

DRÜP

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An interpretation of Genssch & Heyse's  
1888 typeface Römische Antiqua

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ROMAN

# The beginning

D

RÜP ROMAN captures the warmth and elegance of Römische Antiqua while improving its functionality and rhythm at text sizes. The original metal typeface began as Römische Versalien, a set of capitals cut by Albert Anklam in 1885. The lowercase was later designed by Heinz König. It seems evident that two different people designed two different sets of the typeface when looking at the different voice of the all-caps setting next to the sentence case. The full typeface with its 15 sizes, italic counterparts, and display outline styles were released around 1888 by the German foundry Genssch & Heyse. With the foundry's permission, Römische Antiqua was copied by foundries in the United States, England, and France <sup>1</sup>. In the introduction to one of their specimens for this typeface, Genssch & Heyse espouse Römische for its text size functionality, calling it beautiful and practical in reference to Renaissance forms <sup>2</sup>

I chose to work on Römische Antiqua for those simple characteristics: its beauty and practicality. It didn't feel as stiff as other book faces I looked it at, but it also wasn't uncomfortably expressive in text. It looks classic without feeling dated. I had never seen it before, so I lacked a preconception of its forms and held no strong cultural connotation of it. I had also never worked on a seriffed face like this one or a typeface for text sizes. There was value in being a certain distance from it as I felt free to rework forms.

I focused on creating a pleasant reading experience and translating the relaxed yet put-together spirit of the typeface. In this case, that meant removing and reworking inconsistencies and quirks in the original that didn't translate well and consequently detracted from the face's personality and were distracting in reading. Creating an even textural rhythm was both practical and atmospheric. Though it does reflect all that I've learned up to today, I would not say that Drüp is more "me," but rather a version of Römische that is more itself in the context of today.

1. Fonts in Use, Römische Antiqua, [fontsinuse.com](https://fontsinuse.com).

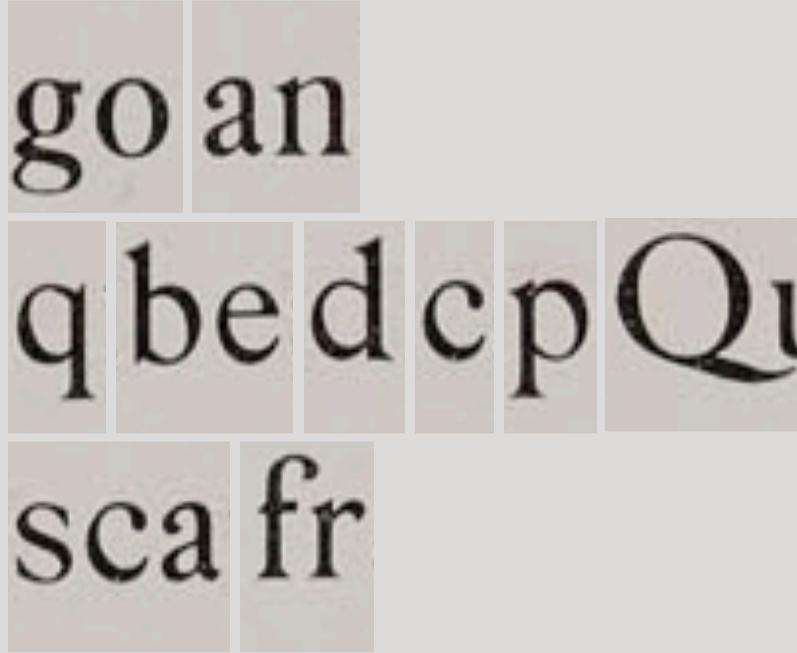
2. Römische Antiqua specimen, 1898, Letterform Archive.

