

## Optional extras

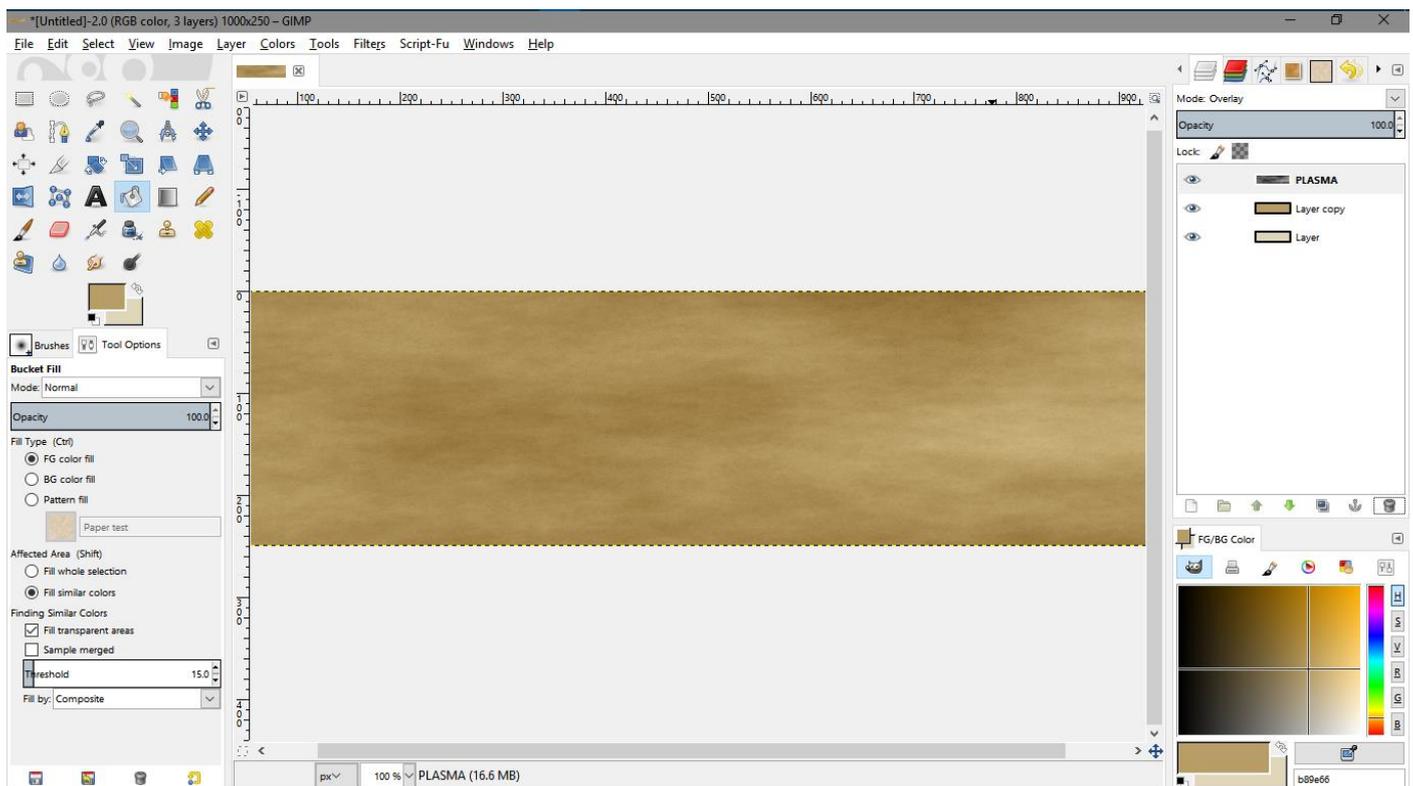
### Varying the basic technique

CTRL + Z is your friend. This is the 'undo' button, and I use it all the time. This handy keyboard shortcut makes experimentation so much more rewarding.

Varying the basic technique is a good way of producing a wide range of parchment or paper textures. Varying the initial colour at step 4 is the most obvious. You might also experiment with the opacity of the plasma layer, or alter the modes of both the plasma and noise layers just to see what happens – there is a whole range of possibilities.

