

Beyond The Pale



Supplemental Newsletter of the Middle Kingdom

June
2025

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Cover Image: *The Royal Family and the premiere members of the Order of the Mark. Bottom row left to right: Forester Muldonny McVriw (Mark vigilant), Countess Aibhilin ni Dhomhnaill (Mark vigilant), and Baron Robert Thorne (Mark vigilant). Royalty left to right: Count Kilian, Countess Jalida, King Wigthehn II, and Queen Neassa II. Photo by Lord Ursus (Brian Stoneman).*



The Greenwood Company form an arch of arrows for King Kilian and Queen Jalida to enter morning court of Spring Coronation 2025. The premiere members of the Order of the Mark would be announced shortly thereafter. Photo by THL Tarmach ben Yehuda al-Khazari (Richard Mandel).

Combatants for Spring Crown Tourney

From Their Royal Majesties:

Middle Kingdom, We bring to you those who wish to contend for the honor of their consort to sit on the Dragon Thrones. May your prowess be worthy, your chivalry honorable, and your future shine as bright as your inspiration.

- Duke Palymar of the Two Baronies and Mistress Magrat Catte for each other
- Duchess Vukasin Ullric for Duke Cellach MacChormach
- Count Nikolai Grigorevich Petrov for Countess Serena Kimbalwyke
- Count William of Fairhaven for Countess Isolde de la Ramee
- Earl Louis LeCoffrier for Countess Sir Sadb ingen Donnchadha
- Count Kilian Fendrich for Countess Jalida al-Hasanah
- Viscount Kith von Atzinger for Duchess Arianwen ferch Morgan
- Baron Kjell Smidr for Baroness Isabel Taylor
- Baron Tonis van Driele for Baroness Anne Mulligan
- Sir Ixtlixochitl for THLNorelle Thespiana
- Sör Ustad Hasan al Hajjii for Lady Rowen Hen Enaid
- Sir Pellinor of Shadowed Stars for Lady Cynthia the Invisible
- Sir Gunnar Redboar for Mistress Finepopla Gunnarswif
- Sir Zygmunt Nadratowski for Her Excellency Maddie McRae
- Sir Crispin dela Rochefoucauld for Mistress Gianna Vettori
- Sir Edward Foxley for Magnifica Allegra Ginevra Soave Da Napoli
- Sir Thorin Eikskjald for Forester Gwyneth Cole
- Master Fergus MacPherson for Dame Maggie MacKeith
- Sir Sascha St. Martin for Sergeant Kemma of the Three Rivers
- Rædesmann/Master Andreas Blacwode for Forester Gunnarr Bogsveigir
- Sir Hauk Hornabrotr for Baroness Octavia Callida
- Sir Victor loc Sant de Dormit for Mistress Keiley Duchem
- Master Immanuel von Brandenburg for Mistress Corasande of Starhill
- Master Roland de Sullane for Barone Rue Brynne
- Baron Cadwgan Faber for Dame Hadley of Beckham
- Baron Ronan Hauksson for Dame Roana Aldinoch
- Captain Brice Calquhoun for Mistress Brangwayn Snowden
- Captain Duncan Burns, called 'Monster' for Captain Mei Li
- Captain Dyderich Wolfhart for Maitresse Odette d'Amboise
- Domn Sierzant Krzysztof cul Bun for Duchess Brigh of Writers Keep
- Captain Arnora in Skarpa and Captain Hjalmr Njalsson for each other
- The Honorable Lord Jok Turnour for The Honorable Lady Meadhbh Ramsay
- Captain Vigfuss mjoksiglandi for Lady Ginna Ígulfríðr
- Warder Adam der Strom for Baroness Emmeline von Kaltwasser
- Captain Kollin Rhos for Mistress Zuriel Aurelius Nightshade
- Captain Marellus Kilianus for Baroness Seonaid inghean Ghriogair/Shonna of Vito's Minions
- Captain TryggR Gillason for Lady Claricia de la Mere
- Sergeant Dawood al Tayyib al Samari for Laureate Arianwen Triona Ceridwen o Wyndham
- Sergeant Pharamond de Flandres for Lady Berwyn O'Beaumaris
- Sergeant Andreas Renardi for Lady Chrysanthème des Prés
- Sergeant Quenild of Mercia and Sergeant Ehrenfried Schertenleib for each other
- Sergeant Astrid Feilan for Syr Magnus Refsson
- Sergeant Algar Irenhande for Vicountess Judith of Kirkland
- Sergeant Frostulf "Frosti" Thorgnyson for Pani Jadwiga Kochanova
- Lord Maks Pellyson for Warder Grimborg
- Sergeant Galum Talagach mucoi Drustan for Lady Morgana ferch Rhys of Glastonbury
- Lord Petur þe Auntelhare for Lady Carolyn le Tricoteuse
- Lord Eofor for Gentle Dyrfinna
- Lord Magnus Gleðill Vermundsson for Lady Danica of Gwyntarian

Arts & Articles

Liquid Gold: Honey & Mead in Late Medieval East Europe

by Rav Ezra de Barcelona, CW, CRV (Emerson Bonnema)

In the late Middle Ages, honey was a product of great value. Not only was it a delicious culinary ingredient, it served a medical role thanks to its antimicrobial properties and the belief in its ability to balance humors and heal wounds. The value was not only a result of its usefulness: it was also, in Northern Europe, a scarce resource. While the Mediterranean Basin featured ecosystems that supported substantially larger production of honey, the North and Baltic Sea coasts were too cold with too much rainfall to support the same amount of production. While trade routes brought wax and some honey from the south, access to honey was limited compared to demand.

