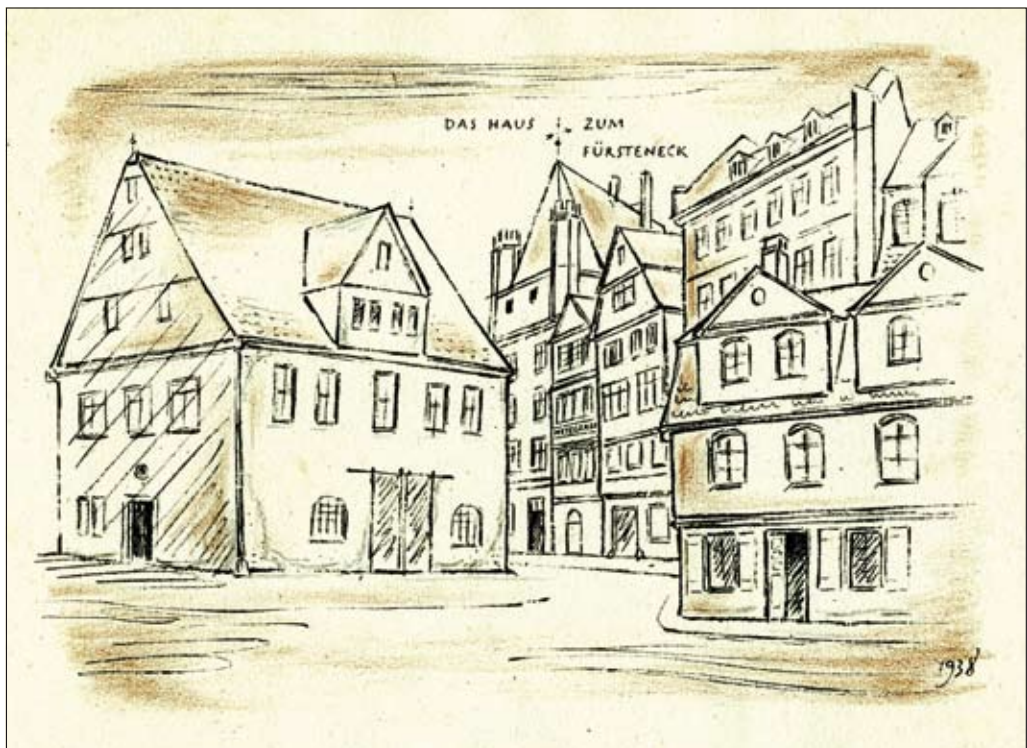


parents were angry, but of course they could not do anything about it. When it came time to take the journeyman's examination at the ›Handwerkskammer‹ in 1938, my father told me to refuse the request because I had been made to do too many other tasks during my four-year apprenticeship. This caused a lot of problems at a time when absolute obedience was paramount.

Haus zum Fürsteneck

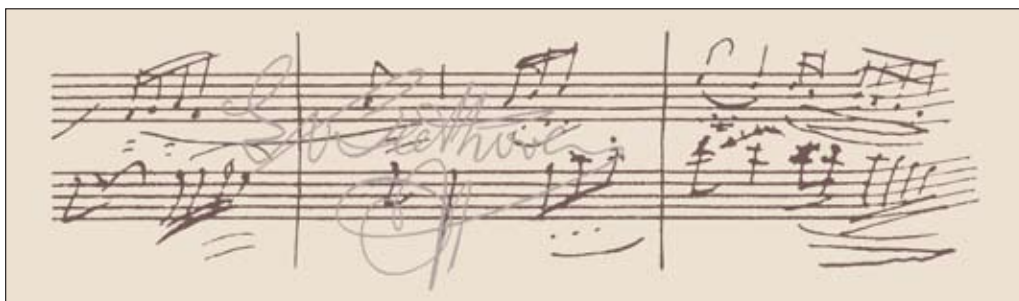
On the day I finished my apprenticeship, I handed in my resignation and a few days later, went to Frankfurt – without a journeyman's certificate in my pocket. I wouldn't have stood a chance of getting a work permit for another company in Nuremberg, since they could have checked everything in the so-called ›Arbeitsbuch‹ (labor book) which everyone had to have. In Frankfurt, I went to the ›Werkstatt Haus zum Fürsteneck‹, which was run by Paul Koch, son of Rudolf Koch. The Haus zum Fürsteneck was located in the historic part of Frankfurt, in the Fahrgasse opposite the cathedral. It was a castle-like building, erected in 1362, with four turrets and a big roof. This building was completely destroyed during the 1944 air raids on Frankfurt, along with almost every other structure in the historic section.



for the publisher Ludwig Voggenreiter, and in 1942 punches were made in the traditional method for music printing by the C. E. Röder firm in Leipzig. All the steel punches and most of the drawings were lost during the air raid over Leipzig on December 4, 1943. I made sketches between 1938 and 1941 for an unusual slanted music type, but this was never put into production. The idea was that if the notation was slanted the eye of a musician could perhaps glide more easily through the lines of a sheet of music. Take only a look at Beethoven's score of the Ninth Symphony in D minor. It may not be just the caprice of a designer.

