

# Middle Kingdom Scribes' Handbook

*Third Edition*

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*by*

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# Introduction

**T**his Third Edition of the Middle Kingdom Scribe's Handbook is an expansion of the pioneering first edition originally written and edited by then Kingdom Signet Kyrille Andreskevich. This edition is an update of the Second Edition, which owed much to the monumental undertaking of the first version. In addition to the First Edition, it has added information involving the formalization of heraldic achievements, more detailed instructions for scribes, the addition of new award texts, and more alternatives for award texts. The Second version was designed to be used as a handbook with a three ring binder. It had been divided into sections which may be removed for easy reference. This Third Edition now provides for a hardcopy which can be punched for three ring binder, but it is also being presented as an online document through the SCA Middle Kingdom website as well as the website of the author, Randy Asplund.

Across the Society, scribes have been provided by their kingdom officers with award text books. These usually include the

texts, some examples of heraldry, scroll layouts, and conventions of production within that kingdom. Some have only a minimum of information on the actual process of creating a scroll. Most Society scribes have had to learn from friends and from what they were able to piece together from numerous source books. Source books are great, but they are not written with the goal of training a scribe to make a scroll that follows the techniques used in creating a medieval page.

My goal with this handbook is to provide, under one cover, a means for the beginning scribe to access a reasonable amount of information necessary to produce a scroll that emulates medieval appearance and technique. Of course, there is no substitution for hands-on instruction from someone already skilled in the craft, but I hope this book will cover enough material to give the beginner a good head start. If you have any further questions or would like to create scrolls for Kingdom awards, please contact the Kingdom Signet, whose address and phone number are listed in The Pale.

# Acknowledgments and Credits

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# Chapter One

## Calligraphic Exemplars

**T**hese calligraphic exemplars will provide you with a script of lower case, upper case, and display letters which can be used in most western European nations within our SCA time frame. More exotic award texts, and sometimes alternate language texts, may be available from the Kingdom Signet office, but it is assumed that scribes who have taken the time to learn non-latin alphabets or languages other than modern English will already be able to provide their own calligraphic exemplars.

### How to use the exemplars

This listing is not intended to be an accurate statement which identifies specific hands used at any specific time and place. It is only meant to be a loose and general guide to aid the beginner in selecting a form that is close to what might have been used in SCA period, offering an approximate and generalized time and place. Since in the hardcopy version the exemplars can be punched for a three ring binder, it is easy to remove the ones you need and place them at your side for reference while you work.

To determine what type of script to use for your text you may look below to the listing by demographic area. Each region will have a short reference to exemplars appropriate for use at a given time period within the scope of the SCA.

Begin by looking at the general section on western Europe, then check the local

region for special instructions.

Each exemplar was originally penned actual size with a 1 mm pen nib for the second Edition, but in the Third Edition some scale change has occurred. There is a key denoting letter height and line spacing.

For example, if you see “Gothic Textura Quadrata 3-5 Pen widths. Rule 2x” it means that in this Gothic hand the lower case letters are between 3 and 5 pen widths in height and the ruling lines should be spaced at twice that distance. Remember that we usually leave a little space between the bottom of the letters and the lower ruling line. In an accurate period proportion we might have the 5-pen-width-high letters start with 1 pen width below them and 4 above the height of the lower case letters. To learn how to establish letter heights for your pen nib, see Chapter Two, **Medieval Writing**.

You will notice that the scripts provided include several strange letters and omit some important modern ones. This is because these letters were uncommon or nonexistent in the languages which used these scripts. The most notable is the letter **W** since it is so often used in our scroll texts in the word “we.” Letters **s**, **r**, **i**, **j**, **u** and **v** also have special characteristics. Both Anglo-Saxon and the Scandinavian languages used special letters for the **th** sounds. Information on how to cope with these special cases can also be found in Chapter Two.

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### CHOOSING AN EXEMPLAR *Options listed by Period and Geographical Area*

#### ALL OF CHRISTIAN NORTH WESTERN AND NORTH CENTRAL EUROPE

**600-10th c.:** Artificial Uncial. When used, capitals are either large versions of the same or **Roman Square Capitals**.

**600-9th c.:** **Roman Half Uncial**. Capitals are either large versions of the same, **Roman Square Capitals** or **Pre-Caroline Versals**.

**11th c. onward: Gothic Versals** are often used as capitals and especially Display Initials and other Decorated Initials.

**11th-13th c.: Early Gothic with Roman Square Capitals** within the text, and **Gothic Versals** for all large decorated letters.

**13th c. onward: Gothic Littera Bastarda and Bastarda Capitals** within the text and **Gothic Versals** for all large decorated letters. Alternatively, formal works would often use **Gothic Textura Quadrata**, with **Gothic Versals** for text capitals and all large decorated letters.

## **BRITAIN & IRELAND**

**7th-9th c: Britain and Ireland: Insular Minuscule or Insular Majuscule with Insular Versals.**

**10th c. onward: Ireland:** Insular scripts survive in modified forms through the SCA period, but take progressively more angular characteristics from the 10th c. onward.

**10th-12th c.: Britain: Carolingian Minuscule with Roman Half Uncial or Roman Square Capitals.**

**11th-13th c.: Early Gothic with Roman Square Capitals** within the text, and **Gothic Versals** for all large decorated letters.

**Late 12th-mid 14th c.: English Gothic Book Hand Minuscules with English Gothic Book Hand Capitals** within the text and **Gothic Versals** for all large decorated letters.

**13th c. onward:** English style **Gothic Littera Bastarda and Bastarda Capitals** within the text and **Gothic Versals** for all large decorated letters. Alternatively, formal works would often use **Gothic Textura Quadrata**, with **Gothic Versals** for text capitals and all large decorated letters.

## **FRANCE AND NORTHWEST EUROPE**

**10th-12th c.: Carolingian Minuscule with Roman Half Uncial or Roman Square Capitals.**

**11th-13th c.: Early Gothic with English style Gothic Book Hand Capitals or Roman Square Capitals** within the text, and **Gothic Versals** for all large decorated letters.

**13th c. onward:** Regular **Gothic Littera Bastarda and Bastarda Capitals** within the text and **Gothic Versals** for all large decorated letters. Alternatively, formal works would often use **Gothic Textura Quadrata** and **Gothic Versals** for text capitals and all large decorated letters.

## **GERMANY AND NORTH CENTRAL EUROPE**

**10th-12th c.: Carolingian Minuscule with Roman Half Uncial or Roman Square Capital.**

**Late 12th-mid 14th c.: German Gothic Book Hand Minuscules with German Gothic Book Hand Capitals** within the text and **Gothic Versals** for all large decorated letters.

**13th c. onward:** Regular **Gothic Littera Bastarda and Bastarda Capitals** within the text, and **Gothic Versals** for all large decorated letters. Alternatively, formal works would often use **Gothic Textura Quadrata** with **Gothic Versals** for text capitals and all large decorated letters.

## **ITALY**

**11th-14th c.:** Italian book hands are similar to the northern continental European styles.

**15th-16th c.:** **Italian Humanist Minuscules**, with **Humanist Capitals** used in text and for large decorated letters.

**SCANDINAVIA AND NORTH ISLANDS**

Before Christianization around the 10th c., there was little writing on the page in Scandinavia, so missionaries and travellers would use whatever script they brought with them to the north. Contact with Britain and Ireland meant that the Scandinavians who settled there would use what scripts existed there already.

Your best bet for “Viking age” scripts would be to follow Anglo-Saxon and German styles. **Insular Minuscule**, **Artificial Uncial**, **Roman Half Uncial**, and **Early Gothic** are all good candidates. Runes were not usually used on scrolls or manuscripts. The Eth and Thorn letters are used.

From the Gothic age onward, follow Northern European standards. A 14th c. **Icelandic Book Hand** sample is given for comparison.

**SPAIN AND PORTUGAL**

**600-12th c.:** Visigothic Minuscule with Pre-Caroline Versals. (Arabic was used by the Islamic population of the Iberian peninsula until the expulsion in the late 15th c.)

**EASTERN EUROPE**

Eastern Europe of the Byzantine Empire used forms of Greek, and in Russia, Greek evolved throughout the Middle Ages into Cyrillic alphabets. The Hebrew alphabet was used in every European nation by the Jewish community with illumination which matched contemporary tastes.

Artificial Uncial

6th c. All Christian lands. 3-5 pen widths. Rule 3X

ΑΑΑ ΒΒΒ C D D E E F G H I K L M N O P Q Q Q  
R S S T T U X X X Y Z

TECANJTA DCELEBRATQUE POLUS REX CAZ  
IFERHYMNIS..TRANS ZEPHYRIQUE GLOB  
UM SCANDUNT TUA FACTA PER AXEM..

Roman Half Uncial

3rd-9th c. Christian Europe. 3-6 pen widths. Rule 3X

a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r r t u x y z st si

Te canit ad celbratque polus rex sazifer  
hymnis. Trans zephyrique globum scand  
unt tua facta per axem.



## Pre-Caroline Minuscules

7th-8th c. Christian Europe. 8th c. Corbie France. 4-5 pen widths. Rule 3X

a b c c d e e f g h i i k l m n o p q r r

s t u x x y z ð ea et min es em or

cogn te er tori

linking from

Te cunia adcelebratque polus rex ga  
zifer hymnis. Trans zephyrique globum  
secundunt tua facta per axem.

## Visigothic Minuscule

7th-12th c. SPAIN. SPANISH 10TH C. 3-4 PEN WIDTHS. RULE 3X

a b c d d e e f g h i i l m n o p q r r a a u x y z

e linking i/j t u/v

eu en terru fu ti ri rec te ter tem

Te cunia adcelebratque polus rex guzifer  
hymnis. Trans zephyrique globum secundunt  
a a u f u c t u p e r a x e m .

Insular Majuscule

8th-9th c. Ireland, Britain and Scotland. 5 pen widths. Rule 2.5X-3X

α b c d d e f g h i k l m n o p q r  
 s t u x s j z z & α

Te canit ad celebratque polus  
 Rex sacriser hymnis. Trans  
 zephyrique globum scandunt  
 tua facta per axem.

Insular Minuscule

6th c. Ireland onward, 6th-late 12th c. Britain, 7th-9th c. Northern Europe.  
 5-6 pen widths. Rule 3X

α α b b c d d e e e f f g g h h i k k l l  
 m m n n o p p q q r r r s s t t u u v v x x y y  
 w (Anglo-Saxon)

z d d t t a z z h h s t e z  
 That th THin at & en es st ae aeg

Te canit ad celebratque polus rex sacri  
 ser hymnis. Trans zephyrique globum  
 scandunt tua facta per axem.



English Gothic Bookhand Minuscules

12th-early 14th c.

England 1240s written in Norman French. 4-6 pen widths. Rule 2.5X

a b c d d e f g h i k l m n o p q r r̄ s̄ t u v v̄ w x x̄ y z

1/2r s u/v

ʒ de pe dr st ct  
& de pe dr st ct

*Te canit adcelebratque polus rex gazifer hymnis. Trans  
zephyrique globum scandunt tua facta per axem.*

German Gothic Bookhand Minuscules

12th-14th c. Germany.

German early 14th c. 4-5 pen widths. Rule 2X

aa bb bcc d d e e f g g h i k̄ l l m n o o p q r r̄ s̄ t t

k

1/2r s

u v w x y z z̄ z̄ ʒ st de  
u/v & st de

*Te canit adcelebratque polus rex gazifer hymnis.  
Trans zephyrique globum scandunt tua facta per  
axem.*



Gothic Litera Bastarda

13th c. onward, all of Europe. 4-6 pen widths. Rule 2.5X

a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v u/v  
1/2r s s

w x y z

English sample 15th c.

a a b t d d e f g g h i j k l m n o p q r r r r  
g r 1/2r

s s s s t t u v w x y z z th &

pp ro rt ri st that with thou

Te canit adcelebratque polus rex gazifer hymnis.  
Trans zephyrque globum scandunt tua facta  
per axem. The quick brown fox jumps over a  
lazy dog.

Italian Humanist Minuscules  
Italy, 15th-16th c. 5 pen widths. Rule 1.5X-3X

a b c d e f g h i k l m n o p q r s s s t u v x y z

æ ct st &  
ae ct st &

Te canit ad celebratque polus rex  
gazifer hymnis.

Italian Humanist Square Capitals

A B C D E F G G H I K L M M N O P  
Q R S T V X Y Z

Roman Square Capitals

A A B C D E F G G H I K  
L M N O P Q R S T U V X  
X Y Z

Pre-Caroline Versals

A A B C C D E E E F G G h h i  
L M M N N O P P Q R S S T T  
U U V V X X X Y Y Z



Insular Versals

A A B B C D E F G G H H

I I L M M N O P P Q Q Q

R R R S S T T U X X S Z Z

&

A A B B C D E F T H I L H H O P

Q R S T U V X Y Z &

Gothic Versals

A B C D E F G H I J K L  
M N O P P Q R S T U  
V X Y Y Z

English Gothic Bookhand Capitals

A B C D E F G G H I J K L M N O P  
Q R S S T U V W X Y Y Z

German Gothic Bookhand Capitals

A B B C D S E F G G G H H I J J K  
L L L M N O P P Q R S S S T T  
T U V W W X Y Z

## Gothic Litera Bastarda Capitals

A A A B C D D D E E E F F F F  
G G H H I I J J K K L L L M M M  
N N O O O P P P Q Q Q  
R R R S S S T T T U U U  
V V W X Y Z Z



## Chapter Two

# Medieval Writing

**T**hroughout the one thousand years encompassed by the SCA, historical scripts evolved several times from their ancient Greek and Roman beginnings. Even within each calligraphic style there were subtle differences in everything from letter shapes to the way words were contracted. The study of these differences is work for scholars and is a level of detail you may or may not wish to explore in your SCA scroll work. The level of accuracy in your works intended as award scrolls is up to you, as long as it represents an attempt to follow a medieval model consistent with the aims of the SCA.

If your goal is to produce the most accurate possible work, good sources are your best bet. You may wish to find a photographic reference of a particular style and emulate it precisely. Alternatively, you may wish to take a generic approach, and that is also acceptable.

The calligraphic Exemplars in this handbook are designed to be a shortcut for scribes using a generic approach. They are representative of several major styles from the SCA time period. Some variations within styles are given, as well as suggestions for use of capital letters, ampersands, alternative letters, and combined letters known as *ligatures* and conjoined letters.

### Using Medieval Scripts

There are several elements peculiar to medieval writing which will make your work acquire a very medieval look if you begin to use them. The following descriptions will outline some of the more basic characteristics which you may eventually choose to add to your repertoire.

**Rule #1: *All rules are subject to exceptions!***

**Upper-Case vs. Lower-Case Letters.** In many early calligraphic styles there is no distinction between upper- and lower-case letters. In these scripts, the main text may be all majuscule (that which we modern folks consider “upper case” or capital letters) or it may be all minuscule (what we consider “lower case” or small letters). Larger, somewhat decoratively built-up forms of the same letters, or more usually, an outdated alphabetic form, would be used to call special attention to the beginnings of special sections. Chapters often opened with elaborately decorated display lettering. To call attention to the beginnings of verses, sentences, or paragraphs, letters called *versals* were used within the main text block.

From this practice evolved the use of one set of letters for the text and another to be used for what we consider to be capital letters. When colored and made slightly larger than the other letters of the text line, these “capital” letters became an alphabet on their own. These were known by the late 11th century as versals. The rubricator was the person who added these colored initials after the scribe had finished writing out the text. Although the display versals continued to be used in later times, we see changes from, for example, the Celtic style to the Carolingian style, and then to the Gothic style. In the “Celtic” age we see very large display letters drawn as individual works of art which diminished in size as they progressed across the page.


By the Gothic era the first letter of the text may be a large decorated initial followed by

one or even a whole panel of display versals. They may be all the same size and similar to the versals within the rest of the text. By this later time, the versal had become its own type of alphabet.

When a letter is big enough to be illuminated with a pictorial scene, we stop calling it a decorated initial and refer to it as “historiated,” “inhabited,” or “foliated,” depending on the type of decoration. This is often followed by the first letter of the main text being slightly bigger than the rest of the text. It is frequently in an “upper-case” form, and sometimes a stroke of color is added to the letter.

The later period of handmade books contains many examples of books using a “modern” looking system of capital letters within the text for the beginning of sentences and for beginning the names of people and places. The versals still open more important passages, but the choice for what to use and where depends on the level of formality of the “book.”

**LETTER HEIGHT.** The height of letters is given in reference to the common stroke height of lower case letters. From the bottom of a letter (such as **m**) to the top is called the “minim” height or the “x-height.” A letter **m** is made of three minim strokes and the letter **i** is made of one. Ascenders and descenders are extensions of minim strokes.

**PEN WIDTH.** This is a convenient measure. It refers to the width of the pen point. It is handy in counting how tall to make your letters. A scale can be made by placing several strokes in a ladder arrangement such as this:  = four penwidths high.

**RULING LINES.** Medieval scribes almost always used ruling lines to get their scripts even, and it is usually appropriate to leave them on the page. In fact, in the Gothic period the lines were often either a colored drypoint (similar to pencil), or they could be colored or

black ink. The reason we seldom see the ruling lines in photos of early period and Italian Renaissance manuscripts is that the scribes often ruled with a bone or metal point which left only a light crease on the parchment without color.

Point location guides for the ruling lines were made on the outside edges of the page by pin-pricking holes. The vertical lines that determine the column sides would be done first. These were followed by horizontal lines for the text.

Text was written between two ruled lines. The bottom of the letter was usually written a little above the line and the top of the minim strokes fell somewhere around half way up to the next ruling line (give or take a little depending on style). The minim height would be as constant as the skill of the scribe permitted, and the tops of ascenders would reach to a short distance below the ruling line above.

### Strange Letters From The Past

The script styles used in the middle ages contained several letters which are unfamiliar to modern eyes. Also, there are letters that we use today that were yet to be invented! For example, the **w** and **j** shapes were unknown in early period. This can be disconcerting to those of us not writing in Latin. Later, when manuscripts were being translated into or composed in colloquial speech, the sounds of local tongues were added into texts. The following descriptions are meant to help you find your way through the alphabet jungle without the need of a machete!

**Æ.** The **æ** was used as a diphthong in Latin, as well as to represent the sound of the letter “ash” in Old Norse and Old English.

**J and I and Y.** The **J** & **j** shapes are not found in the earlier scripts except that sometimes the **j** is used to differentiate the last of three **I** shapes in a Roman numeral. Nor was the **i** dotted in early times as it is today. As a

matter of fact, it was common to dot the **Y** & **y**.)

By 1400 the **j** is in use, but sometimes, (especially in versals), it means a letter **i**. The **i** began to be dotted with a diagonal slash in the 14th century when it became difficult to distinguish between **i**, **m**, **n** and **u** when written together. The dot above the **y** started to be rarer.

However, the more formal the text, the likelier the old practice is to be used. Even today **INRI** means **Jesus Nazarenus Rex Judorum**.

One more thing to be aware of is that in some early scripts the letter **I** was sometimes written as an ascending or a descending letter. This happened within texts that employed it as a normal minim high letter elsewhere. It became an ascender sometimes when there were a lot of minim high letters like **m** or **n** surrounding it, but, of course, not next to a lower case letter **l**.

**K.** You may miss the letter **K** in some sources of early manuscripts and some languages. For example, **K** is not used in Latin, Gaelic, and Welsh. The letter **C** is not generally used in Old Norse. Both **C** and **K** represent the same sound in these cases.

↘ **Half r.** If you take the shape of **R** and remove the left-hand staff you are left with the shape of the 1/2 **r**. It is only for the lower case letter. It follows letters that have right side bows (curves) without a foot, such as **o**, **p**, and **b**. In some scripts other letters may bow to the right such as **ŕ**. In these cases it is fine to use 1/2 **r**.

∫ **Long S.** One important letter to relearn is the "long s." Our ancestors used what is called the "long s" for almost all of the **s** shapes in lower case text. It looked like an **f**, but instead of the cross bar it has a little spur on the upper left side of the staff. The long **s**, pictured above, was usually used for all lower case **s** forms, except for the last letter of the word, when our familiar snake shaped

"short **s**" was used. When two **s** characters are at the end of the word, use only two short **s** characters as in "fortress" rather than a long and short as in "fortreſs" or "fortressſ."

The Short **S** shape is used for capitals, versals, and display letters. Be aware, however, that some scripts use only short **S** and others use only long **S** in lower case text.

Þ **The letter Thorn** is used in Old English and Old Norse. It stands for the sound of the letters "th" as in "thick" or "thin." It looks much like a letter **y** with an ascending staff, or similar to the Anglo-Saxon letter "wen" (þ see **W** below) which looks a lot like a **p**. Sometimes **thorn** has an ascending staff, but in some forms it does not, and the bow may be more angular. Especially after the use of **wen** went out of fashion, the ascending staff disappears and the bow may open a bit more like a letter **y**.

In the phrase "Ye olde colonial inn" we find a remnant of the letter thorn. The **Y** in "Ye" is actually a **thorn**. From the 13th century, **thorn** goes mostly out of fashion except in the words **the**, **thou**, and **thee**. **Thorn** survived later in Scandinavian scripts.

Ð **The letter Eth** (or "dh," also "Edh") is also an Anglo-Saxon letter. It represents the **th** sound of **that** and **then**. It looks like a letter **D** with a line slashing the staff or the ascender. In an upper case *eth* we have the left staff slashed on a standard **D** shape. After the Normans came to England in the second half of the 11th century and the scripts were replaced by continental scripts, the **eth** and the **wen** dropped off in use, and the **thorn** began to stand for both **th** sounds. However, the upper-case version of the **eth** remained in use as the upper-case **th**. The letter **eth** survived longer in Scandinavian scripts.

**V and U.** Through most of our period these two letters were the same shape but represented two sounds. The choice of using round bottom or pointed was a stylistic choice. Hence the word *verbum* would either be

written VERBVM or UERBUM.

From the 13th century, a **V** may be chosen as the first letter of a word (within text columns) possibly because you could make a nice calligraphic sweep from its left side. In such a style the **u** might be used for all of the other **v** and **u** letters. Check your style sheet and photo references. The **v** shape is more common in numerals than the **u**.

**W.** The **w** shape is a form that is in place by Gothic times. For early period scripts we must look to alternatives. The Anglo-Saxons took a rune and made the letter **wen** (ƿ) in their alphabet. It usually resembles a modern **p** and can be found in the exemplars.

ƿ The **wen** sometimes had a short tail protruding to the right from the bottom of the loop. Often it did not, since the **P** sound was not common in the Anglo-Saxon tongue. Other period alternatives for early **W** include: a single **u** only, **uu** or **vv** not joined, and joined, but showing all four staves **W**.

**Punctuation.** The punctuation marks and uses vary in our period. Here are some hints about what to look for. Do not assume they are appropriate for your chosen script without verification from source books.

According to Marc Drogin in *Medieval Calligraphy - Its History and Technique*, you may punctuate Insular Minuscule as you would other scripts of the same time period. The Gothic scripts all may be punctuated as modern text, but Drogin suggests using the commas and periods at mid-minim height to give a medieval feel. For greatest accuracy, look at source books or read Drogin's book. Modern punctuation will be suitable for SCA scrolls.

You may break words where convenient, especially between syllables, but many scribes compressed the end of a line or stretched letters in order to make them fill the column width. Look at examples from the time and place of your chosen style to see which is

most appropriate.

**Abbreviated Words.** Abbreviations are often responsible for tricking SCA calligraphers into thinking a particular letter looks like one which it is not. This is because medieval abbreviations were usually some form of slash or bar, and the scribes would often put the mark right through a letter's ascender or descender! A crossed **ḡ** is an example.

There is a Gothic **1/2r** that falls victim to having its tail extended at the end of the word so a diagonal slash may pass through. An example is in the Latin suffix "-orum". Factorum = factōꝛ.

Most contractions and abbreviations are a simple bar over the word indicating that letters or even a small group of words may have been omitted. Letters may be missing from the middle of the word, or everything after the last written letter may be missing. There are so many variations to contractions in medieval scripts that scholars can tell from where and when a book came down to within a few years. If you are writing your scroll in modern English you may choose to use modern English contractions in this fashion.





**Ampersands.** The ampersand is simply a mark that stands for the Latin word "et" meaning "and." As the letters were often conjoined, this word was written as a convenient mark. It was so convenient that scribes got into the habit of using the resulting ligature no matter what language the text was written in. Some ampersands look like a strange number seven.


**Ligatures and other conjoined letters.** Medieval scribes also had a great number of ways to shorten words by joining parts of letters together. When an extra stroke was added or bent in a strange way while combining letters, we end up with what is called a ligature. These letter combinations usually had shared strokes between letters.

The **1/2 R** is an example of this because



the bowed letter preceding it shares its right side with the **r** which uses that stroke as its left staff. The “**et**” ligature, depicted as “&,” owes its shape to the same thoughts which produced the tall linking **e** in early minuscule scripts. Other ligatures to look for include:

**en** = , **ct** = , **at** = , and some three-letter ligatures like **ter** = .

Long **s** is a very common element in ligatures because the medieval scribe loved to carry the hook of the letter down and pull it out as the staff and tail of the **t**. Letter **b** conjoined to **o** is another example of commonly conjoined letters. The letters **d** and **o** are often joined in the word “domini” “” but notice that the staff of the **d** slants to the left.

Try to avoid conjoining more than two letters at a time until you get the feel for what looks right. In many scripts, the letters are not so much conjoined as they are just touching. Also remember that while conjoining letters does add a very medieval look to a scroll, the more of them you use, the tougher it is for the herald to read it in court!

### Numbers for Dates

The best numbers to use on Middle Kingdom award scrolls are standard Roman numerals. You may use period Arabic numerals, but few people will be able to read them. When writing a Roman numeral, put a dot at the start and end of the number. It can be either on the base line or at mid-minim height.

The SCA calendar year begins on May 1. For example: January .XII. Anno Societatis .XXVII. is the same as our modern Jan. 12, A.S. 27. However, May 1, 1993 begins the new year of the Society with May 1, A.S. 28. The year A.S. 28 (XXVIII) continues through the winter of 1993-94.

A descending **j** stroke was sometimes made for the last **I** in the numeral, but not using it is also correct.

### Medieval Roman Numeral System

|          |             |             |
|----------|-------------|-------------|
| 1 = I    | 13 = XIII   | 25 = XV     |
| 2 = II   | 14 = XIV    | 26 = XVI    |
| 3 = III  | 15 = XV     | 27 = XVII   |
| 4 = IIII | 16 = XVI    | 28 = XVIII  |
| 5 = V    | 17 = XVII   | 29 = XVIIII |
| 6 = VI   | 18 = XVIII  | 30 = XXX    |
| 7 = VII  | 19 = XVIIII | 31 = XXXI   |
| 8 = VIII | 20 = XX     | 39 = XXVIII |
| 9 = VIII | 21 = XXI    | 40 = XL     |
| 10 = X   | 22 = XXII   | 41 = XLI    |
| 11 = XI  | 23 = XXIII  |             |
| 12 = XII | 24 = XXIIII |             |

### SCA Dates

Here is a chart of the years of the Society compared to the modern dates they represent:

| May 1 | to | April 30 | A.S.    |
|-------|----|----------|---------|
| 1990  |    | 1991     | XXV     |
| 1991  |    | 1992     | XXVI    |
| 1992  |    | 1993     | XXVII   |
| 1993  |    | 1994     | XXVIII  |
| 1994  |    | 1995     | XXIII   |
| 1995  |    | 1996     | XXX     |
| 1996  |    | 1997     | XXXI    |
| 1997  |    | 1998     | XXXII   |
| 1998  |    | 1999     | XXXIII  |
| 1999  |    | 2000     | XXXIII  |
| 2000  |    | 2001     | XXXV    |
| 2001  |    | 2002     | XXXVI   |
| 2002  |    | 2003     | XXXVII  |
| 2003  |    | 2004     | XXXVIII |
| 2004  |    | 2005     | XXXVIII |
| 2005  |    | 2006     | XL      |
| 2006  |    | 2007     | XLI     |
| 2007  |    | 2008     | XLII    |
| 2008  |    | 2009     | XLIII   |
| 2009  |    | 2010     | XLIII   |
| 2010  |    | 2011     | XLV     |
| 2011  |    | 2012     | XLVI    |
| 2012  |    | 2013     | XLVII   |
| 2013  |    | 2014     | XLVIII  |
| 2014  |    | 2015     | XLVIII  |

## Chapter Three

# Award Texts

**B**efore beginning to write an award scroll, please be sure to read Chapters Five and Six concerning the production of scrolls. There are several conventions that must be followed on Middle Kingdom scrolls. Please also see the section on scroll heraldry in order to use the appropriate heraldry in your design.

