

COCKATRICE

The Arts & Sciences Journal for the Kingdom of Lochac



Winter AS 56 (2021)

This is the Winter AS 56 (2021) edition of Cockatrice, a publication of the Kingdom of Lochac of the Society for Creative Anachronism, Inc. (SCA, Inc.). Cockatrice is not a corporate publication of SCA, Inc., and does not delineate SCA, Inc. policies.

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We're looking for photos of completed or in progress works, as well as articles, documentation, or class notes!

Please send through anything you'd like to see featured in Cockatrice to editor@cockatrice.lochac.sca.org - **if you're excited about it, we're excited to help you share it!**

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COCKATRICE CALENDAR 2021 - 2022

	Submission Deadline	Publication Date
Spring Edition	1st October 2021	1st November 2021
Summer Edition	1st January 2022	1st February 2022
Autumn Edition	1st April 2022	1st May 2022

From the Editor

This is my final issue of Cockatrice as editor. I am sad to say goodbye. It has been a very eventful couple of years.

Thank you to everybody who has contributed to Cockatrice during my run as editor, either by submitting content or engaging with it. It has been a lot of fun, and so much of that has been because of the contributions that you have made.

I've made a sort of retrospective collage in this issue with some of my personal favourite submissions from the last couple of years. There is also some brand new content - documentation of leg wraps by Lord Thomas Boardmakere and a write up of making butter sculptures by THL Johnnae llyn Lewis.

I feel that there is a lot that needs to be said. However, I also feel that I am unqualified to say much of it. This missive, therefore, will be brief. I mention this only in the hope that you do not mistake my brevity for a lack of sincerity.

I feel that the real magic of the SCA is something that often occurs at our very first point of contact, and carries on for the entirety of our time here. It is the act of being able to choose who you want to be.

Choose a name. Choose a persona. Choose a few, if you like.

Choose to work or choose to take it easy. Choose to fight, or choose to make, or choose to serve. Choose any of these, choose all of them, or choose none.

Choose to speak when you see that words are needed. Choose to be quiet when others need to speak. Choose to be fair. Choose to be kind.

Choose to try to be a better human today than you were yesterday.

Choose to be good to each other.

Yours, always, in Service,
Bjorn Saemundarson

BINRT

Cockatrice Needs a New Editor!

It's that time again! Cockatrice is looking for a new editor to take the reins.

What Does the Editor Do? It's a good question, and one that's already been answered by Cockatrice's previous editor, THL Gwen verch David, at this link: <https://cockatrice.lochac.sca.org/what-does-the-editor-do/>



If you're interested in taking on the role, please contact
artsandsciences@lochac.sca.org

A Two-Year Retrospective



a. A Twisted Ring - Sir Vitale Giustiniani. Summer AS54.
b. Log Workbench - Baron John Biggeheved, Atlantia. Autumn AS54.
c. Mästermyr Chest - Lord Thomas Boardmakere. Summer AS54.





d.



e.



f.



g.

