OBJECTIVES OF THE ASSESSMENT
This standardised assessment format assesses four specific areas, it is intended to check that your clothing and equipment is of a suitable standard, and identify whether you are, (in simple terms), sufficiently informed about your costume to avoid misinforming the public.

FORMAT
The first section focuses on the background and persona of the character you wish to represent. The second part of the assessment will assess your overall appearance, looking for acceptable colours, lack of modern fasteners etc. The third part looks at the culturally distinctive aspects of your customer and equipment and the fourth part at items and trapping appropriate to your social status.

To complete the assessment the candidate must pass sections 1 & 2 and score at least 3 points in part 3. Candidates aspiring to high-status must then score at least 3 points in part 4.

CLERICAL CHARACTER-TYPES
For the purposes of these assessments, regular clerical character-types are split into monks and nuns.

Monks: ‘regular’ clergy lived a life of prayer and labour according to a Rule (‘regula’). Monastic communities following the Rule of St Benedict were formed (or refounded) in England from the 960s and played an important role in spiritual life. As a key part of regular religious life involved renouncing the world, candidates must have a very good explanation for being outside their monastery! Two grades of monk are distinguished: novice/brother and abbot. For high status, a candidate may choose to portray a brother who is ordained as a priest, an abbot or a bishop who is also a monk.

Nuns: communities of religious women were relatively common in early medieval Europe, though they were generally made up of noble or royal women and often had extremely close connections to particular aristocratic families. If it was frowned on for a monk to leave the seclusion of his house, the emergence of a nun would be doubly unusual; candidates must be able to explain their presence. Two grades of nun are distinguished: novice/nun and abbess.

SECTION 1 – BACKGROUND & PERSONA (COMPULSORY)
Name: candidate must have an appropriate authentic name.

Social Status & Family Background. Candidate must indicate which character-type and rank he/she is attempting to portray. The candidate should have an appropriate racial type and family background. The candidate must also be able to explain the background/training he/she will have undergone (in character) to reach this stage.
**Marital Status**: candidate must indicate whether or not their mediaeval persona is married. Although clerical celibacy was not seriously enforced (though it was considered an ideal) until after the Conquest, monks and nuns should be celibate.

**Timeline**: candidate must indicate to which century (9th, 10th or 11th) their costume belongs. Monks and nuns following this kit guide are only permitted from the period between the ‘Benedictine’ monastic revival of the 950s-970s. Clerical types before this period should use the guide for secular canons.

**Faith**: The candidate should demonstrate understanding of the early medieval Christian world-view, including the structure of the Church, the key aspects of early medieval worship and early medieval theology. Candidates should beware of allowing later (particularly post-Conquest and post-Reformation) or earlier (e.g. ‘Celtic spirituality’) strands in Christian thought to inform this view.

**Location**: monks, nuns and secular canons should indicate the monastery they derive from, and know its principle patron saints.

**Literacy**: clergy would be able to read and write, and most would know a good deal of Latin. It is not always possible to represent this, but candidates should be aware when in character.

**21st Century Health Warning!** Religion is a highly personal matter, and it can prove a source of argument. Candidates should be aware of potential sensitivities and show common sense and tact. You should never celebrate Mass (or pretend to) unless you are actually an ordained priest.

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**SECTION 2 –BASIC COSTUME AND ACCESSORIES**

This section is mandatory; a candidate not fulfilling the criteria can only be awarded a part pass.

**Part 1- BASIC COSTUME**

**Material Appearance (COMPULSORY)**

Fabrics must be of wool, linen, silk (for the affluent) or suitable look-alike.

Colours must be appropriate for undyed cloth or material dyed with natural dyes (no harsh modern colours, particularly synthetic black linen). All edges must be properly finished & hemmed.

Costume must contain no modern features such as zips, modern fasteners, and obvious machine stitch or machine braid. For leatherwork avoid Chrome Tanned Leather.

Material weave must look appropriate to the period. No coarse weaves or Sackcloth.

**Undertunic (COMPULSORY)**

The candidate must have an under tunic of approaching ankle length.

The sleeves must be close fitting at the cuff and at least wrist length.
It should have a wide hole for the neck but no vertical slit.

