

Getting the Medieval Mindset or The Medieval Eye for the Mundane Guy

By Baronessa Rainillt de Bello Marisco ~ Autum Schola 2004

This is a rather mysterious concept that people usually use when talking about person development. Of course thinking with a medieval mindset is more than just how you dress or act. When exploring the realm of Arts and Science the medieval mindset becomes something a bit different. The medieval mindset is what will change your work from very nice to OMG.

When doing an Arts and Science project there are generally two ways to tackle a project: copying an extant item and making a new item in a medieval fashion.

Copying an extant item is really fairly simple from a documentation point. You have the item, obviously they made it, and they made it with certain materials. While we don't know precisely how a particular item was crafted, a skillful artisan can duplicate an item to almost to museum quality. But it's still just a copy, there is little originality there.

Then there is something more in line with experimental archeology. You are making an item in a medieval fashion. This is much more difficult. You have to take yourself out of your modern mind frame, with modern materials and techniques and put yourself into the place of the artisan or laborer making the item.

Ask yourself these questions:

Why is this object being made?

Where is it going to be used?

Who is going to be using it?

Is it an every day piece or something being used for special occasions only?

What was the availability of the materials?

Is it something the artisan themselves will be using or is it a sold or commissioned piece?

Who was the customer?

Why were they purchasing it instead of making it themselves?

Once you know these answers, now reconsider the piece with a medieval eye.

Are you going to use the best materials available?

Is your workmanship going to be the best it could ever be?

Are you going to be using this yourself on a regular basis?

Is this an item you will be using for display only?

What modern short steps are you going to use during the making of the item?

For example: Making a garment?

What fabric are you going to use? – To know that you need to think about :

What are you making the garment for?

In what circumstance would you be wearing it?

Would the fabric be readily available for someone wearing that particular garment?

Would you be wearing the height of fashion or something outdated or within sumptuary laws?

Where would you have gotten the fabric, embellishments?

Who would have been making it? Yourself or a tailor?

As you can see, this is all done in conjunction with your research and documentation. By answering these questions before you even begin your project you will have the majority of your documentation done by the time you are finished. Additionally, re looking at your work from the standpoint of the person sitting in the drafty room with horrid light will make you appreciate the work you are actually doing. While modern techniques and tools make it easy to create our A and S projects, it is the medieval eye that will truly make you understand and appreciate just what it is you are making.