

Calligraphy: Musical Notation

Arts & Sciences Tournament : A.S. XXXVI

I chose to make a slightly changed copy of the Antiphonal in the possession of the State Library of Australia. This is page 250 of their manuscript, which has a large illuminated letter “H”.

This Antiphonal, that was created in Italy in the 13th century, is measured at 570 x 395 mm and contains 360 pages. It was written on Vellum, and according to the library’s web site, the ink would have been “carbon-based, with a binding medium such as gum arabic, and the judicious addition of water as necessary to make the ink flow.” No specific analysis was done of the ink or pigments in this manuscript because they did not wish to remove any fragments.

Because the size of the original manuscript was so large, I reduced the size by half in my copy, making it easier for me to handle. I used India ink for the words and notes, and watered-down crimson gauche for the lines. The gold on my copy is 23 carat gold leaf, attached with gesso. Due to the expense and difficulty in getting quality vellum, I used as a substitute pergamanata paper, which is a cellulose based paper, and works very similar to vellum.

In making the music lines, I used a ruler, but the rest of the piece I drew freehand. I used gauche paints for the illumination, as that is very similar to what they would have used in period.

I tried to copy the calligraphy as closely as I could, as well as the illumination. The main difference I made was on the curly-ques on the corners of the Illuminated “H”, which I made not quite as complex.

Bibliography:

Web site:

Treasure of the State Library – Australia

<http://www.slsa.sa.gov.au/treasures/antiphonal/>

Original:

