

From the Skin Out



MAY CROWN A.S. XLV

From the Administrator

—Lady Isebel von Waldeck

Greetings to the An Tir Costumers' Guild!

It looks like winter is finally over and tourney season is soon approaching. Hopefully everyone was able to get a lot of costuming projects done over the long winter months!

At 12th Night, we discussed how we as a guild would like to move forward and what our purpose should be. We decided that we should be promoting costuming throughout the kingdom.

Which of course led to the next question, exactly how do we do that? In our brainstorming we decided that the guild should be more visible, that we should be more than just meetings, contests, and challenges. We can become more visible by offering classes, making largesse, holding workshops, stitch-ins on the eric, etc. I hope, as a guild, we will perform these activities.

At May Crown this year, we will be offering several classes. As soon as the schedule is known we will get it out there so that everyone who wants to can plan on attending classes.

If anyone has suggestions for activities, please contact me at isebelvonwaldeck@gmail.com. I am always open to suggestions for improvement.



From the Editor



Welcome to the May Crown issue of *From the Skin Out*!

I am HL Julia Sempronia and I am returning to my post as your editor after a hiatus of a few years.

I welcome your story ideas

and submissions, and encourage you to capture portraits of your fellow An Tirians at events, particularly those gentles who look well in their clothes.

Please forward this to those you feel might be interested, and enjoy this issue.



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12th Night Guild Meeting Minutes

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Thanks to everyone who participated in the Costumers' Guild meeting this past 12th Night. There was AMAZING energy and really great ideas!

What is the Mission of the Costumers' Guild?

CURRENT GOALS

1. Make the Costumers' Guild more meaningful to selves and the kingdom
2. Change image from stuffy to relevant
3. Everyone needs a costume to play!
4. Dispel myths
5. Personal outreach (e.g., hallway conversations, hand out gilded lilies)

OFFICERS

Contest Coordinator:

Lady Mathea Volpella da Perusia

Education/Challenges Coordinator:

HL Annaka Poznanska

Activities Coordinator:

HL Elewys Finchingefeld

Newsletter Editor:

HL Julia Sempronia

WEBSITE UPDATES

The following sections are going through a overhaul:

Officers

Newsletters:

Going forward, all future FTSOs will be published on the Kingdom Costumers' Guild website, www.currentmiddleages.org/Costumers

We will no longer be mailing out physical copies. We will also be making all back issues available online.

Challenges

Helpful links

Annotated Bibliography

Book Reviews

Movie views & reviews (list from Mattea)

Commercial pattern review (Mattea)

Actions

Need new Costumers' Guild banners - need volunteers (or add to activities list?)

Reignite interest in the Weavers' Sub-Guild?

Need Activities Coordinator

ACTIVITIES BRAINSTORM

- Make largesse like hats, coifs, veils, pouches, bags, handspun yarn, felt, tassels,

fingerloop braid / lucet braid, book covers

- Extreme costuming
- Garb for royals
- Children's / adult clothing exchange
- Fabric white elephant
- Costuming laurels' first garb display
- Classes before & after meeting to attract more people to the meeting (low-cost or free)

CLASS IDEAS

1. Practical
2. Hoods
3. Belt Purses
4. Mongolian Hats
5. Costume Clinic (New Tunic - Measure Hem); Help Fitting (like office hours)
6. Overview of Place & Time
7. How to Fit a Sleeve
8. Fingerloop Braid Class (really fun if it's big); also a good ice breaker

This is the May 2010 version of From the Skin Out, a quarterly publication of the Costumer's Guild, a chartered Arts guild of the Kingdom of An Tir. Issues are published for 12th Night, May Crown, July Coronation and September Crown. Electronic copies are available at <http://www.currentmiddleages.org/costumers/>

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12th Night Full Court Garb Competition

— HL Raffaella di Contino



WINNER SEBASTIAN VON ATER-DORFF & CONTEST COORDINATOR

Without further ado, here are the winners from this year's 12th Night Full Court Garb Competition

NOVICE 1ST PLACE:

SEBASTIAN VON ATER-DORFF

His late period outfit was literally breathtaking! When he came to sign up I was completely astounded that he had been costuming for less than a year! Brava!

NOVICE 2ND PLACE:

RUADHAN O FEARAIN

(AKA HL Ferain, please forgive the lack of many accent marks) who made himself a fantastic Tudor outfit.

