

Reflection on Practice:

The Capucine family

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August 2007

*Essay submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the MA in Typeface Design*

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Introduction

This essay traces a year of typeface design studies at the University of Reading. It shows the development of Capucine, a typeface family primarily designed for listings magazines, and provides a comprehensive account of the methodology established during the year. However, the following pages should not be considered as a design manual; they are evidence of a learning process. They relate the steady, piece by piece development of Capucine, and expose the key-themes that emerged throughout the year.

The first part of the essay introduces the listings magazine and the opportunities and constraints it poses for the graphic designer. It describes how a challenging brief for a type design could be built around this genre of publication.

Section two considers how the typeface was begun from scratch. It describes the first experiments: some considered failures, others that were more successful. All, however, informed the design and led progressively to the development of Capucine regular. It also records a series of tasks that were undertaken in order to deliver a fully working typeface, from the fine-tuning of the shapes to the completion of the character set.

The last section details the procedure for building a whole family, using a single typeface (Capucine regular) as a reference. The reader can see the typeface developing into a coherent family: with the addition of a non-latin character set, an italic and a range of weights.

1 A typeface for listings magazines

1.1 Defining an environment

Unlike art, design generally has a given purpose – performing a specific function, reaching a certain type of costumers – it is governed by constraints. Having a workframe is thus an essential starting point for designing a typeface. This year we had an opportunity to define our own brief, and it was a chance to choose a challenging one. Having a workframe is also reassuring as it specifies guidelines for the typeface, provides an area of study from which to draw inspiration, and gives an environment within which the typeface can be tested.

Early on, the decision was made to design a typeface for an informational environment. After considering the idea of a typeface for newspapers, another kind of publication appeared as an interesting informational medium: the listings magazine.

What is a listings magazine?

Listings magazines are a recent type of publication. They can only exist in a society that has the time and money for leisure. Usually published weekly and focused on one town, they act as a reference for all kinds of entertainment: films, exhibitions, concerts, TV and radio programs, etc. They are mostly informational and structured as directories, but often contain some articles as well (highlights of specific events, critics, etc). Listings magazines also have a strong advertising role, as they are usually the only exhaustive reference of events happening in a town.



fig.1 The Guardian Guide, spread (25%) and detail (full size)

●The real thing. Genuine F wanted for sincere easy-going Irish M, 49, 6'2, GSOH, into people, nature, art, music, politics. Ldn. Call 0905 675 6702 Voicebox 43422

●Easy-going M, 46, enjoys food & wine, reading, travel, walking, seeks relaxed F, GSOH, for fun, laughter & romance. SE. Call 0905 675 6702 Voicebox 84268

●Musical & fit, profess M, 42, 5'10, likes music & tennis, seeks kind, warm, fun-loving F for LTR. SE. Call 0905 675 6702 Voicebox 74525

●Know the feeling? Home alone, dinner for one, no chat or cuddles. Normal M, 63, 6', n/s, GSOH, seeks soul mate for hugs & kisses. Ldn. Call 0905 675 6702 Voicebox 84004

●Easy-going & sincere M, 55, 5'10, slim, GSOH, well-maintained & married, into most leisure pursuits, seeks easy-going F, to enjoy life with Mids. Call 0905



fig.2 Pariscope, spread (25%) and detail (full size)

151 CINE 220
3, rue Anatole France. 01.60.84.48.52.
5,80 € et 5,35 € Mer : 4,90 € et 4,55 €
Eud. Soc. Cr. Chô. PaN : 4,90 € et 4,55 € -
12 ans : 3,50 € (SA) 45,50 € 10 pl.

Harry Potter et l'ordre du Phénix v.1
Séances : Mer, Sam 14h, 17h, 20h30; Jeu 14h, 20h45; Ven, Mar 19h, 21h; Dim 17h, 20h; Lun 20h45

Fragile(s)
Séances : Mer 14h15; Jeu 21h; Ven 18h15; Sam 14h15, 21h; Mar 20h45.

Roman de gare
Séances : Mer, Lun 21h; Jeu 14h15; Sam 18h; Dim 17h30.

London to Brighton v.o. int - 12 ans.
Séances : Mer 18h; Ven 20h45; Dim 20h15; Mar 18h15.



fig.3 Time Out, spread (25%)



fig.4 The Knowledge, spread (25%)

Why design a typeface for listings magazines?

This genre seemed challenging as it combines different kinds of reading processes: on one hand the reader scans through the directory to find specific information, performing a selective reading; on the other hand, he can read a whole page article in a purely linear way. Listings magazines have thus to combine heavy information design alongside entertaining layouts in a more traditional magazine style.

For these reasons, it could be argued that if a typeface performs well in a listings magazine, it will work for a wide range of publications.

1.2 Brief

This first study of listings magazines resulted in a list of major factors to take into account throughout the design process.

Context

The typeface will often be used in small sizes (with an x-height of 1 to 1.5 mm), and set in lines of short length; it will commonly combine plain text with abbreviations and numbers, as shown on fig.1 and 2. Considering the density of information in a listings magazine, the type also has to be space-saving.

