

An Introduction  
to  
gothic textura  
quadrata  
or  
Blackletter on  
Training  
wheels

ambulare,



# Some examples



Bibliothèque National de France – Latin 1178

Hours use of Rotomazsem – Italy 1460

Catalogued as Gothic Partade by BNJ

Calendrier à l'usage de Rouen



BnH – Latin 919

The Grande Heures of the Duc de Berry  
 Paris 1405



**N**eq; habitabit iuxta te ma-  
lignus: neq; permanebit in  
iusti ante oculos tuos. **O**-  
disi omnes qui opantur iniqui-  
tatem: perdes omnes q; locu-  
tur mendaciu. **U**num sa-  
guinu et dolosum ab homina-  
bit dñs ego autem in misericordi-  
a tua. **I**ntroibo  
in domu tuu: adorabo ad te-  
plum san tuu in timore tuo.  
**O**mnine deduc me i iusti-  
cia tua ppter inimicos meos: di-  
rige in conspectu tuo uia me-  
am. **Q**ui non est in ore cor-  
ueritas: cor eorum uanu est.  
**S**epulcru patens est guttur  
eorum: linguus suis dolose  
agebant. iudica illos deus:  
**D**eficiant a cogitatioib;  
suis. sedm multitudinem i-  
prietatum eorum expelle eos.  
qm irritauerunt te dñe. **E**t  
letentur omnes qui sperant in te:  
in eternum erulabunt. et ha-  
bitabis meis. **E**t gloriabu-  
tur in te omnes qui diligunt no-  
men tuu: qm benedices ius-  
to. **D**ñe ut scuto bone uo-  
luntatis tue coronasti nos:

**O**mnine ne in furore tuo arguas me:  
neq; in ira tua corrip-  
as me. **M**iserere mei dñe  
qm infirmus sum: sana me  
dñe qm conturbata sunt ossa  
mea. **E**t anima mea turbata  
est ualde: sicut dñe usq; **O**-  
uertere dñe et eripe animam  
meam: saluum me fac ppter miseri-  
cordiam tuam. **Q**ui non  
est in morte qui memor sit  
tui in inferno aut quis co-  
fitebitur tibi. **L**aborauit  
genua meo. lauabo per sin-  
gulas noctes lectu meu lac-  
rimis meis stratu meu rigabo.  
**T**urbatus est a furore oc-  
culus meus: mueram inter  
omnes inimicos meos. **O**il-  
cedite a me omnes qui opera-  
mini iniquitate: qm exaudi-  
uit dñs uocem fletus mei.  
**E**xaudiuit dñs deprecationem  
meam. dñs orationem meam  
suscepit. **E**rubescant et  
conturbentur uehementer  
omnes inimici mei: conu-  
tantur et erubescant ualde  
uelociter: **S**eruite domino

Bibliothèque nationale de France

BnF – Rothschild 2529

Breuiarium secundum ordinem Cisterciencium, dit

Breuiare de Martin d'Aragon 1318-1450



tulisti nutrimentum animarū *puerū et adipe factū  
mētā faciat et.*  
quas pinguedo huius replet  
et dulcedo.

**F**ue mater redemptoris et eterni  
creatoris: quem terra pontus  
cetera celiq; laudant sydera.

**A**ue mater aue fili qui gau-  
dens in cubili summe pacis  
cum glā scōrumq; frequētia.

**S**alue fili. salue mater salue  
deus summe p̄r quem scōz  
cunctis omnib; laudat ip̄s.

**S**ancta et perpetua uirgo maria dñā  
et aduocatrix mea. confiteor dñm  
nrm iesum xpm tuum dulcissimum filiū  
uicum deum existere et uerum hominem ex  
te natum in finem seculorum p̄ nrā salu-  
te. Et enim ip̄s et tibi et omnib; sc̄is confi-  
teor omnia peccata quecumq; feci cogitā-  
leuitē et ope uel alij p̄ me et p̄t me pec-

