

On tinted paper from:

The Book of the Art

of Cennino Cennini

CHAP. 15. How to draw on tinted paper.

In order to proceed gradually and begin at the very beginning, and as it were at the foundation and threshold of colouring, you must learn another method of drawing besides those of which we have previously been speaking; and this is called, drawing on tinted paper either on parchment or paper. They are called tinted because the whole surface of either is coloured with the same tint. The tints may be either red, purple, green, azure, grey, flesh-colour, or any colour you please ; they all require the same tempering and grinding, and may all be drawn upon in the same manner. It is true that green tints are the most beautiful and most frequently used, both for drawing on with shade - colours, and with white.

Although I shall hereafter treat of grinding the colours, of their several natures and of the medium (tempera) they require, I must give you in short a quick method for your use in drawing and for tinting the paper.

CHAP. 16. How a green tint is made in drawing paper and how it is tempered.

When you wish to tint goat-parchment or sheets of paper green, take about the size of half a walnut of verde-terra, and half the quantity of ochre; of stiff white lead half the quantity of the ochre, and about the size of a bean of bone-dust which I have taught you previously to prepare, and half the size of a bean of vermilion, and grind all these well together on a porphyry slab, with water from a well, or spring, or river: grind them as long as you can bear grinding you cannot grind them too much; and the more you grind them, the more perfect the tint will be.

Then temper these ingredients with glue (colld) of the following kind and strength: Take a piece of glue as sold by the apothecaries (not fish-glue), and put it in a pipkin to soak, in as much clean water as can be contained in two common drinking-glasses, for the space of six hours ; then put the pipkin on a moderate fire, and skim it when it boils. When it has boiled a short time, and the glue is perfectly dissolved, strain it twice; then take a painter's vase, large enough to contain the colours you have ground, and add the glue to them till the colours flow well from the brush; then take the paper which you wish to tint, and with a hog's-bristle brush, rather large and soft, spread the colour immediately all over, with a light touch, and the brush almost half-dry, first in one direction and then in the other, and so go over it four or five times until you see that the paper is tinted equally, with a space of time between each coat, that each one may dry, and if it gets dry or leathery with your tinting, it is a proof that the tempera is too strong ; therefore when you have gone over it the first time you must remedy this. How? Add clean tepid water to it. When finished and quite dry, take a knife and rub it lightly over the paper, to remove any little grain of roughness.