Please be careful to use the word "grant" only on scrolls which "grant" rank. Use the word "award" when it says the rank is conferred by "award" level. They are not the same. Also, a rank can be given by Letters Patent, which is above grant and award levels.

The text for the Award of Arms has been given first because it is the most commonly used text. All others have been listed in order of precedence.

Awards and Orders that have badges should have the badges depicted on the scroll. A scroll conferring arms should depict the arms in some appropriate way when they are both registered and known.

Please also note that the lower case has been used for the w in the word "we." It wasn't always correct to use the upper-case W for the "Royal *We*" but it is appropriate well back into SCA period and is a common usage in the SCA.

### Award of Arms (AoA)

#### *Text for recipient with registered device*

Due commendations and greetings from Their Royal Majesties (*name of Sovereign*), and (*name of Consort*), King (*Queen*) and Queen (*King*) of the Middle Kingdom. Know ye that we are pleased to recognize the good service that (*name of recipient*) hath rendered unto the Middle Kingdom, (specifically) (*optional specific mentions*) and there-

fore are we minded to make unto *him/her* an Award of Arms. We bestow upon *him/her* the right to bear the arms (*heraldic description of the arms*) when confirmed by the College of Arms of the Society, and all rights and responsibilities conveyed by elevation to this rank. Done this \_\_ day of \_\_, Anno Societatis (A.S.) \_\_, in our (*location of event*). In testimony whereof we have set our hands and seal.

The following texts may be used for a scroll when either the recipient has not yet registered a heraldic device or that device is unknown to the scribe or Signet:

### Award of Arms (AoA)

#### *(Unregistered/unknown device)*

Be it known that we (*name of sovereign*), King (*Queen*) of the Middle Kingdom, and (*name of consort*) our Queen (*King*) are minded to make unto (*name of recipient*) an Award of Arms in recognition of *his/her* service to the Middle Kingdom, (specifically for) (*optional specific mentions*). We bestow upon *him/her* the right to bear arms as registered within the Society without let or hindrance from any person, and the rights and responsibilities conveyed by *his/her* elevation to this rank from this day onward. Done by our hands this \_\_ day of \_\_, Anno Societatis (A.S.) \_\_, in our (*location of event*).

### Award of Arms (AoA)

#### *(Unregistered/unknown device)*

Proclaim throughout the realm that we (*name of sovereign*), King (*Queen*) of the Middle Kingdom, and (*name of consort*) our Queen (*King*), send greetings and commendations from our (*location of event*). Know that we, in recognition of the good works and deeds of (*name of recipient*), (especially for) (*op-*

*tional specific mentions*), are minded to make unto *him/her* an Award of Arms. We bestow upon *him/her* the right to bear Arms as duly registered within the Society and all rights and responsibilities conveyed by elevation to this rank without let or hindrance from any person from this day onward. Done by our hands this \_\_ day of \_\_, Anno Societatis (A.S.) \_\_, in our (*location of event*).

### **Award of Arms (AoA)**

*(Unregistered/unknown device)*

Let it be known to all that we (*name of Sovereign*), King (*Queen*) by right of arms of the Middle Kingdom, and (*name of Consort*), our Queen (*King*), having come to recognize the good service and contributions of our subject (*name of recipient*), (most notably *optional specific mentions*), do therefore wish to confer upon *him/her* an Award of Arms. We bestow upon *him/her* the right to bear arms as duly registered with the College of Arms of the Society and all rights and responsibilities associated with armigerous status. Done by our hands this \_\_ day of \_\_, Anno Societatis (A.S.) \_\_, in our (*location of event*).

### **Royal Augmentation of Arms (R. Aug.)**

Proclaim to all throughout the land that we (*name of Sovereign*), King (*Queen*) by right of arms of the Middle Kingdom, and (*name of Consort*), our Queen (*King*), have witnessed the service with which (*name of recipient*) hath exemplified the ideals which we strive to uphold, and therefore do we wish to acknowledge *him/her* in a fitting and seemly manner with some visible token of our esteem. We are minded to give unto *him/her* a Royal Augmentation of Arms in recognition of *his/her* deeds. It shall be a specific charge signifying our appreciation and commendation, to be incorporated into *his/her* arms in accordance with both *his/her* wishes and the Rules of the College of Arms of the

Known World. Done by our hands this \_\_ day of \_\_, Anno Societatis (A.S.) \_\_, in our (*location of event*).

### **Kingdom Augmentation of Arms (K. Aug.)**

**Special:** Because of the nature of this award, the office of the Dragon Herald prefers the scribe to obtain a specific wording from their majesties at the time of the assignment.

### **Order of the Royal Vanguard (CRV)**

Let all persons within our Realm hear the proclamation that we (*name of Sovereign*), King (*Queen*) by right of arms of the Middle Kingdom, and (*name of Consort*), our Queen (*King*) set forth. Know that in consideration of *his/her* outstanding service as Our *King's/Queen's* Champion we hereby make (*name of recipient*) a Companion of Our Order of the Royal Vanguard. We bestow unto *him/her* all rights and responsibilities associated with this Order and the right to bear the badge of the Order: Fieldless, a demi-dragon rampant argent. Done by our hands this \_\_ day of \_\_, Anno Societatis (A.S.) \_\_, in our (*location of event*).

### **Award of the Sapphire (RSL)**

Proclaim throughout our Realm that we (*name of Sovereign*), King (*Queen*) by right of arms of the Middle Kingdom, and (*name of Consort*), our Queen (*King*), send heartfelt greetings. Know that it is one of the pleasures of the Crown to recognize individuals who exhibit great courtesy, grace, and honor to people of all ranks and who exemplify what it means to be the embodiment of The Dream. Therefore, we are hereby minded to make unto (*name of recipient*) an Award of the Sapphire. We bestow unto *him/her* all rights and responsibilities associated with The Sapphire Light and the right to bear the badge: Fieldless, a gemstone azure. Done by our hands this \_\_ day of \_\_, Anno Societatis (A.S.) \_\_, in our (*location of event*).

### **Award of the Dragon's Treasure**

Unto all to whom these presents come know that we (*name of Sovereign*), King (*Queen*) by right of arms of the Middle Kingdom, and (*name of Consort*), our Queen (*King*) send greetings. As we know that the treasure of a kingdom lies in its future leaders, so do we know that such a treasure is before us in the person of (*name of recipient*) and in recognition of *his/her* good service to the Middle Kingdom it is fitting that we honor (*name of recipient*) by naming *him/her* a Dragon's Treasure. As *he/she* has adorned the crown of the Middle Kingdom until now, so shall *he/she* continue to do so in our hearts. Done by our hands this \_\_ day of \_\_, Anno Societatis (A.S.) \_\_, in our (*location of event*).

### **Award of the Grove**

Be it known that we (*name of Consort*), Royal Patroness (*Patron*) of the Arts, and (*name of Sovereign*) our King (*Queen*), are well aware of the endeavors and successes of the people of (*Group name*) in the *artistic and/or scientific* area of (*reason of award*). Therefore we wish for all to know that they are held in high regard, and so we are minded to bestow upon them the Award of the Grove. Henceforward (*name of group*) may display the banner: Per pale Or and argent, a hurst purple. Given by Our hands this \_\_ day of \_\_, Anno Societatis (A.S.) \_\_ in our (*location of event*)

### **Award of the Dragon's Flight**

Proclaim unto all that we (*name of Sovereign*), King (*Queen*) by right of arms of the Middle Kingdom, and (*name of Consort*), our Queen (*King*), wish to commend the superior skill and service of (*name of group*) to the Archer Corps of the Middle Kingdom. Therefore we are minded to bestow upon them the Award of the Dragon's Flight, with all rights, privileges, insignia, precedence and re-

sponsibilities thereto appertaining, and the right to bear the banner: Argent, a pale vert scaly argent between four pheons vert, without let or hindrance from any person. Done by our hands this \_\_ day of \_\_, Anno Societatis (A.S.) \_\_ in our (*location of event*).

### **Award of the Dragon's Teeth**

Let it be known to all that we (*name of Sovereign*), King (*Queen*) by right of arms of the Middle Kingdom, and (*name of Consort*), our Queen (*King*), right mindful of the dramatic deeds and skills that (*name of group*) hath displayed upon the field of battle, especially (*reason of award*), are mindful to bestow upon them the Award of the Dragon's Teeth. We bestow upon them all rights and responsibilities thereto appertaining, and the right to bear the banner: Argent, on a dance between two broken dragon's teeth vert another argent, without let or hindrance from any person. Done by our hands this \_\_ day of \_\_, Anno Societatis (A.S.) \_\_, in our (*location of event*).

### **Award of the Purple Fretty**

Be it known that we (*name of Sovereign*), King (*Queen*) by right of arms of the Middle Kingdom, and (*name of Consort*), our Queen (*King*), have heard of the exemplary service that (*name of group*) hath rendered unto the Middle Kingdom, specifically by (*reason for award*). We do here publicly commend them and are pleased to bestow upon them the Award of the Purple Fretty, with all rights and responsibilities thereto appertaining, and the right to bear the badge: Or, fretty purple, without let or hindrance from any person. Given by Our hands this \_\_ day of \_\_, Anno Societatis (A.S.) \_\_, in our (*location of event*).

### **Order of the Rose (OR)**

*Special Note: This Order originally carried a Patent of Arms. If this award is made after the Peerage level was removed from this award, then use this version. If the scroll is*

*for a recipient who received the version by letters Patent, skip ahead to the text on page*

Proclaim to all Gentles and Nobles that we (*name of Consort*), Queen (*King*) of the Middle Kingdom, and (*name of King/Queen*) our King (*Queen*), knowing full well the grace and dignity with which (*name of recipient*) has served the Middle Kingdom as Queen (*King*), are minded to do *her/him* honor. We do, therefore, recognize *her/him* as a *Lady/Lord* of the Rose, with all of the rights, privileges, insignia, precedence and responsibilities thereto appertaining. Done by our hands this \_\_ day of \_\_, Anno Societatis (A.S.) \_\_ in our (*location of event*).

### **Order of the White Chamfron (CWC)**

Let all know that we (*name of Sovereign*), King (*Queen*) the strong and just, and (*name of Consort*), our Queen (*King*) the graceful and wise, Regnum Mediterranae, have seen the skill, devotion and support that (*name of recipient*) has displayed in the discipline of horsemanship. We are therefore minded to make *him/her* a Companion of our Order of the White Chamfron and bestow upon *him/her* all rights and responsibilities thereto appertaining in order that *he/she* may discharge *his/her* new duties to the Crown and the right to bear the badge: (Fieldless) A Chamfron Argent. Done by our hands this \_\_ day of \_\_, Anno Societatis (A.S.) \_\_, in our (*location of event*).

### **Order of the Cavendish Knot (CCK)**

It shall be known by all that we (*name of Sovereign*) King (*Queen*) by right of arms of the Middle Kingdom, and (*name of Consort*) our Queen (*King*), have witnessed skill, devotion and support that (*name of recipient*) has displayed in the discipline of rapier combat and are therefore minded to create *him/her* a member of Our Order of the Cavendish Knot. We bestow upon *him/her* all rights and responsibilities attendant upon

this rank, and as token of this honor the right to bear the badge: Four Cavendish knots conjoined in cross vert. Done by our hands this \_\_ day of \_\_, Anno Societatis (A.S.) \_\_, in our (*location of event*).

### **Award of the Dragon's Barb (CDB)**

Proclaim unto all that we (*name of Sovereign*), King (*Queen*) by right of arms of the Middle Kingdom, and (*name of Consort*) our Queen (*King*), would fain honour (*name of recipient*) for *his/her* superior skill in archery and service to the Archer Corps of the Middle Kingdom. Therefore are we minded to create *him/her* a Companion of the Order of the Dragon's Barb, and thus we bestow upon *him/her* all rights and responsibilities attendant upon this rank, and the right to bear the badge of the order: A dragon's tail palewise barb to chief, within and issuant from an annulet vert, scaly argent, without let or hindrance from any person. Done by our hands this \_\_ day of \_\_, Anno Societatis (A.S.) \_\_, in our (*location of event*).

### **Order of the Red Company (CRC)**

See, hear, and read the words of (*name of Sovereign*), King (*Queen*) by right of arms of the Middle Kingdom, and (*name of Consort*), Queen (*King*) of the Middle Kingdom. In all the armies in history there have been many warriors who have fought and led from within the ranks, rising to positions of great honor. A warrior has many virtues, such as skill at arms, leadership on the field, and teaching of the arts martial. Therefore do we herewith recognize (*name of recipient*) of the Order of Red Company. Henceforth may *he/she* style *himself/herself* a Serjeant of this noble order, and may bear its badge: Gules, two maces in saltire Argent, in canton upon *his/her* shield. Done by our hands this \_\_ day of \_\_, Anno Societatis (A.S.) \_\_, in our (*location of event*).

**Order of the Dragon's Tooth (CDT)**

May it be known to all that we (name of Sovereign), King (*Queen*) by right of arms of the Middle Kingdom, and (*name of Consort*) our Queen (*King*), right mindful of the dramatic deeds and skills that (*name of recipient*) hath displayed on the field of battle, especially (*optional specific mentions*), are minded to make *him/her* a companion of our Order of the Dragon's Tooth. We bestow upon *him/her* all rights and responsibilities attendant upon this rank, and the right to bear a fang dependent from a chain about the neck, and the badge: Or, on a pale vert, three fangs Or, without let or hindrance from any person. Done by our hands this \_ day of \_\_, Anno Societatis (A.S.) \_\_, in our (*location of event*).

**Award of the Doe's Grace (ADG)**

Unto all Gentles and Nobles to whom these presents come, know that we (*name of Queen*) Queen of the Middle Kingdom, and (*name of king*) our King, right mindful of the high esteem in which (*name of recipient*) is held by our Kingdom and ourselves, and in acknowledgment of (*specific mention*), are pleased to show *him/her* this sign of the Queen's favor, to wit: we bestow upon *him/her* the Award of the Doe's Grace. We bestow upon *him/her* all rights and responsibilities attendant upon this rank and the right to bear the badge: Azure, a sword proper enfiled of a wreath of flowers argent, slipped and leaved Or. Given by our hands this \_\_ day of \_\_, Anno Societatis (A.S.) \_\_, in our (*location of event*).

**Award of the King's Chalice (RKC)**

See, read, hear, and understand by these presents that, right mindful of the high esteem in which (*name of recipient*) is held by Our Kingdom and Ourselves, and in acknowledgement of *his/her* authenticity in (area of accomplishment), are pleased to

bestow upon *him/her* the Award of the King's Chalice. We bestow upon *him/her* all rights and responsibilities attendant upon this rank, and the right to bear the badge of the award: (Fieldless) A Chalice Sable, without let or hindrance from any person. Done by our hands this \_ day of \_\_, Anno Societatis (A.S.) \_\_, in our (*location of event*).

**Award of the Purple Fret (APF)**

It shall be known by all that we (*name of Sovereign*) King (*Queen*) by right of arms of the Middle Kingdom, and (*name of Consort*) our Queen (*King*), do recognize the exemplary service that (*name of recipient*) hath freely given unto the Middle Kingdom, specifically (*specific mentions*). We do here publicly commend *him/her* and are pleased to bestow upon *him/her* the Award of the Purple Fret. We confirm unto *him/her* all rights and responsibilities attendant upon this rank and the right to bear the badge: Or, a fret purpure; without let or hindrance from any person. Given by our hands this \_\_ day of \_\_, Anno Societatis (A.S.) \_\_, in our (*location of event*).

**Order of the Willow (CW)**

May it be known by all that we (*name of Consort*), Royal Patroness (*Patron*) of the Arts, and (*name of Sovereign*) our King (*Queen*), right mindful of the skills that (*name of recipient*) hath displayed in the art of (*specific mentions*), wish to recognize *him/her* as a Companion of our Order of the Willow. We bestow upon *him/her* all rights and responsibilities attendant upon this rank and the right to bear the badge: Purpure, a willow tree eradicated Or, without let or hindrance from any person. Confirmed by our hands this \_\_ day of \_\_, Anno Societatis (A.S.) \_\_, in our (*location of event*).

### Order of the Silver Oak (CSO)

May it be known by all that we (*name of consort*), Royal Patroness (*Patron*) of the Sciences, and (*name of sovereign*) our King (*Queen*), right mindful of the skills that (*name of recipient*) hath displayed in the science of (*specific mentions*), wish to recognize *him/her* as a Companion of our Order of the Silver Oak. We bestow upon *him/her* all rights and responsibilities attendant upon this rank and the right to bear the badge: Purpure, an oak tree blasted and eradicated argent, fructed Or, without let or hindrance from any person. Done by our hands this \_\_ day of \_\_, Anno Societatis (A.S.) \_\_, in our (*location of event*).

### Grant of Arms (GoA)

#### For Great Officer of State

Proclaim to all unto whom these presents come that we (*name of Sovereign*), King (*Queen*) by right of arms of the Middle Kingdom, and (*name of Consort*), our Queen (*King*), in consideration of the excellent service that (*name of recipient*) has given to the Middle Kingdom as (*name of office*), are minded to make unto *him/her* a Grant of Arms. We do hereby confirm by Grant the right to bear (*heraldic description of registered arms or "arms as duly registered with the college of arms of the Society"*) and the right to bear as a crest a Dragon (*specific dragon crest description if given*) as token of *his/hers* service to our Kingdom. Done by our hands this \_\_ day of \_\_, Anno Societatis (A.S.) \_\_, in our (*location of event*).

### Grant of Arms - For Others

Proclaim to all unto whom these presents come that we (*name of Sovereign*), King (*Queen*) by right of arms of the Middle Kingdom, and (*name of Consort*), our Queen (*King*), in consideration of the excellent service that (*name of recipient*) hath ren-

dered unto the Middle Kingdom, most especially by (*reason for award*), are minded to make unto *him/her* a Grant of Arms. We do hereby confirm by Grant the right to bear (*blazon*), (and the right to bear as a crest (*specific non-dragon crest, if one is given*)) and the arms: (*blazon*). Done by our hands this \_\_ day of \_\_, Anno Societatis (A.S.) \_\_, in our (*location of event*).

### Company of the Bronze Ring (CBR)

To all and singular unto whom these presents shall come, know that we (*name of Sovereign*) King (*Queen*) by right of arms of the Middle Kingdom, and (*name of Consort*) our Queen (*King*), right mindful of the superior skill, leadership, and exemplary service rendered unto the Rapier Legions of Our kingdom by our subject (*name of recipient*), do herewith recognize *him/her* as a Companion of our Company of the Bronze Ring. We grant unto *him/her* all rights and responsibilities attendant upon this rank, and the right to bear the badge of the award: Gules, two rapiers in saltire argent within an annulet Or; without let or hindrance from any person. Given by our hands this \_\_ day of \_\_, Anno Societatis (A.S.) \_\_, in our (*location of event*).

### Company of the White Lance (CWL)

See, hear, and read the words of (*name of Sovereign*, King (*Queen*) by right of arms of the Middle Kingdom, and (*name of Consort*), Queen (*King*) of the Middle Kingdom. Both in times of war and times of peace the undaunted equestrian honed their battle skills in tournaments to prepare rider and steed for the defenses of our glorious kingdom. An equestrian has many virtues such as skill in riding, mounted precision at arms, and teaching of the arts equestrian; True leadership is displayed when all culminate in a symbiosis

of horse and rider, to carry them to victory. Therefore do we recognize (*name of recipient*) as a Companion of Our Company of the White Lance. We grant upon *him/her* all rights and responsibilities attendant upon this rank, and the right to bear the badge: Fieldless, a lance argent; without let or hindrance from any person. Done by our hands this \_ day of \_\_, Anno Societatis (A.S.) \_\_, in our (*location of event*).

### **Order of the Greenwood Company (CGC)**

To all and singular unto whom these presents shall come, know that we (*name of Sovereign*) King (*Queen*) by right of arms of the Middle Kingdom, and (*name of Consort*) our Queen (*King*), right mindful of the superior skill, leadership, and exemplary service that (*name of recipient*) hath rendered unto to the Archer Corps of Our kingdom, do herewith recognize *him/her* as a Companion of the Order of Greenwood Company, and do grant unto *him/her* all rights and responsibilities thereto appertaining. Henceforth may *he/she* style *himself/herself* a Forester of this noble order, and may bear its badge: On a hurst of pine trees vert, a pheon inverted Or. Done by our hands this \_ day of \_\_, Anno Societatis (A.S.) \_\_, in our (*location of event*).

### **Order of the Gold Mace (CGM)**

See, hear, and read the words of (*name of Sovereign*), King (*Queen*) by right of arms of the Middle Kingdom, and (*name of Consort*), Queen (*King*) of the Middle Kingdom. The leadership and training of our warriors is essential to the strength of the army, and we have witnessed such excellence in our subject (*name of recipient*). Therefore do we wish to recognize (*him/her*) as a Companion of the Order of the Gold Mace. We grant unto *him/her* all rights and responsibilities attendant upon this rank, <with the right to style *himself/herself* a Lieutenant of the

Order Of The Red Company> (*Note: If the inductee is already a member of the Chivalry, omit the Lieutenant clause*). Henceforth may *he/she* bear the badge of this Order as duly registered with the College of Heralds. Done by our hands this \_\_ day of \_\_, Anno Societatis (A.S.) \_\_, in our (*location of event*).

### **Order of the Evergreen (CE)**

Let it be known throughout the vastness of the realm that we (*name of Consort*), Royal Patroness (*Patron*) of the Arts, and (*name of Sovereign*) our King (Queen), are well aware of the skills and teaching accomplished by (*name of recipient*) in the (*art/science/research*) of (*reason of award*). Therefore we wish for all to know of the high regard in which we hold *him/her*, and so we are minded to create *him/her* a Companion of the Order of the Evergreen. We grant unto *him/her* all rights and responsibilities attendant upon this rank, and the right to bear the badge of the Order as registered with the college of Heralds. Given by Our hands this \_\_ day of \_\_, Anno Societatis (A.S.) \_\_ in our (*location of event*).

### **Order of the Dragon's Heart (CDH)**

See, read, hear and know by these presents that we (*name of Sovereign*), King (*Queen*) by right of arms of the Middle Kingdom, and (*name of Consort*) our Queen (*King*), are mindful of the time, labor and love that (*name of recipient*) hath most freely given unto the Middle Kingdom by (*specific mentions*), and we are minded to make *him/her* a Companion of the Order of the Dragon's Heart. We grant unto *him/her* all rights and responsibilities attendant upon this rank and the right to bear the badge: Argent, a heart vert scaly argent, without let or hindrance from any person. Done by our hands this \_\_ day of \_\_, Anno Societatis (A.S.) \_\_, in our (*location of event*).



### Baron(ess) of the Court

All gentles and nobility, let it be known by all that we (*name of Sovereign*), King (Queen) by right of arms of the Middle Kingdom, and (*name of Consort*) our Queen (King), send greetings. Forasmuch as it is the privilege of the crown to recognize certain nobility, and we have seen such nobility in (*name of recipient*), specifically by (*specific mention*), we are pleased to bestow upon *him/her* the right to style *him/herself* Baron(ess) of our Court. And though a Baron(ess) of the court holds no authority or power to command, yet is *he/shet* to be granted such honor and respect as befits a person of great worth and courtesy. We confirm and acknowledge unto *him/her* all rights and responsibilities attendant upon this rank, without let or hindrance from any person. Henceforth *he/sh* shall be known by *his/her* coronet of silver ornamented with pearls. This do we confirm by our hands this \_\_ day of \_\_, Anno Societatis (A.S.) \_\_, in our (*location of event*).

### Territorial Baron(ess)

All Nobility, know by these presents that we (*name of Sovereign*), King (Queen) by right of arms of the Middle Kingdom, and (*name of Consort*), our Queen (King), having heard petition from the Barony of (*name of Barony*) and well pleased with the service of our subject (*name of recipient*) are minded to create *him/her* Baron(ess) of our Barony of (*full name of Barony*), to have and maintain for us and our successors in fealty and honor those aforesaid lands. We further bestow upon *him/her* all rights and responsibilities thereto appertaining, and the right to employ, without let or hindrance, all symbols and ornaments of that position from this time onward including the right to bear the arms (*blazon of the Barony's registered arms*). Henceforth *he/she* shall be known by *his/her* coronet of gold ornamented with pearls. Done

by our hands this \_\_ day of \_\_, Anno Societatis (A.S.) \_\_, in our (*location of event*).

### Orders of Chivalry: Knight (KSCA) or Master of Arms (MSCA)

*Special Note: If the recipient already has arms by Letters Patent (i. e. is a member of the order of the Pelican, Laurel or in some cases the Rose or Royal Peerage) omit the heraldic confirmation in parentheses.*

All Gentles and Nobles know by these presents that we (*name of Sovereign*), King (Queen) by right of arms of the Middle Kingdom, and (*name of Consort*), our Queen (King), in consideration of *his/her* courtesy, chivalry, and skill both on and off the field of battle, do of our especial grace and certain knowledge recognize (*name of recipient*) as a *Knight/Master of Arms* of the Society, to be in all places of honour numbered a Peer of our Realm and a member of the Order of Chivalry, with all rights, privileges, insignia, precedence, and responsibilities thereto appertaining. (And furthermore do we confirm upon *him/her* by Letters Patent the right to bear (*heraldic description of registered arms or "arms as duly registered with the College of Arms of the Society"*).) Done by our hands this \_\_ day of \_\_, Anno Societatis (A. S.) \_\_, in our (*location of event*).

### Order of the Laurel (OL)

*Special Note: If the recipient already has arms by Letters Patent (i.e. is a member of the order of the Pelican, Chivalry or in some cases the Rose or Royal Peerage) omit the heraldic confirmation in parentheses.*

All Gentles and Nobles know by these presents that we (*name of Sovereign*), King (Queen) by right of arms of the Middle Kingdom, and (*name of Consort*), our Queen (King), in consideration of the skills, excellence, and expertise in the arts and sciences that (*name of recipient*) has displayed, most

especially in the (*art*) (*science*) of (*specific mentions*), and the generosity of spirit with which *he/she* has shared it with our Society, are minded to create (*name of recipient*) a Companion of the Order of the Laurel, to be in all places numbered a Peer of our Realm, with all of the rights, privileges, insignia, precedence and responsibilities thereto appertaining. (And furthermore do we confirm upon *him/her* by Letters Patent the right to bear (*heraldic description of registered arms or "arms as duly registered with the College of Arms of the Society"*)). Done by our hands this \_\_ day of \_\_, Anno Societatis (A.S.) \_\_, in our (*location of event*).

