At a Loss for Words:

Finding inspiration for award scroll wordings by using period documents and other sources

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The Basics Needed for Wording:

In the SCA, an award scroll is a royal proclamation that gives the recipient proof of an award. The minimum information needed is: 1) Who is giving the Award; 2) Who is getting the award; 3) What award is being given; and 4) When it is/was given.

More often than not, this information will come to the scribe from the Signet or the Party who is giving the assignment.

Technically, all that is needed is the above information for the scroll's wording and you could end up with wording such as:

We, Jack, King of the Playroom, award Jill the title of Companion of the Silly Puppet at the Event in the Backyard. Done today, this year.

Admittedly this is rather dull and boring, but it does exactly what it needs to do. But most scribes want to do more than the bare bones basics - they want to entertain and dazzle the recipient, the Royalty, and the populace with snazzy wording that people will not soon forget.

So how does the scribe add the pizazz? That's when we must seek out sources of inspiration.

Where to start looking:

This is by far one of the hardest parts of the whole wording search. Almost every illuminator can give you a list of places to look for ideas for the illumination of the scroll. Calligraphers can reference manuals for the different hands used. Just about every scribe has a library full of books on period manuscripts and can probably recite at least a handful of on-line sources as well. But what about wordings?

Places to look:

- <u>Kingdom Scribal Handbook:</u> Just about every Kingdom in the Known World has a scribal or heralds' handbook that actually gives ideas and basic suggestions for wording. For brand new scribes this is a wonderful place to start to get ideas.
- <u>Other Kingdoms' Scribal Handbooks:</u> Borrowing is a perfectly period practice and often times scribes can and will take wording from other Kingdoms and adapt them to award scrolls in their own.
- <u>Literature:</u> Sometimes scribes can look to modern and classical literature for inspiration. I personally have found inspiration in such works as "The Walrus and the Carpenter" by Lewis Carroll for wording.

- <u>Modern Pop Culture:</u> Bards are known for filking modern songs and giving them relevance to the SCA and events. Scribes also do the same thing. Only rather than singing what we filk, we have heralds read them. Looking to modern songs is a place to find inspiration for spicing up scroll wording and making them fun. I have used such songs as "Do You Hear the People Sing" from the musical <u>Les Miserables</u>, "The Muppet Show Theme" and even "Science Fiction, Double Feature" from Rocky Horror. Let your imagination be your guide.
- <u>Period Documents:</u> This is the best place to look for inspiration. After all, the SCA is trying to recreate aspects of period life. If award scrolls are the royal proclamations of the current middle ages, it only stands to reason that we should look at legal documents and royal decrees of period for our inspiration.

I want to do something that feels "period". Where do I look for period documents?

There are several places a scribe can turn for finding period documents.

• <u>The actual document:</u> Of course this will most likely mean a trip to Europe and Asia, making special arrangements with various halls of records. Not to mention having the ability to read Latin, Old and Middle English, Old and Middle French, High German, or any number of languages the original documents would have been written in, as well as cyphering out the calligraphy hand used to write it. If a scribe is lucky, they have access to a large University's or Library's Rare Books Library where they might be able to find legal documents.

Another place I have found assistance with finding period wording is contacting the College of Arms of different countries. Sometimes they are willing to help you find period wording for such things as Grants of Arms. Several years ago, I was informed by someone from the office of Lord Lyon (College of Arms of Scotland) that the basic wording used for modern Grant of Arms scrolls in Scotland has not changed much since the late 16th century.

• <u>Books</u>: A lot of books have been published over the years that give translations and texts to various medieval and renaissance documents and texts. Often times books on medieval documents will include a translation of any non-English ones. Many colleges and universities have books on medieval texts and legal documents in their stacks and they are easily obtainable through interlibrary loans.

However, do not limit yourself to books just on legal documents. Sometimes period sources can be found elsewhere: famous speeches of period, theater and plays from the middle ages, inscriptions found on architecture and art. I personally discovered a book on inscriptions found on Indian brass plates dating back to the 14th century just by browsing and walking through a section of a library. Do not be afraid to spend a few hours just wandering your local library. You never know what treasure you might find.

