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\*\*\* START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK THE USES OF ITALIC \*\*\*

TYPOGRAPHIC TECHNICAL SERIES FOR APPRENTICES—PART VI. NO. 38

# THE USES OF ITALIC

## A PRIMER OF INFORMATION REGARDING THE ORIGIN AND USES OF ITALIC LETTERS

BY  
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## THE USES OF ITALIC

[1]

### HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION

The first types were cut in imitation of the Gothic or black letter handwriting employed at that period in copying Bibles, missals, and the like. It was large and angular and the lines were very coarse and black. These peculiarities gave it the name. Its characteristics made it easy to read even in the dim light of a church or by the failing eyes of the aged. This form of type, however, was only suitable for large pages. When reduced in size it became very difficult to read, being an almost indistinguishable blur on the page.

**D**omine q̄d multiplicati  
tribulāc me; multi in  
versum me. Multi dicūt an  
nō est salus ipsi in deo eius.  
Dñe susceptor me⁹ es: gloriā  
altā caput meū. Vocē in  
mīnū clamavi: ⁊ exaudiuit  
te s̄cto suo. Ergo dormiui ⁊  
sum: ⁊ resurrexi quia dñs su

Type of the Mazarin Bible (exact size).

The cost of materials and the unwieldiness of the great folio volumes soon caused a demand for smaller books. Gutenberg's 36-line Bible was almost immediately replaced by the 42-line Bible. A reduction of one sixth in the number of pages of a book as large as the Bible would effect a very important saving in the cost of material and labor, especially when we remember that the early printing press was a very laborious and slow affair. Gutenberg's press was capable of printing only twenty sheets an hour, or one sheet every three minutes. The invention of the movable bed, about the year 1500, increased the output of the press to two hundred sheets an hour. In 1786 the speed had risen only to two hundred and fifty sheets an hour. Cheap printing waited for the application of power to machinery.

[2]

[3]

The big book with the big type was well enough for churches and libraries. But the purpose of printing was soon seen to be the spread of intelligence through the popularizing of literature. Books were to be placed in the hands of the people, not

simply of the priests, nobles, and professional men. That end could only be accomplished by making books cheap and portable, that is to say small. To this end the printers soon addressed themselves to the task of devising forms of type which should be smaller, so as to reduce the number and size of pages required for a book without sacrifice of legibility. A clear, clean cut type, with sharp lines and simple forms, capable of compression without loss of distinction, was the great need.

The first important departure was the cutting of Roman type. The capitals were imitated from the letter forms used in Roman inscriptions. In the earlier forms the lower-case letters were rough and uncouth, much resembling the Gothic forms. The inventor of this form is not known, but it was certainly employed by the German printers Sweynheim and Pannartz at Subiaco, near Rome, as early as 1467. Their example was followed by several imitators and improvers, but its form was not definitely settled until Nicholas Jenson cast his fonts in Venice in 1470 or 1471. It is doubtful if any more perfect Roman types than those of Jenson have ever been produced. The superiority of this type soon caused its general adoption except in Germany. England was slow in coming into line. Caxton never used anything but Gothic type. Roman type was not introduced into England at all until 1509, and then had to make its way against the older forms backed by English conservatism. Germany has never adopted the Roman letter for general use but makes some use of it in scientific works.

**quibus legibus exlex. Cæcilius in Sarpasomene: Quid nar-  
ras barbare cum īdomitis moribus illitterate illex es. Sifēna  
li.iiii. Armis equis cōmeatibus nos magis iuuerunt exleges  
& minus honore dignos putabitis. M. T. p Siluentio: Non  
quo illi aut exlegē ullā: aut causam pecūiæ publicæ contem-  
ptā atq; abiectam putarunt.**

**Lurchones dicti sunt a lurchando. Lurchare est cum auuiditate  
cibum sumere. Luc. saty. li.ii. Nam quid metino subiecto  
q; huic opus signo uel lurcharet lardum & carnaria faretrū  
parum conficeret. Pomponius siris lapathiū nullā utebat:  
lardum lurchabat lubens. Plautus in Perfa: Perennis herbæ  
lurcho edax furax fugax. Luc. sat .li.v. Viuite lurchōes: cōe  
dones uiuite uentres. Varro in Eumenidibus: Contra cum  
psaltepisia & cum flora lurchare astrepis.**

Roman type of Nicholas Jenson, 1472 (exact size).

