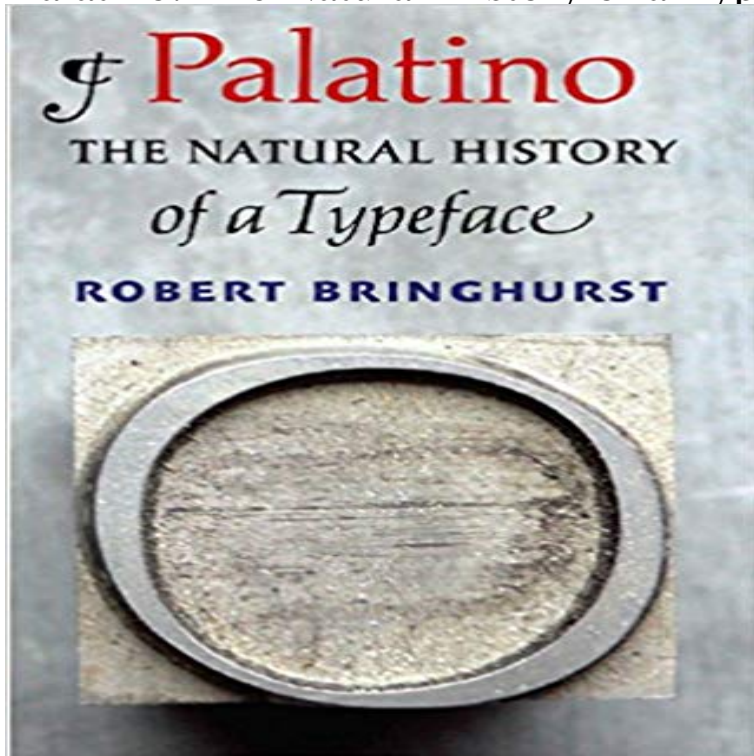


Palatino: The Natural History of a Typeface



Last spring the world lost one of the greatest practitioners of the graphic arts of the past century. Hermann Zapf, born in 1918, died in his sun-and-book-filled studio in Darmstadt at the age of 96. As a book designer, a type designer, an advocate, a teacher and above all, as a calligrapher, the world has seldom seen his equal. And the book here described will probably share that distinction, for in these 296 pages, the author, poet, polymath, and fellow type traveller, Robert Bringhurst, does full justice to Zapf's genius. He takes as his theme Palatino, probably the most widely known and used of all Zapf faces, and traces its development, with all its infinite permutations, and often invisible refinements, through a long and fascinating history. But if Palatino provides the tenor, the variations and transformations, the imitations and confluences—from hot metal, through the brief interlude of film setting and finally into the digital world—provide the musical descants. Bringhurst has orchestrated all the parts; included with the text are over 200 illustrations of design sketches, working drawings, smoke proofs and test prints, matrices, foundry and Linotype patterns, all printed in five colors. Included (at no extra charge) is an eight page letterpress signature, printed in one color directly from handset foundry and Linotype hot metal by Jerry Kelly. If you want background, it is all here, in encompassing detail: a fully illustrated account of Palatino and its extended family: foundry and Linotype, Michelangelo, Sistina, Aldus, Heraklit, Phidias, Zapf Renaissance, PostScript Palatino, Aldus Nova, and Palatino Sans. And more. Much more. More than you would believe existed. But beyond that, the book is an argument, and a convincing one, that artists who create letters can, and should, be judged by the same standards and held in the same esteem as composers who write music and artists who paint on

canvas. They are all cut from the same cloth. Bringhurst asks the question: Can a penstroke or a letterform be so beautiful it will stop you in your tracks and maybe break your heart? In this groundbreaking, seminal and totally original book, issued in an edition of 1,000 copies, he answers the question: It can.

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