!

Nasrudin: ... buy big lies.

Renee: I see you'll be embarrassing
To have around.

Nasrudin: I do my best.

Strongwill: Come, 'tis onward we'll be pressing
To smite the foe in battle's test.

SCENE 3 – A somewhat different patch of all pervasive desert with Father Smallmind, Sir Vaintongue, Sir Goodheart, Princess Resha, Lady Hind, and Ladies.

Smallmind: Oh Lord of Hosts, succor the sheep
Who wander in this grim land.

Vaintongue: God's Blood!

Smallmind: As ye sow, ye shall reap!
Sir Vaintongue, by God I command
Thy curses cease! 'Tis only then
When we are all meek and contrite
That God might heed the prayers of men
And send his mercy hence.

Vaintongue: Alright,
Father Smallmind. It shan't be said
My noble spirit is too high
To stoop to God, but I'm half dead
And God's Wounds ... golly ... thirsty, why
I'd drink with the devil right now
Were he to offer me water.

Ladies: Us too!

Smallmind: Silence, heathen cows!

Goodheart: Father Smallmind, please! These daughters
Of Islam are still ladies fair
And merit all the courtesy
Due their station.

Smallmind: Oh have a care
Sir Goodheart. In form they're ladies,
But in fact, infidel harlots.

Vaintongue: Whatever they are, they'll be dead,
Us too, lest water's near this spot.
I would drink with Satan by God's Head!

Smallmind: Sir Knight, cease!

(Enter Satan and Voluptua)

Satan: Is someone thirsty?

Smallmind: A miracle!

Vaintongue: Our thanks stranger.
Who are you?

Satan: No stranger to thee,
I'm Satan. Drink with me?

Smallmind: Danger!
Do not drink!

Vaintongue: By God's Beard, I will!
I said I would; Knights keep their oaths!
Besides, I thirst.

Satan: Aye, drink your fill.
Anyone else?

Smallmind: Nay, I am loathe
To sully my great holiness
With his drink. I'd rather be dead.

Resha: Oddly enough, we'd rather you were dead too.

Voluptua: Well, Hi there Mister Blessedness.
Want to much some melons instead?

Smallmind: Away! Away temptress!

Satan: Now, now
Voluptua, don't tease the priest.

Goodheart: I'll take water, I don't care how.
The ladies must have some at least.

(Enter Guiraut, Renee, Sir Strongwill and Nasrudin)

Strongwill: Greetings friends, how goes it with thee?

Smallmind: Praise God! A Christian army!

Renee: You've been promoted.

Smallmind: Wondrously
We are saved from peril you see
By this, a holy miracle.

Guiraut: Saved from what? Who are you?

Smallmind: Christ's flock.
Thy loving brethren.

Renee: Treacle.

Goodheart: We are fleeing grim battle's shock,
For this day fell Saladin
Destroyed in war our Christian Host.
There, upon the field of Hattin
Our knights and dreams gave up the ghost.
Perished all 'neath pitiless sun
And red-stained steel of Araby.
We held back to guard the person
Of this; the fair Princess Resha,
Sixth daughter to Saladin, won
Near Acre by force of arms.

Guiraut: Ah ...
I'd say "fair" 's an understatement ...
I'm just being polite ...

Goodheart/
Renee: Yeah! Right!

Guiraut: Hey!

Renee: Faithless!

Guiraut: HEY!

Smallmind: Aughhh!

Renee: You're pale ...
The Goddess ...

Smallmind: A WITCH!

Nasrudin: You ignore ...

(Enter Prince Hassan)

Hassan: A witch, I say, what do you call,
Witches living in desert clime?

Ladies: Prince Hassan!

Hassan: Come, don't stall,
Sink me, it's so good, it's a crime.

Strongwill: Alright, we give up already!

Hassan: Don't bellow ya brute. I hear you.
The answer, ha ha, don't cha know, ha, ha, good show ...

Strongwill: What is it?! What's a desert witch?! You ...

Hassan: Why they're sandwiches, don't cha know.
Sink me, I'm a comedian.

Hind: And our most noble rescuer.

Ladies: Hal Hassan!

Hassan: Damme, so I am.
Fancy that. My dear.

Hind: Hey, clue her.

Hassan: Remember me, your dear betrothed.

Resha: Hassan ...

Hassan: Sink me, that's so ain't it?
Glad to see me? Hassan you rogue.

Smallmind: Oh God, have I been so unfit
That I deserve this?

Voluptua: Yes.

Nasrudin: Thanks God.

Resha: Oh noblest
Of knights. If its true we're damned,
Then I must make a confession.
Long I have indifference shammed,
But I love thee!

Goodheart: Blest profession!
And I love thee! Our souls will burn
Together!

Guiraut: (*To Renee*) Yes! And I love thee!

Strongwill: (*To Voluptua*) And thee, thee, I love thee!

Hassan: My turn.
I ... I love ... me, me, I love me!

Satan: Wait a minute, will you please, I've come ...

Goodheart: Go on! Take us! Do your worst fiend!

Nasrudin: My, my, my, quite a conundrum,
They're all so eager.

Satan: So I'd gleaned.
But really, I'd not come for you ...

Vaintongue: So! We're not good enough for you?
You've got your nerve!

Hassan: Sink me, now who
Do you think you are?

Satan: The devil's due.
There must be an easier way
To make a living. Now, listen,
I've come ...

Goodheart: C'mon, take me first.

Hassan: Wait, wait, now don't be remiss in
Respect for rank. I should be curst
Before the common herd.

Strongwill: No wait!
I'll not follow some slimy wog!
Take me!

Guiraut/

Renee: No, take us!

Guiraut: We've got talent.

Renee: We deserve it.

Guiraut: Really, we promise ...

Renee: What are we saying?!!!

Hassan: Look, if these dumb frogs
Go first I'll take my trade elsewhere.

Strongwill: Frog! Why you ...

Hassan: Hold! You've mussed me shirt!
Come ya brute. Let's fight. Have a care,
I'm a master, you could get hurt.

(Prince Hassan and Sir Strongwill fight)

Satan: Wait! Stop!

Nasrudin: You could be a florist.

Satan: I've heard cheese-making is restful ...
Still, even if I turn and twist,
I've no choice. With all my best skill
I can never be more or less
Than I've made myself.

Nasrudin: Do you hear?
Fate, choice and chance I must confess
In all human lives do appear
Quite intermixed and commingled,
And in our ignorance we make
Truth of mere impulse, blown and swelled
By such conceits as lead us take
Paths and choices which are no more
Than the decision of the ass
To follow on the carrot's lure,
Or flee the rod that it might pass.
Yet we've minds to give dreams names.
Gilded fantasy: duty, hope,
Choice, honor, knowledge, love and fame.
Blind to all but these, most men grope
And never date to seek or see
The art of discernment; true guide

To that one path that sets us free:
To look deep out, more deep inside,
See who we are and then go on
To that destiny laid out for us
By God and our natures. Sons
Of men and daughters! List! You truss
Up your best chances, hopes and means
Of freedom with the chains of pride!
Unbidden save by the false sheen
Of mere vanity. Turn aside.
You all rate better destinies.

Smallmind: Heathen claptrap!

Voluptua: Some men have hears
For mere decor.

Nasrudin: ‘Tis as they please.
What do you have them for?

(Enter Saladin and attendants; Prince Hassan and Sir Strongwill stop fighting)

Saladin: Here ... here!
Stop that! Hold off! What a hubbub ...
What’s going on?

Hassan: Why that’s Satan
Come to fetch us, and here’s the rub,
They think to go before I can!
Insolent fellas that they are.

Saladin: Satan! There is no God but God
And Mohammed is His Prophet!
Stand off fools, let him declare
For whom he’s come to give the nod.
‘Tis not for you to say who’s fit.

Satan: Saladin! Prince of Wisdom! Thanks,
For pitying the Prince of Lies
Who’s forced to deal with all these wanks.
Couldn’t get a word in edgewise.
Now, as to whose sin has sown
Damnation; ‘tis for pride I’ve come ...
Now.

Voluptua: Father Smallmind, come on down!

Smallmind: AUGHHHHHHHHH!!!!

(Exit Satan, Voluptua and Father Smallmind)

Renee: Smallmind, who'd have thought it?

Guiraut: I would.

Saladin: Keep mum!

The higher judgement's done. Attend!
Now comes the lower one of men.
The war has come unto its end
And peace must draw our souls again.
And treaty art though amnestied,
And since my daughter took no harm,
Go to thy homes as was agreed.

Christians: Thank you, Lord.

(Exit Sir Strongwill and Sir Vaintongue)

Resha: Father this man's arm
Was raised to save me in peril ...

Saladin: And his heart to love the after,
I see it daughter, very well,
Go to live in joy and laughter.

Princesss/

Goodheart: Thank you, Lord.

(Exit Princess and Sir Goodheart)

Hassan: Sink me I've got luck,
I was too good for her.

Saladin: Come now.

(Exit Saladin and Prince Hassan)

Guiraut: They're all run over by a truck.
What a stupid ending.

Renee: Guiraut ...

Guiraut: No! It's silly! Not at all how
Real life is supposed to go.
I wouldn't write it, that's for sure.

Nasrudin: Oh my, my, I do like artists,
It all must be so very pure.
Look Guiraut, all life's turns and twists
Sometimes come out on the trite side
Or so it seems if you're clinging
To illusion. Come now, decide,
If it's really worth your bringing
This sense of epic to small chance
And missing its inner import
By warping it to romance?

Renee: Guiraut. You're wrong, oh, be a sport ...
Admit it ... I love you ...

Guiraut: Alright.
I love you ... I'm wrong. Can we learn?

Nasrudin: Come, find out. Come seek the light ...
It shines when lumps start to discred.

CURTAIN

The Faire Play

It had occurred to me to do a “real” medieval play a long time back, as a matter of fact, shortly after I got into the SCA. However, I just never got around to it until a night when a dear woman, Linda of Collinswood, asked me why I never did anything “period”. I explained that everything I had read in the medieval drama was either too boring or too obscene (a rather flip answer which does injustice to the medieval drama). After the conversation, I got to thinking; “Well, why not?”, betook myself to college libraries and began looking into reference works and went to work.

The results of my research and how I modified the material for presentation to a modern audience are summarized in the notes at the end of the play.

As to production, it was quite complex and time-consuming as might be expected with a cast of this size trying to work around the mundane limitations of everybody’s work and school commitments. Even so, it worked ... twice, for it was presented both in the West and in An Tir. The credit for this must go to the spirit and enthusiasm of the Westermark Players whose efforts went above and beyond the call of duty to this play.

Many thanks to everybody.

Ariel: But they'll be heavy.

Giraud: I know.

Ariel: Aww, Giraud!

Giraud: What a prospect, my friends, what a prospect!
Fair fields, good fortune and a fat harvest.
Come on, buck up, earn the title: "Actor",
Now let bright smiles conceal your pinched cheeks
Shouts of joy mask the empty belly's roar.
For should yonder folk suspect we covet
Aught more dear than their laughter and applause,
We shall depart as empty as we come.
But, if our bearing bespeaks our bounty,
Then these dozing dogs of greed shall sleep on
And the sharp edges of these grasping oafs
Be lulled and dulled to our worthy profit.

(All exit)

SCENE 2 – The village. Enter Jean, Marie and Richard along with other peasants going about their business.

Richard: G'morrow Jean. Marie. How d'ye fare?

Jean: Faring well, i'troth.

Marie: Aye, and the better.
For the next weeks fair.

Jean: Hoo! A wit!

Richard: Eh? What's the joke? Oh, I get it! Fare ... fair ...
How fares the harvest fair. That's a good'n.
Yer daughter's sharp as she's pretty friend Jean.
How's about you let me court 'er?

Jean: Oh no.
Ye know as well as I do she's betrothed
To Jaques the sausage maker.

Richard: That old sot!
I'faith, I'd make a prettier sausage
For Marie than that old miser.

Jean: Say you so!
It'd be a fine blood sausage no doubt!
But not one that'd fill her belly I'll own.

Richard: Ho, ho!

Jean: Not that way, you rogue! With vittles!
An' give 'er clothes and a roof o'er her head!

Marie: Aw, father, I think Richard is real nice.

Jean: Silence daughter! That's not your sense talkin'.
You've a pot that wants stirrin' that's all.
An' it'll get it, but not with this stick.
Call it hard, but none'll get thy maidenhead
Save ...

Child: Actors! Look! There's actors come to fair.

(Enter Actors in costume beating a drum)

Villagers: Actors! Look actors!

(Enter Suzanne)

Suzanne: Look husband! Do you see what's come to town?

Jean: Aye, I see 'em, and may the saints help us!
Marie, go fetch the priest.

Marie: But I want to ...

Jean: I'll have no backtalk girl, get a move on ...
Go on, git, and keep your wits about ye.

Suzanne: And your knees together!

Jean: Come on friends,
Let's put these poxy vagabonds to flight.

Villagers: Aye ... grumble ... grumble.

Giraud: My good, gentle and merry friends, pray attend,

Gaston: Get out of here you villains!

Villagers: Aye, get out!

Giraud: My friends ...

Villagers: Boo! Get out!

Arthur: *(Planted among the villagers)*
Let him speak!

Uc: Aye, let's hear what the rascal has to say.

Giraud: For the glory of our LORD JESUS CHRIST:
Shall we present upon the next week's fair
The most stupefying moral drama of the age.
A verytreble respectacle of faith,
Which will ingest the ungainly triumph
Of good over malignamimous sin!
Oh most fortunate souls, 'pon next week
Shalt thou see all the glories of heaven
Before thy very eyes!

Villagers: Ooooooh!

Giraud: And more friends,
The dank, dark dungeons of demonic hell
Shall be unveiled before thee, and therein
The horrid, writing torments of the damned.

Villagers: Ahhhh!

Giraud: Yes friends, a scene of all embarrassing flame
Filled with twisted, tortured, naked bodies
Being obscerenely defecated
By a horde of huge, ugly, nasty,
Smelly demons, wi' big, hairy, blank wings
An' horrible long, sharp, hairy teeth!

Villagers: Ooooh! Ahhhh!

Suzanne: Oh Jean, I'd like to see that!

Villagers: Yeah ... wow ... oh boy ... etc.

Jean: Silence friends!
Remember ye what our priest hath told us;
Not since Satan has this world seen liars
Like these actors. For they have neither land,
Nor livelihood, and their base wherewithal;
Their loot and lust, is gained through thieving,
Despoiling virgins, sneaking ...

Ariel: Not sneaking.

Giraud: My dear friends! Listen! Mayhap some players
Are as wicked as this fine fellow fears.
But not us! See yourselves our bulging packs,
Our fair and fat and guileless faces,
An know we are the players of the King!

Villagers: Ooooh!

Giraud: Favored by him with gifts beyond your dreams.

Elice: That's right, we're rich. Why should we steal from you?

Arthur: Right, who needs a ... chicken, when we bags and bags
Of hummingbirds stewed in pepper!

Villagers: Oooooohh!

Elice: And sugar!

Villagers: OOOOOH!!

Giraud: Here, we'll show you. Albert, break out the wine.

Albert: But Giraud, that's the King's VERY BEST WINE.

Villagers: Ooooh!

Giraud: Come on Albert, these are the King's subjects,
And I'll own they're good ones too. He'd share it.
You know him, he'd say, "Come you good fellows,
"Here's wine for loyal friends to drink my health,
"And the devil take your rank and station."

Villagers: Ooooh!

Albert: Yes Giraud, you're right, that's just what he'd do.
How could we do less? I'll break out the wine.

Villagers: Hurray! Long live the King! Long live the Players!

(Enter Father Marcel and Marie)

Marcel: Here, here now, what's this? Be off poxy knaves!

Richard: Awww, Father Marcel, they're alright.

Villagers: Yea!

Marcel: Holy mother of God. Imps of Satan!
You've seduced my flock!

Giraud: Now, now, good father.
You have got us all wrong.

Ariel: All wrong.

Giraud: We are
Really very holy sorts.

Ariel: Holy sorts.

Giraud: We serve the same great cause as thee.

Ariel: As thee.

Giraud: And we'd never, never lie.

Ariel: Never lie?

Marcel: Ha!

Girard: No really, we've devoted our lives
To humbly serving Jesus by presenting
Edifying moral spectacles
On religious subjects to the people.

Marcel: Dog! To speak of our Holy Mother Church,
And some ribald motley in the same breath ...
It's scandalous!

Giraud: Not at all, not at all.
Why, many times the Bishop of Paris
Has said to me, "Bless you Giraud, bless you,
"Your plays bring the gospel's teachings to life.
"Why, they're worth an army of crusaders
"To the faith."

Marcel: Really? The Bishop of Paris?
You know him?

Giraud: Know him?! Why he played the Christ
In the very play we're doing next week's fair.

Marcel: Bless me. Well, well, maybe I've been hasty ...

Giraud: You know, now that I think of it Father,
We need someone to play our sweet Jesus
In your great fair's performance, and, praise God,
You have the very air of unworldly
Holiness that this sacred part must have.

Marcel: Really?

Giraud: Yes! Ariel, don't you agree?

Ariel: Sure, he reeks of the church like an outhouse
Reeks of ...

Giraud: See! Please father, say you'll do it.

Ariel: Please.

Marcel: Well, I ... if the Bishop of Paris
Can do it, so can I!

Giraud: Hurrah! Good friends!
Attend! Your noble priest, Father Marcel,
Shall have a part in the next week's drama,
And as befits his most holy nature,
He shall be our dearest Lord, Jesus Christ.
If any other of you wish to follow him
And play a part in this holy pageant,
Pray come speak with me later this morning,
And you too might be raised above the throng
Playing the part of a hero or saint
Before cheering thousands of your fellows
In this great drama which the King has called
THE SUPREME SOMNAMBULATION OF THE AGE!

SCENE 3 – The Actor's tent. Giraud, Ariel and Jaques are on stage. Richard and Marie are waiting.

Jaques: But I'm the richest person in the village!
I must have a part!

Giraud: Oh I'm so sorry,
But we've promised it to Uc.

Jacques: Uc! That oaf?!
That worthless layabout shall have the part,
And I shall have nothing! Please dear fellow,
Reconsider, I'll be a laughing stock!

Giraud: I can't. I've promised.

Jaques: Please ... here, take this purse ...
For your holy work ...

Giraud: But I can't my good ...

Jaques: Here, take this ... and this ... and this as well.
But please, change your mind.

Giraud: How could I refuse
One whose faith is expressed so fervently?

Jaques: Oh thank you, thank you!

(Exit Jaques)

Ariel: Next!

Richard: By God's Nose, I can't match what he's got.

Ariel: There's no need, you've got other qualities ...
My, my, I think I've found a perfect part.
Come on lad, let's see if you will fit the hole ...
I mean the role.

Richard: Uh ...

(Ariel leading Richard exit)

Giraud: Ta, ta, Ariel.
Next

Marie: Hello.

Giraud: Hello, do you want a part?

Marie: Well, I ... I ... do you really know the King?

Giraud: Know the King! Why we two are just like that!

Marie: Oh my! And what's his palace like?

Giraud: His palace!
Well now, it's bigger than this whole village,
And all the tables and chairs and such like
Are made of gold inside and out.

Marie: Really?

Giraud: By the blood of martyrs, it's just so.
And the King sits there on his golden throne
Listening to the most beautiful music
With all great nobles bowing to him,
And bringing him costly delicacies,
And He'll take just a taste of 'em and say,
"Take it away and bring on the next one."
'Cos if he has more'n a finger full
Of each, he'd die of gluttony in a day.

Marie: Oh my! It's just as I'd imagined it!

Giraud: I rather thought so ... and there's something else,
Gathered round him, like stars in the heavens
Are the loveliest ladies of the realm ...
Save one, and dare I say it, that one you.

Marie: Oh go on. I'm just a peasant.

Giraud: Just so.
And there's the fount and wellspring of thy beauty.
To look upon the court is to see
The splendor of the sun infusing all
With life and love and joy and power ...
And the awe-struck stars swinging silently
Through the firmament ... and the silvered moon,
Gliding 'pon the wings of darkness with sere
And queenly grace. In short, a similitude
Of the very heavens there resides.
But looking always upwards misses half,
And eyes that fix themselves upon the vaults
Of the ether's gaudy efflorescence,
Oft miss that dearer beauty nearer them;
The robust loveliness of the new born spring,
Thrusting forth from the winter's frosty soil
With green and sinewed softness, or the brook,
Snow fed and sun warmed, rushing heedlessly
In the unfettered and unsubtle joy
Of the earth's new season of swift rebirth.
There's your beauty; the world and its wonder.
It speaks so of this teaming, breathing earth,
That t'would freeze the tongues of dry philosophers,
For, who beholds it knows the sense of awe
That held the heart of God and stayed His hand
And made Him cry in rapture cross the void;
"Behold the world and it is good!"

Marie: Golly.

Giraud: Fair maid, be merciful and generous
And display thy beauty to all the world,
That others may be lifted up as I
And taste of truth and sublime fulfillment!

Marie: Yes! Yes! What do you want me to do?

Giraud: Play a pure virgin, the sum of virtue.

Marie: Oh good! That's easy, I am a virgin.

Giraud: What's that?! Oh no! But then it cannot be!

Marie: No? Why not?

Girard: My dear. All our art and craft,
Our destiny and purpose as actors
Is to portray on stage what we are not.
Therefore, though I'm not a king, I'll play one,
And on the boards be sinner, sultan, saint,
Devil, demon, dastard, dame and bastard,
Everything save who, in truth, God made me.
For such is the way of the actor's craft;
We may be anyone except ourselves.
Thus, as I could never play an actor,
Being one, a virgin you cannot act,
If you're intact ...

Marie: Oh no, it sounded so nice.

Giraud: It was. The biggest part too.

Marie: Really? Ohhhhh.
Isn't there anything I can do
To get it?

Giraud: Ahhhh, perhaps there is my dear.

Marie: Well then, come and tell me all about it.

(They exit)

ACT II

SCENE 1 – A stage in front of the village church. Actors and peasants bustle about; it is the day of the fair and the play is about to begin. Once the plays are started, the four peasants in the audience should keep up a steady chatter; cheering the heroes, hissing the villains, calling out greetings to their friends in the cast when they appear, etc.

Albert: Alright, alright, come on everybody
 In the cast get over here. You can talk
 With your relatives later. We go on
 In five minutes.

Joseph: I forgot all my lines!

Lisette: You don't have any lines!

Joseph: Oh yea, I forgot.

Lisette: Peasants. Come on! Come on!

Ariel: Hi guys, check this out.

Albert: Hey nice, there must be ten gold pieces here.

Giraud: Give me that! Have you gone out of your minds?
 There's five thousand people out there watching.
 Why not just start yelling, "Hey, I'm the cutpurse!"?

Ariel: HEY, I'M THE glmpff ...

Marcel: Hello everyone, hello,
 Oh I'm so nervous, I hope it goes well,
 I hope I remember my lines, I hope ...
 Oh sweet Lord, there's an audience out there!

Albert: We'd noticed.

Marcel: Gleep, gleep, gleep ...

Giraud: Oh great.
 Look, Father Marcel.

Marcel: Who?

Giraud: You. You Father Marcel, me Giraud.

Marcel: Oh, oh yes.

Giraud: Look, go with Ariel here.
 She'll give you something to help calm you down.

Marcel: Yes, thank you, thank you, that's quite a good idea.
Here, it's on me ... why that's odd, where's my purse?

Ariel: Don't worry 'bout it Father, it's on us.

(Ariel and Father Marcel exit)

Giraud: Alright, everything set?

Albert: Looks like it.

Giraud: Let's go then.

Peasants: Yayyyyyy!

Arthur: Good gentles, pray attend me,
And thou shalt many wonders see.
To raise thy spirits and thy hearts,
Our actors have surveyed their parts.

Jean: Marie, yay Marie.

Uc: Where's Charles, come on Charles.

Elanor: Where's old Jaques?

Uc: Is he playing a donkey?

Villagers: Ha, ha, ha, ha.

Elanor: Aye, he plays Richard's little ass.

Villagers: Ha, ha, ha, ha.

Arthur: Please friends.
You'll see them soon, they're in the next play.
But first we have an interlude,
Wherein the devil and his brood,
Get their just desserts as God ordains
By pillaging our earthly pains.
So silence pray, attend this lay
That thee might 'scape its fate one day.
THE MILLER'S SOUL

SCENE 2 – The Miller’s House. The miller and his wife are on stage. He is on a bed.

Miller: Ohhhh! Ohhhh! God’s Dong, my bowels ache.
It feels like someone took a rake
And prong by bleedin’ prong jammed it
Up my old arse and twisted it
‘Till all my gut’s in disarray.
Ohhhh, I’m dyin’ wife.

Wife: So ye say
O’er and o’er ye great reekin’ turd.
For six months now that’s all I’ve heard.
In this as in all else miller,
Yer so much hot air.

