

Chronique

The Journal of Chivalry

Articles, Essays, Reviews

Issue #12

Geoffrey de Charnay & The Black Prince

Chronique

The Journal of Chivalry

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Great thanks to all the above contributors and to everyone who
helped Chronique #12 into being!

THANK YOU!

INTRODUCTION

Greetings! We are very pleased to bring you this issue of *Chronique*--and we regret that it has been so long since the last issue. We have been waiting on some critical material, and were in this case unwilling to substitute other pieces. However, issue #13 is well underway; it will be out in less than a month! #14 will be released at Pennsic, putting us back on track.

Good news! The *Chronique* website (<http://www.chronique.com>) has been getting large amounts of traffic, both from SCA folk and from others interested in knighthood, chivalry, and tournaments. Because roughly a third of our traffic consists of children doing research, we are adding a children's section to the pages to help them with their research.

A new *Chronique* glossary of arms & armor and another on knighthood will be worked into the site soon. Our new assistant editor, Mark Courtney, is working on this project and will be lending his own talents to the publication of *Chronique*. Please welcome him to our staff!

here are currently four volunteer positions open with *Chronique*:

Business Development Manager: Responsible for handling advertising and increasing the exposure of *Chronique* within re-enactment groups and in libraries.

Typeset Manager: Responsible for recruiting and managing a team of typists to key in material used in *Chronique* and related publications.

Art Director: Assist the staff in obtaining clean, period artwork for use in *Chronique* and on the *Chronique* www page. Works with the business development manager to create advertising, and maintains the library of art.

Production Coordinator: Responsible for the maintaining of the backlist, collating mailing the current issue, processing back issue and monograph requests.

All of the above positions are currently unpaid, save for the typeset manager. Our goal is to propel *Chronique* over the 2500 issue mark, at which point salaries will be added and we will talk about incorporating and profit sharing. This is a virtual company, connected wholly via the Internet, we think it represents a fantastic opportunity and welcome inquiries from those who might be interested!



In this issue of *Chronique*, we look at the different perspectives of knighthood during the 14th century. In these pages we frequently focus on the ideals of knighthood as they were understood in their pure sense, but in this issue we are striving to focus more on the "reality" of chivalry as practiced by knights of the period.

We have chosen the Black Prince, the icon of English chivalry, to show one view, and Geoffrey de Charnay, French knight called upon by two successive kings to give guidance to the chivalry of France, to show how chivalry clashed with the realities of politics during the 14th century.

We had hoped to bring you more of Charnay's writings; although we were only able to complete a few of the translated questions, this is a first! These questions, appearing on pages 42-52, have never been published in English before. Charnay's other prose work, the *Livre Chevalerie*, will be released in June by the University of Pennsylvania Press!

In addition we are fortunate to be able to reprint a fine article on basicnets done by Talbot MacTaggart of the Grand Company of the Peacocks, based in the Middle Kingdom. A really first-rate analysis useful to anyone trying to put together a harness from the 14th century.

In keeping with our efforts to include more information on other groups interested in chivalry and knighthood, we are proud to feature an article on the Australian Knights of the Lion Rampante. These folks seem to have a very interesting group going—see the article on page 60.

Chronique has released two more monographs, "Arming yourself in the Style of the 14th century," and "Introduction to Swordsmanship," a reworked presentation of the earlier monograph by the same name. Both feature extensive illustration and are intended to help the combatant in their quest for quality. Other monographs in the works are "The Song of the Black Prince," the "Round Table Discussion on What Knighthood Is," and the "Glossary of Arms & Armor."

Look forward to the next issues of *Chronique*: we will look at the Sword & Knightly Weapons, the Consort & the Gallery, and then the long awaited Fighting Techniques issue. Enjoy!

FORUM

Unto Sir Brion Thornbird does Edouard write, in humble appreciation of the honours that great knight does bestow on him.

I would like to express my deep gratitude at your placing me on the roll of honour. My lady and myself enjoyed the pas d'armes so much that no accolades were necessary, and yet honours have been following us ever since! His Royal Highness, Prince Garrick, has spoke well of you and I can now surely say that the praise was most deserving.

Written from my lady's scriptorium at her lands in Drachenwald.

— *Eduoard Beausoleil*

"Indeed, milords, what an amazing concept, a periodical devoted to the concept and actualization of chivalry! I have been looking for this type of journal since I joined the SCA 14 years ago."

— *Thomas of Aylesbury, KSCA*

QUESTIONS

Question #1: How are authentic tournament formats different from our modern ones? Which form is better?

"Perhaps there is no solid line between these two forms of tournament. There are few if any types of authentic tournament that we can duplicate down to the last detail. We adapt for many reasons — safety being one of the main ones, but sheer practicality enters into it as well. We are not knights in our daily lives; to be knights in the breaks we take from our normal commitments means we must fight tournaments differently.

"The authentic tournaments that I have witnessed have one great virtue, apart from the laudable one of re-creating old customs quite closely: they focus on grace, honor, and style more than brute victory.

"However, I do not scorn the modern tournaments developed within the SCA over the last 30 years. They began with precisely the same goal of encouraging honor and recreating old customs that the tournament companies of today profess. They have often, it is true, become very sport-like, but that is because it takes a concern with victory and technique to re-create an old competitive activity known only from books as a living competitive activity. In other words, we

have pursued victory in the SCA because we cared about prowess (fighting with skill) as well as the honorable gesture.

"Without the experimentation of the modern tournament, the more free-form competition that takes place there, there would be no prowess, skill, or grace to display in the authentic tournaments of the companies. We might enact a play of honor, but it would be a performance only, with no backing of real skill learned in a competitive environment.

"Thus, I do not think we can do without either the motivation of honor or the motivation of attaining prowess; there is a place for many kind of tournaments in these modern days."

— Steve Muhlberger

"I feel our tourney uses a more sports oriented format. This is both good and bad. It makes it feel better to our modern tastes, but makes it less 'real.'"

— Bo Ring

— AKA SCA Sir Ixtlixochitl

"Modern tourneys seem to rely more upon the models of modern sports such as the boxing match. The skill of the opponents is the premier characteristic. The medieval tourney at least after its initial time period depended more on the presentation of the knight as an honorable figure. The very early tourney was basically just practice for battle but the latter ones became a 'theatre' of combat in which the chivalry and honor of a knight could be seen, and in which fame (and money) might be gained."

— David Gurzynski

— Baron Dawyd z Gury

"Historical tournaments took two forms — practice as for war, and recreation for the noble class. Prior to the thirteenth century, the former prevailed as the dominant form. By the end of the sixteenth century, the function of the mounted knight had been replaced and the latter expression was all that remained. Our tournaments are reflections of this second, where what we practice is highly stylized and the victory conditions valued in their own right, rather than as preparation for some greater endeavor.

"While the form we choose does not always follow a strict medieval precedent, it is not inconsistent with the objectives of our forebears. Whether it is merely an athletic endeavor to prove the mightiest athlete or an exploration of the romantic ideals of chivalry, the modern tournament provides a safe and fun arena where these expectations can be satisfied. As such, there is no 'better' or 'worse,' just 'ours.'"

— Jay Hoffman

— AKA SCA Sir Alfred of Carlyle

"I think the real difference between period and modern tournaments is generated by the differences in medieval and modern society. We're so obsessed with numbers and facts we tend to 'bean-count.' We don't even question the double-elimination tournament in many places. Yet for most of period the winner of a tournament was chosen by consensus of the knights and heralds or by the host of the event. Indeed, renown was probably, in my opinion, as important as skill. But this structure would be unacceptable to many due to the 'if-yeness' and politics of the decisions to be made. But having recently instituted a period tourney once a month in our Barony, I find that people enjoy a break from the modern tourney. And in cases like ours where nothing (i.e. Crown) really hinges on the decision, people are actually *very amiable and relaxed* about the contest. They tend to fight with more honor and consideration, especailly when prizes are also awarded for such things by the spectators. Overall its just more fun and less cutthroat in these situations."

—Lord Caradoc ap Rhys

—Knight Marshall, Barony of Unser Hafen

—Kingdom of the Outlands

"The most obvious difference between modern tourney formats and medieval ones is the lack of the double elim tourney tree within the medieval tournament. Additionally, the winner of the medieval tourney was many times based on the judgement of the ladies present. They considered all the knightly virtues, not just the total number of wins. Early tournaments were more often of a grand melee style, with two teams chosen in some fashion. The individual combats became more important in the 14th and 15th centuries.

"Determining which style is better seems rather subjective. I like a tourney where I get to fight many fights, learn new techniques, and improve my fighting ability."

—Marlon Clark

"In my opinion, modern tournaments have inherited our modern preoccupation with so-called objectivity. As a result, they concentrate too much on producing a quote-unquote objective winner. Point systems for winning bear pit tourneys, single- and double- elimination tourneys, and massive inter-kingdom wars (with the emphasis strongly on winning, as it has been at Pennsic recently, for example) all place the emphasis on prowess alone, at the expense of chivalry, courtesy, and honor (which are, in my humble opinion, more important: prowess can be taught, honor is a matter of what a person is). We should, in my opinion, have more tournaments judged by good and worthy gentles and fewer by a point or elimination system. I do not believe

that good and worthy gentles are *that* hard to find: any *Knight of the Realm* should be able and willing to do this, as should titled nobles."

—Doug Browne

—Lord Vladyslav de Jaffa, Esquire

—Squire to Sir Alan Culross, OP

"Both forms have their uses and drawbacks. In medieval tournament forms the usual mechanism for choosing a 'winner' of the tournament (if one is to be chosen) is by vote or consensus of a specific group (Be that fighters, ladies, royalty, etc.). Elimination tournaments were rare. Modern tournament forms are taken from sporting formats, and although there are many different forms, they are all designed to eliminate competitors until there is an overall victor. The most common form is the double elimination tournament which was adapted from the form used in international judo competitions.

"I would not claim one to be 'better' than the other. I prefer the modern double elimination tournament, but enjoy other forms as well. I do not believe that most medieval forms of tournament could be used in choosing a Crown for SCA purposes, since a system in which the victor is decided by vote, no matter what group makes the decision, leaves more room for politics and personal like and dislikes — rather than skill — to effect the decision." —Michael Craemer

"Authentic tournaments were displays of brute force, brute courage, and possibly what we would call 'chivalry' in the modern day. However, they were venues by which all participants had the chance to show themselves during the entire day. Furthermore, they were also meant to test the mettle of youngsters not blooded in war, give them a taste of combat. Unlike modern tournaments, they were not elimination affairs, only designed to produce a 'winner.' Instead, they were to instruct and to demonstrate ability at arms, not merely produce a 'winner.'" —Bryan J. Maloney

—AKA SCA Symon Freser

—East Kingdom

Question #2: Why do you fight in modern tournaments?

"To strive to honor my lady by winning her the Crown." —Valgard

"I fight in modern tournaments for a variety of reasons, but one reason stands out above all others....for the honor of my lady. Without her inspiration, I would not fight.

"Other reasons would filter from there: To do honor to my Order - the Order of Chivalry, by hoping to increase the use and display of

chivalry, honor and heraldic display. To help increase the desire for further learning in our martial endeavors, through example. To serve my Kingdom, by entering the lists with the full knowledge of what the Crown's duties are, with the intent to follow through as best I am able."

— Steve Beck

— AKA SCA HRH Stephen of Beckenham,
— West Kingdom

"I fought in modern tourneys for the honor of my Lady, and to gain some fame in that arena. I found that tourneys that most closely resembled the medieval models were more fun and less brutal."

— David Gur

"I think it is fun. That is the only reason I keep going. Once there, I have been know to fight for other reasons, but the fun is what keeps me showing up."

— Bo Ring

"I have never been inspired greatly by acts in a fight or sparring match. These things do not impress me."

— Bryan Maloney

"I fight in modern tournaments for the sheer joy of the combat. When I first joined the Society for Creative Anachronism, and began learning how to fight, I mainly fought in melees. In the past several years, however, I have found that single combat is more rewarding. I learn from each opponent, win or lose. I am able to measure myself against an opponent of worth, not just some random mass of out of control fighters. I enjoy Sunday afternoon fighter practice, as I can try a series of attacks again and again to see if they work or not. I like the ability to analyze the fight, to consider the moves as though they were moves in a game of chess, to dissect the combat.

"I enjoy going beyond what I thought my limits were, doing more than I thought I could."

— Thomas R. Ayles

— Thomas of Aylesbury

"Truthfully, I haven't in almost two years.

"Why? Because the politics surrounding the martial endeavor have gotten entirely out-of-hand, so that a King of Caid was seriously concerned about my and my opponents' behavior in his Queen's Champion Tourney because of the political hoo-hah that had placed us on opposing sides of an issue. He was so enthusiastically complimentary about the LACK of acrimony in the contest that I was almost insulted that he expected some sort of unchivalrous behavior on either of our parts. One, my opponent was a brand-new Knight (and brand-new Baron of Angels — quite a weekend for him), and there is no off-the-

field argument so acrimonious that it would lead to unchivalrous behavior on my part — I am exceedingly lucky in that I have a lady who would much rather see me be chivalrous and defeated than unchivalrous and King.