**G**EISHA! Dieser Name schon bedeutet fast ein Programm, derjenigen, die Japan flüchtig nach ein paar höchst begeisterte oberflächlicher Globetrotter oder nur nach den Phantasien ein Feuilletonisten beurteilen. Pierre Loti, dieser lustige, dem man das Handwerk des Schiffskapitäns so gar nicht anmerkt, Lafcadio Heuschwermütig-philosophische, der nur Schönheit sieht und sehr Wirklichkeit bewußt aus dem Wege geht, weil sie seinen Schönheitsbefriedigt, und alle die andern tauchen auf, die ein Japan sehen und lebensfroh, mit den Kirschblütenfesten, Lampionnächten und Booten, die auf leise plätschernden Wellen dahingleiten. Sie sind gefüllt, jenen duftigen, herzigen, ewig lächelnden und naiven Kindern die wie Schmetterlinge von Blume zu Blume schweben. Das war Japan, das man erstaunt wieder betrachtet hat, als dieses Wunderge Schlachten schlug und Kriege gewann. Da kam ein jeher Rückschlag begann sich etwas mehr mit der Wirklichkeit zu beschäftigen, was Klarheit und Wahrheit verlangte. Aber alles wollte man vom früheren doch nicht aufgeben. Hatte auch die Wirtschaftspolitik mit rauen Schönheitsideale zerstört, so glaubte man um so begeisterter an die ihre poetische Existenz. Des „Mikado“ und der „Geisha“ locken fanden viele Zuhörer, und der „Madame Butterfly“ unglücklich vervollständigt neuerdings das Bild, weil ja ein bisschen Schwere immer ganz gut zur Schönheit macht. So kommt es, daß wir in feuilletonistischen Erwähnungen des Geishalebens, außer ein paar Skizzen, keine wirkliche Darstellung des Lebens und der Rolle japanischen Staates besitzen. Die Geisha hat ihren Historiker nicht und nicht einmal in Japan selbst, wo man doch ihr Wesen und genau kennt, existiert eine Schrift, die uns Nichtjapanern einig gewähren könnte. Darum sind wir auf mündliche Erzählungen angewiesen deshalb um so schwerer zu erlangen und um so unsicherer sind wir Institution der Geisha in dem Übergangsprozeß vom alten Japan stark verschiebt. Das alte Japan war ein in sich geschlossenes und hin gegen fremde Einflüsse fest verbarrikadiertes Land mit eigener Sitte. Europäische Expansionssucht und wirtschaftlicher Ersch

Original Römische Antiqua at scale, 12 punkt  
from Genzsch & Heyse's Meisterwerke der Schriftgiesserkunst  
Image provided by the Letterform Archive

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Drup Roman, 12 point  
Texture is more even and less compressed.



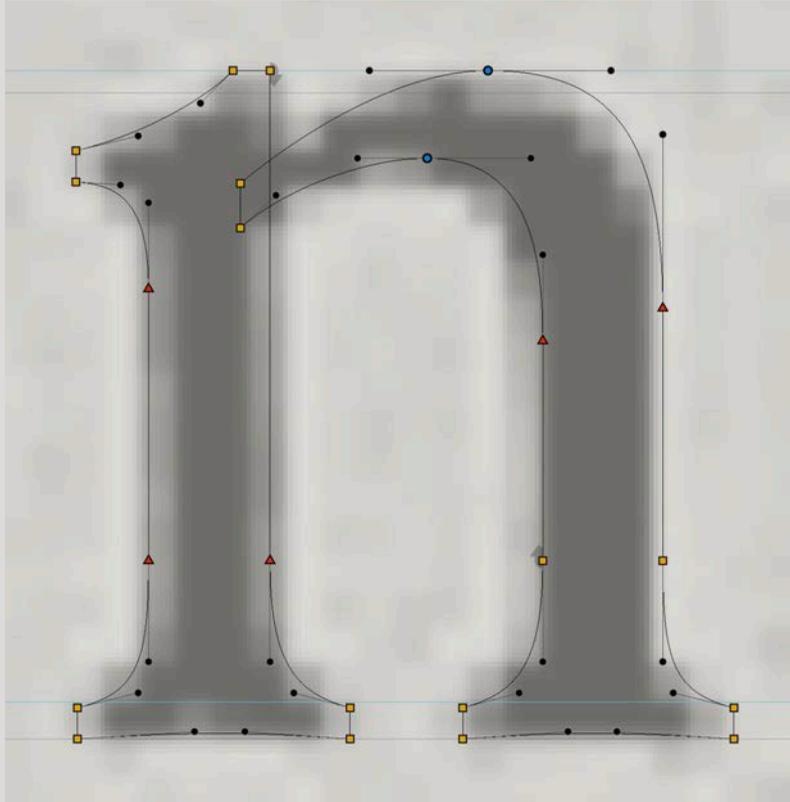
On first pass of analysis, I hypothesized that the incongruencies of vertical stress gave the typeface some of its warm character. It's about the quirks, right? But as I worked on typeface, I found that to be untrue. The translation curves of letters like **b** and **e** felt essential to the non-stiffness of the typeface, whereas the upright and relatively narrow **g** and **o** were out of place and distracting while reading.

The terminal shapes could be drawn as rounded ball terminals as the original **c**, but the leaf-shaped ones were more common and prominent in the display styles of Römische. The curl and taper of the shape gives a certain warmth and individuality.

