

## **Establishing the Color Palette**

### **Principal Colors: Purple, Green, and Gold**

In the absence of an established reference palette, materials created by undergraduate chapters and the general fraternity have displayed a wide variance in the hue, saturation and value of our principal colors. The following information provides a historical overview of the roots of purple, green, and gold as our principal colors and proposes specific values for the establishment of an authorized, official color palette. Subsequent internal documents and meetings will establish secondary and complimentary palettes for use throughout Lambda Chi Alpha's visual communications. *Special thanks to Lynn Chipperfield, Grand High Pi, for providing his research in this project.*

### **First generation of fraternity colors;**

*The grape-olive crescent-monogram badge*

Purple, Green, and Gold have been identified with Lambda Chi Alpha since it's founding. The earliest references to the organization's colors can be traced to the last months of 1911 when Cole and Cross were in written contact regarding the standardization of an initiated member badge and the creation/ordering of additional badges for new members.

To determine costs associated with production and sale of the badge, Cole sent sketches to numerous local jewelers in the Boston area, and several responded with professional renderings. It was from these initial submissions, and from fraternity badges Cross had seen in the Amherst community that our first symbols were taken from. Several items soon revealed themselves to be standard to the badge; a crescent set on its side, Greek letter initials for Lambda Chi Alpha, Greek letters Delta and Phi set in gold on a black enamel background, and enameled green olive branch, and purple grape bunch. This first badge design is referred to in the documentation as the "grape-olive crescent-monogram badge."

Some evidence exists in the historical record that the badges in existence pre-dated Cole's initiation ritual. This would imply the symbols were the inspiration for some of the material in Cole's ritual. Other evidence contradicts this and states the badge was already in development during this period and did not influence his ritual.

Ultimately, only twelve men ever wore the grape-olive badges made by J.G. Johnson of Boston. The brothers from Alpha Zeta paid \$3.25 for their badges, and the brothers from Gamma Zeta paid \$3.50 each for their badges.

### *Color specification: First Generation*

There is no mention of an exact color specification for the olive branch and grape bunch that was used in these first badges, and examples are now unreliable as a reference, as enamel is subject to deterioration in color quality, based on environmental factors. In the absence of specifics, information about color is drawn from the items described on the badge; the olive branch and the grape cluster.

The grape cluster most likely represented *Vitis vinifera* or European grapevine. The fruit of this dioecious vine are commonly white, reddish-plumb or blue-purple. We can clearly eliminate the white grape from consideration, but are left with no stated information regarding which color grape was the intended reference fruit. However, we can make an assumption that it was the blue-purple (RGB 75, 0, 130) variant of the fruit, based on a jeweler's choice to use a similarly colored amethyst for use on a subsequent generation of badges. Had the referenced fruit been of the reddish-plumb variety, the jeweler would likely have chosen a ruby or a similarly colored stone.

The descriptions provided clearly indicate the representation on the badge was of olive leaves and branches, and not of the fruit of the tree. This is significant because an important difference exists between the two colors. The fruit of the olive tree is a much more yellow-green (RGB 128, 128, 0), while olive leaves, which obscure the branches on the heavily foliated tree in the family *Oleaceae*, are darker in nature and are more gray-green (RGB 70, 89, 69).

The gold is referenced as 14 karat, and can be assumed to be the standard metallic gold associated with the element. As there was no significant change in the gold color, a discussion of its properties and challenges occurs in the next section.

## **Second generation of fraternity colors;**

*The creation of a jeweled badge.*

Brothers from Epsilon Zeta at Pennsylvania had requested a jeweled badge as was the custom on their campus. In a letter from Cross to Cole on May 25, 1912, Cross states, "Talked with a jeweler, and as our fellows want jeweled pins, he suggested the following. Where the dots are shown he proposes to place emeralds and amethysts, thus carrying out the idea of the chosen colors of the grapes and olive branch, and he said that it would be impossible to bring out the tiny designs of the fruit and leaf features, so suggests covering that part with jewels in the jeweled pins, for as he said, the glitter of the jewels would entirely hide the other designs anyway, and trying to show them on a jeweled pin would only make it much more expensive, and give a much less attractive pin."

Cole agreed and supplied the brothers from Epsilon Zeta a surprisingly large jeweled badge that would ultimately undergo further revision in size and location of stones, but the general colors of the organization had been established in the choice of stones.

### *Color specification: Second Generation*

There was no prior established color specification for selection of emeralds or amethysts for badge use. This required research into the color of the stones and of the element gold, to establish a baseline. The resultant palette will tie the chosen colors to a point in our history, giving them legitimacy and a deeper sense of meaning for our members who display them.

*Purple:*

**Suggested Value: (RGB 82, 35, 127; HEX 52237F; CMYK 79, 100, 0, 15)**

Amethyst is a form of quartz and naturally varies in color from purple to yellow when burned or exposed to the elements for extended periods. Andrew Ure in *A Dictionary of Chemistry*, describes amethyst as a gem of a violet color, with the most prized and valuable stones being those who tend towards the purple (RGB 130, 27, 125; HEX 821b7d), and away from the blue. This would be an ideal standard; however this color only maintains its values under natural light. On screen it tends to pickup brown hues, and indoors under incandescent light (home) it shifts dramatically to the red, under fluorescent indoor (office) light, it tends to the plum.

Near that value, but shifted away from the red to compensate lies a more durable purple (**RGB 82, 35, 127; HEX 52237F**) that performs well under all general lighting conditions. This provides a richer color match that will compliment to the richer, darker emerald subsequently referenced.

*Green:*

**Suggested Value: (RGB 0, 80, 47; HEX 00502f; CMYK 100, 0, 81, 66)**

Naturally, emeralds come in many shades of green and bluish green. John Sinkankas, author of *Emerald and Other Beryls*, states that when well lit, many resemble a lighter shade, similar to a soda bottle when viewed parallel to the direction of the glass. An example would be looking down into an empty bottle, and the color seen when looking at the mouth of the bottle, or when a bottle is broken, the color of the side of the shard. When not directly lit, or set in a mount like the badge, they can take on a darker, less blue tone. Since a badge mount is the most common representation for members, this appearance is the most logical starting point for reference in determining color values for emerald.

*Gold/Yellow:*

**Suggested Value Gold: (PMS Metallic Gold)**

**Suggested Value Golden: (RGB 212, 160, 55; HEX d49037; CMYK 17, 37, 93, 1)**

**Suggested Value Yellow: (RGB 255, 196, 37; HEX ffc425; CMYK 0, 24, 94, 0)**

There is no change in the gold representation between generations; however an identified standard needs to be established. A particular representational challenge is presented by the gold color, due to the element's metallic luster and shine, respective to its angle and proximity to a light source. This luster can not be reproduced on-screen. It can only be reproduced in print materials that use the specific pantone metallic ink. In traditional four-color process (full-color printing) the inclusion of a metallic ink would add additional cost to the press run. This necessitates the identification and selection of a print alternative to the metallic ink, as well as an equivalent for on-screen reproduction. For ease of internal communication during the identity standards development process, the metallic ink will be called *gold*, the screen equivalent will be called *golden*, and the four-color and spot color used elsewhere will be called *yellow*.