

Introducing
“Tribute”
—a family of
8 fonts *by*
Frank Heine,
released *by*
Emigre Fonts
(2 0 0 3)

Introducing

*Roman,
Ligatures,
Small Caps,
Ordinals;
Italic,
Ligatures
One & Two,
Ordinals*

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Introductory Booklet

CONTENTS →

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Booklet and Font Design by Frank Heine.



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Contents

“Tribute” by Frank Heine

Frank Heine
about Tribute



[For François Guyot]

I've always had a desire to design a typeface based on a *Renaissance Antiqua*.¹

There are two reasons.

First, the Renaissance Antiqua can be considered the prototype for most of today's typefaces.

It already provided a formal maturity at the end of the 15th century, with an exceptional level of DIFFERENTIATION between single characters, offering good legibility.

Second, I am particularly attracted to its archaic feel, especially with settings in smaller design sizes (*Nonpareil* through *Bourgeois*). It is rougher with less filigree than the types of the following centuries, thus

exhibiting much of the cruder craftsmanship of the early printing processes.

To a certain extent the early *Renaissance Antiqua*

CONGENIALLY REFLECTS THE CONTRADICTIONS OF ITS TIME;

the vanishing Middle Ages versus Humanism, and the urge for cognizance or Inquisition versus Reformation.

The Tribute family of fonts is based on types cut by the Frenchman, François Guyot. The single example that I used as the model for Tribute was a reprint of a type specimen probably printed around 1565 in the Netherlands. (An original can be seen at the Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington, DC.)



Contradictions of its time

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Background Information

John Downer
about Tribute

To understand
the intrinsic
differences

The genesis of
the design

CALL IT WHAT IT IS

by
JOHN DOWNER

*A discussion of typeface
sources seems to pop up
whether a designer admits
to being inspired by
historical models or not.*

Getting the appropriate authorization when needed, and giving the proper credit, are but two of many considerations. Other issues such as fidelity to the model, chronological accuracy, and the pros and cons of revisionist history get debated and argued

AT LENGTH.

The talk can get hot.
Designers always
feel the
HEAT.

On the one hand, a type designer who makes a serious effort to acknowledge certain sources of inspiration opens himself or herself to criticism concerning the ethics of appropriating the work of another. ¶ On the other hand, a type designer who fails to cite sources, or, worse, makes a conscious effort to avoid acknowledging sources, leaves himself or herself open to charges of impropriety. ¶ One may ask, “Is there no safe and sound route these days?” ¶ I believe there is. In fact, I think there are several good roads. ¶ To understand the intrinsic differences between plagiarism (normally regarded as a bad thing) and preservation (normally regarded as a good thing), we should look at various means by which newer typefaces are derived from older ones. There are indeed many approaches. Outlining them can be helpful in considering the practices surrounding revivalism in general. ¶ The integrity of a typeface revival depends not solely on what the designer does to create a workable version of an old idea; it also depends on what the designer, or the designer’s copywriter or publicist, has to say about the genesis of the design. ¶ If ad copy, or whatever prose is written to launch a typeface, is inaccurate or misleading, there might be grounds for a dispute. In contrast, if the story behind the designer’s effort stands up to the scrutiny of type historians and scholars, a revival has a far better chance of being considered a welcome addition to the world of revivals—not so much for being a “servant” to a given typographic model as for bearing a relationship to its history. ¶ Historians regard type history in ways that type designers and type critics seldom do. This theme was articulated in a keynote address at the 2002 conference of the *Association Typographique Internationale (ATypI)* in Rome by PAUL F. GEHL, historian and curator of a type-history collection at *The Newberry Library*, in Chicago.

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Call it What it is

In his talk, Gehl noted that type experts (including some effective and influential type promoters, I should add), have been known to give imprecise descriptions and fabricate misnomers. Monotype’s introduction in 1929 of a typeface series known as “Bembo,” based on the first roman type of ALDUS MANUTIUS, circa 1495, was cited by Gehl as an opportunity for STANLEY MORISON, the typographical advisor to Monotype, to inaccurately characterize Bembo, as he did with other historically-based typefaces by Monotype in the 1920s. Morison, according to Gehl, “... insisted upon calling his historical reconstructions of the 1920s ‘recuttings’ of early types, when in fact most of them were beautiful new types inspired by handsome old ones.” ¶ This observation strikes a familiar chord among type reviewers. Accuracy often hinges on semantics, so semantics are important.