See the appendixes for a brief bibliography of books that have documents and other period sources that I have used for inspiration.

• <u>On-line sources:</u> In this modern technological age it is only natural for our first instincts to say "I'll just search on-line and see what I can find." There is nothing wrong with this and you will come up with a lot of interesting avenues to explore. The only problem with on-line sources is that you are at the mercy of the programmer of the web page as to the accuracy of the original document.

In the appendixes I have provided a very brief list of on-line sites that have period documents that I or other scribes have used.

Why do all these period documents mostly sound the same?

As you read through numerous documents from our time period, you will begin to notice that despite time period and location many of them all seem to begin to sound the same. The reason for this is that, starting in the 12th century, there was a movement to codify how letters were written. Many manuals were written about this art and they became known as *ars dictiminus*. Because letters, and by extension official government communications, were meant to be read aloud by the recipient, or in their presence, these documents tended to take on the feel of a speech. This is very helpful to us as SCA scrolls are read in court by the Herald so all present may hear.

By 1150, the ars dictiminus became standardized and consisted of five parts:

- 1. <u>Salutatio</u>: a highly ritualized greeting that usually named the sender and recipient as well as giving the credentials of both.
- 2. *Exordium:* sets the tone of the letter, often times with a proverb or anecdote
- 3. *Narratio:* reason for the letter
- 4. <u>Petitio:</u> a petition or demand
- 5. <u>Conclusio</u>: the conclusion of the letter, often including the place and date of writing.

These terms have evolved into the modern terms of letter and proclamation parts (and their SCA equivalents):

- 1. The Salutation: the greeting
 - a. <u>*The Intitulation:* (Who):</u> Who is issuing the document (i.e. King, Baron, other appointed official, etc.)
- 2. <u>The Disposition (What)</u>: What is the purpose of the document (awarding a title to someone, declaring war, etc,)
- 3. <u>Notification and Exposition (Why):</u> Why the document is being issued (the person deserves it, they started it, I felt like it, etc)
- 4. <u>Corroboration (How)</u>: being presented by the issuing party themselves, presented by a intermediary party/regent
- 5. <u>Where:</u> Where is this document being issued from (Barony, Shire, etc.), event being presented at
- 6. <u>Date (When)</u>: When the document goes into effect, and/or duration of the effect

How to look at period documents for inspiration:

Once you find a source for period documents the next part of the process is reading through them for inspiration and ideas on how to change the document to fit the award. This is a very tedious task as almost all documents and texts you will be looking at are going to be of a legal nature, and no one has ever won a Pulitzer Prize for an entertaining legal brief. But if you wish to give your scroll a truly period feel to it, the only way to do it is to read document after document, text after text.

As you read through the documents you want to be on the look-out for those key elements that are needed for your scroll. There are tricks to finding the key elements by looking for certain phrases as you scan through a period document.

Some key phrases to look for:

Salutatio:

Unto <names and titles> does <names> send greetings

Be it known ...

To all people to whom these presents shall come, greeting

Know ye that ...

Be manifest and publicly known to all who shall see it this public instrument

Intitulation:

... by the Grace of God, King ...

...does <names> send greetings.

Exordium:

Whereas in our times...

we know and from the chronicles and books of the ancients...

Petitio:

...do give and grant to ...

... we do by these presents ...

... according to such statutes, laws and ordinances ...

We do hereby declare to all ...

And do therefore, for Us, our Heirs, and Successors, GRANT and agree ...

... Our Will and Pleasure herein is ...

We, therefore...

... it was agreed and covenanted that...

<u>Narratio:</u>

Whereas our loving and well-disposed Subject ...

For the purposes of...

Conclusio:

Done this <day> of <year> Given at... While on our throne in... In witness whereof. .. Done by Our hand... In the presence off... ...we have ordered the present charter to be written...

A Guide to a Period Documents

Period documents are boring, tedious and usually very dry. But by looking for the key elements, through the use of searching for common phrases, the task can be a great deal less daunting. Below is a copy of the <u>Declaration of Arbroath</u> of April 6, 1320 (<u>http://avalon.law.yale.edu/medieval/arbroath_1320.asp</u>) with the key elements, indicated that can be altered for use on an SCA award scroll.

