

## Telephone Interview with Siegfried von Höflichskait Aug AS XXI (1987): Early SCA

Interviewer, Eadwynne of Runedun

Dedicated to Alison von Markheim

TO: The History of the Kingdom of the West, archivist.

FROM: Edwin "Ted" Hewitt, aka Baron Eadwynne of Runedun

RE: Interview from 1987 with Dave Thewlis, aka Siegfried von Höflichskait regarding the early SCA and particularly the first 12<sup>th</sup> Night in the Kingdom of the West.

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### TRANSCRIPT FOLLOWS:

Introduction: Hi. This is a tape of an interview with Siegfried von Höflichskait by Eadwynne of Runedun in the month of August, 1987, AS XXI. We are talking about some of the first years of the SCA, my specific interest was in the area of Twelfth Night for an article I am doing. This tape I am delivering over to some of the historians of the SCA so they might be able to make use of the information that I had no use for at this time.

Edwin: Okay, first thing, can we get your name and how it is correctly spelled?

Siegfried: Society or Mundane?

E: Oh, let's stick with Society.

S: Okay, sure. The name is Siegfried von (small "v") Höflichskait, "o" with an umlaut.

E: Is that Huflish?

S: Hoofflish... Hooflishskait.

E: Okay. Now, you say you were in the group (SCA) since negative two?

S: Something like that, yeah. Actually, the group's negative one would be a better inception. A friend of mine and I started building, um, medieval shields back in 1965, and we got interested in trying to recreate broadsword fighting, because we didn't believe much of what was in the popular novels. And we both fenced when we were overseas. And we were spending time sharing a place, and early the following year Diana Paxson, later Diana Studebaker, who's uh, Diana Listmaker, and it was her that threw the party that became the first tournament. She visited our house and saw the shields and it actually put the idea in her head, and we talked it over. And that led to the first tournament and that lead to the Society.

E: Uh, this is fully off-the-subject, but I understand that there is some derivation of... that the SCA is actually some derivation of the Renaissance Faire claimed by some people?

S: No. That is wholly untrue. None of the people involved in the SCA at that first tournament so far as I know had ever been to the Renaissance Faire. And in fact, the Renaissance Faire didn't come to Northern California until the following year. It had started a couple of years earlier in Southern California. What actually happened was that the then very young SCA was fairly instrumental in helping the Ren Faire get started in Northern California. Their first year up here they really had no people or contacts or anything else. We put a lot of time and energy in to helping them do it. We did some of the skits for them. And, of course, as the Renaissance Faire grew, they became more rigid as far as its period. And what happened after a while was that there were SCA people who did the Ren Faire, but the orientation of the Renaissance Faire being so very different, being actors and spectators as opposed to participants. But there are still some people in the SCA who do the Renaissance Faire, but in general what has happened is that people tend to get into one or the other. But no, the origin of the SCA had nothing whatsoever to do with the Renaissance Faire. I don't even think we'd ever heard of it.

E: (Laughs) Okay.

S: In fact, I think the very first I'd ever heard of the Renaissance Faire was in June of 1967. Uh... I believe Ron and Phyllis Patterson got in touch with us. They had some friends in Berkeley, and they were trying to set up to do the first one over here in September.

E: Okay, well... Back to the original questions, then. Alright, um, Twelfth Night. The first Twelfth Night, this would be I guess in the year ASI?

S: It was in, yeah, it was in the year AS I. It was probably, I don't remember exactly, but it would have been around the fourth of January in 1967, of course. And uh, it may even have for all I know, it may have actually been a Twelfth Night at Christmas, I'm not sure. It depends upon what the calendar says. We did it on Saturday night and we did it on the Saturday night nearest to actual Twelfth Night.

E: Okay, great. Now I understand at this point that there was a person who was, if fact I'm not even sure about this, was there even a person who was called "King" at this time?

S: No, not really. What happened was that, uh, the first tournament was won by, uh, what was his name? A German student, as a matter of fact, except he went back to Germany the following week. We never heard from him again. He fought under the name of Deutsche Bursenschaft, which we subsequently translated as "The German Student's Union."