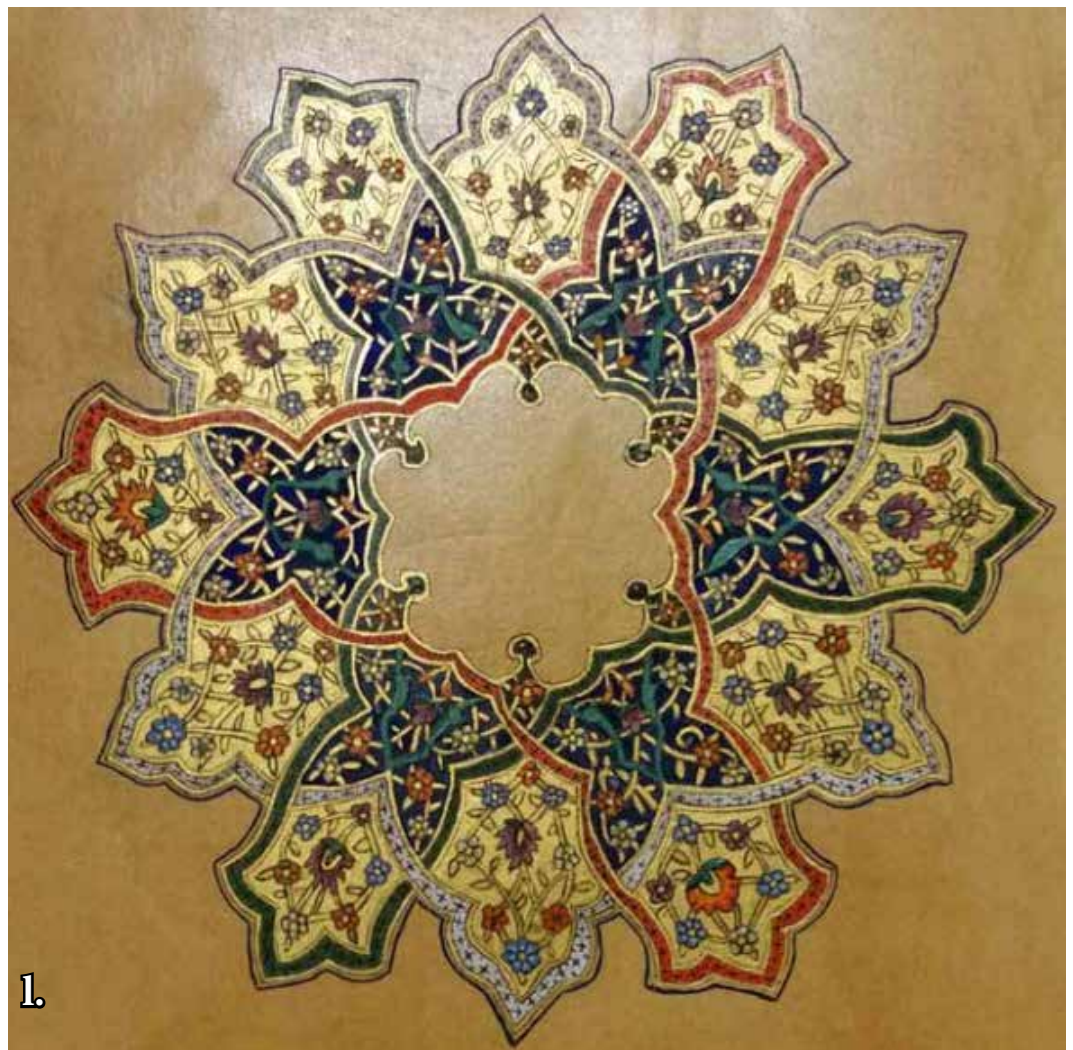
- d. Allegory of the Dagged Dress - Mistress Morgan Donner, An Tir. Summer AS54.
 e. Two Tablet Woven Bands from Orkney - Lady Dagny Sveinsdottir. Summer AS54.
 f. Scappi Kitchen Box - Master Owen van Norden. Autumn AS54.
 g. 14th - 15th C German Rope Hat - Lord Thomas Boardmakere. Autumn AS54.
 h. Pit Firing - Mistress Portia Vincenzo. Autumn AS54.



h.



- i. A Viking Sled - Master Angus MacDougall. Autumn AS54.
j. From Scribal Spectacle to a Life of Letters - Mistress Katherine Kerr. Winter AS54.
k. Experimenting with Ceramic Lamps - Kata of Mordenvale. Summer AS54.
l. Making Shell Gold - Lady Symonne de la Croix. Summer AS54.



Dark Ages Leg Wraps

BY THOMAS BOARDMAKERE



The following documentation follows my journey into creating a pair of leg wraps or “winingas” for the 2021 Total Arts and Science competition, in the *something warm* category. I decided that this was a great opportunity to create an item of clothing which would be appropriate for my 9th century Scandinavian persona, Oddr, to wear.