Miller: God still her!
Here I am dyin’ and my wife
Don’t give a good fart for my life.

Wife: Oh say ye so husband, well here.

Miller: Ye poxy cunt, ye’ve burst me ear.

Wife: Shut up! Is this the thanks I get?
I gave a fart, now pay yer debt!
Give yer life, quit yappin’ and die!
C’mon ye old wretch! Die! Die! Die!

(Enter Priest)

Priest: Good morrow my children.

Wife: Father!

(Wife runs to Priest’s arms)

Miller: Father! A fine one y’are to her!
Bangin’ her like a randy mink.
Ruttin’ about in carnal stik.
While her husband lies a dyin’.

Wife: Oh shut up with all yer cryin’.

Miller: Priest, priest, quick come close, for I die.
Ha! I thought so! I hope you fry.
Yer beard’s full up of merkin lice.

Priest: Hold off miller. Just wait a trice ...
See, my short beard’s full of ‘em too.

Miller: Villain! When I get through with you ...

Priest: You'll do nothing puke face. You're done.
Soon you'll be cold and stiff; stone dead.

Wife: Marry, you'll be stiff in that bed
For the first time in twenty years.

Priest: Come pet, let's drink and make merry.
The old goat will not long tarry,
Then we shall have house, mill and all
And he the dust for wherewithal.

Miller: Dogs! Show the dyin' some respect!

Priest: I'faith, I'm standing quite erect.

Miller: Wife, hast thee not a single tear?

Wife: They've gone to keep me quim moist dear.

Miller: For shame to fuck where folks are fed!

Wife: Then die and let us use the bed.

Miller: Still priest, I'se the first man she had.

Priest: Aye, past the used part she's not bad.

Miller: Ohhhhh. I'm dyin' ... I'm dyin'.

Priest/Wife: Ohhh. We're fucking. We're fucking.

SCENE 3 – Hell. Berith is standing with a finger up his ass.

(Enter Demon)

Demon: Satan calls ye brother, hurry.

Berith: By all that's dark, round and furry,
What in hell could he want with me?

Demon: Yer's ain't the place to wonder, slug,
Just move yer ass, or that's yer mug.

Berith: Yessir, yessir, I'm on my way.

Satan: Aye, hurry up, there's me to pay.

Berith: What's yer pleasure my good master?

Demons: Arrrghh! Arghhh!

Demon: Shad'dap ya nit.

Satan: Grovel! Faster!

Berith: I'm sorry, what'd I do wrong?

Satan: I'm no good master, you pus dong.
I'm no good nothin', understand?

Berith: Yes rotten one, as you demand.

Satan: That's better, you're the imp Berith?

Berith: Aye sir, my form that name doth fit.

Satan: Well I've been going down the role
And you've not caught a single soul.
Of all my hordes, the only imp
Who's brought us naught, not e'en a pimp.

Berith: But sire dear, the pope still lives.

Satan: Silence! I'd like to know what gives?
Why you, with all eternity
Ain't brought a single soul to me?

Berith: Well, you sorta lose track of time,
You know how it is ...

Satan: Silence swine!
Get me a soul this very day,
Or for its crimes Berith will pay!

Berith: Sir, say no more, I'm on my way!
But one thing more go ... bad sir I pray.

Satan: Well, what is it?

Berith: Uh .. Er ... you see ...
How does the soul leave its body?

Satan: THROUGH THE BACK WAY! Now get thee gone!

Berith: Yessir, yessir, thy will be done.

SCENE 4 – The Miller’s House.

Miller: Oh God above, I’m going fast.

Wife: Why just in time, we’ve come at last.

Miller: Tart, could ye spare yer whoring priest
To read me the last rites at least.

Priest: No holy office could be done
By me with greater pleasure son.

Miller: To all my sins I have awoke.

Priest: Come on, ‘fess up, so you can croak.

Miller: ‘Pon others labor I’ve made gain
My mixing gravel with the grain.
I’ve doctored measures, fixed scales
And all men cheated without fail.
I’ve robbed a church, and truth to tell,
I’ve bugged my apprentice well.
When I was young I raped a nun,
But weren’t no crime, she thought it fun
I slandered many out of spite
And shat on altar late at night.
I stole church wine to drink me toasts,
Then pissed on consecrated hosts.
On worldly ways my hopes were pinned,
Forgive me Father, I have sinned.

Priest: Christ’s mercy cleanses thee my son.
He died to make thy sins undone.
Though had he known thee, he’d have said,
“Nail his cock to the cross instead.”
Gabbie, gabbie, you’re forgiven.
Now piss off! Die! For you’re shriven.

Miller: Oh, I forgot, there was this dog ...

Wife: Shut up and die you long limp log!

Miller: Oh that’s done it! I die! I die!

(Enter Berith)

Leave me in peace, the end draws night!

Priest: At last! God’s balls, I pray it’s true.

Wife: We'll mark your passing with a screw.

Miller: Ohhh. Ohh.

(Berith hides under the bed and opens his sack)

Fly soul. Thee the frame unfetters! AUGGHHH!

(Exit Berith)

SCENE 5 – Hell.

Berith: Oh look! Oh look! I've got a soul.
Bad Lord I have fulfilled thy goal.

Satan: Good work Berith. Thou has done well.
Thou art a worthy whelp of hell.
Here's your reward. First take my kiss ...
Now drink a gallon of my piss.

Berith: Thank 'ee master.

Satan: Now speak Berith,
Whose soul am I about to greet?

Berith: That of a miller, evil Lord.

Satan: A miller's soul, eh? By my word,
That's fitting grist for Satan's will,
Of torment it shall get its fill.

Satan/
Demons: Aughhh! Gasp ... choke ... cough.

Satan: Berith you cunt pus, how dare ye
Bring such a rotten soul to me?

Berith: I'm sorry master, I'm sorry.
I'll never do it more!

Satan: Truly,
Nor shall others of demon kind,
For with this law I do thee bind:
Let all the souls of miller's race
Seek refuge in the other place.
Let God find out for what they're fit,
They can't come here, 'cos they're just shit.

(Curtain)

ACT III

SCENE 1 – The Stage

Peasants: Yay! Yaaaay! Yaaaaaay!

Jean: Where's Marie?

Uc: Where's Richard?

Suzanne: Father Marcel!
Hey! We want to see our friends! Where are they?

Arthur: Patience my good friends, for you'll see them soon.
For the next event of the afternoon,
Is the greatest play of the century.
Now! THE PATHS OF VIRTUE AND OF FOLLY!

(Enter Virtue, Folly and Free Will)

Free Will: Attend good folk, behold these siblings two.
The brother, Folly, the sister, Virtue,
Who thus far on life's path have walked as one.
But now their ways on twained courses run,
'Tis time for I, Free Will, to be their guide
And the road they choose, will their fates decide.
Whose steps shall lead unto heaven's glory,
And whose to the pit, will be our story.

Virtue: Dear brother, see this parting of the way?
Which path shall we take now? What dost thou say?

Folly: Dear sister, let us turn unto the left.
Yon rightward road is of all ease bereft,
But steep and rocky and with thorns o'ergrown,
While to the left 'tis clear and smooth I'll own.

Virtue: Nay brother, nay, for I sense danger there,
Whilst from the right there flows a cleansing air.

Folly: Well then, go thee your way and I'll go mine.
There's no reason for me to break my spine.
But as you ... go ... Do just as you please
And I shall go where I can take my ease.

(They part)

Virtue: Ah, I am weary, for the way is hard.

(Enter Strength)

Strength: Do not falter friend, keep pressing upward.

Virtue: Who are you, oh helping hand?

Strength: I am Strength.
For good souls I'm a friend to any length.
For them I am a rod and staff of might
That they might toil onward to the light.

Virtue: Ah the light ... look! Above us, there it is!
Come, let us run to sooner reach this bliss.

(Enter Prudence)

Prudence: Walk, don't run, for you might fall.

Virtue: Who are you?

Prudence: Why I'm Lady Prudence, Mistress Virtue.
Who counsels all good souls to patient toil,
And restrains them from haste which doth embroil
Unwary fools in dangers unforeseen.

Virtue: I will take your advice, for it doth mean
That blind misstep shall not mar my journey.

Prudence/
Strength: Praise God. Such caution doth bode well for thee.

Virtue: Look my friends, at last we have reached the light.
Behold this graceful land now in our sight.

(Enter Justice and Modesty)

Justice: Welcome Mistress Virtue, 'tis meet you've reached
This happy realm by thy good soul beseeched.

Virtue: Thank thee. Who art thou and what is this land?

Justice: I am Lord Justice of the even hand.
Who helps good souls attain their just reward
By keeping them from judgement untoward
For they are the ones who merit mercy
From God when they are judged.

Modesty: I'm Modesty.
Who helps good souls to conquer artful pride.
And every worldly vanity deride.
I see ye do know well my blushing face,
'Tis no surprise to me you've found this place.
This is the garden of earthly delight,
In which only the good do have the right
To enter and dwell in peace.

Virtue: Bless me.
It's wonderful.

Prudence: 'Tis true. Now come swiftly,
To meet and greet our most beloved Queen.

(Enter Faith, Hope and Charity)

Virtue: She is the fairest one I've ever seen.

Hope: Aye, 'tis true. I am Hope, her handmaiden,
Who doth help good souls in those dark times when
Many worldly burdens do bear them down
To stay true to the quest for Heaven's Crown.

Faith: And her other handmaiden, Faith am I,
Who all good souls sustain when they try
To seek out in their hearts God's Will most high.
To heresy and doubt I give the lie.

Charity: And I am the Queen of earthly blessing.
Who leads good souls to their sins confessing,
And to with the poor share their worldly hoard
In the emulation of Christ our Lord.
Hearken Virtue, my name is Charity,
I bid thee welcome to this realm so free.

Virtue: I thank thee, Lady.

Charity: Come friends, let us play,
In innocent bliss 'til the judgement day.

Folly: God's blood. The more I follow on this road,
The easier it is to go.

Envy: That's good ...
At least for you, if no one else.

Folly: Who art thee?

Envy: I'm Lord Envy, and I'm worn out clean through.
Some people can just stride along I guess.
But I would rather ride, I must confess.

Folly: God's nose, so would I!

Envy: So! Why should we lack?
Let's cudgel some oafs and ride their backs.

(They force some passing peasants to carry them and go on. Anger enters, also mounted on a peasant and overtakes them.)

Anger: Faster ye damn slug!

Folly: Who art thee, good sir?

Anger: Lord Anger. Well, you fools seem quite content
To let your mounts just ramble on unspent.
I scorn your dawdling ye sons of bitches!
I shall hasten to the Land of Riches.

Folly: The Land of Riches, come now, spur them on.
Let's grab all we can before it's gone.

(They come to the Land of Riches, wherein are Gluttony, Sloth, Greed and Lust)

Gluttony: Welcome friends! Come and stuff yourselves like hogs.

Sloth: Nay! Come and sleep the day away like logs.

Envy: We have come for riches.

Folly: That's what we seek.

Greed: Well come then, let us steal them from the meek.
We shall grab up far more than our fair share
And gloat o'er those who hunger and despair.

Lust: Gloat, gloat, gloat, gloat.

Folly: Who art thee?

Lust: I'm ...

Gluttony: Lord Gluttony my friend.
The perfection of excess is my end.
I eat enough for three men and show it,
But damn, there's always more room to stow it.

Folly: Well spoke, and thee?

Lust: I'm ...

Sloth: My name is Lord Sloth.
I lay about ... why work? Another doth,
Let him keep me, I'm sleepy.

Folly: I agree!
And who are thee?

Lust: I'M ...

Greed: Ah, Lord Greed, that's me.
I'm vastly rich and worship worldly wealth.
I gather it by craft and theft and stealth.
And I'll ne'er leave off my extortion
'Till I've stolen every other's portion.

Folly: Now that's the kind of life for me! And thee?

Lust: I'm Lust, let's fuck.

Folly: That'd be just peachy.

(Enter Pride)

Pride: Well, it seems there's little left to teach ye.

Folly: And who are you?

Pride: Why friend, I am Pride, King
Of this, the Land of Riches. Firing
With my greatness all its many glories.
For which I'm famed in all songs and stories.

Folly: Well met sire.

Pride: Well met indeed my son.
What is your desire.

Lust: To get it on!

Folly: No ... well, that too ... but what I most wish for
Is greatness like yours, only even more.

All Sins: Ahhh!

(Enter Satan)

Satan: Well spoke young man, I am this land's true Lord.
And I would fain give thee thy just reward,
But first I must have something in return.

Folly: My soul, I know. Come, take it, let it burn.

Satan: Nay, not so fast, I'd that awhile ago,
You must give me more for thy dream to grow.

Folly: Name it! I'll give anything for my goal.

Satan: Well then, bring me your sister Virtue's soul.

Folly: 'Tis done! Your August wish is my command.
I shall swiftly bring what thou dost demand.
Come friends, aid me in my unholy quest,
To separate fair Virtue from the best.

(Satan exits offstage. Folly and the Sins cross stage left to the "Garden of Earthly Delight")

Virtue: Look friends, here is Folly my brother dear.

Folly: Greetings sister.

Virtue: Brother, what brings thee here
Among this fell and evil looking crew?

Folly: Why they are my friends, and we've come for you,
But come with us and all this shall be thine.

Greed: All of the wealth of field and forge and mine.

Sloth: A life of lolling ease without an end.

Envy: All that's better than others, little friend.

Anger: Swift vengeance on those who defy thy will.

Gluttony: Food that fills.

Lust: Lesbo thrills.

Pride: And pinnacles
Of Greatness and glory for thy person.

Prudence: Away, away.

Modesty: Oh how vile.

Justice: Evil ones
Begone!

Strength: Aye, get thee away.

Hope: Leave her be.

Faith: Dear Virtue shan't be yours.

Charity: God have mercy.

Virtue: Fear not friends, in my trials Jesus succors.

Anger: Shit, let's kill these prissy little fuckers.

Folly: Aye, for their craven words arouse my wrath.
But silence them and Virtue takes our path.

(The Sins fall upon the Virtues and slaughter them utterly.)

Charity: Remember dear Virtue, forgive them all,
For each one of them is dark Satan's thrall.

Virtue: I'll remember friend and repay with love,
For death hath thee not, but sweet God above.

Folly: Come sister, come with us. Now do relent.

Virtue: Nay dear brother, come with me and repent.

Pride: Mayhap the torture shall lay low her will,
Fore there's many submit to pain's sharp skill.

Folly: Aye, torment shall from her goodness part her.

(Pride and Anger strip Virtue and tie her to a stake)

Virtue: Praise God. I might die a holy martyr.

Greed: She's ready.

Folly: Give in, this is your last chance.

Virtue: Nay, all ye shall have is my defiance!

Folly: Well now, maybe if we ... RIP OUT YOUR EYES!

Virtue: Then still I'll sing God's praises to the skies!

Folly: But what if we should tear off both your arms!

Virtue: I'd laugh, for one of God's flock this shan't harm.

Lust: Well, shit.

Folly: Say I cut you open,
And inch by inch pull out your intestine.

Virtue: I'd say I loved thee as Jesus our Lord
Loved all of those who nailed Him to the board.
And saying so, with a most grateful sigh,
I shall turn to God and serenely die.

(She dies)

Folly: She's dead! I shan't be greatest in the world.

(Enter Jesus)

Gluttony: Look up there, from the skies lightning's hurled.

Folly: 'Tis Jesus!

Jesus: Tremble sinners, ye must pay.
Now sounds the thunder, 'tis judgement day.

Sinners: Mercy! Mercy!

Jesus: 'Tis justice ye deserve,
And since 'tis Satan ye have chose to serve,
I leave you to him, ye are his creatures.

(Enter Satan)

Satan: Aye, that's right, let fear distend thy features,
For in the pit lies punishment consign,
And thou cans't escape, thy souls are mine.
Come demons now, from every quarter fly,
And carry these sinners to hell anigh.

(Enter demons. The curtain is drawn aside revealing the Mouth of Hell.)

Satan: Seal up this one's lips and then beat him raw.
Cut him to pieces with a rusty saw.
Have this one frozen in a block of ice.
Give this one the dingiest cell ... with lice.
Jam this in and see that he gets his fill.
Whip this one e'er faster on the treadmill.
Set this one o'er ever burning faggots.
And let him be gnawed by maggots.
Thus all souls shall writhe in eternal wrath,
Who do heedlessly follow Folly's path.

(Exit Satan into the Mouth of Hell, which is drawn aside revealing Heaven)

Jesus: Come forward goodly souls, rise up anon.
Come all who bear the marks of martyrdom.
Come follow and ascend with God's sweet grace
To heaven that most high and hallowed place.
Where all saints and angels wait to greet thee.
And God the Father shall bless and seat thee.

God: Greetings my children, come and share my love.

Saints: Oh joy, bliss, rapture, this our God above.

God: Come sit here Prudence, Justice, Modesty,
Beside thee Hope, Faith, Strength and Charity.
Dear Virtue come ye close, sit at my knee,
For thou has been tried, and found most worthy.
All souls shall ponder what this tale has showed;
Eternal bliss doth lie on Virtue's road.

(Curtain)

Peasants: Ya! Yay! Yaaaay!

(While the peasants and, hopefully, the real audience are applauding, the traveling players will be taking their bows along with the rest of the cast, but also gathering up their belongings and their loot. When the applause dies down, the play continues.)

Giraud: Farewell my friend, we had best be going.

Marcel: So soon?

Giraud: Ah, there's other towns to lift up
And lead on the holy path of God's Will.

Marcel: I understand my dear old friend. Farewell.

(The actors begin to exit through the audience.)

We shall always remember thee ... always ...

Ariel: Aye! Especially nine months from now glmpf ...

(Exit All)

CURTAIN

A Note on the Plays

When the medieval drama is mentioned, which is seldom, most people come up with an image of plodding through Everyman in English Lit. 1Z, or of going to some “period” buff’s home to be tied to a chair for the Ancien Pro Musica Antiqua Consort’s dirgelike rendition of The Play of Daniel on the stereo.

To be quite frank, I had much the same idea before becoming involved in the SCA, even though I had a considerable background in the dramatic arts. It was only after I began writing plays and people began to ask me why I never did anything “period” that I began to delve into the world of medieval drama.

At first, I must confess, I was a bit let down by what I found. Everyman and, at least to my dirty little mind, monumentally dull English Passion plays were all I ran across in the initial stages of my researches. The only glimmer of hope I could find were references in several works to drama on the continent, especially France, which was “of course” more vulgar than its English contemporary. It occurred to me then, being occasionally somewhat dense, that perhaps my task was more complicated by the fact that most of the reference works I was using were written by English speaking scholars, and, for some odd reason, tended to focus almost exclusively on the English stage. Accordingly, I redoubled my efforts, this time concentrating specifically on finding material relating to medieval theatre on the continent, especially in France.

At last my labors were rewarded and I found material suitable for the kind of medieval drama I wanted to see, two examples of which are the models for this play.

The Miller’s Soul is taken from a farce or interlude presented in the French town of Seurre in 1496. I have written this version based on an outline of the plot. This I’ve followed faithfully, save for making a few cuts in the interests of brevity. For anyone who wonders how I was able to deduce my version’s obscenities from a mere synopsis, let me point out that the author of the work containing it consistently feels obligated to comment on the unbelievable coarseness of the language throughout the play. Now what does this mean? All things are relative, and my source was published in 1903, and it was possible that what seemed coarse to the author was relatively tame by our standards. Fortunately for my interpretation, I have a few other examples of French literature from the period, and these give me a pretty good idea of what is meant by “unbelievably coarse.” Based on these, I am of the opinion that the play is quite accurate and very much in keeping with that of the original.

The second play I used as a model was a morality, also French, from the same period. This is Bien Avise, Mal Avise (Wise and Unwise) which appears here as The Paths of Virtue and Folly. This play has been considerably reworked. The bare basics are the same; with Virtue (Wise) following the path of righteousness up to heaven and Folly (Unwise) following that of depravity in the other direction, but, within that framework, I have made some considerable alterations.

The most important revision has been in paring down the number and nature of the vices and virtues that the chief characters meet in their respective travels. I did this because, while meetings with like Contrition and Confession on the one hand and Blasphemy and Apostasy on the other may provide something of a grounding in the theologically correct path to salvation (or its opposite) during this period, their significance would be largely lost on an audience which is largely ignorant of church doctrine. In addition, the very number of these characters in the original exceeds my resources in terms of actors and actresses, and moreover, would have required lengthening the work to a degree I deemed unsuitable for SCA presentation. Therefore, I modified or replaced these characters until we are left with the seven deadly sins and the four cardinal virtues plus the three christian virtues. These were not only more familiar and comprehensible to the modern audience, but left me with a “mere” fourteen parts to fill.

My only other major revision has been to add Virtue’s martyrdom. Originally I had hoped to do a martyr play, but this proved impossible. While I found many descriptions of the climactic scenes where the Saint in question was gruesomely and gorily dispatched to his/her reward, I was unable to find a complete text or plot outline. Since I didn’t want to spin my own plot out of the thin air in this instance (I wanted to this work to be as completely documented as possible), I decided to make a major interpolation to the morality at hand. This is not to say that Martyrdom scenes such as the one in this work did not appear in the medieval drama, as they did and were quite popular, but that they did not generally appear in Morality Plays, rather serving as the climactic centerpiece

for an integral work on the life of a Saint. However, I thought medieval martyrdom scenes were pretty keen and I wanted to illustrate this particular aspect of medieval theatre, so I wrote one in, feeling that it would not violate the intent of the original play (after all, it actually helps Virtue to Heaven faster) and that it would provide some scope for the blood and gore so dear to medieval theatre goers.

As to the presentation, it is traditional, with the farce coming first, to be followed by the major religious piece. And, as for the staging ...

A Few Words on Staging A Medieval Play

This play is not staged as it would have been in the Middle Ages. If it were, it would have required sets on a considerably higher level of complexity and many, many months of preparation.

In France at this time, plays of this type were commonly presented outdoors on a series of stages which were erected around the periphery of a field, square, or market place. These stages were often linked, and as the play progressed, the actors moved from stage to stage, each of which contained a different set of scenery. Since it was the stage which was changed instead of the scenery, the sets had much more solidity and permanence than is common in our own day.

This solidity was the foundation on which the relatively sophisticated special effects of the period were built. For medieval audiences were just as fond of a spectacular effect as modern ones, and the plays of the time are full of such displays. Characters fly, disappear into the earth or rise up from the grave, the earth is split asunder, people vanish in a puff of smoke, lightning flashes, thunder roars, and hell appears belching flame and smoke. In addition, all manner of blood and gore is presented as graphically as possible. Babies are hacked to pieces, Saints burned and/or dismembered, Christ whipped and nailed to the cross, John the Baptist beheaded, and, of course, the damned sinners tormented in many terrifying and inventive ways.

These effects required a sort of medieval high tech which often took many months and all the services of a good many skilled craftsmen to prepare, and all of it for a single performance. Ahhh, but what a performance! It was no 2 ½ hour and an intermission presentation, but a spectacle lasting all day, sometimes several days and involving casts that could number over one hundred individuals who had to memorize up to 8,000 lines. And, since these epics were presented out of doors on festival days, the audiences ran into the thousands, as the populace from miles around came in to witness the great event.

Naturally, there were no armies of strolling players roving around the countryside equipped to produce one of these massive spectacles. Prior to the 15th century, as a matter of fact, I can find no records of professional actors in Western Europe at all. These plays were put on by the church, or by a consortium of craft guilds who had the funds, skills and manpower required for such a huge effort. The only professionals involved were usually the writer/director and a master mechanic in charge of designing the stages and special effects.

However, as time went on, and, one suspects, as audiences became more discriminating, professional actors began to make their appearance. Undoubtedly one of the reasons for this was that, given the effort and expense of producing one of these extravaganzas, it was horrible to contemplate the whole thing going down the tubes because of lousy acting.

The professionals who made their appearance in the late 15th century plays, the technical know how to stage them, and a core of reasonably talented people to handle the major roles. They would be hired by the towns or guilds and would produce the play using local labor to build the sets and local talent to fill the minor roles.

What sort of people these first professional actors were is open to question. I have been able to find no records on the subject, thus my portrayal of them as a set of roguish vagabonds may be doing a great disservice to a dedicated group of selfless and upright souls ... but I doubt it. It hardly requires a Sherlock Holmes to deduce that the people responsible for the obscene farces of the period were not exactly pillars of sanctity, or that the denunciations of the Puritans a century later of actors as gangs of thieves and whores were most likely not because of any radical or cataclysmic change in the nature of those who followed Thesbis. Most importantly, at least to my mind, is the wandering life in the Middle Ages. In our rootless age, it is rather difficult to imagine a world in which the average person might very well live out their life without going more than thirty miles from their birthplace.

