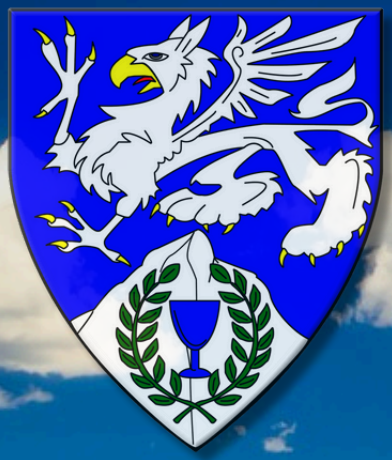
The Official Newsletter of The Principality of the Summits



The Echoes

Featured In This Issue:

- Update from Their Highnesses
- Photo Spreads: Egils Tourney and An Tir West War
- Announcement: The Alpine Codex

July, AS LX (2024)

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Greetings from your Summits Chronicler

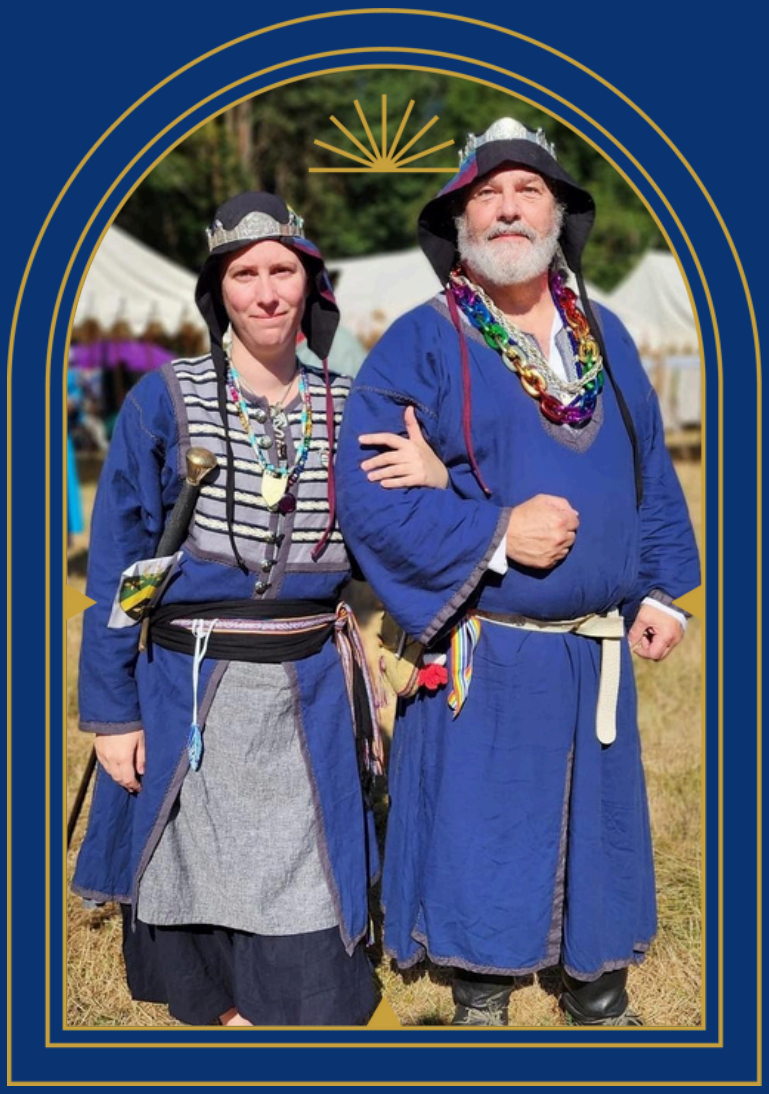
Hello, Summits! As always, I welcome your ideas, feedback, and SUBMISSIONS - let's fill these issues with your art, articles, photos, and anything else SCA-related that you'd like to share with the Principality! I'd love to spotlight YOUR talent. Please send submissions to summitschronicler@antir.org.

In this issue, I'm so excited to introduce The Alpine Codex, featuring a paper by Viscountess Temperance Trewelove. Enjoy!