“When the effect of the political machinations begins to outweigh the enjoyment of the crossing of swords of an honorable opponent, it’s time to retire from the field.

“Mind you, it’s been long enough, and my emotions are sufficiently distanced, and my position in the corporate world is stressful enough that I’d really like to get back on the field. There are few things in life quite like crossing swords with an honorable opponent. The interchange of energies, and honest competition is one of the most pleasant pastimes of my experience.”

— *J. Fox Davis*

“I fight in Queen’s Championship to honor my Queen and to strive to become her champion. I fight in Steppes Warlord to honor my barony and strive to become its warlord.”

— *Jay Rudin*

— Master Robin of Gilwell

“Bloodlust, pure and simple. With any other sport there are a bunch of foolish rules between me and my opponent, and a ball as well. On the field, there is my opponent and a wide range of possibilities.”

— *Sean Slattery*

— Master Beowulf

“When I fight in a modern style tournament I do so for the same reasons that a good 12th century knight would do so. For the chance to display my prowess and to garner the worship that comes from grace in combat. There is no other manner in which I may display my skills at arms other than through this display.

“For myself and those who share my vision I have attempted some period style lists. These focused more strongly upon the concepts of chivalric display and form than the specifics of victory or loss. Interestingly in these lists the interplay between the combatants was very strong and all left the field enobled by their actions and the actions of the opponents. This latter seems to be missing from the modern style (tennis match) lists.”

— *Chris Scott*

— AKA SCA Master Korwyn Ariannad

— *Kingdom of Ansteorra*

“I fight in modern tournaments, when I do (I tend to marshal more than I fight in modern SCA tourneys), to demonstrate and work on perfecting those qualities of knighthood (I very much like His Grace Cariadocs essay *On Knighthood* on this subject). A fighter can still demonstrate noble qualities in such a tourney: it is just that they may

hinder him in winning the tourney, rather than helping him. In such a case, it is self-evident that a knight or esquire should pursue the honorable path, rather than winning at all costs.” — *Doug Browne*

“As one might expect from my answer to the first question, assuming it got through despite technical difficulties, I see every tournament as an opportunity to increase both honor and prowess. One might say that nothing we do in armor is as ‘real’ as fighting in armor in the Middle Ages with steel swords was; but tournaments of the Middle Ages were not as ‘real’ as battle, at least most of the time. Look at it closely enough, and the differences disappear: the effort is real, the danger is real, the potential for honor or dishonor is real; and the friendships and comraderie of a well-fought day are as real as anything you could desire.” — *Steve Muhlberger*

“The modern tournament provides me with the unique opportunity whereby I can test a core virtue (Truth) in a stressful yet relatively safe environment. Unlike any other athletic endeavor, I establish the victory condition for my opponent, and he for me. This forces me to address the very real conflict between wanting to advance in the tourney versus the need to be truthful about the blows I receive. I find this exercise fun and useful — fun because I am sharing the experience with other fighters striving for similar goals; and rewarding, because I believe this practice prepares me for when I am faced with similar moments where such judgments may have more substantial consequences in my everyday life.” — *Jay Hoffman*

“If you would have asked me this question during my first year or so I would have told you that I wouldn’t fight in tournaments. I thought that war was where all the glory and renown was to be found. I find myself at a time in my fighting to be at a period of great ‘learning potential.’ Though presently I am not fighting in any of the major tournaments, as I am not ready to assume the responsibilities should I find myself victorious. I fight for the honor of the lady whose favor I bare. I know that this seems to be a typical answer, yet it is something that I hold dearest on the tournament field. I know that when I am inspired to fight for a lady, something that I need in order to do tournaments, I must conduct myself above and beyond that honor which is my own. I carry a favor on the field, be it a token of friendship or love, and being given this trust is an honor that not only deserves, but demands, that I conduct myself in the highest form of courtesy and chivalry that I know. I know that the only thing I can carry off the field, whether victorious or when met with defeat, is my honor, intact. This is the only part of the fight that I know I can control. The attention that my lady gives at the edge of the tournament field and

the gentle reminder of my ladies favor, be it a piece of ribbon or embroidered velvet, are the reason that I step out onto the tournament field. "

— Eric M. Stutzman

— AKA SCA Gunar Merielsson

"In my Barony, every month we hold a Baronial Tourney if nothing else has been organised for that month. Because of our rather small numbers of fighters, we hold a round robin tourney, so that everyone gets a chance to fight as much as possible.

"I make an effort to host a pas d'armes now and then, so that we get practice in using different tourney forms; there's no point getting stuck in a rut.

"I enjoy the pas format, because one needs to put effort into one's bout, not only in swinging the sword, but in composing an honourable challenge. I also hassle the fighters to upgrade their field appearance all the time, to bring banners, to have a tabard, to generally look good, because I am firmly support the school of thought of 'If you can't beat 'em, at least look damn fine as you go out there.'

"Apart from the last time we hosted Lochac's Coronet Tourney, we've never had a double-elimination tourney here in Ynys Fawr (mundanely Tasmania, Australia). On the one hand, it means that we have more leeway to host different types of tournies, such as the pas, but I also see it as a sign that we just don't have enough fighters."

— Peter Martin

— Editor, *Facets of Knighthood*

— AKA SCA Cormac the Traveller

Question #3: How important is prowess to the character of a modern knight? Compare this to our medieval predecessors

"The two qualities central to the period and modern medieval recreationist knight are chivalrous behavior (defined for my purposes here as all the knightly virtues, save for prowess, described by Lull and others) and prowess on the field. In my young day in the Society as a newly-authorized combatant, the knights were regarded as unstoppable killing machines, who slaughtered you with amazing good grace and sportsmanship. There was never any *approbium* attached to defeat by a knight- 'yes, I lost that one, but by God, I worried him for a little bit, didn't I?' Of course, as one gained in skill, the awe of the Chivalry's fighting ability diminished, to be replaced with increased respect for the manner in which they handled themselves on and off the field, but that initial feeling of awe never entirely left. Even now, as a knight myself, when facing another knight on the field, I have the

feeling that this fight will be something special, requiring that extra effort on my part to prevail. After all- I'm fighting a knight, aren't I? Perhaps I was lucky in my formative years as a combatant. In my kingdom (the West) there were multitudes of knights nearby that fit the model and gave inspiration by example, and I very likely turned a blind eye to those who didn't meet my expectations, but I really don't remember all that many around who failed in this. The long and short of this is that the 'genetic memory' of what a knight ought to be, which I had brought with me into the Society as an inheritance of European culture and education, demanded these two qualities of chivalry and prowess, and the heirs of the tradition that I was meeting on the field were all seemingly making a mighty effort to maintain that legacy.

"Given this inheritance, there is no way to divorce prowess from *kighthood*, without radically altering the office into a completely different form, which I daresay few will independently think of as 'Knight.'"

—Michael Plotts

—AKA SCA Michael St. Sever, KSCA, Viscount

"Prowess is very important to the fame of a modern warrior or knight, but it does not *necessarily* tell us of character. Prowess is a symptom of how much the person works at fighting. It is not a cause, it is an effect. Our predecessors considered it to be of more importance than I do, but I stand by my description."

—Doug Browne

"Prowess seems to be our main thing within the SCA. This is very untrue in the case of most knights and almost all in the period we tend to recreate and the period that had tournaments. Our medieval predecessors were mostly based on heredity. This would not be a good thing to recreate."

—Bo Ring

"With the increasing influence of the athletic and sport-oriented mindset in our hobby, as opposed to the medieval scholar who thought he'd like to try the sword, the 'game' has changed radically from when I joined, 23 years ago. No more do I see as much of the chivalric ideal — warbands and pseudo-barbaric behavior are far more the norm, even though the members of such groups, in the main, display little or no knowledge of the culture they propose to be emulating.

"While our medieval predecessors needed prowess, certainly, they had more time to work on it in a given week, and also were trained at it from an earlier age. I have heard arguments on both sides of the issue of the 'prowess and skill' vs. 'thud and blunder/hack 'n slash' depiction of the medieval knight. I tend to believe there were knights who concentrated on technique and skill, and those who were primarily hatchetmen, much like today."

—J Fox-Davis

"Prowess is in modern times an important thing. It would be stepping in the way of a sleezeball who is calling his girlfriend a 'bitch' and telling him that she is not a 'bitch' but a lady. In this day in age a quality like this is possessed by few. If more men would take up their place in this area we would indeed see a different world. Prowess should now be used to combat against the evil in this world in which we.

— Benjamin L. Backus

"To obtain the rank KSCA or MSCA, prowess is highly important. Without it, a candidate will be almost forever the bridesmaid. Furthermore, he or she must demonstrate the skill at tourneys, in front of the Chivalry.

"Prowess was very important to the medieval mind as well. Bertrand du Guesclin, Jacques de Lalaing, sir John Hawkwood, all demonstrated great prowess on the field of battle and tourney.

"To someone following chivalry as a lifestyle, prowess is least important. As Moonwulf tells the Cub Scouts, 'Learning to fight is easy, anyone can do it.' The other parts- honesty, integrity, courtesy, courage - are much more difficult to obtain, but more lasting."

— Marlon Clark

"If you can't hit back, you aren't a knight unless you're retired. Competence in combat brings to bear a discipline necessary to be a peer. Competence and discipline may be achieved on many paths, but knighthood requires that the path be combat."

— Sean Slattery

"I fight because head-bashin's fun! No joke nor sarcasm. I enjoy it. A 'victory' that doesn't put food in my baby's mouth, clothes on my back, or shelter over my head is a hollow 'victory,' indeed. I don't fight for 'victory.' The only 'glory' is living well and living morally. I don't fight for 'glory.' I gain no pleasure from defeating another, and little pain (aside from physical) from being defeated. I just like to bash heads (in a purely friendly manner, of course)."

— Bryan Mulhoney

"Using the editor's definition of the small 'k' knight as any combatant, I suggest that prowess is irrelevant to character. One of the foundations of the philosophy of modern chivalry is that it is accessible to anyone who subscribes to its tenets. It is the intent of the combatants to act honorably, rather than the force or number of blows they deliver, that earns them the respect of the gallery. In fact, prowess can work against the modern knight if they are perceived to have withheld their full ability from the engagement for some other, less noble agenda.

"This has no bearing, however, on the historical model. For this I refer you to the adage that history is invariably written by the victorious. Since prowess bears significantly on one's ability to achieve victory, it would be safe to believe that our references are fraught with descriptions of the grand and noble traits of the virtuous great — as well as the weak and dastardly habits of the vanquished."

— Jay Hoffman

"If, by 'prowess' you mean skill at brute force warfare, it's not at all important to a modern knight. *Bob Geldoff*, of the Boomtown Rats, was knighted for his untiring work to feed the hungry worldwide. *Sir Laurence Olivier* was knighted for his great entertainment ability. *Ronald Reagan* was knighted for his political connections. It is apparent that skill at arms has nothing at all to do with the character of a modern knight.

"Medieval knights had to be nasty bastards—it came with the job. A knight was a war maker, it was all he ever was. 'Chivalry,' 'gentility,' and 'courtesy' were add-ons. A knight could be coarse and be forgiven.

"A knight could be a vicious murderer of entire villages and be forgiven. A knight could waylay passers-by and extort 'fines' from them and be forgiven. All he had to do was be good in warfare and fight when and where he was told to fight." — Bryan Maloney

"Prowess was an absolute and practical necessity for the knight of old. It constituted his claim to rank and respect in society. His prowess, and the renown it led to, was a protection for himself and his dependents as well.

"We moderns are not under quite the same compulsion to demonstrate prowess, certainly not in armored combat. However, the ability to take care of oneself is still something that contributes to self-respect and gains the respect of others.

"But there is more to it than that. In times of old, prowess was not used only selfishly, but altruistically. To do the latter was one of the highest of knightly virtues, and attractive in great part because it was an altruism and generosity that could be exercised only by the strong and skilled.

"What we do is largely symbolic, but it has no less powerful a hold on our souls than the real thing. We still wish to be seen to have power and skill, and to be seen to use them virtuously."

— Finnvarr de Taaha

Question #4: Tell of something you have seen upon the field that inspired you greatly—and thus credited the renown of the combatant in question.

"Some years ago, in a Caidan Crown Tourney, I saw Sir Guy de Coldrake roundly defeated by John Fetterson (Guy's legs had already been taken, and John worked Guy's shield around perfectly until he could reach the slot left between Guy's guard). Guy had been John's teacher, and he and John had both worked exceedingly hard to improve John's skills. On John's being pronounced the victor, Guy leapt from the ground shouting 'That was GREAT! You did it *just* right! You really cleaned my clock!' His enthusiasm for his student's skill in his (the teacher's) own defeat really impressed me, and the image of the grin in Guy's face remains with me to the present day."