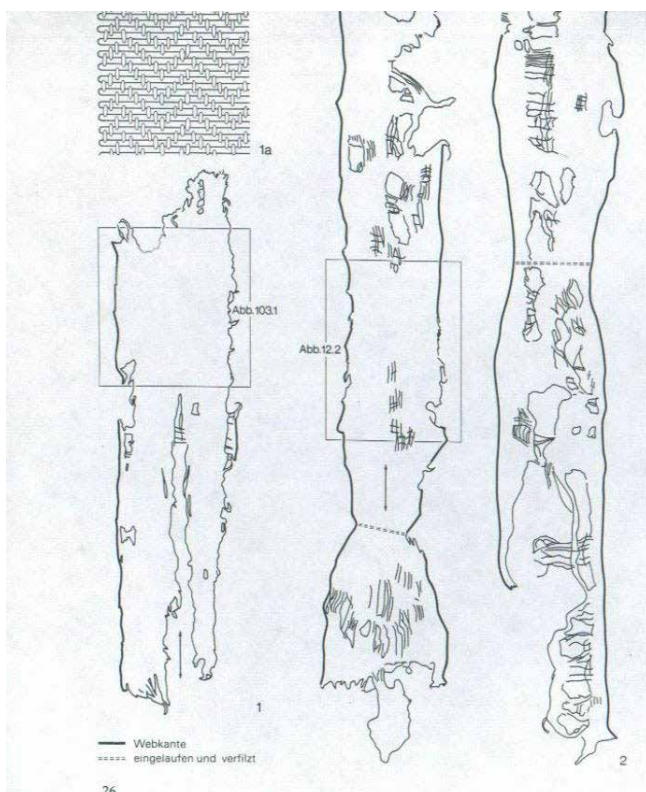
I am hoping to have a finished product that will fit with Viking Age garb in terms of materials, technique, and colour to form a cohesive final impression, but can also function to hold my Birka pants closed around the bottom of my low-profile knee armour, while fighting in SCA heavy combat, to ensure that they do not slip.

This means that the leg wraps need to be long enough to start by wrapping around my feet, wrapping around my calves, and still have length to finish wrapping around my knee cap.

I have never worked with wool yarn before, except for knitting a beanie when I was 14 year old, so this will be a departure from my usual skill set and I have no idea how they will turn out or what I’ll learn along the way.

Inspiration

Below are leg wraps as seen on the Bayeux Tapestry, an 11th century enroidered cloth depicting the Norman conquest of England and the battle of 1066. Importantly, in the selected fragments, leg wraps are visibly being worn as the top layer of the lower legs.



This original fragment (left) was one of five consistent with Viking Age leg wraps that were found at Hedeby, as detailed by Inga Hägg in *Textilfunde aus dem Hafen von Haithabu*.

This fragment is notable for being reasonably well preserved, and as such as the largest of the relevant fragments from Hedeby.

It measures 7.5cm in width, 102cm in length, and the finished edges demonstrate that it was woven to size rather than being cut from a larger woven cloth.

The yarn used was a middle-fine wool, and the leg wraps were woven in a 2/2 twill wool.

Materials

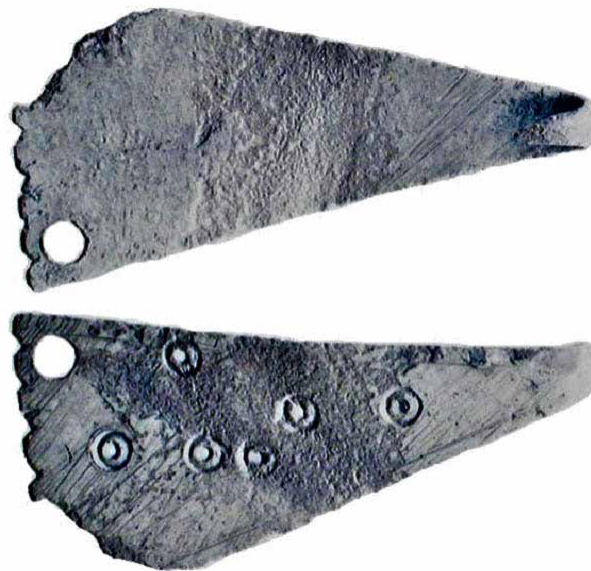
The primary material for these leg wraps was 3 balls of pure wool yarn. These were purchased from Spotlight as I have not yet developed the skills and do not have the time to produce large quantities of high quality yarn.