### Making a parchment that is other than square

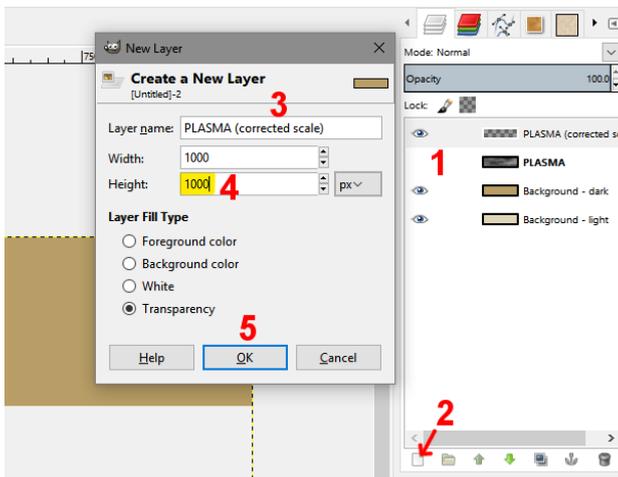
There is a very good reason why the basic parchment tutorial was done as a square. While everything else works fine, the Plasma filter used at step 7 distorts if your file has a long side. In the extreme case this is what happens:



This file was created four times as long as it is tall (1000 pixels x 250 pixels). The plasma layer looks like it's been stretched sideways, and is no good at all unless you really want the result to look stretched for a particular effect you have in mind.

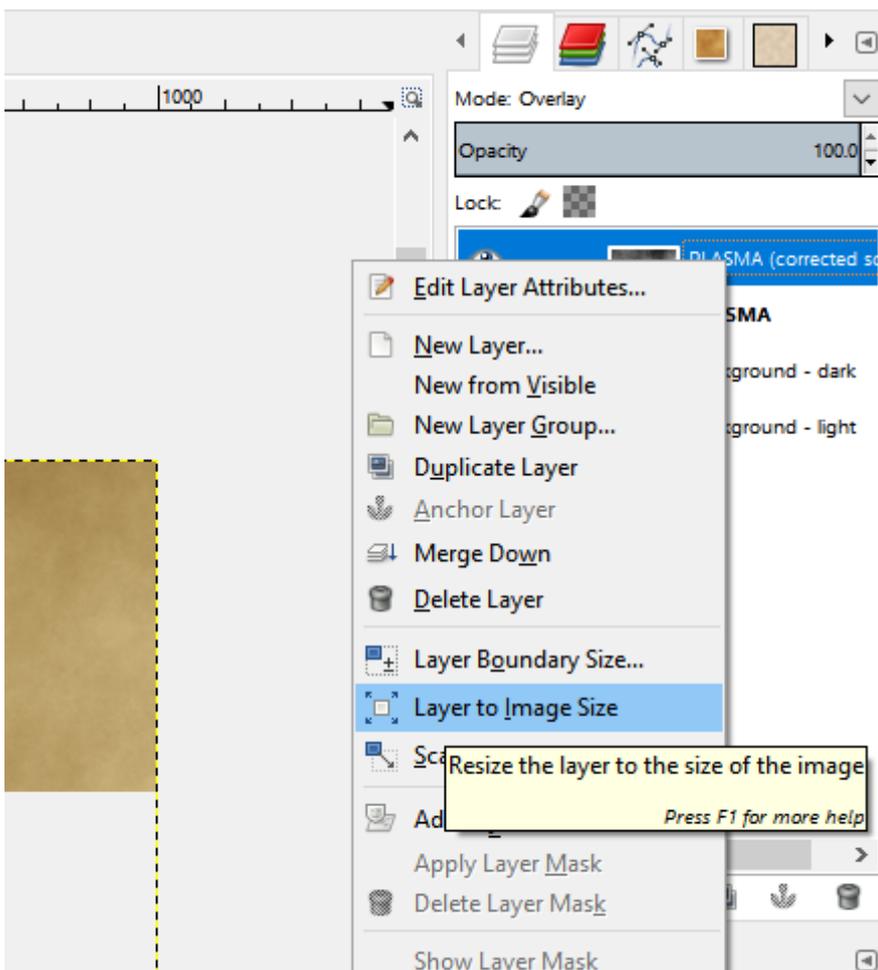
Fortunately, it is relatively easy to remedy this problem.

1. Hide the stretched plasma layer if you have already made this discovery by yourself (hide it by clicking the eye symbol at the left hand end of that layer in the Layers panel (1), click the new layer button (2), name the new layer "PLASMA (corrected scale)" (3), and increase the shortest dimension to match the longest (4). Then click OK (5)



This will create a layer that extends a long way beyond the image. You can see the edge shown by the dotted line where I have turned the layer boundary visible just to show you what happens. This is perfectly ok, since the layer will be trimmed back to the right size after you have generated the plasma.