INTERMEDIATE 1ST

PLACE: SOELIG SWEET-GLEE

Made an amazing Middle Byzantine (ca. 1075 A.D.) ensemble that she made for Baron Hawk of

Aquaterra. If you didn't get to see this it's nearly blinding in its brilliance. So much gorgeous embellishment.

INTERMEDIATE 2ND

PLACE:

EULALIA DE RAVENFELD

Presented a complete 14th c. English outfit from the head wear to the handmade turn shoes, and from her undies to her outerwear. Huzzah!

ADVANCED 1ST PLACE:

MIYAMOTO NO AKIK-

ONMU

Presented a complete 16th c. Japanese ensemble also from the skin out!

ADVANCED 2ND PLACE:

KARYN GEORGDOTTIR

Made a mid-14th cent. Icelandic outfit, both lovely and functional!

This year we did something completely new for prizes, and we had charters designed by Annaka Poznanska specifically for us. This was a great addition and I hope all the recipients were delighted by their award scrolls.

Huzzah to all those who entered, and those who judged for work well done! You have made my experience as Contest Coordinator a rich and rewarding one!



SOELIG SWEETGLEE

July Coronation Tourney Garb Contest

— HL Mathea da Perusia

The An Tir Costumers' Guild is once again proud to sponsor its yearly Tourney Garb Competition at July Coronation.

"Tourney Garb" means garb which is appropriate for your persona and which is durable and practical enough to withstand being worn at an S.C.A. camping event in An Tir. The costume entered can be for your regular persona or for any alternate persona you choose.

There are four (4) separate categories at each competition: NOVICE, INTERMEDIATE, ADVANCED and EXPERT. The criteria for these categories are listed on the guild website: www.currentmiddleages.org/

costumers/

You do not need to be a member of the Costumers' Guild in order to enter—contests are open to everyone.

The only person who can enter the costume is the person who made the costume. You can enter a costume you made for someone else, and have that person model the costume, but the maker must be the actual entrant. The costume is always judged "on the body" (not on a hanger). It doesn't have to be on your body, but it does have to be on someone's body.

Both of the current contests are for complete costumes, including headwear, footwear and undergarments. You will be allowed to

enter a costume that is lacking some of these elements, but you may well be judged against people whose costume is more complete, which will give them an advantage. Documentation is strongly recommended, but not required. You may enter the contest without documentation, but you might be judged against people who do have documentation.

Advance registration is recommended. We assign a 20 minute time slot to each contestant.

If you wait until the last minute to enter, you may get stuck at the end of the day and sometimes we even run out of time and have to turn contestants away, so try to register early.

You can pre-register by contact-

ing HL Mathea da Perusia, lady-mathea@gmail.com, or by arriving at the contest early and signing up on the sign-in sheet which is always provided. You can obtain an electronic copy of the Judging Form used in the contests by emailing me or by picking one up in person at an event where a contest is being held. This will allow you to consider in advance the elements you will be judged on and the weight given each one.

Feature Article: Anglo-Saxon Wrist Clasps

—HL Annaka Poznanska, JdL

What Was Done in Period

The Anglo-Saxons were a Germanic people who invaded England in the 5th century and ruled until the Norman Conquest in 1066. Much of our knowledge of Anglo-Saxon people comes from settlement excavations and grave goods. Large Anglo-Saxon cemeteries and numerous individual burials in the North and East of England have been excavated and extensively studied. Amateur enthusiasts have also discovered a plethora of Anglo-Saxon artifacts with metal detectors.

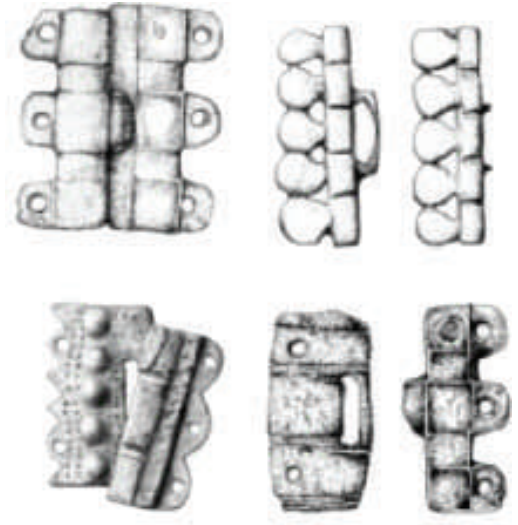
During the pre-Christian era, Anglo-Saxons were typically buried with a variety of personal possessions including jewelry, domestic tools and containers, and weapons. As Pagans, the Anglo-Saxons might have believed these objects would be useful in the afterlife.