### **Order of the Rose (OR) OLD VERSION**

*Special Note: This award no longer carries a Peerage. Only use this version of the text if you are creating a backlog scroll for a recipient who received this award by Letters Patent. Otherwise use the version on page 8 above. If the recipient already has arms by Letters Patent (i.e. is a member of the order of the Laurel, Chivalry or Pelican, or bears Arms by Letters Patent with their Royal Peerage), or if the grant of Letters Patent is otherwise not to be conferred, omit the heraldic confirmation in parentheses.*

Proclaim to all Gentles and Nobles that we (*name of Queen*) (*King*), Queen (*King*) of the Middle Kingdom, and (*name of King/Queen*) our King (*Queen*), knowing full well the grace and dignity with which (*name of recipient*) has served the Middle Kingdom as Queen (*King*), are minded to do *her/him* honor. We do, therefore, recognize *her/him* as a *Lady/Lord* of the Rose, with all of the rights, privileges, insignia, precedence and responsibilities thereto appertaining. (And furthermore do we confirm upon *him/her* by Letters Patent the right to bear (*heraldic description of registered arms or "arms as duly registered with the College of Arms of the Society"*)). Done by our hands this \_\_ day of \_\_, Anno Societatis (A.S.) \_\_ in our (*location of event*).

### **Order of the Pelican (OP)**

*Special Note: If the recipient already has arms by Letters Patent (i.e. is a member of the order of the Laurel, Chivalry or in some cases the Rose or Royal Peerage) omit the heraldic confirmation in parentheses.*

All Gentles and Nobles know by these presents that we (*name of Sovereign*), King (*Queen*) by right of arms of the Middle Kingdom, and (*name of Consort*), our Queen (*King*), in consideration of the noble virtues and distinguished service, alike in courtesy and honor as in patience and toil, of our faithful and dedicated (*name of recipient*) do create *him/her* a Companion of the Order of the Pelican, to be in all places numbered a Peer of our Realm, with all of the rights, privileges, insignia, precedence and responsibilities thereto appertaining. (And furthermore do we confirm upon *him/her* by Letters Patent the right to bear (*heraldic description of registered arms or "arms as duly registered with the College of Arms of the Society"*)). Done by our hands this \_\_ day of \_\_, Anno Societatis (A.S.) \_\_, in our (*location of event*).

### **Viscount(ess)**

*(This version is for the person who reigned over a principality by right of arms)*

All Gentles and Nobles know by these presents that we (*name of Sovereign*), King (*Queen*) by right of arms of the Middle Kingdom, and (*name of Consort*), our Queen (*King*), right mindful of the valiant efforts in battle and wisdom in council given by (*name of recipient*) and in recognition of *his/her* service to our kingdom as Prince(ss) of (*name of Principality*), are most pleased to acknowledge *him/her* as Viscount (*ess*). And though a Viscount (*ess*) holds no authority or power to command, yet is *he/she* to be granted such honor and respect as befits a person of great worth and courtesy. *He/she* shall be known by *his/her* coronet of silver, embattled, and *his/her* counsel shall be weighed as befits one who has borne the

coronet of a Principality within the Middle Kingdom. Done by our hands this \_\_ day of \_\_, Anno Societatis (A.S.) \_\_, in our *(location of event)*.

### **Viscount(ess)**

*(This version is for the consort)*

All Gentles and Nobles know by these presents that we *(name of Sovereign)*, King *(Queen)* by right of arms of the Middle Kingdom, and *(name of Consort)*, our Queen *(King)*, right mindful of the grace and nobility which *(name of recipient)* lent to the Coronet of *(name of Principality)*, and knowing full well the toil and patience with which she/he has served the Kingdom, are pleased to acknowledge *her/him* Viscount *(ess)*. And though a Viscount *(ess)* holds no authority or power to command, yet is *he/she* to be granted such honor and respect as befits a person of great worth and courtesy. *She/he* shall be known by *her/his* coronet of silver, embattled, and *her/his* counsel shall be weighed as befits one who has borne the coronet of a Principality of the Middle Kingdom. Done by our hands this \_\_ day of \_\_, Anno Societatis (A.S.) \_\_, in our *(location of event)*.

### **Count(ess)**

*(This version is for the person who served as the Sovereign.)*

All Gentles and Nobles know by these presents that we *(name of Sovereign)*, King *(Queen)* by right of arms of the Middle Kingdom, and *(name of Consort)*, our Queen *(King)*, in rightful succession to *(name of previous Sovereign)* and *(name of previous Consort)*, and mindful of the excellent manner in which *(name of recipient)* has served the Middle Kingdom, giving of *his/her* valiant efforts in battle and of *his/her* wisdom in council, are most pleased to acknowledge *him/her* as Count *(ess)*. *He/she* shall be known by *his/her* coronet of gold, embattled, and *his/her* counsel shall be weighed as befits one who has borne the crown of the Middle Kingdom. Done by our hands this \_\_

day of \_\_, Anno Societatis (A.S.) \_\_, in our *(location of event)*.

### **Countess (Count)**

*(This version is for the person who served as the Consort.)*

All Gentles and Nobles know by these presents that we *(name of Sovereign)*, King *(Queen)* by right of arms of the Middle Kingdom, and *(name of Consort)*, our Queen *(King)*, in rightful succession to *(name of previous Sovereign)* and *(name of previous Consort)*, and mindful of the grace and nobility which *(name of recipient)* lent to the Crown of the Middle Kingdom, and knowing full well the toil and patience with which *she/he* has served the Kingdom, are pleased to acknowledge *her/him* Countess *(Count)*. And though a *Countess (Count)* holds no authority or power to command, yet is *he/she* to be granted such honor and respect as befits a person of great worth and courtesy. *She/he* shall be known by *her/his* coronet of gold, embattled, and *her/his* counsel shall be weighed as befits one who has borne the crown of the Middle Kingdom. Done by our hands this \_\_ day of \_\_, Anno Societatis or (A.S.) \_\_, in our *(location of event)*.

### **Duke (Duchess)**

*(This version is for the person who served as the Sovereign.)*

All Gentles and Nobles know by these presents that we *(name of Sovereign)*, King *(Queen)* by right of arms of the Middle Kingdom, and *(name of Consort)*, our Queen *(King)*, in rightful succession to *(name of previous Sovereign)* and *(name of previous Consort)*, and mindful of the excellent manner in which *(name of recipient)* has served the Crown of the Middle Kingdom, giving of *his/her* valiant efforts in battle and of *his/her* wisdom in council and court, are most pleased to acknowledge *him/her* as Duke *(Duchess)*.

And though a Duke (*Duchess*) holds no authority or power to command, yet is *he/she* to be granted such honor and respect as befits a person of great worth and courtesy. *He/she* shall be known by *his/her* coronet of gold, embellished with strawberry leaves, and *his/her* counsel shall be weighed as befits one who has twice borne the crown of the Middle Kingdom. Done by our hands this \_\_ day of \_\_, Anno Societatis (A.S.) \_\_, in our (*location of event*).

### **Duchess (*Duke*)**

*(This version is for the person who served as the Consort.)*

All Gentles and Nobles know by these presents that we (*name of Sovereign*), King (*Queen*) by right of arms of the Middle Kingdom, and (*name of Consort*), our Queen (*King*), in rightful succession to (*name of previous Sovereign*) and (*name of previous Consort*), and mindful of the excellent manner in which (*name of recipient*) has served the Crown of the Middle Kingdom, giving of *her/his* wisdom in council and court, are most pleased to acknowledge *her/him* as Duchess (*Duke*). And though a Duchess (*Duke*) holds no authority or power to command, yet is *she/he* to be granted such honor and respect as befits a person of great worth and courtesy. *She/he* shall be known by *his/her* coronet of gold, embellished with strawberry leaves, and *her/his* counsel shall be weighed as befits one who has twice borne the crown of the Middle Kingdom. Done by our hands this \_\_ day of \_\_, Anno Societatis (A.S.) \_\_, in our (*location of event*).

## Chapter Four

# Text Alternatives

### **S**croll wording components

Most scrolls are composed of the same set of key phrases arranged in different ways. Each of the phrases has a variety of equivalent versions. Many of these are listed in this section. Phrases may be interchanged to suit your style, your favorite capital letter, the recipient's persona, or the amount of space required.

Medieval scrolls also followed a set pattern. They were composed of several parts which varied in content and degree of usage according to the rank of the grantor, the chancery in which they were produced, and the time period. Many of these parts are present in the typical Midrealm scroll. Such a scroll may be outlined as follows:

- 1) **Address** (Opening) (Be it known that...)
- 2) **Intitulation** (who it is from) (. . .we, *(name)*, King of the Middle Kingdom and *(name)* our Queen...)
- 3) **Notification and Exposition** (Why it is being given) (...having heard much praise of *(name)*, especially in..)
- 4) **Disposition** (What we are giving to whom) (...are pleased to bestow...)
- 5) **Corroboration and date** (When and where) (Done by our hand...)

The following guidelines can be used to create a variety of scroll wordings. As long as the basic pattern is followed, you can exercise your creativity. If you think of a new or unusual variant, it might be wise to check it out with the Signet.

### **Basic Wording**

Be it known that we, *(name)*, King of the Middle Kingdom, and *(name)* our Queen,

having heard of the *(reason for award)* wish to make unto *(name of recipient)* an *(type of award or order)*. We bestow upon *him/her* *(rights and heraldic description of arms or badge)*. Done this *(date)* in our *(place)*.

### **Address:**

All gentles and nobles know that we...

All nobility, know by these presents that we...

All shall know that we...

Be it known unto all that we...

Come forward all and know that we...

Do ye all hear and tell others that we...

Due commendations and greetings from...

For as much as we...

Greetings unto all to whom these presents come, know that we...

Hear ye all of these presents that we...

It shall be known to all that we...

Know ye all to whom these presents come that we...

Know that we...

Let it be known throughout our realm that we...

May it be known to all that we..

Now let it be known to all that we...

One and all shall know that we...

Pray let all know that we...

Proclaim to all gentles and nobles that we...

Proclaim to all unto whom these presents come that we..

Proclaim unto all that we...

Salutations to all to whom these presents come and know that we...

See, read, hear, and understand by these presents that we...

To all and singular unto whom these presents may come . . .

Unto all to whom these presents come, know that we...

Verily we...

Whereas we...

**Intitulation:**

...we, (*name of King and name of Queen*), King and Queen of the Middle Kingdom,...

...we, (*name of King and name of Queen*), Rex et Regina Mediterranei,.

...we, (*name of King and name of Queen*), King and Queen of the Midrealm,

...we, (*name of King and name of Queen*), King and Queen of these Middle Lands,...

...we, (*name of King and name of Queen*), King and Queen of the Laurel Kingdom of the Middle,...

...we, (*name of King*), King by right of arms of the Middle Kingdom, and (*name of Queen*) our Queen,...

...we, (*name of King*) King by right of arms of the Middle Kingdom, and (*name of Queen*), our Queen of Love and Beauty,...

...we, (*name of King*), King by right of arms of the Middle Kingdom, and (*name of Queen*), by Grace and Courtesy Queen of the Middle Kingdom,...

**Notification and Exposition**

This is made of two parts. The lead phrase (examples below) is accompanied by the reason for the award which will be given.

...finding ourselves in receipt of many good reports of...

...having heard much good of (*name of recipient*), especially for...

...having given greatly and unstintingly of *his/her* skills and energy . . .

...having observed the many good works and labors of...

...having weighed well the works and labors of...

...right mindful of the high esteem in which (*name of recipient*) is held by our Kingdom and ourselves...

...who has labored long and hard in our lands...

...who has made *him/herself* worthy of advancement by ...

...having given greatly of time and labor...

**Disposition:**

The following are worded for an Award of Arms but may be modified to other texts. Mention should be made of the elevation in rank within this part of the text.

...are minded to make unto (*name of recipient*) an Award of Arms with all rank and titles thereto appertaining, in recognition of *his/her* service to the Middle Kingdom, specifically...

...in recognition of the achievements of (*name of recipient*) we do award *him/her* the sole right and title to the following Arms...

...are moved to advance and commend (*name of recipient*) with the Award of these Arms...

...and wishing to show our appreciation of such service do we award *him/her* the sole and exclusive right to bear the Arms of...

**Blazon**

Follow with the heraldic description of the arms (called the *blazon*) and then something based on the following:

... as Arms within the Society, without let or hindrance from any person, and all rights and responsibilities conveyed by *his/her* elevation to this rank from this day onward.

...to be borne by *him/her* throughout the Known World.

...to be borne and displayed by *Lord/Lady (recipient's name)* and none other in all the lands of the Known World.

**Corroboration and Date**

The corroboration consists of a phrase confirming that the award has been given by the King and Queen, with the addition of the date of presentation and the location of the event where the presentation took place. It is optional to use the name of the event. The phrase used in corroboration consists of one of the openings listed below plus the date and place of the event. Please use the Society date as explained in Chapter Two.

For example:

Done this thirtieth day of February, Anno Societatis .LXVII., in our Barony of the Whatchamacallit, in testimony whereof we have set our hands and seal.

Given this...

Awarded by...

Given by our hands...

In witness whereof we have set our hands and seal...

By our hands...

Confirmed by our hands and seal....

Confirmed by our signs manual...

## Chapter Five

# Scroll Heraldry: Achievements and Badges

**T**his chapter is designed to help you create appropriate heraldic displays on your scroll. Unfortunately, much of the heraldic display practiced by the Society comes from a small portion of the SCA period. Also, heraldic displays were adopted at different times in different places, so if you really want to be accurate, do some research.

Achievements are comprised of the various heraldic elements which make up the heraldic display. They include the shield, helm, mantling or cloak, crest, torse or coronet, cloak, livery, compartment, supporters, motto, and various badges.

The heraldic emblems may be anything from badges displayed on objects such as medallions to symbols like hats and garters. Some parts are now formalized in the Middle Kingdom, while others will require you to determine their best usage.

Basic achievements begin to be used in the early-to-mid 14th century.

**Livery.** The colors used in some elements of the achievement are known as the livery tinctures. Specifically, they are the two prominent tinctures of the arms, one being usually a heraldic *color* and the other being a heraldic *metal*. They are selected from the field and primary charge of the arms. Note: when a fur is one of the livery tinctures the base tincture of the fur may be used.

The following is a generalized overview of the introduction of various heraldic achievements to help you determine which shield shapes, helms, crests, and supporters, etc. to use.

**Shield.** The beginning of the SCA period is 600 A.D. The common shields then were round or oval. However, our form of heraldry had not been invented yet. A possible solu-

tion to the problem of incorporating armorial display might be to illustrate the arms as a design in the general page decoration. This would be illustrated in the style of the times. What you sacrifice in pure heraldry you make up for in maintaining a period appearance. Another alternative is to place the design on the round format, but design it in an early period decorative style without pretending it is on a shield.

In the early Gothic era the shield became more teardrop-shaped like the Norman kite shield. This is when heraldry as we think of it really began. In the later 1100's we begin to see crests as well. By the 1200's we see knights bearing hereditary arms on shields, and in some parts of Europe, like Spain and Germany, we see heraldic surcoats and crests.

Also, by the end of the thirteenth century much of our heraldic system was in place. Shields had become more like the familiar "heater" shape and other parts of the achievement were developing.

**Torse.** The torse appeared by the middle of the 14th century. It was a roll of fabric consisting of twists of the two livery tinctures. It encircled the helm at forehead level. It was never used without a crest.

**Mantling.** Mantling is a piece of fabric which covers the top, rear sides, and rear of the helm. It may issue from the wreath of the torse, in which case the top of the helm is not seen due to the crest. Mantling is usually lined in the metal tincture of the livery, and the outside is depicted in the livery color.

The edges may be decoratively dagged and artistically turned to show both the inside and outside tinctures. Mantling was in use by 1300 and by the early 15th century



its depiction had become artistically elaborate. See your source books for models.

**Crests.** Crests appeared by the late 12th century. They were usually quite simple. They were often abstract forms such as colored fans, triangles, horns, or otherwise derived from the arms of the bearer. Often the color would reflect the color of the field of the shield. As crests developed through our period they became more sophisticated, so look into source books for ideas corresponding to the period of art in which you are working.

**Cloaks.** The cloak may be used instead of a helm. It is appropriate for ladies and ecclesiastical persons. The armorial style cloak is a circular pattern cloak which is usually lined with the metal or metal-based fur tincture of the arms. The sides of the cloak sweep around forward to display half of the arms on each side. Remember that since the arms are displayed on the outside of the cloak, which is essentially facing away from you, left side of the arms will appear on the right side!

The other form of cloak is the livery cloak. It uses the livery tinctures the same way as the mantle. It may also have decorative edges.

**Supporters.** A single supporter was used mostly in the Gothic heraldic era before about 1450. After 1450 the use of two supporters is more common. The supporters are usually the full figure of a person or creature and they hold up the shield. When two are used they are usually the same on both sides, except in some cases of royalty and nobility.

**Motto.** The motto may be added to your scroll if you know the preferred motto of the recipient. Please do not invent one as a gift! It is depicted on an object called a motto scroll, which is a wavy band, usually white or parchment colored, containing the text. Mottos were used starting around 1350. They are usually placed below the arms or arcing above the shield and crest. Sometimes the motto scroll was used as a place for the supporters to stand.

## Who can have what

In the Middle Kingdom, anyone with a registered device is entitled to display that device with a steel helm, torse, personal crest, and mantling with the helm either displayed face-on or in profile.

Someone with an Award of Arms may add one supporter and a compartment for it to stand upon. If the person has an award or order, the badge may be displayed on the supporter, e.g. from a ribbon around its neck.

Nobility (including all Barons, Baronesses, holders of Grants of Arms, Peers, and Great Officers of State) are entitled to a second supporter. Great Officers of State, Holders of Grants of Arms by virtue of past service to the Middle Kingdom as Great Officers of State, and Royal Peers of the Middle Kingdom may have a dragon as one of their supporters. No one else may use a dragon supporter in the Middle Kingdom.

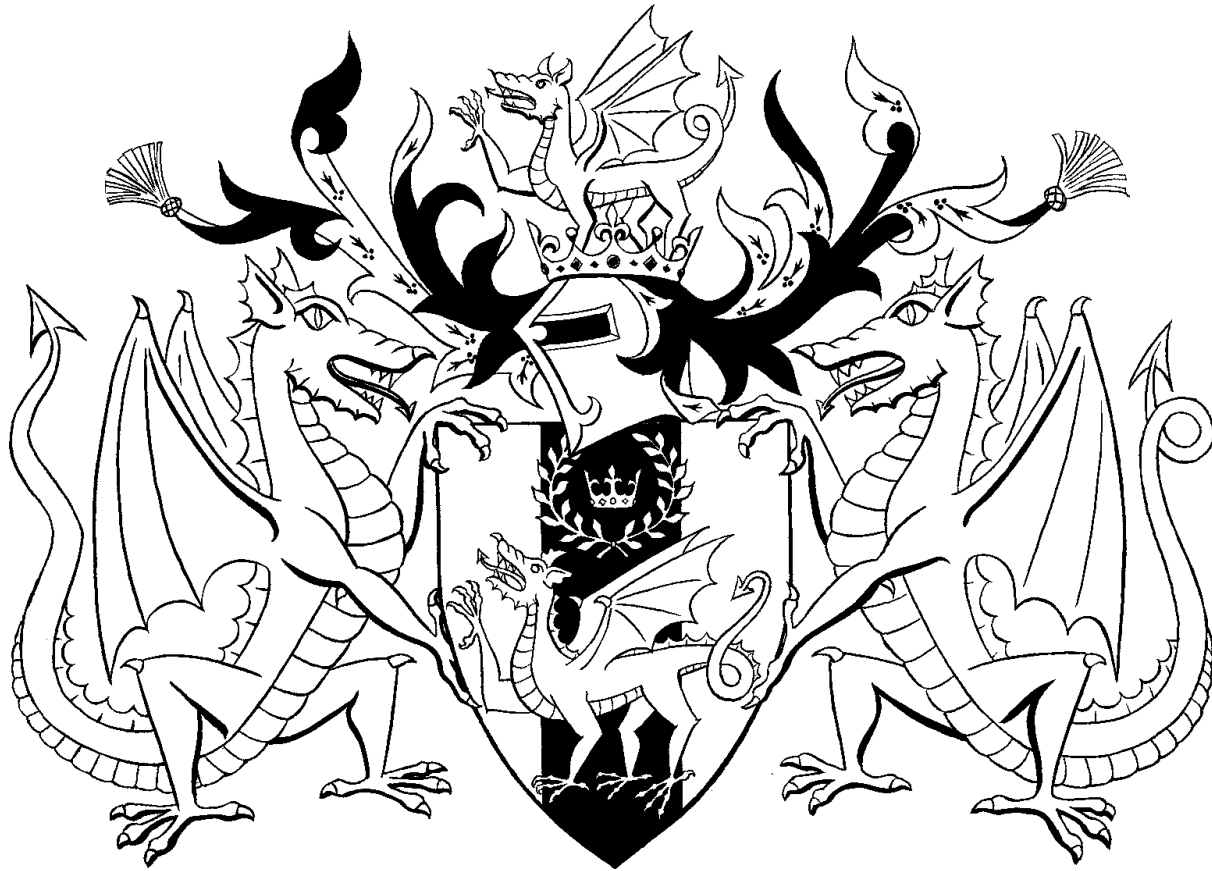
All Greater Nobility (i.e., Dukes, Duchesses, Counts, Countesses, Viscounts, Viscountesses and Peers) may ornament their helms with gold and surround their arms with the appropriate symbols of their orders (see below: Badges of Awards and Orders). The Princes and Princesses of a Principality may use silver helms ornamented with gold.

The crest of a Dragon is reserved for holders of Grants of Arms. The Dragon as a supporter is restricted as described above.

A landed Baron or Baroness may display *his/her* Baronial Arms on a banner carried by a supporter.

The torse and mantling are usually done in the livery colors (the two main tinctures, color and metal, on the arms); however, crimson mantling lined with ermine spots is reserved for the Royal Family.

If you desire, you may include on the scroll the Arms and even the Achievements of the Middle Kingdom. Just make sure they



*The Arms of the Middle Kingdom, shown in near complete achievement*

are appropriate to the period you are emulating and that they are associated with the Royalty in their representation on the scroll. They should not appear to be the arms being given to the recipient.

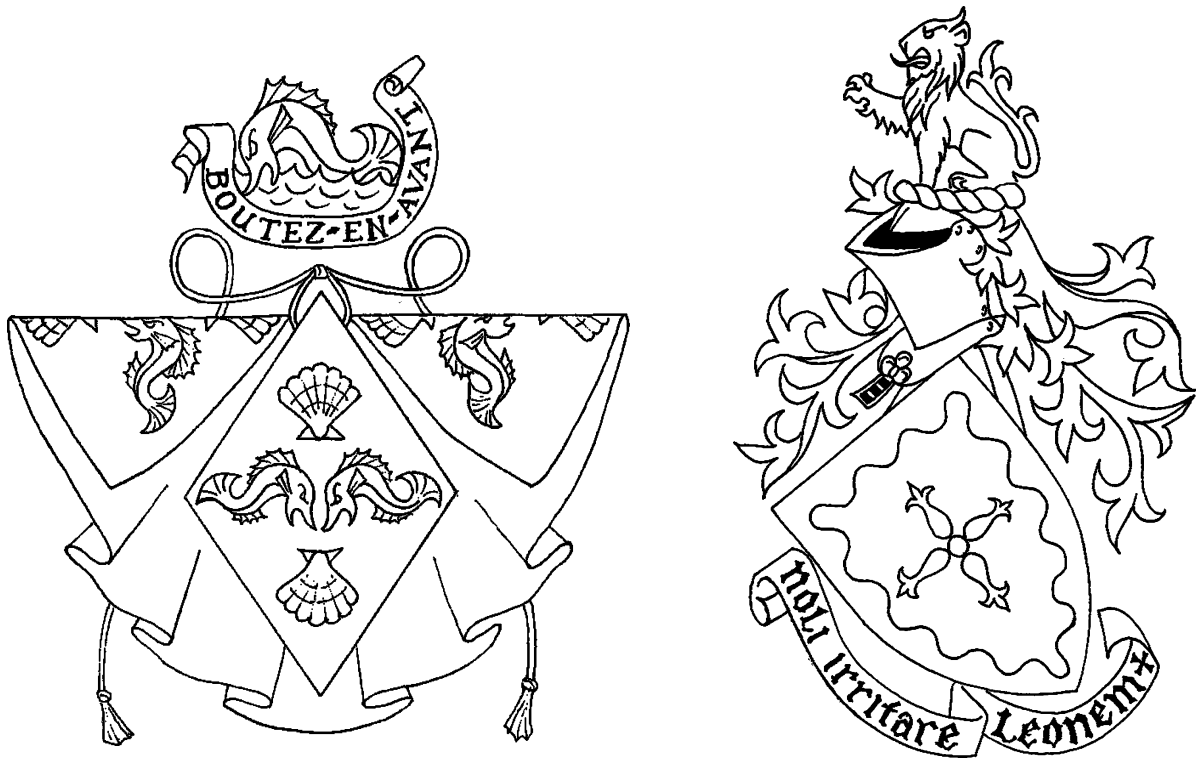
The Arms of the Middle Kingdom are a white (or silver) field with a wide red vertical stripe (pale) vertically centered on the shield. On the top half a green laurel wreath surrounds a golden ancient crown. Such a crown is a circlet of trefoil-like projections or fleurs-de-lis set upon a plain rim.

(This is not to be confused with the *eastern crown*, also known as an *ancient crown* in

Scotland, which has three greater points and two lesser points. This mistake has been often made in the past.)

On the bottom half is a green Welsh style dragon (passant).

The helm should be golden and should have a crest consisting of an ancient crown and a dragon passant vert (as on the arms) standing on top. Mantling may come out from under the crown and should be red lined with black ermine spots on white. The supporter on each side will be a rampant green dragon, and they may stand on a compartment (a patch of ground).



### **Basic Achievements**

For scrolls representing documents from the heraldic era, it is nice to have at least a shield, either straight or tilted, with a helmet on top. Alternatively, if the recipient is female, you may display her arms on either shield or lozenge.

A helm is not used with a lozenge, but a nice way to fill the space behind it is to use an armorial cloak. The cloak may have the front edges wrap around to make visible the

arms of the recipient decorating its outer surface.

### *Sample Achievements*

If the recipient is entitled, the arms whether on a shield or lozenge, may have a coronet (or crown) suspended in mid-air above the center. However, if a helm is used, the coronet (crown) should be placed on the helm. For persons not entitled to wear coronets or crowns (most people), a torse and mantling should be used instead.

# Some Helms and Shields used in Heraldic Art

by *Jeanne-Marie Quevedo and John Vernier*

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**T**

he helm and shield figures on the next several pages are drawn in proportion and in scale to each other so as to provide the scribe with mix-and-match components in scale. Shields may be presented as hanging from the helms, either invisibly or with straps. Shields may also be presented as a horizontal base for the helm to sit upon. Fine lines indicate where a shield might be in relation to the helm.

## What goes with what

Before 1300, you might find a crest “growing” directly out of the top of the helm with

neither torse nor mantle. Or you might find just a coronet or a cap of maintenance without mantling.

By 1350, the crest is always accompanied by both the mantle and a torse or its replacements. (The torse is of the same cloth as the mantle.) The replacements reflect higher ranks than the “base-model” torse, being perhaps a cap of maintenance (*chapeau*), a crown or a coronet.

On the helm figures, faint lines indicate where the mantling, torse (or coronet) would fit.