I have chosen what I have found to be a historically plausible red colour, which would have been achieved in period by dyeing the wool with either Madder imported from relatively local destinations such as Germany, France or the British Isles, or the significantly more exotic and expensive Mediterranean Kermes.

Although madder does not grow in Scandinavia, it has been identified in a large amount of fabric remains from throughout the Viking Age. This points to its importation, which would make it a more expensive dye than locally sourced colours although still within the reach of my impression's social class.

I decided to include small cosmetic sections of natural white hand-spun wool at regular intervals in order to break up the consistent red colour and give me the chance to practice spinning wool. This is a compromise that both demonstrates art of hand spinning while allowing me to benefit from modern machine spun yarn.

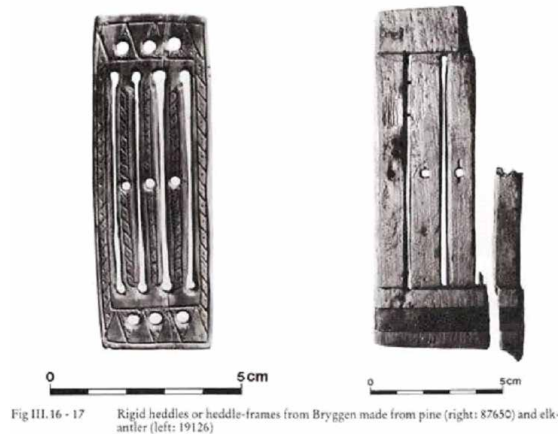
The hooks for the wraps will be made from copper sheet as it is a material readily available in both modern and historical times, and most winigas hooks from period were made either from copper or a copper alloy.



Copper alloy winigas hook with ring-and-dot pattern.
c. 8th - 10th C. CE, Found in England.

Loom

I began the weaving process by creating a rigid heddle loom. Evidence for rigid heddle looms used in period to weave bands exists in the form of the heddles themselves. These small 'looms' were a very portable, easy to use solution to the necessity of needing small bands in period - they could be woven by attaching one end of the warp to a belt, one end of the warp to a stick held between the feet to control tension, and the entire thing could be packed up or moved at a moment's notice. The only real weakness of this design is that the bands woven based on the heddles found would be much too small for my purposes.



The above examples were found in Bryggen, Norway, and date from the 12th C. CE, but other examples have been found as early as 3rd C. BCE in Hungary.

Soft heddled looms were likely in more common use to create wider material lengths. These would usually take the form of large standing warp-weighted looms. One of these looms is on my list of projects to tackle in the near future. However, due to current space and budget constraints, I have created a rough rigid heddle loom that works on the same basic principle as a warp-weighted loom and is possible to use entirely on your lap.

The heddle is made from zip ties cut and in half and the two turners use nails as slip pins to create tension where needed. Although not an entirely period correct loom, it resulted in a period correct tabby weave, and as the leg wraps are the goal of this project, I believe that this home made loom was a good compromise.



Other Tools

The other tools used in this project were a large sewing needle for wool, shuttle, drop spindle, wool combs, and scissors. Additionally, I found a kitchen fork a very useful friend for neatening and beating the weft down.

In order to engage with the project deeper I decided to spin a small amount of yarn myself from raw wool fleece. For this I needed a drop spindle and wool combs, which I have made based on examples found at Coppergate.



The spindle of my interpretation (right) was made from Tasmanian Oak, and the whorl was made from unfired clay.