The Anglo-Saxons were skilled metal smiths, and produced a wide variety of jewelry and decorative items in gold, silver, copper, bronze, and brass. Metal jewelry found in Anglo-Saxon women's graves commonly includes wrist clasps, brooches, and pendants.

WRIST CLASPS - FASHION AND FUNCTION

The fashion of wearing wrist clasps may have come to England from Scandinavia, and appeared around 470. Wrist clasps seem to have gone out of fashion in the 7th century, even though tight-fitting sleeves ap-

pear in Anglo-Saxon art well past that time. Many different styles of wrist clasps were produced during the 5th and 6th centuries. The wrist clasp sets in the following illustration are made of bronze and were all recovered from the Norton cemetery site.



The wrist clasp performed a useful and decorative function, providing a closure for a tight-fitting sleeve. No more than one set of clasps has ever been found in a single grave, yielding the conclusion that only one layer of clothing was fastened in this method. Because wrist clasps are found more frequently in graves with other jewelry and possessions that indicate the deceased woman was at least moderately well to do, wrist clasps may have been a status symbol or only worn on one's best clothing. Wrist clasps were sewn onto the garment – no traces of rivets have been found.

Wrist clasps often preserve fragments of tablet-woven trim or leather that is exactly the same width as the clasp. This indicates to me that the clasp and the sleeve trim were probably made to go with each other.

Wrist clasps are often found as a matched set (same style on both

sleeves). Some graves yielded two different styles of clasp, one on a right and the other on a left side. In other graves, only one clasp set was found on the left side, and a bead appeared to be used as a button to close the right sleeve. Occasionally, the clasps are not matched, as in the lower left example from the Norton site. Mis-matched sets also come from graves that have been previously disturbed. This is a more likely occurrence if found by an amateur collector with a metal detector in farmer's field. To the right is another example of such a set, described as being from two different garments. Although in reality, this assessment may not be true.

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THE WRIST CLASP PERFORMED A USEFUL AND DECORATIVE FUNCTION, PROVIDING A CLOSURE FOR A TIGHT-FITTING SLEEVE.

Manufacture and Decorative Elements

(Continued from page 4)

Common decoration patterns stamped onto wrist clasps are the familiar Anglo-Saxon forms of dots, concentric rings, straight lines or bars, and raised half-domes, such as we see on annular brooches and pendants from the same time period. The following illustration shows the full range of Anglo-Saxon forms present on artifacts found at Norton.

Wrist clasps were either cast or made from a sheet of metal. Here are several recently found examples of wrist clasps from the UK Detector Finds database. The first two are cast pieces. The third is an example of a repoussé piece. Only one half of each of the clasps was recovered.

Description: An early Anglo-Saxon cast copper-alloy wrist or sleeve clasp with a central hook on the back. The front of the clasp has a ridge across the entire width at the hooked end,

and four molded roundels in a



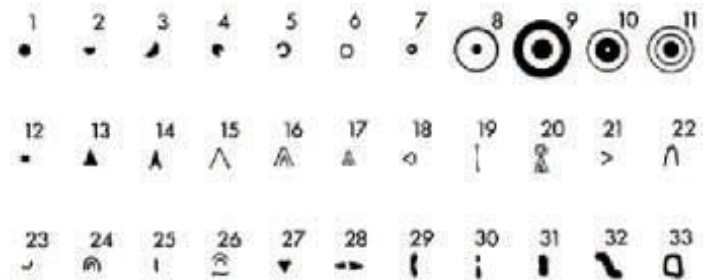
line at the attachment end. The ridge is decorated with transverse grooves, and the roundels each have an indented central quatrefoil. Incised triple lines link the roundels, and between the outer pair on each side, there is a protruding loop for stitching the clasp to a garment. There are traces of silvering or tinning on the surface.

Size (mm): 43mm x 14mm

Date Range: Late 5th - 6th century AD

Findspot: Near Horncastle
County: Lincolnshire

Description: An early Anglo-Saxon cast copper-alloy wrist or sleeve clasp. It has a serrated outer edge, three attachment holes and a rectangular loop of



reduced thickness for the clasp hook. The front has incised linear decoration, including two saltires and border lines along the serrated edge and sides.

