

# Herding Cats: How to Kingdom Signet

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# Introduction

- ◇ I am Patrikia Asa Gormsdottir, OL, OP, aka Manic Pixie Viking
- ◇ Halfway through second term as Kingdom Signet (aka Trillium Signet) for Ealdormere
- ◇ Personal focus: Early medieval and artefact-based illumination
- ◇ Quick-change artist aka battle scribe aka adrenaline junkie, but don't believe other scribes should have to live like that
- ◇ Blessed to live in a Kingdom where TRM tend to give decent notice before awards and where I can make scrolls as big and gaudy as my little heart desires

# Who are the Cats?

- ◆ The Crown
  - ◆ Reviews recommendations, consults with Orders, makes decisions, sets schedule
- ◆ The Kingdom Signet
- ◆ The Scribes
  - ◆ VOLUNTEERS
  - ◆ Varying skills and periods
- ◆ The Court Herald(s)
- ◆ The Recipients





# The Crown

- ◆ Each Crown is different, with specific plans, whims, distractions and concerns
- ◆ Awards are the privilege of the Crown and the cornerstone of a Court
  
- ◆ Thoughtful, beautiful scrolls enhance the prestige of the Crown and Kingdom, gratify the recipient, and develop the scribe





# What is a Kingdom Signet?

## ◇ COORDINATOR

- ◇ Receives the will of the Crown to recognize members of the Populace
- ◇ Advertises and assigns scribal opportunities to volunteer scribes based on their availability and skill sets
- ◇ Follows up with scribes to ensure work is on track
- ◇ Receives finished work
- ◇ Assists Crown to execute scrolls, e.g. apply seals, etc. as needed
- ◇ Coordinates with Court Herald(s), as needed, e.g. award lists, spare copies of wording

# Scribes – Care and Feeding

- ◇ Scribes are Volunteers. Treat them with respect.
  - ◇ Like feast cooks, scribal labour is largely invisible
  - ◇ Scribes are vulnerable to burnout.
  - ◇ I strongly encourage all Crowns and Heralds to always recognize the scribe(s) in Court, by name, preferably at the time the scroll is read out and bestowed.
- ◇ Scribes have varying interests and skillsets
  - ◇ Match the assignment to their preferences when you can
- ◇ Scribes often desire to do scrolls for friends or loved ones.
  - ◇ Exercise that perspective when possible
- ◇ Share resources, e.g. kingdom scribal book with basic wordings and award badges
- ◇ **Show you are invested in their inclusion and success**



# Scribal Collaborations

- ◇ A scroll's components are illumination, wording, calligraphy, research and raw materials
- ◇ A scribe may choose to provide all of these themselves, or ask the Signet for help to find partners

## Examples:

- ◇ Wordsmith
- ◇ Calligrapher
- ◇ Illuminator
- ◇ Patron
- ◇ Researcher
- ◇ Scribal courier, if the scribe can't attend the event
- ◇ Printer for wordings





# Court Heralds

- ◇ Court Heralds are an integral part of Court and are familiar with the kingdom's Boke of the Court, or equivalent, regarding process, call-and-response wordings and oaths, etc.
- ◇ The Crown and Court Herald plan and organize Court in advance, in snatched minutes between Order Meetings, tournaments, lunch, and A&S competitions

## Court Heralds:

- ◇ Carry the big book of scrolls to be awarded that day
- ◇ Announce each piece of business
- ◇ Read out the wordings
  - ◇ Very important to have clear, legible wording print-outs
- ◇ Reveal or conceal the scrolls at TRM's pleasure

# Wording Print-outs

- ◆ Please remind scribes to provide 2-3 copies of the wording, taped to or otherwise included with the scroll
  - ◆ 1 for the recipient
  - ◆ 1 for the Herald
  - ◆ 1 to get lost
- ◆ Wordings should be in 14-point font and clearly show the Award Name, Recipient, and Event at the top
- ◆ Scribes should include their name and key collaborators at the bottom of the wording, so they may be acknowledged.
- ◆ Signing scrolls on the back or concealed in the design is great, but most heralds will not see that information in time.

