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DECORATED TYPES

by

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Though the dependence of type-form upon calligraphic precedents is most amply seen in gothic typography, the same relation is recognisable but somewhat less immediately in the round humanistic lower case. The development of humanistic upper case exhibits a dual derivation, calligraphic and epigraphic; there exist scripts and types whose forms are traceable to the majuscules of the carolingian scribes, while others derive from the exemplars left by the Roman craftsmen who cut inscriptions in stone or bronze. Examples of fifteenth-century founts designed under each of these influences may be isolated, e.g. the capitals of Jenson's roman are essentially carolingian and calligraphic,¹ while those which Aldus employed in the *Polifilo* are classical, epigraphic and therefore geometric. Modern printing and lettering have more than once been re-invigorated by inspiration drawn from the same Roman inscriptional sources; and it may be pointed out, our indebtedness is not limited to the justly praised characters to be found at the base of the famous triumphal column reared in the first quarter of the second century by the Emperor Trajan. The capitals of this column, and others of the same kind made in accordance with the geometrical formulae elaborated by the roman lapidarists, were inevitably popular with the archaistic scholars of the renaissance; they were studied, copied and recommended to architects, artists and scribes by Felix Felicianus, Leonardo da Vinci, Tory, Dürer and

¹ Compare the characteristic Jensonian capitals **M** and **R** with those of a fine carolingian manuscript, e.g. the ninth-century Gospel Book in the Preussische Staatsbibliothek, Berlin (cf. Kirchner, *Das Staveloter Evangeliar in Mittelalterliche Handschriften* (Festschrift Degering, Leipzig, 1926).

others, acquiring thereby prestige not lightly questioned. The modern calligraphic movement which we owe to Mr Edward Johnston has once again directed attention to the same models. But these are not the only forms in modern use which we can trace to ancient Rome, for the historian of type design can point to the founding in the seventeenth century, and the recent revival in England and Germany, of certain letters which made their first appearance in stone inscriptions of the fourth century.

As may be seen from almost any work on Latin epigraphy, the characters of the Trajan column undoubtedly represent the highest development of the roman letter. Nevertheless it is permissible to hold the opinion that an alphabet is not perfect which attempts to combine conspicuously narrow forms of B E L S with conspicuously circular C G O and a square M. At the same time we must realise that to assimilate these two extremes would be to sacrifice the geometrical formula which underlies the construction of the entire alphabet. This very simplicity lent the roman models an authority which carried them all over the Empire and which they were not to lose while Rome remained Rome. However, in 330, the first Christian Emperor, Constantine, transferred the capital of the Empire to Byzantium. Old Rome was left to the popes and in 366 there succeeded a man fit to maintain the divine rights of his ancient see against the privileges of Constantine's new foundation. Damasus I was a masterful bishop and did not lack able assistants. At one time he had as secretary St Jerome himself, who was succeeded in that office by one Furius Dionysius Philocalus. This scholar had already in 354 compiled the First Christian Kalendar which, in addition to possessing great value as a chronology, was decorated by him with figures to which Strzygowski gives a high place in the history of Christian art. Unfortunately we only know the chronograph of Philocalus from copies, but in the case of one of his minor activities we happily possess a fragment or two of his original work. Philocalus was a calligrapher as well as a mathematician, and Damasus was something of a poet as well as an administrator. The pope, finding that the freedom of the Church from persecution had been followed by a lessening of Christian zeal, determined to recall his flock to their first fervour by commemorating the virtues of the martyrs in a series of new

inscriptions worded and lettered with originality. Damasus deserted the tradition of formal prose usual in purely commemorative inscriptions and employed verses of his own making which he had cut in a novel character designed by Philocalus, a character radically different from the classical type. Indeed, Philocalus' invention is a phenomenon, and a problem, since it appeared suddenly and passed without such approval from posterity as would lead to its reproduction or imitation even in modified form. Some trifling exaggeration of the serif is all that is noticeable in the most eccentric pre-Damasine inscriptions; but the Philocalian alphabet not only varies the proportions of the letters but bifurcates their serifs. It would seem that their designer had some appreciation of his achievement, since there is evidence of at least one inscription to which Philocalus has added his name to Damasus' as scribe and author respectively. This stone has an interesting history.

In 1852, as the famous Roman excavator J. B. de Rossi was working in the catacombs, on the Via Appia, he discovered a crypt in the cemetery of St Callixtus and unearthed from the *débris* a number of fragments of Damasine inscriptions which he pieced together. In the smaller room of the crypt this restored stone may now be seen. Originally it carried an imperial inscription of the year 214 in honour of Caracalla. On the reverse an inscription commemorating St Eusebius (d. 310) has been engraved—but, as de Rossi was able to prove, not by Damasus but by Vigilius, a sixth-century pope who copied a number of old inscriptions destroyed by the Goths. The Eusebian inscription is one of these copies; this is certain since de Rossi later discovered some fragments of the original which he pieced together. It seems worth while to illustrate both stones. Fig. 1 exhibits the original with the missing portion supplied in line, and fig. 2 the copy as it stands at present bearing the names of the author and designer of its text:

✠ DAMASVS EPISCOPVS FECIT....
 EVSEBIO EPISCOPO ET MARTYRI
 FVRIVS DIONYSIVS FILOCALVS SCRIBSIT
 DAMASIS PAPPAE CVLTOR ATQVE AMATOR.

Thus, in the case of this character, we possess that rarest of data in the early history of letter design, the name of the artist.¹

The design is an excellent one, the alphabet is well co-ordinated and harmonious, its distinguishing features are prominent though not eccentric, and the letters combine pleasantly, as may be seen in fig. 3, which is from a photograph of the extant inscription in the basilican church of St Agnes. If we accept the opinion of some judges, Duchesne for example, that the verses are poor, we may discern in that fact a contributory reason for the extremely slight influence of the letters in which they were cut. It is possible, too, that succeeding generations considered both the verses and the letters to bespeak a tone of levity out of place in the solemn surroundings of the catacombs, just as it may be observed that our twentieth century, taught by the *grand siècle*, considers its neo-Philocalian reproductions supremely useful in such trivialities as the advertising of cosmetics. It may have been also, that through the decay of the arts and crafts which followed the gothic invasions, the engravers of the sixth and seventh centuries were unable to meet the technical difficulties involved in rendering Philocalus' letters in stone. The late copy of the Eusebian inscription which we have already mentioned is evidently the work of but a poor lapidarist or of one who had little sympathy with the design of his letter. But whatever the explanation, the fact remains that the use of the Philocalian alphabet is confined to the reign of Pope Damasus, so that its appearance on a stone justifies the archaeologist in assigning to it a date between 366 and 384.

To discover any similar design we have to turn to the manuscripts. Figs. 5 and 6 are from the famous *Psalterium Aureum* written for Charlemagne between 783 and 795 by the West-Frankish scribe, Dagulf, showing titles composed in *capitalis artificiosa* as the letter is termed by palaeographers. They form, as we should expect in a manuscript written for one whose solicitude included calligraphy, a remarkably well-formed series of letters with fine accollated serifs united to finely made up and down strokes. Search would no doubt

¹ The chronograph of 354 is also signed "Furius Dionysius Filocalus," enabling us to identify the calligrapher with certainty.

