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Robin Kinross

Modern typography

an essay in critical history

Hyphen Press . London

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for my mother, who didn't publish

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Preface & acknowledgements

Most of the text of *Modern typography* was written in 1985–6, but it was published first only towards the end of 1992. For this second edition, I have revised and updated the text where necessary, to take account of new research. Putting the work into a smaller format has also prompted a thorough revision of the picture section (chapter 14). The one large change in the text is a completely revised and extended concluding chapter (now chapter 13). In the first edition this final section suffered from the delay in the book's publication. Written in one era and published in another, the closing arguments had to skate over what was just then in process of development. Now, with some better perspective on the tumultuous events of the 1980s and early 1990s, I hope that this new conclusion works better. I have considered extending the scope of the book, to take account of cultures other than the North-European heartland of the discussion – Italy, Spain, Portugal, East Europe, the Scandanavian countries, not to mention the world beyond Europe and North America – but my circumstances have prohibited this. One day *Modern typography* could perhaps be extended in that way; but then it might become another book, with differences in its character and thesis. As to this thesis, I can repeat the words I used in the preface to the first edition, in the three paragraphs that now follow.

This book is an essay, in that its text is brief and its argument condensed. The sequence of pictures included here also has the character of a short, highly selective excursion through a landscape of vast possibilities. But more importantly, the work is an essay in the sense that it 'essays' or 'attempts'. This is perhaps better conveyed by the German word 'ein Versuch': an essay, but, in its primary meaning, an 'attempt' or 'experiment'. What is attempted here is a shift of orientation for the history of typography, and so also for its practice. This proposed shift is, of course, not an entirely new orientation. Elements of this approach have been suggested by existing work in the history of the subject, and in its practice; and one could point to thoroughly worked out precedents in parallel fields, such as architecture. As will be clear, the argument depends on the contributions of a large gathering of previous writers; and the present book is in one aspect a reading of – and a report on – this literature.

It is a report written at a particular time and in a particular cultural context, in which what is 'modern' is frequently held to have come to an end, and to have been superseded – or perhaps just extended and qualified – by some 'postmodern'. This context has provided a setting for the book, helping to define its position. In constructing the work I have taken heart from the proposition (of Jürgen Habermas) that modernity is 'a continuing project', and have tried to see how this might be worked out in the field of typography.[1] If all history is to some extent (though not merely) a response to the conditions in which it is written, it is as well to make this dimension of contemporary reference explicit, so that it can be accounted for and engaged with by readers. The facts and examples that are presented in the book are part of this position: they define, test, qualify, advance the argument. There may be a kind of mythic or fictional quality to this, especially in such a compressed work, so that the examples selected become stages in a story, moved along by a narrative mechanism. I hope, at least, that I have avoided any false imposition of pattern and too much tying of loose ends.

From all this it will be clear that the book does have an argument, and is informed by a critical element. The need for a critical approach in any such undertaking, as giving it purpose, and connecting it to practice and to our ordinary lives, is itself one of the propositions of the book. But rather than expound such theses any further in a preface, I have felt it best to devote the first chapter to a statement of position and approach.

My deep acknowledgements for this second edition are as for the first. I owe much to the Department of Typography & Graphic Com-

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1. See Habermas's 1980 Adorno Prize lecture, translated into English as 'Modernity: an incomplete project', in Hal Foster (ed.), *Postmodern culture*, London: Pluto Press, 1985, pp.3–15. This thesis about 'modernity' has raised much debate and serious questioning, as I touch on in chapter 13. But I feel that the Habermasian thesis remains useful as a good proposition. It has been a starting point for investigations, including the present book, which might otherwise never have happened.

munication at the University of Reading, where I was a student and subsequently a teacher (until 1982); many of the ideas put forward here have been everyday currency there. However, neither that department nor any of its members are responsible for what I have written, and I imagine – and hope – that the book will provoke them to argument. I am indebted in particular to a past colleague at Reading: Paul Stiff, who has been a constant friend and discusser. Jane Howard also gave the text of the first edition thorough criticism, as well as providing moral support. For further helpful criticism, I must thank James Mosley, another ex-colleague at Reading, and (now ex-) Librarian of the St Bride Printing Library, London. This library is the other institution that has made this book possible. I hope that it may provide something in return for the friendly and knowledgeable help of its staff.

The first edition of *Modern typography* was printed and bound in Zutphen in the Netherlands. It was the first Hyphen Press book to be produced in that country, and it marked the start for me of a long engagement with Dutch culture. A number of colleagues there have been wonderful friends over this period. It would be invidious to mention names – especially as I look to them and their work as unwitting exemplifications of the themes of this book.

RK / London, 1992, 2004

Blessed be the inventor of the printing press. It is to him that we owe this wondrous revolution.

Louis Lavicomterie, 1792

Standardization, instead of individualization.
Cheap books, instead of private-press editions.
Active literature, instead of passive leather bindings.

Jan Tschichold, 1930

It is through more reason – not less – that the wounds dealt to the irrational totality of humankind by the instrument that is reason can be healed.

Theodor W. Adorno, 1953

Louis Lavicomterie de Saint-Samson, *La République sans impôts*, Paris: ICS, 1792, quoted by G. Kates, *The 'Cercle Social', the Girondins, and the French Revolution*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985, p. 178.

Tschichold, 'Was ist und was will die Neue Typografie?', in his *Eine Stunde Druckgestaltung*, p. 7; reprinted in his *Schriften 1925–1974*, vol. 1, at p. 90.

Theodor W. Adorno, 'Der Artist als Statthalter', in his *Noten zur Literatur 1*, Frankfurt a. M: 1958, p. 184; quoted here (with modifications) from its translation in *Notes to literature*, vol. 1, New York: Columbia University Press, 1991, p. 103.

6 New traditionalism

The ‘reform of printing movement’, which began to gather momentum in Britain in the years immediately before the First World War, can be most simply characterized through its relation to William Morris, whose typography had been a first stage of ‘revival’. The movement took up Morris’s fight for high standards and for an awareness of aesthetic qualities in printing: as at least one of its leading members reported, the sight of a Kelmscott book had provided the shock of excitement that started a life-long engagement with typography (Simon, *Printer and playground*, p. 8). But the reformers dissented from Morris on the question of the machine. Besides the further spread and development of powered presses, Linotype and Monotype composition machines were now in quite widespread use in Britain, and the quality of typography evident in the printing trade at large seemed (to the reformers) as undistinguished as that which had provoked Morris’s rebellion. Furthermore, the legacy of Kelmscott as taken up by the private presses had there become ossified in the cult of the ‘book beautiful’ or had degenerated in weak imitations of the original conception. The advent of Art Nouveau, and its degeneration, had brought further confusion, especially to a trade printer trying to keep up with fashion.

In the face of this situation of decline, the compromise made by the reformers was to accept the machine and provide it with good typefaces. For the book-centred reformers, ‘the machine’ meant above all the Lanston Monotype composing machine, which in Britain was dominant in the sphere of book-printing; line-composing machines predominated in newspaper production. At this first stage of the movement’s development (and, for many of its members, throughout its history) style was not seen as much of an issue. The main impulse was rather the avoidance of any gross stylism: the ‘medievalism’ of Morris or the ‘sentimentalism’ of Art Nouveau (Jackson, *The printing of books*, p. 217).