For every draught, a dram  
Leave for the hollow hill,  
For every feast, a morsel.

The blind harpist  
Sees you, Rhys.  
The sacred oak  
Dons its finest dress.

Triskele turning,  
The song of summer  
Has reached our shore.

For their baronial service, curiosity and joie de vivre,  
We, Steinnar Konungr and Margraig Dróttning  
Make unto Rhys of Anglesey an Award of Arms  
Done the 13<sup>th</sup> day of May, Anno Societatis 57  
In Our Barony of Rising Waters.

Scroll and wording by Dame Asa Gormsdottir.

Jewelled goblet for Rising Waters based on an Anglo-Saxon find.  
Calligraphy in half-uncial script.

# Honouring the Recipients

- ◆ Awards are intended to honour the recipient
- ◆ The Signet will provide you with whatever they have, know, or managed to find.
- ◆ Do your own research into the recipient. Try to incorporate the recipient's persona and activities into the scroll, e.g. period, design, wording, elements – like cats, armoured snails and fandoms!
- ◆ Award scrolls for non-western cultures can be more challenging, e.g. languages, calligraphic hands, etc. These scrolls can be extra exciting and challenging! 😊
- ◆ When in doubt, or if time is short, fall back on a style you are comfortable with.



# What is an Award Scroll?

- ◇ Basic form is an 8.5”x11” piece of watercolour press paper or pergamenata, with text and varying levels of decoration.
- ◇ Individual kingdom sumptuary laws may also set limits on size, style govern the style and amount of illumination
- ◇ To be legal, scrolls generally require the names of the reigning monarchs, the recipient’s name, name of the award, date, and event/location where the award was bestowed.
- ◇ Scrolls can be in alternate formats than paper, e.g., engraved weapons, runestone rocks, etched glass/lanterns, painted banners, embroidered hangings, painted drums, etc.
- ◇ YKMOV (Your Kingdom May Vary)

# Signet Workflow

Crown:

1: Advises Signet of award decisions (recipients, award, event)

Signet:

2: Quality Control:

- ◇ Cross-check recipient against local Order of Precedence (OP), for duplicates
- ◇ Cross-check recipient name spelling against OP, social media, newsletters, court reports, heraldry acceptances, etc. *AOA recipients are the hardest to find.*
- ◇ Note persona tips and home group, if possible
- ◇ Check if any of the assignments correspond with special asks from scribes

# Signet Workflow (cont'd)

3: Post assignment availability, e.g. FB page, email group.

◇ *Do not disclose name of recipient (but kingdoms may vary).*

4: Review responses and assign.

