Historical recipes for preparatory layers for oil paintings in manuals, manuscripts and handbooks in North West Europe, 1550-1900: analysis and reconstructions

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## Appendix 5  Recipes for panel preparation 1550-1900, including South European recipes

### 5a  Recipes for panel preparation: aqueous grounds 1550-1900

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Support</th>
<th>Repair</th>
<th>Smoothing</th>
<th>Sizing Layer</th>
<th>Smoothing</th>
<th>First Ground Layer</th>
<th>Smoothing</th>
<th>Isolation Layer</th>
<th>Second Ground Layer</th>
<th>Smoothing</th>
<th>Isolation Layer</th>
<th>Third Ground Layer</th>
<th>Smoothing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>De Mayerne 1620-44: 99</td>
<td>UK</td>
<td></td>
<td>white, honey</td>
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<tr>
<td>de la Fontaine 1679: 27-8</td>
<td>FR</td>
<td></td>
<td>leather glue</td>
<td>Spanish white, glue (x 3, with a brush)</td>
<td>wetted linen, then sanded with horsetail</td>
<td>glue (x 2)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Valuable secrets 1775: 133</td>
<td>UK</td>
<td></td>
<td>size</td>
<td>Whitening, size</td>
<td>boiling oil</td>
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<tr>
<td>Le Pileur d’Apligny 1779: 72</td>
<td>FR</td>
<td></td>
<td>white, glue</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fokke Simonsz 1803-4: 84-5</td>
<td>NL</td>
<td></td>
<td>glove clippings, white chalk (x 12, first two coats with more glue)</td>
<td>With soft wet brush dipped in water and water pressed out, brush surface to make it more ‘soft’. Alternatively: use wet linen cloth. When dry: smooth with shaved grass or new linen cloth</td>
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<td>Source</td>
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<td>Repair</td>
<td>Smoothing</td>
<td>Sizing Layer</td>
<td>Smoothing</td>
<td>First Ground Layer</td>
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<td>Isolation Layer</td>
<td>Second Ground Layer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bouvier 1827: 577-80&lt;sup&gt;750&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>FR</td>
<td>NOT</td>
<td>pumice</td>
<td>pipe clay, flour or starch, bright yellow ochre, bright orange ochre (x 4 thin layers, with large brush, like a varnish brush)</td>
<td>pumice</td>
<td>lightly</td>
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<tr>
<td>Montabert 1829: 166-169</td>
<td>FR</td>
<td></td>
<td>water, absinth, garlic, salt, vinegar, warm parchment glue, rub while warm and fluid (for adherence)</td>
<td>parchment glue, chalk; or parchment glue, lead white; or parchment glue, pipe clay; or wheat flour, calcined bone powder, pumice powder</td>
<td></td>
<td>decoction of black licquirice sugar</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fielding 1839: 79-80</td>
<td>UK</td>
<td>well</td>
<td>calcined bones of sheep's trotters, thin paste (x 3, first coat rubbed in with a pumice stone, next coats applied with a brush)</td>
<td>sandpaper</td>
<td></td>
<td>coloured ground (artist's colours) 9x 1-2</td>
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<td>raw linseed or poppy oil</td>
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<tr>
<td>Technische Mitteilungen, nr. 25 (1886): 39</td>
<td>GE</td>
<td></td>
<td>Cologne glue or hare skin glue (x 1)</td>
<td>Cologne glue or hare skin glue, slaked chalk, white bole, China clay (x 3-4, 1st layer with very little chalk, last layer with more pumice stone, water</td>
<td>pumice</td>
<td>shellac or thin oil paint</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<sup>750</sup> This recipe is written primarily for canvas preparation. However in the first line, Bouvier alludes to the fact that it may also employed to prepare panel, board and paper. Bouvier 1827: 577.