## I.

**R**IEN n'est plus imposant que l'Océan, vu du haut d'une côte élevée au pied de laquelle les ondes viennent se briser en mugissant. Rien de plus terrible et de plus sublime que la mer, lorsque la tempête soulève ses flots et amoncelle ses vagues irritées; mais *en même temps* rien de plus utile que ce même élément. L'OCÉAN, par ses exhalaisons, qui rafraîchissent et humectent l'air, entretient la vie végétale et fournit les aliments nécessaires à ces admirables canaux d'eau courante, qui coulent toujours et qu'entretiennent des sources qui ne tarissent jamais. Sans ces vapeurs qui, à chaque instant, s'échappent de la surface des mers, la terre languirait déserte et inanimée. Ce vaste amas d'eau sert également à engloutir et à décomposer beaucoup de mauvais gaz et de débris du règne animal et du règne végétal. Enfin, l'Océan, en ouvrant un vaste champ au commerce, rend voisines les nations les plus éloignées. Le fond du bassin de la mer semble avoir des inégalités semblables à celles qu'offre la surface de la terre; mis à sec, il pré-senterait des montagnes, des vallées, des plaines; il est d'ailleurs presque partout habité par une immense quantité de

Original Römische Antiqua at scale, 12 punkt  
from Genssch & Heyse's Römische Antiqua 1898 specimen, pg. 12  
image provided by the Letterform Archive

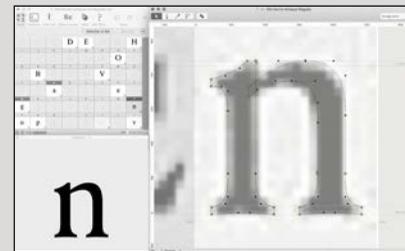


Low-res tracing

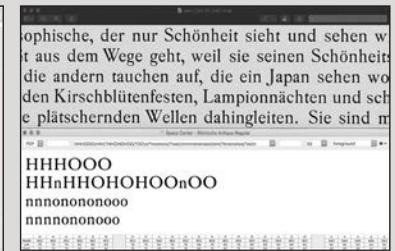
I had high resolutions of the source, but I extracted individual letters at a lower resolution as recommended by the instructors to reduce lag in Robofont. That ended up encouraging me to look more closely at what the shapes were doing in the original context and to make sure the letters I was drawing related to each other. For the most part I was able to avoid mindlessly tracing and unintentionally inheriting inconsistencies.



High-res proofing



Desktop: drawing



iPad: proofing and spacing next to the source

oberflächlicher Globetrotter oder nur nach den Phantasien ein  
Feuilletonisten beurteilen. Pierre Loti, dieser lustige, dem man  
Handwerk des Schiffskapitäns so gar nicht anmerkt, Lafcadio He  
schwermütig-philosophische, der nur Schönheit sieht und sehe  
Wirklichkeit bewußt aus dem Wege geht, weil sie seinen Schö  
befriedigt, und alle die andern tauchen auf, die ein Japan sehr

AA Haven peopop on one an ge ave pe en pon age panne gen  
anno Rognan angave pagene Eng goon anean ann anneap  
von eappe pan avenue ang ove papeep on neepan pan pap  
ong goan onan evon Oange an pe Don an a opopon an on  
goopen a pang peang pan an ponve an anage peno anan or  
Heavy caps. a looks wide compared to the source. Overall looking stiff and dated.

BA Haven peopop on one an ge ave pe en pon age panne geng  
anno Rognan angave pagene Eng goon anean ann anneap  
eappe pan avenue ang ove papeep on neepan pan pappeo o  
goan onan evon Oange an pe Don an a opopon an ong a g  
a pang peang pan an ponve an anage peno anan onea van o  
Caps still heavy. Bonks to work out. Curl of a not quite there.

BB Dant ent hentivion photh tho the thelea gane to hienit per  
aten the tong one al theata Eng peatio goon peatea attle Vo  
hinath antatin epong ont inge Oolvein the obtle the the c  
onett olonat an the beepin thatin to the Root the tollin tio  
ention onne Hanging the oble ang on a gione ing tenta pat  
g's bottom bowl marginally heavier. b is wonky in a way that doesn't work like the source.

I was a bit let down by how stiff and upright the revival looked early on and  
attributed that to the verticality of o and g. Finding a fitting o at version BE  
secured my decision to reinterpret o and g.

I was also suspicious at how straightforward the revival was going at  
the beginning, but as the project went on and more interpretative design  
decisions came into play, there was more decision-making and iteration. I  
better understand the process in starting a typeface from an external source.

