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# Medieval Calligraphy: Its History And Technique (Lettering, Calligraphy, Typography)



## Synopsis

"Vastly rewarding and illuminating." —*American Artist* This comprehensive history and instruction manual contains, in one volume, thirteen significant medieval scripts, with a history of the evolution of the alphabets, and fascinating background material on the scribes, their world, and how writing styles changed over a thousand years. Moreover, it is the only modern book that provides clearly described, brilliantly photographed, and accurately reproduced examples of both major and minor hands along with explicit directions for writing them. The author — a professional calligrapher of medieval styles, as well as illuminator, writer, and teacher — presents a spirited historical account of thirteen important writing styles developed from about the fourth century to the end of the fifteenth. These include Roman Rustic, Uncial, Carolingian Minuscule, Early Gothic, Luxeuil Minuscule, Gothic Littera Bastarda, and seven other distinctive hands. The text explains how and why different styles evolved, why certain devices, codes, and abbreviations were used, and how form and function interacted. In addition to fascinating facts about the origin and development of medieval scripts, *Medieval Calligraphy* also shows you how to duplicate medieval techniques with modern writing tools. Thorough instructions and sharply detailed, full-page photographs of the original alphabets explain pen angles and stroke sequences for each letter and capital. By carefully studying and practicing the techniques described, calligraphers will be able to master some of history's most interesting and influential scripts. Mr. Drogin has rounded out the book with helpful lists of suppliers of tools and materials, American and European sources for facsimiles and books, calligraphic societies, a bibliography, index, and more.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

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I have a whole bookshelf full of books on calligraphy, but this title is extraordinary. The author wrote it in 1980 as a frustrated calligraphy teacher who wanted a comprehensive book for his students. He felt that most other books on the subject were either too simple and glossed over important information, or were written for scholars and therefore inaccessible to the average student. *Medieval Calligraphy* is the result, and an impressive one it is! The book is full of history and technique, but, more importantly, it's eminently readable. Most books on calligraphy are heavy on technique (unfortunately "modernized"); more of a reference than a good read. I sat and read

the book as if it were a novel, looking forward each day to my private reading time, and as with reading any good novel I was sad to come to the end. The scripts are explained in chronological order so there is a clear historical line drawn from, say, Roman Rustic to Roman half-uncial and the scripts in between. Drogin explains the pressures of the day, the movement of people, the politics and other factors that went into the development from one script to another. Included are dozens of pictures of original documents so that you can see the scripts in their native habitat. The author also includes technical notes on each script, though full alphabets are not included. Other interesting sections show page layout used by the scribes and also how to order facsimiles. If you are passionate about calligraphy and are hungry for more than mere technical guidance, I highly recommend this book.

When first I became interested in calligraphy and illumination, I was told that I absolutely must have this book in my library. So I bought it as well as a number of other texts that have come in very handy over the past few years. I've seen many people reference this book, but the few times that I opened it, I only glanced at it and put it down. I don't think that I was ready for the very heavy material and density of information that is in this book. However I now find myself paging through, and have truly fallen in love with it. If you are interested in getting into calligraphy or medieval text studies, you absolutely must have this book. I'm so lucky to have bought this book, it was like finding a treasure on my bookshelf.

Great book. Incredible price. Provides a fascinating history along with a thorough "how to" for each font. At the price you could expect much less so it was a real delight to find such a thorough and readable treatment. I hope this book sets the standard for all new books to follow.

Some calligraphy skills website recommended this book and this is really helpful especially for medieval calligraphy. It divides two sections, one is 'history' and the other is 'technique'. English is not my first language so I was a bit afraid to read but this book is really easy to understand, quite interesting about the history part. Technique part is the most helpful in this book. Roman rustic, Carolingian, and many Gothic text variations are beautiful, easy to write, and there's some tip for writing a calligraphy. Furthermore, this book is just a calligraphy book and doesn't have an illumination skills, so if you want to look at illumination, check another book.

Oldie but goodie. This book has fine examples of medieval scripts, and some nice and interesting

history of medieval scribes. Interesting book. No color illustrations though. But a good reference on these scripts.

There are a lot of books offering you the first step on the wonderful world of calligraphy and lettering, but I've found in Marc Drogin's book not only an excellent source of information but also a great teacher in the various styles of medieval calligraphy. The history part summarizes the evolution of western alphabet as well as the different lettering styles according to a certain age, but the author also talk a lot about the context and the significance behind the important job of being a scribe. The technique part it's so friendly that takes your hand from the beginning of each stroke to the final one in each letter of the alphabet in the several styles that are reviewed in the book. I would highly recommend this book to anyone interested in the wonderful world of medieval calligraphy. Just a tip: If you are practicing with the book beside you, be careful with the ink. May Titivillus be with you to take the blame for all your mistakes, and good writing!

My interest in calligraphy has been purely historical. While I recognize all lettering arts as beautiful, I have no interest in learning the more modern hands or techniques to come along after the 18th ct. So, it has been my delight to read and use this book. The information gathered in this book is adequate and complete, not exhaustive--so one may read as little historical background and other information as he/she likes, then move on to practical application. My advice: do use this book as a resource for historical scripts, but do not begin with it. There is very little written on general principles of calligraphy and lettering, so expect to shop for a beginner's book on calligraphy if you are thus inexperienced. You might find yourself frustrated with the gaps in essentials and not be able to truly enjoy trying the historical hands once you try them.

If you are looking for a good calligraphy reference book that shows a lot of medieval scrips, then this book is for you. The book does a good job of showing some techniques in how to create some of the styles along with some of their history. However, I will note that there is a LOT of stuff crammed into this book and for some people this may come across as a bit busy, but overall I would recommend this book to anyone wanting to try their hand a calligraphy. Enjoy.

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