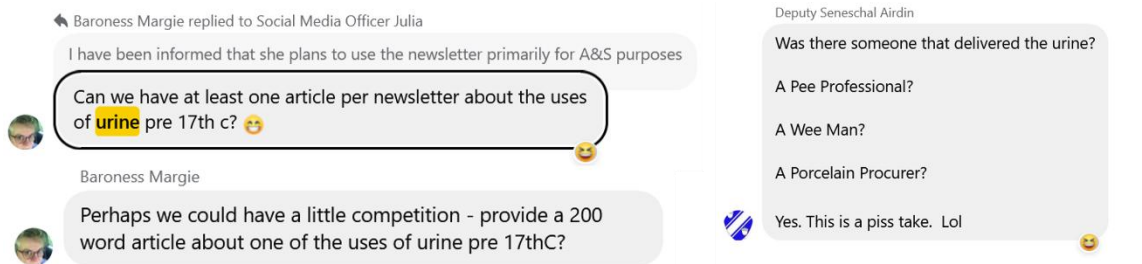


The Blue Strand

Wee-Wind Edition

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER



The Blue Strand will never stop pleasing Her Excellency, Baroness Margie, with our overflowing dedication! If you have articles about urine to include in the newsletter please send them my way!

The Blue Strand: Wee-Wind

The Most Important “Goings-On” of the Year

— JOANNA OF BRAIDWOOD

The month of May marks the beginning of the SCA New Year, and thus, in this April edition I’d like to take a look back on the year that was. This was the first full SCA year that I have been producing *The Blue Strand* for. And what a marvelous year it was! There were approximately 64 articles published, with a total of 17 unique authors across the year – not including some anonymous contributions about urine (strange that people don’t want to fess up to their excellent wee-search!). I’m hoping to have the number of unique authors even higher for the coming year, so if you have any desire whatsoever to write up something for *The Blue Strand*, please, please let me know!!

For this year, the most published individual was Joanna of Braidwood (oop it me) with ~15 articles. I am indeed chatty! The other runner ups were Rúna Keiliselgr (~10 articles), Margie of Glen More (~8 articles) and Julia of the Ravens (~5 articles). Thanks so much for having so much to say, and I look forward to publishing more of your thoughts in the new year (hehehehehehehe more content!!!).

It’s impossible to choose a favourite, but some highlights of the year for

me were – “Heraldic Spot the Difference” by Ollivier Le Floch, “Pink Isn’t Period: Continued Adventures in Medieval Mythbusting” by Julia of the Ravens, “This Month’s Uroscopie” with Ares Humnoidos and the Powers That Be, and “Polite Monicans ‘Menanced’ in Terrifying Attack by Innigardian Ruffians”, by Rúna Keiliselgr. But a massive thanks to everyone who contributed something, I just love publishing the opinions, research, and creativity of our wonderful Barony.

Also a shoutout to the article “7 Reasons to Hate Plaid” by Rúna Keiliselgr, which was so controversial it managed to spawn a rebuttal article (thanks to Robert de Mar!)

As a special treat, I have filled this edition to the brim with everyone’s favourite type of article – information about urine!

For the chance to win a weeally, weeally good prize, submit this form to tell us about your favourite parts of reading *The Blue Strand* this year!

<https://tinyurl.com/TheBlueStrandFeedback>

WHAT’S ON?

April Activities

- ☞ Thursday 2nd April – Fibre Guild Meetup + Fighter Training
- ☞ Thursday 9th April – Fighter Training + A&S
- ☞ Thursday 16th April – Fighter Training + A&S
- ☞ Saturday 18th April – Crafhall + Potluck
- ☞ Sunday 19th April – Archery Training
- ☞ Tuesday 21st April – Council Meeting
- ☞ Thursday 23rd April – Fighter Training + A&S
- ☞ Thursday 30th April – Fighter Training + A&S

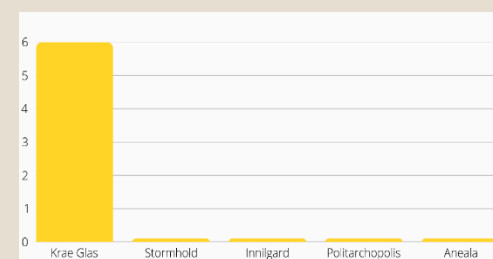
Coming Soon!