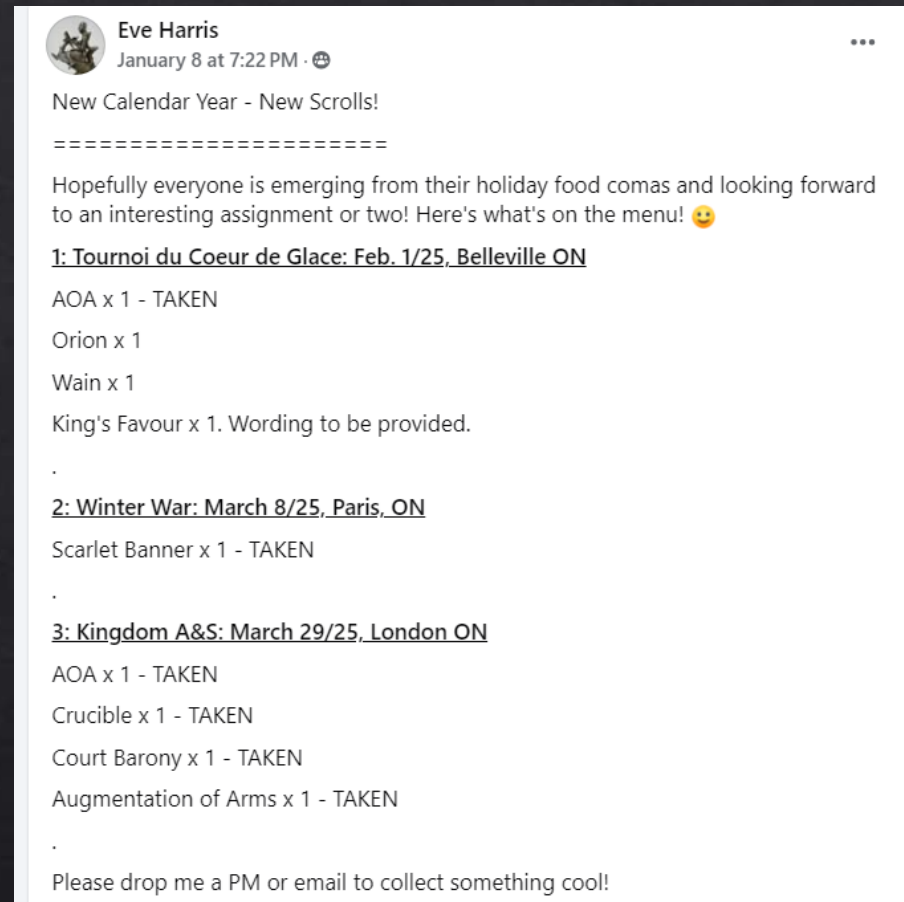
◇ Can be first come – first served, or more nuanced depending on the type of award

◇ Provide selected scribe with all details on the assignment

◇ If a scribe is concerned about an element, e.g. calligraphy or crafting wording, suggest people they might collaborate with

5: Follow-up:

◇ 1 week prior (YMMV), check in with the scribes, check in with TRM





# Signet Workflow (cont'd)

## 6: At the Event

- ◇ Collect the scrolls and match up against your list for the event
- ◇ Attend TRM for seals and signatures (YKMOV)
- ◇ Provide event award list print-out to TRM and Court Herald (if appropriate)
- ◇ Keep an eye out for missing recipients – or recipients who have to leave early!

# Signet Spreadsheet – your life-saver

- ◆ Thoroughly recommend Signets keep a tabbed and up-to-date spreadsheet that shows every kingdom-level award bestowed during every reign, the recipients, the scribes, reasons, ...
- ◆ **Allows thorough tracking of open/backlog scrolls, active scribes, scribal asks, etc.**