—J. Fox-Davis

"During the Field Battle at Pennsic War XXII, a new fighter was overcome with heat exhaustion. One of his opponents, Lord Salverus Severus (a Roman warrior of the Shire of Cynnabar, in the Middle Kingdom) noticed during a hold that the man did not leave with the rest of the dead. He stripped off his own helm, summoned the surgeons, helped remove his fallen opponent from the field, and started to cool him down. Rather than continue with his enjoyment of the battle and display his prowess for the assembled gentles, he gave up that opportunity, that his opponent might live to fight again. Lord Salverus did not display his prowess by this action, but his courtesy and chivalry cannot be questioned."

—Doug Browne

Question #5: Tell of something you have seen off the field that impressed you greatly—how did that gentle lord or lady earn your respect?

"The work of waterbearers impresses me. The pleasant smiles given to so many grumpy unappreciative combatants impresses me. Waterbearers deserve our eternal kindness and thanks."

—Sean Slattery

"Although a great deed can draw one's attention and admiration, those who deserve the most glory are those with a pattern or a habit of doing the right thing at the right time. Fighters who consistently make honorable calls on the field are obvious, but we sometimes need to look harder to notice the deeds of those who do not fight. The first person deserving such glory to come to my mind is Mistress Amanda Kendal of Westmoreland, Baroness Lion's Gate. Word of her worth

reached me before I met her, and within the first several minutes of my acquaintance with her, she had done several small kindnesses for various fighters around her (this was at a war). This caught my attention and admiration, but I was soon to discover that this was standard behavior for her. She has a consistent pattern of awareness of others' needs and feelings, and will deny a smile and a kind word to nobody. A true measure of grace is the ability (or gift) of seeing the good in others, even in certain very irritating individuals or groups of people, and extending courtesy to them all. Through seeing Baroness Amanda interact with many people, I am humbled by her example and I realize how far I have to travel on the road to true courtoisie. She never has a bad word for anyone, and I have never heard a bad word about her. Her great deed is ongoing: She inspires others to do *and be the best they can, to try to follow her example of grace.*"

—Morgan Athenry, CSG

"Many years ago, before such strange and modern ideas as "authorization" had come to our lands, I had expressed my intent to learn to fight to our knight-marshall, Master Lloyd von Eaker. We held a Warlord tournament before ever I got to practice. Master Lloyd came up to me that morning and said that there were 23 entrants, and 24 is such an even number — would I like to enter?"

"He found me loaner gear, so I took the field for the first time, wearing Master Lloyd's helm, carrying Lady Joselyn Allyne Reynards's sword and Lord William of Weir's shield, having never yet swung a stick of rattan, in tournament battle against His Royal Highness, Count Sir Jonathan DeLaufyson. The only man in Ansteorra who had ever won Crown tournament, and he's done it twice.

"I will not speak of the battle, except to say that he was polite, and let me throw many shots before he threw his one. I walked off the field feeling depressed and stupid. Worse yet, it was double elimination, so I had to go through this nonsense again. I was new to the SCA, and knew nothing of its ways; and just then I didn't really care.

"Then a messenger came to me, and said that Crown Princess Willow de Wisp wished to speak to me. I was new to the SCA, and did not know its ways, but I did know that she did not know me — except that I had just tried to kill her lord, and that next month she would be my Queen.

"I approached her throne in fear and confusion. Had I done something wrong in my ignorance? What kind of trouble was I in? When I came to her she was sitting in state surrounded by her ladies in waiting, and she spoke to me thus:

"Milord, I saw you fighting my lord, and I understand that you faced him with no training. I know that my lord can earn glory only

because there are other warriors with the courage to face him, and I thank you for the valor you showed.

“But I also saw that when the heralds called you to salute your lady, you had no one to honor. Therefore will you honor me by taking this my favor and fighting for me this day?”

“Each of her ladies in waiting added their favor as well. I entered the next round proudly wearing seven favors.

“In the next sixteen years, I have had many triumphs. I have won many tournaments, and been given many honors. But I have never had a victory to equal that defeat, and never been offered any honors to match the honor I was accorded by the Princess Willow and her ladies.”

— Jay Rudin

“From upon the tourney field a year ago I did happen to see the lady of whom I’d asked the honor of a favour, wander off the market stalls near by, purchase a scarf in her favorite *purple* and then beckon me to her. This scarf she did then tie about my shield arm and wishing me skill at arms hugged me, a kiss of her sweet lips was impossible as I fought that day in my great helm. Her act was such an inspiration to me that soon after, I was called upon to fight a challenge against a much more experienced fighter. Thinking of this Lady and her favour now tied to my arm I did best my foe and clear a matter between he and I. I have never forgotten that day, for I had asked for this Lady’s favour to wear so that I would have someone to salute like all the other fighters. Can you imagine my surprise when as I came from the field at the end of the days fighting I took the favour from my arm, knelt at her feet, kissed her out stretched hand and offered it back to her, only to hear her utter ‘Oh good, well fought, I shall embroider my wolf upon it for you now.’

“What can I say but, I still, a year of fighting later, place that now bewolfed favour in the most prominent position amongst the several I now carry, always honoring the first Lady whose favour I carried.”

—Donal Fireshaker

—West Kingdom

Question #6: What is renown?

“Fame.”

— David G.

“I’ve read enough of the material at this site to be unable to answer without a certain amount of plagiarism!”

— Steve Muhlberger

"That reputation acquired by an individual based upon acts and behavior which accrues either to his benefit or detriment, depending both upon the acts and the people reporting. 'Brion is renowned for his two-sword work on the field,' one might say, or 'Stromberg is renowned for his ability to command.'"

— J. Fox-Davis

"Renown is a measure of how well a gentle person is known for the qualities of chivalry, courtesy, and honor. It is not the same thing as fame, which is a measure of merely how well the gentle is known. This is a crucial distinction. It is quite possible, for example, to lose renown while gaining fame by a dishonorable action. All of us can name examples of gentles who have done this, and won well-deserved infamy for their actions. It is equally possible to gain renown for an *action that loses one the opportunity for glory*, such as in the case of the noble Master Corwyn who, years ago, lost the final bout of a Midrealm Crown Tourney by accidentally killing himself and insisting on taking the blow, even though his opponent and the marshals tried to convince him not to."

— Doug Browne

"A word. Real competence doesn't seek fame, just better competition."

— Sean Slattery

"Renown is simply positive fame. It can be due to true deeds or false tales. Most historical 'renown' was due far more to good PR plus gullible people than to anything else."

— Bryan Maloney

"Lately it has been mine and others custom to offer safe conduct to the nearest largest unit or seek an honorable yield to a cut-off or isolated combatant whether they are Knight or squire. This usually is done with the stipulation of a ransom. It does not necessarily have to be one of great value but all I ask is that they go through the act and honor their ransom. To each of those that have honored and delivered their ransom I salute and admire their commitment to their word and the resolution of their beliefs in chivalric virtue and their abandonment of the sport ethic too often prevalent in our combat. There actions inspire me to continue to believe that there are those that think more of this than victory before honor." — Earl Benen Mactire, Knight

Question #7: In a tournament, a knight is struck in an illegal area that wounds him and forces him to withdraw from the field. Who should be the victor of the fight?

"I think that both fighters should retire the list."

— Bo Ring

"The victory must go to the wounded knight, even if the blow is struck accidentally. The purpose of legal and illegal areas is to ensure that they are NEVER struck. Thus, an accidental strike must still result in forfeiture (but no further penalties). This is the price to pay if you want to legislate."
— *Bryan Maloney*

"The knight that has struck the illegal blow should forfeit the fight to the knight that he/she has "removed" from the field. Some might consider that when fighting on the field that such "thing" might happen, this is true, but one must be skilled enough that if a blow does land in a illegal area, it has happened strictly as an accident. Therefore, it is a point of honor that the knight delivering the illegal concede to his/her opponent.

— *Baron Tristan of Pheonix Hall, Errant, csg.*

"I am sad to admit in our format for tournaments any reason that causes a fighter to yield is a reason for the other fighter to become the victor of a fight if it be armor failure or injury it matters not. The one who yields is *not* the victor and loses his victory in that round of the list. Sad but true!"

— *B. Babbit*

— *Ld. Geoffrey of Warrington*

— *Kingdom of Trimaris*

"With the facts as given, no victor can be discerned. The wounded man has been wronged, but this does not give him victory. The man who struck the illegal blow is left in possession of the field, but in an honorable tournament that alone is not victory.

"Perhaps some other circumstance can determine the answer. How did the wounded warrior, or the wounder, act after the blow was struck and the injured knight was removed? One of them might well have made a mark in some other way, and be worthy of distinction for that."
— *Steve Muhlberger*

"There is no victor in the fight. Both should withdraw from the tourney. If it is a modern elimination tourney, the knight's opponent should at the very least be charged by the tournament marshal with a loss (make it up with a bye in the next round if necessary). The injured knight did not win the fight by his own valor and prowess, and cannot be said to have won it. To declare him the victor would be an insult, properly spurned by the gentle knight. His opponent has not won the fight, because he has struck his opponent in an illegal area, thus disqualifying himself by his clumsy and inadvertant (at best) or dishonorable (at worst) action."

— *Doug Browne*

"If the knight was struck in an off-target area with sufficient force to render him unable to continue, then the victory should be his. If there is no penalty for striking an illegal target, then the prohibition has no 'teeth', and might as well not exist. At one time, in SCA combat (in Atenveldt), striking below the knee more than twice was considered grounds for forfeiting a fight, though I have not seen this done for several years now (more's the pity). Good fighting is controlled fighting, and forcefully striking an illegal target area smells of poor control."

—Michael Huston

—Sir Michael the Lucky

"Assuming we are talking about an SCA bout, the Society is not about placing blame. That is my major point. Armour failure forces *many combatants off the field, and thus they must yield the fight*. One can consider this to be the yielder's fault. However, if I were to strike someone, accidentally, on the hands or the lower leg, and force them off the field, then my sense of honour would tell me that the fight should go to the person I hurt. I would be continuing in the tourney riding on their injury, and it would be my fault and not my swordsmanship, that sent that person out of the lists.

"It shouldn't be up to anyone such as the marshals or the surgeons to place blame, but it should be on the injurer to make up for his misdeed. Removing oneself from the tourney (so long as the person you hurt doesn't get offended by it) would be a suitable method of self-correction and self-discipline so that you don't easily forget the wrong you did."

—Peter Martin

"The fight was incomplete, and as such there was no 'winner.' However, if I injured my opponent by striking him/her in an illegal area I would yield the fight to my opponent. I should never have been so out of control of my weapon. The loss is mine. I do believe that this should be the individual combatant's decision though. I don't suggest that this would be a good rule to enforce. There are too many rules already."

—Doug Strong

"'Should be' is a question-begging term. If a knight is accidentally injured at no fault to his opponent, the opponent wins by default. If the opponent is deemed to have caused the injury on purpose, or through grossly unsafe technique, he will be removed from the field. Since no one goes up from that fight in any case, there need be no winner. If this is the final round, many things change.

"So to answer the question, the marshalls and fighters will deal with the situation as they see fit, based on the specific details that have not been given to us."

—Jay Rudin

"Since who progresses to the next round is inconsequential to honor, the only question that needs answering is what was the intent of the attacker? If the target was struck intentionally, then honor is denied to the fighter. If, however, the blow was struck by accident, then honor is not a question — the fight is merely over.

"There is also the possibility that the illegal target was interposed intentionally, in which case the defender acted without honor and was punished immediately. This is, perhaps, the most satisfying scenario..."
— Jay Hoffman

"The knight who was struck wrongly should be the victor if it was an intentional blow. If it was not intentional, a draw." — Tom Nielson
— Kingdom of the Outlands

"This is probably one of the easiest questions posted in *Chronique*. Grace, honor and chivalry dictate that the inflictor of the illegal blow (that caused the other fighter (be they knight or not!) to have to withdraw) cede the fight to the injured fighter. It would not be honorable to accept triumph in this situation."
— Steve Beck

"The victor of the fight should be the one who was struck the unlawful blow since that blow was unchivalrous." — David Gurzynski

"Neither. Since the wounded knight must forfeit the rest of the tourney due to the illegal blow, the 'victorious' knight should have to fight an additional fight in place of the one with the wounded knight."
— J. Fox-Davis

"Does the wound force the injured man to withdraw from the tourney? If so, the person who struck the blow should continue in the tourney provided that the blow was struck accidentally. If the injured combatant were able to continue in the tourney, but not in the fight, I would yield the field to him."
— Sean Slattery

"He who has been struck should be the victor. The combatant who struck the illegal blow allowed the desire to win and victory to take precedence over honor. Rarely has someone accidentally been struck in an illegal area and accidentally been hurt enough to have to withdraw. Prowess also means profficiency with arms which should prevent "illegal areas" from being struck. If it has truly been an accident then the bout should be rescheduled if the hurt combatant can continue. If not then the combatant who threw the blow should withdraw or offer to fight the remainder of the injured's bouts with both ladie's permission for he now carries the honor of both."

— Earl Benen Mactire, Knight

Question 8 assumes a 14th century ransom tournament.

Question #8: A knight parades into a tournament, completely armed, including a magnificent destrier. Later, it looks as though the knight's company is about to be overrun, and at the same time his squire brings him an inferior horse. The knight trades mounts, and is captured. Which mount should go to the victor?

