

American Medievalism:
Medieval Reenactment as Historical Interpretation
in the United States

by
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ABSTRACT

This thesis will examine how the Middle Ages are historically interpreted and portrayed in the United States. In order to keep this study within reasonable bounds, the research will exclude films, television, novels, and other forms of media that rely on the Pre-Modern period of European history for entertainment purposes. This thesis will narrow its focus on museums, non-profit organizations, and other institutions, examining their methods of research and interpretation, the levels of historical accuracy or authenticity they hold themselves to, and their levels of success. This thesis ultimately hopes to prove that the medieval period offers the same level of public interest as popular periods of American history.

This focus on reenactment serves to illustrate the need for an American audience to form a simulated connection to a historical period for which they inherently lack geographic or cultural memory. The utilization of hyperreality as described by Umberto Eco lends itself readily to this historic period, and plays to the American desire for total mimetic immersion and escapism. After examining the Metropolitan Museum of Art's exhibition of medieval history as high art and culture, the thesis focuses on historical reenactment, as it offers a greater level of visitor interaction, first by analyzing R.G. Collingwood's definition of "reenactment" and its relation to the modern application in order to establish it as a veritable academic practice.

The focus of the thesis then turns to the historical interpretation/reenactment program identified here as historical performance, which uses trained actors in controlled museum conditions to present historically accurate demonstrations meant to bring the artifacts on display to simulated life. Beginning with the template first established by the

Royal Armouries Museum in the United Kingdom, a comparative study utilizing research and interviews highlights the interpretational methods of the Frazier History Museum, and those of the Higgins Armory Museum. By comparing both museum's methods, a possible template for successfully educating the American public about the European Middle Ages; while a closer examination of the Frazier Museum's survival compared to the Higgins Armory's termination may illustrate what future institutions must do or avoid to thrive.

I would like to dedicate this thesis to Dwain “Pee-Wee” Hart (1936-2012), the man who taught me that faith, patience, dedication, and understanding will see you through any storm and to the place God wants you to go.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
LIST OF FIGURES.....	viii
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS.....	ix
CHAPTER	
1 INTRODUCTION: “THE MODERN MIDDLE AGES”	1
2 PART I: UMBERTO ECO AND HYPERREALITY	7
a. The Hyperreality of the New Middle Ages.....	7
b. Metropolitan Mimesis.....	10
3 PART II: HISTORICAL REENACTMENT AND INTERPRETATION.....	13
a. R.G. Collingwood--What Is Reenactment.....	13
b. Living History: Unfertile Ground for the Medieval Period?.....	19
c. Conclusion: Possibility Exists.....	25
4 PART III: HISTORICAL ACCURACY AND THE THRILL OF COMBAT.....	28

CHAPTER	Page
a. Introduction-a Call to Arms.....	28
b. The Society for Creative Anachronism and the Current Middle Ages.....	30
c. Western Martial Arts-The Second Renaissance.....	38
d. WMA-More than Just a Martial Art.....	62
5 PART IV: PERFORMANCE HISTORY.....	65
a. Royal Armouries Museum.....	65
b. Frazier History Museum.....	66
c. Higgins Armory Museum.....	82
d. Conclusion: The Middle Ages and the Bigger Picture.....	89
6 CONCLUSIONS.....	95
REFERENCES.....	100
APPENDIX	
A FORMS.....	112
B SOCIETY FOR CREATIVE ANACHRONISM.....	117
C FRATELLANZA/TATTERSHALL/HEMA.....	136
D FRAZIER HISTORY MUSEUM.....	190
E HIGGINS ARMORY.....	241

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
1. Illustration of Two Unarmored Longsword Combatants from the <i>Codex Wallerstein</i>	41
2. Illustration of Two Armored Longsword Combatants from the <i>Codex Wallerstein</i>	42
3. Illustration of the Master and the Four Beasts of Virtue from Fiore dei Liberi's <i>Flos Duellatorum</i>	46
4. Alternate Illustration of the Master and the Four Beasts from Fiore dei Liberi's <i>Fior di Battaglia</i>	47
5. Illustration of Two Longsword Combatants from Fiore dei Liberi's <i>Fior di Battaglia</i>	47
6. Photograph of Two Members of Fratellanza della Spada Sparring in Full Gear.....	52
7. Original Milanese Plate Harness from the Sanctuary of the Madonna.....	71
8. Reproduction of the Milanese Plate Armor for the Frazier History Museum.....	71
9. Two Historical Interpreters of the Frazier History Museum Demonstrating Armored Hand-and-a-Half Sword Combat.....	78

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviation	Full Name
ARMA.....	Association for Renaissance Martial Arts
HAM.....	Higgins Armory Museum
HEMA.....	Historical European Martial Arts
RAM.....	Royal Armouries Museum (Leeds)
WAM.....	Worcester Art Museum
WMA.....	Western Martial Arts

INTRODUCTION: “THE MODERN MIDDLE AGES”

On March 23, 2013, The Caledonian Society of Arizona hosted the Scottish Highland Games and Celtic Gathering at Phoenix’s Steele Indian School Park. This cultural event, a Victorian derivation of earlier Highland Clan competition, involved over a dozen pipe and drum bands, athletic competitions such as the caber toss (the lifting and tossing of a pine log), and of course, plenty of venues offering kilts, Scottish beer, and background information on the major Scottish clans. The kilts’ “clan tartan” patterns, which only came into being in the early 19th century, complement the falsified clan badges printed on fake certificates and key chains in propagating the “highland romance” begun by Sir Walter Scott in 1814, which has characterized most modern perceptions of everything considered “Scottish”. One of the few authentic pieces of Scottish historic culture was a quote from the 1320 Declaration of Arbroath, famously stating that “as long as a hundred of us remain alive, never will we on any conditions be subjected to the lordship of the English”¹, which was printed on the back of a few t-shirts amidst a sea of fake Scottish kilts, fake Scottish swords, and fictional Scottish clan roots surrounding the largely ignored Scottish competitions.

As the public cemented its memories of a fictional Highland past, two venues on the outskirts of the festivities offered a chance to watch two different versions of medieval and Renaissance period combat. The first group, La Fratellanza della Spada, specializes in the study and training in pre-modern European combat, including the broadsword and dagger. The equipment and techniques they used drew from extensive

¹Edward J. Cowan, *“For Freedom Alone”: the Declaration of Arbroath, 1320* (East Lothian: Tuckwell Press, 2003), 143.

personal research into older texts combined with practice, which they were more than willing to demonstrate and explain to onlookers. Just across from them stood another pavilion, much more colorful and bearing the pomp of a Renaissance Faire. The members of the Society of Creative Anachronism (SCA)'s Atenveldt barony likewise put on a combat demonstration for the crowd, along with a craft booth manned by members in full regalia. Both groups underwent research to develop their craft and equipment, but while one strives for accuracy in order to educate the public as well as themselves, the other takes the more recognizable elements and forms them into a romantic fiction that offers an escape while somehow generating interest in the pre-modern era.

Another romantic festival, the 25th annual Arizona Renaissance Festival, was held at Apache Junction at roughly the same time. Although similar jousting-based tournaments have been held since the 16th century, most Renaissance festivals and tournaments in their current form trace their origins back to the Eglinton Tournament of 1839. Held by Lord Archibald Montgomery on his Scottish estate, rain delays made the tournament a ridiculed financial disaster at a time when the British government remained over one million pounds in debt; but the involvement of individuals such as Louis Napoleon and the enthusiastic attendance of the upper and lower classes cemented the tournament as a social success, to be repeated again in 1912 and even reenacted in 1989.² Just as the romance of the Highland Games draw from Sir Walter Scott's 1814 *Waverly*, tournaments from Eglinton onwards have found their inspiration in Scott's later novels, namely *Ivanhoe* and *The Talisman*.

² Ian Anstruther, *The Knight and the Umbrella: An Account of the Eglinton Tournament 1839* (Gloucester: Alan Sutton Publishing, 1986), 195.

These festivals, though inaccurate, allow for the American public to connect to the Pre-Modern past through ritual and romance. These historic rituals exploit the public's preference for visual stimulation, and thus historically derived pageantry has traditionally been held in high regard. This romance, however, poses an inherent danger of a loss of truth to fantasy, wherein certain facts, virtues, and myths become connected to history to create a confused and false perception of the past. Festival participants, administrators, and vendors play a role, and they have a duty to entertain and maintain the romance, not to inform or teach the public about the past. Likewise, the Highland Games maintain the image of the romantic Highlander created by Scott and tied to the medieval past by films such as *Braveheart* and *The Highlander*. This latter event has bloomed into an expression of Celtic (i.e. pre-English dominance) culture, harkening back to "simpler" and more "heroic" times that never existed.

The problems posed by teaching and reenacting medieval European history in the United States arise from both the lack of local connection to the European Pre-Modern period (c.500-1600 AD), with the exception of certain sites like St. Augustine in Florida, and the negative connotations attached to European settlement in the New World. Ironically enough, the histories of those countries bordering the United States involve European settlement and colonization predating the Jamestown Settlement of 1607. The reconstructed Scandinavian site at L'Anse aux Meadows in Newfoundland, Canada, stands as testament to the arrival of the Northmen roughly 500 years before Columbus' famous landing in the Bahamas in 1492, as well as the Spanish conquests of Central America that eradicated and made subvert the native cultures. The United States, while certainly not devoid of Pre-Modern heritage sites such as the Cahokia Mounds of Illinois

or the Anasazi ruins at Mesa Verde, lacks a cultural and spatial memory from before the seventeenth century, which has led to a disassociation with both European and pre-Colonial history. This has created a vacuum in the American perception of the Pre-Modern past for which anachronisms and fiction may be substituted.

That is not to say, however, that the American public has no interest in the medieval past. On the contrary, interest in medieval Europe has been steadily growing since the 1960's. A number of American churches reflect the influence of the various medieval cathedral designs, while museums such as the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Higgins Armory have exhibited facets of the Middle Ages as high forms of art. Medieval-based fantasy dominates books, games, and film and television series. The counter-cultural movements of the 1960's saw the creation of the first Renaissance Faires as well as the founding of the Society for Creative Anachronism, while digital connectivity over the last two decades has allowed groups interested in studying and reproducing medieval culture to form both local and international associations.

This ever-increasing fascination with the Middle Ages, particularly the High (1000-1300) and Late (1300-1550) periods, has created an entire industry based around the translation of texts and the reproduction of skills and artifacts particular to this time frame, which a number of U.S.-based museums and academic institutions have readily sought to take advantage of. Key to the success of these museums, reproductions and period themed events is the American cultural desire for immersive mimesis, a synthesized experience that allows the audience to create a personal memory or connection to a previously unknown concept or historical event. American audiences thus create their own hyperreality, wherein reproductions replace the real, creating both an

experience and a memory beyond real. For this reason, many museums, theme parks and immersive events simulate periods or events that visitors could never have otherwise experienced, and cement in their minds the “reality” of the past.

This study will examine the groups, museums and other institutions that take advantage of the American desire for the hyperreal by creating immersive situations or environment for any onlooker to experience thus simulate a memory of a long gone society from both a different time period and a different continent. Groups who capitalize on the romantic expectations for entertainment or commercial value, namely the film industry, Live Action Roleplaying (LARP) groups, and modern Renaissance festivals. The research will put emphasis on groups and institutions which reconstructions, reenactments, and other activities on in-depth research into the primary resources and surviving artefacts, with the ultimate goal of educating either themselves or the general public about the Middle Ages through increasingly accurate methods of simulation.

To be fair, this thesis in no way suggests that Medieval European history, particularly concerning Western Europe, deserves a greater amount of attention than other coinciding historical cultures and societies during this specific time period. This rings especially true for Pre-Columbian and Pre-Colonial North America. American Indian studies, long distorted and neglected, has seen significant improvement over the past several years, but more attention to these findings is certainly required. What is known is that a multitude of complex and well-developed societies existed long before the first European colonies were established, and ever more continues to be discovered as research continues.

Medieval history, however, seems to conjure up a hallowed, nostalgic romance on par with that of the “Wild West”. Any road trip, vacation or family outing to a Western museum or historic site, however, can dispel any misconceptions and make that history “real” in the visitors’ minds. The same holds true for Civil War cemeteries, Revolutionary era battlegrounds, Colonial Williamsburg, or American Indian cultural sites. With the exception of a few museum exhibits, on the other hand, no such reality check is available for American consumers of international history prior to 1600. The groups and programs in this study seek to create an accurate, albeit artificial memory of a particular field of Pre-Modern history usually considered romance or even prehistory in the United States.

PART I: UMBERTO ECO AND HYPERREALITY

A. The Hyperreality of the New Middle Ages

The Highland Games and Renaissance festivities, though inaccurate, act as only symptom of a cultural state labeled by semiotician and philosopher Umberto Eco as neo-medievalism, or the New Middle Ages. The rise of medieval and fantasy-based films, television programs, books and games stands as testament to an American culture wishing to connect to a past beyond the signing of the Constitution, the landing at Plymouth, and Jamestown. “The Middle Ages,” states Eco, “are the root of all our contemporary ‘hot’ problems, and it is not surprising that we go back to that period every time we ask ourselves about our origin”.³ Indeed, study of the medieval period, wherein such modern concepts of the Common Market, the Middle Class, and *habeus corpus* were developed, extends back to the twelfth century and beyond. Their influence on colonial and Enlightenment thinkers such as Franklin, Payne and Jefferson gave rise to the notion that these ideas were a product of New World revolutions, and thus distinctly anti-Old World. The American mindset has appropriated any and all things concerning natural rights, reinterpreting the right to “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness” as exclusively American, while John Locke and the lineage of policy makers extolling natural rights back to the sealing of Magna Carta remain largely regulated to the state of a historical and socio-philosophical orphans on the other side of the Atlantic.

Despite the glaring demarcation line the United States draws between Old World and New World history, comparisons and parallels between the current state of the country and previous civilizations tend to be made. The most common characterization before and even during the 21st century tended towards the Pax Romana, the “Great Pax”

³ Umberto Eco, translated by William Weaver, *Travels in Hyperreality* (Orlando: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., 1986), 65.

demonstrated by the socio-political, economic, and military dominance generally associated with the United States. The turmoil in American national and international affairs, which increased dramatically after September 11th, has caused many to adjust this parallel to the fractious end of the Roman empire, wherein the unifying central entity began to break down, to be replaced by independent kingdoms dominated by ethnic groups migrating across the borders of the former superpower. “The collapse of the Great Pax (at once military, civil, social, and cultural) initiates a period of economic crisis and power vacuum”⁴, while “[t]he city is filled with immigrants, but is drained of its old inhabitants...while on the surrounding hills and in the plains patrician castles spring up, bound by good neighbor protocol, reciprocal distrust, and the great ceremonial occasions.”⁵ This paradigm shift leads to a prevalent psychological state of “insecurity”⁶ and fear.

Eco acknowledges that any comparison between current events and a period separated by over 1,500 years amounts to little more than an “insipid game”⁷, but this should be seen more as a way of rationalizing the Middle Ages in the American mindset rather than assessment of the nation’s current condition. Indeed, the Roman collapse resulted in the decay of the road and other lines of communication, urban depopulation, and central authority; Eco stresses that modern American society instead deals with the exact opposite: an excess of population, transportation and communication⁸ that is rendering cities uninhabitable, putting a strain on resources and ironically breaking down

⁴ Eco, *Travels in Hyperreality*, 75.

⁵ Eco, 77.

⁶ Eco, 79.

⁷ Eco, 74.

⁸ Eco, 77.

personal contact. American culture, then, desires to speculate on what the imminent period of transition from Pax Americana will look like, and has found a comparable yet symmetrically different example in the millennium immediately following the end of the Roman Empire. An interest, therefore, in the Middle Ages will be ever growing in the American consciousness.

Eco also points out the American tendency to become immersed in a staged scenario or artificial settings so that the experience becomes more authentic than reality, giving way to hyperreality. Theorist Jean Baudrillard defined the hyperreal as the creation of a "real" environment or perspective via simulations "without origins or reality",⁹ thus hiding "the absence of real"¹⁰ with artificial reproductions, or *simulacra*. Eco, in his *Travels in Hyperreality*, reflects on the level of hyperrealistic representation, or mimesis¹¹, readily consumed by the American public:

Constructing a full-scale model of the Oval Office (using the same materials, the same colors, but with everything obviously more polished, shinier, protected against deterioration) means that for historical information to be absorbed, it has to assume the aspect of a reincarnation. To speak of things that one wants to connote as real, these things must seem real. The "completely real" becomes identified with the "completely fake." Absolute unreality is offered as areal presence. The aim of the reconstructed Oval Office is to supply a "sign" that will then be forgotten as such: the sign aims to be the thing, to abolish the distinction of the reference, the mechanism of replacement. Not the image of the thing, but its plaster cast. Its double, in other words.¹²

⁹ Jean Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1994), 1.

¹⁰ Raphael Samuel, *Theatres of Memory: Past and Present in Contemporary Culture* (London and New York: Verso, 2012), 113.

¹¹ Richard Handler and Eric Gable, *The New History in an Old Museum: Creating the Past at Colonial Williamsburg* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997), 70.

¹² Eco, 6-7.

Historic institutions, therefore, have an opportunity to develop an authentic, if not accurate, understanding of history by taking advantage of the American imagination's demand "for the real thing", fulfilled by the "absolute fake".¹³ The medieval past, and to a larger extent the other historical European time periods normally designated as "Pre-Modern", has a strong place in current American culture, though heavily influenced by romantic traditions of the past two centuries; but it is possible for institutions and scholars dedicated to medieval European studies to successfully promote a more authentic, if not more accurate, understanding of the Pre-Modern period. With this firmer footing, the thesis will investigate not only how medieval academia should take advantage of the American desire for the hyperreal and appealing nature medievalism offers, but also why academic institutions should be concerned with developing greater public outreach, for which hyperrealistic spectacles are duly suited.

B. Metropolitan Mimesis

A strong Pre-Modern presence already exerts itself in many traditional history and art museums, most notably New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art. The institution's famous arms and armor gallery, the largest such armory in the United States, puts blades, armor and early firearms from Europe, Africa and Asia on display as high pieces of art.¹⁴ "It is, then, from an examination of good specimens of armor and arms of various periods that one realizes that they well deserve their place in a museum of art".¹⁵ Initiated in 1912 and spearheaded by curator Bashford Dean, the gallery plays off of the

¹³ Eco, 8.

¹⁴ Helmut Nickel, Stuart W. Pyhrr, et al., *The Art of Chivalry: European Arms and Armor from the Metropolitan Museum of Art: an Exhibition* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1982), 15.

¹⁵ Bashford Dean, and William Henry Riggs, *Handbook of Arms and Armor: European and Oriental, Including the William H. Riggs Collection* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1915), 2.

visual mystique surrounding the medieval period by offering insight into the intricacy of the metalwork and design of the weapons and armor, as well as the tools used to create them. Mixing the authentic artifacts with the reproduced paints a clearer picture of period combat in the visitor's mind, and lends to the sense of total immersion.

The Metropolitan's Pre-Modern hyperreality extends past the typical focus on medieval warfare and attempts to connect the visitor to the period's non-military cultural consciousness. A medieval style monastic building, located at the nearby Fort Tryon Park, acts as both a counterweight and compliment to the Met's Arms and Armor exhibit. The Cloisters, built in 1934 from parts of five European monasteries including Saint-Guilhem¹⁶ and Bonnefont-en-Comminges,¹⁷ exhibit pieces of medieval art and culture. The centerpieces of the Cloisters gallery are the Unicorn Tapestries, a collection of 15th century silk and woolen wall hangings that demonstrate an exquisite level of late medieval art via the hunting and capture of the mythical creature.¹⁸ It gives insight into the medieval mindset, portraying the period's understanding of the natural, supernatural, and social euphemisms. "Within the galleries of the new Cloisters the atmosphere was intended to be intimate, with minimal ornamentation, limited artificial lighting, and even an occasional burning candle".¹⁹ Like the Arms and Armor exhibit, the Cloisters offer a window into the medieval cultural and artistic sophistication that is usually lacking from the mainstream view of the period. The nature of both galleries, however, keeps visitors

¹⁶ James and Katherine Rorimer, *Medieval Monuments at the Cloisters as They Were and as They Are* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1972), 17-18.

¹⁷ Rorimer and Rorimer, *Medieval Monuments at the Cloisters*, 20-21.

¹⁸ Adolph S. Cavallo, *The Unicorn Tapestries at the Metropolitan Museum of Art* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1998), 79-92.

¹⁹ Peter Barnett and Nancy Y. Wu, *The Cloisters: Medieval Art and Architecture* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2005), 15.

physically separated, either via a glass case or Foucault's instinctive institutional etiquette,²⁰²¹ from the artifacts. The need for preservation requires this restriction; but as these artifacts offer a physical as well as visual bridge to the past, their detachment leaves visitors to merely examine, read any explanatory text, and walk on to the next exhibit. The artifacts and the past they represent therefore remain socially dead.

Other factors may not be as easily replicated, whether natural or artificial, so that gaps or explanations must be left to the interpreter or curator's explanation and the visitor's imagination. Some may wish to hold or handle the original artifacts, and thus establish a more direct link to the past, only to be disappointed when they find themselves limited to handling replicas, even the most authentic pieces. The desire to swing or wield weapons, as sometimes demonstrated by historical interpreters, also may leave visitors wanting to participate in a way a museum may find litigious or unsafe. A limit to visitor interaction exists, but it nonetheless generates a desire to know and connect more with the past.

PART II: HISTORICAL REENACTMENT AND INTERPRETATION

A. R.G. Collingwood—What is Reenactment?

While interaction with the exhibit or artifact, especially physical interaction, has proven viable and effective, certain limitations may keep the audience from the full

²⁰ Steven Conn, *Do Museums Still Need Objects?* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010), 3.

²¹ Michel Foucault, translated by Alan Sheridan, *Discipline & Punish: the Birth of the Prison* (New York: Random House, 1977), Second Edition, 112.

experience they wish to have. Here the process of historical reenactment, or historical interpretation, opens an opportunity to extend hyperreality to a deeper level and thus create a greater desire to seek out the past. If historic interpretation and reenactment offer the best venues for pre modern history, both the advantages and shortcomings of these methods must be thoroughly understood.

Thankfully, much has already been written in regards to interpretation and reenactment's implementation. R.G. Collingwood wrote extensively on the need for reenactment to fully understand history. Collingwood stressed that researchers can only observe real things, such as nature, in the present. The past is relatively concrete, in that it happened, but as it happened in the past and cannot be witnessed or reconstructed firsthand, imagination and any available evidence must be utilized to recreate and understand events of the past:

The historian's picture of his subject, whether that subject be a sequence of events or a past state of things, thus appears as a web of imaginative construction stretched between certain fixed points provided by the statements provided by the statements of his authorities; and if these points are frequent enough and the treads spun from each to the next are constructed with due care, always by the *a priori* imagination and never by merely arbitrary fancy, the whole picture is constantly verified by appeal to these data, and runs little risk of losing touch with the reality which it represents.²²

Collingwood maintained that historical events are formed from two parts: the outer expression, observable by all, and the "Inside" or inward portion, which would be described in terms of thought. According to Collingwood, historians should only be

²² R.G. Collingwood and Jan van der Dussen, *The Idea of History* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 242.

concerned with “those events which are the outward expression” of the thoughts and internal driving forces behind these events.²³

Multiple interpretations of Collingwood take varying stances on his meaning of “re-enactment”, as well as its relation to the current practice of historic reenactment. This section will examine those for and against Collingwood’s relevance to the modern practice, though the study will ultimately conclude that the mainstream practice of reenactment, when done correctly, falls well within Collingwood’s historical philosophy, and therefore has a basis as an academic application.

Historical reenactors, who prefer the titles “living historians” or “historical interpreters”,²⁴ would at first glance be entirely concerned with the external portion of Collingwood’s perception of history. From written sources, surviving artefacts, artistic depictions, and academic studies, historical interpreters put a considerable, what some might consider unhealthy, amount of time and money into producing the physical and material elements of a particular period as accurately as possible. Sometimes these interpretations focus on a specific event, or represent everyday period life. Whatever the interpreters choose to represent, the highest possible level of accuracy must be sought and achieved, both for their benefit and that of their audience.

This strict adherence to accuracy, down to producing the most commonplace of daily period utensils and learning long-dead languages to read the primary sources and present the most accurate as possible depiction of the past, appears to clash with Collingwood’s concept of true reenactment. Indeed, his focus on the inward reenactment,

²³ Collingwood, *The Idea of History*, 217.

²⁴ Tony Horwitz, *Confederates in the Attic* (New York: Random House, 1998) 10-11.

a mental and emotional stripping away of modern vestiges so that the historian may understand the mentality of our forbearers, suggests that the modern notion of historical interpretation would leave Collingwood vexed. According to Iain McCalman and Paul Pickering, Collingwood “did not envisage re-enacting the past emotionally or physically—the historical equivalent of archaeological fieldwork—nor could he have imagined the potential of technology to aid the imaginative process enhanced or derailed by our modern capacity to immerse ourselves in a hyperrealistic visual simulation of past environments”, as he considered it a “purely intellectual activity”.²⁵

The emphasis on period-accurate gear, clothing and environment, though seemingly antithetical to Collingwood, actually allows the interpreter to develop the necessary mentality of either a period-based representative or a historical figure. “The historian not only re-enacts past thought, he re-enacts it in the context of his own knowledge and therefore, in re-enacting it, criticizes it, forms his own judgement of its value, corrects whatever errors he can discern in it.”²⁶ Reenactment in both mind and body induces “a labor of active and therefore critical thinking” in any historical interpreter, taking the interpretation from external pageantry to a personal recognition and realization of the period the external pieces, down to the laces, represent. Kate Bowan also calls Collingwood the “man of action”, pointing out his belief that “a student of music could not imagine a Beethoven symphony without having heard it performed.”²⁷ While the jump from music to full period reproduction may seem quite large, the

²⁵ Ian McCalman and Paul A. Pickering, *Historical Reenactment: from Realism to the Effective Turn* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2010), 4.

²⁶ Collingwood, 215.

²⁷ McCalman, et al., *Historical Reenactment*, 12-13.

principle external experience leading to internal realization and understanding remain the same.

Usually working in tandem with festivals or locally funded events to provide advertising and space for the event, these reenactments may coincide with the dates of the historical periods they represent. Living history events may last for extended periods of time or year round, as they depict certain lifestyles or settlements rather than specific events. Both forms of historic interpretation involve a dedication to authenticity that requires an investment beyond the mere hobby or past time.

This desire to connect and interact with these particular historical elements has led to the development of historic reenactment and living history groups across the globe. These largely amateur groups, i.e. non-professional enthusiasts who may or may not operate within an organized, non-profit group, focus on particular historical periods, such as the high medieval period or the American Civil War, dedicating most of their free time to researching the history of the period, as well as the correct equipment and clothing, in order to historically interpret a particular event or social activity. Military conflicts and battles tend to be particularly popular. Requiring a good deal of research and practice, the interpreters are also responsible for obtaining or constructing the necessary equipment.

A number of studies concerning historical reenactment have previously published on the subject of historical reenactment. One of the most thorough, Tony Horowitz's *Confederates in the Attic*, explores the most popular subject of American reenactment the Civil War. The book explores the culture that has developed around Civil War reenactment, as well as why this method of remembrance has flourished in the South. Horowitz's time with seasoned historical interpreter Rob Lee Hodge illustrates the three

general categories of reenactors: the “farbs”, reenactors who approach the past “with a lack of verisimilitude”, the mainstream reenactors who seek to present an accurate yet limited portrayal of the past to the public, and the “hard cores” that seek “absolute fidelity to the 1860’s” and the “period rush” that accompanies it.²⁸ Horowitz also examines the Southern culture that has allowed the reenactment of this period to flourish, citing the American South’s ties to surviving places of remembrance (historical houses, memorials and battlegrounds) as well as the sense of defeated Confederate nationalism that the author compares to Palestinians and the Catholics of Northern Ireland.²⁹

All historical interpretations have a limit, an element that cannot be fully reproduced due to a lack of materials or an unacceptable level of danger. This rings particularly true for military-based interpretations, or any where violence must be simulated. All interpreters accept the fact that no matter how much research, money or work is put into any historical interpretation, none shall ever be one hundred percent accurate. McCalman’s principle “reflexive reenactment”, which stresses that while “re-enacting can never fully capture what it might have felt like to be there”, it provides the “very element of unpredictability” that “can become a source of creative exchange with the past, provided it is frankly acknowledged.”³⁰ Interpreters hence work around these acknowledged limitations, the process of which requires the interpreter to develop a better understanding of the period represented in order to explain these shortcomings both to himself and any onlookers who notice them.

²⁸ Horwitz, *Confederates in the Attic*, 10-11.

²⁹ Horwitz, 38.

³⁰ McCalman, et al., 13.

While historic interpreters or those researching the reenactment phenomena may readily find rationale for it in Collingwood, and thus a method to the interpreters' madness, historians within the academic community have proven to be less than accepting. Some "have responded to reenactment with an admixture of bemusement and derision",³¹ treating it as nothing more than romantic pageantry for weekend warriors seeking escapism. "[T]he profession appears to be bent on ignoring reenactment, as if by closing their collective eyes it will go away. It won't."³² As this section and others will hopefully demonstrate, these reenactments are more than just the passing fancy of a culture that romanticizes elements of the past, as the commitment to accuracy practiced by individual interpreters and "authenticity committee[s]"³³ may attest to. True historical interpreters develop an understanding of the past by conducting in-depth research into primary documents, reproducing long-obsolete tools and donning period garments to develop the mindset of a person who would have said or written the recorded words, worn those clothes, used those tools, fulfilled those labors, and possibly trained for combat on a daily basis. This perspective, reflected back on the body of academic work, study of the primary documents, and especially new discoveries, may lead to a greater understanding of history than academia has achieved to this point. As an added bonus, greater public interest has been and may continue to be generated.

B. Living History: Unfertile Ground for the Medieval Period?

Historical reenactment falls into two general categories: traditional reenactment involving historic events or practices (usually military conflicts), and living history sites,

³¹ McCalman, et al., 2.

³² *ibid.*

³³ Horwitz, 11.

or open-air museums. The latter derives from the Swedish open-air museums of the 1890's, which focused on the daily life of past communities and the people who inhabited them. Living history museums operate on various scales, from working farms and ranches to towns and early urban centers, such as Colonial Williamsburg. Each site, based in a setting of historical importance, offers a glimpse of the daily and mundane of a different period, rather than the significant or extraordinary. The goal of such sites is total immersion without romance, creating a sense of time travel and accuracy that assures the visitor that the past exists as a conceivable entity grounded in reality. This may mean breaking down mainstream notions that visitors carry into the museum, particularly the "Fred Flintstone syndrome" described by Scott Magelssen, in which visitors assume that "those who lived in the past did not have technology and were not capable of fine detail", when in truth "they did some finer work than we can now".³⁴ Expectations such as these held by the general public may dictate the exhibition the museum presents, thus establishing various degrees of "accuracy" within each living history museum.

As with mainstream reenactment and historical interpretation, some historians within the academic community see little benefit in condoning what they may consider tourist fodder. "'Living history' is offensive to the professional historian. It shows no respect for the integrity of either the historical record or the historical event...It blurs the distinction between fact and fiction, using laser-beam technology and animatronics to authenticate its inventions and produce a variety of reality-effects." Others, however, see living history as a mode of "'controlled reconstruction of the past'", an attempt to

³⁴ Scott Magelssen, *Living History Museums: Undoing History through Performance* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2007), 27.

“improve on the original, or to make up for memory’s silences” that has “galvanized a far greater enthusiasm” from both students of history and the public.

The key factor in the survival and success of any living history center depends on the site’s inherent tie to the period it represents. Archival documents, artifacts, local genealogies, surviving landmarks, and notable historic events gives living history its *raison d’être*, as well as the foundation for historical research on the site. The most successful such museums in the United States may focus on a specific year or sets of dates, but avoid major events or dates in order to preserve their “daily life” presentations. Plimouth Plantation, for example, “stages the year 1627 every season for visitors” rather than the day or year of the landing or the first Thanksgiving;³⁵ while at Colonial Williamsburg, the town has been reconstructed as it was in 1774, though during the 2000 “Days in History” program, “every day of the week corresponds to a lived day in the years immediately preceding the American Revolution”.³⁶ Although the dates of the reconstructed sites tend to act as amalgamations of various years in order to portray daily life within the period, this also rests on community history and regional memory. Living history, therefore, rests on remembrance and local history.

This dependence on local memory and records therefore limits, if not outright dispels, the possible use of living history programs in portraying medieval history to an American audience. To be sure, sites such as the Anglo-Saxon village at Battle and the Jorvik Viking Center have proven successful in the United Kingdom, the former

³⁵ Magelssen, *Living History Museums*, 23.

³⁶ Magelssen, 31.

recreating rural life in the year of the Conquest (1066)³⁷ and the latter experimenting in various forms of interpreting the archaeological site between the years 865 and 1067. Jorvik has received particular attention for its combination of surviving Norse artifacts, facial reconstructions of long-dead Jorvik residents, time-care rides through a reconstructed squalid streets, and even recreated smells.³⁸ The site, however, has been accused of acting more as a “pop-up history” site than an academic attempt to recreate the site’s historical past.³⁹ As American history’s connection to Pre-Modern Europe via settlement dates only to the end of the 16th century, the possibility of making a connection to the medieval past via regional memory and living history centers would prove extremely limited and impractical, if not unachievable.

A living history site, however, does not necessarily hinge on the presence of a historic settlement on a particular site. According to Raphael Samuel, “[t]he taste for ‘living history’ also finds expression in the creation of make-believe historical settlements, improving on the original where there is a nucleus of material remains to create... ‘a hypothetical industrial community’ or assembling artifacts on a...site and threading them with a narrative.”⁴⁰ Theoretically then, a site in the United States with period correct materials, the right conditions, and a staff of regular interpreters could host a living history museum from a large range of historical periods and cultures. While such

³⁷ Raphael Samuel, *Theatres of Memory: Past and Present in Contemporary Culture* (London and New York: Verso, 2012), 170.

³⁸ Samuel, *Theatres of Memory*, 170-171.

³⁹ R.A. Hall, “The Archaeology of Viking Age York”, *Archaeology* 38, no. 5 (September/October 1985), 35.

⁴⁰ Samuel, 169.

an endeavor is feasible, the long-term success of any such sight is conjectural, even doubtful at best.

An American example of medieval living history stands unfinished in the Ozark Mountains near Lead Hill, Arkansas. Begun by French archaeologists Michel Guyot and Jean-Mark Mirat, land was cleared for the Ozark Medieval Fortress and work began on the foundations in 2009. The Arkansas-based castle would act as a sister project to Château Guédelon. Guyot, along with a handful of enthusiastic medievalists, opened a large tract of his land in 1997 near Yonne in Burgundy, France, with the intention of building a 13th century castle from scratch.⁴¹ “This thirteenth-century castle, originally constructed for the Seigneur Guilbert [de Courtenay], is being painstakingly built using medieval construction techniques”.⁴² Opening to the public in 1998, a regular body of craftsmen familiar with the period-appropriate tools and techniques continuously add to the site using “raw materials” found or “produced on the site.”⁴³

As no castle had previously existed on the location, however, Guédelon lacks the immediate spatial memory that heritage sites usually require. Even Guédelon’s lord, Guilbert de Courtenay, was fabricated to provide a simulated history⁴⁴ and reason for the fortress’ construction, said reason being “to reward Courtenay’s service to the Capetian Crown in battles against rebellious barons...in 1228” by the Queen of France.⁴⁵ Château de Guédelon, then, acts as both a simulated “heritage” site, as well as a monumental

⁴¹ Maryline Martin, interview/review by Robert M. Schwartz, “The Medieval Castle of Guédelon, Yonne, Burgundy, France”, *The Public Historian* 33, no. 4 (November 2011), 132.

⁴² David Matthews, *Medievalism: a Critical History* (New York: Boydell & Brewer, 2015), 67.

⁴³ *ibid.*

⁴⁴ *ibid.*

⁴⁵ Martin, “The Medieval Castle of Guédelon”, 132.

exercise in experimental archaeology. The project director, Maryline Martin, acknowledges that while certain anachronisms such as hard hats are present as unavoidable safety precautions, the project is already leading to new discoveries concerning medieval building techniques for the historical community to consider. “The making of mortar,” Martin explains, “is a good example of the project’s devotion to learning by doing and to contributing new historic knowledge as a result.”⁴⁶ As of 2011, the project attracts over 300,000 annual visitors,⁴⁷ and construction should be completed by “1253” (2025)⁴⁸ when plaster will be applied to the finished walls.

With the continuing success at Château Guédelon, Guyot hoped an identical project would prove successful across the Atlantic. Construction of the site, which opened to the public in 2010, would be conducted via techniques and technology of the same period, with artisans and craftsmen providing demonstrations such as medieval stonecutting and bread making. Although Guyot and his board of American-based French directors intended to complete the castle in 2030, the site now sits unfinished after closing “for the season” in January of 2012.⁴⁹ The project faced an apparent mountain of hindrances, namely a lack of both sufficient funds to generate financial solvency (caused by a lack of expected visitors) as well as communication between the French directors

⁴⁶ Martin, 134-135.

⁴⁷ Martin, 134.

⁴⁸ Martin, 133.

⁴⁹ Joanne Bratton, “Ozark Medieval Fortress Closes, For Now”, *The Baxter Bulletin*, January 24, 2012, accessed November 19, 2013.
http://www.baxterbulletin.com/article/20120124/NEWS01/201240337/Ozark-Medieval-Fortress-closes-now?nclick_check=1

and American site managers, the trial-and-error of such a large Pre-Modern project, and the necessity for the site to conform to modern safety measures.⁵⁰

The doom of such projects in the United States ultimately draws from the lack of American emotional attachment to the medieval period. The site's workers, engineers, and architects lack regional and contextual references to either medieval or European building procedures. "Some had received brief instruction from a builder with extensive historical restoration experience, but a week or two of cursory lessons probably hampered by a language barrier does not seem enough to allow the natives to become experts."⁵¹ A lack of academic consultants on sites also led to a large number of historical inaccuracies practiced and promoted by tour guides and other employees.⁵² Employing European architects familiar with the necessary techniques would prove too costly, as it would be to send local architects abroad to gain a more accurate understanding of the process of raising 13th century fortifications. In the end, such projects boil down to the question of financial sustainability; and while Colonial Williamsburg, the Cloisters and Plimouth Plantation may rely on either financial backing from the Rockefeller family or the direct emotional connection to the area's history (or both in Williamsburg's case),⁵³ the lack of both on the Ozark Medieval Fortress' part means that the castle will likely remain nothing more than the four-foot tall foundations of a dream that never was.

C. Conclusion: Possibility Exists

⁵⁰ Lawrence W. Marvin, "Ozark Medieval Fortress", *The Public Historian* 33 (2011), 140.

⁵¹ *ibid.*

⁵² Marvin, "Ozark Medieval Fortress", 141.

⁵³ Magelssen, 30.

That is not to say that reenactment, or historical interpretation, would not prove effective in attracting public attention to the medieval period. A counterpoint to the late Ozark Medieval Fortress can be found near Carnation, Washington. Camlann Medieval Village, a mock-up of a Somerset English village from c.1376, opens its gates to visitors every weekend from May through September. Beginning with its first medieval festival in 1981,⁵⁴ Camlann has held regular festivals throughout the summer and autumn months, “with theatre, knightly combat, puppetry, crafts, archery, and minstrels” supplied by interpreters and “professional entertainers”.⁵⁵ The combat, craft making and regular village life reflect English life before 1400, which is carefully researched in the site’s considerable library.⁵⁶ While a good deal of Camlann’s success lies in the pomp and romance that comes with its annual festivals, its growing access to academic resources and its adherence to 14th life gives credence to its goal to “provide a deeper understanding of the relationship between those historical events and western society today.”⁵⁷ Camlann Medieval Village is slowly but surely transforming itself into a living history site worth of any to be found in Europe with the same period focus.

A number of key elements may have allowed Camlann to carry on for thirty four years, as compared to the two years the Ozark Medieval Fortress operated. First, one must consider the epic scale of constructing a full scale stone castle without the comfort

⁵⁴ Kimberly Tony Korol-Evans, *Renaissance Festivals: Merrying the Past and Present* (Jefferson: McFarland, 2009), 24.

⁵⁵ “Summer Village Festivals”, Camlann Medieval Village, last modified October 27, 2014, accessed January 20, 2015. <http://www.camlann.org/festivals.htm>.

⁵⁶ “Camlann Library”, Camlann Medieval Village, last modified October 27, 2014, accessed January 20, 2015. <http://www.camlann.org/library.htm>

⁵⁷ “Who We Are”, Camlann Medieval Village, last modified October 27, 2014, accessed January 21, 2015. <http://www.camlann.org/about%20us.htm>.

of modern equipment or materials, as compared to a number of wooden and wattle buildings, a mill, a forge, a few shops, and a tourney field. Second, while the castle's time schedule demanded that work continue on a daily basis from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.,⁵⁸ the village proper only operates on weekends during the summer months, with the exception of feast days and special events.⁵⁹ Third, aside from ultimately producing a period-accurate fortification as well as the benefit of attracting some public and academic interest, the Ozark project did not produce any commercial income and depended on funding from financial backers, for which the project has been seeking since 2013.⁶⁰ The medieval village, while existing as a non-profit 501(c)(3),⁶¹ operates in tandem with the Bor's Hede Tavern, along with a number of craft shops that open during the festivals. Unlike the seasonal weekend-based village, the tavern opens for dinner hours five days a week,⁶² and remains open during major events. In the end, Camlann Medieval Village not only sustains itself financially in a way the Ozark Medieval Fortress could not, its smaller scale provides a readily available medieval environment to interact with, one that the construction site at Lead Hill could not provide for several decades. In the end, without a strong financial backing or a cultural connection on which to build a foundation, the Ozark Medieval Fortress was just epic to become a reality.

⁵⁸ "Ozark Medieval Fortress", Google+, accessed 11 March 2015.

<https://plus.google.com/110622850535926401558/about?gl=us&hl=en>

⁵⁹ "Calendar", Camlann Medieval Village, last modified October 27, 2014, accessed February 4, 2015.

<http://www.camlann.org/calendar.htm>

⁶⁰ Bret Schulte, "Fixer-Upper. Ozark Views. Vassals Welcome", *New York Times*, May 27, 2013.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2013/05/28/us/buyer-sought-for-stalled-medieval-castle-in-arkansas.html>

⁶¹ "Who We Are", Camlann Medieval Village, last modified October 27, 2014, accessed January 19, 2015.

