

PRINTING TYPES
THEIR HISTORY, FORMS, AND USE

A STUDY IN SURVIVALS

BY

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WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

*"Nunca han tenido, ni tienen las artes otros
enemigos que los ignorantes"*

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Terence, Juvenal, and other authors. During the first ten years of the existence of this press some hundred volumes were printed.

In 1692, Louis XIV ordered a new series of types, to be used exclusively by the Imprimerie Royale and to be produced without any thought of expense. To decide on what this new character should be, a commission was appointed by the Académie des Sciences, of which Jaugeon¹ was the most active member. Grandjean,² first accredited royal type-cutter, was chosen to engrave the punches—in which he is said to have been helped by his friend and pupil, and suc-

¹ It was in this connection, no doubt, that Jaugeon, in collaboration with Truchet (a Carmelite and a versatile mechanic), and M. Filleau des Billetes, of Poitou, prepared for the Académie a treatise on typography, which was to be part of a collection entitled *Description et Perfection des Arts et Métiers*. This covered the art of designing letters, of cutting their punches, of letterpress printing, and of book-binding. Though some of the plates illustrating the book were engraved—among them the celebrated diagram of 2023 squares on which letters were to be designed—the manuscript was never published and is now in the Bibliothèque Nationale. Jaugeon's elaborate theory of designing types was, after years of neglect, put into practice, and a series of types called *Caractères Jaugeon* was cut by Hénaffe for the Imprimerie Nationale in 1904.

² According to De Fontenai, Philippe Grandjean de Fouchy, of an old family of Mâcon, was born in 1666. When in Paris, early in life, a friend took him to see a printing-office. In examining its types he thought he saw ways of bettering them. Designing some capital letters for amusement, he succeeded so well that his essays were shown to M. De Ponchartrain, who mentioned Grandjean's work to Louis XIV. In consequence, Grandjean was ordered to enter the royal service to occupy himself with printing. Through the influence of the Abbé Bignon, the well-known bibliophile, Grandjean made new models for punches and matrices for the Imprimerie Royale and invented several appliances for shortening and perfecting the work of a type-cutter. The *romain du roi* designed for the Imprimerie made his reputation. "M Grandjean," says Fournier, "who assisted the progress of this new foundry, also had charge of it; he maintained it always in the different localities in which he lived, the last place being his house near the Estrapade at the entrance to the Rue des Postes, from which it was transported to the Louvre in 1725, to be joined with the offices there, thus forming a complete printing-house."

cessor, Alexandre. The committee worked for several years to get things to its mind. The result of all this cogitation was the *romain du roi*—comprising twenty-one different bodies of roman and italic, and twenty bodies of roman and italic initials: in all, eighty-two complete fonts.

These types, begun in 1693, were only finished in 1745. They were marked as "royal" fonts in an odd way—by a little projection on the left of the shank of the lower-case l at the height of a short lower-case letter. This annoying feature of an otherwise beautiful font has been continued on the l of roman letters cut for the Imprimerie ever since. It has been said that l was selected by order of Louis XIV—who, by the way, esteemed Grandjean's types so highly that he refused the request of Philip V of Spain for a set of the punches. In some early gothic types a similar mark, derived from manuscripts, also appeared on the left of the l. The best of Grandjean's *romain du roi* fonts were employed in a magnificent folio, *Médailles sur les Principaux Événements du Règne de Louis le Grand, avec des Explications Historiques. Par l'Académie Royale des Inscriptions & Médailles* (fig. 173). This book was printed at the Imprimerie Royale in 1702.¹ An enlarged folio edition covering the entire reign, with different *explications*, was issued in 1723; but as it is printed on rougher paper, it does not show the peculiarities of the characters so clearly. A good modern impression of these fonts may be seen in the work printed by the Imprimerie Nationale in 1889, entitled *Cuivres de Cochin destinés à l'Histoire de Louis XV par Médailles*. This book, intended to be a continuation of the similar volumes devoted to the reign of Louis XIV, was never completed, but these designs made for it by Cochin