In Service,
Lady Elizabeth Chandler

Their Alpine Highnesses

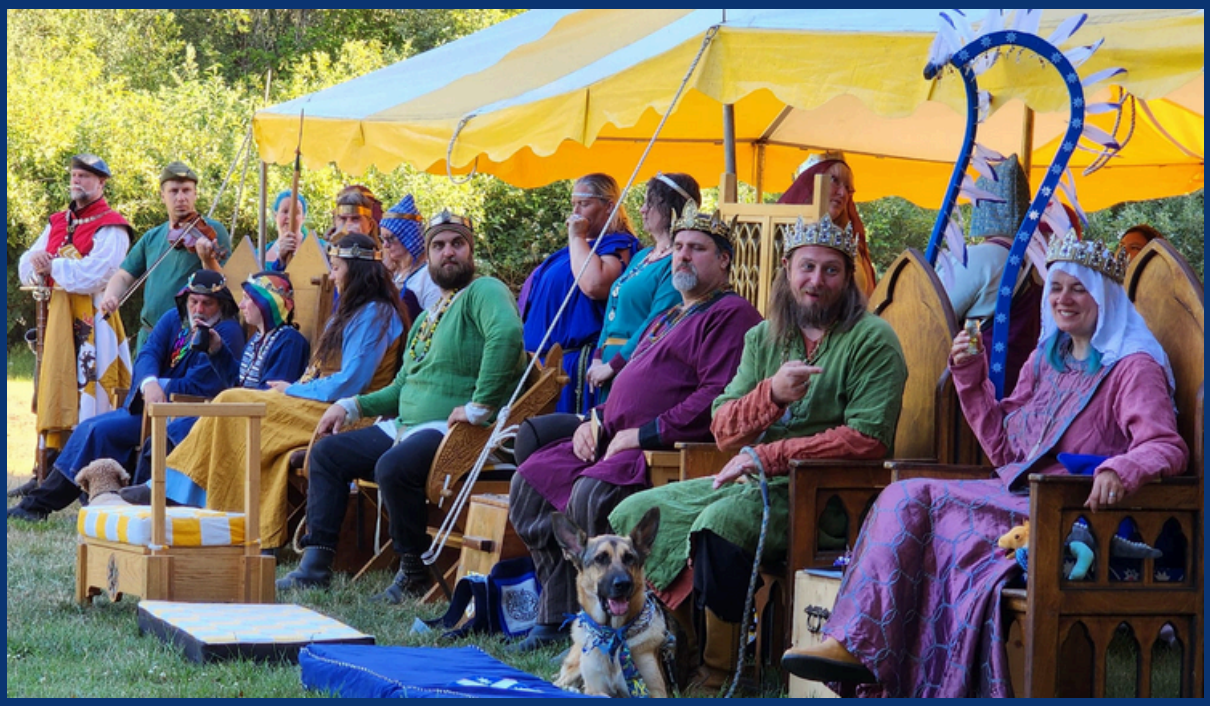
Prince Amalric and Şehzade Z



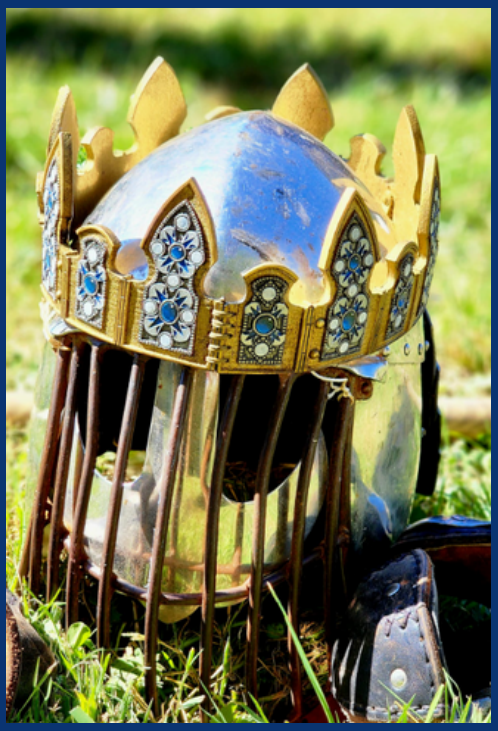
At the time of publication, their Highnesses (pictured here sporting the brand-new travel coronets at July Coronation!) are on their way to represent the Summits at Pennsic. They send their best wishes to the populace of the Principality, and look forward to being with you all when they return!

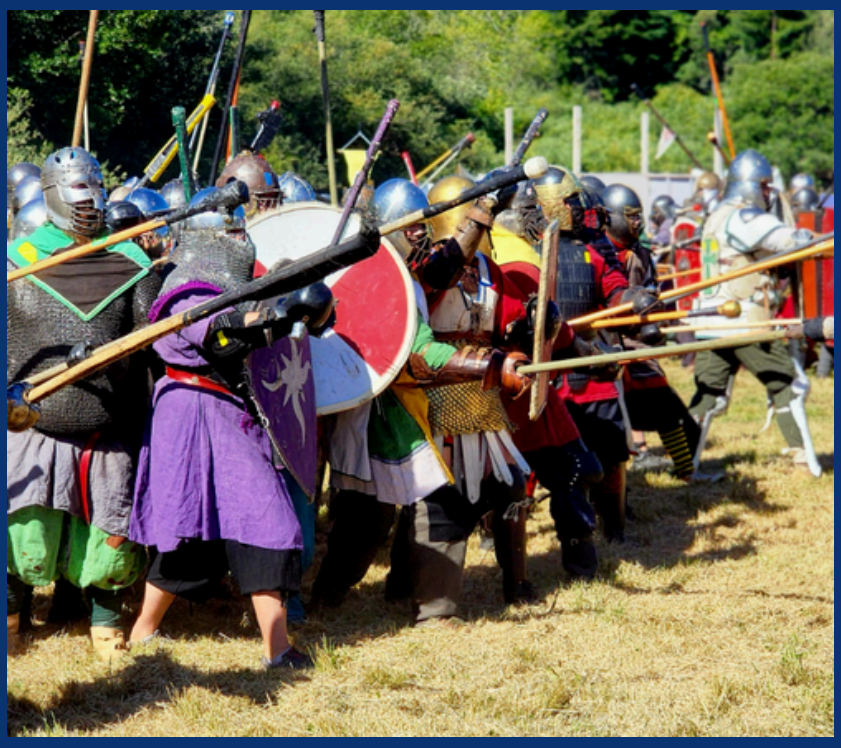
They bid you join them at Murder in the Desert in Corvaria (August 23-25), where archers from throughout the Summits will vie to become the next Captain of Eagles!