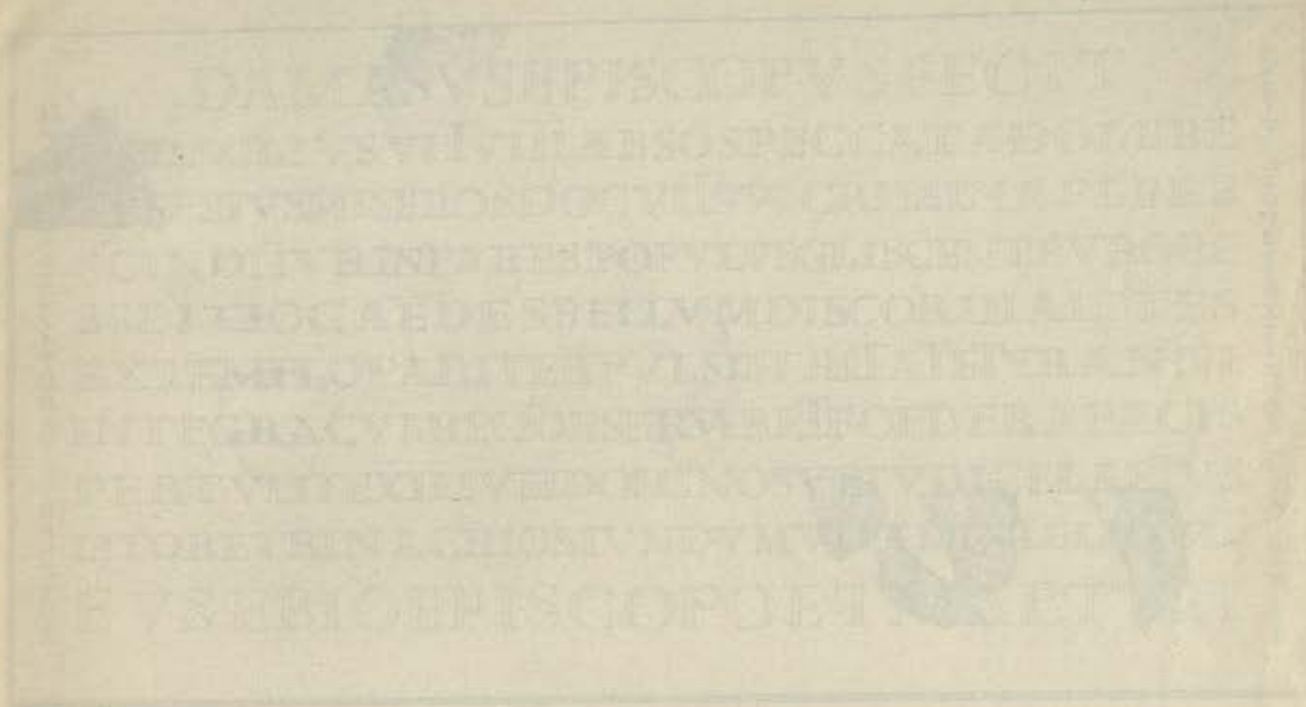


Fig. 1. Fragments of an original Damasine inscription (circa 380), the lost portions are supplied from Fig. 2 (from De Rossi, Roma Sotterranea)

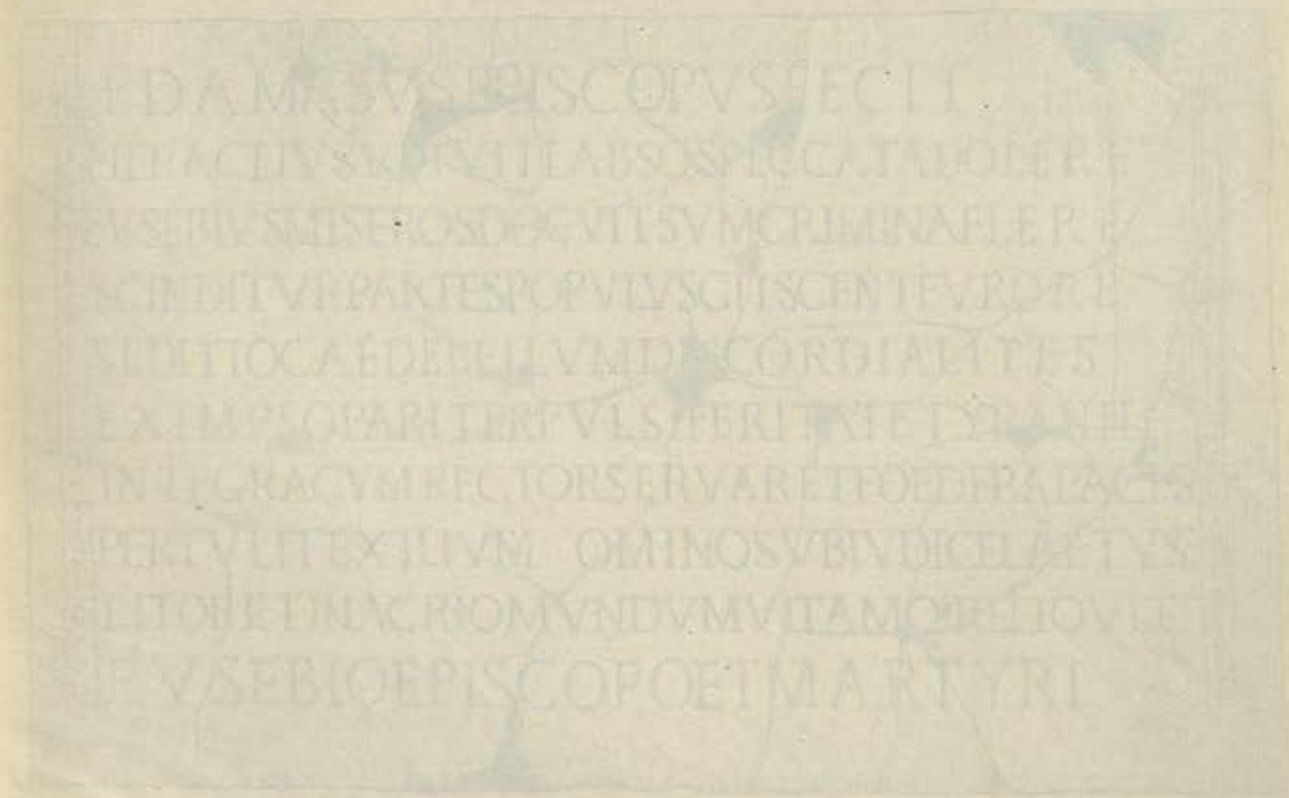


Fig. 2. Sixth century copy of the original inscription of Pope Damasus signed 'Furius Dionysius Filocalus' in the right margin, restored (from De Rossi, Roma Sotterranea)

