

GORGON STUDIOS PRESENTS

A QUICK GUIDE TO PAINTING HELOTS

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Here are a few handy steps for anyone with some pesky, ungrateful helots to breeze through. The majority of colors used are from the Games Workshop (GW) range, with a few from the Privateer Press Paints (P3) range thrown in. Due to drying times between stages while painting and especially washing, I find it best to paint batches of 4-6 minis at one time. Any fewer tend to decrease efficiency due to drying time constraints, while larger groups can become painfully tedious dangerously quick. Each painter will have their own preference, which is as it should be.

‡ BASECOATING ‡



1. Begin by cleaning the figures with a fine point file. Tough mold lines can be eliminated with an x-acto, but the dull blade edge of steel sculpting tools will work just as well without scratching the surface as badly. If you reach this level of attention to detail, check your medications. Glue the minis to a base (I prefer the look of Litko brand wood bases for historicals) and add black sand or grit with a white PVA adhesive (I prefer Elmer's as it is the most nutritious available on the market). Prime before or after basing, as you prefer. I wrap a sliver of masking tape around the edge of the base before spraying to preserve the natural finish of the edge. It saves time and looks better, two things that go great together when you have 50 minis to paint before the weekend. Figure 1 has been prepared for painting in this fashion.
2. Once everything is dry, drybrush Calthan Brown (GW) with a wide, flat drybrush to achieve a light, even coat. Small oil brushes work well, as do larger GW and Army Painter drybrushes.
3. Using the same technique and brush size, drybrush Tallarn Flesh (GW) over areas of exposed skin. This is the last sloppy step, so...
4. Tighten up the detail by repainting a little thin Calthan Brown (GW) with a detail brush over the javelin shafts, belts, hats, sandals, and anything else destined to be wood, leather or bronze. While you're at it use the same (cleaned) brush to apply Mithril Silver (GW) to the spearheads and sword blades.
5. Apply Chardon Granite (GW) to the hair and beards. Also, add Dwarf Bronze (GW) to the sword handle, but most peltasts needn't worry about this step, as most have no swords! Make sure to paint sheathed sword handles hiding behind some minis as well (fig.7 happens to be such a mini).
6. Only the clothing remains to be basecoated. Using a mid-sized brush (e.g. a GW standard brush) apply Khemri Brown (GW) carefully to the tunic.

- Next highlight the fabric folds with Dehneb Stone (GW). GW foundation range paints can be thinned down to an exceptional degree owing to their enormous pigment content. Use this to your advantage by thinning the paint with 70-80% water (only experimentation can reveal the best mix), and using extremely little on the brush at one time to avoid applying it as a wash instead of a layer. Nice, thin, controlled layers will yield a striking transparency that can replace the need to mix colors in order to achieve a smooth gradation between colors. Do not confuse this with wet blending. If you are at the point of tears after reading all that, just paint the highest edges of the tunic with some Dehneb Stone (GW) and everything will be fine.
- Figure 8 has had his additional cloak covered with Catachan Green (GW). The base has been given a heavy, thick drybrush of Thrall Flesh (P3) to accentuate the texture. Rotting Flesh (GW) is more or less identical, and I use both interchangeably on my bases. Larger bits of grit and pebbles (and the odd piece of ground cork!) have been painted with Codex Grey (GW). Some wargamers will no doubt be content to play with figures painted to this level. For the rest of us, read on.

‡ WASHING ‡



- Before applying washes make sure all paint is dry. Figure 1 has caught up and is now at fig.8's previous step.
- Apply a light wash of watered down Tanned Flesh (GW). But you can't, since GW discontinued it last spring. Petition GW to reintroduce the only decent flesh color they ever produced. I have a horde stashed away (nyuck nyuck nyuck), but no matter. Khardic Flesh (P3) is close enough. Mix with 80-90% water so that the Tallarn Flesh drybrush underneath really shows through well on the raised areas. However, add just enough to stain the flesh the darker color, do not let it pool in the recess like a conventional wash. It is more of a watery layer than a proper wash. This step should be quicker to apply than to dry, so be sure to let it dry thoroughly before proceeding.
- Apply a wash of Ogryn Flesh (GW), mixed about 50/50 with water. It will darken as it dries (as do all the other new GW washes), so if it looks too light upon application, wait and see before increasing concentration. The goal is to create a nice, even coat of darkish skin with a smooth gradation of color and a nice eggshell sheen using only drybrushing and washing techniques. Ideally very quick and reasonably good-looking, albeit a bit dark. Be careful to avoid spilling any over onto the tunic or hair.
- For extra definition, apply a fine line of Devlon Mud (GW) to the very edge of the tunic and sandals. This is highly optional.
- Apply Devlon Mud (GW) to the belts, straps, sandals, hats and javelin shafts. Basically all the wood and leather. Again, be careful not to spill onto the tunic.
- Apply Badab Black (GW) thinned 50/50 to the hair, beards, and eyes, being extra careful not to spill any onto the face. Sometimes the top edge of the sandals can use a little as well for extra definition between the skin and leather. Also apply the same mix to the javelin and sword blades, concentrating the most at the point when the blade meets the shaft for good definition. The wash will naturally pool and concentrate on the final point touched by the brush before being lifted from the mini. Use this to your advantage by beginning each wash at the tip of each blade and working down towards the end where the blade meets the shaft. Upon lifting your brush from the mini, a nice, dark line should form, separating the metallic area from the wood. Practice makes perfect.

