

Herald like it's 1459

Heraldic speech for a 15th century tournament

These phrases are from the c. 1460 treatise written by King René of Anjou describing how one ought to hold a tournament, entitled *Traictié de la forme et devis d'ung tournoy*.

The most accessible way to read this treatise is the modern translation by Elizabeth Bennett located at <http://www.princeton.edu/~ezb/rene/renehome.html>. Text used here is from this translation.

Greetings

To the very noble and powerful (title of person[s])...

Noble and redoubted knights, honored and gentle squires,...

...very noble and powerful (title[s]) and redoubted lord, the very noble and powerful prince and my redoubted lord (name of lord)....

Let all princes, lords, barons, knights and squires of the marches of (lots of places) and all others of whatever marches that are in this kingdom and all other Christian kingdoms, who are not banished or enemies of the king our lord, may God save him, know that...

...my very redoubted lords, greet you, and have charged me to deliver these letters of credence from both of them, as you will know as soon as you have read these letters, which you may do whenever it pleases you.

Very high and powerful princes, dukes, counts, barons, lords, knights and squires at arms: I notify you on behalf of (someone) that (something)...

My honored and redoubted lords, the very high and very powerful prince and my very redoubted lord (name) my master...presents himself to you ...

Speaking of the Ladies

...before ladies and damsels...

...in the presence of ladies and damsels, and many others...

...so that the ladies who are present can see the entertainment.

... fourth, by chance it may happen that some young knight or squire, by doing well, will get mercy, grace, or an increase of love from his very gentle lady and mistress.

Getting to the point

I, (name) your (relationship), want you to know that...

I have come before you to advise, request and notify you on behalf of the very noble and very powerful princes and my very redoubted lord(s)...

My lord(s) (name or title) wish you to know that...

...I have (done symbolic thing) to signify that I wish to

...will come to show himself in the lists...

Motivation

... on account of his great personal courage, valor, and chivalry,

... on account of the great chivalry and prowess that he knows is in your very noble person...

...in all love and friendship, and not out of any ill will... I (do this) not out of ill will, but to please my cousin, and to amuse the ladies.

...so that, if it pleases God, every gentleman will wish from thenceforward to practice the exercise of arms more often

I humbly thank my ladies and damsels for the honor it has pleased them to do to me: and although they could easily have found others who could do this better, and who merit this honor more than I, nevertheless I obey the ladies freely and will do my loyal duty, asking always that they forgive my mistakes.

(this is spoken by a single tourneyer chosen by the ladies as their thercy)

Accoutrements

...on their destriers, covered with their coats of arms...

...dressed as well and prettily as possible...

...and first, all may know which men are come of ancient nobility, by the way they bear arms and crests.

...a very great festival of arms and a very noble tourney with maces of one measure and rebated swords, in appropriate armor, with crests, coats of arms and horses covered with the arms of the noble tourneyers, as is the ancient custom...

...behold your humble servant and knight (or squire) of honor, who has entered the lists ready to do what you have commanded, and behold his helm and crest which you should keep in your scaffold, if it pleases you.

Goals

... third, each one who takes up the sword will get good exercise of arms.

...the tourney will take place in such a way that fame and widespread rumor will go out to sustain nobility and increase honor, so that, if it pleases God, every gentleman will wish from thenceforward to practice the exercise of arms more often.

...such a noble deed as this tourney...

And we will do it as well and as loyally as possible in this world, using all our intelligence and strength so loyally that if by chance we err, from which God protect us, it will be more from innocence than from vice.

And we will submit always to the correction, good will and pleasure of our redoubted lords.

Other statements

My honored and redoubted lords, the very high and very powerful prince and my very redoubted lord (name) my master...presents himself to you ... very eager and ready to begin the tourney assigned to-day ... asking that it please you to prepare for him a place to do this, so that the ladies who are present can see the entertainment.

(this is an actual introduction before the start of the tournament!)

...my lords the judges here present have heard and understood what your herald has said for you; to which they answer that your presence is very pleasing, and they well perceive the great and high will for honor and desire for valor that is in you and in the barons present under you...

And although there are in this kingdom many other knights and squires who know better than us how to... (do a task)...nonetheless to obey our very redoubted lords, we offer with a good heart to obey and serve them, and accept the charge that has been put forth before us.

...for you lords, princes, barons, knights and squires who have tourneyed in this place before the ladies, have so done your duty that henceforth you may go out and leave the lists in good time...

To honor, lords knights and squires! to honor! to honor!



Phrases compiled by Guillaume de Garrigues

Like the style of 15th century tournaments? Consider coming to the Emprise of the Black Lion in September!