Some of this demand was derived from consumption in the cities of the Hanseatic League and the rest of the greater Baltic, but more of it was powered by the needs of the feudal lords and knight-commanders of East Europe. Honey, and especially the mead brewed from it, was a diplomatic and political tool used by Polish and Lithuanian lords to grease the wheels of diplomacy. Envoys from royal courts were provided with high-grade mead, in contrast to other dignitaries who were gifted beers, wines, and other, lesser drinks; one diplomat even writes of his high hopes for fruitful discourse with the Polish king when the feast thrown to welcome him included pitchers of mead. This indicates quite clearly that mead in East Europe held a unique status that was recognized as high in prestige.

Diplomacy was not the only use for bee products. The Teutonic Knights whose military commanderies dotted Eastern Europe stockpiled honey in their forts. It is considered unlikely that these stores were meant for rationing: armies on the march would be unable to easily transport heavy jars of stick, liquid honey, and the records of acquisition show that the stores were resupplied at erratic times. It is proposed instead that honey was used as battlefield medicine: the stores did not deplete over time, as they would when used as victuals, but rather were utilized in large amounts at once, as medication following military encounters.

We can see the value of honey to the Teutonic Knights in other ways. In regions where the Knights served as lords, receiving taxation from local peasantry in exchange for their military protection, one of the ways tax could be tendered by payers was in the form of honey. This remarkable arrangement is further made notable by the documented pattern of the Knights not only receiving, but issuing payment in the form of honey: when settling accounts with mercenary companies and other accounts payable, the Teutonic Knights would include tuns of honey (and mead brewed in their own breweries, possibly from honey collected as tax) as payments towards their debt. In this way, honey in regions controlled by the Knights was not merely a treat, nor medicine: it was a kind of legal tender, a literal 'liquid gold.'



Illumination of beekeepers attributed to the Master of the Vitae Imperatorum. Humanistic script. Italy (Milan) 15th century. Used under creative commons license from the Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford.

Honey, wax, and mead can be clearly seen to have great value and importance to the medieval world. More than luxury goods, they represented a wide array of contexts: diplomatic, political, legal, economic, ecological, and religious, to give a nonexhaustive list. The production, trade, and consumption of these goods incentivized collaboration between diverse geographic, religious, and cultural groups, ranging from South Scandinavia to North Africa, from the Ural Mountains to the Atlantic Ocean. In the greater Baltic region, the vast confluence of contexts and networks of contributors to the supply of honey and mead come together to create a good of such cultural importance that it serves to honor kings and pay mercenaries, in a strikingly similar way as precious metals like silver and gold.

This article represents a small amount of the research conducted regarding the historical contexts of late medieval apiculture; further discussion is had in my lecture series “Be as the Bees.”

Resources:

1 Krug, Illana. “The Sweet Side of War: HONEY AND MILITARY MEDICINE.” *Medieval Warfare* 7, no. 2 (2017): 48

2 Sales i Fava, Lluís, Alexandra Sapoznik, and Mark Whelan. “Beekeeping in Late Medieval Europe: A Survey of Its Ecological Settings and Social Impacts.” *Anales de La Universidad de Alicante. Historia Medieval*, no.22 (September 29, 2021): 275. <https://doi.org/10.14198/medieval.19671>.

3 Whelan, Mark. “‘Mead from Riga’: The Trade and Consumption of a Hanse Cultural Good in the Late Medieval Baltic.” *German History* 40, no. 4 (December 2, 2022): 470–86. <https://doi.org/10.1093/gerhis/ghab086>.

4 Krug, “The Sweet Side of War.” 49

5 Sapoznik, Alexandra, Lluís Sales I Favà, and Mark Whelan. “Trade, Taste and Ecology: Honey in Late Medieval Europe.” *Journal of Medieval History* 49, no. 2 (March 15, 2023): 270 <https://doi.org/10.1080/03044181.2023.2188603>.

6 Whelan, “Mead from Riga.” 476.



Order of the Mark Vigilants and Royalty at Spring Coronation 2025 doing what martial peerages do best. Photo by Lord Ursus (Brian Stoneman).

Arts & Articles

The Publick House

by Dame Elizabeth Alles (Ashley Smith)

If you've been to a Coronation or Crown Tournament in the past year, you've probably encountered the Publick House. The Publick House is a daycamp and hospitality space that is open to all attendees at the event at no cost. It is funded and stocked by private donation.

If you haven't had the opportunity to visit a Publick House yet, I hope you will join us. I've committed to hold them at Coronations and Crown Tournaments for the foreseeable future, and other volunteers have organized them at other Middle Kingdom Events. Come in, sit down, play a game, and have a snack or a mug of cold water.

If you're inspired by the Publick House, I hope you'll consider hosting one of your own. Our requirements are simple. Here is what we ask of those who wish to use the moniker of the Publick House at Midrealm events:

1. The space must be open to all attendees of the event.
2. There should be at least one sign indicating that the space is open to all attendees. We would all like to think that we are friendly and welcoming, but it's hard for those of us who are shy, self-conscious, and/or socially awkward to be sure we're welcome. Even with the signs, my volunteers and I have discovered we have to reassure people that they are welcome to partake of our hospitality and shelter.
3. Basic hospitality in the form of shelter, seating, snacks and water should be provided (unless food is prohibited by the event site). Every event is different, and therefore every Publick House will need to adjust to the specific event's circumstances.

If you're interested in learning more about the Publick House, please reach out to me, Elizabeth Alles at lady.elizabeth@gmail.com. I've love to chat with you more.



That's the Queen's Hammer. From shenanigans at Spring Coronation 2025. Photo by THL Tarmach ben Yehuda al-Khazari (Richard Mandel).