

Recipe: black pigment from oil lamp  
Cennino Cennini, *Il Libro D'Arte* (1390)<sup>1</sup>

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OF COLOURS OR PIGMENTS.

black is made in this manner : take a lamp full of linseed-oil, light the lamp, and put it under a clean baking-dish, so that the flame of the lamp shall be about the distance of two or three fingers from the dish, and the smoke which comes from the flame shall strike against the dish ; collect the smoke together ; wait a little ; take the baking-dish, and sweep off the smoke (which is the pigment) into paper, or into some vessel ; it does not require grinding, because it is already a very fine powder. Thus you may continue to fill the lamp with the oil, put it under the dish, and make in this manner as much colour as you require (2).

Translation (EN)<sup>2</sup>

**“There is another black which is made in this manner:** take a lamp full of linseed oil, and fill the lamp with this oil, and light the lamp. Then put it, so lighted, underneath a good clean baking dish, and have the little flame of the lamp come about to the bottom of the dish, two or three fingers away, and the smoke which comes out of [p. 22] the flame will strike on the bottom of the dish, and condense in a mass. Wait a while; take the baking dish, and with some implement sweep this color, that is, this soot, off onto a paper, or into some dish; and it does not have to be worked up or ground, for it is a very fine color. Refill the lamp with the oil in this way several times, and put it back under the dish; and make as much of it in this way as you need.”

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<sup>1</sup> Cennini, Andrea Cennino D'. 1844. *A Treatise on Painting ... Translated by Mrs Merrifield. With an Introductory Preface ... Notes and Illustrations, Etc.* Edited by Mary Philadelphia Merrifield. London: Edward Lumley. Translation (no transcription) by Merrifield (1844): p. 22

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<sup>2</sup> Different translation (no transcription) than Merrifield. In: Thompson jr. 1933. *Il Libro Dell' Arte (The Craftsman's Handbook)*. Translated by Daniel V. Thompson jr. New York: Dover Publications: p. 22-23.  
<http://www.noteaccess.com/Texts/Cennini/2.htm>