[Kingdom Historian: In Diane's articles about the event: *Deutsche Bursenschaft*, his non-SCA name was *Paul Wolfgang*. Subsequently a video was reviewed and it was determined that "Aeginius, now Sir Richard the Short, had struck a killing blow that the judges had missed. Richard was declared the true winner and Marynel of Darkhaven was deemed his lady and Queen of the day."]

E: (Laughs)

S: And he was a friend of Diana's from the University of California. He was in her fencing class and that's how she met him. He finalled with Richard the Short who was actually somebody or other [Historian: *Aeginius*] "the gladiator." You understand that at this point nobody at the first tournament of course had the foggiest notion that had any idea that this thing was going to go anywhere. It was a one shot, a one off, right? It was just a party, with fighting. As far as I know, that was also the only tourney where anybody ever actually used a garbage can for anything. And Richard used it, he heated the thing up to go

with his trident for his Roman stuff. And that was May 1, 66. And the second one was the other. And the way that happened was, the very first tournament played to the judges, one was Dr. Elizabeth Pope from Mills College. She was, uh, a former professor of Diana's. She was also a novelist. She had written a book called, "The Perilous Gard," and one other. And the other quote, judge, unquote, was Dr. Studebaker who was subsequently Jon de Cles.

Most of the people then had not acquired their Society names. And in fact, as much as a year and a half later, you will find that in publications, uh, for example in the early issues of the TI, people still signed things with their mundane names rather than their Society names. The Society name business really caught on about two years into it. Uh, and that's one of the reasons why persona has never really been strong in the West, because we really didn't invent them originally. I mean, we didn't have them. It was just us doing it and subsequently we picked up SCA names. But the notion of actually developing a full-fledged alternate persona was not one that started here. It started other places. And I think that may be one of the reasons it has never caught on as strongly in the West as other places.

In any case, by the second tournament what we did was that the tournament played instead of to the judges, it played to Walter and Miriam Breen. That was Marian Zimmer Bradley, the science fiction author, and her husband because they were the people that had sponsored the thing in the sense of we had the meetings at their house and they did some of the footwork and so we invented the title of "Autocrat" for them, the great autocrats. They got to sit there and the tournament played to them.

And then the third tournament, myself and my wife at the time really sponsored it, so, and it's really hazy any more, but it played to us. Unfortunately I was unable to fight because my feet were so sunburned. We had made a minor blunder and had gone out boating and left our feet in the sun and that didn't work real well. The first tourneys were fought to choose the Queen of Love and Beauty. Okay? So, in the second tournament, for example, was won by Ken de Mace (?) [Historian: *Ken de Maiffe*], who became Fulk de Wyvern and his lady was Mary of Tomar [Historian: *Mary of Tamar*]. And so she became the Queen of Love and Beauty, but that was the only Queen or King term being used. The third tournament was won by Henrik (of Havn), and Henrik didn't even have a lady. He just looked around and found the prettiest girl he could that had anything vaguely resembling a period dress on – and her name was Wendy. And he chose her.

E: (Laughs)

S: And then at the first Twelfth Night, what we did was, we chose a King of Misrule.

E: A King of what?

S: A King of Misrule it's a classic English tradition. Typically the way it works is they pass around a cake or something and there will be something in one of the pieces of cake and that's how the King or Queen of Misrule would be chosen.

E: Oh! Like King o' the Bean.

S: Right. Yeah, something like that. I forget whether we used a bean or what. But the majority of the evening we had that. And I don't even recall whether Henrik and Wendy started by sitting on thrones or anything. I believe that they didn't, because we really didn't start calling the winner of the fighting, "King" until the following year. And in fact, there was a fair argument going on nearly to the end of 1967

as to whether we would use terms like kings and knights and things like that. Um, it took over a year for us to decide to do something medieval rather than some fantasy game or whatever. And one of the major reasons for that was that several of the people were fairly unreconstructed royalists or monarchists and were fairly uncomfortable using those terms until we became convinced that the organization had some stability and people were taking it at least reasonably seriously, in the sense that it wouldn't be dishonoring the notion of knighthood and things like that, to call ourselves that. Right? It wasn't just a bunch of people playing stupid games. Even then, the first titles that were used, as opposed to "King" which when we had that, the King was being chosen by combat and would change. I guess that's a medieval system, except that generally speaking the violence was directed at the incumbent as opposed to (his) not being allowed to participate. However, the only other medieval titles we took were knight and duke, because they weren't necessarily landed titles. And it was a long time before we ever adopted any landed titles because that seemed to be starting to imply some things that were a little nerve-wracking. The SCA has always been a game that is very easy to take too seriously. And when you start finding people who are Count suddenly deciding that they therefore must have counties and the people in their county, and their household becomes a county, and all of a sudden they think they have rights of juris and so on. And, of course, in the sixties, it was very easy for people to adopt multiple games.

