

## Part I. Demographics & Miscellaneous

### *General*

- Response Rates<sup>1</sup> - An overall response rate of 50.8% is adequate for an electronically-based survey. Regions 2 and 5 were most enthusiastic about survey participation.
- Numbers of Authorized Fencers – The office of the MOL reports 246 total authorized fencers kingdom-wide<sup>2</sup>. Region 3 contains the highest percentage of authorized fencers (28%), while Regions 1 and 5 contain the lowest (14% for both).

### *Strengths*

- Favorable Gender Ratios – An overall kingdom-wide gender ratio of approximately 70%-30% in favor of males is likely very similar to current society-wide gender ratios for rapier combat.<sup>3</sup> Although data on gender ratios and the OWS was not specifically included as part of the current survey data, it is also worth noting that approximately 30% of the members of the OWS created in AEthelmarc are female. Society-wide, kingdom rapier combat programs have traditionally had marginal success promoting female fencers to high levels of martial achievement - gender ratios in OWS and equivalent orders across the SCA were hovering around 82%-13% in favor of males<sup>4</sup> during the mid-2000s – so AEthelmarc is quite notable in that regard.

Regionally, Regions 4 and 2 have the most balanced gender ratios kingdom-wide (56%-44% and 60%-40% in favor of male fencers respectively). Region 3 has a lower ratio of female-to-male fencers than the kingdom-wide average with 81%

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix A for information about the location of Regions 1-5.

<sup>2</sup> As of December, 2011.

<sup>3</sup> No citation is available for this statement; this assertion is based on personal memory of an informal compilation of society-wide rapier combat authorization data conducted by Kira Alexander in the mid-2000s.

<sup>4</sup> A brief glance at OWS webpages for the Kingdoms of Atlantia, Northshield, the Outlands, An Tir, Trimaris, Atenveldt, Caid, & Lochac seems to suggest that this hypothesized ratio remains reasonably accurate for 2012 – current percentages of female OWS members appear to range from a low of around 10% in Atlantia and An Tir, to a high of around 20% in the Outlands, with the rest falling in the 12-15% range.

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males and 19% females, and Region 1 is particularly skewed towards male fencers, with a ratio of 92%-8% in favor of males.

- Newcomers – The AEthelmearc fencing community as a whole contains a substantial number of new fencers (those who have been fencing less than 3 years). The presence of many newcomers increases the likelihood that the community will continue to be strong and healthy in the future. In addition, respondents' overall SCA tenures tend to be somewhat longer than their overall fencing tenures, which suggests that rapier combat as an activity may be attracting participants from other SCA disciplines.<sup>5</sup>

Regionally, Regions 1, 2, &3 all have a strong newcomer base (particularly Region 2). However, a relatively low percentage of mid-career fencers and a very high percentage of new fencers could potentially lead to overwork and burnout among experienced fencers in Region 2. Region 3 reports fewer experienced fencers than any other region, a situation which could be leaving new and mid-career fencers without leadership and role models. Region 4 has many experienced fencers compared to other regions, but lacks both new and mid-career fencers, suggesting a general lack of growth in this region.

- Cross-Over Fighters – Nearly 42% of all respondents report that they are authorized in another SCA martial form. Strong, positive relationships with other martial communities ensure that the rapier community will continue to be a valued and important part of the wider Kingdom of AEthelmearc.
- Activity Levels – On average, AEthelmearc fencers attend between three and four practices a month, and nearly 90% of fencers attend at least one event a month. New fencers are especially likely to be active at practices and events.

Regionally, Region 1 fencers are very active compared to the rest of the kingdom, attending between 4 and 5 practices a month on average. Region 3 fencers report the highest monthly event attendance of any region kingdom-wide. Region 2 fencers attend fewer monthly events than fencers from any other region of the

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<sup>5</sup> A less positive alternative explanation for differences between SCA and fencing tenures might be that start-up costs for rapier combat (e.g., time, money, relationships with potential instructors) are significant enough to deter brand-new SCA members from participating.

