

Chronique

The Journal of Chivalry

Articles, Essays, Reviews

Issue #10
Tournaments à la King René d'Anjou

Chronique

The Journal of Chivalry

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Chronique

Issue #10

Arms and Armour #2

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Great thanks to all the above contributors and to everyone who
helped Chronique #10 into being!

THANK YOU!

FROM THE EDITOR

Related greetings unto all! I must stand here before you contrite, for the delay in producing this issue is indeed my own fault. I started a new job as work on the issue was being completed in October, and at that point my life outside of work virtually ended. I am now settled and pushing ahead not only with this issue but with the next issue, which will follow immediately.

Chronique has continued to grow in the interim, along with the new wave of what I have called a "chivalric renaissance" within other medieval organizations, most notably the SCA. More and more people are coming to the conclusion that there should be more emphasis on authentic, ethical behavior, and that the sport-minded mentality should be discouraged. We can lead only by example--it is neither desirable nor possible to push these values upon others. Hopefully we can fan the embers of personal responsibility that most people have within themselves, and thus enrich not only our medieval re-enactments but our larger society as well.

This year is leading great excitement! There are several large events taking place built on the authentic templates in sites all over the US and in Australia. Many of them appear on the calendar here--but I have read of others not mentioned here that intend the same goals that we seek. Chivalry by example may be achieving some of the things we all hoped it would!

Most notable amongst the events of the year is the Grand Pas d'Armes to be held at the annual Pennsic War. It is the intention of the main tournament societies to produce a single event that will include the different tones brought by each of the major companies, yet remain cohesive enough to be contained in a limited area. We hope to reach out this year to a larger audience, building upon the very outstanding efforts of the *Company of Saint Michael*. With the combined resources of six groups--*The Company of St. George*, *the Company of Saint Michael*, *the Company of St. Mark*, *The Company of the Star*, *the Grand Company of the Peacocks* and the *Noble Folly* we should be able to put on quite a tournament and draw more people towards the ideals we are seeking. Special thanks to His Grace, Duke Eliahu ben Jacob, Knight of the Middle Kingdom, for his efforts to bring us together at the Pennsic War.

Speaking of influence, I wish to briefly discuss something that should be on all of our minds as we progress. There is an inherent danger in what we are doing. Not the danger of broken bones or damaged pocketbooks, but a danger that is more subtle, akin to the danger that threatens every tournament combatant when they strive to call a blow that lands in the "gray area."

In a nutshell, the danger is pride. We must avoid, at all costs, the dangers of vainglory, seeking sincere humility in all our ventures. To me, seeking excellence is a prerequisite of the knight, but real humility is the only defense against this demon. In our efforts to bring more splendor, more accuracy, and more gentleness to the tournament field and to our re-enactments generally, we must bend over backwards to make sure others feel welcome, that they see that we are but men and ladies engaged in an activity we love, and that they can achieve the same through devotion and hard work. The payoff for all of this work is the grandiose ceremony, sincerity, and that magical air that we build at tournaments that really work.

Our organization into tournament societies holds certain parallels to the SCA practice of households, but more so. The primary charge against the companies will be elitism, and to a degree it will be valid. The Companies are by their very nature elitist, seeking to build an example to which others can aspire. To counter that reality, however, I think it is our sacred duty to try to bring this magic to all who might be interested, to expend our energies in helping others to achieve what we now treasure. They must attain it through their own efforts, to be sure, but our hands must be available to guide them at their request, spoken or unspoken. We should become masters at detecting interest, however well hidden, opening the tournament phenomenon, the chivalric renaissance, up to the richness and talents of those not currently involved. It is a duty we ignore only at our own deadly peril.

That weighty subject being addressed, I am free to discuss a couple of new things in this *Chronique*. Included on the last page is a listing of the contacts for each of the major tournament companies. We hope to keep this register up to date and that others will use it to contact the members of active companies with their questions and possibly, their applications. More companies are being formed all over the US; the editors are most pleased to receive calendar items, charters from new companies, and descriptions of events in the period style. I thank each and every one of you personally for your patronage and your work to make our re-enactments, and our world, a better place.

-Brian R. Price, Editor

AKA SCA Brion Thornbird ap Rhys, Earl and Knight, OL

Comments by Count Jehan de la Marche, OL

Most Noble Lord—

...I might note that this is not the first time such things have been attempted. I fought in a counted blows tourney held in Michigan in about 1971, in which I was awarded a crown of oak leaves made by the ladies present, which I still have. The crown was specifically given for the one the ladies held deserving, rather than simply to the winner of the most fights (which would certainly not have been myself). This was not the only time counted-blow fights were held in the early days, though it is the one I best remember.

Again in the late 70s, Baron Balin the Fair-Haired in the Barony Beyond the Mountain (CT) sponsored a series of Arthurian tournaments in which, following the occasional usage of other times, the baron and his men assumed the names and arms of Arthurian knights (using Fabulous Heraldry) and challenged all comers. I took it upon myself to assume the name and arms of one of Arthur's enemies--one year it was Sir Breuse sans Pitie, another year Sir Meliadgrance--and assembled a company to take up the challenge.

...Most recently, this past feast of All Hallows, I held a Tourney of Ladies here at Fort New Salem (usually a reconstruction of an 18th century settlement)...The house of La Marche acted as the Tenans, while Lord Tearloch acted as captain of a company of Venans. We hung a large banner bearing my arms from a porch facing the field, and each of the Tenans--myself, my squires Baron Marcus and Donnchadh Dhu Glas (who wore surcoats in my colors with my badge), and our ally Robert the Gray--set his shield against one of the pillars of the porch. Each of the Venans came across the field and struck the shield of the man he wished to challenge. The challenges were fought by conventional SCA rules. Thereafter, Niall issued a challenge for the love of his lady against all comers, fighting and defeating every other fighter on the field. Divers single combats followed, and then there was a melee of all the Tenans against all of the Venans, and diverse other melees. The ladies who were consorts were given ballots (signed, in imitation of the custom in papal elections, by each lady and her fighter) and asked to vote for the warrior other than their own whom they held worthiest. The ballots were counted by Hugh the Black, OL, who reported that I had won; I am bound to say that I think this was more a kindness on the part of the ladies than a tribute to my present prowess...

-John L. Leland

AKA SCA Count Jehan de la Marche, Knight and Laurel

FORUM

Question #1 → Is the appearance of a fight important to the fight itself?

"The fight itself should be important. Appearance critiques can be useful to gain perspective. Those who are close to you may not notice or want to advise you of areas where you may be having trouble."

—Julie Gavello
AKA Ciara...
West Kingdom

"To the whole aspect of the fight as a part of our society? What is important [to the fight] are the moves and methods to deliver a good and honorable blow. One should fight with an intent to victory without the loss of honor. The crowds often enjoy the sight of a well executed fight. But, sometimes the best fight is simply boring. One should not eliminate the efficient skillful moves in favour of flashy, and often useless, moves. But, one should not resort to dishonorable actions for victory. One should avoid the appearance of dishonor at all costs. It is not beneficial to the society if the fighter won crown but it looks like they did so by rhino-hiding. In this example, the Prince has lost honor in the eyes of the crowd. A crown with no honor is damaging to the society. Their 'opponent(s)' 'win' in the eyes of the crowd even though they were vanquished in the lists."

-SCA Danulf Donaldson
East Kingdom

"No, I believe [appearance and] the fight are important to other goals, independently."

-John A. Cross

"Despite what might be true in an 'ideal' world, the appearance of a fight does matter. It matters more, in the long run, than the techniques used or in the outcome. The reason for this is simple—it is the appearance of a fight that evokes sentiment in the populace, and it is this sentiment that produces the only lasting prize taken from any tournament—renown."

-Brian R. Price

AKA SCA Brion Thornbird ap Rhys
West Kingdom

Question #2— Are the opinions of consorts and the gallery important to the outcome of a fight? Why or why not?

"Define 'outcome.' If you mean short term, who wins and takes home the turkey, then no, the opinions of the consorts and gallery are marginal. But if you define 'outcome' as what comes out of the fight long term, very definitely. 'Joe is a pretty fight' translates into Joe is a clean fight or a fun fight as soon as the words are spoken. Conversely, even if the two combatants are perfectly happy with a fight, if it looks sloppy to the spectators, then it goes down as a 'bad' fight. and while individual fights are seldom remembered, collectively, they form your reputation.

"Also, it depends on the combatant. My lord may feel pleased with a fight, but if I walk up after and say 'That looked really bad' it will 1) change the way he feels about that particular fight, 2) perhaps even prompting him to re-fight it and 3) destroy his focus for the rest of the tournament."

-Ann Marie Price

AKA SCA Anne of Alanwick, OL
West Kingdom

"If the consort withdraws her favor, I would think so... but I've not seen a precedent. For the gallery, NO. If there is a question as to the outcome of the fight, it's up to the fighters. If you take away that responsibility, fighting honor would degenerate into, well what they don't see..."

-Julie Gavello

"Only if they observe flagrant violations of an agreed upon code of ethics."

-John A. Cross

Editor: I posed the question in an attempt to draw out the two main schools of thought on the matter:

One school says that the fight belongs strictly to the combatants, and that no degree of interference (outside of safety considerations) should be tolerated. I have heard consorts voice a variation of this belief when they declare that they would never question their champion's decisions made on the field owing to their superior experience / perspective.

The other school portrays the champion and consort as a symbiotic team, working as a pair to advance their mutual honor and renown. The consort provides the combatant with a unique perspective unavailable from within the helmet while the combatant struggles with the technique and ethics of field conduct.

I fall into the second category, with the following proviso—that the fight itself is a matter shared between the two combatants—they own it. They fight upon the Crown's field, however, and for this they owe a debt to the populace who watch their combat. They have the duty to communicate their beliefs about the quality of a fight in such a way that outsiders cannot easily question the outcome, to fight as cleanly and as crisply as possible to avoid such problems in the first place, and to be vigilant in the defense of all honorable parties—theirself, their opponent, both consorts, and the populace.

-Brian R. Price

Question #3— You have the choice of two armours that you can use for tournament combat. One is lighter, and will offer you greater speed. The other is heavier, will reduce your speed on the field slightly, but is authentic. Which do you choose, and how do you come to your decision?

"I will wear the lighter armour only if winning the tournament is very important to me, and I believe that the change in armor will increase the likelihood of winning significantly (doesn't happen often)."

-John A. Cross

"If the difference is slight and I have the money to afford more authentic, I'd go with the authentic armour. I don't want to look like the Michellan man or an add from Carpet USA."

-Julie Gavello

"The answer is not obvious given the way this question is formed, I reform it: you have the option of two armours. Both have the same style, one is heavier and more authentic in its weight. The other loses this weight through modern materials. I choose the authentic armour. We are recreationists, not sportsmen. It is a challenge to my skill. I may be able to get the speed that I desire by working-out and practicing hard in this armour. A greater victory is achieved when I do so authentically.

"You have the option of two armours. They are of different styles. One looks authentic but uses modern materials in place of period ones. The approximate weight of these materials is similar to the period ones. (Note: the modern materials will probably protect and/or wear better). The other armour looks and is authentic. I choose the lighter armour. I still am representing myself as a period fighter, using the period fighters armour, but I have saved some difficulty by using modern materials. I am judging myself on my ability as a fighter, not as an armourer. I am reproducing the period fight, not the armour."

-SCA Danulf Donaldson

"How can you recreate anything accurately without using correct materials? It's like trying to perform a traditional or period dance without the correct clothing and accessories. Certain types of clothing constrained or encouraged certain movements. So to understand how they were moving, you must dress accordingly. Or trying to make a period 'Roast Fowl' only instead of using a partridge roasted on a spit over an open flame, you use chicken and cook it in an oven. Both are in fact roast fowl, but oh—the difference!" *-Ann Marie Price*

"Assuming that you are fighting for re-creation purposes, an inauthentic armour is providing inauthentic speed; and thus detracts from the recreation. A powered sword (a rhetorical weapon, useful only in thought experiments) would provide greater speed— would you use one?" *-Aryk Nusbacher*

Question #4— An opponent fights in armour that you believe to be unsafe; he believes that it is sufficient for his personal defense. What do you do?

"If I consider him a competent judge, I let him make the call and fight with him. The question, however, implies that I doubt his judgement. In that case I would either tell him that I will be careful not to hurt him (and let him wonder whether he is being condescended to), or tell him that I will fight somebody else instead." *-Aryk Nusbacher*

"If he is a novice, I will try to avoid hitting the unsafe areas. If he is an old experienced challenging fighter, I will try to hit him in the head, arms, mid-section, or legs as they make themselves available. In both cases I will discuss the safety issues with the opponent ahead of time." *-John A. Cross*

"If this is a list, he should've been approved prior to fighting. I would then ask the Marshals to check his armour to see if it is sufficient and safe. If they say it is, then I will continue the fight." *-Julie Gavello*

"Depends. As a marshal, I ensure that his armour is safe. As a fighter, I have the option to refuse to fight him or to fight him but direct my blows to "safe" targets. I would refuse to fight him. First, it brings up to him the fact that his actions do effect others. It would be a political statement and I am willing to push those buttons for the name of safety." *-SCA Danulf Donaldson*

Question #5 — At the invocation for a large tournament, a lady of the gallery comes forward and objects to one of the combatants, on the basis that she has a complaint against his courtesy. If you were the sponsor of the tournament, what would you do?

"Depending on the schedule: [If there is] no time to mess around: Take the lady aside, wonder aloud why she waited until now and ask her to save it. [If there is] Time to mess around: have the presiding lady hold a court to decide the question. Afterwards ask why she waited until the last minute."
-Aryk Nusbacher

"I do not know. I might permit her to name a champion to fight the accused lout before the tourney begins. I haven't really been in such a position, and so I haven't considered it."
-John A. Cross

"I would bring the complaint to the fighter (privately) and ask what is their stance and opinion. They might decide to step down. If he felt that they would like to continue, I would want to bring the issue to the other fighters (with the original fighter there) and ask if they would feel comfortable continuing with this objection standing. If all participants felt comfortable, then I would continue." -SCA Danulf Donaldson

"Question her as to why she is bringing this up and at this time. I would also ask her if she has discussed this with the fighter. If not, I would tell her that this is not the correct forum to bring issues to and advise her (as soon s I know who she should talk to) as to the appropriate people to speak with. I would not pull the individual from the lists. I believe the only reason a person should be removed from the lists is if they are known by the Marshall and King to be a safety hazard to themselves and others."
-Julie Gavello

Question #6 — A combatant is believed, but not proven, to have taken an illegal stimulant before a list. What do you do?

"Take him aside, tell him he's a bastard, and don't invite him next time."
-Aryk Nusbacher

"What can we do, we can ask him, but aside from that, we are on the honor system."
-John A. Cross

"Nothing. The combatant must be considered honorable until the person who has been stating such remarks can attest that they witnessed the combatant doing the illegal act. Then it is up to the Crown to decide. Rumors are devastating and should not be perpetuated or condoned."
-Julie Gavello

"Request a blood test? This comes under the jurisdiction of the churgeonate and the autocrat. As a marshal, I would want the churgeon to certify that the fighter can continue.-SCA Danulf Donaldson

Question #7— The victor of a list is accused of cheating to obtain his victory. In the first instance, he is accused by his opponent. In the second, by a lady of the gallery. In the third, by popular consensus. What should be done in each case?

"Work it out between the two fighters. My normal suggestion is a rematch. If both fighters are satisfied, then I let the fight stand."
-SCA Danulf Donaldson

"Unless you are the King or the Earl Marshall and can actually DO something, leave it be. It becomes the accuser's reputation against that of the accused. Popular reprobation is its own punishment."
-Ann Marie Price

"I can see these as planned parts of a tournament, in which case you can plan appropriate responses (death, disgrace, degradation by the cook). If somebody is enough of a bad hat to be cheating on his own hook, and if he is really cheating as opposed to doing something clever and authentic with an obvious response; I would suggest that in the first two cases the matter should be discussed outside the re-creation; and in the third case a competent judge (read: the organiser) should decide whether to tell the cheat to take a hike, or whether to declare that no cheating occurred, and then discuss it afterwards."
-Aryk Nusbacher

"The two fighters should discuss what occurred and speak with the marshalls witnessing the fight. Beyond that I'm not sure. As far as the lady in the gallery, shots that may 'look' good may not always 'be'

good. The decision, in the end, must be the fighters' themselves. I feel it is questionable but something a fighter must consider."

-Julie Gavello

"My experience only covers the first case. Here we ask him what he thinks, and go from there. In the second, I would expect the lady to confront him directly, or to keep still. In the third, I would like to know who is collecting this consensus."

