

Ceramics and Pottery

Category Rules: Because of the inherent durability of ceramics and the importance of pottery to archeology and cultural study, many excellent sources are available and many museums are well-stocked with period pieces. These actual pieces reveal a great deal about form, scale and decoration, although construction and materials must usually be determined through archeological articles and personal research. It is suggested that documentation include photoduplicates of visual sources.

Because pottery is made to be used, **no** penalty will be made for the substitution of a modern glaze for an authentic lead-based glaze, if such is documented. It is also suggested that penalties **not** be given to pieces which have been glazed inside rather than sealed with pine pitch or resin, if such is suitably documented. Slip-casting from molds is an authentic process but modern commercial molds are inappropriate.

In Japanese teaware, skill was a Zen concept and should **not** be counted against such a piece.

Documentation (0 to 4 points):

- 0: No documentation provided with entry.
- 1: Minimal information consisting of time, place and style. Entry lacks citations and pictures.
- 2: As in #1, plus use of general sources. Reliance is on tertiary sources with perhaps one secondary source (for example: use of encyclopedia articles with a possible additional use of a book or article that refers to a period source.).
- 3: As in 2, plus a developed discussion making use of critical references; sources are largely secondary (ex: sources refer to period references; the documentation discusses, compares, and contrasts the source's views).
- 4: As in #3, plus explanation of original research/experiment and relation of source material to it. Primary sources are emphasized. In this category, primary sources can include direct examination of museum specimens, and or reference to archeological research reports.

Methods and Materials (0 to 4 points):

- 0: Entry is completely modern with no relationship to period works.
- 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. It looks period from a distance.
- 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 (but not both) to produce a work that looks or feels like it is from the time period it purports to be.
- 4: Use of totally authentic methods and materials. Artist mined the clay, refined it, and used period modifiers to achieve a workable clay body. The handling of the clay can be mimicked. This will not reflect on the glaze. The SCA supports safe habits, and use of lead glaze is not safe, even in suspension.

Scope (0 to 6 points): Rank the ambition, not the success, of the entry on a scale of 0 to 6 for each of the following elements and average for the total Scope score (Total of element scores divided by 4).

- Number: Were the items made in large batches in period? Should there be more than one? Was more than one made in trial and error?
- Understanding of clay methods: One point each for documentation noting:
 - clay harvesting
 - clay additives
 - wheel if used
 - firing techniques
 - glazing techniques
 - finishing techniques.
 - Difficulty of design and decoration -- i.e, anything added to the overall shape, such as joints:

- handle on lid
- handle on cup
- feet
- spouts on pitchers and tea pots.
- Lids: does the lid fit properly?
- Decoration of additional pieces of clay: have they been attached properly?
- Technique and form also interact to change difficulty. Wheel throwing a vase that has a narrow neck, and then balloons out to become flat (parallel to the base) before sweeping around and down to the base is a difficult form. Very light pieces relative to their size are also more difficult (ie, does the pot feel light or is it more like a lump of rock?).

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 for each of the following elements and average for the total Skill score (Total of element scores divided by 3 or 4).

- Evenness of wall thickness: from rim down sides and along the bottom. The bottom or sides might be a little thicker, but not sufficiently to provide a significant shift in the expected balance point of the pot – is the weight proportioned as the eye expects?
- Functionality (Could it work the way it's supposed to?).
- Appearance: Period look and feel.
- Handling of glaze. If the pot is unglazed, and documentation shows that this is correct, then ignore this category. Use the following guidelines as suggestions for achieving a particular score:
 0. No documentation
 1. Documentation of commercial glaze, or glaze applied with a spray gun.
 2. Documentation of glaze made from raw materials.
 3. Documentation of period glaze and glaze used on entry (provide formulae).
 4. As in #3 but glaze applied using period techniques with documentation.
 5. As in #4 with some discussion about differences between period and modern glaze or application technique.
 6. Documentation and Discussion of both period and modern glaze and appropriate application, along with making the glaze used from raw materials. Note: Using period glaze formula is not necessary to gain full points.

Creativity (0 to 4 points): Creativity can be difficult to assess for pottery entries.

Note: With English pottery, innovative pottery was not desirable when making “common” pottery. In part this was because many of the forms were governed by standards. “These” pots are to be made starting with “this” sized ball of clay. The guild or Crown did not usually receive innovation in standards favorably. If this category is inappropriate the judge has the option of doubling the Methods and Materials score after consultation with the A&S Faire Coordinator. In the documentation, the artist should suggest to the judge that this category is inappropriate and indicate why. One way to define innovation would be to evaluate the decoration and innovation in technique – all within the confines of documented procedures.

- 0: no creative elements noted in documentation.
- 1: Same form, same decoration.
- 2: Same form, different decoration.
- 3: Different form, same decoration, still provides a function. May also include same form if documentation indicates a use of an unusual method of manufacture.
- 4: Different form, different decoration, still provides same function as documented form.

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 personality, private opinions and personal preferences to influence scoring.

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