

GD315A Definitions

- *Renaissance*—“revival,” “rebirth,” denoting the transition from the medieval to the modern world, especially 14th and 15th Century, especially in Italy, when classical Greek and Roman literature was revived.
- *fleurons*—decorative elements cast like type; ‘printer’s flowers’ (apparently first used in a 1478 *Ars Moriendi*).
- *Ars Moriendi*—“the art of dying’ (approx. 65 editions before 1501, pp98, 99).
- *Humanism*—philosophy of human dignity and worth that defined man as capable of using reason and scientific inquiry to understand himself and the world.
- *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*—published by Aldus Manutius (1499), pp100–103 and <http://mitpress.mit.edu/e-books/HP/>
- Also see... *Poliphili*—printed by Jacques Kerver (1561, pp109–111. Compare range of Roman and italic sizes of Kerver vs. single size of type of Manutius)
- *Champ Fleury*—published by Geoffroy Tory. Three books: 1. fixed rules of pronunciation and speech; 2. the history of the proportion of Roman letterforms in relation to the human figure; 3. geometric construction of the Latin alphabet. pp104–107.
- *De humani corporis fabrica*—book printed by Johann Oporinus, authored by “founder of modern anatomy,” Andreas Vesalius. 1545, 1st successful book with engraved illustrations (copied from the original woodcut illustrations). See p112 7-38.

Web Sites

- <http://mitpress.mit.edu/e-books/HP/>
- <http://www.octavo.com>

Names to Know

- *Nicolas Jenson*
- Erhard Ratdolt, master printer from Germany, worked in Venice (*Calendarium*, 1476; *Euclid’s Geometry* (1482), first type specimen sheet. pp96, 97.
- *Aldus Manutius (scholar and printer) and Francesco Griffo (typeface designer; Bembo, first printed italic)*
- Etienne Dolet
- *Henri Estienne* (pp102, 104 re: H. and R. Estienne)
- *Robert Estienne* (pp102, 104 re: H. and R. Estienne)
- *Geoffroy Tory* (see p106, 7-25, *Criblé initial produced by Tory, printed by R. Estienne*)
- Claude Garamond

Important Information

In the latter half of the 15th Century, a Frenchman who settled in Italy, *Nicolas Jenson*, developed typefaces that included the space to the sides of each letterform. This was a revolutionary achievement—producing an even tone throughout the page—which had not been achieved before. Jenson’s highly skilled craftsmanship led him to become one of history’s greatest typeface designers. His fonts were highly legible, with perfectly aligned characters. p95 7-3, compare to Roycroft symbol.

The term ‘*humanist*’ evolved during the Renaissance, with the turning away from medieval beliefs in the invincible power of God over humankind to beliefs in the human potential to achieve personal understanding of the world and an independent actualization of ‘the self.’

From mid 1400s through the 1500s, remarkable growth occurred in type design and the production of printed books using moveable type. *Copperplate engravings replaced woodcut illustrations* and during the *Incunabula and the Renaissance* an abundance of typographic and illustrative material was produced.

During the late 1400s and into the 1500s the *scholar and printer Aldus Manutius* collaborated with typeface designers to produce books which became renowned as graphic design masterpieces (i.e. *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*, 1499). Manutius pioneered the development of small-size books. Especially significant is his collaboration with typeface designer *Francisco Griffo*.

Typographic exploration was evidenced in France during the 16th Century which has become known as the *Golden Age of French Typography*. *Geoffrey Tory and Claude Garamond* remain today among the greatest of typeface designers. In 1530 Tory was named “printer to the King,” and Garamond established the first type foundry which was independent of scholars, publishers and printers. Ironically, Garamond was desperately poor towards the end of his life and after his death his widow sold his typographic equipment. It is said that the sale of Garamond’s equipment contributed to a wide use of his fonts, and his work remained a great influence in the field of typography and printing through the 1700s.

Master calligraphers' skills were no longer needed due to the decrease in production of illuminated manuscripts, however they calligraphers became employed in teaching reading and writing and in hand-lettering government documents. p102, 7-20, Lodovico Arrighi.

Censorship became an issue in the mid-1500s, and printers who chose to print secular and humanist texts ran the risk of being labeled heretics by the Catholic Church. I.e. 1546, *Etienne Dolet burned at the stake because books he published caused authorities to accuse him of atheism*; 1549 Robert Estienne moved from France to Switzerland after being suspected of heresy and fearing fro his life.

In the early 16th Century, Basel Switzerland and Lyons France joined Nuremberg, Venice and Paris as centers of innovative graphic design. Basel to this day is noted as a world center of design innovation.

The 17th Century was an extremely fertile time for literature and the visual arts, yet not anywhere near as exemplary a period for design innovation as had been the second half of the 15th and the entire 16th Centuries. Context: 17th C: Shakespeare (1564-1616) in England, Cervantes (1547–1616) in Spain, and Rembrandt and Vermeer in the Netherlands.

Two notable events occurred in the evolution of printing—as distinct from design—during the 17th Century: Printing was introduced to the American Colonies (the Bay Psalm Book, Cambridge MA 1639) and, as far as historical evidence suggests, the first newspapers were produced (approx. 1609 in Germany and 1621 in England).