"The knight should forfeit both horses. He should forfeit the first as it was the mount he put on the line at the beginning of the tournament. He should lose the second, because the act of switching mounts at the recognition of probable defeat, in my opinion is as dishonorable an act as shrugging off a good blow."
— Eric Stuzman

"The first horse. The knight entered the tourney with that horse, which is magnificent, and switched horses only to keep it from being captured. He should not profit by his dishonorable action."
— Doug Browne

"The greater horse should be the prize. The conduct of a moral paragon should be above question. If a 'knight' is to be considered a moral paragon, then the 'knight' must adhere to a strict standard, one that not only disqualifies cheating but even the appearance of cheating."
— Bryan Maloney

"It seems on first glance that the knight has done a dishonorable thing in bringing to the field that which he is not willing to forfeit according to the rules.

"Perhaps there is a mitigating circumstance, and he is not in a position, from poverty or other distress, to sacrifice the destrier. Perhaps an opponent cognizant of this fact might without objection take the inferior horse. But would the first knight have been so generous to an opponent he overcame, had he won thanks to his superior mount?"
— Steve Muhlberger

"The knight is pulling a really sleazy move here, but were I to take him on the inferior mount, I would not press him for the other, that is equally dishonorable."
— Sean Slattery

"This is a good one! I think they get the horse he was on. If he had the opportunity and ability to switch, then I think that should be allowed."
— Bo Ring

"The captured knight should choose which mount is to be forfeited. This gives him a rare opportunity to display his sense of chivalry and fair play: by parting with the destrier he began the combat with, rather than the inferior horse he 'just happened' to be riding when captured, he shows the virtues of honesty and being a 'good loser', holding his honor above mere silver; by parting with the inferior horse rather than the destrier, he shows himself to be a knight who will resort to trickery to avoid having to give up something he holds more dearly than his reputation. In all likelihood, the knight in question would be among the loudest to cry foul should the tables be turned and he be the one to get the nag rather than the destrier."

—*Michael Huston*

"I think I read in one of my books on tournaments that they allowed this substitution. Isn't it like changing members of a baseball team for various reasons. After all, losing is a bad experience even without losing your best horse."

—*Shelly Pfeiffer*

"The victor should take the horse that he captured the Knight on. To ask for the better horse would be bending to greed and vanity. It is not for the victor to judge the other regarding whether honor was cheapened by the squire's action of trading horses or the captured knight's action of accepting the trade. His was to simply enter the tourney with his ladies honor and his own to represent. As long as the victor did not succumb then his honor and his lady's has been maintained. The rest is up to the vanquished. Renown is a two edged sword."

—*Earl Benen Mactire, Knight*



QUESTIONS

- 1: What might the two edges of a knight's sword symbolize?
- 2: Describe the qualities of a fine sword.
- 3: The style of fighting done with a short sword is different than that of a long sword. It could be said that motions done with a longer weapon have the potential to be more graceful, while a shorter weapon yields more speed. Is this true?
- 4: Is there any virtue in seeking to fight gracefully, rather than just effectively?
- 5: What is your favorite weapon style?
- 6: Should the use of two swords, sometimes called flourentine, be allowed in modern tournaments, even though their use in tournaments of the 14th and 15th century is difficult to document?
- 7: Two combatants are exchanging blows in a *pas d'armes*. One of the two gentles is disarmed, because he lost his grip on the weapon. What should his opponent do?
- 8: What if the same circumstance occurred during an *emprise* (a *combat à outrance*, or *à la guerre*). What then should the knight do?
- 9: If you could be knighted by any gentles' sword, past or present, whose would you choose? Why?

Chronique questions are intended to spark discussions between tourneyers, consorts, and anyone else interested in knighthood. They are also posted at our web site at <http://www.chronique.com>, where you can email your responses directly to the editors.

CALENDAR

Grand Company of the Peacocks Pas d'Armes

May 11, 1996 Chicago, Ill.
Doug Strong 708.562.7667

Black Knight Tournament in Canale

May 18 1996 Turlock, CA
Kevin Brink

June pas d'armes at Thirty Year Celebration

June 14, 1996 Portland, OR
Catherine Keegan 510.283.7689

Company of Saint George Summer Pas d'Armes

July 21, 1996 Berkeley, CA
Robert Holland 510.551.3157

CSG Pennsic Pas d'Armes

Pennsic War, August 1996
Brian Price 415.961.2187



FORTHCOMING ISSUES OF CHRONIQUE

- #13 - The Knightly Sword
- #14 - Consorts & The Gallery
- #15 - Fighting Techniques
- #16 - The Pas d'Armes Revisited
- #17 - War & Chivalry

GEOFFREY DE CHARNAY AND THE BLACK PRINCE

*14th Century Knights of
France and England
Changes in War and Chivalry*

Brian R. Price



Nearly forgotten to the history books, Geoffrey de Charnay could well stand in for the template upon which French knights of the 14th century were struck. Proud, impetuous, courageous to a fault, yet literate, Geoffrey's renown would have been lost save for three works that remain available as yet only in French and which are known only to a small group of scholars. He died at Poitiers in 1356, carrying the Oriflamme to his last breath. The heyday of French chivalry died with him, and though the behemoth took some time to die; it took Agincourt to finally shudder and collapse.

Across the channel was another knight, one who personifies the English view of chivalry during the 14th century. Edward of Wales, dubbed during the 16th century the Black Prince, made his military fortune campaigning in France and in Spain, taking the new tactics developed by his father and using them to great effect against the conservative French chivalry. Edward's way was the new way of the late 14th century, a world growing in distance from the chivalric roundtables of his father and the French knights he opposed. Edward was perhaps one of the first modern soldiers, a fascinating transitional figure who stood

astride the chivalric world and the new one borne of professional soldiers.

French Chivalry

Since the time of Charlemagne, the great kingdom of France had been the land of chivalry. It was there that the first feudal structures were created, that the first poems were struck that crystallized the image of the errant knight, and French was the language of knighthood, much as English is now the language of the skies. Knights usually spoke French. The Norman victors in England had brought their language with them, and it was not uncommon for English knights to conduct business in French.

Given its great economic wealth, France was the most powerful kingdom in Europe. The German princes, distracted by their mutual conflicts, never came together with enough cohesion, and their energies were turned largely eastward during the 14th century. France, united under a single king for nearly a thousand years, was a collection of counties, duchies, and territories that each sponsored a powerful noble, many of which were as powerful as the whole isle of England. The French nobility had been in place since the days of Charlemagne, intensely proud of their heritage and their prerogatives.

French knights had given themselves wholeheartedly to the chivalric identity forged from his-

tory, romance, and religious influences. They believed, wholeheartedly, that they were the finest jousting warriors, and highly polished knights in the world. Famous knights came to France from all over the world to take part in their hastilities, jousts, & festivities in celebration of knighthood. The pages of Froissart and other lesser known chroniclers are full of such instances; yet rarely do they speak of French knights journeying very far from their own kingdom in search of such diversions. France was the central place to earn renown.

English Chivalry

England was a small kingdom, an island in more than just a physical sense. French chronicles speak of English knights in less than glowing terms, characterizing them as rough, shabbily arrayed, backward cousins. A certain amount of culture had been transmitted following the Norman conquests, in the French eyes, but England remained of little account.

Although tournaments were held in England, few French knights appear to have attended them. Some English knights traveled to France to take part in tourneys and engagements, to hear tales of prowess and to build their renown in what was an international community of knights. France was the clearing house for this renown; to be a renowned knight you had to be known in France.

Prior to Edward III, the English had contributed only the basis for the Arthurian legends, gleaned in all probability from Welsh tales. Geoffrey of Monmouth first set the "matter of Britain" into the record, and the British were fiercely proud of their own history. Arthur was, by all accounts, the archetype of chivalric conduct, and yet the tales concerning his deeds were wrought in France and Germany, rather than in England.

Conduct of War during the 14th century

The accepted wisdom concerning the proper conduct of war during most of the Middle Ages was that by sheer mass and initiative, no force on earth could withstand a well-coordinated and cohesive charge by trained heavy cavalry. The heavily armed knight, atop a sometimes armoured war-horse or destrier, could smash into formations of infantry and break them into small groups, laying about at leisure to finish off broken opponents.

Knights fought on horseback; they were the cavalry. Infantry was made up of yeomen and commoners, according to the accepted and proven doctrine providing more of a moveable obstacle for the cavalry to contend with.

Artillery was rarely used in battle, because the cavalry could sweep down with their fast, heavy armour and destroy an archery

unit with ease. Gunpowder was still extremely experimental, unreliable, and used only in sieges. Heavy siege engines fired too slowly to be of value on the battlefield, and were also relegated to siege warfare. Knights still fought siege battles, yet without gunpowder the defenders could usually retain their own walls until relieved, unless starved out. It wasn't until the 16th century when gunpowder became reliable and powerful enough to make fortresses vulnerable to destruction. If a castle or outpost caved in it was by miners, starvation, capitulation or intrigue.

Set piece engagements were seen as the ideal, glorified in literature and worth a goodly amount of renown for those knights who proved themselves in battle. War was the premier place to earn a name; it was the most important knightly activity. Nothing could compare with the impact of hundreds or thousands of knights on a side, charging at full gallop, where individual initiative carried the day against great odds.

Knights fought not so much to slay one another as to obtain victory. Deaths did occur and were considered one of the risks a knight was expected to face. But to be defeated did not necessarily mean being killed. Becoming unhorsed, disarmed, wounded were all ways to be defeated and captured. Once captured, knights were generally expected to provide a ransom for their parole, much the

same as was expected in tournament. And although men died, fewer had perished under the more 'gentlemanly' modes of war expected of knights. Opponents were not necessarily mortal enemies, and if they were not then good treatment could be expected.

Edward III &

The Hundred Years War

The Hundred Years War changed everything. The bitter struggle that transformed how medieval men fought. Although Edward I and Henry before him had won important gains in France, if it had come up at a feast table, no one would be willing to argue that the assembled knights of England could defeat their French counterparts in a classic, pitched set-piece battle.

Yet in England, under the brilliant military mind of Edward III, England began to change the rules for war. Building on lessons first encountered in the Scottish campaigns, Edward sought a more balanced approach to his war, integrating what we might today think of as a "combined arms" method. Knights fought again as highly skilled infantry, cavalry broke the enemy line and caused havoc in the rear, and artillery, for the first time in medieval battle, was brought back onto the set-piece field. It was the English archer that brought this change about, encouraged by his monarch through praise and statute, he and his brethren fought along-

side the knights who for so long had eschewed their company, breaking enemy cavalry formations and destroying enemy archers. New quality in the penetrating force of yew bows combined with this encouragement to produce a new weapon, one that was very much against the spirit of "chivalric" warfare, but one that was so effective that someone would eventually recognize it, and by victory change how knights fought.

Edward may have learned his first lessons as a young knight in Scotland, trying in vain to pin down the rebel forces. In much the same way as the French looked upon the English, so the English looked upon the Scots, as backward, ill-equipped, and barely civilized. Edward desperately wanted to meet the Scots forces in a set-piece battle, both to end the campaign and to bring the rebels to heel with a single blow.

But the Scots would not meet Edward willingly, fighting only when forced. They defended their strongholds, but without strong artillery they could hold out until relieved, and the irregular Scottish forces harried armies and baggage trains whenever they could get away with it. They caused great damage, not only to English armies in the field but also to towns in northern England. Finally, in 1333, Edward lost his patience and settled down to lay a final siege to Berwick, the key city in southern Scotland (or northern

England, depending upon how you looked at it...) Archibald Douglas, Regent of Scotland, finally came to relieve the city, which was just about to capitulate. He brought his much larger army to Halidon Hill, two miles northwest of Berwick. There, surrounded by marshlands and his back to the Tweed River, Edward organized his archers into two large companies. The Scots came on, certain of victory by sheer mass. The archers devastated Douglas' army, and Edward followed up with his cavalry.

It was a theme that the English would carry with them in the war with France. The French refused time and time again to meet Edward's forces in battle, so Edward conducted what came to be known as *chevauchée*. They would burn, pillage, and loot until the French came out to meet them. It had worked on them in Scotland, Edward having nearly been caught at Berwick. Finally, the French would meet them and would be destroyed by the archers and English footmen who fought from prepared positions. The French knights refused, for a hundred years, to understand the new way of war. They fought and died valiantly, but their own code of conduct began to die with them. Geoffrey Charnay epitomized this; he fought, wrote about chivalry and the conduct of war, and died exactly as his contemporaries did.

The Black Prince epitomized the new English way of war. He fought bitterly on the field, discarding many of the accepted conventions that governed knights at war. And yet, he took something from his father; he knew the power of the "knightly gesture," and believed himself to be a civilized, chivalric knight in the Arthurian tradition.

As it should happen, the fortunes of these two men intertwined on the canvas of war, so that by their fortunes we can see a model of the larger changes that were swirling about them.

