

Armor: Mail

Category Rules: The category includes all items of armor which are primarily made of linked rings, or which use mail as a major component of their construction. Non-armor uses of mail are not eligible in this category, but should be entered under Decorative Metalwork. Entries must be modeled either in person (but not necessarily by the entrant) or via photographs from all angles in order to judge fit under the Skill section.

Documentation (0 to 4 points):

- 0: No documentation provided with entry.
- 1: Minimal information consisting of time, place and style.
- 2: Information consisting of time, place, and style, plus use of general sources; reliance on tertiary sources with perhaps one secondary source (ex: use of encyclopedia articles with a possible additional use of a book or article that refers to a period source.).
- 3: Information consisting of time, place, and style, plus a developed discussion making use of critical references; sources are largely secondary (ex: sources refer to period references; documentation discusses, compares, and contrasts the source's views).
- 4: Information consisting of time, place, and style, plus explanation of original research/experiment and relation of source material to it. Primary sources along with critical references, if available, are emphasized (ex: sources used are from the appropriate period for the entry, such as period manuscripts, paintings or artifacts, archaeological essays of primary source item, etc.).

Methods and Materials (0 to 4 points):

- 0: Entry is completely modern with no relationship to period elements or practices.
- 1: Use of modern materials and methods to produce a work that would not be accepted in period but either bears some relationship to an authentic work or which might be useful within SCA Culture.
- 2: Use of both modern materials and methods to produce a work that looks or feels authentic to the time period it purports to be.
- 3: Use of either modern materials or methods to produce a work that looks or feels authentic.
- 4: Use of totally authentic materials and methods.

Scope (0 to 6 points): Rank the ambition, not the success, of the entry on a scale of 0 to 6. Any references to "days" means a standard eight hour work day.

- 1: A small piece with denser, more difficult linking patterns such as double mail (six-in-one) or very small wire size used in making the rings.
- 2: A small piece with extensive fitting or which requires special skills and/or tools; a moderate sized but densely linked piece or one which requires some fitting such as a camail; a large simple item which would take a couple of days to complete.
- 3: A reasonably complicated piece which would require several days to finish; large piece with extensive fitting, such as a coif; or a very large piece with some fitting such as a short sleeveless shirt.
- 4: A complex piece requiring special skills and a few weeks to make; full mail hauberk with sleeves, coif with small rings or special construction, a good-sized piece in Oriental or Etruscan mail styles, simple pieces made with welded or riveted rings.
- 5: A piece requiring extensive research as well as special skills and a great deal of time; skirts, coifs or camails with riveted or welded rings; extremely fine and intricate pieces such as gloves, transitional styles incorporating leather or plate as well as mail.

- 6: The ultimate in complexity. Complete sets of armor made with special tools and incorporating a number of skills beyond mailmaking, such as decoration, leatherwork, gilding, engraving, weaving and embroidery. Full hauberks of riveted or welded mail made with period style tools and practices.

Skill (0 to 6 points): How well is the entry made? Rank the success of the entry on a scale of 0 to 6 points. Factors to consider include the quality of ring joints; smoothness of fit or joinery between sections and how the sections fit together; evenness of mail linking; how well the mail fits; durability and suitability.

- 1: Quality control uneven, linking errors, poor joints, odd rings. Will withstand light use for a short time, but will eventually begin to fall apart.
- 2: The piece is usable, ring joints are fairly well done, some problems may exist at seams and fitting points, but it will withstand ordinary use with frequent repair.
- 3: Good effort to make the piece functional and usable; joints, seams and fittings are not obviously defective. It will withstand a few years of constant wear with occasional repairs.
- 4: Piece is functional and well made; seams are hidden or indistinguishable from the bulk of the mail; transitions between portions of mail are smooth and do not restrict movement; most ring joints are smooth and will not catch on clothing. It will stand up to fairly heavy use for a number of years with minor repairs.
- 5: No visible defects to the untrained observer. All joints are well made, use of special elements integrated into a whole. The piece is solidly made and will withstand most abuse for a long time.
- 6: All details are finished to the highest degree. Every part is integrated into a pleasing, impressive and useful whole.

Creativity (0 to 4 points): The judge will rate the extent of originality and innovativeness shown. Evaluate how well different elements have been combined to create a logical and appropriate whole.

- 0: Rote-copied item with mistakes added.
- 1: Rote-copied item with no innovations or documented knowledge of the range of period style.
- 2: Logical combination of period elements with some innovation of embellishment or techniques, all logical to the period context of the persona for whom the costume is constructed.
- 3: As in #2, plus much individual interpretation and interpolation logical to the period context of the persona for whom the item is constructed; that is, within the range of possible styles with innovative combinations which appear to fit together.
- 4: As in #3, plus each element/layer shows such consideration and choice. Elements work together in a cohesive fashion that is specific to the needs of the persona for whom the item is constructed.

Judge's Observations (0 to 6 points): Rank the entry as a whole. How well do all the separately judged parts fit together? The entry's overall effect is judged in this section. This is the only section of the Criteria where the judge may allow her/his personality, private opinions and personal preferences to influence scoring.

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Editors: Myrra de Blackwood, 1984; Myrra de Blackwood & Bronwyn ferch Gwyn ap Rhys, 1987; Thorhalla Carlsdottir af Bröberg, 1997, Gwyneth Banfhidhleir, 2003.