Photo credit: Ylva Annarsdottir



An Tir West War 2024





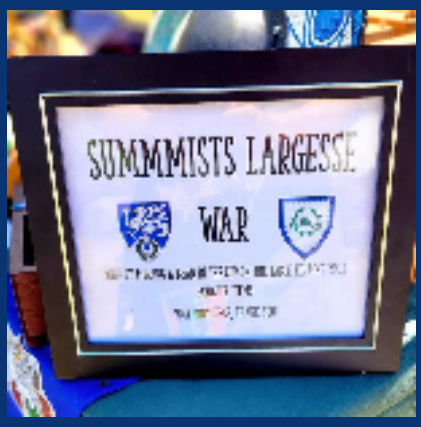
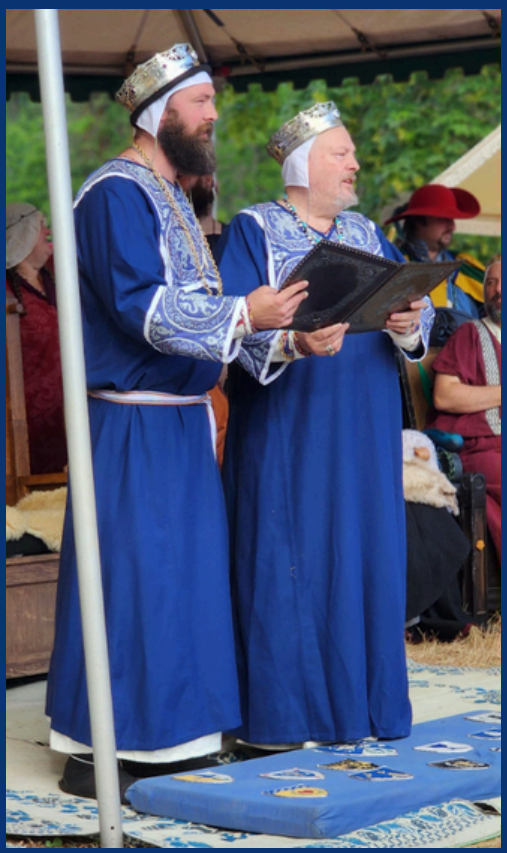


Photo credit: Ylva Annarsdottir

Egil Skallagrimson Memorial Tourney 2024



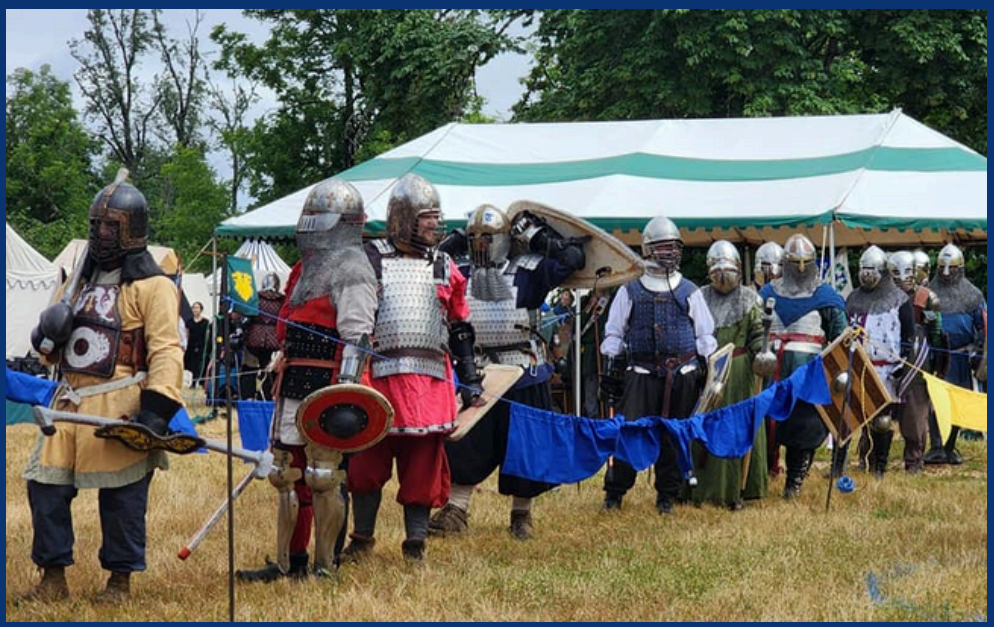


Photo credit: Ylva Annarsdottir

Egil's 18 and under
INTERVIEWS
by Onora Ua Cleirigh

(Note from the editor: Onora had the fun idea to interview her fellow Scadian youth and ask for fun kid-friendly ideas for future Egils events! Interviewee names shortened to initials for privacy.)

Name: L
Suggestion: A Ninja Course
Thoughts: This could be period for Japan?

Name: F
Suggestion: To have the children's "Mini Wars" be organized
Thoughts: These "Mini Wars" are quite famous. Most of the kids participate.

Name: B
Suggestion: "Mini Wars" become more organized, and for them to have props, such as forts
Thoughts: It probably won't be possible to get forts, but I'm not sure.

Name: K
Suggestion: "Mini Wars" become organized
Thoughts: These "Mini Wars" are quite famous. Most of the kids participate.
(Copied from F's interview.{This is what K wanted, just to clarify.})

Name: E
Suggestion: Racing
Thoughts: I don't know if there was much period racing,
but I know very little about racing; modern or medieval.

Name: A
Suggestion: Different kinds of animals
Thoughts: Animals are very period, but I think that you need s
pecial permission to have them at an event.

Name: O
Suggestion: Opportunities for youth to participate in activities
Thoughts: I think that that is an excellent idea, personally.

Name: A
Suggestion: Opportunities for youth to participate in activities
Thoughts: The exact same thoughts I had for O.

Name: L
Suggestion: Adventure games for youth
Thoughts: That could be very interesting.

Name: J
Suggestion: A youth night
Thoughts: A youth night is a night where all the children get together and do "stuff" as June said.

ANNOUNCEMENT:

The Alpine Codex

with Viscomt Antoine a la Langue d'Or

As we look back to the years past and into the future of these our fair lands, the role of the Echoes has changed from the quarterly newsletter with directions to events. It has become a place of spotlight. Where we may bring attention to outstanding people of the Summits. It has become a record of the living history of our principality, and it hopefully will become the new marketplace of scholarly ideas.

With that in mind, we wish to announce the formation of The Alpine Codex . a quarterly arts and sciences journal wherein we will publish research and process papers. This publication will be a regular fixture in future issues of the Echoes.