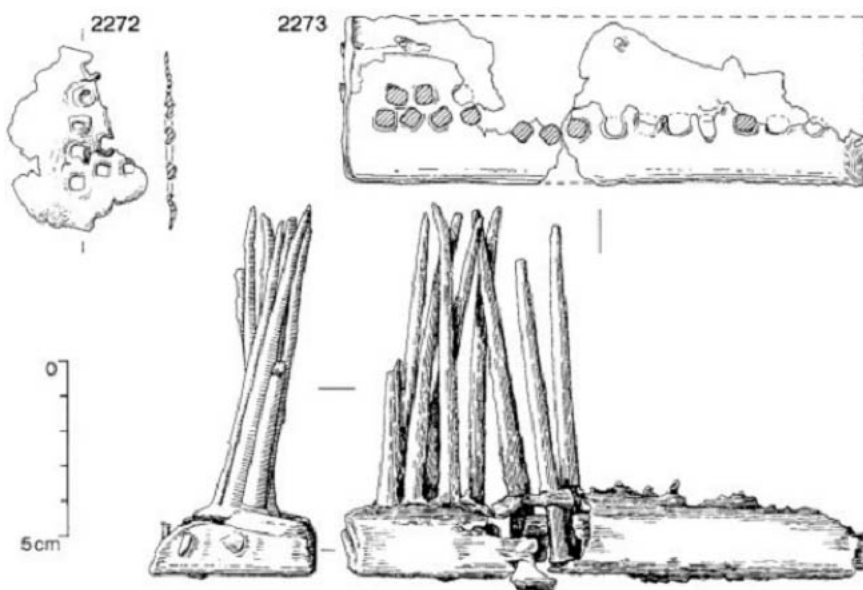


Fig.795 Binding plate 2272 and wool-comb 2273. Scale 1:2

Wool combs from Coppergate (left), and my interpretation of them (right). My combs were made with steel nails as pins and pine for the handles.

Spinning



I began by combing the fleece and spinning the yarn to be used in the hand spun sections of my leg wraps.

Spinning is a whole skill set that I have barely scratched the surface of, but it helps to know how much goes into creating the materials you're working with. Only a very generous spinner would call what I produced "yarn," but, fortunately, the nature of the weaving means that even the most crudely woven wool holds together as weft.

Weaving

Once we have the wools and our tools, we can begin the first step in the weaving process, which is warping up our loom.

I created loops of yarn 5m long by wrapping it around to sticks secured in place. The sticks could then be lifted off the wall and wound onto the loom until all the wool is up one end.

This process is greatly helped by an extra set of hands.

Once on the loom, the ends can be cut and pulled through the heddle, so that when the heddle is lifted one of every two threads is retained while every other thread can side down or up depending on the direction of travel.



I found that some extra sticks wound in with the warp helped to keep everything neat.

This very much becomes an exercise in yarn management. Spend as much effort here as you need to keep the tangles out. Tangles will slow your progress way down later if they build up.

The last tool to organise in order to make this process more manageable is a shuttle to hold the weft while working.



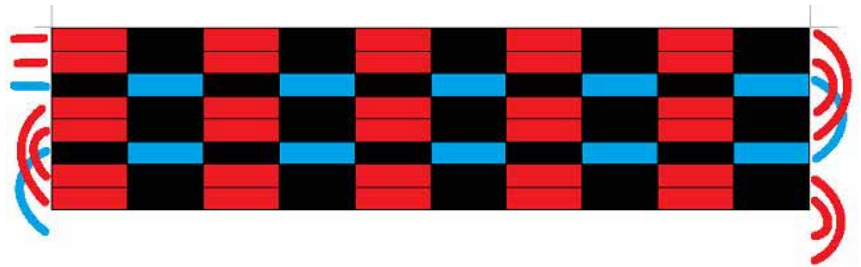
For this project, I decided to use the simplest weaving pattern I could - 1 x 1 basket, or tabby, weave. In this simple pattern the warps and wefts cross each other at 90 degrees and give the image of little squares. This is an ancient technique and was still in use in the Viking Age, and is very common even today.

Many period examples of leg wraps were woven in a twill to help with elasticity; however, due to my intended use of these wraps and the common nature of tabby woven fabric, I did not consider learning to weave a twill within the scope of this attempt.



The process of weaving in this pattern is very simple - lift the heddle, pass the shuttle through, lower the heddle and pass the shuttle through again.

When I first began weaving I had 30 warp threads (the vertical yarn), but after about 10 cm I found this to be too narrow for the project so added 5 more either side of the project, to bring the total up to 40 warp threads. This created a finished piece that was 75mm wide. I cut the narrow piece off later.