Furthermore, coming from a society with secular values, it is almost impossible for us to imagine one permeated with a religious concept of place and rank in which the corporeal world was a mirror of the heavenly one and where one's station in life was ordained by God as an integral part of the Divine Order. Anyone who opted out of this structure on a voluntary basis would more likely than not be a restless and, shall we say, adventurous spirit, not easily overawed by the daunting prospect of living on nothing but their wits. Thus, I feel my portrayal of the professional actors is, if not thoroughly documented, all the same, pretty close to reality.

Some Comments on the Varieties of Medieval Drama And a Digression on Bare Ass and Naughty Words

Some people, on seeing this, might well ask if it is typical of medieval theatre.

To be frank, no, it is not, then again, neither is it atypical. In considering the question, we've got to remember that we have rather cavalierly selected about 1,000 years of history and lumped it under the heading "Middle Ages". Now any thousand years is bound to have a certain amount of variety, and these are no exception. As a matter of fact, the more one studies the period, the more differences in time and place within its hazy boundaries become apparent.

Thus, the stately religious pageant, the upright or not so upright morality, the obscene or scatological farce, the grisly dramas of martyrdom, the vast passion plays and even an occasional romance or historical piece all appear at one point or another, and not one of these forms was "typical" of the "Middle Ages" in the sense that it achieved a dominance which made the others exceptional.

Therefore, it would be just as much a mistake to say that all Medieval drama was coarse as this play as it would be to assume that everything was Everyman. However, I believe that the tendency to "coarseness", even in strictly religious pieces, should not be underestimated, especially on the continent after about 1300.

In the drama of this time, as indeed in much of the general literature, there is a genre of humor based on very direct references to: excrement, constipation, vomit, flatulence, sexual organs, impotence, adultery and perversion in a bewildering variety of forms. It was a type of bawdy humor that very largely eschewed euphemism and which our age would consider "filthy" in the crudest way. Indeed, coming from our censor-ridden society, we might well wonder what had become of all the stalwart moral watchdogs of society at the time.

Well, they were there alright, but they were by and large concerned about other things. The secular authorities were concerned above all with political orthodoxy, not "morality." The church, which was pervasive at the time, was the institution that guarded the state of men's souls and, while it was concerned to some extent with "morality" in the modern sense, it was far more concerned with a concept of morality of a sort which is largely unfathomable to the modern mind. Thus, most medieval denunciations of the theatre by the church are not concerned with someone saying "fuck" or with someone's appearance in the nude. Ah no, they focus on the danger that gullible peasants might be prone to take miracles lightly, or to misunderstand the Holy Mystery of Christ's Passion by seeing them represented on a stage. As far as the church was concerned, "damn it" was far "dirtier" than "fuck it". After all, saying the former was committing the sin for pride by arrogating God's right of final judgement, while the latter could be no more than a rather crude way of describing a couple's communion in the sacrament of marriage. The flesh was corrupt anyway and it would find a way to express its weakness, but the church was far more interested in sins that were a direct threat to the soul. Thus, there was a marked tolerance for much that we would consider obscene until the rise of the Puritans on a grand scale with their pathological reactions towards sex and the human form.

Similarly, in the matter of public nudity, there was a marked difference in the attitude of the moral authorities of the time. True enough, there are denunciations of individuals exposing untoward amounts of flesh. However, there is an important difference between these and those of, say, Jerry Falwell. We've got to remember that, in the Middle Ages, it was very difficult not to be confronted by nudity. The modern concept of privacy quite simply didn't exist, largely because the technological prerequisites to separate everyone into individual cubicles was lacking. Most people lived their entire lives in what was essentially a single room shared with a large extended family. Under these

circumstances, there was little of human anatomy, or, for that matter, the process of procreation which could escape anyone who wasn't born blind. Medieval people saw each other without clothes far more than modern and churchly denunciations of the show of flesh were not at all directed at this sort of casual nudity.

Rather, they were directed at the exposure of flesh whose intent was solely to arouse a sexual response. Admittedly, this is hard to grasp for many moderns. In our society, almost every display of flesh is explicitly intended to provoke this sort of response. We have been culturally conditioned to associate nudity with sex and there are few of us who can deal with it reasonably in any other context. In the Middle Ages, on the other hand, there were a number of contexts in which you might find yourself naked in front of other people, only a limited number of which were sexual. Thus it was possible in the year xxx² for a group of young women to be paraded through the streets of Paris stark naked without compromising anyone's modesty because their nudity was not "dirty" in the sense of being sexually related.

I would ask everyone in the audience watching this play to keep these considerations in mind. None of the situations in the work where there is any form of nudity has the remotest connection with sex and the response of a medieval audience would have been cognizant of the situational context and responded on that basis. Might I suggest that, if you are uncomfortable with the nudity herein, it is your problem and that the judgement you are making in response to mere bare flesh has about as much to do with a reasoned response as that of Pavlov's dog salivating at the sound of a bell.

² The year here was blank in Hirsch's copy of the folio ...

The Fabulous Furry Fealty Brothers

This play was written about certain political contretemps in the Kingdom of the West. Much of the humor is, therefore, kind of topical and will tend to lose something in the translation to other Kingdoms, without a lot of notes on the background of the events and the people involved.

For better or worse, I am not going to provide any of this background at this time. The whole business has died down, but is still fresh enough that any account I give of the tangled affair might well serve to pull the scabs off some pretty fresh wounds. Perhaps at a later date, when everyone has gone on to other things and is inclined to view the whole thing as an interesting and amusing bit of history, I will publish a set of notes giving topical references ... but not now.

Anyway the work was quite a success in performance, both because, if I do say so myself, it is pretty funny and because it had a certain scandalous titillation attached to the subject matter.

I think that, of all the plays in this book, this one is the least adaptable in its current form to present outside the Kingdom for which it was written. I would recommend to anyone outside the Kingdom of the West who is interested in doing this play, that they go ahead and insert topical references relevant to their own areas as I think that the basic premise: a group of “powerful” individuals trying to enforce their blueprint of the SCA on everyone else is a subject which can be adapted readily to just about any section of the organization.

The Fabulous Furry Fealty Brothers

or

Have a Nice D.E.A.

CAST:

Duke Phenobarbarous Fealty	Announcer
Earl Freiwillingen Funkline Fealty	Punk
Fat Flakie Fealty	Punkette
Fat Flakie's Cat	Lady Nookie
Duke Narc	Marshal
Lady Priscilla de la Snotte	Herald
Lady Griselda de la Flea	Calico Cat
Lord Humphrey von der Prig	Tom Cat
Lord Norbert de Fuzz	Roach 1
Sir Mudsling	Roach 2
Master Greentooth le Nurd	
Hans Katzenjammer	
Fritz Katzenjammer	
Populace	
Constables	

SCENE 1 – Crown Tourney, the area in front of the Fabulous Furry Fealty Brothers' pavilion.

Announcer: Hey HEY there all you furry fealty fans. Its time for the further fantastic adventures of those three musketeers of funky feudalism: The Fabulous Furry Fealty Brothers – Duke Phenobarbarous Fealty, Earl Freiwillingen Funkline Fealty, Fat Flakie Fealty, and featuring Fat Flakie's Cat – in today's episode: THE MAD MENACE OF THE MORAL MOTHERS!!

Funkline: Well, here we are at another tourney.

Pheno: Yep. Jeez, I am out of shape. Look, Funkline, why don't we sit this one out. I've been king too much anyway.

Funkline: Suits me. Sit back in the sun, watch the fighters, have a few beers and ...

Pheno: YEAH!!

Funkline: Hey, Fat Flakie!

Fat Flakie: Huh?

Funkline: Here's thirty-five bucks. Go out and score us some recreational substances from one of the many members of the chivalry selling them all over the field.

Fat Flakie: Uh, okay.

Funkline/

Pheno: ... AND DON'T GET BURNED THIS TIME!

Fat Flakie: Alright, alright. Jeeze, you'd think they could trust a guy. Humm. Let's see, ah, they look like they're on something. Hey there dudes, got some stash, I got some cash.

Punk: Huh?

Fat Flakie: Any "recreational substances"? I'm a man of means.

Punkette: What's he talking about?

Punk: I dunno. Speak English, ya dumb hippie!

Fat Flakie: Alas for today's youth! Mired in ignorance! Look you guys, I have here in my hand some money which I will give to you if you, in return, can produce for me some drugs.

Punkette: Wow! Thirty-five dollars! Just a minute hippie, we'll get some for you right away.

Fat Flakie: Ahhh, the generation gap bridged at last.

Punk: What'd you tell him that for? We don't have any hippie drugs.

Punkette: Look, all we've got to get high on is No-Doz and powdered sugar. With thirty-five bucks we can get something really heavy.

Punk: You mean Pepsi?

Punkette: And Twinkies!

Punk: Wow! What do we do?

Punkette: Look, crush up the No-Doz and mix it with the sugar, then, for a kicker, we'll add some of this Draino stuff we got for your mom.

Punk: Wait a minute, that might hurt the guy.

(They look at Fat Flakie)

Punk/

Punkette: Nahhhhhhhhhh.

Punkette: Here ya go hippie.

Flat Flakie: Alright! What is it?

Punk: Uhhh ...

Punkette: It's El Salvadorian Blue, man. It's "far out", y'knaow, a "stone groove", y'knaow, a "kozmic mutha", y'knaow.

Punk: Gosh, I didn't know you could speak hippie.

Punkette: Sure, my mom came from there.

Punk: Wow.

Fat Flakie: Hmmm. Looks okay you guys, but how about a little tryin' before buyin'?

Punk: Sure. Take a ... sniff? ... snot?

Punkette: Snort.

Punk: Yeah, take a snort.

Fat Flakie: AUGHHHHHOOOOOOKA! Not bad; I'll take it.

(The concoction has turned Flakie's nose blue)

Punkette: Just so happens that's exactly thirty-five bucks worth. Thanks. Bye.

Fat Flakie: Wow, this is sure a lot for thirty-five bucks. The guys'll really be proud of me this time ... I'll just take another little hit, they'll never know ...

(Enter Lady Flea and Lord Prig hooded and cloaked, with blue noses)

Fat Flakie: AUGHHHHHOOOOOOKA!

Flea: Ahooka! Really my brother, do you think it wise to go about thus unhooded in the regalia of the order?

Prig: Aye, and shouting the secret password for all to hear?

Fat Flakie: Huh?

Flea: No matter. The meeting will begin soon.

Prig: Aye, take my spare cloak and hurry, the grand master waxes wroth at tardy.

(All exit)

INTERLUDE – Enter Fat Flakie’s Cat.

Flakie’s Cat: I just love armor inspections. What a selection! Pot, Spangen, Bassinet, Salat. Let’s see, today we’ll put the prize behind door number three. Ahhh ... ook ... mph ... wish they could line the damn things with sand.

(Exit)

SCENE 2 – The pavilion of the Order of the Blue Nose.

Narc: Ahooka! Alright brothers and sisters, now just take off our hoods, that’s right, that’s right. Alright, I hereby call this meeting of the Order of the Blue Nose to order.

Mudsling: Bluenose! Oops, wrong order. Be right back ...

Narc: Never mind, never mind, it’s alright Sir Mudsling. Just, ah, don’t let it happen again, okay?

Mudsling: Oh no, Duke Narc ... I mean your exalted grand masterliness. It’ll never happen again, never, nevernevernevernevernever.

Narc: Okay. Let’s get down to business here. Let’s get on with it. Ahhhhh.

Mudsling: Sorry, sorrysorrysorrysorrysorry.

Narc: Alright, alright, let’s go. Sorry State of the Kingdom Report: Lady Snotte.

Snotte: Well, I think it’s just terrible. All these wild kids. They have no respect for anything you know. These loud parties lasting all night. God only knows what goes on in there, *(pause)* I’m never invited. Why can’t we go back to the good old days when everyone would do a pavane or two and go to sleep. I mean, you can have a good time without sex!

Narc: That’s right. The old Guard was famous for its chastity and high morals. Lord Prig.

Prig: In the Old Days, everyone had a proper persona from Northwestern Europe, but nowadays, well, it seems like your persona isn’t “in” unless it’s ... colored. Look around you, Japanese, Chinese, Arabs, humpf. I mean, what in the world did the Arabs have to do with the Middle Ages, anyway?

Narc: Well, that’s right. We didn’t need their oil then, did we? Lady Flea.

Flea: Prithee, what doth aileth this ye oldee kingdome. Hast not ye populace ye respect for what ith periode? Betimes one couldeth heareth ye converse in ye oldee englishee and avise ye oldee costume and alleth hadeth ye respecteth foreth periodeth stuffeth, butheth noweth iteth iseth alleth shiteth!

Narc: Well, you’re right. Gee, she sounds just like Chaucer, doesn’t she? Master Greentooth.

Greentooth: Artists work just as hard as fighters. We put as much time and effort into our work. God knows we contribute as much, if not more, than fighters. We’re just as good as they are, do you hear me, just as good. Then why don’t we get laid as much?? We gotta be royal peers, we just gotta be.

Narc: Well now, that's true. I'm sure that would solve all your problems. Lord Fuzz.

Fuzz: Ten-foah, ten-foah. Yeah, I know what yer tinkin'. Dat I'm just a dumb cop, right?

(All agree)

Yeah, well listen, if it weren't foah me an' a lotta othah dumb cops, weah would you be, huh? It's a jungle out deah, and dose people walkin' around, deah animals. All I'm askin' is dat dis kingdom let da constables take da gloves off an' do deah job.

Narc: Well, by jimminy, I bet we'd all feel a lot safer then. My lord ... I'm sorry, but I forgot your name.

Fat Flakie: Huh?

Narc: That's right, that's right, Lord Huh. Do you want to say anything?

Fat Flakie: Uh ... yeah, well ... y'know ... there's not enough dip chips.

Narc: Not enough dip chips. Well now, you know, I never thought of that before. Not enough ... ah. Sir Mudsling.

Mudsling: I forgot what I wanted to say. I'll pass to you Duke Narc.

Narc: Well now, I'd like to say a few words about drugs ...

Mudsling: DRUGS! That's what I wanted to talk about! Duke Narc and I sure agree on this one! We sure think that drugs are ...

Narc: Well, they're terrible ...

Mudsling: TERRIBLE! Just what I was about to say Duke Narc, old pal. They're all over the place and we're sick of it. Right, ol' buddy?

Narc: Well, yes.

Mudsling: Sick of it! It's disgusting. Everyone snorting steroids and shooting up "weed" ... even fighters ... like those horrible fabulous furry fealty brothers. Why, I bet they're even "tripping" on quaaludes when they fight, how else could they be better than me? It's terrible.

Narc: True, true. Ah, friends ...

All: What's the SCA coming to!?

Narc: Well, I guess that about wraps it up. Once again we've come to the conclusion that we live in degenerate times. Well now, if there is no further business, I guess we can adjourn.

Hans: Vait. Haf you efer thought, you know, apout doink zometink apout it?

Fritz: Yah, yah. Thinks done might pe to chanch thinks.

Prig: Do something?

Snotte: You mean actually do something to change things?

Hans: Yah.

Fritz: Yah.

Flea: What a novel concept.

Mudsling: I know! I'll write a letter!

All: Nooo! Pleeeeeease, not that!

Mudsling: Oh, alright.

Hans: Vait, zere iss anodder vay. You koult ze power take.

Fritz: Yah, yah. Duke Nark fery stronk ist.

Hans: Yah, unt ze Kinks vort iss, you know ... law.

Narc: Golly, you mean win the Crown and ...

Hans: Yah, zimply make oll bat thinks illekal.

Fritz: Yah, yah. Iss periot to do, look at Charles ze First ...

Hans: Chames ze Sekont ...

Fritz: Louis ze Sixteet.

Narc: Mmmm, well now, you know, that's not bad, that's not a bad idea at all. If we made, if we made all our ideas into laws, then people would have to clean up their acts.

Mudsling: The SCA would be saved!

Hans: Yah, iss true. It vould, you know, ze law pe. Oll zo easy, chust ze laws make unt, bim, no more vilt pardies und stuff.

Fritz: Oll perzonas the Aryan raze, I mean ze nordvestern european, vould have to pe.

Hans: Oll would pe periot olzo. Ze koztume, ze langvitch, ze tanse und arts, oll vould be rekvirert to pe **KORRECT!**

Fritz: Yah, or else ze ferry bik und powervul new Constopulary wich vould pe neeted vould come town ze iron fist mit!

Fuzz: Ten-foah, ten-foah. Dat's right, any a' dese punks get outta line an' de'll be sorry.

Flea: Oh joy! Why, verily, we couldeth setteth upeth an Un-Period Activities Committee.

Hans: Oh yez, iss fery gut itea, no?

Fritz: Yah, yah. Fery periot. Ze inquization ...

Hans: Yah, unt ardists vould, of kourze, get oll ze royal peeraches zey are zo deserfink of.

Fritz: Yah, unt olzo zer vould pe many tip chips.

Hans: Unt, of kourze, oll truks vould illekal pe.

Fritz: Yah, yah. Oll zo happy vould pe. Zuch togeddernezz!

Hans: Yah, oll kain much ze strenkth through choy, you know, for who koult unhappy pe venn oll ze same thoughts, ze same deets unt ze same VILL are sharink?

Fritz: YAH! Ein Folk! Ein Lant! Ein Fuherer!

Hans: Shhhh!

Snotte: Gosh!

Greentooth: It's so ... beautiful.

Fuzz: We'll show 'em. Ten-foah, ten-foah.

Narc: Well ... well ... okay, okay. We'll do it. I'll just go out there and win the crown and we'll, we'll, save the Kingdom from itself. My lords, I'd, I'd like to thank you, but, well, you have the advantage of me , I'm afraid I don't know your names.

Fritz: Ah yez, vell, zis iss because ve are from ...

Hans: Ze East.

Fritz: Yah, yah, ze east ve are from.

Hans: Ve haf chust, you know, mofet heer. Ve ze Katzenjammer brodders are. I am Hans, unt zis my brodder Fritz ist.

Narc: Well now, my lords Katzenjammer ... well, you can be sure that when I win the Crown, I'm not going to forget you. Okay, let's ahhh, let's adjourn the meeting and get ready for the lists ... there's a lot to do.

Fritz: Yah, yah, ve must ze koffin prepare for feutalism.

Hans: Shhhhh.

(All exit except Fat Flakie)

INTERLUDE – Enter Fat Flakie’s Cat

Flakie’s Cat: Boy, I’m bored. There’s nothing to do at these tourney things but stretch out in the sun. At least at home I can chase the roaches.

(Roach 2 looks out of picnic basket)

Roach 1: Well, what do you see?

Roach 2: It’s terrible commander! Sunlight, fresh air, and clean earth as far as the eye can see!

Roach 1: Oh no! Then our scouting mission is a failure! We will do nothing to add to the glorious empire of Roachdom.

Roach 2: Wait a minute Commander. The wind is changing. Do you smell what I smell?

Roach 1: Yes! Garbage! Why, there must be mountains of it!

Roach 2: Look! It’s coming from that tent over there.

Roach 1: Yes! Ah, there’s a sign over it ... let’s see .. Ahh. Westermark. Quick, get the pregnant females and follow me.

Roach 2: Yes Commander.

(Exit Roaches)

Flakie’s Cat: Why bother?

(Exit)

SCENE 3 – The Fealty Brothers’ pavilion. Phenobarbarous and Funkline are on stage. Fat Flakie enters.

Fat Flakie: Hey you guys!

Funkline: Well, it took you long enough! Gimme that! JESUS! This is Draino you jerk!

Pheno: Fat Flakie, you got burned again!

Fat Flakie: Wait a minute you guys. Listen to me! I just escaped from this meeting of something called the Order of the Blue Nose, an’ Duke Narc was there, an’ Master Greentooth, an’ Lady Flea, an Lord Fuzz, an’ ...

Funkline: Yeah, so what?

Pheno: All they do is bitch and moan.

Fat Flakie: Not any more! There were these new guys there, ahhh, Katzenheimer or something, and they convinced Duke Narc to win the crown and make everything illegal!

Pheno: Including drugs?

Fate Flakie: Including drugs ... we might get more dip chips though.

Pheno: OH MY GAWD!!!!

Funkline: Wait a minute, was that Hans and Fritz Katzenjammer?

Fat Flakie: Yeah, that was it!

Pheno: Ohmygodohmygodohmygodohmygodohmygodohmygodohmygodohmygodohmygod

Funkline: Those two guys are notorious agents of the HANSEATIC LEAGUE!

Fat Flakie: Not the Hanseatic League?

Funkline: Yes! This must be a deeply laid burgher plot to destroy the feudal structure of the kingdom.

Fat Flakie: What the fuck is the Hanseatic League?

Funkline: This is serious, we've got to do something. I know! Phenobarbarous!

Pheno: Ohmygod

Funkline: You're a duke, you gotta take out Duke Narc and save the kingdom!

Pheno: Oh man, not me! I haven't practiced in weeks. I'm totally out of shape. Narc'll take me apart.

Funkline: Out of shape, eh? Well, maybe we can fix that.

Pheno: Really?! With what?

Funkline: With lots of healthy exercise, that's what!

Pheno: Oh.

Funkline: What did you think? You know we don't do drugs ... on the field.

Pheno: Yeah.

Funkline: Awright then! Shape up boot! I wanna see fifty pushups, NOW! One, two, one, two, one, two, one, two.

Pheno: Urk.

Funkline: I think we need a little more motivation here.

Fat Flakie: I got it! I'll be right back.

Funkline: Awright! Now let's have about twenty laps around the tourney field!

Pheno: No way, I'm beat. I'm just too out of shape.

Funkline: C'mon Phenobarbarous, do you want to say that these bozos made the Knowne Worlde safe for Jerry Fallwell and Ronald Reagan because you were too lazy to fight?

Pheno: Welllllll ... look, Funkline, we could always join the Shriners ...

Fat Flakie: Hey Phenobarbarous ... I mean your Grace Phenobarbarous, I'd like you to meet a friend of mine: this is Lady Nookie.

Nookie: Gosh ... are you really a Duke?

Pheno: Well, yeah.

Nookie: Oooh. Flakie says you're going to win the crown today.

Pheno: Well ...

Nookie: Oooh. Would you fight for me?

Pheno: Well ...

Nookie: Oh please, ooh, you're like so strong and handsome, I just know you'll win.

Pheno: Well ...

Nookie: Oh please. Ooh. I just love men with chains.

Pheno: Well ...

Nookie: Ooh. Please. I like wouldn't be bored. I just love to talk stick.

Pheno: Well ...

Nookie: Ooh, ooh, please, I've wanted to be Queen all my life, all fifteen years of it.

Pheno: Oh my GOD!!! Yes! Yes! I'll win! I'll win! C'mon, a hundred laps around the field, I think I'm gonna need lots of stamina.

(Exit all)

INTERLUDE – enter Fat Flakie's Cat

Flakie's Cat: The Fealty Brothers are sure worried about these blue nose guys. I guess if Duke Narc wins things are going to get pretty tight around here. I just hope nobody finds out it was me that knocked up that cute little Calico ... she wasn't much past kitten ... meow.

(Calico pops out of litter box)

Calico: Hi there. You want to see the kids?

Flakie's Cat: The kids! You mean you had them in the cat box?

Calico: For sure, it's a real "kitty litter."

Flakie's Cat: Oh God! Spare me from SCA kitties and their bad puns.

Calico: Hee, hee, hee, hee, hee.

Flakie's Cat: Humpf. If she weren't my daughter, I wouldn't speak to her anymore.

(Exit)

SCENE 4 – The Eric. The fighters are just finishing final armor inspection and the lists are about to start.

Marshal: Okay, that's the last of them. Armor inspection's over, you can start the lists.

(Enter Lord Fuzz and Constables)

Fuzz: Just a minute heah, keeps ya shirt on. Ten-foah, ten-foah. Awright youse guys, lissen up! Befoah youse can fight, we gotta have drug inspection! Awright buddy, whip it out!

Pheno: Wait a minute, I haven't taken any drugs.

Fuzz: Yeah, an' my muddah's a virgin. C'mon bub, expose da hose.

Pheno: Hey! What about the word of honor of a member of the chivalry?!

Fuzz: Chivalry and honor don't cut it anymore, punk. Ten-foah, ten-foah.

Pheno: WHAT?!

Hans: Vait! Vait! Oll a mizdake iss!

Fritz: Yah, yah. Zo sorry, iss bik mizdake.

Hans: Dumbkof! Zis ve do after Duke Nark iss ze lizts vinnink.

Fuzz: Oh yeah. Okay creeps, yoah off da hook dis time, but watch ya steps ... I'll catch ya latah. Ten-foah, ten-foah.

Fritz: Phew! Zat a close call vas.

Hans: Yah. Ollmozt it vas blovink it.