The next step was the invention of Italic types by Aldus Manutius, of Venice, in 1501. He took for his model the handwriting of the poet Petrarch and produced a type not essentially different from the modern Italic. Originally the Italic letters were lower-case only, Roman capitals being retained. The incongruousness of this combination was, however, so evident that Italic capitals were soon designed and then the new fonts were complete. The Aldine capitals used with Italic lower-case were small, the ancestors of the small capitals of today. Aldus used the Italic type as a text letter, and such use continued frequent for a century.

**I**lle me as errare boues, ut cernis, et ipsum  
**L**udere, quæ uellem, calamo permisit agresti.  
**N**on equidem inuideo, miror magis, undiq; totis **Me.**  
**V**sque adeo turbatur agris. en ipse capellas  
**P**rotinus æger ago, hanc etiam uix Tityre duco.  
**H**ic inter densas corylos modo nanq; gemellos,  
**S**pem gregis absilice in mada cornixa reliquit.  
**S**æpe malum hoc nobis, si mens non leua fuisset,  
**D**e cælo tactis memmi prædicere quærens.  
**S**æpe sinistra cæua prædixit ab ilice cornix.  
**S**ed tamen, iste deus qui sit, da Tityre nobis.  
**V**rbem, quam dicunt Romam, Melibœe putavi **Ti.**  
**S**tulus ego huic nostræ similem, quo sæpe solemus  
a ii

Type of the Aldine Virgil, 1501 (exact size).

At the present day, except in Germany, the three forms of type have their distinct uses. Gothic, variously known as Black Letter, Old English, Priory Text, Cloister, etc., is used only for special work, particularly in ecclesiastical printing. The modern type called "gothic" is not derived from it. Roman is the general text letter. Italic has ceased to be a text letter, but serves a useful purpose for certain special uses which are to be considered at length in the following pages.

## RULES FOR THE USE OF ITALIC

[5]

Italic has, in general, four uses:

1. for emphasis.
2. to set off a title, word, or passage from the context.
3. for running titles, sub-heads, the headings of tables, and other like places where something different from the text letter seems needed for variety.
4. for display purposes in commercial work.

One very important principle should always be observed in the use of italic for emphasis. Emphasis should always be used sparingly. Make the words do their work. Do not try to supplement poverty of thought and weakness of expression by italics, capitals, and other marks of emphasis. Where there is too much emphasis attempted no emphasis is secured. This fault was much more common formerly than now.

The accompanying reproduction of a page from a book printed in 1690 (place not given, but probably London) illustrates several of the faulty uses of italics common at that time. An entire paragraph is italicized (quite unnecessarily) for emphasis. All proper names and adjectives derived from them are italicized where they occur in the regular text and printed in roman where they occur in italicized passages. Note the frequent capitalization for emphasis and especially the italic capital with roman lower-case in the first line of the second paragraph. This is a frequent usage in this particular book. In this book all quotations are printed in italic without quote marks. The paper, composition, and presswork of the book are very poor. It represents English printing in its worst period.

was dash'd in piéces. So that what is here declared, were it reconcilable to Truth, yet could not consist with possibility; unless by one only Exception, that the *English*, who by their new League with *France*, were to be the breakers of the Peace of *Aix*; and by the *Triple League*, were to fulfil their Obligations to both Parties, should have sheath'd the Sword in our own Bowels.

But such was the Zeal of the King and his select Instruments, for the Promotion of Slavery and Popery, that it easily transported them to say what was untrue, or to undertake what was impossible, for the Service of the *French*.

And now the *French King* seeing the *English* engaged past all retreat, comes in with his Fleet, not to fight, but only to sound our Seas, to spy our Ports, to learn our Building, to learn our way of Fighting, and to consume ours, and preserve his own Navy. For no sooner had the D. of York, at the design was laid, suffered himself to be shamefully surprized; but the Vice Admiral, the Earl of Sandwich was sacrificed, and the rest of the *English Fleet* so torn and mangled, that the *English Honour* was laid not in the Dust, but in the Mud, while his Royal Highness did all that was expected from him; and M. d'Estres, who commanded the *French*, did all that he was sent for.

There were three other several Engagements of ours with the *Dutch* the next Summer.

