



Good day Worthy Knights,

In this part 99, the Herald

Wikipedia

**Herald** is commonly applied more broadly to all officers of arms.

Heralds were originally messengers sent by monarchs or noblemen to convey messages or proclamations, in this sense being the predecessors of modern diplomats...

In the Hundred Years' War, French heralds challenged King Henry V to fight and during the Battle of Agincourt, the English Herald and the French Herald Montjoie watched the battle together from a nearby hill.

Both agreed that the English were the victors, and Montjoie provided King Henry V, who thus earned the right to name the battle, with the name of the nearby castle.

### Origin

Appeared likely in the 12<sup>th</sup> century and coming from the ranks of jugglers and minstrels, Heralds were required to organise, announce, and referee the contestants at a tournament.

As officers of arms, they specialized in jousts or even steps of arms.

They would often wear a surcoat, called a tabard, decorated with the coat of arms of his master. It was possibly due to their role in managing the tournaments of the Late Middle Ages that heralds came to be associated with the regulation of the knights' coats of arms.

This practice of heraldry became increasingly important and further regulated over the years, and in several countries around the world it is still overseen by Heralds

In addition, many orders of chivalry have heralds attached to them and they may have some heraldic duties but are more often merely ceremonial in nature.

Originally, they were not related to any particular nobleman and led a life of wandering, but, later on, the nobility takes several heralds to their service to display their power.

### The Golden Age in France

This role in the tournament made them experts in heraldry, which allowed them to have military functions formalized in early 14<sup>th</sup> century as shown by the order made by Philip the Fair in 1306 in the *Battle of Pledge*.

In France, by an ordinance, known as of 1260, Saint Louis prohibited the wages of battle in the royal domain. This text is considered as the starting point of a new approach to judicial procedure.

But the nobles considered that the battle is the only proof which is appropriate for their state and, in 1306, Philippe IV the Fair authorizes it again for the crimes of blood which cannot be proven by witnesses.

In fact, there was no uniform in the feudal host, and the combatants could only be recognized by the coat of arms appearing on the banners, pennons or shields.

The knowledge of the coats of arms acquired by attending the tournaments allowed the officers of arms to quickly recognize the protagonists and to understand the unfolding of the battles. This made them very valuable, especially in the 13<sup>th</sup> century when the arms were individualized.

Thus, they settled with lords while retaining certain specificities inherited from their former status of wanderer, for example the functions of messaging and announcements facilitated by the immunities they enjoyed. They also acquired new skills, particularly in the definition of rules on heraldry and the composition of armorial bearings.

### **Today**

At the present time, some countries still have heralds of arms, notably in the Republic of South Africa (Themba Mabaso 2002-), England where they took part in the coronation of Elizabeth II in 1953, Canada, Spain where they took part in the proclamation of Juan Carlos in 1975, Ireland and Scotland where the Court of the Lord Lyon is a standing court of law which regulates heraldry.

Some Scottish clan chiefs, the heads of great noble houses, still appoint private officers of arms to handle cases of heraldic or genealogical importance of clan members, although these are usually pursuivants.

Most heralds are full-time employees of the sovereign and are called "Heralds of Arms in Ordinary".

In the Netherlands, heralds were appointed until 1948 for the Dutch monarch's inauguration where they wore their tabards; they proclaimed the inauguration ceremony to have been completed to those inside and outside the Nieuwe Kerk.

They were normally members of the High Council of Nobility but during the last inauguration, that of Queen Beatrix in 1980, they were Resistance fighters.



In England, heralds are still called upon at times to read proclamations publicly, for which they still wear tabards emblazoned with the royal coat of arms.