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kingdom. Region 4 fencers attend the fewest monthly practices kingdom-wide, and also attend fewer monthly events than the kingdom average.

### *Areas of Potential Concern*

- Gender Differences In Authorization Progression – Although the majority of data from this survey indicates very few substantial differences between male and female fencers in terms of perceptions or behavior, one area of potential concern involves a notable gender gap in authorization progression rates. Survey data clearly indicate a gradual slowing or attrition of some kind for women during the time period between when fencers first authorize in single rapier and when they finish their case authorization. In addition, there is also a substantial gender gap favoring male fencers with regard to the attainment of a marshals' warrant.

These findings are likely not due to gender-based differences in activity levels, as female fencers report slightly higher practice attendance than, and similar event attendance to male fencers. Nor can it be attributed to a female-heavy gender ratio among new fencers; among those who have been fighting less than 3 years, 64% are male, 36% female. It also seems unlikely that this finding is due to some sort of latent sexism in the community given the absence of any other unfavorable gender-related differences (e.g., female fencers report slightly higher satisfaction with rapier policies, the rapier community overall, and the OWS than male fencers). Whatever the cause, this is a phenomenon the community could potentially monitor and/or address.

- Gender Differences In Fencer Tenure – Data also suggest that there are relatively fewer experienced female fencers (those who have been fighting 7 or more years) than there are new or mid-career female fencers. It is difficult to know whether this finding represents female fencer attrition (a potentially negative outcome for the community) or whether it is an artifact of an earlier time period when fewer women chose to pursue rapier combat as an activity (a potentially positive indication that the community has become more appealing to women over time).

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- Attrition of Mid-Career Fencers – Although the AEthelmearc rapier community has many new fencers, the data indicate possible attrition beginning around the four-years-fencing mark. Because other survey data also suggest general mid-career dissatisfaction (e.g., mid-career fencers are less positive about rapier policies, the community as a whole, and the OWS, than are new or experienced fencers; practice attendance decreases with length of fencing tenure), it is probably not a stretch to assume that the needs of mid-career fencers are not being met by the community and that some of them are reducing their rapier combat related activity as a result. Negative consequences of mid-career fencer attrition for the community could include: burnout of experienced fencers who must bear an excessive share of the responsibility for training and supporting large numbers of newcomers, a reduced pool of fencers who could potentially become members of the OWS or serve as community leaders in other ways, and a lack of role models/examples for newcomers in terms of achieving mid-career milestones (e.g., the Golden Alce, becoming a regional marshal, serving on the command staff at war).

## Part II. AEthelmearc Rapier Marshallate

### *Strengths*

- General Availability of Marshals - Nearly 80% of respondents kingdom-wide report that there are enough marshals at the practice they attend most often.

However, some regions appear to be better-staffed than others. Regions 1 and 4 appear to have a particularly weak marshallate presence at practices, although it is unclear whether this problem is caused by a general lack of warranted marshals in these areas or if it is caused by inadequate marshallate participation. An examination of kingdom-level data showing percentages of warrants by region could potentially provide additional information about this question.

- General Satisfaction With Current Rapier Policies – Nearly 80% of respondents kingdom-wide report being “Somewhat” or “Very” satisfied with the current AEthelmearc Policies of Fence. Responses to the open-ended question, “*What changes would you like to see made to the current AEthelmearc rapier policies?*” support this finding: 26% of respondents commented that they desired no changes and/or were basically satisfied with the current policies.

Regionally, the highest rates of satisfaction with current policies are found in Region 2. Region 5 respondents are most dissatisfied with the current policies, although it should be noted that the average policy-related sentiment in this region is still well into the “Somewhat Satisfied” range.

Low-activity respondents (those who are in the 25% percentile of event & practice attendance) also tend to be more dissatisfied with rapier policies than those who attend more monthly events and practices. Female fencers are just slightly more satisfied with policies than male fencers.

### *Areas of Potential Concern*

- Mid-Career Fencer Dissatisfaction - A consistent pattern throughout this survey involves mid-career fencer dissatisfaction with various aspects of AEthelmearc fencing. In this case, mid-career fencers tend to be more dissatisfied with rapier policies than are newcomers or more experienced fencers.

