❦ FONTS FOR LATIN PALEOGRAPHY ☙

Capitalis elegans, capitalis rustica, uncialis, semiuncialis, antiqua cursiva romana, merovingia, insularis majuscula, insularis minuscula, visigothica, beneventana, carolina minuscula, gothica rotunda, gothica textura prescissa, gothica textura quadrata, gothica cursiva, gothica bastarda, humanistica.

User's manual

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ALPHABETUM Unicode font http://guindo.pntic.mec.es/jmag0042/alphabet.html
PALEOGRAPHIC fonts http://guindo.pntic.mec.es/jmag0042/palefont.html

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INTRODUCTION

The following pages will give you short descriptions and visual examples of Latin lettering which can be imitated through my package of "Paleographic fonts", closely based on historical models, and specifically designed to reproduce digitally the main Latin handwritings used from the 3rd to the 15th century. These typefaces closely follow the original scripts.

Naturally it is beyond my scope to write a treatise on Paleography; this humble article only proposes to provide a simple quick visual reference to Latin handwriting, allowing a glance specifically at book-hands, typically used during the Roman Empire and Middle Ages. Please also note that none of the following examples given in the following pages have been chosen for their special beauty, but merely as examples of particular hands.

EPIGRAPHY AND PALEOGRAPHY

Epigraphy is the study of written matter recorded on hard or durable material, whereas Paleography is the study, interpretation and analysis of the handwriting in ancient documents (i.e. on soft material).

Fonts I have designed belong to the paleographical category.

CONCEPT OF PALEOGRAPHY

Paleography is the study of ancient methods of writing, most properly writing on parchment or paper or equivalent material, such as wooden tablets, leaves, canvas, or any other material on which one can write with a pen, reed, or paintbrush.

Paleography investigates the history of the characters used to represent speech, traces the changes from age to age in those of the same language, teaches the art or science of deciphering documents, and determines their date and place of origin from the style of writing.

Paleography is the art of analysing and reading handwriting. Some would call it a science, and to a degree it has acquired a veneer of scientific style, classification and ordering, but ultimately it evolves one human individual attempting to understand the unique efforts at communication of another. Paleography is fundamentally an art, with some scientific props.

In fact, Paleography was not recognized as a science until the publication in 1681 of the *De Re Diplomatica* of Jean Mabillon (1632-1707), who gave directions in this work for distinguishing, by the writing itself, between the genuine documents of the Middle Ages and the forgeries that were current in his time.

The terminology of "Paleography" was used for the first time in 1703 by Bernard de Mountfaucon, a Benedictine monk, when he published a book entitled *Paleographia Graeca, sive de ortu et progressu litterarum*. Etymologically, this word is composed of two Greek terms παλάια (ancient), and γραφή (written). Consequently we translate: "science that studies ancient writings".

SCOPE OF THE PALEOGRAPHY

By the definition given above Paleography should include the study of writings of every sort, of all times and all peoples, regardless of the material which received them. As a branch of classical philology, however, its scope has been greatly restricted. In the first place it is limited to the Greek and Latin languages, and in the second place Epigraphy and Diplomatics, once mere branches of Paleography, have won for themselves the rank of independent sciences. The former treats of the very oldest written records of Greece and Rome, those, that is, cut in stone and metal, or scratched and painted upon wood or other hard substances; the latter deals with the charters, wills, deeds, grants, etc., of the centuries following the breaking up of the Roman empire.

Several related disciplines are distinguished from Paleography based on the material on which the writing is found.

- Papyrology, the study of writing on papyrus, requires special skills, but is essentially a branch of Paleography (at least so far as it is occupied with reading papyri, and identifying their dates, provenance, place and style of writing, and other facts about the circumstances of copying and transmission; so far as the papyrologist is concerned with editing papyri, he practices textual criticism; so far as he uses the papyri for historical analysis, he is a historian).

- The study of writing stamped on coins belongs to the separate discipline of Numismatics.

- Inscriptions on stone, metal, pottery, gems, seal-stones, stamps, weights, lamps, and other household items belong to Epigraphy.

Although regarded as a separate discipline, Epigraphy is of importance to the paleographer, since the earliest examples of writing are usually found in inscriptions, and since there continues to be a mutual influence of inscriptions and other forms of writing on each other.

To Paleography is left, therefore, merely the study of the writing, or various styles of writing, found in the manuscripts of the works of literature that have descended to us.

Limiting our study of Paleography to Latin manuscripts as we do, the period covered extends from the third or fourth century A. D., the time when the oldest codices now existing were written, to the fifteenth century, when the scribe was succeeded by the printer.

LATIN PALEOGRAPHY

We now proceed to trace the history of the Latin Paleography, and the scheme which will be followed in this division of our subject may first be briefly stated.

Latin Majuscule writing, in its two branches of Square Capitals and Rustic Capitals, and Uncials –the most ancient extant forms of the Latin book-hand – claims our first attention.

Next, the mixed hands of uncial and minuscule letters, known as Half-uncial writing, will be examined.

We shall then have to pass in review the various styles of Roman Cursive writing, beginning with its earliest examples; and from this we shall proceed to follow the course of the National Minuscule hands (Gernanic, Merovingian, Visigothic and Beneventan), which were derived directly from that source.

The independent history of the early Irish and English (Insular) handwriting forms a chapter apart.

From the period of Charlemagne to the end of the fifteenth century, the vicissitudes of the literary handwritings of Western Europe (Caroline minuscule, Gothic hands and Humanistic scripts) will be described as well.

In the following chapters we will have a close look at the different handwriting styles used in Latin manuscripts.

THE ROMAN MAJUSCULE BOOK-HAND

The Latin Majuscule book-hand of early manuscripts is divided into two branches: writing in Capitals, and writing in Uncials.

Capitals, in turn, are of two kinds: Square Capitals and Rustic Capitals. The most ancient Latin manuscript in existence (*De bello Actiaco*, fragments of a poem on the battle of Actium found in Herculaneum, see image below) is in Rustic Capitals; but there is no reason to presume that the rustic hand was employed in manuscripts before the square hand, rather, following the analogy of sculptured inscriptions, the priority should be given to square letters.
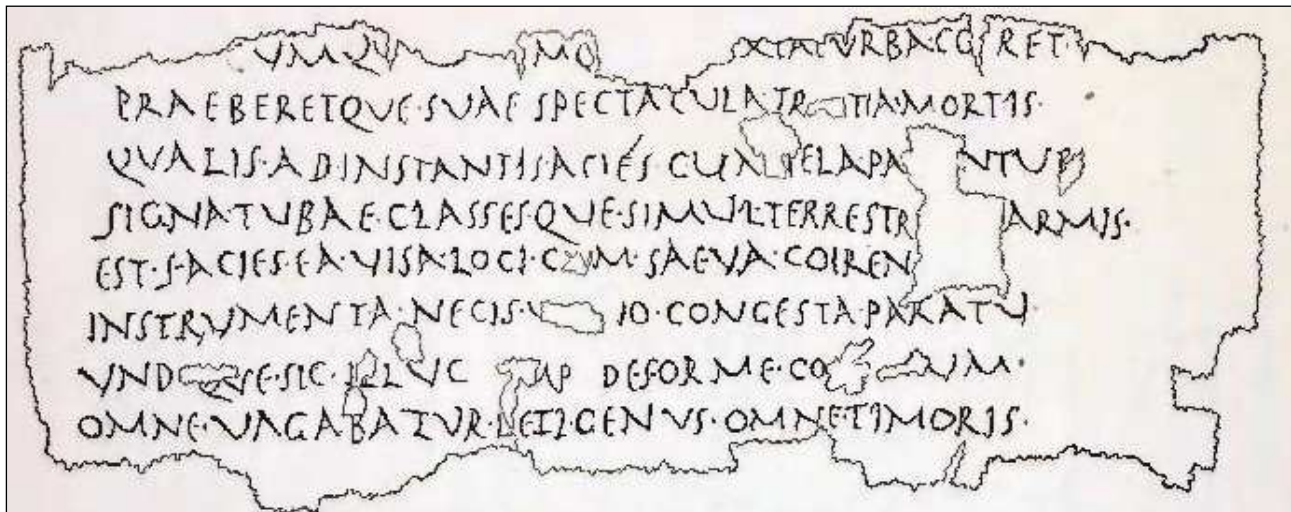
Rustic Capitals: "De bello Actiaco", written between 31 B.C. and A.D. 79

The earliest Roman script, to judge from inscriptions, was entirely in capitals. The most formal variety of them was a majuscule (or capital) script which we now term Square Capitals (*capitalis quadrata*), used mainly for carved inscriptions, where it is also known as *scriptura monumentalis*.
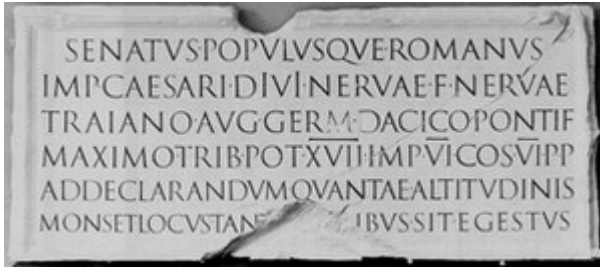
Square Capitals: *Monumental letters carved in stone, which will be adapted for high-status manuscript pages.*

Here is an image of the inscription on Trajan's Column, A.D. 114. Notice the gradation in size from the bottom up. This is so that the letters all appear to be the same height when viewed from below.

The epigraphical capital of our printed books was adapted as a book-hand for use in manuscripts, but there exist only rare specimens of it.

This beautiful script seems to have been exclusively reserved for "de luxe" manuscripts and for the most revered works, such as Virgil or the Bible. Since Square Capitals were very laborious to write because of its straight lines and angular forms, they were more suited for carving inscriptions on stone with a chisel than for a text on papyrus or parchment with a pen.

Hence, for more general purposes, a less formal, quicker written variation was needed. Romans developed a new book-hand called Rustic Capitals (*capitalis rustica*) to meet these needs.

Rustic Capitals were a majuscule script with rather more rounded letter forms that were easier to produce with a reed pen (*calamus*) or a quill (*penna*) than the angular forms of Square Capitals.

Rustic Capìtals were a popular, functional book script and became the standard book hand until the medieval era.

Capitals together with Uncials were the only style used for the formal publication of works of literature until the eighth century, but later they were reserved mainly for the titles and heading of chapters. From this last use was derived the name "capital" (Latin: *caput*, chapter) which is still used for one style of these majuscules.

According to what have been mentioned above, Roman Capitals, therefore, are of two kinds: Square Capitals and Rustic Capitals. Capital writing, in its two styles, copies the lettering of inscriptions which have been classed under the heads of *scriptura monumentalis* and *scriptura actuaria*, as executed in the time of Augustus and successive emperors; the Square Capitals following generally the first, and the Rustic Capitals the second.

We now proceed to examine these two styles more in detail.

SQUARE CAPITALS

Roman Square Capitals (*capitalis quadrata*), also called "Elegant Capitals" (*capitalis elegans*) are an ancient Roman form of writing, and the basis for modern capital letters.

As mentioned above, Square Capitals used in manuscripts are basically the same script employed in inscriptions, since it is derived directly from the pattern used for carving upon hard materials.

Roman Capitals were an angular majuscule script (*litterae maiusculae*), often written without breaks between words (*scriptura continua*) or with words separated by dots placed about midway of the vertical space occupied by the letter.

The capital script is composed of large and regular letters written between two virtual parallel lines, beyond which they seldom extended.

Square Capitals are characterized by sharp, straight lines, supple curves, thick and thin strokes, angled stressing and incised serifs.

The angles are right angles, and the bases, tops and extremities are usually finished off with the fine strokes and pendants which are familiar to us in our modern printed copies of the same letters.

The letters were constructed with formal rules. Serifs, looking like little flags at the end of strokes, signify with certainty the end of the stroke. In design terms, serifs enhance baselines of the letters.

These rules provide recognition and elegance.

The thickness or thinness of a stroke is generally based on a square cut pen at a certain angle, which yields various thickness strokes as the pen draws, for instance, a capital "O". In addition, lines would, if drawn with a pen, be built up with multiple strokes for the thick strokes on a letter form. The inference from these designs is that the Roman letters are rationally designed rather than naturally created by the style of the writer's hand.

The imposing appearance of the Square Capitals clearly denotes a prestigious script. In fact, Square Capitals were only used for high-grade manuscripts.
  It should be remarked that Virgil in the Roman world and the Bible in the early Church were published with a sumptuous elegance to which no other works could aspire.

This script was so stiff and slow to write that even in books it begins to be less common in the fifth century, and then disappears altogether, except in artificial reproductions of the ancient style, in titles and chapter headings in conjunction with various handwritings for body text.
  Of Square Capitals very few specimens are preserved. The extant manuscripts with Square Capitals are all copies of Virgil (such as the famous *Codex Augusteus*, Vat. lat. 3256, the *Codex Sangallensis* and the *Codex Veronensis*) dating from the 4th or 5th centuries.
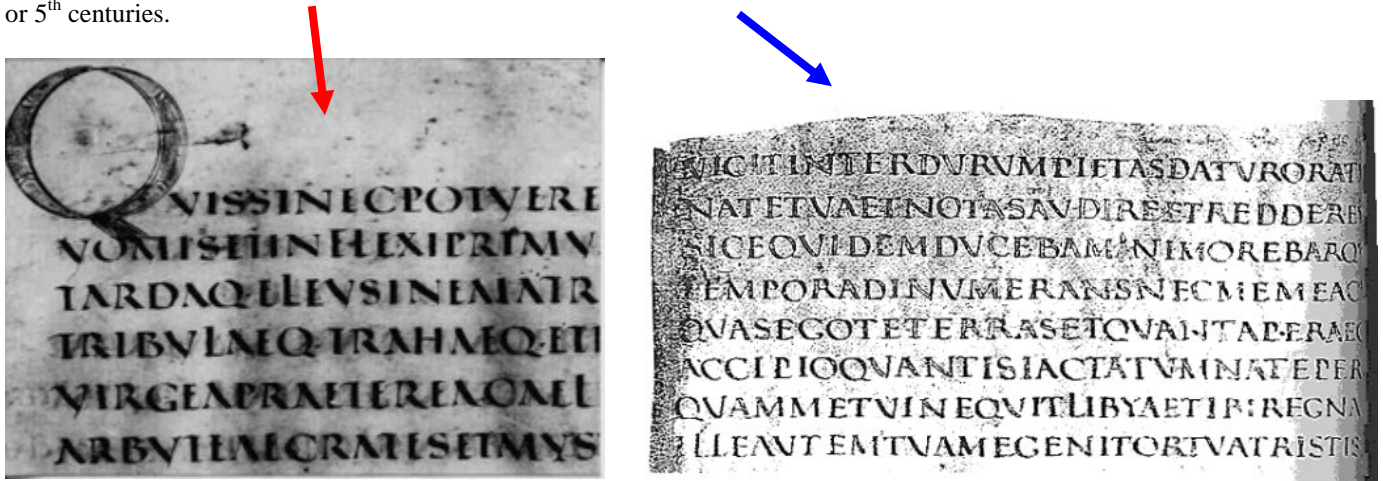
LETTER FORMS

The letters differ but little from those of our printed books.
  Square Capitals provide a good illustration of the cyclic history of Western handwriting and of its Roman origins, since they have virtually the same form as modern block capitals. In fact, the only difficulty in reading these letters lies in the fact that the words are not separated (*scriptura continua*, continuous script). The text is written between two virtual lines.

In Square Capitals the letters are in general disproportionately wide, and commonly of the same height except that F (F) and L (L) sometimes extend above the other letters to avoid be confused with E (E) and I (I) respectively.

The letter A (Λ Λ) lacks the medial crossbar in most manuscripts written in capitals.
  The letter B (B) usually has a small upper loop and a very large lower one.
  The letters E, F and T (E, F, T) have very short horizontal strokes.
  The letter (P) has an open loop.
  The loop of R (R) is not closed (it doesn't touch the vertical ascender stroke or stem).
  The character (I) designates both I and J; in the same manner V (V) is used for both V and U. The second stroke of V descends below the base line.

Capital manuscripts have few contractions and no punctuation marks.

Ligatures and abbreviations are rarely used. Abbreviations are restricted to the *nomina sacra* ($\overline{DS}$ deus, $\overline{DMS}$ $\overline{DNS}$ dominus etc) and *notae communes* such as the raised point after B (B·) for –BUS and after Q (Q·) for –QUE.

THE TYPEFACE "**Capitalis Elegans**"

The "**Capitalis Elegans**" is a font based on the hand of the famous manuscript *Vergilius Augusteus* dating most likely from the 4th century and preserved in the Vatican Library.

Below is a photograph showing a segment from the aforementioned manuscript and the replica which can be achieved by using the "**Capitalis Elegans**" font.

Vergilius Augusteus sive Dionysianus (*Georgicon*, I, 141-147) Bibl. Ap. Vat., cod. Vat. lat. 3256, fol. 3ᵛ.
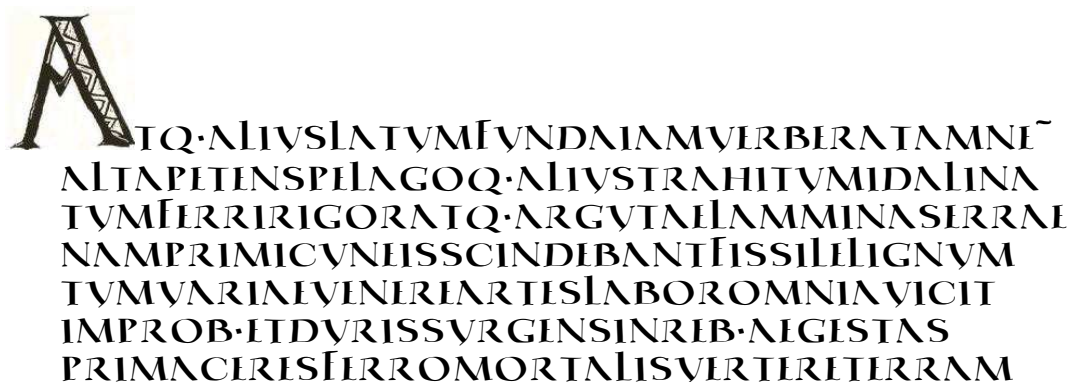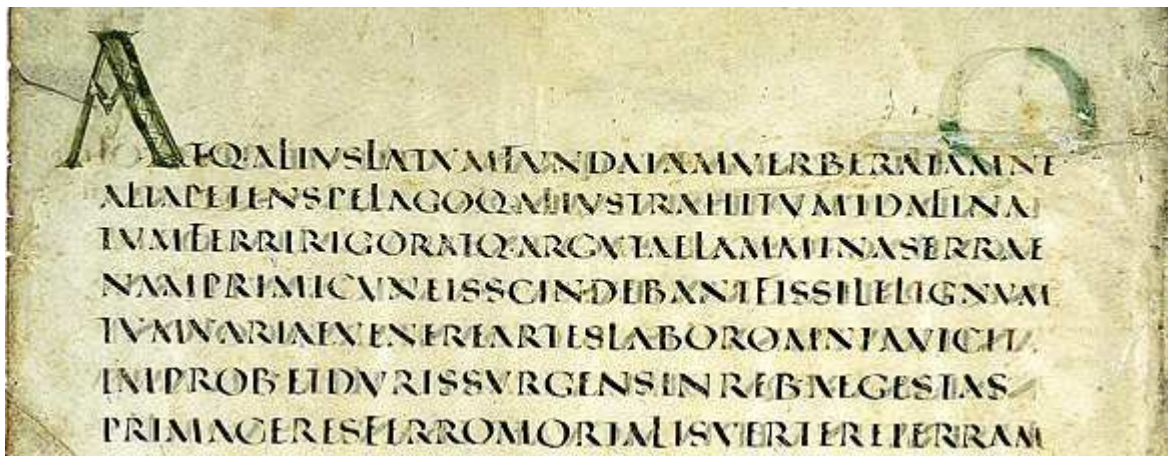
The following lines show a partial character set for the "**Capitalis Elegans**" font.
This is for quick reference only and may not constitute the entire character set provided in the font.
Since Square Capitals are a majuscule script and therefore only uses capital letters, (Square Capitals do not have upper/lower case distinctions) I have introduced some glyph variants for few letters in the lower-case alphabet.
Upper case letters: A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z
Lower case letters: A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z
The font has been designed so that the uppercase and lowercase characters can be intermixed to give variation to the text.
Special signs (ligatures and abbreviations): see samples on page 6.

RUSTIC CAPITALS

The Square Capital writing was obviously so tedious a method for preserving literature that we may be pretty certain that it was seldom used, and that the scribes hastened to escape to quicker methods. This seems to be proved by the paucity of extant examples in that character, as compared with those in rustic letters (*capitalis rustica*).

Rustic Capitals, on the other hand, are, as the name implies, of a more negligent pattern, although, as a style of writing for select books, they were no less carefully formed than the Square Capitals. But the strokes are more slender, cross-strokes are short and are more or less oblique and waved. Their extremities are no longer flattened by the small graceful bar (serif) which adorns the Square Capitals.

Rustic Capitals are similar to Square Capitals, but its letters are less rigid, stand more closely together, are esentially taller than wide, and are easier to write with a pen than the Square Capitals.

Being thus, in appearance, less finished as perfect letters, although accurately shaped, they have received the somewhat misleading title which distinguishes them (*capitalis rustica*).

Rustic manuscripts have few contractions and no punctuation marks. Originally words were not separated (i.e. uninterrupted script), although a medial dot can be found in some manuscripts like a word divisor. The text is written between two hypothetical lines.

Rustic Capitals were used between the 1st century and the 9th century, most often between the 4th and 6th centuries, and later they were reserved mainly for titles and chapter headings.

Of Rustic Capitals specimens are more numerous (about forty manuscripts survive), although in this style too, Virgil is reproduced more frequently than any other author: *Codex Vaticanus*, (Vat. lat 3225), *Codex Romanus*, (Vat. lat 3867), *Codex Palatinus*, (Vat. Pal. lat. 1631) and *Codex Mediceus* (Laur. 39,1).

Aeneid. fols. 45v-46r. Aeneas and the Sibyl at the Temple of Apollo

Eclogue 6. Portrait of Virgil

The earliest extant example of Rustic Capitals is a fragment of a poem on the Battle of Actium (*De bello Actiaco*, see image in page 3) by an unknown author, found in the ruins of Herculaneum which was buried by the eruption of mount Vesuvius in the year 79 A.D. It is written upon papyrus in light, quickly-formed letters.

Among the remaining older manuscripts of the rustic class the most important is the famous *Codex Bembinus* of Terence in the Vatican Library, a manuscript of the fourth or fifth century.

The rustic style was usually used for "de luxe" copies of pagan authors; the only works by Christian authors which use this script are those by Prudentius and Sedulius.

For works of Christian authors the Uncial script was preferred. More will be said on this subject when we come to discuss the formation of Uncial writing.

LETTER FORMS

   The letters are thinner and more compressed, use many more curved lines than Square Capitals do, and have descenders extended below the baseline.

   The rustic letters are somewhat narrower than Square Capitals, angular and with free use of broken strokes and long foot serifs, particularly noticeable on E (Ɛ).

   The letter A (Λ) lacks the medial crossbar.

   The letter B (Ƀ) shows a tendency to rise slightly above the line and has a small upper loop and a very large lower one.

   The letters E and F (Ɛ, Ƒ) might easily be confused, were it not for the slightly longer top-stroke of F.

   The letters I and L (I, L) are often virtually identical, except for the differentiating longer bottom stroke in L.

   The letters F (Ƒ) is generally taller than the other letters extending above the ruling slightly to avoid be confused with E.

   The letters E and T (Ɛ, T) are very narrow.

   The letter Y (Υ) has a very shallow V-shaped component, with upward facing curved arms.

   A medial dot (·) is used to separate words.

   THE TYPEFACE "**Capitalis Rustica**"

   Here is an image of a page of Roman Rustic script. It comes from Vatican Library MS Pal. Lat. 1631: a 6th-century copy of an earlier original. It is known to Virgil scholars as the *Codex Palatinus*.

   Under the image you will find the same text written with the "**Capitalis Rustica**" font.

Vergilius Palatinus (*Bucolicon*, X, 1-6). Bibl. Ap. Vat., cod. Vat. lat. 1631

   The following lines show a partial character set for the "**Capitalis Rustica**" font:

   Upper case letters: Λ B C D Ɛ Ƒ G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

   Lower case letters: Λ B C D E Ƒ Ç H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

   Since Rustic Capitals are a majuscule script and therefore only uses capital letters, (Rustic Capitals do not have upper/lower case distinctions) I have introduced some glyph variants for few letters in the lower-case alphabet.

UNCIAL SCRIPT

ETYMOLOGY

The name "Uncial", first found in the writings of St. Jerome (†420 A.D., preface to the Book of Job: *habeant qui volunt veteres libros, vel in membranis purpureis auro argentoque descriptos, vel uncialibus, ut vulgo aiunt, litteris...* Migne, *Patrologia Latina* 28, col. 1142) is not descriptive, because it means simply "inch high" letters (*litterae unciales*), a name which fits the capitals just as well.

Uncial derives from the Latin word *uncia*, which literally means "one twelfth", hence became inch and also ounce, originally one twelfth of a Roman pound weight.

Jerome's words may mean that the letters occupied one-twelfth of a page of a manuscript. Some paleographers, however, theorize that he used that word because the letters were *uncus*, or crooked, as they presumably were in comparison to Roman Square Capitals.

CONCEPT

The term "Uncial" in the sense of describing this script was first used by Jean Mabillon in the early 18th century. Thereafter his definition was refined by Scipione Maffei, who used to refer to this script as distinct from Roman Square Capitals.

The term is now conventionally applied to rounded forms as distinguished from the square forms of the capital script.

The Uncial script is a transformed capital writing in which the ascenders are curved and the angles rounded.

The peculiar variation of curved letters is most likely an influence taken from the New Roman Cursive.

Uncial is a design quite independent of the formal look of the official alphabet, and yet more decorative than common cursive. It is the effort to combine rapidity with dignity.

CHARACTERISTICS AND ORIGIN

Uncial was still a majuscule script and several of its letters (e.g. B, C, O, R and S) were almost the same as the capitals.

However, in some respects it might be considered a transitional script from capitals to minuscule, so for instance, although a majuscule script was written between two imaginary ruled lines, ascenders and descenders are obvious in some uncial letters (p, q, h etc).

It is true that most of the letters are contained within two parallel lines, however, there is no longer a complete commitment to making the bodies the same height.

The Uncial script has particularly rounded forms and may have been influenced by Greek book scripts as well as incorporating cursive forms of several letters. We must bear in mind that the Bibles, psalters and other religious books were written in Greek. Greek was still the official church language except for North Africa where Latin was used for church manuscripts. North African scribes developed a Latin script that had sufficient dignity for their use, but also had the round strokes and ease of penmanship which was the characteristic of formal Greek scripts.

When Latin became the official language of the Church in Rome, there was a hesitance to use the Roman Rustic common to Roman pagan literature, and Uncial, formal yet quick to pen, became the established script of Church and biblical manuscripts.

Uncial is, therefore, usually associated with Christian Church. In fact, a large number of the extant Uncial texts (around 500) are Christian manuscripts.

Other external factors favoured the adoption and development of curved letters as well. There was, at the same time Uncial arose, a change from the use of papyrus to parchment and from the roll to the codex for literary works.

The material employed influenced the forms of the letters: papyrus does not lend itself as well as parchment to rounded forms.

Early forms of Uncial are characterized by broad single stroke letters using simple round forms taking advantage of the new parchment and vellum surfaces, as opposed to the angular, multiple stroke letters which are more suited for rougher surface, such as papyrus.

The use of parchment rather than papyrus promoted the tendency to round letters, as its smooth surface was appreciably more suitable than papyrus for writing clear curves.

DURATION

We do not know when the Uncial type was first introduced. Perhaps developing in the second half of the third century, Uncial is a common book-hand from the fourth century to the eighth.

Uncial would replace the Rustic Capitals as the most popular script from the fifth century on, and Uncial was still used, particularly for copies of the Bible, until around the 10th century.

Finally, it was used as a display script for headings (often mixed with Roman Capitals) up to until the 12th century.

There are over 500 surviving copies of Uncial script, by far the largest number prior to the Carolingian Renaissance.

One of the most ancient manuscripts of this type which has come down to us is the fourth century palimpsest of Cicero "De Re Publica", now in the Vatican Library.

Sacramentary of Metz

Palimpsest of Cicero "De Re Publica"

LETTER FORMS

This script represents wide curves and curved letters, which are considered to be easier and faster to write than straight lines and angles.

In the oldest examples of Uncial, all of the letters are disconnected from one another, and word separation is typically not used (*scriptura continua*). Word separation, however, is characteristic of later Uncial usage.

As the script evolved over the centuries, the characters became more complex. Specifically, around the year 600 A.D., detailed serifs, flourishes and exaggerations of the basic strokes began to appear in more manuscripts. The Uncial loses spontaneity, the writing angle turns to 90º and the script is enlarged, fitting now between a four-line pattern. Later the script is changed and often transformed by tags on the ascenders and small triangles hanging from the horizontal. This Uncial style is called *Artificial Uncial* or *Imitation Uncial*.

Ascenders and descenders were the first major alterations, followed by twists of the tool in the basic stroke and overlapping.

The letters most modified are: A, D, E, G, H, M, Q, T, U which became respectively: λ, δ, e, ς, h, m, q, τ, u

Many of the Uncial letter forms are rounded versions of capitals; others, such as δ, h and q have assumed new forms, probably under the influence of cursive. Some forms, such as λ and e, are new developments.

In general there are some common features of Uncial script:

The letter A (λ) has a thorn-like bow.

The letter E (e) is formed with a curved stroke, and its arm (medial tongue) does not connect with the top curve. The height of the arm can also indicate the age of the script (written in a high position, the script is probably early, while an arm written closer to the middle of the curve may indicate a later script).

The letter L (l) has a small base and is generally taller than the other letters.

The letters M, N and U (m, N, u) are relatively broad. The letter R (R) has a long curved shoulder

The use of abbreviations is not common in Uncial script. Abbreviations are restricted to the *nomina sacra* (deus, dominus, Christus, spiritus, sanctus etc) and *notae communes* (such as the raised point after B $(B\cdot)$ for –BUS and after Q $(q\cdot)$ for –QUE, and the suspension sign over a final vowel for M: $\bar{\lambda}$ $\bar{e}$ $\bar{i}$ $\bar{o}$ $\bar{u}$ = AM, EM, IM, OM, UM.

The basic abbreviation form is a horizontal or waved line placed above a character to indicate the suppresion of a sign, although an apostrophe is also found: p' (post) N' (nec) R' (rum) T' (tur).

Here is a list with the main abbreviations used in Uncial script:

m̊ (modo)]c̄ (igitur) q̊ (qua) q̄ (que/quae) q (quam) N̄ (non) s̄ (sunt)

nomina sacra: d̅m̅s̅ and d̅n̅s̅ (dominus) d̅s̅ (deus) s̅p̅s̅ (spiritus) s̅c̅s̅ (sanctus) x̅p̅s̅ (Christus)

p̅b̅r̅ (presbiter) e̅p̅s̅ (episcopus) i̅h̅s̅ (Iesus).

Capital letters normally were larger versions of text letters, although versals also occur.

THE TYPEFACE "**Uncialis**"

The "**Uncialis**" font is designed to imitate Uncial lettering.
Here is an image of a page of Uncial script. It comes from a 5th century manuscript.
Below the image is the imitation of the same text made with the "**Uncialis**" font.