Upcoming	My atte Reign	Event	Court Date	Location	Award	Recipient	Scribe(s)	Contact	Comments
Beginning April 2024									
	INCOM!!! Crispin & Anne von	CORONATION	28/09/2024	Barony of Rising Waters (Rockton, Maiden's Heart)	Scotticus of Tor Brant		Rigel (Razi)		Archery set-up and service Running the list table at Lady Mary for BOTH the armoured and the fencible assistance with the Kingdom A&S day-board lunch table.  Margarete is the quiet, competent person at the list table. Last year she tournament in only 1.5 hours, which is amazing because the format that least 2 hours. Margarete rose to the challenge, running that round-robin event that running tragically late. After that exhausting feat, Margarete - This is a LOT of concentration and dedication
	INCOM!!! Crispin & Anne von	CORONATION	28/09/2024	Barony of Rising Waters (Rockton, Maiden's Heart)	Margarete de Mey		Sciath	Messenger	This is someone who has been on the periphery of the SCA for 30+ yrs helping me out personally. She has no definite persons, but seems to someone who first attended the SCA in 1987 and has been peripheral, in my personal entourage, and seems to be mostly social within the St welcome, and bringing new people to events.
	Crispin & Anne	Huntsman's Harvest	05/10/2024	Barony of Ben Dunfirth (Binbrook, AOA)		Gillian Sabine De Mareis	Lizzie Stitches	Messenger	Skalll Wegg- He/Him- Orion- Septentria/Ramshaven- woodworking will work embellishes and enhances events- John Spooner- larchmont4796
	Evander & Marioun	Huntsman's Harvest - BACKLOG	21/09/2024	Canton of Petrea Thule (Codrington)	Orion	Skalll Wegg	Kersteken		Since Ren joined, they have been an enthusiastic addition to our popular martial activities. They have become an officer in Rising Waters, dedicated event hosted by Rising Waters, and attend fight practices and events Group: Barony of Rising Waters. Pronoun: They/Them. They must be informed that they will be called Recommender: Rhys of Anglesey/Umesaya Soukurau. rhys.of.anglesey
	Crispin & Anne	Huntsman's Harvest	05/10/2024	Barony of Ben Dunfirth (Binbrook, AOA)		(Misk) Ren P'sim Ishigame no Okami - WILL BE AT HUNTSMAN'S. Can't attend Brawl. Given to	Aibhilin	Email	Ishigame no Okami- Scarlett Banner- Eoforwic- he shows real leadership in two cultures Japanese and European- name is Chris Beer
	OUTGO Evander & Marioun	Huntsman's Harvest - BACKLOG	21/09/2024	Canton of Petrea Thule (Codrington)	Scarlett Banner	TRH.	Dietrich	Messenger	Rachel Swordbreaker- She/they- AOA- Ben Dunfirth- Training at fencible Meredith Llewellyn - Baronialsofbenunfirth@gmail.com - Piratey *De
	Yes Evander & Marioun	Huntsman's Harvest - BACKLOG	June 6-9/24	Barony of Ben Dunfirth - Hamilton AOA		Rachel Swordbreaker	David of Ben Dunfirth/Aza	Email	large illumination started with her in mind. Rachel started in another
	INCOM!!! Crispin & Anne von	Huntsman's Harvest - BACKLOG	28/09/2024	Barony of Rising Waters (Rockton, AOA)		Cathal Mor	Rigel (Razi)	Messenger	Active and new fencer, jumped in with both feet William of Northumbria - He/Him- AOA- Trinovantia Nava- William ju

# Signet Planning

- ◆ Don't assume the Crown will tell you timely about upcoming awards
- ◆ Watch and ask politely if you don't see anything on the docket for a key event

## Resources:

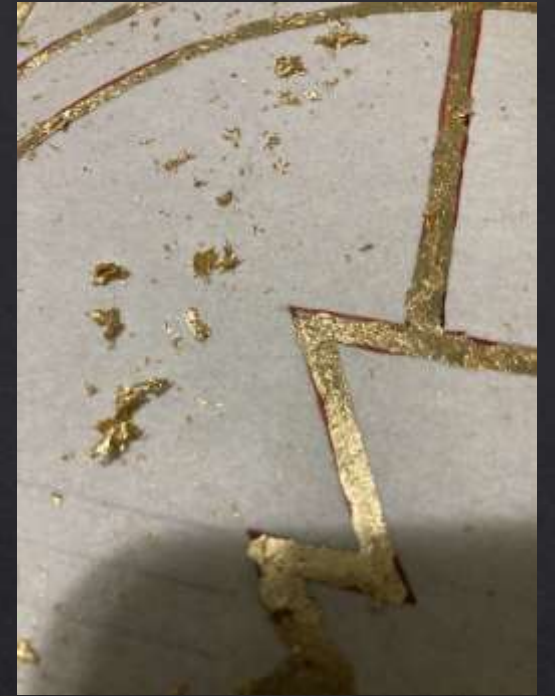
- ◆ Kingdom Calendar
- ◆ New event announcements
- ◆ Royal Progress (though these are often out of date)