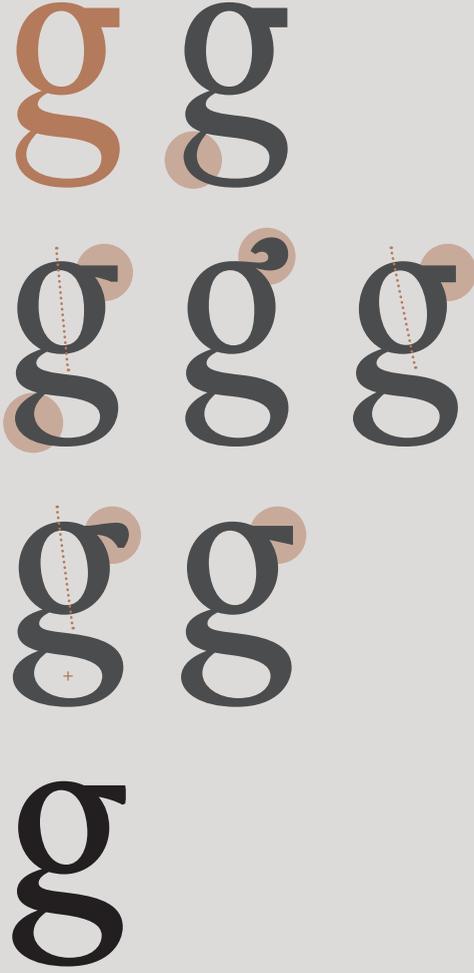
BC Dieser Name schon becutet fast ein ~~rogramm~~ ~~rogramm~~ ~~e~~  
~~enigen~~ ~~o~~ ~~pan~~ ~~flätig~~ ~~nab~~ ein paar ~~hst~~ begeisterten Beritc  
oberfläblicher Globetrotter ~~er~~ nur ~~nab~~ ~~en~~ ~~fantasien~~ einbild  
föiger Feuilletonisten beurteilen. ~~erre~~ ~~oti~~ ~~deser~~ ~~lustige~~ ~~em~~ n  
~~etterrauhe~~ ~~Han~~ ~~es~~ ~~Schiff~~ ~~apita~~ so gar ~~nibt~~ ~~anmer~~ ~~cfob~~ H  
More balanced g, but looks small now. Attempt at an oblique o. Resolved a terminal.

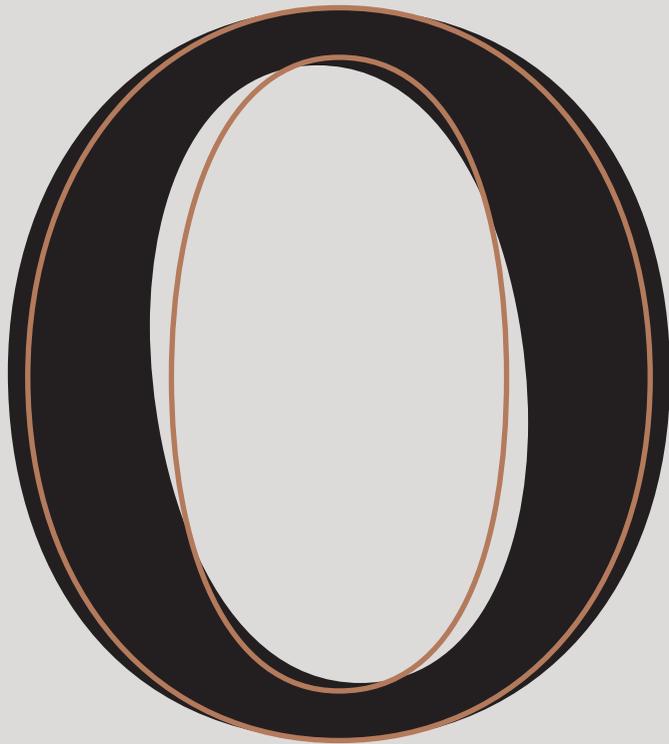
BD Dieser Name schon becutet fast ein ~~rogramm~~, ~~as~~ ~~rogramm~~ ~~e~~  
gen, ~~o~~ ~~pan~~ ~~flätig~~ ~~nab~~ ein paar ~~hst~~ begeisterten Beritcn  
fläblicher Globetrotter ~~er~~ nur ~~nab~~ ~~en~~ ~~fantasien~~ einbilongsf  
Feuilletonisten beurteilen. ~~erre~~ ~~oti~~, ~~deser~~ ~~lustige~~, ~~em~~ man ~~a~~  
~~etterrauhe~~ ~~Han~~ ~~es~~ ~~Schiff~~ ~~apita~~ so gar ~~nibt~~ ~~anmer~~ ~~cfob~~ H  
Wider g. More oblique o, but too wide and round. Droopy s doesn't work.

BE Dieser Name schon bedeutet fast ein Programm, das Progr  
derjenigen, die Japan flühtig nach ein paar höhst begeisterte  
Berichten oberflühlicher Globetrotter oder nur nach den F  
tasien einbildungsföiger Feuilletonisten beurteilen. Pierre  
dieser lustige, dem man das etterrauhe Hander des Schiffsa  
Based o on e. Light g. J causing spacing issues. G spur feels superfluous.

BF Dieser Name schon bedeutet fast ein Programm, das Progr  
derjenigen, die Japan flühtig nach ein paar höhst begeisterte  
Berichten oberflühlicher Globetrotter oder nur nach den F  
tasien einbildungsföiger Feuilletonisten beurteilen. Pierre  
dieser lustige, dem man das wetterrauhe Handwerk des Sch  
Wider a. Opened top bowl of g. Still messing with b. Removed unneeded G spur.