-John A. Cross

Question #8— As a consort, you discover that your combatant hedged the rules of a tournament slightly to gain an advantage. What do you do?

"1. Die of embarrassment.

2. Tell him never to do it again.

3. Suggest he apologise and mail the prize back." -Aryk Nusbacher

"I sharply disapprove and request that they withdraw. If they don't, I remove my favour."

-SCA Danulf Donaldson

"Confront him about it alone and directly. Tell him that if we are to win, there is only real honor in winning fairly."

-John A. Cross

"A fighter's reputation is based on honor, if she asks him to take responsibility for his actions, his honor will be questioned from then on. However, not disclosing it loses valuable trust between them and those that are aware of what occurred. First I would want to know from him what happened and why he did it. If he's out there to win, I would take my favour from him and advise him that it's more important to me that he fights honorably than win. I'd need to discuss with someone more experienced as to the best way to handle this. He should take responsibility for his actions. In admitting this and doing his best to make reparations will effect his honor, but if he learns from his experience, I believe he can earn back his reputation." -Julie Gavello



UNTO THE READERS OF CHRONIQUE FROM SIOR M. BRAND AND HL
CYMBRIC, GREETINGS.

9/15-16-94

Unto all gentles, sad tidings does this bear.

My Lady and I had the honour and privilege to meet a young Champion of Knightly virtue last February at Swedish Hospital, in their Children's Cancer ward. Joseph Boyle, only three years old, who could sit through all of "Robin Hood, Prince of Thieves," loved Knights. At his parent's request, we visited with him on occasion, sang songs, talked and let him and his family of friends try on armor. He and his family came by fight practice, with him all bundled up, to meet the "Knights." Many there met him and he was impressed. During the treatments, his family took pictures, had castles and birthday parties in his hospital room, sang and played music and games.

Today (Thursday) his Mother called to tell me that Joseph lived five days beyond expectations, but had died on Wednesday, the 14th of September. Young Joseph did not want to wear his plastic armor at the last (because Young 'Sir' Joseph felt only a healthy Knight should be in armor) but he would lie upon the floor, weakened, holding yet his sword. She told me that meeting real Knights helped her son survive in a better frame of mind, with strength and hope. She told me that what we believed in, HE believed in. She told me that they would lay their son to rest with his sword by his side. I will never, ever again lack faith in what we stand for, no matter how great the travail of modern life or mistakes of myself or my companions. We live a beautiful possibility, a vulnerable reality, a delicate truth, but, by the Blood of the Lion, it does LIVE!

Joseph Boyle's battle with the dragon of Leukemia ended on 9-14-94, a.s. 29. He was three and a half years old. His family remains supportive and loving of life and Joseph's memory. Your thoughts would be welcomed for Joseph and his family of friends. The following is in tribute to Joseph's (and his family's) fight. In service, humility, sadness and hope... I remain Sior Brand.

THE SQUIRE AT WAR

Inspired by Joseph Boyle and his Family

Not yet had summer's suns seen play enough.
No rivers had yet given up their catch.
Too little had the snowy drifts of fluff
Seen sleds of singing youth go hap'ply past.

Too soon the battle came to those at hand
And young, and younger still, were called to fight.
With weapons barely tempered, this brave Band
Of Families refused both fear and flight.

And on, and on, and on the foemen rode.
No toll could seem to make them slow nor yield.
Again, again, again the fortress told
Of Bravery and Love born as a Shield.

Come night and sun and witness where they stand
And grant all gladness for these times at hand.

Come Knight and Son, now witness where they stood
And grieve in sadness for the loss of "should."
Then smile with joy, and tell of heroes bold
For bravery's not just worn by those of olde.

Sior Brand, 2-26-94 (last quatrain writ 9-15-94)

-fimi-

QUESTIONS

1. What should a knightly combatant know about heraldry? Is it important? Why or why not?
 2. When was heraldry developed in Europe?
 3. Within the SCA, should combatants be allowed to display their devices upon their shields before they receive an *Award of Arms*?
 4. What purpose did heraldry serve in knightly society during the Middle Ages?
 5. What purpose does heraldry serve in our own tournaments?
 6. What latitude should be granted to a combatant in the display of his arms? How precise need the renditions be?
 7. Did historical knights ever run into device conflicts? What did they or would they have done, do you think?
 8. What was the Medieval, symbolic meaning of a knight's pennant?
 9. Who could bear a pennant, a banner, or flag in war during the Middle Ages?
 10. What was the role of a herald in the context of Medieval court? Tournaments?
 11. What should our heralds do to help further the chivalric message transmitted from the field to the gallery?
 12. What are the qualities that make a good herald?
-

CALENDAR

- July 15 Deadline for *Chronique #11*
Heralds and Heraldic Display
- Sept 30 Deadline for *Chronique #12*
Geoffry de Charnay and the Black Prince--
Knighthood in the 14th century
- Aug 95 *Grand Pas d'Armes, Pennsic Wars*
See advertisement p. 16
- Sept. 23 *Company of the Star Fall Pas d'Armes*
Gainesville, FL
Contact Joeseph Latta 904.495.9967
- Oct. 15 Deadline for *Chronique #13*
The Knightly Sword
- Oct. 21 95 *Challenge of the Seven Deadly Sins*
Blacksburg, South Carolina
Sponsored by Master Karl von Nordmark
803.772.1914
Sins represented by the Company of St. Mark
- Nov. 95 *Company of Saint George Fall Pas d'Armes*
Southern California
Contact Brent Jenkins 909.881.8629
- Dec 1 95 Deadline For *Chronique #14*
Consorts, Ladies, & The Gallery



Pas des



sept Trabeaux

In which the Great Tournament
Societies of the East, Middle, West,
Atlantia, Trimaris and Caid
will stand together to hold the field against all
comers in a very noble tournament

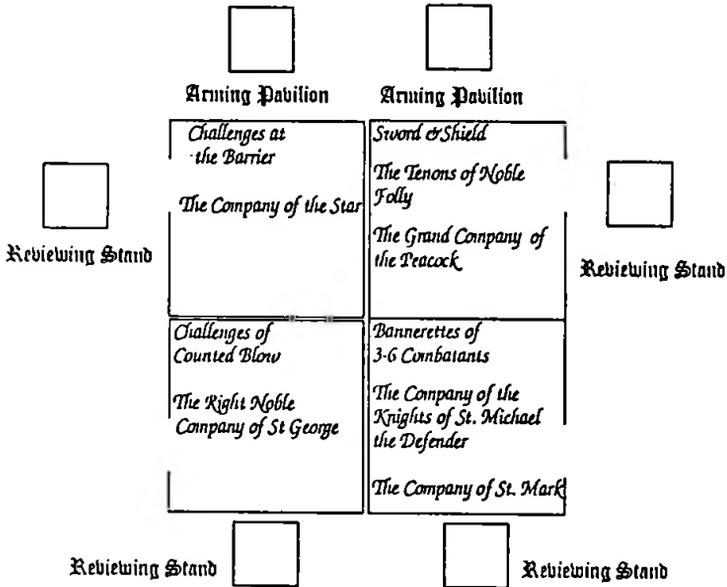
Wednesday, August 16, AS XXXIX

In the afternoon of the Great Pennsic Wars

2:00 P.M.



The Tournament Fields



The Tournament Schedule

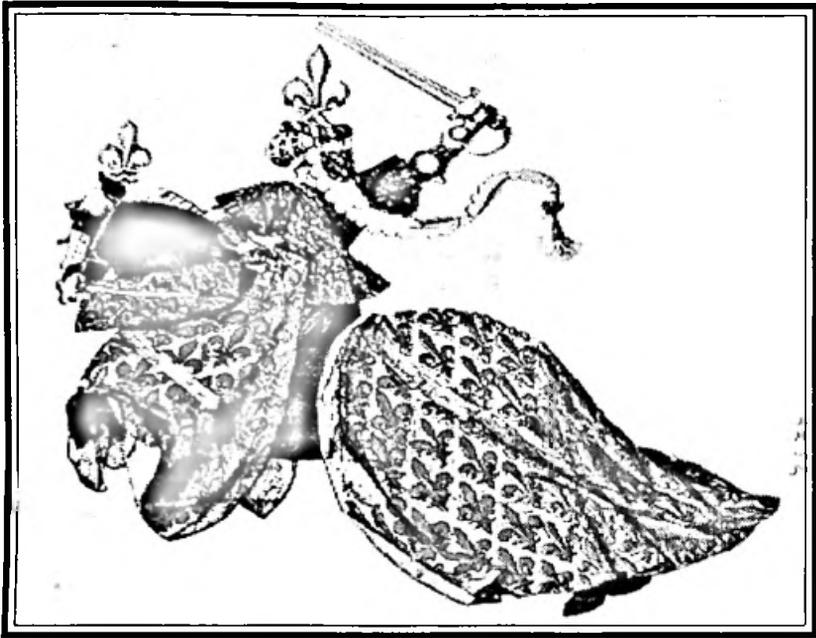
Registration	Merchant's Green	Sunday	12:00-4:00
		Monday	10:00-4:00
		Tuesday	10:00-4:00
		Monday	7:00-11:00
Tournament	Large Field	Wednesday	
Challenges (Pas d'Armes)			2:00-4:00
Meele at the Barriers			4:00-5:00
Grand Meele			5:00-6:00

You may sign up for a specific time at Merchant's Green. If you are unable to gain a time, you need only come to the tournament and you will be let in to challenge as time allows.

You may take part in any part of the tournament without taking part in the others. In other words, a tourneyer may enter the meelee at the barriers though he did not partake in the Pas d'Armes or may take part in the Grand Meelee though he does not choose to meelee at the barriers.

For further information, contact **Karl Lieder**, 5135 Lyndale Avenue South, Minneapolis, MN, 55419, (612)-824-1535.
Email Sticks@protocom.com

KING RENÉ D'ANJOU: TOURNAMENT ARCHITECT EXTRAORDINAIRE



An architect produces the templates upon which monuments are built. René d'Anjou, one of the outstanding 15th century patrons of chivalry, created templates of such brilliance and romance that their images have endured more than five centuries.

Indeed, no modern book on tournaments is complete without a plate from René's *Traicté de la forme et devis d'ung tournoy*. Dancing through the pages of this stunning illuminated "how to" book on holding tournaments are brightly emblazoned knights, tête à tête with sword and bâtons. The combatants form a grand parade through the town, making the event a festival. Before the tournament, the knight's helmets are displayed for the ladies, that any who have offended might be excluded from the lists. Squires run hither and back during the engagement, bringing their lords from battle and retrieving equipment from the field. Above all, elevated above the fray, noble ladies watch the knights battle for their attention, for individual and team

renown. After the fighting is done, the ladies award the prize, a jewel, to their choice for the most worthy knight. This is now the powerful template that has brought a strong influence onto modern tournaments, a template René constructed based on his experiences sponsoring great tournaments, being familiar with the reveling in the romantic literature of the day, and bringing his considerable artistic talents to bear. It is a template which has strongly influenced our own conceptions of what a tournament should be, one that has directly proven to be the model upon which some of the tournament teams in the SCA middle kingdom (*The Tenans of Northshield* and the *Grand Company of the Peacocks*) and the *Company of Saint Michael* have based our efforts.



Born 1409 into the courts of high nobility in France, René was a man of many talents. He led an active life in the French court, known for being a statesman, military leader, active tourneyer of great prowess, and a member of the French intellectual elite. He fought against the English at the side of Joan of Arc during his twentieth year. At the age of 22, he was married to the heiress of the Duchy of Lorraine. After a military engagement and defeat by a rival for her hand, he was imprisoned in Burgundy. He inherited the Duchy of Anjou and the Kingdom of Sicily and Naples from his sister-in-law while he was in prison, and ruled there briefly until Alfonso of Aragon released the kingdom through arms in 1442. Through a more tangled series of dynastic struggles, he became the Duke of Anjou and of Bar, Count of Provence and Piedmont, Count of Barcelona, Duke of Lorraine, Duke of Aragon and King of Jerusalem. From 1447 onwards he seems to have turned his life increasingly towards literary pursuits, penning two works with which we are familiar, *Le Cueur d'Amours Espris* (The Book of the Heart Possessed by Love), and the *Traicté de la forme et devis d'ung tournoy* (The Book of the Tournament), written in 1450, after his experiences with sponsoring several very large pas d'armes. He retired from the affairs of state and died quietly in 1480 at the age of seventy one.



Chivalric Renaissances

As a concept, chivalry has endured a continuous cycle of renaissance and stagnation. During the renaissances, the movement was led by a small elite who took the powerful underpinnings built by earlier generations and modernized them. The idea of chivalry is reborn into a new world, crafted at the hands of individuals who seek through their passion to reestablish a movement towards that distant ideal.

During the earliest days, when "chivalry" solely meant martial expertise, the virtues of the warrior were paramount—courage, loyalty, prowess. The early warriors of Charlemagne were glorified, compared to their Roman and Greek predecessors. In these days the wandering bards brought these poems of valor to the great halls and fires of the people.

The men of the early crusades also picked up the glove. The ideal of chivalry changed to accommodate the strong influences of the medieval church, adding the virtues of humility, piety, faith, and defense to the warrior virtues. At this point chivalry may be seen to have split into two main roads, a secular one and a religious one, two roads that were never really completely separate but which share distinctly different goals and ideals. (Contrast the Hospitallars with the Order of the Star, for example).

Eleanor of Aquitaine and her court profoundly influenced chivalry's next renaissance. Through her patronage and the court of Provence, the poetry of courtly love attached itself to a new ideal of knighthood, one that changed the place of women forever in the chivalric mythos and one that demanded civility, courtesy, and gentlemanly behavior from the knights that they might prove more agreeable companions in their new roles at court.



One of the more colorful and athletic of René's knights, notice in particular the very fine horse bearing distinct hycanthus leaf patterns.

Following the great leaders chivalry tends to decline; the works in between the leaders tend to discuss the general lack of virtue amongst knights of the time. The trend goes steadily down, leaderless, until another set of leaders arise to recast the jewel to meet their own needs. Edwards I & III brought the jewel to England, using it for their own political ends as well as to raise the standard of quality amongst their knights. Following the death of Edward III in 1377, chivalry entered one of the periods of decline where steady war acted as a patina on the chivalric stage.

The chivalric renaissance in Burgundy

Burgundy was the site of the chivalric renaissance during the middle 15th century. During this renaissance, starting in the 1440s, the essence of the chivalric ideal had fully metamorphasized from the collective definitions so popular during the days of William Marshal and Edward I into a glorification of individual prowess. In the pas d'armes, Romantic themes were often combined with single combats and jousts to accent the performance of the individual and to make him stand out from the crowd. Elaborate costumes were often worn; brilliant heraldic achievements were the rule in tournaments, bright color that would have been alien to the pragmatic field accoutrement of the Marshal.

Without question, it was the duke of Burgundy, Philip the Good, who led the chivalric renaissance during the period. Under his rich court, a magnificent collection of romances accented and fed his hunger for chivalric exposition. Numerous pas d'armes and chivalric festivals were held, the *Order of the Golden Fleece* (1430-present) was founded, and a new richness generally graced the chivalric ideals. Many beautiful manuscripts were created for the duke's pleasure, and many men and ladies of the court were roused to knightly display by his example and patronage.

Although Philip's father had not shown much personal interest in chivalry, the young Philip had been tutored from an early age using the best of the chivalric romances and had participated in passages of arms as a tool for development. His father founded the *Order of the Porcupine* in 1394, and in 1422 Philip himself was accorded membership in the still-prestigious *Order of the Garter*. Taking a cue from the Garter charter, the *Order of the Golden Fleece* was founded in 1430:

"Then hear, princes and princesses, lords, ladies, and damsels, knights and squires, the Very High, Very Excellent, and Very Puissant Prince, My Lord the Duke of Burgundy, Count of Flanders and Artois, Count Palantine of Burgundy, Count of Namur, etc., makes known to all that for the reverence of God and the maintenance of our Christian Faith, and to honour and exalt the noble order of knighthood, and also for the following three reasons: first to do honor to hold knights, who for their high and noble deeds are worthy of being recommended; second, so that those who are at present still capable and strong of body and do each day the deeds pertaining to chivalry shall have cause to continue from good to better; and third, so that those knights and gentlemen who shall see worn the order which shall be mentioned below should honour those who wear it, and be encouraged to employ themselves on such customs, that by their valiance they may acquire good renown, and deserve in their time

to be chosen to bear the said order; my said lord the Duke has today undertaken and founded an order which is called "the Golden Fleece", in which, with and besides the person of my lord the Duke himself, are twenty-four knights, gentlemen of name and arms without reproach, born and procreated in legal marriage, of whom a declaration of the names and surnames follows..."¹

The Grand Pas d'Armes of 1443

In 1443 the first major pas d'armes for this period was recorded as being held in Burgundy, lasting six weeks, defended by 13 knights and squires. Held near Dijon, the defenders (led by Philip's chamberlain Pierre de Bauffremont) offered passages of eleven in harnesses of war or a fight with axes or swords. One interesting event was that one engagement was fought with visors open, because the German challenger had entered the lists visor open, and Pierre matched it as a knightly gesture. The pas was an astounding success, recorded in exclusive detail by Oliver de la Marche.²

Chivalry, René & Politics

During the 15th century, these increasingly expensive festivals / pas took on more allegorical themes, increased in expense, and generally increased the divorce between tournament play and war. As wealth grew amongst the elite nobility, the splendor grew accordingly, outpacing the ability of the country knight to participate. Indeed, the country knight was fast becoming an artifact, losing ground to the burgeoning middle classes and the very beginnings of the modern state system. It is a point of active debate in scholastic circles as to whether these noblemen were striving to defend themselves against the middle class, to justify their position, and to what degree they were sincere in their interest in the chivalric ideals.

