

# CHAPTER 10

## The Reds & Purples

An excellent example of reds in this Swedish banner from Franzoia Serge.

In my opinion, red is the most difficult color to shadow and highlight effectively. If not careful shaded parts will be muddy spots and highlights simply another hue i.e. rose or violet. In my mind I have made two categories for reds. Cadmium reds, light and dark and scarlet is the first, while burnt



sienna, Indian and light red, that is the earth reds are the second one. As we travel back through the ages, colors were not of the rich quality as they are now. Reason is because people were using what nature could provide. Reference will dictate a rough estimation of what pigments were available. For sure, red was a color known since antiquity. Greeks and later Romans used it abundantly for their everyday or military clothing. When painting cadmium reds start with a darker tone than the one you intend to use. You will see why later. When shading, experiment with adding burnt sienna or burnt umber. Alternatively, try the complementary

to red, green. You will be amazed by the results. Shade in steps and don't try to achieve the final result by first layer. I would advice not to use black for shading because it kills the chroma of red. If you try to highlight with white then violet will be produced. If you try yellow, then orange will appear. This is the reason why you need to start your basic mixture darker



the after. Light reds such  
be used as highlights. A  
most highlights but do it  
er a faded, worn look, y  
highlighting solution is to  
color, in steps, adding  
a touch of yellow to  
maintain red  
temperature.



Peter Ferk's General Lassale (Quadriconcept 90mm), below "Poetry" by unknown artist (Detlef Belasch 120mm). For the first figure highlights are done with yellow while on the second white have been used producing some pink violet highlights.

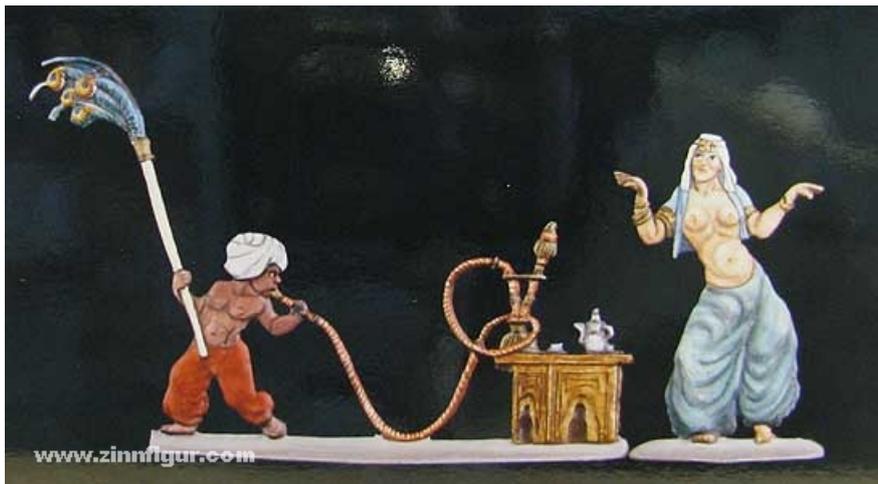
The actual color of Tyrian purple, the original color purple from which the name purple is derived, is the color of a dye made from a mollusk that, because of its incredible expense (many times more expensive than gold), in classical antiquity became a symbol of royalty because only the very wealthy could afford it. Therefore, Tyrian purple is also called imperial

purple. Tyrian purple may have been discovered as early as the time of the Minoan civilization. Alexander the Great (when giving imperial audiences as the emperor of the Macedonian Empire), the emperors of the Seleucid Empire, and the kings of Ptolemaic Egypt wore Tyrian purple. The imperial robes of Roman emperors were Tyrian purple trimmed in metallic gold thread. The badge of office of a Roman Senator was a stripe of Tyrian purple on their white toga. Tyrian purple was continued in use by the emperors of the Eastern Roman Empire until its final collapse in 1453. In medieval Europe, blue dyes were rare and expensive, so only the most wealthy or the aristocracy could afford to wear them. (The working class wore mainly green and brown.) Because of this (and also because Tyrian purple had gone out of use in western Europe after the collapse of the Western Roman Empire in AD 476), Europeans' idea of purple shifted towards this more bluish purple known as royal purple because of its similarity to the royal blue worn by the aristocracy. This was the shade of purple worn by kings in medieval Europe. Also it is considered a funereal color and for that, can be used alternatively for black. Purple is an interesting color. It can be produced from mixing blue and red and with various proportions you get various purple tones. It can be shadowed by various blues and highlighted by its complementary yellow for some rich violets or white for some faded look. Alizarin crimson belongs to the purple family and not to the reds as many time mistakenly considered. Crimson mixed with blues produces some very interesting shades of purple. I would advice shading it with black as it kills chroma making purple