To the most Holy Father and Lord in Christ, the Lord John, by divine providence Supreme Pontiff of the Holy Roman and Universal Church, his humble and devout sons Duncan, Earl of Fife, Thomas Randolph, Earl of Moray, Lord of Man and of Annandale, Patrick Dunbar, Earl of March, Malise, Earl of Strathearn, Malcolm, Earl of Lennox, William, Earl of Ross, Magnus, Earl of Caithness and Orkney, and William, Earl of Sutherland; Walter, Steward of Scotland, William Soules, Butler of Scotland, James, Lord of Douglas, Roger Mowbray, David, Lord of Brechin, David Graham, Ingram Umfraville, John Menteith, guardian of the earldom of Menteith, Alexander Fraser, Gilbert Hay, Constable of Scotland, Robert Keith, Marischal of Scotland, Henry St Clair, John Graham, David Lindsay, William Oliphant, Patrick Graham, John Fenton, William Abernethy, David Wemyss, William Mushet, Fergus of Ardrossan, Eustace Maxwell, William Ramsay, William Mowat, Alan Murray, Donald Campbell, John Cameron, Reginald Cheyne, Alexander Seton, Andrew Leslie, and Alexander Straiton, and the other barons and freeholders and the whole community of the realm of Scotland send all manner of filial reverence, with devout kisses of his blessed feet. [SALUTATIO]

Most Holy Father and Lord, we know and from the chronicles and books of the ancients we find that among other famous nations our own, the Scots, has been graced with widespread renown. They journeyed from Greater Scythia by way of the Tyrrhenian Sea and the Pillars of Hercules, and dwelt for a long course of time in Spain among the most savage tribes, but nowhere could they be subdued by any race, however barbarous. Thence they came, twelve hundred years after the people of Israel crossed the Red Sea, to their home in the west where they still live today. The Britons they first drove out, the Picts they utterly destroyed, and, even though very often assailed by the Norwegians, the Danes and the English, they took possession of that home with many victories and untold efforts: and, as the historians of old time bear witness, they have held it free of all bondage ever since. In their kingdom there have reigned one hundred and thirteen kings of their own royal stock, the line unbroken a single foreigner. [EXORDIUM] The high qualities and deserts of these people, were they not otherwise manifest, gain glory enough from this: that the King of kings and Lord of lords, our Lord Jesus Christ, after His Passion and Resurrection, called them, even though settled in the uttermost parts of the earth, almost the first to His most holy faith. Nor would He have them confirmed in that faith by merely anyone but by the first of His Apostles \hat{A} — by calling, though second or third in rank \hat{A} the most gentle Saint Andrew, the Blessed Peter's brother, and desired him to keep them under his protection as their patron forever.

The Most Holy Fathers your predecessors gave careful heed to these things and bestowed many favours and numerous privileges on this same kingdom and people, as being the special charge of the Blessed Peter's brother. Thus our nation under their protection did indeed live in freedom and peace up to the time when that mighty prince the King of the English, Edward, the father of the one who reigns today,[NARRATIO] when our kingdom had no head and our people harboured no malice or treachery and were then unused to wars or invasions, came in the guise of a friend and ally to harass them as an enemy. The deeds of cruelty, massacre, violence, pillage, arson, imprisoning prelates, burning down monasteries, robbing and killing monks and nuns, and yet other outrages without number which he committed against our people, sparing neither age nor sex, religion nor rank, no one could describe nor fully imagine unless he had seen them with his own eyes.

But from these countless evils we have been set free, by the help of Him Who though He afflicts yet heals and restores, by our most tireless Prince, King and Lord, the Lord Robert. He, that his people and his heritage might be delivered out of the hands of our enemies, met toil and fatigue, hunger and peril, like another Macabaeus or Joshua and bore them cheerfully. Him, too, divine providence, his right of succession according to or laws and customs which we shall maintain to the death, and the due consent and assent of us all have made our Prince and King. To him, as to the man by whom salvation has been wrought unto our people, we are bound both by law and by his merits that our freedom may be still maintained, and by him, come what may, we mean to stand. Yet if he should give up what he has begun, and agree to make us or our kingdom subject to the King of England or the English, we should exert ourselves at once to drive him out as our enemy and a subverter of his own rights and ours, and make some other man who was well able to defend us our King; for, as long as but a hundred of us remain alive, never will we on any conditions be brought under English rule. It is in truth not for glory, nor riches, nor honours that we are fighting, but for freedom \hat{A} — for that alone, which no honest man gives up but with life itself.