Geoffrey de Charnay

We know nothing of Charnay's youth, but he rose from obscurity to become one of the most celebrated French knights of the middle 14th century. The following, summarized by D'Arcy Boulton, is as good a summary as any we can find:

"Geoffrey de Charnay, who by his own testimony was one founder of the knights of the Company of the Star, wrote the metrical treatise called the Livre Charnay, the Demands pour la joute, les tournois, et la guerre, and the prose treatise Livre de Chevalerie. [He was] a veteran knight of obscure origins who had served in several campaigns under the unfortunate Count d'Eu from 1337 onward, and had received the accolade at the siege of Aiguillon in 1346. He was one of the reformers named to the royal council by Philip VI after the disaster of Crècy, and as Captain of Omar had led an ill-fated attempt to recapture Calais from the English on 1 January, 1350, and spent more than a year as a prisoner in England. Jean himself paid Charnay's ransom on 31 July 1351, made him a conseiller du roi es

parties de Picardie et sur les frontieres de Flandres et d'Artois on his return to France, and immediately following the Feast of the Star, invited him to take part once again in the deliberations of the Privy Council itself. After serving Jean in various military capacities during the next several years, Charnay, 'le plus pseudomme et le plus vaillant de tous les autres' was named the bearer of the Oriflamme on 25 June 1355, and fell defending that sacred banner in the Battle of Poitiers."

Most of the records we have concerning the Hundred Years War are indeed English, and being the victors, the preserved history is somewhat biased. What is clear, however, is that the French nobility thought enough of Charnay to grant him successively senior advisory and military honors, raising him to the very pinnacle of French power in his role as a member of the privy council.

During his early years he served in many campaigns in Normandy and Brittany, under the able leadership of the Count d'Eu. He apparently grew steadily in stature in terms of individual prowess and military leadership, for he attained captaincy at an early age. Sadly, there are few details available concerning the individual steps in his military career.

He is mentioned but shortly in most editions of Froissart, who seems unaware of his writings. Geoffry le Baker, a more detailed chronicler of the War, mentions him only in connection with the bad business at Calais, which makes very interesting reading,

though it sheds little light on Charnay's philosophy:

"The King, however, anxious to keep the town, which he had won by no less than a year's siege, hurriedly crossed the Channel, accompanied by his eldest son, the prince of Wales, Sir Roger Mortimer and a handful of others, and arrived only a few days before the date set for the plot. When he arrived in Calais, he prepared a crafty welcome for the French. Under the vaults inside the gateway of the portcullis and around the gates of the castle he stationed knights, building a thin wall in front of them, not cemented but made of dry stone and plastered to look like old work so that no one would readily suspect that there were men hiding there. Then he had the great beam of the draubridge partly sawn through, yet left so that armed horsemen could ride over it. He also had a vaulted opening made in the tower above the bridge, and a large stone placed there; a trusted knight was put into hiding there, who was to break the sawn-through bridge at the right moment by throwing down the stone. The opening was then carefully closed over to the point where the man shut up inside could still count the enemy coming in, and the new work was blended with the old. While all this was being done, only a few people knew the presence of the king and the prince of Wales, who had entered the town secretly.

"On the day before the agreed date, Geoffrey Charnay sent fifteen of his trusted men with a great part of the gold that was to be paid to check that Aimeric would keep his word and to explore the layout of the castle. They visited every turret and hidden corner, but saw nothing that caused them to change their plans. So the next day they raised the standard of the French king on the highest turret of the castle, and displayed the banners of Geoffrey and some other lords on other turrets. The common soldiers of the garrison, who knew nothing of the plot, were so alarmed that, hurrying to arm themselves, they rushed to attack the castle. The French who had entered the day before quickly captured Sir Thomas Kingston, who was also ignorant of the plot, and

bound him in wooden fetters. Then some of them, sent out to their French lords who were in ambush outside the defenses, displayed their standards and raised their banners, promising each other success provided they hurried to defend the castle against the common soldiers. So, rallying out of their hiding places with the usual and imbred pomp of the French race, a large number of Frenchmen rushed at the castle gates. The common soldiers could hardly be held back from attacking them, but their leaders withdrew them because of the danger of confusion in the planned ambush; and the king's comrades, who had been shut in their hiding places in the arches of the walls like hermits, hating the long delay of three days, prepared to attack. As soon as the man who had been walled up in the hole with a great stone saw that enough men had been admitted to be a match for his companions, he sent the great rock crashing down, which broke the drawbridge cutting of both entrance and exit for the enemy. The effect of the falling stone was backed up by the fall of the portcullis, which had been kept out of action at first and handed over to the French, in order to further the delusion of security. As the stone fell and broke the bridge, the hermit knights pushed down the back wall which hid them, forsook their religious solitude and challenged the French knights to battle. A fierce fight raged for a time, but the enemy were overcome and yielded to their conquerors...."

It is indeed a sad business. Is this something a gentleman would do? According to Geoffrey's writings, no. What might have prompted it? If we read something of the viciousness of the *chevauchée* it become perhaps a little clearer. In the following passage, taken from Froissart, he describes a typical *chevauchée* against the Loire valley:

"...This army marched, under the command of the earl of Pembroke as their leader, and took the road towards Anjou: where they no sooner arrived than they

began to destroy, and to do every damage to the country they passed through, by razing castles and forts, burning such towns as could not hold out against them, and levying contributions on all the flat country as far as Saumur, on the Loire...."

In the *chevauchée*, the aim was to pin the enemy army down, to draw them into a set-piece battle, drawing him out. Enemy knights would ravage the countryside, pillaging, "annoying" in the words of a 15th century challenge in Engourrand de Monstrelet. The common folk were overrun; their cries lending strength to the enemy's desire for battle.

War, it seems, allowed for a viciousness that shocks even our modern sensibilities. Chivalry is usually seen as a civilizing set of ethics and virtues, but a reading of Froissart or Geoffry le Baker yields rich material to stun even veteran warriors. *War is hell*, as the old phrase goes.

Perhaps *Seiur de Charnay* was attempting to forestall some of the brutality and the damage that would accrue to the Crown's land, especially to the people of Calais, many of whom Edward had consigned to death owing to their stalwart defense in the face of the English siege. We will never know for sure. Edward III was outraged at the defiance; upon the surrender of the city he nearly butchered the most prominent men in the city, men who had given themselves as hostages so that the bulk of the folk in Calais would be spared the sword. After a long

and expensive siege the city had finally capitulated, only to have Geoffrey attempt to win it back by bribery.

And yet, in the face of this viciousness, Edward III does not slay Charnay. He does not extract physical revenge, but rather holds him in relative comfort in England until his ransom is paid. In the very shadow of brutal warfare, we can find stunning gestures of largesse, respect, and even of humility. On his return to France, Geoffrey helps his king Jean to found one of the more idealistic knightly orders, the Company of the Star. The Star pledged never to flee from battle, to come together for an annual feast and to press each other towards the ideals of chivalric conduct. It was a real flesh and blood company, the sharp contrast of virtuous pursuit against the canvas of absolutely brutal, vicious, animal warfare.

Geoffrey's writings

What Charnay has left for us to study is perhaps more valuable than the deeds recorded by the English—he left his writings. These writings, in all probability penned for Jean's Company of the Star, set out in some detail what was expected of a French knight, and in the Demands, posed questions likely to be debated by the Company of the Star when they met for their annual deliberations. These are the only such questions or essays written by an active member of the chivalry. It is possible that one

of the reasons Jean ransomed Geoffrey from the English was that his thinking on matters of chivalry were important to him.

The Company of the Star

The Company of the Star, also known as the *Compagnie de la Maison Noble* (Noble House), was founded by Jean Capet de Valois, Duke of Normandy and elder son of King Phillipe VI of France, King of France in his own right. First begun in 1344, possibly a reflection of Edward III's Round Table (founded in the same year), to encourage the knights of France to exercise themselves in arms and to bind the chivalry of France together into a more cohesive whole, both in political and military terms.

As recorded by an anonymous chronicler in 1385:

*"Jean, King of France, ordained and made a feast in honor of Our Lady, the which he made at Saint-Ouen near Paris. The feast which was called the Feast of the Star, and was made the day of the Epiphany. At which feast the highest barons of his kingdom were present, and bore as the device of the king a star. And at this feast, by order of the king, those of the feast elected nine worthy knights, of whom Charles the Blois, Duke of Brittony, was named by the country...."*¹

Among the order's maintenances were the following:

"...In the year of grace MCCCII king Jean of France ordained a fair company, large and noble, after the Round Table which formerly existed in the time of King Arthur. Of the company there were 300 knights, of the most worthy in the Kingdom of France. And this company was to

be called the Company of the Star. And each knight of the said Company was always to wear a star of gold or of silver gilt or of pearls, in recognition of the Company. And King Jean promised to have made a large and beautiful house near Saint-Denis, at which the companions and brothers — those who were in the country — were to be on all solemn feasts of the year, if they had no reasonable excuse. And it was to be called the Noble House of the Star. And there each year, at least, the king was to hold full court with the companions. And there each of the companions was to recount all of the adventures, the shameful as well as the glorious, which had come to him in the time since he had last been in the noble court. And the king was to establish two or three clerks who were to listen to all these adventures and put them into a book, so that they might be reported there every year before the companions, by which one could know the most preux and honor those who best deserved it. And no one could enter this Company if he did not have the consent of the king and the greater part of the companions present, and if he was not worthy (*souffisant*) without a failure or reproach. And they were to swear that they were never flee in battle farther than four arpents (in their opinion), but would die or surrender; and that each would aid and help the other in all his encounters. And there were several other statutes and ordinances that each had sworn. And the Noble House was almost made. And when anyone became so old that he could no longer go before the country, he was to have his upkeep and his expenses in the said house with two varlets, for the remainder of his life, if he wished to dwell there, so that the Company might well be maintained.²

Shortly after the institution of the first Company of the Star, they met disaster on the field at Mauron, "where because they had sworn they would never flee; for if it had not been for the oath, they could well have withdrawn. Several others died for the love of them, who might

have been saved as they swore no oath, but who feared they would be reproved by the company."³ Eighty five knights of the Star were killed at the battle, and neither Froissart nor le Bel, the two eminent chroniclers of the war, mentions the Star again until 1352, when it seems that the Star was once again brought into the forefront of new military policies. De Charnay might well have been involved at this point, since he had by this date risen to the Privy Council of king Jean.

Notably, the Order of the Garter, Edward's reborn Company of the Round Table, was just gaining momentum during the same period. It seems that both Companies were something of a propaganda engine for the respective monarchs, but like any public relations campaign, there was a bit of substance below the veneer.

It is for this new Company of the Star that Charnay seems to have been active, elected to a high office within the company paralleling his important post at the royal court. By his writings it seems that he was something of an authority and a philosopher on the chivalric ethic; indeed this may have been his function in regard to the Star, to stimulate discussions and to provide ethical and professional guidance. He had arrived in professional stature and in knightly renown by 1352, serving with distinction and acting as a chivalric resource for the knights of France.

The Black Prince

The English have a history of popular kings, but Edward of Woodstock seems to have exceeded even the most popular of enthusiasms. He left in his wake a swath of military feats earning him incomparable renown, both in France and in Spain, building upon his father's hard-wrought tactics and managing to balance the roles of warrior and chivalric knight in a uniquely English way, a way that allowed for the changing face of warfare while at the same time encouraging chivalric virtue as it was understood in his day.

Much of the history regarding Edward, Prince of Wales, has been lost. Some has been recorded in the pages of Froissart, Jacques le Bel, and by the herald of one of Edward's knights—Sir John Chandos; and by a host of letters he left behind that have been translated and compiled by Richard Barber.

Little is known concerning his early life. Mr. Barber sums his early life well in his collection of documents pertaining to the Prince:

"Edward was born at Woodstock in June 1330, the eldest child of Edward III and Flemish-born queen, Philippa of Hainault. He was given the usual knightly education of his contemporaries, and his interests seem to have been entirely in the direction of chivalry: among his extravagant purchases of jewels, armour and clothes, there is never an indication of the intellectual interests of his son, Richard II. At the age of eight he was nominal regent when

*his father sailed for the Netherlands on the first campaign of the Hundred Years' War, the prolonged quarrel over the succession to the French throne which was to determine the course of Edward's life. Two years later in 1340, he watched his father sail once more, from Harwich, to meet a French fleet known to be cruising off Flanders with orders to intercept him. The prince's messengers scoured the coast anxiously for news until word came at last came the first great English triumph over the French, at the Battle of Sluys, where the French naval power was for a time destroyed. In 1345 he accompanied his father on a planned campaign to Flanders, which was cut short by the assassination of the pro-English van Artevelde, leader of the Flemish citizens...."*⁴

By this time Edward was his own man, a young knight and military commander who, bearing a remarkable sense of tactical timing and a firm grasp on the realities of chevauchée style warfare, as well as a sense of showmanship that enabled him to project his chivalric image. The following year he saw his first battle honors, in the Crècy campaign, described below.

"On the evening of the following Friday, as the king was encamped on the bank of the Somme, Philip of Valois, the French usurper, came up on the other bank, where the English had crossed earlier; with him were the kings of Bohemia and Majorca, and an unnumberable army, divided into eight great battalions. The French called out insolent challenges to the king and to the English, and knights jostled in warlike fashion in the ford and on the banks. The king sent a message to the usurper, offering a peaceful and unharmed crossing of the ford if he wished to come and choose a place for battle; but this timid Philip, who had earlier threatened to pursue the king, now refused battle, but turned away as if to cross the river elsewhere; and the king awaited him all night.