René d'Anjou is one of the men for whom it is hard to say took an interest in chivalry primarily for political expedience. His great skill at hosting grand tournaments belies a subtle understanding of the motivations that carry combatants to the field. His sense of color and feel for romantic imagery come through very clearly in his poetry, his lyrical works, his idealization of knighthood and the lady. To a degree René was a re-enactor; building upon the images of the past to bring some magic into his age. Fortunately for us, his particular brilliance was enough to earn him a little piece of immortality. We can almost meet this man today by looking at the pieces of art he created, and we are better for the experience.

¹DAJ Boulton, *The Knights of the Crown*, St. Martins, 1987.

²For a good account see Barber & Barker, p. 113-114.

René's first Pas (1445)

The first pas accorded to René took place on the occasion of his proxy marriage to Margaret of Anjou in 1445.³ At this pas, action centered around this list field and a large green pillar onto which something might have been inscribed something (René illustrates something like what this pillar might have been in his *Livre du Cuers d'Amours*, where a striped pavilion and large marble pillar greet couer (heart) and his squire (desire).⁴ A stunning pavilion of red, white and green greeted the combatants at the Nancy pas, similar to the one in the same illumination, purportedly painted by René himself in 1457. René made his entry stunningly arrayed in purple and black velvet with gold, while the others were in crimson, yellow, gray and black velvet, each surcoat embroidered with devices.

Charles VIII himself opened against René, and although Charles did not have much taste for such encounters, apparently performed well. Other combatants arrayed themselves with beauty to match René ostentatious display, including the count of St. Pol, the lord of Lorraine, and Pierre de Brézé were all stunningly accoutered. The very next year, in 1446, René hosted two spectacular events in his home duchy of Anjou.

Emprise de la Geule du Dragon (1446)

The first, the *Emprise de la Geule du Dragon*, (the enterprise of the Dragon's Mouth) was recorded in an account that is now lost.⁵ According to Barber and Barker, a rearing dragon was painted or etched into another stone pillar, marking the place for the jousting. The shields of the four defenders were above the pillar, and the challengers were to be accompanied by a lady. Each challenger was to take a vow to break two lances in honor of his lady. It was at this joust where René came all in black, bearing a sable shield with golden tears to signify the ills that had recently befallen him.

Pas de la Joyeuse Garde (1446)

The second, *Pas de la joyeuse garde* (Pas at Joyous Guard), was held in Saumur later in the year. This was a spectacular fest, arranged by René for the beautiful Jeanne de Laval, whom he later married. It was

³This pas, recorded for modern students in Barker & Barber's *Tournaments* p. 115-116, was written in the *Histoire de Gaston IV, comte de Foix*, ed. Henri Courteault (SHF) in Paris, 1893. I do not know where his information comes from.

⁴Österreichisches Nationalbibliothek MS 2597, f.5v.

⁵Barber and Barker p. 116; their information is gleaned from M Vulson de la Comombière, *Le vray theatre d'honneur et de Chevalerie*, Paris, 1648.

increasingly more intricate in all respects. The castle itself was a wooden structure, housing the gallery, and presided over by Jeanne. The knights entered with a grand procession—two white-dressed Turks, leading real lions (which were secured with silver chains to the pillar that bore the shields of the defenders); drummers and pipers, all mounted; the obligatory dwarf (bearing René's shield, yellow with some kind of painting on it and the phrase, "natural thoughts"); and then René, led by a lady who in turn led his horse by the bridle using a scarf. Although it is commonly told that the event was held for Jeanne, Barber and Barker offer that she was only 13 at the time and that René met her only shortly before the marriage. The prize was a gold clasp decorated with rubies.⁶



*Seal of the
Lord of Sault,
from a
book of statutes
on René's own
Order
of the
Crescent.*

The Order of the Crescent (1448)

In 1447, René founded his own knightly company, the *Order of the Crescent*, most likely inspired by the neighboring *Order of the Golden Fleece* and the still strong English *Order of the Garter*. The reason for the name is uncertain; it may come from a verbal game played on the motto, "Los en Crossant", to be worn on an enameled crescent worn beneath the right arm of each member.⁷ It could mean 'Honor in the Crescent', or 'Increasing Praise'. *La Croissant*, formed mostly from René's vassals, was made up of "no more than 50 members," uniquely attaching themselves to the Cathedral at Angers, where René was a powerful patron. Although the order enjoyed great success, it died with René on his death in 1480.

⁶For the most clear version, see Barker and Barber, p. 116.

⁷Malcom Vale, *WAR & CHIVALRY*, p. 52, attributed to Vulson, p. 107.

Like the other orders, brothers of the Croissant were to take vows and pledges that they should follow. All of these remain to us in the statutes of the order, but they have not yet been translated into English.⁸ The members were to guard the honor of their brothers, be they knight, squire or nobleman. No distinction is made for rank within the company; all were held equal. A Senator was elected for an annual term who was to administer to the meetings of the order. There were to be no scenes between members, no public accusations, and no recrimination save in private. Members were to provide ransoms for their fellow companions, and support the widows and orphans of their comrades.

It is appropriate that St. Maurice provided the patron for the order, since St. Maurice and his companions were very popular military saints, collective martyrs following their commanding officer unto death in the cause of piety.⁹ Indeed the *Ordre de la Croissant* placed a unique emphasis on religious observance. A spectacular statue of the saint was commissioned, to be "the finest and most magnificent that can be made," flanked by the arms and crests of the members. The brothers were to meet on the eve of the Saint's feast and attend Vespers. An elaborate heraldic ritual was to take place, followed by a meeting in which the companions discussed the business of the order. The statue can still be seen in the beautiful book presented to the order by Jacopo Antonio Marcello, attributed to Mantegna, in June 1453.

Penalties were imposed for neglecting the canonical hours and for not hearing daily mass. A daily mass was said at the new altar René had built in Angers Cathedral, set aside with its own chapel, stalls, stall plates and embroidered armorial cushions for each member. Each member wore scarlet robes, kept in the chapel, to become vestments after the death of a companion. No other order was as active in a single, public place as was the Croissant. René was a great patron of the cathedral and given his flair for ceremony and color, the rituals that took place within the cathedral must have been breathtaking.

⁸ Bibliothèque Nationale, MS fr. 25205, fo. 2v. Statutes may be found on fos. 2v-7r, ceremonies 29r-34v, oaths taken by members on fos. 35r-37r.

⁹ As the popular legend goes, Maurice was primicerius (commanding officer) for the Theban legion under Maximilian the Emperor as he marched on the Gauls Bagaudae in 287 ad. This legion, raised in Egypt, was unusual in that it was exclusively Christian. At Martigny, close to Geneva, the emperor ordered the whole army to take part in a sacrifice that included killing Christians not a part of the Gaulic enemies. Maurice refused, and when threatened withdrew his legion to Agaunum (now Saint-Maurice-en-Valais), where in time he and an undetermined number (6,600 is recorded, but is unlikely) were slain. Popular medieval history penned by Eucherius of Lyons (5th c.) cites this as a profession of faith in the one true God joined with refusal to renounce Him or take part in the killing of Christians who were not enemies. Maurice, portrayed in 11 English churches, is generally portrayed as a black man. His feast is on September 22.

René's literary interests also came into the statutes of the order, for the exploits of the members were to be recorded in a great book. As the statutes for the order proclaim, the "good deeds and prowess" of the knights should be recorded so that "their praise and renown may always be increasing (croissant) from good to better." A candle of the whitest wax was to be made, to symbolize the saint's purity. Ribbons of crimson, symbolizing his martyrdom, were to be used with the wax on the order's official seal. A King of Arms was to ascertain which deeds were to be included, to be executed by the chaplains and canons of Angers Cathedral. It is in the tradition of another such book, the one specified by the *Order of the Star's* statutes in 1351, but unfortunately, neither book has survived.

Le Cueur d'Amours Espris (1457)

An allegory published today under the name King René's Book of Love. It is said to be the descendent of the *Roman de la Rose*. In it, Cueur, after losing a battle with the Black Knight (trouble), is pushed to the Stream of Tears, is rescued by the Lady Hope, while his valet, Desire, bows to her in fealty and homage. Honor, the General, is requested by Desire to rescue Cueur, then trapped by Lady Sorrow and languishing in a dungeon. Honor sends Renown to the rescue, and Cueur is freed. The illuminations are exquisite, and are actually attributed to René himself. The book is beautiful, and available in hard and paper versions from Brazillier.

Treatise on the form and method of a Tournament

Traicté de la Forme de Devis d'ung Tournoy (Treatise on the form and method of a Tournament) encapsulates some of René's experiences into what he thinks of as the "ideal" tournament. The work is fascinating, but until recently remained inaccessible to those unschooled in the French language. Through the work of Dr. Elizabeth Bennett, it has recently come into print as an English translation, printed in monograph form, available directly from the translator.

The illustrations are sumptuous, and may be found in several modern editions. (see *Arms and Armour of King René*, in this *Chronique*). The book is not a tournament account, nor did any tournament that we know of ever take place using this template. In the book, René summarizes the tournament forms he has seen in the Lowlands, in France, and in Germany. He takes what he believes to be the best elements of each and combines them into a powerful new template. If it were not for the lavish illustration, however, the work would probably be lost in obscurity. It is the power of the illuminated pages that has brought René's ideas through to us, the same power of that romantic image that draws many of us to the re-enacted tournament today.

René presents a perfect distillation the 15th century chivalric renaissance. Heavily embued with romantic images and allegorical themes, heraldic color and the aphrodisiac of courtly ladies, René's scripts his tournament in very minute detail. The words to be spoken by each captain are supplied, as are the intricate rituals that take place before, after and during the tournament itself.

I heartily encourage you to acquire a copy of Dr. Bennett's translation. There is too much contained in René's own text to do it much honor here, but it should be on the shelf of every tournament re-enactor.

All of René's efforts combined cannot match the splendor that the Duke of Burgundy achieved during his day, or the grandeur achieved by chivalry's later champions, Francis I and Henry VIII at their Field of the Cloth of Gold. But for all that, René's efforts are like unto our own; his passion for chivalry has endured the ages and been passed on to us. We can see and dream in his tournament books, practically touching the fictional knights he portrayed there. It is a bit of immortality that enriches our own efforts to wrestle with the ethics of chivalric conduct, an ideal expression that should remind us why we are on this road in the first place. ♦

And I shall pray almighty God
 for his long life and prosperous welfare;
 & that he may have victory of all his enemies,
 and after this short and transitory life to have everlasting
 life in heaven,
 where as is Joy and Blessed world without end,
 Amen.
 —Ramon Lull

Rules for a Tournament à la King René



This set of rules is designed to be used in an SCA context, to recreate some of the splendor of a King René tournament, as outlined in his treatise, *Traicté de la Forme et Devis d'un Tournoy*.

First: That all may know these men of nobility, by the way that they bear their arms and their crests.

Second: That those who fail to behave honorably will be chastised.

Third: That each one who takes up the sword will get a good exercise in arms.

Fourth: That any knight, squire, or man at arms might, by doing well, gain mercy, strength, or an increase in love from his very gentle lady or mistress.

Item: First, that the most gentle noble the defender should send secretly unto another graceful lord, to see if a tournament between the two can be arranged to their satisfaction.

Item: The noble defender should then send, with a herald and all due ceremony, a sword unto the graceful appellant. This should be done in a place where tourneyers gather, such as at another tournament or at a great court where many fine nobles and knights of renown will gather. There should the tournament be cried, in the form of our ancestor René, as is written in his book.

Item: There should be four Judges Marshals, two chosen by each the defender and the appellant. These Marshals should choose the time and place for the tourney, and see to the setting up of the lists and the refreshments for the gallery.

Item: That the lists be the size agreed upon by the Marshals; large enough for the combatants to move about but not large enough to allow much room between them. There should be an inner and an outer barrier, made of wood if possible.

Item: Each lord Defendant or Appellant ought to have his team made up in advance, and a wooden placard ought to be created onto which the defendants and appellants can display their devices. These placards ought to be arranged for the convenience of the gallery and might be built into a rack to hold helmets and shields. All of this should be provided by the Defender or Appellant for his combatants.

Item: On the morning preceding the tournament, no later than 10 in the morning, the combatants will present themselves behind the banner of their patron, defendant or appellant, in equal numbers. They should report to the Herald King of Arms bearing helmet and pennant, and their lady or consort should be in the company of the Queen or Her representative. At the Herald's command, they should file onto the tournament field with a great display of color.

Item: First shall come the King at Arms for the Captain, bearing the robes of his office and the colors of his Captain, the Appellant or Defendant. Next should come the two Marshals provided by that Captain, also wearing his colors. The Marshals should be dressed in large robes, and should come bearing a white rod.

Item: The combatants should then enter, in order of Precedence, behind their Captain. Each should speak to the gallery, introducing themselves. If their lady or demoiselle is present in the gallery, she should step forward and acknowledge her combatant, perhaps bestowing some token of her affection. When finished, the combatant should go to their place under their painted device, and place the helmet in front, and take their place behind to watch the other combatants enter.

Item: The rules of the lists should be read, and the Captains and the combatants should swear their adherence to them, on pain of expulsion from the lists. The rules are as follows:

RULES DE COMBAT POUR LE TOURNOI DU ROI RENÉ

Item: That the combat is to be fought for love and honor only, and not for gain.

Item: That the ladies of the gallery and the Queen or Her representative, who sits in the place of Venus, be empowered to remove any combatant from the field for offending the spirit of love and gentility that shall prevail on this day.

Item: That the Queen or Her representative may have a veil which can be bestowed by Her, through the Knight of Honor, on any combatant who She desires to protect. In this instance, the opponents of this combatant must withdraw from that encounter and seek another; the protected combatant is restored completely and may seek another passage at his leisure.

Item: That all bâtons and swords be checked by the judges, and those that fail be branded with a hot iron. Swords shall be longer than the arm from the elbow and not much longer than the arm including the hand and fingers. Each combatant must provide both sword and bâton. Combatants may fight with either baton or sword without difference.

Item: For the *à la plaisance* challenges, there will only be of two types. Combats chosen with bâtons will be of counted blows, with any weapons that the challenger will choose. The number of the blows will only be 1, 3, 5 or 7. Combats chosen with the rebated swords must be fought until three good blows have been struck.

Item: During the Grand Méléés, only single swords or batons will be allowed, according to the convention of that encounter. There will be three of the Grand Méléés for the entertainment of the gallery—

First: Swords only will be used, without shields, and encounters will be fought until three good blows are thrown. After three have been thrown, the two combatants must recount their adventure to their respective consorts together; they are then free to return to the field. The combat will continue for 20 minutes.

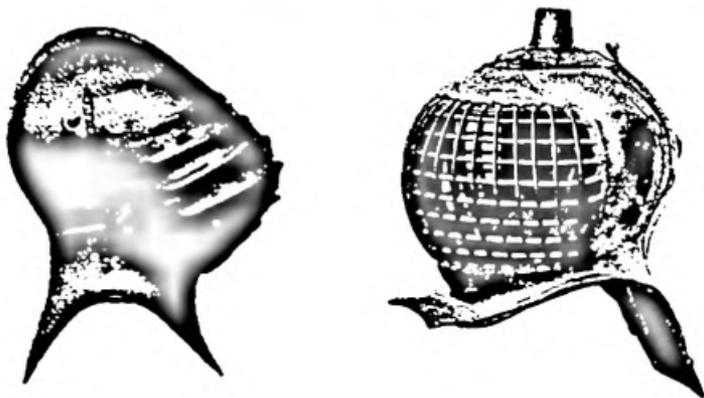
Second: To defend the *Castle of Love*, the Defendants and Appellants will all be armed with spears. This combat will be fought over the barriers, in imitation of the siege combats undertaken by our ancestors. Each combatant will be able to be struck but a single time, and must then retire to the Castle of Love, tell of the service they have done for Love, and where they will there be held by the fair ladies until the combat is over. Wounds to the leg and arm may be forgiven by the Queen, if the combatant chooses to appeal during the fighting, before they are struck dead.

