

Interacting with the Royalty

If you become active within the SCA, it will only be a matter of time before you and the Royalty “cross paths”. This may be in a court setting or while walking around at an event. For many folks this can be a nervous time for them, as they want to do what is proper and present the appropriate actions to acknowledge the Crown’s presence. Following are some guidelines to assist you.

In Court

1. The most likely interaction that a member of the populace will have with the Royalty in court is one of these:

- a. You are receiving an award
- b. You are an officer and have an official function to perform
- c. You have an announcement to make
- d. You have a presentation to make
- e. You are swearing fealty
- f. You are involved in some form of shtick, etc)

2. If you are called into court and you don’t know why...don’t panic. Most likely the Crown has an award to present you; if not that, they most likely will ask you to provide them with some information, or ask you to inform the populace of something. There is nothing to fear. What you do is:

Approach the thrones until you are approximately 20 feet away and bow (or curtsy) to the Royalty.

Once you have done this first bow/curtsy, walk briskly into Court.

When you are in front of the Royalty, bow/curtsey once again, then kneel on the cushions (that’s what they’re there for).

Suppose there are several sets of Royalty and/or Baronages at the head of court. How do you do bows then?

To whom do you bow first?

This is not a simple answer because it can vary based on custom rather than law. Most gentles in Calontir do the bows in this manner:

If you’re in Calontir, bow to the King & Queen (one bow), then the Prince & Princess (one bow unless they are seated separately <rare>, then one bow to each), then bow to any visiting Royalty, then bow to any Calontir Baronages, then any visiting Baronages. Once you’re through bowing, kneel on the cushions.

If you’re in a foreign kingdom, bow first to the King & Queen (one bow) whose kingdom you’re in, then to your own kingdom’s Royalty (if present). Again, once you’re through bowing, kneel on the cushions.

Side Notes on Bowing:

- a. The physical limitations of a site may require shortening the distances where one stops to bow...that’s okay
- b. Some kingdoms have the custom that one bow is sufficient even if the dais has several sets of Royalty, that it is not necessary to bow to all of them. The reasoning is that the Royalty presiding over the court in question are the “important ones”, and by honoring them, you are honoring all other Royalty on the dais, as They are the guests of the presiding Royalty.

Once you have knelt in front of the Crown, They will conduct their business with you (presentation of an award, etc).

When their business with you is done, rise from your knees, back out of the Royal Presence (10 foot Sanctum Rule), bow, then turn and walk briskly out of court.

Side Note on Backing Out of the Royal Presence:

- a. IF THERE ARE STAIRS...do not attempt to back down the stairs. This will only tempt fate to cause you to fall. Turn all the way around (or at least sideways) to go down the steps. Once at the bottom of the steps, turn back to the Crown, bow to Them, then turn and walk briskly out of court.
- b. Should you have been seated to a far side of the populace assembled, please exit down the center aisle, then return to your seat, rather than exit to a side.

3. If you are called into court and you know that you are there to do an officer function or make an announcement (autocrat thank you, announce winner of contests, present prizes, do some shtick, etc), what you do is:

Approach the thrones until you are approximately 20 feet away and bow (or curtsy) to the Royalty.

Once you have done this first bow, walk briskly into Court.

When you are in front of the Royalty, bow once again, and then ask permission to address the populace.

Once the Crown has granted you leave to address the populace, move so that you are standing to one side of the Crown, angle yourself toward those gathered and announce what you are there for (loudly enough, so the populace can hear), and then do what is necessary. When done, turn back to the Crown, thank Them for allowing you to take time in court, bow, then turn and walk briskly out of court.

4. If you (or a group) are called into court to make a presentation to the Crown, what you do is:

If there is a large group of people involved in your presentation, gather your people in advance of court and try to sit together, preferably near the center aisle.

When called into court, allow those with the item(s) to present and anyone who will be speaking go in the front. The rest should follow quickly. Approach the thrones until those in front are at the edge of the Royal Presence.

Those in front should stand still for a moment to give those following a chance to come to a halt also.

Everyone in the group should then bow.

Once the bow is done, the person speaking should ask permission of the Crown to present them with an item or items).

When the Crown has granted permission, those with the items and the speaker should move into the Royal Presence; everyone else should kneel.

Those who have moved into the Royal Presence should now kneel and give the items to the Crown.

(If the nature/size of the item prevents kneeling, this is okay.)

The Crown will most likely have a few words of thanks for the presenters.

Following the thanks, those in the Royal Presence should stand and back out of the Royal Presence, everyone else should stand.

Once those in the Royal Presence have backed out, everyone should bow.

Then everyone should turn and walk briskly out of court.

Side Notes for people making announcements and presentations:

- a. Keep it as short as possible.
- b. Make sure that the person speaking has a loud voice, and preferably is a good speaker—otherwise those attending court cannot hear or understand what is going on.. This makes court tedious and boring.
- c. If you know you'll need to speak in court and you do not have a loud voice (or uncomfortable with public speaking) ...BEFORE court, talk to the court herald. The Court Herald, if asked, will speak with the Crown for you about allowing someone else to come with you into court to speak for you, or having the court herald state your business.
- d. Never do shtick unless the Crown has been made aware of it in advance. They may not need all the details, but They will want to know what's going to happen in Their court.