It must be fully skirted and may have side splits appropriate to class and race.

The under tunic should be made of linen or suitable look-alike. For those aspiring to high-status costume (particularly nuns) the under tunic may be made of silk.

**Habit (COMPULSORY)**

The candidate must have an over-tunic, worn ‘pouched’ with a belt or girdle, and of at ankle length. It should be reasonably loose fitting.

The sleeves should be loose fitting at the cuff (up to 12” wide at the wrist) and be wrist length.

It should have a wide hole for the neck but no vertical slit. It may have an attached hood, with a point extending at least 6”.

It must be fully skirted but should not have side or front splits.

The overtunic should be of plain wool (natural off-white, brown, black)

**Scapular (COMPULSORY FOR MONKS/NUNS)**

This is a tabard-like apron that may be worn over the top of the Tunic when working. It should be of the same naturally-coloured wool as the Habit.

It should be of shoulder width (around 45 cm), with no side seam. There is a simple slit opening for the head and hood.

The Scapular should be of knee to mid calf in length and be equal both front and back

**Trousers (COMPULSORY FOR MALE CHARACTERS)**

Male candidates may wear trousers (see Viking Warrior guide) or Saxon-style hose and braies, as appropriate to racial type.

Braies should be of natural or bleached linen. They should be knee length, or reaching just over the knees, and be loose fitting. They should fasten at the waist with a drawstring, or thin belt, fed through a channel, not through belt loops.

Hose/stockings should be of a natural or bleached linen or wool, reaching to or above the knees. They should be fastened with a thin linen band or garter around their top to hold them up, or be pinned to the Braies.

**Shoes (COMPULSORY)**

Footwear should be of a style appropriate to class / race, and either of a turnshoe construction or a suitable turnshoe look alike.

The candidate may also have a pair of ‘night shoes’.

If extra thick soles and / or studs are evident, candidates must demonstrate that they understand the construction of an early medieval turn shoe and that studs are only allowable for safety purposes.

**Wimple (COMPULSORY FOR NUNS)**
This is a large rectangular or semicircular cloth of natural or bleached silk or linen, roll hemmed on all edges. The cloth needs to be moderately lightweight (like a handkerchief).

It should be wide enough to cover the head from just above the eyebrow to the centre of the back, and be long enough to wrap around the face one and a half to two times. This centre front is held in place with the Fillet or Wimple band with the front ends being secured just behind the ears, either being tucked under the fillet, or with pins.

A second wimple made of a similar coloured cloth to the over-tunic can be worn over the top of the first wimple. This is a large semicircle of cloth slightly wider than the first. Secured at the Temples with pins, and in the centrally in the front with either a small broach or pin.

**Fillett or Wimple Band (COMPULSORY FOR NUNS)**

This is a thin band of either silk or linen, up to 5 centimetres in width. It may be stitched centrally to the front edge of the wimple. Like the Wimple this should be Roll hemmed along all the edges. It may be embroidered.

It may take the form of either a simple fitted band stitched closed at the back of the head.

Alternatively it may be a longer band tied at the back of the head. The ends of this drop down the back under the wimple, to be expose bell shaped ends, in the middle of the back.

**Cloak, Mantle or Cope (COMPULSORY)**

The candidate must have a Cloak or Mantle of rectangular or half round shape and of a high enough quality to reflect the status of a Thegn.

Male candidates aspiring to high status should replace their cloak with a Cope as detailed in the Vestments guide.

**Dress Accessories & Jewellery**

All clerical characters should wear a cross, either of plain or decorated wood or metal.

Monks and nuns will have taken vows of poverty and so strictly should not wear jewellery or have elaborate decoration. Characters (particularly nuns) may choose to have decoration and jewellery, but must be able to justify it through their own (or their family’s) high status.

**Seax or Knife (COMPULSORY)**

The minimum requirement is a seax or knife, which is adequately sheathed and has no hilt fittings. All free men and women carried a seax as a symbol of their freedom. This may be an authentic 'sharp' for eating or a swivelling penknife for writing.

**Messing Equipment (COMPULSORY)**

Every candidate must be in possession of at least one bowl or plate of wood or pottery made in the correct style of the period. Avoid round walled teak bowls.

