

**Scales of Dragonsspine Award Scroll**  
Calligraphy in the style of the Isabella Breviary

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For this project I wanted to create a scroll based on my persona's time period for a friend that received his Scales of Dragonsspine award several months ago. The Scales is a baronial level service award in the Barony of Dragonsspine, Kingdom of the Outlands. As I am entering for calligraphy, the illumination will be completed after the competition is over.

In the Outlands, the scroll texts are prescribed by the College of Scribes with certain abilities to mix and match portions of the text as the scribe sees fit. The text for this award, with my friend's information inserted, reads:

*Every gentle and noble shall know that we \_\_Herbert\_\_ and \_\_Keterlyn\_\_, Baron and Baroness of Dragonsspine, send greetings.*

*Having found our subject \_\_Trevor MacRae\_\_ worthy of recognition for his service to the Barony of Dragonsspine, we do hereby create him a Companion of the Scales of Dragonsspine. Lord \_\_Trevor\_\_ shall be bestowed with all rights and responsibilities of this rank, including the right to bear the badge of the Order: Azure, five dragon's scales in annulo, points outward, Or, that all may know of the high esteem in which he is held by our Barony and ourselves.*

*Done this \_\_2nd\_\_ day of \_\_February\_\_ in the \_\_47th\_\_ year of the Society, being \_\_2013\_\_ Gregorian.*

\_\_\_\_\_, *Baron* \_\_\_\_\_, *Baroness*

I chose as my inspiration the Isabella Breviary, which was presented to Queen Isabel I in 1497 upon the marriage of two of her children, the Infante Juan of Asturias, her only son, and the Infanta Juana, who will come to be called "La Loca" after the death of her husband, by her ambassador, Francisco de Rojas, who arranged the marriages of the Infantes to the children of Maximilian of Austria and stood proxy in the ceremonies sealing the marriage treaties. It was written in a Round Gothic hand in Flanders and also illuminated there. The manuscript contains 523 pages of vellum with 34 lines of text arranged in a double column format.

I spent quite a bit of time measuring the reproductions in the book *The Isabella Breviary* by Janet Backhouse, Curator of Illuminated Manuscripts for the British Library which holds this manuscript. I am confident that they are reproduced at the actual size of 230 mm x 160 mm although one can tell from the photographs that the pages were not lying flat at the time so my numbers were not exactly those. You can see some of my measurements in Appendix A.

After assuring myself of the dependability of the size of the illustrations, I began to measure the script, too, in order to determine the size of nib I would need to use. These measurements are also in Appendix A. I visually compared my nibs to the printed page to confirm that I would be using a 0.5mm nib. The proportions of 1:2:1 means that the ascenders would be 2 nibs high, the body 4 nibs high, and the descenders 2 nibs high.

The Round Gothic hand used in the Breviary is not one that I have previously seen reproduced in a text book. It comes close to what is called Spanish Round in one book that I have lost in my travels. It also comes close to the True Type Font developed by John Stracke. You can further read about it that font at: <http://www.thibault.org/fonts/isabella/> It is also available as a free download for your computer at that site. However, if it is completely correct, he was working from different exemplars than I found in the Backhouse's book. Therefore, I chose to recreate my own Round Gothic from the copy I had access to.

I chose my exemplars and worked on learning my alphabet in this hand. Although I found examples of all of the small letters except a "w", I did not find examples of all of the capitals. This meant that I would have to just use the small "k" only bigger for the Baroness's name. I chose to use the Spanish Round "w" that I was already familiar with.

I also chose to use modern materials. I am familiar with how they function, flex, and write so I wanted this to be a good representation of this manuscript and those choices fit my abilities. The most challenging part of this scroll, since I wanted to work in that style with my modern implements, was learning to write between the lines. In studying the illustrations, I made note of the fact that the letters were worked between two guidelines rather than touching a line. I have "faked" this style before, but this was my first attempt to actually do it without an inner line.

The sizing for the columns and layout is based on folio 182, which is Figure 30 in the Backhouse book of Psalm 118, a supplicant in a rose garden. The illumination (to be added later) will be based on folio 297, which is Figure 45 of St. Barbara.

#### My Materials

Bristol Smooth Paper

Brause .5mm nib

Calli calligraphic ink in Jet Black

#### Period Materials

Vellum

Quill

?? Probably Iron Gall ink

## **Bibliography**

Backhouse, Janet. *The Isabella Breviary*. London: The British Library, 1993.

## Appendix A

### Measurements

Analysis of some of the featured folios

<b>Folio #</b>	<b>Height</b>	<b>Width</b>	<b>Ill. Height</b>	<b>Ill. Width</b>	<b>Top border</b>	<b>Bottom border</b>	<b>Right Border</b>	<b>Left Border</b>
436v	230	149	192	134	14	24	3	12
437	230	146	191	130	15	24	14	2
29	230	152	198	135	15	17	9	8
66	230	150	189	132	16	25	16	2
90	229	152	198	137	11	20	10	5
96	230	153	197	136	13	20	13	4
124	230	152	198	139	11	20	8	4
182	229	152	196	139	12	20	3	9

Analysis of the script

<b>Folio #</b>	<b>C1 W</b>	<b>C1 H</b>	<b>C2 W</b>	<b>C2 H</b>	<b># lines</b>	<b>mm/line</b>
437	42	63	42	63	16	3.9
29	40	40	45	40	10	4.0
63	42	39	45	39	10	3.9
71	43	31	44	31	8	3.9
90	43	41	44	41	10	4.1
182	43	136	45	135	34	4.0

Analysis of the calligraphy

<b>Folio #</b>	<b>Letter</b>	<b>Asc</b>	<b>Body</b>	<b>Desc</b>
437	h	1	2	1
	C	1	2	0
	g	0	2	1
	c	0	2	0
	v	0.5	2	0
	l	1	2	0