Titus Livius (*Ab Urbe condita*, XXIII). Cod. Paris Bibl. Nat., ms. lat. 5730, fol. 77 v. (5th century AD.)

haechannibalpostcan
nensempugnamcapta
acdireptaconfestim
exapuliainsamnium
moverataccitusinhir
pinosastatiopollicen
tessecompsamtraditu
rumcompsanuserat

The following lines show a partial character set for "**Uncialis**" font:
Upper case letters: Λ B C δ ε F ç h ı j k l m N O p q R S T u υ ɯ x ẏ z
Lower case letters: Λ B C δ ε F ç h ı j k l m N O p q R S T u υ ɯ x ẏ z
Since Uncial script only uses capital letters, I have introduced some glyph variants for few letters in the minuscule set.
Special signs (ligatures and abbreviations): see samples above.

ROMAN CURSIVE WRITING

Roman handwriting had developed many different styles, often called "cursive" (which customarily means a flowing, connected hand, written without lifting the pen) though in fact maintaining separate, disconnected letters. Cursive is a form of handwriting used in ancient Rome. It was used for less formal purposes than the publication of books, e.g., for memoranda, accounts and correspondence.

For everyday use, Romans used the cursive, developed from the capital script and optimised for active business use, correspondence and private documents.

Two main styles of cursive writing are know: Old (or ancient) Roman Cursive in use in the first three centuries A.D., and New Roman Cursive, replacing the former from the later third century A.D. onwards.

OLD ROMAN CURSIVE

Old Roman Cursive was based on Roman Square Capitals and was in fact a majuscule script. Despite its cursive qualities this script is therefore sometimes known as "majuscule cursive" and "capital cursive".

It was the everyday form of handwriting used for writing letters, by merchants writing business accounts, by schoolchildren learning the Roman alphabet, and even emperors issuing commands.

Old Roman Cursive is known to us from words scratched or written upon all sorts of objects found in the ruins of Pompeii and Herculaneum, for example market traders used to mark the names and prices of their goods on the exterior walls of buildings as graffiti. Also there were graffiti such as those we find in toilets today –who loves whom and so on.

We also know the Old Roman Cursive handwriting from a number of papyrus (Papyrus Claudius, for instance) and wax tablets (Pompeii, Vindolanda, Dacia, Caerlon etc).

Old Roman Cursive was most commonly used from about the 1st century B.C. to the 3rd century A.D., but it probably existed earlier than that. In fact, the comedian Plautus in *Pseudolus* 21-30 makes reference to the illegibility of cursive letters.

Unlike the Latin book-hand, this cursive is rather difficult for a modern audience to read.

Although the letters are the same, the cursive style of writing uses different strokes to form letter shapes which are drastically different than those in the book-hand.

The letters are constructed from individual slashing strokes rather than a flowing, continuous use of the pen, suggesting that this script was really more at home on a wax tablet than on papyrus.

Old Roman Cursive almost always maintained separate, unconnected letters. Its main characteristic was the attempt to reduce the number of strokes per letter while maintaining legibility.

Words are rarely separated, the breaks between them occasionally (and inconsistently) being identified by points (*interpunctus*). Texts are not punctuated and rarely the scribes differentiate the heading from the body of the text.

The use of ligatures, joining two or more letters together, is common. Symbols and abbreviations are occasionally used.

The Old Roman Cursive characters are often small, slanting to the right and sometimes resemble modern upper-case letters more than lower-case letters.
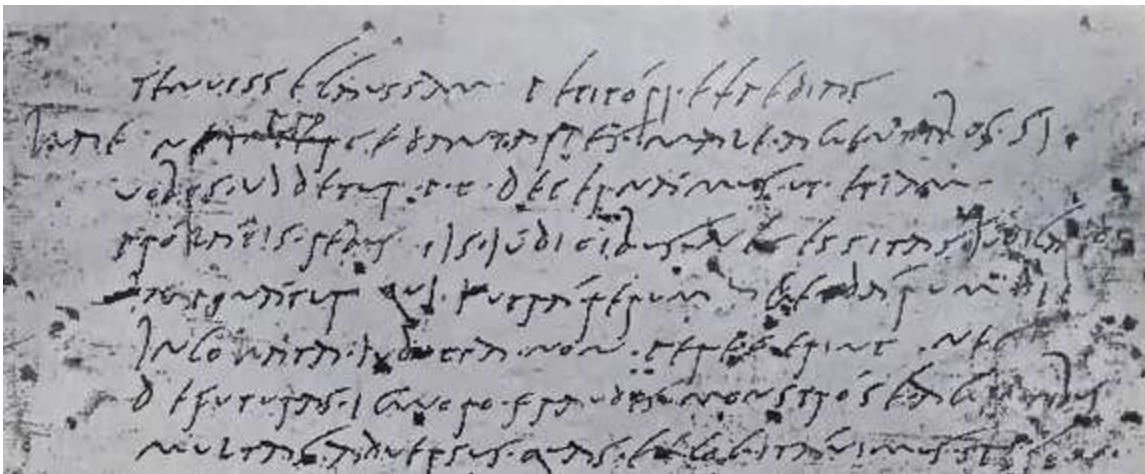
This is a segment from the "Papyrus Claudius", found in Egypt, which contains an "Oratio in senatu habita" of A.D. 41-54; it is written in cursive majuscules.

LETTER FORMS

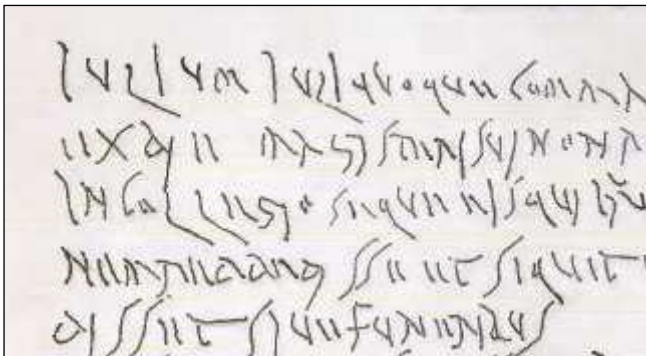Some letters are almost unrecognizable.

There is no crossbar on "a" (λ/λ) which looks similar to a modern cursive "*r*".

The letter "b" (∂) appears to be back to front and is very similar to a modern "d".

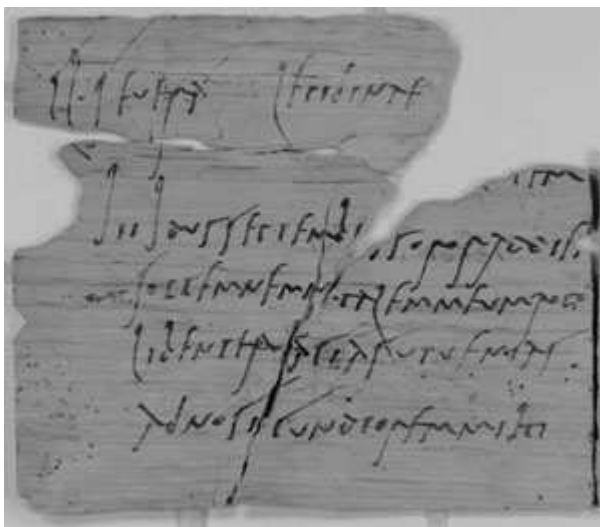The letter "e" ($\mathcal{E}$) is sometimes written as two perpendicular lines ($\mathfrak{n}$).

SAMPLES

All mentioned above, together with the fact that the letters were rapidly executed makes this script difficult to read.

TRANSCRIPTION:

iulium iuli quoque comma...

ex die magisteri sui non a...

in collegio seque eis qui pre...

nem reddedisse et si quit...

disset sive funeribus

Segment from a Dacian wax tablet. A.D. 167

TRANSCRIPTION:

Cl(audia) · Seuerá Lepidinae [suae

[sa]/[u]*te*m

iii Idus Septemb*r*[e]*s* soror ad die*m*

sollemnem n*a*talem meum rogó

libenter *f*aciás ut uenias

ad nos i*u*cundiorem mihi

Detail of a Vindolanda tablet (Tablet 291).

TRANSLATION:

Claudia Severa to her Lepidina greetings. On 11 September, sister, for the day of the celebration of my birthday, I give you a warm invitation to make sure that you come to us, to make the day more enjoyable for me by your arrival, if you are present.

This tablet contains a letter to Sulpicia Lepidina from Claudia Severa, wife of Aelius Brocchus, sending Lepidina a warm invitation to visit her for her (Severa's) birthday and appending greetings to Cerialis from herself and greetings from her husband. Almost certainly, therefore, these are the earliest known examples of writing in Latin by a woman.

The letters are slim, with marked ascenders and descenders, and very little use of ligature.
There is occasional use of the apex mark (e.g. in the words *Seuerá*, *rogó* and *faciás*).

THE TYPEFACE " **Antiqua Cursiva Romana** "

The "**Antiqua Cursiva Romana**" font is designed to imitate the Old Roman Cursive handwriting.
The following text taken from Plautus *Pseudolus* 21-30 is a replica of the Old Roman Cursive inspired by the Vindolanda tablets.
 As mentioned above Plautus in this text makes reference to the illegibility of cursive letters.

Calidorus: CARE HAS TADELLAS, TUTE HINC NARRATO TIAI QUAE ME MISERIA ET CURA
CONTABEFACIT.

Pseudolus: MOS TIAI GERETUR. SED QUID HOC, QUAESO

Calidorus: QUID EST.

Pseudolus: UT OPINOR, QUAERUNT LITTERAE HAE SIAI LIAEROS: ALIA ALIAM SCANDIT.

Calidorus: LUDIS IAM LUDO TUO.

Pseudolus: HAS QUIDEM POL CREDO NISI SIAYLLA LEGERIT, INTERPRETARI ALIUM POSSE
NEMINEM.

Calidorus: CUR INCLEMENTER DICIS LEPIDIS LITTERIS LEPIDIS TADELLIS LEPIDA CONSCRIPTIS
MANU.

Pseudolus: AN, OPSECRO HERCLE, HADENT QUAS GALLINAE MANUS. NAM HAS QUIDEM GALLINA
SCRIPSIT.

TEXT IN LATIN READS AS FOLLOWS:

Calidorus: Cape has tabellas, tute hinc narrato tibi quae me miseria et cura contabefacit
Pseudolus: Mos tibi geretur. Sed quid hoc, quaeso?
Calidorus: Quid est?
Pseudolus: Ut opinor, quaerunt litterae hae sibi liberos: alia aliam scandit.
Calidorus: Ludis iam ludo tuo?
Pseudolus: Has quidem pol credo nisi Sibylla legerit, interpretari alium posse neminem.
Calidorus: Cur inclementer dicis lepidis litteris lepidis tabellis lepida conscriptis manu?
Pseudolus: An, opsecro hercle, habent quas gallinae manus? Nam has quidem gallina scripsit.

TRANSLATION:

Calidorus: Take this letter, then inform yourself what misery and what concern are wasting me away.
Pseudolus: (*taking the letter*) Compliance shall be given to you. But what is this, I ask?
Calidorus: What's the matter?
Pseudolus: As I think, these letters are seeking children for themselves: one mounts the other.
Calidorus: Are you mocking me with your foolery?
Pseudolus: By Pollux I really believe that unless the Sibyl can read these letters, nobody else can interpret them.
Calidorus: Why do you speak undkindly of these charming letters and charming tablets, written by a charming hand?
Pseudolus: By Hercules I beg you, have hens such hands? For certainly a hen has written these letters.

The following lines show a partial character set for " **Antiqua Cursiva Romana** " font:
Upper case letters: A B C D E F G H I K L M N O P Q R S T V U W X Y Z
Lower case letters: A B C D E F G H I J K L M/m N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z
Since Old Roman Cursive only uses capital letters, I have introduced glyph variants in the minuscule set.

NEW ROMAN CURSIVE

The second great stage in the history of Latin cursive must have been reached already in the third century A.D.

When we emerge from the third century we find a great change: an enlarged and flowing hand of a rounder type called New Roman Cursive (Minuscule Cursive or Later Roman Cursive), a rapid script which became the administrative and "everyday" handwriting of late Antiquity.

The constant process of cursive development eventually led to the emergence of a cursive different from that used up until that date (i.e. the Old Roman Cursive).

The result of what was apparently a reform of cursive script occurred from III century A.D. and was completed by the IV century A.D. By this time the influence of the disjoint script of the waxed tablets has ceased. This produced a more rapid and often more calligraphic cursive which introduced the time-saving device of loops, which generally descend to the right of the main stroke.

The script is now in large part erect —although often inclined somewhat to the right—, so that ascenders and descenders stand out boldly, and its appearance anticipates the four-line scheme of minuscule. In fact New Roman Cursive was to prove extremely influential in the evolution of the post-Roman handwritings, usually termed as "national hands".

This handwriting provided the raw material for new book-hands: the older and latter half-uncial and the continental minuscule scripts.

A good knowledge of the structure of the New Roman Cursive at this period is important for a right understanding of certain points which in the development of the minuscule book-hands of the Middle Ages.

The structure of the script remains the same in the following centuries, despite much variation in appearance, up to about the tenth century.

The extant examples of New Roman cursive are sparse. The most important remain is a letter of recommendation for one Theofanes from the Egyptian official (named Vitalis) probably of the middle of the fourth century, now at Strasbourg (Pap. Argent. Lat. I, *circa* 317-324 A.D.). This document is written in *scriptio continua* (without word division).

CHARACTERISTICS

An important novel feature rich in consequences is the materialisation of some necessary joining pen movements; in this way the heads of "e" ($\mathcal{C}$), "c" ($\mathcal{C}$) and f ($\mathcal{f}$) —with their right diagonal headstrokes— rise obliquely above the writing band, became tall, narrow loops.

The writing is quite fluent; the formation of the letters inclines to curves and the letters individually are for the most part written off in connected strokes and although certain of them stand independently, there is much linking and combining among them; "c", "e" and "t" in particular lend themselves to such combinations, with consequent variations in their structure to suit the occasion. The handwriting is dominated by prominent rotatory movements with few pen lifts. Some of the letters resemble those which had appeared as isolated forms or variants in informal handwritings from an earlier period.

We here have practically a complete minuscule alphabet.

LETTER FORMS

The letter "a" ($\mathcal{r}$), like the Greek alpha in contemporary papyri, is often a mere pot-hook or a simple loop open at the top; "b" ($\mathcal{b}$) is a striking letter with the bow on the left (although it has become transferred later to the right), but it can be distinguished from "d" ($\mathcal{d}$), in that it is linked by a down-stroke with a following letter, while "d" is not connected; "g" ($\mathcal{g}$) —which resembles a modern capital S— has not closed loops and shows a larger curve below the line, which in the fourth century, when written as a separate letter, also acquires a flat headstroke ($\mathcal{g}$); "h" ($\mathcal{h}$) and " I-longa" ($\int$) have compressed vertical clockwise loops; "m" (m) is now altogether minuscule; while "n" appears both as capital N ($\mathcal{N}$) and as a minuscule "n" ($\mathcal{n}$); "o" varies in size from a full letter (o) to a diminute oval or loop (o); "p" (ρ) and "q" ($\mathcal{q}$) were formed with descenders and end in a curve to the left against the direction of the horizontal movement of the handwriting; the stem of "r" was sometimes formed with a long descender ($\int$) and often retains the double curve of the shoulder stroke ($\mathcal{r}$) derived from the capital form, although the curve is often much shallower than in earlier handwriting; the letter "s" now has a long curved headstroke ($\mathcal{r}$), and frequently a long descender ($\int$); the letters "u/v" ($\cup/\upsilon$) often appear as a small curve high in the line ($\smile$).

The possibility of forming ligatures is heavily exploited; in fact, one of the principal characteristics of New Roman Cursive is the way in which scribes maintained the momentum and the continuity in rapid writing. They reduced the number of pen lifts by resorting to sequences of ligatures, in which the construction of certain letters was modified when they were connected to both the preceding and following letters. For example, when "e" or "t" occur within a sequence, the letters were disarticulated and reassembled, so that each trace forms parts of two letters (ᘓ ᘒᘐ ᘑ).

By the fourth century the increasing momentum of the handwriting generated by fluent rotatory movements, and fewer pen lifts in the rapid transition from one letter to the next, had created new ligatures.

Scribes linked adjacent letters wherever possible, but "i, m, n, p, q" and capital N and O are not connected to a following letter, because their final strokes terminated in position required a subsequent pen lift; "d" is not linked with a following letter, perhaps because a reader might confuse it with the letter "b", but "l" is linked with a following "i" which is completed as a subscript letter (ᘔ); sometimes transitions are made by extending the final strokes of letters without changing their shapes:

for example "ri" (ᘕ) and "ti" (ᘖ).

INFLUENCE

In New Roman Cursive we see the emergence of letter forms whose shapes would contribute to the development of the archetype of handwriting in the west. From the seventh century onwards regional versions or derivatives of this script appear, and were developed in North Africa, and elsewhere in Europe, including the British Isles.

As mentioned above, New Roman Cursive was widely used throughout the Roman Empire and contributed to the development of the regional scripts, or national hands of Europe. This evolved into various medieval scripts such as Visigothic, Merovingian, Beneventan etc. The Uncial and Half-uncial scripts also most likely developed from this script.

New Roman cursive influenced the development of not only Uncial, but of all the other scripts used in the Middle Ages except Insular majuscule. It was also ancestral to various administrative and business hands, so certain chanceries developed very elaborate and stylised versions based on New Roman Cursive (the script of the papal curia, the Ravenna chancery and the Merovingian chancery, for example).

The script rolls merrily along without any obvious punctuation or separation of words, which all adds to the difficulty of reading it. There are no abbreviations. While it is a script designed for rapid writing, it makes you wonder just how fast they could read it.
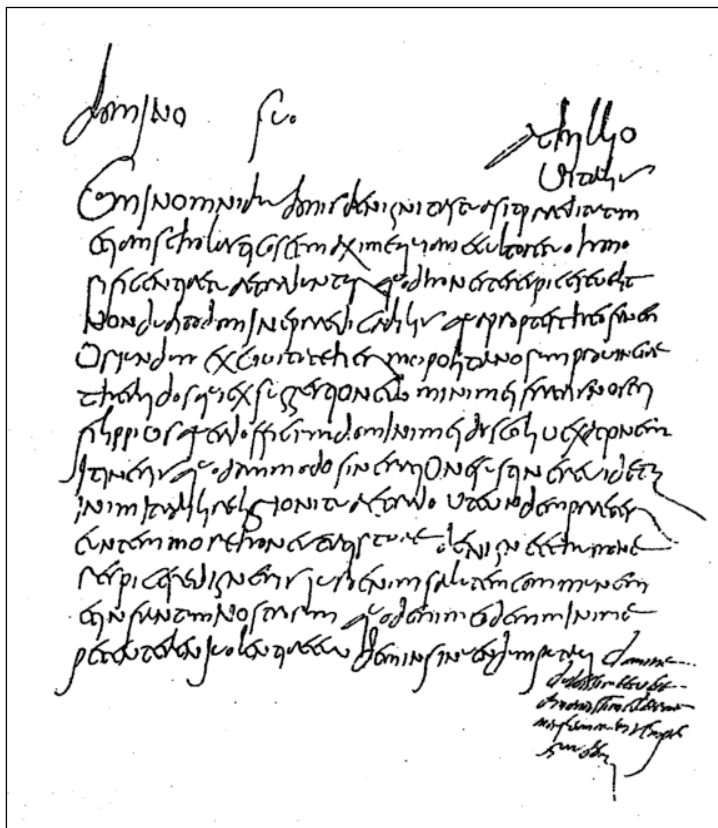

New Roman Cursive handwriting. Letter of recommendation to Achilius (Phoenician governor) from Vitalis. Strasbourg (Pap. Argent. Lat. I, circa 317-324 A.D.)

THE TYPEFACE "**Nova Cursiva Romana**"

The "**Nova Cursiva Romana**" font is designed to imitate the New Roman Cursive handwriting.
The following example comes from a 4th century letter on papyrus.
It is a letter of recommendation for one Theofanes to the Phoenician governor Achillius from Vitalis.
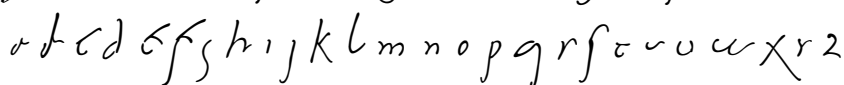

Transcription:
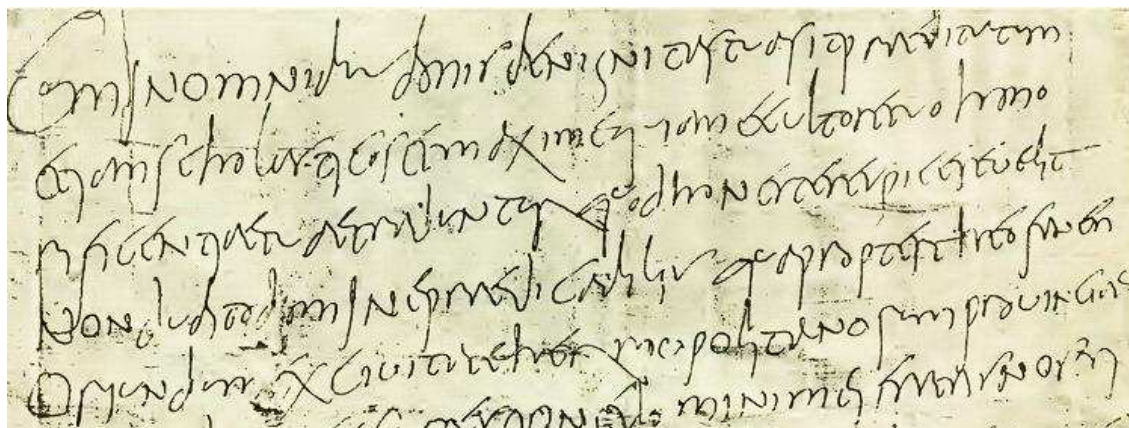
Cum in omnibus bonis benignitas tua sit praedita tum
etiam scholasticos maxime qui me cultore tuo hono
rificentiae tuae traduntur quod honeste respicere velit
non dubito domine praedicabilis quapropter Theofanen
oriundum ex civitate Hermupolitanorum provinciae

The following lines show a partial character set for "**Cursiva Romana Antiqua**" font:

Upper case letters:

Lower case letters:

Ligatures:

Since New Roman Cursive only uses minuscule letters, I have introduced glyph variants in the capital set.

HALF-UNCIAL OR SEMI-UNCIAL

The term Half-uncial or Semi-uncial is applied to a minuscule handwriting used in Latin manuscripts from around the final years of the 5th century to the end of the 8th century.

Half-uncial has been found in the Roman area dating back to the third century; but there is a long period, between that time and the sixth century, which has afforded no examples of writing in this style.

Half-uncial obviously shows considerable influence from the more evolved style of current writing then in use; and it is a step further in the trend toward minuscule letters. A comparison of the Half-uncial letters with the latter current and the uncials will widely confirm theses observations.

It is first found, but not as a book-hand, as early as the 3rd century, and is characterized by exaggerated vertical strokes, by the close approach to our small print of the letters "e", "m", and "r", and by frequent ligatures, contractions and abbreviations.

The scribes were at that time under constant pressure to handle the more mundane paperwork of their day –most easily accomplished yet equally readable. By the 3rd century it is evident that such a script had already become popular, devised apparently from cursive elements with design imitating the Uncial of the time.

It was quickly adopted as a book-hand, and the not inconsiderable number of examples which are still extant prove how largely it was practised, (although much less widely diffused than Uncial) at least within a certain area, chiefly comprising, it seems, Italy and Southern France. Roman Half-uncial was carried out of Italy and across Europe. It probably accompanied Augustine of Canterbury to England and may very well have represented his "scriptura communis".

The English used it and, in turn, carried it back across the Channel and onto the Continent. Among the tasks of the English missionaries traveling abroad was the teaching of Roman Half-uncial.

The early forms of Half-uncial were used for the works of pagan authors and for Roman legal writings, while in the 6th century the script came to be used in Africa and Europe to transcribe Christian texts.

For Christian texts clearly Uncial or Half-uncial was preferred. In fact the history of Uncials and Half-uncials is part of the history of the Christian Church from the fourth century to the ninth; they were essentially "church letters".

The earliest extant example appears to be the *Fasti Consulares* of the years 487-494 in a palimpsest at Verona.

Of more importance is the manuscript of St Hilary of Poitiers at Rome written around 509-510 (see image on page 18).

Other examples are the Sulpicius Severus of Verona, of the year 517 and several manuscripts at Lyon, Paris and Cambrai of the sixth or seventh centuries.

Half-uncial represents a further step towards minuscule, in fact it is the ancestor of our "lower-case" scripts, though it would not have meant this to the original writers.

Half-uncial was written between four ruled lines rather than two, and is easily recognized by the modern eye because some letters have ascenders (l, b, h and d) and descenders (p, q and g). Half-uncial requires generous inter-linear spacing.

Scribes developed Half-uncial to answer the need for a quicker hand "work-a-day" writing. The script may have evolved from writing small colophons and additional notations in the margins of Uncial manuscripts that were more cursive.

It is not, of course, meant to be a fast hand, especially not in the sense of Italic writing, but its evolution is attributed to a desire for greater speed, and this resulted in rounded corners, tighter curves, and a greater thrust to the now very evident ascenders and descenders.

Half-uncial developed as a book-hand over the same period as Roman uncial, although uncial was favoured for more formal works until the 7th century.

By the 6th century it had achieved so much popularity that it began appearing as a script for books, although none of importance. As time passed, it became more calligraphic, although it was always to remain, in terms of visual appeal, humbled by almost every other script of the era. It was a humble script not intended for ornate productions but mirroring the fashions of the day. It is a minuscule script with most letters derived from cursive forms (of whose style we have no witness), but it had evolved into a rounded and formal book-hand.

There is some confusion in the origin of the Half-uncial script. Despite its name, nowadays most scholars believe that Half-uncial may not be considered to be derived from Uncial, but it does look similar and shares many of its features, sometimes, especially when both were developing, the two scripts were used simultaneously in a mixed-uncial script. Though the roundness of Roman uncials was preserved in Half-uncial writing, only a few of the letters were truly uncials. In any case it does seem to be a logical and forward step in the history of letters.

The evolution of Half-uncial towards a minuscule form together with a hybridisation with cursive forms resulted in the development of a diversity of minuscule scripts which arose in the 7th and 8th centuries.

Many of the Roman Half-uncial features were borrowed by other scripts, which followed it.

Half-uncial was immensely influential, and was used all over Europe: later versions developed into both strikingly formal Insular Half-uncial, also known as Insular Majuscule, and the elegantly Anglo-Saxon vernacular scripts.

LETTER FORMS

Its main differences from Uncial are "a" (α) with a rounded bowl, which is often slightly open (cι), "b" (b) with a single bowl, "d" (cl) with an upright stem, "f" (ꝼ) with an intra linear stem (medial tongue), whose top-stroke is at an acute angle, "g" (ʒ) with a flat-topped form without a loop and a curved descender (somewhat resembling the number 5), "r" (ꞃ) with a stem and right shoulder like its modern counterpart, long-stemmed "s" (ſ) and "t" (τ) with a curved shank.

The letters "e" (e) whose top has now been closed, "v"(u), "h"(b) and "n"(ɴ) retain the uncial form.

The "d" (cl) has sometimes the uncial form as well (ꝺ).

The so-called I-*longa* (l) also occurs.

The "l" (l) has sometimes a curved foot.

The letters "u" and "v" are identical (u).

The "r" (ꞃ) and "s" (ſ) can be easily confounded.

In this style of writing a large portion of the forms of letters which are afterwards found in the minuscule hand of the Carolingian period are already developed.

There is some variation in the forms of letters in Half-uncial from different areas and periods.

Ascenders are clubbed, perhaps as an acknowledgement to the Roman serif. They were originally formed with a vertical push stroke before turning downward.

Capital letters were usually larger versions of text letters, inked with the same pen. Uncial or Roman Rustic letters might occasionally be substituted. But there was seldom any careful exaggeration made or decoration added because this was not a script one thought of as accompanied by embellishment.
In the latter two centuries of its existence, however, the script was employed as an accompaniment to the more popular script of that time, looked upon as an antique hand and penned rather more artfully than in the past. In such cases similar care would have been taken in producing well-turned capitals.

Abbreviations are used for *nomina sacra* (e.g. d̄ı c̄lō = dei, deo, x̄p̄o = Christo etc).

The suspension stroke above the *nomina sacra* is wavy (⁓).

Half-uncial texts are usually written in long lines, with very little space between words for the most part, in fact they almost look like "scriptura continua". It was written without word separation, and in general consists in isolated letters.

The punctuation employed was basically the same used for the more important scripts of the different periods in which Roman Half-uncial thrived.

Punctuation marks are rare, although a simple dot (.), a medial punctus (·) and a "s-shaped" stroke (ꜰ) can be found in some Half-uncial texts.

Ligatures are frequent, in most cases the letters "u", "e" and "i" are involved (ei eu ʒe τι = ei, eu, ge, ti).

The letter "e" adopts in ligatures a raised position, being capable of linking its cross-bar with "n", "m", "r" and "u" (eɴ em er eu = en, em, er, eu).

In ligature "li", the letter "l" is followed by a pendant "i" (lı).

Ligatures appeared primarily at the end of a line where there was insufficient room to end a word, rather than as a standard practice within the text. Some ligatures are N with long-S (ɴſ) and N with T (ɴ̅).
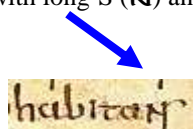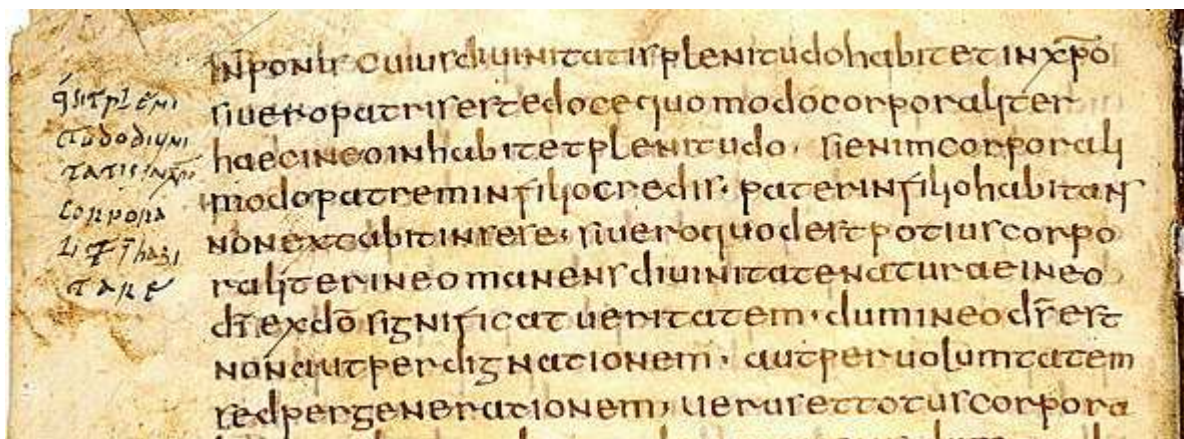
The "**Semiuncialis**" is a font based on the hand of a manuscript of St Hilary of Poitiers written around 509-510.

Below is a photograph showing a segment from a Half-uncial manuscript and the electronic version which can be achieved by using the "**Semiuncialis**" font.

