

Class Title: Making Brazilwood Ink

Instructor: HL Ian the Green

Pertinent Instructor Information. I have:

- Lived in four different SCA Kingdoms.
- Been making various inks for fourteen years.
- A Grant of Arms level Arts & Science award for Ink Making, Scribal, Research and Teaching.



Course Outline:

- Introduction
- Questions up front (To be answered in course.)
- What is Brazilwood?
- What is Brazilwood ink?
- What Ingredients are used for Brazilwood ink?
- Watch process video for making
- Discuss other recipes and processes
- Answer any unanswered questions
- If time allows open discussion and more questions.

Questions?

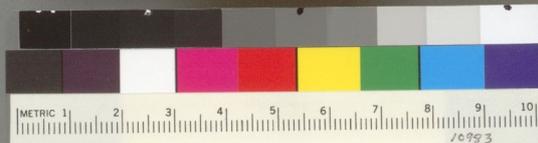
What questions do you have up front? This way I can address them as we move through the class. Obviously new questions will come up as the class goes on. Feel free to ask more as we proceed.

What is Brazilwood Ink?

Brazilwood ink is a red ink that was made and used in medieval and renaissance manuscripts. Uses included drawing lines to write between and for rubrication. Rubrication is red letters or writing designed to draw the reader's eye to important information or parts of the page.

plantana duratium nobis
infernū impetū aut sum q̄
supernū consequamur
beatum Tu autem dicit
misere mi deo q̄. *Ps.*
Santa et immaculata vir-
ginitas quibus te laudibus re-
feram neco Quia quem ali-
capere non poterunt tuo gra-
mio contulisti. *Versus.*
Benedicta tu in mulieribus
benedictus fructus ventris tui
Qui. *Versus.* Iste domine be-
nedicere. *Ps.* Santa dei ge-
nitrix sit nobis auxiliatrix

51
Amen. *LECTIO tertia.*
Gloriosissima virgo
maria nos qui sic
credimus quod virgo et mi-
seris credendo seniamus
quod pro nobis deum depre-
cans et iusta retencum do-
ta impetata assequans ut
qui confitemur te reperisse
deum et hominem gauda-
mus per te nobis aduen-
se salutem Tu autem de-
misere mi deo q̄. *Ps.*
felicis namque es sancta virgo
maria et omni laude dignis



What is Brazilwood?

Brazilwood ink is made from *Caesalpinia*. There are many kinds of this tree. Originally this wood and dyestuff was imported from India and near there. When the New World was discovered an abundant source was found in Latin America. So much was found in one area that the area became known as “Brazil”.

“In its natural state Brazilwood is light, brownish red, not unlike natural mahogany in appearance.”¹

“In the Middle Ages it was always sold in blocks and the craftsman was obliged to reduce solid wood to powder...”²

¹ “The Materials and Techniques of Medieval Painting” Pg 117 Daniel V. Thompson ©1956 Dover Publications. ² Ibid

Ingredients for Brazilwood Ink

I reviewed and indexed about 40 different pre-1600 recipes for Brazilwood ink. Each ingredient below was found in at least one recipe.

Dry Ingredients

Alum

Brazilwood finely

Brazilwood Raspings

Brazilwood Shavings

Chalk

Gum

Gum Arabic

Gum of a Cherry Tree

Lye

Quicklime

Rock alum

Turpentine

Ingredients for Brazilwood Ink

I reviewed and indexed about 40 different pre-1600 recipes for Brazilwood ink. Each ingredient below was found in at least one such recipe.

Wet Ingredients

Beer

Cleane Glue

Glaire

Gum Water

New Glue

Urine

Vinegar

Water

White of egg

Wine

Process of making Brazilwood Ink

Making Brazilwood Ink

Direct Link

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X-Dd5XCAqdo>



Book of Secrets – Diverse Ways of
Making all Sorts of Ink – 1596
English Translation from Dutch.
Originally published in German 1531

The Art of Limning 1575

To seeth Brasill another way.