Information hierarchy is another crucial point here, and its success lays mainly in the combination of different weights. As shown on the examples above, listings magazines often use bold for headlines, light for introduction, italic for secondary information, etc. Weights and sizes are mixed together, giving to the page a very lively feeling and offering the reader various levels of meaning.

Defining this brief helped to set the basis of the Capucine family: a big x-height, very short ascenders and descenders, slightly condensed proportions, and some wide counters. Finally, it made it necessary to design a whole family.

On the other hand, attention was paid not to restrict the design possibilities; listings magazines relate above all to entertainment and leisure, therefore they don't need to be as formal or "neutral" as newspapers. Allowing a certain freedom and originality in the design of the typeface was also part of the brief, even if it was not mandatory.

2 Birth and development of Capucine regular

2.1 First experiments

After studying some existing typefaces¹, the time came to start an original design in accordance with the brief. The word *adhesion* was used as a starting point for the design, and the character set would expand only at a later stage.

One of the early answers was to introduce some "stencil" features (see fig.5) that could: 1. act as inktraps in small size and avoid black spots at the junctions; 2. give to the typeface an original look when set at big sizes.

The image shows the word "adhesion" in a bold, black, stencil-style font. The letters are thick and have a slightly irregular, hand-drawn appearance. The word is centered on a white background.

fig.5 Early sketches, introducing stencil features (50%)

Although this was an avenue worth exploring, it was probably too early in the learning process and turned out to be a difficult path. Actually, it was necessary to get consistency and unity into the letterforms before implementing any idiosyncrasies.

I started therefore a series of exercises on consistency (fig.6 and 7). The results of this were not particularly innovative but helped me understand what it is that makes letters belong in the same typeface. It was also a chance to master Fontlab.

The image shows two versions of the word "adhesion" in a regular, black, sans-serif font. The top version is in a smaller size, and the bottom version is in a larger size. Both versions are centered on a white background.

fig. 6 and 7 Two of the first attempts in Fontlab (72 pt.)

1. The study of existing typefaces is not developed here but is recorded in the workfile.

2.2 From writing to typing

These early attempts did not seem conclusive, nor were they a comfortable way of designing. It was necessary to develop another approach to type design.

Calligraphy and type design

Different methods can be experienced in different type design courses. One of them is to root the design of a typeface into the practice of calligraphy².

I personally experienced it during my two previous years in France at the École Estienne, where one would usually start designing a typeface by reproducing a specific calligraphic model, and then translate it into proper letter drawings. Although this year in Reading was an opportunity to experience a different approach, it became gradually obvious that writing could be an interesting source of inspiration and should not be neglected.

The Greek workshop

The Greek workshop held by Gerry Leonidas in October 2006 was another opportunity to understand and experience the relationship between writing and designing a typeface. Whereas the Latin alphabet has been very normalised by centuries of calligraphy and printing dogma, the Greek script is much more “free-hand” and still carries a strong influence of writing. It was therefore necessary to *write* Greek before even thinking of designing a Greek script. This method was inspiring, as it allowed one to add a personal touch to the design and have a better control of the shapes that were produced. The results of the Greek workshop would be reused later in the process (see chapter 3.1), but from then the use of writing as a starting point became an integral part of the design method.

How cursiveness survived through the design of Capucine

This method naturally introduced a cursive feeling into the design, and many of the early attempts were actually closer to an italic than a roman – in fact, some of them would be reused for the italic version of Capucine, as explained in chapter 3.2. Among other characteristics they had low junctions, a slant to the right and emphasized terminals (see fig.8 and 9). Those features and any other hint of cursiveness needed to be disciplined and was gradually brought under control.



adhesion
adhesion

fig. 8 and 9 First examples showing a cursive influence (72 pt.)

The following points illustrate some major evolutions in the design, progressively leading to the Capucine typeface as it exists today:

- The slant to the right was removed as a regular version of the typeface was required first. However, Capucine always kept a subtle lean to the right, giving it a dynamic feel.

- The low-junctions as they appear on fig.9 turned into loops with higher junctions (see fig.10). This alteration gave a more regular look to the typeface, while retaining a calligraphic feeling. The loops gradually reduced to become at the end a discreet hint of cursiveness: one of the idiosyncrasies of Capucine.

2. It is for example the case at the KABK in the Hague with the teaching of G. Noordzij methods.

nnnn

fig. 10 Instances showing the evolution of the design (72 pt.)

– The typeface needed to be settled on the baseline: the upper-part of g and q were modified for better alignment to the x-height (fig. 11) and instrokes and outstrokes were systematized, reinforcing the horizontal rhythm of the typeface.

– The bowl of the g also became smaller for a better balance with its bottom (fig. 11). This contributed to making its counter equal with other letters like q and d.