St. Hilarius of Poitiers *(De Trinitate: Liber II ad Constantium)*. Rome, Archivio di S. Pietro, D.182

Transcription: in ponis cuius divinitatis plenitudo habitet in Christo
si vero patris est edoce quomodo corporaliter
haec in eo inhabitet plenitudo. si enim corporali
modo patrem in filio credis. pater in filio habitans
non extabit in sese si vero quod est potius corpo
raliter in eo manens divinitate naturae in eo
dei ex deo significat veritatem. dum in eo deus est
non aut per dignationem. aut per volumtatem
sed per generationem. verus et totus corpora

The following lines show a partial character set for "**Semiuncialis**" font:
Upper case letters: a b c d e ꝼ ç h ı j k l m n o p q r ſ ꞇ a u v w x ẏ z
Lower case letters: a b c d e ꝼ ꝣ h ı j k l m N o p q r ſ ꞇ u v w x ẏ z
Please note that I have introduced some glyph variants for few letters in the minuscule set.

POST-ROMAN SCRIPTS OR NATIONAL HANDS

   We have now to investigate the very interesting subject of the formation of the national handwritings of Western Europe, derived from Roman writing.

   As long as the Roman Empire was the central power dominating its colonies and subject nations, the Roman script in all countries where it was employed, and however far apart those countries lay, naturally remained the same.
   Wherever the Latin language was adopted, the Roman form of writing accompanied it as a matter of course; and, whether it was written by an educated Italian or Gaul or Frank or Spaniard or Briton, in all cases it remained the Roman script pure and simple. But when after the Germanic invasions the Empire was broken and independent nationalities arose and began to advance on their own independent paths of civilization, the handwriting which they had learned from their Roman masters gradually assumed distinctive characteristics, and in each country where it was used it took the complexion of it surroundings and finally developed into a national hand.

   The cursive hand which has been described above became the basis of the writing of Italy, Spain and France, and from it were moulded the three national hands which we know as Lombardic (and its later development know as Beneventan), Visigothic and Merovingian.
   While on the Continent the Roman cursive hand formed the basis of the national forms of writing, in Ireland and England the basis was the Roman Half-uncial.

   Although the aforementioned scripts have been traditionally called "national hands", the term is largely inappropriate as it implies a series of discrete categories kept separate by concepts of nationhood, and their names are based on erroneous historical assumptions. In fact, they represent very fluid, interactive variants, in an unstable political climate.
    Writing was not a national type of activity, but was thinly dotted about in centres of literacy all over Europe. The interaction between these centres did not revolve around national issues, but depended on the spread of monastic culture, the borrowing of books and the teaching of writing between centres of influence.

   The development of regional styles was a process which could produce a fair amount of individual variation. The Insular, Merovingian, Visigothic, Lombardic and Germanic scripts each encompassed multiple variants. The terminology and classification is confused as script styles interacted, hybridised and influenced each other. Even the work of an individual scribe could have unique features.
   In fact, prior to the time of Charlemagne almost every region of Europe had its own handwriting style. His rule over a large part of the continent provided an opportunity to unify these writing styles in the hand called Caroline minuscule.

   Most of the "national hands" were not therefore destined to endure long, being superseded by the Caroline minuscule.
   Simplistically speaking, the only scripts to escape this unification were the Visigothic (or Mozarabic, Christian Spain), which survived into the 12th century, the Beneventan (southern Italy and Dalmatia) which was still being written in the 13th century, and the Insular that continues to be used in traditional Irish handwriting, which has been in severe decline since the early 20th century and is now almost extinct.

   In the following chapters we will examine some of the most distinctive of these handwriting styles more in detail.
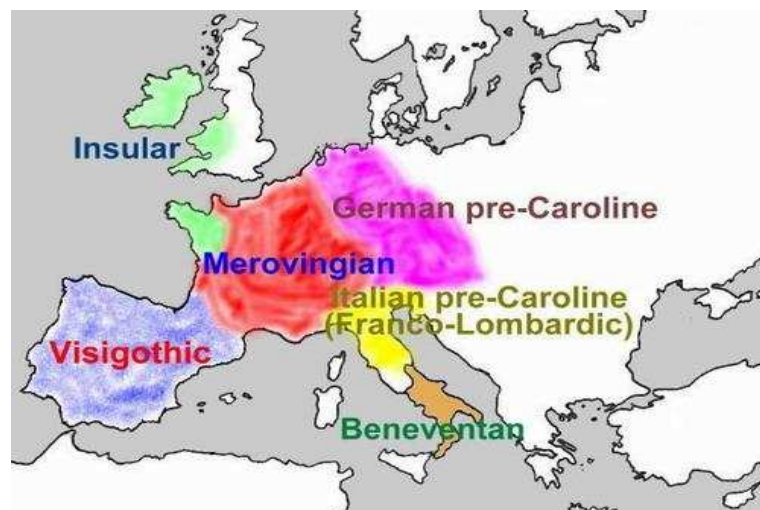
GERMANIC SCRIPT

The East-Frankish writing or *scriptura Germanica* (German writing) was an intermediate style, the direct forerunner of the Caroline minuscule. For this reason this script is also known as "German pre-Caroline".

It was developed in the eastern area of the Frankish kingdom –an area that included Basel and Salzburg, extended north to the Bohemia forest, westward along the line of the Main river, and included both sides of the Rhine almost to its mouth. This area had close contact with Italy to the south; it was the locale of great activity on the part of Anglo-Saxon monks, and Merovingian. Out of a fusion of these three evolved a style possessing so much individuality that it must be considered one of the national hands.

The most important centres of production of this script were Cologne, Maguncia, Ratisbone, Reichenau (founded in 724), Fulda (founded in 744), Lorsch (founded in 764) and St. Gall.

On the whole, the style is quiet and clear, needing but a few minor changes to make it a satisfactory book-hand. There is a notable avoidance of too many ligatures and the word-spacing is consistently indicated. The influences can be quite easily followed: the "st" ligature shows Italian influence; the two kinds of "a" and the triangular heads on the uprights are Anglo-Saxon; while the thickening of the tops of the ascenders is Merovingian. The "g", judging by the way the tail has been added, is a typical German design.

East-Frankish writing had a more than passing influence on the manuscripts produced at the schools and monasteries in Aachen, Rheims, Corbie, Autun, Lyons and Tours. Because of its clearness and simplicity it had begun to displace the artificial and hard-to-read Merovingian script as early as the reign of Pippin (715-768). It was undoubtedly the direct inspiration for the Carlovingian writing.
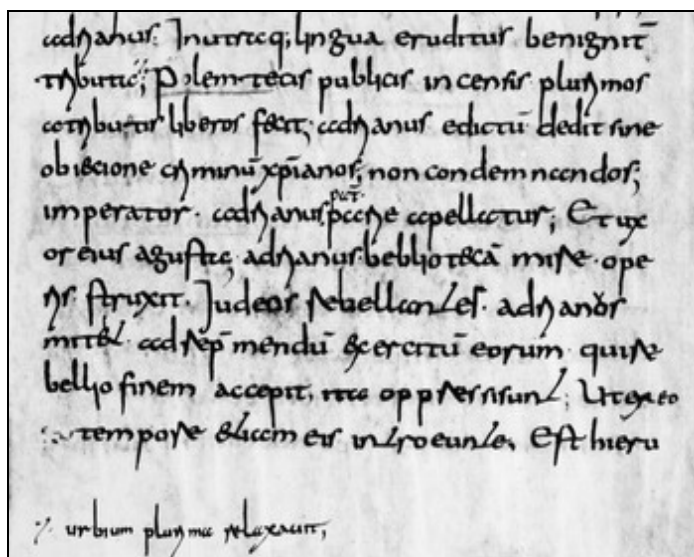
The image above shows a text written in a German "prae-Carolina" hand.
Provenance: Leiden, UB : ms. VLQ 5, f. 3r; Bodensee region, circa 800

MEROVINGIAN MINUSCULE

Merovingian script was a medieval writing so named because it was developed in France during the Merovingian dynasty. There is a diversity of forms of handwriting to which the label Merovingian is applied.

The many hands which have been classed as Merovingian, practised as they were through the wide extent of the Frankish Empire, were necessarily of different types; and, as we already stated, the boundary lines between the several national hands are not always to be accurately defined. The term Merovingian therefore has been used with varying degrees of specificity.

In the strict sense of the word, the style of writing to which the name of Merovingian may "par excellence" be applied, is seen in its cursive form in the diplomas still existing of the Merovingian sovereigns and in the imperial charters.

The archetypal script of this class was produced by the Merovingian royal chancery.

This example comes from a 8th century Merovingian diploma.
Note the elongated and spidery letters in the first line.

In the broadest sense it can encompass a range of related scripts in use throughout the Holy Roman Empire up until the introduction of Caroline minuscule.

This inclusive term embraces the specialised scripts like Luxeuil minuscule and Corbie a-b/e-N types, various Germanic and Lombardic variants and some transitional forms that are sometimes termed pre-Caroline scripts, all often dating from the 7th century to the early 9th century.

All of these scripts are later developments of the handwriting employed in the Imperial Chancery. This latter script in turn had developed from the New Roman Cursive.

Overall, the Merovingian minuscule is characterised by lack of proportion, irregularity, and the number of ligatures. The writing is upright, slightly inclined to the left, the manuscripts are not ruled, and the lines sometimes encroach on one another. If we add to this the fact that the script is cursive as well as squashed, the result is a script very difficult to read.

The phrases are separated by points and begin with a majuscule letter in capital or uncial; the abbreviations are few.

There were several centres of Merovingian script. The main *scriptoria* which produced books written in Merovingian hands were the monasteries of Luxeuil, Laon and Corbie.

LUXEUIL

Luxeuil abbey was one of the oldest and best-known monasteries in Burgundy, France.

It was founded around 585-590 by the Irish missionary Saint Columbanus.

Under the intellectual and spiritual stimulation of the Irish monks, the abbey at Luxeuil soon became the most important and flourishing monastery in Gaul.

The monks at the Luxeuil abbey transformed the Merovingian charter hand into their own distinct "Luxeuil" script (*scriptura Luxoviensis*) and used it as a book-hand.

The Luxeuil book-hand, immediately derived from the official cursive writing, is, in fact, that hand moulded into a calligraphic style, and appears in certain, not very numerous manuscripts. According to E.A. Lowe, only 31 manuscripts written in Luxeuil minuscule have survived.

Luxeuil minuscule is the first true calligraphic European script and was in use during the 7th and 8th centuries.

In the year 732 the abbey was destroyed by Saracens and with it the highly distinctive and mannered Luxeuil minuscule.

The abbey had revived by the 9th century, but not the distinctive script.

The Luxeuil script is most noteworthy for its characteristic "cranked" appearance, for the long ascenders and for extravagant ligatures.

There is such plenty of ligatures in this script that the immediate visual impression is that it is written entirely in "linked letters" (as in modern cursive handwriting).

The ligatures become as thick as the letter strokes, and cause distortion of the letters themselves, as do the long ascender strokes.

Loops on letters are angular and extravagantly formed.

The words are mostly run together so that the writing looks like *scriptura continua*. Unusually long spaces have been left before the beginning of each sentence. In fact, the word spacing is erratic.

Although there are only a few individual letters of really unusual appearance, this script looks very mannered and is rather difficult to read. While most of the letter forms are fairly familiar, when they stand alone, the trick comes with identifying the various ligatures which change the appearance of letters.

The Luxeuil minuscule is considered either the most beautiful (for its fans) or illegible (for its detractors) handwriting ever, but everybody agrees it is difficult. In the sense of legibility, this script represents a degeneration. It seems that it has been intentionally designed to impress the reader.

The scribes use spacing and capitalisation instead of punctuation marks to indicate the beginning of new sentences, though an occasional medial punctus occurs. *Punctus elevatus* (ʡ) is also found.

Otherwise, there are few abbreviations beyond the *nomina sacra*.

The basic abbreviation sign has a wavy shape (an "s"-shaped) and is on a 45° angle (´).

LETTER FORMS

Special notice may be taken of the narrow letter "a" which is open at the top and looks like two letters "c" closely written (ɑ). The strongly-defined angularity of the two limbs of "a" has been noted as characteristic of this hand. Because of this feature the Luxeuil script is sometimes named Merovingian "a" type.

The letter "a" is sometimes superscribed when it is joined to the following letter (ᵃᵉ ᵃm ᵃn =ae, am, an).

The letters "b", "d", "l" and "i-longa" (resembling "l") have very tall ascenders and are slightly clubbed.

The letter "b" (ƀ) often has an open bowl (ƀ), and an arm (ƀ) connecting it to the following letter (e.g. "be" ƀɛ).

The letter "c" (ᴄ) changes its form adopting a raised position before a following "o" (ᶜo).

There are two forms of "d", the upright (ɖ) and the rounded backsloping (ẟ).

The letter "i" is often very tall (i-longa) especially at the begining of a word, e.g. ɪn =*in*, but also within a word, ᴄuiuſ =*cuius*.

In ligature a pendent "i" occurs occasionally, especially in the "ri" (ɾ) and "ti" (ȶ) ligatures.

The letter "e" is surmounted by an appendix in the form of a crosier (ɛ), and is often looped and resembles a number 8 (ȣ).

In ligature the letter "e" becomes raised at the top (ȝc ȝp ȝq ȝr ȝſ ȝȶ ȝx =ec, ep, eq, er, es, et, ex).

An "e-caudata" (ȩ) appears sporadically throughout.

The letters "i" and "j" (ι) are not differentiated.

The letter "f" (ſ) is truly peculiar and can easily be mistaken for tall "s" (ſ) because the medial bar is not prominent.

The letter "g" (ȝ) is closed at the top, but has a zigzag form to the descender.

The letter "n" (ɴ) is sometimes written with an uncial form (ɴ), similar to a capital N.

The letter "o" (o) is often oval-shaped.

There are two forms of "r" (ɼ/ɾ), one of which is very pointed and has a descender; this makes that this type of "r" can be easily be mistaken for an "s" (ſ).

The letter "s" (ſ) is tall and has a descender.

The letter "t" (τ) is short and has a loop on its back extending to the left of its top stroke when not in ligature; "t" is included in a great deal of ligatures which change its form. In ligature the letter "t" grows an elaborate double loop in "te" (ȶɛ), "ti" (ȶ), "tr" (ȶɾ) and "tu" (ȶu). In these cases the top bar of "t" loops over the following letter, resembling a mirrored Greek beta letter.

The letters "u" and "v" (u) are identical.

Particularly notable is the configuration of "qu" where the "u" is merely a wavy element joining "q" to the following letter (e.g. "qu" in ʠndo =*quando*). This may be regarded either as a ligature or as an abbreviated form.

The rare letter "y" (ẏ) is dotted, although, as usual "i" is not (ι).

   Below is an image of a page of Luxeuil script. It comes from an 8th-century manuscript written in SE France in the region that produced the Luxeuil Lectionary. Under the image of the manuscript is the same text written with the "**Luxoviensis minuscula**" font.

Gregorius Magnus

(*Moralia in Job*, XXIV, 11)

Paris, BN lat. 9427

Transcription:

propinquamus Neque enim tunc cuius li	
bet anima in merito terretur quando post pu	
sillum hoc inuenit quod in aeternum muta	
re non possit Consideramus quippe quod	
uiam uitae praesentis nequaquam sine cul	
pa transire potuimus Consideramus etiam	
qui ne hoc quidem sine aliquo reato nostro	
est quod laudabiliter gessimus si remo	

The following lines show a partial character set for "**Luxoviensis minuscula**" font:

Upper case letters: A/A B C D E F G b I J K L M N O/◊ P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

The capital letters employed with Luxeuil minuscule were based primarly on Roman Square capital forms, but they also included some uncial forms, appearing at first to be an unkempt design, or perhaps one about which no firm decision had been made.

Lower case letters: a b c d d ð e e e f p ſ h i j k l m n o p q r ſ ſ τ u u u x ẏ z

Special signs: (various paleographic special signs)

VISIGOTHIC MINUSCULE

Visigothic was a type of medieval script, so called because it originated in the Visigothic kingdom in Hispania (the Iberian Peninsula, modern Spain and Portugal).

It is also named "littera toletana" or "littera mozarabica".

This script derived from the New Roman Cursive and shares many features of Uncial (especially an uncial form of the letter "g" ç).

Visigothic minuscule was amongst the more successful of the national hands in its fusion of New Roman Cursive and Uncial and Half-uncial forms, with a heavier emphasis upon the latter than most of its counterparts.

The result is a highly legible script. This factor, together with freedom from Carolingian influence in all the Iberian Peninsula except parts of Catalonia, presumably contributed to the long-lived nature of this script.

According to the catalogue of Millares Carlo, there are over 281 surviving manuscripts written in the Visigothic hand.

Visigothic developed a book-hand of distinctive character, which is well established in the eight and ninth centuries.

According to Rodrigo of Toledo and Lucas of Tuy, a council held in Toledo in 1080 decreed –doubtless under the influence of the Cluniac monks– that it should be replaced by the French minuscule –Caroline– ("*... statuerunt ut scriptores de cetero gallicam litteram scriberent et praetermitterent toletanam in officiis ecclesiasticis, ut nulla esset divisio inter ministros ecclessiae Dei.*" De rebus Hispaniae, VI, 29, also Chronicon Hispaniae). Nevertheless, Visigothic survived until the end of the twelfth century, especially in north-west Spain (Galicia).

Its final disuse was due, as in the case of the other continental national hands, to the advance of the Caroline minuscule hand, which, however, as was to be expected, could only displace the native hand by degrees, making its presence felt at first in the north-east of the Iberian Peninsula (Catalonia).
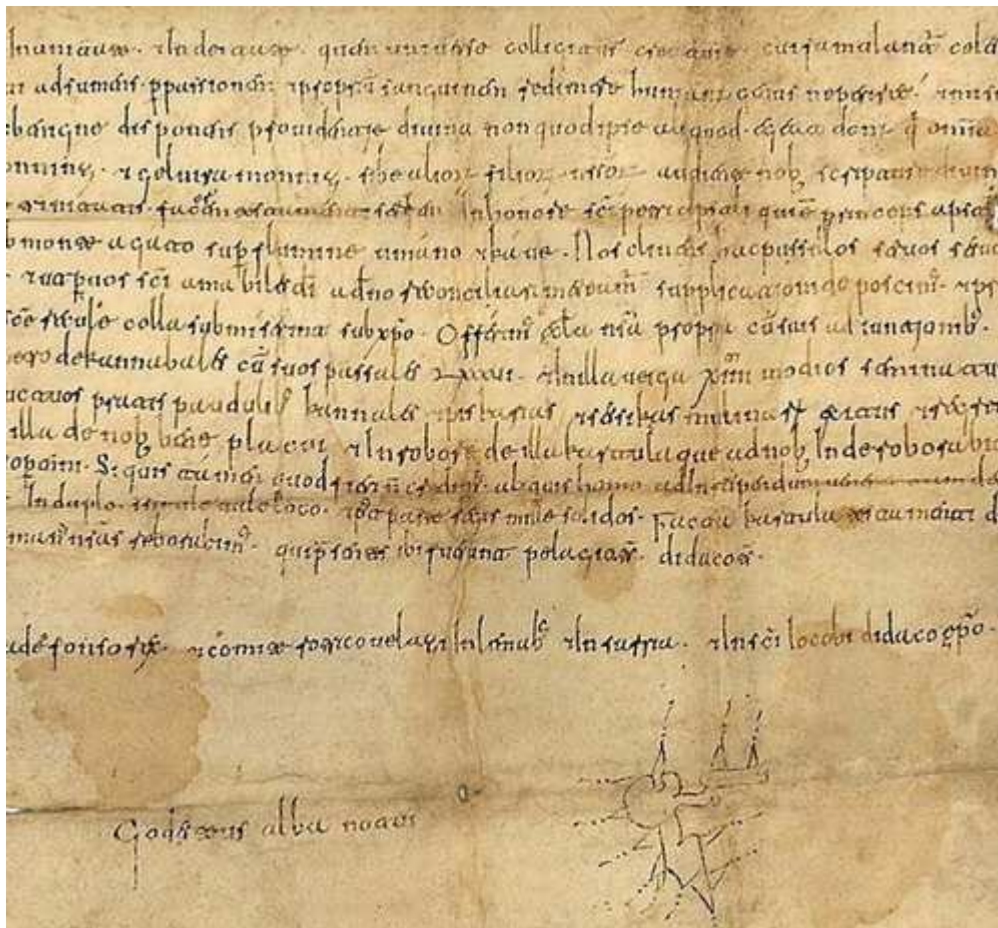
An example of Visigothic minuscule from the year 1115. Testament of Muño Ramiz.
Provenance: Monastery of San Pedro de Valverde, Monforte, Galicia, Spain.

The use of ligatures and abbreviations is common in Visigothic.

Ligatures are numerous. The letter "e" is in ligature with various letters that follow it (e.g. "ef" ꝫ, "er" ꝫ, "em" ꝫ, "en" ꝫ, "es" ꝫ, "et" ꝫ, "ex" ꝫ and so on).

There are two different ligatures for the two sounds of "ti" (soft or assibilated -ꜩ /ꝥ- and hard or unassibilated -ꜩ-) as spoken in Hispano-Latin during this period.

In Visigothic script the scribes appear to have consistently written "ti" in form of a ligature to represent the assibilated sound: it being the general rule that before a vowel "ti" has the assibilated sound; but, if preceded by the letter "s", it has the unassibilated sound.

The letters "t" and "r" also have many different forms when written in ligature.

The basic abbreviation stroke is a wavy contraction sign with a dot above it (̇~).

There are also many other abbeviations: "p" with a hook on its shoulder for "per-" (ꝑ), "m" with final foot extended and crossed for "mur" (ꝣ), "q" with slash bar across its descender for "qui" (ꝗ), "b" with horizontal bar across its ascender for "-bis" (ꜩ), "b" with a "s" above for "bus" ꜩ, the backwards "c" for "con" (ꜿ), the division sign for "est" (÷), a sign similar to a number 2 with a cross bar stands for "rum" (ꝝ) etc.

Punctus flexus (⁀.), a point with a circumflex symbol above it; a punctus and comma together (.,); and the *punctus elevatus* (⸵), a punctus with an almost vertical stroke beneath it, are the main punctuation marks found in Visigothic minuscule.

LETTER FORMS

Visigothic script has many similarities with Beneventan and Merovingian scripts, but can be easily differentiated from them due to some peculiarities in its letter forms. The letters are well spaced and clearly formed.

Ascenders have sometimes a spatulate top at approx. 45°.

The letter "g" (ꝗ) has uncial form and takes the q-form which makes it the most characteristic letter of the Visigothic script.

The letter "g" looks like a "c" with a pendent "i" attached to it.

In fact, the letter "g" (ꝗ) and "q" (ꝗ) can be confused, the latter being closed at the top with a straight descender, while the descender of "g" curls to the left.

The letter "a" (ꜳ) is open at the top and is, therefore, very similar to the letter "u" (ꜷ).

The letter "e" (ꜵ) is tall with an open upper loop. An e-*caudata* (ę) is used as well.

The letter i-*longa* (l) was employed initially for convenience or marking the beginning of the word (in fact as a capital initial) as *Iam*, *In*, *Iste* etc. But if the letter following the "i" happened to be a tall letter, then the use of i-*longa* was not obligatory; thus *ibi, id, ille* might be preferred to *Ibi, Id, Ille*. The i-longa was also employed medially to represent the semivowel *i* as *eIus*, *aIebat* etc.

The letters "u" (ꜷ) and "v" (ꜷ) are identical and orthographical interchange of "b-v" (a Spanish symptom) is usual in this script.

There are two forms of the letter "d", one with an ascender slanting towards the left (ꝺ, uncial form) and another (ꝺ) with a straight vertical ascender as "b" and "l".

The letter "f" (ꝼ) has a descender and its top stroke rises above following letters.

The letter "s" (ſ) is tall and often it descends slightly below the base line. Its shape is similar to "r" (ꞃ).

The "r" *rotunda*, similar to a number 2, also occurs (ꝛ).

The letter "t" (ꞇ) has a large loop or eye on the back. Its top stroke has a hook curving to the left, so that it almost looks like "ct" written together. The letter "t" also has a number of other forms when used in ligatures (e.g. ꜩ).

The letter "q" (ꝗ) is almost identical to "g", but its loop is closed.

The letter "x" (ꭓ) is sometimes highly ornate (ꭓ).

Of particular interest is the special Visigothic "z" (ꝣ), which after adoption into Carolingian handwriting eventually transformed into the c-cedilla, ç.

The Visigothic capitals are sometimes ornate and show Arabic influence.

The "Morgan Beatus" 9th-10th century.
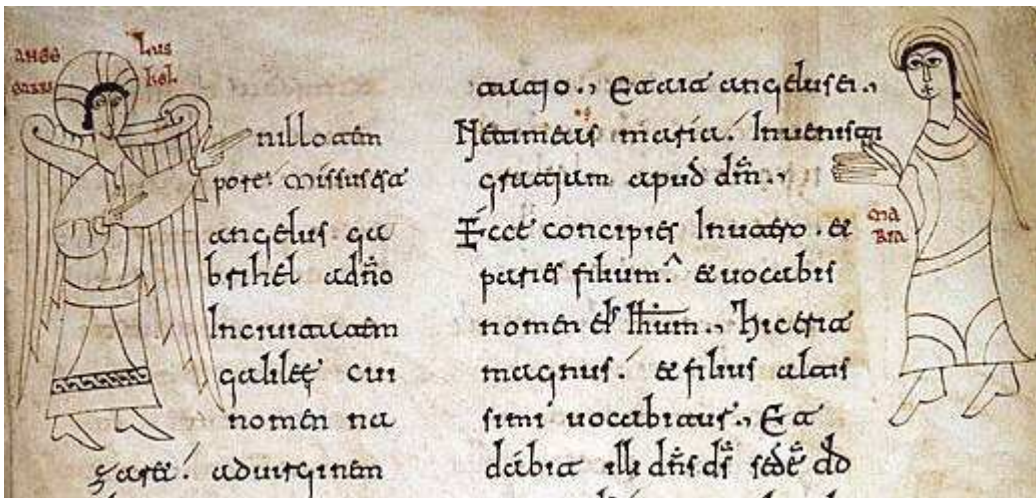*M.644 Pierpont Morgan Library. New York.*
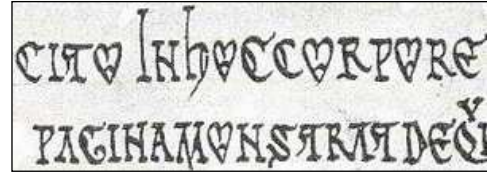
"Etymologiae" of St. Isidore of Seville, 781 a.D.
Q II 24. Real Biblioteca de San Lorenzo. España

THE TYPEFACE "**Visigothica minuscula**"

   Below is an image of a page written in Visigothic script. This example comes from a 10th century volume containing Mozarabic liturgy texts from the monastery of Santo Domingo at Silos, Spain (British Library, add. ms. 30844).
   The figure of the angel, which is partnered on the page with a similar figure of the Virgin as the text refers to the Annunciation (Luke 1:26), forms a capital letter I.
   Under the image of the manuscript is the same text written with the "**Visigothica minuscula**" font.

First column:
In illo ᴛᴇmpore. miſſuſ ᴇᴛ angᴇluſ gabrihᴇl adño Inciuiᴛaᴛᴇm galilᴇᴇ cui nomᴇn nazarᴇᴛ. aduirginᴇm
Second column:
ᴛaᴛio ., Eᴛ aiᴛ angᴇluſ ᴇi ., Nᴇᴛimᴇaſ maria. Inuᴇniſᴛi graᴛiam apud dñm.,

Eccᴇ concipiᴇſ Inuᴛᴇro. & pariᴇſ filium ˆ & uocabiſ nomᴇn ᴇſ Ihᴛm ., hic ᴇᴛiᴛ magnuſ . & filiuſ alᴛiſſimi

uocabiᴛur., Eᴛ dabiᴛ illi dñſ dſ ſᴇdᴇ do

First column:
(I)n illo tempore missus est angelus Gabrihel a domino In ciuitatem Galileae cui nomen nazaret; ad uirginem
Secod column:
tatio., Et ait angelus ei., Ne timeas Maria; inuenisti gratiam apud deum., Ecce concipies in utero. et paries filium.^ et uocabis nomen eius Ihesum., Hic erit magnus; et filius altissimi uocabitur., Et dabit illi dominus deus sedem David

----

   The following lines show a partial character set for "**Visigothica minuscula**" font:
   Upper case letters: Λ/A B C D E F G h I J K L M N ᴏ/O P Q R S T Ⅴ V W X Y Z

   Lower case letters: a b c d/δ e f g h i j k l m n o p q r ſ ᴛ u v w x/x y z

   Abbreviations and ligatures: ƀ ꞗ ꝛ ꝫ ᵱ án ꞁ ᴕ ᴕ & ᴕ ħ ꝿ ᵽ ᵽ.ᵽ q̄ q̄ q̄ ƶ ꝣ ꝛ ꝛ ꝛ � ꞁ ꝼꞃ ÷ ꝰ ꙯ ꝥ

LOMBARDIC AND BENEVENTAN SCRIPTS

The National handwriting of Italy did not follow one or the same lines of development throughout the peninsula.

That the national handwriting of Italy, founded on the New Roman Cursive, should not have developed on the same times throughout the country is attributable to political causes.

The defeat of the Lombards in Northern Italy by Charlemagne subjected it there to new influences (Merovingian), and interrupted its development in the direction which it continued to follow in the Lombard duchies of the south, and particularly in the monasteries of Monte Cassino near Naples and La Cava near Salerno.

Therefore, although the title of Lombardic is applied as a general term to the writing of Italy in the early Middle Ages, that title might be more properly restricted to its particular development in the south, to which the title of Beneventan is also given, covering the period from the ninth to the thirteenth century, and reaching its climax in the eleventh century.

The Lombardic hand is also a Roman hand as written by or for barbarians who lived nearer to the centre of civilisation than the Franks did. To justify its name it would be necessary to show that it originated and was practiced in the region we call Lombardy in the 7th century. There is, however, no trace of its existence before the ninth century, and very little show of its having been used to any extent in Cisalpine Gaul.

Most of the surviving examples of its employment as a national or local script indicate Eastern and Southern Italy as its home during the ninth to the thirteenth century; while most of the manuscripts produced in Lombardy and northern Italy during that time show a mixed style (Merovingian+Italian) to which the name of Franco-Lombardic or Italian pre-Caroline has been given.

Many writers feel that "Old Italian" is the proper designation, and it does more accurately describe the writing.

Paleographers have disputed the definition of Lombardic. While historically, it ought to represent northern Italian scripts, the term has been confined by some writers to the predecessors of Beneventan minuscule in southern Italy.

In this somewhat confused situation, there were certain monastic centres, which were associated with the production of minuscule book-hands with particular features.

In this way the abbey of Monte Cassino was instrumental in developing a script which is one of the most distinctive and long-lived of the post-Roman handwritings.
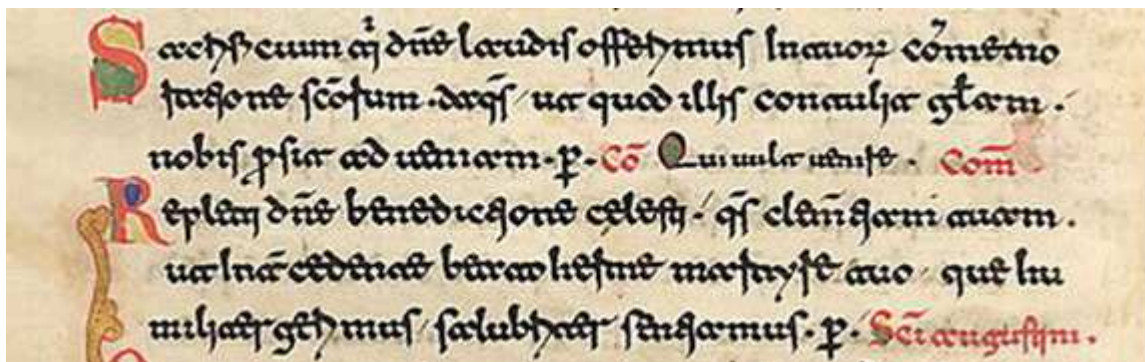
This script has been called "Lombardic" (*littera Longobarda, Longobardisca, Langobarda*), "Lombardic Casinense", "Casinense" or "Beneventan", being the latter the term most commonly used.