DAMASVS

PAECVLTORIBUSQUE MATTOR

DAMASVS EPISCOPVS FECIT
HERACLIVS VITVITLABSOSPECCATADOLERE
EUSEBIVSMISEROSDOCVITSVACRIMINAFLERE
SCINDITVRINPARESPOPVLVSGLISCENEFVRORE
SEDITIOCAEDESBELLVMDISCORDIALITES
EXTEMPLOPARITERPVLSIFERITATE TYRANNI
INTEGRACVMRECTORSERVARETFOEDERAPACIS
PERTVLITEXILIVMDOMINOSVBIVDICELAETVS
LITORETRINACRIOMVNDVMVITAMORELIOVIT
EUSEBIOEPISCOPOETMARTYRI

HERACLIVS VITVITLABSOSPECCATADOLERE

DAMASVS
SPAPPAECVLTORIBUSQUE MATTOR

+ DAMASVS EPISCOPVS FECIT
HERACLIVS VITVITLABSOSPECCATADOLERE
EUSEBIVSMISEROSDOCVITSVACRIMINAFLERE
SCINDITVRPARTESPOPVLVSGLISCENEFVRORE
SEDITIOCAEDESBELLVMDISCORDIALITES
EXTEMPLOPARITERPVLSIFERITATE TYRANNI
INTEGRACVMRECTORSERVARETFOEDERAPACIS
PERTVLITEXILIVM OMINOSVBIVDICELAETVS
LITORETRINACRIOMVNDVMVITAMORELIOVIT
EUSEBIOEPISCOPOETMARTYRI

HERACLIVS VITVITLABSOSPECCATADOLERE

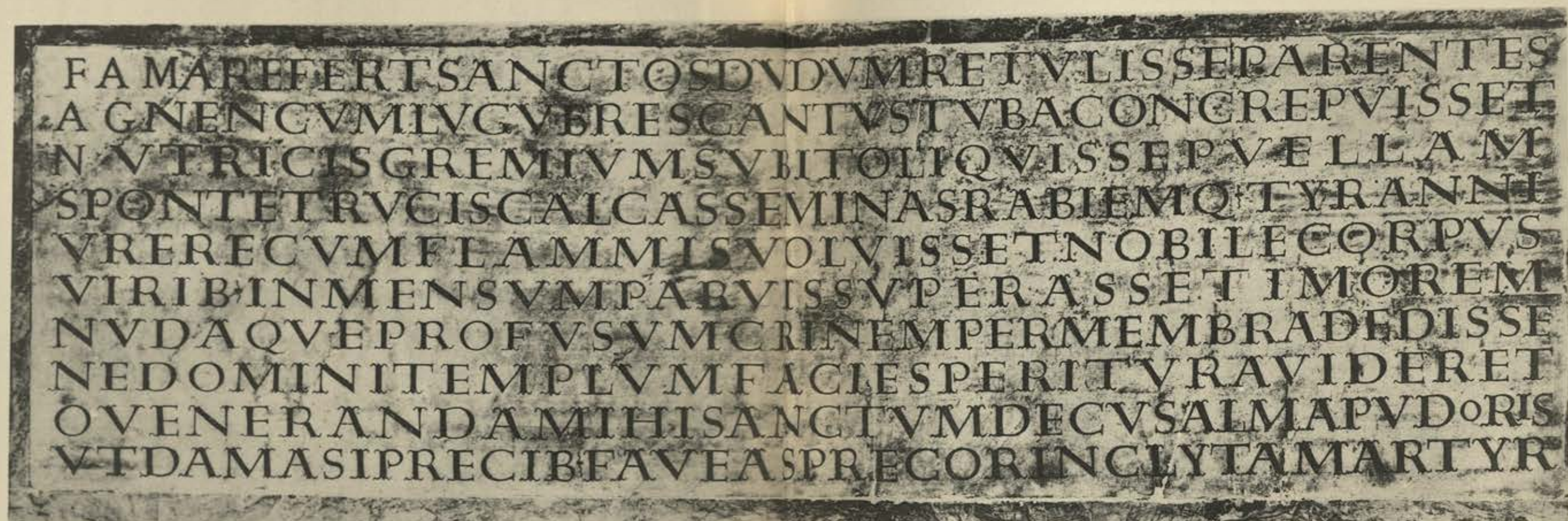


Fig. 3. The poem of St Damasus celebrating the martyrdom of St Agnes in the script of Floculus (from the existing inscription erected in the Church of St Agnes on the Via Nomentana, circa 384 (six letters in the top left corner are restored))