– Some capitals had primarily a very cursive, swashy design, like G and Q (fig. 11). As the character set was expanding, the capitals became more formal than the lowercase. It was considered to keep the early versions of the capitals as alternates; finally, this feature was reused for the italic capitals (chapter 3.2).

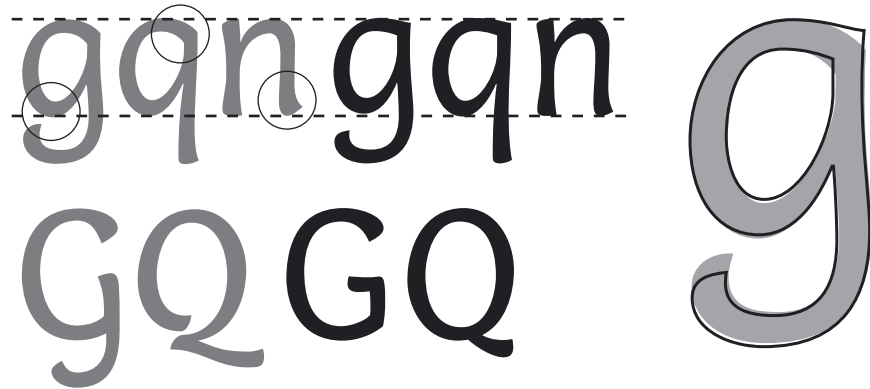


fig. 11 Calming down the cursiveness (72 pt.)

Capucine, serif or sans-serif typeface?

The question of whether Capucine would be a serif or a sans-serif typeface was ever-present, and the final result is still ambiguous. Although it doesn't have proper "traditional" serifs, Capucine cannot be considered a Grotesk face either. Indeed, it has clear instrokes and outstrokes and a humanistic feel that relates more to Old-Style faces than sans-serifs. Many variations of the terminals were tried, often blurring the boundary between the two categories (see fig. 12).

dsin dsin
dsin dsin

fig. 12 In search for the right terminals (72 pt.)

All the attempts to turn the typeface into a proper serif face were inconclusive. Although Capucine has thicks and thins and an oblique axis, its slightly informal flavour was hardly compatible with “sophisticated” serifs, and eventually rather short terminals were chosen; quite prominent at the beginning, they became more and more discreet in order to calm down the overall texture of the typeface and make it more even. The instrokes on the m, n and r were also modified to act as inktraps and avoid black spots at small sizes (see fig. 13).

fig. 13 *Fine-tuning the terminals (72 pt.)*

The final version pulls the typeface into the sans-serif category, but Capucine proves that judging a design by the presence or absence of serifs is obsolete.

Although the basis of the regular were settled from January 2007, consolidating and fine-tuning the typeface was a slow and laborious process. The list of decisions explained above is not exhaustive, and lots of other minor changes are recorded in the workfile. These modifications made the typeface more consistent and more suitable for long texts set at small sizes.

2.3 Work flow

Because of the cursive influence within the typeface, writing and sketching remained the principal ways to solve problems all along the design process. The right stress, good proportions or the appropriate loop would be revealed often by the hand and by a spontaneous gesture. Different kinds of tools were thus experimented with: broad-nib pen, pencil, felt pen, brush – with more or less speed and at various scales. The relevant marks were then turned into sketches of about 3.5 cm high (see fig. 14).

The drawings were then translated into outlines in Fontlab. Sketches were not systematically used as a template, they were interpreted. They helped to solve problems, but usually the final result would be quite different from the original drawing. The further the design evolved, the less writing or drawing were used as a starting point. At the end, a rough sketch would be enough to solve a problem.

Gray shaded, enlarged versions of the glyphs were also printed and then modified manually with a pencil and white painting (fig. 15). This method helped me to understand the relationship between a letter and its surrounding white space, and to work by contrast rather than outline. It was easy to add material or remove it and the design could almost be treated as a sculpture.

Going back and forth between handwriting, sketches and digital outlines

seemed an appropriate method throughout the process. In one sense, the design could move away from preconceived ideas about typefaces designed for specific environments; it could develop an idiosyncratic vocabulary. In another sense, numerous adjustments were gradually added to satisfy the needs of the brief, and allow the right balance between efficiency and originality.



fig.14 Four stages in the design: writing, sketching, designing in Fontlab and adding manual corrections (full size)



fig.15 Adding modifications by hand – here, an attempt for a serif version (50%)

2.4 Expanding the character set

As explained in chapter 2.1, the word *adhesion* was used as a starting point for the design, but rapidly the character set expanded and more decisions could be made by looking at a wider range of letters.

Capitals

Once the lowercase letters had been completed, the capitals were added to the character set. The typeface has a big x-height, and consequently small ascenders; this allows for relatively small majuscules that do not stand out too much when combined with minuscules. It is particularly useful when a text includes lots of capitals, as is the case in German for example. To further harmonize the two cases when in combination, the capital letters were designed slightly smaller than the ascenders, as shown on fig.16.