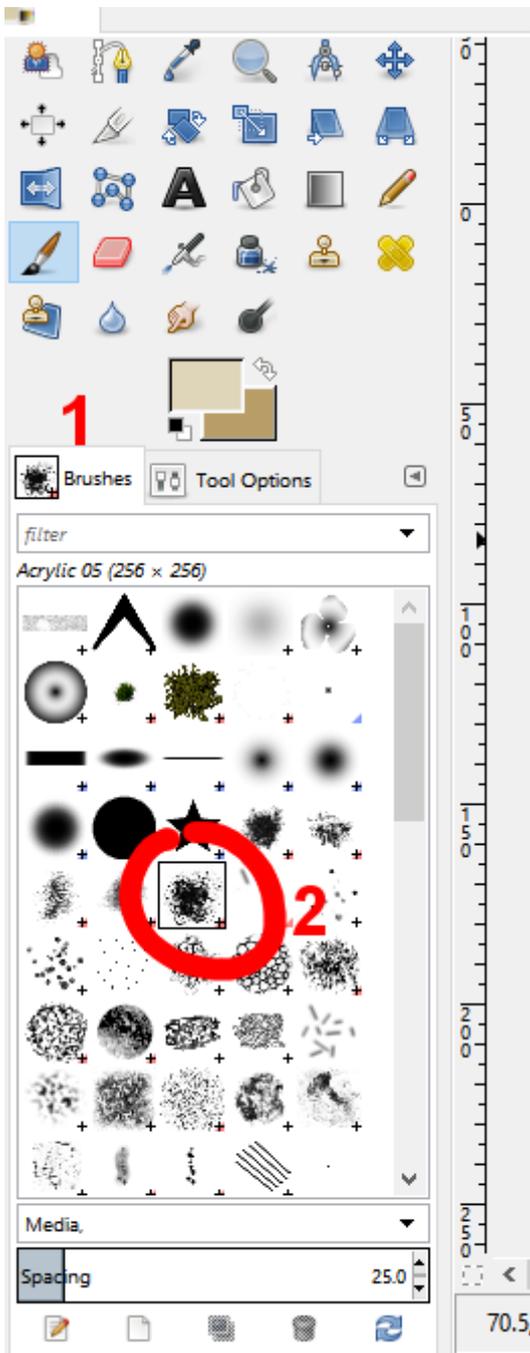
2. Next, generate the plasma on the new PLASMA (corrected scale) layer in the same way as you did before at step 7 (**Filters/Render/Clouds/Plasma**, followed by **Colors/Desaturate**, and change the layer mode to **Overlay**)
3. Then right click the layer in the Layers panel, and choose **Layer to image size**. This crops the layer to the same size as the image, but without compressing the plasma effect.



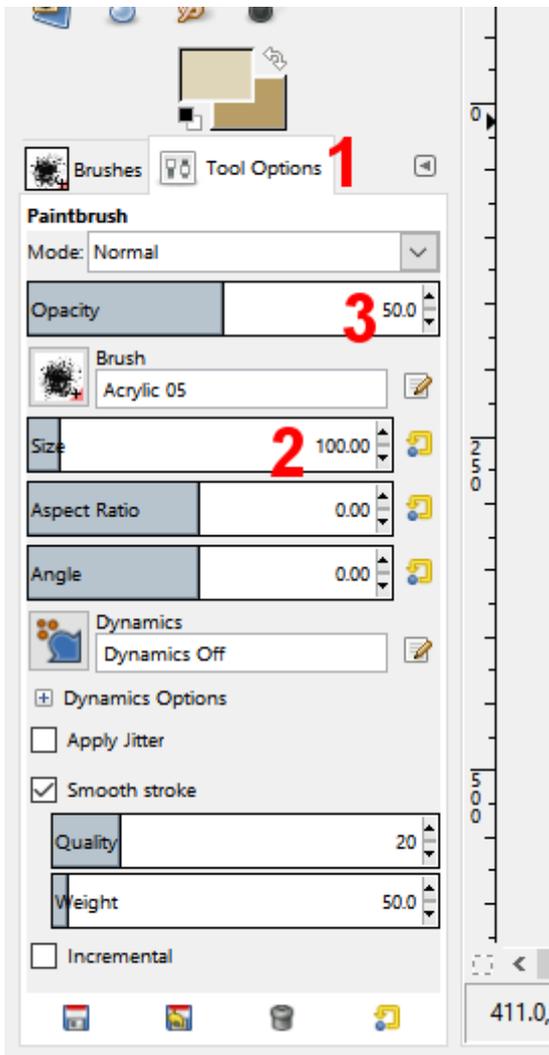
## Ragged edges and stains

With use, the edges of a piece of parchment darken and may dry out more than the centre, at which point tears may occur, and small pieces break off.

