

Moot of Berus II & Marion II

Moot opened with a reading of Article XIV - 'Rights of the Subject'

Upon request from a member of the populace that could not attend, the following definitions were read out to those present:

AFFIRM: To ratify, uphold, approve, make firm, confirm, establish, reassert. To make affirmation; to take a solemn and formal declaration or asseveration that an affidavit is true, that the witness will tell the truth, etc., this being substituted for an oath in certain cases. Also to give testimony on affirmation. To allege or aver a matter of fact; to state it affirmatively.

AVER: To declare or assert; to set out distinctly and formally; to allege. To avouch or verify; to make or provide true; to make good or justify a plea.

AVER: In old English and French refers to property or substance, estate and particularly livestock or cattle. In feudal law Aver Land was the land ploughed by the tenant for the proper use of the lord of the soil.

OATH: Any form of attestation by which a person signifies that he is bound in conscience to perform an act faithfully and truthfully. An outward pledge by the person taking it that his attestation or promise is made under an immediate sense of responsibility to God. A solemn appeal to the Supreme Being in attestation of the trust of some statement. An external pledge or observation, made in verification of statements made, or to be made, coupled with an appeal to a sacred or venerated object, in evidence of the serious and reverent state of mind of the party, or with an invocation to a supreme being to witness the words of the party. In the broadest sense, the term is used to include all forms of attestation by which a party signifies that he is bound in conscience to perform the act faithfully and truly.

OATH OF ALEGIANCE OR LOYALTY: An oath by which a person promises or binds himself to bear true allegiance to a particular sovereign or government, and to support its Constitution or governing documents.

Source - Black's Legal Dictionary

Question: What is a Moot?

Moot: An ancient English meeting, especially a representative meeting of the freemen of a shire. To bring up as a subject for discussion or debate. To discuss or debate.

Comment was raised about a booklet about the swearing of oaths & fealty written by Duke Sir Finvarr & Nicolaa (which was corrected after the fact as it was not written by them to my knowledge but read and commented on by them). This brought up a discussion of differences between historical and modern uses of oaths. It was also

brought up that different cultures would have different oaths and different expectations of those who took such oaths. How do we make such oaths to fit us all in the SCA?

Their Majesties responded with examples from different Kingdoms, noting that in some Kingdoms it is an offense to not be present for Coronation and the swearing of oaths to the new King & Queen. In other Kingdoms the oaths are sworn individually to the King & Queen who sit in state all day until all who would swear have done so. His Majesty stated that he appreciated our way of having all of a Peerage, Baronial or populace swearing at once because to himself, the idea of having an individual swear homage is discomfoting.

Question: What level of respect, or show of esteem and honour are we expected to provide to Royalty?

His Majesty commented that Ealdormere is a more relaxed Kingdom than others and that in our case "familiarity does breed contempt". He also mentioned that certainly some Royalty even within our own Kingdom will expect a different level of respect than others. He admitted it doesn't help when they don't travel with an entourage and don't create a sense of being 'in state' for the populace to react to. Her Majesty then pointed out that in the past when Royalty have tried to create that sense of 'state' with ceremonies or through demeanour, the populace have often viewed them unkindly as distant or snobbish.

Usually in all Kingdoms, Royalty have some level of entourage with them. In one Kingdom, the King & Queen are always attended by all present reigning Barons & Baronesses of their Kingdom.

Question: Does our Kingdom need to actually decide our degree of respect/esteem and develop a habit of it? It was acknowledged that in the SCA, respect is a two way street.

Their Majesties then encouraged all to travel as much as possible to other Kingdoms to see how they do things differently from ourselves. His Majesty also commented that part of the respect they try to show back to the populace is in how much time they take to learn about every person they intend to give an award to at an event. As They currently have a backlog of awards stretching back to our Principality days, They have been avidly attempting to divest themselves of these awards. However They have found it not only difficult, but discouraging, when people who have been at an event all day, suddenly leave just before court. Thus the time They have taken to familiarize themselves with each recipient, not to mention the time taken by the scribes in the making of the scrolls (which not every Kingdom bequeaths -) is not apparently appreciated by members of the populace.

On the subject of travel, Her Majesty stated that They have often taken garb and sometimes armour with Them on vacation in order to be able to drop in at a local event, meeting or fight practice to meet new people and see other ways of doing things.

Comment: In many other Kingdoms Royal respect is sacrosanct. It comes down to how much effort each person chooses to make in order to help make this happen. How do you get the ball rolling on this? It was commented that setting examples of bowing to the thrones whether or not Their Majesties are seated is observed by others who question and sometimes follow said example.