### 5b Recipes for panel preparation: aqueous layer plus oil-based layer 1550-1900

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Support</th>
<th>Smoothing</th>
<th>Sizing Layer</th>
<th>Smoothing</th>
<th>First Ground Layer</th>
<th>Smoothing</th>
<th>Isolation Layer</th>
<th>Second Ground Layer</th>
<th>Smoothing</th>
<th>Isolation Layer</th>
<th>Third Ground Layer</th>
<th>Smoothing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vibert 1892: UK 186-8</td>
<td>smoothed with glass paper, then washed with benzine</td>
<td>zinc white, casein paste [made with casein or cheese, water, ammonia, glycerin] (x 3-5, with swallow-tail brush)</td>
<td>do not polish first layer, but polish subsequent layers with glass paper or powdered pumice stone by means of a cork or dry rag. Last layer unpolished</td>
<td>'A good plan to lay on a very light coat of retouching varnish'</td>
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<tr>
<td>Technische Mitteilungen, nr. 20 (1895): 1-2</td>
<td>chalk ground</td>
<td>boiled linseed oil</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vasari 1550 IT (1568): 52. translation Brown 1960: 230</td>
<td>gessoed</td>
<td>softest glue (x 4-5, with softest sponge)</td>
<td>nut oil, lead white, lead tin yellow, earth for bells (plastered over the panel and beaten with the hand to unite)</td>
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<tr>
<td>source</td>
<td>support</td>
<td>smoothing</td>
<td>sizing layer</td>
<td>smoothing</td>
<td>first ground layer</td>
<td>smoothing</td>
<td>isolation layer</td>
<td>second ground layer</td>
<td>smoothing</td>
<td>isolation layer</td>
<td>third ground layer</td>
<td>smoothing</td>
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<td>BnF Ms. Fr 640 c. FR 1580-1600: 57 perso 115</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>chalk tempered in...[undistinguisha bke] (x 2-3, dabbed on with a brush)</td>
<td>knife</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>A layer of glue (x 1)</td>
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<tr>
<td>De Mayerne 1620-44: 11 UK</td>
<td></td>
<td>glue, chalk</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>scrape and even with the knife</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>lead white, umber</td>
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<tr>
<td>De Mayerne 1620-44: 90v UK</td>
<td></td>
<td>glue, chalk</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>scrape and even with the knife</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>lead white, umber, oil</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bate 1633 (165471): 167 UK</td>
<td></td>
<td>size, whiting</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>scrape</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>lead white, oil</td>
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<tr>
<td>Peacham 1634: 130 UK</td>
<td></td>
<td>size, Spanish white (x 3)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>scrape with sharp knife</td>
<td></td>
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<td>red lead or some other colour</td>
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<tr>
<td>Norgate 1640 (Hardie 1919: 91) UK</td>
<td></td>
<td>size, whiting</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>scrape</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>lead white, oil</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pacheco 1649: 382-3 (translation from Véliz 1986: 66)</td>
<td>hemp over joins</td>
<td>glue, not strong, garlic</td>
<td>unslaked gesso grosso (x 3-4)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>tempered gesso sottile (x 5-6)</td>
<td>scraped with knife</td>
<td>lead white, italianpaper</td>
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<tr>
<td>King 1653-57: 52,UK 52v</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>scrape with reeds or rushes. Some water plaine it with a wet cloth</td>
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<td>primer of lead white, little charcoal black, very little red lead to dry it</td>
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<tr>
<td>'Art of painting in oyle' 1664: 94-5 UK</td>
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<td>strong size, whitening (x 2, applied with a soft brush)</td>
<td>scrape very even with a knife</td>
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<td>lead white, thin red lead, linseed oil (x 1, with smooth brush or</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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71 The original text of the 1654 edition was employed and checked against the transcript of the 1633 edition which is provided by Talley 1981: 172
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Salmon 1672: 141</td>