*Laudate eum sol  
et luna. laudate eū  
omnes stelle et lum.*

*Exultabunt sc̄i  
glā letabuntur i  
cubilib; suis.*

*Laudate eum in cym  
talis benedictio  
laudate eum in cym  
talis uiblatōis oīs  
sp̄s laudet dominū*



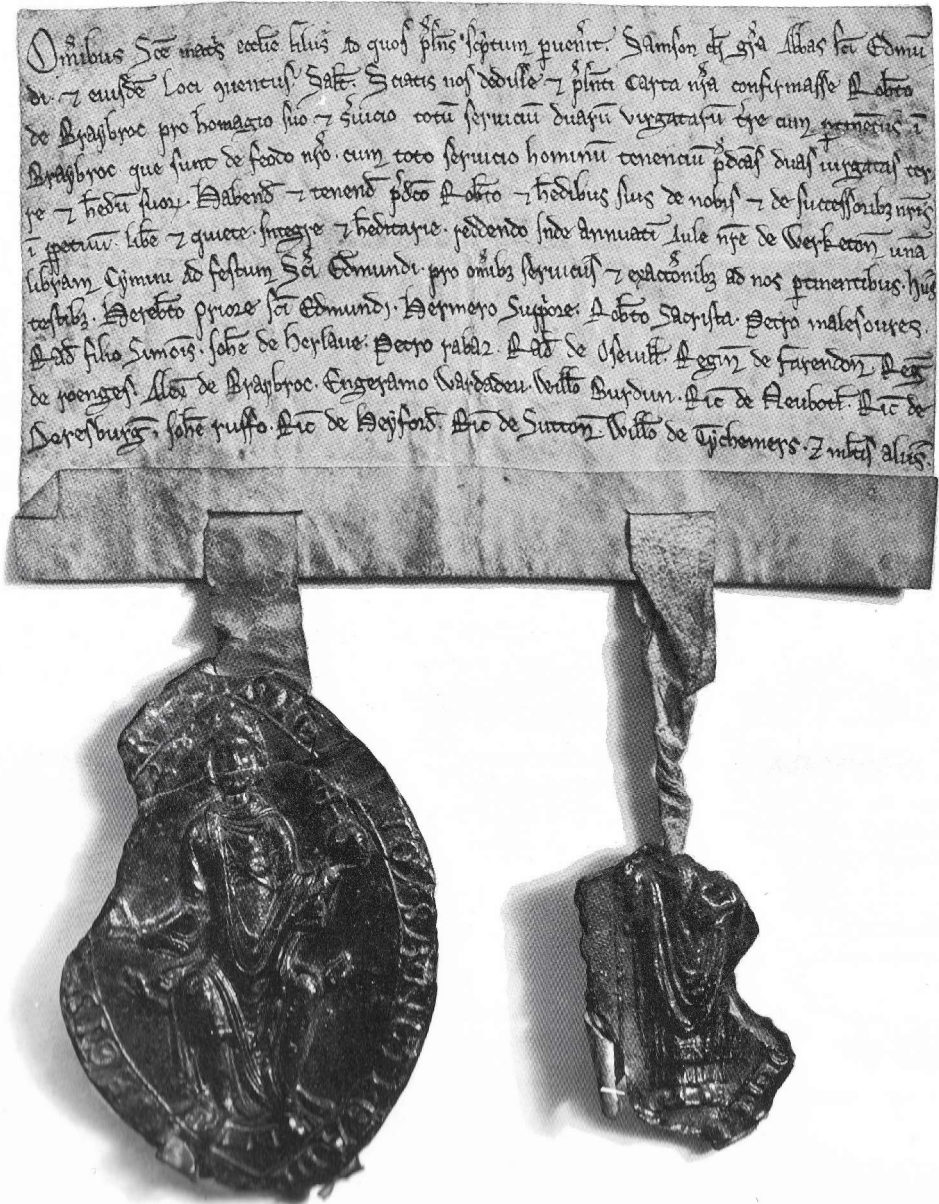
British Library – Ms. Additional 24686 f. 17r  
Alphonso Psalter

c 1284-1316, The Alphonso Psalter was intended as the wedding gift to Prince Alphonso of England (d. 1284), the son of Edward I, and his bride Margaret, daughter of Florent V, count of Holland and Zeeland.