appearing muddy. Some purples are more transparent than others so experiment and use the more opaques for covering work and the transparent for making purple washes when a tint of purplish is needed.

An excellent painting of purples for the dresses of this French queen and for the embroidery by unfortunately by an unknown painter.







# Painting Reds

by Lou Masses

Red seems to be one of the most daunting colors in the entire spectrum for painters of military miniatures. Others include the ever dreaded White, which for fear of scaring myself half to death we won't even get into here, and Blue, but Red seems to really put a shudder into some people. Just like anything else when painting, all you have to do is find a solution that works for you and that you'll become comfortable with. Not being technically versed, I can't get into the details of specific color matches for the various Napoleonic Reds. This article will focus on only the basics of painting the color Red.

This is the technique I use and it works for me. My goal is always to achieve a very vivid and powerful Red and a good, strong contrast between the highlights and the shadows. Of course, having seen the uniforms of the Napoleonic and Victorian periods, they don't look as vivid, but I will take a scientific leap here and say that I am sure being 100-200 years old has a tendency to fade and mute uniform colors a bit. It's up to you to fade or tone down the colors as you see fit.

## Part I - The Basics

One thing that I notice a lot when seeing a figure painted in Red is that the Red areas seem to be either too uniform (overblended), too muddy (brown with reddish highlights), or too pink (when using flesh as a highlight you have to be very careful with the colors used to create that flesh tone because if you use mostly white, you can easily end up with pink). Of course sometimes the muddiness or pinktone (to show fade) is a desired effect, but if you want a Red uniform to really "pop", it is necessary to be vivid.

To start, a darker Red needs to be used as the base color. While I paint in oils, this technique can be used with acrylics as well since many of the colors translate well to the Vallejo and Andrea colors. I generally follow up with acrylics or gouache once the oils are dry anyway. Below are the colors I use as my basic mixes for Reds.

### Scarlet

Base: Winsor and Newton Cadmium Red Dark

Shadow: Cadmium Red Dark + Grumbacher Prussian Blue (about 50/50)

Highlight: Cadmium Red

High Highlight: Cadmium Scarlet

Peaks: Cadmium Scarlet and a touch of Cadmium Orange

When dry, sometimes Vallejo Scarlet mixed with Orange is "touched" onto the very highest points on the figure.

### Red/Crimson

Base: Winsor and Newton Cadmium Red Dark

Shadow: Cadmium Red Dark + Grumbacher Prussian Blue (about 50/50)

Highlight: Cadmium Red

High Highlight: Vermillion

Peaks: Vermillion + a touch of Winsor and Newton Jaune Brilliant

The key to getting a convincing Red color is in the application and understanding the effects of light. Like white (and Blue for that matter), the base color on the figure itself should never be the mid-range color, but instead a variation of the shadow color. In other words, the highlight should be the actual color coming out of the tube. Anything below the highlight

should be a shadow with more or less of the desired final color added to it. This tricks the eye into believing the whole figure is red and makes the highlights really stand out (i.e., "pop"). If most of your figure is Cadmium Red for example, then when finished it will look Orange because you will have to add more yellow to the figure to make the highlights stand out. If you look at your shirt, the highlights on your shirt are the real color of the shirt, not a lightened version of it. The shadows, on the other hand, look like a darker color.