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- Buckler Size Restrictions – One aspect of the current policies which appears to be particularly unpopular with a number of respondents is the restriction on buckler size. 17% of respondents indicated in their answers to an open-ended question about changes to AEthelmearc rapier policies that they would like buckler size restrictions to be relaxed under certain circumstances (e.g., large melees) or eliminated entirely. This sentiment appears to largely be a response to perceptions of unfairness at inter-kingdom events like Pennsic, where AEthelmearc fencers are restricted to the use of small bucklers while fencers from other kingdoms may use very large shields.
- Perceptions of Inconsistency In Authorization Standards – 29% of survey respondents believe that authorization standards are inconsistent within their own region. 47% of survey respondents believe that authorization standards are inconsistent across AEthelmearc as a whole. When asked in an open-ended item to comment on what specific changes they would make to the current AEthelmearc rapier policies, 10% of respondents indicated they would like to see more consistency in authorization standards. When asked to comment more generally about marshallate-related topics, 27% of respondents mentioned problems with inconsistency in terms of authorization policies and procedures, and 19% felt there was a need to better codify policies and procedures, particularly with regard to authorization processes.
- Perceptions of Inconsistency in On-Field Understanding and Application of Policy - 25% of respondents to open-ended marshallate-related survey items also noted inconsistency between AEthelmearc rapier marshals in terms of how policies are understood and applied on the field during individual bouts or melees.

The problem of overall kingdom-wide inconsistency in the application of policy and in marshallate training/behavior is clearly a serious issue for the AEthelmearc rapier community. Negative consequences of this problem could potentially include: on-field conflict caused by differences in expectations when fencers from different areas of the kingdom bout with one another; a general undermining of respect for the office of the marshallate when fencers believe that rules will not be applied evenly across the board during combat; frustration when fencers do not understand exactly what behaviors they will be expected to demonstrate during authorizations or to move from being an MIT to being a fully

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warranted marshal; perceptions of unfairness when fencers notice others being held to “lower” standards during authorization bouts or during MIT trial periods, and so forth.

Some potential solutions for this issue which were suggested by survey respondents include: the creation of handbooks for marshals and authorizing fencers, formal delineation of the specific procedures that should take place during an authorization, holding regular ‘marshal clinics’ throughout the kingdom, the distribution of regular reminders about policies (e.g., a monthly newsletter), and codifying specific requirements for moving from MIT to warranted status. More thought and input from the populace about these matters could produce additional good ideas. The KRM is advised to take this matter under consideration.

### *Other / Miscellaneous*

- AEthelmearc Policies of Fence vs. SCA-wide Standards – 10% of respondents also mentioned in open-ended comment data that they either 1) approved of recent efforts by the marshallate to make AEthelmearc policies more closely match the society-wide standards of rapier combat, or 2) desired an even closer match with society standards than AEthelmearc currently has.

## Part III. AEthelmearc Rapier Community

### *Strengths*

- General Satisfaction With the AEthelmearc Rapier Community - 77% of respondents report being “Somewhat” or “Very” satisfied with the AEthelmearc rapier community.

Respondents from Region 4 appear to be particularly satisfied with the AEthelmearc rapier community. No region stands out as having especially dissatisfied fencers.

New fencers are also particularly satisfied with the AEthelmearc rapier community. Also, those respondents who attend the most monthly events and practices (i.e., “high-activity”, 75<sup>th</sup> percentile of all respondents in terms of event & practice attendance) are more satisfied with the community than are those who attend fewer events and practices. Female fencers are slightly more satisfied with the AEthelmearc rapier community than male fencers.

Additionally, at the end of the survey, respondents were asked if they had any final comments about the AEthelmearc rapier community or their participation as an AEthelmearc fencer. 19% of those who commented on this item noted that they have personally had a positive experience as a member of the community, and 14% expressed that they take personal enjoyment in rapier combat as an activity in the SCA.

