

SCROLL LAYOUT

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First let us talk about AOA level scrolls. Usually this means you have agreed to be the Royal Scribe, or are assisting the Royal Scribe with design of the masters.

Before starting anything you will need to talk with the Coronet/Crown or Their representative:

- 1 What are they envisioning?
- 2 What time period do They want the scrolls for Their reign to be done in? Do they have a preference for the type of artwork (country(s), specific badges/animals to be included, etc.), or calligraphy styles?
- 3 Do They want bible pages, writs with illumination or just writs?
- 4 What size do they want? There are definite benefits to having the scrolls being 8.5 X 11 inches (printing and framing being a couple) but half sheets are also nice.

You should also think to yourself whether you are up for all that They want. For example, is the calligraphy style something you are comfortable with, or are willing to learn, or will you need to get someone to be your partner in designing the scrolls. Hey, this is period, you know, so you don't need to feel bad about it. (This will also apply to doing GAO and POA scrolls.)

Here I will be referencing a previous paper already published in your Scribe's Handbook; "To Be a Royal Scribe". (Don't worry, I wrote it, so I can do that. ☺)

"Make the Masters – By this I mean design what the scroll will look like. The original copy of any preprint is called a "Master". One to two will be made for each AOA level award given out during the next Reign. There are a few ways of going about making a master, but I am going to tell you the way I prefer to do it.

- a. Decide on a graph paper that fits your pen's nib size. This paper is already ruled and makes the alignment of your text and artwork much easier.
- b. The calligraphy and the artwork can be done separately and then cut and pasted together or done all at the same time. The cut and paste method will allow you to make more mistakes, or change your mind, in the initial drawing stage without having to redo everything. This also allows you to have someone help you with the artwork or calligraphy. (I advise that you remember... a preprint will seem more like an original if the person who did the calligraphy on the "master" is also the one who fills in the names as the Reign progresses). If a cut and paste method is chosen, remember to leave the appropriate space on your paper, when doing your calligraphy, for the artwork to be added in later. For example: I've been asked to do Celtic knot work on the scrolls this reign. I can do the hand just fine but designing knot work makes me crazy. I give a rough size estimate to my buddy Tatiana and ask her to draw up some designs for me, which she agrees to do. After I have received the drawings, I then block out the necessary space on my graph paper and proceed to do my calligraphy around it. Ok, so maybe I had to do it a couple of times to get it right, but

that is no problem, I haven't actually added the drawing yet. When I have the calligraphy to my satisfaction, I then cut out the drawing (or a copy of the drawing if I want to use it in another scroll) and tape it onto my graph paper in the appropriate place. I make another copy of that and now I have a "master" from which to make the preprint.

- c. When doing the calligraphy on your master you may want to spend some time before hand writing down some of the more common reasons for awards and some long and short names that you know. Measure how much space these names take up and leave that much space on your "master". For example: do one "master" for the Torse scroll with enough space for a short name and a short reason, and another with enough space for a long name and reason. It is also helpful if you can arrange for one or the other to be at the end of a line. If you do that you can use a "filler", if the name/reason is not long enough, to complete the line and flesh out the scroll.
- d. Your preprint will not have graph lines on it after the copies are made. At least it shouldn't if you have been using the correct graph paper and your copy center knows what it is doing. You will need to pencil in some lines in the open areas to serve as guides when adding in the names, reasons, dates and places (BTW, I like to leave the date and place area completely blank if they come at the end of the text. It is easier for me to callig in a complete sentence than to fill the awkward spaces left for days, months and groups. In case you haven't noticed none of these things need the same exact amount of room and the scroll starts to look sloppy when you try to make the words fit in the wrong sized spaces.). Here's a hint on how to get your penciled-in lines straight and even: leave a small mark (more like a dot) on your "master" at the end of each graphed line (You know, the ones you will be adding the pencil line to after the copies are made.). These marks will show on your preprints, but that is all right. They will act as a guide to line up your ruler. After you have no further need for them, scrape them lightly with an exacto knife, to loosen them, and then simply erase them away.
- e. You can actually make a "master" of artwork only for some of the GOA level scrolls if you like. These pictures can be painted by anyone and then you can callig in the text later. This is a technique best used when you have willing painters who can't draw, or when you want to have a larger picture available to add a last minute text to, for the last minute award. If colored ink is used for part of the text no one will know that the entire thing was not an original scroll, made just for them."