It is our intent to publish between one and three papers submitted by the populace every quarter that have passed a Peer Review. (As in the papers will be reviewed by a panel of peers)

MEET THE REST OF THE PANEL:

Baroness Yseult of Broceliande
Companion of the Laurel and Pelican

Vicaria Vesta Antonia Aurelia
Companion of the Laurel

Viscount Seamus O'Caellaigh
companion of the Laurel and Pelican

Viscountess Temprence Trewelove
Companion of the Laurel and Pelican

HOW DOES IT WORK, AND CAN I SUBMIT?

Absolutely! Anyone can submit their paper for review. To Submit just send an email to Summitschronicler@antir.org with the words "Codex submission" and (Authors Name)" subject line. Please send all papers in the pdf if formatted with pictures or docx if just text.

DO I HAVE TO LIVE IN THE SUMMITS TO SUBMIT A PAPER?

Not at all! We wish to amplify the research and scholarship all across the society, but the intention is to highlight Summits scholars. We intend to publish between 1-3 papers in each issue; one of the "slots" to be designated for a featured Summits Scholar, a second to have some regional prejudice to mostly feature Summits or nearby An Tirian scholars; however, the third may be selected from any contributors within the SCA.

HOW DOES THE PEER REVIEW PROCESS WORK?

As we are just implementing this journal and will hopefully streamline and refine the process as we go along, I can only tell you how we initially intend it to work.

Step 1: Submissions will be received and initially reviewed by the administrator Viscomt Antoine 'a la Langue d'Or. This review is to make sure the submission is complete and determine what, if any, specialty members of the panel need to be recruited to advise the other reviewers. Then Clean copies (without indicators of the author's identity) will be delivered unto the panel. The panel will determine whether the paper is ready for publication, held in reserve for future issues or sent back to the author for continued development.

Authors may resubmit papers that have been further developed as soon as the next window of submission.

OTHER THAN SUBMITTING PAPERS, HOW DO I GET INVOLVED?

Laurels who wish to be considered for future panelists or specialists please contact Summitschronicler@antir.org with your availability, desired scope of involvement and research specialty. As for other non-laurel scholars, Antoine will be looking for assistance with future issues of the Codex.

We are incredibly excited to start this Publishing arm of the Principality so that our contributions to SCA scholarship will not after our Arts and Sciences competitions fade into the annals of history, and that we have a repository of gathered knowledge to further not just our own individual scholarship but hopefully we will be able to make our contributions to overall knowledge of the world.

OUR FIRST PAPER

As we needed a first issue to begin it all, the Panel has agreed to publish "Ophelia FInds Her Voice" by Viscountess Temperance Trewelove, after which she was recruited to join the panel. Thank you all for joining us on this exciting journey.

Ophelia Finds Her Voice

John William Wright

In my other life, I am a teacher, a teacher with a passion for Shakespeare. I tell my students, "Shakespeare's language is not *in* the way; it *is* the way." Consequently, we do a variety of activities to help develop a full-bodied experience of Shakespeare, to remove it from a mere cerebral reading, and to encourage a more instinctive response. This experiential learning creates a kind of understanding of the complexity of human nature, of characters and their motivations, and—if not sympathy—a sense of compassion for the antagonists. However, when my students finish reading William Shakespeare's *Hamlet*,[1] their reactions are nearly uniform: Ophelia is pathetic, in the modern, casual sense of the word. The female students in particular are angry at Ophelia's weakness; they can't understand her passive conduct. Students surmise that Ophelia is driven to madness by her limited control over her life; that conclusion allows them to feel a little sorry for her. They view Ophelia much the same as critics who have described her as "an empty cipher patiently waiting to be infused with whatever meaning . . . (Dane 410). Critics and students alike identify Ophelia as a flat, stereotypical representation of the frailty of women. Even feminist critics like Carol Neely feel the need to speak for Ophelia, negating the possibility that she can speak for herself.[2] But, Shakespeare creates space for some resistance inside the controlled conventions of womanhood by tapping into the essence of what will later be identified by Carl Jung as the wounded healer archetype.[3] This model draws on mythological origins and

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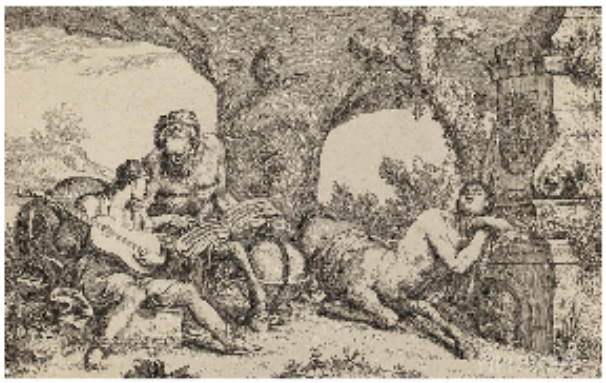
[1] The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark is Shakespeare's longest play. It was written sometime between 1599 and 1602. Three versions of the play are extant: First Quarto, (Q1, 1603), Second Quarto (Q2, 1604) and the First Folio (F1, 1623). Each has lines and entire scenes missing leading to speculation about whether one might have been a reading script or perhaps for use as a shorter traveling show.

[2] In "Representing Ophelia," Elaine Showalter describes a variety of responses by feminist critics including Carol Neely's defense of Ophelia. Neely writes, "I must 'tell' Ophelia's story" (1).

