

# Preprints 101

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Painting AOA scrolls is a great service for the Kingdom. Their Majesties have a need for scores of AOA scrolls during Their reign. No one scribe should carry the burden of painting that many scrolls. To that end, many hands make light work.

Here's what you need to get started:

AOA scrolls (distributed by the Falcon Signet or Royal Scribe)

Brushes

Paint

Sounds simple, right? It's intended to be very easy to get started. Some people have begun painting scrolls with leftover paints and brushes that they've had laying around the house for years. There's nothing wrong with that, as a beginning. But there is a better way. Here are my suggestions for putting together your scribal supplies.

## PAINT

Begin with good paint. I suggest using Windsor & Newton gouache. *Gouache* is a type of water-based paint. It is more opaque than watercolors. It comes in a tube and is ready to use with the addition of just a little water. When it dries on your palette, you can reconstitute it by adding water. No waste!

Watercolors are serviceable, and if you already have them, please use them. But remember to add much less water than normal; this will help to simulate the more period look that we achieve with gouache. Oil paints are not recommended because they can soak into the paper and leave an undesired "halo" effect. Acrylics are also not recommended; they tend to have a plastice look once dried.

If you look at the local art supply store or online catalogs, you'll find brands of gouache that are much cheaper than Windsor & Newton. In this regard, you get what you pay for. These are often inferior products. Some may cause you to wonder why your painting skills are so poor. In this instance, I would suggest that better equipment helps make better artists. It might not be your skills that are lacking, but rather the form of your paint itself. The better paint is worth the money. And keep in mind that the small tube of paint will likely last for years.

So now that you're ready to buy some paint, what colors should you look for? Some of it depends on the current reign's style. If the scroll style is Celtic, it will call for a quite different set of colors than a French style. However, most scribes can get by quite nicely with a small set of basic colors. I suggest the following Windsor & Newton gouache paints to get you started.

Ultramarine blue

Spectrum red

Spectrum yellow

Zinc white

Gold (Holbein-brand rich gold)

The rest of the colors you need can be mixed from these colors. If you can afford a few more tubes of paint, I suggest these:

Windsor green  
Spectrum violet  
Ivory black  
Burnt umber (brown)

Note that I've actually suggested a gouache that's not of the W&N brand. I've had lots of good luck with Holbein-brand gold. It's shiny without being brassy, and can be burnished (polished to a high-shine finish).

I use an eyedropper to add water one or two drops at a time to the paint. Try to achieve the consistency of a heavy cream. Add water to one paint at a time. Many people suggest using distilled water, to avoid impurities. I have to admit that I freely use tap water.

## **BRUSHES**

Everyone has a favorite size and brand of brush. Please use whatever feels comfortable to you. Brushes come in numbered sizes; the larger the number, the smaller the brush point. I rarely use anything larger than size 000 brush, and most of my brushes are much smaller than that. (The more zeros, the smaller the brush. 0 is small, but 20×0 is extremely small.)

Brushes are available in a variety of animal hairs, from domestic to exotic, which are wonderful to work with, but there are synthetic and student models that also work quite well. Don't feel that you have to start out with the best; find something serviceable and work up from there. In brushes, the more expensive is not always better.

## **SCROLLS**

Contact the Royal Scribe or the Falcon Signet office to obtain AOA scrolls to illuminate. The Royal Scribe changes with each reign. Any member of the current Crown's retinue should be able to point you in the right direction. We also have an active Yahoo Group to stay in contact. Information is available at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/CalontirScribes>.

Now you have everything you need to paint scrolls for the kingdom. Now comes the hard part—begin painting. If you're concerned that you're not yet good enough to paint scrolls, keep in mind that every journey begins with the first step. There's no better way to get practice and become a better scribe than by simply painting lots and lots of scrolls. Begin by painting your first scroll, and keep on going!

## **THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND**

You are a volunteer. If you don't want to paint a scroll, don't do it. However, if you've made the promise to supply a scroll, please honor that promise. And do the best job you're capable of doing. No one would ask more than that, but the Kingdom expects no less. Use the best supplies and talent that you're able, for the sake of the recipient, for whom this might be the only scroll ever granted.

Some scrolls have the badge or totem of the order within the design. Please paint these in the colors called for by the badges' heraldry. These are explained in the next section. Some beautifully painted scrolls have, unfortunately, gone unused because the badges were painted in inappropriate colors.

If you take scrolls, do what you can to complete them in a timely manner, or pass them along to others to paint. The expensive paper used for scrolls is paid for out of the Kingdom budget. Try not to waste. And because each reign has individual scrolls, it is best to complete them within the first three months of a reign. The most pressing need for scrolls is during the first month. Typically, the Royal Scribe has enough completed scrolls to coast out the last month or two of a reign.

Please, please, please sign the back of your work. Let people know that you've volunteered your time and talent to make that special scroll. Write your name lightly in pencil on the back of the scroll. The best place to put your name is at the top or middle of a scroll; write it lightly in pencil. Some reigns choose to fold up the bottom of scrolls as part of the sealing process (a very period practice). This means that a signature on the bottom would show when the back is folded to the front.

### **EXTRA SUPPLIES**

Now that you're hooked, you might be ready for more supplies. Here are some suggestions for extra goodies.

- Extras:
  - Books (see a separate section on book suggestions)
  - Easel or clipboard
  - Light table
  - Eye dropper
  - Gold leaf
  - More paints
  - Better brushes

### **RESOURCES**

- Web sites. Start at [www.sca.org](http://www.sca.org) and visit the A&S page. Be sure to check out the home pages for other Kingdoms' C&I groups.
- Catalogs for materials
  - [dickblick.com](http://dickblick.com)
  - [aswexpress.com](http://aswexpress.com)
  - [johnnealbooks.com](http://johnnealbooks.com)
  - [paperinkarts.com](http://paperinkarts.com)
- Calontir scribes list (<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/CalontirScribes>)
- Falcon Signet office (contact information is available on the Calontir home page)