



Old English Recipe for Ink c.1483

The National Archives, Kew, Richmond, Surrey, TW9 4DU

Oak Gall Ink

Submitted By
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Old English recipe for ink from the United Kingdom National Archives

This recipe for ink is written in old English. According to The National Archives of the UK it is a fragment from a larger book or volume, which had long since been parted from the original source. It was found in the records of the Chancery, a government department that wrote most official documents issued on behalf of the Crown during the medieval period.

"The recipe here suggests the following ingredients: gall (growths on oak trees caused by insects or fungus), copperas or vitriol (copper or other type of ferrous sulphate) and gum (Arabic)."

Historical Background:

The Ink recipe below is from "A Booke of Secrets: Shewing diues waies to make and prepare all sorts of Inke, and Colours". Published in London, by Adam Islip, in 1596. This book has about 10 black ink recipes and 20 or so recipes for colored inks. In addition, there are instructions for etching in metal and coloring quill pens. One of the existing copies is owned by the Yale Center for British Art.

Another.

Take a quart of strong wine, put it into a new pot, and set it on a soft fire till it be hote, but let it not seeth, then put into it foure ounces of gauls, two ounces and a halfe of gum Arabike, and two ounces of victriall, al beaten into smal powder, and sifted through a siue, stirre it with a wooden sticke, and it will be good inke.

Transcription:

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Transcription by Jack C. Thompson as published in his book Manuscript Inks © 1996
The Caber Press

Bibliography:

http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/museum/item.asp?item_id=8

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Godfrey's Bookshelf

<http://www.shipbrook.com/jeff/bookshelf/details.html?bookid=3>

Title:	A Booke of Secrets: Shewing diues waies to make and prepare all sorts of Inke, and Colours
Author:	Anonymous
Published:	London; Adam Islip, 1596

Manuscript Inks by Jack C. Thompson
The Caber Press, © 1996

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The Ink Corrosion Website

hosted by the European Commission on Preservation and Access in Amsterdam. In collaboration with the Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen in Rotterdam and The Netherlands Institute for Cultural Heritage in Amsterdam
<http://www.knaw.nl/ecpa/ink/>