

HOW TO START AND END A COURT

William the Lucky (May, XXI)

The beginning of a court (with or without an entrance procession of those presiding) usually follows a relatively set formula. The formula serves to get the populace ready to listen, as well as adding to the general pomp and circumstance of the occasion. If there is no entrance procession, the court will begin with those presiding seated at the front.

WHEN TO PROCESS:¹

In the last analysis, the Royalty will process if They feel like it. However, there are times when it is appropriate, and others when it is not (just in case They ask your advice):

- It is most appropriate for the first court of an event (but not, of course, necessary).
- It is not usually as appropriate at the later courts of an event. However, if a special ceremony is to occur at a later court (especially if it is the only business of that court), a procession can add to the pomp and circumstance of the occasion. Also, if some of the Royalty arrived after first court, this may be the only opportunity that they will have to process.

The purpose of the procession is to let everyone get a close-up look at their Sovereigns and, in effect, introduce Them to anyone who does not already know Them. It also allows the Princes and Princesses to be presented to the Crown if They are at a Kingdom event, and lets Them greet the King and Queen if They attend a Principality or local event.

WHO PROCESSES:

- Kingdom Events

If the King and Queen wish to process, all of the Princes and Princesses who are present will process also. (Exceptions may be made, but usually only because someone has a leg in a cast or is otherwise incapable of walking.) With each set of Royalty may go various members of Their official household: banner bearers, ladies-in-waiting, etc.; the size and number varies from one set of Crowned Heads to the next, but They generally work out what They want for Themselves.

If the King and Queen do not wish to process, They may still ask that the Princes and Princesses process in and be presented. Generally, either all of the Princes and Princesses will process, or none will.

In addition, any visiting Royalty may enter in procession. They will usually come after the Princes and Princesses, because They are then able to meet all of Their hosts. (They should be announced as 'Xxxx and Yyyy, King and Queen of Zzzz', or 'Aaaa and Bbbb, Prince and Princess of Pppp'.)

Ambassadors from other Kingdoms may also be part of an entrance procession. (They are announced as 'Lord (Sir, Countess, etc.) Ffff the Gggg, Ambassador from Their Majesties of Xxxx'.)

¹ pro cess' (verb): To enter court in a procession. Usually prior to the start of business, although it can be used for marching in a Grand March (which is then the first item of business).

○ Principality Events:

If the Prince and Princess of the Principality wish to process, then all of the Royalty present will process. (In exceptional circumstances, the King and Queen may not process, even though the Prince and Princess are doing so.) However, even if the Prince and Princess do not wish to process, the other Royalty present may process, including the King and Queen, if They are present and wish to do so.

STARTING COURT:

(The following are basic guidelines, not fixed ceremonies. Be sure you understand what the Royalty wants before starting. When in doubt, ask them!)

○ Kingdom Events: Determine if Their Majesties wish to process in, or if They will start Court already seated on Their Thrones.

- Processing in: If They are processing in, the populace should be called to assemble before the Thrones. Their Majesties (together with any of the Territorial Princes and Princesses who are present) will start at the back of the gathered populace and to one side. When They step forward, this is your cue to say:

‘All rise for Their Majesties _____ and _____, King and Queen of the West.’

Once They are settled before the Throne (but probably not seated), the first of the Princes and Princesses will start forward (by precedence of Principality: Mists, Cynagua, Oertha). Each should be announced:

‘Their Highnesses _____ and _____, Prince and Princess of _____.’

It is nice if you can give each set time to greet Their Majesties. Then announce the next set in the same fashion. When all of the Princes and Princesses have been announced, Their Majesties and Their Highnesses will sit. If the Sovereign does not say so at this point, ask (softly), ‘Your Majesty, does the populace have Your leave to be seated?’ Assuming the answer is affirmative, inform the populace:

‘You have Their Majesties leave to be seated and make yourselves comfortable.’

or

‘You have Their Majesties leave to draw nigh and be seated, leaving an aisle.’

(Avoid saying ‘be seated and draw nigh...’ It causes giggles from everyone who can picture the populace sitting and then sliding forward along the ground.)

Then proceed to the first item of business for the court.

- Starting with Royalty in Place: When the populace has gathered and Their Majesties are ready, say:

‘Pay heed to the Court of Their Majesties _____ and _____, King and Queen of the West.’

(The populace will usually rise.) If the first item of business is a procession of Princes, visiting Royalty, etc., then proceed as outlined above. Otherwise, when Their Majesties have given the word, say:

‘You have Their Majesties leave to draw nigh and be seated, leaving an aisle.’

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Then proceed to the first item of business for the court.

○ Principality Events

- Processing in: If They are processing in, the populace should be called to assemble before the Thrones. The Prince and Princess of the Principality holding the event should process in first even if the King and Queen are present, followed by Their Majesties and any of the other Territorial Princes and Princesses who are present. When the Prince and Princess start forward, this is your cue to say:

‘All rise for Their Highnesses _____ and _____, Prince and Princess of _____.’