- Other strengths of the AEthelmearc Rapier Community - Survey respondents were asked to list what they believed to be the greatest strengths of the AEthelmearc rapier community. They could list up to eight strengths and were not limited to any particular topic. Some of the strengths respondents thought were particularly notable were:
  - An emphasis on interpersonal social support and bonding<sup>6</sup> (e.g., friendliness, respect, caring and concern for others, sharing, looking out for one another, fellowship, supportiveness, helpfulness) (50%).

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<sup>6</sup> Although this finding may seem on the surface to contradict data suggesting the presence of intergroup conflict and an overall lack of unity in the rapier community, it is possible that respondents view other individual fencers or the fencers they most often interact with in the AEthelmearc rapier community as being helpful, supportive, friendly, etc., and

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- An emphasis on teaching and learning (e.g., skilled, enthusiastic, & willing instructors, good classes) (41%)
- Individual fighting prowess (24%)

### *Areas of Potential Concern*

- Mid-Career Fencer Dissatisfaction – Again following a general pattern identified previously in this overview, mid-career fencers are more dissatisfied with the AEthelmearc rapier community than are new or experienced fencers.
- Factionalism, Intergroup Inequality, & a Lack of Overall Kingdom Unity – Survey respondents were also asked to list what they believed to be the greatest weaknesses of the AEthelmearc rapier community. They could list up to eight weaknesses and were not limited to any particular topic. Some weaknesses which respondents thought were particularly notable were:
  - The presence of intergroup conflict and divisiveness, especially between northern and southern areas of the kingdom (34%).
  - A lack of overall kingdom-level unity (31%)
  - The presence of intergroup social bias or inequality (e.g., perceptions of exclusivity, ‘cliqueishness’, marginalization, or other unfair treatment based on regional or other group status) (28%)
  - Insularity and isolationism between in-kingdom groups, including a lack of travel between different areas of the kingdom (24%)

In addition, when respondents were asked to suggest possible changes to the AEthelmearc rapier community (not related to the marshallate), many respondents suggested the following items:

- Emphasizing kingdom-level unity within the rapier community (34%)
- Encouraging interaction between different groups in the rapier community (e.g., travel, holding multi-regional or multi-group practices) (25%)

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simultaneously believe that larger, existing conflicts between groups or different factions of fencers are inappropriate or harmful to the community as a whole.

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- Addressing social biases or perceptions of group-level inequality within the AEthelmearc rapier community (21%)
- Changing or de-emphasizing factionalism within the AEthelmearc fencing community (21%).

Finally, when respondents were asked at the end of the survey to make any final comments about the AEthelmearc rapier community or their own participation as an AEthelmearc fencer, 14% of those who commented on that item again mentioned the need to address problems with unity and/or intergroup divisions within the rapier community.

In short, factionalism, group-level conflicts, perceptions of group-level inequality, and an overall lack of kingdom-level unity all appear to be substantial social problems within the AEthelmearc rapier community. Some possible solutions to these problems which were suggested by survey respondents include: creating feelings of inclusiveness and pride via heraldry, increased travel (particularly between northern and southern areas of the kingdom), separating regional units/divisions from the command structure of the AEthelmearc rapier army, and holding more rapier-centric events and practices in all five regions of the kingdom (and across kingdom borders). Additionally, the AEthelmearc rapier community appears to highly value socially supportive behaviors (see “Strengths” above), a trait which could potentially be leveraged to encourage fair, inclusive, and respectful treatment of all members of the community regardless of regional or other group associations. An honest, open, and civil community-wide discussion could suggest additional ideas and solutions for these types of issues.

- Low Pennsic Army Participation - Fewer than one-half of survey respondents reported fighting with the AEthelmearc rapier army at Pennsic 40.

Region 2 reported particularly strong army participation compared to its overall numbers of authorized fencers, which is perhaps not surprising given that the majority of Region 2 fencers reside less than two hours travel time from the Pennsic site.

Assuming that the majority of those respondents who did not indicate their region on the survey do not actually reside in Region 3, Pennsic 40 army participation for

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Region 3 was comparatively low given its overall numbers of authorized fencers. Army participation was also quite low for Regions 4 and 5.