Beneventan minuscule (*littera minuscula Beneventana*) was developed in southern Italy from the mid-eight century and takes its name from the former Duchy of Benevento.

Based around the monastery of Monte Cassino, several local variants developed and it spread also to Dalmatia.

It survived the introduction of Caroline minuscule (from circa 800) and continued in use in southern Italy and surrounded areas until circa 1300 and it was only superseded by the Gothic hand.

The illegible scrawl into which the hand finally degenerated in notarial documents of southern Italy was at length suppressed by order of the Emperor Frederick II (1210-1250).

***This is a fragment from an illuminated Missal copied in Monte Cassino, Italy, early 12th century
in a very fine Beneventan minuscule style. Leiden, Bibliotheek der Rijksuniversiteit, B.P.L. 2842.***

CHARACTERISTICS

Although the script was based upon New Roman Cursive, its use of certain half-uncial letter forms and the characteristically Italian breadth and rotundity of aspect lent it a greater formality and regularity than many other pre-Caroline scripts.

It is rounded and regular in letter form, and was characterized by the thickness of the strokes which contrasted with the slender portions of letters.

The script is highly calligraphic. There are a number of initials ornamented with intricate knot patterns, and grotesque marginal ornaments (heads, birds, etc).

Beneventan shares some features with Visigothic and Merovingian scripts, probably due to the common late Roman matrix. No doubt, the similarity to the Visigothic script of Spain is remarkable, but the similarities are not due to direct dependence of Beneventan on Visigothic, as E.A. Lowe (=Loew) demonstrated clearly in this book "The Beneventan script".

According to this author, the theory that the Visigothic script influenced the development of the Beneventan is unsupported by facts, and the Italian origin of this script needs no elaborate demonstration

Beneventan is often considered to have reached its zenith in the eleventh century.

In the twelfth century this writing acquired more and more angular shapes. When the strong contrast of light and heavy strokes exaggerated, as it finally became, received the name of "broken Lombardic".

Its main characteristic is an attempt to produce an ornamental wavy effect by suspending the weight of the pen-stroke in the middle of each descent (the short straight strokes break), but the forms of the letters remain unchanged.

LETTER FORMS

There are a number of unfamiliar letter forms to a modern eye.

In fact, this script is a bit difficult to read until one is accustomed to it.

The letters are well placed, ornamented with the pretence of doing calligraphy.

While it is too formal to be called cursive, the script looks cursive because many sequences of letters are linked together; the rounded parts of near letters tend to touch one another and there are some ligatures.

The letter "a" (ɑ) has "oc" or hooked form.

The letter "e" (ℓ) extends above the tops of the other small letters. The letter "e-*caudata*" (ℯ) appears throughout.

The letter "d" has two forms: uncial with left-slanting ascender (ẟ) and vertical with a straight stem (d).

The letter "i" (ɩ) is sometimes very tall (l), especially at the beginning of a word, and resembles "l".

The letters "b" (b), "l" (l) and "h" (h) are usually clubbed.

The letter "r" (ɼ) is straight and descends below the base line, except in final position where it is wavy and curves upwards (ɤ).

The letter "t" (ᴛ) has an exaggerated loop on its back that extends to the base line so that it resembles "a".

Beneventan script features many ligatures and connecting strokes. Ligatures involving the letter "i" (usually pendent) are numerous: "ei" (ℯ), "fi" (ʄ), "gi" (ℊ), "li" (ℓ), "ri" (ɼ), "rit" (ɼ) and "ti" (ᴛ / ℊ).

Ligatures involving the letter "t" resemble Visigothic forms.

Ligatures with the letters "c", "e" and "s" (ɕ =ci, ℟ =et, ʄ =st) are also common.

This script employs many abbreviations.

Like most other Latin scripts, missing letters can be signified by a waved line (¯) placed over the previous letter (ℯ̄ c̄ n̄ ō ā̄ ū̄), although Beneventan often uses a symbol resembling the number 3 or a small sideways "m" (ᶾ e.g. ɡɼɑɡɑ³ =gratiam).

Other common abbreviations are: ℘=per, p̄=prae/pre, ℘=pro, q=quod, ħ=haec, đ=de, ℛ=rum, ÷=est, ᴛ̃=tur, ꝛ=us.

Regarding the punctuation marks, in other scripts there is often little or no punctuation, but standard punctuation forms were developed for the Beneventan scripts, including the basis for the modern question mark.

Finally it is worth noting that in some Beneventan manuscript there are diacritic marks (acute and circumflex) to indicate phonetic pronunciation, but they do not appear before the 12th century. (ɑ́, ℯ́, í, ó, ú, ɑ̂, ℯ̂, î, ô, û).

The main punctuation marks are the following: , ;· ·: ⁄ ! ⸮   ²

 THE TYPEFACE "**Beneventana minuscula**"

 The sample below shows a manuscript written in a fine Beneventan minuscule hand, and produced in the scriptorium of the Benedictine Abbey of Monte Cassino circa 1100.
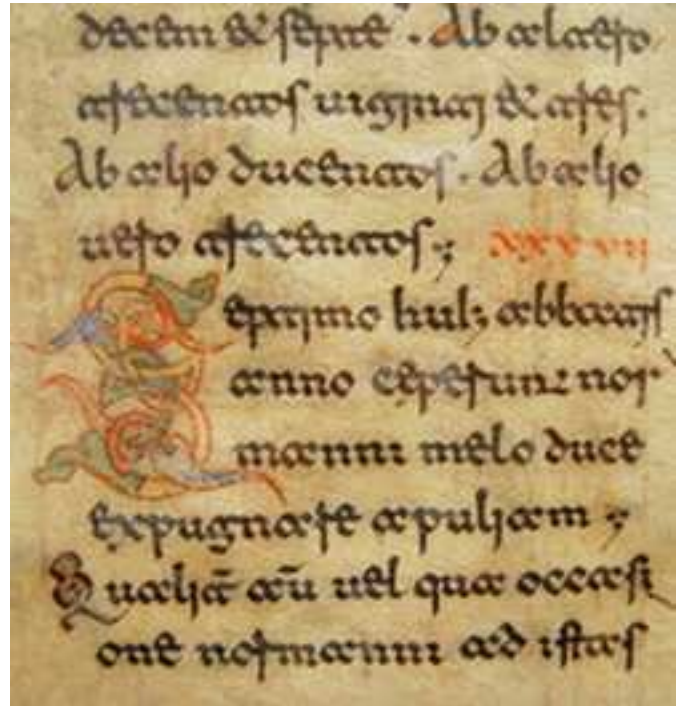
 The electronic version of the text has been made with the font named "**Beneventana minuscula**":

The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek: ms. 73 B 24, f. 13

Transcription:

decem et sept*em*. Ab altero trecentos uiginti et tres. Ab alio ducentos. Ab alio uero trecentos. xxxvii **S**eptimo hui*us* abbatis anno ceperunt nor manni melo duce expugnare apuliam. Qualit*er* au*tem* uel qua occasi one normanni ad istas

----

 The following lines show a partial character set for "**Beneventana minuscula**" font:

 Upper case letters: A B C D E F G h I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

 Lower case letters: α b c d e f g h ı j k l m n o p q t ſ ꞇ u u w x y ƺ

 Abbreviations and ligatures: ꝯ ꝗ ꝺ ē ᵹ ꜧ & ꝥ ħ ꞇ ʅ m̄ n̄ ꝑ ꝓ p̄ q̄ ꝙ ꝩ ꝺ 2 y ß ſ ſꞇ ꜩ m̄ ᵹ ꜳ ; ⸫ ³

 Punctuation marks: , ;· · ·: ⁄ ! ⸮

INSULAR SCRIPTS

A somewhat confusing variety of names has been applied to scripts used in the British Isles: *Irish*, *scriptura Scottica*, *scriptura Saxonica* and *Hiberno-Saxon*, though the commonest is *Insular*, a term derived from the Latin word *insula* which means "island".

Insular script later spread to continental Europe in centres under the influence of Celtic monks, such as Luxeuil in France, St Gall in Switzerland and Bobio in Italy, to mention only the most important.

The origin and development of the early handwritings of the British Isles differ from those of the continental nations of Western Europe which have been examined in previous chapters.

While on the Continent the New Roman Cursive hand formed the basis of the national forms of writing, in Ireland and Britain the basis was the Roman Half-uncial.

The foundation of the early Church in Ireland after its conversion by St Patrick in the 5th century and the consequent spread of civilization naturally fostered learning and the development of a national school of writing.

Ireland borrowed the types for its handwriting from the manuscripts which the Roman missionaries brought with them; and we must assume that most of those manuscripts were written in the literary Half-uncial character, and that there was an unusually scanty number of uncial manuscripts among the works thus imported.

Having once obtained their models, the Irish monks developed their own style of writing.

The early Irish handwriting –around the 6th century– appears in two forms: the round and the pointed.

The first and earlier, termed Insular Half-uncial or Insular majuscule, is a rounded, rather fat hand with spade-like serifs.

By about the 7th century a more cursive version, thinner and more angular or pointed script developed which with its full range of linear, supralinear and intralinear letters is genuinely minuscule and is known as Insular minuscule.

The history of handwriting in England previous to the Norman conquest has a wider range than that of writing in Ireland, although at least in the earlier periods, it runs on the same lines. In fact, England was almost entirely indebted to Ireland for its national handwriting.

Insular scripts were spread to England by St Columba of Iona and Irish missionaries during the conversion of Anglo-Saxons (6th century); previously, Uncial script had been brought to England by St. Augustine of Canterbury.

The influence of both Irish scripts and Roman Uncial hand produced a separate English insular form, which existed in several forms, being the most important the majuscule insular half-uncial and the minuscule insular hybrid.

In England, Insular scripts for texts in Latin disappeared after the Norman conquest, after which the English scribes were usually French trained and used therefore the Caroline minuscule hand, but the Insular hand can be found in vernacular texts as late as the thirteenth century, and is still used in Gaelic texts.

The script –especially the pointed type– was used not only for Latin religious books, but also for every other kind of books, including vernacular works.

Examples include the Book of Kells, the Book of Durrow, the Lindisfarne Gospels, and the Cathach of St. Columba etc.

Insular script was influential in the development of Caroline minuscule, which was formed partly under the influence of the Irish and Anglo-Saxon monks who had been brought to the Continent.

We now proceed to examine these Insular scripts more in detail.

INSULAR HALF-UNCIAL OR INSULAR MAJUSCULE

The Insular Half-uncial handwriting is the most distinctive script developed between the Roman and Carolingian period.

It is also known as Insular majuscule, though it is not strictly speaking a majuscule script since some letters have short ascenders and descenders.

It was closely related to the Uncial and Half-uncial scripts, its immediate influences.

Insular majuscule is a stylised development of Roman Half-uncial. The writing bears a very close resemblance to the continental Half-uncial had, but at the same time it has the distinct impress of its Irish nationality.

The Roman Half-uncial was established as the minuscule script for humble manuscripts at the time St Patrick began his mission to Ireland in 432. The Irish land was behind the influence of the Roman Empire, was unfamiliar with Latin and practically had no script of its own; St Patrick's followers learned and adopted the Roman Half-uncial.

The Celtic artistic tradition influenced the script, and Ireland virtual isolation from outside influences made it possible for Irish calligraphy to evolve in Insular script or Irish uncial. The Irish scribes created an exaggerated serif and formalized the script so that the humble minuscule Half-uncial became a formal majuscule by the 6th century, the Insular majuscule.

No school of writing developed so thoroughly, and, apparently, so quickly, the purely ornamental side of calligraphy as the Irish school. The wonderful interlaced designs which were introduced as decorative adjuncts to Irish manuscripts of the seventh and eighth centuries are astonishing examples of skillful drawing and generally of brilliant colouring. And this passion for ornamentation also affected the character of the writing in the more elaborately executed manuscripts –sometimes even to the verge of the fantastic. Not only were fancifully formed initial letters common in the principal decorated pages, but the striving after ornamental effect also manifested itself in the capricious shapes given to various letters of the text whenever an opportunity could be found, as, for instance, at the end of a line. The ornamental round-hand, which was elaborated under this influence, is remarkable both for its solidity and its graceful outlines.

The finest manuscript of this style, being the most spectacular version of this script, is the famous copy of the Gospels known as the "Book of Kells" or "Book of Columba", now in the library of Trinity College, Dublin, in which both the text and ornamentation are brought to the highest point of excellence. Although tradition declares that the manuscript belonged to St. Columba, who died in A.D. 597, it does not appear to be earlier than the close of the seventh century.

The Book of Kells, Library of Trinity College (Dublin, Ireland)
Ms. 58 (A.16), fol. 19v. Latin text written in Insular Half-uncial.

Doubtless the Insular Half-uncial style is the highest grade of Insular script.

The grand style of round Half-uncial writing was used almost exclusively for significant liturgical books such as gospels and was not adapted for the more ordinary purposes of literature or the requirements of daily intercourse.

This very well can explain that this script ceased to exist at a comparatively early period.

The aforementioned Book of Kells is a Gospel Book which means that it contains the full text of the four Gospels, preceded by some traditional introductory materials.

This book was written circa 800 A.D. in Ireland at Kells, or possibly Iona, an Irish monastery on the west coast of Scotland founded by St. Columbanus.

No words can describe the beauty and extreme splendour of the Book of Kells. The detail in this Irish illuminated manuscript is an amazing example of Irish art, no one symbol, illuminated initial, Celtic knot, interlace or page decoration is duplicated elsewhere in the parchment which contains 680 pages –approximately 30 leaves have been lost, and it was apparently left unfinished, since some of the ornaments remain only in outline.

It is written in part black, red, purple or yellow ink, and it has been thought that the hands of at least two scribes are discernible in the writing and illumination of the manuscript.

Also the ligatures, letters stretched, calligraphy blending with decorative elements are just superb. The drawing is perfection itself. Even the best photographic and colour reproductions give only a faint idea of the beauty of the original.

It is no wonder that it was for a long time believed that the Book of Kells could have been written only by angels: "...haec omnia potius angelica quam humana diligentia iam asseveraveris esse composita." (Giraldus Cambrensis. *Topographia Hiberniae* II, 38. 12th century).

Another manuscript of Irish style but of Welsh origin of the same character but not nearly elaborate as the Book of Kells is the copy of the Gospels of St. Chad at Lichfield.

The manuscript of the Gospels of MacRegol, written about the year 800, now in the Bodleian Library, is a late specimen, in which the comparative feebleness and inexact style of the writing contrast very markedly with the practiced exactness of the older manuscripts.

The course of the English script follows the same lines as that of Ireland.

St. Columba's settlement in Iona was the centre from whence proceed the founders of monasteries in the north of England; and in the year 684 the Irish missionary Aidan founded the see of Lindisfarne (Holy Isle), which became a great centre of English writing.

At first the writing was indeed nothing more than Irish script transplanted into new soil, and for a time the English style is scarcely to be distinguished from that of the sister island. But gradually distinctions arose; and the English school, under wider influences, developed more graceful forms. The liturgical manuscripts differ from those of Ireland in the frequent use of gold in initials.

The earliest and most beautiful manuscript of the English round Half-uncial is the copy of the Lindisfarne Gospels in the British Library, said to have been written in honour of St. Cuthbert by Eadfrith, Bishop of Lindisfarne, about the year 700.

Its very beautiful hand leaves nothing to be desired in the precision and grace with which it is executed, and the manuscript fairly rivals the great Irish codices of the same period such as the Book of Kells.

How nearly it follows the Irish model needs no demonstration. At the same time, a difference is discernible between the two manuscripts, which seems to indicate the difference of country of origin. The letters of the Lindisfarne Gospels, besides being of a more solid type, are rather broader and the curves are even more symmetrically drawn than in the Book of Kells.
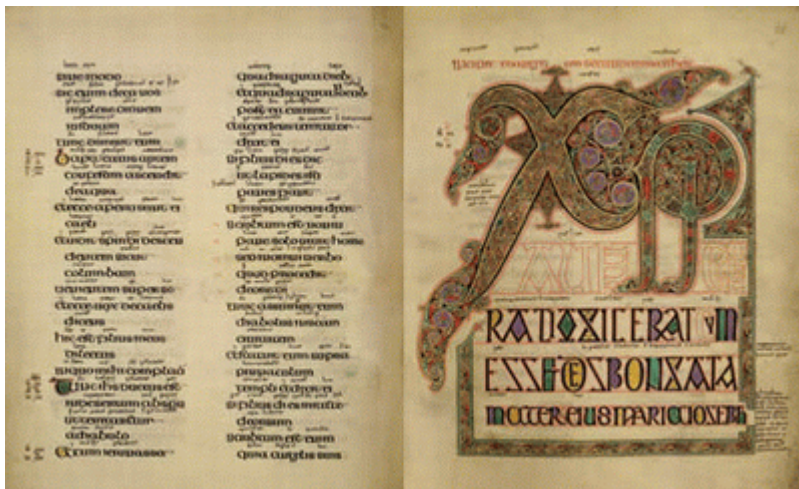
Two pages from the Lindisfarne Gospels, London. British Library. Cotton Ms., Nero D.IV.
Latin text in Insular majuscule with interlinear Anglo-Saxon glosses in Insular pointed

The round-hand was used for books and, less frequently, even for charters during the eighth and ninth centuries; but although in very carefully written manuscripts, the writing is still solid, the heavy-stroke style of the Lindisfarne Gospels appears generally to have ceased at an early date.

Other specimens of this hand are found in the Durham Cassiodorus, in a manuscript of the Gospels at Durham, in the Book of Durrow, and in the Canterbury Gospels.

LETTER FORMS

The letter forms of the Insular Half-uncial script are highly elaborated examples of graphic design. There are not really new forms, but sometimes this script uses alternative forms, some from the majuscule Uncial script, some from the Half-uncial (ꝺ/d, ꞥ/ꞑ, s/ſ).

Though it is essentially a majuscule or bilinear script, some letters have short ascenders or descenders.
Ascenders have characteristic spatulate terminals.
The feet of minims (i.e. the short vertical strokes running from headline to baseline) are very small and many letters lack them altogether.
Although the script is rounded and widely spaced, certain letters run together.
Letters often touch those on both side, suggesting cursiveness in this otherwise stately and monumental script; this effect is reinforced by the scribe's tendency to run two or three words together.
In some manuscripts there is no spacing between words so the script tends to look like *scriptura continua*.
Works written in Insular majuscule commonly use large initial letters surrounded by red ink dots.
Final letters of some words are elongated and decorated in order to fill in space at line ends.
The internal zones of many letters are filled with yellow paint.

The letter "a" (ɑ) has the "oc" form.
The letter "b" (b) has a curved ascender and a very wide bowl.
The letter "d" (ꝺ/d) has both uncial and semiuncial forms.
The letter "e" (e) is sometimes tall before "t", "g" (et, eg) and other letters. An "e" *caudata* is also frequent (ę).
The medial arm of the letter "f" (ꝼ) rests on the base line.
The letter "g" (ᵹ) resembles a "t" with a small loop below the base line.
The letter "n" has both uppercase (ꞥ) and lowercase (ꞑ) forms.
The letter "p" (p) is not fully closed.
The letter "q" (q) sometimes acquires a curved descender (q).
The letter "r" has usually the R form (ꞃ), but in some manuscripts appears the lowercase form (ꞃ). When this occurs the letters "r" and "n" are easily confused, although the former has an extra kink on the bottom.
The letter "s" (s) looks like a S and also has a tall form (ſ) which is used before "t" and at the end of some words.
The letter "y" (ꝼ) has a rather contorted form.
The letters "u" (u) and "v" (u) are identical. The i-*longa* occurs throughout (ꞁ).

Abbreviations are restricted to *nomina sacra*. The scribes used both a double and a single wavy suspension stroke to indicate abbreviated forms (̄ ̃).

The Latin word "et" (et) is still clearly ligatured, but is becoming somewhat stylized. This ligature is also used in verbs to stand for the grammatical ending –*et* (ueniet =ueniet). The "et" ligature is sometimes decorated.

A colon (:) was used for the ending –*us* (ꝺieb: =diebus).

In Insular majuscule we can find a medial *punctus* (·), a *comma* (,) and a tricolon (:·).
It is frequent the liberal use of wrap-marks, some of which are decorated.

Capital letters were usually text letters written larger and with the same pen. However, a specific alphabet of capital letters with some Runic remembrance was occasionally used:

Ᵹ ƀ � Ɗ Ε Ϝ ɦ ꞁ ꞁ Ƙ Ꝇ Ⱨ Ꞥ Ꝺ Ꝑ Ꝗ Ꝛ Ꙅ Ꞇ ᴜ Ꝟ Ꝡ Ꭓ ꞓ Ꙁ

There are also some variants for several capital letters: Ᵹ ꝺ Ɓ C Ɗ ꝺ ε Ꞓ Ⱨ Ο Ꝑ Ꝗ Ꝛ Ꙅ Ꞇ ᴜ Ꝡ

THE TYPEFACE "**Insularis majuscula**"

The sample below shows a page from the **Book of Kells**, Trinity College (Dublín, Irlanda), Ms. 58 (A.16) Excerpts of St. John.
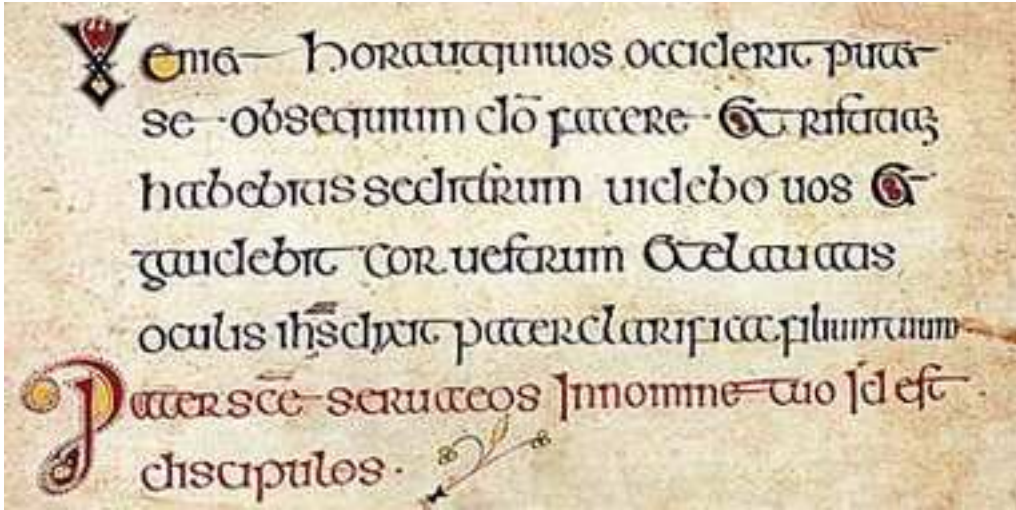
My "**Insularis majuscula**" font bears a very close resemblance to Insular half-uncial style of writing as can be seen in the following reproduction.
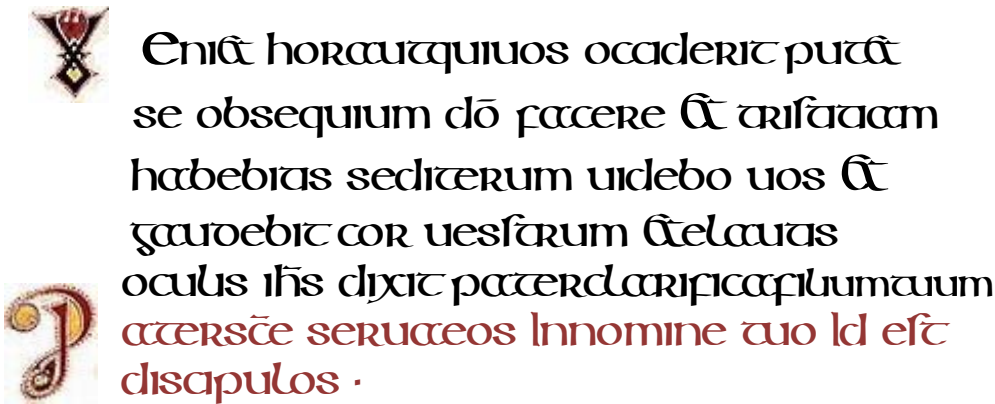
TRANSLITERATION:

Ueniet hora ut qui uos occiderit putet se obsequium do facere et tristitiam habebitis sed iterum uidebo uos et gaudebit cor uestrum et elautis oculis ihs dixit pater clarifica filium tuum Pater sce serua eos In nomine tuo Id est discipulos·

The following lines show a partial character set for "**Insularis majuscula**" font:

Upper case letters:

Glyph variants for capital letters:

Lower case letters:

Abbreviations and ligatures:

INSULAR MINUSCULE (POINTED HAND)

The round hand was rapidly displaced by the more convenient hand designed for more cursive use. This style of handwriting became known as Insular minuscule when it was adopted throughout England in the mid 7th century.

The pointed hand, which also was developed at an early period, became the general hand of Ireland, and survives in the native writing of the present day.

Traces of the existence of the pointed hand are early. It is found in a fully developed stage in the Book of Kells itself. An ornamental kind of pointed hand appears in some of the pages of this book, a fact which proves its fully establishment at a much earlier period.

There cannot be much doubt that this style of writing came into existence almost contemporaneously with the establishment of a national hand. The round hand may have preceded it; but the necessity for a more rapid, working cursive character must immediately have made itself felt.

IRELAND

This form of writing, which may be termed the cursive hand of Ireland, differs in its origin from the national cursive hands of the Continent. In the latter the New Roman Cursive has been shown to be the foundation. The Irish pointed hand, on the contrary, had nothing to do with the Roman cursive. The Irish scribes had, or at least followed, only one model: the Roman Half-uncial.

Thus, the pointed Irish hand was derived from the same source as the round hand, using the same forms of letters, but subjecting them to a lateral compression and drawing their limbs into points or hair-lines; it is a minuscule hand.

Its beginning may be fairly assigned to as early a time as the first half of 7th century.

The first dated example, of native origin, is the Book of Armagh, a manuscript containing significant portions of the New Testament, texts relating to St. Patrick and other matter written in the year 807.

The manuscript of the Gospels of Mac Durnam is an example of writing of the end of the 9th or beginning of the 10th century, showing a tendency to become more narrow and cramped.

In the eleventh and twelfth centuries we find a change, and this hand took the final stereotyped form which it was to follow in the future, and had assumed the angular shapes which are henceforth characteristic of the Irish hand.

A good typical specimen of the Irish hand of that period is the Gospels of Maelbrighte of the year 1138.

The Irish continue to use the hand to this day as the script for Gaelic.
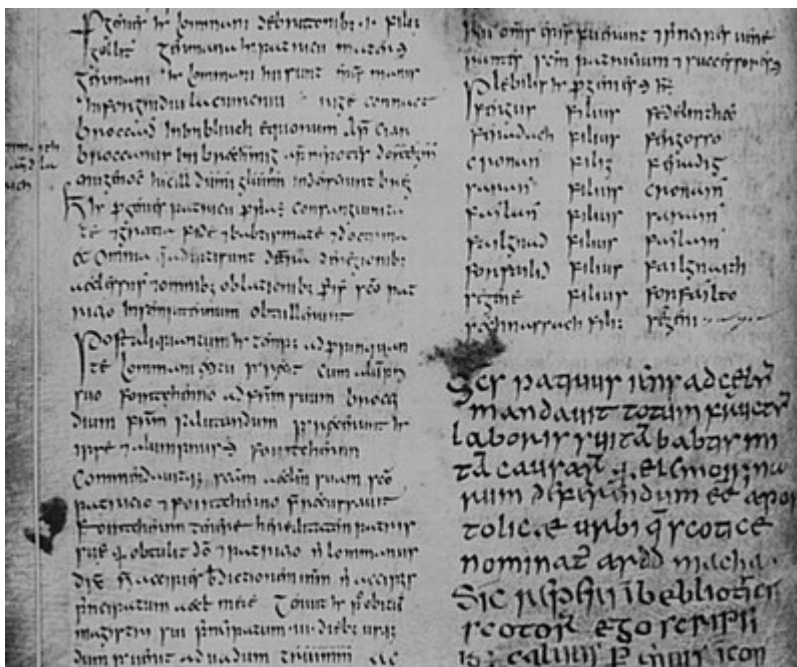
The Book of Armagh, Ms. 52
Trinity College Library
*(Dublin, Ireland)*

ENGLAND

The pointed hand was spread to England by Irish missionaries in the 7th century and adapted for writing Old English.
For this reason this script is commonly known as Anglo-Saxon minuscule.
This was to become the predominant script for vernacular manuscripts until well into the 11th century when, after the Norman Conquest, it was superseded by a form of Caroline minuscule.

For the study of the pointed English hand there has survived a fair amount of material, ranging from the eight to the tenth century; later than this time, the change affected in its structure by contact with southern influence.
In the oldest specimens the writing generally exhibits that breadth of form and elegance of shape which we have noticed in other handwritings in their early stages. Then comes, in the ninth century, the tendency to lateral compression and fanciful variations from the older and simpler types; but the script still retains the sense of grace and fineness of touch.