So at the very first Twelfth Night, I don't recall whether or not we started out with Henrik and Wendryn (Wendy) sitting on thrones or anything like that. And my guess is that we probably didn't. We weren't really doing that yet. We DID have thrones for the King and Queen of Misrule, the majority of the evening that they were there.

[Historian: Good discussion here: <http://history.westkingdom.org/Year1/TwelfthNight.htm>]

E: So Henrik and Wendryn had won the tournament, but nothing was really done to reflect that fact?

S: I don't think so. Something might have been done subsequently to that.

[Historian: Over time, once titles such as Duke, Duchess, Count, Countess were created, anyone who might have had a claim to those titles as having reigned as King or Queen once or twice were back-dated in the Awards List.]

E: I understand that there was a Coronation held sometime after Twelfth Night where they actually installed someone in the Office of King. A lot of my information is kind of hazy.

S: I believe, and unfortunately, it's been over twenty-two years ago, and unfortunately most of my early records were destroyed when my house burnt down, so I lost a lot of my pictures and things like that.

[Historian: This page of the site describes the first Coronation and Tournament in March of 1967:

<http://history.westkingdom.org/Year1/FirstCoronation.htm>]

E: I'm sorry.

S: I certainly felt so at the time. I'm over it by now. We were certainly having a King and a Queen and a Coronation by May of 1967. By the end of the year one, it was starting to happen. And I believe, that Henrik and Wendrine [Historian: *Wendryn* – difficulty is that she was absent and remained so for the rest of the reign, even though she was considered to be Queen] probably sat on thrones to crown their

successors. But I don't honestly recall whether that was formally done with them. See, the way this thing typically works for the first couple of years was that each tournament, there were only the tournaments, there were no Kings or Queens yet. And they were the only ones that were held initially other than fighting practices. The choice of the date of May one was obvious... May one being the date of the first tournament. The next one after that was aimed at summer. The one after that was aimed originally at Bilbo's birthday party, September twenty-third, and subsequently it got shifted to the Fall Equinox. Then there was Twelfth Night and then there was one at the Spring Equinox. And except for Twelfth Night each one of these had competitions for a new King. And the way it would work is, the tournament would start off with a Grand March to the current King and Queen. Ending up, the last people in it were the incipient King and Queen who were then crowned and preceded over the tournament to choose their successor. So, except for about six hours, they were always lame duck monarchs, but it wasn't the kind of power invested in it that there is now. Because it was just developing. We didn't have a civil service – seneschals hadn't even been thought of until around 1969. Then we started building up the civil service. The only officer we really had was the marshal, who was the person who was presiding over the fighting at the tournament. Matter of fact, at the tournament, I think it was the tournament of May of 1967 – I'd have to go back and check my records, but at that one Richard and Diana Listmaker rode in to be crowned, Richard on his motorcycle and she on her motor scooter, so you can see we weren't really hung up on accuracy at that point at all.

E: (Laughs) Yeah, I could see that. Okay, you'll forgive me, I'm getting guilty of getting very interested in all these other aspects except for what I'm actually asking about.

S: Sorry.

E: No, no! I actually enjoy it. It's just that my phone bill's terrible. Okay, do you know about how many people attended, I mean just in general how many people attended the first Twelfth Night?

S: Oh boy! Perhaps around fifty. Around thirty-five to fifty I would say.

E: Who would you say were principally the types of people there? For instance I would assume, since this was still a much smaller gathering that still it was principally the college kids.