Another item of note involves the relationship between community satisfaction and army participation: 50% of those respondents who reported that they felt neutral, somewhat satisfied, or very satisfied with the AEthelmearc rapier community joined the rapier army at Pennsic 40, as compared to only 21% of dissatisfied respondents.

In addition, army participation seems to be highest among new fencers and decreases substantially with longer fencer tenure: only 30% of experienced fencers reported that they fought with the AEthelmearc rapier army at Pennsic 40.

Of those who reported that they did not fight with the AEthelmearc army at Pennsic 40, the most common reason given for non-participation was “*Did not attend Pennsic 40*”. However, a number of respondents also mentioned that they had problems with scheduling, that they disliked large melees or felt that melee was unsafe, that they did not fence at all during Pennsic 40, or that they were not yet authorized to fence during Pennsic 40.

- Discrepancies In Group Affiliations & the Overall Rapier Army Structure – When asked what type of rapier-related group with which they identified most strongly, 39% of survey respondents indicated that they identified most strongly with a small regional group (e.g., a college, barony, or shire), and 16% indicated they identified most strongly with a large regional group (e.g., the Southern Watch, the Northern Irregulars).

Comparing this data to army unit participation data reveals a mismatch: keeping in mind that participants could mention more than one unit with which they fought, only 24% of those who participated in the Pennsic 40 rapier army indicated that they spent time on the field with a small regional unit (e.g., a college, shire, or barony), whereas 68% said that they spent time on the field with a large regional unit (e.g., the Southern Watch, the Northern Irregulars, Mountain Confederation). In other words, in at least some (or possibly many) cases Pennsic unit assignments appear to conflict with existing group loyalties.

Perhaps even more problematic is the fact that only 17% of respondents indicated that they most strongly identified with the Kingdom of AEthelmearc as a

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whole. An additional 10% of respondents indicated that they did not identify with any group at all. Not only do these findings have potentially negative implications for overall army cohesion, they support open-ended comment data indicating that regional divisions/conflict and an overall lack of kingdom-level unity are the most serious social problems currently facing the AEthelmearc rapier community. It is also notable that a number of open-ended item respondents expressed concern about kingdom-wide factionalism or divisiveness specific to war activities and the rapier army (e.g., command structures & commanders, regionally-based melee practices, conflict between different units, a general lack of melee cohesion).

If the AEthelmearc rapier community sincerely wishes to deemphasize intergroup divisions and emphasize kingdom unity more broadly, re-evaluating how rapier army units and command staff are structured could represent one important step towards meeting that goal.

- Interkingdom Differences and Conflict at Pennsic - At the end of the survey, when respondents were asked to make any final comments about the AEthelmearc fencing community or their participation as an AEthelmearc fencers, 16% of the respondents who commented on that item mentioned a need to address interkingdom conflict that happens on the Pennsic melee field (e.g., differences in social expectations between fencers from different kingdoms, differences in marshalling, or in on-field behavior such as calibration or shot acknowledgement).

## Part IV. AEthelmearc Order of the White Scarf

### *General*

- Percentages of OWS by Region- Members of the AEthelmearc OWS<sup>7</sup> who are currently residing in-kingdom or who are spending significant time in-kingdom<sup>8</sup> are relatively evenly distributed between Regions 2, 3, 4, & 5 (between 20% to 23% of the order resides in each of these regions). Only 10% of the in-kingdom members of the OWS reside in Region 1.
- Perceptions of the AEthelmearc OWS Are Generally Mixed – When respondents were asked if there were any comments they would like to make to or about the AEthelmearc OWS, 21% of those who commented noted that the order as a whole has both positive and negative aspects, or that the behaviors/attitudes of some members of the order are positive whereas the behaviors/attitudes of some members are negative. In addition:
  - 74% of those who commented mentioned something negative about the AEthelmearc OWS.
  - 36% of those who commented mentioned something positive about the AEthelmearc OWS.