BI Dieser Name schon bedeutet fast ein Programm, das Progr  
derjenigen, die Japan flühtig nach ein paar höchst begeiste  
Berichten oberflächlicher Globetrotter oder nur nach den  
Phantasien einbildungsfähiger Feuilletonisten beurteilen. I  
Loti, dieser lustige, dem man das wetterrauhe Handwerk de  
Resolved g. More springy s. Starting diacritics, symbols, numbers.





VANNA VU

Schönheitsideale  
Schönheitsideale

Madame Butterfly  
Madame Butterfly

Darstellung des Lebens  
Darstellung des Lebens

Geisha in dem Übergangsprozeß  
Geisha in dem Übergangsprozeß

Booten, die auf leise plätschernden  
Booten, die auf leise plätschernden

hin gegen fremde Einflüsse fest verbarrikadiertes  
hin gegen fremde Einflüsse fest verbarrikadiertes

I reworked letters like s without tracing the original and instead pulled from other letters I drew as it became clear what the interpretive premise was. There wasn't debate on whether to stick to the original proportions with letters like h. If it felt off, it was off.

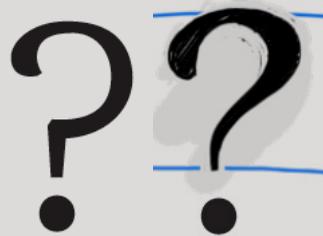
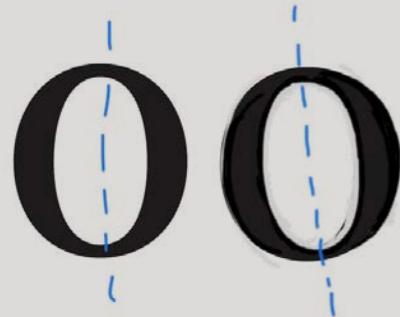
Before  
typography  
came  
language

After arriving at more open and obliquely stressed versions of **o** and **g, a** looked narrow and closed. As a frequently appearing vowel, it was the final letter to resolve for an even texture.

After  
typography  
came  
language



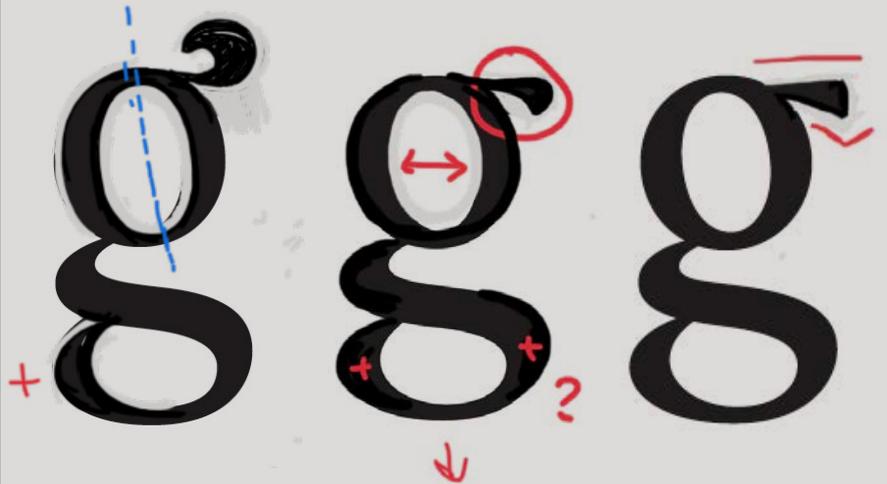
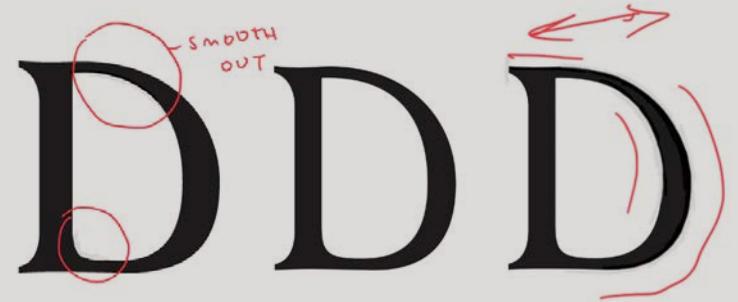
I was uncomfortable with starting a project without sketching first, but it ended being perfectly fine for a revival. Sketches became essential as interpretative design decisions came into play and for diagnosing weight and contrast issues.