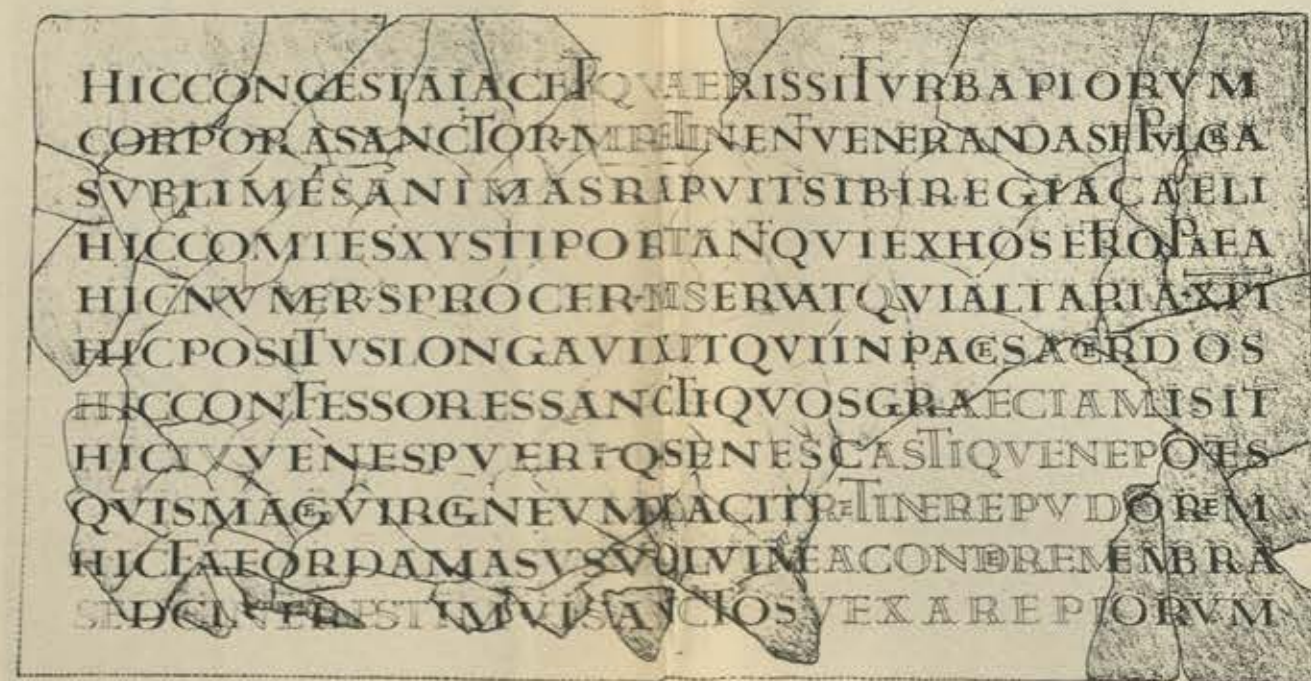


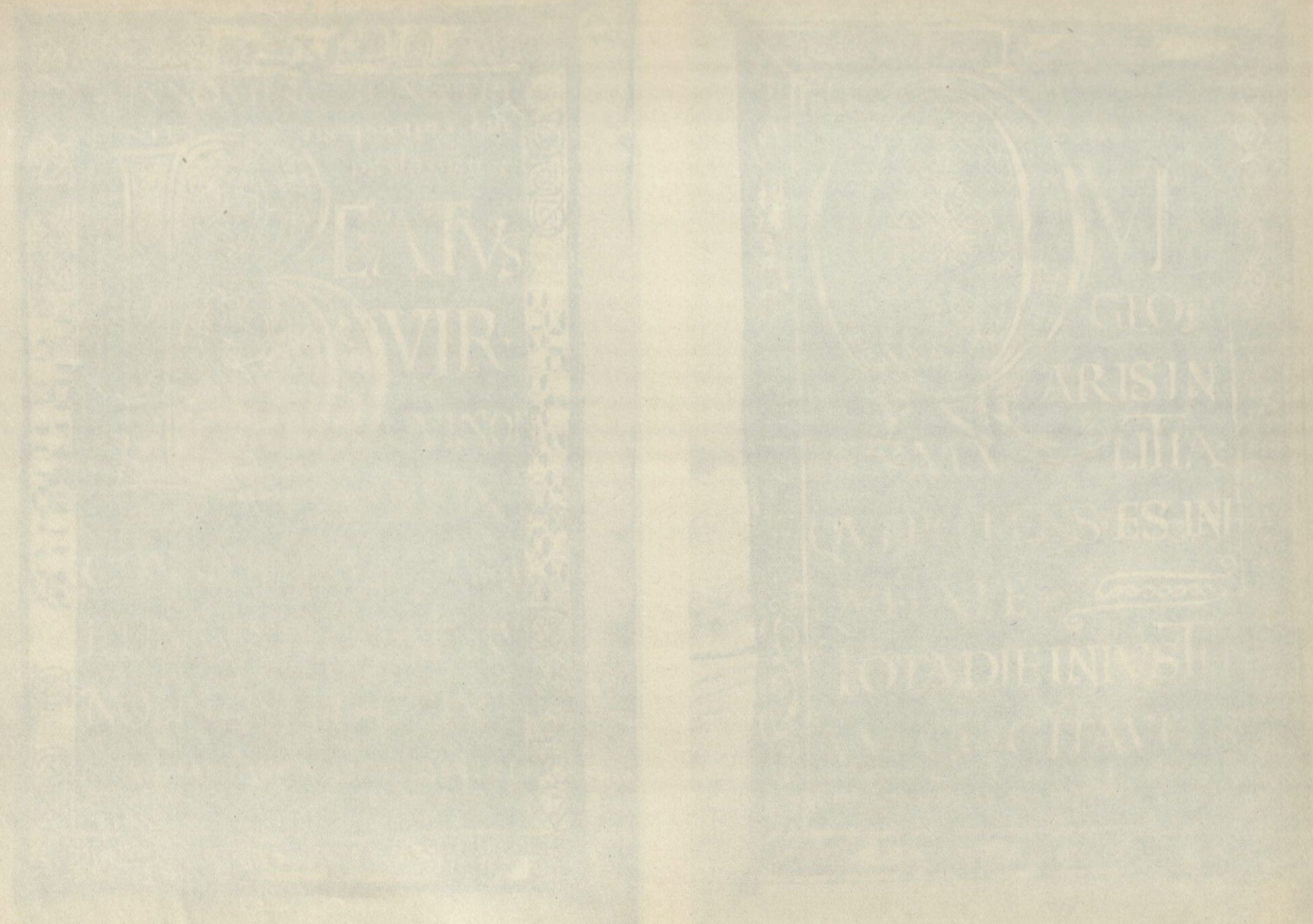
Fig. 4. Another (restored) Damasine inscription (from De Rossi, Roma Sotterranea)

IN NOMINE SCAETRI
NITA
tis. Incipit Lib
psalterii ;

BEATUS
VIR
QVINON
ABIIT IN
CONSILIO IMPIORVM
ET IN VIA PECCATORVM
NON STETIT ET IN
CATHEDRA PESTILEN
TIAE NON SEDIT ;

VOX XPI
DEI DON

DOMINE
GLORI
ARIS IN
LILIA
MA
QUI POTENS ES IN
QVITATE
TOTADIE INIVSTIT
AM COGITAVIT
*qua tua sicut mouacula acut.
fecisti dolum in*



Figs. 5 and 6. *Two pages (reduced) from the Vienna Psalterium Aureum written for Charlemagne between 783–795*

reveal other instances of the employment of such decorated capitals, but apart from their use as initials they are infrequent in fine carolingian manuscripts. Doubtless it was considered at once more convenient and more effective to distinguish titles, headings and dedications by working them in colour, and some abbots were probably of the view that the designing of fancy capitals was no fit work for a monastic calligrapher. A somewhat similar reasoning probably accounts for the delay in their emergence in the printed books. Floriated initials exist as early as the Fust and Schoeffer Psalter 1457, but the use of such capitals for the composition of important lines in title-pages and chapter headings is only to be found in books of a much later date, and their appearance is due in all probability rather to the writing master than to the printer. Thus one of the earliest uses of such capitals which I have come across is to be found in the title-page of Ugo da Carpi's *Thesauro de' Scrittori*, Rome (1525). As they multiplied in number, the writing masters sought to show their skill by the elaboration of every kind of ornamental letter; the successors of Ugo da Carpi vied with each other in the production of letters woven into wreaths, entrelacs and ribbons, skeletonised delineations and other extreme novelties. Examples of some of these appear in an occasional Italian title-page of the sixteenth century as, for instance, the Bartoli à Saxofferato (Lucantano Junta, Florence, 1596); but Italian printers never cared for such fantasies and it remained for the French to exploit the idea and finally to develop it into a permanent feature of typography. An early instance of French interest in elaborate capitals will be found in the wood-engraved writing model-book of Jacques de la Rue published in Paris 1550 (fig. 7). This volume exhibits specimens of fine open letters both gothic and roman. To the same century belongs another series of examples engraved by Gaultier and dated 1597, which appear in the *Panchrestographie* of Jean Beaugrand, the first French manual of writing to be printed from copper plates. This master gives us an alphabet of upper and lower case *ronde* shaded with fine horizontal lines, a method of decoration which would come naturally to a copper engraver. A more important item in Beaugrand's book is his series of inclined capitals (fig. 9) which repeat the serif formation of Philocalus—and weaken it by addition of tendrils; but impoverished as they

Alphabet de dissemblables

sortes de lettres :

EN VERD ALEXANDRINE

PAR.