Fritz: Yah, but zoon ve will be in charch.

Hans: Iss true. Vhen Duke Nark ze lizts vins, ve ze apzolute monarchy vill haf.

Fritz: Unt vhen oll trazes of ze feudalism kaput iss, zhen ve kan “safe” ze opprest piples.

Hans: Yah, yah. Ve shall gif zem democrazy unt ze burgher orter.

Fritz: Yah, zhen zey kan fote for ze rulers what gif zhem ze orters.

Hans/Fritz: Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha

Hans: Vait a minute. Look. Vun of ze fapulous furry fealty brodders iss ze finals reachink mit Duke Nark.

Fritz: Mein Gott! He iss lookink ferry gut.

Hans: Yah. Ve kannot ze vinnink him allow. Ve muzt make Duke Nark look efen bedder.

Hans: Yah, a few vites for ze reflex quvicknezz.

Hans: Unt quvaalutes for ze kalm het, unt kodine for ze aching muscles. Let’s go.

Fritz: Gut luck, Your Graze.

Narc: Well, I’m going to need it, you know Phenobarbarous is looking pretty good.

Hans: Ach mein fuhrer ... I mean your graze, iss terrible, you zound like ze kolt you are kommink town mit.

Narc: Yeah?

Fritz: Oh, yah, yah. Here, take zes kolt pills. Zey haf ze fitamines much of. Zey will make you feel much bedder.

Narc: Well that’s great, thanks, thanks a lot. *gulp* ** SPROING ** Well, GOLLY!! Those are darn good cold pills, I feel GREAT!

Hans: Yah, ze fitamines fery gut for you iss.

Narc: Well, here I go!

Hans/Fritz: Gut luck!

Greentooth: Get him, ol’ buddy.

Narc: Well now, don't worry, I'll just take the old sword here and put it smack into the old head and then, well then, by golly, we're gonna have a great reign!

Greentooth: Boy, he sure is enthusiastic.

Fritz: Yah, iss ze atrenalin.

Greentooth: Yeah, well, I just hope it's not that glass of wine he had awhile ago.

Hans: Vine?

Greentooth: Nah, couldn't be ... not one little glass of wine.

Fritz: He hat ze vine?

Marshal: Are you ready my lords?

Pheno: Ready.

Narc: Yahooo!

Hans/Fritz: Ohhhhhhh.

Marshal: Lay on!

(Duke Narc collapses in a pool of jelly.)

Herald: Victory to Duke Phenobarbarous.

Populace: Yay!

Pheno: Are you sure you want to take that, Narc?

Narc: Suure!

Pheno: You sure are chivalrous.

Narc: Yahooo!

Nookie: Here Phenobarbarous, let me help you out of your armor. Ooh. Ooh.

Prig: Rats! Duke Narc lost and with those Fabulous Furry Fealty Brothers in charge, things will be worse than ever.

Hans: Don't giff up yet, Lort Prik. Perhaps ve ze mindt of zis Phenobarbarous vill canch.

Prig: Humpf.

Fritz: What are you sayink? Zis Phenobarbarous vill nefer to us lizzen.

Hans: Maype, but I haf here ze Ibogaine zolution, unt ze syrinch, unt ze apfel ... unt ze plan.

Fritz: *(On his knees)* Boss! Ze plan! Ze plan!!

(Exit)

INTERLUDE – Enter Fat Flakie’s Cat.

Flakie’s Cat: Oh boy, Phenobarbarous won the crown and I’m the closest thing there is to a royal pet. Even if it is reflected glory, the girls love it.

(Enter girl cats)

Girl Cats: Mew, mew, mew.

Flakie’s Cat: Oh baby, oh baby. There’s nothing women like better than somebody close to the throne.

(An exceptionally well-hung tomcat walks by. All the Girl Cats follow him.)

Flakie’s Cat: We need royal peerages for pets.

(Exit)

SCENE 5 – The Royal Pavilion. Coronation is happening.

King: I crown you King Phenobarbarous.

Herald: Long live the King!

Populace: Long live the King!

Pheno: Thank you, thank you. Now then, some of you might have heard of some loose talk about a lot of changes in kingdom law, well ...

Hans: Vait, vait your machesty, do not zay anymore. Your voiss fery hoarse iss. Maype ze kolt you are kommink town mit. Here, zis apfel take unt ze doktor away keep.

Pheno: Thanks. What a nice old lady. Now then, as I was saying ... *GLEEK*

Nookie: Oooh, ooh, Phenobarbarous, you’re so stiff.

Fritz: *(From behind throne)*

Ahem, as I vas zayink vas ... ahem, forgiff me, I ze kolt seem to haf. Now zhen, as I sayink vas, zome of you might ze rumor haf hert apout ze chances in law ... vell, zey are all true! Now I gif you mein neuw reichkanzler - Lort Hans Katzenjammer, who ze neuw laws vill explain.

Fat Flakie: What?!

Flea: Oh goodie! They haveth shewed ye oldee majestee ye light!

Blue Noses: Yea!

Hans: Zank you, zank you. Iss gutt you are happy, yes? Beleiff me, efen happier you vill pe vhen ze many gut new laws you hear.

Fritz: Yah, yah, now to ze gut new laws lizzen.

Herald: Pray attend!

Hans: First, oll vill now pe, you know, periot. Oll kozdumes unt talk vill pe korrekt, like you know, ze mofie Ifanhoe, mit Elizabeth Taylor unt ze boombaboombaboom ... UNT zere vill pe no more of zis funny biznezz; no truks, no pooze ze minors fur, unt no zex, exzept after dark, for ze purposes of procreation ... mit ze man on top. Olzo, ze noizy pardies vill zeese unt ze curfew pe enforced. Unt, all perzonas of ze Aryan race vill pe. Unt, zere vill pe two new orters: vun a royal peerach ze ardists fur, vich vill pe ze Orter of ze Giltet Lilly kallink. Unt olzo ze Orter of ze Stool Pichen, vich iss fur oll zose vhat turn in ze lawpreakers to ze new, enlarched Constapo. Ah, unt lazt, zere vill now ze ten dollar zite fee pe, vich mit to buy tip chips vill be uset. Fitz, pass ze pyramit.

Funkline: Hold it! That's enough! Jesus, what a load of shit!

Hans: Zilence! Ze kink's vort is you know, law.

Fat Flakie: That's true. They've got us Funkline.

Funkline: Well, maybe they got Phenobarbarous, but they don't have me. Screw 'em! If the SCA is gonna be like they want it, I'm leaving!

Fritz: You kan't leaf! You must opey! You are a knight, unt svorn to ze kink opey by ze oad of fealty!

Funkline: Guess again, you stinking kraut, burgherite sumdog! I don't buy that absolutist bullshit. Like so many ignorant burghers you fail to understand that oaths of fealty are reciprocal. Therefore, at the time of enfeiffment, the terms are either made specifically or they become conditional on the basis of custom and usage at the time of the oath. Now then, the oath of fealty used in this kingdom, bing of the Bilbo Baggins bullshit variety, perforce falls into the latter category, meaning that both parties are bound to the customary usage at the time the oath is taken, and any violation of the aforesaid customary law by either party prejudicial to the rights, prerogatives and or privileges of the other renders all obligations entered into equally null and void. Ipso facto, by violating the conditions and circumstances under which my oath was sworn, the King has, in effect, released me from any obligation under the term of the aforesaid oath.

Fat Flakie: YEAH! ... What he said.

Hans: Ziss iss not ze feutal time! Ziss iss ze mittle aches as ve would haf liked it to haf peen.

Flat Flakie: What you mean "we", white eyes?

Funkline: Let's go Flakie. Oh yeah, anybody who wants to can come along, we're going to have a party at our place and talk about setting up a new SCA. This seems to have become the Society for Constipated Authoritarianism.

Snotte: Wait! We didn't want you to go.

Prig: Yeah, it wouldn't be any fun without you.

Greentooth: Hey, we just wanted you to do what we wanted you to do.

Funkline: Oh, that's all, huh?

Blue Noses: Yes.

Duke Narc: C'mon Funkline, we all share "the dream".

Funkline: Yeah, well, I guess. It's just that, as I remember it, it was a bigger dream. One that had a place for lots of different people and a real diversity of interests and ideas. Seems to me that what you're offering isn't "the dream" so much as a lock-step nightmare that only has a place for you and whoever wants to knuckle under. That's bullshit Narc, and you know it. Christ, you wouldn't be in this group if you were a conformist. What makes you think that anybody else here would be? We got this think here that the King's word is law. Well, I've been king, and I always that there was a lot of responsibility bound up in that concept ... the responsibility to use that "word" wisely, to make things better for the Kingdom, not to make it over in my own image. Well, I don't know what you guys did to Phenobarbarous, but you guys got your way ... it's just ... you broke the faith doin' it man. So long.

Snotte: Wait! Come back! We didn't mean it! It's their fault! They made us do it!

Narc: That's right. They drugged the King! That's the only reason he made all those laws ... awww, they're not valid at all.

Populace: Yayyyy!

Hans: Ve vere only followink ze orters!

Funkline: Okay you two, get outta here. Go back to Danzig where you belong and don't show your faces in this Kingdom again.

Fuzz: Dat's right, we're running you outta hea! Ten-foah, ten-foah.

Funkline: Ohhhh, fuck off.

Hans: Kurzes, foiled akain!

Fritz: Yah, yah ... 'yah', 'yah'. In zis kingdom, feutalizm too stronk iss.

Hans: Vhy don't ve try Atenfelt.

Fritz: Gut itea.

(Exit Hans and Fritz)

Funkline: Okay everybody, court's over. Everything is just the way it was before.

All: Yayyyyy! LONG LIVE THE KING!

Nookie: Ooh, ooh.

Funkline: God, he sure is out of it.

Fat Flakie: Stiff as a board.

Funkline: Totally zoned.

Fake Flakie: Completely wasted.

Funkline/

Flakie: We gotta get a hold of some of this shit!

CURTAIN

You Prayed For It

I am really proud of “You Prayed For It”. At the risk of blowing my own horn, I think that it was one of the most unique and entertaining diversions ever presented at a banquet.

Like many of my best ideas, seeds were sown in a creative ramble with my sister Baroness Anna Moonstar and bore fruit due to the unfailing talents of the Westermark Players ... so thanks, guys.

In form, it is a game show. Two diners at the banquet were chosen to be contestants. They are given questions on points of Church doctrine and allowed to ask for answers from two of the three guest theologians. They are then asked to say which of the answers is orthodox (in some cases both will be orthodox). Whoever has the fewest heretical answers wins.

As for the “guest theologians”, each is equipped with a sheet of answers to all six of the questions to be asked so that they may respond to all possible permutations of choice on the part of the contestants.

The rest should be pretty self-explanatory, so, without further ado, turn the page and stay tuned for the faithful’s favorite game show:

Yaaaooooo Prayed For It!!!!!!

You Prayed For It

Announcer: Hello everybody, and welcome to You Prayed For It, the gameshow that asks the musical question: “Are the ontological implications of Augustine’s refutation of Pelagius sufficient to adduce the error of the Waldensians, or are the observations of Bernard of Clairvaux required supplementation?” And now, here’s your host: Ignatius of LOYolaaaaaa!

Ignatius: Thank you. Hey there! Hey! Great to see ya! Heyyy! Thank you. Thank you.

Well, we’ve got a letter here from a Mrs. P. Ramirez of Cordova. She says, “I’m a good Christian woman and I go to church every Sunday. I thought you’d like to know that, recently, a local girl named Flora went to the local Moslem judges in our town and denounced that nasty Mohammed as “an adulterer, an imposter, and a villain”. They tried to get her to recant, saying that she could believe anything she wanted in private but that they could not just let her say things like that in a Mosque which is where they hold their courts. But she wouldn’t recant so they beheaded her and she died a martyr to the faith. Hallelujah!”

Heyyy! Allright! Let’s hear it for the little lady! I’ll bet she gave those Moslems something to think about! Y’know, it’s like the neo-Platonists used to say about Origen, “I may not agree with him, but he sure has balls!”³ Okay! Keep those cards and martyrs coming folks!

Now, without further ado, let’s get on with the show. Brother Benedict, who are our contestants?

Announcer: _____, come on down! _____ come on down!

Ignatius: Heyyy! Hi there. Are you ready to play You Prayed For It? Alright! You know our rules; we’ll ask each of you three questions on Church doctrine. You can ask two of our three guest panelists for an answer, then you choose which one is orthodox. Whoever has the most orthodox answers wins the game. Heyyy! Okay Benedict, let’s introduce our guest panelists for today.

Announcer: Well, Ignatius, first of all, here’s that pillar of theology and author of the runaway best seller Summae Theologica: THOMAS AQUINAS!!!!

Ignatius: Heyyy! Tom baby! Loved your refutation of Averroes. What’s your latest project?

Thomas: Well Ignatius, I’m working on a little something called Summa Contra Gentiles, which should really throw the pagan for a loop. I can’t say too much about it right now, but I’ll tell you this much, it’s gonna really Aristotelian.

Ignatius: Sounds fantastic. Benedict.

Announcer: Let’s welcome our next panelist. The Holy See’s favorite mystic, the lady who’s got an eternal lease on the Lord’s dream home; the Interior Castle, here she is: Teresa of Avila!

³ Flora was part of the so-called “zealot” movement; a group of young people who actively sought martyrdom in Moslem Spain by making highly inflammatory denunciations of Islam. She was killed in 851 A.D.

Origen was an Alexandrian Church Father who castrated himself in order to remove the temptations of lust.

Ignatius: Teresa, sweetheart, it's good to have you back on the show. You look positively ecstatic.

Teresa: Oh Ignatius, that's because the angel of the Lord came to me and just pierced my heart again and again with a bolt of divine love!

Ignatius: Hallelujah! Who needs the Big O when you've got the Big G! Right Teresa?

Teresa: Oh my, yes, Ignatius.

Ignatius: Alright! Benedict.

Announcer: Last, let's welcome that harlequin of theology, the black sheep of the Dominican Order: Meister Eckhart!

Ignatius: Meister, snookums, how's the boy?

Eckhart: Oh, waow. It's, like, mellow, right? It's like, God, y'knaow ... be cool ... be cool.

Ignatius: Right. Okay, it's time to play You Prayed For It.

(Ignatius reads out the six questions allowing the contestants to take their choice of guest theologians and keeping score on right and wrong answers. For Ignatius' information, the answers are as follows:

		<i>St. Teresa</i>	<i>St. Thomas</i>	<i>Meister Eckhart</i>
<i>Question:</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>Orthodox</i>	<i>Orthodox</i>	<i>Orthodox</i>
	<i>2</i>	<i>Orthodox</i>	<i>Orthodox</i>	<i>Orthodox</i>
	<i>3</i>	<i>Orthodox</i>	<i>Orthodox</i>	<i>Orthodox</i>
	<i>4</i>	<i>Orthodox</i>	<i>Orthodox</i>	<i>Orthodox</i>
	<i>5</i>	<i>Heretical</i>	<i>Orthodox</i>	<i>Heretical</i>
	<i>6</i>	<i>Orthodox</i>	<i>Orthodox</i>	<i>Heretical</i>

Question 1: What is the difference between transubstantiation and transubstitution? Which one is heretical and why?

Question 2: Explain the difference between faith and reason and why one is the superior instrument for the apprehension of God.

Question 3: What is the primary error of the Cathar heretics?

Question 4: Explain the mystery of Trinity.

Question 5: How many angels can dance on the head of a pin?

Question 6: Explain, briefly, and simply, the relationship between God, the Creator and man, the creature.

(After all questions have been asked, and all answers given (-- see the following pages for answers))

Ignatius: Heyyyy! Congradulations _____, you've just won YOU PRAYED FOR IT. Now here's Benedict to tell you about your fantastic prize package.

Benedict: Well, _____, you've just won a year's supply of suntan lotion, a "Fun in the Sand" playset, including pail, shovel, and molding forms illustrating the lives of the saints, a beach umbrella, a pair of sunglasses, and a mantle for your (lord's) helm. All of which you're going to need on your ALL EXPENSE PAID TRIP TO **THE HOLY LAND!!!!** That's right, you'll be whisked in a matter of months from Marseilles to Jaffa aboard the "Topo Gigio", the newest, most luxurious galley in the Venetian fleet. Once in the Holy Land, you'll be staying at the fabulous Kark des Chevaliers conveniently located in the heart of downtown Palestine. Last, to give you good luck on your voyage and vacation, you'll need this piece of the TRUE CROSS guaranteed by the Pope for an ETERNITY of Divine Beneficence.

Ignatius: HEYYYYY! Whaddaya say to that, huh? Isn't that great! Well, now, _____, you were a little too heretical to win YOU PRAYED FOR IT, but we don't want you to go away empty-handed, so here's Benedict to tell what we're going to give you.

Benedict: Well _____, since you weren't orthodox enough to win, we've got some real doubts about the safety of your immortal soul. So, to make sure that it's really saved, we're going to give you an all expense paid life in the DUNGEONS OF THE INQUISITION located in the heart of beautiful downtown Toledo. Here you'll be persuaded to cleanse yourself of your mortal sins by the latest and most up to date implements of torture technology. Once you've confessed and been shriven, you'll be turned over to the secular authorities for the celebration of your new spiritual purity at your very own AUTO DA FE! And all of this thanks to YOU PRAYED FOR IT!

Ignatius: Heyyy! Guards, take _____ away! Hey, don't take it to heart, that's the way the Eucharist crumbles. Well, that's it for today folks. Thanks again to our guest theologians, Thomas Aquinas, Teresa of Avila and Meister Eckhart, and thanks to our contestants, _____ and _____ and thanks to you for watching YOU PRAYED FOR IT!

The Answers for Teresa Avila

Question 1: I don't know about you, but whenever I take communion I feel so joyful that sometimes I think I'm just going to burst. To think that I am consuming and taking into my very essence the blessed Jesus is just too much for my poor wicked soul. Oh my! Well, this actual taking of the body and blood of Christ is transubstantiation. Transubstitution is a foolish notion that holds that the wine and host are not the real physical blood and body of our sweet Lord Jesus, but just some sort of symbol. Isn't that silly? I mean, how could one feel such utter rapture from mere symbols? Only the physical presence of the Lord could call up this bliss which is far above the wicked counterfeits of the mind and Satan. Those people who hold that it is mere symbol are just terrible, you know. Why, they are denying the very physical divinity of Christ. I think they will go to hell for it, don't you?

Question 2: Oh my. I'm only a woman and a very ignorant and humble one at that. I can't pretend to know anything about reason you know, it's not in our nature ... that's where the men just excel. But ... if I did know anything about it, I would have to say that it's just no good for understanding God. Why, I see men rushing about all the time explaining this and analyzing that and it's all very nice I'm sure, but when it comes to God, you know, they just fall flat. I mean, how can one's little worldly mind encompass and explain something as big and wonderful as our sweet Lord. You see, God is so great that He just can't be understood by the work of our minds or anything else we have for that matter. To really understand God we must approach Him through Himself. This is what faith is, the art of opening one's self to God through perfect submission to His Will and it is the only sure way to apprehend Him in all His Truth and Glory.

(If St. Thomas is chosen to answer this question (2), Teresa will say "Amen" when he is done.)

Question 3: Oh dear, I can hardly bring myself to speak about those terrible people! Do you know, they say that there are two gods ... now isn't that the silliest thing you ever heard? Why, anyone who has eyes and a good heart can see that there is only one God and that He is our own sweet Lord. But, my goodness, these Cathar people say that there are two and that one is good; the god of light and spirit and the other evil; the god of darkness and matter. Now, isn't that ridiculous? And do you know what else they say? They say that our true God is the god of evil! Why, it just makes my blood boil! I just don't know what to make of this kind of foolishness. Tsk, tsk, tsk. We should all pray that God will reveal His truth unto them and lead them back into the light of Mother Church.

(If St. Thomas or Eckhart answer question 3, Teresa will say "Amen")

The Answers for Teresa Avila

- Question 4: Praise God! Only he could be such a profound and wonderful mystery. The Trinity is God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Now, God the Father is the eternal and unmanifested essence of Divinity at all times quite perfect and uncreated. God the Son is the manifest and active Person of the Trinity and is surely very wonderful to us, for by His manifestations and perfect mercy we are able to apprehend God even in our low estate. For, you see, God the Father is great in the glory of His Holy Stillness that we would not even perceive Him were it not for the movement and action of God the Son. Now, God the Holy Spirit is the Love between God the Father and God the Son, which is so great and Divine that it is and must be another Person of the Trinity. As the Son is the manifestation by which we perceive God, the Holy Spirit is the means for this perception, for, God being Love, may only be perceived by Himself, that is, by perfect and unhesitating Love. Now, the most wonderful thing about the Trinity is that it is God, eternal and indivisible. For, these Three Persons have only One Essence and One Being who has been a single Holy Unity since before the beginning of time. Isn't it a marvel! But that's God for you. He's so unlike anyone else and quite able to do just anything!
- Question 5: Why, I should think that as many as wanted.
- Question 6: The relationship is Love, pure and simple Love. Now, since God is Love, the relationship on His side is easy. God loves us ... must love us ... because it is His nature and His will. We, for our part, must strive with all the poor means at our command to emulate His great and divine nature, for by so doing we are brought closer to Him, even into His presence as our Love becomes more perfect in submission to His Will. Oh that God should grant us grace and help us to become perfect in our love for him, for, believe me, the joy of being near Him and loving Him with all your heart is greater than any other joy that you can possibly think of.

The Answers for Thomas Aquinas

Question 1: The miracle of transubstantiation takes place during the sacrament of communion. There, the consecrated host and wine becomes the very body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, bringing the communicant into the new covenant proclaimed by His mercy and loving sacrifice for the salvation of all mankind. The foul and heretical doctrine of transubstitution holds that the presence of Christ in this sacrament is symbolic and essential rather than actual and physical. This is contradicted by both scriptures and the works of the Church Fathers and is a most infamous denial of Christ's divinity and the miraculous renewal of the covenant throughout eternity.

Question 2: Reason is the contemplation and interpretation of existence using the mind as its instrumentality. As such, it is highly useful in explaining the world around us and in explicating doctrine for those whose understanding is limited and who must therefore have God presented to them in a worldly framework. Faith is a truer instrument for the apprehension of God, as it is a transcendent means and God is transcendent of all worldly matters, including reason. Thus reason may be used to prove God exists to the satisfaction of the worldly mind, but only faith can demonstrate the truth of God which transcends all proofs. Faith is the superior instrument as reason is the working of man's mind upon God whereas faith is the working of God's Will in man.

(If St. Teresa answers, Thomas will say "Amen".)

Question 3: Their primary error is their belief in a polytheistic dualism derived from Manicheanism, a doctrine whose tenets were utterly refuted and defeated by the Church Fathers. Specifically, they believe that there is a god of light and a god of darkness. The god of light is supposedly pure spirit and uncorrupted by material or corporal contamination, while the god of darkness is ruler of the world and all things of corrupt matter. They identify the god of darkness with the Christian God because He made the world of matter and even descended into matter Himself in the form of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Thus does their monstrous error lead them into damnation and perdition.

(If St. Teresa answers, Thomas will say "Amen".)

The Answers for Thomas Aquinas

Question 4: The mystery of the Trinity is that God is One in Three and Three in One. That is, God has one essence and being while also having Three Persons; the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. These Persons are coexistent and coeternal and One in the Living God. God the Father is the eternal uncreated ultimate beyond all forms or sense, God the Son is the aspect of movement that animates all that is in beings and God the Holy Spirit is the bond of Love between them, which, because of their high and divine nature assumes Himself a coequal Personhood within the Trinity. Having understood the separate nature of each Person of the Trinity and that each is quite separate and distinct in His Personhood from the Others, we must also understand that God is One and in God there is no separation or distinction. This is what we mean by “One Essence”; that the Three Persons are the One True God, not part of God, but God Himself. None came before the Other or was created by the Other. Thus He is Three and Three is He. Praise be to His Name.

(If St. Teresa or Meister Eckhart answers, Thomas will say “Amen”.)

Question 5:

Thomas: What kind of angels?

Announcer: Um ... Thrones.

Thomas: Thrones would not dance on the head of a pin.

Announcer: Alright ... Seraphim.

Thomas: This is a difficult and weighty question, for the Seraphim are, as all angels are, created beings of pure spirit and a pin is a corporal and material object. Now, while it is true that angels may manifest themselves in terms that may be apprehended by the sensory apparatus of limited beings such as ourselves, as evidenced by the heavenly host which appeared to the shepherds at the time of the birth of the Savior, it is rather questionable as to whether they were there in any understandable physical and material sense. To dance on the head of a pin they would have to translate their forms in such a way so as to be able to stand and move on the same plane of reality as the pin; the physical and material plane as we call it. This would be in violation of their being as creatures of spirit and since angels are in all things obedient to the Will of God, they would not even contemplate such an action. Therefore, I would hold that, while the answer itself is based on false premises and that no angels could dance on the head of a pin because no angels would dance on the head of a pin.