Small capitals

Some proper small capitals were also added to the character set, for two main reasons: first, to set abbreviations that do not stand out within the text; secondly, to emphasize a part of a text or the beginning of a paragraph. For this last reason, and for a better optical balance, the small capitals were designed a bit taller than the lowercase letters.

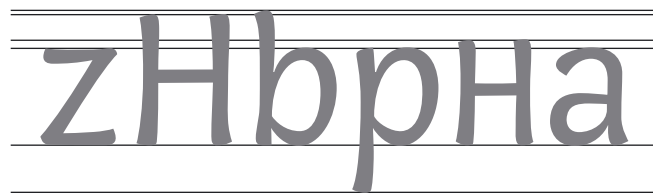


fig.16 The height relationship between lowercase, capitals and small capitals (72 pt.)

Numerals

Two sets of numerals were designed, and both were developed with two different kinds of spacing. These four variants suit a wide range of scenarios.

Oldstyle figures were designed to combine well with lowercase letters, whereas lining figures are more suitable for all-caps setting and tables. However, the height of the lining numerals has been placed at a point between the capitals and the small capitals height, in order to make them usable with lowercase letters if necessary (see fig.17).

Both sets are available with two different types of spacing: proportional and tabular. The proportional spacing enables one to combine numbers with letters harmoniously. The tabular one is very useful when working with tables (see fig.18); this is because all the numbers share the same width.

The oldstyle figures with proportional spacing were chosen as the default, as it was observed that numbers are primarily combined with lowercase letters in listings magazines. The other sets are easily accessible as OpenType features.

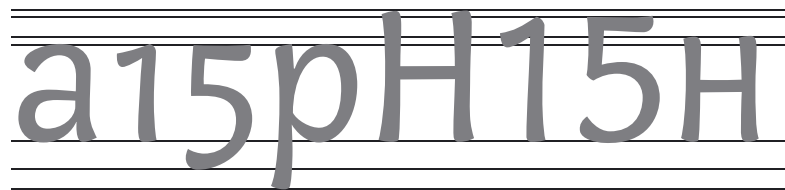


fig.17 The relationship between letters and numerals (72 pt.)

2005–06 average full-time academics salaries and gender pay gaps

Institution	Female average £	Male average £	Total average £	Pay gap %
1 University of the Arts, London	42,349	41,835	42,051	-1.2
2 Queen Margaret University College, Edinburgh	38,444	38,568	38,488	0.3
3 University of Central England in Birmingham	36,956	37,338	37,200	1.0
4 York St John University	37,145	37,543	37,344	1.1
5 Staffordshire University	36,874	37,407	37,215	1.4
6 Bolton University	38,314	38,907	38,701	1.5
7 University College for the Arts, Canterbury	37,096	37,832	37,567	1.9
8 Worcester University	36,641	37,486	37,034	2.3
9 Buckinghamshire Chilterns University College	38,026	38,918	38,560	2.3
10 Chichester University	38,142	39,180	38,730	2.6

fig.18 An example of the use of tabular lining figures in a table

Diacritics

A comprehensive range of diacritics was also added to the character set in order to cover a variety of European languages. Attention was paid to harmonize the diacritics in relation to each other and to the letters. This was achieved by balancing their weight and optical alignment. Also, some alternates were used for the capitals when necessary, in order to reduce the total height of the glyph (see fig.19).



fig.19 Alignment of the diacritics (72 pt.)

The actual character set enables one to set the majority of the Northern and Eastern-European languages using the Latin script, as well as Turkish and Greek (see chapter 3.1).

The traditional punctuation marks and numerous symbols have also been included in the typeface. The complete character set can be found in the appendix.

2.5 “It’s very French!”

Influences throughout the design process

As Capucine was exposed to comments during its development, the most common and striking one was that it was “quintessentially French.” This had not been a conscious wish, but as it was a recurring observation, the question had to be asked: what could be so French about it?

Although one wonders where the French type designers are hiding these days³, France has a very rich history of typeface design and it would be impossible to deal with it all here. However, some parallels can be made between the design of Capucine and a few major French typefaces and theories.

A connection could be drawn between Capucine and some French Art Nouveau typefaces; especially, George Auriol’s *Auriol Labeur* (1901) and *Française Légère* (1903) and Eugène Grasset’s eponymous typeface (1901), all three released by the Peignot foundry. These typefaces saw great success at the time and remain a symbol of the French typographic *grandeur*. They embody the “whiplash” style of Art Nouveau and all three are a brilliant compromise between the aesthetic of the Movement and the requirements of an efficient text typeface. Looking back to Capucine, its lettershapes express a similar “organic” feeling and a preference for soft curves rather than harsh angles. The combination of the oblique axis with short, calligraphic terminals also contributes to the connection between Capucine and the Art Nouveau typefaces (see fig.20). Auriol and Grasset’s works were actually used later as references for the design of the italic uppercase, and convinced me to introduce a subtle swashy style (see fig.22).