Size (mm): 30mm x 16mm

Date Range: Late 5th - 6th century AD

Findspot: North Cave
County: Yorkshire

A copper-alloy wrist clasp of the early Anglo-Saxon period. It is made from sheet bronze and has two stitching holes on one side and

an integral central hook on the



other. The central field is decorated with three domes of repoussé form, the periphery with punched annulets.

Size (mm): 28mm

Date Range: Late 5th - 6th century AD

Findspot: Aldbrough
County: Yorkshire/north

What I Did – A Method of Reconstruction

The wrist clasp set that I made was an attempt to partially recreate one of the clasps found at the Norton site, using the repoussé method on sheet brass. The artifact I reproduced is described as being made of a copper alloy. This copper alloy could be either brass or bronze. Brass and bronze are both period materials for Anglo-Saxon metal smiths. Brass is an alloy of copper and

zinc. Bronze is an alloy of copper and tin. I chose brass sheet because it is readily available at local hobby shops and is relatively inexpensive. Bronze sheet is about 5 times the price of brass sheet and has to be ordered online. So due to the price and availability, I decided to use brass.

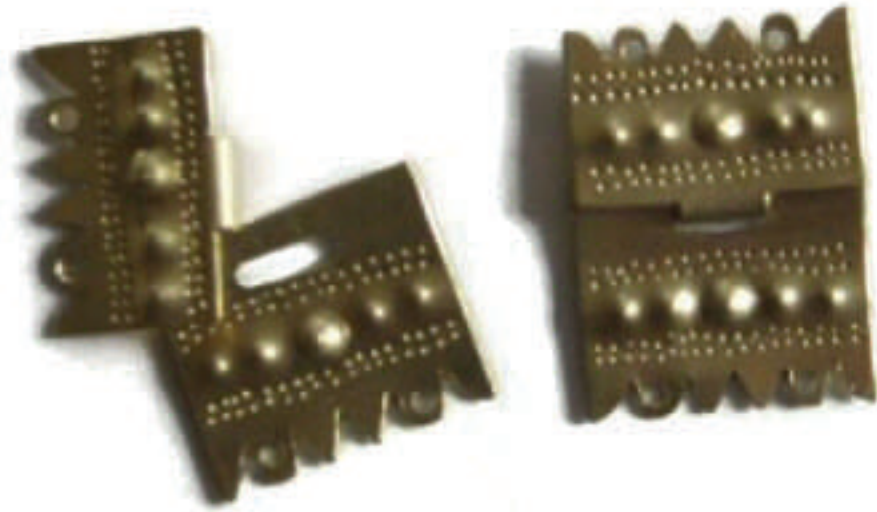
I made the slot side of the clasp set exactly the same size as pic-

tured in the Teeside illustration. Unfortunately, the matching hook side of this clasp was not present and a different clasp had been substituted (lower left - an example of wearing a mismatched set). Since I wanted a matching set, I made the hook side as a best attempt to match the slot side.

My clasps were made using hand tools. A chisel could have been

used to cut the brass sheet in period. I tried a chisel, but being a novice at working with brass, I got better results from a small jeweler's saw. I used fine toothed files to achieve smooth edges. I had quite a learning curve working with the brass sheet. It took six attempts before I was satisfied with my ability to cut everything to the correct size and shape, and

(Continued on page 6)



IN PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE,
A TIGHT SLEEVE THAT HAS A
DECORATIVE WRIST CLASP
CLOSURE CANNOT BE
EASILY ROLLED UP TO DO
CHORES.

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apply the decoration to the
clasps approximating the original
artifact.

No mention is made in the Norton artifact descriptions whether any thread fragments remained in the stitching holes. I decided to sew the clasps to the wrists of my gown with silk thread for its strength and decorative effect.

CONCLUSION

In practical experience, a tight sleeve that has a decorative wrist clasp closure cannot be easily rolled up to do chores. This leads me to conclude that wrist clasps may only have been worn on a typical woman's best garments, rather than being an everyday fashion. Wealthy women who had servants were probably able to wear them more often.

Other forms of Anglo-Saxon women's metal jewelry, such as bracelets and armbands are also

found in many graves - wrist clasps were not the only wrist decoration worn at this time. Amulet pendants made from animal's teeth, tiny bucket pendants containing textile remains, bow brooches, and bullae pendants, also found in pre-Christian era Anglo-Saxon women's graves are out of the scope of this paper but hopefully will be the subject of a future reconstruction project.

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