Jaques de la Rue escriuain,
Auec priuilege, du Roy.

A Paris Rue S. Jaques deuant le Palais.

Fig. 7. White gothic & roman wood-engraved letters in the title-page to *De la Rue's* writing book, Paris, 1550 (?)

ALPHABET
DE INVENTIO DES LETTRES EN DI-
VERSES ESCRITURES PAR P. HAMON. B.
MAISTRE DE LA PLUME
D'OR
PARIS.
PAR JEAN LE ROYER, AV VRAY POTTIER, RUE S. JACQUES
1561
AVEC PRIVILEGE DU ROY

Fig. 8. Shaded roman titling in Hamon's wood-engraved writing book, Paris, 1561



PAR I. DE BEAUGRAND ESCRIVAIN DV ROY ET DE SES BIBLIOTHEQUES ET SECRETAIRE
ordinaire de la chambre de sa
Majeste

P. Firens sculpsit

Fig. 9. Decorated capitals from Beaugrand's writing book, Paris, 1604

Fig. 10. Title-page from Senault's writing book

Les noms

ESCRITURES

Financieres et Italiennes-bastardes

NOUVELLEMENT A LA MODE.

AVEC VN ABREGE

Contenant des instructions tres faciles pour apprendre

a bien et diligemment escrire

ESCRITES ET GRAVEES PAR L. SENEVET

DEPOSEES

A MONSIEUR LE ROY

DEPOSEES

DAVID LEHIN

A Paris chez F. Poilly Rue St. Jacques a l'Image St. Benoit. Avec priuilege du Roy.

are by such superfluities we are effectively reminded of the fourth century design. All these letters were offered to engravers and artificers of various kinds in addition to calligraphers and clerks, and they represent one of the earliest evidences of the enthusiastic following of the craft of decoration which gave Paris a supremacy in the arts of luxury which she retained for centuries. Further varieties of ornamental capitals were made by Nicholas du Val (1650) and Claude Auguste Berrey (1670), and by the end of the seventeenth century they were firmly established in the esteem of goldsmiths and jewellers. A remarkably various collection of *lettres fleuragées* of a most delicate kind intended for the use of these craftsmen was published in M. Pouget fils; *Dictionnaire de Chifres et de lettres ornées à l'usage de tous les artistes* (Paris 1767).

In view of this preoccupation of French scribes with the letters we are considering on the one hand, and the insularity of contemporary English writers on the other, to say nothing of the restrictions on the English printing and type-founding trades, it is difficult to account for the fact that the first foundry to possess types of this kind was the London house of James and Thomas Grover. In succession to the so-called 'Polyglot' founders who worked under privilege during the period 1637-1667, the Grovers began business about 1674. They possessed types which came from Day, Wynkyn de Worde and others, also a fine fount of Greek uncial, a number of scripts and the curious letter entitled "Double Pica Union Pearl," which we illustrate. The Foundry was situated in Aldersgate Street and continued in the Grover family until 1758. Rowe Mores, who made a list of the Grover materials, has the following paragraph at pp. 32-3 of his *Dissertation upon English Typographical Founders* (London 1778).

Union-pearl is a letter of fancy, it is English and of a recent date, for nothing exactly correspondent is given us amongst the whims of Yçiar of Saragosa the Cocker¹ of the Spaniards in 1550, it receives the name from the

¹ Mores elsewhere confesses (p. 68) that he only knew Yçiar from a copy of the 1550 edition 'mutilated by some fool who had it before us.' If Mores had possessed a complete copy of that same edition he would have known better than to do Yçiar the injustice of comparing him, or his book, with Cocker.

The Most Ancient English Types



The Union Pearl newly cast for the Fleuron from the original matrices formerly in the possession of the Grover Foundry (established London circa 1674) by the present owners, Messrs. Stephenson, Blake & Co. Limited, Sheffield and London, 1927.

A B C D E F F G G H I J K L M N
O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z
a b b c d d e f g h h i j k l l m n o p q
r s t u v w x y z s s b s t &

Fig. 11. *The first known English decorated letter (Grover, ca. 1690)*

pearls which grow in couples, to which the nodules of the letter were conceived to bear some resemblance, though it does not seem to have been intended for that denomination by him who cut it, but like the bodies Paragon, Nonpareil, etc. to have been named after it was finished according to the fancy of the cutter; though it has been said that the name of this letter is Union only, and that it was so named because it was cut for a poem to be inscribed to Queen Anne at the time of the Union of England and Scotland, but this too must be a mistake arising from the equivocal, unless the panegyrists began where they should have ended, and prepared the type before they had composed the poem, or considered whether the acquisition would soar to poetry; for the poem did not appear, the matrices came in Mr Grover's foundry. The French are reviving this and other letters of fancy which in titles have an effect not unpleasing.

Rowe Mores' information is tantalisingly vague and success has not so far rewarded my search for examples of the use of this type in England, and I am thus unable to do more than reproduce a specimen of the fount. Reed gives only a specimen of five words, but the kindness of Messrs Stephenson and Blake, who now own the original matrices (having acquired Dr Fry's purchase of the James Foundry, dispersed on the death of Rowe Mores), enables me to show complete alphabets in upper and lower case of this most curious letter, now the oldest English design surviving to us in punch or matrix form. (Fig. 11.)

A fount of the letter came into the possession of Benjamin Franklin—and not unaccountably, for Franklin served his time with Samuel Palmer in a house originally part of the Austin Canons' Priory of St Bartholomew, Smithfield. This house was formerly occupied by Thomas James, who secured the Grover material in 1758 when that family had died out; and thus it is fair to assume that Franklin saw the letters during his apprenticeship and later acquired a fount. Franklin seems never to have used it at Passy or elsewhere; later with other material the fount passed to B. F. Bache. It appears in the latter's *Specimen* (Philadelphia, n.d.), but I have not been able to find an example of its use in the United States and would be obliged to any reader who can refer me to any. It is important to note that Grover's fount consists of upper and lower case, whereas the founts which followed it in

LA
DEVINERESSE,
OU LES FAUX
ENCHANTEMENS.
COMEDIE.

Représentée par la Troupe du Roy.



A PARIS,
Chez C. BLAGIART, dans la Court-
Neuve du Palais, au Dauphin.
Et à Lyon, Chez T. AMAULRY, dans
la Rue Merciere, à la Victoire.