The Imprint

The first rallying point of the reforming movement was *The Imprint*, published between January and November 1913. The journal was founded and co-edited by a group of four men of different backgrounds and specialisms, though all with strong attachments to the Arts & Crafts movement and, in the case of three of them, to the Central School of Arts & Crafts. Gerard Meynell had been running the Westminster Press since 1899, as one of a few enlightened trade printers attempting standards higher than were normal: by the time of *The Imprint*, which it printed, it was perhaps in the league of the Arden Press and the Chiswick Press. J. H. Mason had trained as a compositor at the Ballantyne Press, worked at the Doves Press, and then joined the Central School as a teacher of typography. Edward Johnston had worked with the Doves Press and had taught at the Central School in its early days (from 1899). F. Ernest Jackson, the fourth editor, was an artist and a specialist in lithography, which he taught at the Central School.

Although an independent venture, the journal can be seen as representing exactly the position of the Arts & Crafts movement as it had by then developed. Thus the first number led off with a short text by W. R. Lethaby on 'Art and workmanship'. While aligning himself with Morris on the question of good work ('a work of art is a well-made thing, that is all'), Lethaby stated the one clear difference with Morris: 'Although a machine-made thing can never be a work of art in the proper sense, there is no reason why it should not be good in a secondary order – shapely, smooth, strong, well fitting, useful; in fact, like a machine itself. Machine-work should show quite frankly that it is the child of the machine; it is the pretence and subterfuge of most machine-made things which make them disgusting.' But against any suggestion of the 'style of the machine age', Lethaby went on to propose that: 'usually the best method of designing has been to improve on an existing model by bettering it at a point in time; a perfect table or chair or book has to be very well bred'.[1]

This philosophy of immaculate breeding was borne out in the design of the typeface commissioned for the setting of the journal itself. As reported by J. H. Mason, the typeface, which was given the name 'Imprint Old Face' (it is now known just as Monotype Imprint), issued out of exchanges between himself and Gerard Meynell.[2] Mason, true to his education, proposed Caslon, then available only in founder's type for hand-setting; the Westminster Press had a Monotype composing machine and Meynell wanted to use it for the journal. The project of a typeface using Caslon as a starting point, but designed for Monotype composition, was thus conceived as a compromise, and carried out very quickly. The result does not bear any close relation to the founder's Caslon: rather, it achieved an unusual quality of anonymity or self-effacement. One suspects that it was the people in the Monotype drawing office – more than either Mason or Meynell – who played the most significant part in this achievement. Monotype Imprint seems now to be the very 'type' of a seriffed typeface: in this it was an exemplary instance of the ideals of the journal's editors and inspirers.

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[1] W. R. Lethaby, 'Art and workmanship', *The Imprint*, no. 1, January 1913, pp. 2, 3.

The contents of *The Imprint* do suggest a concerted attempt to speak with the printing trade. For example, there were articles on recent printing machinery, trade education, costing practices, and – though this proportion was to diminish – a quarter of the first issue was given over to largely trade advertisements. Thus, although the journal is remembered by historians as looking forward to the historical-aesthetic typographic journals that followed in the 1920s and 1930s, it hoped to reach beyond a merely bibliophile readership.

The strains of compromise with trade values can be sensed in its attitude towards pictorial reproduction. In a review of the new *Penrose's Pictorial Annual*, the show-piece of the trade, J. H. Mason could not refrain from making what amounted to an objection to process-engraving as such: 'But I come back to the joyless ingenuity that has gone to the making of this dull volume, and think of the destruction of the real art of book illustration, which the half tone process has brought about'.[3]

Edward Johnston was persuaded to contribute a series of articles, extending to seven parts, on 'Decoration and its uses' (in calligraphic work),[4] but he never gave up his objections to reproduction and reduction of hand-work by mechanical means. His illustrations for these pieces – as well as a calligraphic masthead for the journal – were mechanically reproduced (by line blocks), but to the same size as his drawings. In support of these attitudes, a heavy emphasis was laid on the woodcut and wood-engraving in the historical component of the journal.

The Imprint came to an unexpected and unannounced end after nine issues. Financial difficulties and disagreements within the editorial group have been cited as reasons for this, but in any case it would have found a monthly schedule difficult to maintain in conditions of war.

The typographer

If *The Imprint* was a premature flourish, another kind of preface to the post-war reforming movement was provided by the activity of Bruce Rogers at Cambridge University Press. Rogers had come to England in 1916 to work for a time at the Mall Press with Emery Walker. In 1917 he was invited by Cambridge University Press to act as their 'printing adviser'. This was a new post (though a temporary one) and without obvious precedent in Britain. It was a recognition of factors in printing and book production that were then beyond the grasp of the printer – even a press with as long and distinguished a tradition as Cambridge. At this date it was only at Cambridge that the decline of standards could be recognized and a remedy proposed. The presence on the Press's governing body (the Syndics) of Sydney Cockerell – who had been William Morris's secretary – provided a confirming link with Arts & Crafts ideals.

In December 1917, Rogers submitted to the Syndics a 'Report on the typography of the Cambridge University Press', which addressed the problem of how to attain 'a distinctive style in book-making'. Rogers evaluated the materials already possessed by the Press and recommended new acquisitions, and in particular an expansion of the Monotype plant, with certain typefaces, especially Imprint and Plantin: 'hand-work should be brought to an irreducible minimum,

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2. See: 'The Imprint: fifty years on', *Monotype Newsletter*, no. 71, October 1963, pp. 1–5; also: Owens, *J. H. Mason*.
3. J. H. Mason, 'Biblion a-biblion', *The Imprint*, no. 3, March 1913, p. 210.
4. These were later reprinted in: Edward Johnston, *Formal penmanship and other papers*, London: Lund Humphries, 1971.

while machine-work should be correspondingly developed'. In his concluding section on future policy, Rogers recommended the appointment of a permanent 'adviser'.[5]

The post-war reformation was to be largely the creation of such 'advisers', bringing to the printing trade the elements of design. 'Design', that is, both in the sense of an aesthetic awareness and in the sense of rational co-ordination of production. (How much these two considerations connected and overlapped is perhaps the great question to be addressed to any such movement.) The function of design in printing might not have changed, but the functionary had: design would now become embodied in the emerging figure of the typographer. This person was no longer the master printer, but in Britain was typically the educated (or self-educated) amateur, with an aesthetic sense and a passion for the history of books and printing.

The role of typographer can be seen clearly worked out in the career of Francis Meynell (a cousin of Gerard Meynell). His first experience was in directing book design and production at his father's publishing company of Burns & Oates (1911–13). Then, passing on to journalism and socialist and anti-war agitation, he started the Pelican Press in 1916. This was essentially a design office with hand-composition facilities, using the printing capacity of the political press to which it was an adjunct. The work that issued from the Pelican Press showed a strong aesthetic interest; for example, in the decorated typography of sixteenth-century France. This sorted oddly with the left-socialist content of the products.