## Helm Figures

*Notes on figures on opposite page (45).*

### 1-5 GREAT HELMS, c. 1300-1400

1) c. 1300. No torse or mantling were used. Cords with tassels come from within the helm.

2 & 3) c. 1300. These great helms are covered by a colored quilted hood which is seen under the mantling.

4 & 5) c. 1375. A neck protection which is attached by a visible strap has been added to Fig. 5. N.B.: This style of great helm was depicted either facing to the left or facing the viewer. It is most frequently found facing left.

### 6-9 FROG-FACE JOUSTING HELMS, c. 1400-1540

6) c. 1400. This figure is heavily stylized to deal with the difficulties encountered in accurately depicting this type of helm. This type of stylized depiction was most frequent but

may be ugly to the modern eye.

7) c. 1400. More realistic depiction of Fig. 6. This figure also illustrates an attached neck piece that displays a front bolt or ring, called a charnel. Two other types of charnel are shown, but the forms vary and can be quite decorative.

8) c. 1400. A squared variation.

9) c. 1500. High crowned Italian Frog faced helm.

### 10-13 CLOSED HELMS, c. 1500-1600

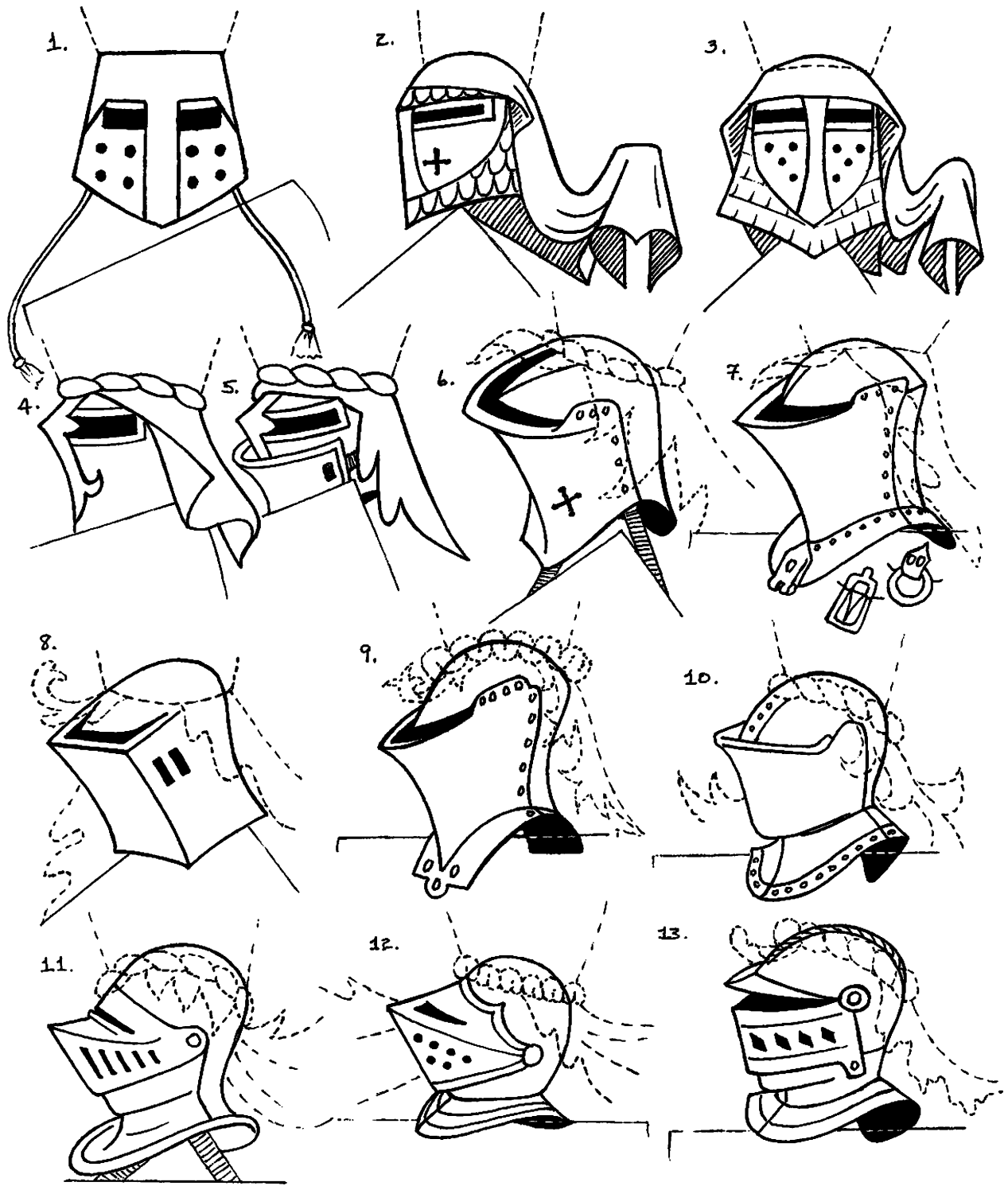
*Closed helms are always depicted facing left.*

10) c. 1530. Pierced work is optionally depicted on this very plain helm, although in reality the holes would be on the dexter side.

11) c. 1500. Closed helm with visor.

12) c. 1595. Closed helm with visor.

13) c. 1575-1600. Burgonet.



## SHIELDS

*On the shield figures (opposite page), the “x” markings are center points for drawing shield edge arcs.*

**A. “KITE” shield, c. 1120-1220.** This shape varied in width (the widest example is shown), in the straightness or curvature of the sides, or in the point or curve of the bottom tip. In the 13th century, styles were changing to a straighter top of the shield. A kite might have the top cut off in a straight line (indicated on the figure), resulting in a “turnip” shape that was to remain popular until 1475. This shape was found throughout Europe.

**B. Classic “heater” shield, c. 13th century.** A shape evolved from the kite shield. This shape was found throughout Europe. A thinner form of it was found in Germany. (The “X” location point for the compass is found above shield C.)

**C. Classic “heater” shield, c. 1250-1350.** Notice that the sides run parallel more than the previous. This shape was found throughout Europe.

**D. Classic “heater” shield, c. 1350-1500.** Notice that the sides run parallel more than half the length of the shield. This shape was found throughout Europe.

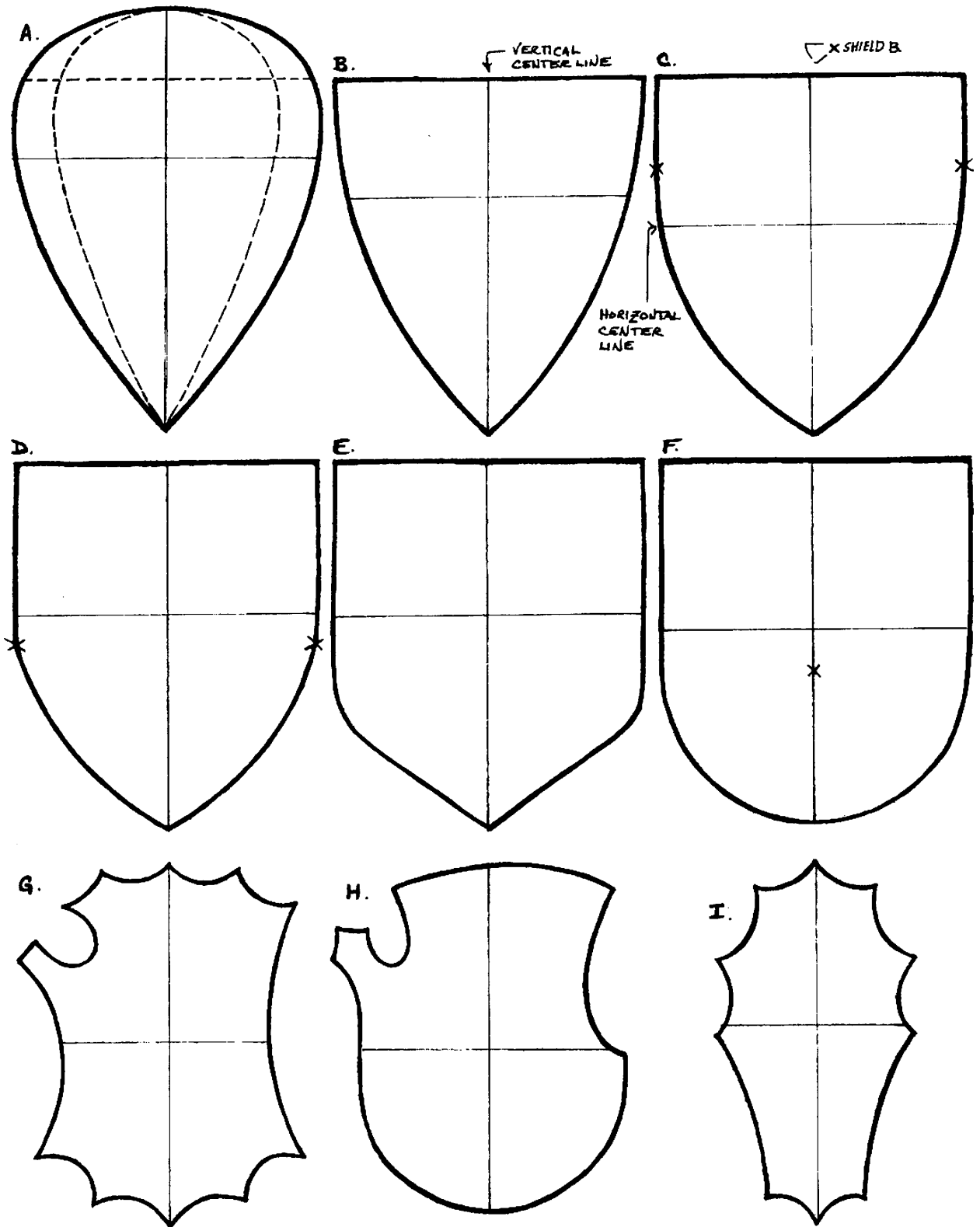
**E. Straight-edge Heater Shield, c.1450-1600.** Notice that the sides run parallel most of the shield. This shape was found throughout Europe.

**F. Half round shield, c. 12th century to 1600.** This shape was sometimes called the “Spanish shield” since it was used most frequently in Spain. Its earliest Spanish form dates from the 12th c. and was thinner, much like the “kite.” That thin shape widened slightly by the 13th century, and was then found in both Spain and Italy. The width shown in the figure has been known in Spain since the 15th c. and remained popular well past 1600. The width shown has also been extremely popular in Germany since the 15th century. Notice the shape is constructed of a rough square with a semi-circle drawn at the bottom.

**G. Jousting shield, c. 1450-1600.** This notched shield shape was very popular in England. It was also found, with slight variation, in Germany in the 15th century. An un-notched (i.e., symmetrical) version of this shield was used in England in the 16th century.

**H. Jousting shield, 14th-15th centuries.** This shape was particularly popular in Italy. A straight-sided version (top and bottom remain curved) was also popular in Italy in the 14th century.

**I. Jousting shield, 16th century.** This shape is uniquely Italian. The basic outline resembles a piece of head armor for a horse called a chamfron. Slight variations known in period were created by a reposition of the scalloping along the sides, but can result in less available area to display charges.



## Badges of Awards and Orders

The following badges should be prominent on a scroll for which they represent the actual award being given. You may be creative working them into your design. If you are illustrating the full achievement for someone and wish to add the badges of their other lesser Orders and Awards, you may display them as medallions dependent from ribbons hung around the neck of the supporter, or on a banner held by the supporter, etc.

When orders of Peerage are to be included, their emblems may surround the shield like a wreath. In the SCA these are as follows:

For the Order of Knighthood, a golden chain encircling the arms.

For the Mastery of Arms, a white baldric (after the fashion of a Scottish strap and buckle) encircling the arms.

For the Order of the Laurel, a wreath of laurel branches encircling the arms. Altern-

tively, a companion of the Laurel may replace the torse on the helm with a laurel wreath.

For the Order of the Pelican, a wreath of feathers charged with drops of blood encircling the arms.

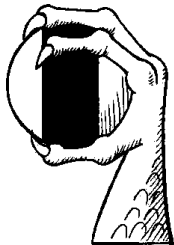
For the Order of the Rose who have received Letters Patent, a chaplet (branch with leaves) with white (or silver) and/or encircling the arms.

The following badges for the Awards and Orders are presented in different ways in the online and hardcopy editions of this book. Jeanne-Marie Quevedo's original drawings for the Second Edition have been supplemented in the Third by lower resolution images created by William J. Michalski which were intended for the Middle Kingdom website. I have not expanded their resolution. Also, I have colored the Second Edition illustrations for the online version.



### ROYAL VANGUARD:

(Fieldless) A demi-dragon rampant argent. (The front half of a white or silver dragon with wings, oriented as if standing on the missing back legs.)



### ORDER OF THE ROSE:

(Fieldless) A wreath of white or red roses.

### AWARD OF THE DRAGON'S TREASURE:

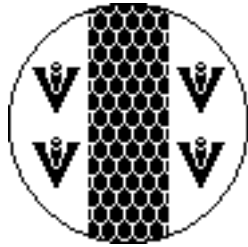
(Fieldless) A dragon's gamb coupé erect maintaining a roundel argent charged with a pale gules. (The right inside view of the forearm and claw of a dragon holding a disk with a red stripe dividing the disk in 3 equal parts.)



### AWARD OF THE GROVE:

Per pale Or and argent, a hurst purple. (Three purple trees on a field divided vertically with yellow on the left and white on the right or with gold on the left and silver or white on the right.)

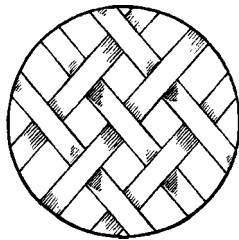


**AWARD OF THE DRAGON'S FLIGHT:**

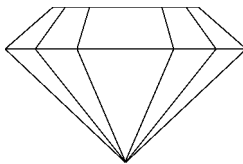
Argent, a pale vert scaly argent between four pheons vert. (On a silver or white field, a green stripe with lines (which match the field) making scales, between two pairs of arrowheads pointing down.)

**AWARD OF THE DRAGON'S TEETH:**

Argent, on a dance between two broken dragon's teeth vert, another argent. (A green zigzag line with three points up and two points down on a white or silver background. Three fangs arranged in a stack where the top and bottom fangs are green and the one on the zigzag matches the background.)

**AWARD OF THE PURPLE FRETTY:**

Or fretty purple. (An interlace of purple diagonal lines on a yellow or gold background.)

**AWARD OF THE SAPPHIRE:**

(Fieldless) A gemstone azure.

**ORDER OF THE WHITE CHAMFRON:**

(Fieldless) A chamfron argent.

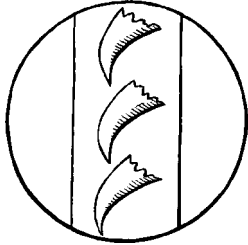
**ORDER OF THE CAVENDISH KNOT:**

(Fieldless) Four Cavendish knots conjoined in cross, vert. (A green cross with each end interlaced with a green figure eight.)



**ORDER OF THE DRAGON'S BARB:**

(Fieldless) A dragon's tail palewise, barb to chief, within and issuant from an annulet vert, scaly argent. (A green tail ending in a arrowhead style barb. The lines making the scales are silver or white.)



**ORDER OF THE DRAGON'S TOOTH:**

Or, on a pale vert three fangs palewise Or. (A gold or yellow field with three golden or yellow fangs on top of a green stripe.)



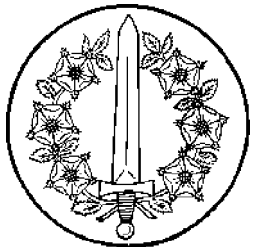
**ORDER OF THE RED COMPANY:**

Gules, two flanged maces in saltire argent. (A red field with two silver or white flanged maces forming an X.)



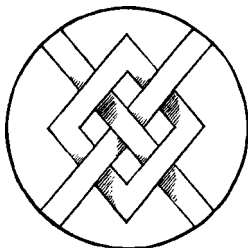
**AWARD OF THE KING'S CHALICE:**

(Fieldless) A chalice sable. (A black chalice.)



**AWARD OF THE DOE'S GRACE:**

Azure, a sword proper enfiled of a wreath of flowers argent, slipped and leaved Or. (A blue field with a realistic sword passing through a wreath of white or silver flowers with golden or yellow leaves and stem.)

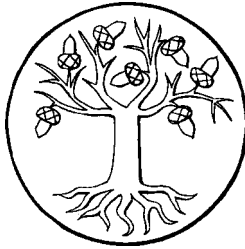


**AWARD OF THE PURPLE FRET:**

Or, a fret purple. (On a gold or yellow field, an interlaced X and hollow diamond.)

**ORDER OF THE WILLOW:**

Purpure, a willow tree eradicated Or. (A purple field with a golden willow tree that displays all of its roots.)

**ORDER OF THE SILVER OAK:**

Purpure, an oak tree blasted and eradicated argent fructed Or. (A purple field with a silver oak tree that has no leaves, displays all roots, and has a few large golden acorns showing.)

**ORDER OF THE WHITE LANCE:**

(Fieldless) A lance argent. (A silver or white lance standing point upwards.)

**ORDER OF THE GREENWOOD COMPANY:**

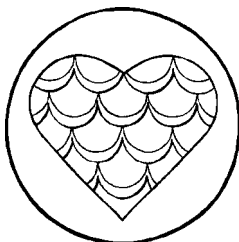
(Fieldless) Upon a hurst of pine trees vert, a pheon inverted Or. (A golden or yellow arrowhead pointing up in front of three green pine trees.)

**ORDER OF THE BRONZE RING:**

Gules, two rapiers in saltire argent within an annulet Or. (A pair of silver or white rapier style swords crossed inside a golden or yellow ring, all on a red field.)

**ORDER OF THE GOLD MACE:**

*(Badge pending)*

**ORDER OF THE DRAGON'S HEART:**

Argent, a heart vert scaly argent. (A green heart with silver or white lines making the scales on a silver or white field.)



**ORDER OF THE LAUREL:**

(Fieldless) A Laurel wreath vert. A green laurel wreath, but members often display it on a gold or yellow field.



**ORDER OF THE PELICAN:**

(Fieldless, however green, blue or purple are typical choices for background)

A pelican statant and vulning herself argent, beaked and membered or. (A white Pelican with gold or yellow beak and legs standing and biting her breast. Usually a few small drops of blood are added at the wound.)

*OR*



OR

A Pelican in her Piety. (The same Pelican in a nest with three young feeding from the blood.)

**ORDER OF CHIVALRY**

(Fieldless)

Masters Of Arms: A white baldric.

Knights: A white belt and/or a gold or yellow chain.

## Chapter Six

# What You Need To Know

## To Make Award Scrolls For The Middle Kingdom

### **W**hy scrolls are made

The Middle Kingdom goes beyond many SCA Kingdoms in the elaborate quality of its award scrolls. We consider them to be a special “thank you” for recognition of services and skills. The actual legal elevation is the announcement of the award in Court and its publication in the Kingdom newsletter. The scroll is not required to make the award legal. It is an extra bonus, a gift given by the Crown. By custom, we try hard to provide each and every recipient with a handmade scroll.

Making a scroll for the Kingdom not only helps to give recognition to someone, it gives you an opportunity to show off your own skills in the arts. In addition, you are helping revive an ancient art, and that is one of the purposes of the SCA.

Foremost, you are a volunteer, and the Kingdom appreciates that fact. Please do not feel pressured to put more into a scroll than the minimum requested below. The Kingdom is very grateful for whatever efforts you choose to donate.

Sometimes you may be approached by a recipient who has already been given an original handmade scroll. They may want to commission you to make a new one because either the old one was damaged *after* receipt or the person just wants a prettier one.

Since the Kingdom already gave them an original, you may feel free to take such commissions and charge the recipient as you would for any other piece of commissioned artwork. The Signet will be happy to use the Kingdom Seal on such replacements, but the burden of obtaining signatures rests between you and your patron.

### Where You fit into the system.

The person responsible for providing scrolls for awards is a Kingdom Lesser Officer of State known as the Kingdom Signet. The Kingdom Signet is a deputy of the Dragon Herald and works directly with the Crown. The Kingdom Signet has Regional Deputies who know the scribes in their areas better than the Kingdom officer usually can. Some local groups may also have a Signet who is either a deputy of the Kingdom Signet or an assistant to the Regional Deputy. Any of these people may contact you with a request to do a scroll. If you are not yet in communication with the Signet Office, you should contact the Kingdom Signet or a Deputy to let them know you would like to help. The Kingdom Signet may be found listed in the Pale.

One of the most important things to remember is that when you are given an assignment by one of these people you have become privy to a **STATE SECRET**. The identity of the recipient **MUST** be kept secret from any and all who have not been given permission by Their Majesties. Failure to keep this secret is cause for not trusting you in the future, and you may end up doing backlog scrolls only. (Actually, we always need help on backlog.)

This means don't show your friends the scroll unless you first cover the name and anything else which might identify the recipient.

Also, no matter how strong the temptation, avoid trying to make sure the recipient will be at court that night. This often tips them off.

If they don't show up, then they don't

show up. Nor should you indicate to friends that they should show up to see the award made if you think they might figure out who is getting something.

### **Alternative languages.**

If you write a scroll in a script that is difficult for a herald to read, please write a transcription and/or translation on the back or on a separate sheet of paper.

If you are interested in making a scroll using a language other than modern English, and you can translate the text accurately, feel free to do so. If you do translate a scroll, please include a modern English version for the court herald to read. The Signet Office has several scroll texts in different languages which are available for this purpose. Please contact either your local deputy or the Kingdom Signet for more information. If you do create an alternate language scroll, please consider contributing the text to this office for the use of other scribes.

### **Regency Courts.**

Sometimes the King and Queen may wish to delegate the distribution of awards to certain other individuals such as Their Highnesses or Baronial representatives. In this case, a Regency Court is held on behalf of Their Majesties, and awards are given in Their names. Such scrolls have special formats because they must reflect both that they are given by the Regent, and that they are coming from the Crown.

The Regency scroll text reads exactly the same as a regular scroll until you get to the corroboration and date at the bottom. Here the text follows a changed model:

“Done by the hands of our Regent(s), (names and titles of acting Regents) this (date) in our (place of event).”

At the bottom of the Regency scroll, below the signature spaces, indicate “Pro Rege” (for the King) and “Pro Regina” (for the Queen) and leave room above these

words for the Regents to sign. (Note the change from “Rex” to “Rege.”)

### **The Parts of a scroll**

The recipients will probably want to frame your work when they get home, so please use a paper which conforms to a standard photo frame size.

Unless you are working on something unique which specifically calls for an odd size, and you know the recipient won't mind buying a custom frame, it is best to keep things easy. Some common sizes are 5x7, 8x10, 8.5x11, 8x12, and 11x14 inches.

**Signature.** You should sign your work. It is best to put your name, address, and the medium with which you made the scroll on the back of the artwork. There are period ways to sign on the front, such as:

(*Your name*) DELINIAVIT: drawn by \_\_\_\_

(*Your name*) FACIEBAT: fashioned by \_\_\_\_

(*Your name*) ME FECIT: \_\_\_\_ made me

PER MANO (*Your name*): by the hand of \_\_\_\_

(*Your name*) PINXIT: painted by \_\_\_\_

(*Your name*) SCRIPSIT: written by \_\_\_\_

**Royal signatures.** The signatures of the King and Queen will be placed near the bottom of the scroll, so you must leave room for them, and also room somewhere on the scroll for the Kingdom Seal. The signature locations are often designated by the scribe with the words Rex for King and Regina for Queen in very small letters under where they sign. On most scrolls the King signs on the left and the Queen on the right. However, on the Doe's Grace, Willow, Silver Oak, and Rose the places are reversed. Do not make an ink line for them to sign on. It is not appropriate. Instead you may leave a very light pencil line if you feel it is necessary.

**Kingdom Seal.** There are two types of Kingdom seal. There is a metal stamping seal which works on wax. It either covers a ribbon or covers a tongue cut in the paper of the scroll itself. It is rarely used because the scribe needs to design the scroll specially to

accommodate this. The standard seal is a rubber stamp which is a disk 1.75 inches in diameter and is inked in either red or green. It is very difficult to place the ink seal into a designed circular space left by the scribe. Nevertheless the rubber ink seal may be incorporated into the scroll design, but it is usually given an open space at the bottom of the scroll.

**Text.** The important part of the scroll is the text. You may deviate from the models presented in this handbook if you understand which are the necessary and required elements. In **Chapter Four: Text Alternatives** you will find information on rewording scroll texts.

**Date.** The scroll must have the date of the Court written into the text to state when the award was made. SCA dates begin the year on May 1, and the month and day are the same as in the mundane system. The year is designated Anno Societatis, meaning "year of the Society," instead of A.D. (Anno Domini).

For example, the twenty-fifth year of the Society, A.S. XXV began May 1, 1990 A.D. (The A.S. letters with periods after them do not represent accurate medieval contractions. These would have shortened versions of the words and added horizontal lines above each denoting the contractions.)

**Decoration.** The amount of decoration on a scroll will depend on the type of scroll and level of award, and how much work you are willing to put into your creation. The minimum amount of decoration expected for lower level scrolls is a nicely illuminated first initial of the text. Middle level awards should have a bit more, such as more border design. Scrolls for Court Barony and above should be somewhat more involved, but even Peerage scrolls are not *required* to be intense reproductions of lavish manuscripts. On the other hand, it is the expectation.

You may have noticed that many scribes tend to go far beyond this minimum amount

of decoration. For some it is because they wish to excel in the art. For others it is a chance for recognition of their skills. Some scribes use it as a way to return to the Kingdom and their friends some of the pleasure they have received in the Society. There is no upper limit to the amount of decoration! We do, however, expect the scroll to be delivered complete at or before the event.

**Unfinished Scrolls.** If the dog gets hungry, or junior gets a little crayon-happy the day before the event, well, accidents happen. It will be acceptable to turn in a substitute scroll freshly calligraphed, have it awarded, and then take it back to finish it ASAP. If there is no way to at least provide the calligraphy by the due date, tell the Signet who made the assignment to you. We will be sure to bring a promissory to award in Court.

**Authenticity.** Scrolls handed out by the Middle Kingdom are usually based on the style of authentic documents or on illuminated manuscript pages from the middle ages. Contemporary fantasy style illustrations are sincerely frowned upon. This policy reflects the historical goals of the Society.

**Armorial Content.** If the scroll confers arms and the device of the recipient is known *and registered*, it is preferred that the scroll depict the arms. You may also wish to consider making the scroll layout resemble some kind of period heraldic document. In this case, it is good to include the arms and achievement done in a way appropriate to the style and period of your artwork.

We recommend that you try to familiarize yourself with the basics of heraldry so you will be able to draw the described heraldic charges in a heraldic style. The person assigning the scroll to you should supply you with the exact wording of the *blazon* (heraldic description) for the arms of the award recipient. If you do not completely understand the blazon, consult a senior herald (i.e., a Regional Herald or the Dragon Herald).

## Chapter Seven

# The Layout and Design of Scrolls

**T**here are several ways to lay out a scroll. Let us first discuss the physical parts of the scroll.

**Support.** This is the paper or parchment (animal skin) on which the scroll is written and painted.

**Ruling Lines and Margins.** These are the guidelines. They may be either erased after completion or retained, depending on what is appropriate to the period being emulated.

**Display Letters.** These are oversized, usually upper-case letters. They are colored or gilded and head the text.

**Versals.** From the late 11th century this refers to an alphabet of upper-case letters used as display letters or as emphasized capitals within text.