The Answers for Thomas Aquinas

Question 6: God, being the eternal and unified Being, created man out of His Divine Love. Indeed, man is a concrete manifestation of that Love. God's relation to man is eternal and unchanging in that it is pure and continuous outpouring of love. Man's relation to God is like that of a lost child to its mother, a somewhat bewildered wanderer seeking always to return to the source of its creation and nourishment. Man seeks, and must seek to get as close to God as he may, and the road to this closeness is through faith and the acceptance of God's will as embodied in the Holy Mother Church. By having faith and observing faithfully the sacraments of the church, man is freed from the fetters of the world and sin and allowed into the very presence of God Himself, there to praise and glorify Him through ages eternal.

(If Meister Eckhart answers, Thomas will wait until he says: "Waow man, like everything is everything else ...". then burst in with:

Thomas: Why, that's heresy! Man is not God!

Eckhart: Oh, Aquinas, don't be so anal-retentive!

Thomas: Look, don't get uppity with *me* Eckhart, that's pantheism you're spouting.

Eckhart: Hey man, answer me this: Isn't the divine essence in each man?

Thomas: Well yes, but ...

Eckhart: Okay then ...

Thomas: Wait a minute, just because the spirit of God is the moving force in all creatures, doesn't that mean that they're the totality of divinity?

Eckhart: God is 'all or nothing' baby. Love, man ... Love.

Thomas: What are you talking about?

Eckhart: Lead with the heart, baby, not with the brain. Open up, man.

Thomas: ... Oh, waow ...

The Answers for Meister Eckhart

- Question 1: Okay man ... transubstantiation y'know, is like the physical presence of the Godhead in the sacramental wafer and wine during communion ... okay ... and, like, transubstitution is, like, saying this presence is only spiritual and symbolic. Oh man! Transubstitution is just ... like ... a crock man ... a supreme crock! 'Cause like, y'know, man, hey, it's just too Manichean man ... 'cause like ... y'know man, God is everywhere man ... like in every physical grubby thing ... you look ... and there's God ... oh waow ... anyway, man ... in the wine and host the whole thing gets really heavy man ... so like, you miss the man you got the sin of pride, you know ... putting yourself above the truth of God, okay ... it's just old Mr. Mind looking to stand alone again ... hey, give up on that trip dude.
- Question 2: Well, y'know man, reason is, like, thinking about stuff, y'know, and like, I mean, how are you going to get at God by thinking, y'know? I mean, all thoughts are abstractions, right? And 'cause there're abstractions they always miss reality ... sometimes by a little bit and sometimes by a lot. So like, man, God is real, right? I mean, He's really real. I mean, there's just nothin' man that's realier real than God. So like, when you reason, when you think about God, you're just gonna miss Him, y'know, 'cause an abstraction just dances around a really real thing ... maybe etches a vague kinda outline of it ... but never really goes to the heart of it. But faith, man, the submission of your will to Gods ... let's Him come straight into your heart, man, and then you just like ... grok the whole trip, y'know? So, like, man, on this question faith is where it's at.
- Question 3: Oh man ... those loonie-tunies. Wow man, like, they're on this weird trip where there's two gods, y'know and like, one of them is the good god of light and spirit and the other's the bad god of darkness and material things. And like, they think God, y'know, like GOD is the evil deity because He like, made the world and appeared in the flesh as Jesus Christ and they're like totally uptight about material things, y'know man ... too many hangups, y'know. It's like they don't know what they're doing, y'know, 'cause, like, God loves the world man. It says in the Bible that He loved it so much He came down as Jesus and, like, just jammed on it, y'know. Like, y'know what I think man, I think these Cathar guys are tuned into Lucifer man, y'know ... the "lightbringer" ... he was an archangel and is pure spirit, y'know, and he's been pissed off ever since man got the ruach adoai, right? These guys better watch out man ... Satan's a bummer, y'know.

(If St. Teresa answers, Eckhart will say "Amen")

The Answers for Meister Eckhart

Question 4: Okay man. We got one God, right? Right. But, hey, like man, He's a single God with Three Persons; the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Well, like, whoa, y'know ... how can there be one that's really three that's really one? Well, hey man, this is God, and He can do anything, dig? So, like, here's where the mystery's at, okay? God the Father is eternal and uncreated in stillness. Man, you could take everything out of Him and He'd never be diminished ... you could add everything to Him and He'd never be increased, He's just ... like ... GOD. Okay now, man ... God is and when God is, God is God the Son, man. God the Son acts and does and creates and is ... so, like, here's these two heavy dudes man, and what do they see man? Hey! Like, God, hey wow, God, y'know man? And man, they are jazzed, 'cause, like, God man, is a real loveable dude, right? So they just Love and that's the Holy Spirit, 'cause a Love as big as God's is God, right? Okay man, so like, those are the Persons of the Trinity ... but like, there's only one essence, only one God ... and, hey, it's not like some dude putting' on masks or one doing the other, y'know, it's really just that one God ... really Three in One and One in Three ... okay? Look, I know man. Whew! It's one heavy mystery.

Question 5: *(Pulls out a pin ...)* Let's see now ... ahh ... 348 ... no, 349 - Gabe, you little rascal ... 349 man ... hey, but there's still some room ... at least 349, man.

The Answers for Meister Eckhart

Question 6:

Eckhart: Waow man, it's Love, y'know. God can only Love us, 'cause He is Love man, and that's just the way He is. So our job is not to turn away from that Love, y'know. Hey, there's lots of ways to turn away man, but they all boil down to pride, y'know. The kind of pride that makes you go for an illusion that you think you want instead of God which is what you really want. So screw that shit man, and just love God with everything in you, 'cause if you do that you'll see Him in all His Glory everywhere you look ... everywhere man ...just love ... oh waow ... the eye with which I see God is the same eye with which God sees me ... oh God ... God ... God ... waow man, like everything is everything else ...

Thomas: Why, that's heresy! Man is not God!

Eckhart: Oh, Aquinas, don't be so anal-retentive!

Thomas: Look, don't get uppity with *me* Eckhart, that's pantheism you're spouting.

Eckhart: Hey man, answer me this: Isn't the divine essence in each man?

Thomas: Well yes, but ...

Eckhart: Okay then ...

Thomas: Wait a minute, just because the spirit of God is the moving force in all creatures, doesn't that mean that they're the totality of divinity?

Eckhart: God is 'all or nothing' baby. Love, man ... Love.

Thomas: What are you talking about?

Eckhart: Lead with the heart, baby, not with the brain. Open up, man.

Thomas: ... Oh, waow ...

Various Political Screeds

These are a few pieces knocked out to propagandize a few issues and events in which I had an interest.

The first of these is a mock communication from our beloved Board of Guidance (B.O.G.) Concerning non-armigerous royal peerages. It was written in response to an actual proposal to the BoD proposing that artists should be allowed to hold Counties, Dukedoms, or their equivalents as well as fighters. Although I occasionally make claims to being an artist myself, I was, and am, adamantly opposed to these sort of proposals. I can find no historical justification for them despite the faulty analogies sometimes dredged up by their proponents regarding princes of the church. Despite the impression I sometimes give, I am a bit of a period freak, and it seems to me that artists are blessed in the SCA simply by being allowed to achieve a status equal to knighthood. There were very good reasons why the royal peerage type goodies were limited to the fighting aristocracy in the middle ages, I mean, what would an Arts “King”, or Arts “Duke” do when the Mongols came over the hill? Throw poems at them?

Anyway, without going into my more lengthy arguments, which would be inappropriate to a mere introduction, I think that as far as non-fighting royal peerages go (unless, of course, we want to start up an institutional church), the only sort which would be both appropriate and historically justified are those which can be bought. I mean, there was many a medieval king who sold status for cash at need, and, since I gather from the recent doubling of SCA membership dues, that there is a similar need for those funds in our own organization, why not sell these peerages? Setting a fair price, say \$500 for a Countency and \$1,000 for a Dukedom would certainly bring us some much needed moola, and would have the added benefit of allowing the holders of such titles the knowledge that they had contributed something more to the organization than a corpus of vain and jealous whining.

Well, now that I’ve got that horror off my chest, I should say a few words about the other material. They are propaganda pieces written for two wars and their language is typical PPFUF cant. There are those who wonder why I use such obnoxious rhetoric on occasion. It is because it is both amusing and irritating, thus causing people to take notice of and attend small local events which they would normally skip were the call to arms as dull as it usually is in our Kingdom newsletter.

There is nothing of really special note in either set of propaganda save, and I’ve got to mention this, that in the stuff on the Golden Rivers Peasant Rebellion, I introduce those two “notorious agents of the Hanseatic League”, Hans and Fritz Katzenjammer, both of whom I resurrected later in the play “The Fabulous Furry Fealty Brothers.”

From the Board of Guidance

At the next meeting of the Board of Guidance, the following proposal will be considered. Anyone wishing to participate in the discussion of this matter should send a letter stating their views to the B.O.G. at least two weeks before its next regularly scheduled meeting.

In order to enhance the prestige of the tonsorial craft and to provide a means whereby members of the SCA may strive to achieve a Royal Peerage without having to be a fighter or a fighter's consort (or possibly, if the amendment to the Corpora is adopted, an artist or an artist's ego), the Corpora shall be changed to authorize the titles of Grand Barbette and Ostentatious Barbarella. If a Kingdom writes this title into its Kingdom Law, then the winner of the Kingdom Barber and Hair Dressing Competition would serve as Omnipotent Supreme Barber (or some alternative title, "Exalted Squid" has a nice ring to it, too) until the next competition. When the next winner is invested, the former Omnipotent Supreme Barber shall assume the title of Grand Barbette, which title shall be a Royal Peerage ranking equal to Counts and Countesses. Persons who have twice been Omnipotent Supreme Barber shall assume the title of Ostentatious Barbarella, which title shall have a ranking equal to Dukes and Duchesses.

At present, only those who are involved in the martial arts can get their hands on a Royal Peerage. For years, those members of the SCA who have devoted themselves to the tonsorial craft have borne their low status and lack of opportunity for aggrandizement with patience and humility. Now, however, certain devotees of the Arts and Sciences seem to be making their move for a piece of the action, which leads us the anguished cry, "If they can be Royal Peers, why can't we?"

It seems to us that there is certainly as much historical justification for the elevation of Barbers as there is for Artists. Indeed, we believe there is more. Throughout most of the Middle Ages, when artists were considered to be people whom it was amusing, and even important, to have about the keep (provided, of course, that everything of the remotest value was securely nailed to the floor and that every virgin within a hundred mile radius was safely locked in a chastity belt), barbers were considered to be an absolute necessity. Not only did they care for the hair, beard and scalp, but also filled the role of surgeon (largely because, while almost everyone in Medieval Europe had figured out how to start bleeding, only barbers, with, it is to be admitted, mixed results, had figured out how to stop it). Perhaps most importantly, they also functioned as inexhaustible founts of gossip and common wisdom for the edification of those they served. In fact, while most artists were still content to be rewarded with a square meal, a pallet of straw in the corner and all they could steal, the post of Barber to the King was already a position of great power and prestige for which great bribes were paid, and in which much influence was exerted.

In light of these irrefutable facts, we think it only fair that Royal Peerages be open to barbers. For those who hold that there is no precedent for the equivalency of martial and menial titles in the Order of Precedence, we would like to point out that in the kingdom of Croatia, in a triangle delineated by the villages of Strephrotic, Cheesowitz, and Spesmizl, on October 25, 973 A.D., between the hours of 4 and 10 pm, if the sun was hidden by clouds and fifteen spotted dogs were present and reciting Beowulf in pig latin, then, all Journeyman Plumbers held equivalency of a Countency and all Master Plumbers, the equivalency of a Dukedom. While some may not perceive how this fact bears any relevancy whatever to Barbers or to the issue at hand, we feel that it is highly important because, in some way, it must prove something.

Once established, the post of Omnipotent Supreme Barber would function as follows: He or she would preside over all tonsorial events in the Kingdom and, at Kingdom events, would stand by the left ear of the King, ready to meet any tonsorial emergency, be it haircut, shave, nose bleed, split ends, whatever. They would preside at the Barber's Champion Tourney where their successor is chosen and would invest the winner with the regalia of the office. Upon retirement, the Grand Barbette would be addressed as "Your Shaveliness", and the Ostentatious Barbarella as "Your Touseledness." In addition, Ostentatious Barbarellas would be allowed to wear a wreath of spit curls as a badge of their rank. The Omnipotent Supreme Barber may or may not have a consort, depending on whether or not they can bring themselves to share the power and glory of their office with any other living soul. If

a consort is taken, he or she shall bear the title “Razor Groupie”, and shall share in all titles and preferments granted to Omnipotent Supreme Barbers at their retirement.

Next month, the Page will print similar proposals which have come to the B.O.G. from Constables, Ferriers, Milners, Gamblers, Brewers, Sanitation Engineers, and Interior Decorators. If you belong to a guild or group that thinks it deserves the opportunity to attain a Royal Peerage, even though there is virtually no historical justification for it, please write the B.O.G. now ... the line at the trough is getting rather long.

Westermarck/Golden Rivers War

Foil the Plots of the Hanseatic League!

(Speech by Comrade Baron Catalin di Napoli, the Shining Sun of Feudalism, the Ever-Brilliant, Iron-Willed Commander, the Respected and Beloved Leader of the 780,000 Westermarck People to the 8th Congress of the All-Westermarck Union of Theologians, Scholastics and Obscuratists.)

Comrades! Greetings!

(Tumultuous applause)

Beloved Comrades of the All-Westermarck Union of Theologians, Scholastics and Obscuratists, I come before you today to speak of a dark and growing menace to our bounteous system of Progressive Feudalism, for, even as we bask here beneath the benign sun of the great Feudal Structure, the venomous adders of the Hanseatic League are spreading the rank poison of Burgherite-Combinationalism among the innocent and freedom-loving peasants of Golden Rivers.

(Angry demonstrations of indignation, cries of “Death to the Hanseatic League!” and “Down with Baltic Burgherite Machinationalism!”)

Yes, Comrades, at this very moment, the docile and peace-loving peasants of Golden Rivers are being turned into a ravening mob of mindless zombies by the depraved lies of this wormy parcel of thugs and hooligans. This rancid gang of scheming vultures seeks to turn the innocent and blameless peasantry of Golden Rivers into the unholy tool by which the great structure of Progressive Feudalism might be dismantled and put aside so that this noisome clique of obese leaches and all their vomitous toadies and henchmen can once more suck the blood of their toiling masses of the world without hindrance.

(Violent demonstrations of righteous wrath, cries of “Throttle the Mad Dogs of the Hanseatic League!” and “Exterminate the Burgherite Parasites!”)

One might think that this half-baked covey of roaches and weevils might think twice before attempting to spew their sewage-like brew of lies and slander upon the fair lands of this Kingdom. Surely the crushing defeat inflicted upon the Southern Shores Fascist Bandit Gang by the glorious forces of the Progressive Peoples Feudalist United Front might have been expected to give this murderous cabal of warmongering ruffians a moment's pause. But perhaps not. Perhaps these insolent and deranged rogues believe that the intrepid vigilance of the Progressive People's Feudalist United Front has been relaxed in the wake of this overwhelming triumph. Perhaps this fish-eyed troop of Baltic eel-eaters thinks that we have fallen asleep or that, once having made safe the glorious Feudal Structure of the Westermarck, we will be content to enjoy its blessings and give no thought to the machinations of Burgherite-Imperialism in other areas of the Kingdom. Well, if that is what these pustulate toads believe, then we would like to inform Messers the Hanseatic Burghers that they are disastrously mistaken.

(Thunderous applause)

For, like one man, the peerless legions of the Progressive Peoples Feudalist United Front arise to demolish the insidious plots of the Burgherite warmongers. Just as the benevolent hand of the father stays the attack of a mad dog upon his innocent child, so will the gleaming mailed gauntlet of the progressive workers, peasants and nobles be thrust into the slavering maw of the Hanseatic jackal! SO shall the poisoned fangs of this wild beast be broken into

so many blood-stained fragments and the innocent and child-like peasantry of Golden Rivers be saved from hideous and lingering torment at the hands of this viral slime!

(Thunderous applause, shaking the hall)

In doing this, it is not our intention to harm a single hair upon the head of any of the blameless, but sorely deluded peasants of Golden Rivers. We call upon them, our comrades in the great struggle for Progressive Feudalism, to repudiate their foul schemes for rebellion against their rightful overlords and to return to the true and righteous path of the Feudal Ideal. We beg this with all of our hearts and make it clear that we will use every means at our disposal to bring about a peaceful and honorable settlement to this matter.

(Prolonged stormy applause)

However! If the peasants of Golden Rivers persist in their perverted and unnatural delirium, if they insist upon continuing this course of acting as a crazed herd of verminous stalking-horses for the Burgherite slavemasters, if they continue to behave like so many deranged and frenzied lemmings intent on charging headlong into the abyss of Burgherite-Combinationalism, then the progressive workers, peasants and nobles of the West will unite to put an end to this madness by any means necessary, AND, if this means taking up arms against those who have, in their folly, become no more than a gaggle of painted and poxy tarts in service of the Hanseatic panderers, **SO BE IT!!!**

(Prolonged thunderous applause, shaking the hall)

For, we are not thinking only of ourselves or the peasants of Golden Rivers, we are thinking also of generations unborn, and of the high and noble task of preserving for them the glorious Feudal Structure! If, in doing so, it becomes necessary to smash this phony rebellion into so much dust, then we shall not hesitate for even one moment to do so! The gangrenous running-sore of Burgherite Combinationalism will be cauterized and burned clean by the flaming sword of Progressive Feudalism! We shall go forward!! And, we shall obliterate utterly any agents of the reactionary Hanseatic Burghers and any of their foul dupes and running-dogs who stand in our way!!!

Down With the Fake Rebellion in Golden Rivers!

Death to the Hanseatic League and All its Running Dogs!!

Long Live the Progressive Peoples Feudalist United Front!!!

(Prolonged thunderous applause and cheers, shaking the hall, shouts of “Long Live Comrade Baron Catalin di Napoli, the Shining Son of Feudalism, the Ever-Brilliant, Iron-Willed Commander, the Respected and Beloved Leader of the 780,000 Westermark People!”)

To The Progressive Workers, Peasants and Nobles of the West

Comrades!

It has come to the attention of the Progressive Peoples Feudalist United Front that a serious disruption of our glorious march towards the great Feudal Ideal is being plotted in the Province of Golden Rivers.

Specifically the peasants of that land are planning to revolt against the authority of the Seneschal on April 17th and 18th of A.S. XVI.

Now, as all peoples know, the PPFUF has always been most mindful of the fact that the long-suffering peasantry is more often than not completely justified in rebellion, as there are still large sections of the SCA where the nobility continues to be infected with the hideous, rotting plagues of Burgherite Combinationalism and Reactionary Renaissance-Authoritarianism. In all such cases, the might mailed fist of the PPFUF will stand foursquare behind the oppressed masses in their fight for true feudalism and justice. However in this case we were puzzled. Long association with the nobles and officers of Golden Rivers had shown them to be consistent and sterling exemplars of Progressive Feudalism. Still we did not at once deem the peasant's cause unjustified. Long and bitter experience has taught us that the putrid pus of Burgherite Imperialism and Mundane Power Seeking is too often concealed behind a mask of agreement with the glorious Feudal Ideal. Therefore we decided to send a commission of inquiry to both sides at March Crown and get to the bottom of this matter.

After a thorough and diligent investigation of the facts, the commission was unable to uncover even a single instance of oppression by the lawful authorities of Golden Rivers. Troubled and confused as to what possible reason the peasantry could have for rebellion in this case, the members of the commission approached Comrade Catalin di Napoli, the Shining Sun of Feudalism, the Ever-Brillion, Iron-Willed Commander, the Respected and Beloved Leader of the 780,000 Westermark People in the hope that he could illuminate the answer to this quandary.

How right they were to do so! How swiftly the keen and piercing mind of this paragon cut through the clouds of deceit that had made this weighty issue dark and impenetrable. Like a pure and cleansing shaft of light, his genius shown upon the problem and suddenly their eyes beheld a festering and putrescent pool of corruption, a diseased and maggot-ridden Trojan Horse of Burgherite Combinationalism in the very midst of this fair Kingdom. For the Comrade Baron said,

“Comrades of the Commission of Inquiry, if you have found no just cause for this rebellion, perhaps there is an unjust one. Perhaps the sinister Burgher slavemasters and oppressors and all their lickspittles and running dogs are trying to delude the peasantry of Golden Rivers into forsaking their feudal obligations. With false and odious promises ‘liberty’ and ‘equality’ they may be inciting these peasants to destroy the noble Feudal Structure, which is their true and mighty bulwark against the rapacious exploitation and degradation of Burgherism. If you look behind the scenes, I think you will find that the agents of the Hanseatic League have been spreading their foul lies and corrupt gold among the simple folk of Golden Rivers.”

How quickly were the Comrade Baron's words confirmed! For, like a vile and choking vapor of pestilence, the uxorious foulness of the Hanseatic Burghers has spread over the peasants of Golden Rivers. These goodly folk believe that they are fighting in a worthy cause whereas, in reality, they are so many catspaws for the despicable Burgherite warmongers. This caitiff band of thugs and hooligans must be laughing in their counting houses, counting houses filled with the very life blood of countless innocent and freedom-loving toilers. Yes, these insolent parasites must be laughing indeed, for now they perceive in their deluded, swine-like brains that they might turn the forces of Feudalism against each other, leaving this odious parcel of scabrous vultures to pick at the once proud carcass of Progressive Feudalism.

This shall not be!

Brother and Sister toilers of Golden Rivers! Turn back from your lunacy before it is too late! The very bedrock of Progressive Feudalism is the high and noble observance by all ranks, be they worker, peasants, or nobles of the lofty system of mutual rights and responsibilities that is the great Feudal Structure. In the immortal words of Comrade Baron di Napoli, "A place for every person and every person in their place." Those who would gnaw away at the vitals of this structure like do many verminous and distempered hyaena must, even though they may be merely deranged and deluded former comrades-in-arms, be smashed with many hammer-blows by the shining, mailed fist of the Progressive Peoples Feudalist United Front and all its glorious allies.

We call upon the freedom-loving workers, peasants and nobles of the Kingdom of the West to read the evidence of Hanseatic subversion in Golden Rivers and decide for themselves whether or not this is one of the gravest threats ever faced by progressive peoples of this Kingdom. We know that in your high and noble hearts there can only be one answer, and that on April 17th and 18th of A.S. XVI, you will be by our sides in Golden Rivers to show the peasants of Golden Rivers the error of their ways, by persuasion if possible, but if necessary by resort to cold steel and hot blood!

DOWN WITH THE FAKE REBELLION IN GOLDEN RIVERS!

DEATH TO THE HANSEATIC LEAGUE AND ALL ITS RUNNING DOGS!!

LONG LIVE THE PROGRESSIVE PEOPLES FEUDALIST UNITED FRONT!!!

The Plot Exposed!

The following is the transcript of a conversation between several peasants from Golden Rivers and two infamous agents of the Mad-Dog Hanseatic Clique, Hans and Fritz, the brothers Katzenjammer. Any progressive and peace-loving worker, peasant or noble who had doubts about the involvement of these Burgherite hyaenas in the phony Golden Rivers peasant rebellion many now lay these doubts to rest. The conversation was recorded and given to the Progressive Peoples Feudalist United Front by one stalwart peasant who refused to be duped by the lies of these swine and who fearlessly stood by the great Feudal Ideal!

Hans: Vell, my frients. Ve haf askt you here tonight zo zat ve might mit you tok apout ze oferthrow of your lawful oferlorts.

Fritz: Yah, yah. Poor peasants. On you zey make mit ze oppression.

Peasant 1: Hey, wait a minute, things seem pretty good to us. What do you guys think you're talking about? We've got a nice life and our feudal overlords are pretty good eggs.

Peasants: Yeah, that's right.

Hans: Oh my poor delutet friends. Dun't you zee zese piples haf from you ztolen ze great blessinks of intivital freedom unt liperty?

Fritz: Yah, yah. Oll of you are ze chains in. Only mit ze Burgher system vill you fint oll ze blessinks of jutztize unt equality.

Peasant 2: What? What do you mean?

Hans: Vell, vhat are you unter feutalism?

Peasant 1: Why, we're peasants.

Fritz: Unt vhat vill you ollvays be unter feutalism?

Peasant 3: Well, we'll always be peasants.

Hans: Zo! None of you vill efer ze chanss haf to pe ze het of a larch multi-national conglomerate.

Fritz: Yah, yah. Iss true. Poor peasants. Unter Burgherism oll piples ze chanss haf to become ze het of larch multi-national conglomerates.