Third: Bâtons only will be used, and encounters will be fought until one of the combatants signals his defeat to the other. Surrenders should be made gracefully, and are *not* dependent upon the number of blows struck or thrown. As before, both combatants must report to their ladies and tell of their encounter. This combat will continue for 20 minutes.

Item: In between each Mêlée will be another opportunity for challenges, led by the Captains of the teams. The first challenge will be offered by the Appellants, and the custom is for the Captain to challenge the opponent's Captain, and then for the others to challenge others in order of rank. This is true only for the first set of challenges; other challenges may be made during the other sets of challenges. In the second and third rounds of challenge, it is the turn of the defenders to challenge, in the fourth and final round, the attackers choose once again.

Item: When the final trumpets have been sounded, all combats must end. The prize will be granted by the Queen or Her representative, under the advice of the Knight of Honor and the other members of the gallery, in recognition of supreme prowess and chivalry.

ARMS & ARMOUR OF KING RENÉ



Some of the most valuable things about René's book from your point of view are the sections devoted to the armament of the tourneyer in the mid-15th century. In this article you will find a brief examination of René's own description of tournament gear and a comparison and the scarce, but excellent, surviving examples of this equipment. For much of this discussion I rely on the French text as reprinted by Francis Henry Cripps-Day (1918), the reproduction of René's book done in 1986 by *Éditions Hersher* of Paris, and the sole English translation extant, done by Dr. Elizabeth Bennett.¹ For excellent reproductions of the original illustrations, see the 1958 edition of the hard cover magazine *HORIZONS*, pp. 92-107 and by Bryan Holme the *Medieval Pageant* (Thames and Hudson, 1987). There is no way to approach any-

thing like a comprehensive analysis in these few pages, but I hope that the effort will give you an idea of where to look and what you should look like when you decide to create a 15th century tourney harness. Bear in mind that the armour described here pertains to René's idealized model, adapted as he says from the traditions of three broad schools of thought on the subject—mostly from the France, Germany and the Low Countries—it is not necessarily typical for soldier's field gear and is not the sole source for what is "correct" in mid-15th century tournament gear.

¹"King René's Tournament Book: *René d'Anjou Traicté de la forme et devis d'ung tournoy.*" Trans. Elizabeth Bennett, Illustrated by Will McLean, 1992, available from Ms. Bennett (see p. 73)

The armour presented as "ideal" by *Le Roi René* is at once practical and familiar. The tourneyer of the 15th century apparently fielded the same concerns for safety, pageantry, and practicality that we feel today. Primary combatants, knights and esquires, were armoured in what we now call "great bascinets," grilled in the front, covered with a cap of cuirboille² that supported a crest and the brightly colored mantling. Over a cuirass, which might have been metal or cuirboille (the records appear imprecise) was worn a tabard that was heavily decorated with brilliant heraldic images. It was cut short to the waist, and is similar to the herald's tabards we shall discuss in a later *Chronique*. The arm harness could be, according to René, cuirboille or steel, after the "export" style then popular in both Italy and Germany. Both styles emphasized lightness and freedom of movement. The hands were defended by gauntlets in either the German or Italian style of the period; what we would now call German gauntlets in the "gothic" style or Italian mitten-style defenses.

The Source—René's Book

It is important to remember that René's book was a compilation of the works and traditions known to René at the time of the book's production. In the book he speaks of the equipment he, an avid tourneyer, recommends, as well as the traditions of other lands. Flanders, Hainault, Brabant and

the German states along the Rhine are individually mentioned.

In addition to the textual references and descriptions, René was kind enough to include some very accurate, and very helpful, portraits of individual pieces and of knights and esquires prepared for battle. They were executed, as Dr. Bennett reports, by Bartholomey d'Eyck, in watercolor format and are beautifully preserved in the original manuscript, *Bibliothèque Nat. François 1695* and are splendid enough to be reprinted frequently in modern books on Medieval topics.³ They show in great detail some of the pieces we will discuss, and should be studied thoroughly as they contain great detail to someone interested in reproducing any element of René-style tournament harness. I have tried to be as accurate as possible in our reproductions here; but the truly serious re-enactor will want to consult the originals.

René describes different types of gear pertaining to the various participants and supporters of the idealized tourneyers he describes. The tournament appears to be open to knights and esquires, who

²Cuirboille is leather that has been treated in wax; a mix of beeswax and carnuba wax seems to give excellent results. Literally "leather, boiled" in the original French.

³See especially the 1958 HORIZONS, the MEDIEVAL PAGEANT, and Barber and Barker's TOURNAMENT book.

should be escorted in the lists by a group of at least two armoured assistants (probably squires). For each element of the armoured man I will first address what René himself says in the text about the primary combatant, then his retainers, and then make more general comments and observations taken from outside resources.

Arming Clothes

All René states concerning the pourpoint or gambeson is that the combatants wear them. Under harness from the 15th century, the pourpoint provides the frame upon which the armour hangs. The arm harness, leg harness and spaulders or pauldrons all attach directly to the gambeson using arming points.

For more details see *Chronique #2* and *Arms and Armour in England, Their Cost and Distribution*, (Jack Earl Wiedemer, Jr., Doctoral Dissertation, 1967). Available through UMI Dissertation Service, Ann Arbor, MI.

The Crest

"C'est assavoir, tout premièrement, le timbre doit estre sur une pièce de cuir bouilly, laquelle doit estre bien faultrée d'ung doy d'espez, ou plus par le dedens; et doit contenir ladite pièce de cuir tout le sommet du heaulme, et sera couverte ladite pièce du lambequin, armoyé des armes de celui qui portera. Et sur ledit lambequin au plus hault du sommet sera assis ledit tim-

bre, et autour d'icellui aura ung totis de couleurs que voulerá ledit tourneyeur, du gros du bras ou plus ou moins à son plaisir."

"This is to say, first of all, the crest (timbre) ought to be fastened to a piece of cuirboille (boiled leather), which should be well padded as thick as one finger (doy); or even more on the inside—And it should be content that the leather (cuir) piece should cover the top of the helm, and the same should be covered by the mantling (mod. French Lambrequin), emblazoned with the arms of he who bears it. And on the mantling at the highest summit should be this same crest (timbre), and around it twisted a torse (tortis) in the colors of the aforesaid tourneyer, more or less the thickness of an arm, at his pleasure."

Here René talks about the decoration atop the helmet: it shall have a cuirboille cap that, according to the watercolor illustrations provided, ties to the bascinet. Surmounting this cap should be a mantle in the colors of the tourneyer, held in place in part by a torse done in the same colors. Interestingly, if we follow this attachment method, there is no way to lift the visor without removing the whole crest / cap / mantling.

In the pages that show the tourneyers en masse, the following crests can be identified:

CRESTS IN KING RENÉ

2-coronets (these seem to take the place of torses)

A horse or donkey's head

A candelabra of seven points

Some sort of tower

A person's feet and legs (?)

A pair of arms lifting a possibly severed head

Golden wings

Fire(?)

Green wings

(2 are obscured)

Gold & red wings with a beast's head

Twin green candy striped (?)

A horse or donkey's head, white w/red cross hatching

What looks like a bear or boar rearing

Possibly a pair of knights bearing blue oxen?

Obscured—looks like a basket

A three-legged table, stool, or tool of some kind

A red and white cap of maintenance

Twin golden horns, recurved, with a cloth (Or) stretched between

Gold and green thingies that look like the candy striped ones above

A red stag or unicorn's head (?)

Twin blue horns, recurved

A simple fleur-de-lis

A partially obscured blue animal head

A miniature knight, upper half, bearing a red shield w/ gold

charge—sword upraised

Partially obscured—gray recurved

horns—could be on a beastie

A golden bear, upper half, quite large, with forepaws boxing

An odd coronet thingie

Two black swan's heads, with one gold wing and one white

Twin recurved horns, gray and patterned, with a red cap between

A white swan's head, in between large blue wings

A golden crescent with a red orb in between the points

Possibly a hat, surmounted by a cross

A golden beast's head with an apple in mouth, between black wings

Partly obscured—a golden stag's head

3 other obscured examples.

In the gallery, a youth supports a helmet atop a pole, bearing a blue mantle with a horse's head crest. Note that this does not match the colors of the "knight of honor" who is bearing an argent field with three red lions. The helmet is gilded or otherwise colored gold, like the leaders of each team, so I wonder whose helmet it is?

There is no mention as to what these crests were made of, yet some of them are very large, and would thus be very difficult to carry were they made of something heavy.

Fortunately, there are a few examples as well as some research that has been done on this by Theodore F. Monnich, currently curator of the South Carolina State Museum and a long time student of arms and armour.⁴ He maintains that the achievements were made using a thick leather, after the 15th century description taken from Cennino d'Andrea's treatise *Il Libro dell' Arte* (translation by T. Monnich):

Whenever you have an occasion to make a crest or helmet for a tourney, or for rulers who have to march in state, you must first get some white leather which is not dressed except with myrtle or

⁴See especially his article in the Fall 1993 edition of *Tournaments Illuminated*, where in addition to extensive research he also offers tips on how to make a crest like those featured in King René.

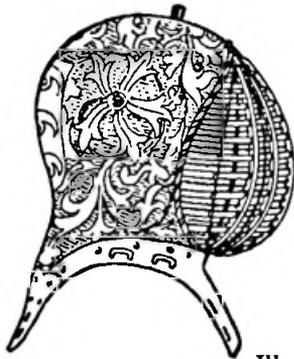
In a contemporary illustration, this one taken from a "late 14th century" chest, the combatants lack any heraldic identification on their helmets; they wear helmets that are almost armets with a feather crest protruding from the hole at the apex of the helmet; the helmets themselves are extended either in a solid piece or with attachments to affix firmly to the steel cuirass, perhaps by buckles in the front and rear, after the Milanese fashion. The visors are not grilles but are instead sparrow-beaked "armet" visors, with reinforces in front, but no rondels. A good rendition of the painting may be found on pp. 92-93 in *Tournaments*; I cite it because the combatants are thrown together very similarly to the René mêlée, wielding clubs and swords in an enclosed list. All of the combatants wear Italian plate defenses of the early 15th century (which makes me question the date of the mss.); most are wearing these "armet-visored great bascinets" but a few are actually wearing barbutes and two men even wield round-shields!

Tourney helmets in Flanders, Brabant, and Hainault

Later in the text, René talks about what the combatants wear in Brabant, Flanders, and Hainault. Speaking of helmets, he begins:

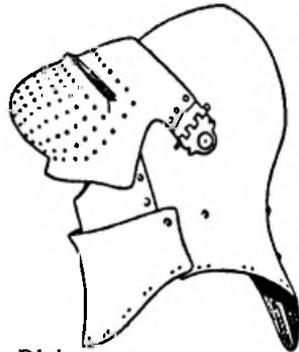
"Et quant à leurs armeures de teste, ont ung grant bascinet a camail sans visière lequel ils attachent par le camail dessus la brigantine tout autour, à la poitrine, et surs les espaules à fortes agueillettes; et pardessus tout cela mettent ung grant heulme fait d'une venue, lequel heulme est coulentiers de cuir bouilly et pertuisé dessus, a la largeur d'ung tranchoires de bois, et la veue en est baré de fer de trois dois en troys dois, lequel est seulement atachié devant à une chaesne qui tient à la poictrine de la brigandine, en façon que on le peut fester sur l'arczon de la selle pour soy refrécher, et le reprandre quant on veult."

"...And as to armour for the head, there is a great bascinet with a camail, without visor, that is at-



Right: Kolbentournier helmet of painted leather reinforced with metal. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Mid 15th-century German.

Left: Great bascinet found at Athens, South German, C. 1430.



Illustrations by Claude Blair

THE SPLENDOR RENE^{OF} D'ANJOU



Illustration 1: A meeting of René d'Anjou's Order of the Crescent, founded c. 1457, from a book on the order purportedly by Mantegna. Reprinted by permission Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, Paris, MS 940 fo. Cv.



The knights of René spill beyond the confines of the list in the lucious climax of the tournament he describes in his "*Tractié de*

la forme et devis d'ung tournoy." All of the action is set and focused, deliberately, upon a carefully set stage.



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EXCELLENCE



CRAFTSMANSHIP



*Great Bascinet in the style of King Rene d'Anjou, constructed by Mack Mackenzie-
-AKA SCA Sir Corwyn Greyrider. In the photograph, the helmet bears the mantling, but is sans the crest and torse. When Sir Corwyn fights in this beauty, the mantling adds movement to an already fluid fighting style.*

tached by the aventail under the brigandine all around, where it is affixed with points, and under the spaulders, tied with strong ties; and over all is a great helm made in a single piece of boiled leather and perforated below, the size of a trencher of wood. And the occularium is barred with iron three fingers in width and three fingers in height, which is only attached to the front of the brigandine with a chain, such that one could hang it from the saddlebow in order to refresh yourself, and then put it on again if you want."

What we have here is basically a camailed bascinet, anchored underneath the brigandine body defense, tied to arming points. It is possible that René meant that the aventail was to be tied over the brigandine and spaulders; we will probably never know. I've never known anyone to tie their aventail under the brig; but the ties serve as a method of keeping the helmet in place without using a chinstrap, which seems to be a completely modern technique. Sometimes combatants would remove their cuirboille. Great helmet, to catch their breath, but could not be attacked when they did so. This seems to indicate the no one fought without some sort of visor.

Over the bascinets was a cuirboille helmet formed "in a single piece", fitted with a grid of iron barwork three fingers in width. It may be that the vision

extended three fingers in either direction from the nose, to give better peripheral vision, but the text seems to indicate the occularia were only three fingers wide, in total. Over this helmet the normal crest is fitted, as was explained earlier.



Body Defenses

"Item. Le harnoy de corps est come une cuirasse ou comme ung harnoy à pié qu'on appelle tonnellet. Et aussi peult-on bien tourner en brigandines qui veult; mais en quelque façon de harnoy de corps on veuille tourner, est de nécessité sur toute rieurs, que ledit harnoy soit si large et si ample que on puisse vestir et mettre dessouloz ung poupoint ou courset; et fault que le porpoint soit faultré de troys dois d'esprez sur les espauls, et au long de bras jusques au col, et sur le dos aussi, pourceque le coups de masses et des espées descendent plus volentiers es

endroits dessus dis que en autre lieux. Et pour veoir la principalle et meillure façon de tourneyer, sera figuré cy dessous une cuirasse pertuisée en le meillure et plus propre façon et manière quelle peut pour ledit Tournoy."

"Item. The harness for the body is in the form of a cuirass like a foot-harness that we call a Tonnelet. And it is also possible to tourney well in a brigandine if you want; but whatever your fashion of body armour you choose, it is necessary above all else that each harness be large and ample enough that you can find there and to make fit underneath a pourpoint or a corset, and it is necessary that the pourpoint have three fingers width over the shoulders, along the arms, and along the back also, because the blows from the batons and from the swords fall more frequently here than elsewhere. And to view the principal and best fashion for the tourneyer, here below are rendered a cuirass that best pertains to and is in the best fashion for someone who wants to tourney."

René here states that the tourneyers wear a footman's cuirass or, in the final analysis, whatever body defenses are popular. Brigandines and full cuirasses are acceptable, as are foot armours (Tonnelets), provided that they are large and allow for a gambeson or pourpoint underneath. Note that Tonnelet armours do not become popular in Europe until the 16th century, when very rich com-

batants like Henry VIII could have an entire garniture made with interchangeable pieces or entire harness of richly decorated armours dominated the grand festivals. René's pieces have a utilitarian, functional look to them, and /or pieces that are primarily dedicated to keeping the combatant from injury.

Brigandine similar to those in the René illustrations, Murder of Phillip II, Nicollo Castaldo de Fano, 1460.



The cuirass illustrated by René appears to be made of metal, but that is not certain. It is a full front and back cuirass, fitted with faulds (for the hips), and pierced with numerous holes that appear to be roughly an inch in diameter. The few combatants who show this defense in the *mêlée* illustrations show it colored blue-gray, indicating that primary combatants, if they could afford it, wore cuirasses, while esquires and those in the lowlands might have worn

brigandines. Most of the squires in the illustrations are wearing brigandines only, without heraldic achievements covering them, while the combatants themselves seem to be in steel cuirasses.

