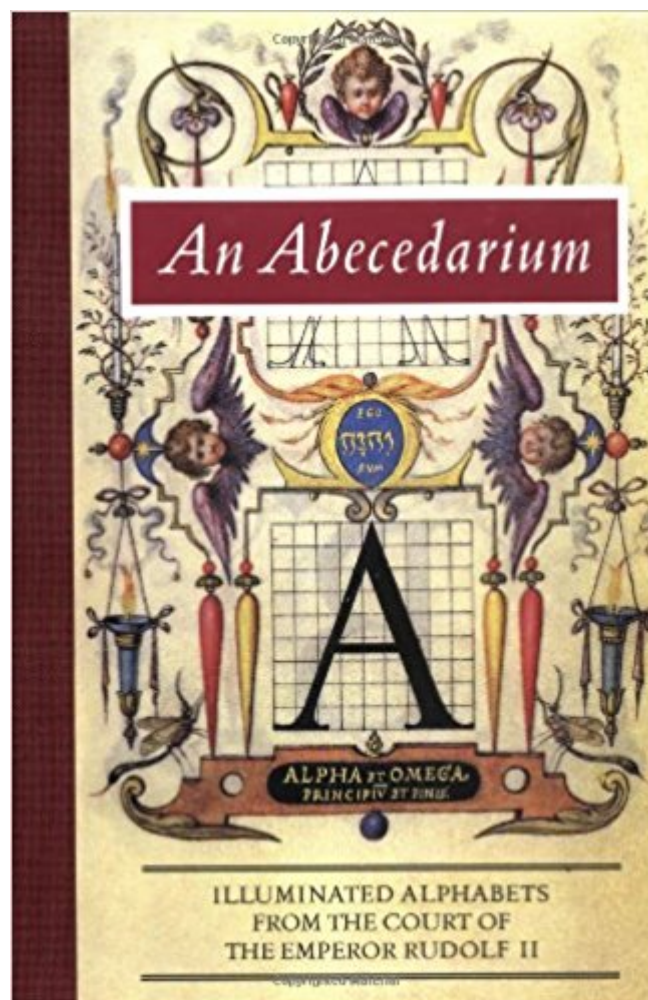


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# An Abecedarium: Illuminated Alphabets From The Court Of Emperor Rudolf II (Getty Trust Publications: J. Paul Getty Museum)



## Synopsis

Included in the magnificent pages of the *Mira calligraphiae monumenta* are two alphabets. Executed by an unknown hand, the first consists of Roman capital letters; the other is Gothic lower-case letters. As with the calligraphy of Bocskay described above, these alphabets were embellished by Joris Hoefnagel, a painter at the court of Rudolf II. In embellishing the alphabets, Hoefnagel employed symbols and heraldic objects--masks, animals, plants, obelisks--to convey the power and greatness of the emperor. An *Abecedarium* contains the thirty-eight pages from the *Mira* codex that display Hoefnagel's virtuosity in decorating the alphabets. Calligraphers, graphic artists, and all lovers of beautiful books will delight in Hoefnagel's artistry.

## Book Information

Series: Getty Trust Publications: J. Paul Getty Museum

Hardcover: 64 pages

Publisher: J. Paul Getty Museum; 1 edition (July 10, 1997)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0892364718

ISBN-13: 978-0892364718

Product Dimensions: 5.5 x 0.5 x 7.5 inches

Shipping Weight: 7.2 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.6 out of 5 stars 12 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #1,227,490 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #37 in [Books > Arts & Photography > Other Media > Illuminations](#) #450 in [Books > Arts & Photography > Other Media > Calligraphy](#) #1833 in [Books > Textbooks > Humanities > Art History](#)

## Customer Reviews

Taken from a 16th-century manuscript now housed in the Getty Museum, the intricate illustrations in this tiny volume are characteristic of Renaissance art: each letter is surrounded by religious and political imagery, as well as fanciful creatures and a fragment of a Psalm beginning with the respective letter. The warm, rich colors and the juxtaposition of elements such as crabs, asps, grapes, disembodied wings, crests, irises, and flags imbue each plate with a sense of divine haughtiness and humor. Besides the drawings themselves, the accompanying notes describe the evolution of different fonts, providing information that helps the reader interpret the wealth of information in each drawing.

Demeude's preoccupation with letters has led him to bring together illuminated initials and ornamental characters from 12 centuries of alphabets and typography, ranging from 8th-century sacred manuscripts to 20th-century mass-produced postcards. Included are samples from over 100 alphabets created by such artists as Durer, Holbein, Daumier, and Kate Greenaway. The animated letters may be draped with the human form, used to offer historical or biblical scenes, or entwined with naturalistic scenes. While the accompanying historical notes and essays are succinct, the visuals will be of the most value as a study collection. The Getty's diminutive (5 1/4" x 7 1/4") volumes contain reproductions and notes on calligraphy and miniature paintings from a work commissioned by the court of Holy Roman Emperor Rudolf II during the 16th century. Currently in the J. Paul Getty Museum, the *Mira calligraphiae monumenta* (Model Book of Calligraphy) is the combined effort of master calligrapher Georg Bocsday and court artist Joris Hoefnagel. Considered one of the most precious books of the European Renaissance, it represents the transition from medieval European manuscript illumination to the emergence of the floral still life genre of the early 17th century. *Nature Illuminated* contains reproductions of 41 manuscript pages with meticulous studies of flora and fauna. An *Abecedarium* contains 38 illuminated reproductions of Roman capital and Gothic lowercase letters. These unique titles are best suited to specialized art and design collections. ?Judith Yankeilun Lind, Roseland Free Copyright 1997 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Love it - just what I ordered.

Great ideas and pictures for any student of medieval illumination

This is on of my Favorites

Nice mini book with beautiful illustrations.

I was just a tad disappointed in this volume. I had "envisioned" the actual book in a larger format than it is. That being said, the illustrations are very nice and the paper is heavy weight. It's just small.

Wonderful book with beautiful pictures. Small but a great source of reference material! I highly recommend this for a quick look with lots of color and graphic detail.

This is an excellent book, and I would recommend it plus the other two volumes in this beautifully crafted set.

Thank you!

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