To an ounce of Brasill, take the third part of a quart of beere, wine, or vinegar, put it in a new pot, let it stand a night, in the morning set it on the fire, and let it seeth till it be halfe consumed, then for every ounce of Brasill, take two penny worth of alum, beaten to powder, and as much beaten gum Arabike, stir them wel together, and let them seeth againe, but if you desire to haue it somewhat darke, then scrape a little chalke into it: when it seeth hath, let it not seeth ouer the pot, and being cold, strain it through a cloath, and put it into a glasse well stopped.

To temper Brasill wherewith to
write, floristhe, or rule bookes.

Brasill,

Take Brasill finely scraped, or grossely beate to powder, and put thereto the glayze of an egge, or gumme water, and a litle Alam made in powder, and lett them steepe a night and a day: and then straine out the liquoz, and keepe it to the vse aforesaid.

Brazilwood Ink - Red

Materials:

- 1oz Brazilwood
- 10 2/3 fl oz (315ml) vinegar (beer or wine)
- 2 pennyweight (3g) alum
- 2 pennyweight (3g) gum arabic
- Optional - Chalk (CaCo₃)

Tools:

- Non-reactive bowl (Optional)
- Non-reactive pot
- Non-reactive stirring implement
- Filtering cloth - Linen or cheesecloth preferred.

Procedure:

- Put brazilwood into a non-reactive container. Add your vinegard (beer or wine) and let soak overnight (minimum 8 hours).

Proceure Continued: In a well ventelated area...

- After soaking overnight, pour your solution and brazilwood into a non-reactive pot. Using a high temperature, bring the solution to a gentle (seething) boil.
- Once at a boil add alum and gum arabic. Be careful to not let it boil over.
- Reduce volume to just over half.
- Remove from heat and let cool
- Strain through the cloth into a non-reactive container.
- Squeeze cloth to ensure as much liquid as possible is released.
- Bottle in an airtight container.

Optional - Add chalk to make it darker

Brazilwood to make Lapis or Azure bluer

an earthen dish and pour over it hot water or hot ley with a little honey and clay, rubbing the azure with your hands or with a stick, in order to extract the refined azure, and note that the water comes off of a green colour. Afterwards strain it through a linen cloth into a well-glazed earthenware basin,³ and pour off the water, or, still better, the ley, leaving the powder of the lapis lazuli settled in the basin; wash the azure with tepid but not hot water in a porphyry vessel, until the saline particles of the ley are washed away, and let the azure dry in the shade in the porphyry vessel; keep it in a bladder or in a purse of chamois leather: and note that if it is not of a good colour, or if it inclines to paleness, boil "Brasilwood"⁴ reduced to powder, in good ley or pure water, and then strain it through a cloth and put into it a little "alumen jameni," or glasso,⁵ and mix with your azure already re-

fined, and this gives it a good colour and will increase its weight.

Bolognese Manuscript

15th Century

From "Medieval and Renaissance Treatises on the Arts of Painting Original Texts with English Translations"

Mrs Mary P Merrifield

Brazilwood Recipe for Painting on Silver

101. *To make verzino for painting on silver.*—To make verzino for painting on silver or tin-foil, so that the brilliancy of the silver or tin may shine and appear through it, put a piece of white lime about the size of an egg into water to dissolve, and let it stand in the water for three days and three nights. Then rasp or scrape verzino, and add it to the lime-water, and let it stand for an hour; then put it on the fire in a small jar, and let it boil until, when you put it upon your nail, it remains upon it. Then take isinglass, or, as some say, turpentine, a piece about the size of a bean, and put into it, and remove it from the fire. Take a little roche alum, which you must stick in the end of a small stick and tie it there, and dip it into the said mixture, and let it remain there until you see that it is dissolved. Then take a strainer, and strain or filter the water through it.

Manuscripts of Jehan le Bugue

1431

From "Medieval and Renaissance Treatises on the Arts of Painting Original Texts with English Translations"

Mrs Mary P Merrifield



Thank you for coming to my class today.

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