<http://www.camlann.org/about%20us.htm>

⁶² "The Bors Hede Inne", Camlann Medieval Village, last modified October 27, 2014, accessed January 19, 2015. http://www.camlann.org/bors_hede.htm

Medieval reenactment, in fact, has proven successful in varying degrees; and medieval-based groups continue to grow in number, thanks in part to an increasing public desire for escapism as well as ever-more available access to online resources and the ability to connect to like-minded groups. This thesis, then, will examine groups within the United States that research, practice and seek to recreate elements of Pre-Modern culture. The procedures involved in this study will largely include interviews with select members of these groups in tandem with research into both the background and methods of study, as well as their methods of public outreach.

PART III: HISTORICAL ACCURACY AND THE THRILL OF COMBAT

A. Introduction: a Call to Arms

Knights in heraldic pomp and armor charging at each other. Skilled archers pulling off trick shots with longbows or crossbows. Vikings forming a shield wall to repel an attack. Even demonstrations of early cannon and firearms. There is no denying that the warfare of the Middle Ages readily lends itself to drawing and keeping the attention of even those not particularly interested in history. The lack of medieval sites of consciousness or memory in the United States proves extremely problematic for any seeking to recreate European history before 1650. Without such a connection, a detached sense of romantic nostalgia colors the American perception of the Middle Ages.

As evidenced by the late Ozark Medieval Fortress, a desire to connect to the medieval past, or at least what society perceives as "medieval", grows steadily every year. Beginning in the 1960's, small groups in the United States have committed themselves to varying levels of research, with the goal of recreating elements of medieval lifestyle and combat. These groups, growing in size and frequency due to greater access to historical materials and online interconnectivity, give public displays not only to entertain, but to educate the public about the Pre-Modern past, as well as immersing themselves and onlookers in the hyperreal "Modern Middle Ages". This section will investigate the methods of research and reproduction these groups utilize, examine how accurately they portray the past, and how they may successfully educate the public.

To be clear, the groups selected have education as at least an element of their *modus operandi*. To one degree or another, educating the public and fellow members about the Middle Ages provides a goal for each member to strive for. To that end, Renaissance faires and festivals have been excluded from this study. This omission stems

from the fact that these festivals, though centered on the portrayal of the public's general perception of the Middle Ages, seeks to entertain rather than educate.

The inherent obstacle facing any attempt at accurate medieval interpretation is romance, thanks mainly to the success of novels of Sir Walter Scott and modern fantasy. The public expects depictions of the past to meet their preconceived notions of the past, which the various entertainment industries are more than willing to provide. For this reason, films, television series, games, and even American Renaissance festivals cannot be expected to provide reliably accurate depictions of the past. Beginning with the semi-disastrous 1839 Eglinton Tournament, modern Renaissance festivals usually involve venues and activities revolving around staged jousting demonstrations based on late medieval and Renaissance tournaments. "The jousting, period weapons, and sportive combat all celebrate a culture of chivalry that was already anachronistic by the Renaissance, and that the English themselves were already staging nostalgically by the reign of Elizabeth."⁶³ Renaissance faires thus reflect a combination of anachronisms developed both recently and from the Early Modern period.

With the first American "Pleasure Faire" and the Living History Center in Marin County in 1964, these initial festivals did hold themselves to a very high level of authenticity during the next decade. The objectives of these early groups was to create "functional paradoxes",⁶⁴ wherein the authenticity would act as a commentary on the present rather than on the past. Phyllis Patterson, who founded the first faire with her

⁶³ Gregory M. Colon Semenza, *The English Renaissance in Popular Culture* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 116.

⁶⁴ Rachel Lee Rubin, *Well Met: Renaissance Faires and the American Counterculture* (New York: NYU Press, 2012), 34.

husband Ron, "began holding instructional workshops, tutoring participants in period-appropriate dress, social conventions, and speech," while a contemporary described her going through the venues "with a clipboard and making notes for people"⁶⁵ to improve their level of accuracy. Over the past few decades, however, the multiple festivals that have sprung up chose entertainment over history, with fairgoers preferring to drink, buy novelty crafts and watch staged combat. Instead of functional paradoxes, these festivals exaggerate fictional stereotypes of the Middle Ages to satisfy preconceived notions held by the public.

Renaissance festivals in the United States may have strayed from their original goal of historical accuracy, but other institutions have sprouted up which seek to immerse their members or audiences in accurate portrayals of the Middle Ages. While these groups may not seek to create or may not succeed in creating the functional paradoxes of the early faires, the dedicated research, practice and reproduction that each member undergoes to recreate some element of the past deserves the appropriate level of academic attention. This section will examine the methods of research the members of these groups practice, along with what resources they utilize, as well as how they attract public attention and new members.

B. The Society for Creative Anachronism and the Current Middle Ages

Members of the Barony of Atenveldt, part of the larger SCA kingdom of the same name, revel in the pomp and ceremony that attracts both positive and negative attention. Founded by Berkeley historians, ex-military language majors and Tolkien fans in 1966,⁶⁶

⁶⁵ Rubin, *Well Met*, 36.

⁶⁶ Mike A. Cramer, *Medieval Fantasy as Performance: The Society for Creative Anachronism and the Current Middle Ages* (Scarecrow Press, 2010), 1.

the Society for Creative Anachronism draws heavily from historic resources such as the Chronicles of Froissart as well as the romantic ideals of Sir Walter Scott and the vivid heroism of JRR Tolkien's Middle Earth. "We didn't incorporate until '67," Lord Heinrich der Bauer (real name omitted), a member of the Barony of Atenveldt, explains, "because originally it was literally a party in somebody's backyard that had a theme, and at the end went, 'That was fun, let's do it again!'" The party grew in numbers, leading to the group's incorporation as a 501-(c)3 organization. "So, at that point an author, Marion Zimmer Bradley, who was going to school at the time, said, 'Let's call it this!'"⁶⁷ Although the recent economic decline caused the group's numbers to shrink, The SCA remains a popular, and now international, entity.

Although generally recognized as one giant nonprofit organization, the SCA is actually an umbrella designation for a number of international affiliations. Nineteen "kingdoms" currently exist across the globe, each divided into various principalities, duchies, counties, baronies, and other smaller bodies. Each is governed by personal charters, the overarching SCA board of directors, and "rotating mock kings who, rather than having been born to the job, must win a "Crown Tournament" held two or three times each year".⁶⁸ Beneath each temporary ruler exist the knights and orders of peerage, namely the custodial Order of the Pelican and the scientific Order of the Laurel. The vast majority of each group's members make up the base of the political structure, completing any task or temporary position that needs to be filled while mainly taking part in the

⁶⁷Lord Heinrich der Bauer, interview by author, Phoenix, Arizona, 8 March 2015.

⁶⁸ Cramer, *Medieval Fantasy as a Performance*, ix.

social events. Lord Heinrich der Bauer currently resides in this social category within the Barony of Atenveldt, one of fifteen baronies, shires and colleges in the Arizona-centered Kingdom of Atenveldt.

What separates a meeting or event held by one of the organization's international kingdoms or baronies from a Renaissance festival or Live Action Roleplaying (LARP) is the level of involvement and personal development by its participants. The SCA and its branches classify themselves as living history groups. "Part of our charter is educational," says Heinrich, "so we do school demos, we do public events, public outreach, that kind of stuff."⁶⁹ As with Civil War and Revolutionary War reenactors, bystanders are encouraged to watch. "However, unlike a Ren. Faire when people come and watch...it's not our job to entertain them. So, it's participatory."⁷⁰

Each member creates his or her persona, set in a historical time period, and develops their persona through personal research, the crafting and/or collecting of the character's clothing and equipment. "In the Society for Creative Anachronism, wearing period garb, historically accurate and grounded in reality, is required".⁷¹ Traditionally, the periods covered and reproduced by its members range from the fall of the Western Roman Empire (c. 476) to the Elizabethan period (c.1650). With the increase of members interested in the Greco-Roman period, the SCA's bylaws were revised to increase the range well into the Bronze Age⁷². These more classical groups aside, the

⁶⁹Lord Heinrich der Bauer, 8 March 2015.

⁷⁰*ibid.*

⁷¹ Gilsdorf, *Fantasy Freaks and Gaming Geeks*, 155.

⁷² Lord Heinrich der Bauer, 8 March 2015.

SCA seeks to create what Michael Cramer refers to as the "Current Middle Ages",⁷³ or at least a participant-friendly version.

What separates personas created by the SCA and those groups associated with LARPing is that the Society's characters, while different in name and profession, are virtually the same as their creators and are treated as such. These personas cannot be verified historical figures, but plausible contemporaries of the period they choose. "The character could have lived, but didn't."⁷⁴ The reason for creating a persona without the intention of traditional roleplaying, according to Lord Heinrich, is the hope of generating a personal desire to learn more about a historical period and generate a greater level of personal accuracy. LARP members, on the other hand, seek a level of escapism. Ethan Gilsdorf's *Fantasy Freaks and Gaming Geeks* delineates between the two groups, stressing that LARPers undergo a detachment from reality when taking on their personas. Gilsdorf's interview subjects felt they enjoyed the chance to become not only someone different, but someone better than themselves. "In the LARPs Bradley participates in, her characters 'are better than me'. She gets to save the world."⁷⁵ In contrast, the SCA acts more like a "fraternal organization" that requires "funny names", but no alternate personalities or abilities.⁷⁶

Many first-time members, usually after watching a group practice or event, become "stick jocks" exclusively for the combat element. Heinrich states that these members "eventually will sit there and scratch his head and [go], 'Hmm. Well I've been a

⁷³ Cramer, *Medieval Fantasy as a Performance*, 58.

⁷⁴ Lord Heinrich der Bauer, 8 March 2015.

⁷⁵ Gilsdorf, *Fantasy Freaks and Gaming Geeks*, 160.

⁷⁶ *ibid.*

12th century Celt for so long. I wonder what I should be wearing?' And the next thing they know, they're in the art museum's research library digging through...fashion books from the 12th century going, 'I can do that.'"⁷⁷ This gradual method, coupled with a "gentle peer pressure nudge",⁷⁸ preserves at least a modicum of the SCA's educational element, while keeping the elements of each persona within the realms of historical plausibility.

While combat remains the organization's largest draws, one of the SCA's main strengths stems from the fact that its research and social events extend past the martial aspects of medieval life. Members attempt to reconstruct period cooking, craft making, music, textiles, fashion, and even engineering, within reasonable limits and based on a mix of available resources. Lord Heinrich's wife, for example, who used to take part regularly in the sparring sections, currently recreates illumination and calligraphy, as well as experimenting with early methods of makeup. "And she uses period pigments," he muses, "So, a lot of the pigments that she uses...are horribly, horribly toxic. Do not lick anything that she does because it is mercury salts and lead sulfides,"⁷⁹ a daily hazard that many in previous periods, to be sure, had to consider. Heinrich also contends that the Society's members include some of the finest armorers in the world:

There was a guy up in Flagstaff that...called himself Brother Gregor for the longest time. But, he got in as a psychology student, and as an elective he took metal shop class and realized he had a knack for it. And he ended up changing his major to metallurgy....And, he actually rediscovered lost techniques...there was a Germanic tribe...And what they used, it was a...very high carbon metal that bent. That was very bizarre. And he figured out how

⁷⁷ Lord Heinrich der Bauer, 8 March 2015.

⁷⁸ *ibid.*

⁷⁹ *ibid.*

they did it. And it's one of those things that...there's about four people in the world that know because he actually took apprentices and taught them.⁸⁰

This desire to be period appropriate encourages a number of SCA members to conduct amazingly in depth research and reproduction, leading to a greater understanding of previous historical periods. Some have gone on to publish their findings.

Another major difference between SCAdian and LARPer personas draws from the "leveling up" that roleplay personas require to play the "game".⁸¹ Gilsdorf points out that while SCA events may involve combat, feasting, discussion or learning new skills, "no specific plot drives the action of an SCA event."⁸² Lord Heinrich agrees that character achievement drives live roleplay. "It's all about the number, your stats, and everything like that"; while in regards to his SCA persona of a 16th century German mercenary, "what awards I get, whether I win or lose in a fight is not based on a stat sheet. It's based on what I personally can or cannot do."⁸³ Make no mistake, involvement in the SCA is one large game; but one achieves through developing one's persona and adding his or her own contribution to the larger group.

The authenticity which each member of the SCA brings to his or her persona, however, varies from person to person. Lord Heinrich admits that not all members keep to a standard most other living history groups would consider acceptable, depending both on financial constraints and one's interest in the period:

You will run into everything from a guy who just heard about us and has safety pinned a pair of beach towels together over his shoulders as a tabard, all the way down to...a good friend of mine...who is academically published...It really comes down to the person. Overall, we try to maintain

⁸⁰ *ibid.*

⁸¹ *ibid.*

⁸² Gilsdorf, *Fantasy Freaks and Gaming Geeks*, 160.

⁸³ Lord Heinrich der Bauer, 8 March 2015.

what we call the ten foot rule. If, standing ten feet away, it looks acceptable, we'll be okay with that.⁸⁴

The majority of the group's members, however, "are either indifferent to history or more committed to a neo-Arthurian ethos (heavily influenced by Victorian romanticism) which is commonly called 'The Dream' than to any historical view of the Middle Ages."⁸⁵ Romance draws the bulk of the "SCAdians" into the "Dream", but a passion for the past at the core of its membership and bylaws keeps the group from flying into the realm of pure fantasy.

Like Civil War reenactments, most SCA events take place outside, involving a good deal of camping. Most of these events, such as the annually held Pennsic and Estrella Wars, concerns meleé or mass combat. Wielding synthetic weapons made from rattan wood and protected by armor that meets SCA requirements, judges on the sidelines determine the ultimate outcome, and decide which contestants are to be awarded. Combat here ranges in size from one-on-one duels to huge melees. "A solid blow to the head or body spelled death. The combatants themselves judged the force of the blow to be sufficient to wound or kill."⁸⁶ Battles can also be held in a number of battlefield scenarios, from open fields to simulated town streets. "These performances displayed the type of physical prowess and courage typical of medieval romances, and both, appropriately will be celebrated in song and story—and in staging them they brought renown not only to themselves but also to their queen."⁸⁷ This desire for romance and

⁸⁴ *ibid.*

⁸⁵ Cramer, *Medieval Fantasy as a Performance*, 68.

⁸⁶ Gilsdorf, *Fantasy Freaks and Gaming Geeks*, 171.

⁸⁷ Cramer, *Medieval Fantasy as a Performance*, 123.

renown, however, separates the SCA method of combat different in both nature and method from that of hardcore or mainstream reenactors in Europe.

Likewise, the inherent lack of medieval spatial history in the United States robs any group's reenactment of a sense of memory or connectivity. "Reenactment in its purest form takes place, like Hastings, on the location of the original event."⁸⁸ As a result, though mock battles may be staged on important dates, these events remain fictional, and thus the nature of the groups is unavoidably fictitious.

The "anachronisms" referred to in the group's name stem from the lack of regulations holding its members to a standard of cohesive authenticity. Just as new members are not expected to meet a high level of accuracy in their kit, so those taking part in wars or open air events are not held at fault for relying on modern amenities in the field. "Coleman stoves, sleeping bags, modern tents, folding chairs, etc., can all be found at an SCA event...so people who sleep in a Coleman tent may one day advance to a medieval-style pavilion, or the propane stove might be replaced by a cast-iron brazier."⁸⁹ Members and participants likewise are not confined to a specific period, meaning that one can encounter "Elizabethans sitting down next to Romans sitting new and they you know are having dinner, having lunch with a Mongol," as Lord Heinrich points out.⁹⁰ Cramer also adds that this "makes it impossible to behave and react the way a person of a specific class from a specific time period would have reacted. In staging an interpersonal performance between a Saxon warrior of the tenth century and a master goldsmith from

⁸⁸ Cramer, 124.

⁸⁹ *ibid.*, 63.

⁹⁰ Lord Heinrich der Bauer, 8 March 2015.

fifteenth-century Amsterdam, where would you begin?"⁹¹ The mix of conflicting periods makes it impossible to pull off any sense of honest immersion or mimesis, for neither the participants nor the onlookers.

Members of the SCA, however, still seek a level of authenticity in developing their personas, and they have proven more than willing to educate and aid schools with demonstrations. Potential exists, therefore, for a greater combined effort between elements of the organization and educational institutions in encouraging both medieval and general historical study.

C. Western Martial Arts-The Second Renaissance

The desire to reproduce the past as authentically as possible generates an unheard of level of study and research outside the academic field. As demonstrated by the members of the SCA, combat, warfare, and all the equipment such acts of violence require draw the most attention from the general public and armchair historians. Certain expectations come with every combat demonstration, be it one-on-one or a large scale “battle”: the combatants should all wear “period appropriate” armor, and the violence generally reflects what the audience has seen in film and television, which usually involves swinging weapons and battering opponents with all one’s strength. “The make-believe fighting of movies, plays, and live-action amusement park and dinner shows is about illusion,” writes John Clements, “It is about creating the appearance of fighting, not about accurately exploring or simulating it.”⁹² This pleases the crowds, and may fulfill one’s preconceived notion of Pre-Modern combat.

⁹¹ *ibid.*

⁹² John Clements, *Medieval Swordsmanship: Illustrated Methods and Techniques* (New York: Paladin Press, 1998), 271.

As with a small number of SCA members, however, a desire to create a more authentic portrayal of the past developed into an interest in learning more about the actual fighting methods from the periods their personas represent. The fact that the majority of medieval European fighting styles ceased to be practiced after the Baroque period, however, presents a major obstacle to any interested party. Fragments of the weaponry and armor, as well as wounds discovered on remains, shed some light on the techniques used in period combat, but no weapons master from the Post Roman period to the early thirteenth century described their practice in any detail.

Thankfully, from the end of the thirteenth century onward, masters in Europe began writing and publishing manuals with details and illustrations on the use of various weapons, namely the sword. The earliest such known manual, a selection from the Royal Armouries Ms. I.33 or “Tower” Manuscript, includes colored illustrations of opponents facing off with arming swords and buckler shields, with Latin text describing the various guards, parries and attacks.⁹³ Such manuals became more popular from the fourteenth century onwards, as sword guilds formed, particularly the German school of fencing in the Holy Roman Empire, and combat techniques ranging from tournaments and judicial duels to fixed battle. One such manuscript, a compendium of two fifteenth century fight manuals known as the Codex Wallerstein, covers a range of fighting styles ranging from unarmed submission and roundel dagger to arming sword, longsword, spear and poleax. These surviving fechtbuchs stand as “unmistakable proof” that combat during the Middle

⁹³ John Clements, *Medieval Swordsmanship*, 12.

Ages, "were highly developed, sophisticated, and extremely effective martial arts", which required years of training, conditioning, and instruction from the masters.⁹⁴

Of the surviving medieval *fechtbuchs* or fighting manuals, the majority originate from Central Europe and northern Italy, regions which originally fell under the loose jurisdiction of the Holy Roman Empire. The weaponry and techniques mentioned in these *fechtbuchs*, as demonstrated by the Codex Wallerstein, range from grappling and daggers to polearms, the most common and popular techniques put emphasis on the longsword, a modern label denoting a double-edged blade generally four feet in length, with a simple cross guard consisting of two quillons and a handle that requires a two-handed grip. "Longswords came in a huge range of styles, categorized in eight distinct types by the late Edward Oakeshott."⁹⁵ Generally weighing between two and four pounds, Oakeshott identified the form of longsword common during the late medieval period as Type XIIIa and Type XVA.^{96,97}

This weapon reflected the evolving nature of combat during the fourteenth to sixteenth centuries, as the growing preference for steel plate armor replaced chainmail, thus rendering the shield redundant and requiring a larger blade to penetrate the thicker armor. Along with its history as a symbol denoting rank and prestige, the longsword proved to be a versatile weapon, as it could be used effectively for offense and defense. Indeed, many *fechtbuch* illustrations depict the longsword being held both in the

⁹⁴Grzegorz Zabinski, Bartolomiej Walczak, and John Clements, *Codex Wallerstein: a Medieval Fighting Book from the Fifteenth Century on the Longsword, Falchion, Dagger, And Wrestling* (New York: Paladin Press, 2002), ix.

⁹⁵Guy Windsor, *The Swordsman's Companion* (Highland Village: Guy Windsor & The Chivalry Bookshelf, 2004), 157.

⁹⁶ Windsor, *The Swordsman's Companion*, 157-158.

⁹⁷ Edward Oakeshott, *The Sword in the Age of Chivalry* (New York: Boydell Press, 1997), 63-66.

traditional grip, with both hands on the handle below the cross guard, or with one hand gripping the blade halfway up (see *Figure 2*). While the former allowed for powerful cuts and was best utilized against unarmored or more lightly armored opponents (*Figure 1*), the latter proved more effective against armored attackers, as the modified grip turned the blade tip into an armor-piercing spike and the pommel could be used for bludgeoning (*Figure 2*). A third grip, with both hands on the blade, turned the sword into a poleax.

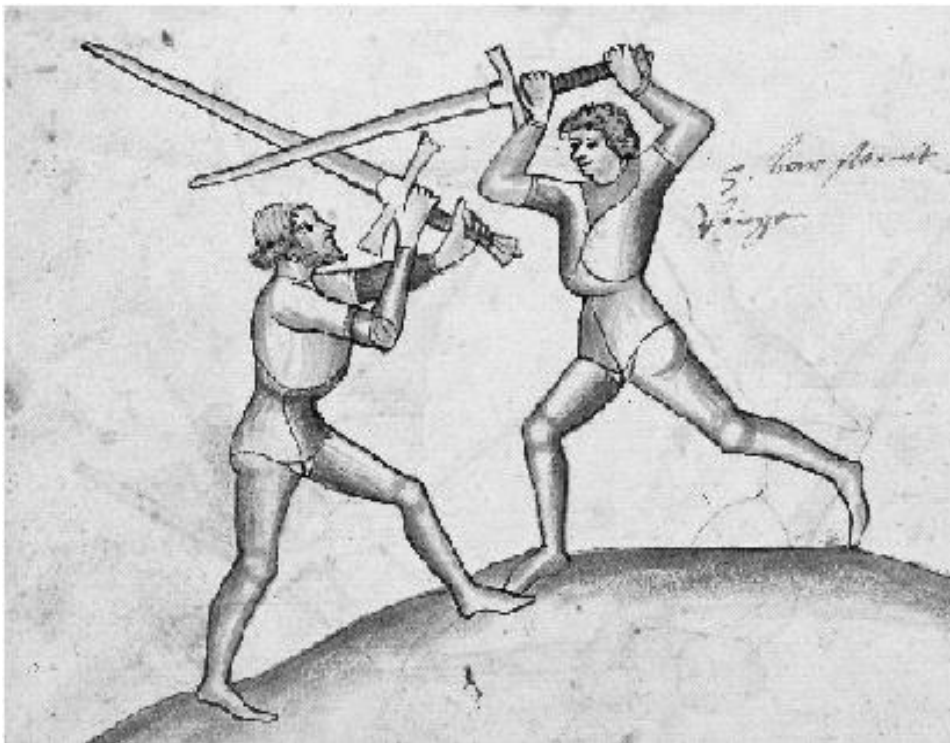


Figure 1: Folio 101r from the Codex Wallerstein depicting longsword techniques between two unarmored combatants. The opponent on the right appears to be using an Unterhau, or underhand strike. Image courtesy of John Clements, Grzegorz Zabinski, and Bartłomiej Walczak.

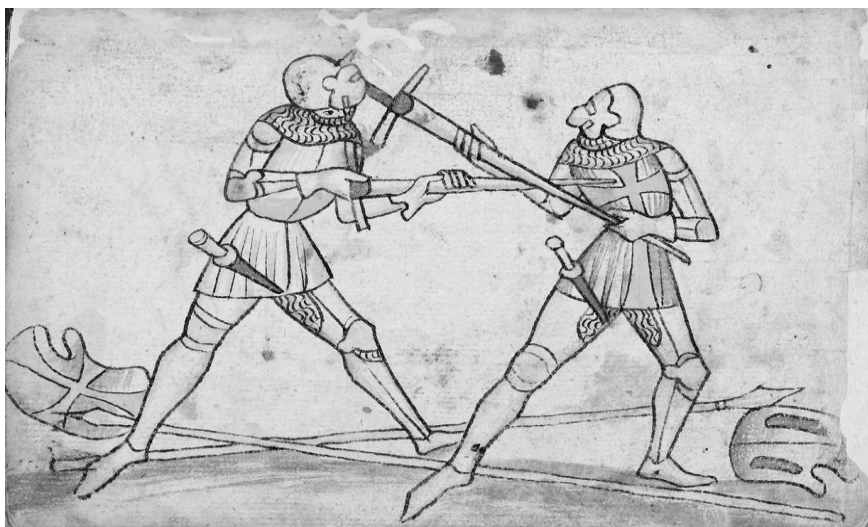


Figure 2: Folio 107r from the Codex Wallerstein depicting two armored combatants fighting with longswords. The opponent on the left demonstrates how the blade would be held to pierce the armor, while the opponent on the right uses the pommel as a mace. Image courtesy of John Clements, Grzegorz Zabinski, and Bartłomiej Walczak.

Arguably the most influential of the German sword masters, Johannes Liechtenauer founded a combat salon that grew to prominence in the late fourteenth and early fifteen centuries. Liechtenauer, who came to prominence around 1350, apparently held the title of *hochmeister* or grandmaster, though the later master and priest Hango Döbringer commented that the techniques he taught were not “devised or thought out” by Liechtenauer himself, but drawn from techniques developed “hundreds of years ago” and adapted for the warfare of the day.⁹⁸ While no manuscript that can be directly accredited to Liechtenauer exists, the manuals of his students like Döbringer and later fight masters such as Sigmund Ringeck and Joachim Meyer cite him as a source and draw directly from his fighting style. Ringeck, a *fechtmeister* operating from c.1389 to c.1440, described the core principles and techniques used in response to a number of

⁹⁸ Mike G. Thomas, *The Fighting Man's Guide to Longsword Combat* (Electra: Swordworks, 2008), 31.

attacks.⁹⁹ The style of Liechtenauer, as continued by Döbringer and Ringeck, centers around four guards, with a number of cutting strikes, parries, thrusts, and counters that can be executed from each. Every action, in essence, exists as a flow from one guard to the next, varying in response to the actions of one's opponent.

Ringeck noted, however, that masters such as Liechtenauer “wrote down his teachings in secret and hidden words”¹⁰⁰ in an effort to preserve the intricacies exclusive to his style:

<i>Daß eben mörcke</i>	Memorize This:
<i>Haw stich leger wiach oder hörte</i>	strike, thrust, position-soft or hard.
<i>jndes vnnd vor nach</i>	Indes and Before and After heed.
<i>Ane hurt dein krieg sy nitt gach</i>	Your war should not be in haste.
<i>Weß der krieg remet</i>	Who tends to the War
<i>Oben unden wirt er beschemet</i>	above, gets ashamed below.
<i>in allen treffen</i>	In all meetings with
<i>den maisteren wilt du sy effen</i>	the masters, you want to imitate them.

-Liechtenauer's verse on the *Zornhau* (The Strike of Wrath)¹⁰¹

Fencing masters tended to write in verses, using cryptic language and at times omitting elements vital to the understanding of the technique. Liechtenauer and Ringeck's teachings, for example, remain strangely silent in regards to the footwork used in his techniques, a factor necessary to any martial art. David Lindholm, who translated Ringeck's *Kunst des Fechtens* into a modern fighting manual, suggests that Ringeck may have preferred a style that emphasized standing against an attack or moving forward to “void” an attack, rather than one based on movement. “It is faster to move the hands than

⁹⁹ David Lindholm, Peter Svard, and John Clements, et al., *Sigmund Ringeck's Knightly Art of the Longsword* (Boulder: Paladin Press, 2003), 7.

¹⁰⁰ Lindholm, et al., *Sigmund Ringeck's Knightly Art of the Longsword*, 1.

¹⁰¹ Henry Christian Tobler, *Secrets of German Medieval Swordsmanship: Sigmund Ringeck's Commentaries on Johannes Liechtenauer's Verse* (Thailand: Chivalry Bookshelf, 2001), 9.

the body, which explains why Ringeck places such importance on both *duplieren* and *mutieren*, neither of which can be done without the bind.”¹⁰² Other researchers, such as Jim Barrows, believe that such information was left out “because they thought it was obvious”¹⁰³ but has since been forgotten as the style fell out of practice; or, as Ringeck himself commented on Liechtenauer’s work, these masters wanted to avoid the threat of laymen “learning from a book, and calling themselves master.”¹⁰⁴ In this way, surviving fechtbooks of Goliat von Danzig, Döbringer, and Ringeck relied on their books “as an advertising tool”.¹⁰⁵

Beyond Liechtenauer and the *Kunst des Fechtens*, another significant resource for medieval combat, primarily concerning the longsword, comes from the writings of the knight and Bolognese fencing school *maestro* Fiore dei Liberi. Originally from Friuli in northern Italy, Fiore translated his experience as a soldier into a fighting instructor in the early fifteenth century, offering his services to the nobility, including Niccolo II d’Este, Marquis of Ferrara.¹⁰⁶ As with his Imperial counterparts, Fiore’s teachings covered the span of weaponry available during the period, but the emphasis of his work concentrates on the use of the *spada longa*, or longsword. Fiore began parleying his experience as a knight and mercenary into training members of the Italian and Imperial nobility in fencing and combat, which culminated in the publishing of a training treatise, surviving

¹⁰² Lindholm, et al., *Sigmund Ringeck’s Knightly Art of the Longsword*, 12.

¹⁰³ Jim Barrows, interview by Ryan Hatch, Phoenix, Arizona, 28 June 2014.

¹⁰⁴ Barrows, 28 June 2014.

¹⁰⁵ *ibid.*

¹⁰⁶ John Clements, “ARMA Historical Study Guide: Fiore Dei Liberi: 14th Century Master of Defense”. *Essays*. The Association for Renaissance Martial Arts, 2006, 11. Last accessed 24 April 2014. http://www.thearma.org/essays/Fiore/FioreDeiLiberi_StudyGuide.v3.6.pdf

variations of which are titled *Fior di Battaglia* and *Flos Duellatorum*, in 1404.¹⁰⁷¹⁰⁸ Much like the German *fechtbuchs*, Fiore's text covers a range of armed and unarmed techniques, as well as mounted combat. The majority of the text, predictably, examines the longsword techniques Fiore deems most effective.

Unlike most of the German *fechtbuchs* from the same period, Fiore's manuscripts contained detailed illustrations. The various versions of *Fior di Battaglia* and *Flos Duellatorum* depict two opponents displaying Fiore's stances, attacks and counterattacks in vivid detail (*Figure 5*). One particular illustration from *Flos Duellatorum* (*Figure 3*) depicts a master (Fiore himself in the MS Ludwig XI copy of *Fior di Battaglia* [*Figure 4*]) with seven swords demonstrating the seven angles of the longsword strike, as well as four animals symbolizing the four virtues of the sword fighter. The lynx with the compass, labeled *Prudentia* in the *Fior di Battaglia* version, stands for *avisamento* or "foresight", while the elephant with the castle on its back (*Fortudo*) symbolizes fortitude or "the base", the tiger with the arrow (*Celeritas*) represents "speed, accuracy, focus", and the lion with the heart (*Audatia*) encourages the fencer to be bold and ready to fight.¹⁰⁹

Fiore's fighting style reveals his background as a soldier. While a number of his guards and stances resemble those utilized by Liechtenauer and Ringeck, his style lacks the complex cuts and windings that characterized the medieval *Kunst des Fechtens*. Whereas the German masters preferred cuts and powerful strikes, Fiore emphasized the direct route via thrusts and counterstrikes. The simplicity and directness of Fiore's

¹⁰⁷ Guy Windsor, *The Swordsman's Companion*, 16-18.

¹⁰⁸ Fiore dei Liberi, Tommaso Leoni, *Fiore de' Liberi's Fior di Battaglia* (Wheaton: Freelance Academy Press, 2012),

¹⁰⁹ Windsor, 23.

techniques appear to derive from the principle of efficiency, the goal being to remove the threat of the opponent quickly. Nothing suggests that Fiore pioneered new techniques or had the same massive impact on Italian fighting styles as Liechtenauer, but the manual created by Filippo Vadi over a century later reflects, if not drawing outright from, the teachings of Fiore.¹¹⁰

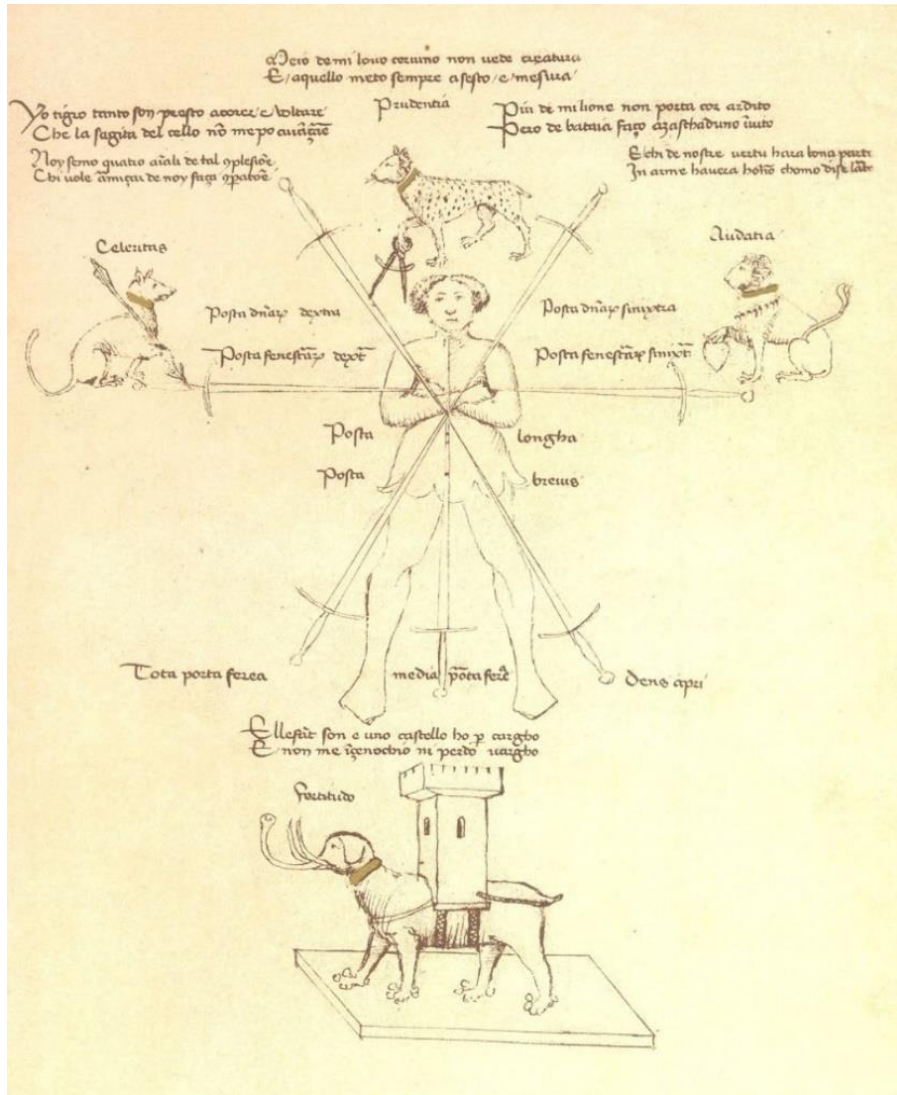


Figure 3: The Master and the four beasts of virtue from Fiore dei Liberi's *Flos Duellatorum*. Image courtesy of Francesco Novati and Wiktenauer.com.

¹¹⁰ Windsor, *The Swordsman's Companion*, 25-27.

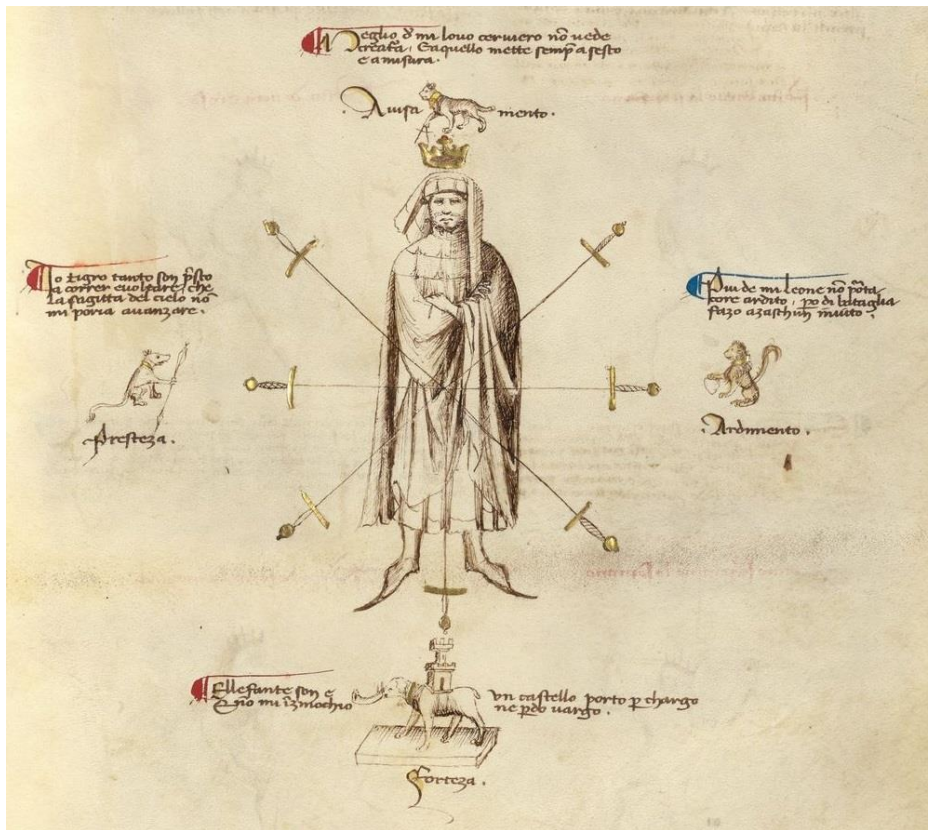


Figure 4: The master (supposedly Fiore himself) and the four beasts from the Fior di Battaglia. Digital image courtesy of the Getty's Open Content Program.



Figure 5: Illustrations from Fiore's Fior di Battaglia depicting the use of longswords. The golden crowns and garter signify which figure has the advantage in each position. Digital image courtesy of the Getty's Open Content Program.

Over time, the evolution of combat weaponry renders all weapons obsolete. The longsword, for example, gave way to the rapier, small sword and pistol; the manuals of Fiore and the German masters were eventually put aside and their lessons went out of style, as did later training manuals when dueling ceased as an acceptable practice in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The latter century, however, saw a renewed interest in the older fechtbooks, when the folios and manuscripts containing the lessons of the old masters were rediscovered and began to be translated. "It wasn't until people started picking up manuals," Jim Barrows explains, "and going, 'Okay, what does this mean?', and interpreting the manuals, and then trying to spar with them...that we started to recreate the tradition."¹¹¹ According to Barrows, study of Historical European Martial Arts underwent a renaissance during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Unfortunately for the early researchers and practitioners, the onset of World War I wiped out virtually all of them. "It was a meat grinder, and so a lot of those people weren't around; and so the manuals were lost again, so to speak."¹¹² It would take another eighty years for interest in the traditional European fighting arts to be renewed.

Thankfully, a second renaissance began in the late 1980's and 1990's, with the rediscovery of the training manuals. Practitioners of western martial arts, or WMA, attempt to recreate and revive the practice of Pre-Modern weaponry by studying the surviving training manuals. Before images and translations were publicized by the institutions housing them, these practitioners relied on older images and transcripts of these manuscripts written in Latin, Middle Italian and Middle German. They conduct

¹¹¹ Jim Barrows, 28 June 2014.

¹¹² *ibid.*

their own translations, reproduce the equipment and weapons described in the texts, and recreate the techniques demonstrated in the illustrations. Two major groups, the Association of Renaissance Martial Arts (ARMA) and the Historical European Martial Arts (HEMA) Alliance, were formed to further the study and practice of these historic combat styles. Various subgroups, most existing as insured 501 c(3) groups,¹¹³¹¹⁴ are located across the country and open to public membership, while ARMA offers a certification program for those who wish to teach one or more of the various combat systems.¹¹⁵

Two such groups, Fratellanza della Spada and the Phoenix Society of Historical Swordsmanship, operate in the Phoenix area. The former group, headed by Sean Clark, emphasizes the recreation of past fighting systems from the 14th to the early 20th centuries based on findings published by HEMA and discovered through personal practice. Clark began studying Western Martial Arts after moving to Phoenix from Lansing, Michigan in 2002, and initially founding the Warwickshire County, Inc. reenactment group. "And so we played under the umbrella of that, until, actually, we started Fratellanza, which is not a reenactment group, it's just a martial arts group," in 2009.¹¹⁶ Clark, a very historically-minded person, formed Fratellanza (meaning "Brotherhood of the Sword") to "try to emulate, as closely as possible, historical combat", through a mix of manuscript research, personal practice, and regular training or sparring

¹¹³ Lord Heinrich der Bauer, 8 March 2015.

¹¹⁴ Christopher Nelson, interview by Ryan Hatch, 4 June 2015.

¹¹⁵ "Student Ratings within the ARMA", The Association for Renaissance Martial Arts, last modified 1999, accessed 9 April 2014. <http://www.thearma.org/RANKING.htm#.VX9L1PkUXIU>

¹¹⁶ Sean Clark, interview by Ryan Hatch, Tempe, Arizona, 26 June 2014.

sessions.¹¹⁷ Along with later fencing masters such as Agrippa, Capo Ferro and George Silver, Fratellanza attempts to reproduce the sword and buckler techniques recorded in the I.33 manuscript, as well as Fiore's longsword.

Members of Fratellanza meet at least once a week to practice, usually on a Saturday. Class sessions consist of an hour of instruction and practices, usually led by Clark or a member with sufficient experience in the style being taught, followed by at least one to two hours of sparring. "We'll take the techniques to the point of not injuring," Clark explains, "or up to the point of injuring somebody. But we wear modern safety equipment: fencing masks, jackets," along with various other pieces of body protection, particularly hand and groin protectors.¹¹⁸ Gorgets, or neck guards, are also mandatory. Members who can afford a greater level of historical accuracy opt for period appropriate clothing. Along with drawing the interest of onlookers during public display, period appropriate equipment helps practitioners get into the mind of Pre-Modern combatants. "So we try to wear gear that is close to historically correct...So, gambesons, doublets and hose, and whatever. So it just depends on the kit."¹¹⁹ Historical kits usually consist of gambesons or padded wool jackets, gauntlets, gorgets, steel shoulder pads, and helms.

