

Lapidary

Category Rules: The category is for entries made from gemstones or crystals. Lapidary judges should keep in mind that primary sources for this category consist mainly of museum pieces and a few treatises, such as Albert Magnus and Theophilus.

The following techniques are typical to period stones and should be treated as examples of authentic methods when judging authenticity:

- Polished nicks in stones, these were the result if cutting out a flaw while removing as little material and weight as possible.
- Stones which have been polished or faceted following the original shape so as to lose as little weight as possible.
- Drilled stones.
- Crystals, especially low-grade emeralds, drilled lengthwise and polished but not substantially shaped.
- Cabochons which started out as drilled stones, then were cut in half, leaving a line across the back of the stone where the hole was.

Modern standards for gemstone polish require a smooth, mirror-like finish without visible scratches. Period lapidaries did not have the benefit of precision equipment or fine, uniform abrasives, so that small scratches and slightly milky finishes are common in examples of period lapidary. When judging mastery of polishing technique, judges should consider the nature of the technique and polishing equipment used; entries using both modern equipment and abrasives should be judged according to a modern standard, while entries using either period equipment or period abrasives should be judged according to the standards for the appropriate period.

About Materials

While use of natural materials is encouraged, extreme cost and tightly controlled distribution of certain types of natural gem rough may make their use in entries impossible. In these cases, synthetic stones are preferred, followed then by simulated stones.

Synthetic gem rough is defined as a material that is effectively identical in chemical formulation to the natural gem. It has the same optical and physical properties, is just as hard to shape and polish, but was grown in a lab. Synthetic gem rough will be considered a fully authentic, period material for the purposes of judging.

Scoring Qualifiers

Simulated gem rough is defined as lab-created material which is not chemically identical to the natural gemstone, and does not necessarily have the same physical or optical properties. Although simulated gem rough is not an authentic material, entries made from it should only be penalized .5 point for Methods and Materials. The hardness portion of the Scope score should be based on the hardness of the simulant, not the natural stone. Cubic zirconium (CZ) is slightly less hard than corundum, but still much harder than garnet, and substantially harder than quartz.

Yttrium aluminate (YAG), a garnet simulant, is slightly harder than garnet. A stone cut from YAG will score .5 point lower in Methods and Materials than an identical stone cut from natural garnet, but will score .5 point higher in hardness for Scope.

Documentation (0 to 4 points):

0: No documentation provided with entry.

1: Minimal information consisting of time, place and style.

2: As in #1, 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: As in #2, 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: As in #3, plus explanation of original research/experiment and relation of source material to it. Primary sources, if available, are emphasized (ex: sources used are from the appropriate period for the entry, such as period manuscripts, paintings or artifacts).

Methods and Materials (0 to 4 points):

(Note: Refer to category rules for scoring qualifiers on materials choice)

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 for each of the following elements and average for the total Scope score (Total of element scores divided by 5).

(Note: Refer to category rules for scoring qualifiers on materials hardness)

- Type and hardness of stone.
- Shaping techniques used (cabochon vs. drilling vs. simple facets vs. period facets vs. engraving vs. intaglio and carving).
- Polishing techniques used.
- Equipment needed.
- Extent gone to ensure authenticity of techniques used.

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 2).

- Mastery of shaping techniques (for each technique used).
- Mastery of polishing techniques.

Creativity (0 to 4 points):

0: Standard style with no innovations.

1: Logical combination of elements with some innovation or embellishment or techniques, all logical to period context.

2: Logical combination of elements with more innovation or embellishment or techniques, all logical to period context.

3: Same as #2, plus much individual interpretation and interpolation logical to period.

4: Same as #3, plus each element is logically innovative to itself. Elements work together in a cohesive fashion.

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.

Contributors: Elli Lutemaker, no date given; Ryan Murdoch Mackenzie, Jean Paul Pierrepont, 2003.

Editors: Bronwyn ferch Gwyn ap Rhys, 1984; Bronwyn ferch Gwyn ap Rhys, 1987; Thorhalla Carlsdottir af Bröberg, 1997; Alan Fairfax, Katarina Peregrine, Gwyneth Banfhidhleir, 2003.