In Flanders, Brabant and in Hainault, combatants took a "demi-pourpoint" (gambeson), probably a short version of the garment that extended only to the waist, padded in the back and front. Nothing is mentioned about padding over the arms. The aventail is laced to the pourpoint or gambeson, and then a brigandine fitted over the whole rig. As mentioned before, I think this odd and would like to hear from someone who tries it.

Note that there are no extant tournament harnesses from René's period; we know that tourneyers did fight in brigandines and cuirasses. The Missiglian harness shown earlier has a fine example; for the best references see *Le Armature di S. Maria delle Grazie di Curtatone di Mantova et L'Armura Lombarda del '400* by Lionello C. Boccia. Mr. Boccia is perhaps the pre-eminent scholar on Italian armours, and his works are always stunningly thorough, featuring page after page of photographs. A more accessible example might be found on p. 97 and on p. 110 of David Edge's *Arms and Armour of the Medieval Knight*, commonly available from Crescent Books. See also p. 159 of Barker and Barber's book *Tournaments*, currently remaindered and

available for a paltry \$13. This page contains good reproductions of the drawings of René's cuirass, arm harnesses, gauntlets, batons and sword.

The best source for information on the brigandines mentioned by René must be found in the *Journal of the Arms and Armour Society* Vol. XIII, Vol. 2, September 1989, in an article by Ian Eves (Curator of the Wallace Collection, London) entitled "On the Remains of a Jack of Plate Excavated from Beeston Castle in Cheshire." It takes up the whole issue, and contains very high quality photographs. See also the *Compleat Anachronist*, where Michael Lacy has contributed his Master's Thesis: "Coat of Plates to Brigandine: The Evolution of Cloth Covered Armour, 1250-1500," September 21, 1992, available from the SC Stock Clerk.

Arm and Hand defenses

"C'est assavoir, garderbras, avantbras, et gantlez; lesquels avantbras et gardebras fait en voulentés tenans ensamble, et y en a de deux façons; dont les ungs sont de harnoy blanc et les autres de cuir bouilly, lesquelles deux façons tant de harnoy blanc que aussi de cuir bouilly sont peintes dessous."

"This is said: rerebraces (upper arm), vambraces (lower arm) and gauntlets are made to move well together, in two fashions; those that are 'white harness' and those

that are made of cuirboille; the two kinds are painted below."

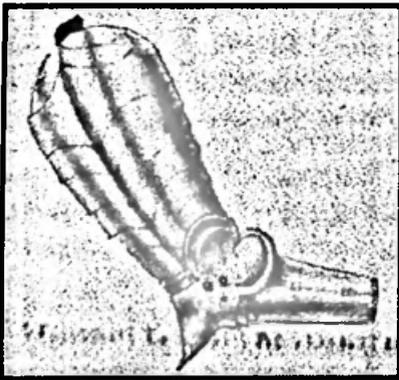
René does not go into any great detail here, but it is clear that both boiled leather and fashionable articulated defenses were in use. Oddly, he shows a "gothic" style of arm harness and "Milanese" gauntlets, although a "gothic" style gauntlet is also shown. No Italian arms are shown. The gothic defenses shown are common to examples shown from the mid- to late-15th century; since René spent a good deal of time near the German states border it is likely that he saw a good deal of this armour around the tournament circuit. The illustrative detail on the German gauntlet is not high; it appears to be made of fewer plates than extant examples seem to show; the metacarpal (back of the hand) is a single piece and the cuff seems plain, unlike the highly fluted and pierced examples com-

mon to the style. The German gauntlets have individual plates defending the fingers, with no additional defense. Evidently, René thought them safe for use with clubs...

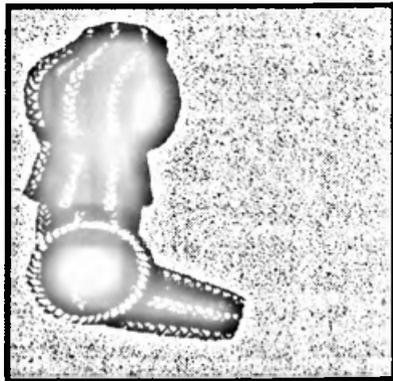
Good examples of gothic gauntlets may be found in any mainstream book on armour—see pp. 103, 104, and 106 in *Arms and Armour of the Medieval Knight*. See also the Appendix on p. 178 for construction details and photographs of the inside of a similar gauntlet.

German-style "Gothic" arms and gauntlets

The German-style arm harnesses are interesting for several reasons. First, one of the defenses appears to have lames on the inside of the elbow, an innovation not commonly ascribed to dating much before 1500. These lames are surprisingly simple in construction



Arm harnesses taken directly from the manuscript. The top two are in what is known as the German "export" style, although the articulation on the inner elbow is quite advanced for this period.



The left example is made from boiled leather, *courboille*, which after having been tooled, dyed, and boiled in beeswax, has been painted or gold leaved to bring out the tooled decoration.

and strongly resemble the Henry VIII tourney harness made for his combats at the Field of the Cloth of Gold in 1520. (*Arms and Armour of the Medieval Knight* pp. 170) Many German harnesses from the period are made without the use of lames to make the articulation metal-on-metal. Often the oversized elbow cop is affixed to the avant-bras and garderbras using leather only; it floats free and gives a great deal of mobility, as René recommends. Good illustrations of

the German harnesses may be found in AAKM p. 103 and 104, harnesses without metal-on-metal articulation. The cops on these two harnesses, made by Lorenzo Helmschmied, are probably tied directly to the pourpoint in addition to being attached to the avant- and garderbras.

Italian style arm and hand defenses

The other gauntlets shown are common examples of Milanese hand defenses. They appear in the Chest illustration I cited earlier; and appear in nearly all extant Milanese harnesses. See *Le Armature di S. Maria delle Grazie di Curtatone di Mantova et L'Armura Lombarda del '400* for many examples; pp. 102, 109, 111, 113, 115, 117 of AAKM for more examples. Notice in particular the rondels

attached to the center gauntlet. It is a right-handed gauntlet, and presumably the rondels are added as plates of advantage to defend the knight from deadly blows with the lance. They appear in the



illustration with the two dukes (fig. xx), and are only on the right hand. Some have guessed in the past that these rondels are for affixing the reigns so that both the lance and shield might be wielded along with the reigns, but this would suggest that the rondel

appear on the left hand, as I have seen somewhere (can't seem to find it now, though...) In the illustrations of the general combat, there are no instances when the rondels appear on the combatants. Perhaps they are unusual and / or expensive.

Milanese mittens are generally constructed with two or three lames to defend the fingers, broad-spanning lames embossed with high, rounded ridges at the knuckle points to facilitate the articulation. Sometimes, but not always, individual finger plates add a second layer of defense under the outer-most finger plate. The thumb is usually defended by the same sort of small plates, affixed either to the outside or inside of a leather backing. This backing is then affixed to the glove by stitching. The cuff is generally elongated, allowing little wrist flexibil-

ity. A careful view of the René illustrations reveals that virtually none of the combatants are doing any sort of wrist flick, so wrist mobility must not be crucial to their sword work. I would submit that, after trying equestrian swordplay and having experimented a good deal with SCA combat techniques, that a "broken" wrist is not really necessary to good sword work. Gauntlets from the 14th, 15th, and 16th centuries do not allow for this kind of work, and it was during this period when tournaments of this sort were most often fought.

All of the combatants in the René *mêlée* illustrations are wearing some kind of articulating Italian arm harness. These harnesses use two or three, never four, lames to articulate a fairly deep elbow cop using metal-on-metal pivoting techniques. The key to this kind of articulation lies in the parallel orientation of the twin articulation holes. They should be nearly across from one another and parallel in order for the articulation to achieve maximum efficiency. Additionally, the gaping between plates should be less than 1/4"; 1/8" is desirable. Vambraces are solid, made of two pieces, hinged on the outside using exterior hinges and some sort of spring catch or leather strap to hold them closed. They often, but not always, have an enclosed rerebrace, and an arming point at the top edge of the rerebrace, which is fitted with leather. If worn over a good gambeson, no additional

padding is necessary either on the elbow or in the vambrace. The arming point, permanently attached to the pourpoint or gambeson, passes through the leather and is tied on the outside. If made properly, the arms are very mobile, although they can be weighty. The *Le Armature di S. Maria delle Grazie di Curtatone di Mantova et L'Armura Lombarda del '400* book abounds with examples of such arm defenses, as you can imagine.

The Italians also made the floating-elbow style of arm favored by the Germans. Their forms were more rounded, but they were essentially the same construction. See the illustration of the left-hand Duke (p20). Note that this style was far more rare on Milanese harnesses, and was probably produced for the export market.

Cuirboille and Composite Arm Defenses

The right hand combatant wears vambraces similar to those described as harkening from Hainault, Brabant, or Flanders:

"...car ils prennent ung demy pourpoint de deux toilles, sans plus, du faulx du corps en bas, et l'autre sur le ventre; et puis sur cela mettent unes bracières, grosses de quatre doiz d'espez et remplies de coton; sur quoy ils arment les avantbras et les gardebras de cuir bouilly, sur lequel cuir bouilly y a menuz bastons cinq ou six, de la grosseur d'ung doy, et collez dessus, qui

vont tout au long du bras jusques aux jointes. Et quant pour l'espaule et pour le coude, sont fais les gardebras et avantbras de cuir bouilly comme cy devant est devisé, fors qu'ils sont de plus lorde et grosse façon; et sone dedans bien faultrez, et de l'un en l'autre est un toille double cousue que les tient ensemble comme une manche de mailles: Puis ont une bien légère brigantine dont la poitrine est pertuisée comme cy dessus est devisé. "

"There you will find a demi-pourpoint of two finger thicknesses, not more, stuffed in the back and also over the abdomen. And then over all of this should be the bracers, more than four fingers thick, stuffed with cotton.⁶ Over this the vambrace and rerebraces of boiled leather to which have been glued five or six rods the size of a finger or so, running the length of the defense to just short of the joints. And for the shoulder and for the elbow cop, and also for the rerebrace and the vambrace are of boiled leather are just like those illustrated above, except that they are larger and heavier, having also more padding in the front.

⁶It is a common misconception that cotton was not known to medieval craftsmen. It seems that cotton was indeed known, but the cotton seeds had to be removed from the flax by hand, and thus was expensive. It is possible that for stuffing purposes the seeds did not need to be taken out, making the material much more accessible.

The vambraces and rerebraces are held together by a cloth that covers both like a mail sleeve. Over everything they wear a punched brigandine shown below."

Over the pourpoint are the "bracers", (it is plural in the original text—"unes bracières"), four fingers thick and stuffed with cotton. Over this are leather bracers, boiled in leather, to which thin bars of stiffener, metal or perhaps bone, have been glued in place. The vambrace and rere-brace float free, or are attached together with leather and a cop riding over the top, similar to the metal defenses done in the German style as described above. Alternatively, the vambraces and rerebraces can be made entirely of boiled leather, as in the illustration shown by René himself.

Note that this harness includes the espaulier (spaulder), also done in cuirboille, but to a more bulbous shape. Near the end of his discourse on the armours worn in the "unfashionable" region of Flanders, Hainault or Brabant, René states that the whole harness makes a man look "nearly as wide as he is tall," probably due to the thickness of cuirboille and layered brigandine and pourpoint defenses. René seems to prefer the sleek beauty of shaped steel.

Nonetheless, a reasonable arm

harness can be made entirely of cuirboille, or using cuirboille vambraces, rerebraces, and spaulder; and still be entirely period and very mobile. Sadly, none of these harnesses exist, so we must look only to René for our references.

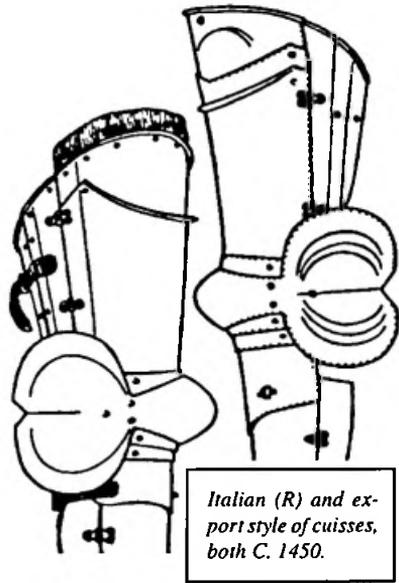
Leg Defenses

"Le harnois de jambes est ainsi et de semblable façon comme on le porte en la geurre, sans autre différence, fors que les plus petites gardes sont les meilleures, et les sollerez y sont très bons contre la poincte des esperons....Les plus cours esperons sont plus convenable que les longs, à ce que on ne les puisse arracher ou destordre hors les pieds en la presse."

"The leg harness is in the same fashion as that which is worn for war, without another difference, except that smaller wings are better, and sabatons are excellent to defend against the points of spurs—shorter spurs are better than long ones, because they won't be broken or twisted in the press."

Nothing is mentioned here about courboille legs; the legs are the same as those worn in war, consisting of steel cuisses, knee cops articulated with lames, and full greaves, with only one change—smaller wings are recommended. No difference is stated for the leg harnesses worn in any of the low countries or in Germany.

Note that on authentic 15th century leg harness, leg harness belts were not worn. The demi-greave fit tightly to the case-fitted greave itself, and often a pin held it firmly in place. Most of the weight was thus distributed along the leg, not hanging from the suspension point. The top of the cuisse was fitted with an arming point much like that on an arm harness, and the cuisse was laced to the pourpoint or to the arming hose.



Surcoat

"La cotte d'armes doibt estre faite ne plus ne moins comme celle d'ung hérault, réservé qu'elle doibt estre sans ploitte par le corps, affin que on congnoisse mieulx de quoy sont les armes."

"The coat of arms is the same, neither more or less like that of a herald's tabard, excepting only that it should not be pleated over

the torso, so that the arms might better be recognized."

There is no further detail given as to the cut of the surcoat—herald's tabards were apparently common enough to require no explanation. The sheer amount of color represented on the list is dramatic in the René illustrations, an important element to the tournament pageantry.

Notice that the esquires did not wear surcoats; sometimes the banner-bearers in Germany wore badges of their knight's devices, but in the Italian illustration there are no surcoats worn at all. In France and the lowlands, and in Germany, they were apparently important, but they were not the fashion in Italy.

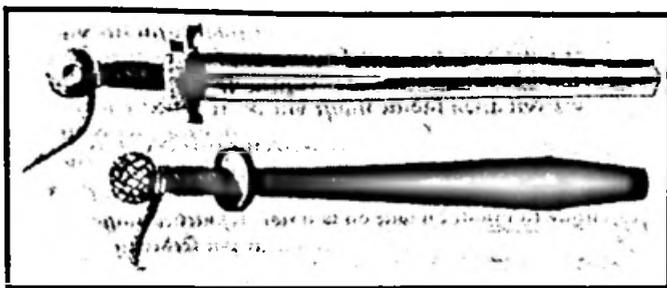
Swords and Batons

"De la mesure et façon des espées et des masses, n'y a pas trop à dire fors que de la largeur et longueur de la lumelle; car elle doit estre large de quatre doiz, à ce qu'elle ne puisse passer par la veue du heaule, et doit avoir les deux tranchans larges d'un doiz d'espez. Et affin qu'elle ne soit pas trop pesante, elle doit estre forte voidée par le meilleu et mosse devant et toute d'une venue se bien pou non depuis la croisée jusques au bout, et doit estre la croisée si courte qu'elle puisse seulement garentir ung coup qui, par cas d'aventure descendroit ou viendroit glissant le long de l'espée jusques sur le

doiz, et toute doit estre aussi longue que le bras avec la main de celluy qui la porte, et la masse par semblable. Et doit avoir ladite masse une petite rondelle bien clouée devant la main pour icelle garentir. Et peut-on, qui veult, attacher son espée ou sa masse à déliée chæsne, tresse ou cordon autour du bras, ou à sa saintre, à ce que se elles eschappoient de la main on les peust recouurer sans choir à terre.

"Au regard de la façon des pommeaulx des espées, cela est a plaisir; et la grosseur des masses, et la pesanteur des espées doyvent estre revisitées par les juges la vigille du jour du Tournoy, lesquelles masses doivent estre signées d'ung fer chault par ledicts juges, à ce qu'elles ne soient point d'oultrageuse pesanteur ne longueur aussi."

