

# **THE HISTORY OF THE ART OF TABLESETTING, ANCIENT AND MODERN**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649344673

The History of the Art of Typesetting, Ancient and Modern by Claudia Quigley Murphy

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Cover @ 2017

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**CLAUDIA QUIGLEY MURPHY**

**THE HISTORY OF THE  
ART OF TABLESETTING,  
ANCIENT AND MODERN**





*The Entrance of a Masque of Minstrels or Actors  
At a Royal Banquet in the Time of Henry VIII*



*The* HISTORY *of the*  
*Art of Tablesetting*

ANCIENT AND MODERN

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FROM ANGLO-SAXON DAYS TO THE PRESENT TIME, WITH ILLUSTRATIONS AND BIBLIOGRAPHY. FOR THE USE OF SCHOOLS, COLLEGES, EXTENSION WORKERS, WOMEN'S CLUBS, Etc., Etc.

*By*

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*T*HIS MONOGRAPH is intended to give content of knowledge which shall be accurate and suggestive on the subject of TABLESETTING for use in Schools, Colleges, and by Extension Workers and Women's Clubs, *etc.*

So far as the Modern Silver and Tableware is concerned, it is based on *Gorham Silverware*. But the content of the MONOGRAPH is universal information and may be treated as such in the classroom.







## Tablesetting

**OUR** social customs, as well as our language, are easily traceable to our Anglo-Saxon origin. From the days of King Arthur, that heroic monarch with his knights of legend and mystery, the round table has been a synonym for community of interest and adventure. Great as is the contrast in material things between the barbarism of these long-ago yesterdays and the luxuries of to-day, it is even less than the contrast between the manners and habits of the guests at the festive board. Unless we occasionally glance back at the successive steps leading to our modern environment, we cannot realize that (simple American citizens that we are) we are enjoying as every-day comfort a luxury in tablesetting and equipment unknown to the greatest monarch or the richest noble in the days of our not very remote ancestors.

In all the illustrations of the Anglo-Saxon period, the tablesetting included the Salt Cellar, which was the first thing put on the table. The salt was far more than the necessary condiment as we know it. It was in itself symbolic. To sit above the salt was to sit in a place of honor, and until the salt was put upon the table no one could know where would be his allotted seat. Then came the silver dishes for holding vegetable or fish, sometimes meat, the  
round

round cross-marked articles being small loaves of bread, always present, the "manchet" of early days. Occasionally a knife is shown, and a prescribed rule was that it be well scoured; the spoons and knives



*An Anglo-Saxon Dinner  
With servants presenting food kneeling*

were not furnished by the host, but were brought by guests whose servants, so equipped, cut the meat and carved the food for each person.

The fair and bonny Queen Elizabeth was accustomed to lift to her mouth with her virgin fingers the second joint of the turkey and gnaw it to depletion.

Careful rules were laid down for the carvers, where the Officer of the Mouth, or carver, is told: "Set never on fish, flesh, beast, or fowl more than two fingers and a thumb."

The guests had no plates or forks and few knives, but ate with their hands, and threw the refuse on the floors, which were usually stone, sometimes covered with rushes. Dogs and cats were freely invited