A very beautiful specimen of the 8th century is a copy of Bede's "History of the English Church and People" (*Historia Ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum*) which has in a marked degree that breadth of style which has been referred to.
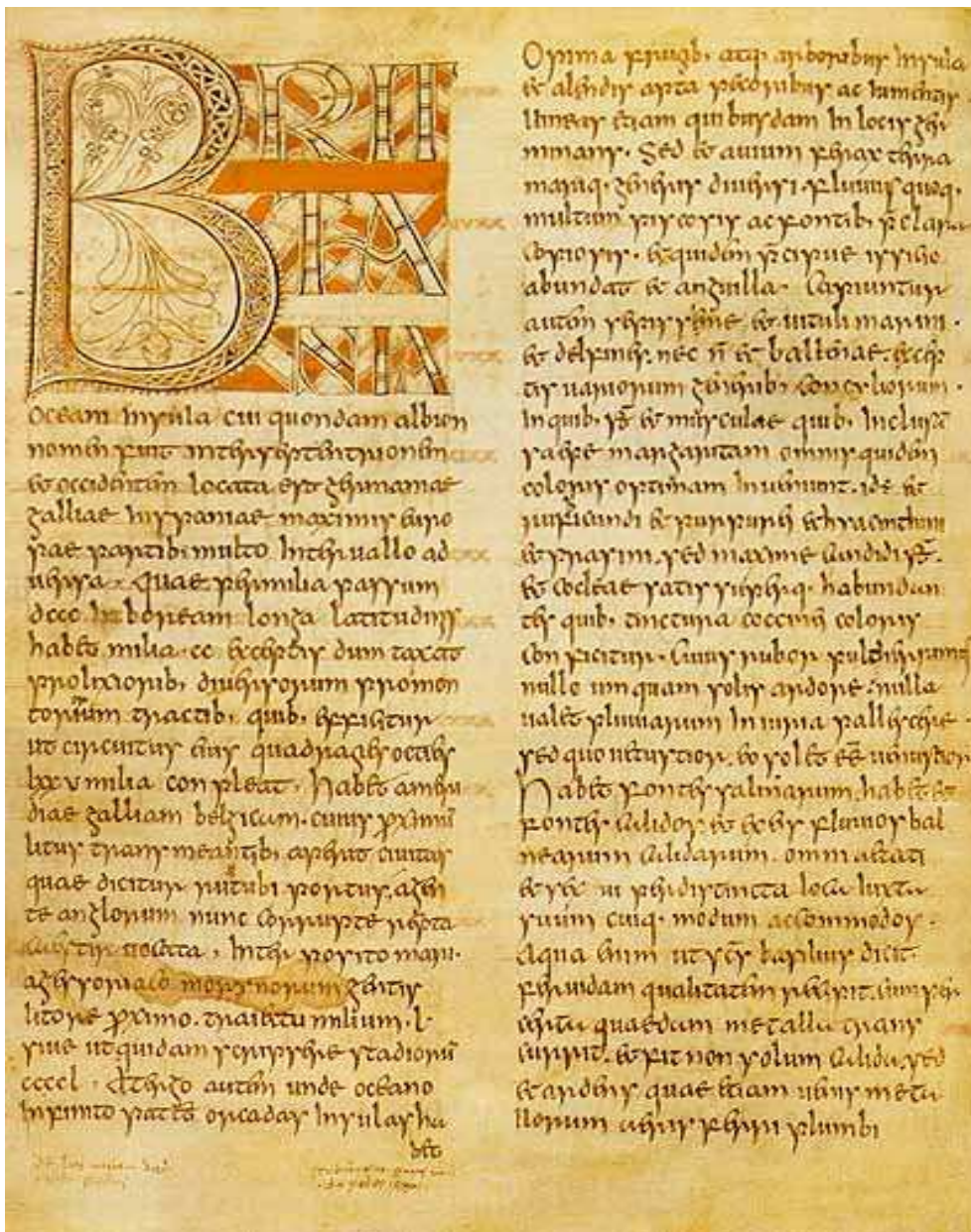
Beginning of the "Historia Ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum" of Bede.

The change which took place in the English pointed hand in the course of the tenth century is highly marked, and towards the end of the century the influence of the Carolingian minuscule hand begins to assert itself, and even, under certain conditions, to usurp the place of the native hand.

Characteristic is the disposition to flatten the top of such letters as "a" and "q", and, so to say, cut it off at an oblique angle.

This is well shown in a volume known as the "Exeter Book" written in the middle of the century and which is a collection of Anglo-Saxon poetry.

An image taken from a facsimile of the "Exeter Book ".

In the latter part of the 10th century the foreign set minuscule hand began to make its way into England, consequent on increased intercourse with the Continent and political changes which followed.

In documents we find the foreign and native hands on the same page: the text in Latin, being written in Caroline minuscule, and the text in Anglo-Saxon, being written in the Insular minuscule.

The Ælfric's Latin-English grammar (early eleventh century) is a good example of the use of the foreign minuscule for Latin and the insular hand for the vernacular.

The scribe must be equally versed in the continental minuscule for the Latin portions of the text, and in the Anglo-Saxon script for the vernacular.
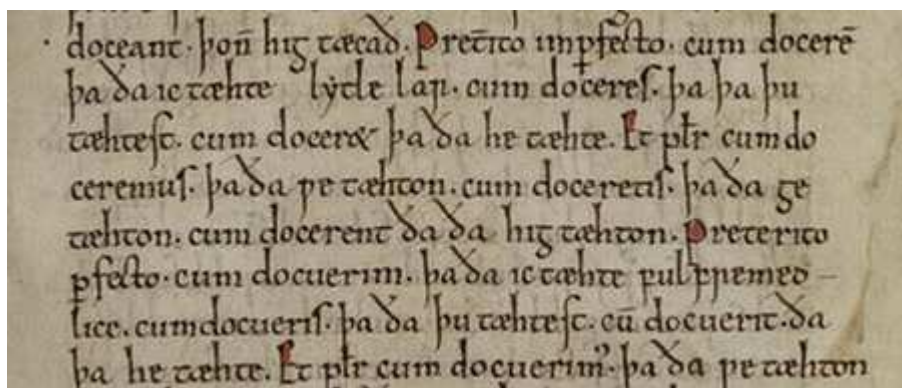
A segment of Ælfric's Latin-English grammar showing a mixture of scripts.
Note that the scribe is careful to keep up the distinction even between such letters
of the two alphabets as might be easily interchanged; for example, the Anglo-Saxon
form of "e" is differentiated from the foreign letter by a small hook at the back of the loop.

The beginning of the eleventh century is an epoch of decided change in the native minuscule hand. This change may certainly be attributed to the foreign influence. The pointed hand, strictly so-called, is replaced by a rounder or square character, with lengthened strokes above and below the line.

It cannot longer be called a pointed hand.

The body of the letters increases in squareness, the growth of which we have noticed in the tenth century, and the limbs extending above and below the line become longer than before.

In a word, the writing by this time lost the compactness and graceful penmanship of the earlier period.

A very good illustration of this new style of the eleventh century is the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle.
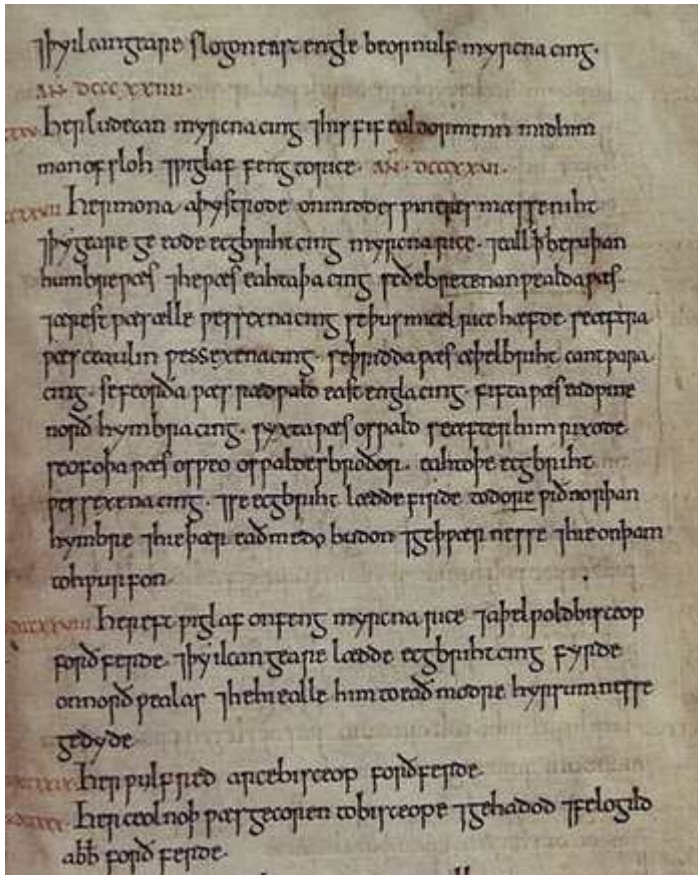
Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: Entries for the years 824 to 830.
Mid eleventh century. Cotton MS Tiberius B.I f.128
London. British Library.

With the Norman Conquest the native English form of writing was doomed. From the tenth century, as we have mentioned, the continental minuscule had been displacing it as the handwriting for Latin manuscripts. It remained only for books composed in the native tongue; and there it continued, for a certain time, to survive, but gradually losing its independent character, and being evermore overshadowed and superseded by the new writing of the continental school, viz. the Caroline minuscule.

Finally it should be remarked that insular script in turn was influential in the development of Caroline minuscule in the scriptoria of the Carolingian Empire. We must keep in mind that Irish missionaries spread over the Continent and founded religious houses in France and Italy and other countries; and where they settled the insular form of handwriting was practiced, which evidently influenced other handwriting styles as well.

LETTER FORMS

The feet of the descenders end in a point; the letters are much narrower, more vertical than the round type, and the letters touch more often.

The words are separated, the ligatures numerous and the abbreviations rather frequent.

A characteristic insular feature is cross-fertilization of scripts, with the letters "d", "n", "r" and "s" particularly prone to variation.

Insular minuscule similarly combines forms from the whole spectrum, together with distinctive square forms and runic derivatives.

For writing texts in Old English graphs had to be added for the sounds for which there was no equivalent in Latin. New letters were therefore devised for these sounds.

One source for these was the Runic alphabet, still current in the Anglo-Saxon period, used for carving on stone, wood and other materials. The Runic graph *thorn* (þ) was used for the sounds expressed in Modern English by "th"; its use lasted till the end of the 15th century, although in its later period the top of the shaft often disappeared making it hard to distinguish from the letter "y".

Another borrowed Rune was *wyn* (ƿ) –employed for "w". It tended to be confused with "thorn" and "y".

The Latin digraph *ae* (æ) which originally represented a diphthong in Latin and which did not exist in English, was adopted to represent the sound described in the Runic alphabet as *aesc* (ash) –a back vowel sound.

The letter "a" comes in two forms, closed at the top (ᴀ) or opens (ᴜ), and occasionally has the "oc" form.

Ascenders of letters such as "b" (ƀ), "h" (ɦ) and "l" (ɭ) are wedged at the top.

The letter "d" has both the uncial (ẟ) and semi-uncial (ꝺ) form, and also the typical insular minuscule form (ẟ) with a flat-topped ascender.

The letter "f" (ꝼ) has a medial tongue on the baseline and descender. "f" looks rather like an "r" with a cross stroke. In fact the letters "f", "r" and "s" are easily confused, as all tend to extend below the baseline and are similar in general shape.

The letter "g" (ᵹ) is open, lightning bolt form. In some manuscripts also occasionally appears a second form of "g" which looks like a "c" with a comma-like hook on it.

While the letter "i" is not dotted (ı), the letter "y" (ẏ) is.

The letter "r" has a minuscule (ꞃ) and a majuscule (ʀ) form. The minuscule version has the "n" shape with the second minim extending slightly below the baseline.

The letter "s" is tall (ꞅ) and looks like a conventional "r" that projects below the line.

The letter "t" (τ) is short with a broad cross stroke.

The letters "u" (ᴜ) and "v" (ᴠ) are sometimes differentiated, in that there is a rounded and an angular form. The angular form seems to be used in most cases as either vowel or consonant.

The Insular minuscule uses many ligatures. In particular "e" becomes tall (ℇ) in certain combinations (*em, en, er, es, et* etc. see samples below).

The letter "i" is extended below the line in ligature as in "ci", "li", "mi", "ni" and "ri" (ꝯ ɭ ᴍ ɳ ꞃ).

The trickiest ligature is the diphthong "ae", which is sometimes written as an "e" with a little hook on the back (ℯ).

Certain combinations of letters can share elements as in "eg" (ℯᵹ), "ex" (ℯ&), "est" (ℯꞅτ) etc.

There are many abbreviations; some of them usually only encountered in Insular minuscule (see samples below).

The Tironian "et" character (⁊) similar in shape to a number 7, appears as an abbreviation for "and".

Contraction and truncation are marked with strokes which have a variety of forms.

The punctuation in Insular minuscule manuscripts consists of a variety of combinations of points and commas.

The Insular minuscule script may appear difficult to read because of the unfamiliar letter forms, but it is open and clear, and the words are usually well spaced. It is really a case of getting the eye in, and it is very elegant.

THE TYPEFACE "**Insularis minuscula**"

This font contains not only the basic insular letters, but a full repertoire of characters including variants for a few signs, and most common ligatures and abbreviated signs.

Upper case letters: A B C D E F Ᵹ Һ I J K L M N O P Þ Q R S T U V Ꝓ X Y Z

Lower case letters: a b c d e ꝼ ᵹ h ı ı k l m n o p q r ꞃ ꞇ u v ꝓ x ẏ ʒ

1.- Alternative forms for some letters.

A / Λ / Ⱥ   Ᵹ / Ꞡ   E / Є
a / u   δ / ð / d   e / є   ꞃ / z / ʀ   ꞇ / ſ / s   x / ⱪ   y / ẏ / ɣ / ẏ

2.- Ligatures.

a) With the letter "e"

ᴇᵹ ᴇm ᴇn ᴇꞃ ᴇꞇ ᴇꞇᴇ ᴇꞇ ᴇx ᴇx
eg   em   en   er   es   est   et   et   ex   ex

b) With the letter "i"

ꞔ ꝼı ʟı mı nı ꞃı ſı ꞇı
ci   fi   li   mi   ni   ri   si   ti

c) Others.

mₐ ſſ ꞃꞇ ſⱪ ᴂ ᴂ ᴐᴇ ᴐᴇ ᴀᴐ ᴀᴠ
ma   ss   st   sk   ae   ae   oe   oe   ao   av

3.- Abbreviations.

ꝑ ꝑ ᵱ ꝑ̇ ꝑ́ ꝑ̀ ꝑ ꝑ q q̄ q̇ q̊ q̊
ʒ̊ ʒ̊ ʒ̄ b̄ c̄ m̄ n̄ p̄ q̄ s̄ ꝼ̄ ꞇ̄ ɣ̄ ꞇ̄
ꞇ ꝺ ꞇ̃ ᵹ ꝥ ꝰ ; ⱬ ꝗ
á é í ó ú ā ē ī ō ū

4.- Special punctuation marks.

⸵ (punctus elevatus)   · (interpunctus)   ⸮ (punctus interrogativus)   ⸗ (hyphen)   ⸍ (virgula)

Please note that many characters are not directly accessible from the keyboard.

SAMPLE

The sample below shows an image of the first page of the **Beowulf**, British Library. London, Cotton Vitellius A. 15.
Under the image is the same text written with the "**Insularis minuscula**" font.
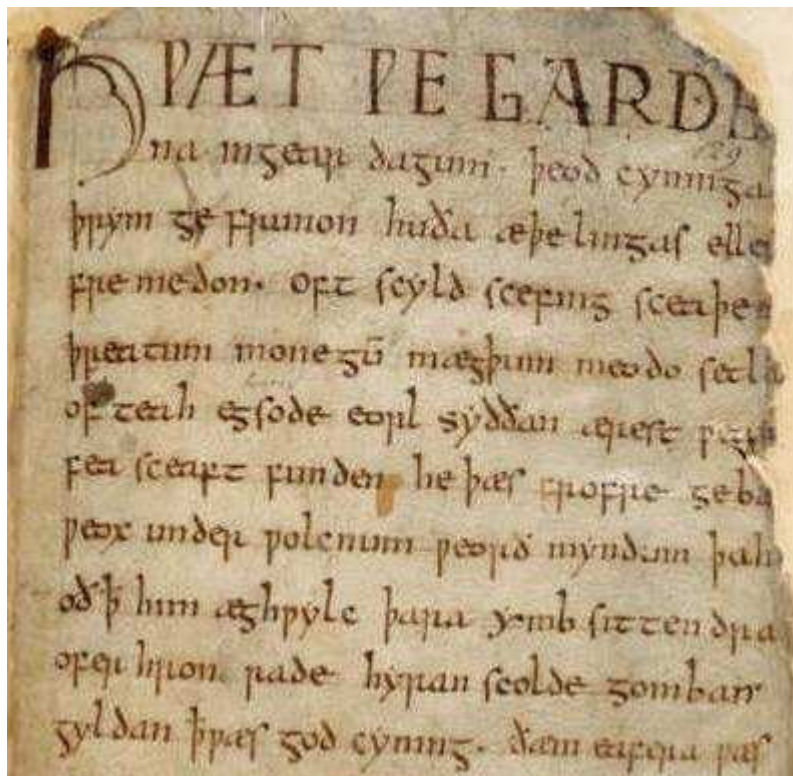
ƕ ÞÆT ƿE ᵹARDE
na inᵹear daᵹum   þeod cyninᵹa
þrym ᵹe ꝼrunon huða æþelinᵹaꝼ ellen
ꝼremedon. oꝼt ꝼcyld ꝼcefinᵹ ꝼceaþena
þreatum moneᵹū mæᵹþum meodo ꝼetla
oꝼteah eᵹꝼode eorl syððan æreꝼt peapð
ꝼea ꝼceaꝼt ꝼunden he þæꝼ ꝼroꝼꝛe ᵹebad
peox under polcnum peorð myndum þah
oð þ him æᵹhƿylc   þapa ymb ꝼitten ðpa
ofer hpon pade hypan ꝼcolde ᵹomban
ᵹyldan þꝼæꝼ ᵹod cyninᵹ. ðæm eaꝼepa paꝼ

CAROLINE MINUSCULE

INTRODUCTION

The ideal of "renovatio" was not just a political idea, but it was a cultural idea for Charlemagne. His ambition to restore the authority of Imperial Rome was matched by his ambition to revive Classical culture. Charlemagne and his advisors had observed the decline of educational skills throughout the Empire. He wanted to restore education to classical standards.

Related to this was his concern with copying books. He was concerned with restoring and preserving Classical texts and establishing authoritative versions of the Bible and Liturgical books. As a part of this the Carolingians developed a new script, the Caroline minuscule, which would become a standard for the next 400 years and would later be revived by the humanists in the fifteenth century.

With the rise of Charlemagne, a tremendous shift in culture in Western Europe began in earnest. Central to that shift was a uniform script known as the Carolingian minuscule. While Charlemagne's forty-six year reign brought with it the largest uniform Empire since Rome, this new script heralded the beginning of uniformity in the art and writing of the period. With the enforced use of the Caroline minuscule, the dissemination of cultural writings moved faster and with fewer errors. The use of the script also walked hand in hand with the revival of culture on a level up to this time unknown in the Christian era. History, philosophy, theology, poetry, mathematics, science, and classical texts of all types were all being revived.

Scholars during the Carolingian renaissance sought out and copied in the new legible standardized hand many Roman texts that had been wholly forgotten. In fact, most of our knowledge of classical literature now derives from copies made in the scriptoria of Charlemagne.

The new script brought with it a truly powerful tool in reintegrating these texts into the society. Though at first contemplation, a shift of handwriting seems a small change in the overall progress of culture for a society, this new Caroline script truly redefined and renewed the nearly extinct arts of learning throughout Western Europe.

Despite his military and political unification of Europe, it may be argued that Charlemagne's greatest triumph came through his push to revive culture, art and learning throughout its Empire. Hence, it is not strange that this period is known as the Carolingian Renaissance.

Interestingly, it is likely a direct result of his military unification that such a cultural revival was able to take place. When the entire continent was being held by multiple rulers and kingdoms, it was essentially impossible for cultural works to be reintroduced on a mass scale. With the political unification of the area came, cultural unification became a possibility and an actuality.

With all of this in mind, it becomes clear how the dissemination of learning, books and writing became an integral means to maintaining power for Charlemagne and his successors. Though he no doubt had a certain personal fascination with arts and learning, Charlemagne must have also realized the potential to have a kingdom that included a widely educated clergy and laity. The use of writing in law, military organization, and social reform sped up the process and solidified rules and doctrine. Culture and media became a means to unify the kingdom once the military had finished its conquest. The use of the new uniform script that would not see its fruition until after the death of Charlemagne helped to spread the products of culture across the entire Empire. In addition, writing and script became a truly valued skill in a way that it had not been since Roman times. Well to do families considered it almost a given that one of the children would enter the monastery, oftentimes as a scribe.

Summarizing: Charlemagne understood the true importance of a strong cultural heritage in a society. Where the military victories and political maneuverings would serve to acquire power, a sense of culture and intellectual growth would maintain the society in a way that nothing else could.

ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT

The development of Caroline Minuscule, or Carolingian minuscule, was a reform which increased the uniformity, clarity and legibility of handwriting. It was evidently developed in the late 8th century scriptorium of Charlemagne, or in those of the monasteries under his patronage, in the course of his conscious efforts to revive the literate culture of Classical Rome.

Nevertheless, it is clear that Caroline minuscule was not suddenly invented one rainy afternoon. Changes had been occurring over time to the Merovingian and Germanic minuscules, rendering them neater, rounder and simpler.

Though Charlemagne and his successors had a profound impact on the use of the Caroline minuscule, this style of writing was developed and in use long before a crown ever rested on Charlemagne's head. Throughout the Frankish kingdoms, fully developed Caroline scripts were in use by the mid 8th century, being the earliest dated surviving examples of the script found in a Bible copied at Corbie in the 770 at the order of the abbot Maurdramnus.

This new style ultimately developed from Roman half-uncial and its cursive version, combined with features from the Insular scripts.

Caroline minuscule derived its models from diverse sources so that many scripts influenced its development.

Building on a foundation of scripts that had come before, including among others the Merovingian, Visigothic and Anglo-Saxon scripts, the Caroline minuscule was significant in a move away from the flowing cursive of previous scripts to a new, slightly more sober look. In actuality, the Caroline script was more a generic term to describe the related shift that most scribes were coming towards all around the same time. Without a doubt, Charlemagne's push to revitalize learning throughout his Empire contributed significantly to this, but it would not be until the very end of his reign and on past his death that the Caroline minuscule would gain fairly complete uniformity throughout what had been his kingdom.

Though Charlemagne desperately wished to be a learned man, it is unlikely that he ever gained full understanding of reading and writing. Caroline minuscule was created partly under the patronage of the Emperor Charlemagne (hence the term Carolingian which is applied to this script) though he himself learned to write late in life, and maintained that his fingers had been ruined for the pen by being trained to the sword.

According to his biographer Einhard, Charlemagne *temptabat et scribere tabulasque et codicellos ad hoc in lecto sub servicalibus circumferre solebat, ut, cum vacuum tempus esset, manum litteris effigiendis adsuesceret, sed parum successit labor praeposterus ac sero inchoatus.*

Charlemagne sent for the English scholar Alcuin of York to run his palace school and scriptorium at his capital, Aachen, where he was master from 782 to 796. The new minuscule was disseminated first from Aachen, and later from the influential scriptorium at Tours, France, where Alcuin retired as an abbot (796-804), and it was especially under his direction that the Caroline minuscule writing took the simple and graceful form which was gradually adopted to the exclusion of all other hands. The abbey of St. Martin of Tours was one of the principal centres from whence the reformation of the book-hand spread, and many considered the chief centre of this reform and produced the most beautiful manuscripts of this period –e.g. the Evangelary of Lothair and the Bible of Charles the Bald.

These manuscripts served as models for other monastic scriptoria throughout the Carolingian Empire, and by degrees the Caroline minuscule conquered the entire West.

Accompanying the reform of the minuscule scripts was a return to standard classical forms of the majuscule scripts such as Uncial, and also Half-uncial employed for display headings.

The scriptorium of St. Martin developed forms of Rustic capital and Half-uncial being responsible for receiving and purifying older book-hands, but its most important achievement was doubtless the creation of the minuscule, which became, except for titles, initials and the first lines of chapters, the writing used in the greater number of manuscripts.

DIFFUSION AND DURATION

Caroline minuscule was used between approximately 800 and 1200 (earliest extant example is from the 770). Codices containing pagan and Christian texts, and educational material were written in Caroline minuscule.

This script spread rapidly to other scriptoria throughout Western Europe, most widely where Carolingian influence was stronger.

Caroline minuscule eventually became a relatively standardized script over an area extending from Spain to Scandinavia, England to northern Italy.

The script was adopted in northern Italy in the early part of the 9th century, building on a base of existing script reform. However, relative political independence and the possession of a satisfactory indigenous script may have contributed to the survival of Beneventan minuscule in parts of southern Italy to circa 1300 (and even into s. XV in some provincial contexts).

Insular minuscule disappeared from the German monasteries of Anglo-Saxon foundation around the mid 9th century and was replaced by Caroline minuscule. A similar replacement took place in Brittany which had used its own characteristic form of Insular minuscule. The new style spread as far north as Denmark. Caroline minuscule was not adopted in England until the 10th century when it was associated with the reform of Benedictine monasticism.

In England the script was used for charters as well as for a book-hand when the language used was Latin. However, Insular minuscule was retained for English documents and books. Bilingual documents or books used both scripts, so that scribes were competent in both.

Caroline minuscule gradually replaced Visigothic script in Spain during the 11th century. Factors affecting its demise were the expansion of the Cluniacs into the country and the banning of the native script for ecclesiastical books in 1080 after liturgical reforms. For other works, the letter forms of Caroline minuscule gradually infiltrated the Visigothic script.

The Carolingian chancery did not immediately adopt this new script for charters or diplomas, retaining certain calligraphic flourishes from Merovingian chancery script, but in the time of Louis the Pious, the minuscule of the manuscripts began to be seen in official documents, although it was always more ornamental than the writing of manuscripts.

This minuscule script prevailed throughout Europe in the twelfth century. However, when the Gothic era came about, the script developed into Blackletter and became obsolete, thought it forms the basis of more recent scripts.
In fact, in the fifteenth century, when another reform of writing was inaugurated, the Italian copyists and typographers again used it as a model. It is ultimately the basis of our modern printed minuscules.

VARIETY OF STYLES

In dealing with a type of book-hand so widely diffused as was the Caroline minuscule in Western Europe, we must expect great diversity of style, of personal or local character, among surviving manuscripts.
It is impossible to describe within limited space, and without the aid of plentiful illustrations, all the varieties of handwriting which were developed in the different countries of Western Europe, where the Caroline minuscule was finally adopted to the exclusion of the earlier national hands. In each country, however, it acquired, in a greater or less degree, an individual national stamp which can generally be recognized and which serves to distinguish manuscripts written in different localities.

A broad line of distinction may be drawn between the writing of northern and southern Europe. The manuscripts of England, northern France and the Netherlands are closely connected. Indeed it is not always easy to decide as to which of the three countries a particular manuscript may belong.
From the southern Europe the influence of the Italian school of writing is manifest in the manuscripts of the south of France, and also, though later in time, in those of Spain. That elegant roundness of letter which the Italian scribes seem to have inherited from the bold characters of the early papal chancery, and more recently from Lombardic models, was generally adopted in the book-hand of those districts.

Besides, it is also evident that Caroline minuscule shows variations and changes in the letter forms in the process of time.

CHARACTERISTICS

The reform of writing undertaken in the monasteries on Charlemagne's initiative was inspired by the desire for correct and easily legible texts of sacred books. It resulted in the development of a hand both easy to write and to read, combining clarity of uncial with some of the swiftness of cursive.
Caroline minuscule was clear and uniform, with rounded shapes, disciplined and above all, legible. Clear capital letters and spaces between words became standard in Caroline minuscule, which was one result of a campaign to achieve a culturally unifying standardization across the Carolingian Empire.
The adoption of a more standardized form of writing coincided with an increase in the production of written works and their movements over greater expanses of territory. It signaled the return of a more literate mode of conduct of society.

Caroline minuscule also had a profound impact on the development of law during the Carolingian period.
The association with liturgical reform in some areas is also interesting. There appears to be some sort of mental association between what you write and how you write it, between orthodoxy of practice and orthodoxy of handwriting.
Caroline script generally has fewer ligatures than other contemporary scripts, although the ampersand, "æ", "rt", "st" and "ct" ligatures are common.
At first, abbreviations were few, but they increased in the tenth century.
Sentences begin with majuscules and are separated by points or semicolons. The words are nearly always well separated from one another.

LETTER FORMS

Caroline minuscule is an easy script for us to read as the forms of letters are very similar to those employed today in book typefaces.

The character of Caroline minuscule through the 9th and early part of the 10th century is one of general uniformity, with a contrast of light and heavy strokes, the limbs of tall letters being clubbed or thickened at the head by pressure on the pen.

Beneath this line you can see an image showing the *ductus* of the letters "c", "o", "q", "b" and "p", which are made up of two, three or four movements of pen.

As to characteristic letters the "a", following the old type, is, in the 9th century, still frequently open (ɑ) in the form of u.

The ascenders of the "b", "d", "l" and "b" broadened at the top.

The letter "d" often appears in an uncial form, with an ascender slanting to the left (ð), but the letter "g" retains its semiuncial form (ʒ) with the bows open and somewhat resembling the numeral 3.

The letter "i" (ı) no longer goes below the line and sometimes is dotted (i).

There is little turning of the ends of letters as "m"(m) and "n" (n).

The tall "s" (ſ) is frequently used.

EVOLUTION

Such is the system of writing which, thanks to its simplicity and clearness, spread throughout the West, and everywhere, except in Ireland, took the place of the national writings of the barbarian period, though each region wrote the script a little bit different.

In the 10th century it was, however, less regular, and ascenders began to slant to the right and were finished with a fork in the 11th. By the 12th century, Caroline letters become more angular and were written closer together, less legibly than in previous centuries; at the same time, the modern dotted "i" appeared.

Though the Caroline minuscule was superseded by Gothic hands, it later seemed so thoroughly 'classic' to the humanists of the early Renaissance that they took these Carolingian manuscripts to be true Roman ones and modeled their Renaissance hand on the Carolingian one, and thus it passed to the 15th century printers of books, like Aldus Manutius of Venice. In this way it is the basis of our modern typefaces.

This is a page of a manuscript of Terence written in Caroline minuscule about 825 A.D.

THE TYPEFACE "**Carolina minuscula**"

Indeed 'Caroline minuscule' is a style of typographic font, which approximates this historical hand, eliminating the nuances of size of capitals, long descenders, etc.
The so-called "**Carolina Minuscula**" font represents my particular vision of this script.
This typeface contains the most usual letter forms, abbreviations and ligatures which one can find in a manuscript written with this book-hand.

The following lines show a partial character set for "**Carolina minuscula**" font:

Upper case letters: ⲁ ℬ ℂ Ⲇ ℰ Ϝ Ⳑ ⱨ ⵏ ⵋ ⲕ ⳑ ⲙ ℕ ℴ ℘ ⵕ ℛ ⲋ ⲧ ⵘ ℴ ⲱ ⵝ ⲩⲍ

Lower case letters: ⲁ/ⲁ/ⲁ b c d/ⴆ e ƒ ⳅ ⱨ ⵏ/i j k l ⲙ ⲛ o p q ⲅ s/ſ ⲧ u ⲅ ⲱ ⵝ ⲩ ⲍ

The basic abbreviation form is an horizontal or waved line placed above a character to indicate the suppresion of a sign.

ˉ = common mark of abbreviation.

ū = um   ā̃ = am   ē̃ = em

Abbreviations:

℘ = pro (por)   p̄ = prae   ℗ = per (par/pre)
ⳉ = us, que, et, m   ⲉ = rum   ⳋ = con   ⁹ = us (os/ue)

ʾ = er (re)   ² = ur (or/ro)   These 4 characters are superscripts
‟ = am (an)   º = or   and appear above letters: ⲙ̇ⲧ̇ (*inter*)

Some letters have alternative forms:

ſ =   "tall" *s*
ⲉ =   *r* "rotunda"
ⲁ =   "open" *a*, very similar to the letter *u*.

There are not many ligatures in the Caroline minuscule script. Their use is avoided as far as possible.

ⵏⲧ = (rt)
ſⲧ = (st)
ⳍⲧ = (ct)
ę = "e" *caudata* ("æ" ligature)
Œ œ (rarely used)

Note that some characters are not directly accessible from the keyboard.

Signs of punctuation: ⁏ = *punctus elevatus*   · = *interpunctus*

SAMPLE

Titus Livius (*Ab Urbe condita*, XXIII). *Ms. Vaticanus Reginensis latinus* **762, f. 32 r** (circa 800 A.D.)

The text in the example immediately below has been written in Caroline minuscule and is a direct copy from that given as example of Uncial script.

Here is the replica of the text made with the "**Carolina minuscula**" font.

Note that the chapter heading is written in Rustic Capitals, and the first and second lines of the text are written in a Half-uncial style.