"On the size and style of the sword and baton, there is nothing to say save about the length and width of the blade; it should be four fingers wide, so that it does not have the power to pass through the occularium of the helm, and the edges should be as wide as a finger is thick. In order that it not be too heavy, it should have a large fuller (hollowed out section) and be rounded along the edges, and made in one piece from the quillions (cross) to theommel, and the quillions should be only long enough to stop a blade descending down the blade to-



wards the fingers. The blade ought to be the length of the arm and hand of the man carrying it, and the same for the baton. The baton should have a small rondel tightly riveted in front of the hand to protect it. You might, if you wish, attach a light chain or cord to your sword or mace around the arm, or to the belt, so that if you drop it you can recover it before it falls to the ground.

In regard to the pommel for the sword, it is up to you; and the weight of baton and swords should be checked by the judges on the vigil of the day of the tournament, and those batons that are too heavy should be stamped with a hot iron by the judges, and the same for those that are of an unreasonable length."

I have translated "masses" as batons because maces were popular during the period that René wrote; but they were usually made of iron and pierced with viciously pointed flanges. Baton seems to evoke the right image—a weapon used only for tourneying.

The rebated swords were apparently heavy; René says other wise but then goes on to describe blades that are four fingers wide, one finger wide at the edge, and fullered. Even with a great deal of stock removal, they would still be heavy. On the cross of one sword in one illustration, the cross is colored brilliant red, indicating possibly that it might have been covered in cloth, or it might have been artist's fancy.

The batons are made from an unspecified material, but they are obviously of wood, shaved to octagonal shape, tapering towards the handle. They appear to be four fingers in width at the widest point, only 6" or so from the tip. The quillion is a simple rondel, and there appears to be leather wrap around the handle itself. The pommel is a ball of unknown material, wrapped in leather twining. In several cases it is tied to the cuirass using cord.

In the tournament proper, all of the combatants start off using the batons, and then in another illustration they all use swords. Perhaps there is a point when they are supposed to switch.

Unfortunately, none of these weapons survive. On an Italian chest of the 14th century is painted a similar scene, in which the wooden batons are not shaped as in René, they are simple wooden staves. There are references as early as the 13th century that indicate that the "vespers" tournaments were fought using cuirboille armour, whalebone or wooden weapons.

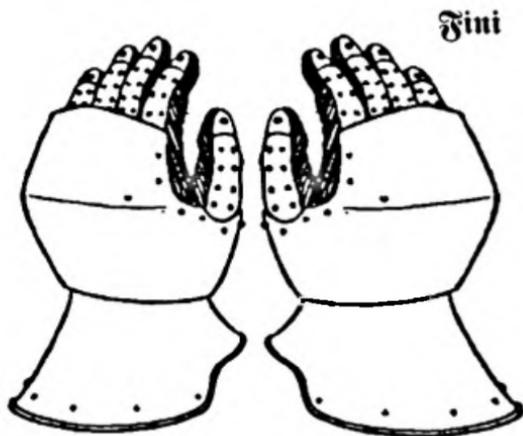
Conclusion

René is at once practical and fanciful. His equipment strives to enhance the pageantry of the event by colorful mantling and coats of arms, while encouraging both safety and comfort. Great bascinets allow superior visibility and tremendous protection; combatants wear cuirasses and leg harnesses very close to, if not the same. Arm harnesses are selected on the basis of lightness and defensive value, according to the combatant's pleasure.

The armour available to René was

rich in quality and variance. The German armourers, beginning their highest period of quality, were able to offer lighter harnesses than their Italian counterparts, although both were in fashion at the time. It appears that tourneying was a popular endeavor for the higher nobility of the middle 15th century; René describes the customs in the Low Countries, Germany and in France; we have seen also an illustration indicating that the Italians tourneyed also. Nothing is said of England.

We can learn much from René; we can learn a great deal about pageantry, about defense, and about the very spirit of chivalry that we share with our distant ancestors. In his book René, Duke of Anjou has left us a rich mine of lustrous examples. It is a mine we should take heed of, because René speaks eloquently in the eternal language of chivalry, and it is a language we share and try to disseminate with our own tournaments.



LE PAS DU ROI RENÉ III



For the third time in six years, the *Company of Noble Folly* has sponsored a René-style event in the Barony of Nordskogen (Minneapolis), located in the Northshield principality of the Middle Kingdom.

In another successful effort to show what can be done to improve the look and demeanor of tourney combatants, the tournament was a smashing success. Run by Lisa Lieder (AKA SCA Sabina de Almeria) and Charles (AKA SCA Cadwallen y Rhudd). They did many things right, and, with the help of many people, put together a very successful event. I was fortunate enough to be able to attend the tourney, and would

like to offer my observations on what they did that worked well and what did not seem to work so well that others might sponsor similar events.

By the fortune that accompanies many such noble endeavors, the rainy weather broke for the day of the tourney, offering instead the bright promise of sunlight to warm the combatants and the gallery.

The event itself was really a hybrid of what has come to be called in the Middle Kingdom a "Black Knight's tourney" and what the Noble Folly had done in the past with the René format. Held in conjunction with the local barony, Noble Folly modified their previous efforts slightly to accommodate various concerns voiced amongst the members of the sponsoring barony. The result was an enjoyable event, one that offered something different than most of the nearly 400 attendees. There were perhaps 110 combatants on the field, nearly as many consorts, and a host of very hard-working staff members present to assist with the preparations.

Model

For the early versions of René, the tourney was primarily a team effort, designed to introduce combatants from the Northshield

region to the 14th and 15th century conceptions of tourneying. The *Noble Folly* (then also called the *Tenans of Northshield*) and the *Peacocks* worked hard to create a cohesive tournament appearance, striving to capture a high-quality field appearance (in general and in detail) and chivalric demeanor characteristic of the High Middle Ages.

Sources consulted included René's *Livre de Tournois* (translation available from Elizabeth Bennet—see Review), various illuminations from the 14th and 15th centuries, and the nearly encyclopedic knowledge of this material held by the various Noble Folly and Peacock members.

Additionally, an effort has been made by the Middle Kingdom to establish "tournaments of chivalry" wherein young, skilled combatants have the opportunity to face knights of the kingdom in single combat, in order that an aspiring squire or combatant need not grapple with the baggage of a Crown Tournament in order to be noticed by the chivalry. These tournaments have been termed "black knight" tourneys in the Middle, and have met with popular support. As I understand it, the Crown Prince of the Middle Kingdom, Branos, requested that a similar thing be worked into the tourney because of the growing reputation that the tourney has begun to acquire.

Preparations

Beyond the extensive coordination with the local barony, several things that Lisa and Charles did stand out.

Booklets

First, they released three preliminary guides to generate interest, build expectations, and educate the potential tourneyers, gallery, and attendees about what to expect. Since the format for the tournament is different than the normal double-elimination, bear-pit or warlord-style tourneys, it was important to get the message out to create the right tone. In the guides were to be found some historical background on the René-style tourney, the history of the 1450-1470 time frame, the announcement for the tourney, the rules for the combat and an explanation of how the Castle of Love was to work, and the other normal event information dealing with fees and directions.

In conjunction with the reputations of two previous successes, I think that these booklets (only a few pages worth) really helped to bring tourney teams into the spirit of the day, as evidenced by the fact that four teams really showed their stuff by appearing in matched tourney finery.

Word of Mouth

In addition to the booklets, much work was done by the Folly members to bring word of the tourney to those who they thought might be interested. At

the Pennsic meeting for the tournament companies for the SCA Known World, flyers and invitations were brought and the word was passed; as expected, much interest was evinced. At the tourney itself, combatants from as far away as Calontir (Count Thorvald the Golden, Knight; Duke Conn MacNeill, Knight; and his companion Raoul), the West (Earl Brion Thornbird ap Rhys, Knight), and the central Middle Kingdom (HRH Brannos) came to cross swords in chivalric company.

Medallions

Medallions were struck to commemorate the day; the Noble Folly has a touch for detail that usually permeates their field appearance in the quality of their equipment that on this day carried over into the pageantry of the day. Being finely attuned to detail, what I call the support elements (banners, barriers, the gateway, etc.) was very well crafted and contributed to the "reality" of the day. The quality is in the detail and it is this quality, I think, that strengthens the chivalric message the Noble Folly wanted to communicate.

List Shields

Small wooden heaters were also posted to all expected combatants, that they might emblazon them with their devices and adorn the gateway to the list field. These same shields were then struck by challengers to indicate whom they would like to cross swords with during the

challenge phase of the day (all were painted except for two—one of the Folly artists and my own, since I didn't give much notice of my arrival.) The effect was excellent, colorful, evocative.



The Tourney Day

Without doubt, the day was a success. The previous and following days poured rain throughout the entire region, but with the good fortune that seems to accompany such chivalric endeavors the heavens warmed the land with sunlight on the day of the tourney. There was a contingency plan so that the event could be held at a fieldhouse if the weather failed; as it was, the Folly's first choice (an enclosed list edged by wooden fencing) had to be abandoned lest the tourneyers be lost to quicksand-like mud. Some people arrived on Friday evening, and one of the Peacock's pavilions was set up in the driving rain. Most arrived between nine and ten the Saturday morning.

The Field

The alternate field was excellent, although it featured only one gateway. The populace gathered around this gateway; it was the obvious point of focus and everyone wanted to be there. Unfortunately, during the *mêlée* portion of the day, combatants clogged the entrance and it became cramped. The gateway itself was impressive; a covered passage that combatants passed through flanked by the devices of other noble combatants. A barrier was present, although it was at the back edge of the field and not easy to see from the gathering area in front of the gate, and was thus, I think, seldom used.

I liked the general set up of the field, but there were some things I would change. First, I think it is important to keep the list field firmly in mind as a sort of stage. Be very aware of the gallery's view, and the view as seen through the combatant's eyes. If you want to encourage something, the stage should facilitate that statement. Normal fields are difficult because people are set up around all edges, generally milling about, thus making focus difficult, and maintaining focus is key to creating an image.

I would suggest providing a specific side of the list for the gallery, a place as close to the field as is practical, where consorts and other interested spectators can clearly view the field. Much of the time was taken, and some com-

batants grumbled about this, by having to press through the gate and wait in a long line at the Castle of Love, then recover, pressing back through the gate to take to the field once again. To alleviate this, perhaps the Castle could be placed on the edge of the field or immediately adjacent.

Banners were used to effectively frame the field, a concept I heartily endorse. It is nearly impossible to have too much framing, or too much color. Defining the space for the tourney can be done solely with banners (as we did at the first St. George's pas) or within a fence (as the Company of Saint Michael did at their twin Pennsic pas). Strongly encourage everyone attending to bring pennants or banners; it adds a great deal to the pageantry.

The Castle of Love

Because the site changed, the castle was improvised at a table near to the list field. Four or five ladies were in attendance at the Castle, to hear the plights of the combatants and to meet out punishments as they required. Most of these dealt with bard compositions of poems or song; some were waived and some received admonitions to be kind to newcomers or the like. As a concept the idea was excellent, but there were a few working flaws. All of these were communicated to me by the combatants; usually lower ranking ones whose less-developed prowess fated them to visit the Castle often.

Mostly the combatants did not like the wait, often five or ten minutes. The ladies tried very hard to get through the lines quicker, but were unable. You want to encourage sincere expression from the combatants, and this takes time. Second, many of the combatants ended up with five or more poems or songs to compose, for someone whose prose cannot be counted amongst their strengths this could prove very difficult. When the Folly asked me about this, I suggested perhaps that there be one Queen at the castle to issue quests (at 1 per day or something like that) and the other ladies engage the combatants in questions: "Why is love important to a knight?" or "What is the most important quality for a man at arms to possess?" or "What is courage?" These questions bring no easy answers, but the discussion can interpose thinking about chivalry with fighting, and hopefully affect some kind of fusion. Myriads of questions could be posed. Perhaps one of those challenged to ask a question could venture an answer at the banquet, on their own initiative.

The ladies themselves did a fine job, searching within themselves to charge the combatants with something important. They were noble and kind; it was the pleasure of Count Valerius and I to meet one another in a counted blows combat for their entertainment to express our appreciation for their effort.

The Day

All gathered on the site starting on the previous evening; preparations were in earnest as post-holes were dug and pavilions erected, despite the harsh rain. Visitors from far away were collected and met with genuine hospitality; wisked from their travels into the whirlwind of preparations and excitement.

Nobles arrived on the site starting at seven on the morning of the festival, to discover a Highland Cattle Exhibit (lines of medieval cattle!) sharing the grounds. Banners were erected along with more pavilions. Gentle combatants hurried about making repairs and last minute preparations; merchants offered their wares for sale and the curious looked on with mounting excitement.

Although scheduled to begin at 10, the inspections and preparations were not ready until 12—for the most part this was not keenly felt as the combatants had as much preparation as the Crown and the sponsors. The tension grew as the opening ceremonies drew near, and at last, the Queen of the Middle Kingdom called her court and the gallery and populace gathered around her. The court was an informal one, and short, probably to the sponsor's relief.

The Company of the Peacock

As an item of business for court, the company of the Peacocks were called into formal court. As soon as the call for the Peacocks had been cried, heads turned about expectantly. Nothing had been seen from the team all morning, and they seemed to dart in and out of the pavilion with an air of secrecy. A few moments passed, building the tension, and then a drum sounded from beyond the Peacock's pavilion. As clear as a sunny morning, a herald spoke; his voice was as bold as it was clear, doing justice to the Peacock's splendor. This herald advanced with the drummer, both bedecked in the green and blue of the Peacocks. A mantle of ermine (or ermine-like) dressed his shoulders; he wore clothing as our ancestors from the time of Charnay and René, and the traditional coat appropriate for a King of Arms.

The Peacocks were arrayed behind him in finery that bedazzled the eyes and caused many a breath to be held. Never before had such a striking array of chivalry been seen by those folk. Each combatant, knight and esquire alike, wore matching accoutrement. Their bascinets, dressed with aventails and flowing mantling were also dressed with a peacock's tail, worn in the fashion of a crest. Identical finery graced their garments as well; their houpelandes swished as they moved, imparting grace to an already graceful company. Arms

and legs were encased in polished steel; knights were their chains of fealty and all combatants wore military belts of metal and leather. Even their boots were matched, crafted by Sir Talbot, their leader.

Perhaps the most grace was imparted by the noble ladies of the company. Each accompanied their lord into court, on his arm, adorned also in the green and blue of the Peacock's rainbow. Emblazoned boldly across the front of their cotehardies was the image of a peacock proper, offering more color to ladies whose beauty brought the finest gift one could want.

A banner bearer accompanied each pair, carrying a long, silk, flowing pennant. The pennants too were in the green and blue, and marching down the sides of the parted populace to the beat of the drum offered proof of the combatant's and ladie's nobility.

Having taken the collected court's breath away, the Peacock Herald then introduced the individual companions to Her Majesty and Their Highnesses, including a list of boasts that brought mirth and wonder to the assembled crowd. Both truthful and humorous, the herald thus brought reality to the pageantry, infusing humor and successfully bringing relaxation to the assembled populace. At some length he went on, extolling the virtue (and some foibles) of each companion, until at along last all seven had been introduced.

Sir Talbot then stood, and called for the Noble Folly, since they had business in court. He spoke boldly, recalling that at the last René tourney, the Folly had made a gift to them of a tourney sword, rebated, in the manner of the manuscripts. Talbot presented the sword back to Cadwallen, who accepted with startling grace, speaking in turn about the nobility of the Peacocks and the inspiration that they surely gave to all present.

The present business completed, the Peacocks requested permission to leave, but it was denied by Her Majesty. She observed that the Peacocks indeed had seven combatants, rather than the allowed six. One too many. She then asked Talbot if there was one amongst them who should be singled out for the error; one who could be spared during the day's fighting. Thinking briefly, Talbot suggested Lord Crinnon (sp?), who Her Majesty then called forward. There, surrounded by his Peacock companions and to his very great surprise, Sir Talbot begged a boon of Her Majesty—and she replied in the customary manner for that kingdom, "Speak, and if be a good and proper thing, then it shall be yours."

Talbot requested the presence of the gathered Chivalry, who came forward. Impact of the moment was partly lost on Lord Crinnon, who was beginning to grasp the situation, but did not have it quite yet. Talbot begged the boon, ask-

ing that the accolade of knighthood be bestowed upon that very same Crinnon. It was, She judged, a Right and Proper thing, and the request was granted. Crinnon stood vigil all day in the Peacock's pavilion, bedecked in a white Peacock tabard slipped over his oblivious head near the end of the ceremony. With permission, the Peacocks withdrew, accompanying their chivalric candidate to the waiting pavilion. Court was ended, and the Sir Saeric of the Noble Folly gathered the combatants around to cry the rules for the day.