His Majesty commented at this point that when They entered the room, the only person to stand was Mistress Mordreath (and the Lawspeaker who attempted to knock over the bench she was sitting on). He then continued that while respect to Him is something He's not necessarily comfortable with, He expects it for Her Majesty and is very happy to see Her honoured in such ways. He then commented that on a recent trip to Northshield, that He watched the room empty in the middle to make way for Her Majesty and other Queen's who attended that day. The level of respect was completely unexpected to Them and They were humbled by it.

Question: Would it help to reduce either the number of events the Royalty attend or the number of courts at events?

Their Majesties responded that firstly it is also their chance to have fun and meet people in the attending of events so They would lose out as well in not attending. His Majesty pointed out that Frothing was the tenth weekend in a row They had attended an event. Only two of those were out of Kingdom. Hence His previous comment about familiarity. In relative terms, our Kingdom is small and it is possible for the Royalty to attend many events throughout Their Reign. In the more central Cantons, that familiarity is likely more exaggerated than at outlying Shires who may not recognize their Royalty without the Crowns, entourage or vestments.

They also felt that a limitation on courts was a tricky business. Will just the limitation make it seem more special and important? Not all Royalty manage to keep the courts to a minimum, but many try to have short courts intended to bequeath awards to those They had been told would be present.

Suggestion was made that a banner carrier could be nominated to signify the presence of Royalty to alert everyone of the Royal Presence. This was followed by a comment that while it might be difficult sometimes for more central groups to recognize newer Royalty and know what protocol to follow, it is even more difficult for the Northern groups especially when the Royalty are in 'stealth' mode and are not readily recognizable to the populace in attendance.

At this point it was commented on that having Barons and Baronesses attend a King & Queen whether or not they like them is a very period thing.

Question: Is it possible to choose a member(s) of a local group to serve as entourage if the Royal's entourage cannot be present? Generally it is customary that the Crown's Chamberlain would contact the Seneschal or Autocrat of said group to

indicate that they would need so many assistants during the day and would the group be able to comply.

Their Majesties amongst others expressed concern that this could cause difficulties for especially smaller groups if more assistance was required than personnel was available. That kind of treatment could inspire resentment instead. Although They did acknowledge that did happen more in 'the old days' than currently in Ealdormere.

They also commented that the regular entourage end up becoming the Royalty's 'back-up brains' and replacing them with volunteers from a local group means needing to know exactly what jobs can be handed out to whom - which isn't necessarily as easy as it sounds with people who've never served as entourage before.

Question: Are there any Law changes planned during this Reign?

Their Majesties explained that unlike other Kingdoms, in order to make a law change in Ealdormere, you have to have some idea what it is you want to do, before you even step up due to the necessity of discussing it in a Privy Council meeting, having it sent for commentary to the populace once drafted (which due to the publication deadlines for the Tidings generally means its out one to two months after being discussed in P.C.), waiting the month or more to receive commentary, discussing that in another Council meeting, publishing the finished laws in the Tidings and reading the new law in court before They step down. In other Kingdoms the King's word is Law.

Almost all law changes in Ealdormere, since our inception have been in relation to Kingdom, Baronial or Canton offices, or have been clarifications of the original laws or have been required changes in keeping with Society laws (Corpora). They pointed out that Ealdormere laws are less medieval and more modern and democratic.

A last point was raised on behalf of a member of the populace who could not attend.

In light of the previous discussion it was recognized that it had already been touched on in different areas. It was commented that there is a growing isolationism in the Kingdom, that people are travelling less and there seems to be fewer and weaker social bonds holding the Kingdom together. Are there are any more thoughts on what our binding purpose as a Kingdom is now that we don't have the Midrealm to hate any more.

Suggestions were made to car-pool more often or possibly set up an e-bulletin board with event pages linking to a 'ride' page.

It was noted by Their Majesties that linking the pages could be a legal issue if something happened to the persons receiving or offering the ride. Also Her Majesty noted that the marketplace page managed by Lord Rhys had indeed had a 'rides needed/offered' section but the whole thing seemed to have fallen into disuse.

Another suggestion was made to make greater use of the e-list in this manner as usually several members of a group will have access to this forum.

Numerous comments were forwarded indicating the obvious frustration of Northern groups at the more frequent visits from Northshield folks than from Ealdormere. Questions were asked as to how the North could convince those from the South to attend more events. It was also acknowledged that during a busy summer schedule especially, having many events back to back, makes the choices harder for those who might be willing to travel but need to choose between events, or for whatever reason are required to be at the closer events.

Again suggestions were made for Northerners visiting the South and making friends thus encouraging people to travel North. It was noted that many of the Northerners already do so and have been doing so for many years. The discussion did not end on a firm note or plan, but Their Majesties did again entreat all to travel whenever possible to places not just within our own Kingdom.

Moot closed.