### *Strengths*

- OWS Practice Attendance - A majority of respondents indicated that at least one White Scarf regularly attends (i.e., at least 50% of the time) the practice they most often attend.

Regionally, OWS practice attendance rates were extremely high in Regions 2 and 4 - 93% and 87% of Region 2 and 4 respondents respectively reported that at least White Scarf attends their primary practice. Conversely, Region 3 reported substantially lower OWS practice attendance rates than the kingdom average - only 27% of Region 3 respondents reported regular OWS attendance at their practice.

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<sup>7</sup> Including those members of the OWS who were inducted in another kingdom but who are currently active inside AEthelmearc.

<sup>8</sup> Data for this item was collected from [www.aerapier.org](http://www.aerapier.org) (February, 2012).

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- OWS Accessibility More Generally - 72% of respondents indicated that they “Very Much” or “Somewhat” agreed with the statement that the AEthelmearc OWS as an order was personally accessible to them.<sup>9</sup>

In tandem with findings regarding OWS practice attendance rates, overall OWS accessibility is perceived to be highest in Regions 2 and 4, and lowest in Region 3.<sup>10</sup> Those respondents who did not indicate their region were also less likely than others to feel that OWS members were accessible.

- OWS Helpfulness - 68% of respondents indicated that they “Very Much” or “Somewhat” agreed with the statement that the AEthelmearc OWS as an order was personally helpful to them.

Regionally, Region 4 respondents were especially likely to feel that members of the AEthelmearc OWS are helpful. Region 3 respondents and those respondents who did not indicate their region reported the least positive perceptions of OWS helpfulness kingdom-wide.

- OWS Members Provide A Good Example For Others- 63% of respondents indicated that they “Very Much” or “Somewhat” agreed with the statement that the AEthelmearc OWS as an order provides a good example for the rest of the rapier community.

In addition, when respondents were asked if there were any comments they would like to make to or about the AEthelmearc Order of the White Scarf, the most popular positive type of comment made was that members of the OWS demonstrate good personal character, are inspirational, or set a good example for others (19% of open-ended comment respondents).

Regionally, Region 4 and Region 1 respondents were especially likely to feel that members of the AEthelmearc OWS set a good example for others.

Respondents from Region 3 and those respondents who did not indicate their

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<sup>9</sup> However, please note responses to open-ended comment items re: perceptions of OWS accessibility under “*Areas of Potential Concern*”.

<sup>10</sup> It is important to point out that, although responses to OWS items are likely to be influenced to some degree by respondents’ perceptions of OWS members that they interact with most frequently (i.e., likely the OWS members from their own region), these items specifically asked respondents to rate the AEthelmearc OWS as an order. To put it another way, regional variations in perceptions of the members of the OWS should be not necessarily be viewed as being specifically reflective of the behaviors or attitudes of only those OWS members who hail from that region.

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region were least likely to feel that the AEthelmearc OWS set a good example for others.

- OWS As Instructors - In open-ended comments, 14% of respondents noted that members of the AEthelmearc Order of the White Scarf demonstrate willingness to teach other fencers and/or are skilled instructors.
- Positive Personal Relationships With Members of the OWS - In open-ended comments, 10% of respondents noted that they have a positive personal relationship with a member of the AEthelmearc Order of the White Scarf (e.g., they are in a healthy cadet-WS relationship, they are a close personal friend of a member of the OWS).
- Gender & Perceptions of the AEthelmearc OWS - Overall, female fencers seem to possess a slightly more favorable view of the AEthelmearc OWS than male fencers, particularly with regard to perceptions that White Scarves are open to non-scarf ideas and that they set a good example for other members of the community. This finding supports a general hypothesis that sexism is likely not a significant problem for the AEthelmearc rapier community.
- New Fencer Perceptions of the AEthelmearc OWS – New fencers (those who have been fencing less than 3 years) appear to have a particularly favorable view of the order overall, and they are significantly more likely than mid-career fencers to feel that members of the OWS set a good example for the community and to believe that members of the OWS are open to the ideas of non-scarved fencers.