M. DC. LXXX.
AVEC PRIVILEGE DV ROY.

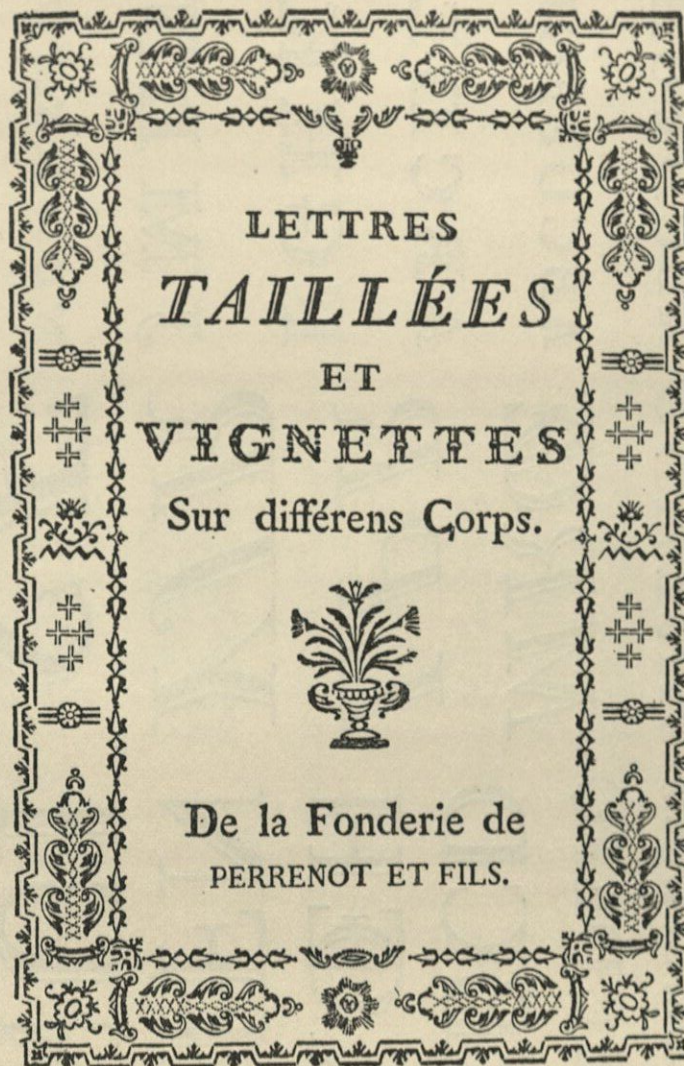
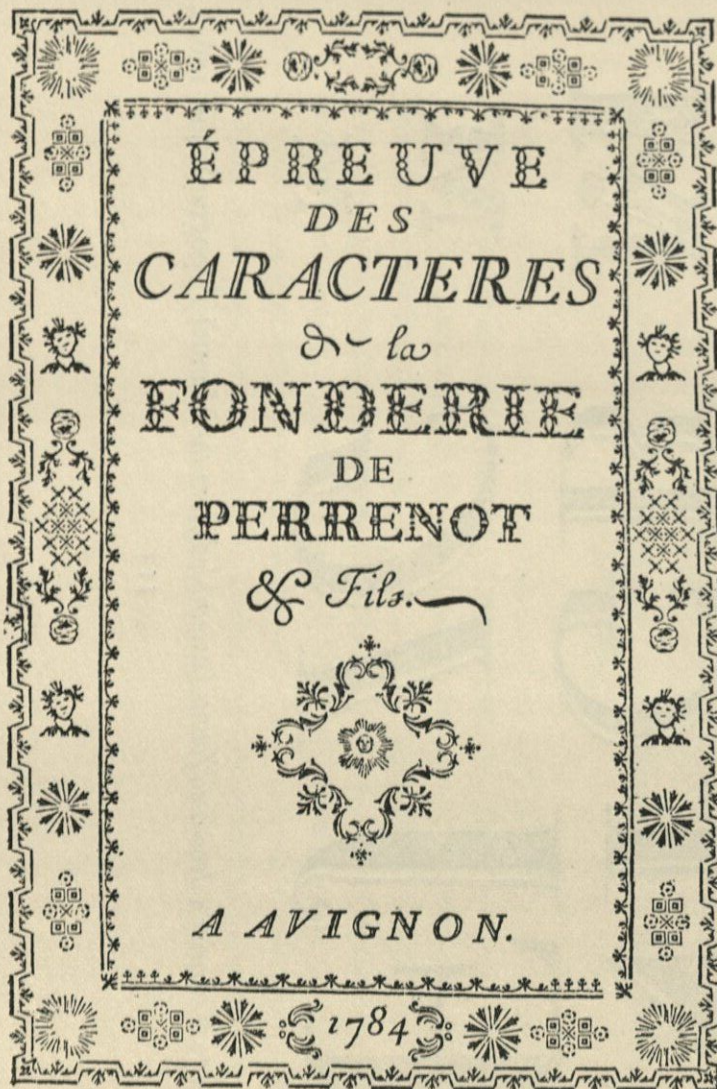
Fig. 12. (First?) French decorated type (from *Blageart's La Devineresse*, Paris, 1680)

England or the Continent were confined to capitals only. There was a practical reason for this no doubt—the small letters filled up on the machine.

It would be interesting if we could prove that the first continental founder had seen Union Pearl, but there is no reason to suppose anything of the kind. The Grover letter was evidently too fragile or too novel to secure any permanent place in printing and it remained for Fournier independently to make a number of practical decorated alphabets. These are shown in fig. 13, but before passing to their description notice must be given to a French fount of decorated capitals which antedates Fournier's by some forty or fifty years.



Fig. 13. Fournier's decorated founts (assembled from the *Manuel Typographique*, 1764).



Figs. 14-15. Decorated letters in French provincial typesetting (from the Specimen Book of Perrenot et Fils, Avignon, 1784)

These capitals will be seen in the figure 12 and are employed for the words "Devineresse" and "Comedie" respectively. The same letters are distributed through the text in headings, etc. I regret to say that I am without particulars as to the ancestry of this letter, but I am glad to report that, as far as I know, it has no posterity. Fournier-le-Jeune's really fine *lettre ornée* was a great success, and before 1766 he had made some nine different ornate founts in sizes from *nonpareille* to *gros canon*. Among his creations, Fournier presents one very fair facsimile of the Philocalian design. How Fournier came by this design we do not know, but he, no doubt, had before him the models of Beaugrand, du Val and others. At the turn of the seventeenth century there was much interest abroad in roman archaeology, e.g., the enormous work of Graevius, *Thesaurus Antiquitatum Romanorum*, appeared in 1698 and our knowledge of the Philocalian Chronograph is largely indebted to copies of originals which he chronicles. But as these have since perished, it is not possible to establish any direct connection between the fourth and the eighteenth centuries. Fournier was no mean designer and he hardly needed to make prolonged search for models once he had made up his mind to cut a series of types. After all, the serif *accoladé* was an invention elementary enough to the designers of Fournier's century, and it accords so well with the taste of the time and place that it is clearly more reasonable to regard it as an independent achievement. Fournier's first ornate letters were cut *ca.* 1749 and were immediately copied in Paris by his fiercest competitor, Gando; they appear later in the specimen books of provincial typefounders—Vernange (Lyon 1770), Delacolonge (Lyon 1773), Perrenot (Avignon 1784), Vaussy (Rouen 1780).