The image shows the words "TRAIN ROYAL" in a large, bold, black serif font. The letters are thick and have a slightly rounded, organic feel, characteristic of the Art Nouveau style. The spacing between the letters is consistent.

fig.20 *Auriol Labeur, roman* (Spécimen Général, G. Peignot & Fils, around 1920, full size)

The image shows the words "SAINT-MARC" in a large, bold, black italic serif font. The letters are slanted to the right and have a calligraphic, swashy quality, particularly in the terminals of the letters.

fig.21 *Grasset italic* (Spécimen Général, G. Peignot & Fils, around 1920, full size)

The image shows the word "CHAMPAGNE" in a large, bold, black italic serif font. The letters are slanted and have a very calligraphic, swashy style, with soft curves and elegant terminals.

fig.22 *Capucine italic, capitals* (68 pt.)

3. Whereas the Dutch are famous for their numerous type designers, France counts only a few professional type designers and its type industry is quite underdeveloped compared to the rest of Europe.

Further to this, it could be said that Capucine follows the theories of Paul Iribe, and among others his manifesto published in 1930 in the journal *Choix*⁴. In this text, Iribe urges the designers to defend the “French Arabesque” versus the “European Cube”⁵:

The arabesque is moving, the cube is still. The arabesque is the freedom, the cube is the prison. The arabesque is cheerfulness, the cube is sadness. The arabesque is fertile and the cube is sterile, because the arabesque is a lively line ‘that walks and leads where one wants to go’.⁶

Although Iribe was writing about the design industry in general, his view of the French tradition seems close to the Art Nouveau spirit – and Capucine is definitely closer to the French Arabesque than the European Cube as it is described here.

Capucine has also what could be identified as a “French gesture”. The best examples of this gesture are Roger Excoffon’s typefaces such as Mistral and Choc (see fig.23), released by the Olive Foundry in 1953. A direct comparison of the lettershapes cannot be made as Excoffon’s typefaces are script-style; but to a lesser extent, Capucine shares with Mistral and Choc the influence of handwriting and the expressiveness of its designer behind the design.

fig.23 *Choc and Mistral* by Roger Excoffon, 1953 (Digital version Linotype Library, 72 pt.)

In conclusion, Capucine is probably seen as “very French” because of its organic and human feeling. It is a typeface driven by the eye rather than mathematical rules, bringing a certain “latin warmth” to the page.

3 The extended family

3.1 Capucine Greek

Designing a non-latin typeface was a desire from the beginning of the course, and after a few months work Greek naturally revealed itself as the appropriate companion for the latin version of Capucine.

As explained in chapter 2.2, the Greek workshop held by Gerry Leonidas in October 2006 greatly influenced the design of Capucine. Of course, the final version differs a lot from what had been produced during the workshop (see fig.24); but the Latin and Greek components mutually influenced each other throughout the design process, and the cursive influence inherent to the typeface was definitely an asset for the design of a Greek counterpart.

Both scripts share some similar features: they have the same x-height, same stroke width and an emphasized vertical rhythm. They also share the same calligraphic terminals, soft curves, and a hint of a loop on some characters (see fig.25).

4. Iribe, P. *Choix*, Montrouge: Draeger, 1930.

5. “l’Arabesque France et le Cube Europe”

6. Translated by the author.

However, each script preserves its singularity – there has been no attempt to standardize the two. Among other characteristics, the Greek version is less contrasted than the Latin, as naturally the script “dances” more. The effect is to allow a similar overall colour when both scripts are set together (see fig.26). The placement of thicks and thins is also different in Capucine Greek than in the Latin; as observed in historical examples, the stress varies from one letter to another in Greek and attention was paid to respect this, avoiding thus a possible “latinisation” of the script. For the same reason, the cursiveness is stronger in the Greek than in the Latin, using emphasized terminals and loops (see fig.25).

ημεκαρ

fig.24 The result of the Greek workshop (72 pt.)

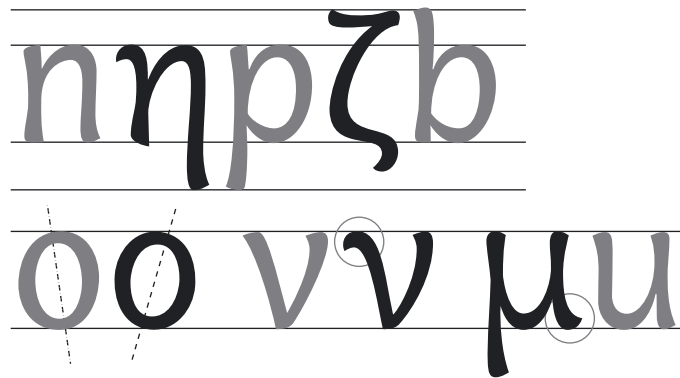


fig.25 Relationship between the lettershapes of the Greek and the latin (72 pt.)

