

PREPARING AN ORIGINAL SCROLL

by Zinaida Likhitovna Umanskaya

Preparation of the original works of art that is the achievement scroll of Ansteorra, takes much more time and effort than the preparation of uncolored charters for photo reproduction. Also, the steps in producing these scrolls differ, since each is an individual work of art.

Different methods work best for different artists, and each must find what works best for himself. The steps proposed here is a combination of what has worked best for the author and techniques suggested by knowledgeable scribes in this and other kingdoms.

PREPARATION

1. Be sure you have the correct heraldic information for the scroll you are doing: Date of the award, blazon (wording), emblazon (try to get a picture), achievement (be sure there is no conflict), name (spelling). The preferred source for this information is the Star Signet.
2. Be sure the Star signet knows you are doing the scroll, so that another scribe will not waste time working on the same award scroll.
3. Give some thought to the theme of the scroll. The script style should match the period of the illumination, and both should relate to the country and period of the recipient, if possible. What are the recipient's likes (dancing, fighting) or special skill? The badge of the award can be incorporated into the illumination. On a Peerage scroll, I usually incorporate the badges of all previous awards into the illumination.
4. Do a little research. Find references for the appropriate period and place with examples of calligraphy, capital letters, borders, layout, achievements. (Build your own reference file with photocopies from books, while you're at it)
5. Decide how you want the finished scroll to look. Make several small sketches of possible layouts, color arrangements, initial letters, etc. Will it be vertical or horizontal? Where will the Arms go? Make it "balanced": not too heavy with illustration on the top or bottom, or on one side or the other. If necessary, do a full sized sketch, or cut out white or colored paper shapes of the elements of your design (shield or achievement, capital letter, name and title spaces, badges, signatures, and seals), and move them around on your paper to see how they will look. Remember that dark is heavier than light, and large is heavier than small. Book and

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craft stores now carry dozens of books with good advice on layout and spacing. Beginners, look for some by Margaret Shepherd.

DRAFTING A LAYOUT

1. Once the style has been chosen, a draft of the scroll should be made. Experienced scribes may skip this step, but it is a valuable tool for those with less experience. Work on scratch paper the same size as the finished scroll.
2. Don't forget to allow margins. The standard scroll sizes provided with the scroll texts are for the finished scroll paper size, not for the artwork only. These sizes are standardized so that scrolls will not require expensive custom framing. The margin is the line at which the illumination stops. Measure from the paper edge at several points and draw this line all around, no less than 1/2 inch from the edge. It could be as wide as three inches, depending on the size of the scroll. The bottom margin should be a little wider than the other three.
3. Outline your margins and artwork. If you made a full-sized sketch of your illumination (#5 above) you are over half finished with this step. On your scratch paper, outline your margins and the major components of your artwork with a dark pen or pencil. This is the first stopping-point if two people, artist and calligrapher are collaborating on a scroll. (You should have previously agreed on a period alphabet and illumination style.) The artist will send the outlined draft to the calligrapher or will perform this next step, sending the scroll paper to the calligrapher.
4. Lightly draw or trace with a hard pencil onto the scroll paper, the margins and the area that each element of the illumination will take. The main area left is where the body of the text must fit. (Be kind to your calligrapher, if you are working with someone, and leave enough space!). NOTICE, NO ART HAS BEEN INKED IN YET.

DRAFTING THE TEXT

1. Get the text ready. Be sure you have all the information to fill-in all the blanks. Be aware of any unusual spellings, capitalizations and (his/her) choices. Double check the name and date another time.
2. Drafting the text. There are several ways to draft the text. Some scribes can even skip this step, but it makes the final scroll easier and neater.

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The calligrapher must determine if the text will fit and what size text and pens to use, and anticipate any spacing problems or awkward spellings. This is done by penciling out or calligraphing (even with a felt tip pen) the entire text on a draft copy, making the necessary adjustments, then "tracing" the calligraphy onto the original or carefully calligraphing it using the draft as a model. Another method practiced by some scribes is to lightly pencil in the entire text directly onto the (ruled) scroll. This may be the best method if you do not have a light table, while the tracing method may work best with a light table.