It seems that the term “recutting” could be accurately applied to a faithful recreation, if it were cut by hand and cast in metal, but that is not exactly what has been done in the process of creating usable facsimiles of centuries-old type. To do a “recutting” in the most literal sense of the word would ostensibly require a cutter of type to work in the same manner, and with the same materials, as the originator. The term “recutting” has come into modern usage partly by way of inheritance and partly by way of convenience. There is no real cutting being done by makers of digital typefaces; namely, faces meant to be fully accepted as recreations of former glories. ¶ In the digital medium, a medium without the physicality of sculpture, what’s attainable can be but a silhouette of facial features produced by carving type at the size—the only size—it will print, in relief, in reverse, in steel. Unlike cutting away excess material to render the form desired, digital type is shaped by manipulating on-screen descriptions of con-

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Call it What it is

tours. Any “digital recutting” takes place merely in a figurative sense. ¶ But don’t let pure semantics completely limit our abilities to label today’s digital replicas of historical types in real and fitting ways. Apt descriptions are almost always possible if there exists a broad vocabulary from which to establish appropriate terminology. We still need new nomenclature for the digital era to replace outdated language that has lost its meaning or has taken on an erroneous twist. Oxymorons like “digital punchcutter” and “digital type foundry” are common in the trade, but at least they have the word “digital” as a qualifier. That’s a lot better than not having a qualifier. ¶ The same may be said of the common term “revival” in describing updates of typefaces that never fell completely into disuse before being converted to a new medium. Labeling a typeface “digital revival” lets us know that the original was born in a pre-digital medium, most often metal. To do a revival in type is to resurrect a design that has fallen into disuse, not to rehash a workable design that never became obsolete or outdated. As Gehl has noted, “Let’s just resolve not to call them historical ‘reproductions,’ ‘recuttings,’ or even ‘re-designs’ unless we intend to do just that, reproduce a type that works like the original.” ¶ Gehl further remarked, “... In my professional capacity as collector, I frequently meet with designers and design teachers and students. What I have to say today is thus conditioned not by my sense of what you as typographers and type writers are doing right or doing wrong, but by my reading of what practicing designers and design students make of what you do and say about type.”

On that cue, a few definitions would be handy. Below are mine. I’ve divided my descriptions into two categories: one for designs that closely follow the original, and the other for designs that loosely follow the original.

Pure
semantics

A lot better
than not having
a qualifier

Born in
a pre-digital
medium

Definitions
would be handy



REVIVALS/RE CUTTINGS/ RECLAMATIONS ↻§

Closely based on historical models (metal type, hand-cut punches, etc.) for commercial or noncommercial purposes, with the right amount of historic preservation and sensitivity to the virtues of the original being kept in focus—all with a solid grounding in type scholarship behind the effort, too.

Historic Preservation



ANTHOLOGIES/ SURVEYS/REMIXES ↻§

Closely based on characters from various fonts all cut by one person, or cut by various hands, all working in one particular style or genre—like a medley or an overview done more for the sake of providing a “sampling” than for the sake of totally replicating any one single cut of type.

KNOCKOFFS/CLONES/ COUNTERFEITS ↻§

Closely based on commercial successes (of any medium) to belatedly muscle in on part of an unsaturated market, often by being little more than a cheap imitation of what has already been deemed by experts as a legitimate revival. “Me Too” fonts, or “Copy Cat” fonts, as they are called, tend to focus on opportunism rather than on originality. These don’t rate as revivals because they don’t revive.

Focus on opportunism

With humor or satire



RECONSIDERATIONS/ REEVALUATIONS/ REINTERPRETATIONS ↻§

Loosely based on artistic successes (of any medium) as a kind of laboratory exercise, often without much concern for their immediate or eventual commercial viability.

HOMAGES/TRIBUTES/ PAEANS ↻§

Loosely based on historical styles and/or specific models, usually with admiration and respect for the obvious merits of the antecedents—but with more artistic freedom to deviate from the originals and to add personal touches; taking liberties normally not taken with straight revivals.