GOA and POA.

Again, talk with the Crown or Their Royal Scribe. You need to know the following things before starting:

- 1 Who is the recipient and what persona is the scroll to be done in? Is this a Crown preference or the persona of the recipient? For example: some Crowns have decreed that the AOA and GOA scrolls be done in the persona of the Crown, while the POAs were to be styled after the persona of the recipient. Also, some people haven't developed a persona yet, in which case you may be given leave to just do what makes you happy.

- 2 Is the scroll to be done on paper, vellum or some other substance? If it is to be on vellum, who is supplying the vellum/providing the money for it? I can't emphasize enough that you not take this upon yourself unless the recipient is a really good friend and you are giving it as a personal gift. Vellum gets very expensive. As for other substances, you might be surprised. (I have done scrolls on bunny fur and real sheepskin, with the fur still attached – I don't advise it)
- 3 When is the scroll due?
- 4 Do they have a text ready for you? If not, how long will it be until one is available? This is important to know because sometimes the amount of time left until the scroll is given out is not enough to actually do a scroll, or at least to do it as nicely as you might wish. This is a good time to split your efforts and do a separate picture with a writ as the main document. Which, as you may have discerned, is a more period way of doing it, but not always the easiest? You can get an earlier start on the picture and do the writ when the text is available.
- 5 Finally, how are They planning to seal and sign the scroll, and how/when do They want it delivered? This is important to know because it will influence how you lay out the scroll, how much room you leave for the signatures and seal(s) and how quickly you need to get it done. For example: Lead seals will mark the paper, beeswax will melt on the paper, no one wants to finish a beautiful piece of artwork only to have the seal covering a good part of it, and some writs will have multiple seals used along with the signing.

Now, for the layout/design: First you do the research. You can do this online or use the old fashioned book. I like to find multiple examples of the style/time period/country of origin you are planning to use. This is the best way to help decide how much detail you will need to include, what color scheme you need to use and how the scroll should be laid out.

Remember, we are trying to do medieval recreation. For several reasons it is very tempting to put a lot of modern elements into the scrolls you make. First, several of us have had modern training in the arts, which is hard to get past. Second, we really want to put people in the artwork; People who look like the recipient; People with pink skin (you won't find much of this in the medieval manuscripts, by the way). And, third, it is often difficult to find examples of period works that fit what it is we want to create.

This is where the research comes in very handy. Finding several examples of what we are trying to recreate helps us find ways to include those personal touches without deviating too far from the period feel we are trying to recreate. If you can make copies of all the pieces you have found and keep them handy while you are working, you can also refer back to them frequently to remind yourself of the colors, shapes and designs used in the middle ages. It keeps you from veering off when you least expect it, if you know what I mean.

You may want to consider the final size of your piece and whether it is going to be easy or difficult to frame. There are a number of standard frames out there, which can be matted for effect or allow for the scroll to be floated. If your scroll is of an odd size a custom frame

may be needed. If the piece needs to be matted, say because it is on vellum and will warp if not secured, keep in mind how much space will be needed around the actual document/picture. But, hey this is a once in a lifetime event for the recipient. They may want a special, custom frame anyway.