**Capital Initials.** Any upper-case letters emphasized by being enlarged and/or colored.

**Decorated Initials.** These are ornamented large upper-case letters beginning text or verses.

**Historiated Initials.** These are very large upper-case letters with narrative illustrations inside and around them.

**Inhabited Initials.** These are large upper-case letters decorated by the addition of animal or human figures.

**Foliated Initials.** These are large upper-case letters decorated by the addition of plant motifs in and around them.

**Miniature.** This refers to the main illustration panel.

**Signatures of Royalty. Heraldic Displays. Kingdom Seal.** These are all expected to be incorporated into the design. Badges of awards and orders may be incorporated at the discretion of the scribe. The recipient's arms should be included only if they are known to be registered. At the discretion of the scribe, the recipient's registered arms may be included on awards which do not confer arms.

\*

It is very important to leave ample open space between the edge of the page and your design. When you see medieval book illustrations running close to the page edge it is usually because the book rotted and was trimmed down.

A comfortable margin is at least 1/8 of the width of the scroll sheet, to be used on each side and the top. The bottom needs slightly more and should have room for the seal.

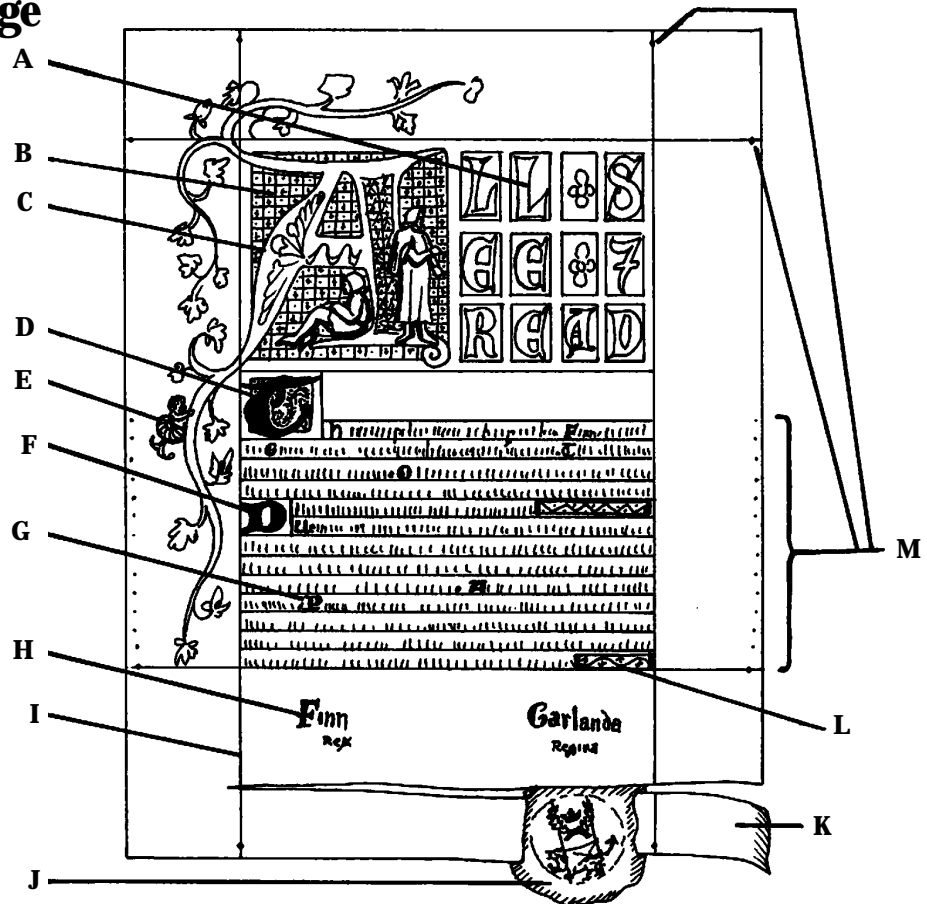
For example: for an 8 x 10" scroll the sides and top should have 1 to 1.25 inches of clear space between the paper's edge and the design. Remember, (especially for small scrolls) the frame will cover about 1/4 inch on each side.

Please make sure your calligraphy fits the style and period of the illumination. Below are several design layouts which suggest possible ways of using the above-mentioned elements on SCA award scrolls. You may feel free to experiment with ideas from source books.



## The Parts of a Page

- A. Display lettering
- B. Diaper pattern
- C. Inhabited Initial miniature
- D. Decorated Initial
- E. Grottesque
- F. Versal
- G. Text capital
- H. Royal signature
- I. Vertical column ruling
- J. Seal
- K. Tongue
- L. Line-ending decoration
- M. Pin pricking holes for ruling



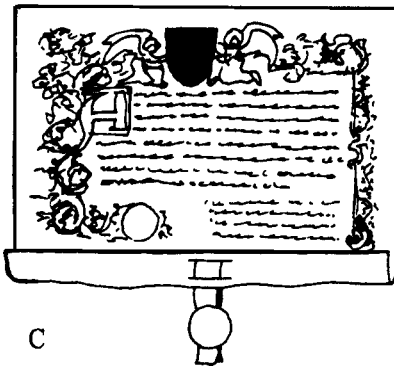
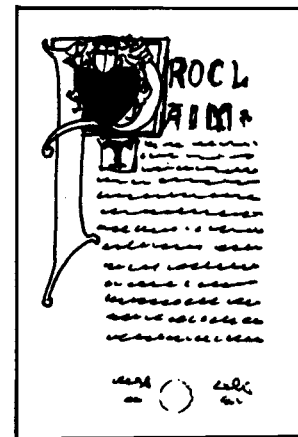
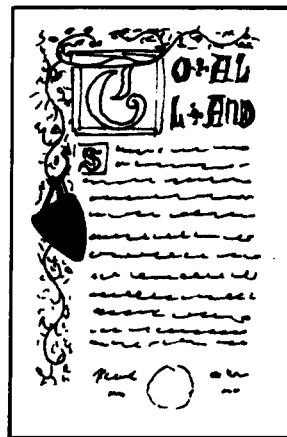
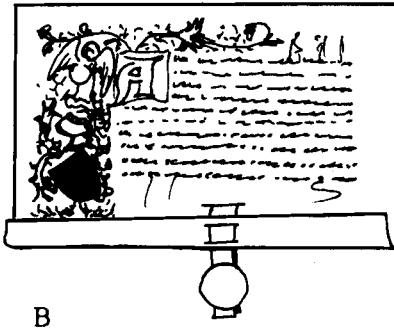
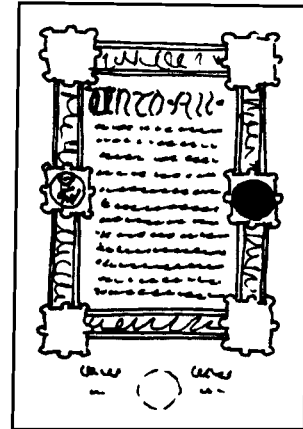
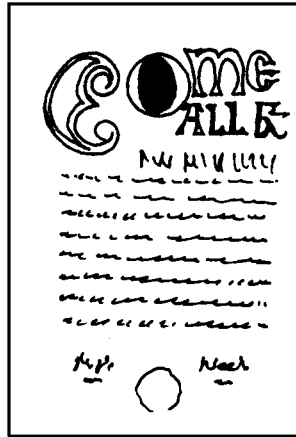
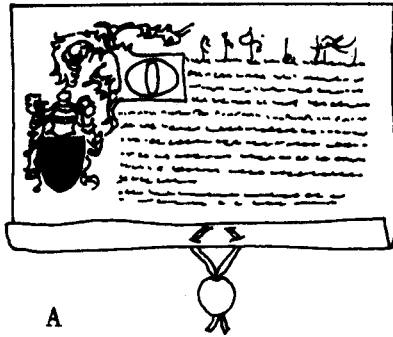
## Scroll Layouts

The scroll layout examples on the opposite page are meant to provide the scribe an idea of what to look for. A, B and C are three examples of actual 15th century Grants of Arms by Letters Patent. This is equivalent to our Peerage level. The remaining four are based on book page layouts from manuscripts. They were not originally meant to be award document designs. However, in the SCA we have adopted the practice of basing our scrolls on book pages because it is very convenient and attractive. Although inauthentic, the SCA practice is accepted because we have been doing it that way for so long.

- A. 1490 Patent of Arms
- B. 1456 Patent of Arms

- C. 1438-39 Patent of Arms.
- D. 600-11th century. Large letters get smaller.
- E. 9th-13th century. Panel surrounded by a border which is foliated geometric. The panel can be colored or the white of the page.
- F. 13th c.-1600. Generic decorated initial in Gothic form with vines.
- G. 12th-14th century. Very large decorated initial. In the 12th c. the initial would often be mostly foliage or an animal shaped like the letter. In the 13th-14th c. the letter would have foliated parts, and may have a face, wing, foot, etc. stuck on the extremities, but the body would be completely filled with patterns. The shield and helm would not be used until the 14th c.

# Scroll Layouts



# Chapter Eight

## Contemporary Techniques for Producing Scrolls *and* Advice for Choosing Tools and Materials

**T**he goal of this chapter is to give advice on the materials and techniques used to make scrolls for the Middle Kingdom. It is important to remember that this is only advice. It is based on the knowledge and experience of the author and should not be considered the final word. You, as artists working within the framework of appropriate medieval SCA scroll design, will make the final artistic decisions which make the product work best for you.

The emphasis in this chapter will include methods of imitating period appearances while using contemporary tools. For information on how actual period documents were made, see **Chapter 12: A Perspective on Period Methods.**

The suggested order for the steps in producing a scroll are as follow:

- 1) Accept commission of assignment.
- 2) Determine scroll size.
- 3) Choose period, place and appropriate style.
- 4) Plan the design with a pencil sketch.
- 5) Rule calligraphy guidelines.
- 6) Write.
- 7) Rubricate.
- 8) Create illustration layout underdrawing.
- 9) Gild.
- 10) Paint.
- 11) Credit yourself and list media.

**1) The Commission** is when the Crown or the Signet contacts you and gives you the correct spelling of the name, the gender, and the arms of the recipient when appropriate, the place, date, location of the event and the reason for the award. Make sure you get all of this information.

**2) Determine the size of the page** you need by considering the amount of text, margins, and how much decoration you plan to use in accordance with whatever layout you will be using.

**3) Choose the style of your calligraphy and illumination.** It is nice if it fits the persona of the recipient, but this is not required. If arms or badges are to be included, please add them to the design.

**4) On another piece of paper,** plan the design you have in mind with a rough sketch.

**5) Rule vertical lines for the text column(s)** in either pencil, drypoint, or thin ink, depending on the style you are emulating. Then rule the horizontal text lines the same way. This can be done with either a special board that has a sliding straight edge, or by using a triangle next to a ruler. The spacing should be in proportion to the height of the letters as explained in the calligraphy section. In many period styles the ruling was permanent, not erased.

**6) The calligraphy comes next.** Remember to leave spaces for the miniature, decorated initials, display letters, and other capital initials, etc. Any of these may intrude into the text block. You may indicate areas with loose pencil lines.

**7) Rubrication:** Now add the colored versal letters and/or other capital initials, the display letters, and decorative flourishing lines etc. where appropriate.

**8) Do an underdrawing of the design** very lightly in pencil (otherwise the pencil lines will show through the paint). You may wish to ink some of the lines at this point and erase the pencil. This will crisp up the drawing; however, it is not always necessary. It is best to leave only a crisp, smooth line, whether in ink or pencil, because sketchiness will always cause your work to look unnecessarily crude.

9) If you are gilding with real gold leaf over gesso (raised gold), this is the time when the gold should be put down. Otherwise, painted gold can be used when convenient in the painting step.

10) Paint the design.

11) Sign your work on the back with both your mundane and SCA names. This way the recipient will know whom to thank! It is also recommended that you list the medium of the paint, whether the ink is waterproof or not, and mention if you sprayed a sealing fixative over the page (Note: My experience causes me to suggest that you try to use techniques which do not need such overspray because it can lead to other problems). If you include your address, who knows, you might even receive a letter of appreciation!

12) Store the finished artwork in a flat place. It can be transported in a large manila envelope with a card in it to prevent creasing or other damage. Please do not roll scrolls as this can cause cracking or smudging of the paint.

## Sources

Appendix A of the Middle Kingdom Scribes' Handbook is being hosted online at the following URL: <http://www.provide.net/~randyaf/rmkshb.html>. It is our intention to have this section updated as frequently as a volunteer basis can allow. You can also contact the local, regional, or even Kingdom Signet for suggestions on reference books, tools, papers, wording suggestions, etc.

There are a great number of good books on the market which teach calligraphy. Most have instructions which teach the basics of medieval calligraphic strokes. Beware of any books which claim to be showing medieval scripts but fail to give source references to time and place. These are usually very generic, and are designed for modern calligraphers who want an antique appearance in their work. They are often misleading and grossly inauthentic.

Your best bet for authentic medieval artwork is to look for books which are specifically about medieval manuscripts. You may look for the ones which show a lot of color reproductions of both calligraphed and illuminated pages through the middle ages. These books should tell the time, place and size of the pages. Avoid the widely-available reprints of several nineteenth-century books on the subject. They are often incomplete. Even worse, the illustrations are lithographically printed from artwork hand-copied from the original pieces. They will not show the level of detail or accuracy which you will get from photographic reproductions. You will not see how translucent the paint was, what the brushstrokes were like, or see how they blended colors.

The best, but most expensive source books are facsimile reproductions of illuminated books. A collection of these will give you an excellent source for the particular time and place featured. Unfortunately, it has the potential to make a collector of you and can cost hundreds of dollars.

## Choosing Tools and Materials

The types of tools you use are your choice. Feel free to substitute as you see fit. The one main thing to remember is that tools and materials are a personal choice. What works really well for one person may be disastrous for someone else. Do not ever let someone tell you that you must use what they use because it is the *best*. It is only the best for them.

**Lighting:** Since you can't predict the lighting under which your work will be displayed, it makes sense to give it the best possible color balance to start with. Believe it or not, if you paint by anything less than full-spectrum daylight, the lighting you paint by will distort the color balance of your finished work, to the same degree that your light source is limited.

Ordinary incandescent lamps furnish less than a third of the blue and yellow light that balanced daylight does. Under it, yellows and reds will look more orange, and blues and greens will look more dull. Fluorescent lights will make the blues and yellows greener and the reds and purples grayer. Naturally, you will tend to compensate as you paint, heightening the colors that look dull. Then, under more balanced lighting conditions, your finished work will show the compensating color imbalance.

To demonstrate the effect to yourself, look at photographs taken with daylight (outdoor) film under both outdoor and indoor lighting, without a flash. The color difference between the two is quite pronounced.

The challenge is to avoid letting your work lights cause a color imbalance in your work. One method is to look at the colors outdoors so you can see them in a balanced lighting and try to remember their true appearance. However, an overcast day gives bluer light than a sunny day, and sunrise and sunset lighting provides much more red than you'd expect. Without a photographer's color meter, you cannot really know what color environmental lighting is; the eye compensates too much.

This is one reason art studio windows are set up to catch north light: it has less color variation by time, season, and weather than other light directions (in the northern hemisphere only). Of course it also eliminates the bright harshness of direct sunlight.

You can create somewhat balanced lighting by using a combination of incandescent and fluorescent lamps. There are drawing-board lamps available with an incandescent bulb surrounded by a fluorescent ring (Circline®) tube, or two side by side fluorescent tubes so you can use a cool white and a warm white simultaneously. Or you can find

light bulbs which are already color balanced.

For true, balanced lighting, color professionals (printers and designers) have established the color temperature of 5000°K (average daylight) as a standard. (This is nothing like "cool white," which has a strong green cast.) 5000°K fluorescent tubes are available in standard sizes and wattages, but can be pricey.

**Real parchment** is the skin of calves (vellum), sheep, and goats. It is very expensive, but in period most documents were made on it. It may require some special instructions to prepare it before use.

**Papyrus** was also used in the Mediterranean during the early middle ages. If you wish to use this, it is a good idea to do some research on period and place first. It was usually used for rolled books and documents, and rarely used in bound form by folding into codices (modern-style books). Its use faded out by the middle of the 11th century.

**Birch bark** was written on for all sorts of purposes from the most ancient times. I do not know about western Europe, but there are archeological finds from Novgorod where birch bark manuscripts called beresty have been dated to the 15th century. They are personal letters, instructions, legal documents, etc. written with a blunt dry stylus which creased the surface. The page was either rolled and bound, or made into a book format (codex). Pages were usually a couple of inches wide and several times that in length.

**Paper** is period, but it came to Europe during the Renaissance and was not used much. We are, however, happy to have you use paper. Do not be fooled by a product called **drafting vellum** or **tracing parchment**. These are paper products made from plant pulp and have nothing in common with real parchment. Most of these "vegetable

parchments” are unsuitable because they have a high acid level which will cause them to get brittle and darken with age.

The best papers are 100% rag and acid free. Wood pulp papers (which are naturally acidic) and acid-treated papers get brittle, darken, and may even affect painted colors with age. The brownish ‘calligraphy paper’ has terrible longevity because it is both pulp and treated with acid to make the color. Besides, the choice parchment was pretty white or off-white in the Middle Ages, not yellow!

The thickness of the paper will determine how wet you can get it while painting. If you must scrape ink to correct calligraphy errors, thicker paper will also let you scrape deeper. Thicker papers will also resist warping when wet in the painting process. A good thickness is like a playing card. Minimum thickness is usually called 2-ply or designated in pounds where 90 pound is a good minimum.

The other important ingredient in paper is the glue called “size” which holds the paper fibers together. Too much size and your ink will not penetrate the paper. Too little will cause your inks and paint to bleed into the loose fibers. Excessive pooling of ink can weaken the bond of the fibers so when the calligraphy pen is pulled through the wet ink it will sometimes pull up fibers and spread ink in places you don’t want. If there is sufficient sizing in the paper this is much less likely to happen.

One good type of paper is called ‘Bristol’ (not to be confused with Bristol Board) and is made by several manufacturers. You can buy pads of it already cut to good scroll sizes. It takes pencil well and erases well. You can get either *cold press* (including “vellum style”) surface or *hot press*, sometimes called “smooth” or “plate” surface. ‘Vellum’ surface takes the paint and ink more and holds it, but you may find it a little more difficult to

get sharp, clean calligraphy with smaller nibs. A metal calligraphy nib gives a sharp, clean line on plate surface paper but the ink pools on the surface and resists bonding well with the paper. For this reason, paint layers are more likely to crack and flake off of the plate finish page. It is also harder to erase pencil from plate surface.

Another drawback of the more absorbent paper is that when a second stroke is made over a wet ink stroke fibers may get picked up and dragged by a metal nib as previously described. This happens because the moisture loosens the fiber and the stronger pressure of the metal nib scratches it away. Try using a lighter touch or a real feather quill.

If you have questions about a particular paper ask your dealer. It is also a good idea to buy a small amount of a new paper and test it first. People will suggest different types which are good to try, but you should decide based on your own experience. Remember, no matter how good the scribe who recommends a particular brand of material, it still may not work well for you!

I would also make this caution: papers specifically designated as **Watercolor** papers are usually a problem for most scribes. The first reason is that the surface is often rather bumpy and coarse, causing the pen to have uneven strokes. The second reason is that watercolors count on penetrating the paper's surface for their adhesion and visual effects. This means that the watercolor papers are usually weaker in size content and the fibers are not tightly pressed. Colors and inks tend to bleed, and pens can easily scratch the paper and cause bleeding.

### **Pencils, ink, & Pens:**

You want a pencil that erases well and makes rather light lines. A number 2H is a good compromise. Ultimately the hardness which works best is based on your paper surface. Harder pencils need more tooth in

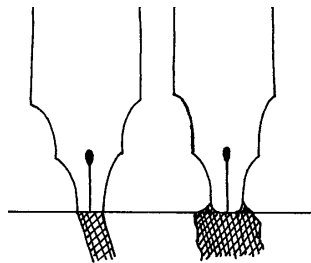
the paper to leave marks, but are harder to erase. Softer pencils leave darker lines and on very soft papers leave so much color that they are also difficult to completely erase. You may like to use a mechanical pencil so you don't have to be constantly sharpening the point. A .5mm lead holder works well.

For calligraphy you will need a flat tip nib of a size appropriate for the size of calligraphy you mean to write (however, for various reasons you may choose an oblique angle nib. See the section entitled **The Sinister Scribe** in Chapter 9).

Most medieval calligraphy was rather small and may be difficult for a beginner. To give an idea of sizes, they often wrote whole books with letters less than 1/16th of an inch high. By contrast, some choir books were written with letters a few inches tall.

For our purposes a 3/4 mm to 1 mm nib will work for a text block on an 8.5 x 11 inch scroll depending on the calligraphy style. A Speedball brand size C-5 is a comparable size, although there are better brands of nib. For smaller works a 1/2 mm or less may be needed. Many people use larger nibs and take liberties with proportions to fit the whole text on the page.

The good nibs are of thin metal, and the corners of the chisel point are crisp and square. This allows them to make fine hair-lines and yields good edges and corners in your writing (see Fig. A-1) Make sure there are no burrs left on the nib from the factory on lower quality products.



**Figure A-1**

Metal dip type nibs are often coated with a bronze-ish colored lacquer when you buy them. It prevents rust, but impedes ink flow. You can remove it by heating over a candle flame and then quenching the hot nib in cool water (quenching keeps the metal springy). The better nibs have removable reservoirs on top. This allows for cleaning and altering the pressure needed to get the ink to flow. Speedball nibs are hard to clean because the reservoir is fixed to the nib. Always clean and dry your nibs after use, and do not store them in the nib handle. This is your best way to prevent rust.

Osmiroid and other fountain ink pens are commonly used, although the ink is a bit more likely to run than dip inks. They give fine, crisp lines. Beware the permanency of the ink used in them since some ink types, especially colored inks, may fade.

Please do not use markers for calligraphy or illumination on any scrolls! They do not in any way resemble period materials and they usually fade.

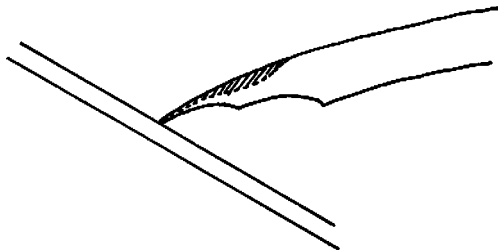
Ink for dipping comes in many varieties. You want a permanent light-fast ink. Again, check this when buying colors. Non-waterproof India ink is very similar to medieval lampblack ink. I suggest using non-waterproof instead of waterproof because the latter tends to dry in the nib and cause clogs. Then it needs either burning in a candle flame or soaking in solvents to clean it out. This wastes time.

If you can get a bottle of ink with an eyedropper in the lid, all the better because you can use it to fill the reservoir on your pen without dipping the pen itself and risking overfill and resultant blobs.

Sumi ink sticks are lampblack pigment. The stick is rubbed on a stone with water until the ink reaches the right consistency. Some people like this extra level of control because it allows them to adjust to a thicker

ink on humid days, etc. Remember to trim the lacquer coating from the bottom edges of the sumi stick before you use it!

Natural pens are made from small hollow reeds or from the primary feathers of geese, turkeys, swans, etc. They work best when used with a calligraphy surface tilted (see Fig. A-2) at a 30-45 degree angle because the ink doesn't run down the point and cause blobs. The pen is at a low angle. These pens require a very light touch and give extremely fine detail. They also require learning to use and maintain them.



**Figure A-2**

### **Brushes:**

The tip shape, the amount of fluid held by the hairs, the ability to retain its shape while wet, and remaining springy while wet are the most important features to look for when choosing brushes.

You may use standard watercolor brushes. You will hear that sables are the very best, but you should not invest in a 'sable' brush unless you know what you are buying. Not all 100% sables are great, and some that aren't are sold with little distinction. The word Sabeline, and other name variations do not mean 100% pure sable. Some are blends with synthetics, and some are inferior grade hairs. Ask your art supply dealer.

Blends and synthetics should not be ruled out as poor brushes. Synthetic brushes are

advanced enough these days that a Taklon hair brush (white or amber synthetic) made by a reputable company is just fine for our purposes. They hold a great amount of fluid, keep a point well and sharp, and have a good springiness. Synthetics are also much less expensive than good sables.

The brush size needed is determined by how wide an area you wish to cover with one stroke. Since most illumination uses light narrow strokes to model surfaces and draw lines, the smaller brushes are best for this. However, don't go overboard! A 0000 size brush holds so little paint that you run out before you make much of a line. Most serious painters say "use the biggest brush that will work for the job." However, there are limits. Larger color fields and fills can be made with the larger brushes, but the wider the round brush, the greater the potential for leaving such a wet paint film that the moisture buckles the paper. You can combat this by using heavier paper. Parchment is especially prone to moisture buckling because it is stretched and dried in its manufacture. The heavy moisture will expand it and it will lose its structure. When thus relaxed it is ruined and unlikely to be re-flattened. Paper does not come pre-stretched and is less prone to this.

A round brush can be made chisel flat for making edge lines. To make wide strokes, simply pull your round brush on the edge of your color well to flatten it. Flip it 180° and wipe again. This will also remove excess paint fluid.

The best brushes for illumination are round, pointed-tip watercolor brushes. They may be hair or synthetic. They should be able to hold a lot of paint, yet still hold a point when wet (but this does not mean you should carry a lot of wet paint for every brushstroke). The real difference between watercolor



brushes and those sold for acrylic and oil is the length of the handle. The hairs are usually the same. If you have them, you can use them.

The exceptions to that are the bristle and ox-hair brushes. You do not want these for illumination. The first is too stiff and coarse, and the second has little springiness. The springiness of a brush is what keeps the point on the paper when you let up on a stroke. This is important for controlling the line width from wide to narrow.

### **Drafting tools:**

These are very helpful in laying out parallel and perpendicular lines. A finely divided ruler or two, a triangle and sometimes a protractor will aid in layout. A compass and templates come in handy for circles and other shapes you may create such as quatrefoils. A bow pen (or ruling pen) is used for ruling inked guidelines. Some calligraphers find that the Ames Lettering Guide (a clear plastic tool with holes in it for a mechanical pencil) saves a lot of time ruling. Your table can be a board or some apparatus which tilts for calligraphy. Drafting tape is like masking tape but is less adhesive. It will be removable after it holds your paper for ruling and writing.

### **Paint:**

Paint is made of raw color plus a binder which “glues” the color to the page. Most people use either *gouache* (opaque watercolor, pronounced “gwash”) or regular watercolor. These are never waterproof so they can be rewet and worked even after they dry. The binder for gouache and watercolor is gum arabic, which is a medieval tempera binder. The difference between watercolor and gouache is that gouache has an inert white pigment called **Blanc Fixe** (aka barium sulfate) added to create opacity, and extra binder to make a stronger paint film which sits on top of the paper. Watercolor, which

has less binder, is intended to adhere to the page by soaking into the fibers of the paper.

Some people use **glair** tempera. The medieval illuminator's binder known as **glair** is the beaten white of a hen's egg. It sticks the colors to the page better than the gum arabic bound colors. It is workable for quite a long time after drying (see **Chapter 10: Advice on Illumination**). Egg yolk is also used in some illumination techniques. However, unless you know the appropriate technique and you add sweetener for flexibility, I suggest you avoid using egg yolk tempera because it dries hard and may crack severely on paper. Also be aware that *poster paint* tempera is not *tempera paint* and you are not using real medieval tempera when you use it! It is a cheap, poorly ground version of gouache with a lot of crusty fillers. It is guaranteed to flake off and ruin your work.