The rest of the text is in Caroline minuscule.

GOTHIC SCRIPT OR GOTHIC MINUSCULE

INTRODUCTION

During the twelfth and thirteenth centuries a number of factors influenced the development of writing styles. There was an increase in the level of literacy. The use and development of writing styles had become established. Literacy was no longer exclusive to the Church. New universities were founded, each producing books for business, law, grammar, history and other pursuits, not exclusively religious works for which earlier scripts typically had been used.

The books needed to be produced quickly to keep up with demand. Caroline minuscule, though legible, was time-consuming and labour-intensive to produce. It was large and wide and took up a lot of space on a manuscript. Hence, a more suitable script was required to meet the new needs. The resultant script became known as Gothic, a general title given to all post-12th century medieval hands that are not Humanistic.

Changes in alphabets dealt less with basic concepts and more with the design of forms. A kind of parallel with Gothic architecture is evident. As in architecture, where the rounded arch based on a circle gave way to the pointed arch, lettering designed changes in individual letters. Styles for artistic purposes were born as well. Perhaps the greatest factor influencing changes in letter designs was the advancement of printing and the invention of moveable type.

Apart from sympathy with Gothic architecture, there was a desire to save space, and the use of an oblique nib was also an important factor in the final form of Gothic letters.

The shortage of writing materials could not meet the demand for written works and, consequently, writing was compressed into less space which necessitated some style alterations.

As a result of these factors, Gothic arose to prominence during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Its narrow angular letters allowed for words to be compacted. There is a general narrowing of all the letters; which adds to the vertical effect; the spacing of letters became a matter of making equidistant upright strokes.

As a book-hand, it was popular with the scribes who had taken over much of the copying task from the churches. The business of this era also approached this sharp, angular style in the form of Gothic cursive minuscule, but it took longer to exhibit the broad lines of book hand Gothic. Gothic became the first widely used printing design to be spread by the emerging printing industry –and may still be found in newspaper titles at the present times.

Gothic letter styles, like the Caroline, experienced national variations, and had replaced most of the previous national Caroline styles by 1300 A.D. Gothic, in one form or another, became the major hand of Europe. Italy was an exception. Though much of Italy used a Gothic cursive, by about 1350 A.D. that style's illegibility and lack of aesthetic appeal prompted the development of new styles.

CONCEPT

The term "Gothic" was first used to describe this script by the Humanists of Renaissance Italy in the 15th century.

The name "Gothic" started as a term of deprecation; it was meant to be synonymous with rude or barbaric. To these men, anything that was done north of the Alps could not be considered otherwise; their entire interest lay in the revival of all the elements of classic antiquity. Gothic style has nothing whatever to do with the Goths; according to an obsolete meaning of the word, "Gothic" meant Germanic or Teutonic. This, if the pitfall of nationalistic interpretation is avoided, represents one clue to the entire period; The Gothic style was definitely northern. It was, however, a style greatly influenced by Saracenic art –an influence that resulted from the Crusades.

The term "Gothic" has many meanings, even within the limited circle of paleographers. In conformity with widespread practice, it is used as a generic name for all late medieval scripts that are not Humanistic. This negative definition is fully justified by the immense variety of shapes and aspects exhibited by late medieval scripts: angular or round, vertical or sloping, calligraphic or rapid, bold or thin, compressed or wide, with or without loops, etc. It is in accordance with the distinction between Gothic and Roman type used by the printers of incunabula. Of course, such a wide definition also embraces scripts that lack all or some of the features that normally are considered "Gothic".

Roughly, the Gothic period lasted from 1150 to 1500. Gothic script, however, continued to be used for the German language until the twentieth century. Schwabacher (1480 to 1530) and Fraktur (1500 to 1941) are notable scripts of this type, and sometimes the entire group of faces is known as Fraktur.

Finally it is worthy noting that "Old English" and "Blackletter" (so called from the dark appearance of a page that results from the small space between letters, words and lines, leaving therefore very little white space) which are sometimes used to denote Gothic letters in general and the severe style in particular, are names better avoided; they are extremely misleading and indefinite. Any letter may be made into a Blackletter by making the stems wider than the white areas between the strokes. Old English, if it means anything, indicates that this letter was also used in England during Gothic times. As an amusing commentary it may be mentioned that the Gothic letter, in its own time, was known as "littera moderna".

ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT

Gothic writing arose from the transformations of the Carolingian minuscule, much as Gothic architecture is derived from Romanesque. The transition was at first imperceptible, and most of the manuscripts of the first thirty years of the twelfth century do not differ from those of the preceding epoch. It is only noticeable that the letters thicken and assume a more robust appearance, and that abbreviations are more frequent. Soon changes are introduced: the regularity is more pronounced, curves are replaced by angles, the lower extremities of certain strokes are provided with more or less fine lines in the shape of hooks, which turn up to the right to join the next stroke; the upper curves of the letters "m" and "n" are replaced by angles. This script is usually known as Protogothic or Pre-Gothic (*littera protogothica / littera praegothica*). It encompasses the transition from Caroline minuscule to Gothic minuscule. In its primitive form it still showed an affinity to Caroline minuscule.
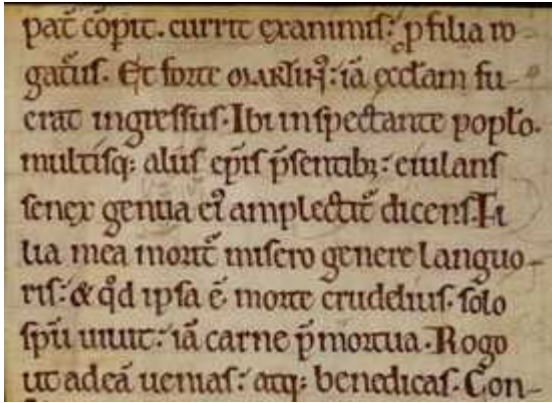
A fragment written in a beautiful Protogothic hand.
Life of St. Martin. England; mid-12th century. A.N.L. Munby collection.

Diplomatic writing follows ancient tradition until the thirteenth century, and retains the elongated ascenders, which sometimes end in a more or less curled stroke. Nevertheless, as early as about 1130 the influence of Gothic writing was felt in the charters of the North, some of which are even written in the characters used in manuscripts Among the most beautiful charters of this period may be mentioned those of the papal Chancery (*littera curialis*); in the twelfth century their writing had become simple, elegant, and clear.

At the end of the twelfth and during the thirteenth century the change in handwriting was more pronounced.
Manuscripts and charters in the vulgar tongue are more and more numerous. Writing ceases to be a monastic art; it no longer possesses its former beautiful uniformity and takes an individual character from the scribe. Abbreviations multiply; side by side with the elegantly shaped Gothic minuscule appears in official documents (registers, minutes, etc.) a smaller, more cursive writing, pointed and ligatured. The tendency during this period is to diminish the size and to thicken the letters. In luxuriously executed liturgical books, however, large thick letters, termed "letters of form" (*littera formata*), are used. This sort of letters persisted until the sixteenth century and served as a model for the earliest type used in printing. Finally, the diplomatic writing used in charters disappears in the first part of the thirteenth century, but the writing of books takes on a cursive character.

In the fourteenth century the writing of ordinary books becomes more and more slender, angular, and compressed. The "letter of form" is reserved for inscriptions, for copying the Bible and liturgical books. The same characters appear in official documents where cursive writing becomes more and more frequent, not only in minutes and registers, but even in certified copies (*expéditions solennelles*). It is evident that the scribes wrote more frequently and freed themselves from the ancient traditions.

This transformation became still more pronounced in the fifteenth century, when Gothic writing took on a national character in the various countries of Europe. The writing of charters then became finer and more cursive, the letters are less carefully formed and all joined together. At last printing which spread through the West about 1450, fixed the characters then in use. Cursive writing was much employed, even for the copying of books. Moreover, according to the temperament of individual scribes, gradual transitions occur between the "letter of form" and the cursive, this new mixed handwriting style is known as "lettre bâtarde" or "hybrid script".

Summarising: by the mid-12ᵗʰ century one can note the first signs of the development of the Gothic script in France. Gradually, scribes began making the Caroline letters more and more angular, as a series of broken strokes, rather than smooth, flowing strokes. They also began a practice known as "biting", in which adjoining letters with rounded parts (bows) would be shoved together so that the bows actually touched. Gothic script is also noteworthy for its large number of abbreviations.

 This script had wholly replaced Caroline by the thirteenth century. Gothic cursive scripts also began their rise in this period, under the influence of charter and notary hands.

The final development of Gothic was the appearance of hybrid (or bastard) scripts in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries, in which elements of both cursive and calligraphic Gothic hands were intermixed. At a later date, already in the printing era, the Schwabacher and Fraktur types were developed, but they were only used in limited areas.

Therefore is no one single "Gothic script". The quality of the book the script was used in, the purpose of the book, the date of the book, and the region it was produced in all affected the way the script looked on the page. Generally, the more expensive the book, the more calligraphic and clear the script.

Each region also produced its own versions of Gothic –for example, Italian Gothic (also called *rotunda*) tends to be rounded and very legible, while German gothic is distinctive for the number of fine hairline finishing strokes on letters.

OTHER CHANGES IN GOTHIC LETTERS

The major design factors have been indicated; there remain to be mentioned a few other changes that occurred in the alphabet during the evolution of Gothic script.

 In the early Gothic there was often a thickness added to the top of the ascender, on the left side; the later designs, especially those produced in the French and English areas, show a forked top on the ascender –theoretically, the top of the ascender, in the severe Gothic, should also be broken. The straight-backed "d" was finally replaced by the uncial designs; the tail of "g" which had been written in one stroke finally required an extra stroke. When the letters came to be written more closely together, the letters "i", "m", "n" and "u" often touching each other and allowing a chance for confusion, it was found necessary to put and identifying stroke over the "i". This stroke at length developed into the dot. To the long "s" (ſ) was assigned the initial and medial position in a word; the final "s" is always shaped like a figure eight; the long "s" was used with and without the hump at the left of the shaft. The point was added to the top of the "t" during the thirteenth century; gradually a differentiation between the design of "u", as the vowel, and "v", as the consonant, was effected. It was during the Gothic era that we see a noticeable "j" form of "i"; "j" and "i", however, were still interchangeable for the vowel and the consonant sound. Three letters, the "w", "y" and "z" –which had always been a bit foreign to Latin–, became, at last, definitely a part of the alphabet. The "z" was redesigned, acquiring a descender and, often, a stroke through the middle. From the end of the fifteenth century onward, influences that were not specifically Gothic –that of the Renaissance, particularly– determined the design changes in these letters.

Finally, it should be noted that in classical times there was no distinction between upper and lower case letters, and only in a few rare instances, however, is it possible to discover the consistent combination of one style of capital with small letters during late Carolingian times. In precedent scripts, Square Capitals, Uncials, and Rustic Capitals were being used for initials, versals (an initial used to start a verse) or chapter headings.

It was during Gothic time that the dual alphabet –the consistent use of capitals with small letters– finally came into being. Specific alphabets of capital letters were designed for the aforementioned purposes.

Here are a few examples of Gothic Capitals:

Typical Gothic capitals. 14ᵗʰ century.

Capitals from English and German area designs. 15ᵗʰ century.

Capital letters used by Gutenberg in his 42-line Bible. Mid-15ᵗʰ century.

Capitals of Schwabacher type, very popular script by the late 15th century and early 16ᵗʰ.

The famous Dürer design. Renaissance influence. Early 16ᵗʰ century.

Fraktur type: capitals used in the "Gebetbuch" (prayer book) of the Emperor Maximilian I. Early 16th century.

BOOK PRODUCTION

   The final hundred years of the Gothic period, roughly 1350 to 1450, saw a rapid increase in literacy caused by the expansion and spread of universities, which in turn, led to a huge demand for books. Many professions, including the newly literate merchant class, joined the ranks of the book-consuming public, which before was composed primarily of aristocratic patrons and monastic scholars. This demand for books — and the ever-growing length of the works to be copied — put pressure on scribes to produce more work and to do it faster. The prevailing formal book-hands of the late Gothic period were tall, tightly spaced, angular, elegant, and written slowly with great care. The luxury manuscripts of the thirteenth, fourteenth, and early fifteenth centuries in England and northern Europe were opulently decorated and illuminated treasures laboriously produced for the Church and for patrons among the nobility such as Geoffrey Luttrell, who was lord of the manor at Irnham and owned estates across England. The so-called Lutrell Psalter, completed around 1340 probably in Lincolnshire, is a notable example. It was made for Sir Geoffrey Luttrell. Its illumination, though less polished than that of some of the slightly earlier manuscripts of the period, is of unsurpassed vitality and marks the last stage of the East Anglian style. No directly comparable work is known.

   This codex is perhaps more famed for its many captivating miniatures, historiated initials and marginal illustrations of rural life in England in the 14th century, but its script is also a very fine example of Gothic *textura prescissa*. Today scholars are more inclined to see the Psalter's scenes as idealised versions of reality – they were, after all, designed to please Sir Geoffrey, not his workers.

   The miniature in the lower half of the folio (see left image below) shows Sir Geoffrey Luttrell, mounted and assisted by his wife and daughter-in-law. All three are dressed in livery bearing his Coat of Arms, as is the horse. The women's clothing shows the Luttrell livery "impaled" with that of their own families (Sutton and Scrope). The Latin inscription immediately above the illustration reads *Dñs* (= Dominus) *Galfridus louterell me fieri fecit* – Lord Geoffrey Luttrell had me made – indicating that he was the patron who commissioned the psalter.

These two pages are from a very famous manuscript, the Luttrell Psalter, now in the British Library.
Left image: Sir Geoffrey Luttrell mounted. Fol. 202v   Right image: Peasants at work. Fol. 207v

   Books were made during this time at scriptoria, commercial enterprises that accepted work and charged a fee for it; craft guilds set the work standards and prices according to apprentice, journeyman, and master levels of skill. The typical scriptorium had specific divisions of labor: scribes who cut their own quill pens, mixed ink, and copied texts; gilders who laid and burnished gold leaf in illuminated manuscripts; artists who painted miniatures; and rubricators, who added initial letters (or versals) — frequently in red ink (thus the title "rubricator" derived from the Latin word *ruber* meaning "red").

   Many scribes in the late fourteenth century were women and they worked alongside men in scriptoria.

CLASSIFICATION

In a work of limited scope, such as the present one, it is impossible to follow in detail the development and varieties of the several Gothic hands of the latter Middle Ages. We must content to illustrate the main line of our subject with typical examples.

The Gothic system of scripts is a complex hierarchy of formal and cursive scripts developed from the 12th century to the 16th century –and in use later in conservative areas and/or for specific purposes into the 20th century.

Its principal initial characteristics are the formation of distinct categories of script suited for use in a well preserved hierarchy of books and texts, from *de luxe* liturgical volumes to university textbooks, and the rediscovery of cursive scripts proper initially for documentary use, but also for book use from 13th century.

These scripts were used in a secular production context and the monastic scriptorium alike.

There is no other handwriting as widely divergent as is this classification of hands. Nothing beats the complexity of classification assigned to the Gothic family. Paleographers employ an impressive array of Latinate technical terms to designate variants of Gothic hands (*textura, bastarda, cursiva, rotunda, quadrata* etc) and also what they term grades of formality (*libraria, documentaria, formata, glossularis* etc), while these ought to be able to provide a comprehensive classification system, there is some variation in the terms and their use. It is also an attempt to place into categories something which actually exists as a continuum. The number of categories is at the discretion of the classifier; it does not represent an actuality in term of discrete classes which any trained eye could distinguish.

For this article, we will examine the three major categories: 1) formal Gothic (*littera textualis* or *textura*), 2) cursive Gothic (*littera cursiva*) and 3) hybrid or bastard Gothic (*littera hybrida* or *bastarda*).

1) FORMAL GOTHIC (littera textualis / textura)

"Textualis" or "textura", was the most calligraphic form of Gothic script and today is the form most associated with "Gothic". It derived from the Protogothic script which originated in northern France around the beginning of the 12th century.

The letters were literally woven together, often compressed, hence "textura" (from the Latin *texere* "to weave").

It was so called because the entire page looked like textured patterns, resembling a woven textile.

The appeal to the scribe was the focus on the whole word rather than one letter.

Gothic *textura* developed after 1190 became the popular script in the 13th century and continued to be the scribal favorite of the medieval period. Primarily used for sumptuous liturgical books.

Johannes Gutenberg carved a *textualis* typeface when he printed his 42-line Bible.

Gothic *textura* is also called "lettre de forme" (Latin: *formata* literally meaning letters of form). It has sharp corners and a tendency for the letters to touch and overlap.

Textualis was most widely used in France, the Low Countries, England, and Germany.

Some characteristics of the script are:

- Tall, narrow letters, as compared to their Carolingian counterparts.
- Letters formed by sharp, straight, angular lines, unlike the typically round Carolingian; as a result, there is a high degree of "breaking", i.e. lines that do not necessarily connect with each other, especially in curved letters.
- Ascenders (in letters such as b, d, h) are vertical and often end in sharp finials.
- When a letter with a bow (in b, d, p, q) is followed by another letter with a bow (such as "be" or "po"), the bows overlap and the letters are joined by a sharing upright stroke (this is known as "biting of bows").

Examples of "biting of bows": PO BE DE DO

- Similarly related is the form of the letter d when followed by a letter with a bow; its ascender is then curved to the left, like the uncial d (see images above). Otherwise the ascender is vertical and there is no overlap: DA.
- The letters g, j, p, q, y, and the hook of h have descenders, but no other letters are written below the line.
- The letter "a" has a straight back stroke, and the top loop eventually became closed, somewhat resembling the number 8. The letter s often has a diagonal line connecting its two bows, also somewhat resembling an 8, but the long s is frequently used in the middle of words.
- Minims, especially in the later period of the script, do not connect with each other. This makes it very difficult to distinguish i, u, m, and n, specially when they occurs together in a word. In Gothic script this would look like a series of single strokes (see example below). To avoid confusion in some manuscripts there is a narrow diagonal slash above the letter i. Dotted i and the letter j developed because of this. Minims may also have finials of their own.

 = INIMICUS

- The script has many more scribal abbreviations than Caroline, adding to the speed in which it could be written.
- Letters that have ascenders, in order to keep the letter square, have shorter ascenders.

Gothic textura has several variants. The elaboration in the treatment of minims (the basic lowercase vertical stroke) was the determinant in a descending hierarchy of four grades of *textualis*: *prescissa*, *quadrata*, *semiquadrata* and *rotunda*.

Gothica Textura Prescissa or sine pedibus

It is the most elegant and formal of the Gothic range of book-hands.

The term "prescissa" and "sine pedibus" refers to the way in which the minims of some letters such as "m", "n", "i" and some taller letters such as tall "s" and "f" lack feet, i.e. instead of ending with a serif (a small decorative stroke added to the extremities of a letter), they are cut off in a neat horizontal at the base line as the image below shows.

Bible, Psalms 88:8 - 24; 95:9 - 96:9
Manuscript in Latin on vellum.
England, late 13th century.
The text contains 18 lines in a formal Gothic book
script of highest grade (textualis prescissa).
Note the decorated initials in red and blue
alternatively and the full-length bar border.
MS 1555 The Schøyen Collection. Oslo. Norway.

Gothica Prescissa is easy to read because the letters, although angular, are large, clear, well formed and well separated.

This is perhaps the most painstakingly written of the Gothic scripts, with the distinguishing characteristic that the bottoms of the vertical strokes of many letters are finished off neat and square, without any kind of feet. This is hard work for the scribe.

The highly decorative nature of the script is evidenced by the elaborate curls that appear on "g", "h", "y" (ꬶ ꞗ ꭹ) and the low form of "s" (ꞩ). The letter "i" (ı̇) has a fine diagonal slash above it.

As with most formal Gothic scripts, there are two forms of "r" (r/ꞧ), one of which is the truncated form that appears after some vowels. There are also two forms of "s" (ſ/ꞩ), the tall and the short. The letters "u" and "v" are identical (ꭎ), as are "i" and "j" (ı̇). Ligatures and abbreviations are common: ꞇ ꞇ ꜳ ꜵ ẜ fi ꝺꞇ ꝺ 9 9 ʾ ˜ ᾿ ˜ ʒ ꝫ ꝓ ꝕ ā ē ī ō ū m̄ n̄ p̄ q̄ r̄

THE TYPEFACE "**Gothica Textura Prescissa**"

SAMPLE

This segment is part of folio 159v (psalm 93) from British Library MS 42130, the Luttrell Psalter, famous for its many captivating miniatures, historiated initials and its marginal drawings of everyday rural life in the early fourteenth century.

It was made for Sir Geoffrey Luttrell of Irnham (Lincolnshire) between 1320 and 1340, possibly in East Anglia, possibly in a London scriptorium. Its script is also a very fine example of Gothic *textura prescissa* "sine pedibus".

My "**Gothica textura prescissa**" font is very similar to the handwriting employed in this manuscript as seen below.

The font "**Gothica Textura Prescissa**" contains not only the basic Latin letters, but a full repertoire of characters including variants for a few signs.

- Upper case letters: ABCDEFGHIJKLM/M NOPQRSO/TU VWXYZ

- Lower case letters: a b c d/d e f g h i/ı j k l m n o p q r/ꝛ ſ/s t u v w ꝛ/ꝛ y/ẏ/p z/ȝ

- Conjoined letters ("biting of bows"): be bo de do pa po

- Abbreviations: ꝺ g ꝯ ꝰ ꝝ ȝ p p ā ē ī ō ū m̄ ñ p̄ q̄ r̄ ꜠ ꝫ ᵒ ᵘ ᷓ ᷓ ᷓ ᷓ

- Ligatures: ꝫ ꝗ æ œ ß fi ct ſt

- Special punctuation marks: ꞉ (punctus elevatus) · (interpunctus) ꞉ (punctus flexus) ♪ (punctus interrogativus)

  / ʾʺ (hyphens)

Gothica Textura Quadrata

This variant, developed from "prescissa", is still a very high quality book-hand, and this type also became the standard script for inscriptions either in stone or brass funerary memorials or on stained glass.

The term "quadrata" (squared) refers not so much to the shape of the letters as to the small diamond or square shaped serifs on the feet of the minims as the following image shows.
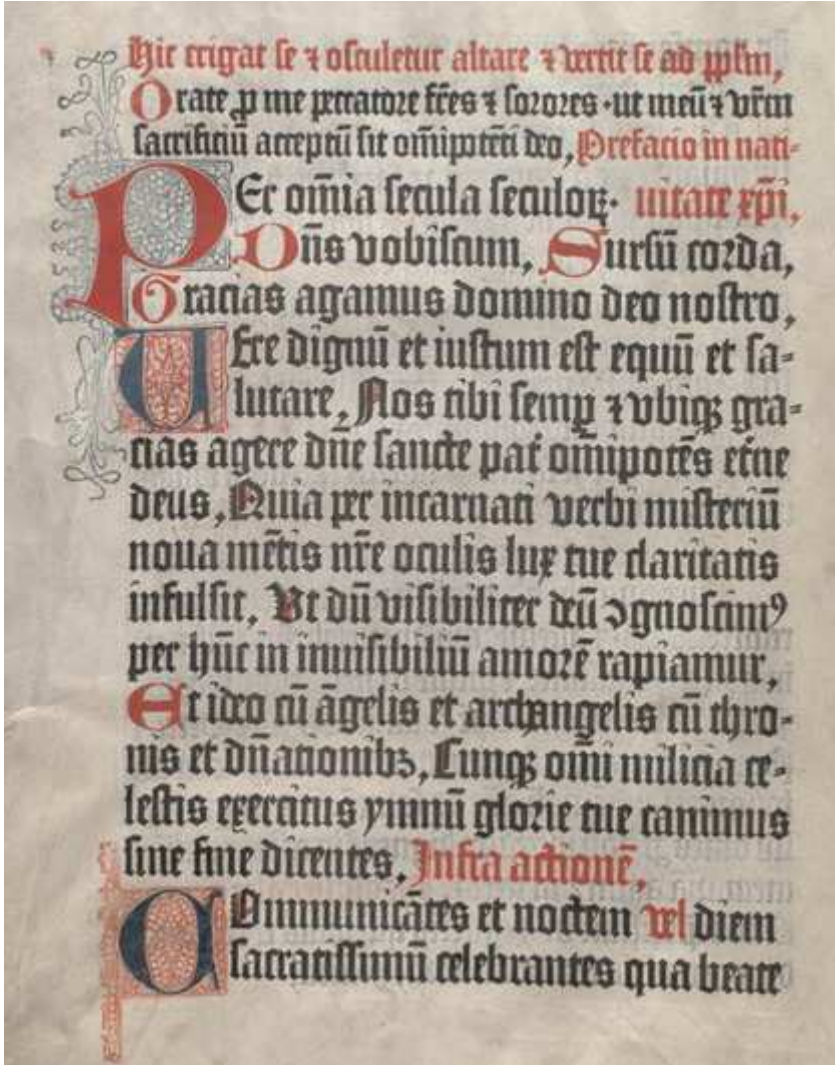
"Canon Missae", book printed by Peter Schöffer in 1484.
The typeface employed in this book is based on the "littera textura quadrata" book-hand.
The first printed books imitated the letter form of manuscripts including the use of abbreviations and ligatures.
Initials were usually "painted" by hand.

All letters have the characteristic of being very angular, with the bases of the letters finished off with little angular feet.

Letters such as "m", "n", "i" and "u" (m n i u) are made up of series of hooked strokes called minims. This can make them hard to resolve in words such as *inimicus* or *minimus*, for example. There are two forms of "r" (r/ɀ). The tall form of "s" (ſ) hooks to the right at the base, and there is also the short curly form (s). In some manuscripts the letters "u" and "v" are apparently distinguished from each other in this script, but this is a bit of an illusion as it is really a distinction between whether the letter occurs at the beginning or the middle of a word. The letters "i" and "j" are identical (i), or perhaps one could say that "j" has not been invented yet.

Gothic *textura* capitals varied from scribe to scribe. The freedom in creation of capitals may be due to the fact that until now no script had had its own set of capitals but had either enlarged its own script or called upon the traditions of earlier scripts (Uncial, Roman Capitals etc). So this was a new "field" and many variations were created.

THE TYPEFACE "**Gothica Textura Quadrata**"

SAMPLE

   The image below is part of folio 11 from BL Additional MS 24686, the Alphonso Psalter. It was made for Alphonso, the son of Edward I and Eleanor of Castille (he was christened after Eleanor's half-brother Alfonso X, hence the exotic name). He died in 1284, when the text of the Psalter had been written but before its decoration was finished. Here are the arms (the leopards of England, with a label) at the bottom left of the page. Like the Luttrell Psalter, this manuscript was possibly made in East Anglia, possibly in London.
   This is the opening page of the Psalter, known from the first word of Psalm 1 as a Beatus page**.** *Beatus* means 'blessed'.

   My "**Gothica textura quadrata**" font resembles closely the handwriting employed in this manuscript.
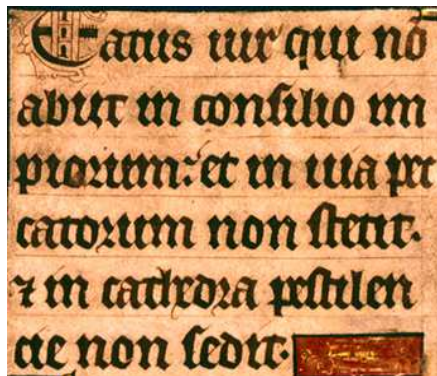
(B)Eatus uir qui nō
abiit in confilio im
piozum: et in uia pec
catozum non ftetit.
⁊ in cathedza peftilen
cie non fedit·
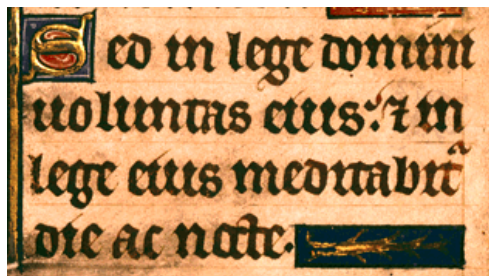
Sed in lege domini
uoluntas eius: ⁊ in
lege eius meditabit̃
 die ac nocte

 Note the forked top on the ascender of some tall letters such as "l", "b" etc, and the narrow stroke over the letter "i" to avoid confusion with "m" or "u".

   The font "**Gothic Textura Quadrata**" contains not only the basic Latin letters, but a full repertoire of characters including variants for a few signs.

♦   Upper case letters: A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

♦   Lower case letters: a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r ſ t u b x y z

♦   Glyph variants: d/d i/ı r/z ſ/s x/r y/p/ẏ z/ʒ A/A M/M N/N

♦   Abbreviations: Ɔ g ꝯ ʒʒ ā ē ī ō ū m̄ n̄ p̄ ꝓ q̄ r̄ ᷓ ᷓ᷄ ᷓ᷄ ᷓ᷄ _ ᷄ ᷄

♦   Ligatures: ȩ ct ſt æ œ be bo de do pp pp

♦   Special punctuation marks: ⁏ (punctus elevatus) · (interpunctus) ⁏ (punctus flexus)   ♪ (punctus interrogativus)

         / ′ ″ (hyphens)

Gothica Textura Semi-Quadrata

"Semi-Quadrata" is a Gothic minuscule script similar to the preceding, but of lesser quality and treating its minims inconsistently in that some have square feet and other are merely rounded off.

Image taken from an early 14th century manuscript written in northern France.

Gothica Textura Rotunda

The still elegant but much lower-grade book-hand of *textura* is called *rotunda* (rounded).
Instead of being finished with definite feet, or cut off abruptly, the bottoms of the minims are curved upwards in a cursive manner following the natural movement of the pen. This presumably made the script faster to write.
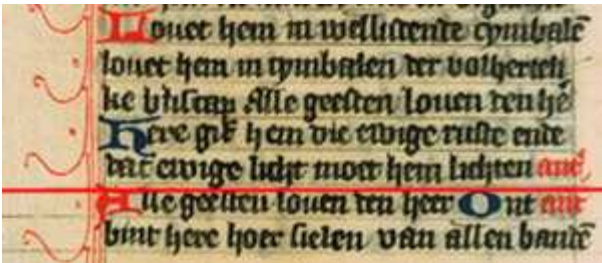
Example of "textura rotunda". Text in vernacular.

It is worth noting that this book-hand is not the same as the rotunda script of northern Italy. Ambiguities of nomenclature are rampant in Paleography.
Italian Gothic also is known as *rotunda*, as it was less angular and compressed than in northern centres.

A leaf from a Psalter (Psalms 50-51)
written probably in Bologna ca. 1320.
Text written in "textura rotunda".
Versals in red and blue alternatively.

The most usual form of Italian *rotunda* was the *littera bononiensis*, created at the University of Bologna in the 12th century and used until the 15th century. It retained the roundness of the Italian script but highly abbreviated and packed into tightly spaced lines (see example in previous page).

The script named *fere-humanistica* or *gothica antiqua* which Petrarca (1307-1374) started to use imitating "ancient lettering" is also included in this category.
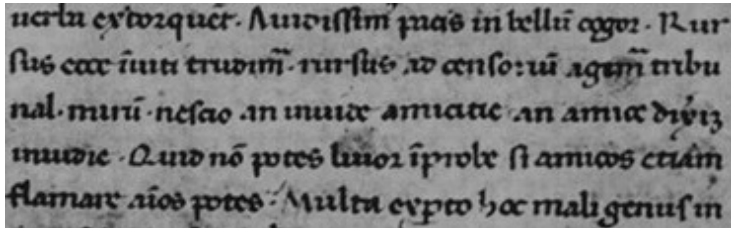
Sample of fere-humanistica hand. Circa 1370.