[3] Carl Jung's wounded healer archetype identifies the centaur Chiron, from Greek mythology, in his analysis. Chiron, known for his skill with medicine, was wounded by one of Hercules' poisoned arrows but was unable to heal himself. Since he was immortal, Chiron suffered but couldn't die. The idea behind the wounded healer is that having suffered himself, a healer is better able to sympathize and diagnose the illness of his patient (Benziman "The Wounded Healer as Cultural Archetype" 3).

portrays such healers as gaining their skills through personal suffering, either physically or psychologically.[4]

Shakespeare connects Ophelia with that healing role by locating her on the psychological edge. Her personal grief confers on her a kind of sanative orientation. Through her insanity, Shakespeare gives Ophelia diagnostic and salutary power and gives us information for reading the tragedy. Ophelia identifies the ills of forgetfulness and unrepentant corruption that plague Hamlet's family and friends and provides an herbal prescription. In addition, Ophelia helps us experience the restorative catharsis indicative of tragedy; she mediates our reaction to *Hamlet*.[5] Through Ophelia, we can feel pity. By examining the uses of the plants in Ophelia's flower scene, we discover that, quite subversively, Shakespeare gives Ophelia a critical voice. Reading Ophelia as a wounded healer allows us to re-cast her as an integral element, rather than merely a foil for Hamlet (Trudell 57).



"The Education in Music of the Young Achilles by the Centaur Chiron" by Antonio Maria.

At the beginning of the play, Ophelia is young, but she is self-possessed. That confidence is eroded throughout the play and disappears in the rational world but re-emerges in her psychosis in a way that guides our experience of the play. In the first act, we can hear the clarity of Ophelia's voice when she is talking with Laertes (1.3.1-51). Here, she is not yet wounded by Hamlet's cruelty. She has spunk. Ophelia listens as her brother berates her for giving any

[4] Galia Benzim cites Joan Halifax's work on the "'initiatory crisis'—a prolonged stage of deliberate physical illness and/or psychological crisis that the initiated has to undergo as part of the training process" (3).

[5] Aristotle wrote that the purpose of tragedy was to "arouse pity and fear, wherewith to accomplish a catharsis of emotions" (*Poetics*).

credence to Hamlet's expressions of affection. He warns her against opening her "chaste treasure" (1.3.31). But, Ophelia does not merely acquiesce to his warning. She facetiously admonishes Laertes to follow his own advice:

> I shall th' effect of this good lesson keep
>
> As watchman to my heart. But, good my brother,
>
> Do not, as some ungracious pastors do,
>
> Show me the steep and thorny way to heaven,
>
> Whilst like a puffed and reckless libertine
>
> Himself the primrose path of dalliance treads
>
> And recks not his own rede. (1.3.45-51)

Ophelia's confident retort demonstrates her love and concern for Laertes and highlights the therapeutic role she is already playing. However, this is the last time Ophelia is whole and strong and, because this scene comes so early in the play, this image of Ophelia does not persist in our minds. Instead, we remember what follows: a steady loss of power when her father dictates her actions and denies her access to Hamlet, increased emotional pain when she is in turn berated and abandoned by Hamlet, and growing isolation when Polonius dies and she is left virtually alone.[6] Nevertheless, as we shall see, her liminal solitude and suffering place her in the realm of traditional healing grounded in an understanding of the natural world.[7]

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[6] In "Reading Ophelia's Madness," Gabrielle Dane describes Ophelia's decline into madness as a "last resort . . . [an] unconscious revolt" (412) against the conflicting messages of all the men controlling her life. She describes Ophelia as "a medieval Alice, endlessly drawn down into the vortex of a psychic rabbit hole . . . " (411).

[7] Rebecca Laroche offers a discussion of research supporting the claim that young women like Ophelia would have an understanding of herbal medicine and be expected to practice it (215). Laroche argues for thinking of Ophelia's plants as being actual plants in her chapter "Ophelia's Plants and the Death of Violets" in the collection *Ecocritical Shakespeare* (211-221).

Ophelia's mania frees her to identify the malignancy in Hamlet's family without the restraints born of age, duty, or station; she speaks uncomfortable truths about the disease in Castle Elsinore without fear of retaliation because she is unconscious of the danger. Her delirium protects her from everyone except herself in part because people empathize with her and because, increasingly throughout the play, she is kept at a distance, playing the role of spectator to the action. Claudius, the root of the contagion infesting Castle Elsinore, does not perceive Ophelia as a threat; he sees her only as diminished by her state. "[P]oor Ophelia / Divided from her self, and her fair Judgment . . ." (4.5.80-1). Ophelia's eroded rationality focuses her iatric capacity, her healing function. Her remarks are diagnostic for the characters and make us aware of the state of illness in the play; that gives us an interpretive lens for understanding the play. Ophelia's perception allows her to identify the affliction and provide herbs as remedy. However, Ophelia's lunacy (and the fact that the play is a tragedy) predestines that her advice will be discounted. Though Ophelia warns the major characters in *Hamlet* that they are sick, they cannot heed her warnings.

As the situation between Hamlet and Ophelia degrades in the "Get thee to a nunnery" scene (3.1.92-162), Ophelia maintains her self-possession despite her obvious injury from his onslaughts. Ophelia notes Hamlet's disjointedness: "Now see that noble and most sovereign reason, / Like sweet bells jangled, out of tune and harsh; / That unmatch'd form and feature of blown youth / Blasted with ecstasy" (3.1.158-161). As she had done earlier with Laertes, Ophelia attempts to treat Hamlet's anguish through the use of healing words.[8] She invokes the supernatural by turning to prayer. "O, help him, you sweet heavens!" (3.1.135); a few lines later

[8] Illness was caused by a disharmony between components: extreme emotions, intellectual struggle, or spiritual strife. Therefore, healing the body physical meant healing other elements. Prayers and charms were valid and valued ingredients in attempts to restore people to full health (Louise Bishop *Words, Stones, and Herbs*).

she continues, "O heavenly powers, restore him!" (3.1.142). In contrast to the image of Ophelia being overcome by despair, which some critics assert, Ophelia demonstrates her emerging skill as a healer; her prayers function as an intervention.[9] Admirably, she has begun to detect and treat Hamlet's ills. However, Ophelia's efforts are in vain. That she fails to cure Hamlet's mania is unimportant in the discussion of agency. What does matter is that Ophelia's orisons represent an attempt to restore Hamlet to his senses. Ophelia acted. She identified illness and ventured a remedy, stepping into a reparative mode.