Mike Woodford, another Fratellanza member who also practices with HEMA, regularly spars in gear appropriate for the late 14th and early 15th centuries. His gear includes a visored bascinet helm based on those illuminated in the *Chroniques* of Froissart, a leather plated gorget, a gambeson, steel shoulder and elbow guards, steel or hardened leather vambraces (lower arm guards), and modified gauntlets (*Figure 6*).

¹¹⁷ Sean Clark, 26 June 2014.

¹¹⁸ *ibid.*

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*

While most of his equipment was originally created by vendors and other craftsmen, Woodford constantly repairs and modifies his kit, both out of a desire for greater accuracy and necessity. "I have my whole finger over here," says Woodford, indicating an index finger he wounded in a steel sparring session, "that fingernail was removed".¹²⁰ Injuries such as these, though unfortunate, help practitioners like Woodford understand the design and function of period weaponry and gear, while encouraging research to make the historical (and usually necessary) modifications. "This could be dangerous," Woodford muses.¹²¹

Woodford and others who reproduce period armor put an impressive amount of research into their work, seeking out any primary sources or surviving artifacts to guide their labors. "When I started doing it in the seventies," says Woodford of his early days reproducing armor in the SCA, "there was really just photographs," as well as the rare museum exhibit. "Now, gradually, we've been able to examine period specimens, and see how they function. Much of that has been trial and error, making our own and seeing how it works. Sometimes, we actually procure a bout of serious historical specimens, and we act accordingly."¹²² Along with his regular sparring gear, Woodford has reproduced a functional harness of fifteenth century Gothic plate. Given the large amount of gear he has either procured or produced over the years, he also supplies the "loaner" gear new members use during Fratellanza's sessions.

¹²⁰ Mike Woodford, interview by Ryan Hatch, Tempe, Arizona, 6 July 2014.

¹²¹ Mike Woodford, 6 July 2014.

¹²² *ibid.*



Figure 6: Two members of La Fratellanza della Spada sparring with longswords. The opponent on the right wears period correct gauntlets, gambeson, visored bascinet, and limb armor; while the other wears modern HEMA gear. Image courtesy of the author.

Seeing as the majority of this equipment cannot be produced personally or locally, practitioners must rely on largely international manufacturers that have national distributors. Windrose Armoury, based in Snowflake, Arizona, provides armor and other accessories for both the SCA and WMA groups.¹²³ Lord Heinrich and Mike Woodford both attest to the quality of Windrose' equipment, with Woodford explaining that the company "used to be SCA [based]...more than a little...but it's branched out, with Western Martial Arts support."¹²⁴ Producers like Windrose, Therion Arms, and Darksword Armoury provide equipment ranging in accuracy and quality from the merely decorative, to museum quality, to combat-ready.

¹²³ "Combat Goods", Windrose Armoury, last modified 16 April 2015, accessed 10 July 2015. http://www.windrosearmoury.com/zc/index.php?main_page=index&cPath=30

¹²⁴ Mike Woodford, 6 July 2014.

Equally important to any WMA practitioner is access to weaponry. Just as the demand for period armor has risen over the last twenty years thanks to these various groups and the SCA, a call for period appropriate weaponry has created a market for specialized blacksmiths. The weapons utilized by western martial artists fall into two categories: plastic or polynylon synthesized practice weapons, and unsharpened rebated steel. Traditionally, students would practice with weighted wooden practice blades, before moving on to real weapons. Modern practitioners, however, prefer synthetic swords. A number of different weapons are available, ranging in weight and flexibility. Practitioners prefer synthetics, particularly produced by Purple Heart Armories,¹²⁵ which offer the approximate flexibility of steel blades.

As soon as beginners develop some of the basic techniques and grow accustomed to sparring, they are generally encouraged to begin sparring with steel. Weapons makers base the designs on these weapons, primarily the longsword, on surviving examples to keep them as accurate as possible, both to the period they represent and the manuals written for their use. Jim Barrows describes the depth to which steel makers go to produce high quality steel swords:

In terms of steel, I know that some of the guys who are making our training swords have relationships with museums, so that they can pick up, and handle, and feel, and measure the distinct temper. They can measure how thick the blades are, and how they taper, in all three dimensions, how they feel and where the balance points are. And they'll do that to help improve their own product, to make it work more practical.¹²⁶

¹²⁵ "Synthetic Pentti Type III Longsword and Shortsword", Purpleheart Armoury, last updated 2015, accessed 3 May 2015. http://www.woodenswords.com/category_s/1513.htm

¹²⁶ Jim Barrows, 26 June 2014.

A number of sword and knife manufacturers, namely Darksword Armory and Paul Chen Hanwei, cater to the WMA community.¹²⁷ The amount of research that these manufacturers put into their products, as with the specialized metallurgists of the SCA, has allowed for the development of an entire industry dedicated to creating both accurate and functional reproductions of the medieval past. This proves to be a two-way exchange, as both these fabricators and museum exhibitors find themselves learning from their own findings. Many armor makers, for example, develop relationships with museums exhibiting authentic harnesses in order to see the backsides of the steel suits. "The backside tells us how they meant it," Barrows explains, "...because the pretty, shiny outside, all that stuff had been buffed away, so you can't see the hammer marks. You can't see all the things that an armorer would be interested in, but most importantly, you can't see the mounting points in a lot of cases, and that's what we're looking for."¹²⁸ Allowing WMA armorers to come in to study these historic pieces, reconstruct them, and test the reproductions in controlled combat scenarios brings a better understanding to how these were worn and used in battle, so that suits "may be displayed correctly"¹²⁹ in the museums that the public take as the absolute authority on the matter.

For those either unwilling or incapable of conducting their own translations of the fechtbuchs, personal study proved impossible until the last decade. The emergence of experienced translators and practitioners, however, has led to an explosion of WMA literature. Starting with John Clements' *Medieval Swordsmanship: Illustrated Methods*

¹²⁷ "Hanwei/Tinker Longsword, Blunt by Paul Chen/Hanwei", CAS Iberia: Swords, Knives, Reenactment, last modified 2014, accessed 14 May 2014. <http://casiberia.com/product/tinker-longsword-blunt/sh2395>

¹²⁸ Jim Barrows, 26 June 2014.

¹²⁹ *ibid.*

and Techniques in 1998, groups such as the Association for Renaissance Martial Arts (ARMA) and the Historical European Martial Arts (HEMA) Alliance have published books ranging from simple how-to books to full translations and reconstruction of the primary material. Of the authors and researchers spearheading this second renaissance, none have been as influential or well published as Guy Windsor. A HEMA practitioner, Windsor founded the School of European Swordsmanship in 2001, and to date has published seven full length books on medieval combat based on the texts of Fiore and Filippo Vadi, along with a number of smaller publications. "We aim," Windsor states, "for absolute historical accuracy of technique. The book is always open during class, and the book supersedes all modern opinions."¹³⁰ Windsor's books offer a range of aids and references for those in the WMA community, from introductory manuals for beginners to an analysis of the physical and mental attributes longtime practitioners may develop through constant application, given that the originally martial benefit of these systems is largely inapplicable in modern life.

Windsor's latest book, *Swordfighting*, examines the method through which he and other researcher/instructors have reconstructed training regimens from the original sources and disseminate the resurrected knowledge to willing students. "The work is multi-disciplinary...requiring a broad range of skills: from locating documents long forgotten in the archives, to hitting hard and accurately with four feet of sharp steel; from developing training methods for combat skills, to keeping control of a class full of armed young men high on testosterone and adrenaline."¹³¹ The teaching method utilized by

¹³⁰ Guy Windsor, interview by Ryan Hatch, email interview, 24 March 2015.

¹³¹ Guy Windsor, *Swordfighting, for Writers, Game Designers, and Martial Artists* (The School of European Swordsmanship, 2015), Kindle Electronic Edition: Chapter 1, Location 472-475.

Windsor and other WMA instructors consists of a two-part process. Windsor breaks down the first part, "Working Out the System", into ten parts:

1. Find the sources.
2. Manuscript study: transcription and image analysis.
3. Determine the context for the combat system.
4. Determine the nature of the weapons, clothing, and armor in use, and acquire accurate facsimiles.
5. Reconstruct the techniques.
6. Analyze the patterns.
7. Test the interpretation.
8. Identify or extrapolate heuristics.
9. Compare the resulting interpretation with other systems.
10. Place the system within context.

With the system worked out, the second part of the process, "Teaching the System", establishes a curriculum for passing the system on:

1. Determine the necessary skill set.
2. Develop training methods into a syllabus.
3. Test the syllabus.
4. Provide general physical conditioning.
5. Provide students with critical philosophical tools.¹³²

Every WMA school or salon, especially those associated with HEMA, follow methods parallel to these. For groups like Fratellanza and Tattershall, the hope is that students undergoing the research and training provided by similar teaching methods will produce a new generation of research-based weapons masters able to garner a greater public interest in history via an authentic and enticing venue. Most members of the HEMA Alliance, including the Phoenix Society for Historical Swordsmanship, also apply these methods and goals to their training. As member Christopher Nelson states, the Society seeks to "foster learning and appreciation of the Historical European Martial arts,

¹³² Guy Windsor, *Swordfighting*, Kindle Electronic Edition: Chapter 1, location 477-517.

so that a person can then...turn around and teach that to another individual."¹³³ As with Fratellanza, the Society translates and reproduces multiple forms of weapons-based European martial arts, primarily sword and buckler, longsword, side sword, rapier, and single stick. They utilize the same sources and manuals as Fratellanza, primarily Fiore; while their membership within the HEMA Alliance grants them access to a larger amount of primary resources. "We are always checking with other peers among the HEMA Alliance," Nelson explains, "who are also often times members of colleges that hold Doctoral degrees, in various things such as history. There are those who actually work hand in hand with organizations that maintain historical documents such as Vatican Library."¹³⁴ This allows the Society's instructors access to all three of the Fiore manuscripts, along with academic translations and analyses. Although they regularly take part in events with local academic institutions such as ASU and ACMRS,¹³⁵ the only constant institution that the Phoenix Society remains involved with is the Caledonian Society,¹³⁶ which provides the group a regular summer practice space in their facility's main hall, as well as venues at their Highland Games and other events.

The interconnectivity of the digital age, which helped to breathe life into these groups and continues to keep them operating, allows Windsor, Clark, Phoenix, and other instructors to share ideas and develop similar yet particular teaching methods. The greatest example of the WMA community's dependence on the internet can be found in Wiktenauer. Founded in 2009 and funded by the HEMA Alliance, the website has

¹³³ Christopher Nelson, interview by Ryan Hatch, Phoenix, Arizona, 4 June 2015.

¹³⁴ Christopher Nelson, 4 June 2015.

¹³⁵ Sean Clark, 21 June 2014.

¹³⁶ Christopher Nelson, 4 June 2015.

become a hub for all studying historical martial arts. Michael Chidester, a HEMA member "who professionally maintains historical documents," maintains and updates the website on a regular basis.¹³⁷ Current masters and instructors from across the globe post their translations, scans of the surviving *fechtbuch* pages, findings and opinions on the surviving works. The four main sections offer detailed information on the various masters, their treatises, the techniques they describe, and the weapons used to execute them. "Ultimately," the website's main page states, "every text in the corpus of Historical European Martial Arts literature will have a dedicated page," and each technique will ideally have an entire dedicated page, with the input of international instructors describing how to execute them directly.¹³⁸

These schools likewise rely on demonstrations to draw attention to their efforts and recruit interested new members. Demos are a mainstay in the WMA community. Woodford describes the venues generally utilized by these groups. "We participate in public events...sometimes Renaissance festivals, but [also] at [the] Highland Games. We were at [Phoenix] Comic Con...Primarily, it's public gatherings." Indeed, Comic Con has become one of the most vital demo venues for both the SCA and WMA groups, as all of the major divisions and schools have taken part over the last few years. Demos show off the facets of both the research and physical practice, as well as the weapons and the equipment used, with experienced members either going through a choreographed and explained routine or taking part in a round of light sparring. "We need to make sure the people know what they're looking at...when they see the demos," Barrows explains,

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*

¹³⁸ Mike Woodford, 6 July 2014.

"we're not just up here swinging swords. We actually have a clue."¹³⁹ The general public usually finds these demonstrations entertaining, interesting, and ideally informative; but these demos seek a particular onlooker who regards it as more than another distraction.

Sean Clark describes seeing an onlooker become a practicing member:

The other problem with demonstrations that I see and have discovered, is that people watch the demonstrations, and they think, 'Gee, yeah, that's really cool', 'Oh, that looks fake', or 'That looks hard'; but when you actually give someone a trainer, and you get them to actually try to do it, they can actually see, 'Okay, this is kind of fun!'. Or 'This is challenging', but for some people, they like the challenge. Some people may go 'Okay, this is too hard, I just can't do it, I'm not coordinated', or they may not want to venture down that path; but other people, you put a sword in their hand for the first time, and the light comes on.¹⁴⁰

The major divide between singular WMA groups like Fratellanza and HEMA Alliance groups such as the Phoenix Society boils down to a question of authenticity--or, more specifically, the amount of emphasis given to keeping both the equipment and combat itself as authentic as possible. Both groups rely on the same sources, and both make their own interpretations. Both spar with polynylon and dull steel weapons, and generally the same forms of protection.¹⁴¹ Whereas Fratellanza and similar groups spar with period-appropriate padded jackets, armor and helmets, members of most HEMA-based groups rely on modern, more readily produced equipment made from fabric and polypropylene. Both groups provide "loaner" equipment for first time members, but eventually every member must supply their own gear. The protective gear supplied by

¹³⁹ Jim Barrows, 28 June 2014.

¹⁴⁰ Sean Clark, 21 June 2014.

¹⁴¹ Christopher Nelson, 4 June 2015.

AbsoluteForce and SPES Historic Fencing¹⁴²¹⁴³ provides a cheaper yet adequately protective alternative to custom-made and functional period reproductions.

Another difference derives from the nature of application each group gives to the martial art forms. Unlike Fratellanza, which practices the fighting styles to better understand the nature of combat from that time, and by extension the period within which it existed, the Phoenix Society and other HEMA schools tend to add the element of competition to their practice. HEMA related schools, along with the traditional venues, tend to take public outreach one step further by holding open competitions, with the longsword being by far the most iconic and the most popular division. These competitions are proving increasingly popular, drawing the attention of both the general public and media. "Matches have complex rules," writes Mac William Bishop of the New York Times, "and use a scoring system based on ancient dueling regulations."¹⁴⁴ Competitors wear "modern if sometimes improvised protective equipment," and spar with "unsharpened blades and blunt tips to prevent bouts from turning into death matches." These competitions, such as Longpoint in Maryland, Combat Con in Las Vegas, and SoCal Swordfight in Los Angeles, draw thousands of participants and onlookers every year for their training seminars and combative tournaments. While these major events may detract somewhat from the academic element at the heart of these

¹⁴² "HEMA", Absolute Force International Sporting Goods, Inc., accessed 17 August 2014.
<http://www.afinternationalssporting.com/shop.php/cPath/8>

¹⁴³ "Fencing-protectors", SPES Historical Fencing, last updated 15 May 2015, accessed 21 May 2015.
<http://histfenc.us/categorylist/protectors>

¹⁴⁴ Mac William Bishop, "Inside the World of Longsword Fighting". New York Times. September 15, 2014, accessed November 6, 2014. <http://www.nytimes.com/video/sports/100000003040466/inside-the-world-of-longsword-fighting.html>

groups, the competitive nature at these events harkens back to the martial tournaments modern society associates with the Middle Ages, minus most of the pageantry.

For the casual onlooker, the first-day participant, and the member who has been practicing for years, the allure of these demos derives from the thrill of combat modern society has always associated with these periods. Indeed, many WMA members with memories of the sword fighting action from classic period films would attend their first session with the hope of reliving some nostalgic fantasy. Sean Clark remembers fondly the swashbuckling film *Captain Blood and the Seahawks*, but acknowledges that these period fantasies are both a blessing and a bane, as they encourage viewers to join while cementing the preconception of combat portrayed by Hollywood. "So, as you already know, our goal is to try, with Hollywood stuff, to show how it was really done; and that's just as cool, but it's not what you see on the screen."¹⁴⁵ Windsor likewise seeks to ultimately replace the current Hollywood-based perception of period combat. "Educating the general public is a 50 year program, including the books, of course, but also like fight directors. One day, movie goers will expect their swordfights as accurate as their car driving. I.e., not very, but better than now."¹⁴⁶ As WMA groups like Fratellanza and the HEMA associated groups grow in popularity, perhaps a call for greater accuracy will change the simulacra generated by filmmakers. Given that Hollywood rarely alters the hyperreality unless it proves financially beneficial, it seems unlikely that such a paradigm shift seems highly unlikely in the near future.

¹⁴⁵ Sean Clark, 21 June 2014.

¹⁴⁶ Guy Windsor, email interview, 24 March 2015.

C. WMA-More than Just a Martial Art

To this point, this study has focused on groups within the United States who authentically replicate elements of the European Middle Ages and their ever-increasingly accurate methods of doing so; while assuming their reason, the madness behind their method, derives either as a means to escape from the modern or as a desire to personally experience the authenticity of combat beyond the fantasy of popular culture. In truth, individuals study the texts and practice with the simulated weapons for a number of reasons. Many in both the SCA and WMA, for example, are either current or former military. Indeed, entire kingdoms, baronies and other SCA divisions operate within the branches of the American military.

Lord Heinrich describes how, towards the end of the Cold War, members serving on the USS Nimitz would practice on the flight deck as Soviet spy planes would pass over. "And, so, Soviet flyover, all the guys on the deck beating the snot out of each other, having a practice and everything. And, about eight months later during one of the summit meetings the Russian ambassador walks up to the American ambassador with a manila envelope, pulls out pictures and says, 'Can you explain this?'"¹⁴⁷ Both during the Cold War and currently in locations such as Afghanistan, hobbies such as these are brought on tours of duty, and provide both an escape and a connection to home.

A large number of those whose military service has just ended have also joined the various SCA branches. For those suffering from PTSD, the group offers a unique

¹⁴⁷ Lord Heinrich der Bauer, 8 March 2015.

form of treatment, given that "it's violent, it's aggressive, but it's safe".¹⁴⁸ Fighting with the SCA also means surrounding oneself with helpful and like-minded individuals. As a result, a network of support develops for those members who need it. Thus, the SCA and other reenactment groups offer a unique and increasingly necessary form of therapy.

Guy Windsor justifies resurrecting long outdated forms of armed combat not only to gain a greater understanding of the past, but also to develop the physical and mental benefits that come with constant training of the mind and body. As with many modern martial arts, Windsor extolls the gifts that come from dedicated practice of sword fighting, particularly the development of autotelic personalities. "This means that we train people to set their own goals, work towards their own ends, and find meaning and value in everything that they do." The focused mind developed through training with the longsword, as told by Windsor, in turn may develop a mindset for succeeding in life, with pillars such as "love, friendship, self-discipline, bravery, and finding beauty and value in things" acting as a latter-day code of chivalry.¹⁴⁹

For similar reasons, members of the SCA create varying levels of authentic yet still idealized personas, and have formed entire kingdoms and meet regularly to experience the Middle Ages as they believe they should have been. This Society exists as a strange mix of reenactors each creating their individual hyperreality, but the hyperreal becomes diluted during their wars, training, demonstrations and other events. This makes

¹⁴⁸ *ibid.*

¹⁴⁹ Windsor, email interview, 24 March 2015.

the self-described anachronists a strange paradox, simultaneously a group of dedicated researchers and an army of farbs.

The amount of research conducted by these groups outside of traditional academia, combined with the continued growth of such groups in the United States, offers an opportunity for academic institutions to reach out to the general public via the demonstrations and competitions held by these groups, who undergo their own historical research to refine their craft and would gladly accept any outreach from licensed historians. Through working closely with these groups, all of which rely largely on public displays and demonstrations to increase membership and support, would allow for a possibility for a combined effort between these groups and academic institutions to be established. Given the depth of research members of this groups are more than willing to strive for, as well as a theatricality based on historic accuracy, academia can benefit from both the willing well of researchers and its ability to generate public interest.

PART IV: PERFORMANCE HISTORY

A. The Royal Armouries Museum

In a controlled scenario, with professionals and researchers providing accurate information, equipment, and training, experienced interpreters can provide an accurate portrayal of historical figures or events. Interaction with the audience and answering any questions would allow the public to gain a better understanding of history while making a personal connection to the past. Historic interpretation programs like this have been utilized by a number of museums and state parks, and have proven effective. Unlike mainstream reenactment or living history/open air museums, this form of historic interpretation does not require places of memory, allowing for a greater scope of history to be portrayed on site. Such institutionalized reenactment bridges the gap between the audience and artifacts outside of their cultural memory.

The key element in distinguishing this particular form of historical interpretation is its blending with theater, especially in regards to the model utilized by the Royal Armouries Museum. The interpretations take place inside the museum, normally on bare stages in the Shakespearean tradition. If combat is performed, a stage specifically designed separate the audience from the performers, namely via solid barriers and collapsible fences, provides a safe venue. Rather than “hard-core” reenactors,¹⁵⁰ amateur enthusiasts, or traditional academics, professional theater actors are sought as employees or volunteers. Historical accuracy remains standard, but the preference for interpreters with stage experience demonstrates the institution understands that the interpreted person

¹⁵⁰ Tony Horwitz, *Confederates in the Attic*, 11.

or event must connect with its audience and deliver a believable performance. With interpretations limited to between one and three interpreters, historical performance offers museums the ability to capitalize on the hyperrealistic nature of reenactment within controllable parameters. These parameters allow for both a greater level of historical accuracy, as well as a greater chance for visitors to connect with the museum's artifacts and the historical periods they belong to.

B. The Frazier History Museum

The Frazier History Museum in Louisville, Kentucky, offers a unique model that successfully blends both reenactment and traditional museum techniques. The pet project of Louisville philanthropist and lawyer Owsley Brown Frazier, the museum opened its doors in 2004 as the Frazier Historical Arms Museum.¹⁵¹ As its original name implies, the bulk of the museum's artifacts consisted of weaponry dating from the Bronze Age to the early 20th century. Firearms play a major part in these displays, which has grown to include finely crafted hunting rifles, various pistols, and the side arms of historical personalities such as George Washington and Theodore Roosevelt.

According to members of the historical interpretations department, Frazier's main objective in opening the museum was education, with the intent of using iconic and unique pieces of weaponry to flesh out the past. "The main thrust for him was to educate people about the weaponry," states J. Barrett Cooper, curator of interpretations, "and not to look at it as a negative, but as something that was absolutely a necessity."¹⁵² Along with the necessity of "survival", the museum's arsenal demonstrates both the

¹⁵¹ Teresa Day, *Fun with the Family Kentucky* (Guilford: Morris Book Publishing, 2007): 10.

¹⁵² J. Barrett Cooper, Tony Dingman, and Kelly Moore, interview by Ryan Hatch, August 1, 2013.

craftsmanship and levels of technological refinement that went into the creation of many personalized weapons, be they firearms or otherwise. Here the methods of the Frazier Museum and the Met's Arms and Armor exhibit parallel, with both redistributing artifacts traditionally viewed as symbols of cultural violence, and reinterpreting them as examples of high art and technological finesse. "And that's the thing that we really learned here," Cooper continued, "and we've been learning in the interpretations department, that fighting with weapons, edged weapons especially, was considered an art, and then a science. It is the art of swordsmanship and the science of the sword."¹⁵³

On top of its plethora of local, national and international firearms and historical miniatures, the museum boasts a large collection of Pre-Modern weapons and armor donated from the Royal Armouries Museum, the only U.S.-based institution to do so. This collection includes the remains and replicas of swords, polearms, arrowheads, breastplates, various pieces of body armor, and helmets dating from 1066 to the World Wars. Contained largely on the museum's second floor, a wax mannequin in the uniform of a royal yeoman stands in front of a wall of steel cuirasses, waving visitors down the exhibit hall to the left. The artifacts resting behind protective glass and the dioramas depicting major military events, all familiar museum fare, are augmented by short films produced by the Royal Armouries and interactive exhibits that allow visitors to feel the weight of a ring mail hauberk and try their hand at shooting a simulated longbow. Faint tunes from the Tudor period mix with the narrations and sounds of battle from the films float on a regular basis through dark halls that grow brighter as the visitors proceed from

¹⁵³ Cooper, Dingman, and Moore, August 1, 2013.

the Norman Conquest past the Age of discovery to the Enlightenment to the Modern period, a subtle suggestion of the progress of man and society. This atmosphere of contained time travel is shattered, however, by the occasional claxons of the alarms that sound whenever a patron attempts to touch one of the figures in the dioramas. A desire to interact, to connect with the past and make it part of one's personal memory, leads visitor's hands towards the reproduced scenes of Normans at Hastings, the fighting at Towton, and the Jacobite charge at Culloden; those hands retract in surprise and fear of punishment, however, when the alarms go off.

The Frazier museum utilizes methods of historical interpretation that capitalizes on the visitor's desire to interact. Along with pieces and replicas dating back to the 11th century, the Frazier also relies on the form of historical performance developed by the RAM. Originally held on a stage on the second floor, these interpretations have since moved down to the main floor. "The interpretations were part of the education department, initially," explains Kelly Moore, a member of the historical interpretations department, "and then we did branch out as our own department; but from the beginning we were part of the whole experience, of visiting the museum. It's based on the model from the Royal Armouries."¹⁵⁴ The armorial collection and the interpretation program go hand in hand to complement each other, in order that museum goers would see the artifacts on display brought to life and made available for possible first-person interaction. "When the Royal Armouries was becoming partners," Cooper explains, "they insisted on us having, actually, an interpretations [department]... They said because [of

¹⁵⁴ *ibid.*

the popularity over there, they wanted it as part of it over here.” Tony Dingman, another senior interpreter, adds, “The irony is thick.”¹⁵⁵

The “irony” Dingman refers to was the discontinuation of the RAM’s interpretations program just two years earlier, when 15% real terms cut from the museum’s sponsor, the Department for Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS), led to the discontinuation of the riding, jousting, and live interpretations program.¹⁵⁶¹⁵⁷ “They are kind of in some serious growing pains,” Jodi Lewis, the museum’s manager of educational programming, admits. “The economic downturn really affected them.” Mrs. Lewis points out that while the museum rehired its interpretation and education staff, the RAM’s involvement with the Frazier has grown increasingly tenuous as the former seeks to “expand their footprint into Europe”¹⁵⁸ rather than across the Atlantic.

The RAM’s insistence in creating a sister program in Louisville, however, means that their methods of historical performance survive largely intact; though the program now performs for an audience that, for the most part, has no direct connection to the Pre-Modern European past. Few interpretive programs in the United States reach back this far, and the museum’s medieval and Renaissance interpretations, including fully-armored hand-and-a-half sword combat, have drawn in major crowds. A thorough understanding of the Frazier’s pre-modern programs, such as how they choose their interpretive subjects

¹⁵⁵ *ibid.*

¹⁵⁶ Mark Hookham, “Leeds Armouries: Jousters Given the Boot”, *Yorkshire Evening Post*. <http://www.yorkshireeveningpost.co.uk/news/latest-news/top-stories/leeds-armouries-jousters-given-boot-exclusive-1-3246290>. April 2, 2011. Accessed August 12, 2013.

¹⁵⁷ Board of Trustees of the Royal Armouries, “Annual Report and Accounts for the Year Ended 31 March 2011”, accessed 8 July 2011,

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/247327/1228.pdf

¹⁵⁸ Jodi Lewis, interview by Ryan Hatch, June 26, 2014.

and the preparation that goes into their execution, may allow for the development of further medieval programs that could take advantage of the period's popularity.

In sharp contrast to the well-lit administration offices of the Frazier's fourth floor, the historical interpretation's office, costume storage, and dressing rooms take up a quarter of the building's basement, where faint scorch marks on the red brick foundations remind passing staff of the fire that gutted the original building in the early 20th century. Lining the walls of the break room is an array of blades from across history, most of them unsharpened. Two harnesses of 15th century plate armor, one fluted Gothic and the other Milanese, stand guard outside the offices of the curator of interpretations, while shelves along the walls hold various helmets and replica firearms under lock and key. The armor pieces derive from depictions from surviving artifacts such as the "B2" armor of the Madonna della Grazie in Mantua, Italy,¹⁵⁹ and a wooden altarpiece sculpture from St. Wolfgang's Church in Pfarrkirche, Germany.¹⁶⁰ A long table with files, vices, tool boxes and rust remover allows the interpreters to maintain the equipment, a task which is usually regulated to interns. The Frazier's basement is, for all intents and purposes, an armory unto itself.

¹⁵⁹ Jenn Reed, ed., "A Tale of Two Armours: the Frazier Museum Adds Two Reproduction Harnesses to their Collection", *Historic Enterprises Journal* 5 (2005), accessed 14 May 2014.

<http://www.historicenterprises.biz/journal/05/>

¹⁶⁰ *ibid.*



Figure 7: Original Milanese plate harness from the Sanctuary of the Madonna in Mantua, Italy. Image courtesy of Historicenterprises.com



Figure 8: Reproduction of the Mantua Milanese plate harness for J. Barrett Cooper at the Frazier History Museum. Image courtesy of Historicenterprises.com

Six full time interpreters, professional actors from the Savage Rose Classical Theatre Company, rely on this arsenal to develop a memory of a past previously unavailable to the largely American audience by creating a first-hand experience. The Frazier and its interpretation program benefits from the use of stage actors and dramaturges, the majority of whom have been with the department since the museum's opening day, as they possess the ability to bring life to long dead people and concepts to life in a compelling manner. "They wanted to hire performers," Moore points out, "not just people who are interested in history, which is certainly important but [with] a certain ability to interact." Those who can perform and deliver a point across to an audience visually as well as physically allows the audience to visualize not only the physical appearance of a historical figure, but how that figure might have acted or reacted to the world around them in their historical context.

In order to authentically portray any historic figure or event at an appropriate level, the Frazier's historical interpreters require the necessary accessories (clothing, equipment, and weaponry) as well as historically accurate scripts based on credible primary and secondary resources. The first resource depends upon both the interpretation department and the institution's access to funds, as most of the interpreters lack the skills and resources to reproduce period metal work or clothing, be it a ring mail hauberk or eighteenth century embroidery. A number of craftsmen and online companies specialize in producing replicas ranging from exclusively decorative to fully functional. The museum's working Gothic and Milanese suits of armor, for example, are fully functional plate armor harnesses reproduced by Historic Enterprises, based on surviving fifteenth

century artifacts. These two harnesses are also custom fitted to Mr. Cooper and Mr. Dingman's specific measurements.¹⁶¹ The non-firearm weaponry is likewise designed to historic specifications, though the majority of their points and edges are dulled or unsharpened for safety reasons. Given the similarities between certain historical periods and cultures, certain pieces can be interchangeable between certain interpretations. Each piece, however, would be supported by hours of research on the interpreters, and would reflect some artifact or exhibit within the museum.

All of these arms, armor and clothing are essential to the interpretations the Frazier stages every day. As expected, a number of these interpretations, indeed some of the most popular, focus on the medieval period. Reaching as far back as 1066, these interpretations have included the Battle of Stamford Bridge from the perspective of a Viking raider, Joan of Arc, Niccolo Machiavelli, an English forester telling the original tales of Robin Hood, a Norse *skald* or storyteller, Queen Berengaria of England, and Vlad the Impaler. These forms of interpretation take full advantage of the interpreters' acting credentials, as it requires that they step into the roles of historical personalities to bring them to life before an audience for fifteen to twenty minutes, albeit in a language that the audience can understand rather than how their characters would have spoken. Before and after each performance, the interpreters address the audience out of character, explaining the background of their character and their place in history. The performance itself is kept within the ten to twenty minute margin of the average visitor's attention span.

¹⁶¹ *ibid.*

After the performance's end, the interpreter first opens the floor to the audience. Pictures may be taken with the interpreter, and their equipment may be examined and held under supervision; more importantly, the audience may ask any questions they might have, and the interpreter answers them to the best of their ability. The usual line of questioning, which varies from the inanely trivial such as "[c]ould a sam-your-eye beat a 95th rifle?"¹⁶² to sincere inquiries about the weight of body armor and the social significance of owning a sword, requires that the interpreter has a profound knowledge of the subject supported by personal research.

This research involves first utilizing what resources and information are available through the institution. Many of the scripts in the Frazier's repertoire were originally written for the RAM's interpretation program, though research should be conducted by any interpreter assuming these prewritten roles, in order to both create a greater familiarity with the subject as well as to ensure that the interpretation is accurate and up to date. Members of the interpretation department may choose to write an interpretation script of their own, or they may be encouraged to by administration or the education department. In this case, the interpreter undergoes research. Books, journals, and magazine articles have been accumulated over the years, but as with any study, the basis of their research centers around the historical figure or event's primary resources. The facts stated by the interpreter, whether they are portraying a verified historical figure or a feasible witness to an event, must prove to be unquestionably accurate.

¹⁶² Cooper, Dingman, and Moore, August 1, 2013.

While historical narratives make up the majority of the Frazier Museum's interpretations, alternative versions break the fourth wall entirely and involve the audience. These "Day in the Life" performances have the interpreters in full dress and gear, but out of character. Here, focus is put on a particular social or military position that would have been held, such as a fourteenth century English archer or an eleventh century Norman knight, as well as the equipment they used. The interpreter gives the history both the gear and the role it played, encouraging the audience to call out and guess the use of each piece before explaining it to them. The medieval archer, for example, emphasizes the preference for yew wood to produce the English long bow and the years of training it took to handle its 120 pound draw, while the Norman knight illustrates how his mail armor (hauberk, chausses, and coif) demonstrates his social status as a member of the military elite.

The third, final, and most popular form of historical interpretation at the Frazier Museum takes its display of the weapons full circle through combat demonstrations. As all combat systems are, in a way, both an art and a science, a demonstration of the mechanics combined with the tools to execute these breathes a life into the artifacts that no display or verbal explanation may accomplish. Just as with the RAM, the Frazier's combat demonstrations take place within a confined area within the museum. Originally held on the museum's third floor, the combat stage has since been relocated behind the first floor main stage. Retractable wooden fencing separates the interpreters on the un-raised wooden stage from the audience in the elevated seats. "You will have people come

out of the woodwork for the combat,” Barrett points out.¹⁶³ Given that the indoor setting excludes firearms from any demonstrations, these combat exhibitions remain limited largely to bladed weapons, with the exception of the Victorian *bartitsu* self-defense.

As with the other interpretations, these combat demonstrations reflect artifacts on display, namely the long sword, the Elizabethan side sword and rapier, and the sword and buckler. Likewise, the techniques utilized draw directly from the translations of surviving *fechtbuchs* or fighting manuals, as well as published findings by groups such as ARMA, combined with personal practice. The participating interpreters, usually two, perform the demonstration in the full dress corresponding with the historical period of the weapon and fighting style. The interpreters, however, remain out of character, narrating the stances, strikes and defenses as they progress, and inviting them to verbally participate on occasion.¹⁶⁴

The interpreters begin by introducing each combat technique, giving their historical context as well as explaining the construction and use of the weaponry. Breaking down the mechanics of the longsword (pommel, grip, cross guard, fuller, point, and the strong/weak edges of the blade),¹⁶⁵ for example, puts the movement and mechanics into context, as each part serves a particular role and may be used either in defense or offense. As the interpreters move through each stance, they frequently refer back to the fight manuals, compounding the legitimacy of their methods by highlighting what techniques come directly from the works of the various masters or from deductive

¹⁶³To accommodate overflow, benches are placed in front of fenced-off openings on either side of the stage.

¹⁶⁴ The Elizabethan Sword Master interpretation is the exception, as part of the demonstration involves the interpreters combining the combat techniques with the dialogue from Act I and Act III of *Romeo and Juliet*.

¹⁶⁵ Clements, 13.

reasoning and personal practice. The Fifteenth Century Longsword interpretation, for example, draws particular attention to the *zornhau* guard, known alternatively as the “woman’s guard” or the “guard of wrath”.¹⁶⁶ This involves shifting the weight to the back foot, twisting the left shoulder towards the opponent, and angling the sword blade across the shoulders or the back.¹⁶⁷ While the visually threatening posture lends credence to the “guard of wrath” moniker, the origin of the “woman’s guard” or “posta di donna”¹⁶⁸ remains speculation, as the interpreters point out. This offensive position presents part of the back and the leading leg to the opponent in order to entice an attack, simultaneously poisoning the blade for a large, diagonal cut across the body; this may be used to set up a number of feints or guards such as *pflug* (plough guard) or *alber* (fool’s guard), which in turn allows for a number of follow-up cuts or thrusts.¹⁶⁹ The interpreters illustrate all these possibilities as they narrate their progress, finishing with a full-sequence exchange of blows with the techniques they have illustrated throughout the presentation.

A clear delineation must be made between these combat interpretations and free sparring. Aside from the Armored Hand and a Half Sword interpretation, the interpreters wear no protective gear and wield full metal or wooden weapons, though all blades are dulled or unsharpened.¹⁷⁰ Every movement is planned, choreographed and executed after hours of practice, with the safety of each interpreter taking priority over the lethal aspect of authentic combat. These interpretations thus walk a fine line between authentic reenactment and stage combat. John Clements, author and former president of ARMA,

¹⁶⁶ Tobler, 19-23.

¹⁶⁷ Windsor, *The Swordsman’s Companion*, 7-29.

¹⁶⁸ Ken Mondschein, *The Knightly Art of Battle* (Getty Publications, 2011) : 53

¹⁶⁹ Ringeck, 33.

¹⁷⁰ This form of unarmored, one-on-one combat was common in both training and judicial duels.

wrote adversely against stage combat, holding to the belief that “choreographed swordplay is still rarely more than a fantasized version. It is about following the prescribed pattern, not freely and spontaneously moving.”¹⁷¹ The techniques used by the interpreters, however, derive from translations of Sigmund Ringeck’s Dresden C 487 manuscript and other German *fechtbuchs*,¹⁷² and thus avoid popular clichés such as “uselessly spinning and twirling” or “face-to-face dialogue” while the opponents are locked hilt to hilt.¹⁷³ Though the movements may be slightly exaggerated for the benefit of the audience, the techniques are authentic, direct, and performed in a manner one might expect a master instructor to demonstrate to his students, in order that they may better understand the mechanics of the art.

¹⁷¹ Clements, 273.

¹⁷² Sydney Anglo, *The Martial Arts of Renaissance Europe* (Yale University Press, 2000): 129.

¹⁷³ Clements, 272.



Figure 9: Interpreters J. Barrett Cooper (left) and Tony Dingman explain to the audience the techniques used for armored hand-and-a-half sword combat in the first floor theater of the Frazier History Museum. Image courtesy of the author.

All three forms of interpretation end with the interpreters first suggesting that the audience visit the exhibits on the various floors to examine the artifacts represented within the interpretation for themselves, thus encouraging visitors to view the exhibits with a greater insight and hopefully greater interest. The interpreters also open the floor to questions and comments, allowing the audience onto the stage for a greater level of first-hand interaction. A critical portion of the interpretation, these one-on-one interactions between the audience and the interpreters demand an in-depth and up to date knowledge of the material on the behalf of the interpretation team. “We’ve done the research,” Moore asserts, “and we write the scripts, so we’ve got more information to

share if people want to ask questions so we can give them even more if they want”.¹⁷⁴ Jodi Lewis attests to this accuracy. “They’re very good stewards of historical accuracy,” she states; sometimes “to the frustration of other people”, namely the administration heads.¹⁷⁵ This frustration stems from the high level of accuracy the interpreters expect in their equipment, provided via the approval of the education department.

Many of these questions or comments tend to be cursory, seeking permission for photographs or to hold pieces of the equipment; but when members of the audience show a genuine interest, the interpreter has a responsibility to fuel that interest by answering questions to the best of their ability. “They would drill you,” Lewis remembers, and many times responses to their questions require more than a simple answer or explanation.¹⁷⁶ “I’ll say this,” Barrett Cooper muses, “the more I’ve done this, the more I’ve realized I’m painting a grayer and grayer picture for them.”¹⁷⁷ Visitors initially expect clear, black and white answers to hypothetical questions based on their preconceived notions as they process the new information and perspectives that have been presented to them. “There is no black [and white]. People want you to say, ‘Oh, absolutely! You could do this!’ and you say, ‘Well...umm...’”¹⁷⁸ After the fanciful scenarios are dispelled, the interpreters answer with facts to establish feasible contexts for the visitor, which hopefully leaves the visitor with a better understanding of the equipment and its historical significance, as well as hopefully fostering a desire to study the past in order to find the answers on their own.

¹⁷⁴ Cooper, Dingman, Moore, August 1, 2013.

¹⁷⁵ Lewis, June 26, 2014.

¹⁷⁶ *ibid.*

¹⁷⁷ Cooper, Dingman, Moore, August 1, 2013.

¹⁷⁸ *ibid.*

Another critical part of the Frazier Museum's exhibitions, the "Hand's On History" exhibit, offers a significant bridge between artifacts and visitors. Once or twice each day, the museum staff allows visitors to handle replicas of many of the exhibits. These replicas range from medieval helmets and armor, to early modern firearms and cowboy gear. While intended mainly for younger visitors, many adults take part in trying on the helmets, holding the Kentucky rifle or practicing with the lariat or lasso. Staff members give the name, date and function of the replicated artifact, and answer any questions. This form of exhibition appeals to visitors of all ages, as it offers them a physical and firsthand connection to the artifacts that hang nearby. Seeing the replicated artifacts and exhibits in motion, and physically interacting with them, personalizes the visitor's understanding of history, makes it a living memory, and encourages further understanding of the past.

Both the Metropolitan and the Frazier Museum offer distinct and tried methods of medieval and Pre-Modern exhibition, one using historical artifacts as a high watermark of artistic culture and the other offering visitors the chance to interact with the past. Each, however, plays to the strength of their founding objectives: the Met and the Cloisters relying on the aesthetic nature of medieval culture, while the Frazier draws on its target audience's intrigue with combat. The hands-on histories and interpretations bolster the displays, taking the artifacts to a level of real that they could not achieve within a case. Many of their combat techniques are also drawn from the same historical manuals utilized by HEMA and ARMA, as well as the publications and findings of these two groups. The museum also hosted a sword training guild, until an accident and the resulting liability issues ended the program. The Frazier Museum nevertheless continues

to rely on Pre-Modern combat demonstrations as a part of their historical interpretations, the majority which involve putting the weapons on display into their full historical context.