Page from a book of 1690.  
(The slurred appearance represents the printing of the original copy.)

Moderation in the use of italics is so important that in many cases the compositor is justified in ignoring markings for italic in his copy where they are too profuse. The author is often surprised and disappointed at the appearance of his proof when it comes back heavily italicized. Moreover the occurrence of many italics increases the cost of composition because of the greater labor involved.

[7]

I. Italicize, subject to the caution just given, any words or phrases which it is desired to emphasize.

II. Foreign words and phrases incorporated into English sentences are sometimes italicized and sometimes not so distinguished. The deciding element in fixing the usage in these cases would seem to be the commonness and familiarity of the word or phrase. For example, the meaning of *bona fide* (Latin), *menu* (French), *recto* (Italian), or *stein* (German) are as well known as those of most English words. To all intents and purposes these words have been adopted into our language. On the other hand, *jeu d'esprit* (French) or *inter alia* (Latin) would probably not be immediately understood by the casual reader. Words of the first type should not be italicized. Words of the second type should be.

Following is a partial list of words of foreign origin which should not be italicized even when the original accents are retained. It is better to retain the accents. They are, however, often omitted. Familiarity plays its part here also. *Dénouement* is very often written without the accent; *née* is rarely so written. The absence of accented letters from typewriters, from ordinary fonts of type, and from the matrices ordinarily used in type-casting machines probably contributes largely to their omission.

aide de camp	ennui	per cent
Alma Mater	entrée	per contra
a posteriori	ex cathedra	personnel
a priori	ex officio	postmortem (n. and adj.)
à propos	exposé	prima facie
attaché	façade	pro and con(tra)
bas-relief	facsimile	protégé
beau ideal	fête	pro tem(pore)
bona fide	habeas corpus	questionnaire

[8]

bric-à-brac	habitué	queue
café	innuendo	régime
chargé d'affaires	levée	rendezvous
chiaroscuro	littérateur	résumé
clientèle	litterati	veille
confrère	massage	rôle
connoisseur	matinée	savant
crèche	mêlée	sobriquet
criterion, <i>pl.</i> -a	menu	soirée
cul-de-sac	motif	tête-à-tête
data	naïve	tonneau
débris	née	umlaut
début	net	verbatim
décolleté	névé	verso
dénouement	niche	versus (v., vs.)
dépôt (= depository)	nil	via
doctrinaire	nom de plume	vice versa
dramatis personæ	papier mâché	vis-à-vis
éclat	per annum	viva voce
élite	per capita	

Following is a short list of words or phrases of foreign origin which are used occasionally but are not familiar enough to be printed in the text type.

<i>ab ovo</i>	<i>en passant</i>	<i>locum tenens</i>
<i>ancien régime</i>	<i>fait accompli</i>	<i>mise en scène</i>
<i>bête noire</i>	<i>grand monde</i>	<i>noblesse oblige</i>
<i>comme il faut</i>	<i>hors de combat</i>	<i>raison d'être</i>
<i>de quoi vivre</i>	<i>inter alia</i>	<i>sans cérémonie</i>
<i>de trop</i>	<i>jeu d'esprit</i>	<i>tour de force</i>

The following words, phrases, and abbreviations used in literary and legal references should be italicized.

<i>ad loc.</i>	<i>infra</i>	<i>sic</i>
<i>circa (ca.)</i>	<i>loc cit.</i>	<i>supra</i>
<i>et al.</i>	<i>op. cit.</i>	<i>s. v.</i>
<i>ibid.</i>	<i>passim</i>	<i>vide</i>
<i>idem</i>		

Do not italicize:

cf.	e. g.	v. or vs. (versus)
etc.	i. e.	viz.

When an unfamiliar foreign word is used to convey precise description, put it in italic, but use roman for repetition of the word. [9]

Italicize brief passages of foreign words which may be incorporated into an English passage but may not be long enough to be treated as regular quotations.

*De gustibus non est disputandum*, or as the French have it, *Chacun a son gout*.

Longer passages in foreign languages should be set in roman.

To set an entire paragraph of quoted matter in a foreign language in italic, or even to use italic too freely for phrases, practically nullifies the value of it as a display letter for the sub-headings or for any other part of the book in which distinction is really needed. Quotation marks, indention, smaller type, or any of the marks which distinguish quoted matter are sufficient.