HEINRICH SPITTA

*Nichts kann uns rauben Liebe und Glauben, zu unserm Land;
es zu erhalten — und zu gestalten — sind wir gesandt.*



It was through the printing historian Gustav Mori that I first came into contact with the D. Stempel AG typefoundry and Linotype GmbH in Frankfurt. I designed my first published typeface for them in 1938, a fraktur type called ›Gilgengart‹. The 36-point pilot size was hand-cut by the punchcutter August Rosenberger; it was finished in December of 1939. I received only 300 reichsmarks for the design of Gilgengart. When I appealed to the management of the typefoundry about this small payment some years later, they did not increase it and coolly responded: »We are the better businessmen«. The ban on fraktur by the political rulers in January of 1941 was the end of any widespread use or popularity of the Gilgengart typeface.

»AUGUST ROSENBERGER. The names of only a few punchcutters from the old days are known – for example, Johann Michael Fleischmann (1701–1768) who cut types for Joh. Enschedé en Zonen; and Edward Philip Prince (1846–1923), the punchcutter for William Morris and T. J. Cobden-Sanderson. The last great masters of our century were Charles Malin (1883–1957) who worked for Giovanni Mardersteig; Paul H. Rädisch (1891–1979), Jan van Krimpen’s punchcutter at Enschedé in the Netherlands; and Louis Hoell (1860–1935) who cut Paul Renner’s Futura for the Bauer typefoundry in Frankfurt, as well as the types for the famous Bremer Presse of Munich.

The art of cutting punches by hand for metal type now belongs to the past. Punchcutting was always a silent art – not at all noticed in the university art history curriculums. Punchcutters did not force themselves on the noisy art scene. They carried out their work with unusual patience in the serenity of their studios. They never wanted to be classified as artists. A little of the Middle Ages was still present in their craft, and they saw themselves as servants of typography. Who else so closely observes the details of a serif or the curve of a delicate bow? It is taken for granted like the everyday use of the alphabet.

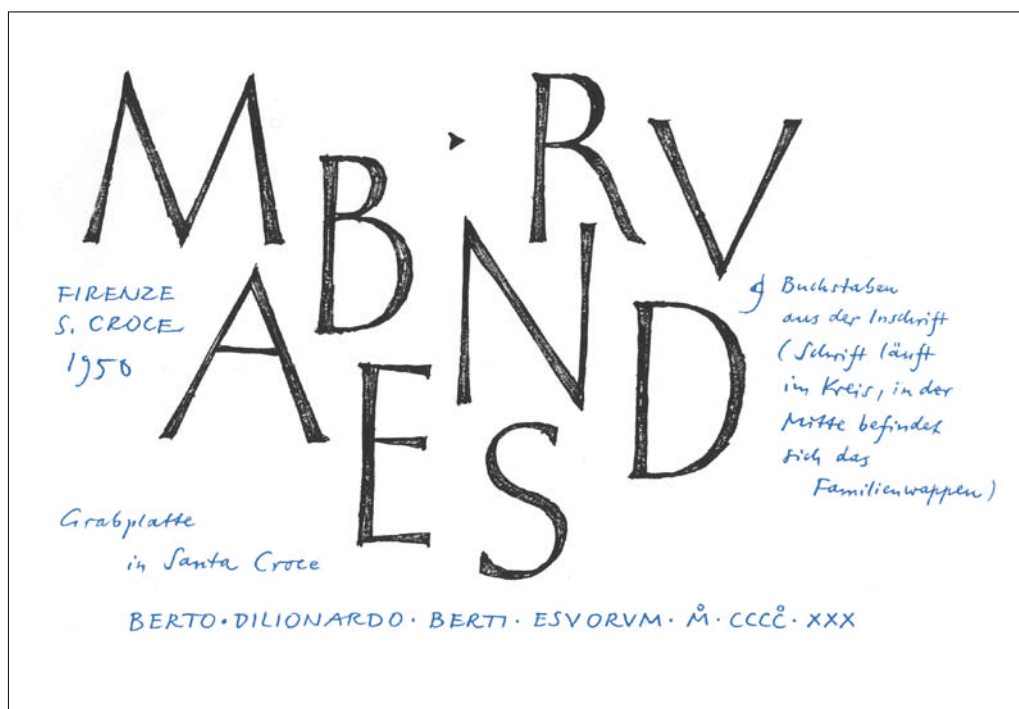
August Rosenberger was my punchcutter, but he also cut many other typefaces, mainly for the D. Stempel AG typefoundry in Frankfurt, Germany, from 1927 until his retirement in 1962.