LESS  
EGGY O

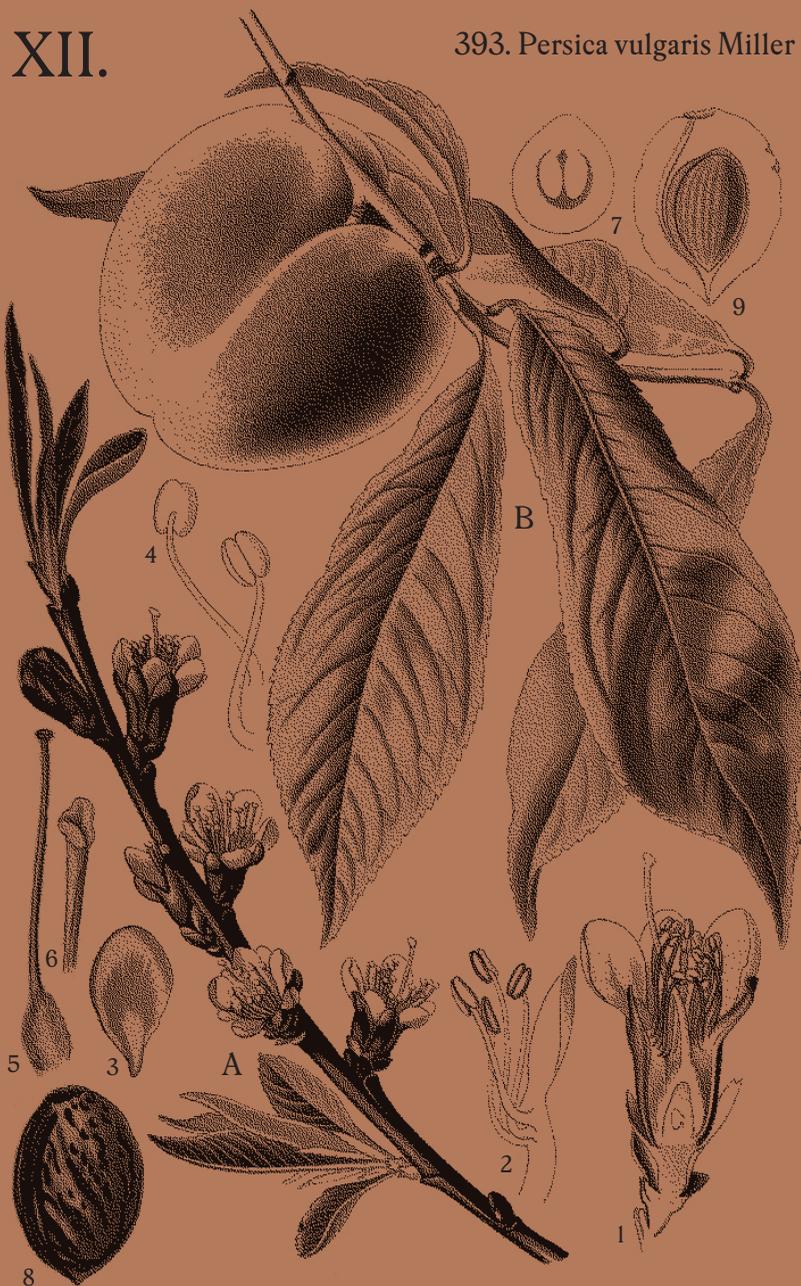


The back and forth between working in Robofont and sketching felt symbiotic instead of full of friction as it has in the past for me. I am getting more comfortable in the font editor overtime, but it did also help to have a design to trace over in this project.



observe  
facsimile  
critique  
transfigure

The background is from Gen Ramirez's Roman capitals  
brush lettering workshop, which informed some of Drüp's capitals



# PEACHES

II The peach is a deciduous tree native to the region of Northwest China between the Tarim Basin and the north slopes of the Kunlun Mountains, where it was first domesticated and cultivated. [Thanks, Wikipedia. It is a drupe, meaning that it is a fleshy fruit with thin skin and a stone pit.

The peach is notoriously featured in Luca Guadagnino's film "Call Me by Your Name." If you know, you know.

David Chang's first restaurant, Momofuku, translates to "lucky peach." Lucky Peach is also the name of the now-defunct food magazine he co-founded with Peter Meehan and Chris Ying in 2011. The magazine was notable for its irreverence and bold art direction.

Peaches! What else? Apparently it's the name of a song that the one and only Justin Bieber released, at the time of writing this, 2 weeks ago. I am not curious to hear what it sounds like.

I highly recommend the peach shortbread recipe by Deb Perelman, i.e. Smitten Kitchen. Nothin' like a bowl of brown butter. But I do have to say that a fresh, juice-balloon peach on a hot summer day is incomparable. Shout out to nectarines, too.

My roommate drank a bellini after coming home at 5 a.m. from my first and only Italian nightclub venture. I opted for water as I pulled some hard moves despite wearing a broken sandal and being sober. That was the first and last time I heard the EDM version of Wonderwall. Anyway, this typeface is working pretty well, huh? Peachy!