"Let all princes, lords, barons, squires and levies of the Middle Kingdom and of the Known World who are not banished, nor enemies of the King, our Lord, know that on the 24th day of the ninth month there will be in the Barony of Nordskogen a very great festival of arms and a very noble tourney in appropriate armour with banners and coats of arms as is the ancient custom.

"Of which tourney the captain is Count Sir Valerius Paencalvus and the redoubted Tenans of Noble Folly are defendant.

"All who intend to participate in the tourney must bring with them a banner for display upon the field, on pain of having said banner provided for them.

"And the tournament shall be fought in the following way: upon sunrise, all participants shall fight, one against another, in challenges of

matched weapons, counted blow, or barrier. At noontime, fighters shall present their arms and their consorts upon the field. After there shall be a great mêlée with fighters forming teams of 3-6 to meet in honor. All weapons must be rebated so that no deaths will be recorded by the scribes. All those vanquished in combat will be escorted to the safe area and ransomed prior to returning to the lists.

"And the tournament shall be judged in the following manner: There will be chosen three judges. Each will judge the valor, chivalry, prowess and virtue of all combatants. A prize will be given to the team which most pleases the judges most. To that team which gains the highest tally shall be a feast fitting the rich nature of the victory.

"And so, let each captain come with their bannerette of 3-6 fighters, to the Pas du Roi René. Let none refuse, for much good may come of it.

"And first, that all may know who are come of ancient nobility by the way they bear arms.

"And Second, those who fail to behave honorably will be chastised so that in the future they will be wary of doing that which is not worthy of honor.

"And Third, each one who takes up the sword will get good exercise of arms.

"And Fourth, by chance it may happen that some young knight or squire, in doing well, will get mercy, grace,

or an increase of love from their very gentle consort.

"So we ask that, for all these reasons, you will agree to meet us in such a manner that fame and widespread rumor will go out to sustain nobility and increase honor, so that, if it pleases God, every fighter will wish from thence forward to practice the exercise of arms more often.

Such was the pronouncement as made in the advance notices, and the same were reiterated and expanded by Sir Saeric. The only regret to this was that Saeric also wished to participate in the Pas itself, leaving the running of the lists to regular Marshallate staff. To my mind it would be better to assign one of the defenders to act as the Knight of Honor; seeing both to safety and to the wishes of the gallery and combatants.

The Challenges

The Knights and Tenans of Noble Folly arrayed themselves, prepared for challenges. Their shields hung on the gateway, offering challenge and opportunity to the gathered squires and men at arms. Challenges were issued either by the young men and ladies themselves, or heralds were hired to cry original or prepared challenges. These prepared challenges helped to create the tone for what the Tenans wanted; graceful words of inspiration or of insult designed to add to the pageantry and tone of the day. Many fine words were spoken by both heralds and by the chivalric

company gathered, and more than once I was pleased to hear original, very knightly sentiment expressed by youthful combatants.

Challenges to single combats

The challenges offered, the challenger had the opportunity to offer the forms of combat as listed in the rules above. Many opted for combats of counted blows, although there was some confusion according to whether the fights were to be over if a blow was struck. Nearly all of my fights were counted to the number of seven; and generally we played in the St. George's style, which is to say all seven blows were thrown and the number of scores tallied. More often than not, ties were achieved.

A few combats were also fought at the barrier, although as I said it was off to the side and not near the focal point, and was thus not the major attraction for the day.

The overall tone for the challenge was very much akin to the historical "vespers tourney", where squires fought one another on the eve of the tournament under the watchful eyes of their knights and some of the younger ladies, attempting to demonstrate their prowess in order to credit their renown.

Any number of combatants took to the field at a given time; many fought took place side by side, in the "black knight" fashion famil-

iar to Midrealm tourneyers. The fights continued for approximately two hours, or maybe an hour and a half, until the flags were dropped and tourneyers retired from the field while the Helmschau was prepared.

The Helmschau

All combatants were encouraged to dress their helmets for the event, and there was to be a sort of progress touring the various helmets. Traditionally, this was done on the eve of the tournament, so that complaints against the tourneyers could be made by the ladies and lords present, and an investigation launched. In the interests of time, however, activities moved directly to the presentation of each team to Her Majesty and to Her Highness.

At the presentation, a speaker introduced each member of the company and the consort for whom they fought that day. Many fine speeches were given, and, as some fighting had already taken place, the presentations were generally short.

I accompanied His Royal Highness of the Middle Kingdom, Sir Brannos (sp?); Count Sir Thorvald the Golden (Calontir), and his squire, Daibhid...(sp?) in a small four man team we hastily named "Knights Errant." Far from our homelands, saving for His Highness, we introduced ourselves, and, determining that we were not here to accumulate points, but

rather to engage in fine exchanges in arms, decided to worry little about the outcome and simply seek out good opportunities for chivalric display.

The Grand Mêlée

The teams then arrayed themselves upon the green of the lists, gathered into two lines, one accompanying the Tenans of Noble Folly, and the other accompanying the Peacocks, who were the official challengers. All was quiet and there were an astonishing number of combatants arrayed there that day; many more than was expected. They managed to jam themselves into the list, and, after a pause, the Marshal's baton was dropped and the teams met with the clatter and rustle expected of men in battle.

Smashing into one another, the Tenans met the Peacocks with the full fury of knights engaged in friendly, albeit hard fought struggle. The teams whirled about, and with the initial engagement over, teams were free to engage any team they chose, and to attempt to capture combatants and to return them to the table at the lists office.

In a few respects the encounters resembled more the William Marshal style of tournament than the King René format used previously. Much to my surprise, polearms were not only allowed, but were present in good number. Combatants did not hesitate to foin, or to attack with the point,

something that was very much out of fashion in tournaments from the late 13th century onwards. Lastly, by working with captures, many teams seemed to focus on the points rather than on the combatants themselves. Generally speaking individual combatants had little trouble getting into the spirit of the combats, however, and there were many chivalric gestures made in any case.

In order to capture an opponent, one had to strike a "killing blow" upon their person. They then accompanied their captor wherever he went, until rescued or removed from the field. A rescue could only be made if the captor was himself struck. Captives could be handed off by the placing of a hand on their shoulder and thus "handing the reigns" over to someone else. There was, of course, a glut at the gateway, where captors attempted to remove their booty from the field and where new teams waited to marshal their strength before returning to the list. This bottleneck was a minor problem, one that could perhaps be alleviated by using a gate away from the gallery or by having more than one gate.

If you were captured, your point value (according to rank—6 points for Royalty, 5 points for Royal Peers, 4 points for Barons, 3 points for Knights, 2 points for squires and 1 point for men-at-arms) was subtracted from your team's total and added to the

team that spirited you away for capture. Anyone struck on the field in such a manner then had to visit the castle of love, as we spoke previously.

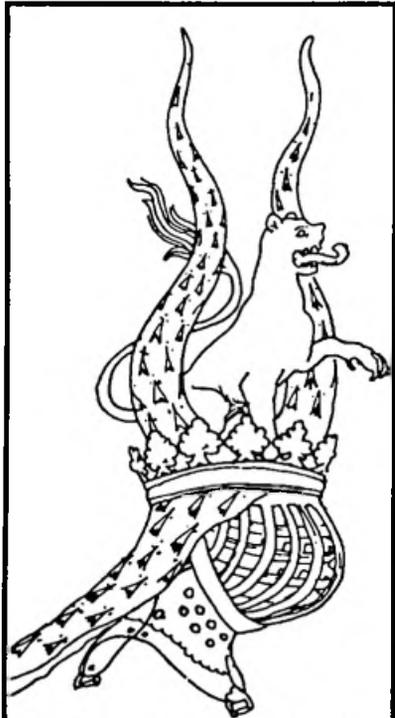
The fighting went on thus for perhaps forty-five minutes, non-stop, as men took to and left the field in various states of freedom and wealth. Count Sir Thorvald the Golden, upon reaching the Castle of Love, had it seemed cached his ransoms inside the castle, and so when he presented himself with captor to the noble ladies of the castle, he was able to reward his victor with some ransom as befit his station: suits of armour (small models), coins, 14th century buckles. The gesture was accompanied with well spoken praise for the prowess of his opponent, and many were moved by the gestures.

The Peacocks had cast pewter Royal A's as are recorded in the books of King René himself. They were a rich prize, and were offered to anyone who defeated a Peacock in battle. Later that evening they offered them generally to guests and the gallery as largesse—a fine gesture.

At long last, the combatants exhausted and the gallery very likely sated with examples of prowess and chivalry, gentles removed themselves and their gear from the field to hear the Bardic competition, to prepare the hall for the feast (which was stupendous), and to see to the Archery

or Fencing competitions. Prizes were awarded at the feast for the winning team, a team rewarded with a feast for 8 to be prepared and delivered at the upcoming Pennsic War. Another prize was offered to a knight for comporting themselves with chivalry; a military belt of plaques is to be made for that gentle.

All in all, the Pas du Roi René can only be called a success. One that hard work and truly extensive preparation is combined with the knightly spirit of the sponsors to create a memorable experience. Any gentle would wish to have been there—but perhaps in future years?



A great bascinet complete with torse and mantling, from René's treatise.

On Romance

Steen Jensen

AKA SCA

Sir Sten Halvorson, Baron

To

✓COUNT RHYS OF HARLECH,
KNIGHT✓



A knight from another land who had come to live in our kingdom found himself increasingly dismayed by the behavior of our chivalry. Finally, he offered his complaints to a gathering of the chivalry, and ended his comments by asking, "And after all, what do you want to be, an authentic medieval knight, or...or...Sir Lancelot?" The knights and masters-at-arms of the kingdom looked at one another, then back at the stranger knight, and one answered, "Sir Lancelot."

—Apocryphal West Kingdom Tale

Romance is powerful, and cannot be denied. The Society should be an enactment of medieval romance as much as a medieval re-enactment. In the ideal, the two should be entwined—authenticity providing the meat for the form of the romance. Neither stands alone. Being a bit of a ponderer rather than a scholar, I prefer romance, but my position is debatable, and should be debated.

Knights wearing patches over one eye to serve a vow to their ladies, Sir William Marmion and his golden helm; the Battle of the Thirty; Ulrich von Lichtenstein, dressed as venus, breaking three hundred lances; John the Good of France surrendering himself to the English because his honor bound him to so act; any of the tournaments "in the style of..."—Romance, the striving for the romantic ethic, had a powerful role in the Middle Ages. The men and women within a certain class threw themselves at an ideal in a way rarely seen in

history. I call that ideal "chivalry" (Sten's quote removed here) and hold it distinct from what was performed in the face of reality.

When William Marshal pursued glory over gain, losing his horse in the process, and was mocked and chided by the Count d'Eu, his patron, he learned the lesson of compromise. His career, in its success, unfolded from that lesson, blending romance with reality in a way that made him a model for those generations who followed even as he fell short of the ideal for which he strove. We study him as an example of what a man might achieve, but we will fail to understand him or his time if we exclude or downplay that which he falls short of.

Dr. Keen, an often cited authority on chivalry, refers to himself as a "social historian," which I believe marks a careful distinction. He has set out in his book *Chivalry* to describe the compromise rather than the ideal of chivalry; the romances, and even

the how-to manuals, must be of interest to him only in how they affected real behavior. But that thing he confesses to love in the very last line of the book are the virtues he describes in his last paragraph—the same virtues that have endured for more than a thousand years—"is something from which it is not easy to withhold respect." It is not the compromise, but the ideal, the romantic ethic, the myth (as he refers to it in chapter 6), that drove the chivalric class in the society he has studied. Dr. Keen's is a book of chivalry in practice. An historian of ideas might write a complimentary companion—*Chivalry in Theory*—though a stronger case can be made that the writers of the romances have long filled that role, offering their poetry to balance the scholar's prose.

A romantic ethic such as chivalry is given by poetry an enduring life, from its rough beginnings in Beowulf and the Song of Roland, through de Troyes and Eschenbach, to Malory

and Cervantes, and even on through the much-abused Victorians. Through its long life, such a poetic ideal not only guides and informs its enactors, but is shaped and changed itself through the actions of those who pursue it—(like) two mirrors, face to face, reflecting back again each change that each produces in the other. But through whatever changes occur, the core of what I call the romance of chivalry—loyalty, generosity, bearing, courtesy—can be seen as far back as Beowulf, and survives the nineteenth century to us in the present. That is its life.

In the SCA, we cannot simply be medieval re-enactors. Not only would that exclude those of us who think in poetry rather than in prose, but it is flat impossible. We can strive for individual authenticity in appearance and accoutrement, and I count that a right thing; but rigorously authentic behavior is a fantasy. Even if we could agree on whether our outlook should be that of a 14th century Burgundian or a

12th century Angevin, we would still have hordes of Vikings, Cavaliers, Samauri, Carthaginians, and bunny-fur barbarians. And even if we allow each their “authentic behavior,” somehow shoe-horning in the odds and ends, suffering the ensuing chaos, there remains the question of the common culture that will allow us to function. We have rulers chosen through combat two or three times per year, orders of peerage called “Pelicans” and “Laurels,” a grab bag of of traditions, awards ceremonies, and no church. Authentic behavior would be (supposing a European background) to treat it all as though you had been dropped into the court of the Emperor of China. But we don’t, and we shouldn’t.

The solution is to face the mirror of romance against our odd reality, and so allow each of us to find our own compromise with our own ideal. The trick, I believe, is in understanding that our romance includes to a great part the reality, the authenticity, of the Middle Ages;

the whole of it has become a part of *our* romance. As we each strive for our romantic ethic, our failing, our compromise with others around us, will give us the form for our common behavior. That will be our chivalry in practice, as our ethic will remain our chivalry in theory.

On a scale of one to ten, I count the ideal, the romantic ethic, as a ten; and authenticity as a nine. Authenticity's great value for me lies in the enormous part it plays in our romantic vision. The more meat and bone of reality we have, the closer we come to the form of our ideal. However, it can equally be argued that the reality is all that matters, and that only from it will the beauty of romance arise. There can, and should be, contention between these views, but each side must acknowledge the power and place of its opposite. We should accord the courtesy to each other that we each hold deeply held views, and recognize that our common foes are ignorance and indifference—those who care

nothing for ideal *or* reality.

Good Rhys, I find myself in agreement over most of your definition of chivalry; whatever points of disagreement we have make only for good discussion. I applaud you as an "authenticity mavin" against whom I might put my failings. But I would counsel you against dismissing our modern romance as clap-trap. There are many, many of us who are striving for Lancelot and the enduring life of the romances, as many in the Middle Ages likewise strove. Romance and authenticity are complementary and in the end each necessary for us in the SCA. In as much as I need a Rhys to caution me against becoming a Conan-esque fantastic, a Rhys needs a Sten lest he become no more than a ghost walking in dead men's steps.

Finis

-Sir Steen Halvorson, Baron
-Company of Saint George

On Virtù and Fortune

Leon Battista Alberti
1434

Translated by
James Bruce Ross

Editor: It is generally acknowledged that Italy led the Renaissance forward. Amongst the arts recalling their Roman predecessors was the art of philosophy.

The following sounds like something out of Cicero, and although it does not mention the older medieval ideals of chivalry per se, this was the form in which the virtue we pursue were being articulated during René's time. I include it here both for a touch of flavor and because it states in part what I see the mission of Chronique to be: "Finding in [histories] many and most excellent instructions, I consider it my duty to collect them and put them together so that you, finding in one place thanks to me, will expend less effort in knowing them, and in knowing them, following them."

When I call to mind from ancient histories and from the memory of our elders, and when I see in our own times, both elsewhere and in Italy, that not a few families once supremely happy and glorious are now lost and extinguished, I often wonder and grieve. Could iniquitous and malign fortune have so prevailed against man? Could hers be the responsibility, in her fickleness and termerity, that families so full of the most talented men, abounding in goods cherished and desired by mortals, adorned with honour, reputation, praise, authority, and grace, have been deprived of every felicity, thrown into poverty, solitude, and misery; reduced from many elders to a handful of grandsons, from immeasurable wealth to dire neces-

sity, from the brightest splendor of glory submerged in such misfortune and cast down into darkness and stormy adversity?

Alas, how many families are to be seen, fallen and ruined! It would be impossible to name them or tell how many (like the Fabii, Decii, Drusii, Gracchi, Marcelli, and the other noble families of antiquity) there have been, even in our own land, who once maintained liberty for the public good and preserved the dignity of authority of the fatherland, who were temperate in peace and war, and so full of wisdom and strength that they were feared by their enemies and felt themselves loved and respected by their friends. Of all these families, not only the magnificence and wealth but even the men have been reduced and brought low, and not only the men but the very name, as if every memory and reminder had been lost and destroyed. It seems to me not unreasonable, therefore, to wish to know whether fortune ever possess such power over human affairs or if to her was granted the excessive right to plunge into ruin the greatest and most excellent families by her instability and inconstancy.