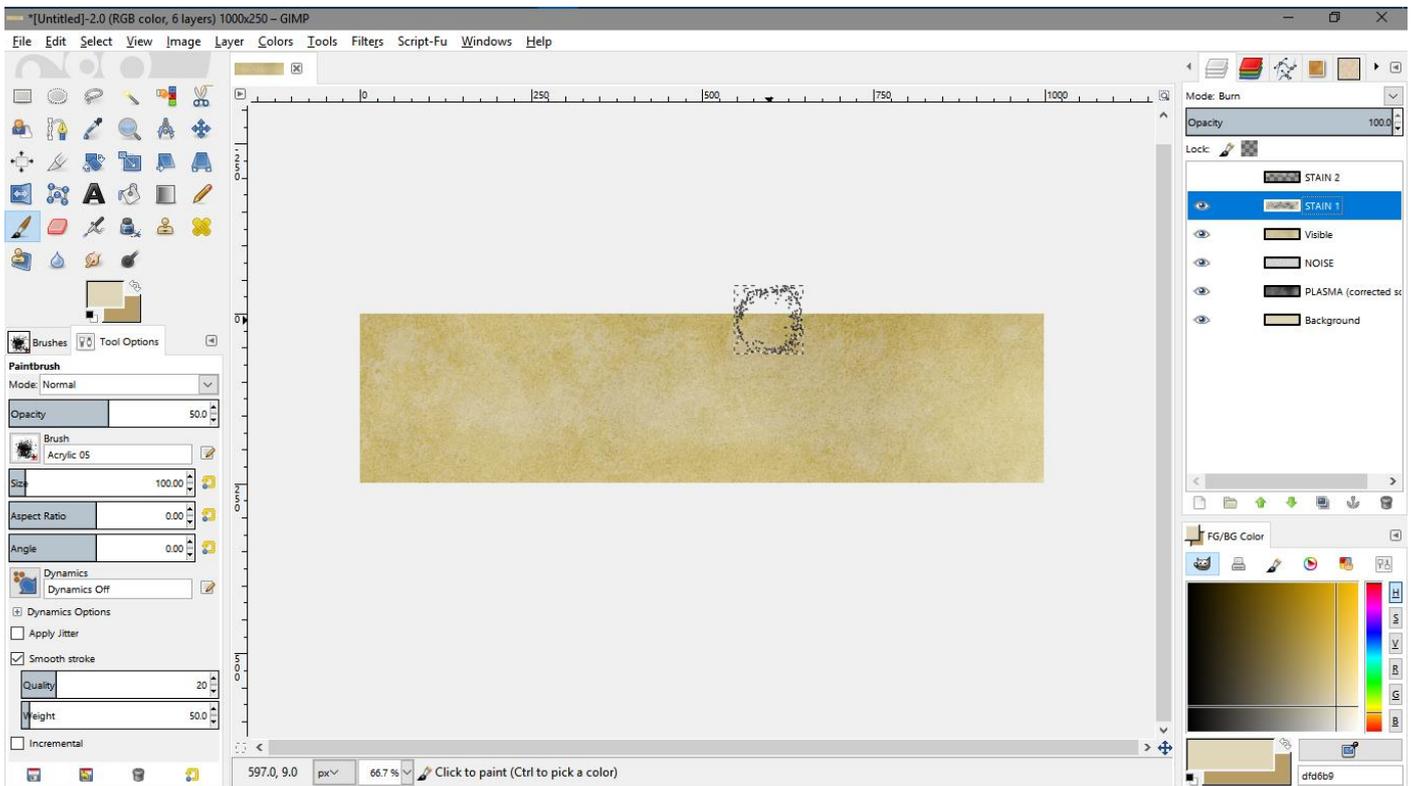
- To add stains, add 2 new layers to the top of the stack, name them STAIN 1 and STAIN 2, and change their modes to **Burn**, then select a suitable grungy brush by clicking the **Brushes** tab in the lower panel on the right hand side of the screen (1) and picking something like “Acrylic 5” (2), or one of the sponge brushes that are available in the default set. (I have downloaded and created several of my own brushes, so don’t worry if your brushes panel doesn’t look exactly like mine.)