- ☞ Sunday 10th May – Royal Brunch
- ☞ Sunday 21st June – Midwinter Hunt

More information: <https://kraeglas.lochac.sca.org/>

Did You Know?

To celebrate the end of the SCA year, *The Blue Strand* research team investigated the number of articles about urine published over the year in several other well-known Lochac newsletters – to discover, much to our horror, that our newsletter is the ONLY ONE in the ENTIRETY of Lochac to publish ANY articles on urine this year!!!



Well, never fear! As evidenced by our ongoing track record, *The Blue Strand* will always provide the “pee-ople” with what they truly desire!



The alchemical process of preparing the Philosopher's Stone, 15th-16th century. Image from: Bodleian Library MS. Ash. Rolls 52.

Piss Alchemy

From Pee to Philosopher's Stones and Phosphorus

— TINA TINKLEBERRY

In the 'golden age of alchemy' starting from the 13th century, alchemists tried to create a philosopher's stone. This was a substance that could turn base metals into gold and also be used to make an elixir of life that granted the drinker immortality. Pretty big promises!

Alchemists suggested this substance could be found within the human body and that it had to be a liquid, as water was integral to life itself. It also had to be gold. Thus... it had to be piss.

These beliefs, formed in the medieval and Renaissance periods, were tested by Henning Brand in 1669. He found an alchemy book that stated alum, potassium nitrate and concentrate

human urine would turn base metals into precious metals. It did not work, but Brand decided to experiment with boiling large quantities of human urine anyway. He went all in and collected vast amounts of the stuff.

What he eventually discovered wasn't actual gold but gold in its own way: the element phosphorus. Urine contains sodium phosphates (PO₄). This can be isolated under strong heat when the oxygen reacts with carbon and leaves behind phosphorus. Brand named the element 'light-bringer' after its green glow. He kept it secret for a while but eventually sold the recipe.

He never did make a philosopher's stone, from piss or otherwise, but he did accidentally discover an element, which is still pretty impressive.

Poetry Corner:

Shall I Compare Wee to a Summer's Day?

— WILLY SHAKESPEE

Shall I compare wee to a summer's day?
In gentle warmth it floweth sweetly by
With song of crickets by the water's spray
It causes one to give a peaceful sigh.

When wettest Spring hath pour'd with no relief
The need for it becometh urgent fast
So languidly it goes and yet is brief
In endless moment trapped until it's past.

Sometime in shine that gold complexion's dimm'd
So man is pressed to know wherefore that be
Thus greater truths are from its study skimm'd
And knowledge is reveal'd as if set free.

So long as men can breathe and take a pee
So long lives piss, and piss doth live in we.

..— . ♣ . — ..

Predicting Pregnancy with Peeing

One weird Ancient Egyptian trick!

— PEETER BREMERTON

It is true that modern medicine is leaps and bounds ahead of the medicine that our ancestors practiced. And yet, no matter how things change, some things stay more similar than you might think! In order to tell if a woman is pregnant in the modern age, they get a sample of her urine – and it was the same for the Ancient Egyptians!