Τον Ιουνιο του 2007 οι Εκδοσεις Πανεπιστημιου Μακεδονιας, με τη στηριξη του Department of Typography & Graphic Communication, University of Reading, UK, και της Association Typographique International (ATypI), τη συνεργασια της alterVision και τη συμβολη της Redfish και του Μουσείου Design Θεσσαλονικης, διοργανωνουν το 3ο Παγκοσμιο Συνεδριο Τυπογραφιας και Οπτικης Επικοινωνιας

με θεμα ΑΠΟ ΤΗ ΛΕΞΗ ΣΤΗΝ ΕΙΚΟΝΑ στους χωρους του Πανεπιστημιου Μακεδονιας. Το Συνεδριο αποτελεί μερος ενος προγραμματος που σχεδιαζεται απο τα τελη της δεκαετιας του 1980 με στοχο την αναπτυξη των τυπογραφικων σπουδων και της ερευνας, αλλα και την προοδο της τυπογραφικης πρακτικης στην πατριδα μας. Η προσπαθεια αυτη ξεπερασε τα στενα γεωγραφικα ορια

fig.26 Sample of the latin and the Greek set together (8,5/12 pt.)

3.2 Capucine italic

Experiments with texture

As shown in chapter 2.2, experiments with italicized typefaces appeared quite early in the design process. The question of the relationship between roman and italic was ever-present, and many directions were contemplated. Beyond the question of the slant or the degree of cursiveness, I aimed to understand what could create an interesting *contrast* between a roman and

an italic. Therefore, a few interesting combinations were chosen as examples: Galliard by Matthew Carter, Vendetta by John Downer and Triplex (roman by Zuzana Licko, italic by John Downer).

<p>Galliard Conservationists battling to preserve endangered wildlife threatened by the destruction of the Indonesian rainforest have scored an important victory. <i>New 1739 laws will allow (wildlife) groups to manage a tract of Sumatran rainforest that had been designated for logging concessions and plantations of palm oil for use in food and bio-fuel?</i> In the first project of its kind, which was 68 years in the making, 403 bird conservation groups - the RSPB,</p>	<p>Vendetta Conservationists battling to preserve endangered wildlife threatened by the destruction of the Indonesian rainforest have scored an important victory. <i>New 1739 laws will allow (wildlife) groups to manage a tract of Sumatran rainforest that had been designated for logging concessions and plantations of palm oil for use in food and bio-fuel?</i> In the first project of its kind, which was 68 years in the making, 403 bird conservation groups - the RSPB, BirdLife International and Burung Indonesia .</p>	<p>Triplex Conservationists battling to preserve endangered wildlife threatened by the destruction of the Indonesian rainforest have scored an important victory. <i>New 1739 laws will allow (wildlife) groups to manage a tract of Sumatran rainforest that had been designated for logging concessions and plantations of palm oil for use in food and bio-fuel?</i> In the first project of its kind, which was 68 years in the making, 403 bird conservation groups - the RSPB,</p>
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fig.27 Samples of Galliard, Vendetta and Triplex showing the combination of the upright with the italic

The italics shown above work very well in association with the roman because of their variation of *texture*. Set in combination with the upright, the three of them express a greater speed not only by their slant, but also because of a sharp, angular, overall texture.

Long before a regular version of Capucine was clearly defined, a series of variations on the same idea was undertaken (see fig.28). These are experiments and lack maturity; nevertheless, they demonstrate that playing with a few parameters like angularity, compression or speed can have a great influence on the overall aspect of a typeface. Pushed further, these attempts could have lead to interesting combinations. But in the particular case of Capucine, its smooth and curvy shapes were hardly compatible with the angular, almost gothic designs displayed below.

adhebion

bandaid anion onion ben
 an bandannaed abandon
 boneheaded dhoni abandonee de
 adened bandied anabaena node
 bonehead aid hid dan hobnobbed
 bad anni dahabiah dhabb a bab
 bie dodo hoboed dedenda nee aa
 h hi deaden ended hide anhedoni
 a bandanaed en bin ended hindoo
 nob dine hide anadenia hi be e
 ndia anend none bandonion died
 oh aeon oboe abed hidebind nod
 deb bandannaed had indene ban

adhebion

bandaid anion onion ben an b
 andannaed abandon bonehea
 ded dhoni abandonee deaden
 ed a oh oh bandied anabaena
 node bonehead aid hid dan ho
 knobbed bad anni dahabiah d
 habb a babbie dodo hoboed de
 denda nee aah hi deaden end
 ed hide anhedonia bandanaed
 en bin ended hindoo nob dine
 hide anadenia hi be endia an
 end none bandonion bandaid
 anion onion ben

adhesion

nondenseness doh seises dad
 a aha shad ha hoed dash she
 end a in asshadedness did s
 he andia shoeshine adenoid in
 adhesion deadishness onions e
 osin hoosh anne sissonne dhoo
 n aide ash dianisidine she dos
 ed ha aid deadhead sidedness
 a deadheaded saids as shansa
 died dons dada hindhand no
 ds shad has dines hosanna
 d a on as is ideas did dies dis
 dein enshade nonadhesion an

fig.28 Experiments with the overall texture of an italic (9,5/12 pt.)