Therefore it is, Reverend Father and Lord, that we beseech your Holiness with our most earnest prayers and suppliant hearts, inasmuch as you will in your sincerity and goodness

consider all this, that, since with Him Whose vice-gerent on earth you are there is neither weighing nor distinction of Jew and Greek, Scotsman or Englishman, you will look with the eyes of a father on the troubles and privation brought by the English upon us and upon the Church of God. May it please you to admonish and exhort the King of the English, who ought to be satisfied with what belongs to him since England used once to be enough for seven kings or more, to leave us Scots in peace, who live in this poor little Scotland, beyond which there is no dwelling-place at all, and covet nothing but our own. We are sincerely willing to do anything for him, having regard to our condition, that we can, to win peace for ourselves [PETITIO]. This truly concerns you, Holy Father, since you see the savagery of the heathen raging against the Christians, as the sins of Christians have indeed deserved, and the frontiers of Christendom being pressed inward every day; and how much it will tarnish your Holiness's memory if (which God forbid) the Church suffers eclipse or scandal in any branch of it during your time, you must perceive. Then rouse the Christian princes who for false reasons pretend that they cannot go to help of the Holy Land because of wars they have on hand with their neighbours. The real reason that prevents them is that in making war on their smaller neighbours they find quicker profit and weaker resistance. But how cheerfully our Lord the King and we too would go there if the King of the English would leave us in peace, He from Whom nothing is hidden well knows; and we profess and declare it to you as the Vicar of Christ and to all Christendom. But if your Holiness puts too much faith in the tales the English tell and will not give sincere belief to all this, nor refrain from favouring them to our prejudice, then the slaughter of bodies, the perdition of souls, and all the other misfortunes that will follow, inflicted by them on us and by us on them, will, we believe, be surely laid by the Most High to your charge. [NARRATIO]

To conclude, we are and shall ever be, as far as duty calls us, ready to do your will in all things, as obedient sons to you as His Vicar; and to Him as the Supreme King and Judge we commit the maintenance of our cause, casting our cares upon Him and firmly trusting that He will inspire us with courage and bring our enemies to nought [INTITULATION]. May the Most High preserve you to his Holy Church in holiness and health and grant you length of days. [PETITIO]

Given at the monastery of Arbroath in Scotland on the sixth day of the month of April in the year of grace thirteen hundred and twenty and the fifteenth year of the reign of our King aforesaid. [CONCLUSIO]

As it can be seen that there is usually a great deal that is added to a document that isn't needed by SCA scribes.

Below is how I adapted the underlined text from the Declaration to fit a Pelican Scroll.

To the most noble and glorious citizens and persons who hear these words, know that We, Christopher III and Maurya III, King and Queen over all of Æthelmearc, defenders of the Inland Seas, send all manners of benevolent greetings. [SALUTATIO]

We know from the chronicles and books of the ancients that among other famous nations Our own, Our Æthelmearc, has been graced with widespread renown. We came from the Great Eastern Empire, through the Endless Hills, across Misty Highlands, past the Copper Trees, and even to the Sundered Oaks, to Our beloved home in the west to settle. And since that time, in this kingdom there have reigned 12 kings and queens of noble line and dedication.

