

An Entrement

Entremets and subtleties played a large role in medieval and renaissance feasts. These displays varied from decorated food displays and tame amusements to miniature castles made of food with people inside and food pyrotechnics.

The goal of the entrement today is to bring a bit of this medieval fun to our modern-day feast. The entrement was inspired by the “recipe” below, an excerpt from *The Viandier of Taillevent*, translated by Terrence Scully.

We have constructed miniature boats of parchment, and painted half of them with the arms of the Middle Kingdom, and half with the arms of the East Kingdom. These will be presented to head table, who will then have to opportunity to defend our navy (Midrealm boats), from our invading enemy (the East). The goal is to sink their ships with “cannonballs” (grapes), by tossing them at the Eastern Navy’s ships.

215. Le Chevalier ay Cigne

Entremetz de peinture. Qui veult faire le Chevallier au Cigne a son droit, convient avoir xii pieces de boys legierettes dont les iiii qui seront droictes soient plus fortes que les autres, et tout assembler et clouer bien fort; puis avoir du plomb comme la large d’une table de iii piez de long et autant de le, et y faudroit bien de ii a iii tables de parfont qu’il puisse tenir deux ou iii seaulx d’eau; et faire un petite nasselle de parchemin collé ou sera mis l’ymage du dit Chevallier au Cigne. Item, fault la semblable d’un petit cigne qui soit fait de parchemin collé et couvert de minu vair ou de duvet blanc; et fault une petite chaynete semblable d’or pendue au col dudit cigne ataichié a ladicte nacelle parmy ladicte carre de plomb; ouquel carre convient iiii rouelles bouttees et iiii chevrons pour bouter ça et la; et y fault de la toille taintte a ondes en maniere d’eau, et qu’elle soit clouee au hault du carre affin que on ne voye point les hommes qui seront dessousz.

215. Entremetz de peinture: le Chevalier au cigne: Painted Entremets. If you wish to make the Swan Knight realistically you should get twelve light pieces of wood, four of which will be the uprights and should be stronger than the others, and assemble and nail everything strongly; then get lead in the size of a sheet three feet long and just as wide, and you would need from two to three sheets of lead, and make a sort of little coffer which is about a foot deep so as to contain two or three buckets of water. Make a little boat of glued parchment covered with minever or with white down; and you need a little golden chain hanging from the neck of the swan attached to the boat across the lead box. On this box four wheels should be affixed, and four shafts so that it can be pushed here and there; and it should have cloth painted with waves to look like water, nailed to the top of the box so that the men beneath it will not be seen.

- The Viandier of Taillevent, Terrence Scully (trans.)

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