III. At one time it was quite customary to set all quotations, whether in English or a foreign language, prose or verse, in italics, but that fashion is now happily obsolete. Some modern printers use italic for bits of verse between paragraphs in the text of roman, but it is a fancy and not likely to be permanent.

IV. Do not italicize foreign titles preceding names of foreign institutions or places, streets, etc., the meaning or position of which in English would call for roman type.

Pere Ladeau; Freiherr von Schwenau; the Place de la Concorde; the Museo delle Terme.

V. In text matter use roman for the name of any author, but italicize the title of the

work. This applies to books, including plays, essays, cycles of poems, and single poems of considerable length, usually printed separately, and not from the context understood to form parts of a larger volume; pamphlets, treatises, tracts, documents, and periodicals (including regularly appearing proceedings and transactions). In the case of newspapers and periodicals the name of the place of publication should be italicized when it forms an integral part of the name, but do not under ordinary circumstances italicize the article *the*.

[10]

In many offices the names of papers, magazines, and serials are not italicized. Roman is often used without quotation marks, the title being indicated by capitalization. When such names are used as credits at the end of citations or notes they should always be italicized.

This is largely a matter of individual taste and office style. Ample warrant can be found for either form in the writing of the best authorities and in the practice of the best offices.

VI. In citations which make a full paragraph, and in footnotes, the name of both author and book are commonly set in roman lower-case. At the end of a paragraph or footnote specification of author and book may be roman for author and italic for book. When only the book is given, use italics.

These rules are often modified in long bibliographical lists, tables, or other cases when following them would cause a great accumulation of italics and spoil the appearance of a page. Do not italicize the books of the Bible (canonical or apocryphal) or titles of ancient manuscripts, or symbols used to designate manuscripts.

D 16, M 6, P, J.

VII. Italicize *see* and *see also*, in indices and similar compilations when they are used for cross-reference, and when it is desirable to differentiate them from the context.

VIII. Italicize *for* and *read* in lists of errata to separate the incorrect from the correct.

Page 999 *for* Henry *read* Henri.

IX. The phrases *prima facie* and *ex officio* are sometimes used to qualify the nouns which follow, and sometimes used as adverbs. As qualifiers they are often printed in roman with the hyphen.

Prima-facie evidence.  
An ex-officio member of all committees.

[11]

When used as adverbs they may be printed in italics without the hyphen.

The evidence is, *prima facie*, convincing.  
The speaker is, *ex officio*, the chairman.

X. Names of ships, especially when they are taken from places, as in the United States Navy, are often italicized.

U.S.S. *Philadelphia*, U.S.S. *Alabama*.

XI. Names of paintings, statues, musical compositions, and characters in plays are sometimes italicized. This is not ordinarily advisable. It violates the rule of never using italics or other emphasizing devices needlessly and is liable to mar the appearance of the page. It is sometimes necessary, however, to avoid ambiguity. For example, Julius Caesar is a historical personage, "Julius Caesar" is one of Shakespeare's plays, *Julius Caesar* is a character in the play.

XII. Italicize the symbols *a)*, *b)*, *c)*, etc., used to indicate subdivisions when beginning a paragraph and *a*, *b*, *c*, etc., affixed to the number of verse, page, etc., to denote a fractional part.

See Chap. iii,  
sec. 2 *a)*.  
Luke 4 : 31 *b)*.

XIII. Italicize letters used to designate quantities, lines, etc., in algebraic, geometrical, and similar matter, and in explanation of diagrams and illustrations.

$(a+b)^2=a^2+2ab+b^2$ ; the line  $a$   $c$ =the line  $a$   $b$ ; the  $n^{\text{th}}$  power; at the point  $B$ .

XIV. Italicize particular letters of the alphabet when referred to as such.

We use  $a$  much more frequently than  $q$ .

XV. Authorities in science differ in the use of italics and capitals. In strictly scientific matter it is better to follow copy if the copy is intelligently prepared; if not, follow some recognized text-book on the subject. [12]

In general the following rules will be found serviceable.

- a. In botanical, zoological, geological, and paleontological matter, italicize scientific (Latin) names of genera and species when used together (the generic name being in the nominative singular), and of the genera only, when used alone. When genera and species are used together the genus always comes first, species second.