C. The Higgins Armory Museum

While the Frazier Museum continues to operate successfully, similar institutions have recently closed their doors for the last time. John Woodman Higgins, head of the Worcester Pressed Steel Company, demonstrated an interest in both metalworking and medieval romance from a young age. After acquiring his steel business in 1905, the Massachusetts-based entrepreneur began collecting pieces of late medieval and Early Modern European armor as early as 1928.¹⁷⁹ His acquisitions and correspondence with fellow armor enthusiasts such as John Ringling led to his 1929 opening of a steel and glass museum structure, one of the first ever constructed. “The upper two stories of the John Woodman Higgins Armory were arched and plastered to form a great hall resembling one in Prinz Eugen’s castle of Hohenwerfen in Austria”.¹⁸⁰ The Higgins Armory Museum, which operated from 1930 to 2013, at one point boasted the second largest collection of Pre-Modern European arms and armor, second only to the Metropolitan’s collection.

The founding mission of Mr. Higgins’ museum was to exhibit the industrialist’s ever-growing collection of steel and armor while drawing attention to his booming steel works factory. Andy Volpe, a staff member and interpreter at the Armory until 2013, points out that while the armor collection drew considerable attention; its mission was to

¹⁷⁹ Frank Duval, *Medieval and Renaissance Splendor: Arms and Armor from the Higgins Armory Museum* (Sarasota: The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art, 1984): 6.

¹⁸⁰ *ibid.*

compliment the modern steel artifacts within the museum, highlighting the forward progress of metalworking that Worcester's booming steel industry promised:

The [medieval] arms and armor, initially, was but one small aspect. One wing of the museum was dedicated to "ancient" metalwork, where the other side was "modern" [,] including examples from his factory [,] which was connected to the building, and visitors could also get a tour of the factory. At one point the museum boasted "110 Steel Knights", but remained focused on metalcraft even as the collection of arms and armor outgrew the modern (the armors had become wildly popular to visitors).¹⁸¹

Higgins' death in 1961 preceded the end of the Worcester Pressed Steel Company, which went out of business in 1975.¹⁸² The Higgins Armory remained, albeit cut off from the funding both had provided. After becoming a public nonprofit, the museum changed its mission statement after 1979 to separate itself from Worcester industry¹⁸³ and shift its emphasis exclusively to its arms and armor.¹⁸⁴ The museum continued to struggle financially in the wake of Mr. Higgins and PRESTEEL's demise, despite the continuing at financial aid from the tycoon's children; the board adamantly denied offers to sell a number of suits to private buyers,¹⁸⁵ as well as a proposed merger with the Worcester Art Museum.¹⁸⁶ It remained "the sole museum in the United States devoted just to armor",¹⁸⁷ until the opening of the Frazier Museum in 2004.

¹⁸¹ Andy Volpe, interview by Ryan Hatch, June 6, 2014.

¹⁸² Duval, 6.

¹⁸³ Malory Truman, "Museum Focus: Higgins Armory Museum," *Antiques & Fine Art Magazine*, 2000. Accessed 4 February 2014. <http://www.antiquesandfineart.com/articles/article.cfm?request=230>: 29.

¹⁸⁴ Truman, "Museum Focus: Higgins Armory Museum," *Antiques & Fine Art Magazine*, 2000: 37-39

¹⁸⁵ Truman, 29-30.

¹⁸⁶ Truman, 32.

¹⁸⁷ Geoff Edgers, "Closing Time at Worcester's Singular Showplace of Armor," *The Boston Globe*, 30 December 2013. <http://www.antiquesandfineart.com/articles/article.cfm?request=230>

Like the Frazier Museum, the Higgins Armory employed historical interpreters that would educate visitors about the collection as well as provide educational entertainment for events.¹⁸⁸ Members of the education and outreach departments dedicated their efforts towards the preservation, conservation, study, interpretation and display of arms, armor and related items, spanning from the Bronze Age to 1863. The majority of the collection falls within the 1550-1690 date range, firmly placing the artifacts in the period of the Late Renaissance and Early Reformation.¹⁸⁹ Tours and presentations by the Higgins staff, however, “tended to focus on the ‘height’ of armor development and use, roughly 1450-1530.”¹⁹⁰

As with the Frazier, responsibility for approving and obtaining reproduced equipment for the interpreters fell to the education department. Volpe and fellow interpreter Resa Wilson agree that the department set the standard for historical accuracy as high as possible, though these standards could prove flexible if a cheaper, less accurate piece that could be abused during daily demonstrations was made available.

Commissions for specially crafted replicas by professional reproduction companies, including a short sword by Museum Replicas and a pair of gothic plate harnesses, came primarily through grants.¹⁹¹ Members of the education staff also had access to the museum’s library in order to develop their interpretations. “They encouraged staffers to conduct research on their own time, and come up with one’s own ‘spin’, but following the ‘standard’ demo format...was also acceptable,” Volpe points out. Arms and armor

¹⁸⁸*ibid.*

¹⁸⁹ Duval, 12.

¹⁹⁰ Volpe, June 2014.

¹⁹¹ *ibid.*

demonstrations tended to be conducted by regular museum staff in both business-casual clothing and from a third-person perspective, sometimes inviting “a hapless (young) audience member” to take part and try on pieces of the replicated artifacts¹⁹²--a method similar to the Frazier’s “Hand-on History” display. First-person historical interpretations by staff in full period attire included “Women in Armor” pieces developed by female members; as well as a number of presentations, including Hernan Cortez and mounted combat from the English Civil War, performed by Eury Cantillo during his tenure as Outreach Coordinator from 2002 to 2005.¹⁹³

To augment these regular interpretation staff, the museum developed and hosted an in-house WMA group, which continued to operate until the institution’s last days:

The Higgins Armory Sword Guild started as a small collection of people mutually interested in the study of swordplay and fencing, some of them were Dr. Jeffrey Forgeng (the museum’s curator), Paul Kenworthy, and the late Dr. Patri Pugliese, who also happened to have supplied the earliest facsimilies and scan copies of fencing and dance manuals. They started gathering at the museum around 1998-99, and then the group became ‘public’ around 2000-01 [w]hen it “officially” became known as the Higgins Armory Sword Guild.¹⁹⁴

As with Fratellanza and other WMA organizations, the establishment of the Higgins Armory Sword Guild (HASG) coincided with the increasing availability of translated *fechtbuchs* and training manuals, thus allowing its members to expand the museum’s available interpretations from the late thirteenth (I.33) to the nineteenth centuries. “For demonstrations...we stuck with the 1470’s as it seemed to be in the ‘middle’ of the time

¹⁹² *ibid.*

¹⁹³ *ibid.*

¹⁹⁴ *ibid.*

period these manuals were published (I suppose there is a ‘middle ages’ pun there)”. Dr. Jeffrey Forgeng, museum curator, provided members with personal translations of several of the manuals, namely Joachim Meyer, practicing and revising with the group as they progressed.

Resa Nelson, author and HASG member from 2002 to 2006, remembers the group’s interpretational method as a three part process: “1. Translate copies of original manuscripts... 2. Read the translated text and study the illustrations. 3. Physical interpretation, meaning use each person’s base of knowledge to figure out what the text and illustrations mean by trying to copy them physically.”¹⁹⁵ While a combination of funding from the museum and loaned materials from guild members provided the group with gloves and wooden wasters for training, they initially wore loose, modern clothing during training and demonstrations; though the guild members eventually settled on historical costumes c. 1470 for demonstrations. Although there was “a short lived movement to go to ‘live sparring’ with masks and padding,”¹⁹⁶ most members proved uninterested.

Members such as Volpe also avoided the first-person form of interpretation that the Frazier favors. “I, personally, refuse to do any 1st person,” as, “... [t]here is so little we ‘actually know as fact.” Although Volpe’s reservations about first-person portrayals pertain to the Roman legionary interpretation he personally developed and continues to refine, it rings true for many periods of history, particularly the Middle Ages. Even those first-person interpretations by the Frazier Museum require primary resource approval

¹⁹⁵ Resa Nelson, interview by Ryan Hatch, June 11, 2014.

¹⁹⁶ Volpe, June 2014.

from museum staff and disclaimers in both the “intro” and “outro” portions of the performance, describing what sources were used to piece together the narrative when first-person or autobiographical sources proved unavailable. In this regard, the HASG’s avoidance of the first person seems the most historically sound.

Just as with the Frazier’s combat portrayals, the HASG’s demonstrations avoided actual combat and followed a very technical method, again similar to an instructor drilling apprentices. These demonstrations usually began with “an “At Speed” intro, a step-by-step explanation, then a finishing At-Speed with a counter or ‘trick’, usually a disarm.”¹⁹⁷ Each technique would be explained, their history given and mechanics performed in a slow and exaggerated manner. “Some of us were so nerdy into the nitty-gritty details,” Volpe admits, “[that] sometimes we forgot the audience just wanted to see a damned swordfight already!”¹⁹⁸ Each “demo” would end with a full speed exchange of blows and guards, until one interpreter would be “disarmed” or “beaten”.

Along with the “Overknight” program that hosted overnight stays for cub scouts and children’s groups, both the Higgins Armory proper and the HASG practiced various forms of outreach to draw greater public interest. The museum offered free admission on “Founder’s Day” and special events coinciding with holidays. “Higgins Faires”, similar to the average Renaissance festival, would be held every summer, though Volpe characterizes these festivals as “way too complicated and overcrowded”.¹⁹⁹ School outreaches utilized hands-on displays, as well as interpretations of specific periods from the Roman period to the Age of Pike and Shot. The Sword Guild likewise took part in

¹⁹⁷ Nelson, June 11, 2014

¹⁹⁸ Volpe, June 6, 2014

¹⁹⁹ *ibid.*

public displays and fundraising. According to Volpe, the combat element drew major public interest; while the guild's history of *fechtbuch* interpretation made the HAM a place of pilgrimage for WMA practitioners. "It got to the point where visitors traveled from a distance specifically to see our demos. (That was a thrilling if humbling experience)." ²⁰⁰ Demonstrations would also be held at Boston's "Arisia" and "Boskone" science fiction conventions depicting combat in Gothic harness, Roman armor, and the anachronistic scenario speculating the outcome of a confrontation between the two. ²⁰¹ Towards the end of the museum's existence, interpretations took on more science-fiction themes, in order to capitalize on greater outside support. "There was even a few 'Star Wars' days...and Guild members did 'Lightsabre' demos showing how Lucas [would have been] influenced by historical manuals and of course, Japanese swordplay...as well as how a Lightsabre fight 'might happen' had they been utilizing WMA techniques." ²⁰²

Despite the reasonable success of these programs and high attendance rates, the museum suffered major deficits ranging from \$500,000 to \$1 million, with only an endowment of \$2.9 million. ²⁰³²⁰⁴ Attempts to raise funds and increase revenue by board members and the Higgins family failed. "The most difficult, frustrating and stressful time was the last 5 months of 2013 when the museum closed," Volpe remembers of his last days, when acting as a tour guide. "We had to answer professionally and without [getting] emotional, all the while display pieces were being moved out for maintenance

²⁰⁰ *ibid.*

²⁰¹ "Live Performances at Arisia 2011." Arisia 2011. Accessed March 5, 2014. <http://2011.arisia.org/livePerformances>

²⁰² Volpe, June 2014

²⁰³ Edgers.

²⁰⁴ Truman, 37.

and preparations for moving to WAM or to Auction. But, we did it as best we could.”²⁰⁵

The museum closed its doors in December 2013; the majority of its arms and armor collection has been moved to the Worcester Art Museum, and currently feature in the museum’s “Knights!” exhibition.²⁰⁶ The rest of the collection was auctioned away. Four former members of the Higgins’ education staff have found permanent positions at the WAM. The interpretation program, as well as its sword guild, likewise dissolved with the museum’s termination. “HASG effectively ceased meetings and demonstrations in 2011. A [rival] organization, the Higgins Academy of the Sword under Ken Mondschein, ceased functions when the Higgins Armory Museum closed in 2013 and has since apparently moved to Worcester Fencing Academy and classes at UMass Amherst.”²⁰⁷ Although the museum successfully maintained itself for nearly a century, the dropping of the steel-based exhibits and reframing the museum’s mission statement to focus on the medieval elements, which coincided with its transition from private to public funding, apparently put its decline into motion.

D. Conclusion: The Middle Ages and the Bigger Picture

The impressive building that once housed the Higgins Armory Museum’s array of arms and armor now sits as an empty historic landmark, its collection on exhibit at the Worcester Museum of Art, and its historical interpretation programs left in a state of limbo; the Royal Armouries and the Frazier History Museum, continue operations, as do their interpretation departments. Both institutions, however, have encountered financial

²⁰⁵ Volpe, June 6, 2014.

²⁰⁶ “Knights! Now on View”, Worcester Art Museum, Accessed 7 June 2014.
[http://www.worcesterart.org/exhibitions/knights/..](http://www.worcesterart.org/exhibitions/knights/)

²⁰⁷ Nelson, June 11, 2014.

challenges similar to those faced by the HAM. How have these two museums survived while the latter succumbed to a lack of funding? After a 38% decrease in visitor numbers after ending the interpretations in April 2011,²⁰⁸ the RAM began taking steps to revitalize its education services and visitor involvement, namely through school outreach programs as well as demonstrations held during school and bank holidays.²⁰⁹ Fencing and martial arts classes continue at the Leeds site, and jousts are held regularly.

The Frazier museum, meanwhile, has sought methods to compensate for the financial demands that their current endowment and grants cannot meet. To this end, the Frazier's administrative staff faces the task of restructuring the museum/s methods of operation. "The development department has a...big task ahead, to make us sustainable...but we are in a position that a lot of other museums are, where...the revenue that we earn from the admissions, or from the education program...just can't pay for all of it. So we have to cut down". According to Jodi Lewis, the Frazier examined the methods utilized by other institutions, namely San Diego's Museum of Man, which "pruned back" elements of each department to "bare-bones" in order to create room for growth.²¹⁰ The Frazier's interpretations department, which receives ten percent of the museum's annual budget,²¹¹ now submits forms to the director of public programs explaining the focus of any intended interpretations. This measure ensures that the

²⁰⁸ Rebecca Atkinson, "Visitor Numbers Fall by 38% at Royal Armouries Leeds". Museums Journal. Museum Associations. <http://www.museumsassociation.org/museums-journal/news/22082011-royal-armouries-leeds-visitor-figures>. August 22, 2011. Accessed July 3, 2014.

²⁰⁹ "Royal Armouries Rolls Out New Education Programme to Coincide with Revised National Curriculum Launch". Press Release. Royal Armouries. http://www.royalarmouries.org/assets-uploaded/press-releases/RA_-_Launch_of_new_education_sessions_-_National_-_FINAL.pdf. September 18, 2014. Accessed November 9, 2014.

²¹⁰ Lewis, June 26, 2014.

²¹¹ Cooper, Dingman, and Moore, August 1, 2013.

interpretations remain within budget as well as in correlation with upcoming educational programs or exhibits.²¹² Along with efforts to create a metro “School of Innovation” museum school in a joint effort with other local Louisville museums,²¹³ the Frazier’s administrative staff are currently attempting to develop a travelling exhibit with the Redding Museum of Art.

Herein lies the secret to the Frazier Museum’s survival in light of the Higgins’ demise: the willingness to branch out and open venues not necessarily in tandem with the museum’s original mission. Both the travelling and temporary exhibits the Frazier hosts have proven, along with the historical interpretations, the major driving force behind its annual income, as “study after study finds that [is what] drives our attendance...or membership is temporary exhibitions.” Lewis cites the access paying members receive to these changing exhibits for “free, or at a greatly reduced cost,” as the reason for the ever-increasing emphasis on displays of artifacts, which do not always involve weaponry.²¹⁴

Many of the temporary exhibits tie directly into the history of Louisville. One of the most successful of these exhibits, which ran from May 15 to September 8 of 2009, focused on the Fontaine Ferry Amusement Park. Originally a vital river crossing and later hotel, the eventual amusement park delighted visitors as a major tourist attraction from 1905 to 1969.²¹⁵²¹⁶ This exhibit found massive levels of support from local visitors, many

²¹² Lewis, June 26, 2014.

²¹³ *ibid.*

²¹⁴ The Museum’s “Mythological Creatures” travelling exhibit ran during the summer of 2013; its current travelling exhibit, “Gridiron Glory”, focuses on the history of American Football.

²¹⁵ “Fontaine Ferry”. Frazier History Museum. <http://fraziermuseum.org/exhibitions/temporary-exhibits/past-2/fontaine-ferry-2/>. Accessed May 19, 2014.

²¹⁶ Nicholas Howard, “Fontaine Ferry Park”. Examiner.com. <http://www.examiner.com/article/fontaine-ferry-park>. July 22, 2012. Accessed May 27, 2015.

of whom still remembered the old park. “I mean, we had incredible amounts of people coming out of the woodwork just for that,” Cooper remembers, “who had never thought about coming to this museum.” The success of locally-oriented exhibits repeated itself, namely in an exhibit concerning the history of the Louisville Water Company. “It was incredibly fascinating,” Cooper admits, “I thought it was going to be as boring as all get-out. But what that’s spawned...is the beginning of the Louisville Water Company starting their own history museum”.²¹⁷ Despite beginning as an institutions dedicated to the display and demonstration of European and American weaponry, the Frazier has thus expanded outward to impact as well as interconnect with the local community.

While the interpretations department has limited the development of performances to those that tie into the current exhibitions, the combat demonstrations that drew initial attention to the museum continue to run on a regular basis. Cooper and Lewis agree that people “love the sword fights”,²¹⁸ but aside from the thrill of seeing professionals in period dress cross swords, the other forms of Pre-Modern interpretation continue to prove less popular compared to those depicting American history. “When we have done focus groups and things, it’s the American history that people are coming to see.” Buffalo Bill, created specifically on the request of Mr. Frazier himself, has proven to be one of the most popular. “He wanted Buffalo Bill,” says Cooper, who performs that particular interpretation, “so, we did Buffalo Bill...Buffalo Bill is very popular.” Cooper concedes however, that “the most popular thing, of course, is the historic combat.”²¹⁹ The

²¹⁷ Cooper, Dingman, Moore, August 1, 2013.

²¹⁸ *ibid.*

²¹⁹ *ibid.*

promise of violence, even controlled violence, draws a crowd; especially if said combat harkens back to the romanticized ideal of one-on-one combat.

In this way, crowds of visitors pay admission to the museum to see the exhibits and themes they are familiar with; but the chance to witness something they have not seen before, or in a way they had not before, increases the chance that they may extend their visit time, view the artifacts in a way they may have not before, ask more questions of the museum staff, and hopefully leave with a better understanding of the past. “We have people who come in who don’t know what people we’re portraying,” says Dingman, “and come out thinking, ‘Oh, wow, I’m far more interested than I thought I was.’” The thrill and romance of the violence usually associated with the Middle Ages and Renaissance generates a level of interest among visitors that have no personal connection to that particular history, and thus creates a venue for accurate demonstrations of the historical past.

Compared to the case of the Higgins Armory, the determining factor between the survival of the two institutions becomes clear. While The HAM’s large display and public demonstrations of medieval history proved popular among visitors and WMA enthusiast alike, the financial problems that had plagued the museum since the 1970s demonstrated that it could neither reach a larger audience, nor could it generate a sustainable level of public interest. Along with the monetary vacuum created by the demise of both Mr. Higgins and PRESTEEL, the decision to focus exclusively on the armorial collection and exclude the element of steel works that had made up the second half of Mr. Higgins’ vision cut both the museum and its visitors off from its ties to

Worcester's steel working past. This piece of local history, if maintained and utilized correctly by the HAM's administration, would have created a larger interest base for potential visitors, as well as possibly allowing for museum visitors to bridge the gap between the steel working of their own recent past to the armor making of the medieval past. While the sword guild attracted WMA aficionados and other like-minded groups, it courted little attention outside of this relatively small interest base.

Combined with both the museum board and the Higgins family's reluctance to downsize or sell off any piece from its collection, the unique but limited glimpse of the past that the HAM offered led to its inevitable downfall. The difference between a museum's life and death depends on its willingness to expand a museum's perspective past its original vision, to connect with the various interests of different audiences on all levels (i.e. local, state, national, international) while interconnecting its original and expanded themes, this creates a platform through which a larger audience can connect with an artifact or an element of history they had not considered before. The Frazier's travelling and temporary exhibits, though not always in the same vein as the museum's main artifacts or original subject matter, will always draw in crowds of every level. The interpretations department will continue to breathe life into both the permanent and the temporary artifacts, including the Royal Armouries' medieval and Renaissance armaments.

CONCLUSIONS

This study has sought to shed light on and explain the current historical portrayal of the Middle Ages in the United States. For Umberto Eco, hyperrealistic portrayal of the Middle Ages in the United States offers Americans a method of understanding the period by placing themselves in a similar, albeit symmetrically different, scenario. The “Current Middle Ages” that began in the 1960’s, however, grew out of the counter-culture movements prevalent in that decade and continuing on to this day. Instead of viewing themselves, as Eco proposed, as Romans in the last days of the empire, many members of the SCA and Western Martial Artists take on the historical personification of those descendants of the Germanic tribes and kingdoms that replaced the old empire. Both the citizens of transition in Eco’s Current Middle Ages and the SCA/WMA Renaissance, however, find inspiration and motivation in the romance of modern literature of Tolkien and Marion Zimmer Bradley, films such as *Captain Blood* and *Robin Hood*, and the idealization of periods in transition. The romance, then, plays an important role in drawing attention to and sustaining these groups. To put it simply, many come for the romance, some stay for the truth, and a few decide to take on the mantle of armed and armored interpreter.

The question remains, however, as to whether or not the Middle Ages can be successfully and accurately reenacted in the United States. The success of the SCA and HEMA has led to the development of a thriving reproduction industry, ready to supply period-appropriate equipment to any SCAdians, Western Martial Artists, and museums such as the Frazier. Many of these interpreters and groups are self-sufficient, able to produce or buy their own equipment. The digitally-aided interconnectivity of these

groups also provides access to an ever-growing source of surviving manuals, along with translated and illustrated primary resources via online sources like Wiktenauer. Accurate mimetic reproductions and the sources to ensure they are worn or used correctly. A surprisingly increasing possible base for successful historical interpretations of the Middle Ages therefore exists.

As a corollary to this potential, it should be noted that scale plays a major role in the success of the existing medieval historical interpretations tend to take place on a relatively small scale, that is small and intermittent displays or demonstrations rather than large, constant venues. As seen with the demise of the Ozark Medieval Fortress, larger displays take too much time and finances to construct, and require constantly present and large amount of professionals with sufficient knowledge of period-correct techniques. In contrast, Camlann Medieval Village, Fratellanza, HEMA, and the Frazier Museum schools rely on small to moderate scale demonstrations, with the first three able to sustain their performance via some private and personal funding, i.e. the Bor's Hede Tavern or membership dues; while the last persists on a number of federal, state and local grants.

In regards to the state of Western Martial Arts, an unspoken animosity concerning the purity of the fighting techniques, specifically the sportification of Liechtenauer, Ringeck and Fiore's combat techniques. Members of authenticity-based groups such as Fratellanza della Spada feel that burdening the original fighting styles with regulations for competitions will cost them the spirit of their creation, and would thus cease to offer an authentic portrayal of both the original techniques and the historic periods they represent. It should be noted, however, that Fratellanza, while not officially defunct, has not held a practice or taken part in a demonstration in roughly a year. The Phoenix

Society, on the other hand, continues to meet regularly and grow in number as HEMA continues to attract national attention. The SCA, although having sustained a small drop in membership due to the recent economic downturn, still operates successfully around the world.²²⁰ Both the SCA and schools associated with HEMA have also benefitted from the increasing popularity of the Armored Combat League (ACL), a heavy contact sport involving international teams donning 14th century plate armor and weaponry to revive the medieval melee, or massed mock combat on foot.²²¹ An American team was recently formed, and competed at the annual Battle of Nations in Europe.²²² These successes, especially in the United States, suggest that sportifying elements of medieval combat may be one of the best ways to generate greater interest in the Middle Ages, as long as instructors like Guy Windsor and members of the HEMA Alliance governing body maintain their studies of the original training manuals, as well as their connection to the academic institutions that may provide greater insight and study into the source material.

On a larger scale, museums in the United States can develop and maintain traditional and interactive exhibits concerning the Middle Ages, under the correct circumstances. In order to succeed and remain relevant, the medieval-based exhibit must tie in to the “larger picture”. The enduring success of the Metropolitan Museum’s Arms and Armor gallery, along with the Cloisters, stems from its elevation by Bashford Dean

²²⁰ Heinrich der Bauer, personal interview.

²²¹ Claire Carter. “Knight Club: The Mace-Wielding Fighters who Really go Medieval on their Opponents While Wearing Full Suits of Armor and Brandishing Real Weapons,” *Daily Mail*, February 16, 2015, accessed March 9, 2015, <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2955576/The-mace-wielding-fighters-REALLY-medieval-opponents-wearing-suits-armor-brandishing-real-weapons.html>.

²²² Mike Tierney. “The Holy Grail of Battle Re-enactments”, *New York Times*, May 8, 2013, accessed March 10, 2015, <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/05/09/sports/battle-of-the-nations-a-holy-grail-of-battle-re-enactments.html?ref=sports>.

and other curators to a level of high art, inviting visitors to respect the skill and high culture represented in both the gothic armor harnesses and the Unicorn Tapestries. While the long-term Royal Armouries exhibit at the Frazier Museum ended in January 2015,²²³ the historical interpretations department continues to offer Pre-Modern performances on a regular basis, as those that represent both the temporary and permanent exhibits, the focus of which are now turning more towards local Kentucky history.²²⁴ Unlike the Higgins Armory, the Frazier has chosen to prove its relevance to the local and greater national community, while continuing to provide a dynamic portrayal of the medieval past. By providing the familiar, the Frazier draws the crowds in and may present an intriguing element of Pre-Modern European history.

To this point, the study has focused on the state of medieval portrayal in the United States, as well as how more accurate portrayal may be increased and propagated. The question of why any institution in the United States, academic or otherwise, would care about more accurately portraying the Middle Ages, must be addressed. As this paper has pointed out previously, the country lacks a medieval European cultural memory and any associated cites of consciousness. While this has led to a greater cultural acceptance of romanticized perceptions of the Middle Ages, it is this same romance that attracts the public to festivals and demonstrations, thus fueling the handful of groups and organizations that wish to authentically interpret a myriad of European cultures reaching back over a thousand years. The characterization of the Middle Ages as violent,

²²³ Sheldon S. Shafer. "Frazier Museum Returns British Armor", The Courier-Journal, October 24, 2014, accessed May 9, 2015, <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/05/09/sports/battle-of-the-nations-a-holy-grail-of-battle-re-enactments.html?ref=sports>

²²⁴"Upcoming Exhibitions", The Frazier History Museum, accessed May 10, 2015, <http://fraziermuseum.org/upcoming-exhibitions/>.

oppressive and ignorant is far from correct, a fact that both modern academia and historical interpreters seek to establish in mainstream culture, both in the United States and worldwide. Eco states the point at length:

In fact, even the early Middle Ages (perhaps more than the Middle Ages after the year 1000) were a period of incredible intellectual vitality, of impassioned dialogue among barbarian civilizations, Roman heritage, and Christian-Eastern elements, a time of journeys and encounters, when Irish monks crossed Europe spreading ideas, encouraging reading, promoting foolishness of every description. In short, this is where modern Western man came to maturity, and it is in this sense that a model of the Middle Ages can help us understand what is happening in our own day.²²⁵

If every field of historical study is to be held to the inter-connective standards of postmodernity, all periods must be given the same level of attention and presented in the same level of authenticity. This rings no less true for Pre-Modern European history. If hyperreality and reenactment offer the best method of promoting this standard and furthering study of the period, then all academic institutions within the United States should take note and consider developing or extending programs to meet these needs.

²²⁵ Eco, 75.

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APPENDIX A

FORMS

RECRUITMENT SCRIPT

To Whom It May Concern

My name is Ryan Hatch. I am an graduate student working on my Master's thesis under the direction of Prof. Nancy Dallett in the Department of History at Arizona State University. I am conducting a research study into the use and methods of historical interpretation (i.e. living history and historical reenactment) by various groups and institutions in portraying medieval history to the public in the United States.

I am recruiting individuals to conduct oral history interviews. I will ask participants a set of questions about their experiences in historical interpretation, how they conduct their research, the methods and materials they use in their portrayals, and how successful these methods have proven to be. These interviews will take approximately 25 minutes to 1 hour each. I mat audiotape these interviews, and will transcribe and then use in my research paper. Tapes may be offered to local libraries to store. All participants must be 18 and older.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. If you have any questions concerning the research study, please call me at (480) 433- 0129.

STUDY TITLE

I am a graduate student under the direction of Professor Nancy Dallett in the Department/Division/ College of the School of History, Philosophy, and Religious Studies at Arizona State University. I am conducting a research study to gain a better understanding of the nature and methods of historical reenactment in the United States, especially the reenactment of Pre-Modern European history and the Middle Ages.

I am inviting your participation, which will involve sitting down and answering a number of questions concerning your personal involvement with, or your group or institution's use of, historical interpretation and reenactment. You have the right not to answer any question, and to stop participation at any time.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. If you choose not to participate or to withdraw from the study at any time, there will be no penalty. You must be 18 or older to participate in this study.

Although there is no immediate benefit to yourself or your group/institution, this study will further academic understanding of historical reenactment, as well as the reenactment process itself. There are no foreseeable risks or discomforts to your participation.

Confidentiality will be maintained by keeping your personal information on a separate and private and password-locked hard drive. Any printed or written documents shall be kept under lock and key. Your responses will be confidential. The results of this study may be used in reports, presentations, or publications but your name will not be used.

I would like to audio record or video record this interview. The interview will not be recorded without your permission. Please let me know if you do not want the interview to be recorded; you also can change your mind after the interview starts, just let me know.

If you have any questions concerning the research study, please contact the research team: Ryan Hatch at 480-433-0129 or rrhatch@asu.edu; and Nancy Dallett at nancy.dallett@asu.edu. If you have any questions about your rights as a subject/participant in this research, or if you feel you have been placed at risk, you can contact the Chair of the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board, through the ASU Office of Research Integrity and Assurance, at (480) 965-6788. Please let me know if you wish to be part of the study.

By signing below you are agreeing to be part of the study, during which you may be video or audio recorded.

Name:

Signature:

Date:

By signing below you are agreeing to allow your name to be used when quoted in the study's final report.

Name:

Signature:

Date:

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Date:

Number of Interviewees:

1. What is the name of your group/organization
2. When did this group/organization begin? Is this group/organization still in operation?
3. What is your role within the group/organization?
4. What are the mission and goals of this group/organization?
5. Is this group open to public membership?
6. What historical periods does your group/organization focus its research on?
7. What standards of accuracy or authenticity does your group/organization attempt to meet?
8. What methods of historical interpretation does your group/organization utilize?
9. What sources do you utilize for your research?
10. What are your methods of research?
11. What forms of public outreach and presentation does your group/organization utilize?
12. What guidelines or regulations does your organization adhere to?
13. What equipment or resources does your group/organization require?
14. How does this group/organization obtain its funding?
15. Is this group involved with any academic or historical institutions (i.e. museums or historical societies)?
16. What does the future look like for this group/organization?
17. How might this group/organization increase its public outreach/membership size/funding?
18. How much emphasis is put on educating the general public about the period(s) this group/organization represents?

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS-FRAZIER HISTORY MUSEUM

Interviewer:

Date:

Number of Interviewees:

Name(s):

19. What are the mission, vision, and objectives of the Frazier Museum?
 - a. Does the museum meet these on a regular basis?
 - b. What methods might be used to improve or increase the meeting of these standards?
 - c. How does the historical interpretation department help meet these standards?
20. When did the Frazier Museum first become involved with historical interpretation?
21. When did the Frazier Museum become involved with the Royal Arms Museum?
 - a. Does the Frazier Museum still work with the RAM?
22. What procedures or guidelines are used to select and develop interpretations?
 - a. How much involvement does the museum's administration or education departments have in this process?
23. How much of the monthly or annual budget is set aside for historical interpretation?
24. How much emphasis is put on historical accuracy?
25. Do you feel that the interpretations help the audience connect with the history and artifacts within the museum?
26. Do the Pre-modern (medieval and Renaissance) or Early Modern American interpretations attract more audience attention or institutional emphasis? Which has proven more successful?
27. How much romance or creative/artistic license goes into the interpretations?
28. IS the Frazier involved with the local community?
 - a. How does the Frazier interact with the community?
 - b. Does the Frazier acquiesce to the local history or to local interests?
29. How does the Frazier select which temporary exhibits it will host?
30. How does the Frazier obtain most of its funding?
31. What is the average turnover for Frazier staff and management?
32. How much emphasis is put on involvement with the education department and Frazier events?
33. What might the future look like for the Frazier?

APPENDIX B

THE SOCIETY FOR CREATIVE ANACHRONISM

DATA COLLECTED MARCH 18, 2015

1. Lord Heinrich der Bauer (Name Omitted), Kingdom of Atenveldt; March 18, 2015

Short Consent Template

STUDY TITLE

I am a graduate student under the direction of Professor Nancy Dallett in the Department/Division/ College of the School of History, Philosophy, and Religious Studies at Arizona State University. I am conducting a research study to gain a better understanding of the nature and methods of historical reenactment in the United States, especially the reenactment of Pre-Modern European history and the Middle Ages.

I am inviting your participation, which will involve sitting down and answering a number of questions concerning your personal involvement with, or your group or institution's use of, historical interpretation and reenactment. You have the right not to answer any question, and to stop participation at any time.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. If you choose not to participate or to withdraw from the study at any time, there will be no penalty. You must be 18 or older to participate in this study.

Although there is no immediate benefit to yourself or your group/institution, this study will further academic understanding of historical reenactment, as well as the reenactment process itself. There are no foreseeable risks or discomforts to your participation.

Confidentiality will be maintained by keeping your personal information on a separate and private and password-locked hard drive. Any printed or written documents shall be kept under lock and key. Your responses will be confidential. The results of this study may be used in reports, presentations, or publications but your name will not be used.

I would like to audio record or video record this interview. The interview will not be recorded without your permission. Please let me know if you do not want the interview to be recorded; you also can change your mind after the interview starts, just let me know.

If you have any questions concerning the research study, please contact the research team: Ryan Hatch at 480-433-0129 or ; and Nancy Dallett at . If you have any questions about your rights as a subject/participant in this research, or if you feel you have been placed at risk, you can contact the Chair of the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board, through the ASU Office of Research Integrity and Assurance, at (480) 965-6788. Please let me know if you wish to be part of the study.

By signing below you are agreeing to be part of the study, during which you may be video or audio recorded.

Name: Stephen Taylor

Signature: 

Date: 3/18/15

By signing below you are agreeing to allow your name to be used when quoted in the study's final report.

Name:

Signature:

Date:

Oral Interview-Barony of Atenveldt, the Society for Creative Anachronism
3/18/2015, 7:38 PM

Interviewer (I): Student

Interviewee (A): Lord Heinrich der Bauer, member, Society for Creative Anachronism.

Interview Setting: Interview conducted at Hayden Park in Phoenix, Arizona. Interview was conducted on March 18, 2015, at 7:38 PM.

Affiliation with the Interviewee: The interviewee agreed to a pre-practice meeting with the interviewer.

(Start of Interview)

I: What is the name of your group/organization?

A: It's called the SCA. It stands for the Society for Creative Anachronism.

I: When did this group/organization begin?

A: Actually started in 1965. We didn't incorporate until '67, because originally it was literally a party in somebody's backyard that they had a theme and at the end went, "That was fun let's do it again." And, after a couple of years they had just grown enough to the point where they needed to reserve a Ramada at the park and they had to have an organization name. So, at that point an author, Marion Zimmer Bradley, who was going to school at the time went, "Let's call it this!" So, in '67, so.

I: Yeah, nice.

I: Is this group/organization still in operation?

A: Extremely.

I: Yes.

A: Yeah. We're a little, we we've shrunk just a little bit over the past couple of years because the economy kind of you know when the economy tanked. People didn't have the

money to spend in this size of a hobby anymore, but or you know it's started to grow again.

I: Good, Okay.

I: What is your role within the group/organization?

A: That's a hard one to answer, in in in in our group because we don't really have specific roles, for instance. It's not a thing where you can walk up and say, "Hey what's your character?"

I: Right.

A: That's not quite how we operate. Everyone is basically just a participant, until you until you actually try to gain an office, I guess.

I: Yeah.

A: So, really don't have a dedicated role, per say, just participant. You know people, you come, you do your thing.

I: Ok.

A: So.

I: Alright.

I: What are the mission and goals of this group/organization?

A: Technically, we're an educational group. We are actually a federal 501-3C, or whatever it's called, but we're classified as a living history group just like the like the mountain men, and the civil war groups. Part of our charter is educational, so we do do school demos, we do public civic events, public outreach, that kind of stuff.

I: Ok.

A: So.

I: That's awesome.

I: Is this group open to public membership?

A: Absolutely. We get, we get that a lot. Actually, we get two different things. We get, "You're a cult!" and then we also get, "Are you a play?" But, no we're constantly, most of us are are blatant recruiters.

I: Excellent.

A: So we encourage people to just come and watch. However unlike a renfaire when people come and watch we're not, it's not our job to entertain them. So, it's participatory. You get out of it what you put into it, more than anything, so yeah.

I: Excellent.

A: Absolutely.

I: What historical periods does your group/organization focus its research on?

A: Up until about 10 years ago, the SCA was pretty much exclusively, I mean, in in our bylaws it was fall of the Roman Empire to Elizabeth. So roughly 1000 to, sorry, roughly...

I: 476 to...

A: Thank you. To about yeah, so, and however there was a large contingent of early period Greco-Roman types that that wanted to do their thing, that were technically outside of the period. So our directors, the people who actually do the, handle the the interface between what we call the game, the actual end participatory and the legal end of things, revised the bylaws and basically blew out the back end. So we really don't have a back end anymore. Top end is 1650.

I: Nice.

A: So.

I: Ok.

A: You end up with some really bizarre stuff, you end up with some Elizabethans sitting down next to Romans sitting new and they you know are having dinner, having lunch with a Mongol. Yes. It gets interesting.

I: What standards of accuracy or authenticity does your group/organization attempt to meet?

A: Once again, because we are such a broad group, it really depends on the person you're talking to. You will run into everything from the guy who just ***** and has safety pinned a pair of beach towels together over his shoulders as a tabard, all the way down to one of a, a good friend of mine who actually made who actually made the practice every in ***** who is academically published. So, you'll run the entire gamut. Everything from, you know like I said, absolute I'm wearing polyester that's held together with seam check down to I spun the thread that this garment's been sewn from. It it it really comes down the person. Overall we try to maintain we call we we call it the ten foot rule. If standing ten feet away it looks acceptable we'll be ok with that, you know.

I: Ten foot rule? I haven't heard of that before. That's cool.

I: What methods of historical interpretation does your group/organization utilize?

A: Once again because of our scope it really depends. A lot of people when they first join, just they get into it a lot because the the fighting and things like that. The very obvious parts, "Hey that's fun!" You know, the turn...

I: It's the romance of it, yeah?

A: Exactly. And then they actually have no intention of ever doing any any more or any the scholarly aspects. But one of the things that we encourage people to do is create a person. The character that could have lived, but didn't. And the reason for that isn't for role-play or anything, it's because even the hardcore stick jock whose on reason for coming to this and doing this is because he likes to hit people with a stick, eventually will sit there and scratch his head and goes, "Hmm. Well I've been a 12th century Celt for so long. I wonder what I should be wearing?" And the next thing they know, they're in the art museum's research library digging through, you know, fashion books from the 12th century going, "I can do that." So, it's really an evolutionary approach. You know, we encourage people just to come, just to participate. And then, over time there's that gentle peer pressure nudge towards being more authentic.

I: Alright.

A: If I'm being too vague or anything, Please let me know.

I: No, so far it's been going very well I'm just. You're basically getting at it. Yes. It's what I've heard so far a lot of people, you know, just get into it, you know. ***** each

other, it's a fun activity and then a few number of people actually do care, about going the extra way.

I: What sources do you utilize for your research?

A: Boy, personally I've done I everything. I mean, I've I've hit the libraries. I've done the traveling shows. My particular period there isn't a whole lot of of material because it's my personal area I do early 16th century German.

I: Okay.

A: Which unfortunately is close enough to the modern era that it tends to get overwhelmed by Nazi propaganda. It, it's called early modern Germany. And, if you google 'early modern Germany' you will get nothing but swastikas and 3rd Reich. So, it it it depending on your period it's difficult. A lot of sense and also because it is a hobby to us there's not a lot of money involved. It's very hard to find to get to deal with primary sources.

I: Right, yes.

A: So, literally we keep an eye out on the art museums when the cool shows come by. Research libraries; there's the rare book room up at the branch library which me and my wife have spent a lot of time in. They make you wear white gloves.

I: Yes, yes, yes. I've been to a couple of those.

A: It's good, it's awesome. I want to get to the Getty eventually, just because that would be awesome.

I: It would be.

A: So, it's a little bit of everything to be absolutely honest. And because it is a, it's a, it's a living history thing, there's a little bit to it more than just the core research. Because it's cool to learn about something from a, you know, from a book and or see it in a painting but then the big issue becomes, "Yeah but how can I actually put that together and use it?"

I: Right.

A: You know, so.

I: Okay, well, that's awesome dude.

I: What are your methods of research?

I: You just described those; we can skip over that.

I: What forms of public outreach and presentation does your group/organization utilize?

A: Primarily we do we like I said we do a lot of lot of demos is is our biggest issue. I want to say our biggest issue, our main method we do a lot of school demos, a lot of group demos like we just had a demo for a couple combined boy scout group out in Scottsdale where we set up different stations and just broke the kids up into groups and kids go from station to station and, you know, this one's about fighting and this one's about illumination or this one's about, you know and and it was a lot of fun because the kids walked away going, "I had no clue that existed!" You know...

I: Right.

A: Which was which was just cool, it means: Hey! We were successful. And of course all the kids really enjoyed the the the fighting and so. But, demos primarily and like I said there is a little bit of publication that that goes on. We do we do put out a quarterly that includes some scholarly work, some work that's geared directly towards other members. You know, camping tips, that kind of stuff.

I: Right.

A: So, but most it is just is is recreation and showing off the stuff that we've done because most of us are artists in some fashion and like most artists if you ask us questions we won't shut up. So.

I: There you go, perfect.

I: What guidelines or regulations does you organization adhere to?

A: There's an entire way that the the or, we actually it's almost a two lobe kind of thing. We have what we call 'the game.'

I: Right.