5. If you are going into court to swear fealty, what you do is:

Approach the Royal Presence, along with everyone else who is coming to swear fealty at that time. When you arrive as close as you can get (this will vary depending on the number of participants, bow, then kneel with everyone else swearing fealty.

If you have gotten there first and can use the cushions, do so. However, be courteous - if someone with bad knees needs them, let them have use of the cushions. The court herald will come forward and give you the words to state, giving your oath of fealty.

Once the oath has been given and the Crown has responded, along with everyone else, rise and give a short bow. Then walk briskly back to your seat.

6. Weapons and Court

Unless you are a member of the chivalry in fealty, or your function in court is marshal in nature (General of the Army, etc), it is usually best not to wear weaponry to court. If you know in advance that you will be going before the Crown in court (for announcements, etc) then remove the weapon prior to court beginning. If you are wearing a weapon and get called into court unexpected, when you first stand, simply remove the weapon and either place it in your seat, on the floor by your seat or ask another sitting next to you to hold the weapon. Then proceed into court normally.

In Public

1. Free Roaming Royalty

It's possible that you and/or the Royalty will be walking around an event and you'll come across each other.

What do you do?

- a. First, don't panic.
- b. Second, if you see Them in time, and there is adequate room, remember the Sanctum rule. Sanctum is defined as an area 10 feet in radius surrounding the Crown's presence, which may be used exclusively by the Crown, and into which other persons may enter solely upon the invitation of the Crown. This applies to all the Royalty (King, Queen, Prince and Princess). When the Royalty is "free roaming" and there is adequate space and time to do so, allow 10 feet of clear space between yourself and them. This "circle of privacy" allows them to discuss things and handle various business without having to retreat to the Privy Chamber.

Side Notes on the Sanctum rule:

- i) The distance to allow can vary in other kingdoms. Some give as much as 20 feet of space.
 - ii) In Calontir, it is also considered courteous to apply the Sanctum rule to Territorial Baronages when they are conducting official business. They are acting as representatives of the Crown at that point.
 - iii) In some kingdoms it is the custom to apply the Sanctum rule to Territorial Baronages at all times, the same as the Royalty.
- c. Third, simply bow or curtsy to acknowledge Them. If there's not space to apply the Sanctum rule, don't worry. They should be aware of the physical limitations of the surroundings and take that into consideration.
 - d. What happens if you fail to notice the Royalty as They pass by? Well, don't be upset, no one is going to be angry if you didn't notice the Royalty passing by. Some members of the Royalty like to (or have need to) pass through the populace at an event without making "a show". This is usually referred to as going in "stealth mode". Most likely if the Royalty wants to do this; They will not be wearing Their crowns. If the Royalty passes you in such mode, it is still courteous to acknowledge Them by bowing.
 - e. If the Royalty stops to talk to you, don't panic! Remember that the members of the Royalty are people too. Simply be polite and respectful.

2. **Sitting in State**

Sitting in State refers to when the Crown is sitting on the Thrones, but is not holding court. If the Crown is not involved in a meeting, it is permissible for populace members to stop and talk to the Royalty, if they so desire. You should follow the Sanctum Rule previously noted, and stop outside the Royal Presence and await notice. Once you are noticed, simply ask if They would be willing to talk to you (be polite, use proper forms of address as mentioned earlier). If They are already talking with someone else (or some unexpected business arrives), They may ask you to stick around until things are finished. Or you may be asked to come back later. If so, do not feel put-off...the Royalty usually has a lot to do at an event and many things vying for Their attention. Most likely They will be willing to see you later, when They are not busy.

Besides talking to the Royalty when They are Sitting in State, it is also a great time to make personal presentations to Them. Due to the hectic nature of courts, the Royalty rarely has an opportunity to examine items presented to Them in court. If such a presentation is done while They are Sitting in State, They have more time to thank you and discuss the gift.

When passing by the Crown, when They are Sitting in State, it is proper to acknowledge Them with a small bow or curtsy.

3. **In Proxy** (Passing the Royal Pavilion or the Royal Thrones when Empty)

In several kingdoms, it is tradition to show respect for the Royalty/Baronages by acknowledging Them even if no one is sitting on the Thrones when you pass, by bowing. In Calontir there is a mix. Some gentles will do such acknowledgement; others prefer to save their reverence for the people themselves who hold those positions. The choice is yours.

4. **Feast**

When the Crown is present at the Head Table of a feast and you are passing by, you should treat this as if They were Sitting in State and give them a small bow or curtsy. If you wish to speak with Them, approach to the edge of the Royal Presence (remember the Sanctum Rule) and wait to be acknowledged. Then bow, step forward and speak with Them. If you are a server, you are given implied permission to approach the Head Table to serve Them. However, always address Them politely and respectfully. Also, give a small bow if you can do so without jeopardizing what is being served or removed from the table.

In Private (Inside the Privy Chamber)

This is an area that will vary from Crown to Crown. It will also be affected by the relationship you have with the Crown. Just remember that if others are present, it is usually best to refer to the Royalty with more formal address, even if you're old friends from all the way back in grade school.