

THE TRAVELING SCRIBE

by Chiara Francesca Arianna d'Onofrio

“... And he said to them, “Therefore every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like a householder who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old.” – [Mat 13:52.8]

There are 30 verses in the Bible that talk about scribes; all of them are traveling scribes. This would be a good indication that traveling scribes in the eyes of this religious sect were just as important to the court as a herald. If you wish to be one of the proud, the few, and the passionate, you too can be a Traveling Scribe!

The Traveling Scribe may often find they will be doing scribal work at an event. They are usually recognized as a well-known scribe or recognized when they inform the court herald and the Autocrat/Steward that they are there to work. The most popular request will be to fill in charter scrolls on site. Less popular are: creating original scrolls or impromptu teaching of the scribal work. This article will go over these three aspects of a Traveling Scribe.

The Field Teaching Scribe

This scribe has been asked to teach scribing at an event. This can be very productive and fun. Recruitment of new scribes can begin here for all ages.

This scribe will need:

- A set of blank award scrolls for the number of people you think will be at the event. Never make photocopies of award scrolls on your own unless you are the appointed person in your area to do so. There are specifications that must be followed when these are made.
- Have a portfolio or box to protect the scrolls from the elements and other stuff. Have a portfolio of finished scrolls.

Have as many of the following as possible:

- Paints: Fill the palettes prior to the event with primary colors and a few with metallic and other unique colors. Try to match palettes to charters for ease of use. Label them if there is time.
- Brushes and round toothpicks – watercolor brushes that are good enough to last the event and do not mind losing to the sand or down a fighter's breastplate. Tooth picks for making small dots and mixing the paint.
- Rags and scrap Paper for practice and to keep hands from smudging the work.
- Cups for rinse water. Cups for dipping water.
- Bottled water and droppers for adding that water to the palettes
- Sawdust to help dry the finished work.
- Ziploc with wipes for hands before and after. Or the antibacterial Hand Gel.

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- An area with tables and chairs. Although art boards are inexpensive they get heavy to tote around. If your area chapter can afford to get about 5 of them for events do it. Get the larger clips. These can found at the hardware store for a lower price than at the art store.
- Most importantly, the box the finished products will go into. Get tissue or rice paper to separate the painted scrolls if they are not being used at the event.
- Disposable calligraphy pens to fill in the blanks if the scrolls are to be used at the event.
- Have large ledger size envelopes for the recipients to put their scrolls into.
- Chocolate for the painters! Make sure they clean their hands after they have had some.

Have handouts about charter painting for the Kingdom. Begin by handing these out and explaining that the first thing to do is to add water to the paint. Tell them how to lay out the table if this was not done ahead of time. If two are sharing a palette and water, set up the items between them. If there are more, set up in a round for them if possible, always keeping the palette, water, and brushes central to them. As the paint is saturating go over the instructions on the charters and have the students pick out the one they want to work on. Try to have good selection that have proven quick and easy for beginners. This will boost their confidence and recruit more scribes. Have them select a brush and a palette that matches the description on their charter. Have samples of the finished product in a portfolio for show and tell. Keep these in page-protectors so the scribes will not feel afraid to touch them.

The Court Scribe

It may be 2 minutes to court, and there are charter scrolls AND award scrolls that need to be filled in. You have that much time to get 15 scrolls to the Monarchs to sign. This may have been planned for ahead of time, but most likely not. This scribe is the one that gets to fill in all the blanks on the award scrolls that the guilds have been diligently painting for just this event.

You will need:

- A solid 8.5x11 art board with flat clips.
- Clipped to your board have an emergency pad of small 8.5x11 fake parchment paper
- Have large ledger size envelopes for the recipients to put their scrolls into.
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In a lightweight fishing tackle box have:

- ALL the calligraphy-nib sizes. There is no telling what size nib was used for the scroll.
- Nib holders. These can be prepped ahead of time with the nibs already in them
- Practice sheet. This is for testing the nib and to help match the hand on the scroll. Write a few samples out in the recipient's name to match/check the nib size to the scroll and to practice and get the writing style flowing smoothly.
- Scrap pieces of paper. This is to lay your hand on while filling in a scroll taking care not to smudge the work.
- Ziploc bags. These are for anything that is really messy and cannot be thrown away or cleaned immediately.