Acrylic may be used if it is all you have, but it is not a medieval paint, doesn't handle anything like medieval paint, and you will need some manipulative skill to make it look medieval. This is because it is not workable when it dries. Oils and alkyds should not be used because they do not look like illumination paints and they will cause the page to deteriorate.

### **Correcting Mistakes of the Pen and Brush**

If you have had a scribal accident there may be a way to save your work if the area affected is not too large. In this case, the definition of *too large* is one you will have to make. It is a balance between how much time and work the repair will take, and how much work has already been put into the scroll. You must also consider whether the repair will be more obvious than you are willing to allow.

**1) Fixing spots by painting over them.** Do not put any kind of white paint onto a spill of a non-waterproof ink or other aqueous paint without preparation of the area. Ink from a metal or feather quill is usually applied in a thick layer which readily leaches into the white and will always yield a grey. Nor should you use “white-out” (typewriter correction fluid) on a scroll. There are some white inks which are specially made to be able to write over dark areas, but even if you do get them to cover, the white ink may still be the wrong color. Papers for art are not always pure white.

To prepare an area for white paint you must first remove as much of the color from the paper as possible without damaging the fiber structure of the paper. This can be done with a moist brush tip, or by taking a damp Q-Tip™ swab, or a tightly rolled damp tissue and gently blotting the area. Do not rub because it will tear up the paper fibers which are loose from the moisture. When you finish, let it dry completely and check to see if there is any fuzz on the area. If there is fuzz from paper fibers being rubbed up you should burnish the area with some flat smooth object like the flat of your fingernail. If the fuzz won't burnish away you can paint onto it a little glair or gum arabic cut with some water, or rub a little hide glue gelatin over the area. This restores the glue which holds the paper fibers together. Finish by burnishing.

If you are successful, the spot should appear now as a smudge or a ghost of what had been there. If you are not going to write or paint on this area you may mix an off-white to match your paper color and apply it. If you will be painting colors over this area, the removal should allow colors to be overpainted without fear of much contamination. If you are going to write, you have two options.

One option is to put down a thin layer of

a white waterproof paint like egg yolk tempera or acrylic (note: egg yolk takes many days to become waterproof), and then write over it with your ink (using a nib that lets you use little pressure, such as a feather quill, otherwise you will scratch through the paint).

Another possibility is to write the letters on first and use glair or gouache with a fine detail brush and spot paint the areas around the letter forms.

## **2) Fixing spots by etching.**

This method is best done when the white of the paper must be preserved and the area to be fixed is small. It will not work on thin papers, or papers which are very absorbent. If you find you have written the wrong word, correct it in this way: With the same pen and ink, write the correct words in the place where they should have been. The correct words will occupy the same space as the erroneous words and it will be best to make your strokes build letters from as many of the pre-existing strokes as possible (see Fig. A-3).



**Fig. A-3**

Next, when the ink is dry, take a very fine point X-Acto™ blade and carefully cut the outlines of the parts of the ink lines which you wish to remove. Use only a light pressure, only breaking through as deeply as the ink has penetrated the paper. Then, again

using the sharp tip, gently scratch away the surface layer with the ink. If you think the ink may be flaking off and ink dust may be contaminating the etched area, you should gently blot the spot with a putty eraser. This method will leave a fuzzy area which may have a slight shadow. The deeper you etch, the more obvious the shadow will be. Make sure there is as little of the ink dust in the wound of the paper because it makes the shadow obvious. The affected area may be dry burnished as above or one of the mentioned binders applied before burnishing if there is no paint or ink near the spot.

### **3) Fixing a large mistake.**

If your mistake is a long series of words or you do not like either of the correction methods described above you can always strike the area with a line and write the correction above in small letters. Another option is to write the Latin word VACU, where VA is written at the beginning of the error and CU is written immediately after. These are both period corrections. If your mistake was one of painting, remember these words passed down from my teacher: "A great artist never makes mistakes; he just covers them up!"

## Chapter Nine

# Advice on Calligraphy

**T**he period and place of the style of the calligraphy should match the period and place of the style of the illumination on your scroll.

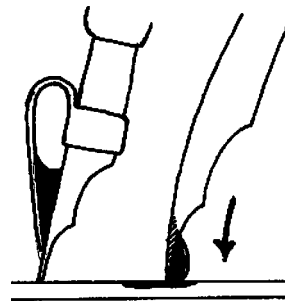
Keep in mind that practice will help build up both muscle coordination and evenness in your letter forms. In order to get good at this you will need patience. There is more to it than just learning with your brain. You need to build the muscles for the fine motor control. Then you need to program your brain to act with those muscles.

If your calligraphy needs help there are several books on the market with tips on how to improve your work. Dover Books sells a book called *Medieval Calligraphy: Its History and Technique* by Marc Drogin. It is a superb source for learning medieval scripts since it has style sheets, information on punctuation, ligatures (combined letters), and upper-case forms for display lettering, etc. It also has photos of the actual scripts with captions that reveal what is written in modern type face.

If you are a left-handed scribe, please see the section below entitled **The Sinister Scribe**. What follows are the basics. An experienced calligrapher may work on a flat table, but you will probably find advantages to working on a slope. Your table can be a special drafting board with a ruler and T-square or a simple board propped up on some books with a couple of rulers taped on in an L shape. We sometimes see manuscript illustrations of scribes working on boards in their laps, but there are advantages to working on a stable slope of between 30 and 45 degrees.

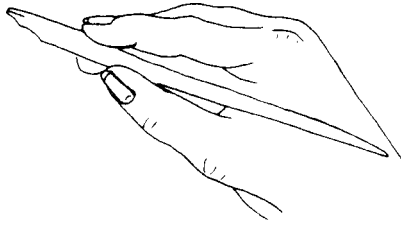
The reason for this is that the drop of ink hanging under the nib is pulled down by

gravity, and if your quill pen is held vertically it may drop onto the page and leave a blotch. (See Figure B-1). However, if the board is at an angle, your pen is held more horizontally and the ink is less likely pour onto your paper. Its flow is by capillary rather than just gravitic attraction. Of course, a reservoir on the back of the nib will help prevent ink dropping, but the gravity will still cause the ink to flow down the nib faster. Sometimes this leads to thicker lines from too much ink.



**Figure B-1**

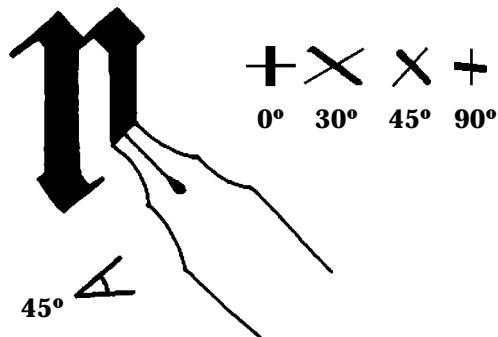
Another advantage to the slope is that you can use gravity to help your hand pull down straight, vertical lines. When you sit in front of the slope, do not write in front of your face. Write with your hand in front of your shoulder. This will help your arm bring the pen stroke down vertically. You should also use a light touch. A heavy touch will cause the pen nib to slide toward the angle the pen is held at. Manuscript illuminations often depict right-handed scribes holding their pens between the thumb and first two fingers (see Fig. B-2). This provides stability by causing you to use more arm and hand motion than just finger motion. The pen should meet the page at close to a perpendicular angle for best results.

**Figure B-2**

Set the previously ruled paper on the board with drafting tape. The area on which you write should be in front of your shoulder instead of your face. This allows you to pull down vertical lines with better body mechanics. Next, tape or pin an original version of the text to be copied onto the board next to your art. You may also arrange a calligraphic exemplar nearby. Tape a piece of scrap paper nearby for marking with the pen to make the ink flow.

Use a light touch with your calligraphy. You may need to start pressure to make the ink start to flow. If ink does not flow, check to see if it needs to have more water added to it. Your problem may also be a clogged nib.

Different calligraphic styles use what are called different pen angles (see Fig. B-3).

**Figure B-3**

Imagine the ruling lines to be the horizontal. When a style is said to use a pen angle of 30 degrees, it is meant that the flat of the pen tip is tilted 30 degrees from the horizontal ruling. It does not mean that you should write on a 30 degree table or pen slope.

You will also notice that medieval scripts usually are written in the space between the

ruling lines, not from touching one line to touching the other. There is a small space between the bottom of the letters and the lower ruling line. There is a large space between the top of the minim stroke high letters and the top line. (A minim height is the height of what we call lower case letters without ascenders or descenders. An ascender is the part that rises above this level. A descender drops down. **b, d, f, h, k, l** and **t** are ascending letters; **g, j, p, q** and **y** are descending letters.)

Most SCA scribes rule with a pencil. Some erase the pencil after writing the text. Some manuscripts, especially pre-Gothic and Italian Renaissance examples, were ruled with a blunt point which left a faint crease instead of a colored line. Otherwise, it was common practice to rule with either ink or a black or colored drypoint.

There is a way to imitate writing between the lines without actually doing so. First rule the page in ink. Next, rule again with pencil so that the bottom pencil line is the line for the bottom of your text and runs slightly above the ink line. Run another pencil line at the top of minim height. Write the scroll between the pencil lines and erase them when the ink dries.

It will look as if you had written evenly between the ink lines without touching them! (See Fig. B-4).

**Figure B-4**

While writing, try to keep your hand relaxed. Take a break if you feel you are cramping up. Are you squeezing the pen too tightly?

The most common mistakes made in calligraphy are in not realizing what the

spacing of a particular script's letters and words are like. It is very easy to separate words and letters by modern amounts, but a look at period scripts often reveals letters touching within words and words separated by very little. Look to see what is typical in your script. Also make sure the letter height is proportional to the spacing of lines of text. Another common error is neglecting to make ascenders and descenders the correct lengths. In some scripts they are very short, while in others they are very long.

One of the biggest causes of grief is when you have written out the bulk of the page and you learn that there is not enough space to finish the work! You can keep this from happening if you warm-up your calligraphy

by writing the text out quickly to determine how much space it will take. The space taken will depend upon how wide the margins are set, how closely the ruling lines are spaced, and what ratio of letter height to letter width you choose. You can alter any of these factors to enlarge or compress your text.

If you like to use a certain calligraphic style more than others you can save yourself time by standardizing your work. Try making several scrolls on the same calligraphic format. Use the same script with identical margins and line spacing so you need only figure the text length once. Alternatively, you can make models of several different text styles which you will save and refer to when you start a new scroll.

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## The Sinister Scribe

By Sondra Venable

(AKA Lady Aleksandra de Acciptre)

**T**he problem of doing left-handed calligraphy did not, to the best of my knowledge, exist in the Middle Ages. The few people who could write used their right hands. The Sinister Scribes of the current Middle Ages are thus stuck trying to duplicate calligraphic styles designed by and for the right-handed. They face a distinctive, but not insurmountable problem. I will offer several solutions I have run across, and the left-hander may choose to try any or all of them. First, however, we need to dispel some popular myths about writing left-handed.

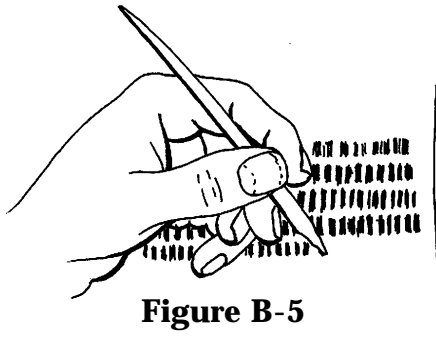
**MYTH #1:** Lefties cannot be calligraphers because they have terrible handwriting. While it is certainly true that many left-handed people have terrible handwriting,

this is far from inevitable. I suspect that it stems from having been taught by people who have little idea of how to teach writing at all, and even less of how to teach lefthanders. Besides, many right-handed calligraphers (myself included) had terrible handwriting before taking up calligraphy.

**MYTH #2:** Left-handers drag their hand through the line they have just written. Again, many do because of the way they curl their hand around (see Fig. B-5), due to the above mentioned improper instruction.

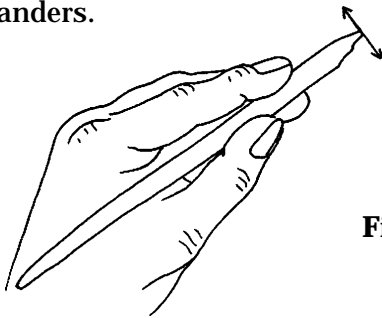
There are, however, ways to get around this. (As a right-hander I can do Hebrew calligraphy, from right to left, without dragging my hand through it.)

**MYTH #3:** Left-handers cannot do medieval calligraphy because they cannot get the same pen angles as right-handers. While this may not make sense to a non-calligrapher, it is a real difficulty for left-handed calligraphers and the reason why they need different tools and/or techniques than right-handers. Let us now examine this problem and suggest some solutions to it.



**Figure B-5**

Calligraphic letters cannot be properly shaped unless the scribe has the right pen angle. A calligraphic pen, like the medieval quill, makes a thin line if pulled along its edge and a thick line at right angles to it (see Figure B-3 above). “Pen Angle” refers to the angle formed by the thinnest line of the pen and the line on which you are writing. (The angle of the pen nib to the paper is something entirely different and not of interest here.) Medieval hands used everything from a 0 to 90 degree angle, but around 45 degrees was the most common. Figure B-6 makes clear why this is a problem for left-handers.



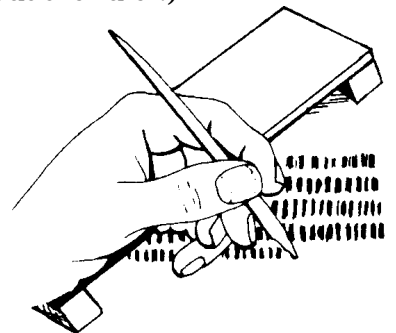
**Figure B-6**

**SOLUTION #1:** Pick a calligraphic style where the pen angle is not a problem. Some

Uncial variations were written with a nearly or totally flat pen angle, which should be no more difficult with the left than the right hand. (I have tried this myself – since my left hand is unco-ordinated, the letters look terrible, but the pen angle is indeed not a problem.) At the other extreme, some Hebrew scripts use a 90 degree pen angle. This solution is obviously somewhat limiting, and it is no help at all if what you really want to do is Gothic or Italic. Keep reading.

**SOLUTION #2:** A left-hander can get a 45 degree pen angle by holding the hand curled around as in Figure B-5. Since a quill, metal quill, or reed pen must be pulled, not pushed, you must reverse all stroke directions, going from bottom to top and from right to left. If you already write with your hand in this position, this may be the way for you to go. There is the problem of dragging one’s hand through the wet ink, but you can support your hand on a rigid 18” ruler held slightly above your paper to prevent this (Fig. B-7). (Editor’s note: A bridge can be made with any flat, rigid bar that has a 1/4 inch spacer glued beneath each end.)

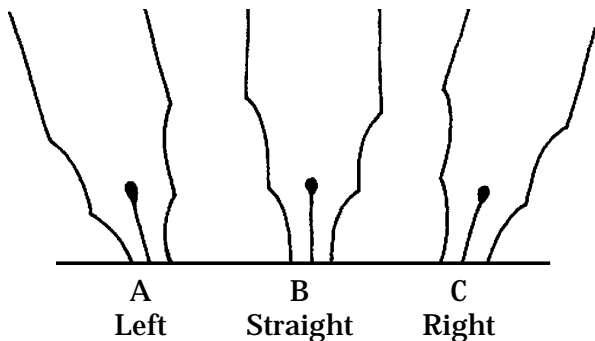
Some scribes also suggest a light coat of talc powder on the edge of the hand to help it glide along the paper. (I am indebted to Master Johannes von Nurenstein for this method, and to a student in one of my classes at Pennsic XV for the point about the ruler.)



**Figure B-7**

**SOLUTION #3:** You can also get the proper pen angle by turning the paper sideways. If you do this, you should turn your model alphabet sideways as well. You may find it difficult to write this way, since it is harder to read what you are writing, but it works for some people.

**SOLUTION #4:** I have recommended to my left-handed students that they use left-handed (also called Left-Oblique) nibs, and I know at least one woman who gets very nice results this way. As shown in Figure B-8, these nibs are cut at an angle to compensate for the angle of the writer's hand.



**Figure B-8**

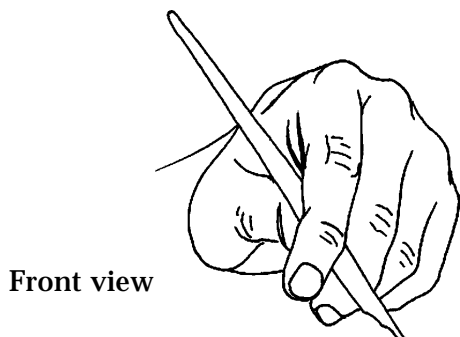
If you use them you should experiment with the positioning of your arm and the paper until you find what works for you. Left-handed nibs in various widths are made for both Platignum (recommended) and Osmiroid fountain pens. Speedball and

Mitchell make left-handed nibs for dip pens which will fit any holder. (Editor's note: There are other companies which produce good left oblique pen nibs than those mentioned in the text. It is not the intention of the SCA or this manuscript to promote one brand over another.) Unfortunately, some retailers will only carry right-handed nibs, and those that do have left-handed ones may frequently be out of them. Ask around. Marc Drogin in *Medieval Calligraphy* also suggests that if you can't find a left oblique nib, you can use a right oblique (Fig. B-8c) turned upside down! If you choose to cut your own quills or reeds you can get pretty much any width and angle you like.

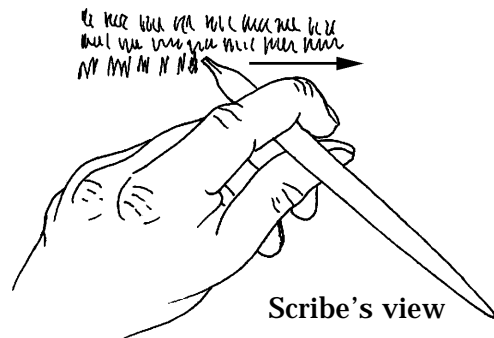
Different methods work for different people. If you are left-handed, I hope that one of these will work for you. If you are a right-handed calligraphy instructor, keep them in mind for potential students. (You may want to buy a left-handed nib to keep for students, and practice with it yourself.) Both students and teachers might want to look up a book called *Left-Handed Calligraphy* by Vance Strudley. I haven't seen it myself, but it's mentioned in the calligraphy primer in *The Known World Handbook*. If you are a left-handed calligrapher who uses a method I haven't covered here, please let me know about it.

In addition to the techniques described above in **The Sinister Scribe**, there is another method which seems to work well. A

left-hander can achieve the mechanical advantages of hand and arm motion by adopting the method of holding the pen as illus-



Front view



Scribe's view

**Figure B-9**



trated in Fig. B-9. In addition, the strokes made by the left-hander will be exactly the same as those made by a right-hander.

The nib shape can be flat, but there is a special way to hold the pen. Hook your index

finger over the top of the pen and hold the pen there with your thumb. The other three fingers are curled under the hand and your middle finger stabilizes the pen by resting it on the center bone, just behind the joint.

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## How to Form Letters

Most calligraphy books provide calligraphic Exemplars with arrows around each letter to indicate how to make the strokes. To repeat this with each Exemplar in this book would be perpetuating a redundant crutch. There are many ways to form a letter with a medieval pen.

You should use a technique which suits you best. They differ in how many strokes are used and in what order. Since there is no correct order for placing the strokes which make a letter, we will learn instead to make letters in general. We will then be able to analyze any calligraphy and determine how to reproduce it without the aid of arrows.

To make a letter form, first look at the letter to discover the pen angle with which it was written. Insular Majuscule was usually written at a near 0 degree angle and Gothics are usually written around 45 degrees. However, some alphabets are variable. There are horizontal lead-in strokes on the German Gothic book hand done in 0 degree angle, and there are others which change by rotating the pen. An example of one of these rotating scripts is Insular Minuscule, which starts at a near 45 degree angle and has spiked descenders which are formed by rotating the pen to a full 90 degrees as the stroke is pulled. There will be more on rotations below.

Most letter forms start on the upper left of the letter. This allows you to better judge the distance for spacing between strokes, your

right hand pulls away from wet ink as you write, and most strokes are pulled downward.

Begin by placing the pen onto the page with a little more pressure than you would use to pull the stroke. The pressure will get ink flowing. Don't overdo it. Release to a light touch and write by skimming the page with the flat edge of the nib end. If you are only getting half the width of your line, or the ink won't flow, look at your technique. Are you accidentally using a diagonal pressure so that only half of the nib is on the paper?

The formal Gothic Textura Quadrata and some others use a lot of straight lines, either vertical, horizontal, or diagonal. These strokes may be made separately, or as one by backtracking.

Most often, scribes pull the strokes of shapes like the letter O starting from the top left, down and around to make the left bottom, and then, they go back to the top, pull down to the right, and then continue pulling downward to meet the other side (Fig. B-10).



Figure B-10

A tip for getting good spacing and consistent verticals in Gothic Textura Quadrata, or any hand where you have a series of identical first strokes, is to make as many of the

vertical strokes as possible. Then go back and make the serifs.

Although most strokes are made with downward pulled and side to side motions, there are many times when, for convenience, scribes sped up the process by completing the letter form with a pushed-up stroke or two. This led to many of the configurations of conjoined letters, and a pushing action actually became necessary to form some of the shapes.

Pushing is quite common in cursive style and otherwise flowing scripts. The scribe is keeping the pen on the page as long as possible. Examples are Gothic Littera Bastarda and Insular Minuscule. To push the pen upward you need a very light touch or your nib will snag the fibers of the page. Look at the insular miniscule letter "o" and "r" as well as any early period ligature such as the tall linking "e."

Also look at the English Bastarda "e," "s," and "d" which incorporate the technique of rocking up onto the corner of the nib to draw a fine line (Fig. B-11).

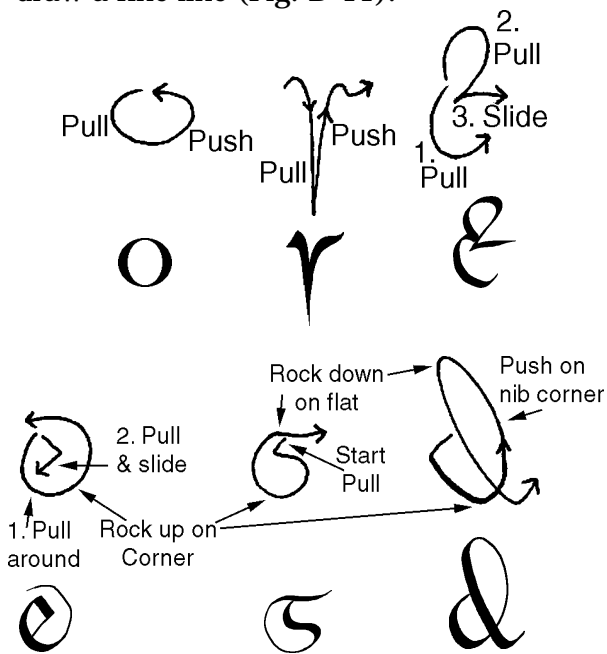


Figure B-11

Both pushing and drawing lines with the corner of the nib require you to start with enough wet ink on the page to complete the stroke. If your paper is overly absorbent, your ink will not draw out with the nib. It will soak into the paper first.

The technique of rocking up onto the corner is very useful for making the decorative spikes and curved lines which emerge from the letter, but would otherwise be impossible to make on the flat nib. Before you rock up onto the corner you must first apply a little pressure to increase the amount of ink on the page with the pen (Fig. B-12).

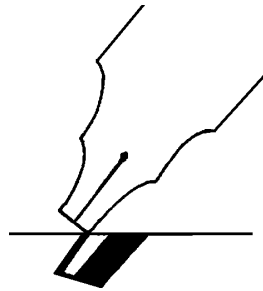


Figure B-12

**Serifs**

Many letters have a decorative attachment called a serif. These add obvious visual weight at the ends of strokes. Examples of serifs are the triangular decorations on the upper left of many letter forms, the hooked bottoms of some letters, and the hairline and diamond shapes of Gothic Textura Quadrata.

The serif is usually drawn with the same nib as the rest of the letter, although some scribes add them later with a pointed pen. If you use the same pen, the serif can either be made first, or after the main stroke. To make a serif with a calligraphy pen, first decide whether it is a type which can be made with a stroke the same width as the width of your pen or if it needs a finer line. For many scripts it is possible to make the serif with the pen nib flat on the page. To do this, it is often

necessary to use pen rotation (see below). Otherwise it is possible to rock up onto the corner and draw. Figure B-13 shows how several serif types can be made.

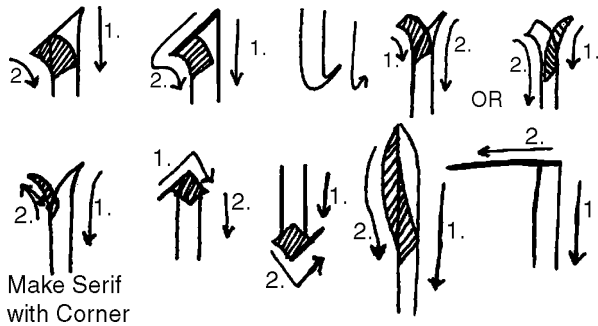


Figure B-13

There will be times when it is necessary to make the serif with a pointed drawing pen or the corner of your nib. The wispy triangles of the Book of Kells serifs and the “V” shaped tops of some Gothic Textura Quadrata ascenders can be made with more convenience this way. Hollow areas are then filled.

### Rotation

The rotation technique is a manipulation which is made by gently rolling the pen handle between your fingers. The result is that the pen angle changes as you do this. When combined with a pulled stroke we get a line which changes from thick to thin. A rotation can also be used at the top or bottom of strokes to create a flat ending to a letter stroke which is made with a diagonal pen angle. Figure B-14 shows an Insular Miniscule letter “s” being made and the rotated angles of the process.

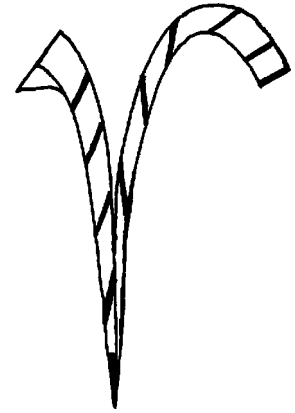


Figure B-14

As you can see, the pen angle starts at about 45° and as the stroke is pulled downward it is rotated to a vertical orientation. In this particular letter form the pen stays on the page and draws the wet ink back upwards, rotating back to 45° as it goes.

## Chapter Ten

# Advice on Painting

**A**lthough this section is provided for the less experienced painter, we will assume that the artist has already studied several examples of a favorite style and is familiar with the shapes, patterns and colors as seen in the source material being emulated. The trick then is to reproduce the period effects. These effects varied tremendously within SCA period. They range from simple color areas laid in as thin washes, with either line work or dots, etc., to the more subtle shading and blending of naturalistic form which came in with the Renaissance.

### Color

Medieval colors are often accused of being very bright and pure. Actually, many of our modern colors are more powerful in intensity and "purity of hue." Some modern colors are more opaque and have stronger covering abilities than medieval counterparts. Many medieval colors have been replaced for a variety of reasons. Modern chemistry has made some colors like Ultramarine much cheaper than by using natural Lapis Lazuli. Other colors like lead have been vanishing because of toxicity issues. Then there are a lot of medieval colors which are not permanent when continuously exposed to light and atmosphere. Such colors were fine shut up in books, but little contemporary art is meant to be stored in airtight dark places. Our illuminated manuscript style art is no exception. In fact, even during the middle ages there was a specific set of colors which was considered OK in books but not on panels because of archival reasons.