Finally, before I start with the actual layout information, think about what it is you are good at doing and how long it usually takes you to do it. If you are good at ivies and acanthus leaves, but not so good at faces, perhaps you should concentrate more on the ivy or leaves. If you have only two weeks to complete a scroll, perhaps you shouldn't try for a full page from the Grande Hours of Duc du Berry. I am not saying you should not try something you haven't done before or that you have some problems with. The only way to get good at something is to give it a try and practice. What I am saying is, it is always more fulfilling to give someone a scroll you wish you could keep. A scroll that is beautiful and still keeping with your abilities.

LAYOUT

WRIT

This type of document is really handy when you have a long (by this I mean really long) text. It can be done with or without a decorated first letter. Many also have the first line of the document fancified with more elaborate flourishes on the ascenders of the letters (especially in the later period examples). It is a pretty simple layout with four important things to take into consideration:

1) Writs in period were not done in the more formal book hands we are used to seeing in the manuscripts we reproduce. They were completed in more of a secretarial hand, sometimes even in the cursive form of the day. Do a little more research on the type of calligraphy done on writs of the time period you are working in and you will see what I mean. You do not want to use the more formal quatrata, or textura, or even uncial hands when penning the writ. This even applies for the more important documents in history. For example, look at the Magna Carta. It is a simple (if very long) document, in a fairly common hand and with no decoration.

2) You will need to leave enough room around the top and sides of the document for the piece to be matted and framed. Depending on the size of the document, I recommend an inch and a half to two inches at the top of the document, and 1 ¼ to - 1 ½ inches on each side. The bottom needs to be big enough to allow the page to be turned up and then have signatures and a seal added. I recommend 2 ½ - 3 inches. If your text is so long that turning up the bottom, and still having room for the text and signatures, is not possible, you can do it with 2 inches, but make sure you are using a heavier paper which is able to support the weight/strain of the seal(s). I know this is a lot of wasted space, especially when using vellum, but it is also less than was often used in period and still allows the piece to look right.

3) Decorated letters are a lot less common, in period, than we would like to think. When they are used on writs they are usually pretty simple. Now, don't get me wrong more complicated letters can be found, but if you intend to also paint a lovely picture, or have some other piece of artwork made to accompany the writ, keep it simple and spend more of your time on the accompanying picture/item. Remember, just like when you make a master, you need to block out the area for the decorated letter and then do the calligraphy. Come back later to complete the painting/gold leafing of the first initial.

4) Signing the writ. It is our tradition in the SCA for the Crown to sign all of the legal documents in addition to placing Their Seal. In period this was not done. The Seal is the Crown's (or their representative's) signature. The scribe, however, did at times sign the writ. The writs I have found with examples of this all have the signature of the scribe placed along the bottom of the turned up portion of the parchment, usually in the lower right corner.

BIBLE PAGE

It has become the norm for most of our scrolls to be given in this format. It gives the scribe the opportunity to do both illumination and calligraphy. It also encourages us to expand our skills, learning not only the calligraphic book hands of the different time periods, but also the different styles of drawing and painting throughout the middle ages. And let's face it, when done well, they are darn pretty and a thing of beauty to display in the recipient's home.

Many medieval manuscripts have painted and/or rubricated letters or fillers that are interspersed amongst the text, as well as at least one historiated or decorated initial. There may also be ivies or knot work you want to work around your text. Also, most bible pages have evenly spaced lines, columns, and pages, which end with columns that match in length.

Our texts do not always lend themselves to accomplishing this look, and we often make do by placing the text in a box in the center of our page. We end the text with uneven lines. We don't put a lot of the nicer elements into the text that are needed to really make the work look like the bible page we are trying to reproduce, and we encourage the Crown to sign directly in the center of the page. Also, we tend to use a lot more capital letters than were used in the bible, and we break things up into paragraphs, which they did not do. To avoid these problems there are several things we can do:

If you can, talk to the person writing the text. We in the SCA tend to like starting texts with "Know all", or "This day", or "Let it be known"... If you notice, there is not a round letter in the bunch. For a really nice historiated initial, you really need a round letter, like a "P" or an "O". Encourage the writer to start the text with a letter of your choosing. One you frequently see in the manuscript you are reproducing. It makes planning your first decorated or historiated initial much easier. I have, at times, changed the wording myself (with the Crown's permission, of course) to allow for a more optimal first letter.