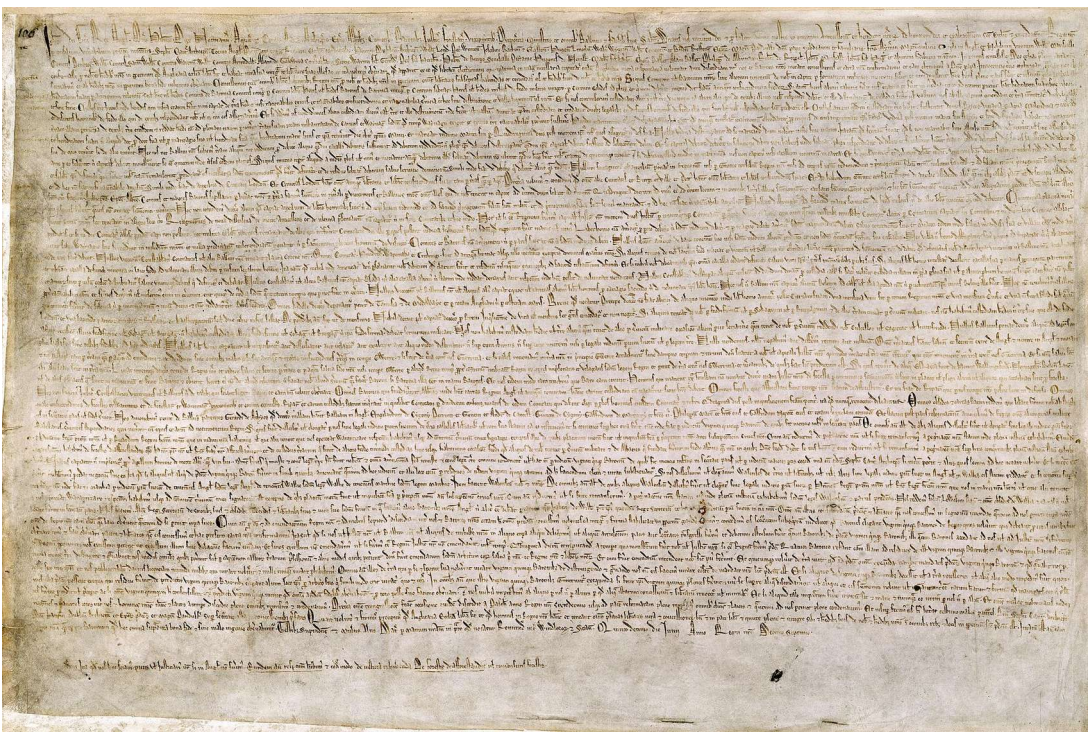
The manuscript shows a slight cursive hand and a style that is more frequently seen in the later centuries.



# An English Cursive Documentary Script from c13



**British Library Egerton Charter 2180  
Charter from Abbot of Bury  
St. Edmunds of a gift of land to Robert  
de Braybroc about 1211**



Magna Carta is the founding document of English Law, originally written in 1215 as cease fire agreement in the Civil war.

The charter and uses a cursive textura bastarde hand.  
British Library Cotton Augustus II 106





The grant of arms to the Tallow Chandlers, dated 24 September 1456, showing the use of bastarde, which is typical of the 15 century for England, France and the low countries.

