

Analyzing a Calligraphic Hand

1. What size was the original? Are you now working with a reproduction?
2. What tools and materials were used:
 - a. What was the original writing surface?
 - b. What tool did the calligrapher write with?
 - c. What fluid was used?
3. Pen scale:
 - a. Size of writing tool
 - b. Proportion:
 1. How many nib-widths high is the body of the letter?
 2. How many nib-widths high are the ascenders?
 3. How many nib-widths long are the descenders?
4. Ductus:
 - a. The number of strokes
 - b. The order in which the strokes were made
 - c. What is the pen angle; is the pen manipulated?
 - d. Do strokes overlap? Are some portions of the letter built up?
 - e. Where do strokes branch as opposed to being separate strokes?
 - f. Are there serifs? How are they formed?
 - g. Are strokes pressurized? Was the writing tool flexible?
5. What is the general shape of the letters?
 - a. What shape are the "o" and "l"?
 - b. Are those shapes consistent throughout the alphabet - which letters are different and how?
6. What is the overall texture of the piece?
 - a. What is the general direction of the lettering (movement)?
 - b. How much does it slant?
 - c. At what speed was it written (rhythm)?
 - d. What is the letter spacing/word spacing/line spacing?
 - e. Are there flourishes?
7. What is the calligrapher's intent? Is the hand appropriate to that purpose?