In Acts 3 and 4, the situation in Castle Elsinore goes from bad to worse: Hamlet's melancholy gives way to a cruel outburst against Ophelia (3.1.90-162); Hamlet roughly confronts his mother about her over-quick marriage to Claudius (3.4.9-197), and he accidentally stabs and kills Polonius (3.4.25-27). After Polonius' death, and with the absence of her brother and the loss of Hamlet (her love and quite possibly her lover), Ophelia experiences a drastic decline. No longer suffering from mere melancholy, she hovers on the brink of insanity: "She speaks much of her father; says she hears / There's tricks i' th' world, and hems, and beats her heart; / Spurns enviously at straws; speaks things in doubt, / That carry but half sense" (4.5.4-7). This moment is the point of initiatory crisis or isolating madness that fully connects Ophelia with her healing powers.[10]

Though Ophelia is off-stage as her ravings develop, we hear reports of their effect on others and whispers of concern about Claudius' elevation. Even in the first stirrings of her

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[9] In "La femme n'existe Pas- female ways of withdrawing from, interacting with or opposing the Lacanian Symbolic Order," Sophie Schallmayer describes Ophelia's metamorphosis from a position of some power to "mere puppet" (59).

[10] In "Furor Poeticus: Madness, Inspiration, Genius," John T. Hamilton describes Dionysian madness as a double-edged sword because it causes a "psychic wound reducing its victim to savagery; but also, possibly a gift of transcendence which elevates the inflicted above the quotidian, above the work-a-day world" (3).

dementia, Ophelia's words have potency. When Act 4, scene 5 opens, Queen Gertrude listens as Horatio airs his concern regarding Ophelia's mental state (4.5.1-20). He warns the Queen that though Ophelia's "speech is nothing, / Yet the unshaped use of it doth move / The hearers to collection (4.5.7-9). He suggests that Ophelia's words are problematic.[11] Gertrude intensifies the disruptive capacity of Ophelia's words when she says: "'Twere good she were spoken with, / For she may strew dangerous conjectures / In ill breeding minds" (4.5.14.15). It is interesting that Ophelia's words are "dangerous" because of the reception they might have in "ill breeding minds." Whose minds are more mischievous or discontented and in need of relief than their majesties? Horatio's counsel to the Queen, and her response, is an acknowledgment of Ophelia's voice and an attempt to silence it.

Gertrude seeks to marginalize Ophelia by avoiding her. But Horatio's urgings hold sway and Gertrude admits Ophelia. From the first, Gertrude and Claudius try to enter into conversation with Ophelia to exert their royal power over her, but their efforts are met with limited success. Gertrude says, "Alas, sweet lady, what imports this song?" (4.5.27). Ophelia discounts the Queen's authority, fails to answer a direct question, and commands the Queen to listen: "Say you? Nay, pray you, mark" (4.5.28). In the past, critics have often ignored these exchanges except to note them as evidence of Ophelia's insanity.[12] But Neely identifies Ophelia's resistant behavior as transformational ("Feminist Modes" 9), making Ophelia's repartee important. While

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[11] Critics have discussed Horatio's role in *Hamlet* variously. Some, like Peter Gillies, suggest that Horatio's character functions as a rational and impartial "barometer of truth" for both Hamlet and the audience ("Words of Wisdom: The Role of Horatio in Shakespeare's 'Hamlet'." Christopher Waverly suggests that Horatio's function is to "conserve noble rule" ("Specters of Horatio" 1042). The latter interpretation explains why Horatio encourages the Crown to silence Ophelia in order to preserve the State.

[12] Expressing the concerns of pre-feminist criticism, Carroll Camden writes, "[W]e should probably make little or nothing of Ophelia's non sequiturs in this scene. To derive intelligent meaning from them would be to group ourselves with others who remark her ramblings and 'botch the words up to fit their own thoughts'" (251).

the unmoderated flow does indicate Ophelia's diminishing sanity, it also marks her escape from the strictures of a well-mannered lady. Ophelia is threatening precisely because she is not conforming to societal expectations. She is moving to a place of influence through mental instability.

In much the way that Shakespeare uses clowns and other marginalized characters to tip order on its head and raise deep themes, he uses the role of female healer to move women from a position of "powerlessness to authority" (Kerwin 104).[13] Though Ophelia's condition sets her apart from her society, it expands the limited space for women. While Ophelia's derangement would have separated her in a negative way from any properly ordered society, Castle Elsinore and its inhabitants are diseased. Separation from a situation defined by illness actually re-empowers Ophelia and reconnects her with the self-possessed girl from the beginning of the play. However, amidst this natural and politic sickness, it is not surprising that Ophelia too should suffer. The difference is that while she becomes divided from the rest of the inhabitants by her madness, she ascends to a place of power where she can diagnose the infection and recommend treatment, elevating her authority in our eyes. Despite the dismissal by the characters in the play, we are privy to the diagnosis and insight she provides.