To compliment the mess kit an appropriate spoon of wood, or bone, or horn must be produced. This must resemble spoons of the period

**VILLAGER ACCESSORIES**
The candidate shall explain his/her character’s presence at the event – particularly as monks and especially nuns lived a regular life cloistered away from the world.

**Appropriate Craft**

Crafts might include copying manuscripts or writing charters; preaching and telling Christian stories (from the Bible or about the saints and conversion of England); praying for a patron/lord, or for the success of a Christian army in battle (even against Christian enemies).

**Appropriate Craft Tools**

The candidate should be able to talk about the relevant tools of their trade. A basic understanding of what the tools are for and how to use them can be mentioned. Writing equipment could include: quill or reed pens, iron gall ink, parchment, a penknife, writing-slope, wax tablets, exemplar manuscript to copy from. Clerical equipment could include: candles, censers, portable altar, chalice/paten, reliquary. Items should be decorated where their status is appropriately high (particularly reliquaries and anything to do with Mass!)

**Craft Work**

The candidate should give a description of the craft they are proficient in. Regular clergy should be encouraged to ‘passive’ pursuits such as prayer and scribal activity.

Those praying could lead/assist at a short service of psalms and prayers appropriate to the season etc. Ideally this should be in Latin (quite a few service-books survive), but the candidate should have some idea about what the different parts are (hymns, antiphons, responses, collects etc).

Scribes should demonstrate knowledge of early medieval scripts and calligraphy, explain how books were copied, parchment and ink produced, etc. Illuminators should have appropriate pigments, a pestle and mortar, gold leaf etc and a fixing agent (very often egg white).

Preachers should be able to communicate Christian ideas and stories (for example drawn from Bede’s *Ecclesiastical History*) and might hear confessions or check other villagers’ knowledge of the Creed and the Lord’s Prayer (the vernacular is acceptable!)

Detailed knowledge or obvious effort should be rewarded – for example demonstrable knowledge of Latin, musical ability (plainchant), stories about saints associated with their home-area, monastic sign-language etc.

**SECTION 3 - ITEMS APPROPRIATE TO CULTURAL IDENTITY**

Strictly speaking, regular clergy should not be found outside their monastic houses. The following section outlines the behaviour appropriate for regular clergy.

**Monks:** kit should include an under-tunic, habit and scapular. Monks should have some understanding of the Rule of St Benedict and what it involved in practice in later Anglo-Saxon England (the services of the Divine Office, restrictions on diet, periods of silence) and should be aware of the *Regularis Concordia* (a document outlining how monks would live and how the king would treat them).
Although monks took a vow of poverty, the Rule stipulated that anyone leaving the monastery should be given good quality clothing so that the house looked respectable.

Monks could spend their time writing or praying; talking to the worldly should be discouraged (and silence was enforced at certain times of the day!).

**Nuns**: kit should include an under-tunic, habit, scapular, wimple and fillett. Early medieval nunneries were invariably ruled by women from noble families, and it would be unusual for anyone of low status to enter a nunnery.

Nuns should have some understanding of the Rule of St Benedict and what it involved in practice in later Anglo-Saxon England (the services of the Divine Office, restrictions on diet, periods of silence) and should be aware of the *Regularis Concordia* (a document outlining how regular clergy would live and how the king would treat them).

Although nuns took a vow of poverty, the Rule of St Benedict stipulated that anyone leaving the house should be given good quality clothing to give an impression of respectability.

Nuns should have a good reason for being found away from their house, especially if alone. Nuns could spend their time writing or praying (talking to disreputable men should be strictly forbidden! Yes, that includes you, Sir Galahad “the Chaste”!).

**Male Clergy**: strictly speaking, all male clergy should have the distinguishing tonsure – a circle of shaven head around the crown (a remembrance of the crown of thorns). Some candidates will have a ‘natural’ tonsure; it is perfectly acceptable for others who do not to portray clergy provided that they acknowledge that a tonsure would be more authentic.

**Divine Office**: monks and nuns were committed to performing a daily cycle of prayer (nocturns in the middle of the night, matins at dawn, and then services at the first, third, sixth and ninth hours (prime, terce, sext, none), followed by vespers in the evening and compline before retiring to bed. Though it is not usually possible for re-enactors to follow this, regular clergy should be seen conducting these services at the appropriate times.

