

sandbox

The "Sandbox" space makes available a number of resources that utilize and explore the data underlying "Secrets of Craft and Nature in Renaissance France. A Digital Critical Edition and English Translation of BnF Ms. Fr. 640" created by the Making and Knowing Project at Columbia University.

[View the Project on GitHub](#) cu-mkp/sandbox

Secrets of Craft and Nature Reconnaissance (Directed Scavenger Hunt)

A downloadable version of this assignment: [[PDF](#)]

BnF Ms. Fr. 640 has 170 folios (340 pages) with over 900 entries on metalworking, casting, painting, medicine, and sleight of hand tricks. This is an exercise with two activities to help become familiar with the online Edition and Translation of Ms. Fr. 640: [Secrets of Craft and Nature](#).

Activity 1: Explore the Manuscript Folios

The screenshot displays the digital manuscript interface for "Secrets of Craft and Nature". On the left, a facsimile of a manuscript page is shown with a navigation sidebar. The main content area is split into two columns. The left column shows the original text in French, and the right column shows the English translation. The translation includes sections for "Counterfeit coral" and "Varnish for panels".

Counterfeit coral*

Colophony is nothing other than recooked resin. To do it well, take a leaded pot & melt the resin, & boil it over the brazier a good hour, & until it appears not to be thick, but clear & liquid like water, & easily runs & flows from the tip of a stick with which you grind it, & test it. Then pour it through a coarse canvas or a very light lammy cloth, such that when pouring it falls into the strongest vinegar that you can find, for the vinegar gives it strength & prevents it from being so fragile. Reiterate this two or three times & it will be beautiful & well purified. For counterfeiting your coral, you can mix a quarter part of mastic into your purified resin to render it more firm and more beautiful, & if you were to take a single tear of mastic, it would be all the better, but it would be too long.

Sulfur & vermillion makes the same effect.

Varnish for panels

Take a lb of Venice turpentine & heat it in a pot until it simmers, and put in half a lb of the turpentine oil of the whitest you can find, and stir it together well on a charcoal fire and take it off immediately. And ~~one~~ it is done. But if it seems too thick to you, add in a little more oil. Similarly if it is too clear, you can thicken it by putting in a little turpentine. Thus you will give it whatever body you want. It could be made well without fire, but, when heated, it is more desiccative. It is appropriate for panel paintings and other painted things without corrupting the colors or yellowing. And it dries both in the shade and in the sun, and overnight, and during the winter as well as in the summer. It is commonly sold 15 sous a lb.

Choose a linked folio from below and find:

- 2 features you think are important to note or are useful
- 2 things (edition features or manuscript content) you have questions about
- 1 thing you are excited about

Suggested folios:

- [Fol. 5r](#)
- [Fol. 10r](#)
- [Fol. 34r](#)
- [Fol. 124v](#)
- [Fol. 152r](#)

Activity 2: Explore the [List of Entries](#), which is an index of the 900+ entries of the manuscript

The Making and Knowing Project
Secrets of Craft and Nature
A Digital Critical Edition of BnF Ms. Fr. 640

Read Fr. 640 Research Essays Resources About How to Use

Filter by Category

alchemy animal husbandry arms and armor casting
corrosives cultivation decorative dyeing glass process
household and daily life La boutique lists
manuscript structure medicine merchants metal process
painting practical optics preserving printing stones
tool tricks and sleight of hand varnish wax process
wood and its coloring

Filter by Tag

animal arms and armor bodypart currency definition
environment german greek italian latin material
measurement medical music occitan personal name
place plant poitevin profession sensory temporal
tool

Entries (927)

Ms. Fr. 640 consists almost entirely of distinct “entries,” i.e., units of text with titles. They have been grouped into categories to help browse the manuscript. Within entries, meaningful terms have been tagged.

Filter the List of Entries by selecting one or more “category” and/or “tag” buttons.

Sort: By Folio Number Alphabetically

[List of names] / [Liste de noms] - 1r
Categories: lists
Essays: Introduction to Ms. Fr. 640, Le contexte toulousain
1 material 3 personal name 4 place 1 plant 2 profession

[List] / [Liste] - 1r
Categories: lists
1 latin 1 personal name 1 place 1 profession

[List of books and authors] / [Liste de livres et d'auteurs] - 1r
Categories: lists
1 animal 9 latin 50 personal name 6 place 5 profession

- Choose a **Category** on left hand side.
 - How many entries do you see?
- Click on one of the entries in the list.
 - What kinds of tags are present?
- Unclick your **Category** and instead pick a **Tag** to filter the list by (you may need to collapse the Category list).
 - How many entries do you see?
 - What categories are they?
 - What other tags seem to co-occur frequently?

Further Explorations

For additional resources found in the Edition, see the 100+ [Research Essays](#) and other [Resources](#).

For an account of how the Making and Knowing Project created the edition through courses and workshops:

- **Explore** [the Making and Knowing Project Website](#), especially the tab “Project Components.”
- **Read** Pamela H. Smith, “[Making the Edition](#),” in *Secrets of Craft and Nature*.

For more context on Ms. Fr. 640, see Pamela H. Smith, “[An Introduction to Ms. Fr. 640 and its Author-Practitioner](#),” in *Secrets of Craft and Nature*.

Explore the student projects, resoures, and assignments for hands-on activities on the [Sandbox](#).

This project is maintained by [cu-mkp](#)

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