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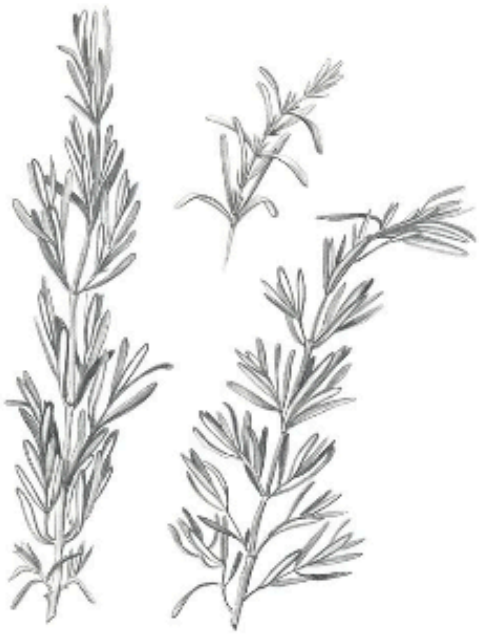
[13] Ophelia is not alone as a lady physic in Shakespeare's works. In *All's Well That Ends Well*, Helena cures the King's illness by applying the medical knowledge she gained from her father who was a famous physician. Helena strikes a bargain with the King of France allowing her to attempt to heal him. She agrees that failure will result in forfeit of her life but in a bold expression of power, Helena requests to be compensated if she succeeds. When the King is cured, as per his word he permits Helena to choose her husband from among the King's court (2.1.98-210). In *The Winter's Tale,* Paulina attempts to cure King Leontes of his jealousy and to restore his senses (2.3.35-127). King Leontes believes his wife, Hermione, has had an affair with and become pregnant by his best friend, the King of Bohemia, Polixenes. Paulina, a confident woman who is comfortable speaking harsh but salubrious facts to King Leontes, tries to change Leontes' mind and have him acknowledge the baby, but he refuses. In her efforts to convince him, she overrides the men who try to silence her, resisting the role of a meek and obedient wife, and she enrages the king by failing to comply with his commands. Shortly thereafter, Hermione is reported as dead. Leontes repents and mourns for the next 16 years until magically, Hermione is restored to him in Paulina's garden when her statue magically transforms into the living queen (5.3.1-155). Paulina's behavior locates her on the edge of the socially acceptable in the same way that Ophelia exists on the rational edge. These women operate outside of the rational and conventional, and their role as healers serves as locus for their power.

In the famous flower speech, Ophelia pronounces the malady that has affected them all and proposes some countermeasures. For this scene, Shakespeare provides no stage direction to indicate to whom each plant should be given.[14] It is Shakespeare's absence of specificity that expands Ophelia's authority to apply the curatives as she sees fit and opens the larger interpretive function of her actions. Her proposed remedies encourage us to reflect on all the characters' actions and determine the aptness of her analysis. Ophelia begins with rosemary, which could be a panacea for the entire play because it was used to treat so many illnesses.[15] When Ophelia says, "There's rosemary, that's for remembrance. Pray, /love, remember" (4.5.176-177), she is potentially offering everyone on stage a roborant in the form of a simple since rosemary was useful for general maladies of the brain like "dullness of the mind and senses" (Culpeper 155) and stimulating memory (Dioscorides).[16]



"Rosemary Pencil Drawing" by Anna Repp.

In *Hamlet*, Shakespeare considers a range of pitfalls related to hypomnesia. All the major

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[14] The distribution of plants was an issue of conjecture among critics in the past. Simone Augustine Blackmore concedes that one of the riddles of *Hamlet* is this floral distribution but he asserts that despite the lack of actual stage direction, stage tradition has established recipients: "Ophelia assigns rosemary to Hamlet, who is present to her imagination; she gives pansies to Laertes; fennel and columbines to Claudius; and rue to the Queen and herself" (*The Riddles of Hamlet*).

[15] Rosemary is a very versatile plant; in his herbal *A Greene Forest*, John Maplet calls it the "wholesome" herb.

[16] Simples are drugs made from a natural source: mineral, vegetable, or animal can be combined in a recipe to form a compounded drug. The herbal simples stand in contrast with *potherb*s, which would be for use in the kitchen (Kerr 54).

characters suffer from ailments related to their lack of responsibility to memory; the action implied in remembrance would have altered their situations. A healthy Laertes would have remembered to comfort and care for his sister and focus on her rather than his quest to avenge his father's murder. In fact, Laertes seems to not think of Ophelia at all when not in her presence and, upon returning from France after hearing of his father's death, Laertes stands transfixed when he sees Ophelia and speaks of her but not to her. Gertrude, in particular, is damaged by her negligence to memory. The grieving process for King Hamlet was skipped or at least abbreviated and she married Claudius in haste; this is integral to the play. Hamlet too requires the tonic effect of rosemary. In what turns out to be a prescient observation, the ghost tells Hamlet that even the fat weeds on the river of forgetfulness will have more vivacity than Hamlet should he fail to take action against his uncle.[17] Had Hamlet been able to act on that warning he might have been released from his paralysis of indecision and avenged his father's murder.

Claudius' situation also underscores the need for rosemary. From the first, his crimes against his brother and others stem from an utter failure to honor his brother and, after King Hamlet's death, his memory. Ophelia's prescription of rosemary highlights the fact that Claudius' recollection of his brother is only a veneer. In Act 1, scene 2, Claudius provides the outward appearance of remembering when he says:

> Though yet of Hamlet our dear brother's death
>
> The memory be green, and that it us befitted
>
> To bear our hearts in grief, and our whole kingdom
>
> To be contracted in one brow of woe,

[17] "I find thee apt; / And duller shouldst thou be than the fat weed / That roots itself in ease on Lethe wharf, / Wouldst thou not stir in this" (Ghost 1.5.32-35).

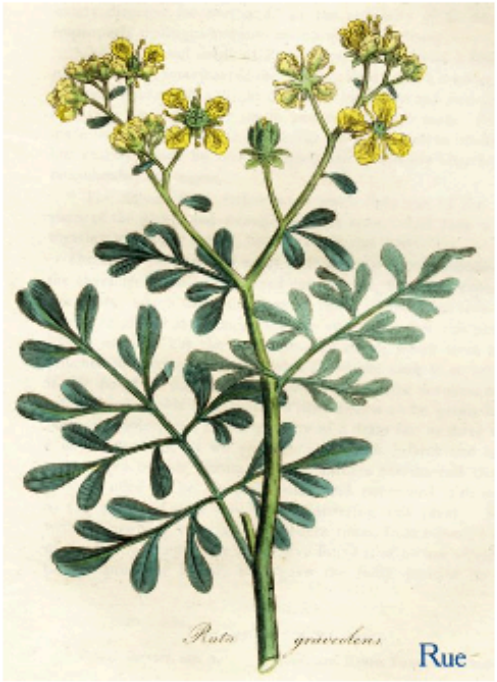
Yet so far hath discretion fought with nature

That we with wisest sorrow think on him

Together with remembrance of ourselves. (1.2.1-7)

However, Claudius' real thoughts are self-interested and not an active recollection of his brother. The medicinal properties of rosemary signal that.