An upright italic?

The idea of designing an upright italic was also considered; the best example of this is Eric Gill's Joanna, which has a very compressed italic with a slant of just 3°.

Some attempts were made in that direction, but all were unsuccessful. The reason is that Capucine regular is already quite similar to an upright italic: it has a certain cursiveness, is slightly compressed and has a single-storey g among other characteristics. Consequently, the contrast between the roman and an upright italic would never be have been strong enough.

Although the avenues explained above were not successful, the experiments produced a variety of shapes and approaches which had a great influence on the final version.

Final choice

Eventually, Capucine italic was conceived as an independent design, yet in the same spirit as the roman. Although its slant is slight (8°), it shows a greater speed and cursivity than the upright. It has, among other characteristics, bigger contrast between thicks and thins, emphasized terminals and loops, and lower junctions (see fig.29). Some letters like m, n, u, y also have broken curves, emphasizing the impression of speed. The italic is a little condensed compared to the roman, and slightly lighter in colour (see fig.30).

Looking back to some of the early old-style italics, they didn't have a systematic slant. For Capucine, although the overall slant is about 8°, some variations have been introduced to the design to give a more lively and dancing feeling (see fig.29).

The capitals are more formal than the lowercase letters and are primarily designed to combine well with them. They bear a subtle swashy style, reminiscent of such Art Nouveau typefaces as Française Légère or Grasset (see chapter 2.5).



fig.29 A few glyphs from the italic version of Capucine

There was a table set out under a tree in front of the house, and the March Hare and the Hatter were having tea at it: a Dormouse was sitting between them, fast asleep, and the other two were using it as a cushion, resting their elbows on it, and talking over its head. "Very uncomfortable for the Dormouse," thought Alice; "only, as it's asleep, I suppose it doesn't mind." The table was a

large one, but the three were all crowded together at one corner of it: "No room! No room!" they cried out when they saw Alice coming. "There's plenty of room!" said Alice indignantly, and she sat down in a large arm-chair at one end of the table. "Have some wine," the March Hare said in an encouraging tone. Alice looked all round the table, but there was nothing on it but tea. "I don't see any

fig.30 Sample showing the regular and the italic set together (8,5/12 pt.)

Greek italic

Because the regular version of Capucine Greek was already very cursive, it was hardly possible to push this cursiveness any further. The Greek italic is therefore based on a slanted version of the regular, following the same slant and compression as the latin italic. However, many modifications were added: the terminals were emphasized to give greater speed and cursiveness (see fig.3.1); some curves were redesigned for similar reasons (on the letter *nu* for example); alternate versions were preferred for some glyphs like *beta*, *theta*, *phi*; and a broken curve similar to the latin *n* has been added to the character *eta* (see fig.3.2).



fig.3.1 Manual corrections emphasizing cursiveness in the Greek italic (full size)

Η πόλη δεν είναι ένας ιδιαίτερος γαστρονομικός προορισμός. Το μεγαλύτερο ατού των περισσοτέρων εστιατορίων είναι η ατμόσφαιρά τους. Επειδή η παλιά πόλη είναι το επίκεντρο της τουριστικής βιομηχανίας, είναι πολλά τα εστιατόρια εκεί που έχουν επαναπαυθεί. Το καλύτερο και πιο αυθεντικό φαγητό το τρώει κανείς στα *paladares*, που είναι ιδιωτικά σπίτια που ανοίγουν τις πόρτες τους για ένα μικρό αριθμό ατόμων. Το απόλυτο *must*

fig.3.2 Sample of the Greek italic (12/16pt)

3.3 Black, Thin and intermediate weights

Since Capucine is designed primarily for listings magazines, building an extended family was a crucial part of the design process.

Capucine Black and Thin

Having the Multiple Master technology in mind (see part 3.4), the decision was made to create first the “extreme” weights in the family: Capucine Black and Thin. Both were conceived as display variants; this allowed me to bring boldness and lightness as far as possible without being limited by legibility problems at small size. These two extremes reveal different flavours, although they belong to the same family and work well together.

Capucine Black leans toward a kind of brushy, almost comic style. Attention was paid to enlarge the counters as much as possible. Therefore, some angularities were introduced in the counters (see fig.3.3), reminiscent of some features of the italic. Inktraps were also added when necessary. Consequently, Capucine Black stays very legible at small sizes although it was first conceived as a display weight. It is visually striking and essentially intended for headlines.

adhesion

fig.33 *Capucine Black* and detail of the inktraps (72 pt.)

At the other extreme, *Capucine Thin* offers a different style: because of its thin stems, it tends to look more delicate and refined. Although the letters are very slim, they are not monolinear and their subtle thicks and thins retain a feel for the cursive flow. Getting the Thin variant optically right was a tricky operation; the design was very sensitive to any variation in stem-width, and each letter had to be tuned very precisely. *Capucine Thin* should not be used at small sizes as the fineness of the strokes would not render well in print.

adhesion

fig.34 *Capucine thin* (72 pt.)