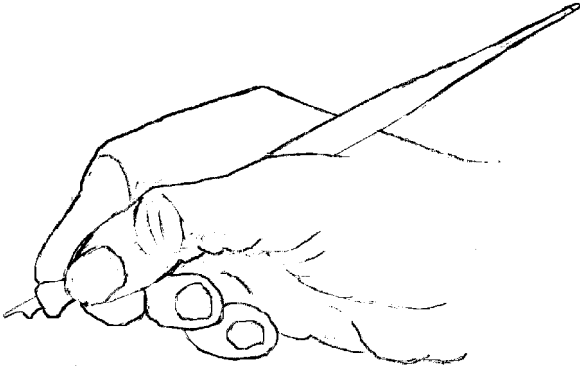
# Basic elements of Gothic Textura

- The use of this script can be found in use from the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries.
- The examples presented here are all from religious texts made for private owners.
- Many of the legal texts from the same era are in a cursive (rounded) script
- The ductus (that is the description of how each letter is formed) shows that the letters are made with the same basic form for each stroke. So it is the pattern of the ...

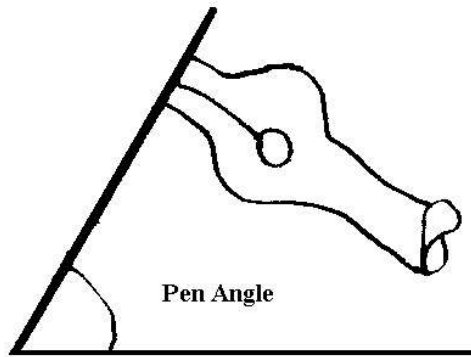


# Analysis of a script

Some basics of the art from many years ago



Holding the pen - preferred position. A good method is to loop the thumb and forefinger over the shaft of the pen and support the shaft from below with the second finger and the pen is held with the segment of each finger. The third and fourth fingers are tucked out of the way into the palm. This is a rough sketch of myself holding a pen, although there are many other ways of holding a pen.



All medieval scripts have a constant angle between the pen tip and the horizontal. This is the pen angle. The usual pen angles are 0 , 30 and 45 , with 45 being the commonest.

Occasionally a script will require the pen to change angle at the start or at the finish of a stroke. This requires some practice. Another common usage is for the pen to be drawn along on one corner of the nib. This adds a fine line to the end of a stroke.



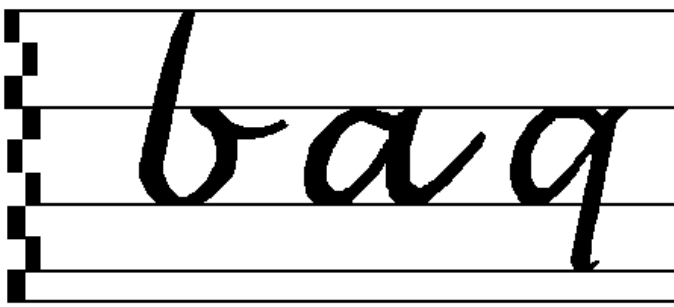
This diagram shows the various parts of the letter.

The ascender is the part of the letter above the body. The body is the main part of the letter.

The descender is the part below the body. The space is the gap between the top of the ascender on one line and the bottom of the descender on the line above. On some scripts the ascenders and descenders may interact.



All parts of the layout are measured in pen widths, thus the shape of letter and its relationship to the other letters is the same as it is independent of the size.



This diagram shows an Italic hand with the space=1 and the ascender, body and descender =3 pen widths.

<https://digitizedmedievalmanuscripts.org/>

The DMMapp (Digitized Medieval Manuscripts app) links to more than 500 libraries in the world. Each one of these contains digitized medieval manuscripts that can be browsed for free.