<td>UK</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>size, whiting ground (x 2-3)</td>
<td>scrape smooth</td>
<td>lead white, oil</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>large pencil. More oil than in second ground to prevent sinking in</td>
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<td>(x 1)</td>
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<td>Félibien 1676: 407-8</td>
<td>FR</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>white tempered in glue</td>
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<td></td>
<td>oil priming</td>
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<tr>
<td>De la Fontaine 1679: 27-8</td>
<td>FR</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>leather glue</td>
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<td></td>
<td>grey in oil</td>
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<tr>
<td>Beurs 1692: 19-20</td>
<td>NL</td>
<td>Spike oil to keep away woodworm</td>
<td>glue paint, chalk white</td>
<td>scrape</td>
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<td></td>
<td>lead white, oil, umber, (x 3-4, applied with a knife)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Beurs 1692: 19-20</td>
<td>NL</td>
<td>Spike oil to keep away woodworm</td>
<td>glue paint, chalk white</td>
<td>scrape</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>lead white, oil, black, (x 3-4, applied with a knife)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Smith 1693: 75</td>
<td>UK</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>whiting, strong glue (x 6-8)</td>
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<td>'Plained with a joiners plane, then water plained with a rag dipped in'</td>
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<td>prime</td>
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<tr>
<td>De la Hire 1730: 708-9</td>
<td>FR</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>warm leather glue (both sides)</td>
<td>scrape</td>
<td>white chalk, glue (x several layers, with a soft brush)</td>
<td>smooth layers in between</td>
<td>lead white, little brown red, carbon black, oil (x 1-2, with soft brush)</td>
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<td>Chomel 1743: 948</td>
<td>NL</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>glue, chalk</td>
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<td></td>
<td>oil paint</td>
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<tr>
<td>Barrow 1754: n.p.</td>
<td>UK</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>white, size</td>
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<td>colours</td>
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<tr>
<td>Source</td>
<td>Support</td>
<td>Smoothing</td>
<td>Sizing Layer</td>
<td>Smoothing</td>
<td>First Ground Layer</td>
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<td>Isolation Layer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pernety 1756: FR lxxxviii</td>
<td>warm</td>
<td>scrape</td>
<td>white chalk, glue (x 2 or 3, with a soft brush)</td>
<td>scrape size on which you will paint between applications or only after last application</td>
<td>lead white, little brown-red, carbon knife blade black (x 1-2, with brush)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ecole 1759: 173- FR s</td>
<td>sized (with brush)</td>
<td>white, glue</td>
<td>lead white, little carbon black</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hallen 1761: GE 321-2</td>
<td>warmed glue from glove leather or parchment clippings</td>
<td>planed even</td>
<td>several layers of glue ground chalk (x several, with soft brush)</td>
<td>evened with moist sponge</td>
<td>flake white, oil, brown red and charcoal black</td>
<td>with pumice stone</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jombert/De Piles FR 1766: 135-6</td>
<td>warm leather glue, parchment or glove clippings (both sides)</td>
<td>scrape</td>
<td>white chalk, glue (x several, with soft brush)</td>
<td>even between coats</td>
<td>lead white, little brown red, carbon black (x 1-2)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Griselini and Fassadoni 1772: 269</td>
<td>white, glue</td>
<td>remove all knots with a knife and rub and even with a pumice stone</td>
<td>oil, gesso or white chalk, red ochre, or other chalk</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nieuwenverlichter 1777: 170</td>
<td>warm glue from leather, parchment or glove cuttings</td>
<td>white chalk and glue (x several times, with soft brush)</td>
<td>scrape between layers</td>
<td>lead white, little brown red, charcoal black (x 1-2)</td>
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<tr>
<td>source</td>
<td>support</td>
<td>smoothing</td>
<td>sizing layer</td>
<td>first ground layer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dutens 1779: 62 FR</td>
<td></td>