As I wove, I experimented with a few different ways of laying the weft in and found that the style I liked the most was a combination of 1 x 1 and 1 x 2, where a double weft runs through every second row, and the 1st row is a single weft created by its own thread.



This started as a way to use up off cuts and scrap, but I found that it made a more constant over all product and covered ground more quickly. It also made it easier to splice in yarn as they started and stopped.

Every 40cm or so I replaced the single weft with some of the hand woven yarn for the course of 5 rows, then would return to red.

After several sessions of weaving, this first batch came to an end, and I sliced it off of the loom and sewed the free ends back down to warps to seal the end. This run had turned out to be 3m long.





This is the same length as another pair of leg wraps that I own, however this pair is not as wide, so I judged I'd need to add a meter to the end of it.

This time when I warped, I started with 10 m of warp between my wall and the kitchen cupboard door. This would give me enough for second leg wrap and an extra meter for the first one.

However, when I began rolling these onto the loom, it became very tangled and I had to separate each individual thread and then tie them into batches of 5 once they had been passed through the heddle.

Something I didn't account for when using 10m of warp was that this made keeping tensioning consistent over that length much more challenging.

I attempted to resolve this on the fly by adding tensioning bars in the form of chops which happened to fit in the ratchet holes. This gave the slack somewhere to go without the need to be cut off.



Once I had finished weaving 5 meters on this batch I tested it on my leg and decided 4 meters was the right length with 1 m left over. I cut it off the loom, leaving enough loose warp to left over so that I could splice the new wrap to the old wrap, creating an eight meter piece. I then cut this in half and finished the ends, creating two 4m leg wraps.

When finishing the cut ends I sewed them into triangles to receive the hooks.

Now that the weaving was finished the woollen fabric could be wet set.

Wet setting locks the fibres into place and helps stabilise the piece. This was done by soaking the leg wraps in hot, soapy water and agitating them. If I was to do this long enough it would become felt but we only want the fibres to sit neatly, not change state. They were allowed to dry under slight tension to keep everything straight, and to take out some of the tension errors.

Hooks

The hooks were cut out of the piece of copper pipe.

I hammered the pipe flat, and then sawed and filed them into shape as a pair. I then separated them for sanding, bending, and drilling.

I experimented with a few homemade triangle punches, with you can just see as a “shadow” under the ones I ended up using. I also did some straight chisel marks on what turned out to be the back of the hook that I didn’t like the effect of. The particular punches I used in the end came from a packet of “mandala” punches sold at Spotlight. They fit with in the triangle motifs you often see on jewellery from this period.

The placement of punch marks in period examples can range from very geometrically placed to randomly punched in. I went with tastefully random.

Finally, I sewed the hooks on with linen, and they were finished.



Reflection



The leg wraps were a super interesting project.

It is always humbling to enter into a completely new style of project, for which you don't not have a foundation in at all. The new technique and materials force you to grow as a maker and the problem solving seems so fresh.

The leg wraps were a success in terms of their final product - they look good, and function as intended. They hold up my knees and do not slip off or move around while I fight.

I think what I would do differently next time would be in the selection of type of loom. I would be much more likely to select a loom where the warp is weighted but freely separated. This would prevent the tension from creeping. At the end of this project one side was much tighter than the other. This was due to how the warp unwound itself off of front roller.

This would not be an issue on a standing loom or inkle loom.

Next time I would like to try a herringbone twill weave, to see how they behaved differently when worn. I would also like to try different coloured wools in the warp and weft even if there were similar, like a grey and blue, or dark green and light green.

I would have to practice spinning a lot to get good enough to create fully functional yarn, and for the limited weaving I plan to do in the future, I'll probably stick to buying it from those who do it better.

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Butter Sculptures

BY THL JOHNNAE LLYN LEWIS, CE

Butter poses interesting problems for Society feasts. What can be done with butter that makes it more interesting? Might I suggest the art of butter sculpting or butter molding?