The next day, Saturday, the king moved his army to the field of Crècy, where the usurper's army met him. So the king, always ready for battle, put the prince of Wales [Edward of Woodstock] in charge of his first battalion, appointed commanders for the second, and kept the third under his own command; and he commended all things to God and the Blessed Virgin, having ensured that all his men awaited the enemy attack on foot, and having kept back the warhorses with his supply train for use in pursuit of the retreating enemy.

"The French army was divided into nine battalions. The first was commanded by the king of Bohemia, a man of great wisdom and experience of warfare, who to preserve his reputation had asked the usurper for the command of the front line, and prophesied that he would die fighting against the most noble soldier in the world; for he was reproached for being foolish when he said that the king of England would not flee, and so begged insistently for command of the front line. The heroes on the French side were so confident in the numbers of their army that individuals asked for specific men on the English side as their prisoners. The king of Majorca asked for the English king to be given to him, while others asked for the prince or the earl of Northampton or others among those seemed most noble: but the cunning usurper, fearing that his men would spend their time trying to capture nobles for ransom, and would fight only half-heartedly for a general victory, ordered the standard called the Oriflamme; when this was raised no one was to take prisoners on pain of death. It was called the Oriflamme to imply that the mercy of the French was entirely consumed, and no-one's life could be spared, just as flaming oil destroys everything that can be burnt.

"The standard to the right of the king's position had on it broad gold fleur-de-lis woven in gold thread at each side of the standard of the kings of France, which hung as if in an empty space. On the other side the English king ordered his standard to be unfurled, on which a dragon was depicted clothed in his arms; hence it was called the dragon standard; implying that the wildness of the leopard and the gentleness of the lilies would be turned into the dragon's cruelty.

"So the troops stood drawn up in the field from mid-morning until mid-afternoon, while the threatening size of the French army was continually increased by new reinforcements. However, as the sun began to set, the first line of battle of the army advanced, trumpets and cornets sounding, drums and kettledrums rolling; and the noise of the French troops seemed like thunder to the English. The French crossbowmen began the attack; their crossbow bolts did not reach the English, however, but fell a long way off. Much to the terror of the crossbowmen, the English archers began to pick off their closely-packed enemies with arrows, and ended the hail of crossbow bolts with arrows. Realizing that the crossbowmen were not harming the English, the French men at arms, mounted on young warhorses and agile chargers, rode down seven thousand of the crossbowmen who were between them and the English, charging headlong into the English ranks in order to display their prowess. So a great cry went up from the victims trampled by the French cavalry, which those in the rear of the French army took to be dying English troops. Every Frenchman strove to follow those who had already charged; foremost in such rashness and boldness were newly made knights, of whom there were a good number in the army, all eager to gain the glory which they thought they would earn by fighting the English king.

"The English, on the other hand, calling on Christ's mother, made that Saturday holy with feats. They quickly dug a large number of pits in the ground near their front line, each a foot deep and a foot wide, so that if the French cavalry approached, their horses would stumble into the pits.⁵ The archers were assigned a place apart from the men at arms, so that they were positioned at the sides of the army almost like wings; in this way they did not hinder the men at arms, nor did they meet the enemy head on, but could catch them in their crossfire.⁶

"Thus a great cry went up, as has been said, from the crossbowmen trampled by the Cavalry and from horses wounded by arrows, while the French line of battle was badly disordered by stumbling horses. When they attacked the well armed English, they were cut down with swords and

spears, and many were crushed to death, without a mark on them, in the middle of the French army, because the press was so great. In this desperate battle, Edward of Woodstock [the Black Prince] the king's eldest son, aged sixteen, displayed marvelous courage against the French in the front line, running through horses, felling knights, crushing helmets, cutting lances apart, avoiding the enemy's missiles; as he did so, he encouraged his men, defended himself, helped fallen friends to their feet, and set everyone an example; nor did he rest from his labors until the enemy retreated leaving behind a heap of bodies. There he learnt that knightly skill which he later put to excellent use at the battle of Poitiers, where he captured the French king. In this battle a handful of men in the front line held their ground together with the Prince, whom the French repeatedly attacked, fresh troops coming up to replace the dead, weary, and wounded; so the prince and his companions were kept continually at work, and were forced to their knees by the rush of the attacking enemy. Then someone ran or rode to the king or father, and asked for help, saying that his eldest son was in great danger; so he sent someone with twenty knights to aid the Prince, who found him and his men leaning on their lances and swords on mounds of dead men, taking deep breaths and resting, awaiting a new onslaught of the enemy. So the fearful face of war was displayed, from the setting of the sun until the third quarter of the night, during which time the French raised a general war-cry three times and charged fifteen times, but nonetheless fled defeated.

"The next day four battalions of fresh French troops came up, and as though nothing had happened to their companions, raised their war-cry for the fourth time and charged for the sixteenth time. The English, though weary from the previous day's fighting, resisted manfully, and after a great and bitter struggle put the enemy to flight, and pursued them; in the chase and from the beginning of the conflict, they killed three thousand men, that is on the Saturday and Sunday.

"At noon on Sunday, when the second battle was over, the king and the army moved a mile away from the dead and gave thanks to the Giver of victories

and rested, taking a roll call of their men; only forty of the king's whole army were found to have been killed. That evening, having found the king of Bohemia's body, they had it washed in warm water, wrapped in clean linen and placed in a horse litter. The Bishop of Durham and the clergy who were there celebrated the solemn rites for the dead in the presence of the king and his companions."

Poitiers Campaign

In 1355 the Prince embarked upon another expedition that would bring Charnay and the Prince together, this time for the last time. Starting with a *chevauchée* by landing at Bordeaux, he ravaged the coast, working gradually inland. He continued thus until he came near Poitiers, where in 1356 the English and French were to meet in the second of the three great battles that define the Hundred Years War.

Before the battle, Geoffrey made an interesting challenge: that in order to avoid a general and unnecessary bloodshed, that one hundred French champions meet one hundred English champions in lieu of a grand set-piece battle. The challenge was, unfortunately, declined; the battle progressed, the French once again piling up in disorganized masses, unable to coordinate against the much smaller English foe. Here, in the pitch of the battle, as the English pressed upon the French royal company, Charnay unfurled the fateful *Oriflamme*. He was heavily beset, defending as he was able with a banner in one hand; perhaps a sword or a shield in the

other. Little record is left of his actual death, saving that he fell gallantly defending the *Oriflamme* to the last, receiving wound atop of wound, still in the king's company, until at last he was overcome and slain. The name of his final opponent has eluded history, at least insofar as my researches have shown.

To me his death is a symbol of an age, of the death of French chivalry and the rise of English power, a power based on a new military age. No longer was heavy cavalry—the French method of warfare—dominant. For the second time in a decade the bulk of the French army was decimated by a much smaller, but more rounded English approach to war. It was an approach that sounded the death knell for battlefield chivalry. Although it took another defeat—this one under the leadership of Henry V—for chivalry to finally yield the battlefield to the professional soldier, it did not die away completely.

During the battle, the French king was captured by a band of knights competing for the honor of his capture. Such was the rivalry for the ransom that one of Edward's knights was forced to intervene lest the French king be slain. There, on that bloody day where so much of the French chivalry lie slain in the muddy fields, victims of their own failure to recognize that warfare had changed, Edward the Black Prince did a singular odd thing that showcases

the transition between the ethics of two ages. His army butchered sans regret, Edward put forth a feast for the captured French king, according him all the honor that was due his station and his membership in the brotherhood of chivalry. It is perhaps one of the more striking contrasts of an age that seems to have been expert in contrasts: after a day of bloody battle, where the flower of knights lay dead on the battlefield, Edward of Woodstock personally serves the table of King Jean, his enemy, honoring him as a fellow knight even as he is held captive.

Order of the Garter

The Black Prince's father, Edward, instituted the Order of the Garter in 1348, ostensibly celebrating the successful Crècy campaign and attempting to fuse the English chivalry together while simultaneously improving their quality. Additionally, the Order had an important role to play in foreign affairs, where the image of Edward as their heir to King Arthur was projected; it was a company copied in the form of the Order of the Star, in the Golden Fleece, both testaments to the success of the Garter company, twenty-six knights chosen from the elite of England. The Order still exists today, of course, based out of Windsor and in Saint George's chapel. The Prince was a charter member of the company, but is not known to have been a contributor of philosophy as Charnay was to the Star. Edward of Woodstock was the soldier's

soldier, not a philosopher.

Sack of Limoges

The Black Prince came again to France in 1370, commanding from a litter, since he had never fully recovered from dysentery contracted in Spain, when the Duc de Berry lay siege and took the valuable city of Limoges. Furious at the capitulation of the city, the Prince took it quickly by mining the walls and then issued a command that would forever stain his renown—he ordered the city gates closed to prevent the citizenry from leaving and ordered the city destroyed. In the words of a contemporary chronicler, the city was “decimated.” Everyone was put to the sword, men, women and children alike. It was a dark hour for both France and England, a time when all pretext of chivalric conduct had been forgotten.

Conclusion

Was there a difference in the practice of chivalry in England and in France during the 14th century? I would maintain that there is a difference, one that reflected the changes in the techniques of warfare and in the changing role that knights played in warfare and would continue to play as war and chivalry changed. To my eye the late 14th and early 15th centuries are the real transitional period for chivalry, where the role of the professional soldier became solidified through ordeal by combat, the combats of the Hundred Years War.

Geoffrey de Charnay symbolizes French chivalry; the holders of the chivalric tradition, traditions that were admired by the English but adapted for the realities of war as it evolved beyond the medieval practices. In this period of change the French knights refused to give ground to the new technical methods of war, for while they adopted



The Sack of Limoges, from a contemporary manuscript. Notice the complete destruction of the town--it was, 'demolished'.

some of the technological and tactical advances, they failed to change the philosophical changes required to implement them. At Crècy we saw that the French had learned from their earlier failures, posting crossbowmen to meet the English archer. Yet the range on the French crossbows were too short to do the job; the French did not understand the weapon well enough to employ it in battle and discarded it in disgust when their failure was evident. At Poitiers the destruction of the French methods were nearly complete as the French captains lost control over their lances and once again the trampling at the front was enough to negate any advantage of the massed heavy cavalry. It is perhaps appropriate that Charnay fell here, at Poitiers, where the real strength of French chivalry was thrown to the mud.

Edward of Woodstock, son of Edward III, the Black Prince, epitomizes the English approach to war in the 14th century, where a small nation surrounded by difficult opponents, led by creative and intelligent military commanders, seized on the new technologies and developed new tactics to take advantage of the new weaponry. Warfare was now the business of more than just the knights, though the knights were still to be the predominant leaders. The common footmen and archer could play a significant role in supporting the knight, partners in battle who were to be worked into a tactical advantage rather

than trampled under the hooves of the aristocracy's destriers.

Warfare during the 14th century was anything but sanitary, rarely chivalrous, usually bloody and unjust. Geoffrey de Charnay tried to buy the city of Calais through bribery; Edward sacked an entire city, putting men, women and children to the sword and "decimating" it. Yet both of these men were regarded highly enough to serve as examples for their fellow knights, and although these deeds did not earn them great renown—at least not in the positive sense—it is interesting that these acts did not impeach their reputations as knights. Yet these same men did contribute strongly enough to the history of chivalry that we have valuable records left by them. The Black Prince has left in his wake a striking contrast of a great Englishman who changed forever the nature of warfare, validating the techniques of his father. His patronage of the tournament, of the Order of the Garter and of knighthood in general, was legendary enough to earn him a renown of historical proportions that lasts even now. Geoffrey de Charnay, Companion of the Star, trusted advisor to the French king, has left us with the *Demands Pour le Tournoi, La Joute, et Le Guerre*; the *Livre Charnay* and the *Livre Chevalerie* where we can see the heights to which knights of the 14th century might aspire. Indeed, they are heights to which we might aspire today.

As renowned as these great knights were and are, neither achieved the perfection that chivalry demands. Chivalry is an ideal, a distant, unattainable perfection that we as human beings might never attain. Although we, like these fine knights, are buffeted with the realities of the world, we too can be softened by the ideals that chivalry offers. Ideals that do more than animate characters in a romantic story. I for one am proud—or in the words of Sir Sten—“joyful” to be along on the same quest as these knights, a quest where I must on one hand fail as a human being but at the same time where I can succeed as a knight by improving bit by bit, by constantly striving for that ever distant perfection.

Notes

¹ Chronique des Quatre Premiers Valois, II, pp. 23-24, anonymous. Cited from Boulton, p. 181.

² Jean le Bel, 1356-1360, Chronique II, p. 204-206, translated and cited from Boulton, p. 180-181.

³ Jean le Bel, 1356-1360, Chronique II, p. 207, translated and cited from Boulton, p. 182.

⁴ Richard Barber, the Life and Campaigns of the Black Prince, The Folio Society, p. 8.