<td>Glove glue (both sides)</td>
<td>scrape</td>
<td>white, glue (x1-2, with brush)</td>
<td>oil, lead white, brown red (x1)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pernety 1781: 8 FR</td>
<td></td>
<td>size</td>
<td>white in glue</td>
<td></td>
<td>oil priming</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monton 1792: 42SP</td>
<td></td>
<td>glue</td>
<td>white, glove clippings glue</td>
<td>scrape smooth</td>
<td>oil, ochre</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Golden cabinet 1793: 113</td>
<td>US</td>
<td></td>
<td>white, size</td>
<td></td>
<td>white chalk, red ochre, or other chalks beaten pretty stiff</td>
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<tr>
<td>Transactions 1806: 85-9</td>
<td>UK</td>
<td>pumiced</td>
<td>calcined and crushed bones of sheep's trotters, wheaten flour, (x 2, first layer rubbed on with pumice stone, subsequent layers applied with a brush)</td>
<td>sandpaper</td>
<td>'coats of the colour' [probably the mixture used as a first ground, with the addition of pigments/oil paint] (x 1-2, with a brush)</td>
<td>raw linseed or poppy oil before painting</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cawse 1822: 9- 11</td>
<td>UK</td>
<td></td>
<td>calcined ground sheep's trotters, wheat flour (x 2)</td>
<td>calcined ground sheep's trotters, wheat flour, colour (x 1)</td>
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<td>Smith 1825: 357-FR 8</td>
<td></td>
<td>pumice stone</td>
<td>calcined bones from sheep's feet, wheat flour (x3, first coat spread with pumice stone, second with brush)</td>
<td>softened with sandpaper after second coat</td>
<td>colour (1-2)</td>
<td>layer of raw linseed or poppy oil</td>
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<td>smoothing first ground layer</td>
<td>smoothing isolation layer</td>
<td>second ground layer</td>
<td>smoothing isolation layer</td>
<td>third ground layer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fernbach 1834: GE 5-6</td>
<td>glue water (x 2, dabbed on with stiff brush)</td>
<td>chalk ('Mannheimer Kreide'), glue (x 6-7, dabbed on with stiff brush)</td>
<td>pumice stone hot glue and water, pumiced twice</td>
<td>lead white, chalk ('Mannheimer Kreide'), amber varnish (x 3-4, with brush)</td>
<td>also in between coats, with pumice and turpentine, carefully when just dry, then smoothed very fine again</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cawse 1840: UK 1; 26</td>
<td>parchment clippings size, whitening, (tint) (x 2 with trowel or large palette knife) Plaster of Paris may be added</td>
<td>1st coat: well-surfaced pumice-stone, 2nd coat: hand, dipped in water</td>
<td>‘Should it be desirable to remove the absorbance’: coat of light coloured drying oil</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hundertpfund 1847: GE 125-7</td>
<td>flour, pipe clay ('Haugerde'), water (until no more pores are visible)</td>
<td>oil paint, lead white, some turpentine oil (x 2)</td>
<td>pumice stone (after first application)</td>
<td>flour (sifted over and superfluous flour beaten off) (applied while former layer is wet)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hundertpfund 1849: UK 105-9</td>
<td>flour, cold water, papeclay (x 3-4)</td>
<td>oil colour of lead white and oil of turpentine (x 2, second without turpentine)</td>
<td>pumice-stone (after first application)</td>
<td>flour sifted over and superfluous dusted off (straight after application of leadwhite paint)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Technische Mitteilungen, nr. 25 (1886): 39</td>
<td>Cologne glue or hare skin glue (x 1)</td>
<td>Cologne glue or hare skin glue, slaked chalk, white bole, China clay (x 3-4, 1st layer with very smoothellac or thin oil paint</td>
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The English 1849 translation of Hundertpfund 1847 translates ‘Haugerde’ as ‘pipe clay’. Hundertpfund 1849: 150
5c Recipes for panel preparation: oil-based grounds 1550-1900

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>source</th>
<th>support</th>
<th>smoothing</th>
<th>sizing layer</th>
<th>smoothing</th>
<th>first ground layer</th>
<th>smoothing</th>
<th>isolation layer</th>
<th>second ground layer</th>
<th>smoothing</th>
<th>isolation layer</th>
<th>third ground layer</th>
<th>smoothing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vibert 1892: 184 UK</td>
<td>sandpaper, for the last rubbing soaked in petroleum. Then panel must be seasoned.</td>
<td>lead white, painting varnish with a little siccative (x several layers)</td>
<td>glass paper between each layer</td>
<td>little chalk, last layer with more glue added to smooth it</td>
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BnF Ms. Fr 640 c. FR 1580-1600: 48 perso 114

De Mayerne 1620- UK 44: 99

Eikelenberg 1679-1704: 403 NL


Cröker 1729: 78 GE