Quite possibly the earliest documented instances of butter sculpting can be found in far off Tibet where devout Buddhists still fashion colored yak butter into flowers, animals, symbols, or auspicious devotional figures. These figures are known as *torma* and are said to date from as early as the fifteenth century. The origins are somewhat in dispute, and there are a number of myths or stories as to how or why the tradition began. Sources point out that traditionally older sculptures are broken apart, and the butter reused; there are no surviving ancient sculptures. The practice is associated with the Tibetan New Year or *Losar* which occurs in February or March. One of the highlights of *Losar* is the lighting of thousands of butter lanterns or butter lamps.



In Renaissance Europe, the great Italian mastercook Bartolomeo Scappi offers a tantalizing introduction to the subject of butter sculptures in Europe. In 1536 he created a banquet for the last day of May to be served in a garden. The first service began with “statue di zuccaro” or sugarworks. The third course featured pastry sculptures. Of most interest to readers here is the second course which began with “con le altre sei statue di butiro.” These butter sculptures included: “Uno Elephante con un castello su laschena,” “Hercole che sbranava la bocca al lion,” “Il gran villano de Campidoglio,” “Un Camello, con un Re moro sopra,” and “Un’alicorno che habbia il corno in bocca al serpente.” Scappi’s butter sculptures have been featured of late in many accounts, including Wikipedia’s entry on “butter sculptures”. (*Opera*, p.398)

A lesser known but perhaps even more interesting source for butter sculptures can be found in the work *Le Ouverture de Cuisine*. In 1604, Lancelot du Casteau published in the city of Liege the small cookery book titled *Le Ouverture de Cuisine*. The work has been recently translated by Master Edouard Halidai/Daniel Myers. *Le Ouverture* ends with the description of butter sculptures created for the banquet “of Monsieur Robert de Berges Count of Walhain, Esquire & Prince of Liege, made in the palace in Liege, the year 1557 in the month of December.” The list reads:

“There were four parks of two feet square, environed in a hedge of butter.

The first was Adam & Eve made of butter, a serpent on a tree, & a running fountain, with little animals all around of butter.

The second park was the love of Pyramus & Thisbee, the lion by the fountain, & the trees all around environed in a hedge of butter.

The third park the hunt of Acteon, & the nymphs with Diana at the fountain, & then of the little dogs of butter.

The fourth park was two wild men, who battled one another with the masses by a fountain, & little lions of butter all around: each park had four banners.” (Myers)

So based upon these descriptions from Scappi and *Le Le Ouverture*, it seems that for special feasts in at least the spring and winter months, we can and ought to be creating sculptures of butter or diverse and lovely objects and animals of butter.

Creating the Butter Sculpture or Molded Figures

Having grown up with parents and grandparents that owned and milked dairy cows, I have some background in dairies, butter making, and molding. I can't recommend that one start with a cow and work one's way up through churning and then into molding butter, except as a demonstration project. Given the cost of numerous subtletie materials such as almond paste or sugar paste made with gun tracaganth, butter is a relative bargain. I often pay less than \$2.00 USD per pound. The trick is to buy when it's on sale and freeze it for use as needed. It's certainly much cheaper to work with butter than marzipan or sugarpaste, and butter for most feasts is already a budgeted and necessary item.

Both John Murrell and Hugh Plat mention cutters and moulds of tinne being used in the late 16th and early 17th century English kitchen. Today there are a number of commercial butter molds which can be purchased. Flat carved butter stamps are quite common. Often made out of wood or ceramics these stamps impress or print a design on a butter circle or square. It would be possible to create kingdom or baronial arms in a carving and imprint the arms in butter. (Once made, uses could also extend to cookies or other items.) Small butter molding can be done using flexible rubber butter molds or flat plastic candy molds. They can be found in a variety of seasonal themes or as designs like suns, moons, flowers, etc. Instructions call for filling the molds with softened butter. Freeze until hard. Carefully pop out the molded butters and freeze until needed.