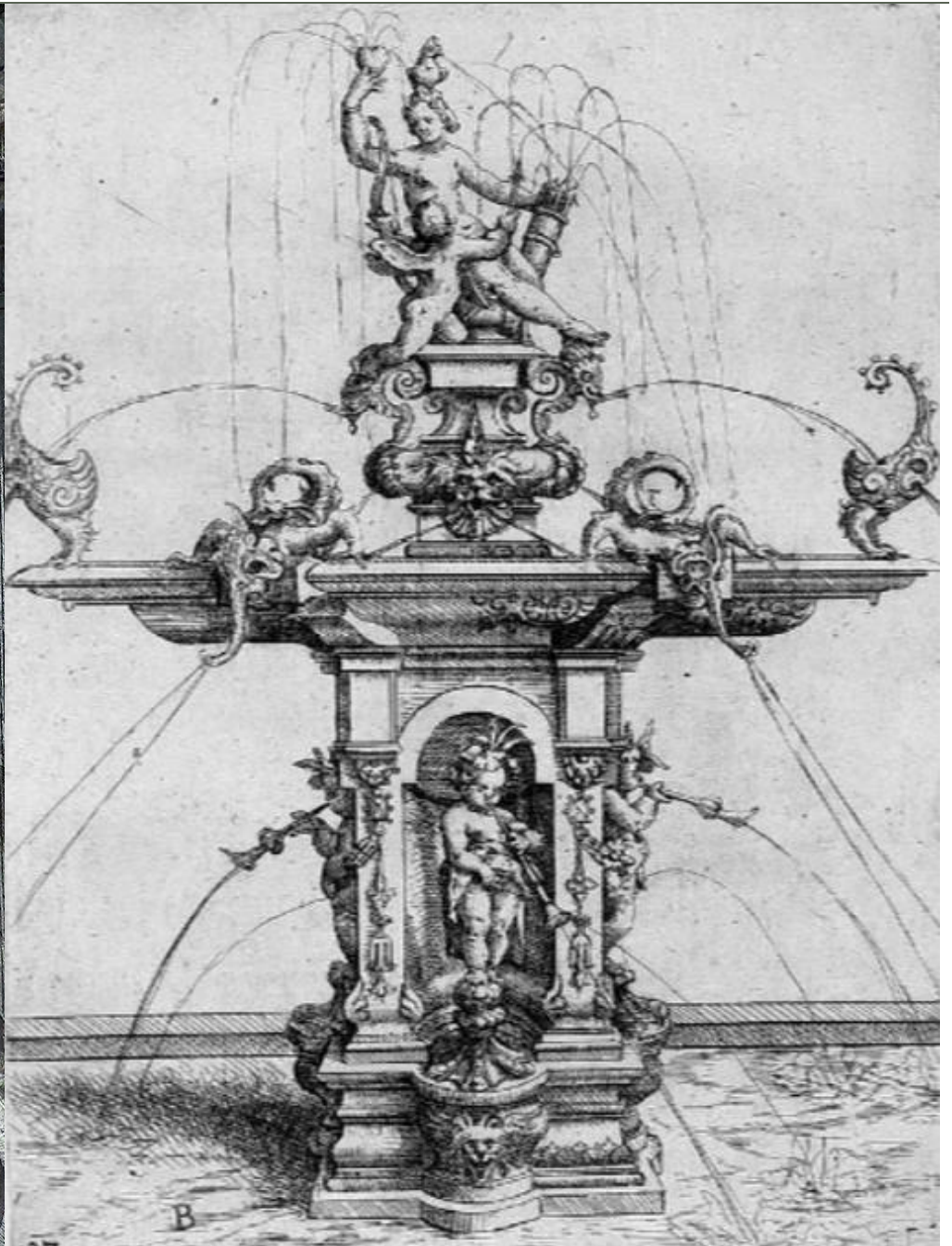
According to a papyrus text from

1400 BC, Ancient Egyptian women would pee into a bag of barley grain and one of wheat grain. If the bags of grain (either one) sprouted after this treatment, it meant that she was pregnant. The Ancient Egyptians also believed that if it was the barley which sprouted, the baby would be a boy, and if it was the wheat, it would be a girl.

A 1963 study from the US National Institute of Health concluded that this method was 70% accurate (although

not for determining the sex of the baby). They theorised that the elevated estrogen in a pregnant woman's urine might promote seed growth. So if you're pregnant, try "watering" the garden and see what happens?

Source:
<https://science.howstuffworks.com/life/biology-fields/ancient-egyptian-pregnancy-test-survived-millenia-because-it-worked.htm>



Left: The Manneken Pis ('Little Pissing Boy') statue in central Brussels, Belgium; the statue dates back to the mid-fifteenth century but was recast in 1619. Right: A Venus and Cupid fountain design in Wendel Dietterlin's 1598 book *Architectvra: Von Außtheilung, Symmetria vnd Proportion der Fünff Seulen*.