Peasant 2: Gee, really?

Hans: Oh yeah. Eferybody ze equal chanss hass. Rich unt poor oll ze same haf ze chanss to het larch multi-national conglomerates.

Peasant 3: Wow! That's pretty good, huh?

Fritz: Yah, yah. When you are ze larch multi-national conglomerate het of, you much moneys haf zat you mit zem know not vhat to do.

Peasant 2: Gosh.

Hans: Yah, unto alzo you vill haf bik faktoiless ze place oll ofer, vich vill make mit much of ze zmoke unt larch noisess.

Peasant 3: Boy, that sounds keen.

Fritz: Yah, it iss, unt olzo you will haf demokrazy ze blessinks of.

Hans: Yah. Demokrazy fery gut iss.

Peasant 2: What's democracy?

Hans: Vell, unter feutalism, you haf not choiss to fote fur ze piples vhat leat you.

Fritz: Yah, yeah. But unter Burgherism, oll piples oll ze time are foting, foting, foting. Iss fery gut. Oll piples ollvays seeink are how much ze foting makink great improfments in zere life iss. Iss greatest blessink of equal rights for oll.

Peasant 3: Golly. You mean everybody's equal.

Hans: Yah, Eferyboty rich unt poor, black unt vwhite, man unt broat, oll ze same iss.

Fritz: Yah, yah. Oll ze hets of larch multi-national conglomerates haf ze equal fote mit ze odders.

Peasant 2: Wow.

Hans: Unt oll you haf to do iss ze feutalism oferthrow. Ve vill help you.

Fritz: Yah, yah. Ve ze golt vill gif you.

Peasants: Wow! Gold!

Hans: Iss ze little bit only. In Burgher lants, oll piples ze much gold haf.

Fritz: Yah, yah. Oll piples are fery rich unt always happy in Burgher lants.

Peasant 3: Gee guys, this is going to be great. Let's rebel!

Westermarck/Lions Gate War

(Most of the following was presented as a series of letters in The Page over several months ... Hirsch)

Published: April, AS XVII (1983)

Comrades,

We, the assembled progressive workers, peasants and nobles of the great Feudalist Barony of Lionsgate send fraternal greetings to our brothers and sisters to the south.

In order to enhance our common struggle for the great feudal ideal, we would like to propose to you that Comrade Baron Gerhard Kendall, the Polestar of Feudalism, the High and Shining Beacon of Justice for the Progressive Workers, Peasants and Nobles of the North, be elevated to joint and coequal leadership of the Progressive Peoples Feudalist United Front with his great friend and close comrade-in-arms Comrade Baron Catalin di Napoli. By combining the luminous brilliance of these two peerless fighters for Feudalism, surely a light will be created which illuminates the feudal path for all progressive workers, peasants and nobles of the Knowne World and which strikes terror in the dark hearts of the Burghers and all their lickspittles and running dogs.

FORWARD TO THE GLORIOUS FUTURE OF PROGRESSIVE FEUDALISM!

LONG LIVE THE PROGRESSIVE PEOPLES FEUDALIST UNITED FRONT!

LONG LIVE COMRADE BARON GERHARD KENDAL AND COMRADE BARON CATALIN DI NAPOLI LEADERS OF THE GREAT STRUGGLE!

Published: April, AS XVII (1983)

Comrades!

We, the High Council of the Progressive Peoples Feudalist United Front send comradely greetings to our Northern Brethren.

We read with some surprise that you propose the Comrade Gerhard Kendal, Baron Lionsgate, be made “joint and coequal leader” with Comrade Baron Catalin di Napoli, the Shining Sun of Feudalism, the Ever Brilliant, Iron-Willed Commander, the Respected and Beloved Leader of the 780, 000 Westermarck people of the Progressive Peoples Feudalist United Front.

Comrades!

Shall the moon outshine the sun?

Shall the pond outweigh the sea?

Shall the dog command the master?

Dear comrades of Lionsgate, give up this mad scheme! Turn your hearts to the wise and true leadership of Comrade Baron Catalin di Napoli who is the sole beacon of leadership for all progressive workers, peasants and nobles in the great struggle for feudalism.

FORWARD TO FEUDALISM!

LONG LIVE COMRADE BARON CATALIN DI NAPOLI, THE SHINING SUN OF FEUDALISM, THE EVER-BRILLIANT, IRON-WILLED COMMANDER, THE RESPECTED AND BELOVED LEADER OF THE 780,000 WESTERMARK PEOPLE!

LONG LIVE THE PPFUF!

Published: April, AS XVII (1983)

Comrades?

We have received the insolent and mean-spirited reply to our request that Comrade Baron Gerhard Kendal, the Polestar of Feudalism, the High and Shining Beacon of Justice for the Progressive Workers, Peasants and Nobles of the North, share in the leadership of the PPFUF. We can hardly bring ourselves to believe that such phrases as, “Shall the dog command the master?” could have been penned by our purported comrades-in-arms, for such sentiments are only worthy of the warped mind of a degenerate parcel of slaves to the rotten gibberings of Burgherite Combinationalism.

Perhaps the tiny clique of gangsters and warmongering sycophants surrounding that bloated Megalomaniacal buffoon Baron Catalin di Napoli have allowed their unbalanced delusions of omnipotence run away with their infantile, rat-like little minds.

If so, let us inform Messrs. “The High Council of the Progressive Peoples Feudalist United Front” that the struggle for feudalism can do without their doctrinaire personality cult, their nattering dogma, or their puerile so-called leadership.

Under the leadership of the unerring genius of Comrade Baron Gerhardt Kendall, the Polestar of Feudalism, the High and Shining Beacon of Justice for the Progressive Workers, Peasants and Nobles of the North, the progressive workers, peasants and nobles of the north shall march forward to the great feudal ideal, confident that all true fighters for feudalism will rally to the banner of Baron Lionsgate and forsake utterly the reactionary mob of oozing toads which currently passes itself off as the leadership of the PPFUF.

Published: May, AS XVIII (1983)

Comrades!

At last the febrile pack of demented splitters and wreckers surrounding the senile lunatic “Baron” Gerhard Kendall have been exposed to the light of day. Now all the Progressive Workers, Peasants and Nobles of the Knowne World can bear witness to this writhing sink of putrescent corruption which has previously masqueraded as progressive feudalism.

For many years rumors have circulated in the Progressive Feudalist movement about the dangerous abuses of the Kendallite ruling clique. Rumors of scribes whipped and beaten into producing scrolls for awards less than five years old, rumors of mothers forced to give their innocent daughters into the hairy, sweat stained paws of André (the Brute) Lessard. Until now we had not believed these rumors ...

But now! Now that the rotten Kendallite Clique has cut loose all moorings of sense and reason and, like a pack of witless rabid skunks, basely attacks those whom they should hold most in loving awe and high esteem. This would seem to be the last grisly step in the grisly degeneration of the corrupt Kendallite gang to a state of little better than baboons and hyenas!

All right thinking and progressive elements in the Knowne World must utterly reject the Kendallites unprincipled adventurist call for the virtual destruction of the PPFUF and turn instead to the task of demolishing the slaving ringworm of Kendallite comprador deviationism. With the invincible sword of the leadership of Comrade Baron Catalin di Napoli, the Shining Sun of Feudalism, the Ever-Brilliant, Iron-Willed Commander, the Respected and Beloved Leader of the 780,000 Westermark People, the Progressive Workers, Peasants and Nobles of the world shall march forward to feudalism over the prostrate and reeking carcasses of the Kendallite adventurist mob and all their ameboid minions.

Gerhardt von Nordflammen

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So, at last the distempered lunatics of the DiNapolite autocratic clique have called upon the diseased brain and poison pen of their pet slander monger: Gerhardt von Nordflimflam. This spineless weasel whose paltry talents are always available for the price of a drunken stupor and a chance to kiss the moldering fingertips of authority, has now turned his deluded venom to the task of creating a set of unspeakable falsehoods and slanders in the service of his imbecilic overlord Catiffslime DiCrapoli.

This putrid scrivener, whose degenerate whims have been the downfall of so many innocent and underage peasant lads and lasses, dared to write a series of incredible falsehoods concerning my family and myself. Surely the Progressive Workers, Peasants, and Nobles of the Knowne World will treat the vile ravings of this besotted lunatic with the contempt that they so richly deserve.

Surely the oppressed peasantry of Westermark, so abused and crushed down by the rotten DiNapoli-Nordflammen-Rexdevia nepotistic clique will soon tire of being reduced to the level of mere slaves and sex toys to this parcel of perverted jackals and will rise up as one to overthrow them and establish a just progressive feudal rule which recognizes the benevolent preeminence of Comrade Baron Gerhard Kendall, the Polestar of Feudalism, the High and Shining Beacon of Justice For the Progressive Workers, Peasants and Nobles of the North.

André Lessard

Published: May, AS XVIII (1983)

To the Kendallite splitters and Wreckers, especially that sleazeback André Lessard.

What do you tink you're talking about? I mean your letter, what's got alwl that bade burgherite slanders about Gearhart and what seys weer opprest pissants and stuf like that. You no what you dimhed! Yu don't know nuthin' thats what.

Weer not opprest nor nuthin' and wee get treated reel gud and like it hear in Westermark wich is mor than the pissant that are wippt and beat and made to eat dog shit in Lieonsgrate can say.

So wy don't yu just shut up huh?

Oh yeah ant whil Im tawking, yu gize hav got the dejenerate slym mold bums down her spreading rumeurs and stuf and wher do yu get off huh?

So hears tha answers to them and I hop yer bad click of burger kin chok off, huh?

1. Yes
2. No
3. So what if they ar fatso!
4. Its mor than even you big mouth can handl Kendall!

Pier Plowmon

Scty. All Westermark Union Oafs, Churls & Villeins.

I would like to contribute some small observations on the debate between Lionsgate and Westermark.

In Matthew 4:35, there is, I believe, a pertinent passage: "And lo, the Lord went out among the Baabaaberanerite and spake unto them saying, 'Be it known unto you that I am the Lord and as my works are made manifest in heaven, so are they made manifest upon the earth e'en unto the flavor of cherry cake which tastes not of cherries but which is e'en so tasty upon the palates of the children of Israel. And know moreover that I am the Lord and that I am with my father in heaven, and with the holy spirit and they with me and that their glory is mine and mine theirs and that the mind of man shall be confounded to sunder them. Now, if you'll just leave your prayer offerings and live gifts with Luke here.'"

I think that this passage is most illuminating of the controversy we are currently engaged in. For it treats upon implicitly and explicitly the mystery of the Trinity which is manifest in the heavenly and therefore the worldly order. It is an Exordium.

For if the divine person is a multiplicity in unity, so shall the worldly rule be placed in a unity of order directed by a multiplicity of persons and it would be a very anathema, a compendium of heresy to place the reins of worldly power in the hands of a single individual. If we are to truly conform to God's plan, Comrade Baron Catalin di Napoli must share power with Comrade Baron Gerhard Kendall (and perhaps, if we are to be quite correct, a third person ... perhaps Torgul Bahadur ... it is a matter requiring much reflection and earnest prayer). That Baron di Napoli refuses this course of action must demonstrate to all good souls that the leader of Westermarck and all his deluded followers are passing along a path hewn by Satan to lead the unwary into the pit.

All good souls must make it their holy task to cleanse the temple of Progressive Feudalism. Let us gird on the armor of the Lord and march forth in a holy crusade to crush the DiNapoliite heretics and their wicked pronouncements lest the Prince of Darkness overwhelm the people of the Knowne World.

Cardinal Woolhead
Primate of Lionsgate

The letter of Cardinal Woolhead to the populace of the Knowne World far from illuminating any of the matters currently at issue between Westermarck and Lionsgate casts a pall of schismatic heresy, concocted of the most degraded and demonic notions over the debate.

Oh woe that this should be! That our dear brother in Christ, Cardinal Woolhead, should stray so into error is but another demonstration of the extent to which the Beelzebub has ensnared the people of Lionsgate.

For, as it is written in Corinthians 14:73, "And the Lord came unto me and spake saying, 'Lo, verily, verily, listen up. I am the Lord, thy God. The Big Cheese. The Grand Tomato. The Heavy Zucchini. Where I am, there is room for no other for I am the big O and all others are as dust or corn starch in my glory. Pass this along Paul and tell these bums in Corinth to pay up in full or I'll ...'"

As anyone who has not the scales of Satan over his eyes can see, the Lord's will and rule is effected on earth in a uniting manifestation, not a multiple one. While it is true that the Lord's essence is a trinity in unity, it is the very pinnacle of heresy to suggest that His divine person is a diverse personhood in the sense that created beings are.

Therefore, it is obvious that the reflection and epitome of the divine order on earth lies in the rule of a unitary will embodied in a single individual of supreme wisdom and sanctity, an individual like the blessed Comrade Baron Catalin di Napoli, the Shining Sun of Feudalism, the Ever-Brilliant, the Iron-Willed Commander, the Respected and Beloved Leader of the 780,000 Westermarck People, Defender of the Faiths.

I appeal to Cardinal Woolhead and his followers in error to repent the heinous sins and transgressions against the will of our Most Merciful Lord and His church and beg for forgiveness from Him and His instrument upon earth, Comrade Baron Catalin di Napoli. Failing this, I call upon all of our brethren to consider Cardinal Woolhead and his flock to be excommunicate and in the grip of Satan and the Barony of Lionsgate a veritable Sodom and Gomorrah which must feel the cleansing scourge of God's wrath at the hands of a holy crusade by the PPFUF.

Cardinal Haelfwitte
Primate of Westermarck

Published: June, AS XVIII (1983)

TO: Baron Catalin di Napoli,

You Tedious Clown,

You are skinny. There is hair in your nose and earwax beneath your fingernails. Your member has a hole in it.

TO: Baron Gerhard Kendall,

You Specious Buffoon,

Your nose dribbles. You mate with barnyard fowl and your socks don't match.

TO: Baron Catalin di Napoli,

You Vapid Invertebrate,

You smell like cheese and your teeth are loose. You orally stimulate salmon.

TO: Baron Gerhard Kendall,

You Cretinous Placebo,

Your wife has dark matter between her toes. Your head is too small for your ears. Your son wears codpiece earmuffs. Your daughter sniffs ants. Your momma ...

TO: Baron Catalin di Napoli,

My Mama! What you say about my Mama!?

Your Mama!

TO: Baron Gerhard Kendall,

Oh yeah!? Well, I'll meet cha out back at Cour-deValle with all your guys on July 4th. Okay?

TO: Baron Catalin di Napoli,

OKAY!!

An Answer to the Lions Gate War Sonnet

Oh the muse must live in Lion's Gate,
The proofs her poet's bold invention.
Elsewhere minstrels are more temperate,
Hold to the ancient form's intention.
But, witness the boldness of this northern bard,
Who's made a sonnet to the fell arts of Mars,
Put in Cupid in armor, so in like regard,
Lacemakers might pick out their work with hammers.
But here in the Westermark we're too damned shy
To make chargers with asses and horses.
On matched purposes and form we still rely,
Guiraut sings war, Guiraut makes sirventes.

My Lord! I could write a wedding dirge,
Or fashion you fine funeral jigs,
But wait, I must needs abate my urge,
Stick to the point and take no more digs.
For war draws nigh and that must be my subject
'Tis better so, for our northern comrades know
Sticks much better than poems. Now don't object
I ought to know, my Lady will always go
For a proper stick over proper verse,
And she's from up there, so take it for fact;
That if for rhyme you could do little worse,
In their martial virtues, nothing's lacked.

For their Baron is a wise old sot,
Much like ours, ready to stand a round.
"It's on the King!", he'll cry, "Have a pot!
"What matter the tax is short a pound?"
But though he's a rascal, Ares might be green
With envy for his warlike wit and power.
His serried liegemen are like a rainbow seen
When their bright hued banners in blue skies tower,
Underlined by a sharp drawn line of white ...
Right at the waist (they've got a lot of knights).
Aye their true art is this display of might,
Rank on fierce rank of battle's acolytes.

A pity they took on Westermarck,
For all their prowess with other foes,
A sponge might sooner vanquish a shark
Than their troops ours when it comes to blows.
In the press we'll knock that paint-pot panoply
Hither and yon, scatter and splatter their arms
All over the field, dead or on bended knee ...
For there's nothing that Westermarck heart's so warms
As swords stained crimson with the foeman's gore
As the bitter-bright clash of wills and steel,
And triumph death while the standards soar
O'er the proud Lion Baron brought to heel.

There's no music sweeter to our ears
Than the roar and din of fierce fought fight.
And there's nothing that the heart so cheers
As does riding down a foe in flight.
And friends, what would touch the well-springs of laughter
And bring forth a silvered stream of pure delight,
But a well-aimed blow, a split helm and after,
The dying shriek of a worthy northern knight?
And what spring field strewn o'er with fresh blossom
Stirs us like one sprouting slaughtered foeman?
Scarlet buds opened where the pike toss 'em,
Aye, that's what Westermarck hearts will gladden.

As in war we will tame the lion,
Make it lick our hands like a lapdog,
Still those that have no chosen to die on
The field where their stream of hope did clog
Congeal and clot in a welter of black blood.
These we shall treat with honor due their courage
And not grind their vanquished muzzles in the mud.
For we disdain to noble foes disparage,
God knows they're scarce enough to find and fight.
While of the bad there are as many now
As the sky has stars, or Atenveldt knights.
To keep high foes, we must high conduct vow.

And that's how it shall be, Guiraut avers.
Furor Westermarkus shall make them quail,
And after, mercy all ill-will disperse.
These are my words, our deeds will make them pale.

The Poems

These fall into two categories: first, poetry done in the style of the troubadours and second, some songs.

The troubadour style of poetry represents my attempt to transmit some of the flavor of these works in the English language, and also to express some of the sentiments at the mushy core of my being. Whether I've succeeded or not is open to question. English is not the most suitable language in the world for rhymed verse, and I am far from being the most talented poet who ever lived. Maybe I should say a bit more about the problems inherent in the language in case anyone wants to repeat my experiments.

The chief frustration I ran across was the simple fact that most verbs in the English language seem to conjugate with no uniformity. This is important to bear in mind as a very large percentage of the rhymes in Provencal poetry occur as standard conjugations of verbs at the end of the line. Any attempt to replicate this in English is impossible and efforts to encapsulate poetic images within single lines of rhymed verse presents vast difficulties in terms of warping the natural rhythm of English into something that is, quite frankly, stilted and artificial. Ah well, whether I've succeeded in any way, shape, or form is up to the individual reader.

In any case, these poems were neat to write, and, successful or not a useful exercise in disciplined writing uncommon in these days of free verse. They also allowed me to play around with devices like variable rhyme schemes, internal rhymes, recurring phrases that subtly shift meaning on each repetition and a host of other devices that the troubadours loved to use in their intricate and subtle forms.

As to the forms themselves, I have used only a few of those available to the troubadours and I think that I should give the reader unfamiliar with them some brief descriptions of them:

Canso – A love song, usually addressed directly or indirectly to the woman (or man) who is the object of one's passion.

Sirventes – A song on war, politics, social questions, etc.

Pastourella – A song about an encounter between a simple and virtuous woman of the people with a lecherous member of the upper classes.

Vanto – A comic song boasting of the singer's talents, attainments and status in grossly exaggerated terms.

Partimen – A debate between more than two people (as opposed to the Tenso, or dialogue) on a question of love, politics, courtesy, whatever.

Vers – Someone may be able to come up with a better definition, but as far as I can see, a Vers is simply a song that doesn't really fit any other category.

There are three other songs in this section: "My Awards Go Jingle, Jangle, Jingle", "Hail Kingdom of the West", and "PPFUF Forever". They are all just bits of nonsense on the current middle ages that I've knocked out from time to time.

I don't really think they need much comment save that "My Awards Go Jingle, Jangle, Jingle" is sung to the tune of "My Spurs Go Jingle, Jangle, Jingle", "Hail Kingdom of the West" is sung to the tune of "My Country 'Tis of Thee", and "PPFUF Forever" is sung to the tune of "Battle Hymn of the Republic".

And, oh yes, "Hail Kingdom of the West" was written before Calontir achieved Kingdom status, so I apologize for leaving it out of the song, although I am sure that it harbors the same feelings of worshipful awe towards our great senior kingdom as to all other lesser realms in the Knowne World.

In Her Eyes (Canso)

In her eyes; there's white light, blue flame, darkness.
And I ... I think ... following a glimmer
Deep, deeper, in the black center, lightless,
Sightless and unseeing, still I seek her ...
Ahh, and find her, for now, nothing matters
But the heart. I see, breath, tell, all of it
Through that. One Point, one mix, my love and hers,
An organ, not us but the way we fit.

Come friends, poor wine; make the drunkard drunker.
Give me the red sweetness until I fall
On cushions of darkness and do not stir
'Till the light fails and the light masters all,
And death dies and my eyes are washed open
With wine, warm and fresh drawn from a rosebud.
With wine, warm, the grape; a pearl. Friend, listen!
With Love's wine the senseless is understood.

Hear me! There comes a time when one can taste sight!
Come, drink the fire that burns behind the eyes;
Thine eyes beloved; twin pole stars of the night.
I shudder and my soul within me cries:
"Beloved! Truth!" It is in me through you,
I perceive it by you, all I am, aye,
And all that I was and might be are due
To this: You live and breath and draw me night.

And our lips touch and I drink deep ... oh see!
'Tis a thousand times and each one is new.
Each moment is a fresh eternity,
And all forever; a heartbeat in you ...
And I; I am your fool and sot and slave ...
In a place above Kings. Set high. Without peer,
One foot in the ruins, the next is in the grave,
And my heart fast in yours. In Love there's no fear.

Guiraut prays you listen well,
For nothing maybe, what the hell.
He sings the love who's at his core
And all he says will say no more.

My Hair's Greasy (Vers)

My hair's greasy, sticks out every which way,
I'd better wash it.
My mind lazy, stuck fast in ruts I'd say,
I'd better cosh it.
Kick it.
Stick it.
Because it holds my heart at bay.

Say now, listen, I had this teacher see
I shan't forget him
Made words ... glisten ... techniques and artistry ..
I don't regret him.
Taught me,
Caught me.
With afterthought, the heart's the key.

Without the heart, there's no song that rings true
Full purse filled with brass.
That he'd impart, but, between me and you,
Like priests that say the mass:
Half cant,
Half rant.
Fraudulent ... parrots prate on cute.

But those words lit, inside me a true flame,
Or say, touched a spark,
Half-smothered bit of truth inside the frame
Of mere art, and mark;
I burned,
I turned.
To love, and never was the same.

So there I was, good intent, no training,
Trapped by what I'd feel.
And why? Because I would be maintaining
Each tryst would be "real".
True love ...
True love!
God above, was my hope waning.

My own fault too, see, I knew what I sought.
But that's just part.
Another who. Souls unaligned, love's naught.
Two must have one heart ...
Say yes,
Say bless.
The Goddess; Love for what she's wrought.

For now I've found you lady, and with you,
That truth's more than song.
Alive, profound, with wonder all shot through.
Two like hearts livelong.
Growing,
Knowing.
And flowing to the source of true.

Listen, friends, Guiraut's cleaned up his act.
Knocked into shape by love, that's a fact.
Come to know the nub, the core, the pith:
The heart of love is the one I'm with.

Lord, In Truth I Deserve Favor (Vanto)

Lord, in truth I deserve favor.
There's so few artists left these days
Who write verses one can savor
Aye, most are weak and rancid lays,
So unlike mine, which are so rare
That e'en Apollo's can't compare.

But still I'm mocked by jealous fools
Whose talent's all in whispered dirt.
Who mock the raucous muses' rules
And warp bright motley to stuffed shirt.
Screw them all, I scorn their quarrel ...
Love the muse and fuck the Laurel.

They say I court vulgarity!
Sweet lord! Since when are poets tame.
Ah wait ... they are in charity,
That's why their verses are so lame.
For when a poet's lost his fire,
'Tis time to shut up and retire.

Their petty carping makes me sick.
My words are e're thrown back at me.
Make deeds, not words, aye that's the trick.
Be sly and court mendacity,
That is the tale their actions tell.
Be covert friend and all is well.

But I've no need for vainglory,
Or strutting 'round with pompous air.
My talent tells its own story,
A tale that makes these hacks despair.
Though they may whine and rant and curse,
These peers can't match my peerless verse.

'Tis true that I'm a troubadour
And will not make my talent whore.
But if reward is given slander
Seek not a poet but a pander.
While if to honor truth is sought,
Then sweet my lord, reward Guiraut.

Water Rushes, or Is Still (Canso)

Water rushes, or is still
Falls unforced, finds its level.
Shimmers, streams .. Is here, flows on.
Forms change much, the essence nil.
Our love's essence: Never gone.