The underlying issue of forgetfulness contributes to the increasingly deleterious effects, which come to a head in the final act of the play. Ophelia's prescription of rosemary pushes our awareness of the need to remedy memory lapse and irresponsibility. Her ability to pinpoint the cause of the illnesses and recommend a cure confirms her skill as a healer and enlarges our understanding of the underlying meaning of the play. Her desperate attempts at herbal treatment heighten our experience of the tragedy as we recognize the characters' inability to heal their soon-to-be-fatal conditions. *Hamlet* becomes a tragedy because none of the characters benefit from the gestures of Ophelia.



"Rue Herb," original source unknown.

In *Hamlet,* lack of memory is the first element in a two-part dilemma; the second is repentance. The OED defines repentance as "review[ing] one's actions and feel[ing] contrition or regret for something one has done or omitted to do; . . . to acknowledge the sinfulness of one's past action or conduct by showing sincere remorse and undertaking to reform in the future." Repentance is impossible without a clear memory. While rosemary enhances memory, rue is the herb of repentance. Ophelia says, "There's rue for you; and here's some for me. We may call it

herb-grace o' Sundays: O, you must wear your rue with a difference" (4.5.181-184). As with the rosemary, Shakespeare gives no specific recipient for the rue; therefore, the same diagnostic and thematic opening to view applies to everybody. Every character in *Hamlet*, including Ophelia, has something to remember and regret.[18] Whether by careful machinations or impetuosity, the major characters suffer for their varied passions; each can find his cure in Ophelia's recommendation of rue.[19] Shakespeare uses Claudius to draw attention to the dangers of impenitence. Claudius' desire for power, his unwillingness to be liberated from his ill-gotten goods, and his unnatural self-absorbed orientation preclude genuine contrition. Ophelia's prescription redirects our attention away from specific heinous acts and relocates it to Claudius' general repentant impotence. This move underscores the tragedy of failed conscience.

Laertes is only slightly more penitent than Claudius. While Laertes fails to express regret for his absence from Ophelia's life when she most needed him, he does profess remorse for agreeing to poison his blade. He says, "And yet 'tis almost 'gainst my conscience" (5.2.248), though he continues to fight with the blade without warning Hamlet. In the end, as he lies dying, Laertes does ask Hamlet for forgiveness, but even that act is tinged with selfishness as Laertes asserts that in exchanging forgiveness, he cannot be held culpable for Hamlet's death (5.2.282-4). Therefore, he too, is in need of the rue's tonic. Gertrude recognizes her need for repentance in Act 3 when she says, "Thou turn'st mine eyes into my very soul, / And there I see such black and grained spots / As will not leave their tinct" (3.4.81-84). Ophelia's scrip allows us to see that all the characters are in need of serious healing.

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[18] Some critics have suggested that Hamlet and Ophelia were lovers and that she might possibly be pregnant. If that were the case, Ophelia may be taking rue to terminate a pregnancy since rue has long been used medicinally as an abortifacient. For a discussion of the history of critics debating Ophelia's potential pregnancy see Maurice Hunt's "Impregnating Ophelia."

[19] Rue functions by "check[ing] the excessive passion in a person's blood" (Hildegard von Bingen 38).

Hamlet has become a stranger to himself. In the process, he sends his two best friends--Rosencrantz and Guildenstern--to their deaths, casts Ophelia aside, and outright murders Polonius. From our perspective at this point in the play, it is difficult to see Hamlet as a tragic figure. He does not express regret for any of his actions; he is completely unrepentant. However, in Act 5, it is as if Ophelia's prescription of rue and rosemary finally takes hold and Hamlet re-awakens. In our eyes, he is redeemed somewhat when he finally avenges his mother's murder by forcing Claudius to drink from the cup of poison that killed her. His humanity is restored when he forbids Horatio from taking his own life with the liquid left in the poisoned cup. And finally, Hamlet's nobility is reinstated when he considers the fate of his people and lends his support to Fortinbras, though Hamlet knows he will not survive long enough to see the outcome of the election. Ophelia's counsel for rue highlights all the characters' need to repent, draws our attention to the underlying cause of Hamlet's dereliction, and recovers him as the tragic hero.

The ubiquitous application of rue allows us to explore the principle themes in the play: responsibility to memory and repentance. However we view Ophelia's own case, there is no doubt that the pulling out of rosemary and rue is appropriate for all the characters and underscores the expanse and depth of illness at Castle Elsinore. When we understand the medicinal value of Ophelia's herbs, we begin to perceive the insight of Ophelia's diagnoses and the significance of her prescriptions. Then, Ophelia becomes a more complex character and ceases to be a simple representation of the wretchedness of women. Shakespeare has expanded her potential; she becomes a complicated figure whose madness elevates her to a place of authority. Shakespeare scholars may still think of Ophelia as pathetic, but this time it should be in the classical sense of pathos because she, the least powerful character, shoulders an impossible but revealing burden in opening to view the tragedy and seeking to heal the inhabitants of Castle

Elsinore. Through her trauma, we experience a cathartic reaction in that we reflect on self-deception, feel pity for those who recognize their failing, and imagine that we could escape their fate. In contrast to Lee Edwards' claim that, "We can imagine Hamlet's story without Ophelia, but Ophelia literally has no story without Hamlet" (qtd in Showalter), I assert that when we attend to Shakespeare's poignant identification of Ophelia with this tradition of healing, we understand the power of our own cathartic response to the tragedy of the play.

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