Our predecessors gave careful heed to things and bestowed many favours and numerous privileges on Our kingdom and people. Thus Our nation, under their protection, did indeed live in freedom and peace up to the time when We found ourselves upon the Sylvan Thrones. Our people have been given the blessing of protection and freedom to pursue noble and gentle pursuits, the study of military art, and even partake in helping others through giving and generous service. [EXORDIUM]

Word has now traveled to Us of one citizen of Our glorious kingdom, whose work has delivered our

nation from ignorance through her work as chronicler, rescued Our people from hunger by supervising feasts, and assisted Our forbearers though her tireless service to crown and kingdom. [NARRATIO]

But We do not listen to tawdry idle gossip or put Our faith in tall tales. However, praises of this person from nobles and gentles of every state have filled Our ears to the exclusion of all else. Our people beseech Us with their most earnest requests and have sincerely asked that We consider the works of our Miriam Meggett. This We have done with glad heart and found this gentlewoman deserving of high praise and adulation, and find Ourselves presented with only one solution that is fair and right and just. Thus with these arms: Argent ermined azure flaunches azure each charged with a chalice or given by letters Patent, We do recognize and declare Miriam Megget a member of Our noble, glorious and renowned Order of the Pelican. [PETITIO]

May she continue to inspire all who see her with the gentleness of heart, and devoutness of her service for all the length of her days. **[PETITIO]**

Given at the Pennsic War in Æthelmearc in the month of August in the year of the society thirty 38 and in the fifth month of Our reign. [CONCLUSIO]

This is by no means the only adaptation that could be given to the Declaration for an award scroll. But it does provide an example of how using wording from a period document, with a little bit of revisionist license, provides the feel of a period piece while making it also relevant to the award and personalized to the recipient.

However, you do not need to use just period documents. Below is the Eulogy to Kagan Vlaimir, aka Vladimir the Great, who died in 1015 AD (<u>http://www.shsu.edu/~his_ncp/Ilarion.html</u>)

All lands, cities and men honour and glorify their teacher who brought them the Orthodox Faith. Thus let us, through our own strength, humbly praise our teacher and mentor, the great Kagan of our land Vladimir, the grandson of lgor of yore and son of glorious Sviatoslav, who ruled in their day with courage and valour, becoming famed in many lands for their victories and fortitude. And they did not reign in a poor and unknown land, but in Russia, which is known and celebrated by all to the ends of the earth.

A good attestation of your devotion, blessed one, is the Holy Church of the Blessed Virgin, the Mother of God, which you build on the orthodox foundation and where your valorous body now lays at rest and awaits the archangel's trumpet. A good and certain attestation is your son, George, whom God has made the heir to your throne, who does not destroy your laws, but confirms them, who does not diminish works of piety, but extends them, who does not undo, but strengthens, who finishes that which you have left unfinished even as Solomon finished the works begun by David; who has built a great and holy temple to God's omniscience that it may hallow your city; who has embellished with all manner of things beautiful, with gold and silver and precious stones and with sacred vessels; so that the church is a wonder to all surrounding lands and so that the like cannot be found in all the northern land, nor in the east nor the west; who has given your famous city of Kiev the crown of glory, who has turned your city and its people to all-glorious Mother of God, who is always ready to succour Christians and for whom he has built a church with doors of gold in the name of the first holy day of the Lord of the Annunciation, that the veneration, which the archangel will offer to the Virgin, may also be upon this city. To her he speaks, saying: "Rejoice, Blessed One, the Lord is with you!" And to the city he speaks, saying: "Rejoice, faithful city, the Lord is with you!"

<u>Arise from your grave, venerated prince</u>, Arise and shake off your sleep. You are not dead, but only sleep until the day of resurrection of all. Arise! You are not dead, for it is not right that you should die, for you have believed in Christ, the Sustainer of the whole world. Shake off your deep sleep and lift up your eyes that you might see what honour the Lord has granted you, and you still live upon this earth, unforgotten through your sons. Arise! Behold your child George, Look upon your beloved one, whom God has brought forth from your loins. Behold him embellishing the throne of your land. Rejoice and be of good cheer! Behold the pious wife of your son, Irina. Behold your grandchildren and your great-grandchildren. Behold how they live and how they are cared for by

God. Behold how they preserve devotion in your tradition, how they partake of the Sacraments of the Holy Church, how they glorify Christ, how they venerate before his Holy Name. Behold your city radiant with grandeur. Behold your blossoming churches, Behold Christianity flourishing. Behold your city gleaming, adorned with holy icons and fragrant with thyme, praising God and filling the air with sacred songs. And beholding all this, <u>rejoice and be of good cheer</u>, and praise the Lord, the Creator of all which you have seen.