Abroad, Enschedé produced a shadowed letter as early as 1751 and a series of *lettres fleuragées* about 1768, which were imitated by most of the other Dutch founders. Rosart of Brussels cut a pleasant set of shadowed types in 1759 and soon all Europe was using one kind or another of such decorated capitals or "titlings," as they are known to English printers. Some of the most interesting examples of their use come from Spanish presses and though Italian typography had grown careless, the eighteenth century can show numerous examples of title-pages composed in several

J. F. ROSART.

J. F. Rosart's shadowed letter, ca. 1759

JACQUES FRANÇOIS
ROSART.

MATTHIAS ROSART.

J. F. Rosart's lettres fleuragées, ca. 1768

IZAAK

ET

JOHANNES

ENSCHEDÉ.

Enschedé's shadowed script, Double Capitale Financier, engraved by J. F. Rosart, 1768

LA VEUVE DECELLIER.

Double Median Fleuragée, engraved by J. F. Rosart, and one of the finest of all lettres fleuragées

Fig. 16. A collection of lettres cut for the Enschedé Foundry

W. CASLON,
Letter Founder
To the KING.

Fig. 17. *A fine shadowed letter from the specimen of William Caslon IV (The Salisbury Square Foundry, 1784)*

varieties of decorated capitals. But there can be no doubt that it was in France that they were used to greatest extent and greatest advantage. The title-pages to Fournier's tracts against Schoepflin are themselves instances of their use. But even in Paris one illustrious printing house remained indifferent to the new fashion. No *lettre ornée* is to be found in use at the Imprimerie Royale and the engraved title-pages which were invariably prefixed to Louvre publications of any importance never competed with those of Prault. The Royal Printing House, however, was engaged upon a much more serious matter, nothing less than the complete modernisation of its style which was destined to create not merely a fashion but a revolution which was to have a permanent effect upon Europe. During the years 1692-1745 there were being designed and engraved the series of flat serified letters which marks the beginning of a new typography. The essential form of the roman alphabet, lower case as well as capitals, remains unaltered, but the serif formation of the new *romain du roi Louis XIV* differs so unmistakably from that of the older types that it satisfied the public appetite for novelty without having to resort to any fantastic inventions. As the new modern style began to be appreciated by its generation, Fournier went as far as he dared in imitating the Royal types; and in time, these, by virtue of their novelty, drove out both the old faces and the *lettres ornées*, so that towards the end of the century typographical interest centred round the Louis Seize quartos printed in the letters which François Ambroise Firmin Didot (1730-1804), director of the Imprimerie Royale, derived from the original Louis XIV types. Trade typesetters in search of further novelty were obliged to subject the modern letter to decoration, since as F. A. Didot had left it there was little room for any further modification or development. Gillé fils cut a large number of "Titres" (fig. 18), in which he included in addition to the shaded, shadowed and outlined sorts a number of forms in which the "thicks" were illuminated with *trompe-l'œil*s of various kinds. But the times were unpropitious and although conferences on the subject were still conducted with intelligence and zeal, the Revolution gave Paris something other to discuss than type varieties. The trade generally was in no condition to absorb Gillé's decorated letters and examples of their use outside the *Bilboquets*

of the town are hard to find. The new generation of typefounders, of whom Molé *jeune* was the most conspicuous, followed the lead of the engraver in shading the thick strokes, diagonally, horizontally and vertically. Across the water it was otherwise; Wilson and one of the Caslons had cut simple shadow outline and letters of the classic old-face school (fig. 17), and these were well displayed in handsome quartos. English type-founding was awakening, and, as is proved by the specimen book of the founders we have named, English printers now had to their hand a choice of material no longer inferior to continental manufacture. During the years 1770-1810 the title-page composed with its leading line in white open type is rather the rule than the exception in English style; and these books form a singularly delightful episode in our typographical history. With the advent of Thorne's fat type, however, this agreeable verdict has to be revised. Unable to press any more novelty out of the modern letter as inherited from Grandjean through Fournier, Bodoni and the Didots, the nineteenth-century typefounders resorted to the exploitation of colour. It is true that Firmin Didot and Gillé enfeebled their types until they were positively unreadable by artificial light but, taking a hint from Bodoni's bolder letter cut *ca.* 1780, Thorne, after imitating Wilson and Caslon, all but sent printing to perdition at one stroke by his invention of the extreme fat-faced type. For a generation or more English and continental book printing suffered from these bad types. A worse novelty was reached when, in order to provide a trick three-dimensional fount, heavy black types decorated with white outline flowers were provided with a perspective-shadow. Finally, there came a queer piebald fatuity, the upper half of which is black and the lower white, or vice-versa. This monster also is found in a three-dimensional form; but, we are gratified to add, its creation seems to have exhausted both the resources of the trade and the patience of the public. We are now at the middle of the nineteenth century with its old-style revivals associated with the names of Perrin in France, Fick in Switzerland and Pickering in England. None of these reformers used decorated letters. The simplest open outline letter does not seem to have been used in Victorian England until the advent of Andrew Tuer of the Leadenhall Press, an individualistic printer of the antiquarian

TITRES

De la Fonderie et Imprimerie de Gillé fils, à Paris.



Deux points de Parangon.

MONTAIGNE.
MIRABEAU.
CONDILLAC.

Deux points de Gros-Romain.

MONTESQUIEU.
CONDORCET.
DALEMBERT.

Deux points de Saint-Augustin.

MALESHERBES.
L'HOPITAL.
S. VINCENT DE PAUL.

Deux points de Cicéro.

LAVOISIER.
FOURCROY.
VAUQUELIN.
LAPLACE.

Deux points de Philosophie.

CORNEILLE.
LA FONTAINE.
MOLIERE.
RACINE.

Deux points de Petit-Romain.

DUGUESCLIN.
TURENNE.
DUQUESNE.
TOURVILLE.

Deux Points de

Petit-Texte.

Compareille.

PERAULT.	LE SUEUR.
MANSARD.	LE BRUN.
SOUFLOT.	LE POUSSIN.
BLONDEL.	COYPEL.

D. F. de Compareille Italique.

ANTOINE.	DREVET.
VAUBAN.	NANTEUIL.
GONDOIN.	FIQUET.
AUDRAN.	MASSON.



DECORATED TYPES

MARSEILLE

LA FRANCE

PARIS

Fig. 19. *Decorated letters from the foundry of Pierre Didot l'Aîné, now in the possession of the Enschedé foundry*

type whose work has passed with singularly little recognition in the history of the English printing revival. He was an enthusiastic admirer of late English eighteenth-century printing and without imitating, sought to catch something of the spirit of Bulmer and Bensley. His equipment ranged from an exclusive old-face, probably of his own design, and special swash sorts, to several series of ornamental initial letters and factotums. Alone in his generation he possessed and used a set of open outline capitals of old-face design like those to be found in the specimen books of Wilson (1780) and Caslon (1795). This letter—and Tuer possessed but one size of it—seems to have been the only fount obtaining regular use in English books between Thorne's generation and our own.

