

General SCA Terms

A list of terms and definitions to refer to, as you become familiar with the Society for Creative Anachronism.

Anachronism: Anything that is out of its proper time and place. We are the Society for Creative Anachronism because we re-create the Middle Ages and Renaissance in modern times.

Anno Societatis: Latin term for "in the year of the Society"; used in dates (Anno Societatis XXX). Sometimes abbreviated as A.S.

AoA: Shorthand term for Award of Arms.

Apprentice: Someone who has a formal teacher/student relationship with a member of the Order of the Laurel. Often signified by wearing a green belt (many times with the Laurel's arms on the end of it).

Archer Marshal: The officer in charge of archery who certifies that shooting procedures and equipment are safe.

Archivist: Another term for a group's historian.

Arms: What a heraldic device is called, once a person has received an Award of Arms (AoA) or higher award. The heraldic emblem members of the SCA use to identify themselves.

Arts and Sciences: General term for the arts, crafts, technology, and science of the middle ages. Many times shorten to A&S. Example of arts & sciences are: sewing, armor-making, leathercraft and cooking.

A&S: Abbreviation for Arts & Sciences. General term for the study of the arts, crafts, technology and science of the Middle Ages.

A.S.: Abbreviation for Anno Societatis; Latin term for "in the year of the Society".

Authorised: Refers to a fighter who has proven to the fighter marshals that they are no danger in combat to themselves or others.

Autocrat: The person in charge of an event.

Award of Arms: The first level of personal awards one can receive in the SCA. It confers the title of Lord or Lady upon it's recipient. This level of award is usually given for showing promise in one or more areas or for service given to a group or the Kingdom.

Bardic Circle: An informal gathering for singing and storytelling.

Baron: Title for the male noble who oversees a barony. (Also called a Landed Baron.) They are addressed as "Your Excellency".
[Compare to the term: Court Baron]

Baronage: The term used when referring to both the Baron and Baroness of a group.

Baroness: Title for the female noble who oversees a barony. (Also called a Landed Baroness.) They are addressed as "Your Excellency".
[Compare to the term: Court Baroness]

Barony: A large chartered local group of the SCA.

BoD: The Board of Directors.

Brass Hat: A slang term for anyone entitled to wear a coronet or crown; derived originally from US military slang where the term refers to officers (who have gold braid on their caps).

Canton: A chartered local group of the SCA, connected to a Barony.

Castellan: A (male) officer who acts as a group's "greeter", making sure that new members and visitors informed of activities, are introduced with group members who share similar interests, and many times acts as the group's demo coordinator. They provide hospitality. This person in this position is sometimes called a Hospitaller or a Chatelain.

Chatelaine: A (female) officer who acts as a group's "greeter", making sure that new members and visitors informed of activities, are introduced with group members who share similar interests, and many times acts as the group's demo coordinator. They provide hospitality. This person in this position is sometimes called a Hospitaler.

Children: Children is the preferred term to apply to the younger members of the SCA. In times past other terms such as halflings, smalls, urchins, etc have been used to refer to children. We are attempting to change this. Children are a valuable resource to the SCA, as they will carry on our work and ideals. We desire to show respect for them.

Chirurgion: A medical officer. [Usually pronounced Ki-ur-jon.] Sometimes also spelled Chirurgeon.

Chivalry: The Order of the Knighthood and the Order of the Mastery of Arms.

Chronicler: An officer who publishes a local, Kingdom or Society newsletter.

CLEAR!: A term announced before drawing a knife from its sheath, a sword from its scabbard, etc. It means "Beware, I am unsheathing live steel." The use of the word is both a courtesy as well as a safety measure.

Compleat Anachronist: The name of a SCA publication in which each issue is dedicated to one specific historical or SCA topic.

Coronation: An event in which the investiture of a new King and Queen takes place. (The Prince and Princess step up as the next King and Queen.)

Corpora: The governing and policy decisions of the Board of Directors of the SCA.

Count: The title of someone who has ruled as King once and stepped down. They are addressed as "Your Excellency".

Countess: The title of someone who has ruled as Queen once and stepped down. They are addressed as "Your Excellency".

Court: A special gathering held by the Royalty, Baronage, etc for announcements and awards.

Court Baron: Someone who has had the honor of having the noble title of baron bestowed upon them by the Crown (usually for a great amount of service). They are not "landed", and do not oversee a barony. They are addressed as "Your Excellency".