- Click the **Tool Options** tab next to the Brushes tab (1), and set the size of the brush to about 100 by double clicking in the size slider (2) and typing “100”. Change the opacity of the brush (3) the same way to 50.

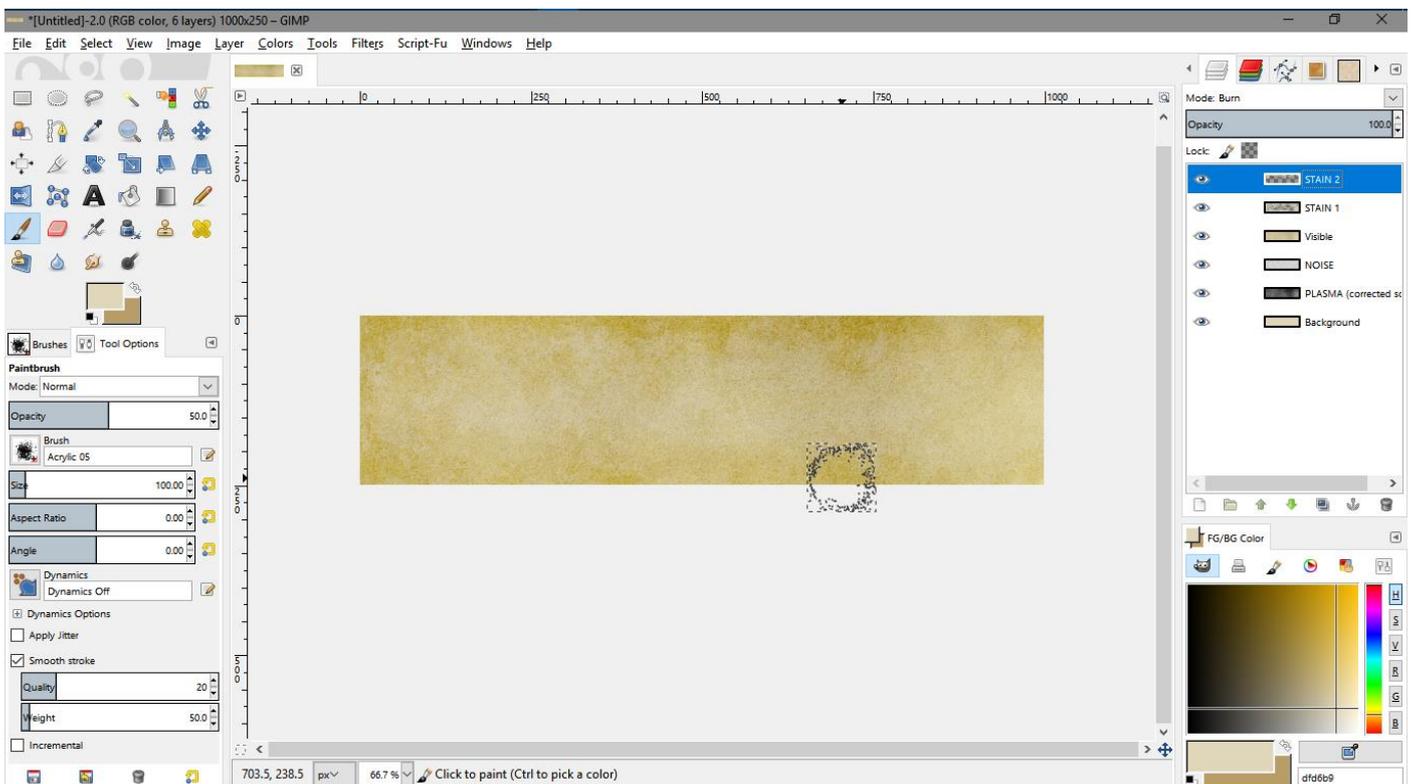


6. Select a colour as close to the original background parchment colour as possible, zoom out so that you can see the whole file and quite a lot of space around it (CTRL + mouse wheel), select the lower of the two STAIN layers you have just created, and start to click around the edge of the parchment like this:



This is a very pale parchment. If your parchment is darker the effect will be a lot more dramatic, and you may want to further decrease the opacity of the brush to compensate for that. You can also use the brush as an eraser just by clicking the eraser tool, reducing the opacity of the eraser to something similar to the brush opacity, and 'sponging off' any areas that are now too dark for your taste.