A: And then, unfortunately we just the way things go there's the legal end of things. And it's kind of like the interface as far as like the the insurance stuff and the the liability and so we actually have an entire set of bylaws we call it 'the corporum.' Which you can actually get that online that outlines all of the absolute legal ramifications. What we can

and cannot do; the exact legal interface between what we do the rest of the modern world kind of thing.

I: Right.

A: Which I hate phrasing like that because it makes it sound like some kind of a hippie commune kind of thing. Like, "Damn it ****!" And it's not really like that, but...

I: Okay.

A: You know, it it's like and if we have a demo we have specific like restrictions within the corporum on like who can put on a helmet and whack somebody with a stick.

I: Right.

A: You know, specific byline, guidelines, I don't know them. Media would do that. I don't run the demos. I participate in them, and I do what I'm told.

I: There you go.

A: So, but yeah there is actual specific guidelines that about that as as far as that goes. Which I guess would be the actual answer to the question. But as far as the participatory end of things there really isn't, you can pretty much do almost anything that you want to do as long as it doesn't violate modern law.

I: Right, of course.

A: Which means especially in our arts and crafts end of things you will find some insane stuff, and you look at it and you're like that that that's bizarre. But, they did it!

I: Right.

A: And some of the chemical concoctions especially some of the things they used to put on their skin, it's like, "Wow, lead. Let's smear lead, lead mercury on our skin. It means you get such a healthy glow." Until your skin sloughs off.

I: Yeah.

A: So, literally, there really isn't. Like I said, as long as if legal or the mundane, the the modern law, you could pretty much do it.

I: There hasn't been anyone crazy enough to do that, has there?

A: No, well. But it's like my wife, actually, she does a lot of the illumination and calligraphy, the scrollwork and stuff that we the awards that we hand out are done that

way. And she uses period pigments. So, a lot of the pigments that she uses that she grinds up for the paints and stuff.

I: Right.

A: Are horribly, horribly toxic. Do not lick anything that she does because it is mercury salts and lead sulfides and, you know, you gets the proper colors that they used but like I said it was also horribly, horribly, you know. Have you ever seen Queen Victoria? Has the bright red hair and the, and the complexion...

I: And the white face?

A:...and the white, you know, the white cake?

I: Yes, yeah.

A: That's the lead sulfide. It was horrible stuff. You know, and your skin literally it was a horrible circle cause it's like...

I: You're putting more on to cover it up.

A: Exactly. It causes the boils and blemishes and skin.

I: But, it's what they used.

A: You know, and worse than the stuff we use modernly almost.

I: Almost, yeah.

I: What equipment or resources does your group/organization require?

A: Require?

I: Whether to do research or...

A: Literally, we don't require anything. It's, it's purely participatory. The level that you put into it is totally up to you. I mean, if somebody wants to come and participate anybody's welcome to. Like I said, we want you to put forward some effort into at least trying to look medieval-esque. But, we're not going to tell somebody they can't come to an event because your garment doesn't meet the standards. We're not going to tell somebody they can't come to an event because they don't have the right kind of tent. There are groups that do that, and you know, but that's not us. That's one of the reasons we are so big and it's one of the reasons that some of the more accurate groups laugh at us. So.

I: Yeah.

A: So yeah, I mean literally there is there is no requirements. If you want to participate, great, if you want to go get more period we will help you. We won't do it for you because that costs money and you know, hey, money is money.

I: Definitely.

A: But, you know little things like I've always had an interest, and right now I'm building a forge in my backyard and you know I'm building it out of cast iron pipe and a break drum. But, I'm going to be able to make stuff that looks medieval.

I: Yeah.

A: So, and that's something I've wanted for years and years and years and I finally have the time and the money to actually do it. So, but yeah. Required? No, not at all.

I: Alright. So, and for the people that really want to go all accurate and use period accurate armor and say combat. A lot, I'm sure a lot of them make their own, but...

A: Oh, yeah.

I: Is there a like, what dealers or what stores where, what manufacturers that-

A: Locally we actually have some of the best armorers in the world, actually. We actually have two different people who do museum reproductions. I, Ice Falcon and Seer Metalworks. And both of them have done, well, like they dig they dig they like an archaeology dig they dig up some armor and pieces of it are missing. Just like the dinosaur bones, you know, they cast and sculpt.

I: Yeah, part of it's elementary and the other part is, yeah.

A: Exactly. And, like I said, so we've got some of the best armorers in the world and they've done they've done museum reproduction work and stuff, which means their stuff isn't cheap. But, they also do munition grade stuff because obviously out here on the field we're not going to be wearing museum quality gear.

I: No, no.

A: That would just be silly.

I: Yeah.

A: You know, so I mean it's munitions grade so some of the stuff they sell for for use out is it still looks fantastic, but it's not that quality basically.

I: Of course, yeah.

A: So, but yeah, like I said. Seer, Seer and Ice Falcon are both that. Windrose I forgot all about.

I: Windrose, yeah. Windrose is good.

A: So, there was actually my favorite. There was a guy up in Flagstaff that, I I don't know what happened to him. He called himself Brother Gregor for the longest time. But, he got in as a psychology student and as an elective he took metal shop class and realized he had a knack for it.

I: Oh, okay.

A: And he ended up changing his major to metallurgy. And, after a few years.

I: Metallurgy?

A: Yep.

I: Wow.

A: And, he actually rediscovered a lost techniques kind of things that that there was a Germanic tribe, for the longest time, that was their metal, their armor was it was. Most of the armor in medieval times was iron. It was cast.

I: Yeah.

A: And, which meant it broke.

I: Easily, yeah.

A: And what they used it was very high carbon, very high carbon metal that bent. That was very bizarre.

I: Like the Ulfberht sword?

A: Yeah.

I: Yeah.

A: And he figured out how they did it. And it's one of those things that where currently there's about four people in the world that know because he actually took apprentices and

taught them. But the stuff that he was selling, his gauntlets as an example, a good pair of gauntlets for finding out here you can expect to pay three or four hundred dollars for a really good pair of gauntlets. And he he was selling gauntlets starting at 1200 bucks. And he's selling them, people were buying them cause it was just top notch stuff.

I: Wow, yeah.

A: But, yeah. Sorry.

I: Yeah, supply and demand. I understand that.

I: How does this group/organization obtain its funding?

A: It's, we are a purely voluntary group. All of our money, I mean every once in a while somebody will donate something but most of our money comes from site fees when we have an event. Obviously, we have to pay for the event for the site. So, they basically estimate how many people they are expecting, then they draw up the figure. We're a non-profit group so we're not trying to turn a profit. But, anything over and above the breaking point, like I said, goes into the coffers for use for the group. And, like I said, in corporum there is itemizations on exactly what that money can and can't be used for.

I: Right.

A: So...

I: Yeah.

A: Yes. It's really not like a funding thing. At the corporate level, in order to keep the corporate end of things, the legal end of things going, there is membership dues. You can, if you want to be a member.

I: Right.

A: It's like 35 bucks a year. Which gets the publications and technically you can't hold an office or receive awards without being a paid member. But, you don't have to be a member to participate.

I: Right, okay.

A: So...

I: Is this group involved with any academic or historical institutions (i.e. museums or historical societies)?

A: Not directly. We don't, we don't really have a, because we are as open as we are we don't have any direct links with specific schools, museums, etcetera, etcetera. We've done demos at a lot of them and we will do book events, you know, with a lot of things like that, but nothing directly.

I: Right.

A: So, yeah, there's no patrons or anything. I wish, that would be great.

I: What does the future look like for this group/organization?

A: We're growing. Like I said, there was a small period where we had a little bit of member retraction. But that was economic, purely simple. And, we're growing again which is really nice. We're international. Like I said, we started from a backyard party in Berkley in '65 and now we've got chapters in Australia, Japan, Germany, Thailand, Korea. I saw a recent map, there's actually a small fighting group going in Afghanistan right now.

I: My favorite picture so far is, like two years ago, well actually when the Kiev problems started in the Ukraine, one of the protesters was out in what my friends clearly identified as SCA armor.

A: My favorite actually, the apparent sun dragon, there are, our barony on the west side of the town. Apparently our sun dragon has a claim on low Earth orbit. They sent a small, it was about two inches square silk banner. I don't know how they managed to get it but there's a picture floating around of the astronauts on the ISS holding up the sun dragon banner. So yeah, so sun sun dragon has claimed low Earth orbit. So.

I: Wow.

A: That was impressive.

I: Okay, that's going in the report.

A: There's actually, if you want, my favorite story is in you can dig it up. In the '80's there was, on the Nimitz, there was a fighting group on the Nimitz. The aircraft carrier.

I: The Nimitz?

A: Yeah.

I: Wow.

A: One of the aircraft carriers, they would hold fighter practices on the flight deck. The captain thought it was cool. And, at the, towards the end of the cold war we knew where they were, they knew where we were blah blah blah blah. And, there was one of those instances where they were scheduled for a Soviet flyover and the captain went, “Hehehehehe get your armor on and go practice.” And, so, Soviet flyover, all the guys on the deck beating the snot out of each other, having a practice and everything. And, about eight months later during one of the summit meetings the Russian, Russian ambassador walks up to the American ambassador with a manila envelope, pulls out pictures and says, “Can you explain this?”

I: Oh, my Lord. Okay.

A: Beautiful, beautiful, beautiful stuff.

I: Oh, my gosh. Wow. No, that's...

A: So, but yeah. The military tends to be people who are in the military tend to take their hobbies with them.

I: Yeah.

A: Especially, you know, the younger kids they, you know, the guys who come out and are doing this and then they enlist. And, they take their hobby with them. That's, that's how our group in Korea got started.

I: Yeah. That's...yeah, that makes sense.

A: Which is why there's a group in Afghanistan right now.

I: Now, it's just strange to me I've been doing a lot of interviews and a lot of these guys are ex-military. Or they're current military and they just happen to have...

A: Well, I think a lot of ex-military will actually use the fighting here as a PTSD treatment because it's, it's violent, it's aggressive, but it's safe.

I: Yeah.

A: You know, and it's they're out here they're with friends. They can still do the things they do, you know, but no matter what happens they're surrounded by friends. So.

I: Awesome.

A: Even the guy they're facing off with, you know, they you, it's one of the greatest thing I love about this is I can put my armor on and beat the holy hell out of my best friend and then talk about it afterwards over a beer.

I: Right.

A: Yeah.

I: You know, it's one of the, it's one of the most aerobic exercises you're ever going to see it, you get to get you know, do the whole you want to use the term ultra-violence thing then, you know. But, it's a completely safe environment.

I: There's no anger in the...

A: No, actually that's one of the big things is we actually we if you start losing your temper we actually boot you off the field.

I: Good.

A: Bad, bad juju. That's how people get hurt.

I: Absolutely, yeah.

A: We're our whole, one of our spiels is, "You're here to 'kill' your friends not to hurt them."

I: Right. There you go.

A: So.

I: There you go.

A: You know, it's great. You know, my wife fought for about five years. And that was one of the coolest things ever. Just because the whole concept; our friends thought it was a little weird. Because it's like, what do you guys do for a hobby? Oh, we beat each other with sticks. They'd stop and they'd look like, "Huh?" And we'd show them a video and they'd go, "You're weird." It's beautiful. One of our knights actually, Sir Valora, she's actually, just moved to the she's over in Twin Moons now, she had a new job moved her over to Mesa. But, she came to work one day and there was domestic abuse pamphlets sitting on her desk because the previous week she'd been showing off some of her new bruises cause one of our big camping events. She was like, "Check this out, check this out!" and one of her co-workers thought that she was being abused. Well, in actuality, she was Sir Valora, she's a knight. So, most likely, she was the one who did the abusing.

But in in in completely, it's like, "No no, I appreciate it but you've got this totally wrong, you know."

I: Yeah. Most victim's don't, aren't bragging about the...

A: So, you know, and it's a blast. A lot of people will, like will just, from the weird thing, we get a lot of people who go that think it's like a LARP or, you know, dungeons and dragons.

I: Yeah. No, that that was my, one of the things when I was getting into this. I said, "Look, I'm not interviewing LARP-esque figure peoples."

A: And, that's actually a big argument because what it boils down to in a LARP. I understandLARPs, one of my kids does LARP, but in a LARP you achieve what your character can achieve. It's all about the number, your stats, and everything like that and in this game you achieve what you can achieve. It's, you know I may take on a persona of Heinrich the Bauer, 16th century German mercenary. But, what I, what I can achieve in this, what awards I get, whether I win or lose in a fight is not based on a stat sheet. It's based on what I personally can or cannot do.

I: Right.

A: So, even though we're taking on a character, it's not a role-play kind of thing.

I: Gotcha.

A: So.

I: How might this group/organization increase its public outreach/membership size/funding?

A: Obviously, that is an ongoing question. We try to push demos a lot as a recruitment tool. However, most of the people that you talk to, like our our board actually ran a survey about two years ago on how you join, how you first heard about the SCA and what made you join.

I: Okay.

A: And it was 12 percent of the, of the survey respondents said it was through a demo. Over 70 percent was through word of mouth, friends kind of thing.

I: Right.

A: And it was, literally, it was “Hey, I do this thing. Come on, come to practice.” You know. So it’s something we talk about all the time because we want to grow, we want to be bigger, we want to you know, just cause the fact that more people that do this the more fun we have to be honest.

I: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

A: So, I, like I said we do a lot of demos just to get the word out because groups like this, like I said, are a lot like termites. If you if you don’t know that we’re there, you’re never going to see us. But, once you do know we’re there we are everywhere.

I: Right!

A: So, like I said, a lot of demos a lot, a lot of word of mouth. Constantly. That’s that’s one of the reasons I was willing to do this because hey, the more people that know about us.

I: Absolutely.

A: The bigger we get.

I: Granted, the people that are listening to this are... 3.

A: That's fine.

I: That works. All right.

A: And at some point you’re going to be having lunch over at in the union or something and go, “Dude, you got to come check out these whackos.”

I: Yeah.

A: So.

I: Any chance I get.

I: How much emphasis is put on educating the general public about the period(s) this group/organization represents?

A: As much as we can. Like I said, the demos are a big thing. One of the big, big things our huge event for this part, it’s actually the second largest event that the SCA holds is the Estrella war.

I: Is that behind the Pennsic War?

A: Yeah, it's second or third depending on who you talk to because right now it's between the Pennsic war and the Great Western in October. They're about the same size.

I: Okay.

A: So, from year to year, based on attendance, it's either second or third. So, but like they had they did school tours and we had 800 kids from various schools come through and we had tour groups kind of thing. We had people touring around and showing and showing the camps and the fighting, you know, the arts and the science competitions and the cook ovens.

I: Yeah, yeah.

A: So every chance we could get. You know, it's it's, I like doing the demos. It's, it's fun.

I: Yeah.

A: And it's cool to have people watching and then asking questions and then every once in a while you see the third person back over there that's just standing going. So.

I: The light clicks on.

A: That's about it, nothing real super specific.

I: Well, it is 8 o'clock and this is the end of the interview and thank you very much and I ramble, I apologize.

A: That's all right.

(End of Interview)

APPENDIX C

FRATELLANZA/TATTERSHALL/HEMA

DATA COLLECTED JUNE 21, 2014-JUNE 4, 2015

1. Sean Clark, Fratellanza Della Spada; June 21, 2014

Short Consent Template

STUDY TITLE

I am a graduate student under the direction of Professor Nancy Dallett in the Department/Division/ College of the School of History, Philosophy, and Religious Studies at Arizona State University. I am conducting a research study to gain a better understanding of the nature and methods of historical reenactment in the United States, especially the reenactment of Pre-Modern European history and the Middle Ages.

I am inviting your participation, which will involve sitting down and answering a number of questions concerning your personal involvement with, or your group or institution's use of, historical interpretation and reenactment. You have the right not to answer any question, and to stop participation at any time.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. If you choose not to participate or to withdraw from the study at any time, there will be no penalty. You must be 18 or older to participate in this study.

Although there is no immediate benefit to yourself or your group/institution, this study will further academic understanding of historical reenactment, as well as the reenactment process itself. There are no foreseeable risks or discomforts to your participation.

Confidentiality will be maintained by keeping your personal information on a separate and private and password-locked hard drive. Any printed or written documents shall be kept under lock and key. Your responses will be confidential. The results of this study may be used in reports, presentations, or publications but your name will not be used.

I would like to audio record or video record this interview. The interview will not be recorded without your permission. Please let me know if you do not want the interview to be recorded; you also can change your mind after the interview starts, just let me know.

If you have any questions concerning the research study, please contact the research team: Ryan Hatch at 480-433-0129 or rrhatch@asu.edu; and Nancy Dallett at nancy.dallett@asu.edu. If you have any questions about your rights as a subject/participant in this research, or if you feel you have been placed at risk, you can contact the Chair of the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board, through the ASU Office of Research Integrity and Assurance, at (480) 965-6788. Please let me know if you wish to be part of the study.

By signing below you are agreeing to be part of the study, during which you may be video or audio recorded.

Name: SEAN CLARK

Signature: 

Date: 6/21/14

By signing below you are agreeing to allow your name to be used when quoted in the study's final report.

Name: SEAN CLARK

Signature: 

Date: 6/21/14

Oral Interview-La Fratellanza della Spada
6/21/2014, 12:33 PM

Interviewer (I): Student

Interviewee (A): Founder and head instructor of La Fratellanza della Spada.

Interview Setting: Interview conducted in the Hayden Library of Arizona State University, in Tempe, Arizona. The interview was conducted on July 21, 2014, at 1:00 PM.

Affiliation with the Interviewee: The interviewee has acted as an instructor in various styles of western martial arts.

(Start of Interview)

Interviewer (I): What is the name of your group or organization?

Interviewee (A): It's called La Fratellanza della Spada, which is just a fancy Italian word for "Brotherhood of the Sword"; and since we study mainly Italian techniques, we went with an Italian name.

I: When did this group/organization begin? Is this group/organization still in operation?

A: I think we formalized in 2005 or 07...2009, I think, is when Fratellanza became incorporated.

I: Oh. Alright, so you guys are a [501c3], or I understand you were...

A: At this stage, we're just a nonprofit organization, we don't have our 501c3.

I: Okay...I was under the impression you guys were an offshoot of the Tattershall school, Jim Barrow's group, but you guys do your own...

A: No. When...in 2002, when I had gone to my first martial arts convention in Lansing, Michigan, and I came home, I wanted to involved more with strictly Western Martial Arts stuff. And at the time, the Tattershall school was...dispersed, not very organized...

I: That seems like it's still that way.

A: Yeah. And so I investigated other organizations around the country that maybe we could join and be a part of. That's when I moved to Arizona, and not being content with what was available out there, I just decided we would do our own thing. At the time, we still had Warwickshire County, Inc., which is a reenactment group, which is a 501c3.

And so we played under the umbrella of that, until, actually, we started Fratellanza, which is not a reenactment group, it's just a martial arts group.

I: Okay.

A: So, that was 2008, 2009.

I: That's good.

I: Is this group still in operation?

I: Yes, this [organization] is still in operation...I have to ask that because, I'm getting people from stuff that's shut down...have you heard of the Higgin's Museum?

A: Mm-hm. Oh yeah, I've heard of the Higgins Museum.

I: Yeah, I've interviewed-

A: Who doesn't?

I: Well, Some I've interviewed haven't. They're...peons, but...I've interviewed Andy Volpe, who worked there; Resa Wilson, etc.

A: Cool!

I: It was interesting to see what they had to say.

A: Nice.

I: And what they had out there.

A: Mm-hmm.

I: What is your role within the group/organization?

A: I'm the ringleader.[laugh]

I: There you go!

A: I'm the head cheerleader, I'm the head instructor. I'm the most...historically minded research person in our group, and my experience...in the martial art aspect, is basically by default made me that person.

I: Yeah.

A: So, I've been teaching.

I: If the position's open, someone's got to take it.

A: Yeah, somebody's got to step up to the monkeys! [laughs]

I: Yeah, step up!

[Laughing]

I: I understand that.

I: What are the mission and goals of this group/organization?

A: Our mission and goal is to explore historical treatises, take them and, based on the interpretations of other scholars, as well as ourselves...to take those interpretations, and explore them to their natural end; and try to emulate, as closely as possible, historical combat: European combat, from the fourteenth to the nineteenth centuries.

I: Okay.

A: Without hurting anyone, intentionally.

I: That's always good.

A: Yeah.

I: You don't keep your members if you do that for too long.

A: No, we don't. We try to study it in the context of the time periods: political factors, cultural factors, the costumes they wore, all of that; to take all those things into consideration in studying the swordplay, not just taking the swordplay itself out of context, or studying the swordplay without...knowing...the dynamics of where that came from.

I: So, emptying the cup and trying to fill it back up, but the way it was supposed to be. Does any of that [make sense?]...It's a Bruce Lee [thing], I hope that makes sense.

A: Kind of-sort of.

I: Yeah.

[Laughing]

I: I should stop trying to be philosophical during these things...

I: Is this group open to public membership?

A: Absolutely, sure.

I: Well, yes, it would have to be.

A: Yeah, we need people. What good is the knowledge if you don't share it?

I: Yeah.

I: What historical periods does your group/organization focus its research on?

I: Well, you covered that...13th to-

A: 14th.

I: Yes, 14th through 19th centuries.

I: What standards of accuracy or authenticity does your group/organization attempt to meet?

A: Right, we stop short of bloodshed and breaking bones. [cough] We'll take the techniques to the point of not injuring, or up to the point of injuring somebody. But we wear modern safety equipment: fencing masks, jackets; but we also wear historical type clothing like gambesons and elbow guards that are historically correct. Sometimes with period materials, sometimes with non-period materials.

I: And in the case of Michael Woodford, trying to make a...14th or 15th century-

A: Yes, historically-styled elements. As far as footwear, historically, there were flat-soled leather shoes; and we wear either that or perhaps modern wrestling shoes, which are actually very, very similar. So we try to wear gear that is close to historically correct. And whenever we're at a venue, and when we are doing something historical, we...will...wear historical clothing. So, Gambesons and doublets and hose, and whatever. So it just depends on which kit.

I: Right.

I: What methods of historical interpretation does your group/organization utilize?

A: We study historical texts. We deal with direct translations, or by modern interpreters who have taken those texts, and have translated them into interpretations.

I: For example, Fiore dei Liberi is the swordmaster we use for this group. I think it was only, what, 2005, 2007, when somebody finally printed a full translation of his manual?

A: Guy Windsor's first book was...2004-ish, I think? That wasn't the first...That wasn't a direct translation. The book he produced was [a] translation and interpretation.

I: Hmm.

A: Because at that time, we still didn't...we in Arizona just didn't have the right access to historical translations.

I: Yeah, it's hard to get to the Getty Museum from here.

A: Yeah. Sure.

A: That works.

I: What are your methods of research?

I: Again, Fiore dei Liberi, 'The Flower of Battle', and the interpretation of that. What other fight books and manuals do you utilize?

A: A little Agrippa, his rapier treaties. We study pretty much anything and everything we can get our hands on. [Jerónimo Sánchez de] Carranza, [Nicoletto] Giganti, the Spanish School, [Achille] Marozzo, so that's Italian, 16th century side sword...

I: Huh.

A: George Silver, which is...English, [Giacomo di] Grassi, [Angelo] Viggiani...so now there are a myriad of manuals available. Many have been translated, some still haven't.

I: Okay.

A: I'm currently working on a German one myself.

I: Oh?

A: It's a later period. It's Napoleonic era.

I: Oh. So it's fencing?

A: [Incoherent]...saber.

I: Oh!

A: There is no translation. [Incoherent]

I: Nice.

A: So, I found a little something that hadn't been done; so if I can get that accomplished, it's something I can give to the community at large and say, 'Okay, here's another one that we have to work with'.

I: And that's in French, right? Sorry-

A: German.

I: German, okay. So, did you have to go and learn German to do this?

A: I knew some already.

I: Okay.

A: We're talking 19th century German, so it's not quite as difficult to study as, say, the Italian Renaissance.

I: Oh, no.

A: Or...Venice. Because you have different regions, different dialects...

I: Different dialects, yeah.

A: ...so mine is going to be a bit easier to go back.

I: Yeah.

[Laughter]

A: The biggies out there, the [Nicoletto] Capoferros, the Viggiani, [Vincenzo] Saviolo, things like that, those have all been translated.

I: Okay.

A: It's come a long ways in the last 24 years.

I: That's a miracle in itself-

A: Yeah.

I: It's own way of bringing history back to life.

I: The unspoken part of historical research right here.

A: Yeah.

[Laughs]

I: What forms of public outreach and presentation does your group/organization utilize?

A: We do, or we have done, Renaissance festivals. We do highland games, demonstrations at movie premiers, Pirates of the Caribbean, or Robin Hood, stuff in the nature of Cutthroat Island.

I: Yeah.

A: Any type of venue where there's going to be swordplay or images of swordplay, we try to get into. We've ventured into 18th century reenactment events, so they do musketry and cannon fire. They may not do the martial art aspect, so we try to get into that. We demonstrate original things, rather than just going 'bang'.

I: Like standing in a line, like at the Rebels and Redcoats events earlier this year. There were a couple of guys doing the hatchet and bowie knife.

A: Yeah. Those were my tomahawks.

I: Oh yeah, that's right! That's right!

A: We've done ASU's Night of the Open Door, so historical, medieval-Renaissance history type events.

I: And you also participate here [at ASU] with the ACMRS program...

A: Yes.

I: With the travelling classrooms-

A: Travelling classroom, yeah. We do that as well.

I: And then...[incoherent]

A: Oh, and then there's Comic Con! Comic Con conventions. Comic books and science fiction conventions, we've done several of those.

I: Yeah.

A: So, demonstrations and classes. I like hands-on. I like classes, because you can actually put swords in people's hands...

I: Yep.

A: ...show them that you [the student] can do this too.

I: And there is this trust showing. They trust you, and they will follow you. That's different than a person just saying, 'Okay, yeah...'

A: That's right. The other problem with demonstrations that I see and have discovered, is that people watch the demonstrations, and they think, 'Gee, yeah, that's really cool', 'Oh, that looks fake', or 'That looks hard'; but when you actually give someone a trainer, and you get them to actually try to do it, they can actually see, 'Okay, this is kind of fun!'. Or 'This is challenging', but for some people, they like the challenge. Some people may go 'Okay, this is too hard, I just can't do it, I'm not coordinated', or they may not want to venture down that path; but other people, you put a sword in their hand for the first time, and the light comes on.

I: Yeah.

A: They go, 'This is so cool!'

I: My favorite are seeing...you remember the guy showing up with the gigantic no-dachi samurai sword.

A: Yeah.

I: Like a bunch of other guys, they assume they know how to hold the stuff. They pick up the swords, thinking they're going to be really heavy.

A: Yeah. That's not so heavy.

I: And they think, 'Wow this is actually pretty easy!'

A: They are not the iron bars people think they are.

I: No. There's this sense of...I guess it's Hollywood that puts it out that...basically, the sword gets dull to the point that you start just hitting somebody over the head.

A: Yeah. Or...I was watching Captain Blood and the Sea Hawks last night...

I: Oh, yeah!

A: So it's not historically correct. So...the weapons they're using are incorrect, everything's incorrect! But it was damn cool to look at.

I: Definitely.

A: Very flashy.

I: Yeah.

A: So, as you already know, our goal is to try, with Hollywood stuff, to show how it was really done; and that's just as cool, but it's not what you see on the screen.

I: It doesn't look as good on the stage...

A: Yeah.

I: for people who don't know whether...

A: Yeah, or if somebody gets cut on the arm, they immediately drop...We're going to work through it, you're not going to make me drop, you're still a threat.

I: Yeah, definitely.

A: So, the education part of that is fun, but then people get a sense of what it was really like and not so much the Errol Flynn-thing.

I: 'Ha-ha!', yeah.

A: Jumping around and stuff.

[Laughing]

A: Some privileges are taken.

I: Oh, definitely, definitely, but...entertainment.

A: Yeah.

[Cough]

I: What guidelines or regulations does your organization adhere to?

A: No, because we developed independently, I created it myself, I thought...our brand should be...so, were rather informal in that.

I: Hmm.

A: Some groups study just specific weapons, [but] because we cover so many centuries, there's diversity. We don't have a specific curriculum. You do dagger, then you do rapier, then you do longsword. You've got to show these sorts of proficiency.

I: Hmm.

A: We're not at a level where we do that sort of thing, but I'd like to see that, so we give a challenge for every student to come in to [it], and say, 'Okay, let's work this out. Let's push for it.' Whether if you're Fiore dagger, or whatever.

I: Hmm.

A: But, at this stage, we don't have that.

I: Right.

A: It's not required.

I: Do you see yourself doing that kind of research, somewhere down the line?

A: There are other groups that have research things in place.

I: Hmm.

A: There's some in California, there's some back east. There are organizations in the UK.

I: Oh, well, I can definitely see that.

A: We have resources in bits and places.

I: Alright.

A: We are in Arizona, after all.

I: Yeah, we make do with what we got.

A: That's right.

I: Not that-

A: It's not a hub of medieval-Renaissance history.

I: No. And that's one of the major problems with the United States is...we don't have that cultural connection or framework.

A: Right.

I: You get that a little bit on the...East Coast.

A: East Coast, much more so.

I: Yeah.

A: And Canada.

I: Canada, definitely. Even a little bit in Mexico. Arizona and New Mexico, they're just located right where-

A: Texas.

I: Yeah, Texas. It's-

A: Texas is the home of ARMA, though.

I: Yeah, ARMA, and also that Viking village. Apparently...

A: Yeah.

J: Jomsvikings are down there. I never would have thought that, but, okay!

A: You see pockets of them in Seattle.

I: Definitely, yeah.

A: There as well. So, it will grow, but...

I: Yeah. Right now...

A: Arizona, it hasn't reached there yet. No one will farm here, for lack of a better term!

I: Very dry, and thin soil.

[Laughing]

A: We are detached, which, for us, because we get into 19th century combat, and that gets into things such as pugilism, savate kickfighting...

I: Bartitsu.

A: Yeah. Bartitsu, bowie knife, tomahawk, things that you would find in the Old West. So there's another segway into other-

I: Definitely!

A: things, things we can explore as well.

I: Nothing matches you guys, especially with the stuff you've made, like the [leather] bowie knives and the tomahawks. That's a niche you can definitely fit out here.

A: Then we can appeal with more cultural attachment...

I: Yeah.

A: ...to people, who, now, are thinking...

I: 'Oh yeah, yeah! My dad had one of those'. Yeah.

A: Things such as bayonet, which is also part of these treatises...Now you're talking Civil War.

I: Yeah, and that will immediately get you in.

A: [It's] not quite martial art. It borders between just military combat and a martial art form.

I: Yeah.

A: We push some boundaries around here. [Laughs]

I: Get some buyers who are Civil War guys. I know there are a couple out here. Say, 'I can teach you how to use the bayonet', then if they prefer just messing around, talk with them; or just do the basics in the combat demonstrations.

A: Mm-hmm.

I: But...

A: Well, there's bound to be some who are interested in going the extra step and learn, and fill out their historical authenticity a bit more.

I: Hmm.

A: That's a way to do that.

A: Excellent, yeah. We've got the ground, we've just got to till it!

I: How does this group/organization obtain its funding?

A: Mostly out-of-pocket.

I: Yeah.

A: Most of it from [Mike] Woodford and myself. Contributions from our members.

I: Yeah.

A: We get stipends every now and then from state groups.

I: Oh, that's good.

A: But, it's a challenge. Always is.

I: Yes, well, this is a personally driven-

A: Yeah, we do this because we want to do it.

I: Yeah.

A: We're experts, and we want to learn. Of course, we can get stipends out of things like that, or we can ask groups for that.

I: Right.

A: We're educational, and the staple of education in Arizona...[Incoherent]...

I: Yeah.

A: We're always looking for a patron. [Laughs]

I: That'd be nice, yeah. Da Vinci had a patron for his art, but that meant he had to make a ton of weapons.

A: Yeah. Same choice.

I: Yep.

I: Is this group involved with any academic or historical institutions (i.e. museums or historical societies)?

I: As previously stated, you're involved with ASU. Do you guys work with any other groups, like, say, the Irish Cultural Center?

A: Yeah, we've been with the Irish Cultural Center, the Caledonian Society...the organization that runs both of the in Flagstaff. I forget their names.

I: Hmm. I've always heard that it's either Scot or Caledonian. I've never heard...

A: Northern Arizona...I don't know...

[Laughing]

I: It's out there, somewhere.

A: They have us for historical, for whatever it is they need. They're trying to promote and start a practical school setup.

I: That's good, yeah.

I: What does the future look like for this group/organization?

A: The future of Fratellanza della Spada...that's a good question.

I: Hmm.

A: Let me think on this.

[Laughs]

I: Like I said, Murphy's law. Just be ready for anything.

A: Yeah. We will continue to do public events as we've done, reach out to the community, try to interest more people in what we do.

I: Mm-hmm.

A: Try to get more involved in other aspects of historical combat I might be interested in. I won't start a [training] salon anytime soon, but I would want to.

I: Well, that would be nice.

A: The marketing scheme I've been going for tends to be younger, not so affluent, so financially they can't necessarily buy anything, but dues are open, so let's get them part of the...

I: Yeah.

A: ...the very, very bare thing. Like their gym membership fee.

I: Yeah.

A: Martial arts studios have their plans

I: Just like five or seven dollars a class.

A: True.

I: Yeah.

A: But the way we'd do it, actually, would be a lot more like workshops.

I: Oh.

A: Yeah, workshops. So, once a month, we give this for or five hour class, and we...we try to...If I was at, say, ASU, the [incoherent]...different places, different people, just show up and say, 'Look, we know you're not necessarily martial artists, so you don't need to make a commitment to be there every week...

I: Yeah.

A: But they could show up and actually learn something about what we're doing. So, we want workshops.

I: Excellent. Workshops are good. I like workshops.

A: That will be good for everyone. For the students...

I: Yeah, they'll...

A: Show up, do their thing, Move on from there.

I: Yeah, especially students who don't hold up their end.

A: Yeah.

[Laughing]

I: How much emphasis is put on educating the general public about the period(s) this group/organization represents?

A: I teach a class that's on early dussack.

I: Yeah.

A: I make sure I explain to them what a dussack is, [that] it's a representation of a messer, what's a messer, why they fight with...these things, why was it popular in solaizes at that time in Germany, [etc.]? So, very much so giving you the background for what we're

studying is, where it came from, and then be able to move on from there. So at least they know what the heck they're fighting with.

I: Yeah, because, the dussack, that's...people are going to have questions about that, and they'll ask 'Well, what's this weapon supposed to be?'

A: Yeah, exactly.

I: All that you can say is, 'It's a number of things.' [laughs]

A: Yeah. It was the most popular weapon in fencing solaize at the time, throughout Germany.

I: Because...I'm sure it was a pretty adaptable thing. The techniques you used for that could be utilized for a lot of different things.

A: Yeah. Well in [Joaquin] Meyer's system, the Meyer dussack, the Meyer longsword, the Meyer rapier, they're all built on the same methodology. But it just became popular light weight fencing gear, to the Victorian [era]. Everybody knew how to fence. The just did.

I: Pretty much, yeah.

A: So, if you were Bohemian, and you were noble, and you went to your solaize, you had better know yourself. This is whay you did.

I: Okay.

A: You know American football?

I: Yeah.

A: If you're American, you know football.

I: Yeah.

A: Because it's a cultural thing.

I: Yeah, or better yet, just acknowledge the basic terminology.

A: You get it right.

I: Okay, this is what they mean when they say, 'they're gonna move the chains'.

A: Yeah, very much. In the classes themselves, we put a little history of whatever that particular weapon style is.

I: Excellent. So, historical context is always important.

A: Very much, yeah.

I: Excellent. I think that is the end of the questions, so this is the end of the interview. Thank you...for coming out.

A: Thank you.

I: And that will be it. Thanks.

(End of Interview)

2. Jim Barrows, Tattershall School of Defense/HEMA; June 28, 2014

Short Consent Template

STUDY TITLE

I am a graduate student under the direction of Professor Nancy Dallett in the Department/Division/ College of the School of History, Philosophy, and Religious Studies at Arizona State University. I am conducting a research study to gain a better understanding of the nature and methods of historical reenactment in the United States, especially the reenactment of Pre-Modern European history and the Middle Ages.

I am inviting your participation, which will involve sitting down and answering a number of questions concerning your personal involvement with, or your group or institution's use of, historical interpretation and reenactment. You have the right not to answer any question, and to stop participation at any time.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. If you choose not to participate or to withdraw from the study at any time, there will be no penalty. You must be 18 or older to participate in this study.

Although there is no immediate benefit to yourself or your group/institution, this study will further academic understanding of historical reenactment, as well as the reenactment process itself. There are no foreseeable risks or discomforts to your participation.

Confidentiality will be maintained by keeping your personal information on a separate and private and password-locked hard drive. Any printed or written documents shall be kept under lock and key. Your responses will be confidential. The results of this study may be used in reports, presentations, or publications but your name will not be used.

I would like to audio record or video record this interview. The interview will not be recorded without your permission. Please let me know if you do not want the interview to be recorded; you also can change your mind after the interview starts, just let me know.

If you have any questions concerning the research study, please contact the research team: Ryan Hatch at 480-433-0129 or rhatch@asu.edu; and Nancy Dallett at nancy.dallett@asu.edu. If you have any questions about your rights as a subject/participant in this research, or if you feel you have been placed at risk, you can contact the Chair of the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board, through the ASU Office of Research Integrity and Assurance, at (480) 965-6788. Please let me know if you wish to be part of the study.

By signing below you are agreeing to be part of the study, during which you may be video or audio recorded.

Name: Jim Barrows

Signature: Jim Barrows

Date: 6-28-2014

By signing below you are agreeing to allow your name to be used when quoted in the study's final report.

Name:

Signature: Jim Barrows

Date: 6/28/2014

Oral Interview-Tattershall School of Defense/HEMA Alliance

6/28/2014, 1:16 PM

Interviewer (I): Student

Interviewee (A): Member of Tattershall School of Defense and the Phoenix Society of Western Martial Arts (HEMA Alliance)

Interview Setting: Interview conducted in Hob Nob's coffee shop and restaurant in Phoenix, Arizona. The interview was conducted on June 28, 2014, at 1:16 PM.

Affiliation with the Interviewee: The interviewee has acted as an instructor in various styles of western martial arts.

(Start of Interview)

Interviewer (I): What is the name of your group/organization?

Interviewee (A): I'm with Tattershall School of Defense.

I: Okay.

A: And also the HEMA Alliance. HEMA stands for Historical European Martial Arts.

I: Cool.

I: When did this group/organization begin? Is this group/organization still in operation?

A: That's a really good question. Umm...early nineties?

I: Okay. Yeah, that sounds about right. That's when most of them started up, right?

A: A lot of groups started. That's when we started getting the manuals translated from Italian. Those were some of the first manuals that were found, and then some started translating them from the Italian.

I: Sounds good. And, yes this group is still in operation.

A: Yes.

I: So we can [move on].

I: What is your role within the group/organization?

A: I teach and fight. I'm not officially an instructor with Tattershall at the moment. When I started, there wasn't an official instructor position, and now there is. And I just

haven't...the leaders are still trying to figure out what the requirements are for that; but I've been teaching and practicing swordplay since 1994. I started with the Society for Creative Anachronism, the SCA, fighting [with] rattan, before moving in 2006-2005, sometime in there, to work on actually the manuals...

I: Okay.

A: ...reading the manuals, and learning what was in them, and working actually with steel.

I: Excellent. Okay.

I: What are the mission and goals of this group/organization?

A: Tattershall is research and education on historical swordsmanship. HEMA Alliance is more about creating a group of groups essentially, and promoting HEMA as a martial art. And that promotion does include...that education includes research, scholarly research, as well as teaching and fighting and tournaments, and the whole thing.

I: Okay.

I: Is this group open to public membership?

A: Yes. Both of them are.

I: Excellent.

I: What historical periods does your group/organization focus its research on?

A: Primarily, I focus on 1400's Italian swordsmanship, up to about 1650.

I: Okay.

A: Tattershall itself, it depends on which instructor, and who you're talking to.

I: Oh, yeah.

A: So there there a lot of different focuses. Some people focus entirely on rapier, some people entirely on Bolongese, so it just kind of depends. It's the same with the HEMA Alliance.

I: Oh, yeah.

A: So basically, if you really wanted to nail down dates, anything from about 1200 to 1800.

I: That sounds about right.

I: What standards of accuracy or authenticity does your group/organization attempt to meet?

A: It depends on the instructor. As organizations, because we're attempting to interpret a manual without any interaction with the author, or anybody who knew the author, so nothing's been handed down. In a lot of cases, there's a consensus on what certain things mean, and a way to interpret certain books; but there's also a lot of room for personal bias, and it's really hard to come down to hard-fast fact. Personally, I try to look as closely to the manuals as possible, and I try to fight as closely to the manuals as possible. My purpose in doing that is, in a lot of cases I think they drew these accurately as they could...

I: Yeah.

A: ...as opposed to the style of art at the time. I think there was a difference between the way these guys were drawing, and the way the artists would draw. They were drawing for a purpose and to teach. And I think that once you do that enough and you understand it, then you begin to build on that as a foundation, and find the things that they forgot to teach in the manuals, because they thought it was obvious or because they thought, 'Why would you ever need to learn this?'

I: Right, it's just common sense, why is it here?

A: Right. For instance, why would you ever write a manual on how to push an elevator button?

I: That's a good point.

A: Right? But, if the technology for operating an elevator changes significantly in ten thousand years, they may wonder what the little decorations are. Sometimes they're lit up, sometimes they're not.

I: Yeah.

A: So, there's that issue. And then there's the issue of what aren't they teaching because they don't want people learning from a book, and calling themselves master. They're really using the books as an advertising tool.

I: That's true.

A: And so we don't really know...we only know what they tell us the purpose of writing the book is.

I: Ah.

A: In some cases, you write a book today, and suddenly you become famous.

I: That's true.

A: You teach one seminar at IBM, and now you've taught IBM, right?

I: [laughs]

A: Teach a small class of policemen, and now you've taught the cops. And all of a sudden, you have a...

I: It's that resume. You've got to build it up. It's got to look good.

A: Right.

I: [laughs]

A: And that's a human trait.

I: Of course.

A: And so...not saying it's a good thing, bad thing, but it is a thing.

I: Yeah.

A: And so we don't know any of that, and so I think you have to start with the base, and the base you have to work with is the books.

I: Right.

A: So we focus on the books. We fight the way they tell us to fight, and then once you begin to understand that, you can begin to move forward from that, and find the things that...weren't being found.

I: Cool.

I: What methods of historical interpretation does your group/organization utilize?

A: [skipped]

I: What sources do you utilize for your research?