The career of another typographer, Stanley Morison, intertwined with Meynell's, both at Burns & Oates and then at the Pelican Press. Morison, though slightly older than Meynell, was without the family advantages of the other: he had worked his way through clerks' jobs to an induction into the world of enlightened printing as a junior assistant on *The Imprint*. As well as their common printing-historical enthusiasm, Morison shared both Roman Catholicism and socialism with Meynell. He had been in prison as a conscientious objector, but now, after the war, began to work as a typographer.

Morison's blend of practice and history, each activity informing the other, showed itself already during his short spell at the Pelican

Press, taking over during Meynell's absence (1919–21). His first substantial historical essay, *The craft of printing: notes on the history of type forms* (1921), was published by the Pelican Press. It served as publicity and as a contribution to knowledge: the first of many such publications from Morison.

Typefaces: the work of revival

In the post-war period, with the days of cheap hand-labour gone, any lingering doubts over the benefits of mechanized type-setting could hardly be sustained. The question was simply one of quality of typeface design. The diet of undistinguished 'old faces' and 'moderns' with which the Monotype and Linotype systems were equipped was felt to be inadequate. After their largely successful experience with Imprint, Lanston Monotype had continued with the idea of adapting historical faces for machine composition. There had followed a Plantin (1913), a Caslon (1915), a Scotch Roman (1920), and a Bodoni (from 1921). The British Linotype company (Linotype & Machinery) had as yet taken no steps in this direction, but in September 1921 appointed a 'printing adviser', as if in recognition of the need to remedy deficiencies in typographic quality. Their consultant, George W. Jones, was a master printer with historical interests: he now concerned himself with the design of the company's publications, and with the quest for better typefaces.

In the search for a typeface for modern-day composition that could emulate the products of what was seen as a (or the) golden period of printing history – the French sixteenth century – the running was being made in the USA. The American Type Founders Company had started work before the war on a Garamond typeface for hand-composition. The typographic reformers in Britain began to hear of this, and to see samples, and some quantities of the type were ordered in 1920 by C. W. Hobson for his Cloister Press. This was the context in which the Lanston Monotype Corporation then started on designing a Garamond for its machines, and in which Linotype & Machinery began (slightly later) to work on the typeface that was issued as Linotype Granjon.

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5. The report was only published much later, on the occasion of his eightieth birthday: Rogers, *Report on the typography of the Cambridge University Press*, pp. 1, 31.

The story of these various attempts to recreate a Garamond typeface is a complex one, and it has been the subject of some dispute.[6] Rather than engage in an estimation of precedence and influence, the point to observe here is that the leading machine typesetting companies in the USA and in Britain, as well as some founders of type for hand-composition, began to produce typefaces that were based on historical models, and that this now became their pattern of operation: replacing the previous almost unconscious production of 'old face' or 'modern' variants, or the commissioning of 'original' or 'artistic' designs. Typographic quality was to be found by scouring the past. The revolution brought to the trade by the typographers was to be a historical (or historicist) one: the best old typefaces, machine composed, and used in a historically-conscious manner.

This effort of revival was considerably enabled by the appearance of D. B. Updike's *Printing types* in 1922. For the emerging band of typographers, history was now given a clear outline, and provided with much more factual and also visual substance than had previously been available. For those working on the history of typefaces, contributions could now be fairly described as 'before' and 'after' Updike.

With his appointment as 'typographic adviser' to the Lanston Monotype Corporation in Britain, Stanley Morison became the principal figure in the revival of historical typefaces. The date of this appointment has been disputed: on various occasions Morison suggested that it had come in 1922, and that he therefore had some major responsibility for the cutting of Monotype Garamond. The balance of evidence now published suggests that Morison played an informal, agitating role in the production of this typeface, and that his formal appointment as consultant to the company came only 'in the early part of 1923' (Barker, *Stanley Morison*, p. 123).

In the 1920s and 1930s, the typeface production of the Monotype Corporation – 'Lanston' was dropped from the company name in 1931 – was to become the central achievement of the British reforming movement, providing the essential materials for its design work. In his retrospective survey of these typefaces (1950), Morison ran through the production of the company before his appointment as 'adviser': 'Such was the type-cutting performance of the Lanston

Monotype Corporation, showing very little originality, up to 1922, when a plan was laid before the managing director. It was intended as a programme of typographical design, rational, systematic, and corresponding effectively with the forseeable needs of printing.' (Morison, *A tally of types*, p. 32.)

The problem with this claim has been its stress on the rationality and foresight of the operation, which, when viewed dispassionately, seems to have been marked by a good deal of improvisation, if not muddle. Thus, as Morison's chief revisionist critic observed, the typefaces that followed from this 'plan' or 'programme' (of which no contemporary documentation exists) were the results of events that he could not have foreseen in 1922 or 1923 (Moran, *Stanley Morison*, p. 76). The case is rather one of Morison joining the company with the proposition of reviving typefaces, discovering models as he went along (fired especially by current historical enthusiasms), and then – later in his life – casting his characteristic aura of rationality over the whole operation.

In his retrospective commentary, Morison touched on a chief difficulty in this 'plan': the obstinacy and independence of the 'works'. While the typographical adviser was based in London, along with the sales department and administration of the company, the actual work of drawing and production was in the hands of the draughtsmen (mainly women, in fact) and engineers at Salfords, Surrey. This distance and division of labour certainly affected the processes of design: while Morison could make proposals and then urge corrections, the final forms of a typeface were in the hands of the people at the works. This would account for what one can discern as a common Monotype style, evident in many of the company's typefaces, especially in numerals and other characters beyond the primary interest of the consultant designer. Thus, even with the typefaces in whose design Morison was most deeply involved (such as Times New Roman), one should hesitate before attributing them to him without qualification.

In Morison's account, the Monotype works showed resistance

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6. See the works of Moran and Barker. The classic work on the sources is by Beatrice Warde, as: Paul Beaujon, 'The "Garamond" types', *The Fleuron*, no. 5, 1926, pp. 131–79.

to ‘the ideas of outside experts with theoretical learning but of unproved utility’: they would rather wait for trade demand to suggest new typefaces (Morison, *A tally of types*, p. 34). He then admitted the good fortune of the other major consultancy of his early years with the Monotype Corporation: as typographical adviser to Cambridge University Press (the position created first for Bruce Rogers). Through this post, as later with *The Times*, Morison was able to direct a large and influential customer to purchase Monotype equipment and thus to stimulate demand for Monotype products more widely in the trade.

