

# The Term Ancient Colors

When you buy tartan material today, you get a choice of colors Ancient, modern, muted, weathered etc, etc. The most confusing of these is the term ancient colors. This term does not, I repeat does not have anything to do with the ancient colors of clan x, y or z. It is not the colors worn by Clan X, 500, 600 years ago.

You can go to most clan tents at any Highland games and someone will tell you the tale of how back in the mist of time, these were the original colors of Clan X, as they were dyed with old vegetable dyes, mixed by hand, they came from boiling heather, heath, broom, wild plants and flowers. This is not true.

The myth started with the tartan manufacturers in the 20<sup>th</sup> century not 500 A.D. After World War II was the birth of the term “ancient tartan.” The sale of tartan after World War II had gone into a sales slump. At this time someone said to himself, what if these tartans faded over many, many years what would they look like. These lighter shades of colors proved to be quite popular as opposed to the dark colors of the past. Now that they had tartan in lighter shades of colors they needed a new name.

A manufacturer decided on Ancient for the name of these new lighter colors and the myth was born.

To explain it simply when you buy a new pair of jeans for the most part they are dark indigo blue. After a year or two of washing and wear they fade to light blue, off white to gray. This now faded pair of jeans is not in its ancient colors. The oldest color is the dark indigo blue. They started with, that is the ancient color.

To make things more confusing what are now called modern colors is the closest to the original colors of Clan X. Back in the midst of time they could make a dye that made a true red, not orange. They could dye dark blue, dark green, yellow etc! etc! I have seen many pieces of these old tartans, here in the U.S. and in Scotland.

Take pride in your families' tartan: if you choose the lighter colors or the darker colors this is up to you. Tartans in modern or ancient colors are by thread count the same tartan in different shades of color. Wear your tartan with pride for it makes you a part of history.

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