With an enlarged section from the end of shows measuring of the text



Elle demeure dessoubz les riuieres  
des arbres pres des riuieres. et  
va a les menques ainsi que vne  
autre beste fait. aux herbes seu-  
lement en prin temps. et aux  
poissons comme iay dit est.  
Elle noue p dessus les riuieres.  
et par dessoubz quant li pleust.  
Et pour ce ne li puet eschapper  
nul poisson que elle ne preigne.  
se il n'est trop grant. elle fait  
trop grant donnaige es riuieres  
et estances. car vne paue de lou-  
tres lenz plus destruita bien de

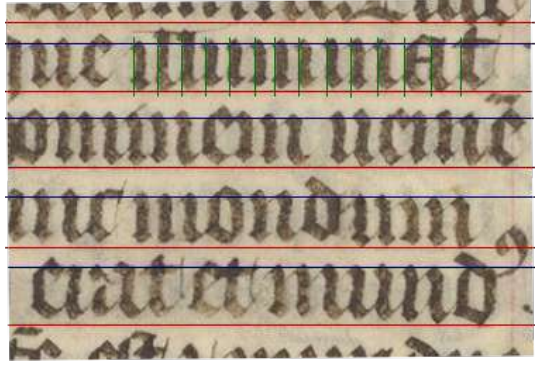
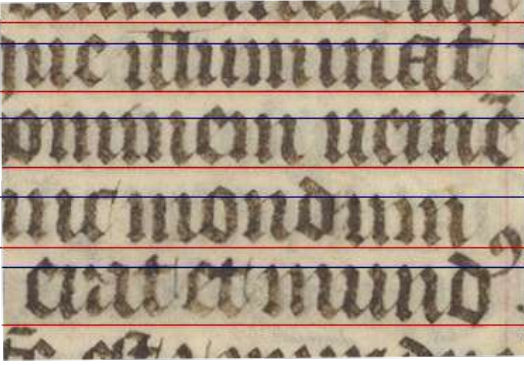
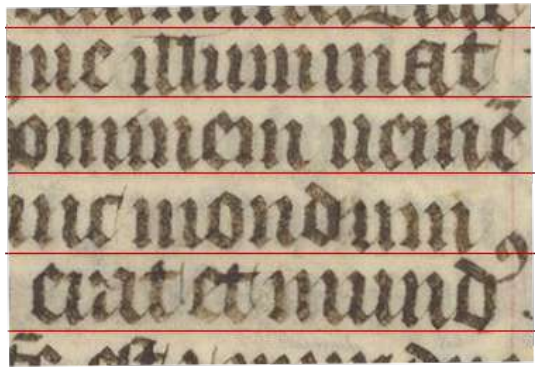
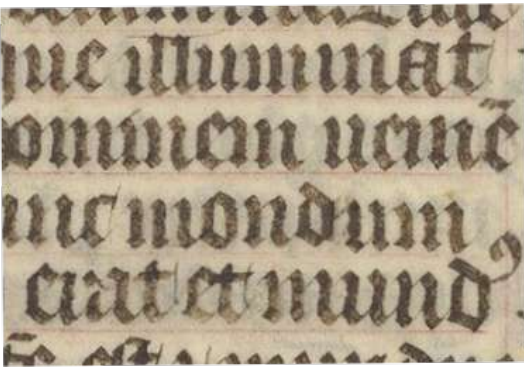
**ueste par ouy veir les cerfs.**  
en diuerses pars. et regarder la  
selon la voie de luy. le quel luy  
semble plus grant cerf. Et tous  
iours escoutant en soy approu-  
chant au dessoubz du vent. en  
guise que quant vendra au  
iaillier courre. il ne faille que  
le drescer du lumier. et tâtost

Extracts from Gaston Phoebus Comte de Foix  
Book on Hunting,

Bibliothèque National de France

Francaiz 616 written c 1380

This text displays all of the features of  
Quadrata with the spacing between lines  
smaller than the text and the regular verticals  
of the strokes in every letter.



red - 17 66 121 178 233

blue - 33 86 142 192

green - 91 108 125 142 158 177 191 208 228 245 264 283 302 323

ruling to ruling red - 49 55 56 55

ruling to ruling red - blue - 16 20 21 14

ruling to ruling green - 17 17 17 16 19 18 20 17 19 19 19 20

pen width white = 10.6

Thus showing is closer to 1.5 pen widths

Now to review one of the examples and measure the elements of the text.

