

OVER ITS FIVE-HUNDRED YEAR HISTORY, the roman typeface has evolved to better serve the needs of its times. While originally rooted in calligraphy and the movement of the hand, typefaces have adapted to present many types of messages, both organic and mechanical.



THIS CAN BE SEEN IN EVEN THE EARLIEST TYPEFACES, used in the Gutenberg Bible of 1455. The Gutenberg letterforms were based on the hand-written gothic/blackletter script common in religious works. In many ways, Gutenberg sought to replicate the feel of a hand-lettered book via an automated method. For this reason, any of the bibles included decorative initials that were hand-drawn by scribes.

THE ROMAN TYPEFACES of the 15th and 16th Centuries, sometimes referred to as HUMANIST, followed the handwritten tradition as well. They used a modulated stroke with large, pen-formed terminals and an oblique axis. The goal was to produce a text that was more readable and more

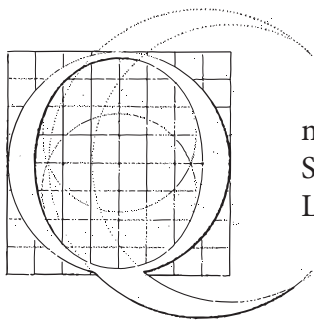
Quidā eius libros nō ipsius

human. A style that might match the revolutions of the arts and sciences. One of the most famous masters of this craft was Nicolas Jenson.

Vt gemini inter se reges albusque

TOWARD THE END of the 15th century, a new type of formal

writing called “cursiva humanistica” gave rise to a new category of typeface, the ITALICS. One face, created by Vatican chancellery scribe named Ludovico Arrighi (circa 1527) incorporated slightly taller roman capitals, a gentler slant angle, and a wider separation of lines. It gave text the appearance of refined handwriting.



TYPEFACES CREATED DURING THE ENLIGHTENMENT embody many of the ideals of that era. Louis Simmoneau, while working for Louis XIV made use of fine grids and mathematical instruments to design Romain Du Roi.

Helvetica

Which leads to the modern typefaces. Modern typefaces contrast sharply with other styles due to their lack of handwritten forms. Helvetica, for example eschews all ornamentation.

BUT THOUGH THERE MAY be profound differences in appearance and purpose, the letters of all alphabets share the same basic characteristics. The proportions, contrast of stroke thickness, and details may change, but the architecture remains the same.

CAP-HEIGHT: Distance from the baseline from to the top of the capital letter. The cap height of a typeface determines its point size.



BASELINE: Where the letters sit. This is the most stable axis along a line of text. It is crucial for aligning letterforms and other elements of a layout.

X-HEIGHT: Height of the main body of a lowercase letter.