Today we have a huge range of colors available to us. Some are dingy and dull,

while others are far brighter than any medieval pigments. The contemporary artist needs to be very careful when deciding which colors to use on the page. Care should be taken to try to use colors which are similar to medieval colors, but there are other important considerations. Lightfastness, color permanence, and toxicity are all factors to consider when shopping for paint.

### How To Shop For Paint

The first question should be "What kind of paint should I buy?" Well, the work is probably going to be on paper or parchment, so you want something that won't eat the page or make it turn brittle. So oils are right out. Acrylics don't behave anything like medieval paint for the page, but fortunately we have some options which happen to be very much the same as what the medieval artist used. My advice is to consider that the paint will cost you a fair bit, so you may be stuck with what you buy for a while. If you buy a lot of colors of one kind, and then decide you really want something else, you might end up paying a lot more than is necessary. It is best to try some different kinds first, and then decide what you want to get.

Lets take a quick look at what the different paints are. The verb "To Temper" means to add something which changes the nature of something else. When we temper raw color powder with a binding medium we are making a *tempera paint*. When most people think of "tempera paint" they either think of a cruddy poster paint used in public schools, or they think of egg tempera, the kind made

from yolk. But really, any paint you make yourself becomes a form of tempera.

In the middle ages the common binders used to temper color were gum arabic, (a glue made from ground tree sap and water) and glair (the white of egg). Other binders such as egg yolk, fluid hide glue, and even fish glue were used, but gum and glair were the common ones. You can make glair as per the instructions below, or you can make gum tempera. All you need is the binder, a little water, a watercolor well to mix it in (or if you want to be medieval you can use a white shell), and the raw color. However, if that is more advanced than you want to get for now YOU ARE IN LUCK! because both watercolor and gouache are bound with gum arabic, so they are almost exactly medieval paint already! Remember, as stated in **Chapter 8**, watercolor needs a little more gum arabic added into it and gouache will look most like medieval paint.

### Choosing Colors

*Hue* means the actual color of a pigment. Blue and green are different hues. Ultramarine Blue is a slightly purpler hue than modern Phthalo Blue, which is a bit more to the green side.

*Value* refers to how bright it is. Pink is a light value of red. The pink and the red may represent the same hue on the color wheel.

Colors with white added are called *Tints*. Colors with black added are called *Shades*. When you tint or shade a color you make it less saturated. It becomes a little duller than the original, but it does get lighter or darker. Shading and tinting can make colors somewhat more opaque.

Some paints have a greater covering ability than others. This is called *Opacity*. You can use opaque colors to paint over some other colors without sacrificing the brilliance of the hue by shading or tinting it.

However, colors with lesser opacity can be diluted with some water and painted as thinner color over the white of a page to make them lighter without changing the hue. I caution you not to rely on this much though. Medieval illuminators seldom worked on very white pages and so didn't use this technique as much. Also, covering large areas with dilute, wet paint is just asking for the extra moisture to buckle the page. Medieval colors were usually lightened with white.

You have lots of choices for colors which look medieval. The following are some recommended modern colors. They are reasonably close to common medieval colors, but few are exact. They are chosen for lightfastness and color permanence. Several are very toxic! You may wish to choose other colors for your palette. A good book for describing medieval colors is Daniel V. Thompson's *Materials and Techniques of Medieval Painting* from Dover Books.

**Black:** Lampblack, bone or ivory black.

**White:** Permanent white, Titanium white, and various translucent whites.

**Blue:** Ultramarine, Indigo.

**Red:** Cadmium Red Medium (Hue or real), Red Ochre, Alizarine Crimson Hue, Cadmium Red Light.

**Yellow:** Cadmium Yellow Medium, Yellow Ochre,

**Green:** Chromium Oxide, Viridian + White. Sap Green Hue.

Although it would be better to mix browns, some browns such as these can be used: Burnt Umber, Burnt Sienna.

Mix your purples from blue and a red from the alizarin hue family.

These colors are not the only ones, but they will get you by until you do some color comparisons of your own. Note that colors may vary from manufacturer to manufacturer, and since everybody makes a different gold ink/paint and each artist has their own idea of what the best of those is, I will let you figure that out yourself. However, I suggest you get a gold which looks like real gold jewelry. Medieval shell gold was a paint like watercolor kept in a clam shell as a cake. It was often on the pale side rather than dark and "antique" looking.

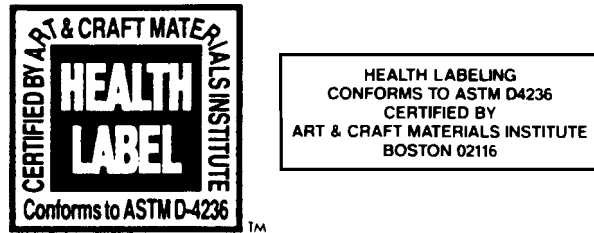
In the above list I have suggested a few *Hue* colors. Cadmium Red Medium is the modern substitute for Vermillion, and Cadmium Red Light is close to Red Lead, but cadmium is also poisonous. Fortunately a hue version of it made of modern chemicals exists. Titanium has been considered the replacement for White Lead since it was invented. Sap Green and Alizarine Crimson are not very permanent colors, but they are indispensable hues. There are a few fake hues of these colors available which are similar enough to work and are more long lasting. Indigo is virtually the same thing as Woad, and although Viridian isn't a medieval pigment, when white is added it makes a nice fake pale Malachite.

Although medieval paints were often very toxic, many modern pigments are even worse, the cadmiums for example. Fortunately many companies make whole lines of colors which are not dangerous. There is also a system in place for identifying the toxic level of pigments.

### Safety

The American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) has a standard for the evaluation of the safety of artist's materials. The reference number for this standard is called ASTM D.4236 and is entitled "Standard Practice for Labeling Art Materials for

Adverse Chronic Health Hazards." There is also a group called the Art and Craft Materials Institute, Inc. (ACMI), which makes recommendations for labeling (see label above right, Figure C-1). These labels mean that the paints bearing them have been manufactured according to standards. Neither they, nor the label "NO HEALTH LABELING REQUIRED," mean that the product is safe.



A.C.M.I. CERTIFIED LABEL SEAL - WILL REPLACE A.C.M.I. CONFORMANCE PANEL

Figure C-1

It may still be poisonous or harmful. For example, there are different labels needed depending on whether the product is readily absorbed through ingestion, skin contact or inhalation. Dry pigments are especially dangerous because they are easily carried into the air as fine dust, and being pure, they are more easily taken in by the body.

If you choose to research your pigments' toxicity you can contact the Art and Craft Materials Institute, 715 Boylston St., Boston MA 02116, Phone: (617) 266-6800. If you have a medical problem, you can contact the Poison Control Center or the Rocky Mountain Poison Center at (303) 629-1123 (24 hours).

### Color Permanency

Some paint companies follow ASTM color lightfastness ratings. These are not required by law and several companies do not provide this information. Look for a label telling the exact pigment material (not the color name!), and lightfastness label in roman numerals where "I" = Excellent lightfastness, "II" means the color does not have maximum color permanency and may suffer in sunlight, but

it should survive fairly well under normal circumstances, "III" means the color is prone to fading or changing of color, usually more obvious when applied in thin coats.

The Permanency rating is different from lightfastness. It refers to color stability. Class "AA" are the best. Class "A" are not as stable when used less than full strength or left to the elements. Class "B" are rather non-durable and Class "C" are considered fugitive.

### **Color Matching**

There are numerous books on the market which contain manuscript illustrations, but keep in mind that printed colors in one book may be very different from the reproduction of the exact same page in another book! This is very common, so do not trust the color reproductions of art books very far. Just do your best and go to a museum when you can.

### **Applications Of Color**

In many medieval styles, medium and light pigmented colors were often put down either as straight color or with a little white added (depending on the color's opacity). For example, a bright red field might be just vermilion pigment mixed with binder of gum arabic or glair and painted directly onto the page. Darker colors such as ultramarine or indigo (woad) were mixed with a little white to make them light enough to be used for most applications. If white was not added, the blue would be very dark and translucent. It would not be best in all styles to make light blue by using the pure blue in thin consistencies. Although its "blueness" would remain stronger, the paint film would not cover the parchment color. (However, sometimes you will see thin streaky paint on real manuscripts.) Some colors were shaded or highlighted with translucent washes of paint diluted with water.

One of the reasons medieval book colors seem so pure is that except for white, most colors were not combined nearly as much as modern painters mix colors. The medieval painter did mix colors, but it was in a limited way, such as a little yellow into some green to brighten it up, or red and blue to create purple. Modern paintings seem to have a more dull look because several colors are all mixed together in different amounts which tends to greatly tone down hues toward grey.

One of the biggest mistakes people make when working on medieval paintings is to buy watercolor or gouache color cakes, and then use all of them straight. Not only does this limit the palette, but failing to mix white with some colors when needed can ruin the period effect. If you are using color cakes, you should have some extra color wells for mixing tints and shades. Carry wet color with your brush from the color cake to the new receptacle. Add the next color and keep your brush clean when it goes to the other color cake!

If you are using dry pigment (raw, pure pigment powder sold in jars) and either gum arabic or glair tempera as the binder, you have the advantage of being able to easily mix colors ahead of time. Glair will bind the colors to the page a bit better than the gum arabic in watercolor or gouache. Gum is a slightly weaker binder. In fact, part of the reason that watercolor sticks to the page is because it is finely ground and the fine particles sink into the absorbent paper and get stuck in the fibers. That is why gum-bound paints rub off more easily from plate surface papers.

### **Making Glair**

To make glair, take one egg, break it open and without breaking the yolk, separate out the white into a clean bowl. Next beat the white with a whisk (or egg beater) for a long

time. It must peak into a very stiff foam, then beat it some more. Cover and let sit for 10-12 hours. After that time there will be a watery liquid at the bottom; that is the glair. Pour it into a small jar like a 35mm film cassette canister. You can save it for several days or longer in the refrigerator, or you can leave it out and allow it to go stale. Stale glair is a little stickier as a binder than fresh glair. It will have an odor, but it is not the same as rotten eggs since it contains none of the yolk.

To use glair, first take a small amount of the dry color from the jar and put it into a little pile in a color well. Drop about the same volume of binder next to it and mix them together. The actual amount of binder varies from pigment to pigment a little bit. If you are not sure about the amounts, paint out a stroke on a separate piece of paper. If the paint dries shiny there is too much binder. If it rubs off, you have too little.

Once you get the proportion of binder to pigment correct, you may thin the paint further with as much water as you want - within reason- to make any level of translucency. It is better to get a little too much glair than too little. At least it will not rub off. Saffron stamens were soaked in glair to leech out the yellow color. The craftsman then painted with the stained glair. You can't get a color heavier in binder than that! However, glair, and especially gum, were susceptible to cracking when used in this thickness, so a tiny amount of sweetener like honey or sugar was added to regain flexibility.

You may temper color with gum arabic solution in the same way. It is readily available from most art supply stores. Just remember that the proportion of binder to pigment is what is important. The amount of water added to that mixture is only important for achieving the desired consistency of the paint fluid. Thus, you may wish to adjust the gum to water ratio in the gum water

solution. Gum water should have the right amount of binder for your colors when added in equal proportions by volume to the pigment.

As with glair the addition of a tiny amount of honey or sugar will help the gum tempera resist cracking in thicker applications. Don't add too much sweetener or the paint may become permanently sticky. Always test it before you apply it.

### **Application of color**

Some paint films were fairly thin in books, but usually some kind of brushwork design of another color went over the field. For example, a thin background field may be ornamented with lines, dots or different shades of the same color making a two-toned or three-toned geometric design. Another example might be a late period landscape with a thin, light brown or green ground and darker opaque blades of grass brushed on top.

Large color fields often appear streaky on parchment. This was probably because the colors needed to be painted onto the surface without a lot of moisture to avoid buckling the page.

The more paint that is layered on the page, the thicker the paint film, and the more likely the paint is to lose flexibility, crack, and flake off the page. Do not goop or crust-up your paint on the scroll! Sometimes we fall into this bad habit while trying to get one color (often white) to go opaquely over a darker or more powerful color. The paint you are trying to put on top may be too wet to go on opaquely. Another possibility may be an inherently weak color like yellow. Adding white, black, or another opaque color to a weak color will make it more opaque, but it will also lower its purity and intensity.



### Whitework and other fine brush lines

White is a difficult color to lay over a dark color such as blue or red. Yet, because of the contrast it creates, adding white lines over dark colors is a very important medieval effect. Often artists become frustrated when the white turns into a light tint of the color it is supposed to cover. This happens because the artist is applying the color too wet. If you have a puddle of paint that you dip into, the white may still be too thick to cover well.

Here's the trick. Start with a white which is opaque, like Titanium White. Put it into a color well and let it dry completely. Now, with a fine pointed brush, dip the brush into water and wipe it onto the color cake. Wipe on enough to make the white flow up into the hairs. The paint should be just wet enough to barely flow off the brush when you paint it. Now that the paint is right, only dip the tip of the brush into the paint. Then as you withdraw it, shape it into a point by wiping it gently along the side of the well. Giving it a rotation as you do this will point the brush. Wiping it and flipping it over and wiping it again will make the brush have a knife-like edge to make either thin *or* thick lines.

The idea is that if the paint is drier it will not attack the color film under it. Wet paint soaks into the undercolor and loosens it. This is why wide, wet lines or brushstrokes will tend to pull up colors from beneath them. This applies to all colors, but light colors in particular are more obvious.

Some colors have more covering power than others. Yellows almost never cover without the addition of white. Black always covers well. The other colors vary depending on what they are made of. Experience will teach you.

### Methods

When you are ready to paint, set your sheet onto a clean table surface, but do not

secure it with tape unless you have worked on the other side of the page. If you have worked on the flip side, it is a good idea to secure a piece of paper with drafting tape to the side which will face the table. You will be rotating the page as you work, so this will keep the downside clean. Put your work on a flat table. You should feel free to rotate the page to work on areas from different angles. For example, if you are filling in the inside of a curve, or drawing a curved line, it is easier to follow the curve if you approach from the concave side rather than reaching over the outline (Fig. C-2 below).

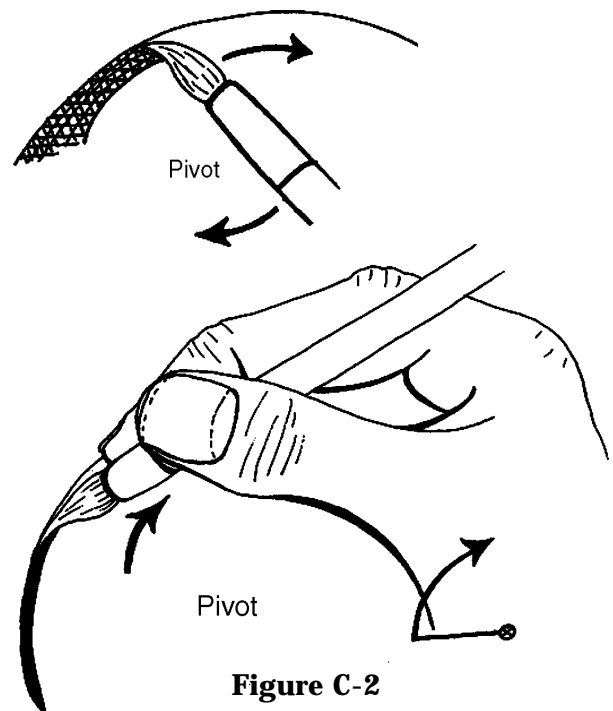


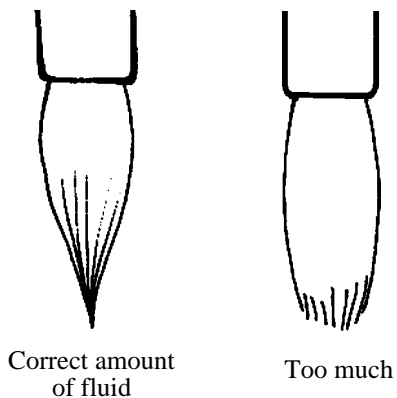
Figure C-2

To pull a straight line with a brush you can either brace your finger along a ruler and slide it, or you can turn the paper so the line points away from you. Then pull your brush straight away from you with an arm (not hand) motion.

Sometimes the moisture from your hand can leave oils on your page making it hard to paint with water soluble colors. Even sweat from your palm can smudge calligraphy and illumination. For this reason, it is wise to lay

your hand on a clean sheet of white paper if you must rest it on your artwork. You might also try using an artist's bridge. This is a thin board on low legs which spans the artwork and acts as a hand rest.

For fine line control, dip the brush into the paint and wipe it on the side of the color well until there is only enough paint in the hairs to allow the brush to maintain a pointed shape. If the hairs are spread out and the tip looks blunt, you still have too much paint on the brush.



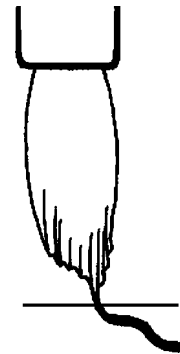
**Figure C-3**

A slow, slight rotation will cause the hairs to stay in a pointed configuration. To make a white line on a medium or dark field, use a narrow stroke of paint just barely moist enough to flow. The faster it dries, the less the color below is disturbed. The wetter the color, the more the bottom color comes up and mixes with the top stroke. This should be kept in mind for blending.

To blend from light to dark, mix a light, a medium and a dark version of the color. You can work with three to five gradations. Then brush back and forth between them with a moist, but not too wet brush for blending. Add white highlights (or gold if appropriate) and shade with black or another dark color to complete the contrast.

Small circles can be made by drawing with a brush tip when the brush is held

vertically. An old blunt ratty brush may have enough reservoir for holding paint and may be trimmed so that only a couple of hairs stick down past the blunt end. These can be used for drawing with great control either circles or dots if you get your nose down close enough to see the exact hairs hit the page (Fig. C-4).



**Figure C-4**

Dots are best made either with a pen or with a blunt tip brush. The point of a pointed brush creates a wedge shape. This results from the tips of the hairs being pushed aside leaving a wider line like a calligraphy nib.

A side-to-side sketchy motion with the brush usually results in rough brushwork. This is because the motion wipes the paint rather than letting it flow off the end of the brush. Try pulling the brush along the same direction as your line so the paint flows down the hairs. This motion keeps the hairs close together and, combined with a slight rotation, helps keep the point together.

#### **Patterns:**

Many of the Gothic patterns were created by laying in a color field first and then drawing lighter or darker line-work as layers on top with a brush. Look closely to determine if the medium or the dark color came first. The lightest color was often last. There were, however, always places that needed to have the white of the page behind them. For example, the fancy diaper pattern would not have been painted over an entire panel and then the figures opaquely added on top. This would have created problems with trying to cover all of the soluble underpaint. Instead, the figures would be painted over virgin page surface within their contour lines, and the background pattern would be filled around

them. In general, one wide color area rarely paints well over another color field, and it would make a dangerously thick paint film if it did.

However, we will note that backgrounds of thin or less intense color were often underpainted behind a whole area and then figures laid in over that paint. An example would be a renaissance blue sky and greyish green foreground being laid in across the whole field first, followed by the added figures (like trees) painted opaquely over top. Whereas you could get away with painting a dark tree over the background, you would have difficulty adding people in white robes over a dark field of grass.

Diaper patterns are the fancy geometric backgrounds found in miniatures. Often they start with a field color of a medium light value of red or blue. Red and blue or red and green are considered contrasting colors. The second step usually involved adding a darker value of the field color as a grid, either straight or diagonally over the field. The third step may be to add a tiny design using a contrasting color in half or all of the resultant boxes.

The final color step was usually white and was to bring full contrast to the pattern.

The white may be a grid connecting the tiny designs or it may be just dots or circles. There are a lot of variations on these patterns, some even using gold as a third main color. Use the knowledge of the basic construction to determine the steps used in the pattern you have chosen.

Strip patterns in borders and line endings in texts were often made in a similar way, but they seldom had a grid. Usually the medium or dark value was painted down the whole strip as a field, and then light or white color was painted over that to create the design.

Tiny color interlace can be first laid out with a single light pencil line or drypoint indentation, and then the color painted over it opaquely, following the line. The overlaps are made with thin black lines delicately placed as edging. If the ribbons are to be the white of the paper, take a pencil and sketch the design over the whole area in a single line. The final lines are then inked with a very sharp pen to create the edges, and thus the overlaps. The pencil is then erased.

Alternatively, you could add color to these ribbons by painting thin color very carefully between the black lines. Thin paint is so translucent that small amounts will not be very noticeable over the black.

# Chapter Eleven

## The Process of Gilding

**T**his article will provide you with important information which will lead to successful gilding. It will demonstrate period gilding techniques and a good, modern time-saving technique. A good art supply store may carry the tools and materials needed for gilding if you are in a big city, but most art supply stores do not. Most people will need to order such things from mail order companies that retail them.

There are five ingredients necessary for gilding. They include:

**1) Gold:** Sold in loose sheet “books” of ultra thin leaf. Medieval gold leaf was somewhat thicker than what we have available today. Except for practice, I recommend you do not use the bronze Composition Leaf. Bronze will tarnish if used without a treatment, which must be painted over it. If you have used bronze composition leaf and it has tarnished, you may make it golden again by carefully painting colored metallic enamel paint (such as is sold for painting plastic models) over the entire surface of your metal, but this may not be permanent either.

**2) Support:** This is what your artwork is painted or written upon. Paper or true skin parchment could be used as a support for this kind of gilding. Note: The word “parchment” in this pamphlet refers only to pages of animal skin and not to the paper pulp mate-

rial sold for calligraphers. Also, modern drafting vellum is not even close to real vellum, which is specifically calf parchment.

**3) Glue:** Special glues are used to stick the gold to the support.

**4) Sweetener:** Honey or fine ground sugar are used to give the glue body some flexibility and allow it to hold moisture better when laying the gold. (Sweetener is unnecessary in PVA type glue recipes.)

**5) Bulk Former:** Inert chalk or plaster type of white powder is used to make the glue set up with an appreciable thickness. The goal is to create a slightly raised surface above the rough page texture. This would provide a perfectly smooth surface for the gold to be adhered. The idea of making gold sit very high up off the page is quite secondary and has been inappropriately emphasized in the SCA. Most gilding in books was rather low.

This article deals with water gilding. Water gilding uses moisture to dampen a raised glue surface to make it sticky for laying gold. It can then be burnished to a high polish. Another type of gilding is called mordant gilding, and it uses some form of oil or other slower drying base, which can not be made sticky again after it dries. It is not burnished, and one does not usually add a bulk former. Mordant gilding usually leaves a surface of gold matching the surface texture of the support.

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The following instructions are quoted from an Italian illumination treatise from the 14th century called *De Arte Illuminandi*, as translated by Daniel V. Thompson, Jr. from the Naples MS XII.E.27, Yale Univ. Press, 1933.

### 2. Binders for Gilding.

The binders for gilding are as follows: stag’s horn glue, parchment or fish glue, and things like these.

### 14. Size for laying Gold.

Size for laying gold on parchment is made in many ways. But I shall put down a certain rule for it which is both good and tested. So

take as much as you want of the calcined and prepared gesso which the painters use for gilding panels, that is, the gesso sottile, and a quarter of that amount of the best Armenian bole; work it up to the utmost fineness with clear water on the porphyry slab.

Then let it dry on this slab, and take whatever part of it which you want, putting the rest aside, and grind it with stag's horn glue or parchment size. And put in as much honey as you think necessary to give it a sweet taste; and in this it behooves you to be careful, so as not to put in either too much or too little, but, according to the amount of the material, so much that, if you put a little of the compound into your mouth, it just barely tastes sweet.

And you may figure that for one of the little dishes that painters use, twice what you can pick up with the handle of a brush will be enough; and if there were any less, the compound would be ruined. And after grinding thoroughly, put it into a glazed dish, and at once pour enough clear water on it to cover it, working carefully, without disturbing the material; and it will immediately be refined in such a way as not to make either bubbles or holes after it dries.

And when you want to use it, after a brief delay, pour off the water which stands over it, without stirring the material at all. And always, before you lay any size on the actual place where you have to work on the parchment, you should try it out on some similar parchment, to see whether it is properly tempered; and after it dries, put a little gold on it, and see whether it takes a good burnish.

And know that, if there is too much of the tempera or of the honey in it, you correct it by putting plain soft water over it in the dish, without any stirring; and if it stands for some time, and the water is then poured off, still without stirring, the tempering will be improved.

And if it should need a stronger tempera, put in more of the size, that is, more of the solution of it, or more of the solution of honey, if that is needed, until the composition

suits you.

And since experience is worth more in all this than written documents, I am not taking any special pains to explain what I mean: – a word to the wise.

### 15. How to use it.

You ought to know that after the letters, or leaves, or figures have been drawn on the parchment, the places where the gold is to be laid should be rubbed over with a scrap of stag's horn or fish glue in this way: by moistening a scrap of this glue in your mouth, on an empty stomach or after digestion, until it has softened, and with that, constantly moistening that scrap of glue, coat the place where the gold is to be laid, so that the parchment gets made more manageable for taking the size.

And some people even coat the whole drawing in this way with this glue, so as to make all of the colors unite better; but this would only be necessary if the parchment were hairy or rough. And the parchment can even be wet down or coated, wherever the gold and colors are to be laid, with the size solution, sweetened with a little honey, and applied deftly with cotton, as required, or with a brush; and this is better.

Then take this size, well tempered as has been said, and with a brush right for this purpose, put it on, quite wet at first. And when it is almost dry, put some once more over this size; and do this two or three times until it seems to be about right, and neither too thick nor too thin, but adequate.

When the last coat is quite dry, scrape the surface thoroughly with a good and suitable knife and clean it up with a hare's foot. Then take some glair of eggs broken with a bristle brush or with a reed, split and adapted for that, as painters do; and when all the white has been turned into froth, pour over it enough plain water, either mixed with the best white wine or a little lye, or plain, because any of these is good.

And after a little while pour it out from the froth which it produces on top, and what remains will be good. Then take some of it, with

a brush fit for this, and wet over this size with judgement and moderation, so that this size will take the gold or silver readily, as painters do when they are laying gold on panels.

And cut the gold with a knife upon parchment, as you know how to do, according to the number of places where the gold has to be laid; and if necessary, you may force the gold to stick to the size with a bit of cotton. And after a little while, when it is practically dry and can stand burnishing, you burnish it with a suitable tooth of a wolf or calf, or with a hematite stone as the painters do, on top of a panel of box or other wood, well polished and

sound. And if the gold comes out imperfect anywhere, with this glair carefully wet the place where the gold is imperfect, and lay the gold, pressing it down with cotton if need be. And after all the gold has been burnished, rub it lightly with a hare's foot; and any excess which has not been removed by the foot, scrape off and even up with a good sharp knife. And after removing the excess, burnish it again, until it suits you perfectly. And so, with a stone of hematite or other tools made for this, one can rule or stamp the gold in this way, over the panel of box or other wood, etc. And so it will be finished.

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## Making Gesso

Gesso is the name for the material that we paint onto the page and then stick the gold onto. It is a type of gilding seat. The author of *De Arte Illuminandi* calls it a *size*.

Notice that the author has not used any toxic materials like white lead pigment. Some modern gilding recipes use white lead, which helps yield a smoother finish and brighter burnish. However, this author describes the use of Armenian bole which serves that same purpose. Armenian bole is a soft red clay, also known as gilder's clay. It gives a bit of color to the material for making it more visible, and it is also a filler which will help to yield a smoother polish from the burnishing. Modern recipes using white lead suggest the addition of a little red color such as Indian Red pigment, and Bole has less tinctural potential than Indian Red dry pigment, but in the amount we'll use it will make the gesso plenty red.