⁵ It is likely that these pits were dug before the lines engaged, while the muster was taking place, rather than in the middle of the battle.

⁶ It is often pondered why the French failed to charge down the archers first; the most common explanation is that in their race towards chivalric encounters with the most noteworthy English knights, they ignored the ignoble archers.

Geoffrey de Charnay's Questions:

LES DEMANDS POUR LA JOUTE, LE TOURNOI, ET LA GUERRE

Translated by Daryle Pompeo



What could be more interesting than real questions posed for the Knights of the Star, composed by a premier member of their Company that they better understand the ideals of chivalry?

Fortunately, Geoffrey de Charnay left us with more than one hundred such questions, translated here for the first time into English by Daryle Pompeo; AKA SCA Sir Severin of Trimaris.

What I find most interesting about the questions is their technical nature. The translator joked to me that "this guy was a real rules-lawyer, wasn't he!?" The answer is yes, in this writing he was--but why?

These questions must have been the sorts of things that knights encountered when they engaged in tournaments during the early part of the 14th century. We can see that jousts are common--nearly a third of the original questions are devoted to the joust. The other two thirds pertain to the tournament and to war. Taken together, Charnay states in his "Livre Chevalerie" that these are the things a knight must excel in to maintain his station, and he rates them--Wars are the most important, tournaments next, and jousts last. But they are all important and and knight should seek to become expert in all.

It is clear from the very first paragraph that these questions were composed for the Knights of the Star, King Jean le Bon's knightly order mirroring the English Order of the Garter. Both orders were built partially for political reasons and partially to improve the quality of the knights in both kingdoms. These questions are unique in that they are an expression of questions that actually appealed to real 14th century knights--they express some of their concerns.

The questions appear to have been written to spark discussion amongst the Knights of the Star, whether at their annual gathering at the Noble Maison or simply amongst themselves is unknown. But it is interesting that these questions exist at all; that there was an effort made to get knights thinking about difficult chivalric questions and actively discussing ethics.

In Geoffrey's other two works, the "Livre Chevalerie" and the "Livre Charnay," he speaks in more philosophical terms about what it means to be a knight. It has been proposed that either of the other two works might also have been composed for the Company of the Star, but this remains speculative. The "Livre Chevalerie" is to be published this summer by the University of Pennsylvania Press; Chronique is working on the other one. Eventually we hope to collate all three works, plus the "Ordene de Chevalerie" (Chronique #5) and Ramon Lull's "Libre Caballeria" (Special Edition Monograph) into a single bound chivalric handbook.

---Editor

QUESTIONS FOR THE JOUST, TOURNAMENT, & WAR



These are the questions for the joust that I, Geoffrey de Charnay, give to the high and powerful prince of the Knights of Our Lady of the Noble House to be judged by you and the knights of our noble company.

- 1 **Firstly I ask:** A contest of joust is called to be in such a place on such a day to bring all knights among three passes of the lance, and no more, and announced is naught but the prize. It so happens that a knight with a spear-thrust knocks another to the ground, excepting the saddle-bow. He who has brought the other to the ground, has he won the horse of the other? What do you say of it, will he not be judged by right of arms?
- 2 **Charni demande:** If it so happens that at a festival a knight brings to the earth another with a spear-thrust, his saddle between his arms and all beneath the horse, He who has brought the other to the ground, has he won the horse? What do you say of it, will he not be judged by right of arms?
- 3 **Charni demande:** Knights joust without proclamation, and one brings another knight down from a spear-thrust from his saddle-bow. Does he win the horse of whom he brought down? What say you of it?
- 4 **Charni demande:** A contest of squires ready themselves to joust in the same manner as the previous proclamation and none other. One squire brings another to the ground from the saddle-horn. Does he win the horse? What say you of it?



Charni demande: In the contest it is said that he who kills horse with a spear-thrust, he will pay for it. It happens that one strikes the horse of the other very early; but they were knocked from their horses so strongly that the one and the other are thrown to the ground. Pay he for the horse that struck with the lance or no? What say you of it?

5

Charni demande: Knights and squires joust for a contest, the proclamation like below. A knight brings from the saddle a squire from a spear-thrust, or a squire a knight. Does he win the horse? What say you of it?

6

Charni demande: A contest of knights or squires ready themselves to joust in the manner announced like above. If it so happens that one of those that are the defenders (Tenans) jousts one of the aggressors (Venans); and so that he not run past the limits he of the aggressors throws his lance and the thrown lance lands with the butt in the earth. And in front the butt gains purchase and holds among the horse of the other and kills it. Must the outsider give his horse? What say you of it?

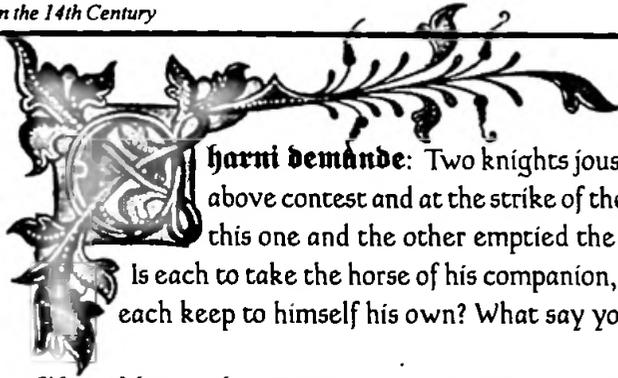
7

Charni demande: A strange knight banneret sends forth from his towers many knights to go forth with him afield to joust with the defenders; if these knights grant and serve him on their horse the same as if they were his. If they have their horses bitted and are stampeded from jousting with hurts and injuries, will the banneret be beholden to repay them? What say you of it?

8

Some questions have been omitted; questions #9, 11 13-18. tournament question #7 appears to be a fragment.

10



Charni demande: Two knights joust in the above contest and at the strike of the lances this one and the other emptied the saddle.

Is each to take the horse of his companion, or does each keep to himself his own? What say you of it?

12

Charni demande: A squire so saddled all armed for jousting at an undertaking of knights and joust; and a knight of the tournament knocks him out of the saddle with a spear-thrust. Does the knight win the horse, where each one was armored as though a knight as much as one could tell, but was not wearing the adornments of a knight (golden belt, chain of gold, a collar, fringe, spurs, etc. of gold). Will it be judged by right of arms?

13

Charni demande: A knight so saddled all armed like a knight for jousting at a contest of squires; and a squire of the contest brings him to the ground from his saddle from a spear-thrust. Will the squire win the horse? What say you of it? How could one interpret this situation?

14

Charni demande: A knight from the contest (defending company) strikes with his spurs, and two challenger knights, each one aiming his lance, come against him. And the one from within (defender) brings his lance against the first of the two and brings him from his saddle; and the other of the two comes against the defender knight. And from his same thrust the challenger brings himself from the saddle; and to the thrust the defender has not a lance point. Will the defender win the horse of the challenger? What say you of it?



Charni demande: A knight from the contest strikes with his spurs, aims his lance, and one of the other challenger knights comes to strike his spurs to counter the one on this same point. It comes to be that one of these two also as if on assignment strikes his lance in the ground, and from this spear-thrust is forced from the saddle. The other, does he win the horse? What say you of it, because he has not struck a blow against the other?

15

Charni demande: A knight from the contest said above strikes with his spurs, and from his first run he is wounded and disarmed; and his harness is put upon another and he put upon his horse in the stead of the one who is injured, and by the willingness of the wounded, but he was not supposed to be put in the contest, except to help those of the defenders. So well did he joust that none of the challengers had very long to say anything. Who will have this prize, the one who has jousting so well, or his master for whom he jousting, or the one who jousting best after him? What say you of it?

16

Charni demande: The one knight spoken of before who so well jousting for his master, the same day struck horse with his lance; that horse he sent for so that he could return it. Who will return it, he or his master? What say you of it?

17

Charni demande: A knight jousts at the above festival against another and with a spear-thrust carries him out of the saddle, except so far as one of his hands hold the saddle-bow before he could be completely out; but none more was at home than his hand. Does he lose the horse and will it be won by the other? What say you of it?

18

19



Charni demande: A knight or a squire had borrowed a horse to joust another companion and joust upon; but nevertheless the horse came to be knocked and hit against. When after weeks or months the companion returns the horse to the one whom he had borrowed it from, the horse no longer had it's prize value from the knocks of things that he could perceive of it. And the companion who loaned the horse refuse to take it back because of it's injuries, but wanted to have the price of the horse. Thus they are in debate. What say you of it?

20

Charni demande: A knight carries another to the ground with a spear-thrust together with his horse, and the horse cannot get back up so the knight cannot remove himself from the saddle. Can he remove himself from the saddle without yielding to the one with whom he has jousted? And if he goes down without yielding to the the one with whom he has jousted and the horse gets back up, if he brings down the other to the ground, can he demand the horse by right of arms of jousts? What say you of it?

Questions for the Tournament

These are the questions for the tournament that I, Geoffrey de Charnay give to the high and powerful prince of the Knights of Our Lady of the Noble House to be judge by you and the knights of your noble company.

1

Firstly I ask: If a rich man (an important lord who had hired bannerets and knights at his service for war and for tournament. ed.) retains a banneret, or knights for one certain service and for the season, and thus are bound;

and on this comes to town where a tournament is announced or "fait ou fenestre", this being when the coats of arms of the knights at tournament are hung from the windows of houses and hostels. So the rich man or the above bannerets come beneath his banner and all his retinue, another rich man speaks to this banneret or the above knight that they are with him for the year; and the authorized banneret or the knight bachelor. Then the rich man who has retained for the year to raise the banneret who is with the other and put outside of the window with him. What may he do by the right of arms of the tournament? What say you of it?

O **Charni demande:** If the rich man whose banneret has been retained for the season and who has been lost for the year, if it is thus said, he speaks again with this banneret who has left that he be with him for life and he will give him land for his lifetime so far as they are in accordance. Then if the rich man raises the banneret against the retinue of the rich man who has retained him for the year and it will put him with him like before. The other rich man says no. What may he do by the right of arms of the tournament? What say you of it?

2

Charni demande: If it was said that he may do this, another rich man offered to this banneret or knight bachelor to give him lands for his lifetime that he may pass on upon his death (the highest form of payment), can he take him away from he that had retained him for life by the right of arms of the tournament?

3

Charni demande: Would it be equal to retain squires also like it is said of the above knights by the right of arms of the tournament?

4

5

Charni demande: The disceurs (referees chosen by the two parties of the tournament to organize and judge it. They divided the groups of fighters, arranged the phases of the fighting, established the boundaries, and had the knights swear faith, ~trans.) come to take the faith of the knights in the accustomed manner and to hold the prizes except for the knight bachelor who does not want to give a prize. Should he yield the tournament or not by the right of arms of tournament?

6

Charni demande: So that knight is not allowed into the tournament, and that knight swears not to armor himself, and the referee **fait crier le laiser** and put the cords in the fields, and projections (poles?) outside, and the teams made by the referees and their call of go out and assemble. And many are those who are drawn to the ground and their horses taken away. And when night comes those who have lost their horses demand them and say that this was not a tournament (because there was a knight missing). What will be judged by the right of arms of tournament?

7

Charni demande: the referee **crie le lacier**, the cords to mark the boundaries are in the field. And when all the knights are in the field the referee divides the tourney into none but the teams; and these teams assemble before he has said the tournament is divided. And before he is able to call the last teams of the tournament more knights come onto the field; therefore the referee could not order them before into these teams. The other teams who are assembled lose and win horses and are guided to the border ropes.

8

Charni demande: A knight comes out all armed for tournament as above upon a beautiful destrier. And when on a horseback ride for assembling, that knight climbs on another horse. A disarmed man climbed on the horse which he dismounted during the tournament despite the horse's

protestations and came across the enemies of the knight who owned the horse in a field outside of the boundaries. So they bring that horse to their boundary and knock off the disarmed man who was upon it and said that they had won it. The knight said that they did not. (His pretext being that the horse had been stolen from him and it was not taken from him fairly in combat.) What will it be by right of arms of the tournament?

Charni demande: A knight tourneys with the others as above and **tourne par acort** (a tournament wherein the referees, chosen in the presence of the two parties, unite in order to reach an understanding about how to arrange the phases of the fight and to proceed concerning the choosing of the winner); so is he knocked to the ground and his horse also. Then he that has thrown him to the ground cuts the belt and the breastpiece of the harness from the saddle; and the horse arises. Then leads it away by a cord; and the knight rests on the ground, his saddle between his arms. Is the horse won or lost for the knight? What say you of it by the right of arms of tournaments?

Charni demande: A squire or two or three armed for tournament find a knight outside of the *mélée*. Then they stop him and hold him down and lead away his horse by a cord. When night comes the knight demands his horse for those he has lost it to were none of them knights. The squires say no. What will it be according to the right of arms of tournaments?

Charni demande: A tournament is held 'par acort' When the '*disceurs*' or referees and heralds saw that the tournament was sufficiently long, they raised the cords (those that encircle the legal area); but then came later many knights onto the field to the *mélée* and lost and won horses enough and from one part and from another. And when

9

10

11

night came many demanded their horses back that they lost after the cords were raised. What will it be judged by the right of arms of tournaments?