7. Apply Cryx Bane Base (P3) watered down about 80ish % to the base. Apply a large thinned coat in one go with a basecoat brush and really let it seep in there. Be careful not to let it run over the edge of the base and stain the nice wood finish. Best to let this dry completely before proceeding.
8. Add very thin (80-90% water) Badab Black (GW) to the tunic and the codex grey rocks on the base, and let everything dry. Now things are looking a bit better than your buddy's figs. To finish of the mini at this stage, drybrush a little Fortress Grey (GW) onto the rocks and add some static grass with a few blobs of Elmer's. However, those who really care about the little things in life will continue.

‡ HIGHLIGHTING ‡



1. Here the Fortress Grey (GW) has been added to the rocks, but fig.1 is otherwise unhighlighted.
2. Add a 50/50 mix of Dwarf Flesh (GW) and Tallarn Flesh (GW), thinned with about 40% water. Hit the tops of muscles, cheeks, foreheads, shins, kneecaps, toes, etc. with this mix, but leave your hard won shading from previous stages visible between each stroke. Successful highlighting is a mix of accuracy, application, patience and experience. Once this is dry add just a bit more to the highest points with a tad more Dwarf Flesh thrown in to really make the highlights pop. Use your best judgment as to what "bit", "tad" and "pop" really mean. More of a very subtle afterthought than a step in its own right, it requires a good eye and fine control.
3. Add a touch of Khardic Flesh (P3) to the lower lips, noses and ears for a little healthy ruddiness in the mini's complexion.
4. Touch one corner of each eye with a sliver of Skull White (GW), leaving the other half black as the iris and pupil. The mini will appear to be looking hard to port or starboard, depending on which corner you choose. Highlight the same two corners of each eye lest the mini turn out looking like Marty Feldman. This may not be the most exact method of painting eyes, but it is certainly the quickest. If you are supremely confident in your painting skills feel free to paint the smallest dot possible near the other corner to represent the gleam in the helot's eyes as he skewers his social betters. When working at this fine of a scale, it is best to thin the pigment with up to 80-90% water and load almost nothing onto the fine detail brush before applying. A few good wipes across the palette (or thumb!) with a loaded brush is the best way of achieving this. Highlight hats and leather with a little thinned Khenri Brown (GW). Don't go overboard.
5. Reapply Dehneb Stone (GW) to the raised areas of the tunic.
6. Add a bit of white to the Dehneb Stone (GW) and apply again as an even finer highlight. Too little white and the tunic will look dull; too much and it will look far too clean to be a helot's campaigning gear.
7. Add a bit of your favorite static grass or flock in clumps on the base. Remember that natural vegetation does not grow evenly or symmetrically spaced.
8. Highlight cloaks with Knarloc Green (GW). Only the shields and optional tunic decorations remain. If you've come this far, you might as well, right?

‡ FREEHAND DETAILING ‡



The unit has now been completed with shields and tunic border patterns. The tunics have had a fine line or two of thinned Enchanted Blue (GW) added to the lower edge for decoration. Simple patterns are appropriate for helots. The cloaks (fig.1 & 8) have been bordered with Bronzed Flesh (GW), which produces a very strong yellow that can cover darker colors well.

The shields were pinned into cork and painted separately. Like the helots, they were first sprayed black and drybrushed with Calthan Brown (GW), then washed with Devlon Mud (GW) and detailed with Dehneb Stone (GW) and Skull White (GW). When applying freehand details: always thin the paint, apply very little to the brush, work carefully, and take breaks before you make mistakes. Scratches and dents were added with thin lines of Chaos Black (GW) representing the dark recess of the dent, and then thin parallel lines of Dehneb Stone (GW) underneath to represent the bright catch of light on the bottom edge. Refer to the detailed image below. Finally, a bit of watery Devlon Mud (GW) on the lower quarter of each shield can help represent grim and natural shadow.



Whew! That's a bit of work for a 3 point model, isn't it? With practice this method can produce minis with a painting time of roughly 40 minutes each. It is best to stop once your level of painting (or threshold of pain, as the case may be) is reached. The beauty of this technique is that it allows wargamers to produce nice looking minis without bothering to use time-consuming blending techniques or too much fuss. Just line up the colors for each stage in a row and go! Happy painting!