Court Baroness: Someone who has had the honor of having the noble title of baroness bestowed upon them by the Crown (usually for a great amount of service). They are not "landed", and do not oversee a barony. They are addressed as "Your Excellency".

Crash Space: Informal lodgings with members of the group holding the event or in unused spaces at the event; usually just floor space for you to be able to put your own sleeping bag, etc..

Crown, The: The term used to refer to the King and Queen.

Crown Tourney: The fighting tournament held every six months to choose the successor of the current King and Queen. The fighter that wins (male or female) and their consort become the Prince and Princess who then will take over as King and Queen.

Dame: An alternate title that can be used by a female Knight of the SCA. (Female knights may also use the title Sir.)

Damp Site: Site where wine, beer, and mead are permitted, but no hard liquor.

Demo: A talk or demonstration given by SCA members to non-SCA people or non-SCA groups.

Dance Minister/Mistress: An unofficial officer in charge of dancing activities for a group.

Device: Also referred to as a heraldic device. The heraldic emblem a member of the SCA can use to identify themselves.

Discretely Wet: Refers to a site that normally do not allow alcohol, but the owners have agreed to permit us to use alcohol as long as the labeled containers are kept out of sight and removed from the location after the event.

Dry Site: Site where no alcohol is allowed.

Duke: The title of someone who has ruled as King two or more times and stepped down. They are addressed as "Your Grace".

Duchess: The title of someone who has ruled as Queen two or more times and stepped down. They are addressed as "Your Grace".

Earl: An alternate title for Count. Someone who has ruled as King once and stepped down. They are addressed as "Your Excellency".

Event: An official function of the SCA. A larger Society gathering that focuses on re-creating a day at a medieval faire, royal tournament or special feast day. A wide variety of activities occur at an event which may include fighting tournaments, archery tournaments, equestrian tournaments, games, craft competitions, classes on topics of interest, music, dancing, singing, cooking, feasting and general good fun.

Event Steward: Another term for autocrat. The person in charge of an event.

Exchequer: The treasurer for a group, principality or kingdom.

Favor: A personal token given as a mark of friendship or love. In a Crown Tournament the fighter and the prospective consort exchange favors to show their commitment to rule together.

Feast: An elaborate meal. Usually of exceedingly good quality. (If you have any food allergies, be sure to inform the Feastocrat, and a special accommodations will be made for you.)

Feast Steward: Another term for feastocrat. The head cook in charge of the feast at an event.

Feastocrat: The head cook in charge of the feast at an event.

Feast Gear: A place setting for use at a feast. It is recommended that you have at least a plate, bowl, spoon, knife and a drinking vessel. Other items that could be added are: a napkin, fork, tablecloth, and candles. If you are eating feast at an event, assume that you will need your feast gear unless the announcement says that you don't.

Garb: Clothing based on medieval or renaissance design. The SCA required an attempt at such attire to participate at events.

Gentle: General term to refer to any person in the Society.

Gold Key: The officer who keeps spare garb (clothing) for new people to borrow until they acquire their own. Sometimes they will also have extra feast gear, etc. This officer works with the Castellan/Chatelaine office.

Graf: An alternate title for Count. Someone who has ruled as King once and stepped down. They are addressed as "Your Excellency".

Grant of Arms: The second level of personal awards one can receive in the SCA. Generally given for showing skill in one or more areas or for extended service.

Guild: An official Kingdom-recognized group of individuals which meet to study or practice a period art or science.

Her Ladyship: The title used when referring to a female gentle who has received a Grant of Arms, or an Grant of Arms bearing award. (i.e. "Where is Her Ladyship Jane?") Your Ladyship is used when addressing such a person. (i.e. "Greetings, Your Ladyship Jane!") Some kingdoms use the words Honorable Lady instead.

Herald: The officer in charge of overseeing the heraldic needs of a group, Principality, Kingdom or the Society. These including helping people develop and register names & heraldic devices, and with making announcements at events and courts.

Herald, Book: A herald who specializes in helping people register SCA names and devices,.

Herald, Vocal: A herald who specializes in making announcements at events and courts.

Heraldic Display: The practice of placing one's heraldic elements on various items to add to the ambiance of an event. Items can include clothes, equipment and banners, amongst other things.

Heraldry: The art, science and study of heraldic practices, particularly in the Middle Ages.

High Table: The table reserved at feasts for the presiding royalty and honored guests.