A: I use Fiore, all four manuals. So we have the Getty, which is at the Getty Museum, the Santi Dosi, which is with the Santi Dosi family, and I forget the other two off the top of my head; but it's all from the same author. All four books were written at different times, or rewritten at four different times. We believe that the Getty, being the oldest, is probably the closest to being the original, with the others being rewrites as time goes on.

I: Okay, Yeah.

A: So we still see changes in the styles of the art, from prose to rhyming couplets. So yeah, it changes based on what they're trying to do with the book, but it's all the same material.

I: That's a good point.

A: He [Fiore] wrote in the late 1300's, early 1400's, primarily about longsword. That's what most people use his manual for; but he starts with wrestling, and moves forward all the way to armored combat.

I: Yeah, that's true, huh.

A: So he covers spears and poleaxes as well.

I: And rondel as well.

A: Yeah. So yeah, wrestling and dagger, sword in one hand, sword in two hands, spear, then...well, armored sword in two hands, and then spear, poleaxe, and mounted combat.

I: And then there was some weapon, I can't think of it; and it looks...almost looks like a duster or something; and they're using it, and it shoots out-

A: Oh, no, that's...[laughs]He writes...the Getty manual is dedicated to the Duke of Urbino, and he says now...essentially paraphrasing here, he says, "Great duke, I know you would never do this, but some people in tournament have been known to do this awful trick," and he goes into detail about how to make a powder that will burn the eyes, and cause you to sneeze, and some other rather nasty effects. And you put it in your poleaxe; and when you turn your poleaxe, the head is hollow, and it's basically punctured like a salt shaker. So when you hit, and they go to block...

I: That thing comes-

A: All that powder comes right into their face, causing them to be blinded, sneeze. And it just really...

I: That's like the dirtiest of the dirty, right there.

A: That's pretty much why he says, "I know you have way to much honor to do this..." We don't know if he's doing this tongue-in-cheek, but he does put that in the manual.

I: Nice, alright. Well, thanks for explaining that.

I: What are your methods of research?

[answered in previous questions]

I: What forms of public outreach and presentation does your group/organization utilize?

A: Well, we teach at walk-right-in conventions, science fiction...we've had it...talked to some of the guys that fought at Comic Con, I've taught at Comic Con locally. We had just got off of Combat Con in Las Vegas just a couple of weeks ago, and then we practice in parks. People will contact us off the internet, and then have us come in and do stuff...So, a wide variety of stuff.

I: What equipment or resources does your group/organization require?

A: A mix of modern...actually, it's almost all modern. We don't really use antique weapons, although we use weapons that are based on those antiques, so that they handle the same. And then for armor, or safety gear really. It's really not so much about armor, it's about safety gear. Absolute Force makes really nice stuff. Some people use custom made stuff, based on certain patterns. My personal safety gear is a gambeson, based on an historical piece. It's six layers of linen, which is very historical. It gives me a great deal of protection. But a lot of people are using more modern, so that they're lighter, they move better and they breathe better. They work better in a lot of ways because we do have material that is better at dispersing force across the body.

I: And then it would also be cheaper too, some of the more modern stuff than getting someone to...

A: Yeah, I can get you a full kit for \$1,500 to \$2,000 in steel, and I can get you a full kit of modern fencing gear for probably \$500. So yeah, it's cheaper, but it depends on the price of steel, and the price of steel has gone way up.

I: That's true, huh.

A: So if the price of steel goes down, then it can become cheaper; but it's still hot, it still doesn't move very well, but it still does the best job of protection.

I: Excellent.

I: How does this group/organization obtain its funding?

A: We do primarily from dues. That's the way most of the schools are working right now for the HEMA Alliance. Some, like myself, I personally teach for free out of my back yard, and then I pay dues to HEMA Alliance and Tattershall.

I: Okay.

A: So, most schools do that.

I: That makes sense. And the people that aren't really a part of that really appreciate the free teaching.

I: Is this group involved with any academic or historical institutions (i.e. museums or historical societies)?

A: Not officially. I know that a lot of people have contacts; but really most of the time, when we walk into a museum, it makes us cringe, mostly because they're not displaying the armor correctly.

I: Hmm!

A: They're getting better about that...

I: Yeah.

A: ...but until you put the armor on, or try to figure out how to put it on, you don't really understand how to strap it.

I: That's true.

A: And I don't mean just like how to put it on, but actually wear it and use it, figure out how it works. So, while a suit may be displayed correctly, in terms of how the pieces worked, same time, same place...

I: [Incoherent]

A:...Yeah. The way that it's mounted as if it's on a body is not correct.

I: Hmm.

A: In terms of books, which is our primary interest...armorers are really interested in going to a museum, and looking at how the armor is made.

I: Right.

A: And so, in that case, armorers will develop relationships with museums, so that they can see the backside of the armor.

I: Oh?

A: the front side is beautiful, but the backside tells where all the mounting points are.

I: Oh! That's...

A: The backside tells us how they meant it. It tells us how would that being...because the pretty, shiny outside, all that stuff's been buffed away, so you can't see the hammer marks. You can't see all the things that an armorer would be interested in, but most importantly, you can't see the mounting points in a lot of cases, and that's what we're looking for. In terms of steel, I know that some of the guys who are making our training swords have relationships with museums, so that they can pick up, and handle, and feel, and measure the distinct temper. They can measure how thick the blades are, and how they taper, in all three dimensions, how they feel and where the balance points are. And they'll do that to help improve their own product, to make it work more practical.

I: Okay. Hadn't thought of it that way.

A: But other than that, I would rather have a relationship with a library of ancient manuscripts than with a museum.

I: That's a good point.

I: What does the future look like for this group/organization?

A: Tattershall itself, I don't know how much longer it's going to be. HEMA is the future. I mean, HEMA Alliance is the future. It's growing.

A: Yeah.

A: We get more and more interested, more and more often. Shows like Game of Thrones don't hurt.

I: Yeah. [laughing]

A: Whenever you have a sword-and-sorcery movie, a good sword-and-sorcery movie come out, we get an influx of people who are interested. Sometimes they are people who stick around, sometimes they don't; but we're getting more and more recognition as a martial art, and there's a reason we call it HEMA, Historical European, is for a long time we didn't think any of those arts existed, and quite frankly, they didn't. It wasn't until people started picking up manuals and going, 'Okay, what does this mean?', and interpreting the manuals, and then trying to spar with them...

I: Hmm.

A: ...that we started to recreate the tradition. And this is probably the second...this is actually the second Renaissance of historical European martial arts. The second one started in the late 1800's, early 1900's.

I: Oh.

A: And unfortunately [for] the pioneers at that time, World War I happened.

I: Yeah, that is-

A: They were all pretty much killed.

I: I can see why-

A: So, Yeah.

I: [Laughs]

A: That was not good. We lost a lot of men.

I: Yeah.

A: On both sides. It was a meat grinder, and so a lot of those people weren't around; and so the manuals were lost again, so to speak, and it wasn't until the 1980's and 90's where things started to pick up. Late eighties, especially early nineties. We started getting manuals and started to see a second renaissance. Now, you could count the SCA, which started in the late sixties...

I: Yeah.

A: as part of that. I don't know if we would have [had] as a big an entrance without that influence.

I: That is true.

A: SCA is a huge worldwide organization. The HEMA world is filled with SCA folk. So depending on how you want to look at it, we're definitely in the second renaissance of swordplay. The question is, do you want to market it as a late sixties, with the creation of the SCA, or do you want to start it in the late eighties and early nineties when we started getting manuals and working from manuals?

I: Right.

A: So, [it] depends on where you want to look at it. But yeah, there's a huge future. The conventions and cons are getting bigger.

I: Yeah.

A: The internet is a huge, huge help with that. It's very, very hard to find small groups of people, and it makes that very, very easy.

I: Nice.

I: How might this group/organization increase its public outreach/membership size/funding?

A: We need to have a better organization in terms of people willing to do stuff.

I: Hmm.

A: That's kind of our big achilles heel right now. Like any business, even though we're not in this for profit, we need to market. We need to get our names out there, we need to show people what we're about. Right now, we either get...we're compared to Olympic fencing, which we're not in any place to...

I: No, no.

A: Oh, or your LARPer's! And...yeah, that's not it either.

I: Just yell 'lightning bolt!' as you're getting hit in the head...

A: Yeah, yeah.

I: [Laughs]

A: So, we just need to do more marketing, do more outreach. We need to do more demos. We need to make sure the people know what they're looking at...

I: Hmm.

A: ...when they see the demos, we're not just up here swinging swords. We actually have a clue.

I: Yeah.

A: And that's the hard part, because...yeah, there's no tradition, but that doesn't mean we don't know what we're doing, either.

I: Yeah.

A: So...

I: Well, the tradition has got to start somewhere.

A: You're right. Again.

I: Right here.

A: Yeah.

I: Yeah.

I: How much emphasis is put on educating the general public about the period(s) this group/organization represents?

A: Not a lot.

I: Not a lot?

A: One, the general public, as a whole, has no interest in it, right?

I: True.

A: If we were teaching something that had more practical self defense application, we'd have a bigger audience.

I: Yeah.

A: So, the general public, as a whole, we don't need to be talking to. We need to find that specific subset, that's crazy enough to pick up a piece of steel and start swinging it at somebody.

I: Hmm.

A: For fun and entertainment, in the good way.

I: Yeah.

A: [Laughs]

I: We can do it. There's a lot of people who want to hit some more stuff; it's just, do they want to go through the, 'Okay, hit it this way when you do it'.

A: Yeah.

I: Okay, I think that's all the questions so far.

A: Okay.

I: Yeah, that's it. It is 1:37 [p.m.], and this is the end.

(End of interview)

3. Mike Woodford, Fratellanza della Spada; July 6, 2014

Short Consent Template

STUDY TITLE

I am a graduate student under the direction of Professor Nancy Dallett in the Department/Division/ College of the School of History, Philosophy, and Religious Studies at Arizona State University. I am conducting a research study to gain a better understanding of the nature and methods of historical reenactment in the United States, especially the reenactment of Pre-Modern European history and the Middle Ages.

I am inviting your participation, which will involve sitting down and answering a number of questions concerning your personal involvement with, or your group or institution's use of, historical interpretation and reenactment. You have the right not to answer any question, and to stop participation at any time.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. If you choose not to participate or to withdraw from the study at any time, there will be no penalty. You must be 18 or older to participate in this study.

Although there is no immediate benefit to yourself or your group/institution, this study will further academic understanding of historical reenactment, as well as the reenactment process itself. There are no foreseeable risks or discomforts to your participation.

Confidentiality will be maintained by keeping your personal information on a separate and private and password-locked hard drive. Any printed or written documents shall be kept under lock and key. Your responses will be confidential. The results of this study may be used in reports, presentations, or publications but your name will not be used.

I would like to audio record or video record this interview. The interview will not be recorded without your permission. Please let me know if you do not want the interview to be recorded; you also can change your mind after the interview starts, just let me know.

If you have any questions concerning the research study, please contact the research team: Ryan Hatch at 480-433-0129 or rrhatch@asu.edu; and Nancy Dallett at nancy.dallett@asu.edu. If you have any questions about your rights as a subject/participant in this research, or if you feel you have been placed at risk, you can contact the Chair of the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board, through the ASU Office of Research Integrity and Assurance, at (480) 965-6788. Please let me know if you wish to be part of the study.

By signing below you are agreeing to be part of the study, during which you may be video or audio recorded.

Name: *Michael Woodford*

Signature: *Michael Woodford*

Date: *7/11/2014*

By signing below you are agreeing to allow your name to be used when quoted in the study's final report.

Name: *Michael Woodford*

Signature: *Michael Woodford*

Date: *7/11/2014*

Oral Interview-La Fratellanza della Spada

7/6/2014, 2:56 PM

Interviewer (I): Student

Interviewee (A): Instructor and member of La Fratellanza della Spada.

Interview Setting: Interview conducted in the Hayden Library of Arizona State University, in Tempe, Arizona. The interview was conducted on July 6, 2014, at 2:56 PM.

Affiliation with the interviewee: The interviewee has acted as an instructor in various styles of western martial arts.

(Start of Interview)

Interviewer (I): What is the name of your group or organization?

Interviewee (A): It's Fratellanza della Spada.

I: Alright.

A: A western martial arts group, based in the Phoenix area.

I: Okay.

I: When did this group/organization begin? Is this group/organization still in operation?

A: Well, it's been a gradual process. It was, to some extent, a spinoff of Fratellanza Triad organization, a company inc. That occurred about four to five years ago. Sean Clark, who was the president of it, wanted a...this will take a while to explain...a western martial arts verses a form of recreation.

I: Yeah.

A: Some of the conferences have a certain wariness about historical recreation groups, so we wanted an independent organization that was strictly western martial arts, historical European martial arts.

I: Okay. And it is still in operation, so we've got that covered...

I: What is your role within the group/organization?

A: Well, I'm a pundit. I've...I usually attend the practices and act as treasurer. I help organize the scheduling and the practices, and I make protective gear for that.

I: Hmm.

A: Usually historically accurate....

I: What are the mission and goals of this group/organization?

A: It's an educational organization. It recreates historic period fencing, that's a brief description of it. It plays on, and develops skill, in martial arts forms, primarily in Western Europe...

I: Alright.

A: ...and I suppose the European world, from the earliest manuscripts, from perhaps the 13th, maybe the 14th, century. That would be basic broadsword and buckler, all the way up to the nineteenth century forms. Nineteenth century advanced rapiers, small swords, things like that. The bulk of the instruction tends to be either longsword and rapier, and there is also some Scottish Highland broadsword. What is taught is not really what I do down there. I provide the equipment, and basically the logistics of it, and I handle the finances of it. I don't consider myself an expert in the history of it.

I: Yeah.

A: I'm more of a hardware and novelty specialist.

I: That's good.

A: But I know enough about the history, whether it's the fisher net, or basic [things].

I: Okay.

A: But dussacks and messers, those are lesser known weapons, that's something I leave to Sean.

I: I already interviewed him about two weeks ago.

A: Oh, okay. Cool.

I: These are pretty much the same questions, but....

I: Is this group open to public membership?

A: [Skipped]

I: What historical periods does your group/organization focus its research on?

I: You said the 13th century-

A: Yeah, that's to some extent, not the main emphasis. I would say that most of it tends to be from around the early longsword, which would be 1380...

I: Yeah.

A:...some side sword, but then to rapier, then side sword. Then, highland broadsword. There's even been some Jacobite [re]construction with bayonets, lochlaber axes, and all that.

I: Yeah.

A: So that would be somewhere around 1740. There is a Holmes-ian English...

I: Bartitsu.

A:...yes, that goes up to 19th century England.

I: That's right.

A: And I think that compliments them, gives them an earlier...spadroon, which is around 1800, and smallsword, around 1830.

I: Okay.

I: What standards of accuracy or authenticity does your group/organization attempt to meet?

A:

I: What methods of historical interpretation does your group/organization utilize?

A: Well, we don't do translations, other organizations have done that...There are fechtbuchs, fighting books, and Sean and other instructors, I'm not really an instructor, unless there's a vacancy or something like that. They familiarize themselves with the techniques in the fighting manuals, and also our own experimental archaeology. It's not tournament oriented. It's designed to be technique oriented, so that you don't unnecessarily distort it. You can concentrate on what the technique is.

I: Right, okay. Sean said he's translating something right now, about Napoleonic saber, something from that era. Fencing saber, or infantry saber.

A: Oh! I wasn't really aware of that. Translating it from what language to what language?

I: I believe French to English. Or...it was either French or German.

A: Oh, okay.

I: I'd ask him about it the next time you see him.

A: Alright.

I: What sources do you utilize for your research?

A: Oh, God. Sean has all the knowledge. I should know these sources better. Fiore dei Liberi for longsword, and [Johannes] Lichtenauer for longsword, and [Ridolfo] Capo

Ferro for rapier. There's [Joachim] Meyer for longsword, and then there's cavalry saber, but I don't know the names of all of them.

I: Right.

A: But something like that...I think I've told you that my role is to tool people out. This could be dangerous.

I: Yeah! [laughs]

A: I have my whole finger over here, that fingernail was removed. [Indicating finger wounded during a sparring session with steel weaponry].

I: Yeah, is that doing better?

A: Yeah, it's normal for me. So I'm working on tools to make their gauntlets better than before.

I: Yeah.

A: So that's what I concentrate on. So, if you were quizzing me on sources, I know Fiore dei Liberi.

I: That's alright.

A: But that's about it.

I: You mentioned Fiore and Capo Ferro, so that's good enough.

[laughs]

I: What are your methods of research?

I: Describe some of the metal work that you do as part of your research. What sources do you [use]? Like the Codex Wallenstein, when you're looking to design the armor?

A: Well, some of it now. When I started doing it in the seventies, there was really just photographs.

I: Hmm.

A: Some, later, when people were actually able to go to museums. Now, in the seventies, I actually went to the Massachusetts museums and the collections; and in the eighties, I was able to buy a fragment from the Tower of London. I have some of that in my personal collection. You're able to see the upper arm harness, and how that works.

I: Oh, the vambrace!

A: Yes, and things like that. It's much thinner, lighter, better carbon steel. Now, gradually, we've been able to examine period specimens, and see how they function.

Much of it has been trial and error, making our own and seeing how that works. Sometimes, we actually procure a bout of serious historical specimens, and we act accordingly.

I: Nice.

A: That's a short explanation, but it's definitely a process.

I: Yeah, and it's paying off.

I: What forms of public outreach and presentation does your group/organization utilize?

A: We participate in public events, such as...sometimes Renaissance festivals, but [also] at [the] highland games. We were at [Phoenix] Comic Con...

I: Yeah. [Laughs]

A: There was a demonstration out there...with other martial arts groups. Primarily it's public gatherings.

I: Yeah. Okay.

A: And other groups with similar themes.

I: Right. And any place where a bunch of people come together, and it's not your normal, say, faire. I don't want to say this is abnormal, but...

A: [laughs]

I: There's cause and reason for people to look at this and go, 'Oh hey, look at this' too, right? Okay.

I: What guidelines or regulations do you organization adhere to?

A: It really hasn't done much because it's a small organization, and we were in it to centralize the customs of the western martial arts mainstream. So, there are some overlaps, but there is a waiver.

I: Oh, yeah.

A: And then the articles of a corporation. Beyond that, no, it's fairly informal.

I: Huh. Alright.

I: What equipment or resources does your group/organization require?

A: Really, only some personal items like a cup. Now, the protection, we provide the body a great deal of needed equipment.

I: Yeah.

A: So, really, very little. I do a little bit of business by making padded equipment. Like all productions, stitching is to...on production.

I: Hmm.

A: The gambesons are designed by us, and produced by outside vendors. But only about ten of those have ever been used.

I: Yeah. Talking about outside vendors, what are some of the major ones that people getting into experimental archaeology and Western Martial Arts, and people in Fratellanza would use?

A: Well, I'm familiar with Windrose Armoury...

I: Windrose, okay.

A: That tended to be, used to be SCA, Society for Creative Anachronism, more than a little, but it's branched out, with western martial arts support. On weapons, they're just a loose thing.

I: Hmm.

A: And Sean could probably tell you more about the different vendors for that. Darksword Armories, I will indicate them as wholesale buyers, I'd say they're pretty good.

I: Oh, nice.

A: And in terms of other sources of armor...The armor breaks down into two categories: there's sport for WMA, protective equipment; and then there's recreation...

I: Oh.

A:...WMA equipment. Windrose, for example, is recreation, with the goal to give us some new level of authenticity.

I: Yeah.

A: Another revival...which is...the authenticity of one or the other.

I: Yeah.

A: I want to say it's Speedy's or something like that...

I: Yeah, it's...

A: So, that's what's up.

I: How does this group/organization obtain its funding?

A: Essentially, there hadn't been any membership fee yet. It's been contributions, basically "pass the hat", at events. And I provide most of it, and then Sean...The principle expense was the Castle Sports [Center].

I: Yeah. That worked out really well.

A: Yeah.

I: Blessing and a curse at the same time. [Laughing]

I: Is this group involved with any academic or historical institutions (i.e. museums or historical societies)?

A: well, yeah the Arizona [Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies], that's the only one. Otherwise, it's associated with Warwickshire County.

I: Right.

A: That's the Fratellanza group. That's really about it.

I: Is Warwickshire County still around, or is that dead?

A: It's neither. We have the one event a year.

I: Oh.

A: It's infrequent. It's essentially two events a Year.

I: Okay.

A: A lot of other organizations are like that.

I: That's true. Huh.

A: They just partake in two events a year.

I: Hadn't considered that, yeah.

I: What does the future look like for this group/organization?

A: Well, in the global metro...it depends on what you want to look at, from the instructor's standpoint, or the organization's standpoint. The principle group now, in the valley...you probably discussed this with Sean...there used to be Tattershall...

I: That's right.

A: ...but Tattershall's not very active now.

I: Nope. You've got Jim [Barrows], and that's about it. [laughs]

A: Yeah, Because Jonathan Barber, they were meeting in at the church in Mesa, but now that's gone.

I: That's gone, yeah.

A: That avenue's gone. And then the HEMA Alliance, their president is local.

I: That's right, yeah.

A: He lives up in Phoenix, and teaches at a high school. So, that...they built up a rapport with the Irish Cultural Center.

I: That's right.

A: Originally, our group actually started indoor practices.

I: Hmm.

A: In Arizona. We were the first ones to have indoor practices.

I: Oh, okay.

A: We rented the YMCA, got a room there, and that is, that's still usable.

I: Yeah.

A: And we were there for a little over a year, and then they wanted to reschedule us around their summer events, so we decided to go to Castle Sports, until we were told they sold it. We were introduced to inside practice, and [then] it was actually HEMA Alliance. The third existing, that's the Society for Creative Anachronism, cutting [and thrusting] shield and sword.

I: Yeah.

A: I want to include the rattan, in the same genre. But the cut-and-thrust thing is pretty authenticity oriented. It's old school, in that it still stays relevant in their practices. It's primarily in the Metro Phoenix area, at Encanto Park.

I: Okay.

A: And usually on Wednesday nights, at Encanto Park. In the summer, it's Tuesday nights, these things usually go...They tend to do a lot of side sword.

I: That's right, yeah.

A: And some longsword. For some reason, WMA, we get called WMA along with the Society for Creative Anachronism, and that's probably because of Bill Wilson in Flagstaff. He was one of the founders of it, and he liked doing side sword. And so, the SCA's is much longer, and that's the crucible of the cut and thrust segment. Then there's the rapier segment. Most of the steel in the SCA is big rapier.

I: Right.

A: Because there's not enough protective equipment.

I: And is that the same for Adrian Empire?

A: Oh, that's a whole other...I hadn't included Adrian.

I: Hmm.

A: Adria's on the fringe of WMA.

I: Oh, okay.

A: Because it...Sean can tell you more about that. Steel is at the center of its political structure, just like rattan is at the center of the SCA's political structure.

I: Right.

A: Now, Adrian Empire does more than just armored combat...It has arts tournaments. But it still elects its leaderships by...they call them wars.

I: Hmm.

A: Just like in the SCA, a lot of the leadership is chosen with the peerage system called "battle of peers".

I: Yeah, I've seen it a couple of times. [laughs]

A: So, there's rattan, and then the cut & thrust thing, you can't win any political position...

I: Right. No, it's-

A:...by violence...Whereas in Adrian empire, things tend to be more politically motivated, and so they're interested in winning by their rules. To give you an example, when I was at a HEMA Alliance sponsored event in Las Vegas three weeks ago, I was one of only four combatants in our group, Fratellanza...

I: Right.

A:...and unlike...doing that authentically is difficult, it's challenging. In the SCA match, they would have their Gothic armor. In an Adrian match, there are exceptions. The basic rules are essentially, bang, you're dead. If I hit you in the head once with a longsword, or even just a simple broadsword, you're supposedly, in quotes, your supposedly...Dead!

I: Yeah (Laughs). Yeah.

A: You're supposed to fall down dead. The opposite is what I was doing, which was two minutes of just full contact, and the judges kind of guess.

I: Right.

A: But no thrusting is allowed!

I: Oh.

A: When two people in Gothic suits, because we were wearing Gothic suits, a full suits of armor, are trying to go at it with each other with just a longsword...

I: Mm-hmm.

A:...cutting at their head, the helmet is massive, that's not how you normally win.

I: No.

A: You assume you can't kill them in one blow.

I: Yep.

A: The big boys start top swording, there's considerable instances of crossing the blade.

I: That's right.

A: That's the problem with when you're thrusting, which you're going to learn. So I tried to have a warrior's chainmail vestments to protect this area here [under the armpit]. I got one in, and it had a slicing point that someone had banged for me. Gradually, the equipment will catch up, so we will be able to do authentic armored combat.

I: Right.

A: But Adria, because they have those other problems, and they're not as interested in historical authenticity. They're interested in winning. It is an alternative...

[Loud noise]

A:...social organization, similar to the SCA. The SCA is very popular.

I: That's right.

A: But a lot of it is basically getting titles, and they vary; and the same thing is true in Adrian Empire.

I: Oh, alright. So-

A: That's why we go on Saturdays. There's a pecking order. You can move up the ladder if you do well.

I: So it's more of a social thing than a historical research thing.

A: It has historical research aspects of it. There's a motivation to build suits of armor, for example...

I: Yeah.

A: But they're not using them accurately.

I: No.

A: Except, maybe sometimes in the wars, you see pole weapons being used. Being in the SCA, you see rattan pole weapons. Those aren't too different than what was actually used.

I: Yeah.

A: But the swords, no, nothing. And even in side sword...side sword is a modern term.

I: Right.

A: They were called "swords"!

I: [Laughs] There you go! Espada, yeah.

A: [Laughs] Yeah, they were called espada, yeah. They were called swords.

I: Yeah.

A: By the time they were doing that...by 1480...By the 1450's, they had a somewhat elaborate guard, and you had your broadsword. It was basically a broadsword, with a fairly elaborate hilt.

I: Hmm.

A: And if you hit someone wearing a helmet with that, it wasn't going to do much. It's going to go 'bang!'...

I: Okay.

A: Even in the SCA's dress segment, going 'bang!' like that, that's a kill.

I: Yeah.

A: If you're going to have it so we can thrust, if you get past someone's guard and you thrust, and it's supposed to be unarmored like a duel or just a tournament you had created, that would be a kill.

I: Yeah, that would be. [Laughs] That was good, yeah.

I: How might this group/organization increase its public outreach/membership size/funding?

A: I don't know right now. It's kind of in limbo. I'm not sure what the president wants to do.

I: Yeah. I think he has a couple of ideas, but he's mulling them around right now.

A: Right. I have to talk to him after I get...I'm going to another recreation. I'm going to 'Old Fort MacArthur Days'.

I: Oh, with John Redmayne?

A: Yes.

I: Right, yeah.

A: Doing the eighteenth century.

I: Okay.

A: And so I'm doing that next weekend. And then after I get back, I'll have a chat with Sean.

I: There you go, okay.

I: How much emphasis is put on educating the general public about the period(s) this group/organization represents?

A: Well, the public's invited to practice with us. And we do private instruction.

I: Yeah.

A: Also, we provide instruction briefly at this public exposition, at Comic Con. We actually tried [weapons used] to kill people. What the period was, what the weapons were, and people asked questions. We're talking about maybe sixty people, maybe 107 people that were asking questions about what was going on.

I: Absolutely, yeah.

A: And when we do it at the Highland Games, we do a lot of instruction.

I: Yeah.

A: What kind of weapons you're using, what the period is, and how it works.

I: Every time I think of the Highland Games now, I'm going to think of kids trying to take that lochaber [axe] and...

A: Yeah, that's right! You did a great job of guarding that!

[Laughing]

A: You did.

I: I saw the scared look on Jim [Barrow]'s face, it was like 'No!' [Laughing] Aw man. Well, that's one of the things when you do this kind of stuff. Some kid's always going to do something stupid.

A: Mm-hmm.

I: But...they learn! And so, that's it. It's the 6th of July, 2014, and this is the end of the...interview.

(End of interview)

4. Christopher Nelson, Phoenix Society of Historical Swordsmanship/HEMA; June 4, 2015

Short Consent Template

STUDY TITLE

I am a graduate student under the direction of Professor Nancy Dallett in the Department/Division/ College of the School of History, Philosophy, and Religious Studies at Arizona State University. I am conducting a research study to gain a better understanding of the nature and methods of historical reenactment in the United States, especially the reenactment of Pre-Modern European history and the Middle Ages.

I am inviting your participation, which will involve sitting down and answering a number of questions concerning your personal involvement with, or your group or institution's use of, historical interpretation and reenactment. You have the right not to answer any question, and to stop participation at any time.

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By signing below you are agreeing to be part of the study, during which you may be video or audio recorded.

Name: Christopher Nelson

Signature: *Christopher Nelson*

Date: 6.4.15

By signing below you are agreeing to allow your name to be used when quoted in the study's final report.

Name: Christopher Nelson

Signature: *Christopher Nelson*

Date: 7.2.15

Oral Interview-Phoenix Society of Historical Swordsmanship

6/4/2015, 9:42 PM

Interviewer (I): Student

Interviewee (A): Instructor and member of the Phoenix Society of Historical Swordsmanship; member of HEMA.

Interview Setting: Interview conducted at Applebee's on Central and Camelback, in Phoenix, Arizona. The interview was conducted on June 4, 2015, at 9:42 PM.

Affiliation with the interviewee: The interviewee has acted as an instructor in various styles of Western Martial Arts.

(Start of interview)

Interviewer (I): What is the name of your group or organization?

Interviewee (A): We are the Phoenix Society of Historical Swordsmanship. And we operate under the HEMA Alliance.

I: When did this group/organization begin? Is this group/organization still in operation?

A: 2010.

I: Okay. [It is still on operation - okay - you can skip that] What is your role within the group?

A: I'm a member of the leadership, which also entails that I help manage and maintain the club.

I: What is your role within the group/organization?

A: To foster learning and appreciation of the Historical European Martial arts. So that a person can then - in return can turn around and teach that to another individual.

I: What are the mission and goals of this group/organization?

A: [Skipped]

I: Is this group open to public membership?

A: It is.

I: What historical periods does your group/organization focus its research on?

A: We study historical manuals from the 1300's up to the 1900's.

I: What standards of accuracy or authenticity does your group/organization attempt to meet?

A: We are always checking with other peers among the HEMA Alliance or also often times members of colleges that hold Doctoral degrees in various things such as history. They are does who actually work hand in hand with organizations that maintain historical documents such as the Vatican Library.

I: Oh!

A: And they usually help to make sure the authenticity remains intact.

I: What methods of historical interpretation does your group/organization utilize?

A: Sometimes when a system of study, take for example polish saber, a lot it was not specifically written down of how to properly do specific techniques, how to perform certain techniques. So sometimes from accounts and written observations at the time, sometimes from historical drawings, we are able then extrapolate our best at the time with what materials that we have at hand.

I: What sources do you utilize for your research?

I: You said the Vatican Library—

A: We currently-- the largest organization that we have at this time is in the online data base of - called the Wiktenauer. Which is maintained by a gentlemen who professionally maintains historical documents and works with other organizations in Universities.

I: Hmm. And name some of the folios, like...

A: For example there is a three versions of the Fiore dei Liberi manuscript. There is one called the Getty which is held in a private collection. There is one called the "Paris" which is named because it is held in Paris, the Louvre Museum. The 3rd one is actually on display currently in a university in Los Angeles at this time.

I: What are your methods of research?

A: [Skipped]

I: What forms of public outreach and presentation does your group/organization utilize?

A: We constantly are working with local communities and other charitable organizations to help facilitate any new memberships. We work with the Caledonian Society to do demonstrations of our fighting and to explain our historical techniques at their highland games. We recently have also done another year at a Phoenix Comicon, where again we did fighting demonstrations and outreach for new members to see if there's interest for is for people to learn an historical art.

I: What guidelines or regulations does your organization adhere to?

A: Under the HEMA Alliance we adhere to a safety policy. It also what enables us to maintain a level of insurance for our organization. And under that safety policy there is also the fact that we operate of a 501(c)3 which is a non-profit, so there's federal regulations regarding how much money we can take in and to what use those funds can be given. For example membership dues are used to replace equipment for new people...

I: Alright.

A: ...or to pay rent or pay insurance.

I: So, okay. Let's see-- Is the question for guidelines and regulations?

A: Yes.

I: What equipment or resources does your group/organization require?

A: Equipment wise, we use everything from wooden sticks to polynylon synthetic wasters. And we also use steel - we never use sharp instruments, they are always dulled, or blunted. We also use the equipment of space - we often rent indoor space for the use of our members. What is the second part?

I: Well, uh, that's the...

A: The equipment or...

I: It was the equipment or at least - we tackle those resources - but uh...

A: Resources would also entail such as acquiring the dues of the members, and then paying for the rent. Other resources can also be accumulated by the purchasing of manuals. Every once in a while we will get certain manual that are once again published for us as a community. Sometimes the club will purchase of those.

I: How does this group/organization obtain its funding?

A: [Skipped]

I: Okay. Alright. We just covered how you get your funding too. So, that was that. So...

I: Is this group involved with any academic or historical institutions (i.e. museums or historical societies)?

I: You have mentioned the Vatican, you mentioned the college students. Is there any specific university or museum right now you guys are working with or—

A: Yes.

I: Awesome. Who are they? [chuckles]

A: I could not remember the names of all the institutions. We are a very broad reaching organization at large. Locally, however, we are not currently operating with any local municipalities or historical resources, other than perhaps the Caledonian Society.

I: What does the future look like for this group/organization?

A: Hopefully, as we've seen over the last year and a half, our membership continues to grow, and we continue to have new instructors coming up with in the ranks. We begin to have more times available for instruction. We are participating with more local communities and organizations to help broaden the reach of Historical European Martial Arts.

I: How might this group/organization increase its public outreach/membership size/funding?

I: Would it be through more demonstration—

A: I would like to see some actual published materials, perhaps in the local paper, some more flyers posted at the traffic areas.

I: Okay.

A: Perhaps reaching out to the local universities and try to foster some - sponsor programs there with the students.

I: Okay.

I: How much emphasis is put on educating the general public about the period(s) this group/organization represents?

A: Well, I wouldn't say that it's extremely high. During the demonstrations or event such as the Highland Games and the Comic Con, we usually have some kind of a booth presence. People come up to us. As they walk by, we try to engage with them with some conversation. We explain to them the time periods in which we operate. Occasionally, of course, we get questions such as, "Do you do Roman battles?" and stuff such as that which in this case we have to explain that there is no written account of that, and therefore it falls outside of our purview.

I: Alright.

A: Okay.

I: And that does for the questions. This is the end of the interview. It is 9:48 PM. And I just wanted to thank the representative from Phoenix Society. And I'm cutting it off right now.

(End of interview)

5. Guy Windsor, The School of European Swordsmanship; March 10, 2015

Short Consent Template

STUDY TITLE

I am a graduate student under the direction of Professor Nancy Dallett in the Department/Division/ College of the School of History, Philosophy, and Religious Studies at Arizona State University. I am conducting a research study to gain a better understanding of the nature and methods of historical reenactment in the United States, especially the reenactment of Pre-Modern European history and the Middle Ages.

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By signing below you are agreeing to be part of the study, during which you may be video or audio recorded.

Name: Guy Windsor

Signature: Guy Windsor

Date: 10 March 2015

By signing below you are agreeing to allow your name to be used when quoted in the study's final report.

Name:

Signature: Guy Windsor

Date: 10 March 2015

Email Interview-The School of European Swordsmanship

3/24/2015

Interviewer (I): Student

Interviewee (A): Leader and Founder of the School of European Swordsmanship, member of HEMA

Interview Setting: Interview was conducted online, via email, on March 24, 2015.

Affiliation with the Interviewee: The interviewee has acted as an instructor in various styles of western martial arts.

(Start of Interview)

Interviewer (I): What is the name of your group/organization?

Interviewee (A): The School of European Swordsmanship.

I: When did this group/organization begin? Is this group/organization still in operation?

A: March 2001, and yes. We have branches and affiliated groups all over the world.

I: What is your role within the group/organization?

A: Founder; chief instructor, researcher, facilitator.

I: What are the mission and goals of this group/organization?

A: The school was founded to enable interested people of any age, race, orientation, or disability to pursue meaningful training in historical European swordsmanship.

I: Is this group open to public membership?

A: Yes.

I: What historical periods does your group/organization focus its research on?

A: Our syllabus is primarily based on my research into Fiore dei Liberi's *Il Fior di Battaglia*, so early 1400s; Ridolfo Capoferro's 1610 book *Gran Simulacro*, the

anonymous mid 1300s I.33 sword and buckler ms., Domenico Angelo's *School of Fencing* (1763 and 1787). But many of my students also do research into other styles and schools.

I: What standards of accuracy or authenticity does your group/organization attempt to meet?

A: We aim for absolute historical accuracy of technique. The Book is always open during class, and the Book supersedes all modern opinions.

I: What methods of historical interpretation does your group/organization utilize?

A: That is not a short answer. The best summary is in my new book, *Swordfighting*. I'll send you a copy. pp25-43.

I: What sources do you utilize for your research?

A: Those listed above, plus a massive library of reproduced originals (several hundred printed copies), plus 1000+ secondary sources, plus we organize regular seminars with guest teachers. The bibliography from *Swordfighting* will give you some idea.

I: What are your methods of research?

A: Likewise, not a short answer. See pp25-43.

I: What forms of public outreach and presentation does your group/organization utilize?

A: We do demos at all sorts of reenactment and other events; we have our entire syllabus online as a free wiki, with videos. My books also serve that purpose.

I: What guidelines or regulations does your organization adhere to?

A: There are two fundamental rules: Safety, and Respect. Safety first, so, take all risks into account. Then Respect, for the weapons, the Art, the sources, your training partners and yourself. We do have e.g. freeplay guidelines, but not a great long list of rules for people to remember and follow. Download our welcome booklet for a more thorough explanation.

I: What equipment or resources does your group/organization require?

A: None. We can provide it all, in the beginning. After that, we expect students to wear the required t-shirt based uniform, and collect their own kit at their own pace.

I: How does this group/organization obtain its funding?

A: Mostly from students' subscriptions/training fees. Some branches also benefit from local or national grants.

I: Is this group involved with any academic or historical institutions (i.e. museums or historical societies)?

A: Not precisely, but we have good relations with many.

I: What does the future look like for this group/organization?

A: When I learn to tell the future, I'll let you know. Read Kahnemann, *Thinking, Fast and Slow*, for why I say that.

I: How might this group/organization increase its public outreach/membership size/funding?

A: Good question. More pertinently, do we want to? Individual branches grow or shrink, and so may be looking for more students or not. We do not actively add branches; they come to us.

I: How much emphasis is put on educating the general public about the period(s) this group/organization represents?

A: Not a lot. We are a martial arts school. Those that see a demo or read one of my books will either catch light and follow the way, or not. Educating the general public is a 50 year program, including the books, of course, but also people like fight directors. One day, movie goers will expect their swordfights as accurate as their car driving. Ie, not very, but better than now.

(End of Interview)

APPENDIX D

FRAZIER HISTORY MUSEUM

DATA COLLECTED AUGUST 1, 2013-JUNE 26, 2014

1. J. Barrett Cooper, Tony Dingman, Kelly Moore, The Frazier History Museum
August 1, 2013

Short Consent Template

STUDY TITLE

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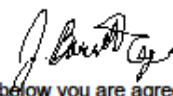
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By signing below you are agreeing to be part of the study, during which you may be video or audio recorded.


Name: J. Barrett Cooper

Signature: 

Date: June 24, 2014

By signing below you are agreeing to allow your name to be used when quoted in the study's final report.

Name: J. Barrett Cooper

Signature: 

Date: June 24, 2014

Short Consent Template

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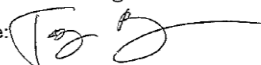
Name: Tony Dingman

Signature: 

Date: 7/2/14

By signing below you are agreeing to allow your name to be used when quoted in the study's final report.

Name: Tony Dingman

Signature: 

Date: 7/2/14

Short Consent Template

STUDY TITLE

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Your participation in this study is voluntary. If you choose not to participate or to withdraw from the study at any time, there will be no penalty. You must be 18 or older to participate in this study.

Although there is no immediate benefit to yourself or your group/institution, this study will further academic understanding of historical reenactment, as well as the reenactment process itself. There are no foreseeable risks or discomforts to your participation.

Confidentiality will be maintained by keeping your personal information on a separate and private and password-locked hard drive. Any printed or written documents shall be kept under lock and key. Your responses will be confidential. The results of this study may be used in reports, presentations, or publications but your name will not be used.

I would like to audio record or video record this interview. The interview will not be recorded without your permission. Please let me know if you do not want the interview to be recorded; you also can change your mind after the interview starts, just let me know.

If you have any questions concerning the research study, please contact the research team: Ryan Hatch at 480-433-0129 or rrhatch@asu.edu; and Nancy Dallett at nancy.dallett@asu.edu. If you have any questions about your rights as a subject/participant in this research, or if you feel you have been placed at risk, you can contact the Chair of the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board, through the ASU Office of Research Integrity and Assurance, at (480) 965-6788. Please let me know if you wish to be part of the study.

By signing below you are agreeing to be part of the study, during which you may be video or audio recorded.

Name: Kelly Moore

Signature: *Kelly Moore*

Date: 6/16/14

By signing below you are agreeing to allow your name to be used when quoted in the study's final report.

Name: Kelly Moore

Signature: *Kelly Moore*

Date: 6/16/14

Oral Interview-Frazier History Museum Historical Interpretations Department

8/1/2013, 3:03 PM

Interviewer (I): Student

Interviewee (A): Head of the Historical Interpretations Department, Frazier History Museum

Interviewee (B): Member of the Historical Interpretations Department, Frazier History Museum

Interviewee (C): Member of the Historical Interpretations Department, Frazier History Museum

Interview Setting: Interview conducted at the Frazier History Museum, in Louisville, Kentucky. The interview was conducted on August 1, 2013, at 3:03 PM.

Affiliation with the interviewees: The interviewer has taken part in the historical interpretations department since June 2, 2013.

(Start of Interview)

Interviewer (I): What are the mission, vision, and objectives of the Frazier Museum?

Interviewee (A): That's kind of a loaded question.

Interviewee (B): That's philosophical...

I: Well, your take on it.

A: Well, it's to educate people about the past through the pieces that we have in the museum, and the stories behind those pieces, and, as Mr. Frazier was wont to say, that things are repeated in the past...that we can...look to a better future and learn to live in the present.

B: And learn from the past.

I: Exactly.

A: And learn from the past. I mean, the museum is really set up as an educational entity, in a way.

I: Hence the education department's heavy emphasis on everything.