Reworked for a Pelican Scroll:

May all the lands, cities and men honor and glorify the teacher who brings them to embrace knowledge, the cook who leads them from hunger, and the law keeper who guides them along the true and just ways of the realm. Thus let us, Andrew, who by strength became King, and Alexandra, who through inspiration became Queen, humbly praise Our subject, the wise and noble Katja Davidova Orlova Khazarina, student of Michaele and Devon, who has become famed in many lands for her knowledge and willingness to serve. And she did not serve in a poor and unknown land, but in Æthelmearc, which is known and celebrated by all to the ends of the Knowne World.

Because she does not destroy Our laws, but confirms them, does not diminish works, but extends them, and does not undo but strengthens, she has proven herself worthy of reward. And because the likes of her cannot be found in all the northern lands, nor in the east, nor in the west, We, by the rights granted to Us by the laws and traditions of the Society, say that she shall be made a member of the steadfast and glorious Order of the Pelican. Behold that We grant unto her, by Letters Patent, these Arms: azure, three catamounts sejant guardant argetn and on a bordure argent, semy of stars of David, azure, and proclaim to all that on the 12th day of January, AS 36, she is made a Peer of the Realm.

Arise honored Pelican and serve the lands you love. Stand tall with the honor that has been granted you. Rejoice and be of good cheer.

The one thing I encourage all wordsmiths is to not just re-read what you have written before putting it to official paper, but to read it aloud. Remember, these will be read in court and if you, the author, find yourself tripping over the language, chances are the Herald will too.

In Conclusion:

Through study and continued reading of period documents, a scribe can get as sense of how writers in period phrased ideas and strung together thoughts and sentences, thus enabling the scribe to even create totally original wordings that have a period feel.

All it takes is dedication, research, and an imagination. As always, keep in touch with your fellow scribes. Other creative minds can provide new points of view on the same dry material and can be a huge help when you feel stuck or overwhelmed.

Happy Scribing.

Appendixes

Appendix 1: Brief Book Bibliography for Period Document Sources

Adams, George Burton and H. Morse Stephens. *English Constitutional History*. London: The MacMillan Company, 1901.

Brewer, J.S. and RH Brodie. *Title Letters & Papers Foreign & Domestic of the Reign of Henry VIII vo/s. 1-21 and 2 Addenda*. London: His Majesty's Stationary Office, 1920.

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Vijayaraghvacharya, V., ed. Inscriptions of Saluva Narasimhas Time: From 1445 A.D. to 1504 A.D. Volumes 1-3. India: Sri Satguru Publications, 1933.

Appendix 2: A Brief list of On-line sources for period documents.

The Avalon Project at Yale Law School: http://avalon.law.yale.edu/

British History: Original Sources & Texts: http://www.britannia.com/history/docs/document.html

Documents on the Lord Lyon: http://www.heraldica.org/topics/britain/lyondocs.htm

The Dutie of a King in His Royal Office: http://www.constitution.org/primarysources/raleigh.html

Henry VIII's Act of Supremacy (1534) - original text:

http://www.britainexpress.com/History/tudor/supremacy-henry-text.htm

Internet Medieval Sourcebook: http://legacy.fordham.edu/halsall/sbook.asp

The Labyrinth: Resources for Medieval Studies: http://labyrinth.georgetown.edu

The Malleus Maleficarum: http://www.malleusmaleficarum.org/

Medieval & Renaissance Europe: Primary Historical Documents:

http://eudocs.lib.byu.edu/index.php/History_of_Medieval_%26_Renaissance_Europe: Primary_Documents

Modern History Sourcebook: http://legacy.fordham.edu/Halsall/mod/modsbook.asp

TEAMS Middle English Texts: http://www.lib.rochester.edu/camelot/teams/tmsmenu.htm

Vincentio Saviolo his Practise: http://www.cs.unc.edu/~hudson/saviolo/

Henry III Fine Rolls Project: http://www.finerollshenry3.org.uk/content/calendar/calendar.html

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