The typographic club

During the 1920s, a network of enterprises and associations, reinforcing each other, came to define the reform of printing movement, and to aid its progress: *The Fleuron* (1923–30); the Double Crown Club (from 1924); the reinvigorated Curwen Press; the Nonesuch Press (from 1923); the Monotype Corporation. In different areas of work, each of these enterprises developed the themes of the movement: the belief in machine composition and machine printing; the revival of historical typefaces (and the cautious admittance of some ‘original’ faces); a historically sanctioned approach to design. These aims were to be entrusted to the figure, newly perceived, of the typographer. All this was felt to be ‘new’ and ‘modern’: thus Holbrook Jackson, a participant in the movement and an early chronicler of it, could apply both of these words to its typography and its typographers, with no hint of awareness of the contemporaneous Continental new typography (Jackson, *The printing of books*, pp. 33, 47, 226). The difference was between the merely modern, seen against a backward trade or ossified bibliophile context, and the consciously modern or the modernist.

The movement worked by example and by propaganda. In the first category one would place the output of the Nonesuch Press, run by Francis Meynell, as a demonstration that good qualities in book design were attainable under ordinary trade conditions, if the operation was directed by a designer. Nonesuch books mixed limited editions (up to around 1500 copies) with unlimited ones, each painstakingly designed. The venture ran profitably, finding success with intelligent collectors (those who read books too), until the recession of the 1930s.

The Curwen Press was the best advertisement for the movement among trade printers: its management had been taken over before the war by Harold Curwen (grandson of the founder), who instituted a policy of good relations within the workforce and good quality in its products. Curwen had been strongly affected by Arts & Crafts ideals (joining Edward Johnston's class at the Central School) and was a founder member of the Design and Industries Association. After the war, and particularly after it had taken on the services of a typographer (Oliver Simon), the Curwen Press developed a distinctive style or manner. As well as book production, the press engaged in jobbing and advertising work, and to some considerable extent it functioned as a design studio. It built up an informal stable of artist-illustrators and its own repertoire of typefaces and decorative elements. So 'Curwen' came to denote a world of gentle refinement: literate but not too serious, it was associated particularly with good food and wine.

This hedonist, self-deflating aspect of the movement was enshrined in the Double Crown Club: the occasional dining club in London at which papers on typography were delivered, followed by discussion. A more serious forum was provided by *The Fleuron*, the journal published in seven numbers between 1923 and 1930. Edited first by Oliver Simon and then by Stanley Morison, *The Fleuron* continued the project that had been suggested by *The Imprint*: a combination of historical articles and reviews, with discussions of contemporary work. And while it had no obvious ambition to speak to the printing trade, *The Fleuron* did serve as a vehicle for discussion within the movement – or club – which was now becoming an international one. A consistent feature of the journal was its surveys of work from abroad: thus there were contributions from and about D. B. Updike, and surveys of contemporary traditionalist work in the USA and on the Continent.

For Stanley Morison, these were years of intense production, with historical research going hand-in-hand with consultancy work. His historical work issued in articles and short texts – introductions and annotating pieces – rather than in anything of the scale of Updike's *Printing types*. Given the multiplicity of his interests, this was perhaps inevitable. As a historian, Morison's achievement now resides chiefly in works compiled after his death: the two volumes of

Selected essays and what was to have been a ‘summa’ of his investigations into the history of letterforms, *Politics and script*. For several generations of typographers and graphic designers, Morison’s history was communicated through *Four centuries of fine printing*, the anthology of reproductions of pages from books, with a survey introduction, published first as a large folio in 1924 and subsequently in reduced and revised editions.

It was Morison who provided the movement with a summary of its design philosophy, *First principles of typography*. This short text started life as the entry on ‘typography’ in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (1929), was rewritten and published in the last number of *The Fleuron* (1930), and in later years republished separately in further editions, including several foreign-language ones. The text was concerned to assert the inviolability of certain governing values: ‘reason’, ‘convention’, ‘the reader’s comprehension of the text’. Having offered a definition of typography in these heavily charged terms, Morison ran through the elements of book design and production.

The *First principles* served to emphasize that, for this movement, typography was almost always book typography (and books consisting of continuous text, with no mention of tables or even footnotes). The constraints and traditions of book typography were the bases from which Morison generalized a theory that might be taken to apply to the whole field. Outside books, Morison did elsewhere recognize ‘advertisement setting’, where novelty and play were allowed.[7] But he never admitted the possibility of other areas of typography (or, at least, thought it worth discussing them in print), and thus he polarized the field into the area of strict obedience to convention and that where no rules obtained. His own ventures in publicity typography (for example, the celebrated dust jackets for Gollancz) demonstrated the burdens of designing without principles. In a postscript to this essay, written in the 1960s, Morison referred to modernist approaches to typography (as at the Bauhaus), but brushed them aside, as making an art out of something that should essentially be a service, and as violating tradition, convention, orthodoxy.[8]

Dissident presences and new letterforms

Though the British reforming movement advanced by way of historical revival, the process could reveal new things. This double aspect is clear in Edward Johnston's formal writing, which set out to discover lost practices and forms, but which put its faith in making 'the thing itself', rather than its reproduction or recreation (see chapter 4). Pre-eminent among Johnston's new things was the London Underground Railway alphabet. Johnston's alphabet was a product of the moment of *The Imprint*: the project was conceived in 1913, and his working drawings for the first set of letters were done in 1915–16. The alphabet was grounded in the forms of classical Roman and Renaissance humanist letters, but as a sanserif and 'elemental', it had the right qualities and associations for its purpose of a letterform for public spaces, for a company then renewing its visual identity. Johnston's Arts & Crafts scruples and his natural diffidence obstructed any collaboration with the world of machine production: he never developed the alphabet as a typeface (i.e. in a range of sizes, with variant forms) for a typefounder, still less for machine composition. And, apart from his involvement with *The Imprint* – he seems to have played an observer's part in the design of its typeface – this was his only sustained contact with the printing reformers in Britain.

Although he started as a pupil of Johnston at the Central School, and was soon his revering friend and associate, Eric Gill's relations with the printing reformation were more involved. Gill's liberation from the drudgery of apprenticeship in an architect's office had come through taking jobs of inscriptional letter-cutting. From this time (1903), he was a 'workman', with 'a workman's rights, the right to design what he made; and a workman's duties, the duty to make what he designed' (Gill, *Autobiography*, p. 115). Gill belonged to the tradition of Morris and Lethaby, but with qualifications and differences: an attachment to anarchist rather than Marxist (let alone

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7. See Morison's manifesto 'The 2 kinds of effectiveness' (1928), reproduced in: Moran, *Stanley Morison*, p. 119; and also his 'On advertisement settings', *Signature*, old series, no. 3, 1936, pp. 1–6; *Rationalism and novelty appropriate in display advertising*, London: The Times, 1954.

8. See also the remarks on typographic modernism in Morison's *The typographic arts*, pp. 50–1, 97.

Fabian) socialism, and to a radical Roman Catholicism (he had had an early conversion, from a non-conformist upbringing). He thus stood at some distance both from the Arts & Crafts movement as it had developed after Morris, and from those (in the Design and Industries Association, most notably) prepared to give succour to the world of industrial production. Gill did come to make pacts with the twin devils of industrialism and capitalism: but on his own terms, and while never ceasing to pour reasoned abuse on them in lectures, essays, and letters to the press.

