

A TIME SCALE FOR ARCHÆOLOGISTS.

Some remarks on the suggested standard method of indicating the dates of buildings by colour or hatching proposed in the Report of the Research Committee of the Society of Archæologists for the year 1931.

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ARCHÆOLOGISTS will heartily approve of the principle of a Standard Time Scale, as tending towards the simplification of interpreting drawings, plans, etc. There are, however, a few points in the method proposed in the above Report which are deserving of scrutiny, and perhaps of modification.

COLOURS. The colours suggested are the so-called Primary colours, Red, Yellow and Blue, and their associated Secondary colours, Orange, Green and Purple, to which have been added Brown (a tertiary colour composed of all three Primaries) and Black.

The Primaries and Secondaries above-named are the colours into which the spectrum is usually divided in the following order : Red, Orange, Yellow, Green, Blue, Violet (or Purple), and the word spectrum generally evokes a mental image of a rainbow, a *band* of colours more or less broad, with Red at one side of the band and Purple at the other, the remaining colours forming a sequence in the order cited.

There is in this "band" of colours, occupying space or width, the embryo of a scale, in which space may be related to time, the various colours representing various periods, and the whole representing a flow of time from one end of the band to the other.

It so happens that the sequence of colours adopted in the Report is the same as that of the spectrum, with the exception that Red and Orange are interchanged, thus destroying the complete analogy with the rainbow and deranging the mental image of a colour time scale evoked by it.

It is suggested that the Committee's Time Scale should therefore be modified in this respect, and the colour Orange

Century	XI	XII	XIII	XIV	XV	XVI	XVII	XVIII	XIX
1 st half	Colour Solid Black	Brown	Purple	Blue	Green	Yellow	Orange	Red	Voided
	Hatching Grid	Light Brown	Light Purple	Light Blue	Light Green	Light Yellow	Light Orange	Light Red	
2 nd half	Colour Grey	Brown	Purple	Blue	Green	Yellow	Orange	Red	Voided
	Hatching Cross-hatch	Light Brown	Light Purple	Light Blue	Light Green	Light Yellow	Light Orange	Light Red	
Heraldic Tincture	Sable		Purpure	Azure	Vert	Or	Tawney	Gules	Voided
Approximate Periods of Architectural Styles	Pre-Conquest	Norman	Early English	Decorated	Perpendicular	Tudor	Stuart	Georgian	Modern

TIME SCALE.

For indicating periods on archaeological plans and drawings.

placed in a position between Red and Yellow, as in the spectrum. There would then be a Time Scale based on a conception which is inherent in the minds of all who are not colour-blind. This scale could be reconstituted from first principles, and it would involve no tax upon the memory or reference to any authority, which is surely a manifest advantage.

In the suggested Scale, a colour is allotted to each century, commencing with Black for the "Dark Ages" and progressing through the Spectrum from the Purple end to the Red end, Yellow representing the beginning of the Renaissance.

It is further suggested that a sub-division of the centuries might conveniently be made by using a full tone of each colour for the first half, and a pale tone for the second half of each century (see specimen Scale on page 242).

HATCHING. The colours used in the Committee's Time Scale are not only those of the spectrum, but they are, with the single exception of Brown, also the tinctures used in heraldry.

Heraldry is a subject with which most archæologists and antiquaries are conversant, and it is somewhat surprising that the Committee appear to have overlooked the convention, now some three centuries old, which related the heraldic tinctures with special forms of hatching. If the Committee's recommendations are adopted, there will then be two conventions when there seems to be really no need to have more than one.

It is suggested therefore that the hatchings relating to the colours should be according to the heraldic convention, with, however, some modifications, which are put forward as helping to simplify the memorization and drawing.

In heraldry, Orange (or Tawney) is a tincture not often encountered, and a change in its representation would not cause much inconvenience. Moreover, cross-hatching is rather a nuisance to a draftsman. So instead of the crossed horizontal and sloping lines of the heraldic convention, it is suggested that Orange, which is a secondary colour arising

from a blend of Red and Yellow, should be represented by a combination of the hatchings for Gules (Red) and Or (Yellow), that is, by vertical lines alternating with dotted or pecked lines, as shown in the specimen scale on page 242.

Similarly, Brown, which as a tincture does not occur in heraldry but which may be considered as a combination of Purple and Yellow, might be indicated by lines sloping downwards from right to left (for Purpure), alternating with dotted, or pecked, lines (for Or), in the manner shown in the specimen scale.

Grey, which is only diluted Black, might be represented by crosses, a hatching which is really only the cross-hatching for sable, lightened by the erasure of alternate lines.

Summarizing, if these suggestions be adopted, there would be a sequence of colours and hatchings which would be easy to memorize for those who are unacquainted with heraldry, and which would obviate the necessity of memorizing a new convention, for those who already know the heraldic convention.

A specimen Time Scale is shown in which the above suggestions have been incorporated, showing how the colours and hatchings might be allocated, and to which has been added the approximate periods of the various styles of architecture.

It will be noted that cross-hatchings have been avoided, with the exception of those indicating Black and Grey. There are several reasons for this :

(a) From a draftsman's point of view, cross-hatchings are a nuisance, entailing covering the same area twice.

(b) A combination of vertical or horizontal lines with sloping lines has an ungainly appearance, and moreover the significance of these hatchings is apt to be overlooked and perhaps taken as representing Black.

(c) Close cross-hatching is prone to blotching and blurring in reproduction by photogravure, etc.

(d) Cross-hatching for Black is a heraldic convention, but in general a solid wash will be used.

(e) The crosses representing Grey would usually be put in by freehand, and so would not entail going over the same area twice.

It may be that the Research Committee had very good reasons for allocating the particular colours and hatchings in the way they have done. If so, it would be very interesting if the reasons were published, for they would help in the process of memorization which must be gone through by antiquaries for the full benefit to be derived from the scheme.

If, however, it has so happened that the colours and their hatchings were selected more or less fortuitously, then the existing relationship between tinctures and hatchings in heraldry is obviously preferable to a new and quite arbitrary relationship.

If that premise be accepted and a modification of the Committee's Time Scale be considered desirable in that respect, then the sooner the modification is made before that system has become too widely adopted the better, and, if the change *be* made, then the other suggestions might be considered also.