

Lapidary

Category Rules

This 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 were the result of 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.

Research and Documentation (Score: 0-4 points)

- 0 No documentation provided with entry. Face-to-face judging adds very little information.
- 1 Minimal information is provided for time, place and style. Face-to-face judging adds some background information.
- 2 As in #1, generalized sources are given with no emphasis on primary and/or scholarly resources. In face-to-face judging, no further understanding of the resources is evident. Materials and methods of construction of the entry are described.
- 3 As in #2, there is a good balance of resources: primary and/or scholarly sources well supported by other resources. Documentation and/or face-to-face judging provides well developed discussion of research. Materials and methods of construction are described and the reasons for the choices made are discussed.

- 4 As in #3, in-depth and extensive documentation provides a good balance of resources, emphasizing primary (if available) and/or scholarly resources backed up with a significant selection of other resources. Documentation and/or face-to-face judging provide a good explanation of original research and experimentation related to the research. Face-to-face judging indicates a keen grasp of the research and the entrant can discuss it easily with active engagement. Appendices included in documentation (if any) help provide further pertinent information to subject and time period.

Materials and Methods (Score: 0-4 points)

- 0 Entry is completely modern with no relationship to period elements or practices.
- 1 Use of modern materials and methods to produce an item that would not be accepted in period but bears some relationship to an authentic work or which might be useful within SCA culture. Entry is inconsistent to period, location, and persona.
- 2 Use of **both** modern materials and methods to produce a work that looks or feels authentic to the intended time period, location, culture, and economic class.
- 3 Use of **either** period material **or** methods to produce a work that looks or feels authentic to the relevant time period, location, culture, and economic class.
- 4 Use of materials and methods entirely documentable to the period for which it was constructed. Substitutions of modern materials for those no longer readily available will not be penalized so long as an effort has been made to substitute materials with a close look & feel to the original. Please explain the substitution in your documentation, and, if possible, explain how your substitution either resembles a period material, or how the handle of a period material would differ from the replacement.

Scope (Score: 0-6 points for each bullet item)

Rank the **ambition**, not the success, of the entry for each of the following elements. **Note:** Refer to category rules for scoring qualifiers on material 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 (Score: 0-6 points for each bullet item)

How well is the entry made? Rank the **success** of the entry for each of the following elements.

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

Ingenuity (Score: 0-4 points)

Judge the ingenuity of the entry. Was the entrant resourceful and inventive in the approach to creating their entry? Does the entry reflect the entrant's vision of period context? Is original thought, contemplation, interpretation, and vision evident according to the entrant's period?

Judge's Observation (Score: 0-6 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 judges may allow their personality, private opinions, and personal preferences to influence scoring.