# Pennsic and Other Wars

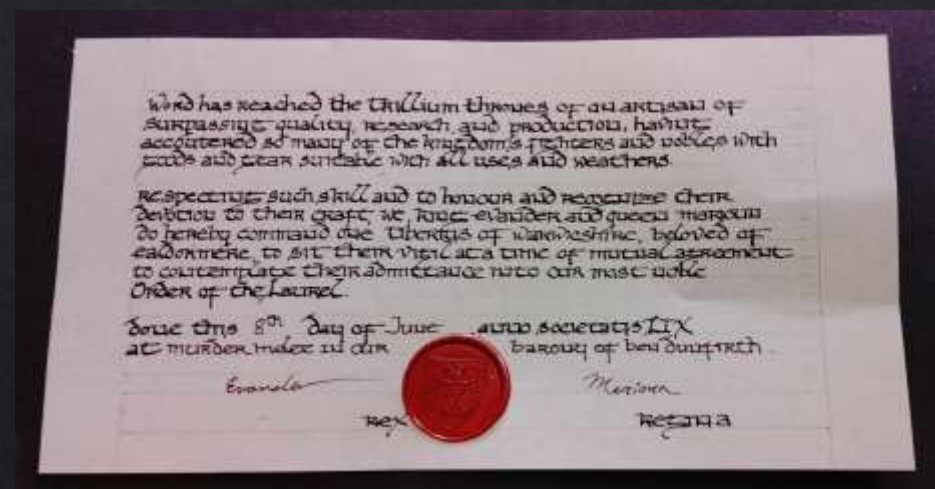
- ◇ Maybe you can go, maybe you can't
- ◇ Discuss TRM's needs and expectations
- ◇ Arrange Deputy Signets on Scene, if needed
  
- ◇ Bring field kit and bottles of water
- ◇ Protect scrolls in waterproof envelopes or equivalent
- ◇ Arrange for appropriate blanks in case TRM wish to honour as-yet-unknown participants at specific battles or competitions
- ◇ Identify secure area with decent table space, chair, and water supplies
  
- ◇ Gilding at Pennsic is a fool's enterprise, at least for me



# Peerage Decisions

The Crown may require small writs for peerages

- ◆ Writs are usually pretty plain
- ◆ Don't **have** to be signed or sealed
  - ◆ Writs are an invitation, not the award itself
- ◆ **Peerages not yet announced are extremely confidential**
- ◆ TRM may directly assign someone to do a writ (or other scroll). If you are aware of an upcoming peerage to be announced, ask TRM if They require a writ to be produced.
- ◆ Handle writs yourself **and do not publish.**







# Signet Philosophy

- ◇ Signets have a lot of knowledge and power
- ◇ As Kingdom Signet, my philosophy is that I am here to support and develop the scribal community
- ◇ **Not here to grab all the “good” assignments for myself and deprive other scribes of the opportunity**
- ◇ **SHARE THE SCRIBAL LOVE**



# Crown Changeovers

- ◇ Crowns change every six months
- ◇ Heirs are present most of the Reign but may not see much of the process
- ◇ Each Reign may have their own preferences, stylings, whims, themes, etc.

Things to check:

- ◇ Does the Kingdom have designated Crown and Heir email accounts?
- ◇ Is this the Heirs' First Rodeo, or are They experienced? (cue Jimi Hendrix)
- ◇ Contact each incoming Reign, a couple of months in advance, introducing yourself.
- ◇ Ask for Their preferred stylings (e.g. High King, Queen Ilsebet the 3rd, Daimyo Tanaki, etc.), if They will use seals, stamps, hanging seals, etc., if there is a theme for the Reign.
- ◇ Let them know about deadlines and timings so everyone can plan. Some Crowns are highly organized and know exactly what They want to do. Some are more organic and want time to assess.
- ◇ It's Their Reign. You serve at Their pleasure. Work with Them. 😊