The start of Gill's engagement with typography proper – letterforms for composition and printing, rather than cut in stone – can be dated at 1925. He was asked by Stanley Morison to draw alphabets that could be reproduced as a printing type for Monotype composition. Gill's inscribed letterforms – which by then had become a stable and immediately identifiable set of forms – seemed to provide a suitable model for a typeface for printing. Morison was then developing the theory that quality in typeface design was inseparable from the operation of engraving or inscribing, and that something had been lost with the introduction of the pantograph punchcutting machine. He therefore commissioned one of the surviving punchcutters (Charles Malin in Paris) to work from Gill's drawings; the Monotype draughtsmen would then work from smoke-proofs of these punches. This process of design proved to be a muddle, and the result – Monotype Perpetua – was long in the making. Writing years after the event, even Morison, at his most ponderous, admitted that 'the question whether the sizes 8 point to 14 point fully realize the ambition with which they were begun, i.e, to create an original type serviceable for all kinds of books, does not permit of an answer in the unqualified affirmative' (Morison, *A tally of types*, p. 103).

The unsatisfactory experiences of Perpetua may well have stimulated Gill to a greater interest in typography. He became fully engaged in the activity with the production of the typeface that became known as Gill Sans. The clear precedent for this letterform was the Johnston Underground alphabet, and Gill had been around during its design: both men were living in Ditchling, Sussex, at the time. Monotype Gill Sans followed from some painted signs that Gill had recently designed, using a 'block' (sanserif) letterform;

and perhaps Morison and Monotype were then becoming aware of the burgeoning production of sanserif typefaces in Germany (see chapter 9). Gill's first informal drawings for the typeface were done in 1926; the first drawings for production went to Monotype in 1927.

In a paper delivered to the Double Crown Club in April 1926, just before the General Strike ('I feel like a miner before a court of mandarins'), Gill had represented his world of the workman-artist as unreconcilable with that of the book-producers. He could not accept the attempt to bridge it by 'men of taste' (the typographers of the printing reform), if this meant machine-made decoration: 'what I ask of machine-made books is that they shall *look* machine-made'.[9] By entering fully into the process of design for machine-tool execution (and then for machine composition and powered printing presses), Gill now became thoroughly implicated in the world of industrial production. In confirmation of this, in 1928, the Monotype Corporation started to pay him retaining fees.

For Morison, Gill Sans represented a deal with modernism. The need for an improved and refined sanserif had been accepted, but its place was clearly defined: as a display letter (usually in all-capital setting) in public contexts, or perhaps in ephemeral literature, but not in books, and there was no 'spirit of the age' talk. When, very soon after the first matrices became available, it was adopted by the London & North-Eastern Railway company as their standard letterform, Gill Sans became, for the Monotype Corporation, the railway letter: equally at home on an engine name-plate and in a timetable.[10]

Gill's other major typeface – Joanna – soon followed, in 1930. This was designed for the use of the printing press that his son-in-law René Hague set up at Piggots, Buckinghamshire, and which they ran in partnership as 'Hague & Gill' (see example 12, pp. 206–7). This press, Gill took pains to point out, was not a private press but a printing business (with a powered press) and, as such, endeavoured to achieve 'a good reasonable commonplace', without excessive aes-

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9. The text was not published in Gill's lifetime, but as: 'The artist & book production', *Fine Print*, vol. 8, no. 3, 1982, pp. 96–7, 111.
10. Among the contemporary literature, see especially the 'Modern typography number' of the *Monotype Recorder*, vol. 32, no. 4, 1933.

thetic or moralizing scruples.[11] Hague & Gill undertook a good deal of jobbing work for local customers, as well as book production. In a short text entitled 'Reason and typography' (1936), Hague outlined his credo: 'There is only one sort of hope, and that is in establishing a new tradition, but not a new academicism, in keeping everything plain, trying not to remember the —teenth century (filling in whatever is the fashionable number) when you are struggling with a newspaper in a tube, remembering that, finally, printing will have to be judged as printing and not as advertisement or fine art.'[12]

An early production of this press was Gill's own *Essay on typography*, published first by Sheed & Ward in an edition limited to 500 copies. Gill discussed typography – both letterforms and their composition as printed text – in his present context of England in 1931, suffering under a rampant, inhuman 'industrialism'. In such conditions, he argued, undecorated plainness was all one could decently hope for (thus Gill Sans) and, in the face of the sentimentality of machine-produced ornamentation, it was perhaps a noble aspiration. Gill's rationalism also led him to argue for unjustified setting: 'even spacing is of more importance typographically than equal length. Even spacing is a great assistance to easy reading ...' (Gill, *Essay on typography*, p. 91). The *Essay* is thus much more radical, in all senses, than any document produced from within the orthodoxy of the printing reform movement. It compares interestingly with the *First principles of typography*: where Morison is sententious, attempting timelessness, Gill is down-to-earth and pointed, in his illustrations as in his language.

The hegemony of invisibility

The period of most intense activity for the reforming movement came to an end around 1930. There are obvious economic explanations for the slackening of pace then: recession and cutbacks meant less demand for printing and thus for enlightened typography. The change from a time of rather feverish discovery to one of steadier consolidation is also a reflection of the fact that the stock of typographic history that fuelled the movement had limits. By the 1930s, the reformers were provided with sufficient materials, in the form of typefaces, easily available reproductions of historical examples, and a literature of the subject (Updike's *Printing types*, *The Fleuron*, Monotype publications).

The typeface 'programme' (if such it was) of the Monotype Corporation seems to come to an end with Bembo (cut in 1929) and Bell (cut in 1930). After this, apart from some new faces, the revivals were the less celebrated Ehrhardt and Van Dijck (both 1937–8). Times New Roman (cut in 1931) was a special case: designed very specifically for *The Times*, it was not intended as a historical revival, though it does nevertheless refer, via Monotype Plantin, to an existing (French sixteenth-century) model.[13] Morison's historical bent of mind (and, one might add, his lack of drawing skills) thus informed this 'new roman' designed for the most demanding production conditions of the modern world. (It is interesting that his first proposal to *The Times* included the suggestion of a modified Perpetua: a typeface with stronger claims to being a 'new roman', though hardly robust enough for newspaper printing.) With his appointment in 1929 as its 'typographical adviser', Morison became increasingly absorbed in the affairs of *The Times*. As well as becoming its consultant on typography, in charge of the major redesign that required the cutting of Times New Roman, he became its official historian (his five-volume work came out between 1935 and 1952) and was an unofficial policy adviser to a succession of editors.