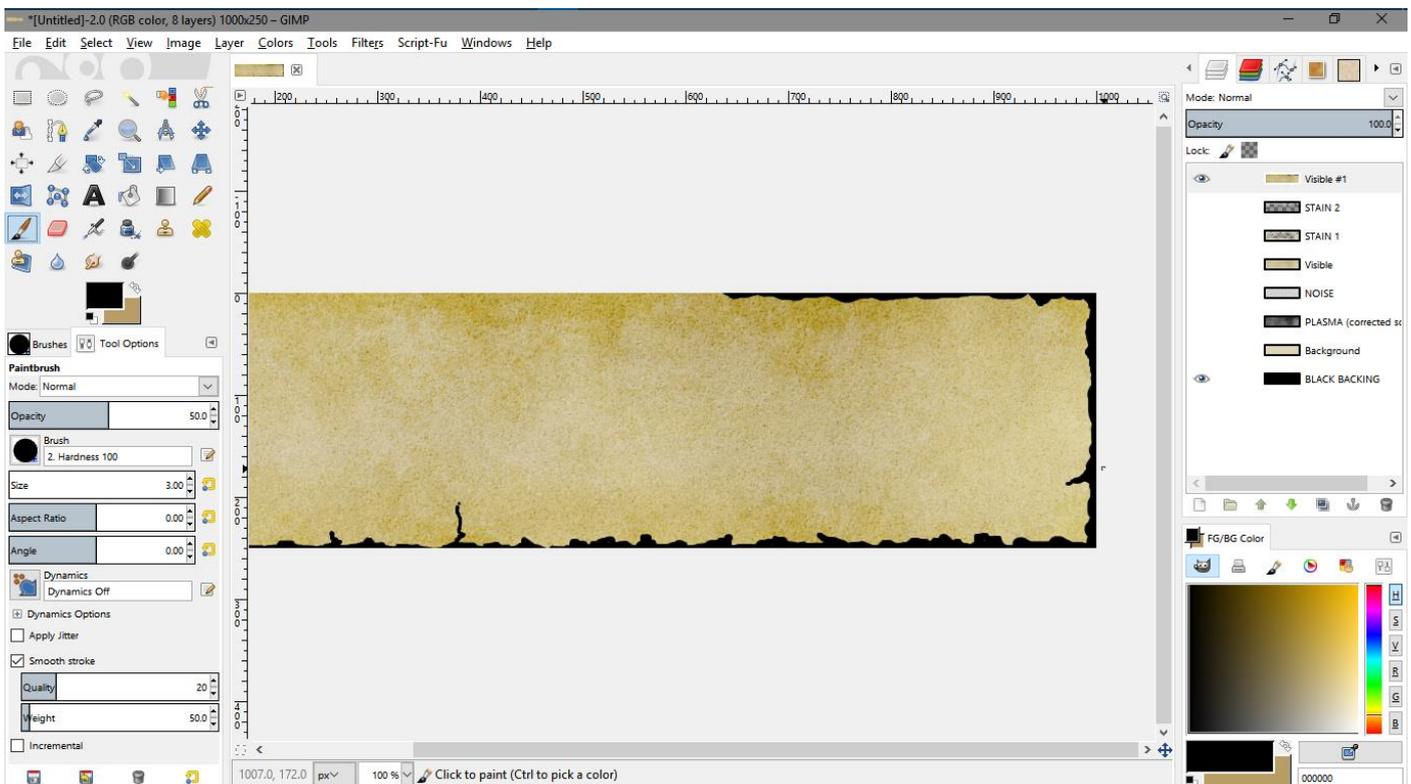
7. When you are happy with the general distribution of the stain on STAIN 1, click STAIN 2 and start work on that layer. Try not to put so much on STAIN 2, since this layer will produce the darkest stains where you have painted both layers in the same spot.



Here is a snippet of the new staining at 100%



8. To 'rag' the edges first add a completely black layer right at the bottom of the layer stack (make a new layer and use the fill tool to fill it black then move it to the bottom of the stack by clicking the green down arrow)
9. Change the brush back to the hard edged round brush under the **Brushes** tab, click the **Tool Options** tab and pick the eraser tool . Remember to re-set the opacity back to 100%, and set the brush size to about 3-5
10. Create a brand new Visible sheet (Layer/New from visible), then hide all other layers except the new black sheet (click their eye symbols). Select the new visible layer, and zoom in to the file edge to start erasing – and remember you always have the CTRL+Z shortcut to instantly undo a whole string of erasings if you aren't happy with the way its going.



11. The black background layer is only there to help you see what you are doing. When you are happy with your ragged edge hide the black layer and export the finished stained and ragged parchment ready for use as a CC3 background.