A: Well, yeah, but also Mr. Frazier's.

I: Oh, yeah.

A: So that was his big, (I almost said gobbledygook). The main thrust for him was to educate people about the weaponry, and to not look at it as a negative, but as something that was absolutely a necessity. You know, at the time. [It] wasn't just used for war, it was used for...

I: Hunting?

A: Hunting and trying to live.

B: Survival

A: Survival.

I: Yeah.

B: Plus, they also demonstrate levels of craftsmanship.

I: Oh yeah, definitely!

B: Levels of technology, too.

I: Definitely, just as, first of all, those German rifles. Those are amazing.

A: The technology and the artistry as well. And that's the thing that we really learned here, and that we've been learning in the interpretations department, that fighting with weapons, edged weapons especially, was considered an art, and then a science. It is the art of swordsmanship and the science of the sword.

I: That's a good point. As a martial artist, I've thought about it that way [as an art form], I've never thought of it as a science before.

A: Well, especially the Italian rapiers.

I: Oh jeez, yeah!

A: It gets into mathematics and things like that, which I was never any good at, that's why I'm not good at the rapier.

[laughing]

B: There's a lot of physics involved.

A: Geometry.

B: The awareness of your body in space.

I: Oh definitely, yeah. I mean, just from working with Eric-

A: Kinesthetic awareness. (kinesthetic awareness)

[laughing]

B: I hope you got that!

I: I hope so, too!

[laughing]

I: And, uh, when did the Frazier first become involved with historic interpretation?

B: From the beginning.

I: Alright.

B: The interpretations were part of the education department, initially, and then we did branch out as our own department; but from the beginning we were part of the whole experience, of visiting the museum. [It's] based on the model from the Royal Armories.

I: Oh!

B: They had the same kind of program.

A: When the Royal Armories was becoming partners, they insisted on us having, actually, an interpretations [department]...

I: They insisted? Wow, okay.

A: Yeah. They insisted. They said because [of] the popularity of it over there, they wanted it as part of it over here. So-

C: The irony is thick.

A: Hmm?

C: The irony is thick.

A: Oh, yes! Isn't it?

I: And now they're not continuing it over there.

A: Right.

B: Right.

A: Um...

B: And we are all actors, too. They wanted to hire performers, not just people who are interested in history, which is certainly important, but a certain ability to interact.

I: People who can, you know, perform, project, and get a point across visually and physically.

B: Yes.

I: Okay.

B: Right, so tell a story-

I: Yeah!

B: and be entertaining as well as educational.

I: Yeah, that's something the history department, or really, ANY history [program], really falls down on is just the storytelling part.

A: Mm-hmm.

I: That's the sad part, because history is about storytelling,-

B: Absolutely.

I: and, I don't know, I'm one of those guys who thinks that maybe the performing arts and history need to get closer and closer together. But, uh...

B: This is certainly a path that a lot of actors may think about, too!

I: Oh, yeah! Definitely.

B: Museum Theater, but it really is a line [of work].

A: And it's becoming more and more popular, too.

B: [It's a] really interesting way, of performing, as well as bringing history, to live.

I: Awesome. I'm actually going to bring that up and see what my professors think over there. "Performing history?"

B: Mm-hmm! People did those things in high school,-

A: That's all we do!

B: instead of doing the book reports, playing the person, that's a lot more fun!

I: Does the museum meet these on a regular basis?

I: What methods might be used to improve or increase the meeting of these standards?

I: How does the historical interpretation department help meet these standards?

I: When did the Frazier Museum first become involved with historical interpretation?

I: When did the Frazier Museum become involved with the Royal Arms Museum?

I: Does the Frazier Museum still work with the RAM?

I: Do they, like, say, "Oh, we're going to have this exhibit, you guys might want to try this"?

A: That's really a question for Madelyn.

I: Okay, save that one for Madelyn.

A: That's a question for Madelyn.

I: What procedures or guidelines are used to select and develop interpretations?

B: Hmm...

A: Well, it used to be "what do we have in the museum?"

I: Historical arms.

A: And...the pieces themselves would tell us the stories. And so we would pick and choose around what was in the museum.

B: Either the period or time...

I: Oh yeah.

A: Right.

B: ...or events that are presented, as well as the artifacts themselves.

A: The artifacts would actually be upstairs and we'd go "okay, let's write our story around this" or one of the tableau in the Royal Armories. There were also...what's big now is, of course, two things: one is the education department, and what they are teaching to schools.

I: Hmm.

A: To have live performance interpretation to enhance those.

I: Okay.

A: Then, the other one is writing for the exhibits that come in, the travelling exhibits-

I: Okay.

A: or the in-house exhibits. That's really what we're doing, because for the first five or six years we got close to 75 different interpretations in and out, and now we've let some of those go...but that's how...we basically look out in advance, and go "okay, what's coming in?"

I: Hmm.

A: And so that's where we are because we have a nice base of interpretations covering the last thousand years.

I: Oh yeah, definitely.

B: A lot of the travelling exhibits are tied into the educational programs, too.

A: Yes.

B: Sometimes, they ask us to.

I: Yeah, hence the Odyssey and mythic adventure [interpretations] and all that.

B: Yep, yep. And we had pirates, da Vinci, and the Samurai, etc.

I: Oh yeah, yeah.

A: And da Vinci reminds me that not only did we do live historic interpretations, we actually did put together, especially Tony was really instrumental in that, was putting together a tour-

I: Oh! Okay.

A: of the exhibits.

C: I think that was the first time we'd ever done that.

A: That was the first time we'd done it, and that was my favorite one. That was incredible. And so we will give a highlights tour of some of the travelling exhibits or temporary exhibits that come in.

I: Yeah.

B: And there are also highlights tours of the third floor and second floor.

A: Yes, and we do those in costume, just as ourselves, not as our characters.

B: Usually done by request, sometimes available publicly.

A: Except for Tony, who has to play a character.

[laughter]

B: But since you're probably the one most familiar with the collection.

A: Yeah.

I: Yeah, that's true.

B: Though there are some variable trainings...though the volunteers are really trained in that too.

A: Yes.

B: They're people who can do that, too.

I: Excellent, okay. And, let's see...

C: And Gary takes part...

B: Yeah, Gary...

A: Oh, yeah.

I: How much involvement does the museum's administration or education departments have in this process?

A: Nothing!

I: Nothing? Okay. Good!

[laughing]

A: They really don't come down from above and say, "you have to this" or "you have to do that". It's mainly us with education.

C: There's a trickle down. If they chose to do something coming up...

A: That's...

C: It could trickle down-

A: They could say, you know, "It would be really nice if we had..."

I: Ooh, I see.

A: Um...

C: They might throw a suggestion out.

A: The one main one was Mr. Frazier.

I: Oh, yes!

A: He wanted Buffalo Bill,

I: Well, that makes sense, yeah.

A: so, we did Buffalo Bill.

B: Mm-hmm.

A: We, the "royal" we.

[laughter]

I: Yes.

A: I'm going to pass that [part] down to Kelly.

B: Oh, um, okay!

A: She'll be doing that next year.

[laughter]

I: How much of the monthly or annual budget is set aside for historical interpretation?

A: I have no idea. I mean, I would imagine it's less than...it might be...monthly?

I: Or monthly or annual...

B: Percentages.

A: I would say less than five percent...I think.

B: But we've accumulated quite a lot of stuff over the years.

I: Well, yeah, over time, yeah.

A: Trying to think...

B: A lot of this stuff is things that can be used from one interpretation to another.

A: (To Tony) How much is our budget? What was it, five or six million?

I: ...Wow.

C: He's not talking about us, he's talking about the whole museum.

[laughing]

I: Well yeah, I figured the overall...[laughter]...I was about to say...

C: Wouldn't that be great!

A: My salary alone is ten percent.

K: We'd have a lot more field trips!

I: [laughter]

A: Um, annually, so that would be...what's ten percent of 5 million? 500 grand?

C: Mm-hmm.

A: Oh yeah, we're less than five. Or maybe around five percent. Maybe, yearly.

I: Okay.

A: Maybe.

I: And, uh...

A: We're the red-headed stepchild.

B: [laughter]

I: Right.

A: The one that plays piano really well that they trot out at cocktail parties.

[laughter]

C: And then occasionally want to do a poem.

B: Yes.

A: Mm-hmm.

B: That you haven't done in two, three months.

I: How much emphasis is put on historical accuracy?

[skipped]

I: Do you feel that the interpretations help the audience connect with the history and artifacts within the museum?

A: No.

B: No.

C: No.

I: No.

[laughter]

I: It's a failure! The entire thing!

C: Of course they do!

I: Of course, yeah!

C: [laughing]

I: We got the answer to that earlier,

A: Yeah.

I: And working with you guys, I know that pretty well on, they're able to see this and go "Hey!"

B: Yeah.

B: The most constant feedback from guests is the interpretations is the favorite part of their visit.

I: Excellent.

C: If nothing else, the artifacts don't talk.

I: That's very true.

C: They don't speak. I mean, you can obviously look at the wall panels and see the guns, and not everyone will-

A: And the patrons don't read.

I: That's exactly right.

C: Ha!

R: Yeah.

A: Because we're in Kentucky, and we're the forty-eighth state in education.

I: I tell you, they don't read in Arizona, they don't read in Washington...

A: Haha!

C: Those previous comments were Barrett...

[laughter]

A: Let's attribute it to Tony Dingman!

[laughter]

C: But not everyone is going to look at those panels-

A: yeah.

C: and see that weapon and be able to synthesize that into a greater picture, and get what's going on in the world.

A: Yeah.

I: Absolutely.

A: And...that reminds me. If we put it into a context...

I: Hmm.

A: [If] we put those artifacts into a context, instead of being up on a wall or in a case, people can go "Oh, okay! So, before this, this is where this comes from".

I: Mm-hmm.

A: A plus b equals c. Here we go to algebra!

B: Oh, man!

C: Jesus!

I: [laughter]

A: See? It really is...

B: Pythagoras.

[laughter]

B: Right...

A: the hypotenuse of this story.

B: May need to check the facts about it.

I: Yeah, a word I plan to never use that word in interp because immediately everyone will...

A: Ah, no.

I: But, uh...

A: Even though our performances are generally ten to twenty minutes, obviously you can't fit the entire background and all the story into time.

I: Exactly, yeah.

B: We've done all the research, and we write the scripts, so we've got more information to share if people want to ask questions so we can give them even more if they want.

I: And that Q & A and that chance for them to come up and hold the sword.

B: Mm-hmm.

I: That's just as important as the actual interp itself.

C: I'll say this, the more I've done this, the more I've realized I'm painting a grayer and grayer picture for them.

A: Mm-hmm! Yes!

C: There is no black [and white]. People want you to say, "Oh, absolutely! You could do this!", and you say, "Well...umm..."

I: Meehhhhhhh....

C: Maybe not!

B: We're not editorializing on the story.

C: Yes.

A: Yeah.

I: Yeah, that's what they're expecting!

B: We're not giving an opinion, we're just telling them what happened.

I: They expecting us to go up with a stone chisel and just like [write it in stone].

A: Yeah.

C: Yeah.

A: "Could a sam-your-eye defeat a 95th rifle?" No. Not from a thousand yards.

C: If it was just the rifle itself?

I: Yeah. A thousand yards would do it.

C: Oh, yeah.

B: A Mongol could.

C: Oh, of course!

I: A Mongol, definitely!

[laughter]

A: Yeah.

I: This isn't "The Deadliest Warrior".

B: Right.

I: Do the Pre-modern (medieval and Renaissance) or Early Modern American interpretations attract more audience attention or institutional emphasis? Which has proven more successful?

A: Buffalo Bill is very popular.

C: Only, I think, if Barrett does it.

A: Anything that Barrett does is popular.

B: Particularly with the old ladies.

A: Especially with the old ladies!

[laughter]

B: They really like Catherine, too.

A: Yes, yes.

I: I can imagine, yeah.

A: I think that probably the most popular thing, of course, is the historic combat.

I: Oh yeah, combat!

A: You will have people come out of the woodwork for the combat.

I: Yeah, no, it was full to capacity in there [during the armored hand-and-a-half sword demonstration]

A: Especially when Eric does it.

C: By himself.

A: In the loincloth.

B: [laughing]

I: Loincloth! [laughing]

C: shadowfighting.

B: Shadowfighting.

A: Yeah.

C: We'll get it.

B: with the screen.

A: When he does the Bunraku Philippino stick fighting one, it's very interesting. He fights a bunraku puppet.

[laughing]

I: Bunraku puppet??[laughing]

C: And he has to take each of the guys.

A: [laughing]

I: Oh my gosh...

C: Which is difficult.

A: It is, it's very difficult.

C: It's a challenge.

I: Yeah, I can imagine it would be [laughing]

C: But it's the legs first, and then...

A: Oh yes, Oh yes.

B: As far as non-combat things, it really just varies.

A: Yes.

B: Because people are into all kinds of things.

C: Yeah.

B: You know, there may be people who are really into medieval things, and people who are interested in the Civil War, or the nineteenth century.

I: Yeah, they want to see the old gentleman rapier work, yeah.

C: We have people who come in who don't know what people we're portraying, and come out thinking, "Oh, wow, I'm far more interested than I thought I was".

A: I [the visitor] had no idea, yeah.

I: And that's exactly what historians, I mean that's what a museum like this should be doing. Every museum should be doing this, you know, giving people interested enough to go "Oh, okay!"

B: With your mix, too, of more well-known personalities, as well as portraying...

I: Lesser known.

B: Lesser known, or even just anonymous, voices people telling you about a certain event.

I: Yeah. And does it work better to portray some of these better known people, or does it work better to do other people who would have known these people, and work around so that you can paint a picture of them?

A: That depends on the interpreter who's doing them.

I: That's very true.

C: And the story itself.

B: Yeah. With the information that's available.

A: And when I do them, people love it.

I: Hmm, okay!

C: I've had a child puke.

B: [laughing]

A: Tony has children puking when he does his.

B: People left.

I: Wow.

[laughing]

A: I can't beat that [laughing]

C: I try not to take it personally.

I: [laughing]

A: Eric has had whole school groups leave at once!

[laughing]

C: A whole busload!

[laughing]

B:[laughing] OH, forget it.

I: Oh, man [laughing]

A: Yeah, we're done here!

B: I've heard all I need to hear! [laughing]

[laughing]

A: Yeah, we've had it! That's enough history for today!

I: [laughing]An entire afternoon, wasted! No, noooo! Cut him loose, cut him loose!

[laughing]

C: They almost got to the intro, too, and that was it.

[laughing]

B: Your performance is just too brilliant for me, I have to go!

A: Yes, your sun is too bright!

[laughing]

I: Alright, let's see...

A: It all really depends, you know...

I: How much romance or creative/artistic license goes into the interpretations?

[Skipped]

I: Is the Frazier involved with the local community?

B: We have Founder's Day.

I: Founder's day, that's true.

B: Which is always a large affair.

A: We do a lot of things with the convention and visitor's bureau...we've got the Leadership Louisville...we go out to different functions for businesses and things like that.

B: The hometown tourism initiative, which kicks off every year.

A: And that's something that's probably more for Reginald, and for Kevin.

I: Oh, okay, yeah.

C: I think it's more in our sights. The more we're here, the more we realize the community is something we rely upon, and we have to have kind of a handshake with it. A give and take.

I: Alright.

C: That's true. I mean, we've tried really hard especially over the past five or six years to really reach out; because in the beginning, this was a "gun museum".

B: We've changed our name a couple of times, too.

I: Oh, yeah.

B: Trying to, yeah, change that perception, that it's just "historical arms", the weapons place.

I: This has gone...you know, that name, it comes and goes, comes and goes, whenever you talk about this place.

A: Mm-hmm.

C: Actually, it's going to be the Frazier-Cooper Museum.

B: [laughing]

I: Frasier-Cooper. Okay. [laughing]

A: Only after it was the Frazier-Dingman Museum.

[laughing]

C: That didn't go over well.

A: They made us take down all the pictures of Tony over the front window because there were too many traffic accidents.

I: Oh, jeez

[laughing]

B: Especially the Rifleman Harris.

A: Yes.

B: [laughing]

C: Wasn't Towton up there?

B: Yeah.

I: Oh jeez, yeah.

C: It was disappointing.

B: There was Thea up there, too. And Oregon Trail.

A: That's right.

C: Was it?

I: I've walked around here, you guys even have a plaque talking about the history of this building, too, which is interesting.

A: Mm-hmm.

I: It's especially interesting for us [the interpretation department] because we're down here in the basement. We can see the stones and stuff that were originally here.

C: You can actually see some of the fire burns Joyce kept here, as well.

I: Yeah, I've seen some of that.

C: Charred.

I: A little ominous.

A: Well, and we've also had several exhibits that have had to do with Louisville. We've had the Fountain Fairy exhibit, which is a very popular amusement park from the early 1900's to the late 1960's, and the whole history behind that. I mean, we had incredible amounts of people coming out of the woodwork just for that, who had never thought about coming to this museum.

I: Right.

B: Also, a very surprising one was the history of the Louisville Water Company. Which was...

C: Fascinating.

A: It was incredibly fascinating. I thought it was going to be boring as all get-out. But what that's spawned, and I don't use that word lightly...what that has germinated, inseminated, is the beginning of the Louisville Water Company starting their own history museum.

I: Really?? Cool.

A: And the Louisville Fire Department.

I: That's true, huh? Okay.

B: Yep.

C: We're like an incubator.

A: We are a test tube-

C: Would you say we are an inseminating incubator?

A: Yes! We are inseminating history into the community!

I: Inseminating...[laughing]

B: Inseminating!

A: Both artificially...and literally!

C: You might want to cut that out!

[Laughing]

B: You better cut some of this out, find the good stuff.

I: [to the recorder] I'm going to choose better words for the paper, don't worry!

[laughing]

A: But, yeah...

B: We also have a good time.

A: While inseminating, we are having a really good time!

B: For a good time...

C: Yeah, for a good time...

A: For a good time, call [phone number]

B: We love our job.

I: Alright. And... a lot of these have to do with how you choose temporary exhibits, funding, etc.

A: That's them.

I: That's them.

C: Yeah.

I: How does the Frazier interact with the community?

I: Does the Frazier acquiesce to the local history or to local interests?

[Skipped]

I: How does the Frazier select which temporary exhibits it will host?

[Skipped]

I: How does the Frazier obtain most of its funding?

[Skipped]

I: What is the average turnover for Frazier staff and management?

C: Depends on which department you're talking about.

I: What's it like for the interp department?

A: There isn't a whole lot of turnover.

I: Yeah, I figured that.

C: The four of us here have been here since the museum opened.

I: Okay, yeah, definitely, so you guys are mainstays here.

A: Yeah...Yeah, his [Tony's] first day was the first day we opened.

B: Was it Agincourt?

A: Yeah. He's wasted his youth here.

I: Wow.

B: Yeah.

C: Oh God...as I look back...

A: He was a mere boy, a beardless youth. We kissed them both good bye. Um, yeah, not very much [turnover]. I mean...Let me see, I mean, people who get in here never really get out. I mean, they're here for three or four years, if not more.

B: A lot of other actors come in for what, six...

C: Gerry was five?

A: Gerry was here for five. Brian's been here for four now, part time.

C: Thea was gone by the third week.

I: How much emphasis is put on involvement with the education department and Frazier events?

[Skipped]

I: What might the future look like for the Frazier?

[Skipped]

[End of interview]

2. Jodi Lewis, Frazier History Museum; June 26, 2014

Short Consent Template

STUDY TITLE

I am a graduate student under the direction of Professor Nancy Dallett in the Department/Division/ College of the School of History, Philosophy, and Religious Studies at Arizona State University. I am conducting a research study to gain a better understanding of the nature and methods of historical reenactment in the United States, especially the reenactment of Pre-Modern European history and the Middle Ages.

I am inviting your participation, which will involve sitting down and answering a number of questions concerning your personal involvement with, or your group or institution's use of, historical interpretation and reenactment. You have the right not to answer any question, and to stop participation at any time.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. If you choose not to participate or to withdraw from the study at any time, there will be no penalty. You must be 18 or older to participate in this study.

Although there is no immediate benefit to yourself or your group/institution, this study will further academic understanding of historical reenactment, as well as the reenactment process itself. There are no foreseeable risks or discomforts to your participation.

Confidentiality will be maintained by keeping your personal information on a separate and private and password-locked hard drive. Any printed or written documents shall be kept under lock and key. Your responses will be confidential. The results of this study may be used in reports, presentations, or publications but your name will not be used.

I would like to audio record or video record this interview. The interview will not be recorded without your permission. Please let me know if you do not want the interview to be recorded; you also can change your mind after the interview starts, just let me know.

If you have any questions concerning the research study, please contact the research team: Ryan Hatch at 480-433-0129 or rhatch@asu.edu; and Nancy Dallett at nancy.dallett@asu.edu. If you have any questions about your rights as a subject/participant in this research, or if you feel you have been placed at risk, you can contact the Chair of the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board, through the ASU Office of Research Integrity and Assurance, at (480) 965-6788. Please let me know if you wish to be part of the study.

By signing below you are agreeing to be part of the study, during which you may be video or audio recorded.

Name: Jodi Lewis, Director of Public Programs, Frazier History Museum

Signature: Jodi Lewis

Date: 11/6/14

By signing below you are agreeing to allow your name to be used when quoted in the study's final report.

Name: Jodi Lewis, Director of Public Programs, Frazier History Museum

Signature: Jodi Lewis

Date: 11/6/14

Oral Interview-Frazier History Museum

6/26/2014, 2:30 PM

Interviewer (I): Student

Interviewee (A): Head of the Education Department/Director of Public Programs at the Frazier History Museum

Interview setting: Interview conducted over the phone on June 26, 2016, at 2:30 PM.

Affiliation with the interviewee: The interviewer worked with the interviewee during a two month internship from June to August 2013.

(Start of Interview)

Interviewer (I): What are the mission, vision, and objectives of the Frazier Museum?]

Interviewee (A):(laughter) Okay, here's-Whoo! That is a whopper of a question! What are the mission, vision, and objectives!

I: Yeah, [laughs]...

A: Well, that's really, truly interesting...that you say that, or (adjusting microphone) that you ask that, rather, because, we are going through a really big change right now. Barrett has left, Barrett is gone.

I: Oh yeah, I heard! Yeah.

A: The Marketing department is going through a few. We actually have a new interp. directive, so the whole museum is just reassessing the way that we do business, even back to the mission, vision and objectives, all of that good stuff. So that is a really...interesting question for you to ask me right now.

I: Wow, dang. Okay. (Laughing)

A: Yeah. So, I don't even really know how to answer-I can tell you, a proposed mission-vision statement that our new director is putting forth, if you're interested in that. Actually...

I: Sure.

A: Actually, I can probably email it to you, if it would be easier.

I: Oh, yeah. Okay. I-I'll do that, yeah.

A: Actually, you know what? Here, I'm going to email it right now, as we're talking.

I: Oh.

A: now again, this isn't really...this isn't really supposed to be for public consumption, I guess...but, I mean, it's not like, we're going to...

I: Mmmm...

A: You know...

I: I, I know.

A: It gets back here, and somebody goes, "Oh, wait! That's not the right mission statement!"

I: Yeah.

A: You know, so it's going to be, it's going to be a lot different.

I: Yeah, this-

A: Hmm.

I: Yeah, this is a completely act-this is for academic purposes. It's not going to be publicized...

A: Yeah, you're right.

I: At least, not major publication, yeah, sorry, yeah.

A: Okay, okay. So I just sent you kind of what she came up with. Frankly, between you and me and the telephone, I think it's-I think mission statements can be a little bit...a little wordy...

I: (Laughs)

A: Maybe a mission statement needs to be very, very concise, and this is certainly the opposite of that; but, you know. There it is.

I: Well, you've got to cover a lot of stuff, and you got to-

A: Yeah.

I: Got to throw that net out there and say, "Look, we're covering all of this!" So...some people don't like to pigeon [hole] themselves in, but, yeah, you're right. It does help to have a very clear statement as to what you are doing. But...

I: Does the museum meet these on a regular basis?

A: Yeah, I would say that, it's not that it's going to be a huge seismic shift, what we do with this new mission statement, but I think that, I think that we're all really conscious of what we're doing and making sure that we're staying on track with what we have been, what we understand, is what we've been tasked to do.

I: Hmm.

A: A greater sub-mission...Frazier Museum has broadened the community and regions with a greater knowledge of history, and its power to help understand the countless opportunities. Um...yeah, I would, I would... (Incoherent)...we do that.

I: Okay. Let's see...Yeah, then I guess the rest of these, like, sort of sub questions are sort of...given the circumstantial nature of the first question, at the moment, you can feel free to answer them, or we can just skip to number 2.

A: Okay, right, yeah. I think- I do think that I see some questions I haven't really got the qualifications department...I think that, you know, the whole, power to understand.. I think that that is ...I think the interpretations department is really key to what ...to accomplishing that mission because we certainly get our hardcore, history lovers in here. Military history, or...

I: Oh, yeah... (Laughs)

A: But, yeah, right, right, right, but I think that the interpreters just make that so much more accessible, and having them... who have (incoherent) styles..

I: Hmm!

A: That tie in to what we're trying to do. That makes our message way more accessible to people who um... who just have a different learning style.

I: Yeah!

I: When did the Frazier Museum first become involved with historical interpretation?

A: So... ... Question number 2 was when did the Frazier Museum first become involved...(incoherent)...from the beginning, before the museum even opened. We knew

we wanted to ...to have that. So in fact, before the museum opened, Barrett went over to London, and to Leeds...

I: Hmm!

A: with the Royal armories, and...had a conversation with *their* interpretation department. they even got some scripts. Some of the scripts that they [the Interpretations Department] perform are from the Royal Armories.

I: Yeah! I noticed that. I did the one from Stamford Bridge.

A: That's right. That's right! Yeah!

I: Yeah. And-

A: Yeah, yeah!

I: And that leads, actually, strangely enough, into the third question...

I: When did the Frazier Museum become involved with the Royal Arms Museum?

I: So...

A: Yeah. So...before it opened.

I: Yeah.

A: I'm not sure how long before we opened. I could try to use...

I: Well, I don't think it needs to be *that* specific. I mean...

A: Okay.

I: Just "from the beginning" works just fine. So...

A: Okay. Yeah, yeah. From the very beginning.

[a.] Does the Frazier still work with the Royal Armories?

A: Yes, for now...

I: Hmm

A: (Laughing) That may or may not change.

I: (Laughing)

A: They're thinking of... They are kind of in some real serious growing pains. The economic downturn really affected them.

I: Yeah, I heard.

A: Yeah.

I: Yeah.

A: They...I don't know if you remember, they laid off their entire interpretation and education staff, and they kind of rehired them on a contractual basis. And so, they're really in dire straits. They're kind of looking to maybe, expand their footprint into Europe. So whether or not they're going to stick around with us, I don't know that, frankly, between you and me [Interviewer] whether we want them to stick around with us. I often don't know-

I: (Cough)

A: Because they're so very...I mean, I love it, because I'm a medievalist, but...

I: Yeah.

A: I...yes, for now, the question to 3 A.

I: Yeah, I-I had, I had heard about, you know, they had changed hands, and uh...

A: Right?

I: Stuff had gone, sort of south, and the program was discontinued. I didn't know that they had been rehired on a contractual basis, though.

A: Yes, they had. Well, so, like this job, it's a weekend job, and things...

I: Ah.

A: They'll come in and do that.

I: Okay.

A: Yes. Pretty rotten.

I: Yeah...well, what can you do? I mean, uh...

A: That's right.

I: Times are hard. You know? I think the first thing that go-that has to go is, you know, the medieval pomp. So...

A: Right.

I: Unfortunately.

A: Yes.

I: And, let's see...

I: What procedures or guidelines are used to select and develop interpretations?

A: Yeah. Again, funny you should say that...

I: (laughs)

A: Because when I took over that, I had to make the hard call of putting the crunch on anything that wasn't either temporary exhibition-related...

I: Hm.

A: Or deep in the pool from which educational programming is drawn. So in other words, we have a part on, say, the Civil War, for school groups, for outreach. If it was a program that supported *that*, we could, they could move forward. But, not just kind of random "Hey, I think I'll do Al Capone", or "I think I'll do..." I don't know, whatever...

I: Yeah.

A: "Queen Matilda!" That had to stop, because there was so much money and energy being spent on that, that it just didn't...It was just getting to [be]...pretty intense. So, I actually came up with a template of "how do we work toward a development of..."

I: Hmm!

A: Of a...And I'm happy to send that off to you! It's kind of a-

I: Absolutely!

A: Okay! rather than try to talk to you and...(incoherent)...

I: Yeah!

A: I'll send that to you.

I: Okay, yeah! Thank you!

A: Sure.

I: And, Yeah, let's see...that covers that...

A:(Incoherent)

I: Yeah, this gets sort of into the financial side of it...

A: Okay, sure.

I: If this...if that's...

A: Kind of going back to that fourth [subquestion], "how much involvement does the administration or education department have?"

I: Oh! Yeah.

A: More and more and more-

I: Yeah.

A: Actually, is the answer to that.

I: Oh!

A: Because it has to be... we just have to be more cost effective.

I: Oh, definitely.

A: Financially it is harder to support doing, say, Queen Matilda when that doesn't support any of the programming we're doing, and there are only six people at an interpretation. So, what we're trying to do is just really maximize, and I don't know if down here further, I don't see anything...I just...at a quick look...I've actually, in fact, just today, told the interpreters that they are actually going to move to being....that the whole title changed, and they're going to become "teaching artists".

I: Hmm!

A: And so they will be leading the programs that we do, as well as doing the interpretation. So that kind of is a big shift in where we were...But over the last year or so, they have been really good about, "Hey we're going to develop a Revolutionary War

theme program" and we sent them "Okay, here's core content that fourth graders are using, and scitters[?] are using, and here's eighth grade. Try to incorporate as much as you can, either in the interpretation itself, or the intro and outro". And that's been really successful, both for the interpreters, to be able to print what exactly they're going to say, and content; and it's been...really well received by the teachers, too. So...

I: Okay.

A: So.

I: How much of the monthly or annual budget is set aside for [historical] interpretation?

A: Well, just submitted the budget, and, do you mean institution wide?

I: Or...

A: Or, based as a percentage or a number?

I: whichever is easier to grasp I guess.

A: Yeah. I mean...let's see...Institution-wide, it would be a large number in salaries. The interpretations department is the largest department, next to security, and those are actually, many of them are only part-timers. So, it's the biggest department. Let's see...hold please, and I can get you the exact number.

I: Okay. (laughs)

A: It is...this again, of course, without salaries...(incoherent)...Well, I guess I can go ahead and tell you. Um...\$235,000 was last year's...And that, of course, is *with* salaries.

I: Oh yeah. Okay.

A: So, probably about...I don't know what percentage of that it would be. [It] would be...ten-ish percent? 10 percent?

I: That's sounds about what Kelly and Barrett told me, last year.

A: Yeah?

I: So, yeah.

A: Yeah...Okay. Um...(popping noises)

I: How much emphasis is put on historical accuracy?

A: An incredible amount!

I: (Laughs)

A: I mean, to the point where, we..."Oh, we...we found out that this is the wrong kind of boot, so we have to ditch these boots and order some new boots."

I: (laughs)

A: They're really good stewards of historical accuracy. In fact, it's sometimes... to the frustration of other people, because ...it's like "Oh, we want to, I don't know...do an interpretation of the Battle of Yorktown. Well we only have this, a uniform that would be three years earlier than that." And we're like, "Who-or-whatever! Doesn't matter! Just get it on!"

I: (Laughs)

A: So, they're really careful. You might remember that. People would drill you. Remember that?"

I: Oh, yeah! Yeah.

A: When you would do interpretations, and "Well, that doesn't look quite accurate! Blah, blah!"

I: I remember Gerry [Rose]. He was...you had the Eye of Napoleon thing coming up, and he was trying to get his [Duke of] Wellington stuff all right, and I remember him trying to go through and making sure the cape was right, the boots were right...

A: Oh, Lord, yes! Yes, yes...

I: All the stuff to clean the boots. (laughs) That was incredible.

A: Yes. Yeesh.

I: Right...

A: When did the Frazier Museum-Oh, no. Where are we now? What part of, uh...

I: Uh...

A: Seven.

I: Seven, yes.

I: Do you feel that the interpretations help the audience connect the history and artifacts [within the museum?

Absolutely.

I: Good. Yep.

A: That's why I fought to keep them in the budget.

I: Do the Pre-Modern [medieval and Renaissance]] or Early [Modern] American interpretations attract more audience attention or institutional emphasis? [Which has proven more successful]?

A: Oh, okay, so which one, you mean the medieval and Renaissance or the American?

I: Yeah.

A: Which draws more of an audience?

I: Yeah, do people like-

A: Definitely American.

I:...swords, or do they like guns? Basically, that's what it boils down to.

A: Oh, right, right. Well, they love-well, that's a tricky one; because they love the sword fights.

I: Oh definitely, yeah!

A: But more people-An American interpretation, aside from a sword fight, American themed, American history themed interpretation will draw more people.

I: That's true.

A: More people, mm-hmm. Yes. See, When we have done...When we have done focus groups and things, it's the American history that people are coming to see.

I: Buffalo Bill and stuff.

A: Which is crazy to me, because I love medieval history, but whatever.

I: Yeah...It's America. It's...

A: There you go!

I: It's a cultural hist-It's a cultural connection. That's what we connect to. We know Buffalo Bill, we know the Confederacy, and Company Aytch, and all this, but...some guys messing around with swords? Uhhhhh.....

A: (Laughing)

I: So, yeah, coming from the south I definitely understand the emphasis for more American history over Medieval history, but...

A: Right. Right... okay...

I: How much romance or creative/artistic license goes into the interpretations?

A: Well...some of us would say "not enough", because the kinds of primary sources can be pretty dry.

I: Absolutely! (Laughs)

A:(Laughs) I'm all for story, (laughs) but, yeah, they did. They really...They'r very, very dedicated to primary sources and research, and the only times they really move away from that very much is when they do these, what we call "Day in the Life".

I: Oh, yeah, yeah!

A: Yeah. "Day in the Life" frontiersman, or "Day in the Life" medieval archer, where it's a conglomerate, character. Now, I'll tell you, [Interviewer], I'm going to push for more, I guess, I'm going push for less obscure people. You know, we've been...we've been saying for ages, "You give us a York interpretation from the Lewis and Clark expedition...

I: Mm-hmm...

A: "That is great." So all these other people, Holt Collier or whatever, "Okay, yeah, that's great", but if you had York, from the Lewis and Clark, people would really go to see that. But the problem, of course, is that there isn't a whole lot of first-person, primary sources stuff-

I: Oh.

A: All about York, and so, we've been a little hesitant, but I'm going to push that a little bit more.

I: Yeah. And I-And I can see that, yeah, that would...that would be good; but yeah, that's a problem when you're dealing with American stuff. It's more so a problem if you're dealing with medieval-

A: Yeah!

I: because there's not so much, there's no such thing as a first person account, really. But uh...

A: Yeah! Right, right! Yeah...

I: But, uh...but that's one of the good things, and it's a little easier to do American history, because, you know, you've got personal journals and stuff like that. But...

A: Right.

I: Yeah.

A: Okay...

I: Is the Frazier involved with the local community?

A: Heck, yeah!

I: Yeah!

A: That's probably the best part of my job.

I: (Laughs)

A: We of course are really involved in the school system around here, and not only just providing field trips or doing outreach, but also a lot of the, community, the nonprofit, arts and cultural attraction networks. So, I'll give you a couple of examples right now: Jefferson County Public Schools are just about to select among the four of us who are finalists [in] the School of the Nation competition, and we have submitted this...we, along with the Frazier-er, the Louisville Science Center, and the Kentucky Museum of Arts and Crafts and these other cultural partners..

I: Mm-hm.

A: We've proposed some metro museum schools, where we, it would be a school based down here, in down town [Louisville] in the building that isn't use very much, and this whole coalition of museums would help be a resource for field trips, also a teaching resource. We would use a museum pedagogy, basically to, um...for the school. So, it's a really collaborative community. We also have this thing that just started sort of a cultural path that our mayor, Mayor Fischer-

I: Mm-hmm...

A: ...was really eager to take hold of, and kind of get some brainstorming on. What would Louisville look like in 25 years? He developed this community discussion process called "A Day in Louisville", and one thing that was said was it would be great to have full access for our kids to all these arts and cultural attractions. So, there are about a dozen of us, who this summer have said, "Okay, any Jefferson County, you know, go pick up your pass, and Jefferson County kid and an accompanying kid can get in for free to the museum. We are, we do a lot with Metro, government. We're just about to install some like, mini exhibits, in the city hall...

I: Wow!

A: just the community itself. We want the collaborative programming... and then, public appearances, going out to speaker's bureaus and stuff... we really aim to be the place that somebody thinks of "Museum Row" or...

I: You...

A: "Downtown Louisville" or "museums" that they're going to think of the Frazier and...that's really great. We have a good reputation here in the community.

I: Yeah, yeah...When I was there, you guys won Best Museum in Louisville, I believe.

A: Yeah, that's right! That's right.

I: And...

A: I think we're about to earn that again, actually.

I: Oh, excellent! So, yeah, this-

A: Yeah!

I: This is, I had no idea you guys were this ambitious. That that metro museum idea sounds like a gigantically-gigantic job, and if it works, it will pay off! Yeah!

A: I really think-not to jinx it-but I really think we have a chance to win. And if you're interested, I can send you information about that, although I don't know if it really...it really applies to what you're doing or not.

I: I'm just interested, yeah! By all means! After this, I'm hopefully going to have a career in museums, and I'd like to look at this as an example of what can be done.

A: Oh, okay!

I: So, yeah.

A: Great. Okay, um...

I: How does the Frazier select which temporary exhibits [it will host]?

A: (laughs) It's so funny, because you're asking all these really great questions...that we're all struggling with right now...

I: (Laughing)

A: Um...Of course, it's going to be a balance of cost...

I: Mm-hmm...

A: And previous experience, um...Do we, do we build in-house? Do we rent it? Um...If we rent it, what would the price point have to be, in order to um...you know, kind of make financial sense? And then sometimes it's the time of year, um...we'll try and really do a lot of family friendly stuff in the summer...

I: Mm.

A: ...and more heavy history stuff that might appeal to schools in the...in the fall, winter, spring. Um...It's amazing that there aren't a lot of great travelling exhibitions out there.

I: Yeah.

A: It is shocking how few are out there. So, it's really, really tricky. And it's so important, because study after study finds that's what drives our attendance, or membership-

I: Hmm.

A:-is temporary exhibitions. You know, we have a small base of members, about five thousand members, but people see the value and, "Oh! Well, I get in free, or at a greatly reduced cost, to these awesome, temporary exhibitions!" So we try to do a good balance of, of stuff that we make in-house...

I: Hmm.

A: ...versus a travelling exhibition; so, up-charge, not an up-charge...

I: That's...

A: That's a good question.

I: Yeah. That's, uh...yeah, because...it's-One of the things I've noticed about the Frazier Museum is when it started out, it was the "Frazier [Historical] Arms Museum".

A: Right.

I: I think, Mr. Frazier wanted it to be about weaponry, not just showing, okay, well, you can kill stuff with this; but they're seeing the art, and the science, and the physics that goes into all this stuff that, over time, you guys have really expanded, and, uh...It's not just, you know, military arms history anymore. It's this...huge-

A: Yeah.

I: branch of history, and, I mean, there was the, Mythical Creatures exhibit last year...and then, was it the Eye of Napoleon that followed up after that?

A: Yeah! Yeah. Eye of Napoleon was gorgeous. It was an absolute flop, financially.

I: (Laughing)

A: (Laughing) And then now we have the Gridiron Glory,

I: Yeah.

A: which is about football. I mean, I'm telling you, it's...pickings are slim.

I: (Laughs)

A: we're looking to develop our own, in partnership with the Redding, actually...

I: Oh!

A: The Redding Museum in Pennsylvania.

I: Okay.

A: But...

I: Yeah, that-

A: It started out as just an American impressionist paintings, and we were going to try and mimic something that the Metropolitan Museum of Art did in New York City, which was to take paintings of a certain era, and pair them with clothing. Like costumes from a certain era.

I: Huh! Okay!

A: And we just acquired a bunch of...of sort of gilded age, kind of Edwardian stuff from the Speed, who was re-fashioning some of their textile collection.

I: Hmm.

A: And now that exhibit turned from this little thing of just paintings up on the walls and dresses, to this really big, in-house developed exhibition on um...we're calling it now "Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous: Art, Style and Luxury in the Gilded Age." And it turned into a really cool exhibition, and I'm very excited for it. All that consumerism, and...

I: Yeah!

A: ...industrialization, and all that kind of stuff. Sort of that exposition...

I: Yeah, leading up into that sort of, like, the Gatsby years, and stuff like that. That...

A: Yeah! Exactly, exactly, exactly. Yeah.

I: That would be awesome. Yeah, and that, I was actually about to ask if you guys had thought about creating your own, travelling or temporary exhibits; but sounds like you are-sounds like you guys are already on that! So, yeah.

A: I'll tell you, that our exhibitions staff is exceptional. I wish you could have seen the samurai exhibition, the summer before. It--

I: Actually...I did, actually. I was doing a...but I saw it only briefly. I was actually in Indiana working at the Lincoln Boyhood Museum on an internship. And...

A: Oh! Okay!

I: I drove up on my last day in Indiana, but, again, I didn't know about the huge time zone difference, you know, right there. Only being literally just an hour or two away from Louisville, but...

A: I know! (Laughing)

I: It jumped like two hours; and I got there, and it was only fifteen minutes to see everything! So...

A: Oh, crap!

I: The girl at the front desk said, "You know what? Just go in, but you've only got fifteen minutes!" So I just ran through, and it was all like...it was beautiful! And the stuff, uh you guys all had! And then, Eric, when I was there as an intern, he was still doing some of the "Arming the Samurai" stuff; and...

A: Oh, yeah, right! Yeah, yeah, yeah!

I: So...I wish I had been able to see it in its entirety, and...But, from what I saw, it was very impressive.

A: Yeah, they do a really gorgeous job. They did this bill that was stro-well, that one, that wouldn't have travelled anyway, but, I think...In the future, we're really going to look at that. Both as a way to increase some revenue, and just, you know...

I: Mm.

A: just keep it going.

I: Yeah, that-that'd be--that'd be a good road to go down. I'd definitely support that!

A: Yeah, yeah! (laughing) next question...

I: How does the Frazier obtain most of its funding?

Well...very little is coming in from the gate, of course. We do a combination of public money from grants, and things, from federal, state, local, or from when Mr. Frazier was here, he pumped money into it. We just had an endowment...