### *Areas of Potential Concern*

- OWS & Encouragement of Non-Scarf Leadership– Only 47% of survey respondents “Very Much” or “Somewhat” agreed with the statement that members of the AEthelmearc OWS encouraged non-scarved fencers to take leadership roles within the community.

Regionally, Region 4 respondents were especially likely to feel that the OWS encourages non-scarf leadership. Region 2, 3, & 5 respondents all reported less

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agreement than the kingdom-wide average with the statement that non-scarf leadership is encouraged by the OWS.

- OWS Openness to the Ideas of Non-Scarved Fencers – Only 45% of survey respondents “Very Much” or “Somewhat” agreed with the statement that members of the AEthelmearc OWS are open to ideas suggested by non-scarved fencers.

Following a general pattern noted throughout this portion of the survey, Region 4 respondents were most likely to believe that members of the OWS are open to non-scarf ideas. Respondents from Region 3 were particularly negative with regard to this statement; their overall ratings were lower than the kingdom-wide average and were well into the “Somewhat Disagree” category.

- OWS Understanding of Rapier Community Needs – Only 47% of survey respondents “Very Much” or “Somewhat” agreed with the statement that members of the AEthelmearc OWS have a good sense of the needs of the AEthelmearc rapier community.

Again following a general pattern noted throughout this portion of the survey, Region 4 respondents were most likely to believe that members of the OWS have a good sense of the needs of the community. Respondents from Region 3, as well as those respondents who did not indicate their region, were least likely than others to feel that members of the AEthelmearc OWS have a good sense of the needs of the rapier community.

- OWS Physical & Social Unavailability – In open-ended comments, 35% of respondents complained that members of the AEthelmearc Order of the White Scarf are in some manner physically unavailable to them personally or to the larger community (e.g., White Scarves are inactive, do not attend practices or events, do not fence at practice or events, or do not travel, especially to certain areas of the kingdom). Additionally, 17% of respondents complained that members of the OWS are socially unavailable (e.g., are ‘standoffish’, avoid non-scarves at events, do not reach out to others, do not appear to take an active interest in the community).

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- Perceptions of OWS Arrogance – In open-ended comments, 16% of respondents indicated that they perceived members of the AEthelmearc Order of the White Scarf as arrogant, elitist, ‘looking down’ on others, or as having too high an opinion of themselves.
- OWS Set A Poor Example / Are Badly Behaved – In open-ended comments, 10% of respondents indicated that they perceived some members of the AEthelmearc Order of the White Scarf as demonstrating poor personal character, being uninspirational, or setting a poor example for others.<sup>11</sup>

In addition, 14% of respondents commented that some members of the AEthelmearc Order of the White Scarf allow personal grudges or biases to negatively affect their behavior towards other members of the rapier community.

- Mid-Career Fencer Dissatisfaction With the OWS – Again following a general pattern identified throughout the entire survey, mid-career fencers are more dissatisfied overall with the AEthelmearc OWS than are newcomers or experienced fencers. This difference is particularly pronounced with regard to perceptions of OWS accessibility, OWS openness to the ideas of non-scarves, and the example that members of the OWS set for others.

### *Other / Miscellaneous*

- OWS Practice Attendance and Attitudes/Behaviors – One interesting pattern identified in this portion of the survey is that OWS practice attendance is significantly related to positive attitudes about not only the Order of the White Scarf as a whole but also with overall community and policy satisfaction.<sup>12</sup> Survey respondents who report that at least one White Scarf regularly attends their practice are also significantly more likely than those without regular OWS practice attendance to feel that White Scarves are accessible, helpful, open to the ideas of non-scarved

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<sup>11</sup> Although this data conflicts with other findings suggesting that a majority of respondents felt that a strength of the OWS was being inspirational, it is consistent with an overall finding that reactions to the AEthelmearc OWS as a singular entity are mixed. Any individual respondent or groups of respondents may feel (and/or may have commented) that some order members provide a good example for the populace and that others do not.