S: No, because the SCA never really was principally college kids. Okay? The original people who came to the very first tournament, the oldest person there was in his sixties, and the youngest person there was two. Um, they were drawn largely from several ranks. There were drawn from... there were some people from either Mills College or the University of California at Berkeley depending upon the (?). There were some science fiction people there because Diana at the time was involved in the science fiction community in California, and had invited several of those people. Was Poul there? Yeah. Poul Anderson was there at the tournament, and his daughter Astrid. Karen was at the second tourney but not the first. [Historian: Actually Astrid was at the first Tourney, but Poul and Karen couldn't make it. We have at least a couple of photos of Astrid at the event ...] There were several other people, uh, Felice Rawls (?) and her children were there, and several other people that were sort of in the general Northern California science fiction area. And their ages ranged quite considerably. And Walter and Miriam Breen, of course, and Miriam was Marian Zimmer Bradley and she was an author. And so those people were largely, not necessarily OLD, I mean Marian's (?) father, Beverly Hodgehead who subsequently became one of the first two Laurels, was there. She was there because she was a member

of a medieval choral group at Mills college that had been invited, and he dropped her off and he got interested and stayed.

E: (Laughs)

S: And several of us were with the science fiction community and the school community, those were probably the two major ones, but the result of that was that it was not oriented towards college students particularly. Although I would say that the majority of the people fighting certainly were of an age group ranging from their late teens to the, you know, late twenties. Uh, and you know, it wasn't exactly like anyone knew what was the appropriate age to do this. This was the first time most had ever done it. But certainly at the first Twelfth Night there was just as wide a spread of age group. And that has always been true here. The West in general has never been oriented around a university group. Generally speaking of course, the SCA in a lot of the rest of the country has started up around nucleus groups in schools. The thing that really spread the SCA worldwide was the science fiction convention in 1968. That was the BayCon and that was held at the Claremont Hotel in Berkeley. And the SCA was invited to put on a tournament, and it did, and most of the people at the convention saw the tournament. And an awful lot of them went back and started doing it themselves. And a lot of science fiction people are students – not all by any means, but a good number of them. And so, a very common model subsequent to that for SCA groups to start up would be on a campus, for example.

But the first Twelfth Night, the only thing I remember is that, not the only thing I remember about the first Twelfth Night, but the one thing as I say is that there was a variety of different ages. One of the more amusing was that somebody brought a tapioca pudding – it was a pot-luck... (pudding story redacted at Siegfried's request).

E and S: (Much laughing)

...Ah, the skeletons in our closet, yes. Aside from that, as I said, we did have a King and Queen of Misrule. We did it at the Mills College. We had a number of student union buildings. The early Twelfth Nights were all there, for a long time until we outgrew it. And from there we moved to the Church in Berkeley. And in fact, we still use the student union in Mills, it's a very nice room. It is big. It basically is an entire building that is one big hall and it's very medieval and has a huge fireplace at both ends. It really was nice. And it was there at Twelfth Night II that the SCA formally was created.

E: I wasn't aware of that!

S: What led to it was this was by the fall of 1967, by the time the SCA had existed for a year and a half, we had had two knightings. Both of which were done, in a spirit of fun. That is to say, in the first tournament David Bradley was knighted. He was supposed to be a squire and he did such a good job fighting that we staged a knighting, okay? And about nine months later when Henrik won the April tournament, April or March I'm trying to think, in early 1967 and De Wyvern knighted him. But what was becoming obvious at that time was that we were also starting to be in the middle of a controversy over what are we really doing? And so we decided that until we knew what we were doing, we weren't going to use these terms like this. And so for a while there was an Order of Champions, and there was a red arm band, no, a red baldric that was used to identify the senior fighter. We weren't calling ourselves knights at that time. In any case, the September 1967 tournament was won by a brand newcomer who had only been to one fighter practice, okay? And a number of the older fighters complained that it

wasn't really fair and that he wasn't really the winner, and it was just because that none of them had bothered to fight, and that was the only reason he won. There were also those who believed that if they didn't bother to fight that they got what they deserved and all that.