Once They are settled before the Throne (but probably not seated), the King and Queen (if present) should be announced:

‘Their Majesties _____ and _____, King and Queen of the West.’

After the Prince and Princess have welcomed the King and Queen, and they have all gotten settled, the first of the other Princes and Princesses will start forward (by precedence of Principality: Mists, Cynagua, Oertha). Each should be announced:

‘Their Highnesses _____ and _____, Prince and Princess of _____.’

When all of the Princes and Princesses have been announced, Their Majesties and Their Highnesses will sit. If the Sovereign does not say so at this point, ask (softly), ‘Your Highness, does the populace have Your leave to be seated?’ Assuming the answer is affirmative, inform the populace:

‘You have Their Highnesses leave to be seated and make yourselves comfortable.’

or

‘You have Their Highnesses leave to draw nigh and be seated, leaving an aisle.’

Then proceed to the first item of business for the court.

- Starting with Royalty in Place: When the populace has gathered and Their Highnesses are ready, say:

‘Pay heed to the Court of Their Highnesses _____ and _____, Prince and Princess of _____.’

(The populace will usually rise.) If the first item of business is a procession of visitors, then proceed as outlined above. Otherwise, when Their Highnesses have given the word, say:

‘You have Their Highnesses leave to draw nigh and be seated, leaving an aisle.’

Then proceed to the first item of business for the court.

○ Baronial Events:

If the King and Queen (or the Prince and Princess) are present, They should hold any court that is being done. The function of the Territorial Baron and Baroness is to provide a ceremonial focus in Their absence. Therefore if there is no Royalty present, the Baron and Baroness may hold court.

It may happen that the only business to be done is strictly Baronial (e.g., the Baronial championship or various Baronial orders). Opinions differ as to whether it is appropriate for the

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King and Queen to give out a Baronial championship, so you will need to ask Them what Their pleasure is. It is probably more appropriate for the Baron and Baroness to give out any Baronial Orders which are to be presented, but again, the Crown may have other ideas, so check with them.

Generally there is no procession for Baronial Courts. When the populace has gathered and Their Excellencies are ready, say:

'Pay heed to the Court of Their Excellencies _____ and _____, Baron and Baroness of _____.'

Usually the populace will not rise, so it is not necessary to tell them to be seated.

ENDING COURT:

- Courts conducted by the King and/or Queen:
First ask Their Majesties if there is any further business. This can be done in a normal conversational tone; it does not need to be heard in the last row of the populace. Do not ask the populace if they have any further business; any business from them was supposed to be gathered before court started. (All kinds of embarrassing things tend to turn up if you issue an open invitation like this.) If you know someone who is likely to have business (e.g., the autocrat) has not caught up with you before court, go find him before court starts and ask if he has announcements which need to be made.

If Their Majesties have no further business, say:

'There being no further business, Their Majesties give you leave to depart.'

Long Live the King!

(pause while the populace echoes: 'Long live the King!')

'Long Live the Queen!'

(pause while the populace echoes: 'Long live the Queen!')

(Optional: If foreign Royalty is present, say: 'Long Live the King and Queen of _____!' and give time for the populace to echo.)

'Long live the Princes and Princesses of the West. Hip, hip . . .'

(Be sure to run the 'Hip, hip' into the end of the previous sentence. The idea is to not have everyone repeating 'Long live _____' for each and every of the Princes and Princesses. 'Hip, hip . . .' is repeated thrice.)

- Processing out:

If Their Majesties have indicated that They wish to process out, the words are all the same, but They will start out as you are saying '...give you leave to depart.' The 'Long live the King!', etc. should be done while They (and any Princes and Princesses who are present) are processing, so that there is not a long space of time with Royalty walking out and the populace standing and nothing happening.

- Courts conducted by the Prince and/or Princess:
First ask Their Highnesses if there is any further business. This can be done in a normal conversational tone; it does not need to be heard in the last row of the populace.

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If Their Highnesses have no further business, say:

'There being no further business, Their Highnesses give you leave to depart.

Long Live the King!

(pause while the populace echoes: 'Long live the King!')

'Long Live the Queen!'

(pause while the populace echoes: 'Long live the Queen!')

'Long live the Prince and Princess of _____! Hip, hip . . .'

(Optional: If foreign Royalty is present, say: 'Long Live the King and Queen of _____!' and give time for the populace to echo. Similarly if other Princes and Princesses are present.)

'Hip, hip . . .'

 (repeated thrice.)

○ Baronial Courts:

Check that there is no further business for court. Then say:

'There being no further business, court is ended.

Long Live the King!

(pause while the populace echoes: 'Long live the King!')

'Long Live the Queen!'

(pause while the populace echoes: 'Long live the Queen!')

'Hip, hip . . .'

 (repeated thrice.)

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