More complicated and expensive are the commercial food safe 3-D plastic molds. These two or three part molds enable one to make 3-D statues of butter. Provided that one can find the mold, one can make cows, horses, deer, elephants, swans, lions, tigers, bears, etc. Be sure to check measurements carefully as many hobbyists have entered the market and are selling rather

small home 3-D printed items. My personal preference are the professional weight molds such as those sold by Tomric. When doing butter and honey butter sculptures for feasts, it's perhaps best to order multiples and in different sizes. <http://www.tomric.com/> Tomric molds can be expensive; there is also a minimum order size. Also the molds must be ordered well in advance as some designs come from Europe. (These molds can be used also for molding chocolate, should that fact influence and make their purchase more attractive.)



I would add that butter molding is not as easy as it first looks. It can take a great deal of time to mold multiples of even small animals or objects in butter for a feast. I do use food safe non latex gloves when handling butter for feasts. The finished items do keep and if wrapped well and stored in plastic boxes, the butter figures can be made in advance and stored in a freezer until needed. Finished sculptures can be decorated with food safe color dusts or garnished with flower petals. (I won't go into the opinions pro and con or the history of honey butter in this article, but will note that it's long been a traditional item on Society tables and is still requested to this day.) Honey butter molding is trickier as the honey has a tendency to weep out if the proportions of honey to butter are incorrect. Use too much honey and the figure will weep honey. Use too little and the figure won't taste of honey. It's tricky. But as butter is relatively inexpensive to buy, I would urge more people to take up the craft of butter molding. Butter sculpture where one starts out with a block of butter and sculpts the figure from scratch calls for the same skills as needed

in artistic sculpture of other materials, with the added need for working in a cold environment.

Lastly as someone born and raised in Midrealm (Illinois, Land of Lincoln and downstate farms), one must mention the famous life size “butter cows” of our summer state fairs. For those interested in “butter cows” there are a number of articles and photos, (plus streaming video, and live webcams during the actual fairs) which may be found online. Search under “Butter cows.” Generally, they are sculpted over an elaborate framework of wire mesh, steel, and wood. Iowa uses about 600 pounds of butter for each life size cow. (The donated dairy butter is often recycled and reused by food banks or even converted into biodiesel fuel.) Illinois’s butter cows often decorate the fair posters. North Carolina used a reported 1200 pounds in their sculpture in 2000. It took ten days to sculpt. Butter people, butter celebrities, butter buildings, popular culture, including Harry Potter and Star Trek, as well as the cows and calves, are all explored in the Pamela Simpson article and book cited below.

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Le Ouverture de Cuisine . 1604. This rough translation is courtesy of Daniel Myers (copyright 2006) at <http://www.medieval-cookery.com/notes/ouverture.shtm>

The butter descriptions are located just prior to the book’s index. {It should be noted that while the book was initially published in 1604, it was actually written in circa 1585 or a generation earlier than the first publication. See Terence Scully’s 2006 volume titled *La Varenne’s Cookery* for details as to this dating.} A French transcription based on the 1983 facsimile of the original text may be found on Professor Thomas Gloning’s website. See p 153 for the butter sculptures. <https://www.uni-giessen.de/fbz/fb05/germanistik/absprache/sprachverwendung/gloning/tx/ouv3.htm>

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What You're Working On



↑ My first go at pewter casting - a 13thc English belt with pewter fittings. **Mistress Rowan Perigrinne, Politarchopolis**



↑ A 16thc German Hemd (chemise) with pattern-darned collar. **Mistress Rowan Perigrinne, Politarchopolis**



↑→ Viking Age Shield. Hand forged reproduction 10th C Birka shield boss. Copper shield clips reproduced from Birka GR369. Goat hide covering attached with home made raw hide glue. Edged with raw hide. Colour scheme based on traces of paint from 9th C Gokstad shields. Black paint made from charcoal in linseed oil, yellow is yellow ochre. **Lord Thomas Boardmakere, Mordenvale**.

↓ Reproduction of the band from Birka BJ735. The warp is mostly silk. I've also used some linen in areas where the silk would not be seen (as was done historically). The primary weft is also linen, and the supplemental weft are dual strands of 26 gauge silver wire. **Lady Dagny Sveinsdottir, Mordenvale**