¹ A *quarto* volume, with much the same title, also published in 1702, does not employ these types, and is not to be confused with the *folio* edition.

dans l'Isle de Saint-Amand, & battit encore huit cens chevaux sortis de Douay. Après quoy il se campa entre cette Ville & Bouchain, & porta la terreur dans tout le Pays, qu'il fourragea jusques aux portes de Cambray. Enfin il marcha vers Condé, & ayant pris d'abord le fauxbourg de l'Escauld, il fit faire un logement sur la contrescarpe; de forte que le jour mesme, 25 d'Aoust, le Gouverneur se rendit à la seconde sommation. Le Comte demeura aux environs de cette Place jusqu'au mois de Septembre, & cette entreprise n'ayant esté faite que pour amuser les Espagnols, ou pour les attirer à un combat, il abandonna Condé avant la fin de la Campagne, & prit Maubeuge en revenant.

C'est le sujet de cette Médaille. On y voit Pallas, tenant un Javelot prest à lancer; le fleuve de l'Escauld effrayé s'appuye sur son Urne. La Légende, *HISPANIS TRANS SCALDIM PULSIS ET FUGATIS*, signifie, *les Espagnols défaits & poussés au-delà de l'Escauld*. L'Exergue, *CONDATUM ET MALBODIUM CAPTA. M. DC. XLIX. prise de Condé & de Maubeuge. 1649.*

Une description historique & allégorique aurait accompagné les dessins, & chaque page de la description devait être entourée d'un cadre différent, également composé & gravé par Cochin. Au bas de chaque description se trouverait un cul-de-lampe allégorique.

Les quatre premières planches de l'Histoire de Louis XV par médailles ont figuré au Salon de 1755; mais l'ouvrage n'a pas été publié. Il existe à la bibliothèque de l' Arsenal une épreuve des neuf pièces que nous publions aujourd'hui, & elles sont accompagnées du texte qui s'y rapportait (H. n° 7031, in-fol.). Les encadrements entourent ce texte, qui remplit vingt pages; il est resté à l'état d'épreuves, toutefois, & son imperfection indique que ces épreuves n'étaient pas encore définitives. Aux Estampes de la Bibliothèque nationale, il ne se trouve que cinq

have been published. In its text Grandjean's italic type¹ is beautifully displayed (*fig.* 174).

Grandjean's type was, Bernard says, "a type friendly to the eye"—and at first sight it seems to be. There was about it, however, something that was to prove, in its developments, very *unfriendly* to the eye. That was its serif,² which took the form of an almost unbracketed line, and on the tops of b, d, h, i, j, k, and l extended on *both* sides of the upright stroke. A page printed from these types had, owing to the number of fine horizontal serifs, the appearance of being ruled. Jenson's letters had very thick serifs at the bottom, and triangular serifs at the top. Garamond's fonts had much the same kind of serif, but refined. Grandjean's thin horizontal serif was a movement toward that lightness of effect in type that came about later, but which was then very little thought of. It is the appearance of a bad element in French type-design, and is important in the history of some types to be discussed later. This was not all. In the capitals the contrasts of thin and thick strokes are more marked. The italic lower-case—beautiful of its kind—appears engraved. It is a very decorous type, and it looks as if it had been designed in accordance with rules—many rules. It was of the lucubrations of the committee who arranged elaborate diagrams for it that Fournier *le jeune* exclaimed: "Must there be so many squares to make an O that is round, and so many circles to make other letters that are square!"³ Yet when all is said, Grandjean's open, clear,

¹ They were retouched, it is said, by Luce in the eighteenth century.

² A "serif," it must be remembered, is a short cross-line which occurs at the ends of unconnected lines of a letter. It probably originated in a difficulty felt by cutters of inscriptions on stone, who found that if strokes of letters terminated without some curve or line, they appeared unfinished. To correct this, they made serifs.

³ *Manuel Typographique*, Vol. I, p. xvii.