Drift ... watch her hair dishevel,
This rich, dark, silent cascade
Falls smoothly down her fair spine.
My lips drink deep and revel;
Fragrant, fresh ... this is my wine.

Let us drink and be remade.
Drink deep of ourselves and love.
The taste's of life, isn't it?
Warm, cool, sharp, sweet ... every shade.
And savor's mixed up in it.

In us, of us, God above!
Who are we? Now a torrent,
And now a pool of stillness.
A mist, tempest, the depths of
The sea ... the heart ... all of this.

And more make a space, a rent;
See! Love flows in, fills and heals,
A tide of joy, drowning fear,
Of love, source that is not spent,
Of light ... for clear light burns here.

Beloved, all that lives and feels
Aids us now .. Shares our ecstasy
With us and within our souls
We aid all and all the seals
Of death dissolve. Love is whole.

You ask what this might be.
Don't ask Guiraut, he doesn't know.
But soft, there's his love, watch him go,
And now they kiss ... you see.

Have I Known Too Much of Sorrow?

(Vers)

Have I known too much of sorrow?
And are my eyes made blind to light?
I've no hope left for tomorrow.
For all my dreams have died tonight.
Were there some spark, I wouldn't know.
My eyes and heart see all as gray.
From no place fled, nowhere to go,
I've nothing left to light my way.

If I had a wish, but I've none
I've had them all and held them dear.
T'was by wishes I was undone
T'was chasing phantoms brought me here.
Some called I folly, some reason,
Some chance, and others destiny.
For each was fair, and each was treason
To inmost heart's reality.

Dreams are the stuff fools are made of!
And hope the lameness, not the staff.
Wishes, dross for which we trade love,
And all these poisons did I quaff.
A thousand drear and dead delusions
Murdered the truth for which I sought.
Now I've nothing save illusions ...
Where lies the truth ... I have forgot.

Oh Love, have pity, for love's sake.
Don't leave me here among the dead.
Whose nightmare souls forever ache
And make the horrors they most dread.
Make me your slave and set me free.
Have mercy, show me how to serve.
Pray give me light that I might see.
Though light is what I least deserve.

Guiraut's made his bed, let him lie,
And rot and suffer and be damned.
He got true death when life was shammed.
He asks Love's aid ... he knows not why.

Damn Baron, You're a Lucky Dog (Vanto)

Damn Baron, you're a lucky dog,
You've got me to sing your praises.
You might have got some bleeding frog
Croaking lame and hackneyed phrases.
Or some sallow and shallow wop,
With a voice like rancid honey.
Who'd steal good vers and make it flop.
But Baron, rejoice, you've got me.

I've spread your fame throughout the land,
In no town south of the Loire
Is there a sot who wouldn't stand
And swear you were Christ's exemplar.
For Baron, when you give me cash,
I run and spend it straightaway ...
Make the red wine flow, slosh and splash ...
Drunks hear your name and shout, "hooray!!"

And sweet my lord, do you recall
That fine armor you gave me?
It would've stopped a tailor's awl ...
On a good day. Then that palfrey
You gave me for a mount. The sight
Made all your foes fill their armor
To the faceplate ... they feared the might
Of one so lavish with a singer.

Then there's the clothes, what finery!
By God, I looked like a magpie!
The ladies threw such looks at me,
Lord I thought I'd curl up and die,
But I'd the power of my vers,
That brings forth harmony from strife.
My wit my fortune did reverse,
By God, Lord, you've a pleasing wife!

Your lady's generosity,
Well, it made my service worthwhile.
T'was priceless, what she gave to me.
Her joy, sweet body and her smile.
All with good heart and good will.
She didn't crab and pinch the dole.
You never knew, you had your thrill:
A stableboy up the blowhole!

My lord, I leave you, no regrets.
I'll take your candlesticks along.
They shall remind your ex-poet
Of your qualities ... here's his song:
"Gilt outside, lead at the core,
"Greedy, stupid, corrupt, unfit,
"As noble is to you, you bore,
"Angelic is to maggot shit."

Lord Baron, Guiraut takes his leave
And though I'd steal all but your bones,
I'd be cheated ... the vers I weave's
Worth twice as much as all you own.

Night Came and Fell Into Her Eyes (Canso)

Night came and fell into her eyes
I saw it go and saw it rise
Out of them again and glowing,
And into mine and in my heart
Something stirred, the warm blood flowing.
I shook myself and shoot apart
My soul like dogs shake out water.
Who was left? T'was I who sought her.

Who is she and what did she do
That sheared the scars so cleanly through,
That left sweet air and life inside
Someone ... who ... me? I couldn't say.
It seems as though the dead have died
The husks of hurt fall by the way
And life emerges and moves on
My sundered heart is now made one.

Again, what did you do Lady?
Made bitterness drain out of me.
If I knew, I'd know everything ...
That what I'll find is what I seek,
Why Christ said it was a blessing
For love to turn the other cheek,
The secret held by every saint:
Love without limit or constraint.

How shall I describe her? Cry joy?
Words fail, (God, that's a hackneyed ploy!)
I'll do better since I've her leave
To be a poet. She's just so,
She fits, it's simple ... when we cleave
There's two streams met to make one flow.
A seamless ribbon to the source
Of love, joy, wisdom and valors.

When I see her, my heart stands still.
I have no tongue or wit or will.
And then she smiles, it melts my soul.
Warmth, flashing ... brighter than the sun.
I'm liquid fire! Let me be whole!
Beloved let our flames be one ...
And life, death and divinity
Are meaningless ... your love's in me!

Then she'll laugh and I can't help it,
Tenderness floods through my spirit.
The blue eyes flashing, so alive,
The way the flesh folds around her lips.
Her head tilts and the joy will dive
A waterfall of silver slips
Down through me cleansing, making fresh
All things ... the spirit and the flesh.

Love came and fell into my heart.
I saw her then; my life and art
Were made one, joy became my lot,
My touchstone and my destiny.
Who I was before, I've forgot.
A dead man maybe, but not me.
Now I live and t'was you Lady
Gave me the gift and set me free.

By love has dead Guiraut been raised.
He lives again, her name be praised
Who kindled, brought forth living light
And made a holy gem of night.

Oh Gentle Friends, I Have a Mystery (Canso)

Oh gentle friends, I have a mystery
For my true love is not my love you see.
Indeed, my domna seldom soothes my sight,
And when se does, ah, then I am happy,
And when she doesn't ... well I look for her.

All the wise trobar without one demur
Sweet Ventadorn's and sour Rudel's all aver
That true love's like to torment in its might
Which, though it may as joy or pain occur,
May be mistaken for no other thing.

My love is rain when the sun is shining
And one night in winter warm as the spring.
Who'll make heads or tails of this strange delight,
Or from this enigma and answer wring
When dame nature seems mixed up about it.

My friends all give me doses of their wit.
Good counsel, but it doesn't help a bit,
"Faster! Slower! Bolder! Milder!" Alright!
I've heard it all but nothing seems to fit.
Her worth transcends each tired scheme and plan.

All the same, I'll do something if I can.
To touch and be touched, it's only human.
My heart is filled with longing day and night.
For she is all that's sublime in woman
She is my soul's sole and sacred treasure.

Would that I had honor in her measure,
But I have none, save by her pleasure.
Aye, all my luster's her reflected light,
My labor her repose, my toil, her leisure.
All my true worth, her effortless essence.

Friends, of all that's fair she is the quintessence.
All base thought is banished in her presence.
Pray God she bends to ease me in my plight.
I'll never know love without her lessons.
With her I would be saved, I'm damned alone.

Lady, what good sweet water poured on stone?
What hope in your mercy lest it be shown?
True love is not concealed or recondite.
In truth, it is well done when it's well known.
Let us share our joy, not our mystery.

Go friend to my dear lady this verse.
Tell her I scarce dare breath till she reply
Her yes will be all blessings, nay a curse.
Guiraut on bended knee begs her say "aye".

There is a Girl From My Barony (Pastourella)

There is a girl from my Barony,
Right here in the Kingdom of the West
Who one summer's day rejected three
High born nobles (and I do mean pests).
Now she's not a virgin, no not she
Still she won't sleep with one she detests.
But ladies know how it can be:
There's many a swine who longs to nest
Like an eagle.

The first to approach her was a Duke.
And he ... well at last his gut's well hung.
He praised her eyes and face, but some fluke,
Glued his eyes quite firmly on her lungs.
"Crushed to death by lard," thought she, "Oh puke!
"I'll have to take him down a couple rungs."
So she sang her age as a rebuke.
He heard and he hollered as though stung,
"She's illegal!"

Next she was accosted by a knight
Who said, "Come fair maid, let's turn the trick.
"Oh my sword shall make for your delight."
She said, "Good sir, do you see this stick?
"Tis longer, harder, and suits me quite
"Your sword is short and not near so thick
"This wood will last through many a night.
"So prod your wife, bang your sheep or prick,
"Your bitch beagle!"

Last came a Laurel and they're the worst.
Dull conceited louts that stick like glue.
Right off he grabs her, shouts, "I'm well versed,
"In pleasing fair ladies through and through."
Well our lass said 'No' and struggled first,
Then said, "Look my Lord, I'll tell you true,
"I'm Westermark, take me and you'll be reversed.
"All my friends will see that you're just too,"
"Queenly regal!"

Three up, three down, there's a lesson here I trust.
Nobles (and ig-nobles) should contain their lust.
For he'll get naught who lady fair abuses
She'll pass up pricks and pick the prick she chooses.

I Say In Love, Folly's Supreme (Partimen)

- Raimbaut: I say, in love, folly's supreme.
The heart knows naught of good or ill.
When it sees love, its inmost dream,
It bolts and reason, measure, will
Are left guarding an empty stall.
For love, when it comes, must run free.
The fence of thought is first to fall
Love rushes through torrentially.
- Gausbert: Folly's easy, it's there in love
Whether or not you ask for it.
Leaves me queasy, not thinking of
Whether the frenzy's right or fit.
You see, might be, a mask for lust,
Or every manner of falsehood,
That kills the heart, that murders trust.
Love not what you've not understood.
- Guiraut: Only lovers should speak of love
Folly, reason, they're all just words.
The lark hovers, flies, wings above ...
What's folly, reason, for the birds?
Which discovers the secret of
Soaring? Folly? Reason? Nay friends,
What uncovers is essence, love.
Being starts ... folly, reason, ends.
- 'Tis birds nature to know of flight
And lovers to know of love's ways.
Nomenclature? Thought? Too finite.
What makes lovers to know love plays ...
Dances ... stays sure in touch and sight.
'Tis love makes lovers to know ... flow
On love's way, pure unto the light.
Ai! 'Tis love brings lovers to know.
- Gausbert: Nonsense, Guiraut! What have you said?
You've made of love both means and end.
And hence, you're caught. No light is shed
On light by light. Mix means and ends,
Pretense, all naught. Look, use your head
To understand one needs distance,
Prudence and thought. Aye a cool head
To sort out love from mere romance.

- Raimbaut: I'll still hold for love, folly's best
Take your reason and all the rest.
Forget 'em, they'll not pass the test.
Love's folly comes and all are blest,
Like it or not, it's manifest:
With folly, love waxes fullest.
As with the wind which thunders truest
Unconstrained in a tempest.
- Guiraut: I will foreswear none of love's moods.
The gentle ones are as precious
As the fierce. Like sleep and waking
Each has a place within us.
Nor shall I take the path that broods ...
Makes fear for the sake of the making.
Love guides my love, aye, how woundrous!
There is much; life, death, God abovem
Known but by means of themselves, such is love ...
Folly, reason, come between us.
- Gausbert: Gausbert's near done. One might suppose
He'd ramble on, refute his foes.
But screw it, while the hot air blows,
He'll clam up ... for he really knows.
- Raimbaut: I say in love, folly's supreme.
I've proved my point in vers I deem.
Though my poor wit makes no vers gleam,
Hold not my point in low esteem.

We All Make Vers and Cansos To the Spring (Canso)

We all make vers and cansos to the spring.
You know; “when the green buds tremble”, and such.
Alright, youth, I’ll grant’s an attractive thing.
But to mistake young for youth, that’s too much.

Spring turns, the young must age.
Love only the new rose ...
Beware, you’ve built yourself a cage:
The young may pass, youth grows.

Spring? I’ve known breathless waiting, that’s its charm.
But when the buds flower, I love it more.
Spring may promise, but summer gives the warm
Fulfillment that the heart is yearning for.

I love summer, no regrets.
The open flower’s truth,
Fine love and real joy begets.
Have them and you’ve got youth.

And when autumn comes, why I’ll love that too.
Cherish rich harvest, then ruddy twilight.
The rip riot of every shade and hue,
The crisp chill that presages winter’s bite.

Then my love will be as fresh
As when youth and young were one.
In and past the passing flesh,
Love lives, all is new begun.

Nor shall I forsake winter, though it seem
Harsh, cold, gray, severe and dead ... Understand.
‘Tis those who never see within ... esteem
Mere surface, come to grief at winter’s hand.

When all seems dead, look inside.
The supple flame burns on.
None who loved have ever died,
Forms pass, truth passes on.

I love a woman, I do confess.
First she was white, now she’s red.
She shall be black, and then be dead.
Guiraut will settle for nothing less.

If a Bird Could Live Without Singing (Canso)

If a bird could live without singing
Or the sun shine without light,
And a bell could sound without ringing
Or snow fall ... and not be white;
Then I could I've without you,
A drop ... pretending to be the sea.

In a world that tasted of ashes
And a time always too long,
Where pride and fear wielded the lashes
And nothing was worth a song ...
As it was before we touched ...
When joy meant a surcease from despair.

Oh Lady! Oh dear and sacred star!
You are the warm blood in me,
The sweet spring rain, the flower's nectar,
The fiery wine that sets free
All the tides of life and joy;
That I might know wonder as wonder.

To slay the false and tear asunder
All in me closed up and coy ...
For love is come! I count the thunder ...
Fire and water in alloy ...
Storm that comes now bringing
A tempest of sweetness and delight.

The seething stillness ... lightning flashes ...
"LET THERE BE LIGHT!" ... Goddess song ...
We sing it now, the silence crashes
Births the world where we belong ...
Lets us touch, all waiting's done.
And our timeless love has come to be.

Beloved, hear me, if all were gone;
Earth and stars and life and death,
The Goddess and God, the moon and Sun,
Flesh and spirit, sight and breath,
Time and timeless ... naught remained.
Ai! The void would burn with our love's flame!

Thus sings Guiraut
Who'd half a soul,
To his beloved
Who made him whole.

My Awards Go Jingle, Jangle, Jingle
(Tune: My Spurs Go Jingle, Jangle, Jingle)

Chorus: My awards go jingle, jangle, jingle.
As I go strutting pompously along.
Oh I see you've only got a single,
If you think that I'll talk to you, you're wrong!

Oh I'm a peer,
Yes I'm a peer.
If you don't outrank me don't come near.
But if you do,
Yes if you do,
And you give me something, I love you.

CHORUS

Oh there's the Queen.
Yes there's the Queen.
I'll run up to her ass and lick it clean.
And there's the King.
Yes there's the King.
Let me put my lips around his thing.

CHORUS

And there's the Dukes.
Yes there's the Dukes.
I'll go fawn upon them 'till they puke.
And there's the Earls.
Yes there's the Earls.
But we mighty peers don't talk to churls.

CHORUS

I've got a leaf.
A laurel too.
If you don't have one, then fuck you.
I've got the QOG,
And pelican.
And I'll be an Arts King when I can.

CHORUS

Oh I don't fight.
Or come to blows.
But if I did I would be the best God knows.
I'll take a shield.
I'll take a sword.
When just touching them will get awards.

CHORUS

At the grand march,
Now don't forget.
Announce my name and then half the alphabet.
My greatest joy:
Titles and name,
Take heralds half an hour to declaim.

CHORUS

Awards aren't cheap.
Buzz off you creep.
There's no more room at the top of the heap.
Now I've got mine,
'Tis my design.
To make all you bozos stand in line.

CHORUS

Hail Kingdom of the West (Tune: My Country 'Tis of Thee)

Hail Kingdom of the West
You are the very best.
Your praise we sing.
Oldest of realms by far.
Long rise your shining star.
No one's as good as you are.
Long live your King.

By some peculiar flukes,
Your knights can beat their dukes
Make them look green.
Men at arms beat their earls,
Their knights all flee your churls
They give up when your flag unfurls.
Long live your Queen.

Your seneschals don't swerve
Hate power, love to serve.
No virtues lacked.
Their deeds are without flaw.
Their words rub no one raw.
For they know the King's word is law.
They might get sacked.

Your artists know the most.
They are the Knowne World's toast.
That's no surprise.
Some say they're lazy bores,
That's jealousy of course,
Their wondrous talent always pours,
If there's a prize.

Atenveldt, Meridies,
Atlantia, Caid,
East and An Tir,
And Ansteorra too,
The Middle, all love you
They wish they could do what you do.
West without peer.

Nordflammen wrote this verse
So other realms rehearse
Our lofty ways.
Have fun but make it clear;
Don't go too far, you hear.
Gerardt is moving to An Tir
One of these days.

P.P.F.U.F. Forever
The Glorious Anthem of the Progressive People's Feudalist United Front
(Tune: The Battle Hymn of the Republic)

Oh we charge 'gainst their machine guns
With the lance and with the bow.
Though they shoot a million of us
Still our righteous numbers grow.
Soon they will run out of bullets,
Then we'll let the burghers know:
Feudalism makes us strong!

CHORUS: PPFUF forever, PPFUF forever, PPFUF forever.
Feudalism makes us strong!

Oh the burghers try to tell us
Feudalism is no more.
But we don't believe these liars,
They're all rotten to the core.
They will know the truth and tremble
When they hear our mighty roar:
Feudalism makes us strong!

CHORUS

Oh, the burghers with enclosure
Forced serfs by machines to stand.
Now they're facing social unrest
But they still don't understand,
That the serfs are only happy
When the serfs are on the land.
Feudalism makes us strong!

CHORUS

Oh they're poisoning the water
And they're poisoning the air.
It's a sure thing you've got burghers
If there's poison everywhere.
We'll demolish all their fac'tries
And our mother earth repair.
Feudalism makes us strong!

CHORUS

When you see a racist bloodbath
It's the burghers you must thank
Keeping people at each other's throats
Means money in the bank.
But for us your race means nothing,
All that matters is your rank.
Feudalism makes us strong!

CHORUS

In El Salvador right burghers
Slaughter serfs to stake their claim.
In Afghanistan left burghers
Also play that rotten game.
Oh they say that they are different,
But we know that they're the same.
Feudalism makes us strong!

CHORUS

In war burghers hide in shelters
For their courage is all show
Their mass armies and civilians
Are the only ones who glow.
We will follow Kings not burghers
'Cause the King's the first to go.
Feudalism makes us strong!

CHORUS

Oh the burghers have elections
And they shout; "Let freedom ring."
But they nominate two bozos
So the votes don't mean a thing.
Oh we scorn their scams and shell games
'Cause you don't vote for the King!
Feudalism makes us strong!

CHORUS

Oh the burghers with their millions
Think that all our souls are crass
And they try to buy and sell us
But for us, their gems are glass.
They can take their gold and diamonds
And just shove them up their ass.
Feudalism makes us strong!

CHORUS

Oh they taunt the feudal system
Because women were oppressed.
They don't mention sexist churches
Burghers still praise them as blest.
But the Goddess shall not fail us,
She'll give power to the best!
Feudalism makes us strong!

CHORUS

Oh we scorn the burgher's "freedom"
And their jingo loyalty
We will give them all a lesson
In truth and reality.
For the only freedom we know
Is an oath of fealty.
Feudalism makes us strong!

CHORUS

We will follow Kings and Barons
It's in them we'll place our trust.
We'll unsheath our swords, string longbows
Fight until the final thrust.
We will overthrow the burghers,
We will smash them all to dust.
Feudalism makes us strong!

CHORUS

With the holy feudal order
We shall free the human race.
All shall dwell in peace and freedom
In a state of endless grace.
With a place for every person,
Every person in their place.
Feudalism makes us strong!

CHORUS

In Defense of Feudalism

This is the first explication of my political ideas regarding the SCA. It was written in response to a situation in the Kingdom of the West wherein I felt that the King had exceeded the customary limits of royal authority in our kingdom.

I chose the issue, in part because it was important to me and in part because it was not so important that there was any great likelihood of a big political blow-up because of it. For, I wanted this to be above all a discussion piece which would make a broad section of our populace seriously consider where the SCA is going. I have felt for some time that we are drifting in the direction of increasing centralization due to our cultural conditioning and in default of any alternative. Herein I present one alternative or at least its bare bones. I certainly don't believe that it is the only alternative nor that if applied within the SCA it would not require some adaptation to meet the demands of the real world.

Still, I view these ideas as a desirable alternative to the mundane centralizers of all stripes and I fully intend to follow up In Defense of Feudalism with further pieces on this subject.

In Defense of Feudalism

At Twelfth Night, His Majesty, King William promulgated a new law which, in effect, barred oaths of fealty to Barons. Being a subject of a Barony and, moreover, a convinced feudalist, I find this law profoundly disturbing for the following reasons:

1. It denies the customary right of freeboard subjects of the Kingdom to swear fealty to whomever they wish.
2. It constitutes an abuse of the royal prerogative in that it:
 - a. Violated the King's Oath of Fealty to His Baronial Liegemen, and,
 - b. Violates the de facto legal limitations on the Crown by custom, usage and precedent in the Kingdom of the West.

In raising these objections, I am aware of the fact that I am bringing up issues which have not hitherto received much attention in this Kingdom. I do so because I feel that the time has come to discuss some of the broader aspects of socio-political theory and practice in the Kingdom and the SCA as a whole. Obviously, I'm not the first person attempting to contribute something to a discussion of this sort. The Hobbyist/Re-creationist group, centered primarily in the Kingdoms to the East has already raised many questions of organizational philosophy, albeit, from a perspective radically different from mine and with which I vehemently disagree.

However, I feel justified in objecting to King William's actions on grounds that might seem, at first, to go beyond the issue at hand because I believe that this law is a manifestation of a widespread misunderstanding of the value of the feudal system to a Kingdom and the SCA as a whole. With this in mind, I am loathe to leave the field of systematic organizational analysis in the hands of Woodfordites and others of similar bent.

Therefore, I am going to go on at some length from an orientation which is, to my knowledge, atypical of political thought in the SCA at this time. My views, or at least the vehemence of their expression are my own, and any objections or rebuttals to what I have to say below should be directed at me and not any theoretical confederates.

The Matter of Feudal Rights

If there is one salient feature that sets the Middle Ages apart from the Roman civilization that preceded and the modern ones that followed, it is the fact that they were a time of radical decentralization of power.

Both the Roman Empire and modern nation-states are largely urban oriented civilizations in which ultimate power is focused in a narrow center and extends outwards and downwards by means of a large legalistic bureaucracy.

The Middle Ages, on the other hand, were characterized by the political system of feudalism, in which there was a conspicuous absence of centralized political authority. Rather, a host of petty lords ruled very limited domains and what centralized authority there was, in a secular-political sense, was the result of the ties of fealty between various groups of nobles.

These ties of fealty were in almost no sense like the ridiculous "Oath of Fealty" currently used in the Kingdom of the West. Rather, they were highly detailed statements of the respective obligations and benefits accruing to both contracting parties as a result of the oath. Included as well were numerous escape clauses inserted as a hedge against violations, which precluded one part or the other from having to fulfill something that had become a dead letter. Inherent in this system was a recognition of the fact that, in order for these oaths to work, they had to be reciprocal, i.e., fealty was not a one way street ...

These medieval oaths are a far cry from the Tolkeinesque parody we use in the Kingdom of the West. No medieval nobleman in his right mind would swear an oath of fealty to his King like the one we swear to ours. In ours

there are no specific statements of the rights of the vassal and no guarantees that any rights that might have accrued to him through customary laws or usage will be respected. In return for this big, fat zero, the Western vassal swears unconditional obedience, body and soul to the King.

Now, while I am sure that many a medieval King would have been amazed and delighted to have a set of nobles obliging enough to wear themselves into a de jure state of slavery, most medieval nobles, on the other hand, would have been aghast at such a performance, regarding it, in all likelihood, as some species of mass insanity.

For, the medieval nobility did not enter into a feudal arrangement with a King because it was inherent in the “rules of the game”, but rather because they needed the security that such an arrangement afforded. Most feudal nobles had dominions which could only be preserved by coming to an arrangement with their more powerful neighbors. Even so, within the framework of obligations imposed by such an arrangement, they sought to preserve as much independent control as possible over their local domain. The more powerful Lords, up to and including the King (who was by no means always the most powerful noble in the realm), were restrained in their absolutist tendencies by the fact that they, in turn, were dependent upon the loyalty of the fighting aristocracy represented by their vassals, and were constrained by this consideration to grant these vassals a large measure of local autonomy. The result of all this was a complex system of interlocking rights and obligations we call Feudalism.