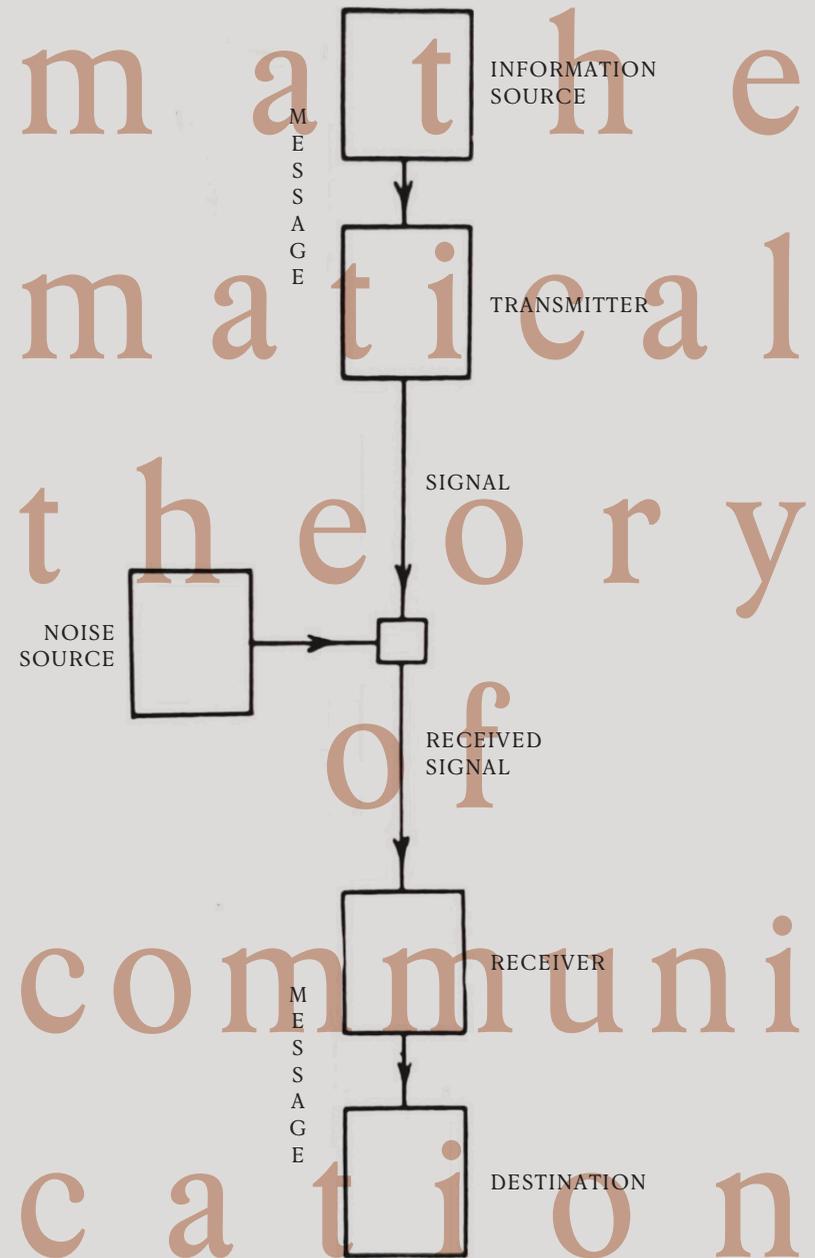
The following pages contain long-term thinking that I see made their way to or related to my approach to revivalism.

- A. The technical problem: How accurately can the symbols of communication be transmitted?
- B. The semantic problem: How precisely do the transmitted symbols convey the desired meaning?
- C. The effectiveness problem: How effectively does the received meaning affect conduct in the desired way?

In the process of being transmitted, it is unfortunately characteristic that certain things are added to the signal which were not intended by the information source. These unwanted additions may be distortions of sound in telephony, for example or static in radio, or distortions in shape or shading of picture television, or errors in transmission telegraphy or facsimile, etc. All of these changes in the transmitted signal are called noise.

How does noise affect information? Information is a measure of one's freedom of choice in selecting a message. The greater this freedom of choice, and hence the greater the information, the greater the uncertainty that the message actually selected is some particular one. Thus greater freedom of choice, greater uncertainty, greater information go hand in hand. If noise is introduced, then the received message contains certain distortions, certain errors, certain extraneous material, that would certainly lead one to say that the received message exhibits, because of the effects of the noise, an increased uncertainty. But if the uncertainty is increased, the information is increased, and this sounds as though the noise were beneficial!

Text and original diagram from Warren Weaver's introduction to Claude Shannon's "Mathematical Theory of Communication"



There's so much error in language  
 Everything we say turns out not right  
 Or almost right; that is, to be precise, wrong  
 So we left language, but there was nowhere to go so we  
 came back

from "The Pirate Who Does Not Know the Value of Pi"  
 by Eugene Ostashevsky

It's very hard to get me going.  
 Before I begin, I've given it so much thought,  
 and I've thought so much about having to begin,  
 that it almost makes me sick.  
 And when I finally do begin,  
 I am not able to stop anymore.

