

Greetings unto His Majesty Henri Rio, King of Aethelmearc.

Contained herein are the reference materials for the gift crafted for you at the request of His Majesty Meridies, Gareth. Upon receipt of Your interests from your gracious Chancellor Ilish I determined that what would be most appropriate for Your gift would be an item that could be used in Equestrian Activities. One of my personal areas of interest is Heraldic Display which led to the desire to create an article of Horse Barding. Being that most aspects of Horse Barding need to be fitted to each individual horse I settled on making Rein Covers. This conclusion was reached as they are something that I hope would be useful even if You currently have a set and that they are something that should fit on any horse, regardless of size.

Being that I am not involved in Equestrian activities I set about determining the best method of crafting these covers by speaking with individuals who are involved. The most significant issue that I was able to identify is the tendency for rein covers to slip down the reins and bunch up at the lowest point. This in mind I moved to researching period images of the item.

Investigating the time period and region appropriate to your Persona I found that most of the evidence I could find involved decorative elements that would not display Your Arms to their best advantage. Moving later in period within the region of France the elements became more elaborate, but still did not interact favorably with Your Arms.

With this information I set about looking further to find display that was more suited to Your Arms regardless of region. What I found was an illustration of a German Joust in the 15<sup>th</sup> century (Figure 1)



Figure 1



Figure 2

This appeared to be perfect, the only modification that I made was shifting the center panel to white with a black (Tau) cross. With this image in mind I looked into the matter of construction.

The solution to the bunching problem proved to be attaching the barding directly to the reins. In several texts I found reference to riding with two sets of reins. Frequently one of the two sets was threaded through a metal chain to prevent the reins from being severed and cause the rider to lose control of their horse. I then found an image from Rene d'Anjou's Tournament manuscript (Figure 2). As you can see one of the forward rider's reins has turned over and you can plainly see that there are two sets of reins, one with barding and one without; the set with barding being primarily decorative.

With a pair of reins in hand I made the barding. I wanted the barding to be able to withstand vigorous use, such as in an Emprise, but I wanted them to be removable just in case they need to be cleaned or changed to a different set of reins. The solution I devised was to place grommets in the top of each corner of each panel and punch holes in the reins. I did not think that simple ties would stand up to heavy use so I chose to sew the panels on. I could see no reason why the attachments could not be decorative so I chose to use pretty buttons to cover the unsightly grommets. The thread used is heavy duty upholstery thread for strength. If you need to remove the panels from the reins simply cut the threads and catch the buttons, the panels will then slide off.

I have also included the template I used to ensure that the panels are of a consistent size and the placement of the Tau Cross is the same panel to panel. If You desire, You could have more panels made to go across the chest and rear of your horse as in the illustration. The fabric used is common Trigger so it should be easy to match. If You need any additional information on construction please do not hesitate to contact me and I would be happy to assist.

Glad Tidings,  
Signora Serena da Riva

Figure 1: MS 775, f. 275v. New York, Pierpont Morgan Library

Barber, Richard and Barker, Juliet. *Tournaments: Jousts, Chivalry and Pageants in the Middle Ages*. New York: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 1989. pg. 147.

Figure 2: Knights Arriving at a Tournament, *De la forme et devis d'ung tourney*. Rene d'Anjou, Bibliotheque Nationale.

Robards, Brooks. *The Medieval Knight at War*. Connecticut: Brompton Books, 1997. pg. 121.