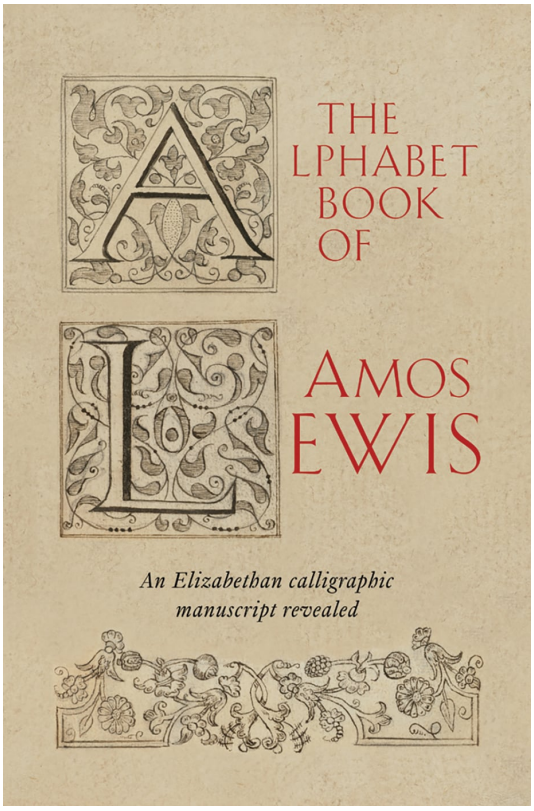
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The Alphabet Book of Amos Lewis

An Elizabethan calligraphic manuscript revealed

Edited by Simon Swynfen Jervis

ISBN	9781898565208
Publisher	John Adamson
Binding	Hardback
Territory	USA & Canada
Size	7.28 in x 10.83 in
Pages	96 Pages
Illustrations	51 color
Price	$60.00

- Calligraphic manuscript made in about 1585 presented in facsimile
- Profusion of scripts, accompanying decorated capital letters from A to Z
- Wealth of texts eloquent on the value of learning, with translations and commentary
- Earliest known attempt at an original writing book by an Englishman
- A window into handwriting and education in the age of Shakespeare

This delightful manuscript, published in facsimile, was composed around 1585 by a clergyman in a bid for the patronage of an Elizabethan magnate, Sir John Petre. Modeled on printed writing books, German and French, it presents a profusion of scripts, accompanying decorated capital letters from A to Z. Its texts are eloquent on the value of learning. All is transcribed in print and, when needed, translated, including poems in English and Latin in which Amos Lewis, the creator, presses his case, reinforced by colorful Petre heraldry. The commentary unravels the Alphabet Book's precursors and analyzes its ingredients, including a lively range of ornament. The first writing book published in London, in 1570, was by a Frenchman, Jean de Beau Chesne. Lewis's manuscript is the first attempt at an original writing book by an Englishman. This signal rarity, virtually unknown hitherto, is a window into handwriting and education in the age of Shakespeare.

Simon Swynfen Jervis, FSA, is an art historian. After 23 years in the furniture department of the Victoria and Albert Museum, he became Director and Marlay Curator of the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, and later Historic Buildings Secretary of the National Trust. He has served as a trustee of the Royal Collection, as chairman of the Leche Trust, the Walpole Society and the trustees of Sir John Soane's Museum, and as president of the Society of Antiquaries of London. A director of the *Burlington Magazine* until 2024, he is now president of the Furniture History Society.

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