While Morison turned to major historical projects, his dicta began to spread through the world of typography in Britain and abroad, both directly through his writings (*First principles of typography* achieved gospel status) and indirectly through the work of

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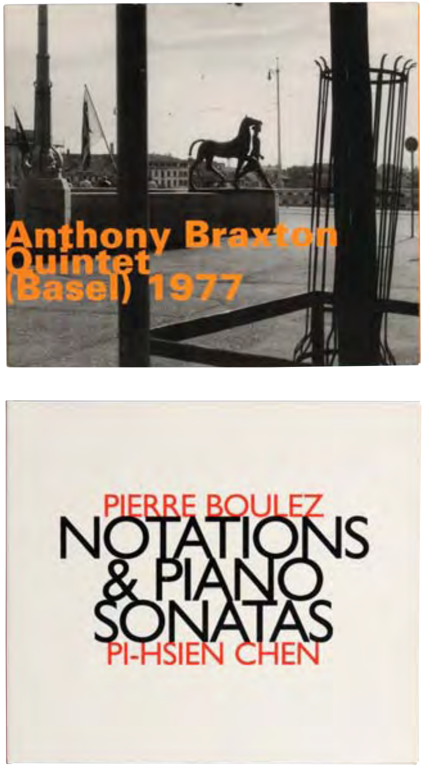
[11] 'A letter from Mr Eric Gill', *Monotype Recorder*, vol. 32, no. 3, 1933, p. 32.

[12] René Hague, 'Reason and typography', *Typography*, no. 1, 1936, p. 9.

[13] See: Barker, *Stanley Morison*, pp. 291–3; Allen Hutt, 'Times New Roman: a reassessment', *Journal of Typographic Research*, vol. 4, no. 3, 1970, pp. 259–70; John Dreyfus, 'The evolution of Times New Roman', *Penrose Annual*, vol. 66, 1973, pp. 165–74; Tracy, *Letters of credit*, pp. 194–210. A later round of discussion was started by Mike Parker with his theory that Times Roman followed the model of a typeface designed by Starling Burgess, around 1904: 'Starling Burgess, type designer?', *Printing History*, no. 31/32, 1994, pp. 52–108. Replies by Harold Berliner, Nicolas Barker, Jim Rimmer and John Dreyfus were published in *Printing History*, no. 37, 1998. Barker's rebuttal, 'Starling Burgess, no type designer', was reprinted in his *Form and meaning in the history of the book*, pp. 371–89 – in its section of essays on forgery.

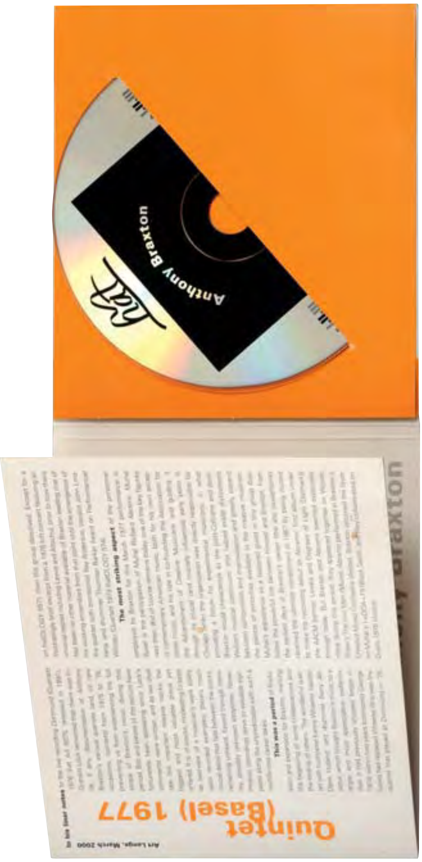
associates and acolytes. At the Monotype Corporation, the active work of propaganda was in the hands of Beatrice Warde. She had entered the world of typography through a job in the library of the American Typefounders Company, before coming to Europe and the principal centres of typographic history. Following the success of her demonstration of the real sources of the 'Garamond' revivals, and a substantial historical article in the *Monotype Recorder*, she had been asked to join the company in 1927, as editor of the *Recorder* and in charge of publicity. In the years of her association with the company (into the 1960s), the Monotype Corporation became a model of enlightened self-interest. Its publications and its exhibitions were a powerful source of education. Monotype became the medium through which several generations of printers and typographers learned about the practice and (to some considerable extent) the history of their subject. Other companies – Linotype, Intertype, Stephenson Blake – were by comparison very quiet. Beatrice Warde had the popular touch (as Morison hardly had) and was able to make links with the world of printing education and the trade at large. Her lecture of 1932, 'Printing should be invisible' (later published as 'The crystal goblet') recapitulated the Morisonian doctrine of self-effacement and obedience, but in the terms of an after-dinner speech.

Thus it was through the Monotype Corporation that the printing reformers could exert a hegemonic influence over the printing trade. The vulgar extremes of 'printer's typography' were eroded by the teachings of the printing reform: typefaces had a historical pedigree and should not be illegitimately (ahistorically) combined, nor used in too many sizes, nor with too much bold type; the nineteenth century was a dark period typographically (the enthusiasm, towards the end of the 1930s, for its display typography was to come rather from architects); typography should not get in the way of the reader and the text, but should (like Beatrice Warde's crystal goblet) be a transparent and civilizing container. This apparently invincible philosophy was bestowed on and accepted by all sectors of the printing world: the trade and its publications; printing education in the technical colleges and design education (so far as it existed) in the art schools; the newly emerging sphere of the 'typographic designer'. This latter had its own society from 1928, seeking to represent not the gentlemanly book typographers, but rather those working in advertising and the ‘commercial’ field. The Society of Typographic Designers was a marginal, if persistent, organization, without the scope or the forum of discussion necessary to work out any independent approaches. The potential source of criticism of the doctrines of the printing reformation was the new typography, as it was being developed on the Continent: a spectre that in the 1930s was easily held at bay or domesticated.

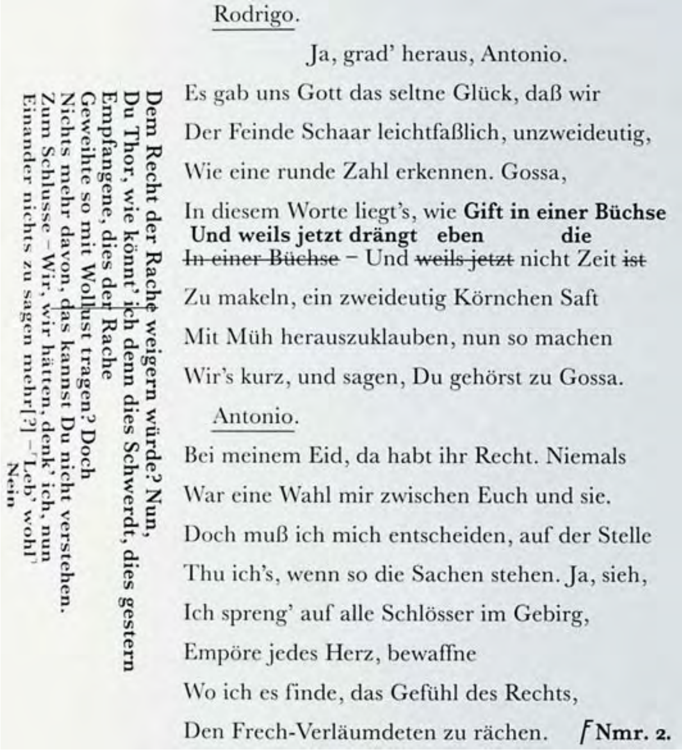


23. Publishing recorded music
Anthony Braxton: Quintet (Basel) 1977, Basel: Hat Hut, 2001
125 x 140 mm, folding out to 125 x 427 mm, with CD, lithography
Pierre Boulez: Notations and piano sonatas, Basel: Hat Hut, 2005
125 x 142 mm, folding out to 125 x 430 mm, with CD, lithography

These are examples of the two CD series published since 1997 by the independent label, Hat Hut. The hatOLOGY and hat[now]ART series are notable for their minimal but very effective packets, designed by Stefan Fuhrer in Vienna. The CDs are held in a slit in a card packet that also carries a short essay and information on the recording. For hatOLOGY – jazz and improvised music – cover images are always photographs, usually showing details from scenes from the modern world, and the colours used are black and orange. For hat[now]ART – contemporary composed music – the covers are text only, set in Gill Sans capitals, in black and red. With these limited materials, both sets are surprisingly various visually, adaptable to particular needs, and appropriate to the music they publish.