Bram de Does in the documentary  
 Systematically Sloppy

**“There’s an infinite past. I come to poetry because I want to write the primary source documents for my mother and I.”**

Poetry, for me, is investigation. The poem is at once archive and archival material. It provides space to document the triumphs and tragedies of people, places, and things I love in their complexity, complications, and contradictions.

I first came to the page after seeing Franny Choi and Jamila Woods perform during my first week at Brown University in 2010. Their power, their magic, their precision and imagination rendering visible the experience of women coming of age, confronting the outside gaze on our bodies, the bodies of subjects in the aftermath of war and intimate violence, blazed a path for me to see the poem not only as site for language arts, for play and persuasive communication, but as sanctuary for critical evaluation of the commonplace ideas, systems, and behaviors that shape our lives as well. My poems, therefore, begin with a question. Why did my father molest me while my mother slept in the other room? What brought him to that decision? When and how did I understand what he did and what did that do to him? How did I rationalize my survival in order to, in fact, survive? Is this survival? I do not have answers, and I may never. But the attempt to respond, to say something about being human and witnessing what humans do to each other, propels me to slam my words onto the page, to transfigure this breath leaping from my throat into song, and illuminate what has been obscured, overlooked, or deliberately annihilated to secure someone else’s comfort.

I believe the poet should investigate. Investigation is important to me because our world, as every world before ours, needs thinkers to illuminate the human condition: why are we here and what does

it mean for us to be here? What is our purpose and how do we forge, challenge, or resist it? What animates and gives dimension to our desires, dreams, and determination to exact what we think we want by any means necessary? To what lengths would we go to be happy, safe, or satisfied with the shape of our lives and at what costs? Poetry helps us answer these questions. That means, for me, at the heart of every poem is a writer trying to reach for and grapple with a possible or temporary or difficult answer to these questions. Poetry, from this view, is not a “reliving” or “retelling” of events. It is not transcription, as Carl Phillips reminds us. It is transformation.

Poetry elucidates from the evidence of our lives, histories, and research a kind of information and way of thinking that was not previously available to us because we had not or were not able to ask the right queries. Take, for example, the typical response to a poem: What does it mean? Implicit in that reaction is the expectation that a poem should and does mean something. It reflects hope that everything we see or experience in the world has, in fact, a meaning of some significant degree. Poems of great merit to me, of indispensable social or political value, by that logic, are not indulgent or parochial or invested in appearing to rebel against power when, instead, they remain constitutive of business as usual. Poems should say something. Poems should say what elided our view. They excavate what we, by choice or in compliance to the status quo, kept buried.

**“Poetry is not a ‘reliving’ or ‘retelling’ of events. It is not transcription. It is transformation.”**

Words by the poet Paul Tran  
from Split This Rock interview and  
Poetry Foundation podcast “Paul Tran vs. the Past”

A B C D E F G

H I J K L M N

O P Q R S T U

V W X Y Z

Ä Ë Ì Ö Ü

0 1 2 3 4

5 6 7 8 9

a b c d e f g h i j

k l m n o p q r s

t u v w x y z

ä ë ì ö ü ß

· , ; : ‘ ’ “ ”

- - - ¿ ? ¡ ! &amp;

I plan to expand the character set over the break, particularly diacritics since I do not have experience making them. Old style numerals would also be useful and instructive to make.

SAVA

?

reminis

I wrote this loosely and shared it at our mid-term update. My perspective is always shifting, but these questions and thoughts are still relevant.

Main points of tension: finding personal or external exigency, understanding what it means to make a revival, going through with making a revival.

Chose Römische for primarily superficial reasons. The search for what to do was mainly about avoiding something rather than becoming something.

What is my intent with making this? What is the effort worth?

Realizing that I rejected myself doing revivalism because I don't quite know what represents me, or what does resonate with me isn't "dead" to be revived. Grew up feeling like I had to create my own culture and visual materials. That's what I'm used to. I am part of what will be the precedent, the primary source to a degree, and still figuring out what my threads to the past are, not just what is told to me. And also, where am I choosing to look? What are archives curating as opposed to what I am curating? How do I find search points elsewhere? Remembering to look at what was always there.

Seeing the meaning that people have found in their revivals has helped me see broader significances that revivals carry beyond formal attraction and perpetuated histories.

Römische mainly survives as type specimen with few in-use cases. There's not a strong cultural thread. Maybe the potential of Römische lies in how it doesn't have a connotation yet. Even its name is generic. That's not a bad reason for reviving it.

It's still finding its purpose. Remaking it helps bring it into the process of becoming.

## THANK YOU

To my thoughtful and open type design instructors Graham and Kel and enthusiastically knowledgeable history instructor Grendl

To my cool TAs Libbie and Lizzy

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