The x-height of *Capucine Thin* and *Black* has also been modified to optically harmonize with the regular. As shown on fig.35 the x-height of the thin weight is slightly lower than the regular, and the black higher.

ananan a

fig.35 Comparison of the height and the weight of the thin, the regular and the black

Defining intermediate weights

The Multiple Master tool was then used to create the intermediate weights. This technology operates by interpolation of two extremes. It is very useful and flexible, as it allows one to generate numerous intermediate designs between the two extremes. In the case of *Capucine*, three interpolations were made, as shown below:

aaa 1. the thin>regular axis enabled generation of the light;

aaa 2. the regular>black axis enabled generation of the bold;

aaa 3. the regular>bold axis enabled generation of the semi-bold.

After generating the desired weights, it was necessary to fine-tune the design, and many minor corrections were added manually.

Although the Multiple Master tool offers the possibility to generate a vast series of variants, only a reasonable and sensible number of weights were added to the family. The Light, Semi-bold and Bold versions were designed to be easily useable at text size, and combine effectively with any other variant. More specifically, the bold is quite dark to contrast well next to the regular; it is visually striking as often required in listings magazines and magazines in general; the light can be used with the regular as a secondary typeface (for introductory texts or notes for examples), and the semi-bold has the effect of a bold when set with the light (see fig.36).

As a whole, the family offers a solution for any kind of text, from continuous to more complex structures.

There was a table set out under a tree in front of the house, and the March Hare and the Hatter were having tea at it: a Dormouse was sitting between them, **fast asleep, and the other two were using it as a cushion, resting their elbows on it, and talking over its head. “Very uncomfortable for the Dormouse,” thought Alice;** “only, as it’s asleep, I suppose it doesn’t mind.

There was a table set out under a tree in front of the house, and the March Hare and the Hatter were having tea at it: a Dormouse was sitting between them, **fast asleep, and the other two were using it as a cushion, resting their elbows on it, and talking over its head. “Very uncomfortable for the Dormouse,” thought Alice;** “only, as it’s asleep, I suppose it doesn’t mind.

fig.36 Examples combining between the weights. On the left the regular with the bold; on the right, the light with the semi-bold (8,5/12 pt.)

3.4 Beyond the letterforms

Although the design of the lettershapes represents the major part of the process, some more technical work had to be undertaken to make the typeface fully operational.

Kerning

Few combinations of glyphs needed to be kerned in order to get the spacing of the typeface completely right and even. First, the glyphs sharing similar shapes on their left and/or right side were grouped into kerning classes; the key-glyph in each class was then kerned in combination with others. Kerning was done on both the latin and the Greek, and a range of combinations were considered: lowercase/lowercase, UPPERCASE/lowercase UPPERCASE/UPPERCASE, UPPERCASE/SMALLCAP, and SMALLCAP/SMALLCAP. Some glyphs were also kerned with punctuation marks when necessary.

Implementing OT features

The last stage was to implement some OpenType features in the typeface. A table lists the main functions on the following page (see fig.37).

OpenType Features

Ligatures	fb ffb ff fh ffh fi ffi fj ffj fk ffk fl ffl ft fft Th ȚhȚh Țh
Stylistic alternates	έβρεχα έβρεχα πίθηαι πίθηαι μαφία μαφία
Case-sensitive punctuation	[{(CASE)}] «¿iCA-SE» <CA-SE@Sens> [{(CASE)}] «¿iCA-SE» <CA-SE@SENS>
Small Caps	UNESCO AMSTERDAM EDF et GDF
Numerals: Proportional oldstyle Proportional lining Tabular oldstyle Tabular lining	0123456789 \$£€ 0123456789 \$£€ 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 \$ £ € 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 \$ £ €
Fractions	1/2 ½ 1/4 ¼ 3/4 ¾ 5/6 ⅚
Superiors and inferiors	x ^o n ^(q+1) H ₂ O m ² M ^{lle} M ^r S ^{te} 2 nd 3 rd 4 th
Localized forms	Și să pornești Și să pornești

fig.37 List and examples of the main OpenType features

Conclusion

This essay relates the considerable amount of work that went into the design of Capucine. Yet the family is far from being finished: among other tasks, the metrics have still to be fine-tuned and italics to be developed for each weight. Finishing the typeface should not, however, be a major undertaking. A strong basis from which to work is already in place.

The benefits of this year dedicated to typeface design are numerous. Firstly, there was the opportunity to set up a unique and challenging project. Then, there was surprise, delight and not a little frustration along the way, as the design evolved in directions that I could never have predicted. Furthermore, it has enabled me to set up a methodology that will last beyond this specific project. In this light, the Capucine family must be considered an experiment that will help to build the foundations for future designs. Finally, numerous ideas were explored during this year - many had to be abandoned for the purposes of Capucine - but they will hopefully be returned to and form the embryo of interesting projects in the future.

