

# THE HISTORY OF TYPOGRAPHY

On left:  
Metal Movable  
type which was  
used with a  
printing press,  
invented by  
Johannes  
Gutenberg

Typography is the study of type and type faces, the evolution of printed letters. Since man did not begin to write with type, but rather the chisel, brush, and pen, it is the study of handwriting, that provides us with the basis for creating type designs.

The first thing to keep in mind when thinking about the history and development of typography is that many early printers were not just printers, but typographers as well. The first independent typefounder was a French gentleman by the name of Claude Garamond. Although not the inventor of movable type, Garamond was the first to make type available to printers at an affordable price.

Garamond based his type on the roman font of Griffo (a man commissioned by Manutius to develop an italic type for the Aldine classics). Before Garamond's independent practice, men such as Jenson, Griffo, and Caxton played specific roles in the development of type. Jenson perfected the roman type, Caxton conceived a bastard gothic font, and Griffo developed italic. Several of the fonts we see on our computers's have evolved from the work of typefounders of the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries.

The weakest period the history of type rests in the sixteenth and seventeenth century printing presses. Many presses (for reasons unknown) mixed many sizes and styles of type into single pages, fliers, and playbills. These 100-150 years witnessed very little in the progression of typography.