3. Estimate measuring text, instead of writing a complete draft. Count the letters and spaces on each line of the provided text. Make an educated guess on what size the letters should be. On a scrap of paper, draw lines for several lines of text of the size you have chosen. Calligraph several lines of text with the nib you have chosen, and with this as a guide, figure out the amount of space the full text will take. If it is too long, adjust smaller; if too short, adjust larger. When you do not draft the entire text, you are more likely to have text that does not fit onto the allotted space, misspelled words, and all kinds of other nasty little errors, especially if you are not experienced.
4. With either method, it is good insurance to allow one extra line of calligraphy. Remember that text can change sizes for title and name lines, and for the closing "date" lines.
5. Leave enough room for the signatures from the Crown, and/or Star Principal Herald, and a seal, if one is in use. It helps if the signers have a penciled line to follow. The Star Principal Herald signs all achievement scrolls, be sure to allow space for the signature.

CALLIGRAPHING THE TEXT

1. Using the letter height(s) you have decided on, lightly line-out the entire text space on the scroll with a hard pencil. Measure precisely so your work will be even.
2. Before starting, "warm-up" by calligraphing the first line or so of the text on a scratch piece of paper (same as the scroll paper, if possible) with the pen and ink to be used on the scroll.
3. If using a dip pen, have scratch paper nearby on which to make "squiggles" to remove excess ink periodically.

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4. Using a slip sheet to protect the pencilled lines below your work, calligraph the entire text. When using two colors of ink, switch pens and inks as you work from the top, down, or do all of the black and let it dry COMPLETELY before calligraphing the contrasting color. Don't take any chances on smearing fresh perfect calligraphy by trying to insert contrasting text too soon. It is preferable, however, to complete the text in one session to insure consistency.
5. When the text is finished, check it carefully for mistakes, make any corrections, and erase all pencil lines and dirt from the text area.
6. Sign "scriptset" ("written by"), and your maker's mark or signature in a discrete spot along the border. Make it something the illuminator can work around. Pencil the same in the upper left corner on the back. Make a photocopy or photo of the scroll for your records. (A full-sized copy could save a lot of draft time on another scroll.)
7. Send it back to the illuminator, and report to the Star Signet that you have finished your portion of the work, or complete the illumination yourself.

COMPLETING ILLUMINATION

1. IMPORTANT! Tape a clean white paper over the text area before beginning to complete the illumination to protect it from dirt, drips or spills.
2. Many illuminators outline their art in black before coloring it. If this is your style, this is the first step in completing the illumination after the calligraphy is COMPLETELY dry. Use permanent black ink with a crow quill pen or with medium to fine technical pens.
3. Erase pencil marks when the black lines are COMPLETELY dry. They will show through any transparent colors, and the colors will set them so they will not come off.
4. If you are unsure about what colors look best where, quickly color a black and white photocopy (or reduction) of the scroll.
5. Color the largest parts of the illumination first: the arms, the border, and other major design elements. Generally complete one part of the design

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before starting on the next. This allows you to change color schemes, if necessary, to complement the main colors.

6. Within each area of the design, and throughout the scroll, you will generally put colors on in light-to-dark order so that they "bleed" together less. Add metals last.
7. Finally, touch-up any colors as needed, and go-over the black outlines, as necessary, to "crispen" them.
8. Sign "delineavit" (drawn by") and your maker's mark or your name in a discrete place, generally in or on the border. Put the same information in pencil on the back in the upper left corner. Make a photograph or slide of the scroll for your records. (One for the Star Signet's office would be appreciated.)
9. Check the scroll one last time. Erase pencil lines and dirt. Gently make corrections on paint and ink slips or smudges, if you know how. (Ask someone, if you don't.)
10. Turn the scroll over to the Stellar scroll for approval if to be handed out in court, or to the recipient. You're done.