**VESTMENTS.**

Abbots and monks who have been ordained as priests should have vestments. Candidates aspiring to high status may choose to portray Abbots or monks ordained as Priests. Monk-bishops were a peculiarity of late tenth and eleventh century Anglo-Saxon England; as well as monastic kit, monk-bishops should have high quality, lavishly decorated vestments. See the separate appendix on Vestments for details.

**Non-ordained monks**: alb and amice. Note that the cantor of a monastery (the monk who oversaw the singing of services) often wore a cope.

**Monks ordained as deacons**: alb, amice, stole (worn crossed at the right hip) and dalmatic.
Monks ordained as priests: alb, amice, stole (worn crossed in front at the waist), dalmatic (optional), chasuble (compulsory) and/or cope (compulsory)

Abbots: alb, amice and cope. An Abbot may also have priestly vestments.

Bishops who were monks: alb, amice, stole (worn crossed in front at the waist), dalmatic (optional), chasuble (compulsory) or cope (compulsory), crozier. Stole, dalmatic, chasuble and cope should all be embroidered and should be made of high-quality material and/or dyed an expensive colour. Alb and amice should be made of silk.

SECTION 4 - ITEMS APPROPRIATE TO SOCIAL STRATUM

This section is mandatory for High Status personnel. However, a candidate achieving a part pass is automatically relegated to a lower class. Costume can be upgraded on subsequent assessments. Part 1 is compulsory, score 1 further point in Part 2 to pass this section.

Part 1- MANDATORY ITEMS FOR HIGH STATUS COSTUME

Cope (COMPULSORY)

The candidate must have a Cope, as described in the Vestments guide. It should be suitably embroidered or of expensive material.

Embroidery (COMPULSORY)

Expensive embroidery sits rather uneasily with vows of poverty! Therefore Abbots and Abbesses should be reasonably restrained, limiting themselves to silk undertunics and silk or fur linings for hoods and cloaks. Abbots’ vestments should be appropriately embroidered.

Decoration (COMPULSORY)

The leatherwork of the costume must be decorated appropriately with tooled leatherwork on scabbards, sheaths and belts and pouches. Alternatively decorative plates must be fitted to belts and pouches as appropriate.

Alternative the candidate may wear expensive jewellery and a suitably lavish cross.

Part 2 - OPTIONAL ITEMS FOR HIGH STATUS

To complete this section the candidate must score 3 further points.

Head Covering

If the (female) candidate is in the appropriate possession of a wimple or cap made from silk. (ONE POINT)

Writing Equipment

If the candidate is in the possession of a quality satchel or bag in which are placed quills, penknife, ink and either parchments or wax tablets. (ONE POINT)

Comb & Comb Case
If the candidate is in the possession of a comb and comb case, suitably decorated. (ONE POINT)

**Vestments**

If the (male) candidate is in the possession of a priestly vestments (an alb/amice, stole and chasuble, made of appropriate material, with suitable decoration). (ONE POINT)

**Chalice and Paten**

These should be of appropriate design and may be decorated. Candidates should show due respect for the Eucharist. (ONE POINT)

**Reliquary**

This should be of appropriate ‘house shape’ design and should be decorated with either carved wood, ivory/bone or metalwork. (ONE POINT)

**Manuscript**

This should be written on parchment pricked, ruled and bound in an appropriate manner to its origin (Insular or Continental). The text should be one known in the location of the candidate’s home-area (e.g. England, Normandy, Flanders, Ireland) and it should be written in a script appropriate for the candidate’s time-period. It may be illuminated or have decorated initials, as appropriate to the type of text (Gospels would demand greater attention). It may have a tooled leather cover, carved ivory/bone panels or jewelled metalwork (depending on the status of the text). (TWO POINTS)

You will get serious kudos for producing this – this sort of labour of love deserves great respect!

**Other Items Distinctive to High Status**

There are many other items distinctive to High Status. The list of is long but down to the assessor’s discretion, to a maximum of (ONE POINT).

Revised by Benedict Coffin, February 2005

Compiled By Russell Scott. May 1999

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