At this time, arguments over what the SCA was becoming and whether we were going to have knights or whatever were coming to a head. And finally, after that tournament in September that William the Silent won. We, by which I mean a few people who were concerned enough, sat down and decided that we finally needed to regularize this. We had been calling it, the Society for Creative Anachronism since mid-sixty-six. The name was invented in trying to apply for permission to reserve a park – Marian Zimmer Bradley came up with that name by the way. In any case, what we did was that we sat down and ultimately John de Cles and I spent all of one Saturday and part of one Sunday at my office using a Selectric typewriter typing out the scroll that would be read to actually formally create the SCA. And at Twelfth Night two, of January of 1967 we did that. Twelfth Night started in the afternoon, and the typed scroll was fourteen feet long. He never again heralded at anything, he said he'd used himself up. That was Clint Biggleston (?). His mundane name was Clint Bigglestone and his Society name was Herald Breakstone. Subsequently he became Laurel once we had a Laurel. We had already had the custom of crowning our victors with laurel leaves which we did because of the Olympic custom of crowning victors with laurel leaves and the Roman custom of the wreath of laurels. That is where the Society Laurel Wreath came from. Besides which, the Bay trees here are the California Bay laurel and they are all over the place here. So we always used that. Anyway, we wrote this thing and what it did was it bootstrapped the whole SCA. It created its self-defining terms. It established the structure of the thing as much as there was one, defined kings and queens, defined knights and dukes, and defined the Order of the Laurel. Okay? And it then said that all of the tournaments that had happened prior to Twelfth Night II, for the purposes of precedent, they would be dealt with as though the operation that was created in Twelfth Night II had been had been in effect the entire time. What that effectively meant was that David Bradley was a knight from May one of 1966, and Henrik from April of 1967. And that the Order of Precedence would show that the first duke was the person who had been king twice, even though they weren't being kings. That would have been Richard the Short, but the first two times he won we weren't having kings yet. Okay? And that is what the original grandfather clause was. It was simply the statement that everything that had happened prior to Twelfth Night II and the regularization of the SCA would be treated in terms of precedence as though it had happened under the same rules that were at that point established.

We started Twelfth Night II, Henrik was again King at that time on the throne, and William the Silent came up and Henrik knighted him, and then William and his lady, Sheryl, were crowned. And then we knighted all of the knights, including reknighting David and Henrik.

E: Was that David Bradley?

S: Yes.

E: Can I have his SCA name?

S: Ardral Argo ver Kaeysc. And he, therefore is the head, the principal of the Order of Knights, the Order of Chivalry. Although he is inactive and he hasn't been in the SCA for a very long time, but he still is the first knight.

E: I think I actually met him at a science fiction convention about five or six years ago.

S: Yeah, that's possible, he still does that... a very strange lad.

E: I think I had just joined the SCA a year or two earlier and he was using some terms which I considered "very SCA" and so I went up and said, "Hi, do you know anything about a group called the SCA?" And he laughed and he laughed and he laughed. I took that as an affirmative. He really didn't say anything after that. I'm sorry... please.

S: It's okay. In any case, that is where the SCA formally came from. That's when we bootstrapped it and did all that. And there are still copies of the original ceremonies that we did for knighthood and duking and Order of the Laurel. And the Laurel was invented, you know, for excellence in the Arts and Sciences basically. In fact the first two Laurels, one was an artist and one was an artificer – a mechanic, basically. And the first two Laurels were Master Beverly Hodgehead who got his Laurel for being the master artificer of the Society, and he made things.

E: Can you give me an example?

S: Sure. He made the first two crowns, which I have sitting on my mantle. He made the first great field of the SCA. He helped everybody on Earth make pavilions. He made portable holes for banner poles. He's a master mechanic by trade, or he was before he retired. And his mind naturally turned to things like that. Unfortunately, he especially likes to make things out of pipe, which means his things are very heavy.

The other one was Master Alfonso de Castile and he was a master musician. He was the head of a medieval music group called the Consortium Antiguam which was modeled after New York's Pro Musica Antigua. And the consortium existed in Northern California in the late sixties. And in fact, they intersected with the SCA early on. I think they were certainly at the third tournament. I don't think they were at the second tournament. As I recall, what happened was that one of their singers knew someone in the SCA and that is how they got connected with us.

E: Now Alfonso de Castile is down here in one of our (Caid) local shires now.