Despite the denigrations of a pervasive group of historian saturated with the Burgher conceit that the bourgeois nation-state is the very sum of human achievement, there is a sizeable body of evidence to the effect that feudalism in fact worked rather well. The mere fact that feudalism was the dominant form of socio-political organization for over 1,000 years would seem to indicate something about its viability. Still, in most general histories of the period, the achievements of Kings like Alfonso VII of Castile and Pedro III of Aragon, who relied on the feudal system and made it work are glossed over in a few sentences, while the bigoted bloodbaths of a grasping boor like Phillip “Augustus” are given page after frenzied page of nauseating adulation for putting in place the gory cornerstones of “modern” statism.

It is easy to see why many SCA Kings lean towards an absolutist perspective. After all, most history books agree that the “greatest” medieval Kings were those who were the most successful at ramming their monomaniacal delusions of grandeur down everyone else’s throats.

Unfortunately for those who would make these obsessives a role model for SCA monarchs, they and their achievements are, in reality, more correctly regarded as historical aberrations within the context of feudalism than as anything productive of lasting social or political impact. As evidence for this view, witness the wailings and whinings of the very historians who exalt these characters, when relating how, after the death of the “great” man, sometimes even before it, as with Henry II of England, the old “chaos” of feudalism immediately reasserted itself in full force.

In fact, the amazing vitality of feudalism was never suppressed by the periodic appearance of these centralizing obsessives. It was only with the perfection of tactical systems using bovine herds of marching peasants armed with bows, pikes, and finally guns and the resultant elimination of any need for a class of professional warriors, coupled with the development of an alternative administrative system based on codified law administered by ant-like burgherite bureaucracy with all the dull-witted pedantry peculiar to that class that the vital force of feudalism ebbed away.

Now, then, given that Feudalism was the essential socio-political reality of the Middle Ages, and that it was workable on a long term basis under those circumstances, we must ask ourselves whether it is “right” for the SCA.

First of all, before entering into a detailed discussion of this question, I would first like to say a few words to the many good souls who have told me that the question “doesn’t matter” because, “after all, the SCA is a ‘fantasy’ organization”. My friends, this is simply not so, or to be absolutely correct, it is only if that’s all you want to make of it. In a broader sense, the SCA is a dynamic social organism to which a lot of people devote vast amounts of time, talent, energy and money. In my opinion, which is, admittedly, biased as I am one of those people, “fantasy” is a daydream, but, what I put most of my creative work into is damn well real. The tendency to denigrate the SCA’s “reality” is yet another manifestation of the Burgher culture surrounding us wherein anything not conforming to a narrow range of social normalcy and acceptability is “unrealistic”. Since I see little value in our taking the Burgher’s

word for anything, especially for what is “real” and what is not, my arguments will be predicated on the assumption that the subject is meaningful and important and in no way partakes of a “fantasy” orientation.

The reality of the SCA, like that of the Middle Ages, is decentralized. Ask a person from Tarnist what the SCA is, then one from the Mists, then Westermark, then a fighter, then an artist, then a peer, then a newcomer, then ... well, you get the point: While there will be common ground in all your answers, there will also be a vast diversity, dependent on any individual’s background, how they came to be involved in the SCA, what they want from the organization and a host of other factors.

One of the major reasons for the SCA’s success lies in the fact that it is one of the few organizations around which essentially leaves people to pursue a wide range of interests in relative peace. The continual carpings of those with a stolid Burgher concept of order about the SCA’s “inequalities”, “chaotic politics”, etc. and its need for “uniform policy guidelines” miss the point that most of our membership did not join, and does not stay in the SCA to participate in a costumed version of the mundane social order. On the contrary, most of our membership is here to get away from the rigidity of the mundane world and to make for themselves, even if unconsciously, an alternative which is an exuberant celebration of diversity.

In this context, it is almost inevitable that attempts to centralize the SCA do harm to that diversity which is among its greatest strengths. These attempts are almost always efforts by one interest group to impose its conception of what the SCA is on everybody else. This is understandable since it is an article of faith among those infected with Burgher ideas that not only do they know best what is good for everybody else, but that this sublime omniscience entitles them to enforce their views whether their would-be beneficiaries like it or not. Even so, the fact that one can comprehend the missionary zeal of our “reformers” should not lead us to disregard the fact that their concept of “what is good” for the SCA is highly questionable. As a matter of fact, it has been my experience that most of our political brawls, factional squabbles and resignations in a huff have been the result of some individual or group in a position of “authority” trying to nail their true-blueprint of the SCA on others.

Recognizing the essential diversity of the SCA and wishing to preserve rather than suppress it, I think that it is time for those of us with a feudal perspective to begin speaking up. For, in feudalism we find a time-tested system adapted to the maintenance of diverse interests within a framework of consensual unity and not a chain of command wherein the interests of those in “power” are imposed by fiat. It is also a system present in the SCA already, most often in the form of customs and traditions manifested as part of the subconscious system of assumption that go into people’s concept of “the way things are”.

These proposals entail making no new law. In my opinion, we’ve got plenty of law already and, besides, I think it would be rather contradictory to advocate centralizing power decreeing decentralization. Rather, these proposals are based on unmaking some laws on the one hand, and relying more on custom, tradition, usage and real leadership on the other. Concretely then, here is what I am proposing.

1. Reliance on Customary Law.

Laws need not be written and codified. In fact, during the Middle Ages, almost no laws were written and codified in the modern sense of the word. Burgher historians hail the advent of written law as one of those great “advances” over the “chaos” of medieval times. With good cause too, the bloated bureaucratic states of the present day need a vast corpus of written law to keep everyone in line. For, to be brutally frank; those who can lead, do, and those who can’t, enforce them. Since nobody in particular ever wanted to follow the Burghers by choice, codified law seemed a peachy solution for dealing with the localized vagaries of customary law that had evolved to protect the interests of other sections of the population.

For example, if customary law had remained supreme in Europe, the enforced eviction of peasants from their homes via enclosure would have been much more difficult. As it was though, the Burghers and their stooges were able to confront the peasants with freshly inked “evidence” for the fact that the land their families had occupied for hundreds of years didn’t “belong” to them and that they had to go ... it was the “law”.

Written law is one of the greatest tools of any group of centralizers in attempting to enforce their views on everybody else. It guarantees that those who disagree with them, even when accorded certain “legal rights”, will

be given an absolute minimum of room to maneuver without “breaking the law”. Even when such legal systems are not absolutely totalitarian in nature, they inevitably “load the dice” in favor of the interest group making them.

Customary law, on the other hand is much more diffuse and flexible. Systems based on it don’t fit written law very well because the rights and obligations of individuals and groups may vary widely depending on a wealth of variables. This is the sort of “chaos” that drives Burgherite legalists into gibbering fits. “How,” they shriek as if the apocalypse were upon them, “can you govern when every town, village, hamlet and fief has a different set of customary laws? What kind of order can you get from this crazy-quilt jumble of practices?”

Well, you can get a feudal order and you can govern very well so long as people are content with running their local affairs, and not foisting their views on others. To be sure, conflicts arise in such a system, but conflicts are inevitable in any human society and their occurrence in no way means that there is a need for some group or another to make “peace” by imposing some schema of legalistic orthodoxy on everyone. In fact, the top-down, legalistic method of conflict resolution is one of the most inefficient imaginable, seeking, more often than not, not to clarify and resolve issues, but to shut everyone up, leaving, even when successful, vast amounts of resentment, bitterness and anger. I would rather face a long series of petty squabbles, trusting to the fact that the people in the SCA are mature enough to work them out, than a “peaceful kingdom” based on one group’s version of what the organization should be.

The one time the “lay down the law” approach is justified is when a particular group within an organization is behaving in a way which threatens the existence of the organization as a whole. In this case, as an emergency response, analogous to the “flight or fight” syndrome common to organisms in a life-threatening situation, the solution of a problem by decree is quite appropriate. However, to institutionalize this system; to act as if the SCA requires at all times the organizational equivalent of a permanent adrenalin frenzy is patently ridiculous.

It is better, in my opinion, to make as few laws as possible, especially ones impacting the traditional operation of local groups, and to have a hands off policy in every way regarding such operation save in those cases where there are real and manifest problems. Even when intervention is necessary, might I suggest that, save in emergency situations requiring immediate action, methods of *mora suasion*, social pressure and open discussion of the issues be attempted before resorting to settlement of the question by *diktat*.

That such methods are as practical as the legalistic approach is amply demonstrated by the pervasive respect already shown towards customary law within the Kingdom, and, indeed, the SCA as a whole. For example, there are no “laws” prescribing the conventions of courtesy, behavior at court, polite address, etc., but they are still almost universally practiced, often more so than some “laws”.

Other practices which we might want to see in the SCA might be introduced in a similar way, from the ground up, as it were. The beginning would be a few people doing something and others picking it up as time went on because they wanted to, not because they were ordered to. It may be more time consuming than simply tossing off a “law”, but the effects have a better chance of being lasting ones, as anyone who has observed the ephemeral existence of some of the revolving door laws promulgated and repealed from reign to reign can attest.

2. Redefinition of “The King’s Word is Law”

Another feudalist objective should be a redefinition of “The King’s Word is Law”. Understand, I do not want to get rid of this particular concept. I will defend it against anything or anyBODY who attempts to temper with its basic force. This is because, in the last analysis, emergencies might arise where somebody will have to “lay down the law”, and, I’d trust the Kings I’ve known to do it better than any other class of people I’ve encountered in the SCA. More importantly, “The King’s Word is Law” is the mighty fortress of our kingdom’s rights and traditions vis-a-vis the encroachments of the BOD and the mad-dog centralizers of the Hobbyiest-Re-creationist wing of the SCA.

Even so, I think that it might be helpful to bring the concept of “The King’s Word is Law” down to earth. As it stands now, it connotes a measure of absolutism that would make Louis XV green with envy.

In the Middle Ages, even when this formulation was present, it was modified in practice to produce a limited monarchy. Not in the sense of modern “constitutional” monarchy, but in a way that gave the King a great deal of

power within limited parameters. I think that this is what we should aim for in the West. For, while I have no desire to see the King of the West turned into a gaudy, but powerless tourist attraction as advocated by the lunatic fringe of the Hobbyist wing, still I would rather not feel like I'm living on the old plantation and that all us darkies ain't got no rights our massa de King's bound to respect.

To understand a limited monarchy in a feudal sense, we must look at the institution of Kingship and what it meant in the Middle Ages. This will immediately make apparent a whole series of implications which should give everyone in the realm, including the Kings, a better understanding of the practical aspects of the role of the monarchy within the framework of a system that militates against the assumption of god-like powers.

First of all, what exactly is the "King"? A person, obviously, but, also obviously, an institution of social and political order. From a feudal standpoint, these two aspects of Kingship are inseparable. This means, and this seems so hard for many people in the SCA to grasp, that there was no real conception in medieval practice of swearing fealty to the "Crown" as an institution separate from the personality of the monarch. On the contrary, oaths of fealty to the King were personal oaths made man to man, liege lord to vassal, in which one of the parties happened to be wearing a crown. The fact that there was a certain implicit systemic compulsion to swear fealty to a monarch in now way altered the fact that such oaths were entered into on the same basis as any others.

Each party specified the rights and obligations inherent in the agreement and if either party broke its terms, they were personally responsible. In this light, take a look at the excerpts from a few representative oaths of fealty included later in this issue. It is clear that the liege lords involved, even when Kings, were taking them just as any other and that they did not regard themselves as being above the law as regards the feudal obligations they were entering into.

These considerations, along with the implicit restraints of customary law, were what limited the powers and prerogatives of medieval monarchy. In one sense, they were enforced, as the King who tried to expand his "power" at the expense of his vassals often found that he suddenly had very few vassals. But, in a very real sense, the limitations were also voluntary; self-imposed in recognition of the fact that in the context of the situation, an absolutist arrangement was impossible and that the only way the Kingdom would work was by means of the delineation of, and mutual respect for, the various spheres of interest within it.

Therefore, the Kingship was not an institution set apart and above the lower orders of society. Rather, it was but one element, albeit an important one, in the complex matrix of feudal society. As such, its powers were limited not so much by written restraints as the traditional parameters of the social medium in which it was placed.

Now, the SCA, in the essence of its structure bears more resemblance to the feudal model than the absolutist one. Here too, the King's powers of coercion are limited by his subjects powers of resistance; i.e., this is ultimately a voluntary association and the King cannot make anyone do anything against their will. The only reasons there are manifestations of absolutism is because all parties involved are consenting to them, usually under the misapprehension that by doing so, they are being "period". This course seems to have reached the end of its usefulness and it would seem to be advisable to begin moving towards a model limited on a feudal basis which would be closer not only to our advertised goal of reality of the SCA as well.

3. Institute Realistic Oaths of Fealty.

As a means to this end, one of the first steps that should be taken is instituting realistic oaths of fealty.

For, if I may be indulged in repeating myself, our current "oath of fealty" is little more than a bad joke. If I were a medieval monarch accustomed to feudal practice and someone came around swearing themselves to me body and soul, "in living or in dying", etc.; in return for which I had to give them a promise of nothing save maybe to protect their "rights", which are, if we are to use our own Kingdom as an example, pretty much whatever I say they are, well ... If I were a feudal King, I'd think all it would take to make such an individual the complete sucker would be a stick up the ass.

Our "oath of fealty" has been pulled almost verbatim from The Lord of the Rings and while it might, in fact, be suitable for credulous rustics from Hobbiton to put themselves at the service of elderly pyromaniacs, it is completely useless as an oath of fealty in any reasonable Lord-Vassal relationship.

Technically speaking, it is not an oath of fealty at all. Rather it is a very long homage ceremony. Once in awhile in the SCA someone talks about “swearing homage and fealty”, however there seems to be an unfortunate and completely erroneous impression that the “homage” and the “fealty” are one and the same. This is not so. Homage was sworn prior to the oath of fealty and formed the basis of the feudal relationship.

To put it simply, Homage was the statement by the vassal that he was now the “man” of the liege lord and that Lord stating in return that he accepted the vassal as such.

Once this was out of the way, the oath of fealty was sworn. The oath of fealty was the nitty-gritty of the matter. The vassal’s obligations to his Lord were specified as were the reciprocal rights and lands “ceded” to the vassal by the Lord. Aside from promises of protection, what was ceded was usually merely a de jure recognition of what the vassal already had in his possession. In addition, there were often a host of subsidiary details and arrangements including clauses for vassals who had sworn an oath to more than one liege lord stipulating the conditions under which they would be held free of an oath without prejudice when a conflict between two of these lords was involved.

It cannot be overemphasized that the oath of fealty was a practical contractual relationship based on maximizing cooperation on items of mutual interest while leaving each party free to act independently on matters of his own business. It would seem to be that instituting real oaths of fealty would be an enormous advance over the nonsense we have now.

For, our current oath gives vassals no real security in their rights whatsoever. The only security they have is negative ... the hope that their lord will not do anything adversely affecting their traditional rights. That this hope is unfounded is evidenced by the law removing the right to swear fealty to Barons.

The right to swear fealty to a Baron has been around a long time in our Kingdom. It was embodied in both customary and written law. One would have thought that since the Barons had sworn our “oath of fealty” to the King, that the monarch would have felt some obligation to preserve their rights in this matter. This has not been the case.

Seemingly without cause, one of the most important feudal rights accruing to territorial Barons has been chucked out the window. If there were some cause for this, such as continual disruptions in the Kingdom by power-hungry Barons, the King’s action might be understandable. But, this is not the case, the realm was at peace, and the Barons were among the King’s most loyal and supportive vassals.

The whole fiasco emphasizes the fact that, unless a vassal’s rights are specified in detail, they essentially have no rights aside from the occasional bone their liege lord deigns to toss them. Its time to change this travesty of feudal practice in instituting realistic oaths of fealty reflecting the obligations, rights, privileges and prerogatives of both parties.

The only objects I can see are:

It would be time consuming in the sense that new ceremonials would have to be written, possible even more than once every twenty years in response to mutually recognized changes in lord-vassal relationships. This is not an insurmountable hardship. Our Kingdom abounds with talented individuals who, with a little research could come to a basic understanding of what was required and who would, in all likelihood jump at the chance to see their handiwork become Kingdom ceremonial.

The other object is that there might be those who feel sentimental about the old “oath of fealty” and who want to continue using it. Since I am a feudalist, I have no objections to anyone setting whatever terms they choose for their oath. If there are those who want to continue using the old oath, by all means, let them do so, but, for God’s sake, let’s give everyone else some kind of alternative.

4. REPEAL THE LAW OUTLAWING OATHS OF FEALTY TO BARONS!

This is not a long-term “reform”, rather it is an imperative act of simple justice which should be done now.

These proposals are suggestions and contributions to a discussion, but, their implementation might serve in future to make subjects and monarchs of this Kingdom conscious of the fact that:

1. We have the right to swear fealty to whomever we wish.
2. We have a King, not a dictator, and there are rules for him too.
3. An oath of fealty is not an act of submission, but a contract involving a measure of reciprocity.
4. The King should respect the traditional rights of his subjects so long as they do not threaten the existence of the SCA.
and
5. The royal power and prerogative should be used with force of law only when required for the safety and security of the Kingdom and not to advance the organizational whims of the person on the throne.

I, for one, think we'd be better for it.

Gerhardt von Nordflammen

Culture Corner

Today, we have a few excerpts from some real medieval oaths of fealty. I think you will find them rather illuminating.

1. Here is an 11th century oath sworn by King Sancho IV of Navarre. Note the safeguards built in should he fail to hold up his end of the bargain:

... I the above mentioned Sancho, king, out of friendship, fidelity, aid and council as God has given them to me, give you the castle which is called Sangossa, with all its boundaries, and the town which is called Lrede, and Ondues. And I give and confirm my pledge that through my life I will not vex you concerning these towns, nor will I require them of you, nor the castle ... And if I should basely do this – may it never be! – I give permission to all my chief vassals who are with me, with all their honors and lands which they have and hold of me, to come to your aid and place themselves in your power. And we lords whose names appear above, vow that, as it is written ... we are held to this agreement in good faith, without deception, through God and His saints, and we shall not quit you nor your service for the sake of any possessions or earthly honor.

(Abridgements are the translator's)

2. Here is an excerpt from an oath wherein the problem of swearing fealty to more than one liege lord is dealt with quite explicitly:

I, John of Toul, make known that I am the liegeman of the Lady Beatrice, Countess of Troyes, and of her son Theobald, Count of Champagne, against every creature, living or dead, saving my allegiance to Lord Enjorand of Coucy, Lord John of Arcis, and the Count of Grandpre. If it should happen that the Count of Grandpre should be at war with the Countess and Count of Champagne in his own quarrel, I will aid the Count of Grandpre in my own person, and will send to the Count and the Countess of Champagne the knights whose service I owe to them for the fief which I hold of them. But if the Count of Grandpre shall make war on the Countess and the Count of Champagne on behalf of his friends and not in his own quarrel, I will aid in my own person the Countess and the Count of Champagne, and will send one knight to the Count of Grandpre for the service which I owe him for the fief which I hold of him, but I will not go myself into territory of the Count of Grandpre to make war on him.

3. Finally, we have a complete oath of fealty from the 12th century. Pardon the length:

In the name of the Lord, I Bernard Atton, viscount of Carcassone, in the presence of my sons, Roger and Trencavel, and of Peter of Barbazon, and William Hugo, and Raymond Matellini, and Peter de Vitry, nobles, and of many other honorable men, who had come to the monastery of St. Mary of Grasse, to the honor of the festival of the August St. Mary; since lord Leo, abbot of the said monastery, has asked me, in the presence of all those above mentioned, to acknowledge to him the fealty and homage for the castles, manors, and places which his predecessors and from the said monastery, as a fief, and which I ought to hold as they held, I have made to the lord abbot Leo acknowledgment and homage as I ought to do.

Therefore, let all present and to come know that I the said Bernard Atton, lord and viscount of Carcassone, acknowledge verily to thee my lord Leo, by grace of God, abbot of St. Mary of Grasse, and to thy successors that I hold and ought to hold as a fief, in Carcassone, the following: that is to say, the castles of Confoles, of Leoque, of Capendes ...; and the manors of Mairec, of Albars and of Musso; also in the valley of Aquitaine, Rieux, Traverian, Herault, Archas, Servians, Villatritoies, Transiraus, Presler, Cornelles. Moreover, I acknowledge that I hold from thee and from said monastery as fief the castle of Tentaion, and the manors of Cassanolles, and of Ferral and Aioharsm, and in Le Roges, the little village of Longville; for

each and all of which I make homage and fealty with hands and with mouth to thee my said lord abbot Leo and to thy successors, and I swear upon the four gospels of God that I will always be a faithful vassal to thee and to thy successors and to St. Mary of Grasse in all things in which a vassal is required to be faithful to his lord, and I will defend thee, my lord, and all thy successors, and the said monastery and the monks present and to come and the castle and manors and all your men and their possessions against all malefactors and invaders, at my request and that of my successors at my own cost; and I will give to thee power over all the castles and manors above described, in peace or in war, whenever they shall be claimed by thee or thy successors.

Moreover I acknowledge that, as a recognition of the above fiefs, I and my successors ought to come to the said monastery, at our own expense, as often as a new abbot has been made, and there do homage and return to him power over all the fiefs described above. And when the abbot shall mount his horse I and my heirs, viscounts of Carcassone, and our successors ought to hold the stirrup for the honor of the dominion of St. Mary of Grasse; and to him and all who come with him to as many as two hundred beasts, we shall make the abbot's purveyance in the borough of St. Michael of Caracssone, with the best fish and meat and with eggs and cheese, honorable according to his will, and pay the expense of the shoeing of the horses, and for the straw and fodder as the season shall require.

And if I or my sons or their successors do not observe to thee or thy successors each and all things declared above, and should come against these things, we wish that all the aforesaid fiefs should by that very fact be handed over to thee and the said monastery of St. Mary of Grasse and to thy successors.

I, therefore, the aforesaid lord Leo, by the grace of God, abbot of St. Mary of Grasse, receive the homage and fealty for all the fiefs of castles and manors and places which are described above; in the way and with the agreements and understandings written above; and likewise I concede to thee and thy heirs and their successors the viscounts of Carcassone, all the castles and manors and places aforesaid, as a fief, along with this present charter, divided through the alphabet. And I promise to thee and thy successors, viscount of Carcassone, under the religion of my order, that I will be a good and faithful lord concerning all those things described.

Moreover I, the aforesaid viscount, acknowledge that the little villages of Cannetis, Maironis, Villamagna, Aiglino, Villadasas, Vilfrancos, Villadenz, Villaudriz, St. Genese, Gaurt, Conguste, and Mata, with the farm-house of Mathus and the chateaux of Villalauro and Clairmont, with the little villages of St. Stephen of Surlac, and of Upper and Lower Agrifolio, ought to belong to the said monastery, as we have seen and heard read in the privileges and charters of the monastery, and as was there written.

Made in the year of the Incarnation of the Lord 1110, in the reign of Louis, Seal of Bernard of Atton, viscount Carcassone, seal of Raymond Mantellini, seal of Peter Roger of Barbazon, seal of Roger, sone of the said viscount of Carcassone, seal of William Hugo, seal of lord abbot Leo, who has accepted this acknowledgement of the homage of the said viscount.

And I, the monk John, have written this charter at the command of said lord Bernard Atton, viscount of Carcassone and of his sons on the day given above, in the presence and witness of all those named above.

Quite a mouthful, eh? No doubt that would make for lengthy courts. However the essentials could be extracted and incorporated into an oath little longer than the one we have now with very little effort.

A Lexicon of Progressive Feudalist Terms

These terms have been in circulation in the West for some time now. Many people consider them jokes, and they may be just that in one sense, but they also have real meaning. They were coined to be exact and descriptive terms regarding aspects of the SCA's political scene as regarded by Progressive Feudalists. It is time to let the cat out of the bag and define them for everyone else in the Knowne World.

Burgherism (Burgherite, Burgher, etc.): from Bughers, i.e., those who live in burgs or cities which were the wellsprings of the mundane world as opposed to the feudal world.

Burgherite Combinationalism: A view that would transpose mundane social and political norms to the SCA.

Monarchite Deviationism: A view that holds that Kingship is set apart and above the other political formulations of the SCA and is invested with unlimited power over them.

Right Feudal Deviationism: A view imparting absolute power in a feudal relationship to the liege lord.

Left Feudal Deviationism: A view holding that a vassal is free to disregard feudal obligations he or she has freely chosen to enter into.

PPFUF: Progressive People's Feudalist United Front

Progressive Feudalism: A view that attempts to implement the elements of medieval feudal systems that are applicable to the SCA.