Anthony Braxton
Quintet (Basel) 1977

PIERRE BOULEZ | NOTATIONS & PIANO SONATAS



Rodrigo.

Ja, grad' heraus, Antonio.
Es gab uns Gott das seltne Glück, daß wir
Der Feinde Schaar leichtfaßlich, unzweideutig,
Wie eine runde Zahl erkennen. Gossa,
In diesem Worte liegt's, wie **Gift in einer Büchse**
Und weils jetzt drängt eben die
~~In einer Büchse~~ – Und ~~weils jetzt~~ nicht Zeit ~~ist~~
Zu makeln, ein zweideutig Körnchen Saft
Mit Müh herauszuklauben, nun so machen
Wir's kurz, und sagen, Du gehörst zu Gossa.

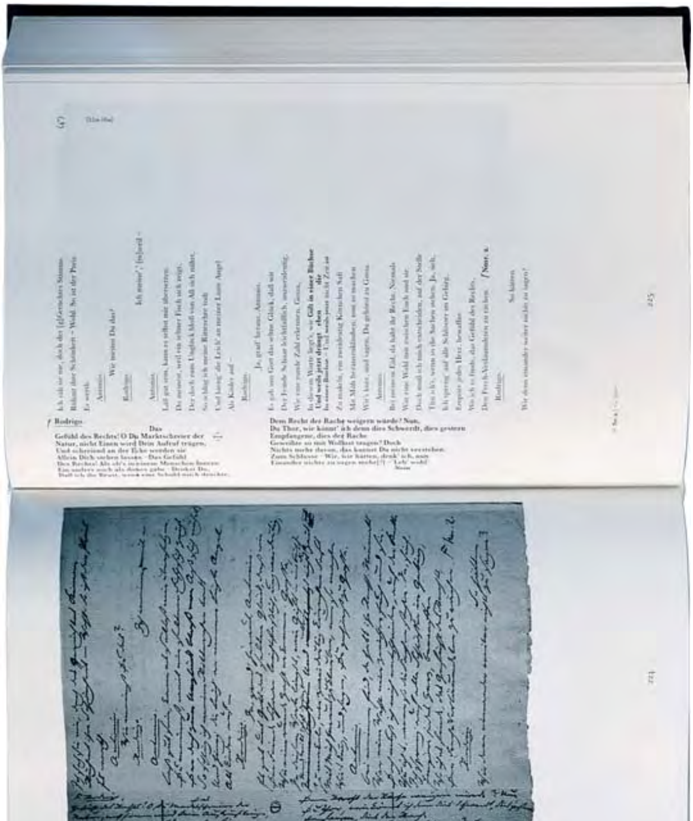
Antonio.

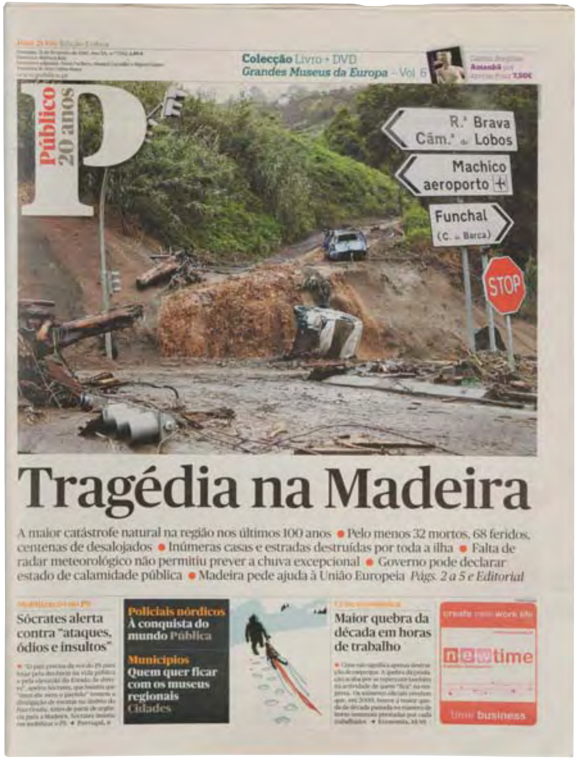
Bei meinem Eid, da habt ihr Recht. Niemals
War eine Wahl mir zwischen Euch und sie.
Doch muß ich mich entscheiden, auf der Stelle
Thu ich's, wenn so die Sachen stehen. Ja, sieh,
Ich spreng' auf alle Schlösser im Gebirg,
Empöre jedes Herz, bewaffne
Wo ich es finde, das Gefühl des Rechts,
Den Frech-Verläumdeten zu rächen. ſ**Nmr. 2.**

Dem Recht der Rache weigern würde? Nun,
Du Thor, wie könnt' ich denn dies Schwerdt, dies gestern
Empfangene, dies der Rache
Geweihte so mit Wollust tragen? Doch
Nichts mehr davon, das kannst Du nicht verstehen.
Zum Schlusse – Wir, wir hätten, denk' ich, nun
Einander nichts zu sagen mehr[?] – ⌜Leb' wohl⌝
Nein

24. A historical-critical edition
H. v. Kleist, *Die Familie Schroffenstein* (Band I/1,
Sämtliche Werke, Brandenburger Ausgabe, edited by Roland
Reuß & Peter Staengle), Frankfurt a.M: Stroemfeld, 2003
275 x 175 mm, 564 pp, lithography

This spread from a volume of this major edition of Kleist's writings shows the method of this way of editing. A primary document of the text – in this case, Kleist's handwritten pages – is reproduced on one page, and facing it is a typographic version that attempts to transcribe every significant word or sign or mark. Elsewhere in the volume a straightforward transcription of the first printed text is given. Readers and scholars are thus provided with the important materials for a study of this work. The Kleist edition is one of a number following these principles being published by Stroemfeld, which includes editions of Kafka (also edited by Reuß and Staengle) and Hölderlin. A special feature that makes possible this approach is that the editor (Roland Reuß) is also the typesetter. The act of setting the text, in QuarkXPress, is part of the act of interpreting and transcribing Kleist's (to modern, non-German eyes) often impenetrable script. Yet the interpretation is done with great fidelity and restraint – qualities that permeate every part of the design of these dignified books.