# Coordinating Scroll Assignments

- ◇ *“The Crown just sent me an email with all the names and awards and events! All I have to do now is make a quick post / email and wait for the offers to come in!”*
- ◇ Not so fast.
- ◇ Check the Order of Precedence against each name to ensure the specific award has not already been bestowed. If it looks like a duplicate, ask the Crown if they wish to change the type of award, give it anyway, or cancel it.
- ◇ Check the spelling of the name, in case the Crown’s note had a typo. Research online (e.g., Facebook, kingdom wiki, heraldry resource, etc.). Talk to trusted contacts from the area of the recipient.

# Assignment Phase

- ◆ Scribes want as much detail as possible – name, reasons for award, recipient persona, preferred pronouns, activities, area in which they reside, who recommended them, etc.
- ◆ Some kingdoms use online recommendation forms. These can be extremely helpful but only if the Crown passes on the full text
- ◆ Try to help out your scribes by doing some of the legwork on a recipient (and tell them what resources you found).





# Everything's Assigned!!

That's great!

Don't trust it. 😊

Check in with the Crown a few days (e.g., Wednesday before a Saturday event). See at right.

- ◆ If appropriate in your Kingdom, send a copy separately to the Reign Herald
- ◆ Print out 3 copies at home – 1 each for the Crown and Herald, and 1 for you.
- ◆ *Don't leave the list in public view.*

## Sample message to Crown:

Your Majesties,

Following is the list of Awards for Dancing with the Czars this Saturday:

### Award – Recipient – Scribe

AOA – Jeanne la Touraine – Torran

Grant Martial – Tiffany Red Sleeves – Momoki

Laurel – Peter Spiffy Pants – Genevieve

*Backlog: Service Award – Fossi Finagle – Dmitri*

Please let me know any changes or additions.

Yours,



# Time and Exigency – and Blanks!

In an ideal world, scribal deadlines are:

- ◇ Far enough away to not throw life into turmoil
- ◇ Not so far that we procrastinate and forget
  
- ◇ Crowns may wish to honour participants on the field
- ◇ Crowns may order several AOA's on Wednesday for Saturday, or at the event itself
  