Another face of this class is the so-called "lettre de somme". This fine book-hand obtained its name from the fact that Fust and Schöffer used a type based on it for the printing of their *Summa Theologica* of St. Thomas Aquinas in 1467.
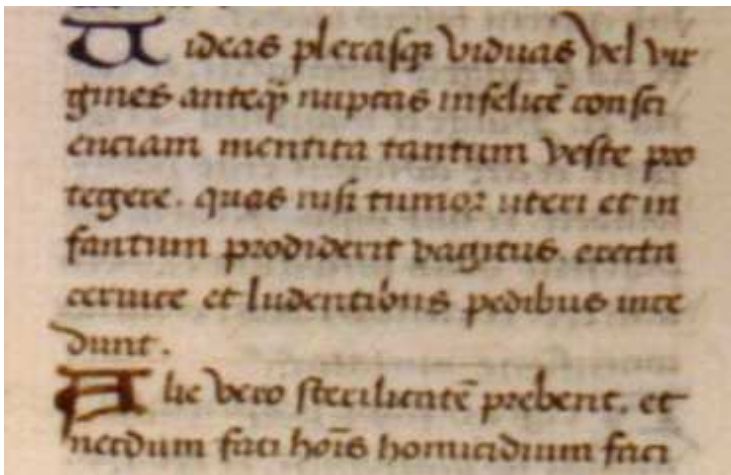
Segment of a manuscript written in "lettre de somme". Mid-15th century.

In Spain the book-hand known as "Spanish round-hand" or "redonda de libros" was created in the late 13th century. It joined a range of types and grades of Gothic, often related to Italian *rotunda*, as book-hands in use in that country.
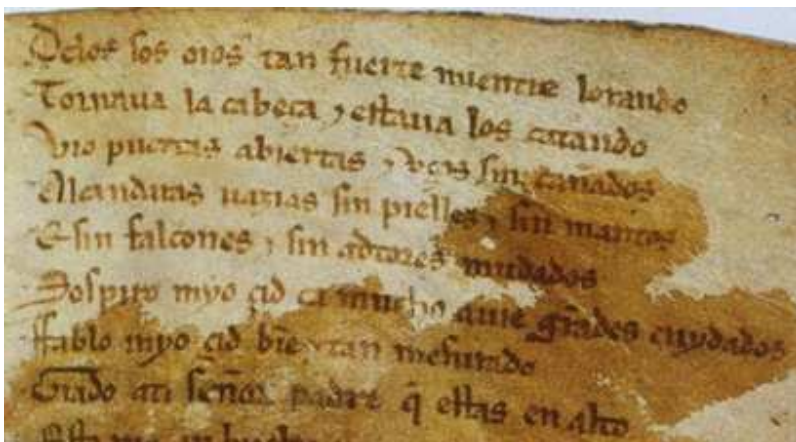
Beginning of the "Cantar de Mio Cid" (The Song of My Cid), epic poem of the mid-12th century, the earliest surviving monument of Spanish literature and generally considered one of the great medieval epics and one of the masterpieces of Spanish literature. The existing manuscript is an imperfect copy of 1307.

As seen above, many hands based on this "rotunda" script were produced.

The *rotunda* hand was also adapted to printing.

From the very beginning of printing both the texts and images of the manuscript were emulated in the printed version.

The manuscript exemplars were imitated and sympathized. This was true not only for decorations and illuminations but also for type styles. Ligatures and abbreviations were used equally in print and codices.

Since printed books imitated the notation of the manuscript as it was, thus the handwriting practice of using contractions and abbreviations of letters to save space and time was also maintained.

The image above is from an incunabulum which employs the rotunda style as main typeface in body text.
Missale Dominicanum seu Ordinis Praedicatorum (Venice, 1482).

In the course of the 15th century Gothic hands were replaced in Italy and neighbouring areas which had favoured the *rotunda* form of Gothic by the humanistic scripts.

My "**Gothica Rotunda**" font comes very close to the *rotunda* style as shows the following imitation of a text which appears in a book printed by Erhard Ratdolt in 1470.

The following lines show a partial character set for my "**Gothica Rotunda**" font:
The font also contains abbreviations and the most common ligatures:

♦ Upper case letters: A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

♦ Lower case letters: a b c ð/d e f g b i/ι j k l m n o p q r/ɀ ſ/s t u v w x y ɜ

♦ Ligatures and abbreviations: ﬆ ⁊ ꝛ ꝫ ꝛꝫ ⁹ ˜ ̃ ā ē ī ō ū m̄ n̄ p̄ ꝑ ꝗ r̄

♦ Special punctuation marks: ꞉ (punctus elevatus) · (interpunctus) ꞉ (punctus flexus) ⁊ (punctus interrogativus)
  / ́ ̋ (hyphens)

Gothica glossularis and Gothica notularis

From the 12th century onward, smaller and simplified variants of Gothic textura were introduced for the glosses, or commentaries which accompanied the text of many works, and for smaller books such as the miniature Bibles of the 13th century. These scripts were more rapidly written and very compact, and employed limited cursive features.

The variant used for glosses is known as *littera gothica glossularis*.
The university of Oxford produced its own variant (*littera oxoniensis*), very dense and highly abbreviated, for the production of heavily glossed textbooks.
Similarly the university of Paris developed the so-called "*littera parisiensis*" for the same purposes.

The variant used for notes is called *littera gothica notularis* or *littera notula*. This hand was practically confined to the 13th century, after which it was replaced by cursive.
In fact, *littera notula* indicates a script from a period wherein the oposition textualis vs. cursive is not yet firmly established. This was the case in the 13th century.
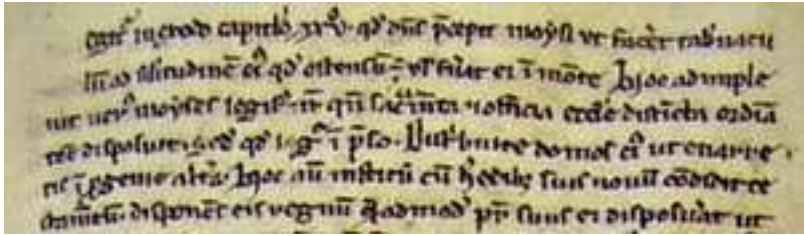
The Hague, KB : ms. 70 H 15, f. 1r; Northern France (Cambron?), second quarter or second half 13th century.

2) <u>CURSIVE GOTHIC</u> (littera gothica cursiva)

"*Cursiva*" refers to a very large variety of forms of Gothic script; as with modern cursive writing, there is no real standard form. It developed in the late 13th century as a simplified form of *textualis*, with influence from the form of *textualis* as used for writing charters. Gothica *textura* formed a fine display script for significant or prestige works, but more rapidly produced legible writing was needed. A range of styles of cursive developed for different purposes. *Cursiva* developed also partly because of the introduction of paper, which was smoother than parchment. It was therefore, easier to write quickly on paper in a cursive script.

Cursive letters are interconnected, written without lifting the pen. As a consequence cursive script has loops.
In *cursiva*, descenders are more frequent, especially in the letters f and s, and ascenders are curved and looped rather than vertical (seen especially in the letter d). The letters a, g, and s (at the end of a word) are very similar to their Carolingian forms. However, not all of these features are found in every example of *cursiva*, which makes it difficult to determine whether or not a script may be called *cursiva* at all.

As already mentioned, during Gothic times the practice of writing became ever more widespread, and by the 13th century there was a great increase in the production of the written word in terms of books, documents, government records and private legal matters and correspondence; no longer were the monasteries and chancelleries the sole centres of writing activity; the professional lay-scribe made his appearance –this calling became highly important as a means of livelihood to great number of needy and itinerant scholars. The greater the number of those who could write, however, the more numerous became the styles and designs of everyday writing –because, while the formal designs were well established and not too easily tampered with, the informal every day hands derived from them were subject to the varying individualities of the writers.
Furthermore, cursive scripts tended to hybridise and change so that a great diversity of forms gradually developed.
On the other hand, it should be noted that even the designation of book-hands and document hands reflects usual convention rather than absolutes of classification, as scribes sometimes used scripts normally used for books in documents and vice versa. The hybridization of book and document hands in the later middle ages led to a proliferation of script styles for divers purposes.

Numerous national styles emerged, some transient, some enduring, some ornate, some extremely simple.
It is almost impossible to give a detailed account of the individual current hands used by Gothic scribes in the various areas; that is not at all necessary and would, if anything, confuse the general picture.
It is sufficient to mention that cursive scripts appear in different forms and there is also regional variation.
In this article I will briefly examine only the major national forms of cursive Gothic.

Italy

Italian cursive developed in the thirteenth century from scripts used by notaries. The more calligraphic form is known as *minuscola cancelleresca italiana* (or simply *cancelleresca*, chancery script), which developed into a book-hand, a script used for writing books rather than charters, in the fourteenth century. Cancelleresca influenced the development of *bastarda* in France and Secretary script in England.

France

French cursive was used from the 13th century to 16th century, when it became highly looped messy and slanted.

Germany and Flanders

German cursive is generally similar to the cursive scripts in other areas, but forms of *a*, *s* and other letters are more varied.
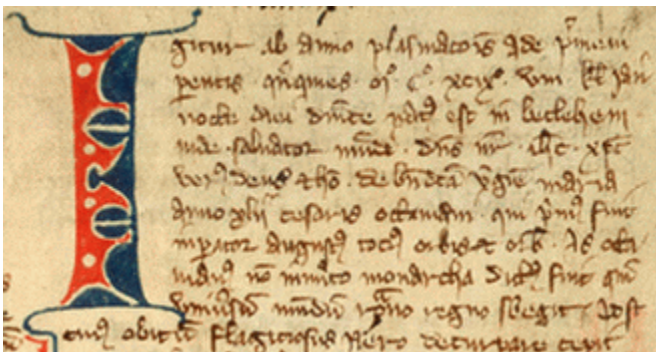
Part of a page from a manuscript written in a Gothic German cursive hand.
Leiden, UB : ms. BPL 2429, f. 1r; Leiden, c. 1360

England

By the end of the 13th century the cursive hands −replacing *littera oxoniensis*− evolved for literary purposes too, and were fully developed by the time of Chaucer.

From Chaucer's time (late 14th century) to the death of Skelton (1529), there were in use in England two types of cursive scripts called *anglicana* and *secretary*, and amalgams of *textura* and cursive known as hybrid or bastard script (see the following chapter devoted to this script).

- Anglicana

The chief literary cursive hand at the time of Chaucer was *anglicana*, the earliest cursive Blackletter used in England, which was a very round and looped script. It also had a squarer and regular counterpart: *anglicana formata* (=more "formal").

Though it was probably imported in its earliest form from France, it has been given the name *anglicana* because of its widespread and distinctively English use.

Originally a documentary hand, it came to be used as a book-hand.

It first appeared in England in the 12th century as a correspondence hand, and was in general use by the end of the 13th century: it predominated until close on the middle of the beginning of the 15th century, and survived in a degenerate cursive form until the 16th century.

Sample of anglicana from a manuscript written in England, mid-14th century.

Among the many modifications of *anglicana* in the 14th century was the development of the so-called *anglicana formata*, based partly on *textura* from which it acquired a squatter and squarer appearance, some broken strokes and hooked serifs. It employed thicker and more angled pen strokes than for normal *anglicana* and its ascenders were somewhat taller and usually arched. The graphs were not otherwise different except that a diamond-shaped form of small capital S was used in final position and the use of the circular "e" was usually limited to a type of ligatured "re". At its best, it was a comely though rather congested script, and it is understandable that it held its way as a formal book-hand for most books of the first half of the 15th century –apart from those of high-grade.

The *formata* form was employed until the 15th century and was also used to write vernacular texts.

Sample of "anglicana formata". England, second quarter of the 15th century.

- Secretary Script (also known as Court hand)

No sooner was *anglicana* at its height than it was challenged by another cursive script as the general-purpose documentary and book-hand below the class of *formata*.

Though the earliest forms of *secretary* seem to have originated in Italy, it was a direct importation from France during the reign of Richard II, and is found in chancery warrants in the third quarter of the 14th century. It steadily grew in popularity and was widespread by the middle of the 15th century.

It is a much more angular hand than *anglicana*, which looks quite rounded by comparison, being written with an angled nib with a studied contrast of thick and thin strokes.

It is a much more variable hand than *anglicana* with respect to size, slope and range of graphs. Though more angular than *anglicana*, secretary could be written rather more quickly, and effected a greater cursiveness by a large number of diagonal links, some of which are so faint as to be almost invisible.

Secretary script has a somewhat haphazard appearance, and its forms of the letters "a", "g", "r" and "s" are unique, unlike any forms in any other English script.

It never attained a *formata* grade which could rival *anglicana formata*, but none the less achieved a degree of elegance combined with compactness to provide a very serviceable quasi-formal book-hand.
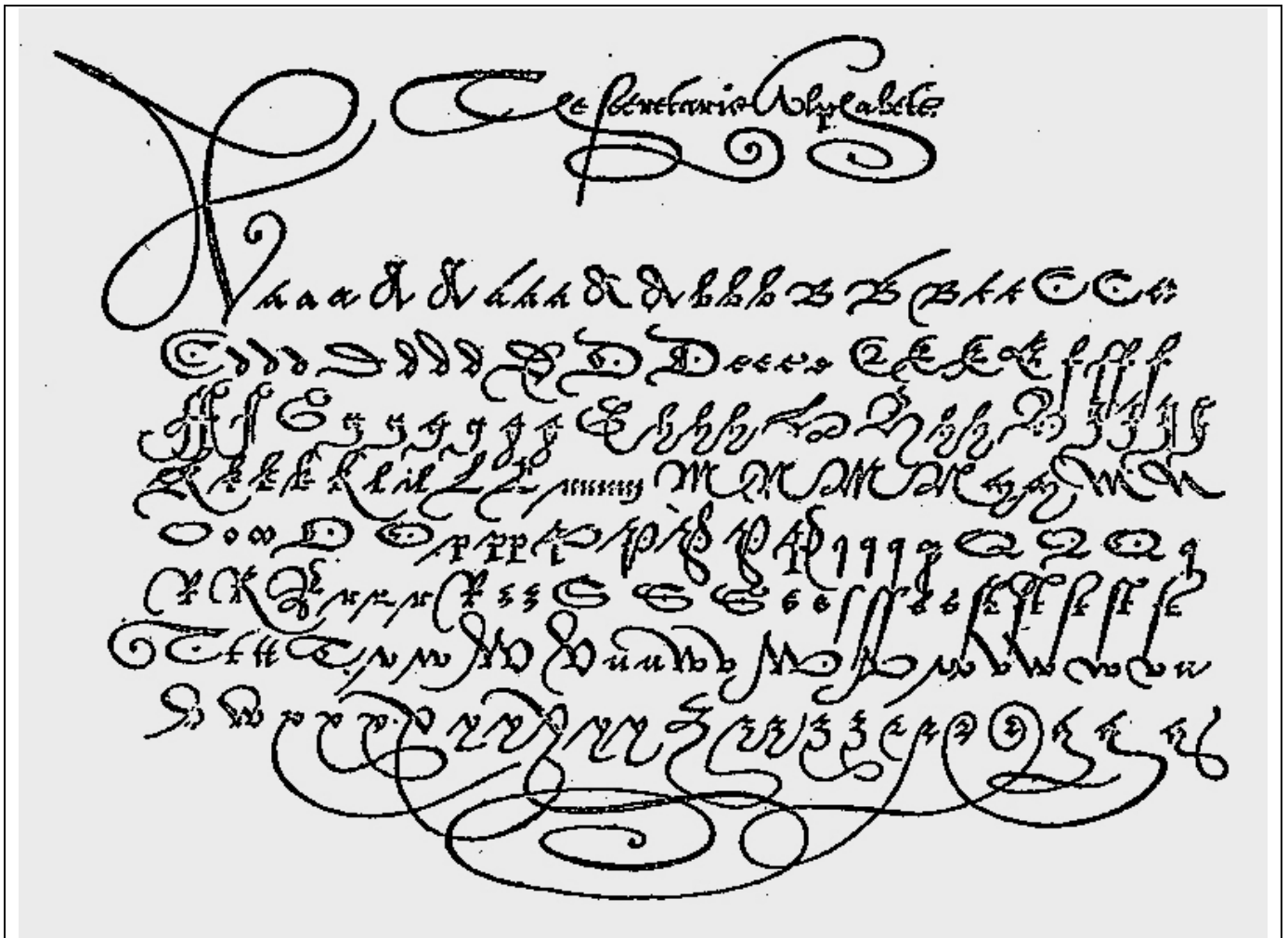
Sample of secretary script. The sheet displays a complete set of uppercase and lowercase letters including variants.

THE TYPEFACE "**Gothica cursiva**"

My "**Gothica cursiva**" typeface has been designed to give some of the feel of the Gothic cursive handwriting, but is not based on a specific type because there is not a real standard form.

The following imitation shows a text written with this font which has been freely copied from the Papal Bull entitled "Solet annuere" promulgated by Pope Honorius III in 1223 confirming the rule of St. Francis.

Honorius Episcopus servus servorum Dei dilectis filiis, fratri Francisco et aliis fratribus de Ordine Fratrum Minorum, salutem et apostolicam Benedictionem: Solet annuere Sedes Apostolica piis votis et honestis petentium desideriis favorem benivolum impertiri. Eapropter, dilecti in Domino filii, vestris piis precibus inclinati, ordinis vestri regulam, a bonae memoriae Innocentio papa, praedecessore nostro, approbatam, annotatam praesentib, auctoritate vob apostolica confirmamus...

Transcription: Honorius Episcopus servus servorum Dei dilectis filiis, fratri Francisco et aliis fratribus de Ordine Fratrum Minorum, salutem et apostolican Benedictionem: Solet annuere Sedes Apostolica piis votis et honestis petentium desideriis favorem benivolum impertiri. Eapropter, dilecti in Domino filii, vestris piis precibus inclinati, oridinis vestri regulam, a bonae memoriae Innocentio papa, praedecessore nostro, approbatam, annotatam praesentibus, auctoritate vobis apostolica ...

The font "**Gothica Cursiva**" contains not only the basic Latin letters, but a full repertoire of characters including variants for a few signs.

♦ Lower case letters: *a b c d e f g h i j k l m n ñ o p q r ſ t u v w x y z*

♦ Upper case letters: *A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V X Y Z*

♦ Special signs (ligatures, abbreviations and glyph variants): *a œ b b t & h h j j k l m̄ ꝛ ꝝ*

œ ꝑ ꝑ ꝑ p̄ p̆ p̆ r ꝫ 2 6 ꝰ ꞌ ſ ſt ū x z

3) <u>BASTARD GOTHIC OR HYBRID GOTHIC</u> (littera bastarda / littera hybrida)

The inclusion of the term "hybrida" in the nomenclature of a script indicates that the script consists of a mixture of formal and cursive elements.

"Hybrida" is also called "bastarda" (literally *illegitimate*) especially in France where is known as "lettre bâtarde", and, as its name suggests, refers to a hybrid form of the script. It is a mixture of *textura* and *cursiva* developed in the mid-14th century.

Simply stated, the term "bastard hand" implies a union between an informal or "base" script, such as any of the Gothic cursive hands, and a formal or "noble" script such as *textura*. Bastard therefore combines peculiarities of two genres of script: from *textura*, it borrowed vertical ascenders, while from *cursiva*, it borrowed long "s" and "f", single-looped "a", and "g" with an open descender –similar to Carolingian forms.

The gap between *cursiva* and *textura* was bridged by means of the Bastard scripts.

Bastard hands were written with varying degrees of deliberation depending on the level of elegance and formality desired, or the speed required. When the emphasis is on speed, as in Bastard writing, it is easier to see the individual peculiarities of the hand of the scribe doing the writing.

Some Bastard writing was incorporated into luxury manuscripts, along with miniature paintings and time-consuming decorated and illuminated initial letters. Notable among these are the French and Belgian "Books of Hours" of the fifteenth century in which Bastard writing became a formal book-hand in its own right, taking on many of the stylistic elements and overall color of *textura*, but with cursive elements of speed and fluidity. This writing had a liveliness and charm lacking in nearly all *textura* writing which, although bold, powerful, and majestic, tended to be stiff and formal.

Some of the French and Belgian Bastard manuscripts exhibit writing that is among the most beautiful and eye-pleasing of all time. Despite its derogatory label, Bastard scripts can be extremely handsome, and was used for some high-status manuscripts and luxury vernacular books.

It is hard to document the many variations of this script as it existed for at least three centuries and has many national variants as well. It was very popular in England and on the Continent, and was introduced on a large scale in the northwestern Europe around 1425. It later took a back-seat to the more readable, popular Renaissance script styles.

Bastarda is a vast category which encompasses more variations than can reasonably be catalogued.

Again we must content with following its main lines of development.

France and Low Countries (" lettre bâtarde" –formerly known as French humanistic)

The best known *bastarda* is that affected fifteenth-century script styled from the French chancery cursive, mostly inclined slightly towards the right with or without loops, which is written with high contrasting between thin and thick strokes, and separately appending shafts of "n" and "m", the last ones, within the word, being mostly fractured and arched slightly inwards.

Bastarda acquires an elegant prickly character through its pointed descenders, through its forms of "t" and "st", and through small points of "e", "g" and "s".

While it has some cursive qualities, as some letters appear to be joined, it is a formal and carefully written script.

Used mainly for French texts, it becames the court hand *par excellence* under Philip the Good and Charles the Bald, but was also much used in France into the sixteenth century.

The "lettre bâtarde" was widely used by scribes in the court of the Duchy of Burgundy, for which it is called "lettre Bourguignone" or simply *Burgundia*.
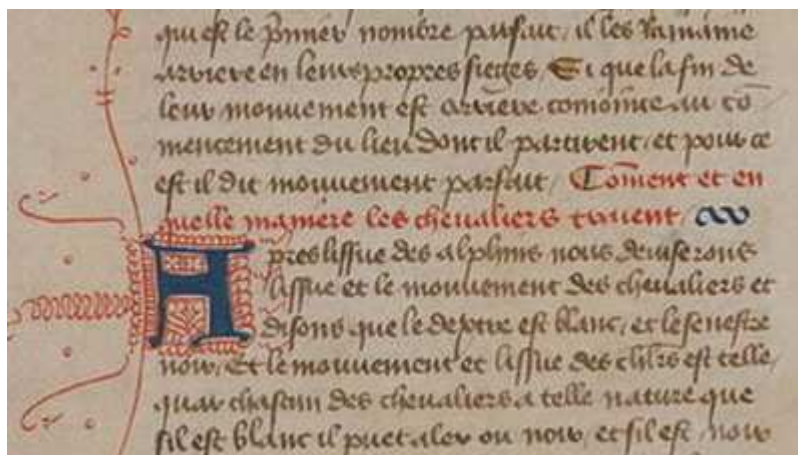
A sample of "lettre Bourguignone".
Text written in French, 15th century.

In the French *bastarda*, the annoying manierism of bearing down on the quill when making the long "s" (ſ) and the "f" (f) is noteworthy –a speckled page was the usual result.

The distinctive ascenders and descenders of "f" and the long form of "s" are curved and tapering with double pen strokes.

The short form of "s" (ẟ) is a double closed loop, as found in some cursive scripts of this date.

The letter "d" is usually of an uncial type (ẟ) and pointed at the bottom, although a "flagged-d" also occurs (ẟ/ẟ).

As usual in the Gothic scripts, there are two forms of "r" (r/ɀ).

The letter "v" (℣) is commonly differentiated from the letter "u" (u) when it occurs at the beginning of a word, but "u" is always used in the middle. The letter "v" is sometimes started with a flourish form (ʋ/ᵥ) from the upper left.

The letter "h" (ß) is swept back in a point to the left.

The letter "w" (w) is based on two joined "v's".

The letter "o" (o) is pointed at top and bottom -the *mandorla* shape- typical of Schwabacher type.

The letter "y" (ℽ) has a straight left-hand stroke with a curved back-stroke.

Although the letters are angular, there are no rows of minims, as some ends of letters finish in a tapered point rather than with feet or an upward kink, so that the letters "m" (m), "n" (n) and "i" (ɩ) are easily distinguished.

SAMPLES

The images below show two segments from two manuscripts which use two different types of bastarda hand.

Records of the Hundred Years' War,
"convocation des trois etats" (1356).
Text in French, Belgium, ca. 1490.

Book of Hours. Text written in Latin.
Southern Netherlands, ca. 1470-1500.

THE TYPEFACE "**Gothica bastarda**"

   My "**Gothica bastarda**" typeface has been designed to give some of the feel of *bastarda* handwriting, but is not based on a specific type because there is not a real standard form.

   The following imitation shows a text written with this font which has been freely copied from a late 15th Book of Hours from France, from a private collection

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The following lines show a partial character set for "**Gothica bastarda**" font:

Upper case letters: 𝕬 𝕭 𝕮 𝕯 𝕰 𝕱 𝕲 𝕳 𝕴 𝕵 𝕶 𝕷 𝕸 𝕹 𝕺 𝕻 𝕼 𝕽 𝕭 𝕾 𝕿 𝖀 𝖁 𝖂 𝖃 𝖄 𝖅

Lower case letters (including variants): a/a ß/ƀ c d/ð/ɔ e f g h i/ı j k l m n o p q/q r/z ſ/s t u ꝓ/�v w x y/ẏ ʒ/ʒ

The font also contains abbreviations and the most common ligatures: ⁊ ꝑ � ꝛ ɔ g ꝝ ʒ ã ẽ ĩ õ ũ m̃ ñ p̃ p̃ q̃ r̃ ′ ″ / : · ·

England

In England two broad types have been recognised: *bastarda anglicana* which appeared in the mid-14th century, and *bastard secretary*, which appeared later and was derived from the imported *secretary* hand.

As often happens when two or more distinctive scripts are current, *secretary* and *anglicana* often borrowed from one another in features of general style and in use of graphs. Both scripts became combined with *textura* to form what are now known chiefly as "hybrid scripts", though the term bastard (*bastarda*, i.e. "not aspiring to nobility") is still prevalent, being derived from the practitioners themselves.

Hybrid *anglicana,* also known as *bastarda anglicana,* developed in the middle of the 14th century, and was perfected by the beginning of the 15th century. Its basic difference from *anglicana* is that it was slightly larger; more liberally spaced and often employed the *quadrata* or *semi-quadrata* system of serifs. Somewhat easier to write than *textura formata*, it occurs in deluxe manuscripts and is used for display purposes in others where *anglicana formata* is the basic script.
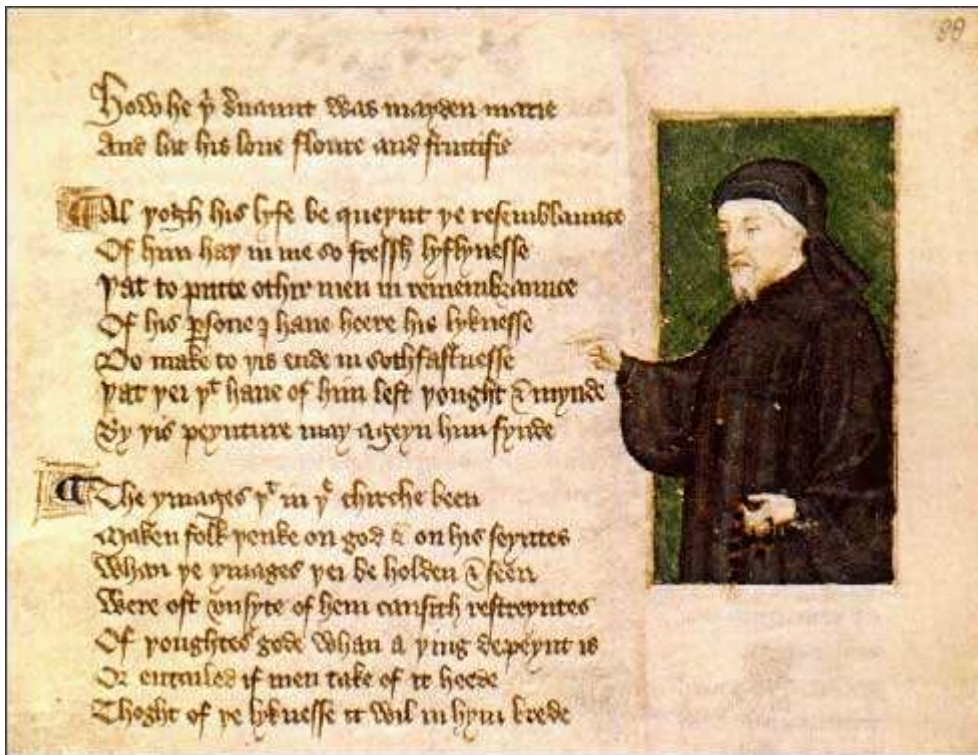
*Sample of anglicana bastarda hand. Image taken from "The Regiment of Princes" (1412)
of Thomas Hoccleve. The manuscript above was written in England circa 1430-1440.
Text in Middle English. The image on the right is a portrait of Geoffrey Chaucer.*

Attempts by 15th century scriveners to upgrade *secretary* resulted in several forms of hybrid *secretary* both in England and on the Continent –a French and German variety is known as *brevitura*.
The hybrid *secretary* hand was far more popular than *textura* and occurs quite frequently in the more formal manuscripts. It was of special service in works divided into text, translation and commentary and therefore requiring differentiation and levels of formality of script.

With the advent of printing in England, at the end of the 15th century, the medieval penman's skills were no longer needed for books and so they turned their attentions to the teaching of writing which had spread to the middle classes.
Every writing master would own a collection of exemplars of common hands (both book and court) for teaching purposes.
One such collection is the anonymous "A newe booke of copies" published by Thomas Vautroullier in 1574 which contains divers sorts of hands, such as the English and French *secretaries*, and bastard *secretary*, Italian, Roman, chancery and court scripts.
Only one copy of the book has survived and currently resides in the Bodleian Library, Oxford.

- Bastarda Anglicana

The gap between *cursiva* and *textura* was bridged mainly by means of the *bastarda* scripts, whose name —despite all variety in their actual appearance— allows one to say that they combine peculiarities of two genres of script.

Various trends lend to a bridging of the gap between *textura* and the cursives —originally the expression of a contrast— that came about in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries in multifarious ways.

The best known *bastarda* —see page 68 for more details— is that affected fifteenth-century script styled from the French chancery cursive, mostly inclined slightly towards the right with or without loops, which is written with bold contrasting or hair or broad strokes. It acquires an elegant prickly character (*Bourgouignonne*) through its pointed descenders, through its forms of "t" and "st", and through small points of "e", "g" and "s". The bold pointed "f" and a straight "s", a common characteristic of cursive book scripts, is the most distinguishing feature here.

These fat, sloping (and sometimes extremely sloping) letters, which were artificially made much bolder than any other letters, contrast with the overall somewhat vertical character of the script. Their emphatic appearance on the page creates, at first sight, a confusing and restless impression, which is special to this type of cursive.

Another internal contrast in *bastarda* consists in the combination of roundness and angularity. It is close to its cursive models in maintaining essentially round letter forms, but it is full of angular and spiky details, in *bastarda* taken to extremes.

In very calligraphic execution quadrangles were sometimes added at the headline and the baseline, which bring this script even closer to *textura*, although its fundamentally different letter forms prevent it from being confused with *textura*.

A final and parallel distinctive feature in *bastarda* as compared with other cursives is the relative shortness of the ascenders and descenders, giving the script a large height of the letter bodies unusual in cursive.