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Público
20 anos

Tragédia na Madeira

A maior catástrofe natural na região nos últimos 100 anos ● Pelo menos 32 mortos, 68 feridos, centenas de desalojados ● Inúmeras casas e estradas destruídas por toda a ilha ● Falta de radar meteorológico não permitiu prever a chuva excepcional ● Governo pode declarar estado de calamidade pública ● Madeira pede ajuda à União Europeia *Págs. 2 a 5 e Editorial*

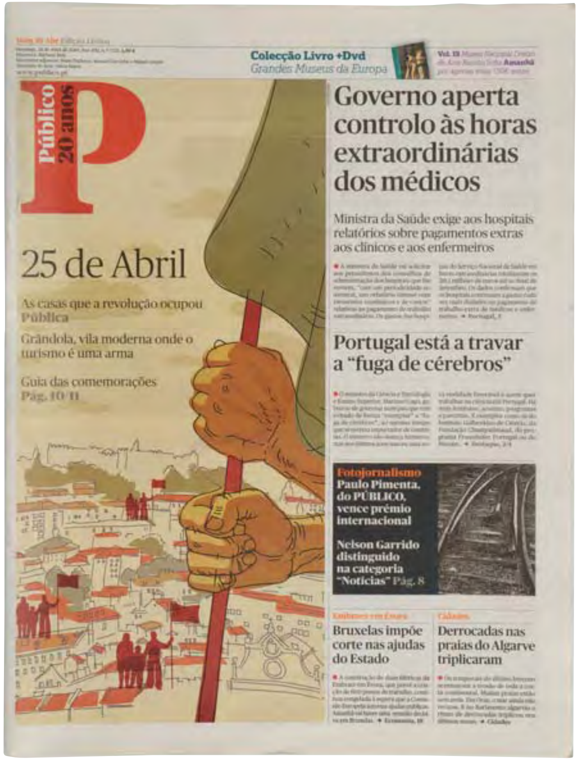
Sócrates alerta contra "ataques, ódios e insultos"

Policiais nórdicos
À conquista do mundo Pública

Municípios
Quem quer ficar com os museus regionais
Cidades

Maior quebra da década em horas de trabalho

create new work life
newtime
time business


Colecção Livro +Dvd
Grandes Museus da Europa

Público
20 anos

25 de Abril

As casas que a revolução ocupou
Pública

Grândola, vila moderna onde o turismo é uma arma

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Governo aperta controlo às horas extraordinárias dos médicos

Ministra da Saúde exige aos hospitais relatórios sobre pagamentos extras aos clínicos e aos enfermeiros

Portugal está a travar a "fuga de cérebros"

Fotojornalismo
Paulo Pimenta, do PÚBLICO, vence prémio internacional

Nelson Garrido distinguido na categoria "Notícias" Pág. 8

Bruxelas impõe corte nas ajudas do Estado

Derrocadas nas praias do Algarve triplicaram

25. The modern newspaper
Público, Lisbon & Porto, 2010
370 x 280 mm, 36 pp, lithography

The liberal national Portuguese newspaper *Público*, established in 1990, was already in its original form a ‘modern newspaper’ in both content and design: smaller in format than the traditional broadsheet and making considerable use of photographs and colour printing. In 2007 a substantially altered version was launched. The redesign brought the paper yet closer to magazine pages, and also reflected the growing presence of *Público*’s website in its operations. Both printed paper and website are art-directed by Sónia Matos.

As often now, the newspaper’s redesign was made by consultant designers from elsewhere, in this case Britain: Mark Porter working with Simon Esterson and Kuchar Swara.

An essential element of the redesign was a new typeface, custom-made by Christian Schwarz (New York) and Paul Barnes (London).

Postscript on reproduction

The artefacts reproduced as 'examples' in this book attempt to provide some visual illustration of its themes. No strict rules governed the choice of examples. Some of them are actually discussed in the text. Some were chosen just because they show things that are not otherwise mentioned: this is particularly so with the last examples, of recent work, which raise the question of what modern typography may be in the years in which this book has been written. In this second edition of the book I have also tried to choose examples different from those in the first, and borne in mind other books that I have produced since 1992, which present material that overlaps with this one.

From the reservoir of printed matter deposited over three hundred years, what should one show? The possibilities may seem to be almost infinite. But in the event – when it comes to actually locating examples and reproducing their images in a book – the process of selection becomes considerably clarified. It was decided to confine the images to a separate 'chapter' and to use a different paper for this purpose. Forty-eight pages were allocated for this. It was decided to show artefacts not often reproduced before, in freshly-made photographs, with a caption that would give some physical description and refer to points of interest. It then became a matter of finding suitable things, which one could lay one's hands on – gently – and place before a camera and lights. Libraries and archives may not be the best sources here. Heavy fees, bureaucratic obstacles, uncertain technical quality: all of these things lead the reproducer away from these institutions and towards the private archive, which may be small and arbitrary, but is at least friendly and unrestricted.

This pressure towards the things that happen to be easily available has helped to confirm one of the arguments of the text. Printing and typography are in service of the ordinary and the everyday. The pamphlet, the invoice form, the trade catalogue, the flimsily-made novel: these are the staples of printing, and it seems right to give them full attention. If they are not more prominent here, this is partly due to the difficulty of finding old examples of ordinary printing: they perish and are discarded, or else may be found only in unfriendly libraries. It will be clear, then, that this collection of examples is not a 'canon' of modern typography: such a notion seems beside the point of typography. Rather, these examples are just a 'continuation by other means' of the essay.

How exactly to photograph and then print these examples is another area of dilemma and finally unresolvable contradiction. One strong wish has been to show that these artefacts are indeed artefacts. Books, for example, have weight, texture, smell, as well as kinetic possibilities when their pages are turned. When opened, a book may not lie flat, and even if it does, 'flat' will include a valley through the middle. Paper may be torn and stained. At some point in its history, a book's pages may have been ruthlessly trimmed, nastily rebound, or embellished by library stamps. Letterheadings should have been written and typed on; postage stamps licked, stuck and franked. All of these things are the reality of the artefacts of typography. How or whether one shows any of this in reproduction should be a matter of serious consideration.

In the first edition of this work we used black-and-white printing for the pictures, arguing that this gives 'some distance from the artefact', and perhaps a 'critical distance' that gives room for reflection. In this new edition we have tried colour – again in the spirit of experiment, and after seeing what good realist colour photography can achieve. As in the first edition, we have presented the objects cut out from any background. Readers might compare the two results.

Sources of the examples

The examples shown here all belong to private collections with the exception of the first four, as indicated below. We are grateful to these libraries for permission to reproduce these things in their collections.

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The index covers people, companies, institutions, and some key subjects; but ‘modern’ and related ideas have not been indexed. ‘Typefaces’ are gathered under that heading. The concept, as now understood, dates from the full commodification of these things (around 1900); references to types before this time may be found through the names of people. Chapter 15 has not been indexed. Material in notes is shown by the suffix ‘n’.

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