

SECTION VII -- COURT HERALDRY

5) Sample Ceremonies for Small Tournies (May, XXV)

Author: William the Lucky

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Abstract: Ideas for simple ceremonies for the smaller event.

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SIMPLE CEREMONIES FOR SMALL TOURNIES

William the Lucky, (May, AS XXVI)

Ceremonies provide some of the pomp and circumstance which sets our Society apart from the mundane world. And you do not have to wait for a Royal visitation in order to have some ceremony at your event; there are opportunities for ceremonies which every branch can use, even if they do not see a Crowned head from one year to the next.

Done well, ceremonies both increase our enjoyment of an event and give visitors and newcomers a taste of what life in our Kingdom is like. Done poorly, they give less enjoyment, or even (in extreme cases) convince everyone in earshot that they are in the wrong place. The cardinal rule for any ceremony at a local event is **KEEP IT SIMPLE!** There are three reasons for this:

First, it is easier to do a good simple ceremony without practice or any particular theatrical skill. Not only is there less to remember for those with lines to speak, but the audience's attention will not have a chance to lapse -- and both the willingness and the ability to pay attention through a long ceremony take experience for your audience to develop.

Second, it is not really good form to try to make a bigger production out of your local event than is made of a major Kingdom or Principality event. This is a constraint because the West tends very much to simple ceremonies, especially compared to most of the other Kingdoms.

Third, and tying the first two together, simple ceremonies frequently have more impact than long and ornate ones. It is hard to write a really bad simple ceremony; it is hard to write a good long, complex and ornate ceremony.

Here are examples of a) the invocation of the lists for a local tourney, and b) a ceremony to invest a Shire or Baronial Champion. They are in no way mandated or required; they are merely to serve as examples or to provide something which you can use if you have too much else to do to write one of your own. If you decide to write one of your own, see the section VII.4 "How to Write a Ceremony" of the West Kingdom Herald's Handbook.

The ceremonies are written with the local Seneschal taking most of the parts, since this will work for either Shires or Provinces. For Baronies, you may wish to have the Baron or Baroness take the lines instead.

INVOCATION OF A LOCAL CHAMPIONSHIP TOURNEY

Herald: Let all those who would enter the lists this day for the Championship of the Shire/Province/Barony of _____ come forward.

(When they have done so.)

Seneschal: As Champion of _____ you will have these duties:
To lead the forces of the Shire/Province/Barony in war,
<list additional duties, if any>.

Are you willing to accept this responsibility?

(Pause while the fighters nod, or say "I am." N.B. There are no known cases of fighters finding themselves forced to withdraw at this point.)

Herald: These are the fights for the first round:
(Read List)

Go now and prepare yourselves. The lists will begin in _____ minutes. *(or "at ___ o'clock.")*
(Exeunt)

INVESTING A LOCAL CHAMPION

Herald: Let _____ come forward.

(When he or she has done so:)

Seneschal: _____, we are all greatly pleased with your achievement in the lists this day, and we would honor you with the title of Champion of _____.

Herald: Know all men that, _____, was this day victorious in the Lists and shall serve as Champion of _____ for the coming year. Done this ___ day of _____ in the ___ year of the Kingdom of the West.

Witness:

Seneschal of _____.

(The Herald shall exhort the cheers of the populace.)

(Exeunt)