S: Right, he's down there now. The Consortium eventually dissolved, and he went inactive and vanished. And he surfaced again many years later. So he and Master Beverly share the honor of being the first two Laurels.

E: Okay. Do you know anything about the Order of the Pelican?

S: The Order of the Pelican came much, much later. The Order of the Pelican was invented by the Board of Directors in the early 1970s. And there were a lot of us who were very much opposed to it. And the reason was that originally we felt that the Laurel really should cover that because what the Laurel was supposed to cover was excellence in something in the service to the SCA. This particular period though had a lot of strain between the then Kingdom of the West and the Board of Directors. The SCA was eventually incorporated in October of 1968. And the people who did the incorporation became the first members of the Board of Directors. By the early seventies, they were calling themselves the Imperial Electors and inventing awards. And that essentially forced the issue of whether the Board was essentially a medieval function or a modern business function. The Board gave three Pelicans, three Board Level Pelicans, and of those, one person refused it, one person is totally inactive, and the third person was immediately given a multi-kingdom Laurel by the monarchs of all the existing kingdoms on

the grounds that if the person was going to be a Peer, they were going to be a Peer as if it were an "honest peerage." The Board never gave any more Pelicans, but they invented the Pelican award for service. Pelicans weren't given out in the Kingdom of the West for a while after that, then about a year and a half later, one of our very respected Peers requested that he might be allowed to give up his Laurel in exchange for a Pelican because he felt that he gotten his Laurel for service, and the Pelican was what that was for. It would be only fair. There was a lot of debate about that, and they finally decided to do it. And that sort of legitimized the Pelican in this Kingdom and subsequently there have been Pelicans.

E: Is there any particular anecdotes about Twelfth Night, aside from the Tapioca pudding, that you think might be interesting?

S: (Laughs) Well the second one obviously had a lot of interesting things to do with it because we created the SCA and the Herald tired his voice out. It was a fourteen foot long scroll and parts of it had to be read over and over again for each ceremony.

E: Oh no!

S: Here's one thing that might interest you. You recall I said, one thing that led up to this was that William the Silent's winning after only being at one fighter practice, and a lot of the people saying that if anybody who had been any good had been fighting then it wouldn't have happened. One of the things we established at Twelfth Night II was the fact that fighting for the Crown was a privilege. That is to say, you are allowed to fight for it. However, if you are a belted fighter, if you are a knight, you had the right to fight for the Crown and therefore the responsibility if you are present and capable. And we then said, however, that those who had twice been king on the grounds of that we made them duke. And we said that a duke having twice been king was not obliged to fight for the Crown. That is the ducal prerogative. It is simply that a duke is entitled to not enter the Crown lists. That is what the ducal prerogative initially was. Now there are places where that has been translated into anything the system will bear, and the ducal prerogative has become a great deal more than that. But that's what it initially really was. It turned from that to being able to leave the Crown lists at any point, and there have been dukes who have entered the Crown lists to make sure a certain someone didn't win. And in some kingdoms it has been interpreted as being able to enter the Crown lists at any point.

E: That is odd.

S: It certainly is. However the original ducal prerogative was simply that and nothing else.

E: I have found that there are several kingdoms which don't have a Twelfth Night.

S: Well, it's not that they don't have a Twelfth Night, they do. Atenveldt certainly has a Twelfth Night celebration, or they have several. The point is that it is not a Coronation for them. And it's not in Caid either. But in the West, Twelfth Night has always been a Coronation. It is entirely possible, thinking about that, but I cannot for sure remember, that we actually did have a ceremonial coronation of Henrik and Wendryn at the first Twelfth Night and that set the precedent of making it a coronation. But I cannot truly remember that...

One of the things that happened at the first Twelfth Night, I teamed up with Edwin Bersark for a presentation of "The Host of the Air." Which was an intoned poem which he was very fond of. So I

played guitar and he intoned it. And we had dancing. And we had some form of play, I don't remember anything about it other than it happened.

E: I understand that the "cloved lemon" was at Twelfth Night I?

S: I honest to God don't remember it. I don't remember cloved lemons until the early seventies. So if it was, I missed it.

E: I've had Twelfth Nights like that...

S: (Laughs) Right.

E: Okay, I sure thank you for your time. (Interview ends)