I encourage you to remember that the hand used really needs to match the style of artwork you are reproducing. For example: If I am attempting to reproduce a bible page from the Grande Hours and I have perfected the actual painting and illumination, I really need to use a quadrata hand (the same as was used in the original and other manuscripts of that time). I would not be doing the piece justice by using an uncial or carolingian hand, or one of the later period italics or bastardas.

Also, I avoid most of the capitals in the original text and never do separate paragraphs.

After determining which elements you plan to use, from the various manuscripts you have researched (preferably from the same region and time period), you will need to block out your page. Do this on a separate piece of paper. I like to use the same graph paper I use when designing masters. I know it is a lot more work, but you will be much happier if you do.

First, go through the text and circle all the letters you would like to highlight (decorate, color in, historiate, rubricate, etc). Decide which ones would allow themselves to be made into something a little more special (beginning of a paragraph, name of the recipient, name of the Crown, name of the Order... you get the idea), and then decide on how big you would like that letter to be.

Note whether the manuscript you are reproducing has the majority of its decoration on the left, right or middle of the page and what the approximate size of your manuscript is. It is possible that you will need to do more than one page in order to keep the scale of your work appropriate. We love long texts, but they don't always work well when doing this sort of work. Trying to put too much text on one page can destroy the look you are going for by making the page too big, the text too small, or by limiting the amount of artwork you can include and still fit onto the medium you are working with.

In order to determine how much space you need, outline the basic area the first letter will take, and any other decoration the page will have (ivies, etc.) and block out how wide you want your columns to be. The drawing can be added and perfected after the calligraphy has been blocked out, so don't dwell on making it pretty. Now start writing the text, stopping to block out where you want the decorated letters to go. Some manuscripts use a lot of fillers, and this can be a wonderful thing for you. You will need to keep most of your columns even, which may mean that you are abbreviating, or cutting off your words on one line to start the next line with what is left of the word. Fillers can end a sentence before the letter you are wanting to use, allowing you to place it at the beginning of a line, and they can even out a line when you are reluctant to break up a word (say like the name of the Crown, or the recipient -- that would be poor form). Fillers are also ideal for paragraph breaks.

After doing most, if not all of the text, you will get a good idea of how much space/length you will need to allow for your page. You can decide where to break in order to start the next column and still end up as close to even as possible. Now writing out all of the text can be a very good thing. Not only does it allow you to determine where to put the decoration, break up words and end columns, and decide how big a piece of paper or

vellum you will need, it allows you to get really good at the hand you have chosen.

OK. I think that is most of what you need to know about the layout portion of making a bible page style scroll. Now, all you need to do is do it. Easy. That part is up to you. 😊

Finally, the Crown needs to sign the page. I can tell you from experience that most Crown's really do not want to sign in the middle of a beautiful piece of artwork. It can destroy the look of the page and our writing is nowhere near as nice as the calligraphy you do. Leave a place at the bottom of the page, spaced slightly down from the artwork. Leave room for the seal (as per the Crown's preference) and draw a fine line on which they can sign. You may want to include the words "King" and "Queen" at the end, or under, each line but that is not always necessary. Talk with the Crown and see what they would prefer.

PICTURE

This part is pretty easy (the layout that is). Look at your research, determine your size and what elements you want to include, and start gilding and painting. It can be anything you want it to be, and as simple, or complicated, as you want it to be.

Your picture doesn't even have to be a picture. It can be an item of significance, done by yourself or someone else. Remember, when done this way, the writ is the actual document and the accompanying picture, or item, is a gift to show the recipient the Crowns' appreciation of all their efforts.