The author describes the use of glair as a wetting agent for the laying of the gold. Some recipes are exact enough that the gilder need only breathe on the gesso with a long moist breath to make it sticky for the gold.

I suggest that you let the gesso dry completely before laying the gold, but not let it

age for more than a day if you can help it. You must let it dry enough so that the inside isn't soft or it will be destroyed when you burnish. However, if you let it go too long the moisture from your breath will not be enough to rewet it to make it sticky and accept the gold.

If this happens, you can use a wetting agent to moisten the gold, but you must be careful. If you wish to use a wetting agent, I agree with the author that it is best to apply it with a brush. That way you will not get any on the paper or parchment surface, which may lead to some gold adhering there. Moisten only the surface of the gesso and make sure you apply the fluid evenly. *Don't overwet it!*

If you apply a lot of fluid you will make it too wet in the middle and the outside edges will be too dry to lay gold before the middle becomes dry enough.

If it is too wet when you lay the gold, the moisture will puddle under the metal and the gesso will get soft. If you press the gold down at this point the gold will tear and red gesso will burst up through it, leaving a crack in your gilding.

It is important to remember that fresh

gesso requires much less moisture to rehydrate. Gesso also holds the moisture much longer. It is thus better to use the breath method of moistening while the gesso is fresh, but firm. When you moisten gesso with glairwater you will find that it soaks right into the material and softens the whole mass. You must allow the gesso to regain its firmness before you lay the gold.

The glair is made in a glazed bowl. Put in an egg white, and with a whisk beat the daylights out of the white for a long time! Continue beating a few minutes past when the white foam is so stiff it will not even jiggle when you shake it. To make diluted glair, pour a shot glass or sake cup of water over the foam material. Allow it to sit for several hours (up to 12 hours). Undiluted glair is great for painting, but can cause gilding failure.

The verb “to temper” is used often in medieval painting treatises. It does not refer

to poster paint tempera. It means to change the nature of material “x” by treating it with something “y” in order to achieve a planned result. For example, we temper dry color powder with binders such as glair or gum arabic to make it flow from a brush and then stick to a page. The gilder tempers parchment glue (such as rabbit skin glue) with honey to make it remain flexible when dry.

In the section where the author of *De Arte Illuminandi* describes priming the surface of the support with stag’s horn, fish or parchment glue, observe that it is a precaution against overly absorbent support material (the parchment). An application of glue can also be used to get rid of high nap on parchment or paper if you burnish the application with some smooth tool. It is not necessary to prime a moderately absorbent parchment or paper, such as a vellum surface Bristol paper, because the first thin layer of gesso should not soak in far enough to weaken the gesso’s contact with the support.

## Tools needed for gilding

*(See Figure D-1 on the next page)*

- 1) A fine point metal or natural quill style drawing pen.
- 2) A wad of soft cotton or folded tissue.
- 3) A couple of sake cups or shot glasses.
- 4) A 1/4 tsp. measuring spoon.
- 5) A small pointed palette knife.
- 6) A new X-Acto™ or other sharp hobby sized knife.
- 7) Either a gilder’s brush or a second, very clean, new X-Acto™ knife.
- 8) A gilder’s pad or some dry clean parchment for cutting gold upon.
- 9) Some glassine paper. (A very slick, non-stick paper which looks a lot like waxed paper. It is available at art supply stores)
- 10) A small burnisher of agate or hematite with a blunt pointed tip and at least one semi-flat surface. Don’t buy any of those huge, clunky burnishers. They are used for sign and frame gilding.
- 11) A double boiler and heat source.
- 12) A small pointed round brush and a medium small round brush.
- 13) Any of the following: slaked plaster, fine gypsum powder, calcium carbonate (CaSO<sub>4</sub>), or any other fine powder chalk material.
- 14) Small jar of honey and an eyedropper.
- 15) Dry ground rabbit skin glue.
- 16) Armenian bole or Indian red dry ground pigment (or any other color you like. Terre vert and saffron were also used in period).

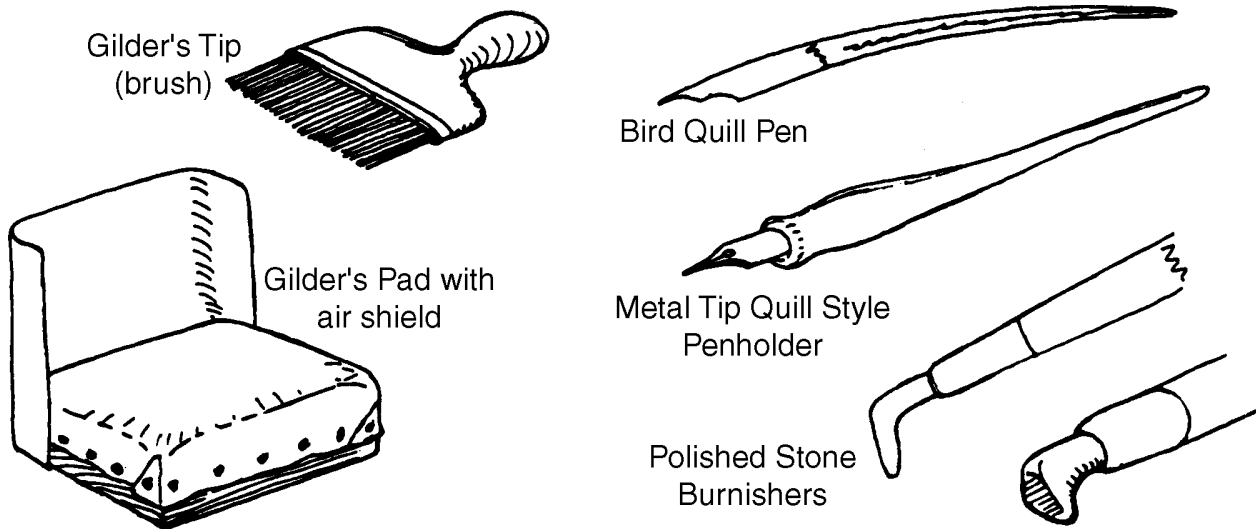


Figure D-1

## The Gilding Process

### Set-up

Begin by making the glue solution. Put 1/4 level tsp. of dry ground rabbit skin glue and 14 level 1/4 tsps. of water into a covered bowl which can be used as the top of a double boiler. After it soaks a few hours, put the glue bowl on the double boiler and gently melt the glue and water mixture on low to medium heat. Do not let the glue boil or it loses adhesiveness! When it has dissolved, you can either pour it into a sake cup for immediate use, or you can store it in the refrigerator in an airtight container such as a margarine tub or a 35mm film jar. It will cool into a gelatin.

Your bulk former may either be pre-prepared with the bole according to *De Arte Illuminandi*, or mixed in the same jar with the recipe which follows, if your ingredients have been well ground. **Caution:** that which seems to be fine powder often has lumps which go unnoticed. Later, when the burnisher encounters these lumps it tends to break them and cause holes in the gilding. Be sure to grind the powder fine.

When using pre-mixed bulk former plus bole, or mixing bulk former with color when you prepare the whole recipe, use the following proportions:

1) One part Armenian Bole to four parts slaked plaster (or equivalent).

OR

2) For each half tsp. of slaked plaster (or equivalent) add a volume of Indian Red equal to about half a grain of rice. When mixed with water it should look pink. Colors with lower tinctural strength require more pigment.

### Ratio of ingredients:

- 1/4 level tsp. bulk former
- About 6 drops honey pre-warmed to flow as drops from an eye dropper
- 1/4 tsp. glue solution.

**SPECIAL NOTE:** You may wish to make a double recipe. It will be a little easier to judge the proportions.



The amount of honey varies a little according to humidity of the day, and if the amount is off by 1 drop it may result in a disaster. Too much honey makes a sticky goop which will have problems drying and will remain soft and unburnishable. Too little honey will make your gesso inflexible and prone to flaking off the page, especially during burnishing. It will also have problems rehydrating enough to become sticky. If you must err, do it on the side of not enough honey.

The portion of glue used in solution is much more forgiving: Too little will lead to an over-chalky material and create brittleness from lack of binder. Too much glue, and the material will be thin and may not burnish as brightly. However, it should gild all right unless it exceeds the honey ratio. If you err, do it on the side of more glue.

If you substitute Indian Red pigment for the bole, use a tiny amount or the color will become overpowering. I have seen actual period manuscripts where the gold has rubbed off the gesso. On those samples, the density of color ranged from a medium reddish-brown to a translucent off-white. Some gilding was on gessos of green or yellow.

If you have an internet connection with a web browser you can see pictures of the tools I use. My article on the making of a manuscript style illuminated page has a section on gilding which can be found on my website at:

**<http://www.provide.net/~randyaf/Illos.TI/TL.page.1.html>**

If you mix your gilding seat (another term for the gesso) from scratch, follow these steps:

1) Warm some water in a bowl on top of a double boiler. Into this bowl put a small jar of honey to warm it until it flows like water. Also, put some of the cold glue gelatin into a sake cup and place the cup in the water to

melt the glue.

2) Measure the melted glue into another sake cup and add the honey. (Also add the non-toxic pigment at this time, if it has not already been combined with the bulk former. Slowly mix the color into the material with your finger tip to avoid creating bubbles. If you use toxic pigment you should put a rubber barrier over your finger.) When the glue and sweetener are combined, this material can be used to prime the page *IF YOU FEEL IT IS NECESSARY*. If you have an absorbant paper, this may be needed. Otherwise when you applied the finished gesso the glue in the gesso might soak down into the page and leave underbound chalk on top of the page. That chalk, no longer having enough glue, would be fragile. If you prime an absorbant surface you make a barrier to close the surface from further absorption.

3) Add bulk former slowly to the glue/honey solution and mix gently with your finger tip so as not to create bubbles.

4) As it says in *De Arte Illuminandi*, we need to test the mixture. This is *very* important! If the gesso isn't just right, it won't work. Take a brush and paint out a layer of the gesso onto a sample of the same surface as you will be working on. See if it soaks into the page and remains crusty and smeary on top. If it does, your paper may be too absorbant. Also look to see if the surface of the gesso follows the paper texture like paint, or if it is thick enough to have a smooth surface. If it has paper texture, then you need another coat. When it dries, inspect it closely.

It should appear a little pale and dry looking, and it should be stiff, but just soft enough that you can slightly dent it with the edge of your fingernail. The big test is if it is dry to the touch and not at all sticky until you do the following: Breathe a long, slow moist breath onto the patch. If you can get it to go a little darker with the moisture, and it be-

comes sticky for a few seconds, then it is perfect! In a few seconds it should lighten in color and become hard again.

If it seems light and pasty, it may not have enough honey in it. If it won't darken and become sticky with the breath it definitely needs more sweetener.

If it is glossy it may have too much sweetener. Touch it with a dry finger. If it feels sticky after it has dried, then you have too much sweetener in the gesso. If you can smear it like dough with a rub from the flat of the top of your fingernail that also means it had too much to become solid.

5) Now that the gilding gesso is prepared you can apply it with either a brush or a quill style pen. Be sure to get enough material into the corners of your design because this is an area prone to becoming thin due to surface tension. As gesso dries it tends to pull away from the edges, leaving them thin. As you apply more material, add to the existing mass by spreading forward.

Avoid using sloppy brushstrokes as if you are building up paint to cover something opaquely. If you do that you may get a stucco effect!

You *can* lay the gesso over large areas by applying wet pools of it (and yes, this will tend to buckle up the page if not primed), but I don't recommend it. You should not leave the gesso in a deep and very wet condition. Spread it around, and take care not to apply gesso in deep puddles. If you do that it will remain very wet and soft in the center. As the

center dries it will sink and leave a dimple. The best way to avoid that is to use thinner, even strokes and flow the gesso over the surface.

Gesso behaves like thick paint at first and it can be ruined if you touch it before it becomes solid. You will note the directions for building thin layers on top of each other. The manuscript says to let the top layer get almost completely dry and then apply the next coat. This will allow the two layers to bond together better than if one dried completely before the next coat.

6) The next step is to scrape (or sand) off any unevenness from the completely dry gesso. Use a fine-grit sandpaper like 400 or a sharp X-Acto™ knife. Make sure your edges are shaped straight and have clean curves. Brush off any scraps of material with a soft brush. The smallest imperfection will show if it is not removed or filled (Fig. D-2).

7) When the gesso is still relatively fresh, and you have controlled the ingredients well, you may cut your gold and then lay the leaf, after breathing long moist breaths onto the gesso. If you do this, you should immediately lay a piece of glassine over the gold you just laid and gently press it onto the gesso with a burnisher. As the material beneath the gold continues to dry, you can burnish harder, eventually removing the glassine and finishing the burnish with the stone directly onto the gold.

Note: If you just can't get the gold to stick after using your breath, you may need to use a wetting agent such as glair cut with some

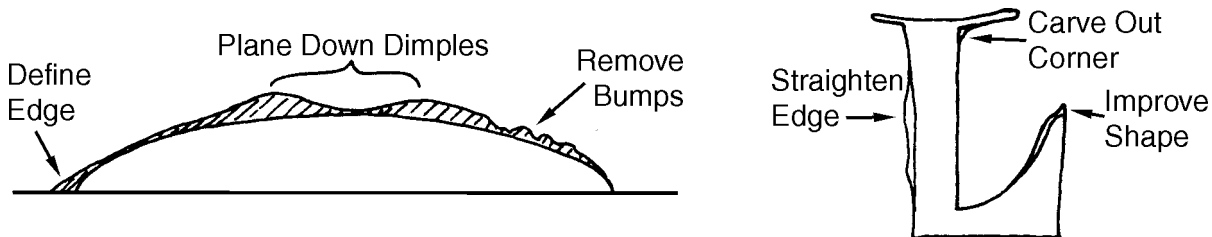


Figure D-2

water. Brush this on sparingly, and be careful not to get any on the page next to the gesso. Otherwise the gold may stick to the page. You should also be careful not to get the gesso so wet that the nice smooth surface you just prepared will get ruined. The gold will only end up as smooth as the gesso can be.

The gesso will get soft when you moisten it with a brush. This means that it is easier to lay the gold onto it, but you must not use much pressure to place the gold. If you do, the pressing may cause the wet gesso to burst through the gold. Let the gesso dry so it is very firm before you burnish. It tends to stay wet in the center much longer than the edges. This is especially apparent in really thick gesso.

### How to Handle the Gold

This process is very tricky because gold leaf is so light and malleable that it tears easily, floats on the slightest draft of air, folds over on itself and sometimes welds back onto itself. It is one of the world's most delicate materials and thus requires special techniques to handle.

You will probably want a gilder's pad (Fig. D-1). This is a block of wood with a piece of parchment, or a clean low nap suede nailed to the top and padded with cotton batting. There is often a wind shield on one end to guard against drafts.

Begin by grasping the book of gold gently by the spine with one hand and lift the book so that the pages hang loose underneath (Fig. D-3). You will not drop the gold out because it is held in the spine by the pressure of your fingers. With your other hand, peel open the book to expose a leaf of gold. While still holding the spine of the book, lay the gold leaf against the top of the gilder's pad. When the leaf is on the pad, release the spine of the book to release the leaf and pull the book away.

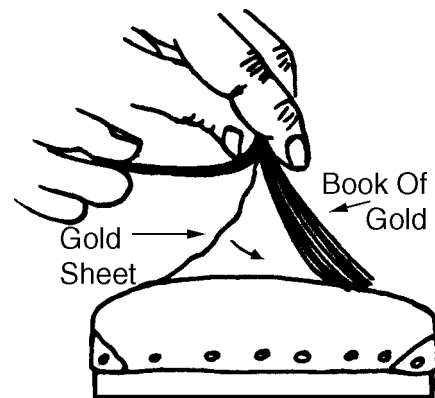


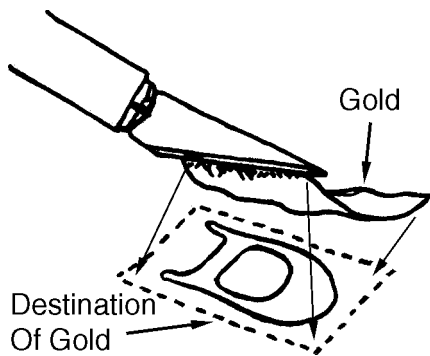
Figure D-3

It is very important that you redirect your breathing away from the leaf and do not make any quick movements. Nor should anyone else in the room walk past except at the slowest speed, otherwise the gold will launch onto the gentlest of air currents!

With a clean, sharp, new X-Acto™ knife, begin to cut the gold. I do not like to move any gold bigger than the length of the knife blade without using a wide brush such as a gilder's tip, but most gilding on illuminations uses smaller pieces so this should not be a problem. After judging the size of the piece you need, cut the gold a little larger by pressing the knife straight down onto the gold and then use a tiny short sawing motion until the leaf parts. It is actually less wasteful of gold to lay one piece over hollow shapes like "o" and "a" than to try to cut special strips to lay along the lines of the letter (unless the shapes are very large). Besides, you can cut rectangles and polygons, but I've never seen anyone cut and lay an "A" shape!

When using the breath method of laying leaf, I find that the moisture which makes the gesso sticky evaporates very soon after I breathe on it. This means the leaf must be ready. I often cut the leaf and pick it up with edge of my knife blade and hold it ready while I breathe on the gesso. The lifting is done with a second X-Acto™ knife. I make

the very edge of the blade attractive to the gold by wiping my finger on my forehead or the side of my nose to get a mere trace of skin oil on it. Then I wipe the finger on the exact edge of the blade. Next, touch the oiled blade edge to the edge of the gold piece and it will stick (Fig. D-4).



**Figure D-4**

Then gently drag the gold through the air towards the gesso. Lay it on the moist gesso.

If you have too much oil on the knife and the moist gesso can't take the gold away

from the knife when you lay it, grab a bit of cotton, or better yet some glassine, and lightly press the gold onto the gesso as you remove the knife.

More gold can be laid on top of pre-existing layers if you want a slightly more opaque gold, but the bright polish is more related to a good gesso than to the thickness of gold layers. Lay new gold by the breath method. One layer of gold should be all you need if you do this process correctly.

After your initial burnishing, and when you are sure the leaf is well enough bonded everywhere, go ahead and brush off the excess leaf from the edges. Use a very soft brush. Then, check to see if there are any holes in the gilding where the gesso is showing through by placing a piece of glassine over the gilding and looking for dark spots. Re-gild small places with breath if possible, or use the glair as a wetting agent. This process of going back and fixing areas which didn't take the gold is called **faulting**.

## Modern Alternative Gilding

### Materials Needed:

- \*A fine point metal or natural quill style drawing pen.
- \*A wad of soft cotton or folded tissue.
- \*A couple of sake cups or shot glasses.
- \*A 1/4 tsp. measure.
- \*A small pointed palette knife.
- \*A new X-Acto™ or other sharp hobby sized knife.
- \*Either a gilder's tip brush or a second very clean new X-Acto™ knife.

- \*A gilder's pad or some dry clean parchment for cutting gold upon.
- \*Some glassine paper.
- \*A small burnisher of agate or hematite.
- \*A small pointed round brush and a medium small round brush.
- \*Any of the following: slaked plaster, fine gypsum powder, calcium carbonate (CaSO<sub>4</sub>), or any other fine powder chalk material.
- \*PVA glue. It looks like Elmer's white glue.
- \*Red dry ground pigment or watercolor.

This process requires much of the same leaf laying technique as the process described above, but the actual materials in the recipe are easier to get correctly proportioned, and you do not need a heat source.

1) Put some PVA glue into a shot glass and add a little bit of color mixed well into the glue. Dilute this with water until it is of a consistency which flows easily from a brush. This will be painted onto the areas to be gilded in order to seal the surface porosity of the support page. Let it dry almost completely, but not quite.

2) Next, mix PVA glue (regular strength) with a little less than the same volume of bulk former and some color so you can see it on the white page. Be careful as you mix so as not to create air bubbles!

3) Brush this thicker solution onto the areas

to be gilded. Use thin coats to avoid dimples in the middle. If you need to add some water to make it flow better, do so. Build up as many layers as you like to give your preferred thickness for the final result.

4) This material will take about an hour to dry (subject to atmospheric humidity and thickness) and it should darken somewhat as it dries. When it has dried completely, sand the material with 320 or 340 grit emory paper to smooth and even the surface.

5) When you are ready to lay the leaf you may use breath or a brush to rehumidify the surface. This may be done anytime up to about a week after the material has been applied. Use the same techniques for laying the leaf as described above. The final burnishing is best done 1/2 to 1 hour after leaf was originally adhered.

## Chapter Twelve

# A Perspective on Period Methods

**T**here is a difference between a period book page and a document which confers elevation and/or awards. The book page contained far more decoration because it was usually an object of religious devotion or needed illustration to clarify or even beautify the text. Documents were for the business of State and were often rather bare. Towards the latter part of SCA period special documents, such as those conferring arms, sometimes had decorations.

Some of these had elaborate borderwork, and they would usually have been written in what is called a *court hand*. The court hands were less formal than the scripts used in most religious manuscripts. Court hand was more of a “handwriting” style which would be more difficult to forge than a standard *book hand*. The book hands were originally designed to be clearer and easier to read.

Documents were horizontal in layout and filled most of the page. The texts were long and windy to modern eyes because the herald writing the document was apt to identify himself and all of his titles. The recipient was also identified at length. At the bottom of the scroll was a ribbon or cord which passed directly through a hole in the page and came back through, the ends being caught together with a disk of sealing wax or lead that was stamped with the seal of the grantor. Alternatively, the seal might be set on a tongue of parchment which was cut from the bottom of the scroll but not cut completely off.

Many SCA scribes choose book page style formats for their scrolls. Although it is inaccurate for period documents, it has nevertheless become acceptable in the SCA. Therefore, the following description of one of the

ways a medieval book may have been made is included for the scribe’s “illumination.”

Until the rise of universities in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, most books were made by ecclesiastic hands. Nearly the entire work was made by a few people. Except for a few hard-to-get colors, like ultramarine blue made from processed lapis lazuli, most of the materials were locally collected, processed, or otherwise made. Books were lent from one collection to another so that they could be copied.

For a more complete idea about how a book might be made, let us take a closer look at the process as it might have happened in early fourteenth century Paris:

Henri is a young nobleman with both money and religious faith. He is planning to marry Jeanne and needs a sincere wedding present. He goes to the street where the book sellers are found, and he steps into a shop. He tells the proprietor that he wants a Book of Hours, and together they discuss the type and amount of decoration. Henri specifies that he wants only ultramarine azure for certain parts of the illustrations, he wants a specific number of gilded initials, and he wants rubrications to begin all verses. The list goes on and is specific. A price is set.

Elsewhere, the parchmenters have been busy. A large number of calves’ skins (or maybe goat or sheep skins) have been soaked in lime water for about a week and had the hair and flesh scraped off. Then they were rinsed and stretched on a frame, scraped, sanded, and then rewetted and stretched very tightly and allowed to dry.

The bookseller has had the hides cut into

the sizes of the *bifolia* (a *bifolio* is both the right and left sides of one sheet, making four sides), which were arranged into stacks of several sheets. The top bifolio was pin pricked down the outside edges where the ruling edge will be lined-up to produce the ruling lines. This top bifolio becomes a template for the entire book and was laid upon the top of the stack. An awl would then be driven through the pin holes through the whole stack. When the whole book was pricked, the bifolios would be ruled. In this case, the ruling was with fine ink lines for both the columns and the text lines.

Next the bookseller sent stacks of several blank bifolia out to various copyists. Along with these went the *peciae*. A *pecia* is a section of the original text broken into numbered loose leaves. The calligraphers left space for decorated initials and plenty of room for the **miniatures**. They used pens made of bird quills, although at other times and in other places pens made of reeds were very common. Their inks were made from oak galls or lamp soot mixed with gum "arabic" and were kept either in small glazed pots or in horns stuck through holes in the copydesk. The copydesk had a slanted surface which opened to reveal storage underneath. It also had a post which supported a book stand which might swivel in front of the copyist.

The finished writing was then given to the **rubricator**, who was paid to paint in all of the versals and other initials throughout the collective manuscript. Although the Book of Hours is a secular text, Henri feels the work would not be complete until the bookseller takes the work to Notre Dame to be checked by an ecclesiastic corrector.

Mistakes were either corrected above, or scraped clean and rewritten if they were small enough. Otherwise they are stricken and rewritten in small letters nearby. Sometimes "va" was written at the beginning of

the error and "cu" at the end meaning "Vacu" or "out with everything between".

The bookseller then distributed the *peciae* between a couple of illuminator's workshops on the "Rue des Enlumineurs" on the left bank.

The master would design the important illustrations and check the designs of his/her trusted journeymen. Drawings would then be made with a form of pencil and the final lines fixed in light ink. Sometimes a cue would be written in the design to indicate what colors were to be used and where gold would be laid.

An advanced apprentice was given the labour of gilding. The outlines were filled in with a pen or brush laying **gesso** (a mixture of hide glue, plaster or chalk), a bit of sugar, a small bit of pigment, and often some white lead. The gold, slightly thicker than we use today, was laid onto the gesso after the gesso was moistened by breathing onto it. Then the gold was burnished and sometimes stamped.

The master had only a few apprentices to paint the backgrounds and simple parts of the illustrations. Then, he/she personally completed the figures and other important parts. The loose folio leaves were then returned to the bookseller.

In the meantime, Henri had revisited the bookseller and asked that some additional prayers be added to the manuscript. The bookseller knew of a man and woman who ran a tavern and supplemented their income by doing manuscript illumination. He assured Henri that they were competent and that Henri will have the remaining bifolia when the others became due.

The illuminator's workshop was a busy place. Apprentices had to be taught how to purchase good quality colors, usually sold in bags (occasionally gravel or other impurities found their way into the containers by "acci-

dent”), how to make brushes, temper colors, make some colors, and how to avoid being poisoned.

The brush was made from hairs of mini-ver, squirrel, or other weasel types. These hairs were hand bound in bunches, tied, and stuffed from the large side of a feather barrel out the narrow end. The soaked barrel was then slipped over the end of a wooden handle and bound tightly to crimp it to the wood while the knot would hold the hairs.

The illuminator ground powdered colors with some water and binder, enough to use for a few hours, and placed it in a small mussel or clam shell. This was the palette. Some colors were kept as stains crusted on linen pages and stored between books out of the light. To use these *clothlets* they cut a small piece off the clothlet and soaked it in a little water with binder to leach the color into the binder. Some organic colors needed no additional binder while others (such as the resin powder “Dragon’s Blood”) needed alcohol to be used as a solvent.

Several colors were reactive to each other. For example, the illuminator knew not to add orpiment to any copper-based or lead-based colors, for the result might be disastrous

color changes. Other colors were likely to fade completely when exposed to sunlight, which wasn’t as likely in a book, but the panel painters didn’t even bother to use them. Some colors like malachite and azurite were grainy in their choice form, and if they were ground finely, they would yield a pale color. The apprentice had much to learn.

When the bookseller had the completed manuscript in hand, it was then assembled by folding the bifolia and nesting about four into each other. These were then sewn through the fold, thus binding this small collection into a *quire*. When all of the folios had been bound into quires, the quires themselves were bound together into a codex (book) and a pair of leather covered boards were bound around the whole. Now the book was finished.

When Jeanne received this marvelous little book she was overjoyed. She kept it near her for many years, reciting its prayers many times each day. Eventually, she passed it on to her children, but by that time new styles had become popular and the book was never used again. Today it has been taken apart and sold to collectors, page by page.