*Agaricus Campestris, Felis leo, Conodectes favosus, Phyteuma Halleri, Pinus, Basidiobolus, Alternaria, Erythrosuchus.*

- b. In medical matter the general practice is to print names of diseases and remedies in roman. In the *Encyclopedia Britannica, Eleventh Edition*, however, the scientific names of diseases are printed in italics.

- c. In astronomical and astrophysical matter italicize:

1. The lower-case letters designating certain Fraunhofer lines:  $a, b, g, h$ .
2. The lower-case letters used by Baeyer to designate certain stars in constellations for which the Greek letters have been exhausted:  $f$ , Tauri;  $u$ , Hercules.

- d. Italic should not be used for:

1. Greek, Latin, and Arabic names of planets, satellites, constellations, and individual stars: Neptune, Thetys, Orionis.
2. Symbols for chemical elements: H. Ca. Ti.
3. Capital letters given by Fraunhofer to the lines of the spectrum: A-H, K.
4. Letters designating the special types of stars: A 5, B 3, Mb. [13]
5. The capital letter H with different Greek subscript letters, used to designate symbols of hydrogen:  $H_a, H_b$ , etc.
6. Designations of celestial objects in well-known catalogues; also the Flamsteed numbers:

M 13 (for No. 13 of Messier's *Catalogue of Nebulae and Clusters*), Bond 619; N. G. C. 6165; B. D.-18° 4871; 85 Pegasi, Lalande 5761.

But when initials are used to express the titles of catalogues, as such, and not to designate a particular celestial object, such initials are to be italicized, following the usual rule of references by titles.

*B. D.; N. G. C.*

XVI. In resolutions italicize the word "*Resolved*," but not the word "Whereas."

XVII. Italicize the names of plaintiff and defendant in the citation of legal cases; also the titles of proceedings containing such prefixes as *in re, ex parte, In the matter of*, etc.

*The Boston Elevated Railway Co. vs. The City of Cambridge. In re Johnson; ex parte Thomas; In the matter of the petition of John Smith for a change of venue.*

XVIII. Italicize address lines in speeches, reports, etc., and primary address lines in letters. Set the address flush, in a separate line, with the nouns capitalized.

*Mr. Toastmaster, Ladies and Gentlemen.*  
*Mr. Henry P. Porter, 148 High St., Boston, Mass.*



XIX. In signatures italicize the position or title added after the name. If this consists of only one word, it is usually run into the same line with the name.

Frederick W. Hamilton, *Clerk.*

If the title consists of more than one word but is no longer than the name, center the first letter under the name line, and indent one em on the right. [14]

John F. Fitzgerald,  
*Mayor of Boston.*

If the title is longer than the name, center the name over the second line and set this flush:

Minton P. Warren,  
*Professor of Latin Language and Literature.*

Sometimes a long title may be set in a smaller type, or, if this is not advisable, it may be put into two lines.

These rules are generally sound, but may have to be varied to suit special conditions.

Italicize the signatures of contributors to magazines, etc., when the names appear at the end of the article. If the name appears at the head of the article use small capitals, or, as is often done, the same type as the text.

XX. Italic may be used to distinguish the words or clauses which serve as verbal texts for an extended comment. In printed sermons, for example, the text is often set in italics.

XXI. Italic may be used with good effect for running titles, for table headings, and for sub-heads. It is not desirable for side notes. It has many kerned letters which are liable to break off at the ends of the lines in an exposed position.

XXII. In the English Bible italics are used to print words which are not expressed in the original Hebrew or Greek but are implied in the original and expressed in the translation.

Their quiver *is* an open sepulchre; they *are* all mighty men.

I find in him no fault *at all.*

These italics should never be mistaken for marks of emphasis.

XXIII. Care should be taken that the italic type used should mate well with the roman. The fact that it often did not so mate, even in fonts supposed to go together, was one cause for the disfavor which came to attend its use. Typesetting machines constructed without proper provision for the composition of italic have been very influential in restricting its use. Italics are now practically abolished from newspaper work except in advertising matter, though they were used in newspapers to excess in the eighteenth century. [15]

XXIV. Italics are indicated in manuscript by drawing a single line under the words to be so printed.

## SUPPLEMENTARY READING

[16]

Correct Composition. By Theodore L. DeVinne. Oswald Publishing Co., New York.