Space	0
Ascender	1.8 shared with Descender
Body	3.7

To give a practice set of numbers

Ascender	2
Body	4

So with a pen width of 1.5mm the ruling will be 3mm and 6mm



The bottom line of this fragment shows the main issue with textura (known as the minimum problem).

So this word could be  
munc- or  
miunc- or  
minisc- so only by knowing the full text can the  
word be reliably known.

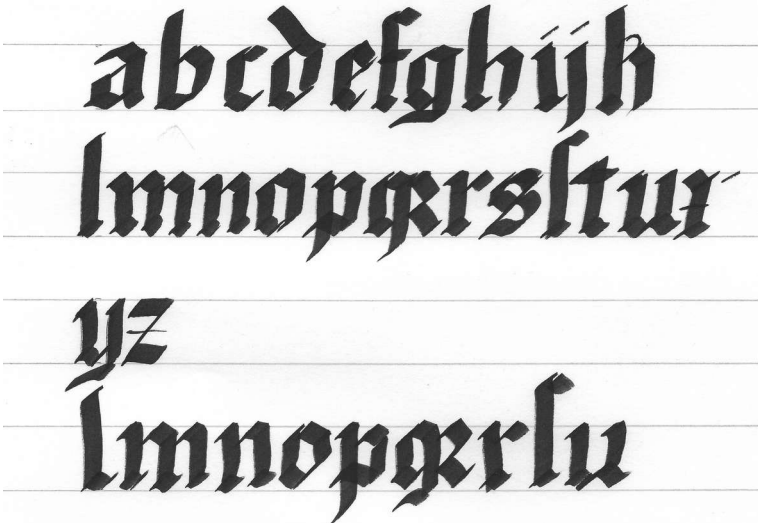


The letter examples as demonstrated in the presentation by the author.



abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwyz

Some text by the author without any guide lines and emphasized wandering



abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwyz  
abcdefghijklmnopqrstu

Adding explicit horizontal guides for letter size and line spacing to constrain and align the text.



A further piece from the presentation with of note the line height and line spacing being measured in pen widths.

Added are vertical guides with a measure of 2 pen widths with the pen set at the pen angle shown on page 12.

Here each letter stroke is at most 1 pen width and vertical from the previous within each word. The spacing between words is 2 pen widths.

This script is also noted for many ligatures, which is the merging of letter to further compress the text and give the texture, which gives this hand its name.

# Ductus

This is an outline of how each letter is written with each letter written with each stroke drawn separately to show how each letter is formed, with an arrow showing the pen movement. The page is ruled with guidelines at 3 pen widths for the letter height and for the word spacing and the verticals at 2 pen widths at the pen angle.





## Sources

Gaston Phébus, Livre de la chasse. — Gace de la Buigne, Déduits de la chasse.

<https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b52505055c>

Magna Carta - British Library Cotton Augustus II 106

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Magna\\_Carta#/media/File:Magna\\_Carta\\_\(British\\_Library\\_Cotton\\_MS\\_Augustus\\_II.T06\).jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Magna_Carta#/media/File:Magna_Carta_(British_Library_Cotton_MS_Augustus_II.T06).jpg)

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Hours use of Rotomagehem - Italy 1460

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British Library – Ms.Additional 24686 - Alphonso Psaltern

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British Library Ms. Additional 50000 - Oscott Psalter

[https://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=Add\\_MS\\_50000](https://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=Add_MS_50000)

Horae ad usum Parisiensem [Grandes Heures de Jean de Berry].

<https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b520004510>

Bibliothèque nationale de France BnF – Rothschild 2529

<https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b52000996s>