

The Medieval Tournament in Europe: Violence in the Lists

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ABSTRACT / RESUMEN

Originating from Medieval warfare the European tournament adopted the formal regulations of private feuds (*guerres privées*) for its more or less “pacified” forms of encounters in the lists. However, from its very start to its final phases, which set in and ended at different epochs in each European country, remnants of actual warfare, such as gaining booty and exacting ransom remained the highlights of such events.

When charging in the joust, the most spectacular form of the tournament, physical violence displayed in the tiltyard and valiant “*tours de force*” were regarded as the chivalrous distinctions of a knight on horseback, whose aim was to unhorse his opponent, to break the lance on his head/visor, and to hit him at the highest part of his body. Violent actions such as these led to many injuries, mutilations, and even to deaths. Sport historians can find a plethora of such violent actions, because the frequency of reports of deaths in the tiltyards corresponds to the social ranks of riders participating.

It is the object of this paper to highlight a few fatal occurrences, such as those of Armand de Montigny, Duke Leopold V of Austria, and of Henri II, King of France.