Associated with this trend is the very limited exploitation of loops at the top of the ascenders. While these are very visible or even emphasized in other cursives, such in *cancelleresca*, in *bastarda* they are often very small, not closed at all, or reduced to a slight incurvation of the ascender to the right.

Used mainly for French texts, *bastarda* becomes the court hand *par excellence* under Philip the Good (1396-1467) and his son Charles the Bold (1433-1477), but was also much used in France into the sixteenth century. It affects the scripts of England and the Low Countries.

Of the two English *bastarda* , the *bastarda anglicana*, which appears already in the mid-fourteenth century, still retains the two-tiered "a" up to 1500, while the later "bastard secretary" comes more under the influence of the French "letter bâtarde".

LETTER FORMS

A)- <u>Lower-case letters</u>.

Distinctive letters: This is a neat and formal hand and many of the letters closely resemble those of a formal Gothic book hand (*textura*). The letter "d" (ꝺ/ẟ) has a looped ascender and "k" (ꝁ) has the fancy elaborations found in the chancery hand of the period. The letters "b" (ƀ) and "l" (ſ) also have a loopy appearance. The letter "a" may appear with (ɑ) or without (ɑ) a fully looped ascender.

As is normal in Gothic scripts, there are two forms of "r" (r/ꝛ) and two forms of "s", the tall (ſ) and the short and curly (s). Sometimes is found a third variant of "s" (ơ) which resembles a Greek *sigma*. The letter "w" (ꝩ/ꝩ) is elaborate and curly, as is usual, almost as if getting to write "w" in an English text required a bit of a celebration. The special letter for "th" (þ), known as *thorn*, somewhat resembles a "y" (y), but without the curled descender.

The letters "u" and "v" are interchangeable (u/v).

A few abbreviations are sporadically employed (ꝑ, ꝫ).

B)- <u>Upper-case letters</u>.

The scripts within the general term *Gothic littera bastarda*, or simply *bastarda*, varied from extremely cursive to markedly *formata*.

A cursive *bastarda* was served with equally cursive capitals, whereas a *bastarda* similar to the *textura* hand will show the basic shapes of the capitals used in the *textura* scripts. The major difference is in the degree of care (and consequently time) taken by the scribe.

The more elegant version employed, the more carefully and creatively produced capitals.

Where *bastarda* virtually replaced the *textura* scripts as an elegant presentation hand, it might even be accompanied by the grand versals.

The simple rule is: use a capital as fine as your script or better; never meaner.

THE TYPEFACE "**Bastarda Anglicana**"

The "**Bastarda Anglicana**" font is designed to imitate the Bastard Anglicana handwriting.
This following passage comes from a 15th century copy of Thomas Hoccleve's *Regiment of Princes*, composed around 1412
(British Library, Harley 4866).

Transcription:
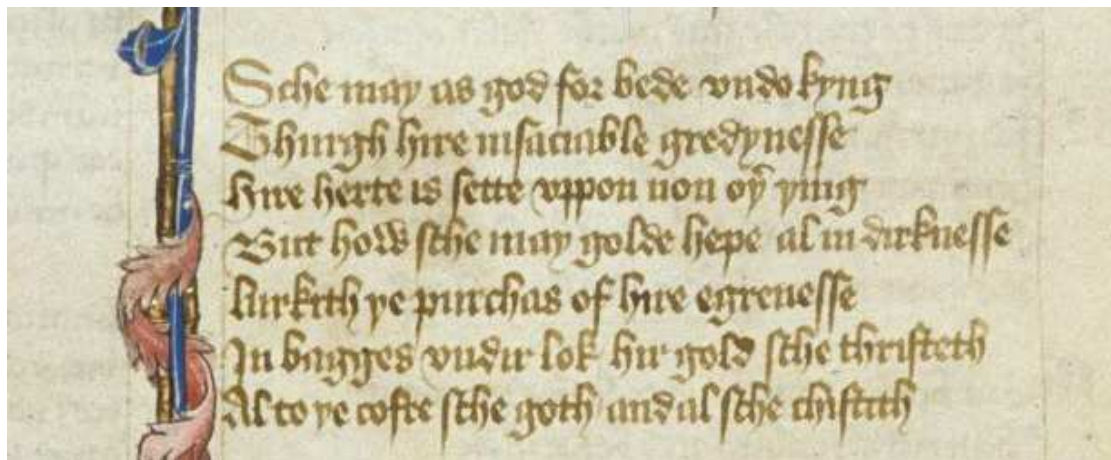
She may, as God forbede, undo kyng
Thurgh hire insaciable gredynesse;
Hire herte is sette upon non othir thyng
But how she may gold hepe. Al in dirknesse
Lurkith the purchas of hire egrenesse;   4485
In bagges undir lok hir gold she thristeth;
Al to the cofre it goth and al she chistith.

The following lines show a partial character set for "**Bastarda Anglicana**" font:

Upper case letters (including glyph variants): A/A B C D E F G H/H I J K/K L/L M N O P
Q/Q K/R S/S T/T U/V B/V W/W/W X/X Y Z/Z

Lower case letters: a/a b c d/d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r/z s/f/σ t u v/v w/w x y z

Germany

- Schwabacher

A curvilinear version of "lettre bâtarde" known as "Schwabacher" came into use in Germany and Switzerland around 1480. The origin of the name remains unclear; some assume that it was designed by a typeface carver from the village of Schwabach who worked externally and was thus referred to as the Schwabacher.

This script combines characteristics of both *textura* and *rotunda*, and is, therefore, a hybrid script which compromised formal and informal elements. The influence of the baroque element of the Renaissance is also evident in Schwabacher.

Lowercase characters are relatively wide and double-angled, and there are a great number of rounded elements:

a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z

The more characteristics letters are the "a", "d", "g", "h" and "o".

It is apparent that the "a" has been returned to an earlier state; the "d" is pointed at the bottom; "o" is given a point at top and bottom.

Uppercase characters are quite wide and fairly simple, with a number of rounded elements:

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

Schwabacher soon became the usual printed typeface and was predominant in Germany from about 1480 to 1530, and this style continued in use occasionally until the 20th century.

Around 1490 the Schwabacher reaches its completion among other things in the well-known *Schedel's World Chronicle* printed by Anton Koberger in 1493.

Most importantly, all of the works of Martin Luther, leading the Protestant Reformation, as well as the Apocalypse of Albrecht Dürer (1498) were printed in this typeface.

In the early 16th century, already in the printing era, this type was displaced by a more expressive one called "Fraktur"
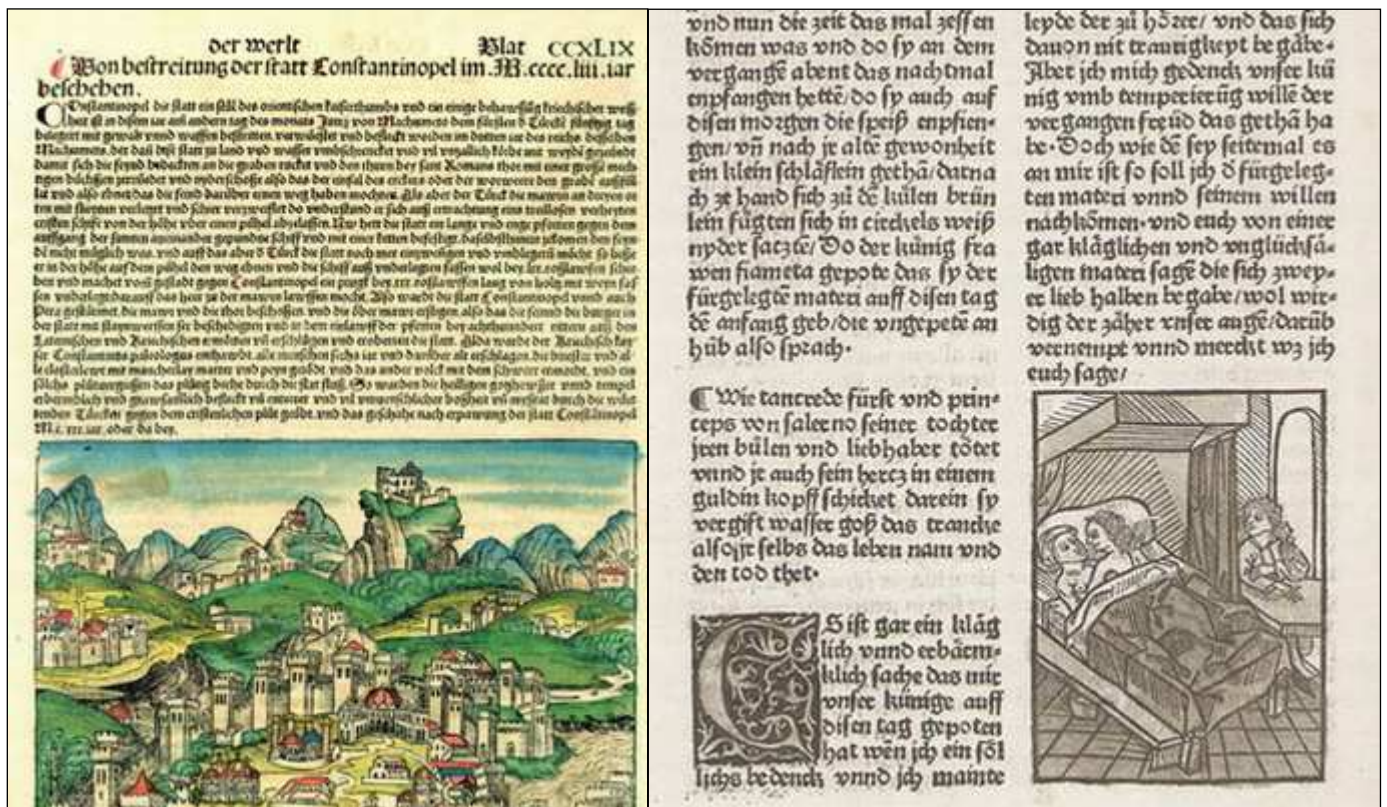
These two pages are from two incunabula printed with a Schwabacher typeface.
Left image: "Nuremberg Chronicle" or "World Chronicle" (Weltchronik) know to Germans as "Schedel's World Chronicle" (Die Schedelsche Weltchronik). It is a work of Hartman Schedel printed by Anton Koberger in 1493. Text in German.
Right image: A page from "The Decameron" printed by Anton Sorgs in Augsburg in the year 1490. Text in German.

- Fraktur

The German word "Fraktur" refers to a specific style of Blackletter (Gothic script).

The term "Fraktur" derives from the Latin *fractus* meaning "broken", and is so named from its angular, broken lines.

All Blackletter types in German are referred to as "broken types" (*gebrochene Schriften*).

The Fraktur style was in wide use in Germany until the middle of the 20th century, and because it was so common, all kinds of Blackletter tend to be called Fraktur in German.

Fraktur came into use when Emperor Maximilian I (reigned from 1493 to 1519) decided to establish a splendid library of printed books and had a new typeface created specifically for this purpose.

Maximilian I commissioned a group of lettering artists, including Albrecht Dürer, Johann Neudoerffer the Elder and Leonhard Wagner to carry out this task.

The result was the creation of a typeface more elegant than Schwabacher, more modern than Textura and yet distinctly "German" in that it does not incorporate elements of the Antiqua (Roman typeface), common in Italy at that time.

Lowercase characters –not very different from *textura*– are quite narrow, double-angled, fairly large, with a great number of calligraphic elements such as flourishes and curls. The influence of the baroque element of the Renaissance is evident.

The maze of lines could be a masterpiece of an extremely difficult art, but sometimes it was also difficult to read.

Lowercase bowls are normally flat on one side and curved on the other side. Ascenders often have forked stroke ends; descenders are tapered: a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w r y z

Uppercase characters are wide and quite sophisticated, with a number of rounded elements, calligraphic flourishes, dots and curls: A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

Legend tells that the Fraktur capitals were even based directly on the personal handwriting style of Maximilian I.

This new typeface soon became known as Fraktur for the broken character of its lines.

Fraktur quickly overcame Textura and Schwabacher as the main style of type used within the Empire.

When the reformation movement swept across Germany, a flood of printed propaganda came with it. Much of this material used the new, fresh Fraktur type, which helped to popularize it extensively.

It allowed an easy distinction of catholic and protestant publications: Protestants printed in German using Fraktur, whereas Catholics printed in Latin using Antiqua types, similar to the ones we use today.

For a while, Fraktur was regarded as a "protestant" type, but it was used by the southern Catholics too.

Fraktur was also employed in Scandinavia, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Austria and surrounding areas.

For the next three centuries many countries held on to Fraktur. After the Napoleonic era, however, Fraktur slowly began to loose ground against Antiqua, as the Germans called Roman type. It disappeared during the 1800s from the Netherlands, Sweden and the Czech lands altogether.

Even in Germany since the late 18th century Fraktur began to be replaced by Antiqua as symbol of the classicist age and emerging cosmopolitanism.

The debate surrounding this move is known as the Antiqua-Fraktur dispute. However, the shift mostly affected scientific writing, while most literature and newspapers continued to be printed in broken fonts.

During the 19th and 20th centuries both typefaces gained ideological connotations in Germany, which led to long and heated disputes on what the "correct" typeface to use was.

Historically, the dispute originates in the differing use of these two typefaces in most intellectual texts; for Latin texts, Antiqua-type typefaces were normally used, whereas Fraktur was favoured for works written in German. This originally had no more meaning than being a convention.

In the context of these debates, the two typefaces became increasingly polarized: Antiqua typefaces were seen to be "un-German", and they were seen to represent this by virtue of their connotations as "shallow", "light", and "not serious".

In contrast, Fraktur, with its much darker and denser script, was viewed as representing the alleged German virtues such as depth and sobriety.

By 1900, almost all books sold in Germany that where translated from foreign languages, as well as most scientific books, were printed in Antiqua.

After World War I, Fraktur gradually went out of fashion as German society became more cosmopolitan and open to international influences.

Of course the Nazis put an end to that when they arose to power in 1933. The Fraktur typefaces reached a particularly strong use during the time of Nazism. All German things were glorified, and Fraktur was declared the only "Aryan" type.

Many pseudo-Fraktur and Gothic fonts were created then, most displaying the harsh spirit of the "New Germany", and all of them stiff and ugly.

It is ironic to learn that it was Hitler himself who finally terminated Fraktur printing. In a typical ideological about-face, Hitler declared Fraktur to be "un-German" and "of Jewish origin" (*Judenlettern*), and so it was officially abolished.

Borman's edict of 3 January 1941 forbade the use of Blackletter typefaces.

Thus, Fraktur was replaced by the standard Antiqua.

By January 1941, Germany had conquered most of Europe, and the German type had become a communications barrier with the new "vassals". It is supposed therefore that the reason for this change of mind was that Antiqua would be more legible to those living in the occupied areas, since the Fraktur typefaces were not well known outside the countries of German language.

After the Second World War, Fraktur became associated closely and solely with the Third Reich. Fraktur became "Nazi-print". This image was enforced by many movies, documentaries, books and articles, and it proves almost impossible to correct today.

Following the war, Fraktur stopped being taught in the schools and slowly disappeared out of the public eye, nevertheless, the Fraktur script remains present in everyday life through road signs, names of newspapers (e.g. The New York Times and Chicago Tribune), art books, book covers, Heavy Metal, pub signs, gastronomy lists (menu), beer brands and other forms of advertisement, where it is used to convey a certain rusticity and oldness.
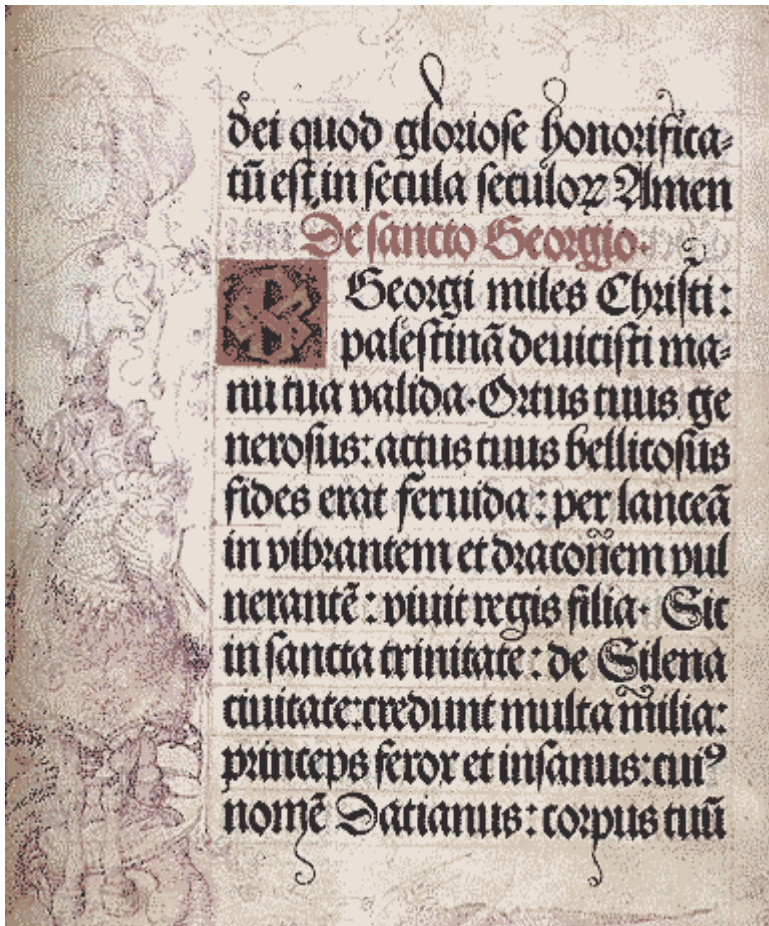
A page from the "Gebetbuch" (prayer book). Augsburg. Early 16th century. Text in Latin.

The first use of Fraktur as a printed typeface was in 1514 for the Gebetbuch, printed for Maximilian I by Hans Schönsperger in Augsburg and illustrated – among others– by Albrecht Dürer.

HUMANISTIC SCRIPT

The humanistic script (*littera humanistica*) is also known as "round" (*rotunda*) or "old" (*antiqua*).

This is the hand that would last into the present day.

During the course of the 15th century, the Italians, trying to get away from what they perceived as the ignorance and barbarity of the previous centuries –the era they would name "Gothic"– looked at the texts of the past, seeking to bring forth classical learning. The Italian humanists of Renaissance searched old libraries for ancient manuscripts and found some manuscripts with Roman authors. Fascinated by the handsome simplicity of its appearance and high legibility in contrast to the Gothic script, they decided to revive this handwriting.

The Renaissance calligraphers and humanists (Niccolò Niccoli, Colucio Salutati, Poggio Bracciolini etc) adopted the style of these books, although they redesigned it slightly so it matched better the Capitalis Quadrata.

They called this style "antiqua", as they thought this was the style used by ancient Romans in their books. Of course, we now know that what they thought was a "classical" script was actually a hand of the early middle ages –Caroline minuscule.

Thus, the Humanistic script is simply an elegant and clear adaption of the Caroline script.

The Humanistic system of script was primarily an aesthetic attempt to restore clarity, legibility and elegance to book production, coupled with a scholarly preoccupation with texts.

Lucius Annaeus Seneca: "Epistulae ad Lucilium" (littera humanistica textualis).
MS 647 The Schøyen Collection. Oslo. Norway.

Incidentally it was the time when the printing press was invented; the Italians adopted the invention, but –unlike Gutenberg– designed their typefaces in the newly fashionable *antiqua* style, usually known as "Roman types".

Gradually the rest of Europe –except Germany and some surrounding areas– adopted this style for their printed books.

Nonetheless, the substitution of the updated Carolingian hand, named the Humanistic hand –so called for its use in written works from the Humanist movement– was so successful that it is today the basis of most modern typefaces and printed writing. Times New Roman, Garamond and other computer fonts fall into this category.

"Roman type" used in an incunabulum. Italy 1478.
Guido de Monte Rocherii: "Manipulus curatorum".

Also the humanists developed a cursive hand (an invention of Niccolò Niccoli around 1470) which by 1500 was adapted to printing by Aldus Manutius as the "italic" type, and which is the ancestor of our modern handwriting.

Humanistic cursive handwriting (littera humanistica cursiva).

Italic typeface in a book printed by Aldus Manutius.

LETTER FORMS

Although the Humanistic round hand is a revival of Caroline minuscule, the *humanistica antiqua* carries some Gothic features such as fusion (*biting*) of curves, "e" for "ae", "f" and long "s" resting on the baseline (not extending below), "i" with dot, 2-like "r", round "s" at the end of words etc.

There are only a few ligatures such as "ae" (*æ*/ *ę*), "ct" (ꝯ), "st" (ﬆ), "ss" (ﬅ) and "et" (&).

The presence of abbreviations is very limited in the Humanistic script.
The most usual is a simple line above the letter (‾) to indicate the lack (elision) of a final "m".

As usual "i" and "j", as well as "u" and "v" are identical. The "y" usually is dotted (ẏ).

THE TYPEFACE "**Humanistica antiqua**"

The "**Humanistica antiqua**" font reproduces the handwriting of Poggio Bracciolini (1380-1459). His hand represents the inspiration for my Humanistic typeface.
The font contains not only the basic Latin letters, but a full repertoire of characters including variants for a few signs.

➢ Upper case letters: A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

➢ Lower case letters: a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r ſ t u v w x y z

➢ Glyph variants: x / x   i / ı   r / ꝛ   ſ / s   y / ẏ

➢ Abbreviations: ā ē ī ō ū f̄ ḡ m̄ n̄ p̄ q̄ q̄ r̄ s̄

    ƀ đ ħ q̊ q̊ q̊ g̈ ï ẍ ꝫ ꝰ ꝝ ꝑ ꝓ ꝗ ꝥ

➢ Ligatures: æ ę & ﬅ ﬆ ꝯ

➢ Special punctuation marks: ⁏ (punctus elevatus) · (interpunctus)

The following specimen is a segment from a letter of Cicero. Under the image of the manuscript is the electronic version written with the "**Humanistica antiqua**" font.

Marcus Tullius Cicero. Epistolae ad familiares lib. XIV, epist. 1.
MS 612 The Schøyen Collection, Oslo, Norway, c. 1435 d.C.

TVLLIVS Terentie sue, tulliole sue Ciceroni suo salut d. et litteris
multorum & sermone omnium pfertur ad me incredibilem tu
am uirtutem & fortitudinem esse teq: nec animi neq: corporis
laborib: defatigari. me miserum te ista uirtute fide probitatate hu
manitate in tantas erumnas propter me incidisse tulliolamq: nostram ex q̊
patre tantas uoluptates capiebat ex eo tantos percipere luctus Nam quid
ego de Cicerone dicam qui cum primū sapere cæpit acerbissimos dolores
miseriasq: pcepit: que si ut tu scribis fato facto putarem ferrem paulo faci
lius sed omnia sunt mea culpa cōmissa, qui ab his me amari putabam qui
inuidebant eos non sequebar qui petebant. q̊· si nostris consilus usi essemus
neq: apud nos tantum ualuisset sermo aut stultorum amicoꝛ aut impboꝛ
beatissimi uiueremus. nunc quando quom sperare nos amici iubent dabo

EPILOGUE

The art of calligraphy during the Middle Ages achieved heights that have never been surpassed. It has come down to us in the form of manuscripts, books and documents that were written, copied, and used throughout the Western medieval world.

Styles of writing were constantly undergoing changes, but these were discernible from century to century rather than from year to year. Variations within a style often took off in different directions, disappeared, or returned to help reshape each other. At times the taste of past centuries seemed appealing and writing design was influenced by revivals.

With the advent of printing (which changed the course of calligraphic history), and the end of the Middle Ages (around 1500), we come to the end of our "history of scripts" –although handwriting of course did continue to develop right up to the present day. But it was no longer a vital part in the production of books and many others of the documents produced over the later period.

It is believed that the introduction of printing from "movable type" in the middle of the 15th century marked the death of calligraphy. Obviously, hand-written books could not be produced as fast or in as great quantity as printed ones, but the art hardly disappeared –it only changed direction.

Printing also served to spread and standardize calligraphy. Calligraphy continued to exist but more as a curiosity than an art form.
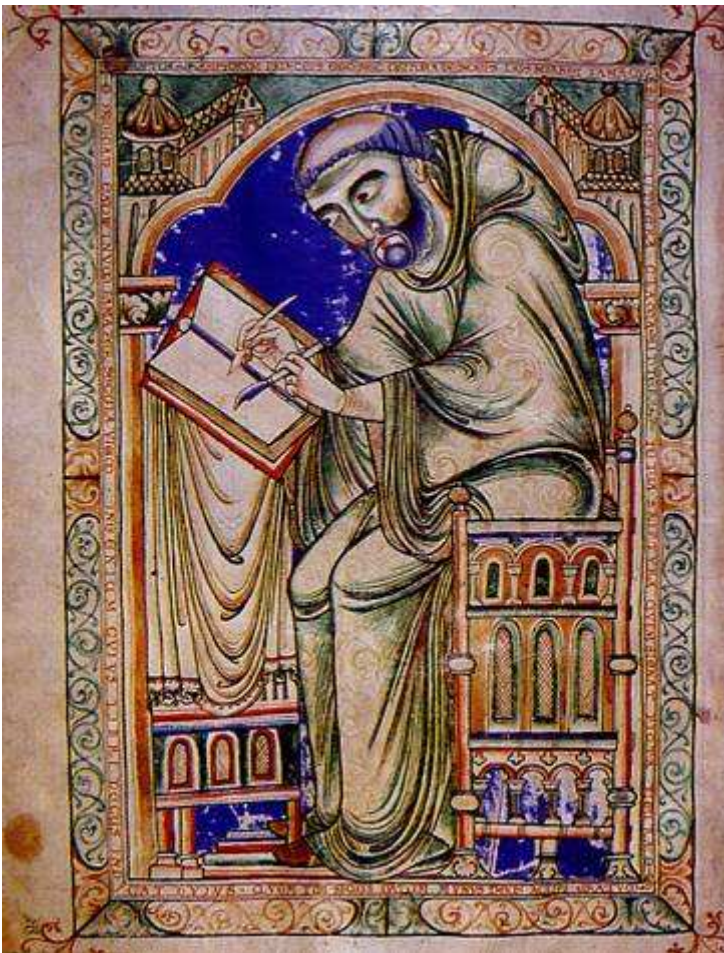
Text in Latin surrounding the figure of the scribe reads as follows:

"Scriptor s(c)riptorum princeps ego nec obitura deinceps laus mea nec fama quis sim mea littera te tua s(c)riptura quem signat picta figura. Predicat Eadwinum fama per secula vivum ingenium cuius libri decus indicat huius quem tibi seque datum munus deus accipe gratum"

Eadwine declared that he was the leading prince of scribes and that the glory of his manuscript was proof of his skill, assuring his fame forever.

Scribe's self-portrait, c. 1150. Cambridge, Trinity College, MS. R. 17.1, f. 283 v.
By Eadwine of Canterbury in the "Canterbury Psalter".

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DIGITAL RESOURCES ON CD/DVD

Bernard J. Muir and Nicholas Kennedy. *DUCTUS. Digital Latin Paleography*. Version 2.0, June 2008.

Ductus, from the Latin *ducere* (to lead), is a digital program designed for the teaching of Latin Paleography either locally or via the internet. The program is based on 66 extremely high resolution facsimiles of manuscripts from the period 150-1500 CE. It includes videos depicting a (modern) scribe at work, a 15-session course, and extensive glossaries and support documentation. It is already used by teachers and independent scholars around the world.
Ductus is in DVD-ROM format and runs in a web browser (Firefox, Safari, Opera, SeaMonkey, or Internet Explorer).
In 2000 it received 'The Australian Award for Excellence in Tertiary Educational Multimedia'.
For more details visit the following URL:

http://www.medieval.unimelb.edu.au/ductus/

WEB RESOURCES FOR PALEOGRAPHY

The reader may find the following links useful:

EXERCISES IN LATIN PALEOGRAPHY. This site is created and maintained by Fernando de Lasala. This site is in English, Italian and Spanish. It contains images, transcriptions and comments.

http://www.unigre.it/pubblicazioni/lasala/

MEDIEVAL WRITING. This site is created and maintained by Dr Dianne Tillotson.
This contains, among other things, some extremely helpful paleography exercises. It also has very nice drawings and photos of materials, etc. and of how books were produced.

http://medievalwriting.50megs.com/map.htm

PRICE OF THE PALEOGRAPHIC SET OF FONTS

The font package termed "Fonts for Latin Paleography" is a set of fonts which contains a total of 20 typefaces: **Capitalis monumentalis, capitalis elegans, capitalis rustica, uncialis, semiuncialis, antiqua cursiva romana, nova cursiva romana, merovingia, insularis majuscula, insularis minuscula, visigothica, beneventana, carolina minuscula, gothica textura prescissa, gothica textura quadrata, gothica rotunda, gothica bastarda, gothica cursiva, bastarda anglicana** and **humanistica antiqua** respectively.

These fonts based on historical prototypes are the result of long hours of investigation and hard work.

Font development is a painstaking, time-consuming task and this is a single person's work not sponsored by any institution. Hence these fonts are not free. Nevertheless, the font package has a reasonable price.

Registration costs **€120,** approximately US $162 or £102 * (see advise below).

If you wish, you also can purchase only one individual font. Each single font costs US $27, £17 or **€20**.

SPECIAL PRICING: Pay two fonts and get three. Purchase three fonts for **€40** or $54. If you acquire two fonts, the third is for free. A 33% discount!

After making the payment you will receive the fonts as attachment to an email message sent to your email account.

If you wish to receive the fonts in a CDRom sent by post to your address, the extra cost is $13, £8 or €10.

The CDRom contains the set of paleographic fonts plus other additional free programs (an excellent free wordprocessor for Windows, font utilities, character maps, a generator of PDF files which runs under Word for Windows etc) which will allow you to manage properly these fonts.

*ADVISE: Due to the current fluctuation in the exchange rate among different currencies, only prices in **Euro** can be guaranteed. The prices in US$ or in other currencies depend on the actual exchange rate (at the date of this writing, June 2014, 1 euro is equivalent to 1,35 US dollars).

METHODS OF PAYMENT

If you own a credit or debit card (Visa®, MasterCard®, Discover® and American Express®), you can pay online, which means purchase can be made in a matter of clicks.

This payment is being backed by **PayPal**®, a global leader in online payment solutions. To make payments with PayPal is easy, fast, free and secure for buyers. Naturally, your transaction will be confidential and the information you give will not be used for any reason other than the use intended. PayPal protects your security.

You can pay in any currency (USA dollars, Canadian dollars, sterling pounds, etc.) since PayPal will convert your currency to euros during the payment process.

Visit my page for further details: http://guindo.pntic.mec.es/jmag0042/palefont.html

For other alternative methods of payment (bank transfer, postal order, etc.), please email me for more detailed information.

SUGGESTIONS AND QUERIES

I have taken care to see that these fonts work as well as possible, nevertheless, if you find any fault, feel free to email me.

Although you do not purchase the fonts, please, send me comments, suggestions for improvements or anything else regarding my paleographic fonts. I would like to know your opinion about my work.

I really would appreciate having users' feedback.

Such reaction from users will be the deciding factor in my decision of carrying on with the development of more paleographic fonts. Do not hesitate to email me juanjmarcos@yahoo.es

Your comments on the manual of Latin Paleography itself will be also welcome. Thanks in advance.

If this set of fonts is well received, it will be expanded in the near future (e**arly Gothic, Anglicana, Secretary** and so forth).

A similar font package for **Greek Paleography** is also available at: http://guindo.pntic.mec.es/jmag0042/palegreek.html

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