When I contemplate this, without prejudice and free from all passion, and when within myself, oh, young Albertis, I consider our family, noting how many adversities it withstood in times past by its courageous spirit, and with what sound reason and wisdom our forefathers knew how to drive off, and with what constancy to sustain, both harsh misfortune and the furious assaults of iniquitous fate, I realize that many persons often blame fortune without just cause. And I perceive many who, fallen on evil days through their own stupidity, blame fortune and complain of being tossed about by those stormy waves into which the fools have actually cast themselves! Just so, many foolishly attribute their own errors to the power of others. But if anyone wishes to investigate carefully what it is that exalts and increases families and also maintains them at a high peak of honor and felicity, he will clearly see that men are themselves the source of their own fortune and misfortune; nor indeed will he ever conclude that the power of gaining praise, wealth, and reputation should be attributed to fortune rather than to ability.

And if one considers that republics and passes in mind all past principalities, he will find that in acquiring and increasing, in maintaining and conserving majesty and glory already achieved, in none did fortune every avail and more than good and sound discipline in living. Who can doubt it? Just laws, virtuous princes, prudent and firm counsels, steadfast deeds, love of the fatherland, faith, diligence, courteous and praiseworthy relations among citizens, these will enable states even without fortune to win and seize fame, and with fortune greatly to extend and spread their glory and to commend themselves to posterity and immortality...

*Just laws,
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and firm counsels, steadfast
deeds, love of the fatherland,
faith, diligence, courteous
and praiseworthy relations
among citizens;
these will enable states even
without fortune to win and
seize fame*

I believe the wise man will judge that what is true of principalities is also true of families, and will agree that families have rarely fallen into a state of misery through anything else than their own lack of prudence and diligence. I recognize this happens either because in prosperity they do not know how to control themselves or because in adversity they are not wise enough to sustain and support themselves; and hence fortune engulfs and submerges families in those cruel waves into which they actually abandon themselves. And since I do not doubt that good government, watchful and diligent fathers of families, good customs, honourable ways, refinement, ease and courtesy render families most affluent and happy, I have decided to investigate with

zeal and diligence what instructions there may be for the good regulation and direction both of fathers and the whole family, useful for achieving the ultimate and supreme felicity and preventing a collapse before iniquitous and strange fortune. What leisure I have been able to steal away from my other labours I have spent entirely in searching through ancient writers to see what precepts they have left that are apt and suitable for the well-being, honour, and growth of families. Finding in them many and most excellent instructions, I consider it my duty to collect them and put them together so that you, finding in one place thanks to me, will expend less effort in knowing them, and in knowing them, in following them. And I believe that you, when you have with me reviewed the sayings and examples of these good men of antiquity, and noted the fine customs of our ancestors, the Alberti, will be of the same mind, and will decide for yourselves that as ability goes, so goes our fortune. Nor will it please you less, as you read, to see that the good old ways and customs of our house, the Alberti, than to approve and accept them, recognizing that the counsels and sayings of our ancestors were all necessary and perfect. You will see from them how a family multiplies, by what arts it becomes fortunate and blessed, in what ways it acquires grace, good will, friendship, by what disciplines honor, fame, and glory will now spread, and how the name of the family wins eternal praise and immortality.

Leon Battista Alberti, 1434
Della famiglia
Trans. James Bruce Ross, 1953



The Company of the Star

Michael Spivey

Earl Benen Mactire, KSCA

Kingdom of Trimaris

Editor: *In December 1993 I had the pleasure of attending the Company of the Star's first pas d'armes, held on Sir Seosaidgh's property in Gainesville, Florida. As a principal member of the Company of Saint George, I was able to bring greetings to our sister company; and was flattered by the degree of parallelism between our writings and philosophies. As a member of the Company, it is my hope that these smaller subgroups can indeed bring focused talents back into the SCA culture and give those with an awakening interest in the medieval a place to taste something a little different, without rejecting the premises upon which the SCA is built.*



We had long ago decided that the SCA was drifting away from the island of recreating the middle age and deeper into the seas of an armoured sportin club where performance on the field is measured by the amount of bruises one gives or receives in a list. No longer did the earls pick up the panalogy of sounds common at a fair or gathering, armour making its distinctive clamour as participants walked to and fro. Heralds crying the challenges and courtesies of one entrant to another. The subtle flirtatous banter between men and women or the encouragement of friendly advice. Nor were the eyes seeing the galleries of ladies, pages, and squires in their master's livery running errands, delivering challenges and flowers. Banners dancing in the wind. Nor was there the anticipation of an event, the evenings spent polishing armour, adjusting and checking harness and buckles. Dressing out weapons and testing the weight and feel of each. We realized that all of this had been replaced by ABS plastic, held together with duct tape, Roman loricas topped with Japanese helmets, grilles replacing houndskulls and running or track shoes in a multitude of colors, showing off more logos than a World Cup soccer match. Challenges and courtesies to an opponent's lady or the ladies of the gallery had been replaced with "kick his ass!", and the banshee-like screams of household names. Ape like chantings reminiscent of late-night television. There were those of us who tried to fight it, this mutation of a nobler age, some of us even won a Crown list and tried desperately to make the changes necessary to get back into calmer seas, either by example or edict, we were met with staunch resistance

from all sides, peer and populace as one, kicking and screaming like dogs their first time on a leash. The Board more politically correct, restrictive and reactionarily than Cromwell's parliament on the other. Still there were small pockets of resistance. We camped together in our enchanted grounds, we plotted and held private, themed tournaments. We researched and tried by example and friendly cajoling to sway others to our cause. We carefully tried to teach newcomers our ideas. We were alone. Or so we thought.

It was this seeking out of other "medievalists" like ourselves that gave rise to the Company of the Star. Earl Seosaidh Mac Seosaidgh had long professed the activities of the Company of Saint George and its members. He acted as their agent for the distribution of *Chronique* here in Trimaris, and he had interested some of us in the allure of their ways and ideas. We sat down and decided we should make a petition to enter the Company. Fortunately we were able to talk to some of the St. George members at Pennsic and had the opportunity to share philosophies and discuss the situation at hand. It turned out that logistically it would prove too difficult to participate in their pas, and it was on this revelation that we put ink to paper and set down the outline for the Company of the Star, that would be uniquely our own.

We chose to emulate the original French Order of the Star as we likened ourselves to our namesakes, as they could not retreat from battle we would not retreat from our cause and efforts to maintain our criteria, philosophies, and standards. The Company of the Star goes beyond our counterparts, St. George in the West and St. Michael in the East; whereas they operate within the SCA and are resultantly effected by it, we branched off and made it more restrictive. Our tournaments are not held at SCA events and are by invitation only so that we may control the atmosphere and insure its continuity. We set strict guidelines for participation in Company tournaments, using armour styles from the decade of the 1350's. Our weapons fall under these same strict guidelines. Our timeline operates parallel to a historical one so that we have a commonality amongst our members— i.e. the current year is 1354 (1994). This allows us to narrow our research and to share common subjects in our conversations. This is unique in that we are narrowly focused on one period of time and thus can proceed without fear of dilution. The logical choice also seemed to be to concentrate on this period in that we are in the zenith of the transitional era in armour styles and clothing. It gave us the ability to either modify existing harness or create new fighting harnesses with a minimal cost in effort and yet we still look colorful enough and are able to capture the image of the medieval knight. It provides the spice of common variety in a time of drastic and everchanging cultural events and charac-

ters that fill our heroic stories and aspirations. Upon reaching the year 2000 we will revert to 1350 again.

This is not to say that all has been forgotten within the SCA. We still operate within the confines of this group and will still be the high priests of our religion of medievalism. Earl Benen Mactire shall remain an Anglo Irish knight in the service of Edward I (1286) protecting grain shipments and fighting the Welsh in England. My lady shall continue to be Countess Rosabel de Burgundy, an heir to a considerable holding of lands and horse farms in 1415. But rather than to despair in what has become a bad costume and social gathering and fantasy sporting club we will have a place to go where others will appreciate and respect the work we have contributed and will have like returned.

It is our hope to host a pas at an SCA event so that others may see that there is a light at the end of the tunnel, as well as to share our philosophies and bring new life to those who may be waining. The benefit is that with our concentrated efforts to find as much information as possible by our members, we are amassing a wealth of information regarding the 14th century covering topics ranging from the military/political to the socio-economic.

It must not go without saying that we owe a debt of indebtedness to the Companies of St. Michael and St. George, for their writings, beliefs, encouragements and willingness to share them with us that we were able to build the steam with which to steer back our drifting ship. It is our hope that we will have the opportunity to share these same courtesies and information with others so that once again the spirit of chivalry and virtue may once again sail those nobler seas unfettered and with grace.



Charter for the Company of the Star

May all know by this present charter that we the Company of the Star do swear and declare before God our faithful obeisance unto the noble art of arms.

Whereas we declare that the true joy of combat proceeds not from the base spirit of pride, nor of vainly striving one against the other, but is only from honor.

We hereby proclaim that with God's grace this company shall endeavor to increase, advance and uphold the banner of chivalry, and swearing the same do hereby ordain these maintenances:

Item: That every companion shall strive through speech, manner and appearance to present forth the very mirror and example of knightly behavior.

Item: Also that every companion shall revere such goodly arts and mysteries of past days omitting neither their practice nor their patronage.

Item: Also that every companion shall take such care of his arms, harness and raiment and all appearances that be in accordance with his conviction that neither shame nor stain shall befall the company.

Item: Also that every companion shall endeavor to better himself in the use of arms and all pursuits that belong to a gentleman.

Item: Also that no companion shall flee in battle more than four arpents, but rather die or be taken prisoner.

Item: That every companion shall accept such guidance and council regards to the above as seems meet unto the same.

Item: Also that any may become a companion may in some way be

known to the company that his merits and advantages are known unto all.

¶Item: Also that the companions shall gather no less than once per year for a special feast, with their consorts, to address the company and to administer to the same, and to share agreement together, and to tell of the adventures that befell them in the year both shameful and honorable, by custom being the Feast of Saint Crispen.

¶Item: And also that the companions be known by a blue garter adorned by a silver star worn below the left knee bearing the motto *Honestas Supra Omnia* (Honor above all), and also by a white cloak bearing a badge of the same garter encircling a silver star worn upon the left breast.

May God serve us in our endeavor, done this fifth day of September in the year Thirteen Hundred and Fifty Three of our Salvation.

Rules and Bylaws

1. The time period is the decade of 1350 to 1359. The current year is 1354.
2. The geographic area involved are the parts of Western Europe where knights would have participated in formal tournaments. These shall be the areas in Britain, France, the Spanish peninsula, Germany, Austria, Italy and parts of Scandinavia.
3. The activity under study is the medieval tournament and its surrounding activities and society.
4. The costumes, armour, weapons, accoutrements, equipment, etc. but me documented (in appearance) to that which was in use in these tournaments within the time period (1350-59).
5. The form of tournaments will be historical, i.e. Melee, pas d'armes, etc. Allegorical themes and / or ransoms may be used.
6. The Knight of Honor shall be chosen by the Ladies of the Gallery (the consorts). He shall be chosen for his chivalry (knightliness), honor, courtesy, prowess and display upon the field. He shall

preside over feasts and ceremonies until the next Knight of Honor is chosen. He chooses and declares the type and theme of the next tourney and poses the chivalric question to be discussed at the next feast.

7. The sponsor of each tournament shall arrange the location, fees (if any) and logistics for that tourney.

8. The contests shall each be in livery with matching shield and banner, and shall have a consort. It is recommended that each contestant have a personal herald.

9. The weapons used in the tournaments shall be sword and shield, lance (spear), mace, hammer, axe, dagger, and tournament polearms. (swords shall be flat-sided with no marked edge or thrusting tips. Thrusting tips on spears, daggers and polearms shall be modified for realistic shape. All weapons shall be as realistic in appearance as possible. No basket or cup hilts on swords. No grilles on helmets.

10. The principles on honorable and chivalric (knightly) behavior on the field shall be of paramount importance. Blow calling, language, gestures, and courtesy to one's opponent are only the most obvious.

11. Pomp and ceremony are second only to the above. Appearance should be good, not just passably period. Courtesy to one's consort, the opponent, and crowd are to be emphasized as well as respects and salutations to Crown and opponent.

12. No visible modern items shall be within 100' of the tournament field. This includes clothing, footwear, accessories, tents, coolers, chairs, tables, bottles (even modern eyeglasses; there is some documentation for rimless and wooden rimmed glasses; obviously contacts are invisible.)

Members of the Company of the Star (CS)

Joseph Latta: Sir Seosaigh Mac Seosaigh, Earl Clan Dhu, principal

Mike Spivey: Sir Benen Mactire, Earl, principal

Dave Jenkins: Sir Llwellyn ap Cadwallader, principal

John Debets: Johann the Warlord von Limbourg



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 Penguin Edition, hardcover, no marks. Chronicler of the 14th century, Froissart recounts many tales of war and chivalry: Hardcover, \$12.50

The Book of the Courtier
 Baldassarre Castiglione: *Milestones of Thought* compact edition. Paper, 100 pp. \$5.00

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Classics of Western Thought: Middle Ages, Renaissance, Reformation. Contains many useful translations and documents.

TEMPORARILY OUT OF PRINT

Essence of
 SCA War

Organization for
 SCA War

PUZZLER

True or False:

1. During the 14th century, swords were usually dull.
2. The Company of the Star ended in 1351.
3. During the 13th century, combat over barriers was a popular form of tournament.
4. Edward III held a grand tournament to honor his son, called "The Field of the Cloth of Gold."
5. Armets were popular helmets worn by William the Marshal.
6. Tristan fell in love with Isolde because of a magic elixir.
7. In heraldry, sable refers to the furs worn by the richest heralds as they attended court.
8. Knighthoods could be purchased during the 14th century.

How did you score?

1. A *coustiller* was, according to David Edge, a band of roving brigands. They were named for the *cultellus*, the popular name for a "dagger." Needless to say, during the 12th century the *cultellus* was hardly a knightly weapon.
2. The passage from the last *Chronique* was the famous section from The Song of Roland, perhaps the last of the heroic epics. In it the warrior virtues, courage, prowess, and loyalty were praised above all others. Yet in this piece there was a glimmer of what was to come, for the friend of the hero, Oliver, was said to be "wise," when Roland was "Preux." Any guesses as to the King or the sword? The King was of course Charlemagne, who took a central position in early romances. The sword, *Durandal*, was legendary.

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004 **Introduction to Swordsmanship:** (July 1, 1994) *Class notes prepared for the fall session of Collegium Occidentalis, 1992. Thoughts on training oriented towards the novice combatant, including building a philosophy, balance, focus, awareness, stance, movement, and instructions for building the first offensive blow, the "snap."* 40pp.+ photographs. Monograph \$6.00

005 **Essence of SCA War** (Temporarily out of print)

006 **Organization for SCA War** (Temporarily out of print)

007 **The Company of Saint George (2nd edition):** *A newly expanded booklet containing a brief history of the company, it's goals, and philosophy. Although the book is intended as a guide for those who are curious about St. George, it may prove valuable for anyone considering the formation of such a group.*

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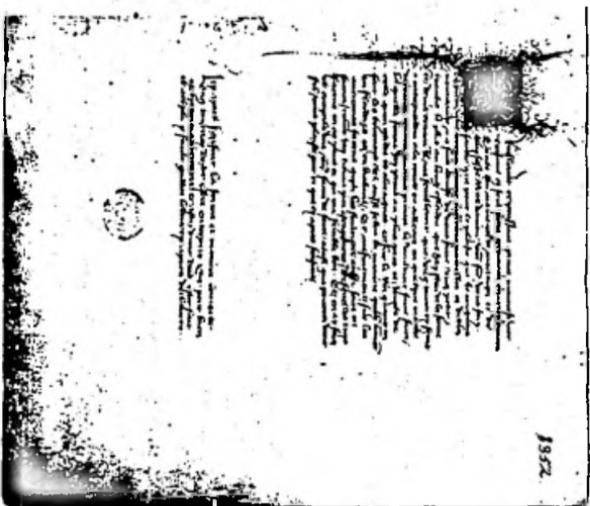
--All of the above are available from the Editor--

Chronique: *The Journal of Chivalry*

Brian R. Price

316 Escuela Avenue #38

Mountain View, CA 94040



First page from René's treatise: Traicté de la forme et devis d'ung tournoy