12

Charni demande: If none of the knights asked above that night asked that be given anything back, but they then waited to demand this the next day, must they receive their prize as if they had asked the previous night?

19

Charni demande: A knight banneret is at tournament and his bachelors with from his retinue; and participated in the tournament during the week. And the bachelors of the banneret came forth to the trial fights and lost their horses without permission from their master, and without their master being there. When night came they asked for the return of their horses; and their master said no. What will be judged of it by the right of arms of tournaments?


Explicit Charny. Charny.

The editors would like to thank Mr. Daryle Pompeo, AKA SCA Sir Severin of the Kingdom of Trimarisis for his kind assistance with the Charnay translation.

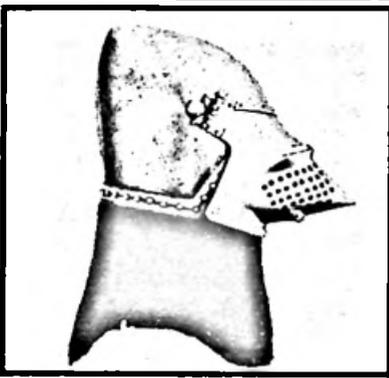


Figure #1: North Italian bascinet c. 1380-1400.
Royal Armouries, Leeds, England.

THE BASCINET

by

Sir Talbot Mac Taggart, OL
Grand Company of the Peacocks

The most popular helm of the 14th century, the *bascinet*, owes its birth to a small metal skull cap called the *cervelliere*, which was worn beneath the great helm (barrel helm). Gradually the bascinet began to replace the great helm altogether, primarily due to the improved glancing surfaces, greater visibility and better ventilation it provided.

By the 1330's the first of the true bascinets had evolved. It had longer sides than the earlier form, which now covered the ears and top of the neck. By the 1350's this

had developed into the "international" form which is that most commonly found in museums today (Plate 1), with a long back and sides which covered the head down to the base of the neck and the cheeks. This seems to have remained the most popular form until the 1420's when it was replaced by the great basinet (Plate 14), although the international form continued to be used long after this point. (A 'pig faced' basinet is illustrated in the 1510 woodcut *Christ taken captive* from The Large Passion by Albrecht Durrer.)

Shape

As the early basinet grew more substantial, its point became more pronounced and gradually moved away from the center and towards the back of the helm, providing a greater glancing surface when the head was tilted downward to charge an opponent. In the last quarter of the 14th century the Germans developed a slightly different form of basinet. It was ogival in shape with a pronounced point slightly to the rear of its apex, with a flaring back surface (Plate 2). One final form of basinet seems to have evolved in Italy. In place of the point this helm had a more pronounced crest running from back to front and a flared back edge. It was often constructed with a nasal plate made in one piece with the skull plate. This form of basinet seems to be the direct predecessor of the 15th century Barbut.

Lining

The lining for the bascinet followed the technique already evolved for the barrel helm and great helm. Quilted pie shaped wedges of cloth or canvas were sewn together at the base leaving the upper halves of the wedges free. A draw string threaded through the apex of the pie sections could then be used to adjust the fit of the helm. This type of webbing functioned both as padding for the helm and as a shock web suspension system for the wearer's protection. Examples of this type of lining can be found in the linings of bascinets #13 and #15 from Churburg as well as inside the great helm of the effigy of Ulrich de Werd, d1344, in the church of Saint Guillaume, Strasbourg. A row of closely spaced holes along the entire lower edge of the bascinet, each countersunk to prevent cutting the thread, allows the lining to be stitched to the helm.

Visors

The basinet was often fitted with a visor for added protection. These visors were primarily of two types: 'Pig-Faced' (Plate 3) or 'Round-Faced' (Plate 4). Both visors shaped in such a way as to cause an opponent's weapon to glance off harmlessly. In addition the visors had raised ridges surrounding the eye slits to prevent a glancing weapon from entering the eyes. Generally these visors had most or all of their ventilation holes on the right side so as not to weaken the metal or pre-

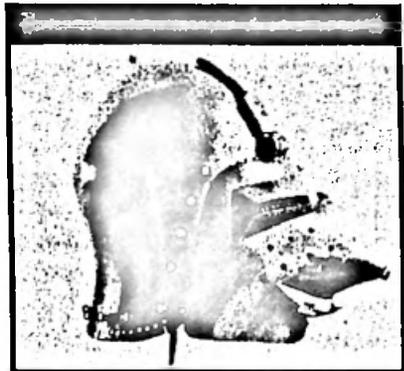


Figure 2: "Churburg" bascinet showing the German evolution of the klappvisier and skull shape.

Figure 3: Italian "entierme" visor from the Royal Armouries, Leeds, England.

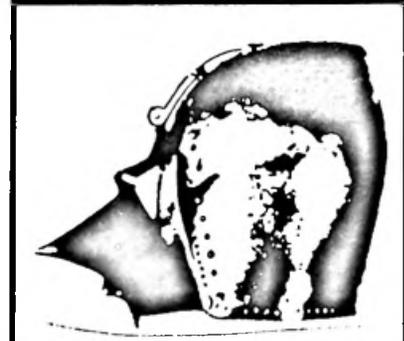
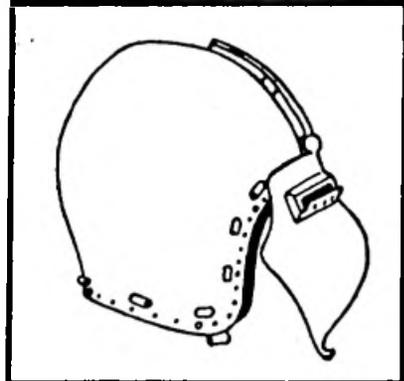


Plate 4: Roundfaced bascinet from Sitten, Switzerland. Illustration per Claude Blair, with permission.



vent a glance on the left where most blows would fall.

Hundskul visors

The pig-faced visor, which seems to have been the most common, was made in almost conical cross section which provided an excellent glancing surface, especially against the point of an incoming lance. These visors were occasionally fitted with a mouth slit as well, made in the same way as the eye slits, with raised edges to prevent accidental penetration. The mouth slit in conjunction with the air pocket inside the conical snout provided this visor with greater ventilation than its round-faced counterpart. This, coupled with its improved glancing surface and fearsome appearance may help to explain its popularity.

Round-faced visors

The round-faced visors were small and shallow in comparison to the pig-faced style. They covered only the area of the face not covered by the mail aventail, which hung down over the cheeks and chin. The oldest surviving example of this type of visor is in the museum at Sitten, Switzerland and is dated between 1360 and 1370.

Other visors

There are two more forms of visors which, though less common are worthy of mention here. They are the detachable triangular nasal and the grill face. The triangular nasal is a removable type of face protection which was attached to the top edge of the mail aventail at the bottom of the face opening and was fitted over two studs in

the brow of the helm, thus leaving only the eyes exposed (Plate 5). This visor seems to have its origins in Germany in the first half of the 14th century, however, a few isolated examples can be found in France and England. Sometimes also taking the form of a triangular extension of the mail aventail, which hooked to the top of the face opening, both versions suffer the disadvantage of not being a rigid protection for the nose. The crushing effect of a blow would be fully felt. The grill face is by far the most uncommon type of visor; it is seen in only a few illustrations, most notably a Bohemian altar piece dating from the 1380's depicting St. George and the Dragon (Plate 6). No example of this type of visor has survived today.



Plate 5: Bascinet w/triangular nasal, c. 1350, Freiburg Cathedral.

Plate 6: Grilled Bascinet from a Bohemian altarpiece, c. 1380.

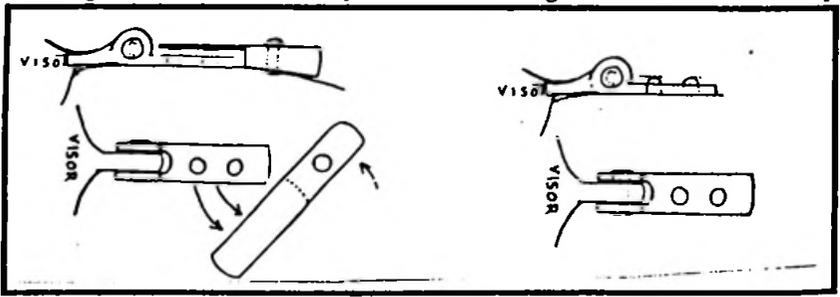
Visor attachments

All of these visors were attached to the bascinet in one of two fashions. The first and most common of these is the side pivot (Plates 1, 16). Here the visor has long 'arms' which extend back to the sides of the helm. These arms were commonly attached via hinges and removable pins (usually attached to the visor with small guard chains to prevent loss) to a large pivot at each side of the helm. The hinge, pin and pivot allowed the visor to be lifted above the head, swung sideways, or totally discarded with the removal of two pins. In the lowered position the weight of the visor was depended on to keep it in place. A few surviving bascinets are also fitted with a spring pin which does not allow the visor to be raised unless the pin has been pushed in, thus preventing the visor from being unintentionally lifted in battle.

The author would like to suggest that, with a visor of this type, a knight riding into battle, could leave his visor open until the last minute, closing it only as he was about to face his enemy. After the initial charge, when he was in the fray of battle, the visor, with its vision good at 10 feet and beyond

but severely limited at close quarters and lacking sufficient ventilation, was a hinderance to his combative skill. In modern collections there are a much larger number of surviving bascinets than visors. Two explanations for this suggest themselves. First, since the visor was removable like other detachable pieces of armour it was removed and lost over the course of time. A second, that, given the wearers desire to see at close quarters logically he would either raise it or remove it in order to get it out of his way. Thus a practice of discarding the visor in battle may also account for the low number of surviving visors in comparison to the number of bascinets in modern collections.

The second type of hinged visor, called the klappvisor was predominantly used in Germany, although it can occasionally be found in English and Italian sources such as the Spinello Artino frescoes at Siena made between 1407 and 1410 and the 14th century stained glass at Birthington, Worcestershire, England. The mechanism consists of a large single hinge fitted in the center of the bascinets brow (Plates 3, 7). The hinge was removable by



means of unlatching either a turning pin, which could be swiveled to fit through a keyhole slot with a matching shape, or, more commonly, a paddle system which could be turned to allow the hinge plate to slide off its retaining rivets (Plate 8).

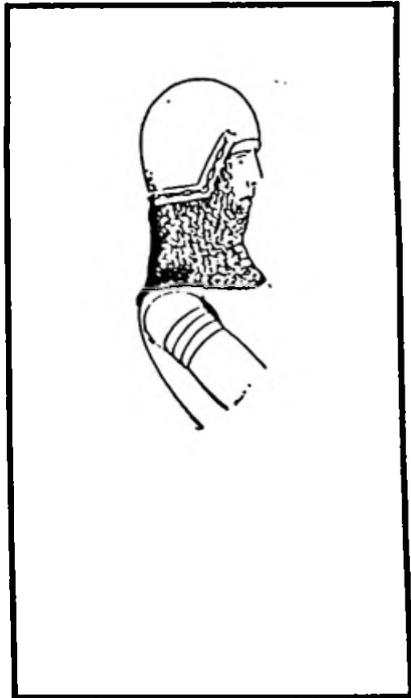
Aventails & Camails

Bascinet were usually fitted with a aventail or camail, a curtain of mail armour suspended from the helm, providing protection to the neck without restricting movement. Occasionally the aventail was also secured to the jupon (gambeson) by laces to prevent it from being lifted by an opponent's weapon. In its earliest form the mail extending from the bottom of the bascinet would most likely have been riveted on the inside of the helm. Later the aventail was fitted to the bascinet by means of a series of *vervelles*. These were small loops of iron, their bases riveting them to the helm (Plate B), which protruded from the helmets surface. Over the *vervelles* was fitted a leather strap to which the mail was sewn or attached by small rings. This strap was provided with holes spaced at the same intervals as the *vervelles*. The *vervelles* were then fitted through the holes and a cord was laced through the loops of the *vervelles* and secured at each end (Plate 9). This allowed easy removal for maintenance and cleaning.

Vernelles

The use of *vervelles* seems to have begun in the 1320's and become almost universal after 1350. However, in the 1370's the *vervelles* and cording began to be covered by some sort of plate, most likely to prevent them from being cut. another form of protection for the aventail attachment was a series of wedge shaped lugs of steel, wide end downwards, attached to the bascinet just above the *vervelle* band. These also served to deflect the blow of a sword away from the vulnerable leather and cording (Plate 10).

Another form of aventail which bears mention is the pouointed aventail. This form of neck defense, constructed of heavily padded layers of quilted cloth, could



KNIGHTS OF THE LION RAMPANT

DAMIEN FEGAN
AKA FLORIAN DE LISEUX, OLR



Editor: *In an effort to bring you a wide sampling of the chivalric cultures working on re-enactments, we bring you a company working on a completely different technique for re-enactments.*

The Lion Rampant is an interesting Australian band who uses performance as their primary vehicle for chivalric expression.

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