- ◇ Keep a supply of blanks on hand
- ◇ Bring a scribal kit to events



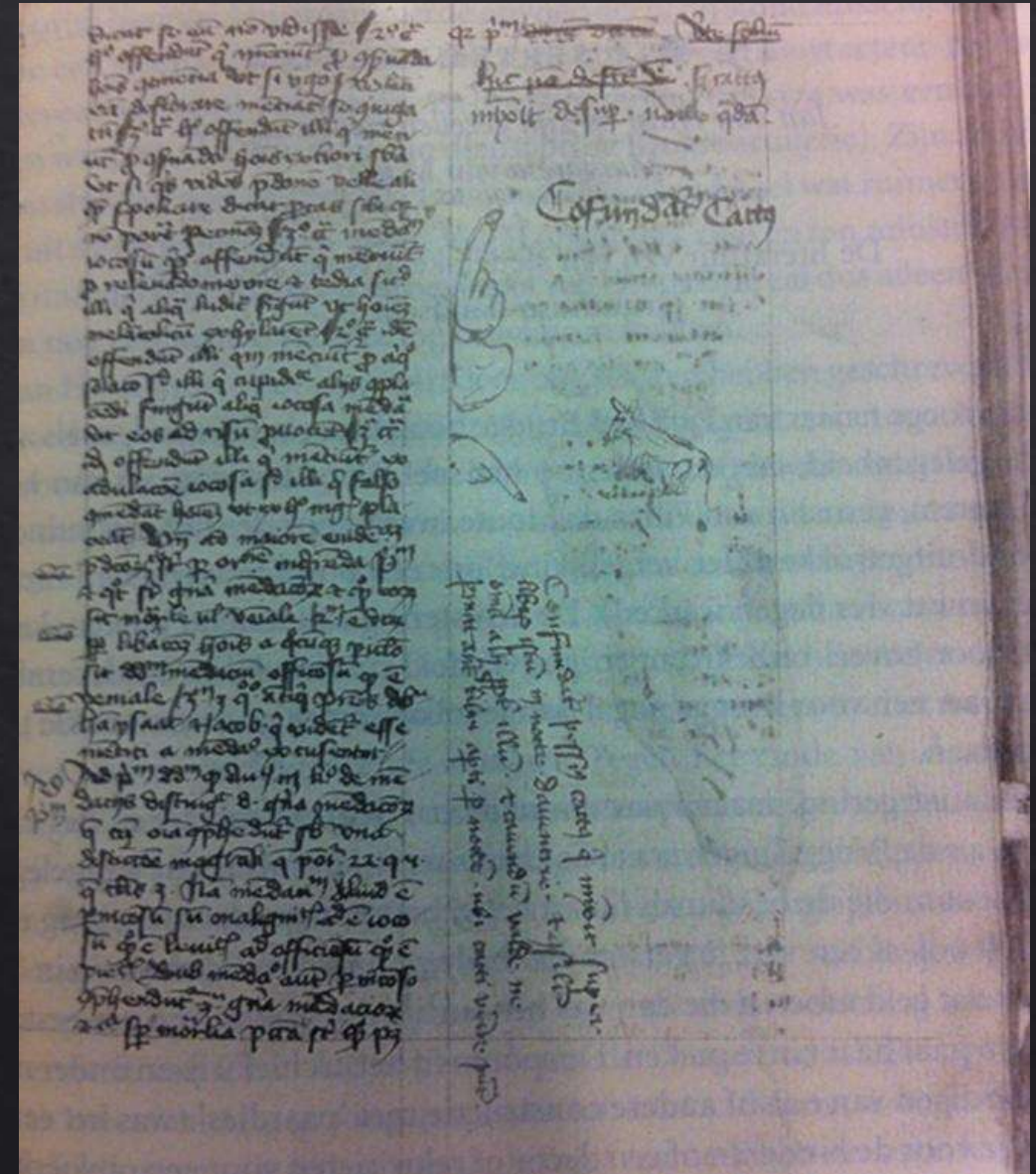
# Catastrophe

Deventer manuscript, c. 1420

© Cologne, Historisches Archiv, G.B. quarto, 249, fol. 68r

For a full discussion of the Cat Pee incident and the scribe's reaction:

<https://thijsporck.com/2016/08/08/paws-pee-and-pests/>





# Sometimes, despite best efforts, things go Wrong.

- ◇ TRM makes a last-minute award decision and doesn't tell the Signet
- ◇ Signet accidentally assigns same award to two scribes, leaving one unassigned
- ◇ Scribe has an attack of Life/car breaks down/cat pees on scroll, etc.
- ◇ Recipient who was Supposed to be at X event only (per intelligence) shows up earlier
- ◇ Scrolls “walk” from Royalty Room

*“Then he put the schedule back on the dashboard, looked left, looked right, looked left again and began to walk purposefully across the road. He was halfway across when a German juggernaut came around the corner, its driver crazed on caffeine, little white pills, and EEC transport regulations.*

*He watched its receding bulk.*

*Cor, he thought, that one nearly had me.*

*Then he looked down at the gutter.*

*Oh, he thought. “*

- ◇ *“Good Omens”, Pratchett / Gaiman. I attribute the good bits to Terry Pratchett.*

# Recovery – Soft and Hard Skills

- ◇ *Communication*
- ◇ Delay/reschedule
  
- ◇ *Patience*
- ◇ Carry blanks and supplies
  
- ◇ *Avoid Finger-pointing*
- ◇ Battle scribes
  
- ◇ *Praise the mystery of Caffeine*





But, usually, things will go right.

