

Calligraphy 101
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Pennsic War 41

Afraid to try Calligraphy? Do you think your handwriting is too bad? WELL DON'T!! Anyone can do this. Today, we'll learn about what is acceptable in pens, inks and papers for Aethelmearc award scrolls. You will put Pen to Paper to have hands on practice to learn basic calligraphic strokes and the steps in forming letters. No specific hand will be taught BUT we'll try a few.

Disclaimer: Special Thanks to THL Sophie Davenport for her guidance. What I will show you today works for me. Don't ever be afraid to try.

Tools of the Trade

PAPER (from bad to wonderful)

Graph Paper - should be used for practice only

Bristol - this is ok for paint but tends to lend to fuzzy ink.

Cold press watercolor paper - Again, nice for painting but not ideal for ink.

Available in most craft stores

Hot press watercolor paper - (140lb) - This is the most commonly used paper in many Scribal groups in Aethelmearc. The weight of the paper is ideal for calligraphy and the texture is smooth. Most inks have little issue with the paper as well as paints.

****personal note: I use this pretty exclusively ****

This generally can be found in speciality art stores

Pergamenata - translucent Vellum like but made of plant material (sometimes referred to as Vegetable Vellum). One advantage is that Inks and paints will sit on the surface. This lends to a longer drying time BUT makes it very easy to scrape if you make a mistake.

Calfskin vellum - Most manuscripts in period of make of this. Skins are cleaned and prepared for painting and/or calligraphy. This leads to increase cost

Pergamenta and Vellum can generally be ordered online.

Writing Implements (of doom. The pen is mightier than the sword)

Pencils - start with practicing with a pencil to understand letter shape.

White erasers - always keep one handy

Calligraphy Markers - these are great practice pens, but should not be used on Scrolls

Cartridge Pens - Available with changeable nibs and replaceable ink cartridges.

Dip style nib pens - Available in a variety of styles in both nibs and holders. You may go through a few before you find one you like

Reed - Yes, reed. You can cut a reed into a nib with little preparation

Quills - with some preparation and practice, Quills produce a different and beautiful result.

INKS

The current market for inks is wonderful. From craft stores to online, you can find any ink you want. If you are using a cartridge pen, please be sure to use ones that match. The last thing you need is ink splatter on your scroll. For dip pens, look for acid free archival inks. They are gentler on metal nibs.

Ink Color depends on the manuscript. **DON'T BE AFRAID OF COLOR!** Use colors that are in the manuscript - Reds and Blues are wonderful accent colors for Names.

A SPECIAL NOTE: You can make your own ink. Ox Gall ink classes are available.

PEN TO PAPER

First things first. Take a deep breathe. This isn't hard. It is just writing. When you were a kid, you had to practice your handwriting. You'll need to do the same here.

Start with Graph paper. Most letters can be broken down into stokes and the graph lines will help guide you.

Warming up. Horizontal and vertical lines, circles and diagonal lines. why? This will give you a feel for the pen, ink and paper. Nibs can vary and so can paper. It's best to have accidents happen off the scroll than on.

Practicing your hand - I do this on conference calls. My notebook is littered with letters I'm having issues with. Work your basic strokes into letters. Letters will move into words. This will cement the structure into whole being.

PRACTICE PRACTICE PRACTICE!!

Don't push, pull the pen

Breathe

Keep your hand loose..

Stretch your hand often

BREATHE

Remember the 3 basic strokes. This is your foundation.

Basic Angle - 45 degree

Basic Line - 45 degree

Basic Crescent - 45 degree

Don't use a small nib on really big letters. Watch your sizing.

Some Books to consider

The British Library-- <http://molcat1.bl.uk/illcat/welcome.htm>

Calligrapher's Bible-- <http://www.amazon.com/The-Calligraphers-Bible-Complete-Alphabets/dp/0764156152>

The Art of Calligraphy-- http://www.amazon.com/The-Art-Calligraphy-Practical-Techniques/dp/0756613043/ref=ntt_at_ep_dpt_3

Medieval Calligraphy- Marc Drogin-- http://www.amazon.com/Medieval-Calligraphy-Technique-Lettering-Typography/dp/0486261425/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1334971567&sr=1-1

For supplies- PaperInkArts-- <http://www.paperinkarts.com/>

Hyatt's Art supplies <http://www.hyatts.com/>