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
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<th>Sizing Layer</th>
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<th>First Ground Layer</th>
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<th>Isolation Layer</th>
<th>Second Ground Layer</th>
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<th>Isolation Layer</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mss.Hist.Helv.XVII. SUI 234 1750-1800: 85-6 (transcribed in Stettler 1987)</td>
<td>glue water (x 3)</td>
<td>brown red (x 1)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>charcoal black, lead white, raw linseed oil (x 1)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mss.Hist.Helv.XVII. SUI 234 1750-1800: 85-6 (transcribed in Stettler 1987)</td>
<td>oil</td>
<td>brown red (x 1)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>charcoal black, lead white, raw linseed oil (x 1)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dossie 1758: 203-4 UK</td>
<td>hot drying oil (as long as will soak in)</td>
<td>lead white, of flake, colour</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dossie 1758: vii-viii, 204, 205 UK</td>
<td>hot drying oil</td>
<td>flake white, fat oil, colour</td>
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<td>Chomel 1767: 869 FR</td>
<td>glove glue (x 2)</td>
<td>oil priming</td>
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<tr>
<td>Van Leen c. 1800: 18 NL</td>
<td>yellow ochre, little white, turpentine water (with rather large brush)</td>
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<td>lead white made yellow by heating, boiled oil, little turpentine (x 6-8, with brush)</td>
<td>after layer has hardened 4-5 weeks: sieved pumice stone, woolen cloth dipped in water, rub smooth and even</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ibbetson 1803: 11- UK 12</td>
<td>‘flatting’ [=spirit of turpentine, linseed oil, lead white], strong drying oil, spirit of turpentine (x 3-4, first layer with brush, subsequent layers more stiff and applied with palette knife)</td>
<td>taken off with the knife while wet</td>
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<td>Support/Repair</td>
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<td>Smoothing</td>
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<td>Second Ground Layer</td>
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<td>Montabert 1829: 163</td>
<td>FR</td>
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<td>copal, elemi resin, spike oil, a third of this mixture, two thirds poppy oil, white or ochre</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vergnaud 1831: 138-9</td>
<td>dressed and polished</td>
<td>normal strong glue or cheese glue</td>
<td>As canvas</td>
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<td>Fielding 1839: 81-2 UK</td>
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<td>‘flatting’ (lead white, [oil] turpentine), strong drying oil, spirits of turpentine (x 1, with brush, brushmarks in the direction of the grain)</td>
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<td>&quot;the stiff colour&quot; [probably the same material as used for the first layer, but less or un-diluted] (x 2-3, with a palette knife)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cawse 1840: 20-1; UK 26</td>
<td>pumice-stone</td>
<td>tobacco-pipe clay, Spanish white, drying oil, colour (with trowel or palette-knife)</td>
<td>rub over with pumice-stone and linseed oil</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cawse 1840: 20-1; UK 26</td>
<td>pumice-stone</td>
<td>common lead white (with palette-knife or trowel)</td>
<td>rub over with pumice-stone and linseed oil</td>
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<tr>
<td>Susse 1845: 22</td>
<td>NL</td>
<td>Leather glue (with a knife)</td>
<td>Pumicestone</td>
<td>Oil, lead white, little ochre (x 3-4)</td>
<td>Pumicestone applied after each coat</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hampel 1846: 26</td>
<td>GE</td>
<td>Oil varnish (x until it absorbs no more)</td>
<td>Lead white, ochre, varnish (x a few thin layers)</td>
<td>Every coat evened with a pumicestone. If wanted extra smooth: polished with shaving knife or with shard of glass.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Blockx 1881: 3-4</td>
<td>BE</td>
<td>Lead white, linseed oil (enough to cover well the pores of the wood without being a thick layer)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Blockx 1881: 31</td>
<td>BE</td>
<td>Wash with rectified turpentine essence or water</td>
<td>Thin layer of oil [paint] (x 1)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oughton 1892: 36</td>
<td>UK</td>
<td>Sized</td>
<td>Flake white, little bright red</td>
<td>Fine sandpaper</td>
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