<sup>12</sup> However, as noted in survey FAQs, it is important to keep in mind that all survey data is correlational, meaning that it is impossible to know for sure what causes any relationships identified in survey findings. While it may be tempting to assume that the mere presence of a White Scarf can magically transform one’s practice, there may be additional factors influencing both White Scarf practice attendance and fencer attitudes which are not apparent in the current survey data.

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fencers, and that White Scarves understand the needs of the fencing community. Respondents reporting regular OWS practice attendance also tend to have overall higher levels of satisfaction with the AEthelmearc rapier community and with the current AEthelmearc Policies of Fence than respondents without regular OWS practice attendance. Finally, they were also more likely to have participated with the rapier army at Pennsic 40 – 71% of respondents who reported regular White Scarf attendance at their practice fought with the rapier army at Pennsic 40, whereas only 53% of those without a White Scarf at their practice did.

- How Would The Rapier Community Like the White Scarves To Behave? – Some respondents to the open-ended question, “*Are there any other comments you would like to make to or about the Order of the White Scarf in the Kingdom of Aethelmearc?*” provided the order with advice. Notable commentary included:
  - White Scarves should be providing inspiration and striving to act as good examples for other fencers (17%).
  - White Scarves should be physically available to the rapier community (e.g., travel more, fight at events) (16%).
  - White Scarves should be receptive to teaching other fencers (12%).
  - White Scarves should be socially available to the rapier community (e.g., reach out to and take an active interest in others, be welcoming & friendly) (10%).
  - White Scarves should remember that the accolade of the scarf is accompanied by important obligations (e.g., serving the Queen, meeting other needs of the community) (10%).

As the formally appointed leaders of the rapier community in the Kingdom of AEthelmearc, it is critical that the members of the Order of the White Scarf be open and responsive to the thoughts and needs of community members. Thus, the order is advised to take into consideration the opinions of those who responded to this survey, particularly with regard to areas in which the community believes there is room for improvement.

## GENERAL OVERVIEW OF ALL SURVEY DATA

### *Areas of Strength For the AEthelmearc Rapier Community*

- Overall gender equality (for the most part)
- Active, enthusiastic, happy newcomers
- Overall high satisfaction levels with current rapier policies
- Overall high satisfaction levels with the rapier community as a whole
- Community emphasizes interpersonal social support & teaching
- Individual fighting prowess is also seen as a particular strength of the community
- Members of the Order of the White Scarf are helpful
- Members of the Order of the White Scarf are skilled and willing instructors
- New fencers view the Order of the White Scarf in a particularly positive light

### *Areas of Weakness For the AEthelmearc Rapier Community*

- Gender differences in authorization progression & marshallate warrant status
- Mid-career fencer dissatisfaction & attrition
- Perceptions of inconsistency in marshallate-related standards, policies, and procedures
- Perceptions of factionalism, group-level inequality, and a low level of overall kingdom-level unity
- Issues involving the rapier army (participation levels & structure)
- Perceptions of the Order of the White Scarf are mixed with regard to physical & social availability and whether members of the order are acting as good examples for the community
- Members of the Order of the White Scarf are not viewed by a majority of the community as being open to non-scarf leadership or ideas, or as having a good sense of what the community needs
- There are significant regional differences in terms of community attitudes towards the Order of the White Scarf

## Appendix A. Regions of AEthelmearc

**Region 1:** West Virginia - Ballachlagan, Blackstone Mtn., Misty Highlands, Port Oasis, Sylvan Glen

**Region 2:** Western PA - BMDL, Silva Vulcani, Steltonwald, Gryffyns Keep, Hunter's Home, King's Crossing, Riversedge, Stormsport, Sunderoak

**Region 3:** Central & NE PA - Abhainn Ciach Ghlais, Endless Hills, Nithgaard, Hornwood, Westland Mor, St. Swithin's Bog

**Region 4:** Western NY - Blackwater, Hartstone, Heronter, Rhydderich Hael, Beau Fleuve, Thescorre, Winter's Edge

**Region 5:** Central NY - Angel's Keep, Coppertree, Courtlandslot, Delftwood, Myrkfaelinn, Sterlynge Vayle, Wynterset