ENCORES/SEQUELS/ REPRISES ↻§

Loosely based on commercial successes (of any medium) as a means of further exploring, or further exploiting, an established genre; milking the Cash Cow one more time.

EXTENSIONS/SPINOFFS/ VARIATIONS ↻§

Loosely based on artistic or commercial successes (of any medium) for only rarely more than minor advancements in a tried, popular, accepted style; akin to previous category.

CARICATURES/PARODIES/ BURLESQUES ↻§

Loosely based on prominent features of the model, often with humor or satire as the primary objective, but quite often also with humor or satire as an unexpected effect.

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Call it What it is

Centuries ago, loose interpretations were easier to produce than close (faithful) interpretations because the level of skill needed to produce punches was high. But late in the 19th century, the use of the pantograph as a tool in cutting punches and matrices by machine eliminated the need for a punch-cutter who worked by hand. The speed of replicating existing typefaces increased. Phototype was yet another step in the direction of fast copying, and digital type can be copied in an instant by almost anybody. ¶ Our ability to make digital facsimiles of types that were cut by hand centuries ago affords us a chance to render them as we see fit. We can make them look old, like the original types, or we can make them look fresh. We can’t, however, make them look identical to historical models, for digital type is not metal type. The two are different creatures and they manifest separate identities. They each have their own idiosyncrasies. ¶ Realizing that digital type can actually only simulate the “look” of old type is an important aspect of evaluating type revivals. Terms like “digital homage” or “historical fiction” can be used to describe what we attempt to do when we pay tribute to types of the distant past without relying too heavily upon their design. ¶ *It is evident that FRANK HEINE’s Tribute possesses an element of “type caricature” in its drawing, but this fact doesn’t relegate it to that one category. Heine has really gone beyond parody, well into an area of personal exploration. He has challenged many traditional assumptions that we “connoisseurs” of hand-cut type have maintained in our attitude toward the historical accuracy sought and loved and expected in “revivals.” The result is a unique combination of caricature, homage, alchemy, and fanciful reinterpretation. ¶ Tribute, I think, recalls Guyot’s native French-learned style, primarily as a point of departure for an original—albeit implausible—work of historical fiction, with merits and faults of its own. **

Introducing “Tribute” —a family of 8 fonts; Roman, Italic, SMALL CAPS



€
Ordinals:
\$95



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Call it What it is

5 points (←)
7 points (→)

Typi non habent claritatem insitam; est usus legentis in iis qui facit eorum claritatem. Investigationes demonstraverunt lectores legere melius quod ii legunt saepius. Claritas est etiam processus dynamicus, qui sequitur mutationem consuetudinum lectorum. Mirum est notare quam littera gothica, quam nunc putamus parum claram anteposuerit litterarum formas humanitatis per saecula quarta decima et quinta decima. Eodem modo typi, qui nunc nobis videntur parum clari, fiant sollemnes in futurum. Typi non habent claritatem insitam; est usus legentis in iis qui facit eorum claritatem. Investigationes demonstraverunt lectores legere melius quod ii legunt saepius. Claritas est etiam processus dynamicus, qui sequitur mutationem consuetudin.

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9 points (←)
10 points (→)

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Typi non habent claritatem insitam; est usus legentis in iis qui facit eorum claritatem. Investigationes demonstraverunt lectores legere melius quod ii legunt saepius. CLARITAS EST ETIAM PROCESSUS DYNAMICUS, qui sequitur mutationem con.

18 points

Typi non HABENT CLARITATEM insitam; est usus legentis in iis qui facit

24 points

Investigationes demonstra verunt LECTORES legere me

36 points

Claritas EST etiam mutationem cons

60 points

Qui sequet,



Typi non habent claritatem insitam; est usus legentis in iis qui facit eorum claritatem. Investigationes demonstraverunt lectores legere melius quod ii legunt saepius. Claritas est etiam processus dynamicus, qui sequitur mutationem consuetudinum lectorum. Mirum est notare quam littera gothica, quam nunc putamus parum claram anteposuerit litterarum formas humanitatis per saecula quarta decima et quinta decima. Eodem modo typi, qui nunc nobis videntur par.

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