The Writer's Desk Book. By William Dana Orcutt. Frederick A. Stokes Co., New York.

A Manual for Writers. By John Matthews Manly and John Arthur Powell. The University of Chicago Press, Chicago.

1. Describe the first types.
2. What caused the demand for smaller books?
3. What was done to meet this demand?
4. What was the first step in the improvement of type?
5. What was the next important step?
6. What are the present uses of the three principal forms of letters?
7. What are the general principles governing the use of italics?
8. What important principle should be observed in the use of italic?
9. Is a compositor ever justified in not following an author's marks calling for italics, and why?
10. For what, in general, is italic used?
11. What is the general usage regarding foreign words and phrases?
12. What decides whether they are italicized or not?
13. What about accents in foreign words?
14. Give a list of common words, phrases, and abbreviations used in literary and legal references which should always be italicized.
15. Give a short list of abbreviations of foreign origin which should not be italicized.
16. How should quotations in foreign languages be treated?
17. What is the use of italic in English quotations?
18. How should you treat foreign titles preceding names of persons, streets, and the like?
19. How are names of authors and of books, magazines, and the like, treated?
20. How do we use italics in citations, in footnotes, in indices, and in errata?
21. When are *prima facie* and *ex officio* italicized, and when not?
22. How are names of ships printed?
23. How are names of paintings, statues, musical compositions, and characters in plays treated?
24. What is the rule about letters used to indicate subdivisions, etc.?
25. How do we print letters of the alphabet when referred to as such?
26. What can you say of the use of italic in scientific matter generally?
27. Give the particular rules for the use of italic in certain sciences.
28. What is the rule for italic in resolutions?
29. How are italics used in legal matter?
30. How are italics used in signatures?
31. Where are titles placed when following names in signatures?
32. How may texts of sermons and the like be printed?
33. What can you say of the use of italic in running titles, table heads, side notes, and the like?
34. What should be looked out for in combining italic with roman?
35. What has been the influence of machine composition in the use of italic, and why?
36. How does the use of italic in newspapers at present compare with that of a hundred years ago, and why?
37. How are italics indicated in manuscript?

As elsewhere in this section of the Typographic Technical Series, the learning of the rules must be supplemented by extended practice in their application. Constant drill should be given the apprentice in the setting of matter requiring the use of italics, or in writing out manuscripts with the italics properly indicated. There is no other way in which accuracy and practical proficiency can be acquired. Printed matter may be shown for criticism and discussion, and incorrectly italicized matter may be given out for correction.

The following list of publications, comprising the TYPGRAPHIC TECHNICAL SERIES FOR APPRENTICES, has been prepared under the supervision of the Committee on Education of the United Typothetae of America for use in trade classes, in course of printing instruction, and by individuals.

Each publication has been compiled by a competent author or group of authors, and carefully edited, the purpose being to provide the printers of the United States—employers, journeymen, and apprentices—with a comprehensive series of handy and inexpensive compendiums of reliable, up-to-date information upon the various branches and specialties of the printing craft, all arranged in orderly fashion for progressive study.

The publications of the series are of uniform size, 5 × 8 inches. Their general make-up, in typography, illustrations, etc., has been, as far as practicable, kept in harmony throughout. A brief synopsis of the particular contents and other chief features of each volume will be found under each title in the following list.

Each topic is treated in a concise manner, the aim being to embody in each publication as completely as possible all the rudimentary information and essential facts necessary to an understanding of the subject. Care has been taken to make all statements accurate and clear, with the purpose of bringing essential information within the understanding of beginners in the different fields of study. Wherever practicable, simple and well-defined drawings and illustrations have been used to assist in giving additional clearness to the text.

In order that the pamphlets may be of the greatest possible help for use in trade-school classes and for self-instruction, each title is accompanied by a list of Review Questions covering essential items of the subject matter. A short Glossary of technical terms belonging to the subject or department treated is also added to many of the books.

These are the Official Text-books of the United Typothetae of America.

Address all orders and inquiries to COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, UNITED TYPOTHETAE OF AMERICA, CHICAGO, ILLINOIS, U. S. A.

## **PART I—Types, Tools, Machines, and Materials**

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- 1. Type: a Primer of Information** By A. A. Stewart  
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