I: Hmm!

A: But...it is not large enough to cover our operating expenses. So...

I: I see.

A: It's one of the reasons we are kind of restructuring, and really taking a look at development. The development department has a...has a big task ahead, to make us sustainable; but we are in a position that a lot of other museums are, where like the revenue that we earn from the admissions, or from the education program, we just can't pay for all of it. So we have to (cutting noise) cut down.

I: Yeah.

A: And here we go. I'm really encouraged by, out in San Diego, the Museum of Man, have you ever been into that?

I: I have not been to that one, no.

A: one of our-Kelly Williams, who is our curator of collections, she just got a job out there about four months ago.

I: Hmm.

A: And what they use, they pruned back, all the way down. I mean, they laid off so many people. It's just that, we're going bare-bones, living within our means...

I: Wow.

A: Being really invasive about our programming and the way we approach things. And now there's this room we can grow inside, up and down, because they really did this serious...Question number 1) Mission, vision, objectives, they really did a cold, hard look at what they were and what they wanted to be, and figured out how to get there. And they are, I guess...It's really, you should check out their website.

I: I will!

A: The Museum of Man, yeah.

I: And, it's just interesting, because it sounds like you guys, sound like you guys are going through a lot of the same stuff the, Higgins Armory was going through, for-

A: Yes!

I: before it closed at the end of last year, yeah.

A: Absolutely, absolutely. Yeah, that was horrible, wasn't it?

I: Yeah, it was. And, and that-I was look...I was actually thinking about going out to, Massachusetts to get some, look for some work. And hopefully I thought they'd be hiring; and then, you know, I get the email back, in November saying, "No, sorry! (Laughs) You won't have anything when you get over here!"

A: Ech! Boy, "I guess I won't be working here!" (laughs)

I: Yeah.

A: (Laughs)

I: So...

A: Yeah, that was sad. Sad, sad news.

I: Yeah.

A: Let's see...

I: What is the average turnover for Frazier staff [and management]?

A: Depends on which floor you're on!

I: (Laughs)

A: Most of us, it really does go department by department. I mean, supplement staff turns over fairly frequently, frankly, I think maybe...I've been here five and a half years, and I know I've gone through, four different development directors...

I: Wow.

A: Marketing has pretty high turnovers. Interpretations has almost no turnover.

I: Yeah (laughs) I noticed.

A: Education has low turnover...

I: Hmm.

A: ...and then the things that you would expect, like, guest services, or admissions, or security. That has a pretty high turnover. But for the most part, people have been here...three, four, five, seven years, yeah. So...

I: Yeah.

A: Fairly low turnover, in most of the museum.

I: Yeah, compared to what I've heard, you guys are, it's, like you said, Barrett, until this year, he's been there from the beginning. And so did everyone else. I think the-

A: Yeah!

I: The most recent full-time interpreter was Gerry.

A: Yes. Six, four, yes. And Victoria.

I: And Victoria?

A: Victoria's been-

I: Oh, I thought she was still an intern, though. But...

A: Oh, she was an intern, and I just loved the way she interacted with people. And so, we hired her back her senior year.

I: Huh.

A: We hired her as a part-time...a part timer; but she was going to be in charge of doing things like birthday parties. And then, last year I got her full time. After she graduated, we hired her on full-time, with the understanding that she would be doing...do work with education.

I: Okay.

A: And now, like I said, everyone's going to be...Actually, we're melding departments, so we're going to be the programming department. And so...

I: Okay.

A: I would guess that's going to be, something that the model that a lot of places will have to, have to go to.

I: Okay.

A: For full timers.

I: Ah. I see. Alright. Well, yeah, I never realized that. Okay. Then...

I: How much emphasis is put on involvement [with the education department and Frazier events?]

I: Well, this is pretty self ex--from what I understand, the interp. department was originally part of the education department. So...

A: It was, and then it broke out for some reason. I'm not sure what precipitated that; and then it came back under my wing.

I: Hmm.

A: About a year and a half ago? And then, I took over events, about...about six months ago. Well, and then that moved from the marketing department into education. And, when I say movement, we have always been involved with, with things; but now programming fall-falls within the education department. I know we've changed ...my title went from, director of education to director of programs, to now director of public programs more oriented for stuff other than exhibition. That's still its own department. I don't oversee the development of exhibitions, but I am on the exhibits planning team.

I: Okay.

A: So, if we all want to do something on, say, the Revolutionary War, I'll say....And there's an exhibition opening in the summer, I'll say, "Well, that doesn't really make sense. For Revolutionary War, we have it in the fall, because that's when school groups

are studying it; and that's a good, meaty topic that would bring in a lot of, that would drive a lot of attendance from school groups.

I: Hmm.

A: So that's been really nice to be on that, on that team. That developing, exhibitions.

I: Okay. Yeah, and, yeah...

I: What might the future look like for the Frazier?

I: You pretty much answered that earlier, so I guess we can, uh...

A: Yes.

I: Skip that over.

A: Fingers crossed! (Laughs)

I: Definitely! That's, that's quite an endeavor, and I hope I'm able to come there one of these days and see that come to fruition. So...

A: Yeah! Yeah, yeah, yeah! So... are there any other documents that I can send to you, do you think? I'm going to send the template on how we develop the...Heather has put forward and developing interpretations. And just [as] with information on the metro museum school, I had a list of all, I guess on the website, a list of all the interpretations we do. I'd be happy to send it to you in a document.

I: yeah. Actually, the website lists it, or lists most of them. but, like I said, I'm more than willing to accept anything, uh; you're willing to send me. So...

A: Okay.

I: I-I'm-

A: Let me think about-

I: Yeah, this whole thing is about "the more, the merrier", so, you know, bring it on.

A: Okay.

I: (Laughing)

A: Well, great! I'll take a look at some of the stuff, and please don't hesitate to call if you think of something else or if you think "Ooh, it'd be great if I had any..."

I: Okay!

A: Information on x-y-z!" So...and so I just need to fill out that confidentiality?

I: Yes.

A: And get that stuff back to you?

I: Yes. It's just saying I have not abused your human rights, or you know, experimented on you. It's...

A: (Laughing)

I: Thank you, Dr. Mengele! He made us all do this now! So...

A: (Laughing) All right. Well, yeah. If you have any questions or anything like that, give me a call. If you're in town, give us a call, and...

I: Absolutely, yeah!

A: Well, best of luck to you, [Interviewer]! Thank you again!

I: Well, hey-

A: All the work you did last year!

I: Hey, no problem! Like I said, thank you guys for having me! Like I said, it was eye opening chance, and it was great working with you guys! And uh...

A: Oh!

I: I'll let you get back to what you were doing, and uh...and just for the record, this was [Participant] from the Frazier Muse and today is the...wait, is today the 26th?

A: It is!

I: Okay!

A: Believe it or not!

I: Yep, I know.

A: Alright!

I: Alright, thank you very much!

A: Thanks [Interviewer]! Take care!

I: Take it easy! Bye!

A: Yep!

[End of interview]

APPENDIX E

HIGGINS ARMORY MUSEUM

DATA COLLECTED JUNE 6-11, 2014

1. Andy Volpe, Higgins Armory Museum/Higgins Armory Sword Guild; June 6-8, 2014

Short Consent Template

STUDY TITLE

I am a graduate student under the direction of Professor Nancy Dallett in the Department/Division/ College of the School of History, Philosophy, and Religious Studies at Arizona State University. I am conducting a research study to gain a better understanding of the nature and methods of historical reenactment in the United States, especially the reenactment of Pre-Modern European history and the Middle Ages.

I am inviting your participation, which will involve sitting down and answering a number of questions concerning your personal involvement with, or your group or institution's use of, historical interpretation and reenactment. You have the right not to answer any question, and to stop participation at any time.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. If you choose not to participate or to withdraw from the study at any time, there will be no penalty. You must be 18 or older to participate in this study.

Although there is no immediate benefit to yourself or your group/institution, this study will further academic understanding of historical reenactment, as well as the reenactment process itself. There are no foreseeable risks or discomforts to your participation.

Confidentiality will be maintained by keeping your personal information on a separate and private and password-locked hard drive. Any printed or written documents shall be kept under lock and key. Your responses will be confidential. The results of this study may be used in reports, presentations, or publications but your name will not be used.

I would like to audio record or video record this interview. The interview will not be recorded without your permission. Please let me know if you do not want the interview to be recorded; you also can change your mind after the interview starts, just let me know.

If you have any questions concerning the research study, please contact the research team: Ryan Hatch at 480-433-0129 or rrhatch@asu.edu; and Nancy Dallett at nancy.dallett@asu.edu. If you have any questions about your rights as a subject/participant in this research, or if you feel you have been placed at risk, you can contact the Chair of the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board, through the ASU Office of Research Integrity and Assurance, at (480) 965-6788. Please let me know if you wish to be part of the study.

By signing below you are agreeing to be part of the study, during which you may be video or audio recorded.

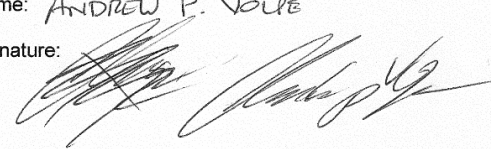
Name: ANDREW P. VOLPE

Signature: 

Date: 6/4/14

By signing below you are agreeing to allow your name to be used when quoted in the study's final report.

Name: ANDREW P. VOLPE

Signature: 

Date: 6/4/14

Email Interview-Higgins Armory Museum/Higgins Armory Sword Guild

6/8-10/2014

Interviewer (I): Student

Interviewee (A): Former member of the Higgins Armory Museum Education staff and current member of the Higgins Armory Sword Guild.

Interview Setting: The interview took place online, via email, on June 6th through June 8th, 2014.

Affiliation with the Interviewee: The Interviewee agreed to answer the interviewer's questions.

(Start of Interview)

Interviewer (I): What is the name of your group/organization?

Interviewee (A): *For this questionnaire, I'll respond from my experience with Higgins Armory Museum (hence HAM or Museum) and Higgins Armory Sword Guild (HASG or Guild). I'll include another questionnaire that details the other groups related to Higgins Armory separately.

My name is Andy Volpe, I'm a member of several organizations that have presented at Higgins Armory Museum over the years. (Wolfe Argent, Legion III Cyrenaica, Salem Trayned Band / Salem Zouaves, Higgins Armory Sword Guild, Phoenix Swords (members who were in HASG))

I: When did this group/organization begin? Is this group/organization still in operation?

A; Higgins Armory Museum / John Woodman Higgins Armory was started in 1931 by steel industrialist John W. Higgins. He started collecting arms and armor as early as 1920, and had amassed a large enough collection he decided to house the majority of it in his office building which was being built for his company, Worcester Pressed Steel in 1929. He decided that a museum to showcase his love of steel and metal fabrication would be a great way to promote his business and educate the public about metalcraft, and was planned for the top two floors of this office building. The [medieval] arms and

armor, initially, was but one small aspect. One wing of the museum was dedicated to “ancient” metalwork, where the other side was “modern” including examples from his factory which was connected to the building, and visitors could also get a tour of the factory. At one point the museum boasted “100 Steel Knights”, but remained focused on metalcraft even as the collection of arms and armor outgrew the modern (the armors had become wildly popular to visitors). When Higgins died in the 1960’s the museum was kept going through Factory operations until it closed in 1976, and it was also around this time the collection focused on arms and armor, with modern pieces phased out. The collection as a stand-alone museum in the entirety of the office building became public in the 1980’s, but was forced to close permanently in 2013 primarily due to lack of endowment and budget woes. (according to legend, Higgins left \$1500 to the maintenance of the collection, expecting the Company to keep it going just before he died) A large portion of the collection and holdings was transferred to the Worcester Art Museum (WAM)

Higgins Armory Sword Guild started as a small collection of people mutually interested in the study of swordplay and fencing, some of them were Dr. Jeffrey Forgeng (the museum’s curator), Paul Kenworthy, and the late Dr. Patri Pugliese, who also happened to have supplied the earliest facsimiles and scan copies of fencing and dance manuals. They started gathering at the museum around 1998-99, and then the group became ‘public’ around 2000-01 When it “officially” became known as Higgins Armory Sword Guild. I was one of the first members to sign up as a Guild member in ’01. The Guild ceased regular formal meetings somewhere around 2008, and ceased to exist when the museum closed in 2013.

I: What is your role within the group/organization?

A: HAM - I was first with Overknight staff in Fall 2001, which was the program (first of its kind in the U.S.) where cub scouts and groups came in at night, had a dinner, tour, craft, and slept overnight. I also did occasional staff/security during museum rentals and special events. I then moved onto Education Staff on weekends by 2002, where I developed the Roman Legionary presentation that I still do today. That was also one of the first of its kind in the region. I started doing school outreach for the museum in 2004-2006. I then returned as weekday staff for much of 2013.

HASG - I was an active participant in the Manuals studies and interpretation group that met at least once a weeknight, around Fall 2000, and there was a separate physical work component that met on Saturdays, much of that time was put towards working up

demonstration choreography, practice and presentation, as well as “experimental” work on what we had studied during the week, aka, try out what we’d read about to see how it worked. From 2002 - 2007 I was a regular demonstrator showing swordplay and other weapons nearly 3 Saturdays a month, usually two demos a day. By 2007 I was worn out and had scaled back my participation, and took a break entirely around 2009.

I also designed the “Guild Logo” used on the website and on t-shirts, which I mention in more detail below.

I: What are the mission and goals of this group/organization?

A: HAM - Was in the presentation, conservation, study, interpretation and display of arms, armor and related items spanning the Ancient world to the end of the use of armor. (That is paraphrasing the official mission statement which I do not remember and is no longer available). Specifically the majority of the collection was armors in the late Renaissance period and beyond ca 1550-1690, but also had ancient items (the oldest an Egyptian bronze axe dated 2040BCE, a significant collection of bronze Greek and Roman helmets, and the ‘newest’ on display a French Carabinier armor dated 1863). For much of its existence Higgins was the only museum in the Western hemisphere solely dedicated to Arms & Armor (the Frazier museum of industry opened in 2006 and included private collections and pieces from Royal Armouries, but then appeared to have moved away from A&A around 2011), and HAM still is (as far as I know) the 2nd largest A&A collection in the U.S. next to the MET, even when the collection was reduced when transferred to WAM)

HASG - The mission, more or less, was in the research, translation and interpretation of fencing and arms manuals from 1300 - 1870. When I started there didn’t seem to be a hard set mission or structure that was enforced, there were some initial ‘course’ requirements taking a ‘safety’ course, and basic swordsmanship (competency) classes. A hard requirement of Museum Membership to be a participant in Guild activity was enforced shortly in, but the details and administration are not well remembered by me; and wasn’t my responsibility. There seemed to be a division that formed between physical study/practitioners and a demand for regularly scheduled demonstrations several times a month by the Museum, which lead to attrition and burnt-out demonstrators. (part of the rift was the demonstrations became ‘standardized’ and the same year after year, with little fresh interpretations added in, where we were supposed to be showing the ‘latest’ research we’d done; but the public sometimes expect(ed) the same show time and time again) The first few years saw HASG as one of the leading centers of Western M.A.

research in the world, but as fencing and research (HEMAC/WMA) groups sprang up, the 'market' sort of flooded and other factors led to stagnation in much of the work. In some ways the Guild outgrew, outpaced, and forgot itself.

I: Is this group open to public membership?

A: Now that Higgins closed, what capacity there is at Worcester Art Museum for continued swordplay research and work remains unclear, although there seems to be a slow development to bring swordplay classes back. WAM did honor HAM membership to transfer over until 2014 and then be 'upgraded' to WAM membership. Any 'new' HAM memberships in 2013 were honored at WAM, as I understand it. WAM membership is open to the public.

I: What historical periods does your group/organization focus its research on?

A: HAM - As mentioned above, the major collection pieces (armors) were in the Late Renaissance and later periods, mostly 1550-1690; with Ancient pieces in the collection as well. But tours and presentations tended to focus on the "height" of armor development and use, roughly 1450 - 1530. The museum did not have any significant Roman military artifacts (although one of only 3 known Gladiator helmets in the Western Hemisphere, and a soldier's belt buckle that I felt was improperly identified), so when I started to develop the Roman Legionary program, it was initially intended to support the display of excavations done by Yale University at Dura Europos in Syria (ca 250 AD), with artifacts on loan at HAM from 1950 - 2006. Since those artifacts did not allow public photography, my program was intended to show reconstructed artifacts and fill that gap in the collection's historical scope. But, at the time, little to no quality 3rd century reconstructions were available, so we stuck with 1st century as it was not only popular (that "Gladiator" movie was a big deal, apparently), and that period gear was more readily available.

(Yale reclaimed all of the artifacts on loan in 2006 and the entirety of the Dura Europos excavation is on display there)

I joined Legion III Cyrenaica in 2004 and started group presentations around 2006; our focus is on the Legion as it may have appeared in Egypt in the Flavian period (covering roughly 69-100 AD/CE).

I should note here too that Company of the Wolfe Argent started presenting at Higgins around 1999, and was one of the first groups to give its 'living history' dressed presentations at a museum in the world. Royal Armouries did similar things around the same time, but as far as we can tell, W.A. was the first in the U.S. to give the type of program it did. The unit focuses specifically on 1476 Burgundy, and several collection pieces in HAM were exactly contemporary. Examples include a short sword with a shell-shaped pommel, is thought to be a Burgundian sword, and a breastplate that is nearly identical to a piece in a European collection ID'd as Burgundian, and other weapons were of the same time/type. Another museum display was a large diorama with hundreds of hand-painted scale figurines showing the Battle of Grandson 1476 which was one of the pivotal battles of Charles the Bold and the Burgundians. One of the key features of W.A. is they [give] an armoring presentation, showing how the armor is put on and how it moves. (I finally joined the group I think around 2009; some members had been among the first Guild members with me as well, but left to focus on W.A. stuff after a while)

HASG focused on manuals, manuscripts, treatises and 'fechtbuch' dating from 13th century all the way up to 19th century, although my initial work with the group in '01 was on Joachim Meyer's 1570 Fechtbuch. For demonstrations when historical costumes were used, we stuck with the 1470's as it seemed to be in the 'middle' of the time period these manuals were published (I suppose there is a 'middle ages' pun there). We worked on so many manuals over the years I barely remember them all. Although the significant ones I personally worked on were MS I.33 'Walpurgis' (1300's); Von Danzig / Goliath (1500's) Hans Talhoffer, (1470's); J. Meyer (1570); Leckuchner 1460's); Gia. DiGrassi (1573); Paulus Hector Mair, (1510-20's); George Silver (1600's). Weapons ranged from Sword & Buckler, Longsword, Messer, Dussack, Halberd, Pollaxe/Bec de Corbin, Sickel, Dagger, Rapier & Dagger, Armored combat (Harnessfechten) and some Wrestling.

I had started but not far independently into studying Albrecht Durer's manual and Codex Wallerstein both on Messer.

I: What standards of accuracy or authenticity does your group/organization attempt to meet?

A: HAM - The Education department tried to obtain reconstructions and 'commercially available' gear that was as accurate as we could get, but also was willing to purchase [cheaper] items that were not as accurate because much of them were intended to be used [and abused] in public demos. In one occasion, a short sword in the collection was measured and copied, produced and released in a very limited run, by Museum Replicas.

There were also a few Grants that purchased some gear over the years, such as the pair of “gothic” styled harnesses intended for armored combat and there were some donated and commissioned pieces over the years.

My first Roman armor was of the ‘lorica segmentata’ type from Museum Replicas that the Museum got through a grant. Unfortunately it was the worst piece of crap I ever had to work with, but the only thing I had available at the time. I soon was able to replace it with a much better example but through my own purchase. Actually, 100% of my gear within my 3rd year of Roman programs was entirely my own. I used much of the standards put forth by Leg XX Valeria Victrix, a Roman Legion reenacting group in Maryland (I happen to be an Associate Member), which is very highly respected for its exhaustive research and reconstructions. I’ve since tried to keep up with the most current interpretations and studies of the artifacts.

HASG had a rift of sorts when it came to accuracy, because we were studying so many periods and weapons, we couldn’t really settle on a specific period, so at the time it was decided to go with modern shirts and pants, a ‘Guild’ T-shirt with a design I created as well as the HASG logo that incorporated a cutting diagram, crossed-swords, Higgins museum helmet logo and open book design in 2002. (which incidentally went to...”Inspire”...Other WMA group logos. If I’d been more forward-thinking / aggressive there’d be copyright infringements, but I know what I did and did it ‘first’). When we did end up building (slowly) a historical costume for both Museum and outside presentations, we stuck with the 1460-80 period, as mentioned above, as the ‘best fit’, although some individual members also had 1300’s, 1570’s and 1600’s specific clothing. (among the very first sword demos done by Patri, Paul and Jeffrey in 1999-2000 was in 1590-1600 clothing when they did some demos on Swetnam rapier)

Although our overall goal was not so much in the costuming (which provided its own rift around 2006 but a whole other story) but the accuracy of our research, translation, interpretation and presentation of the weapons work. We also strived to get accurate reproduced weaponry, such as the a 14th century short-sword, in the Museum collection mentioned above, and longwords modeled after Meyer’s manual and an example at the MET, as other weapons modeled after the manuals. Early on we worked with wooden wasters, but eventually moved onto steel examples too. (wood tended to be used by beginners, metal for advanced and demonstrators)

I: What methods of historical interpretation does your group/organization utilize?

A: HAM - The Arms & Armor demos the Museum did were in regular museum clothing (Business casual), and went through very basic descriptions of different weapons, a maille-cutting demonstration with a hapless (young) audience member, and sometimes putting an audience member into a cuirass and helmet(s). There were variations on the theme over the years, an “armor ala carte” that cropped up now and again (one I remember from my childhood visit) These were not 1st person. There were a handful of women who worked at the museum for a time who developed their own “Women in Armor”: Joan of Ark, Celtic, Roman, Viking/Norse and a Queen Elizabeth presentation. Those were predominately 1st-Person but I had nothing to do with those, so can’t comment about them. There was a handful of 1st-Person male presentations done by Eury Cantillo, who was the Outreach coordinator around 2001-03, who had developed most notably a presentation on Hernan Cortez and Conquistadors, and a presentation on English mounted warfare in the English Civil War, but again, I did not develop them and had no involvement, so I can’t comment on how they were conducted.

HASG wasn’t much on 1st person or similar presentations. There was a short-lived thing where we acted as if we were in a fencing Salle but it was complicated and not everyone in Guild was into it nor had the proper historical costuming (or desire to do so) Early on we were big on “gory details” which lost a lot of the audience, as well as “scaring children”. So, it got toned down and became each of the segment pairs introducing and describing each section/weapons form. It usually followed 2-3 swords, a dagger or small weapon, and a polearm format. The few times [we] had Armored combat, one or two of us in regular medieval clothes would act as squires, and the two [knights] would do much of the narration and demo.

That said, the demo standard was usually an “At Speed” intro, a step-by-step explanation, then a finishing At-Speed with a counter or “trick”, usually a disarm. Some of the Step-by-step explanation and background history tended to be very wordy, but we tried to inject some humor. When Patri was alive he was known to (sarcastically) say only he was capable of making a swordfight “boring” or put people to sleep with his explanations. (He held a Doctorate from Harvard University, after-all.) Some of us were so nerdy into the nitty-gritty details sometimes we forgot the audience just wanted to see a damned swordfight already!

I, personally, refuse to do any 1st person, especially for Roman. There is so little we ‘actually know as fact’ about the Romans I think it’s impossible to have a solid character portrayal, let alone able to relate to modern people and esthetics. Instead I merely ‘dress

the part' and talk about the research I've done and give an idea of what it 'might have been like'. I also like to try and make parallels to the modern age to better connect ancient history to modern times.

I: What sources do you utilize for your research?

A: As mentioned above, much of it is archaeological artifacts, museum collection pieces, and manuals translations and facsimile copies/scans, artwork, etc.

The Ed. Dept. had a lot of material that was "standard" and written down for the staff to study and interpret from. Much of it was related directly to specific collection pieces as part of the tours the staff would conduct both for schools, overnights and private group tours. Some information was taken directly from Curatorial and Conservation departments, learning from their study of the actual materials.

Guild had the actual manuals, and their facsimile copies. Around 2005 the museum was able to acquire one of the very few Joachim Meyer books, as well as an English translation (I think) of Di Grassi. I got to get my hands on the Meyer manual once. It was wonderful.

I: What are your methods of research?

A: On the Manual study group nights during the week, we had facsimile copies of the manuals, such as which provided by Patri Pugliese; When it came to Meyer (as well as Leckuchner, Mair, I.33), we were working off some of the initial translations Dr. Jeffrey Forgeng (Museum Curator) from the German he had done, as he was working on his now published translations of I.33 and Meyer at the time, but there were a number of sessions with some 'translating live' from people like Dr. Forgeng and Amy West and others who had the language background from the German and Latin. We then went through the physical motions of what we thought [Meyer] was describing, that was usually what I was doing with Frank Hunt (Phoenix Swords) and Mark Millman (Became a Guild fencing instructor). We seemed to have stuck with literal translations of each segment or sequence, although we went through several revisions when we went to look back and re-read it.

There were a few times where Dr. Forgeng realized he'd made a translation error, or, realized there was a 'better' word or meaning of a word, phrase that seemed to make more sense. So we'd go through it again with the different wording and see if it worked better, etc.

HAM - For general Ed. Staff the museum had a whole Educational library for Ed Staff to pour through. Some books were decades old, some were new. As one could imagine, some information was better than others. They encouraged staffers to conduct research on their own time, and come up with one's own 'spin', but following the 'standard' demo format and patter was also acceptable, since the A&A demos and some tours were very generalized for time constraints and audience age range.

Roman stuff was from several sources, publications, journals and from other reenactors like Matt Amt / Legion XX. We also had the Dura Europa artifacts for a time and some museum collection pieces. Because I had the background in Guild in physical work, a few times I'd bring my Roman gear and try things out to see what worked and what didn't step-by-step or "What if I did this?" or what seemed like "A really bad idea so let's not do that because I'd like to keep my teeth" sort of stuff.

I: What forms of public outreach and presentation does your group/organization utilize?

A: HAM - There was internal Public demos, mostly Arms and Armor demos that covered the basics of the Museum's history, and general development of arms vs armor done in the Auditorium. There were public tours, self guided tours, school, and overnight tours. There was also a "Founder's Day" offering free admission for the day and an assortment of presentations, and there was a handful of "Higgins Faires" in the summer that were Renaissance Faire-like but got way too complicated and over crowded. There were also holiday museum events like Halloween, Father's/Mother's Days (being Knighted or Queened), Christmas with an annual Gingerbread House/Castle contest, etc.

The museum for years did school outreaches, and these varied between a collection of arms and armor as a traveling auditorium show, often as a hands-on display; there was also the specific time period demos that became our hot-ticket starting around 2000, like the Medieval Soldier, Gothic Knight / How to Arm a Knight, Roman Legionary, Pike and Shot / Arms of Shakespeare's Day. Added later there was Celtic Warrior / Celt vs Roman, Viking/Norse, 14th century Knight. For a short time the Gothic harnesses were used for a "walking mascot" sort of thing which made some appearances at media events and the like, and sometimes used for museum rentals and weddings. The last few years audience participation and hands-on was strongly emphasized, although not always with the best results (put plastic/wooden weapons into kids' hands who are wound up and/or on sugar, and see what happens). There were also some hands-on craft-like activities with the travel package.

HASG was primarily demonstrating our research at the museum on a regular schedule. It got to the point where visitors traveled from a distance specifically to see our demos. (That was a thrilling if humbling experience) the Guild also started doing a regular appearance at a Sci-Fi/Fantasy/Literature convention in Boston, called Arisia, and for a time, Arisia's 'father' convention, Boskone. Some of those demos we had a "Roman vs Knight" where I'd be in Roman armor and (Mark Millman, Dr Forgem) in Gothic harness and we'd do a compare/contrast presentation as both were armored soldiers and well known in Pop culture; then a "What If the two met" scenario, which was a lot of fun and generated a lot of attention and discussion.

There were a few other similar conventions we did, too. There were also a few Renaissance faires that we did presentations at. The Museum itself would sometimes (individually) set up a display and hands-on table at some of these faires and venues. The idea was to draw in more visitors and potential paying museum members. As mentioned earlier, there were a handful of Sword Guild "walk in" sessions as an introduction into WMA and swordplay, with varying degrees of success and new members. The museum also had some "special events" where Guild provided some demos and public interaction, like when the museum brought in Gary Gygax as a special guest for a day, and the last few years a "Lord of the Rings" and "Robin Hood" days. There was even a few "Star Wars" days which invited members of the area 501st Legion group, and Guild members did "Lightsabre" demos showing how Lucas [would have been] influenced by historical manuals and of course, Japanese swordplay, (and items in the museum collection) as well as how a Lightsabre fight "might happen" had they been utilizing WMA techniques. It was all good fun, certainly drew in a huge crowd each time.

I: What guidelines or regulations does your organization adhere to?

A: HAM - There was a Museum Standard Procedure in place for Education staff, who had to act as tourguides and collections security. Massachusetts State laws I'm sure had some say as well as how much/little a museum staffer could do or be asked to take responsibility for, etc. There was of course the "Act in a Professional Manner" quotient one would expect of any museum or institution. Our duty was First to the collection (protection), aka "Don't Touch That". Public education/interpretation/interaction/answering questions Second. Directions to the restrooms was an immediate Third. For a long time we regularly had to correct misinformation and myth from horrible Hollywood movies or TV shows or video games, Like trying to explain that wearing 50-60 pounds of metal that's made to fit you, does not require a crane to put you on a horse, or that you could easily get back up if you fell

down, swords could not cut you in half while wearing armor, and other ridiculous assumptions and misconceptions.

The most difficult, frustrating and stressful time was the last 5 months of 2013 when the museum closed. On an hourly basis we had to answer why the museum was closing, how much a shame/travesty it was, and usually, what happens to the building, and asked if we had a new job waiting or where we were going. We had to answer professionally and without [getting] emotional, all the while display pieces were being moved out for maintenance and preparations for moving to WAM or to Auction. But, we did it as best we could.

HASG I don't exactly remember all the details. [Metal] weapons could be handled by the audience, but we had to keep at least one firm hand on (the blade) and ask them not to swing them around. Some of those "common sense" concepts. Guild members/demonstrators had to maintain their museum memberships, and for a time had to take a "refresher" course in basic swordsmanship/competency and safety, even if they were taking classes or attending Saturday practices regularly.

I: What equipment or resources does your group/organization require?

A: HAM provided gear but encouraged Ed. staffers to supplement their own, as long as it was deemed acceptable by the Ed. managers and director. Sometimes new gear was purchased for Ed. programs and demos. Although budget woes especially in the last 5 years, made getting gear difficult as the quality gear was 'too expensive' and the cheap gear was, cheap. There was a pile of repro's we used in demos that were in use for A&A demos for several years.

HASG members were asked to wear "loose comfortable clothing", and encouraged to buy [leather] gloves and any personal protection they wanted. Otherwise there was hardly any required gear. Much of the gear used was purchased through the Museum/Education's budget, and provided to Guild members to use at the museum. A bunch of weaponry and gear for classes and demonstrations was purchased at some point early on, I think around 2005, but details are fuzzy. There were a handful of weapons/gear that was 'donated'/loaned to the Guild's use by individual members. The massed purchased gear was technically Museum property which sometimes led to some arguments about who gets to use it when/how and if the gear could be taken for use in outside demos from the museum property. But, that's not something I can really elaborate on in detail. There was a short lived movement to go to 'live sparring' wearing masks and padding, but only a handful of people took that on. (I was not interested).

When Academy of the Sword wedged itself into the museum and into Guild space, they managed to buy an outfit of modern fencing clothing and masks and some sparring weapons. The Viking group (Hurtwic) managed to make or procure its own [padded] weapons and gear.

I: How does this group/organization obtain its funding?

A: HAM - The museum's operating finances was from direct admissions, memberships, Renaissance Society contributions, donations, endowments and cultural grants. As well as Gift Shop sales, School tours, Sword Guild classes, Outreach and Rental fees.

HASG - I cannot comment in detail, I wasn't part of that aspect of the Guild. From what I know, it was funded primarily through the Museum. Most of the out-of-museum events like Arisia or Renaissance fairs were volunteer.

I: Is this group involved with any academic or historical institutions (i.e. museums or historical societies)?

A: HASG was essentially another branch of the Museum itself, through volunteer contributions and efforts. It was more a less a bridge between the Education and Curatorial departments (as Dr. Forgeng was the museum's curator and he being a founding member of the group), so separating either elements and their involvement with other institutions becomes difficult. Because John Higgins had attended Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI) there was a relationship between WPI and HAM, Dr Forgeng was also an adjunct professor at WPI, and students there had created informational and promotional films with Guild demonstrators and some of the associated reenacting groups (Wolfe Argent), which were used by the Museum. Dr. Forgeng visited the MET a number of times, and historically, John Higgins was supported and encouraged by Bashford Dean, who was the A&A Curator at MET back in John's time. Guild and some other Museum people have contributed papers and presentations at Western Martial Arts conferences at Kalamazoo in Michigan over the years. We also had a sort of working relationship with John Waller, Andy Dean and Keith Ducklin from the Royal Armouries, who visited and gave workshops a few times. The Museum itself loaned artifacts to other institutions, and had traveling exhibitions like the "Age of Armor" which went through several dozen U.S. cities around 2003-05. I happened to draw a parts of an armor diagram using one of the museum armors that was published in the traveling catalog. Dr. Forgeng also attended some of the Tournament of the Phoenix in California, and was part of the DVD documentary production (2012?) about jousting. Other institutions contributed artifacts for specific exhibitions over the years, ie the Massachusetts

Historical Society. The Conservator, Bill MacMillian, hosted a 'Metal Artifacts Conservation Conference' (I forget the official title) that was conducted at HAM, WAM, and WPI. Guild was also able to bring in special guests for WMA studies and workshops such as Bob Charon, Steven Hand, Christian Tobler, and Ramon Martinez, and in 2013 had a visit by the Irongate Exposition (formerly Boston Sword Conference I think was the name). Some Guild members (continue to) contribute papers and presentations at Kalamazoo and UMass Amherst Center of Renaissance Studies which holds an annual Swordsmanship Conference in the spring, thanks to Jeff Lord who was an early Guild member and fencing instructor.

I: What does the future look like for this group/organization?

A: HASG effectively ceased meetings and demonstrations in 2011. Some former Guild members have formed other WMA groups and manuals study groups around Massachusetts. A [rival] organization, the Higgins Academy of the Sword under Ken Mondschein, ceased functions when the Higgins Armory Museum closed in 2013 and has since apparently moved to Worcester Fencing Academy and classes at UMass Amherst.

There are rumors that sword studies and classes may resume at Worcester Art Museum where the Higgins collection was moved, but nothing I am currently involved with. I personally took a 'break' from manual reading and interpretation since 2009, but recently slowly edging back into it with Phoenix Swords and some other former Higgins-associated people.

I'm still very active with the [reenacting] groups that were involved with Higgins and comprised of Guild members (Wolfe Argent, Salem Trayned Band, Phoenix Swords)

As for HAM Education staff, there was about a dozen of us in 2013, and all but 3-4 managed to find other jobs or opportunities so far. Out of the Museum staff, 4 had managed to be brought directly over to WAM, 2 of them (assistant curator and assistant conservator) were there temporarily until they went to post-grad work in England this summer.

I happen to be one of the handful who has not found other work, although I have been "back" to the museum building a few times in 2014 in helping move and collate items like office furniture for the final liquidation auction, which happens the 2nd Saturday in June 2014.

I: How might this group/organization increase its public outreach/membership size/funding?

A: HAM - For the Collection and interpretation, it's in WAM's hands, now. They have their own marketing department and more facilities for public/media exposure than HAM allowed itself the last 10 years. WAM also has an entirely different clientele and means of funding, but it sounds like some of the 'old' demos Higgins used to do are being well received at WAM, and the reenacting groups appear to be in demand for programming. [We] have now established a few months' worth of scheduling, nearly identical at Higgins, for the reenacting groups to present at WAM. My Roman program had its first one on June 8, and we're currently scheduled into November. There is an enormous amount of potential growth for a variety of programming the groups could do at WAM that wasn't immediately accessible, possible, or conceived at HAM, so the groups' presentations can evolve into something new and interesting. Although at the same time, some qualities of HAM are clearly lost at WAM. But, when the entirety of the collection is integrated, anticipating around 2017 or so, who knows what will happen.

As for as HASG goes, I have no idea what will become of swordplay at WAM.

I, personally, am continuing my efforts in promoting and booking my independent school and library presentations, as well as my art research (looking at Old Master techniques and tools utilizing facsimiles of period manuals and treatises).

I: How much emphasis is put on educating the general public about the period(s) this group/organization represents?

A: A tremendous effort is placed on educating and interacting with the public. No coincidence the groups who were involved with and allowed to present at the Museum were sought after because of their exceptional level of detail and research.

(End of Interview)

2. Resa Nelson, Higgins Armory Museum; June 11, 2014

Short Consent Template

STUDY TITLE

I am a graduate student under the direction of Professor Nancy Dallett in the Department/Division/ College of the School of History, Philosophy, and Religious Studies at Arizona State University. I am conducting a research study to gain a better understanding of the nature and methods of historical reenactment in the United States, especially the reenactment of Pre-Modern European history and the Middle Ages.

I am inviting your participation, which will involve sitting down and answering a number of questions concerning your personal involvement with, or your group or institution's use of, historical interpretation and reenactment. You have the right not to answer any question, and to stop participation at any time.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. If you choose not to participate or to withdraw from the study at any time, there will be no penalty. You must be 18 or older to participate in this study.

Although there is no immediate benefit to yourself or your group/institution, this study will further academic understanding of historical reenactment, as well as the reenactment process itself. There are no foreseeable risks or discomforts to your participation.

Confidentiality will be maintained by keeping your personal information on a separate and private and password-locked hard drive. Any printed or written documents shall be kept under lock and key. Your responses will be confidential. The results of this study may be used in reports, presentations, or publications but your name will not be used.

I would like to audio record or video record this interview. The interview will not be recorded without your permission. Please let me know if you do not want the interview to be recorded; you also can change your mind after the interview starts, just let me know.

If you have any questions concerning the research study, please contact the research team: Ryan Hatch at 480-433-0129 or rhatch@asu.edu; and Nancy Dallett at nancy.dallett@asu.edu. If you have any questions about your rights as a subject/participant in this research, or if you feel you have been placed at risk, you can contact the Chair of the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board, through the ASU Office of Research Integrity and Assurance, at (480) 965-6788. Please let me know if you wish to be part of the study.

By signing below you are agreeing to be part of the study, during which you may be video or audio recorded.

Name: Resa Nelson

Signature: Resa Nelson

Date: 6/5/2014

By signing below you are agreeing to allow your name to be used when quoted in the study's final report.

Name:

Signature: Resa Nelson

Date: 6/5/2014

Email Interview-Higgins Armory Museum

6/11/2014

Interviewer (I): Student

Interviewee (A): Former member and demonstrator at the Higgins Armory Museum

Interview Setting: Interview was conducted online, via email, on June 11, 2014.

Affiliation with the interviewee: The interviewee has acted as an instructor in various styles of western martial arts.

(Start of Interview)

Interviewer (I): What is the name of your group/organization?

Interviewee (A): I was a member of the Higgins Armory Sword Guild.

I: When did this group/organization begin? Is this group/organization still in operation?

A: Not sure when it started. Sometime in the late 1990s, I think. Not sure if it survived the museum's closing. It may exist in another form.

I: What is your role within the group/organization?

A: I was a demonstrator and also participated in the study and interpretation of historical martial arts manuals written hundreds of years ago. My sword partner and I created a new demo for the guild and the museum based on our study.

I: What are the mission and goals of this group/organization?

[Skipped]

I: Is this group open to public membership?

A: Yes, but it required a museum membership.

I: What historical periods does your group/organization focus its research on?

A: Approximately 1200s to 1600s.

I: What standards of accuracy or authenticity does your group/organization attempt to meet?

A: As high as possible. The guild acknowledged that studying these manuals involves a lot of speculation but the goal was to strive to be as accurate and authentic as possible.

I: What methods of historical interpretation does your group/organization utilize?

A: 1. Translate copies of original manuscripts written hundreds of years ago by weapons experts. (For example, from medieval German to English.) 2. Read the translated text and study the illustrations. 3. Physical interpretation, meaning, use each person's base of knowledge to figure out what the text and illustrations mean by trying to copy them physically. (Base of knowledge includes not only experience with historical martial arts but experience with modern-day fencing as well as other martial arts like karate.) The Higgins Armory Museum offered several courses in historical martial arts. In other words, you could take a course and learn historically accurate ways to use weapons such as German long sword, Italian rapier and dagger, dagger, sword and buckler, etc. Members of the sword guild typically joined the sword guild after taking one or more courses.

I: What sources do you utilize for your research?

A: Copies of manuscripts written by martial arts masters from the 1200s to the 1600s. When I was a member, the focus was on books written by Joaquin Meyer.

I: What are your methods of research?

A: Same as answer to Question #8.

I: What forms of public outreach and presentation does your group/organization utilize?

A: Demonstrations on a regular basis at the Higgins Armory Museum and at local science fiction conventions and other events.

I: What guidelines or regulations does your organization adhere to?

A: Safety is at the top of the list. All members must first complete a safety course (in how to use wasters) and then complete a basic weapons course before being eligible to join the guild. Each meeting usually began with a group warm-up, which consisted of

doing drills of the most basic sword blows. Otherwise, the model was academic, meaning, members were responsible for how they spent their time, what they studied, and how they chose to study.

I: What equipment or resources does your group/organization require?

A: Copies of historical manuscripts. Wooden wasters of various weapons.

I: How does this group/organization obtain its funding?

A: Not sure. This is speculation on my part: my understanding is that museums typically survive on endowments/trusts/investments, while a small amount of income comes from museum admissions.

I: Is this group involved with any academic or historical institutions (i.e. museums or historical societies)?

A: Higgins Armory Museum

I: What does the future look like for this group/organization?

A: I don't know. I was a member of the Higgins Armory Sword Guild from 2002 to about 2006 or so. The museum closed at the end of 2013.

I: How might this group/organization increase its public outreach/membership size/funding?

A: Some of the Higgins collection has been absorbed by the Worcester Art Museum. I don't know if this is true, but it's possible the guild might continue under WAM.

I: How much emphasis is put on educating the general public about the period(s) this group/organization represents?

A: Very high emphasis. When I was a demonstrator at the museum, each demo began with a brief talk about the time period represented by the demo. This included some basic history about that time period and the role that weapons played in it.

(End of Interview)