His Lordship: The title used when referring to a male gentle who has received a Grant of Arms, or an Grant of Arms bearing award. (i.e. "Where is His Lordship John?") Your Lordship is used when addressing such a person. (i.e. "Greetings, Your Lordship John!") Some kingdoms use the words Honorable Lord instead.

Historian: An unofficial officer of a group who maintains the historical records of the group's activities. In some groups this officer also records the minutes at official meetings.

HOLD! : A term meaning, "Stop! Be quiet and stand still!" When you hear this, it means that something potentially dangerous has happened or about to happen. It may mean that a fighter is down on the field, or it may mean that you are about to step into a ditch. Until you know which, it is wise to stand still and listen. Look around you and make sure that things are safe before proceeding.

Honorable Lady: The title used when referring to a female gentle who has received a Grant of Arms, or an Grant of Arms bearing award. (i.e. "Where is the Honorable Lady Jane?") Some kingdoms use the words Her Ladyship instead.

Honorable Lord: The title used when referring to a male gentle who has received a Grant of Arms, or an Grant of Arms bearing award. (i.e. "Where is the Honorable Lord John?") Some kingdoms use the words His Lordship instead.

Household: A voluntary association of friends or group of people with a similar interest, organized under whatever rules the members jointly accept. Households have no formal standing in the SCA.

Interest Group: A group of individuals which meet to study or practice a period art or science.

Investiture: A term used for the ceremony of installing a new ruling noble. It can be the investiture of a new King and Queen, the investiture of new Baronage, etc.

King: The male ruler of a Kingdom. They are address as "Your Majesty".

Kingdom: One of the regions the world is divided into, within the Society.

Knight: Someone who is a member of the Order of the Knighthood. It is conferred on someone for has displayed a mastery of the martial skills and taken an Oath of Knighthood. They are addressed as "Sir" (for either male or female), although female knights may also use the title of "Dame".

Knight Marshal: The officer in charge of combat who certifies that combat procedures and equipment are safe.

Known World: (Also spelled Knowne Worlde) All the groups of the SCA, taken as a whole.

Lady: The title used when addressing or referring to a female gentle who has received an Award of Arms, or an Award of Arms bearing award. (i.e. "Greetings, Lady Jane!" "Where is Lady Jane?")

Laurel: Someone who is a member of the Order of the Laurel. It is conferred on someone for has displayed mastery in one or more of the crafts, arts & sciences of the SCA, and who has shared that knowledge over an extended period of time. They are addressed as "Master" (male) or "Mistress" (female).

List or Listfield: The area where fighting is held, usually marked off with ropes. Do not enter unless you are fighting or marshalling.

Live Steel: A blade made of steel or other metal, usually with a sharp edge, as opposed to one made of rattan.

Lord: The title used when addressing or referring to a male gentle who has received an Award of Arms, or an Award of Arms bearing award. (i.e. "Greetings, Lord John!" "Where is Lord John?")

Master: The title used when address or referring to a male gentle who has received an Patent of Arms bearing award. (i.e. "Greetings, Master John!" "Where is Master John?")

Master-of-Arms: Someone who is a member of the Order of the Mastery of Arms. It is conferred on someone for has displayed a mastery of the martial skills, but has elected not to a member of the Knighthood. They are addressed as "Master".

Milady: A generic address to any female in the Society. Often useful when you don't know what awards or rank the person might bear.

Milord: A generic address to any male in the Society. Often useful when you don't know what awards or rank the person might bear.

Minister of Arts & Sciences: The officer who oversees the art and science activities of a group.

Minister of Children: The officer who is in charge of children's activities for a group. THEY ARE NOT A BABYSITTING SERVICE. They only oversee the activities aimed at children, not the children.

Mistress: The title used when address or referring to a female gentle who has received an Patent of Arms bearing award. (i.e. "Greetings, Mistress Jane!" "Where is Mistress Jane?")

Mundane: Refers to something that is modern, not SCA related.

Newbie: Some who is new member to the Society.

On-board: Refers to space at tables reserved for people who have paid to eat the Feast at an Event. Remember, the feast is only one meal. Unless the event offers other meals, assume that you will need to provide for yourself.

Off-board: Refers to table-space reserved for people not eating feast, but bringing their own food. This allows more people to share the entertainment/ambiance provided at feast. Note that few sites have the luxury of offering this space due to size constraints. Do not count on off-board space being available unless it is advertised.

