



Paint recipes you can make yourself

The following types of paint are suitable for paper.

1.) Distemper of cellulose adhesive:

The binder is cellulose adhesive (wallpaper paste). If a strong colour is desired, use plenty of colour pigment in the recipe.

Strong colour: 1 dl wallpaper paste and about 2 tbs (tablespoons) colour pigment.

Light colour: 1 dl wallpaper paste and about 1 tbs colour pigment.

1.) Distemper of dark lager:

Ordinary beer can be used, but lager gives the best adhesion.

This recipe gives paint that resembles watercolour. Beer paint dries very quickly.

Strong colour: 1 dl beer and 4 ts (teaspoons) colour pigment.

Light colour: 1 dl beer and 1-2 ts colour pigment.

1.) Distemper of casein:

Casein is milk curd. When it is added to a basic substance (powdered ammonia) it gives a very strong, quick-drying adhesive.

Strong colour: 1 dl buttermilk, 1 pinch powdered ammonia, 4 ts colour pigment.

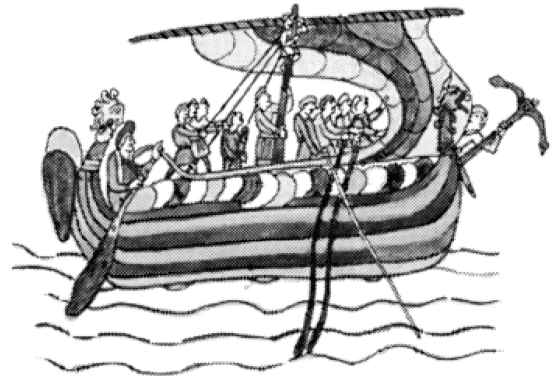
Light colour: 1 dl buttermilk, 1 pinch powdered ammonia, 2 ts colour pigment.

Many pictures can be produced from 1 dl paint.



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Colours of the viking age



People have used paint for decoration for thousands of years. The earliest preserved pictures are 30,000-year-old cave paintings made by prehistoric man and depict hunting and other scenes with animals and men.

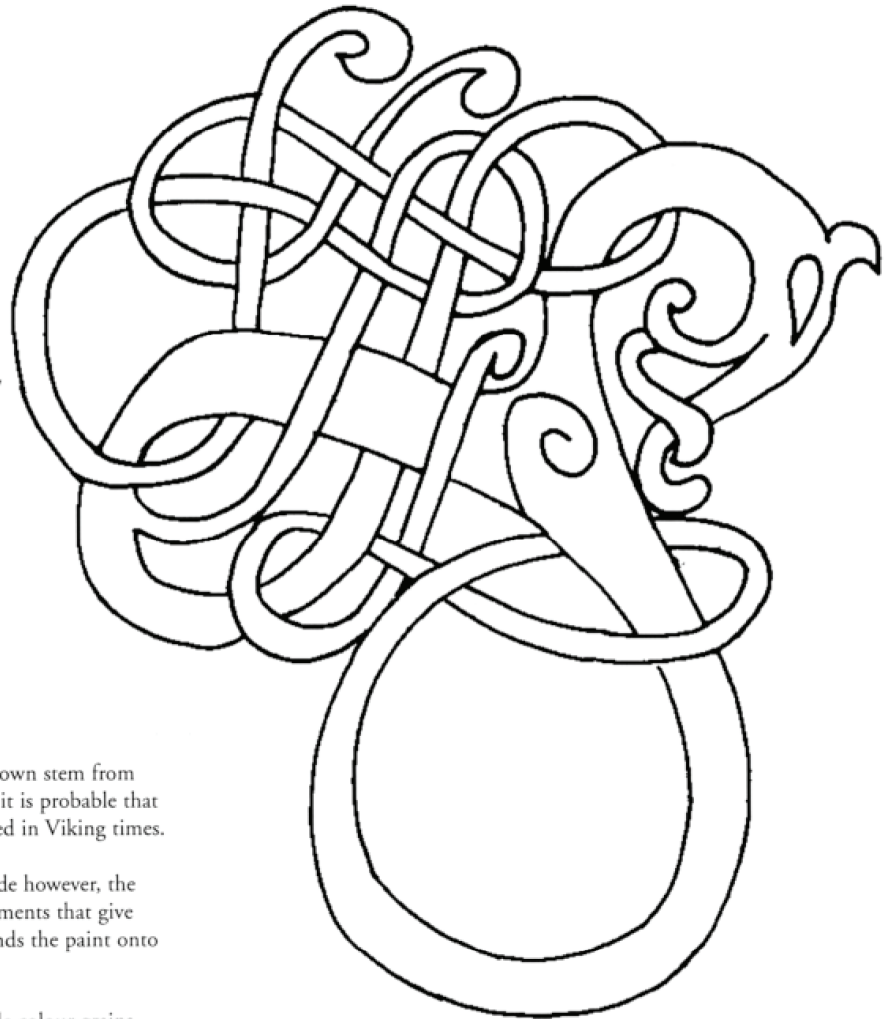
Colours were also used industriously by the Vikings who dyed yarn and textiles with plant extracts. Costumes of wealthy Vikings were often richly coloured. The woollen sails of Viking ships were coloured too.

Many other objects were also coloured: runestones and carved ornamentation on buildings, and smaller artifacts like shields, tent components, etc.





The colours most widely used in the Viking Age were black, white, yellow, red, red-brown and brown. They were produced from charcoal, chalk, ochre, burnt ochre, rust. The colours were often muted. If strong colours were desired - blue, red or yellow for example - dyes could be imported from Southern Europe. However, these were expensive and rare and were most often associated with prestige and wealth.



Viking paint

The oldest paint recipes known stem from the Middle Ages, although it is probable that the same ones had been used in Viking times.

Paint can still be home-made however, the main ingredients being pigments that give colour, and a agent that binds the paint onto the underlay.

Pigments are small insoluble colour grains. Black pigment can be made from charcoal or soot; red and yellow from rust and ochre; white from chalk. These substances must be crushed and ground very finely, with pestle and mortar for example.

Binding agents could be made of various substances. Oil paint could consist of pure oil such as linseed. White flour glue was used mainly for indoor paint. But there were also fats, egg, blood, wood tar, bees' wax, and others.

Paper was unknown to the Vikings. Instead, they painted on bark, wood, stone and leather. Many of their binding agents were suitable for paint that was used outdoors. They are very weather-resistant and it is this property that has made it possible to reconstruct Viking paints from archaeological finds.