In France the ornamental letter persisted until 1840 or so, yielding to the so-called "Elzevirian" style introduced by Perrin and developed by Beau-doire, Claye and others. By 1860 and for the ensuing half century the decorated letter was excluded from French books. Almost without exception titles were composed in the fine letters whose design was, as Perrin claims, obviously drawn from the inscriptions. The style had the powerful support of the Chiswick Press, London, in the 'sixties when Mr Wilkins (the firm was then Whittingham and Wilkins) purchased large founts of it; the letter was in general use at the Chiswick Press until recently. A less successful version entitled "Cadmus" was associated in the United States with Mr Gilliss, who died two years ago. Though the "Elzevirian" style does not entirely lack support in Paris to-day, there can be no doubt that its influence is exhausted. Its decay is due first to the example of Edouard Pelletan, whose books drew attention to the resources of the Imprimerie Nationale, and secondly to the activity of the typefounders, MM. Peignot of Paris, who in 1913 brought out a fine series of types of eighteenth-century design. These series, named "Les Cochins" in memory of the line engraver, comprised a book fount based on the small text letter employed in engraved volumes of that century, a heavier display letter based upon the titlings to eighteenth-century prints, a fount of open outline capitals adapted from the legends to the engravings of Moreau-le-jeune and finally a recut set of inclined capitals of fanciful design originally put out by Fournier in 1768 (fig. 20).

PEIGNOT'S FOURNIER

PEIGNOT'S MOREAU (and
Lower Case)

MAXIMILIAN

NARCISSUS and Lower Case

MARGARITA

Vittoria Colonna

NARCISSUS and Lower Case

MARGARITA

Fig. 20. *Modern open and decorated letters*

Present-day usage of ornamental titlings dates from these Peignot revivals. The outbreak of the war inevitably held them back, but founts quickly made their appearance in local books and, above all, in advertisements. In 1918 the Pelican Press, a small London house which has had more influence upon the typography of the post-war title-page than any of its contemporaries, added the Cochins to their equipment, and London books were again distinguished by decorative titlings. In the first year of the war Germany produced her first distinguished shadowed letter, the fine Maximilian of R. Koch (fig. 20). If the initiative in this department of typography lies with MM. Peignot, the Germans have nonetheless taken the development to its maximum. In no other country is there available such a varied assortment of *lettres de fantaisie*, modernist or revivalist. We show one or two of these at fig. 21 and, granted that they are suitable only for very discreet use, there can be no doubt that when required, they are agreeable.

The seven years 1921-1927 is a period of great activity in the cutting of decorated letters. In 1921 Professor Tiemann re-drew for the Klingspor Foundry the shadowed letters which Fournier had made in 1760, but adding weight to both thicks and thins. The type is a trifle too heavy for book work, but it has figured on many London title-pages, being introduced from the Pelican Press in 1922. It is safe to say that the "Narcissus," as it is called, will find its best use in advertising. In this department, indeed, its success has been extraordinarily rapid and that not confined to one press in England. To-day no printer who works for advertisers can afford to be without "Narcissus," and it has arrived in the United States, doubtless because it possesses more spirit than the "hand-tooled" Goudy, a shadowed letter made by the American Type Founders Company. Though the Monotype "Imprint"-shadow is not unpleasing, it remains that not only is there no efficient English substitute for the German letter but that none is likely to be forthcoming until England reduces the lead which the German typefounders and calligraphers enjoy in virtue of their greater enthusiasm. As we have pointed out, the "Narcissus" is not an original letter but a heavier re-drawing of one of Fournier's designs. It would be a mistake to conclude from this that modern German effort is imitative; the contrary is the case; all the

DECORATED TYPES

DU BARRU

POMPADOUR

ROCOCO

PETIT PALAIS

WALPOLIANA

ARCHITECTURE

Fig. 21. *Modern open and decorated letters*

LIEDER DER
DEUTSCHEN
MYSTIK

ERANOS

GOETHE
HERMANN UND DOROTHEA

Fig. 22. *Decorated letters by Frl. Anna Simons cut on wood for the Bremer Presse, Munich*

E G Q R

G Q O P P P

B

D H B

P

Fig. 23. *Decorated letters cut at the University Press, Cambridge, upon the face of existing types*

German foundries now possess a large number of fancy letters; new bold, grotesque¹ varieties being added every year. Few, however, are designed for use in books, and of these fewer still are completely satisfactory, while the most successful is in private ownership. Since its foundation the Bremer Presse of Munich has employed for the titlings of its publications a pen-drawn letter by Frl. Anna Simons cut on wood. Though the Bremer ranks as one of the more conservative of the German Presses, these titlings have made a welcome departure from the narrow private-press tradition of calligraphical orthodoxy, and if all her inventions have not been uniformly acceptable, there can be no doubt that the slightly rococo lettering for the *Eranos* and the *Hermann und Dorothea* in fig. 22 are highly successful. Frl. Simons has, of course, also designed a number of initial letters of a more decorative character, which in themselves and for their purpose are no less satisfactory, but which on account of their freedom or elaboration lack that combinability which would justify her using them in titles. In designing decorated letters it is of the first importance to bear in mind that a letter cannot live by ornament alone—that decoration is a condiment and not an aliment, and the bravado which is the very life of a “good” publicity type obviously is inadmissible in any type intended for use in books. The ornamentalist’s first duty is to leave intact the essential form and to permit such a restrained efflorescence as will avoid encumbering the letter with overgrown foliage. There can be no doubt that modern typography requires good letters of this kind which it would be possible to use with greater frequency than is allowable in the case of most of the varieties exhibited at figs. 20–21. We need founts in which the proportions and significant form of the classic old face letters dominate the decoration. Barely one or two such founts are available to discriminating book printers. We are thankful to possess outline and shadow types, which will accord with compositions in old-face and modern respectively, but save for the revived Peignot-Fournier letters the book printer possesses no satisfactory decorated letters—

¹ They can be conveniently seen in *Handbuch der Schriftarten* (Leipzig, Seeman 1926).

a situation which foreign typefounders will be quick and the English slow to realise. In the meantime an able engraver may make a fount at least of upper case by cutting his own design directly upon the face of a fairly heavy letter of, say, 36-point or so cast on the monotype. At fig. 23 I show a number of sorts cut in this direct fashion by a member of the foundry staff of the University Press, Cambridge, where these pages are printed. As will be seen, the larger letters are by no means unsuccessful and inevitably possess a better printing quality than zinc blocks. It is not the purpose of this article to consider the use of ornamental capitals as initials, but it may be permitted to remark, in passing, that a good engraver while preserving harmony as between the capitals and the initials brings a welcome variety into the chapter openings. He could, for instance, follow the lead of the Bremer Presse books, and give us alternative forms of such persistently recurrent letters as T.