Oyez: Pronounced, "O-yay". It is a term meaning "Please listen, I am going to announce something of importance and/or interest." When you hear someone calling "Oyez", stop talking and listen. Even if the announcement is not for you, please be quiet to allow others to hear it.

Patent of Arms: The highest level personal award that can be attained. Usually conferred in inducted into an Order (Laurel, Pelican or Chivalry). Sometimes called a Patent of Letters.

Pavilion: A term used to refer to a medieval-style tent.

Pelican: Someone who is a member of the Order of the Pelican. It is conferred on someone for extended service that is above and beyond what is generally expected of a normal member of the SCA populace. They are addressed as "Master" (male) or "Mistress" (female).

Pell: A target for fighting practice, usually a wooden pole.

Period: Refers to something that deals with the Middle Ages or Renaissance.

Persona: The fictional person you wish to have been, had you lived some time prior to 1600 A.D. Also referred to as your persona story, it involves your SCA name and history/background you create. It can be as simple as just a name, country and time in history, or it can very complex. You **CANNOT** be an actual historical personage or a literary character.

Populace: The people of the SCA.

Post-Revel: This is a party after an event, usually at someone's home, for socializing and unwinding.

Prince: Heir to the Throne of the Kingdom, and the person who will be the next King. They are addresses as "Your Highness".

Princess: Heir to the Throne of the Kingdom, and the person who will be the next Queen. They are addresses as "Your Highness".

Proof of SCA Membership: This is your membership card, a photocopy of said card, or a recent Kingdom Newsletter with your name and address on the label.

Protégé: Someone who has a formal teacher/student relationship with a member of the Order of the Pelican. Often signified by wearing a yellow belt (many times with the Pelican's arms on the end of it).

Pursuivant: An alternate title for herald. In some areas, it means a junior herald.

Quartermaster: An unofficial officer in charge of keeping track of items, equipment, etc that belongs to the group as a whole. They do not have to store it all themselves, merely have recorded who is storing what.

Queen: The female ruler of a Kingdom. They are address as "Your Majesty".

Rattan: A type of wood that is used to make replica weapons for combat. Because of its long fibrous "grain", it is safer to use in combat than any other wood as it will "mush and bend" rather than "break off into pieces".

Realm: A Kingdom or Principality.

Regnum: List of society branches and officers.

SCA: Pronounced, "Ess See Ay" or "Skah". The short version of the name: Society for Creative Anachronism. An international, not-for-profit, educational organization dedicated to the study, research, teaching, preservation and re-creation of the Middle Ages and Renaissance eras (pre-17th Century).

SCA Name: The name someone uses in the Society. Also called your Persona name. Historically based, but not the same as any historical person. It includes one given name and a qualifier or surname, but no titles. All titles are granted by SCA royalty.

SCAdian: A slang term for an SCA member.

Scribe: A person who does illumination and/or calligraphy on scrolls to be given as awards.

Seneschal: The head of the local SCA group. Equivalent to a club's President.

Shire: A chartered independent local group of the SCA.

Sir: The title applied to a Knight of the SCA, whether male or female. (Female knights may also use the title of Dame.)

Site: The place where the event is held.

Site Fee: The cost of admission to an event.

Site/Feast Token: A small object which shows that you have paid your site and/or feast fee. Often it will be something you can wear on your belt or hang around your neck.

Society: Society for Creative Anachronism. An international, not-for-profit, educational organization dedicated to the study, research, teaching, preservation and re-creation of the Middle Ages and Renaissance eras that span from 600 AD to 1600 AD.

Squire: Someone who has a formal teacher/student relationship with a Knight or Master-at-Arms. Often signified by wearing a red belt (many times with the Knight's or Master's arms on the end of it).

Reeve: The Kingdom Scheduler.

T-tunic: A simple piece of period-style clothing, shaped like the letter "T". (Similar to an over-sized tee-shirt with long sleeves, and the bottom going down to either the knees, or the ground.)

Tabard: A sleeveless, serape-like garment worn over clothes or armor.

TI: Short for "Tournaments Illuminated", the name of a quarterly SCA publication.

Tournament: A competition.

Tournaments Illuminated: The name of a quarterly SCA publication that has multiple short articles on a variety of SCA topics.

Troll: Short for troll booth, a play on the words toll booth. It is the place to check in or buy at-the-door admission to an event.

Waiver: An official document signed by everyone attending SCA events, indicating that they understand the risks (if any) inherent in the activity and agree not to sue if those risks result in injury to themselves or their property.