The same applies to White. The only color (hue) you can highlight White with is, well, White. Should your base color be a pure White, then you can't have highlights of White because you won't be able to differentiate between the highlights and the base color. You'll end up with something that offers no contrast.

Once this concept becomes a habit for you, you'll find it much easier to paint the difficult colors in the spectrum.

## Part II - The SBS

1. As an undercoat, I will typically use the midtone or base color and paint the entire area using Vallejo acrylics (over white or light grey primer). Then the figure should be set aside to dry overnight.

2. I start painting by placing my oil color on a piece of card. I buy one sheet of bright white matt-board that I cut up into dozen of smaller pieces so that it lasts longer. The matt-board gives me a better idea of the true color of the paint. Once some of the oil carrier seeps out (you'll see the color turn flat and a ring appear around it on the card), I transfer the oil color over to a piece of wax paper that I use as my palette. Sometimes, if I plan to just finish in one sitting, I'll leave it on the card. This helps dull the Red further

and dry flat.

3. I then apply the base coat (I dip my brush in white spirits, then mix it into the color) to the entire area and set it aside. While it is beginning to dry, I mix up the shadow color (Cadmium Red Deep and Prussian Blue) until it is a nice deep Red shade. I also mix up the high highlight color by mixing Scarlet and a touch of Cadmium Orange and place them on a card. Finally, I'll add straight Prussian Blue, straight Cadmium Scarlet and straight Cadmium Orange onto the matt-board. In case I need them later, they will be ready.

4. By the time I place all of the colors on the matt-board, the basecoat is not dry, but the glossy shine will have evaporated. I blend the shadow colors into all of the shadow areas. In fact, a lot of the figure is the shadow color at this point. Only the areas which would receive direct light are left in the base color.

5. I then apply the Cadmium Red to the highlight areas and set it aside (or in the crockpot) for it to dry a little, but not completely. This drying allows me to blend the oils without over-blending them; It gives me more control over the paint.

6. In the higher highlight areas, I add the Cadmium Scarlet.

7. Now, I'll inspect the figure. Wherever necessary, I'll add some more Scarlet. In the darker shadow areas, I'll add more Prussian Blue. The shadows should never actually end up being Blue, but when mixed in with the Red, they'll become a darker Red, but not quite Brown, without ever really looking "muddy".

8. At this point, your figure might look like a Brownish-Orangish mess. Don't

worry! There's more to do! Start blending at this point.

9. Once totally dry, go back over any areas that need a more vivid highlight and add more Scarlet. Then, highlight that highlight with a more focused highlight of Cadmium Scarlet and a touch of Cadmium Orange. Let that dry completely. See Figure 5.

10. After the new layer of highlight has fully dried, comes the fun part. Mix up some Vallejo Scarlet with a touch of Orange. Making sure that it is lighter than the highest highlight (but not Orange!), go back and very carefully apply small amounts of this mix to the "Peaks" of the figure. Note that this step may not be necessary if your results after step 9 resulted in a stark enough contrast.

That's pretty much it. While this method does add some time (e.g., drying time between the oil coats and the acrylic coats), I think you'll be please with the results. While the above is focused on a Scarlet uniform, the same method applies to Crimson, or White and Blue for that matter. Again, focus on where the light hits the figure and you'll see exactly where to put the shadows and highlights. Also make sure that if it's a Scarlet uniform, only the highest highlights should be Scarlet (if Crimson, only the highest highlights Crimson, etc.). For example, a Blue uniform is often a Blueish Black with the highlights being the only actual Blue area. Another little trick that might help you with light placement that I learned can be performed during the priming stage. Spray the entire figure with light Grey or Grey primer. Once dry, spray the figure again with White primer, but spray only from the direction that you want the "sunlight" to come from. When painting the undercoats, mix a slightly darker shade of the undercoat and apply that to the areas in Grey and then a lighter shade

to the areas in White. This will become your reference for painting shadows and highlights exactly where they should fall.

I hope this technique helps you with the light placement for Reds. Like I said early on, Red isn't too hard if you understand where to put the correct color values. Once you grasp that concept, the mixing, highlighting, and shading becomes second nature.