Tinkling Fountains

Tracing the Origins and Decline of the 'Puer Mingens' Motif in Figurative Fountains

— WEESLEY PISSANT

Creators of figurative fountains, which combine sculptures and water in an artistically pleasing and naturalistic way, have always struggled with incorporating the display of water into the overall design of the fountain. One solution is to have the water come from the sculpture itself, possibly by depicting urination in human or humanoid statues.

One common example of this is the *puer mingens* ('boy urinating') motif, which was widespread in continental Europe from the Renaissance until the seventeenth century during the heyday of large elaborate fountains. An early adopter was the sculptor Donatello in the mid-fifteenth century in Florence, whose works containing both the putto and *puer mingens* motifs were easily transferrable to fountain design. The popularity of his works influenced the spread of these designs outward into broader Italy and across the continent.

While academic literature until now has assumed that urinating boys were a broadly used motif in classical times, including in fountains, there seems to be no evidence for this. Instead, the motif seems to have been

used only in Roman art and not in literature or in fountains.

Although some Roman fountains exist and even some fountains involving urination exist, they are not associated with figures of young boys. One such example is the Priapus statue in Pompeii's House of the Vettii. While Priapus is well known for being depicted with a large erection, this instance cannot be directly linked to the later *puer mingens* motif as Priapus is an adult.

The *puer mingens* motif had symbolic meanings such as charity and abundance, fertility and fecundity, purity and cleansing, chaos and abandonment, and humour. Its use in large ornamental fountains declined in the eighteenth century alongside the decline in large elaborate fountains, as these designs became largely too expensive to maintain.

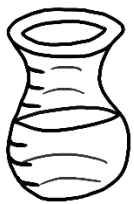
Reference: "The problems of meaning and use of the *puer mingens* motif in fountain design 1400–1700" by James W.P. Campbell and Amy Boyington, published in 2019 in *Studies in the History of Gardens & Designed Landscapes*: <https://doi.org/10.1080/14601176.2019.1675987>.



✦ Your Yearly Uroscope ✦

Back by popular demand!

— THE POWERS THAT WEE



Clear as wellwater

This is a good year for new experiences. Be not afraid of what change might bring!



Pale yellow as of a not reduced lemon

Beware doorknobs.



Yellow as of reduced lemon

Thou shouldst lean upon thy friendships more. A problem shared is a problem halved! Thou canst do it!



Slightly red as of a lowered flame of fire

Ill will surrounds thee, but thou wilt become stronger in its wake.



Ruddy as pure intense gold

Someone doth try to imitate thee and steal thy good fortune. Do not give in to duplicity, thou must stay stalwart and true.



Green as cabbage

Lucky in love? Someone in thy circle may be eying thee up. But this new connection doth bring with it new perils to face.



Livid as lead

For this year, money is not thy friend. If thou gamblest, thou wilt find troubles abound. Play it safe and keep it close to thy chest.



Wine red as animal liver

Thou art diminishing thyself, wasting away. A candle doth need air to thrive. Go outside.

DISCLAIMER: If your urine is any colour other than the clear to bright yellow spectrum, SEE A DOCTOR. The above publication is intended for humour ONLY.

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The Blue Strand is not an official publication of the Society for Creative Anachronism (SCA) and does not delineate SCA policy. The official newsletter for the Society in Australia is Pegasus, which is available from the Registrar at registrar@sca.org.au.

From the editor

Technically it's all from me, but still

If you want to write it – I want to read it.

And I want to make everyone else read it too :P

You could have an article about whatever niche topic you want added to this very newsletter!

You could be as unhinged as me. It could happen.

Send any write ups (almost any length, I can make it work) completely without context to joannabraidwood@gmail.com. Make it happen.



About the editor

Joanna of Braidwood is probably a little mad.

If you made it this far, thanks for joining us.

That's all folks! Huzzah!