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- Ziploc with wet wipes or antibacterial Hand Gel. It can be found in the baby section of most stores. Use a drop or two per hand.
- India Ink. Find fast drying liquid, as there may be only seconds from the moment it leaves your table and goes into court.
- FOR BACK UP ONLY: A nice set of commercial disposable calligraphy pens. This is in case the Monarchs do not know how to do calligraphy or if the ink is spilt by the very nervous autocrat trying to speed up the work while learning your name.
- Sawdust. This is to help the ink dry by the time the Monarchs get to sign them. This can be found in any hardware store for free. Go to the wood cutting area and look for a clerk. They will gladly give it to you.
- A hand held light source. This is in case it is pitch dark and no one can spare a light.
- A commercial container of nib cleaner. This is for the nibs in case there is no time for them to be cleaned immediately.
- A container of water for you to drink from.

The Field Scribe

Scribes may find themselves asked to do a fast original scroll on site. The field scribe is the one that is tagged to do this. This scribe is also the one that gets to court scribing in case there is no one else.

This scribal job will need:

- Art board and clips.
- Rulers. Clear ones, short ones, curved ones. Ones with cork underneath would be great.
- Text samples for the different awards. This can be in the form of a small diary with the text written into it or a folder with printed out text. Which ever is used the text should be of accepted usable texts for the Kingdom and its region's awards.
- A sampler of a favorite hand's alphabet. This is in case the ink the nervous autocrat spilt was on the only award scroll they had. This scribe will be creating a promissory for the scroll that was destroyed.
- When at all possible have a set of scrolls already painted just for such emergencies.
- Portable light-table if you have one if not a piece of glass on a frame and something you can prop it on so that you can work and a light-source in case sunlight is not enough or gone.
- Graph paper for practice and then transfer the finished pieces to the paper using the above light-table.
- A supply of paper.
- Waterproof box to keep the papers in.
- Have large ledger-size envelopes for the recipients to put their scrolls into in case there is not one for them.
- Small paper backs of your favorite Illuminators artwork.

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- Your sampler of hands that you are most confident with.
- A bible of your choice of religion or non-religion, no not for illumination samples, for help!
- Your box of magic filled with:
 - The primary colors of your paints along with pearl gold and pearl silver already set in palettes.
 - One size each of your most popular brushes
 - Distilled bottle water
 - Small bottle with dropper tip.
 - Scrap paper
 - Scrap rags
 - Sand paper for fixing mistakes
 - Sawdust to dry the art
 - Quick drying India ink
 - All your nibs, calligraphy and drawing.
 - Nib cleaner
 - Ziploc bags for each of the palettes and anything else that is still wet when you pack up.
 - Wipes or gel to clean the hands
 - Drafting tape
 - Sharp, new blades for scraping the mistakes you cannot sand off.

Find an optimal place to work at with a sturdy table and good lighting that is away from everyone so that others do not see the work or interfere with the process of doing the scroll. One bump to a table can ruin the work. Set up your ink, paint, nibs and brushes in a method that is quickest to utilize. The critical factor here is time. Have a sample alphabet of a hand that has proven easy and quick to do. Have a sample of art from the same period as the hand that has also proven to be quick and easy to do. Do a quick sketch of the art and text on a small pad of paper. Get graph paper and layout the design. Leave about 1 to 2 inches around the actual work. Since time is at a premium, having pre-illuminated paper ready would be the best solution. This is a good thing to anticipate at all times.

If there is no field scribe about with all the above, the court scribe will have to improvise. The scroll you will make most likely make is a thank you note or a promissory for an award. Most rulers are 1 inch in width. Use this to make your border. Find ruled paper and a light source and place it behind the paper to help as a guide for the calligraphy. Look at a scroll that is handy and use that as the source of art and hand if one is not readily available in the scribal case.

Start early and never walk too far away from your work. Ask/find a helpful person if they would occasionally bring some water, food, and watch over the work if nature calls.