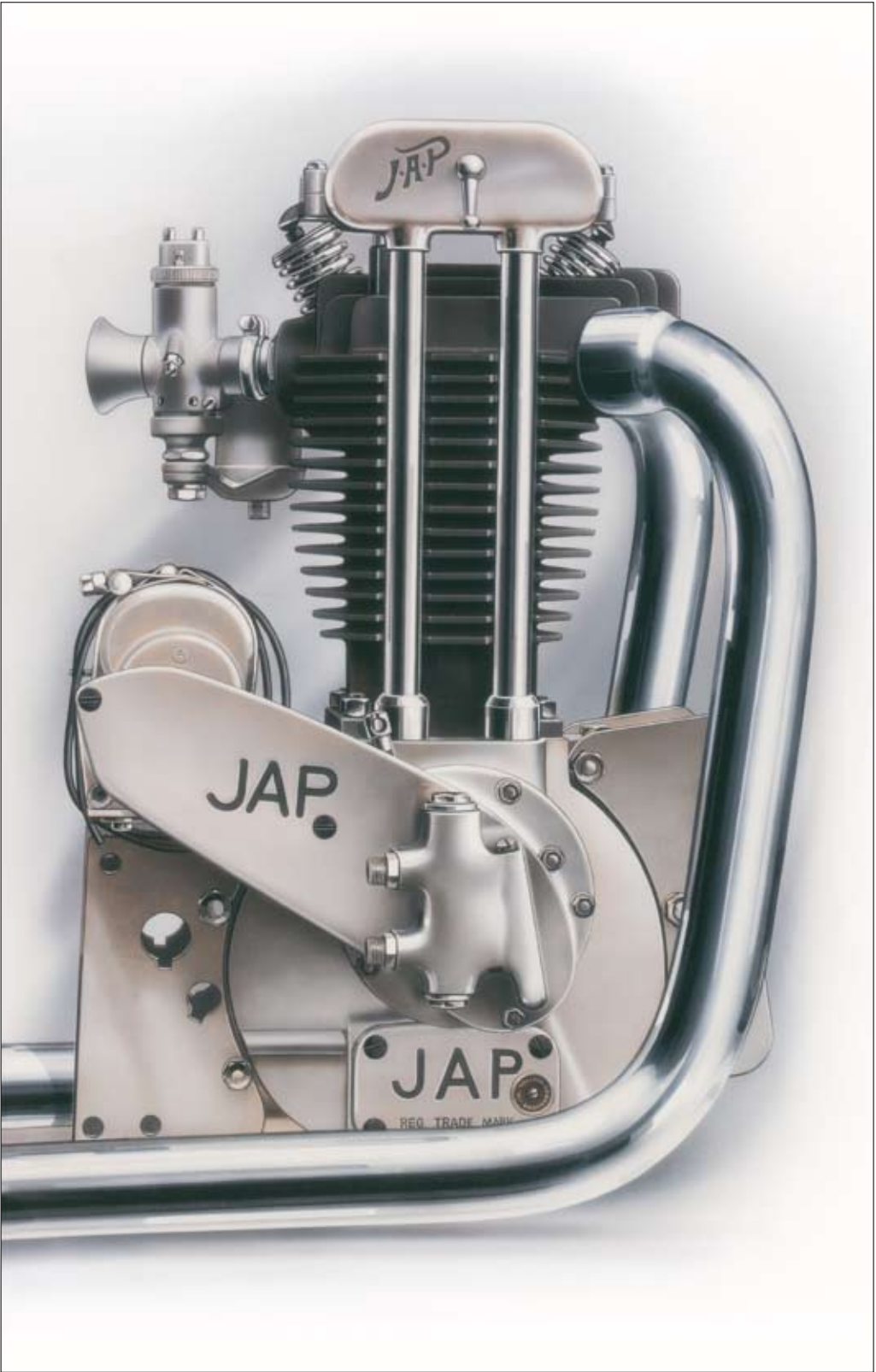


named ›Frederika‹ was added. Virtuosa was based on the letterforms in the Hans von Weber quotation from one of my sketchbooks done in 1944, during the war. (See p. 21). But because it was a metal type, Virtuosa was constrained by many technical limitations which had to be considered in the drawing of the different characters. We had no idea at all about the unlimited possibilities to happen 50 years later with the digital generation of letterforms. But for letterpress printing, Virtuosa was a special design and a successful typeface.

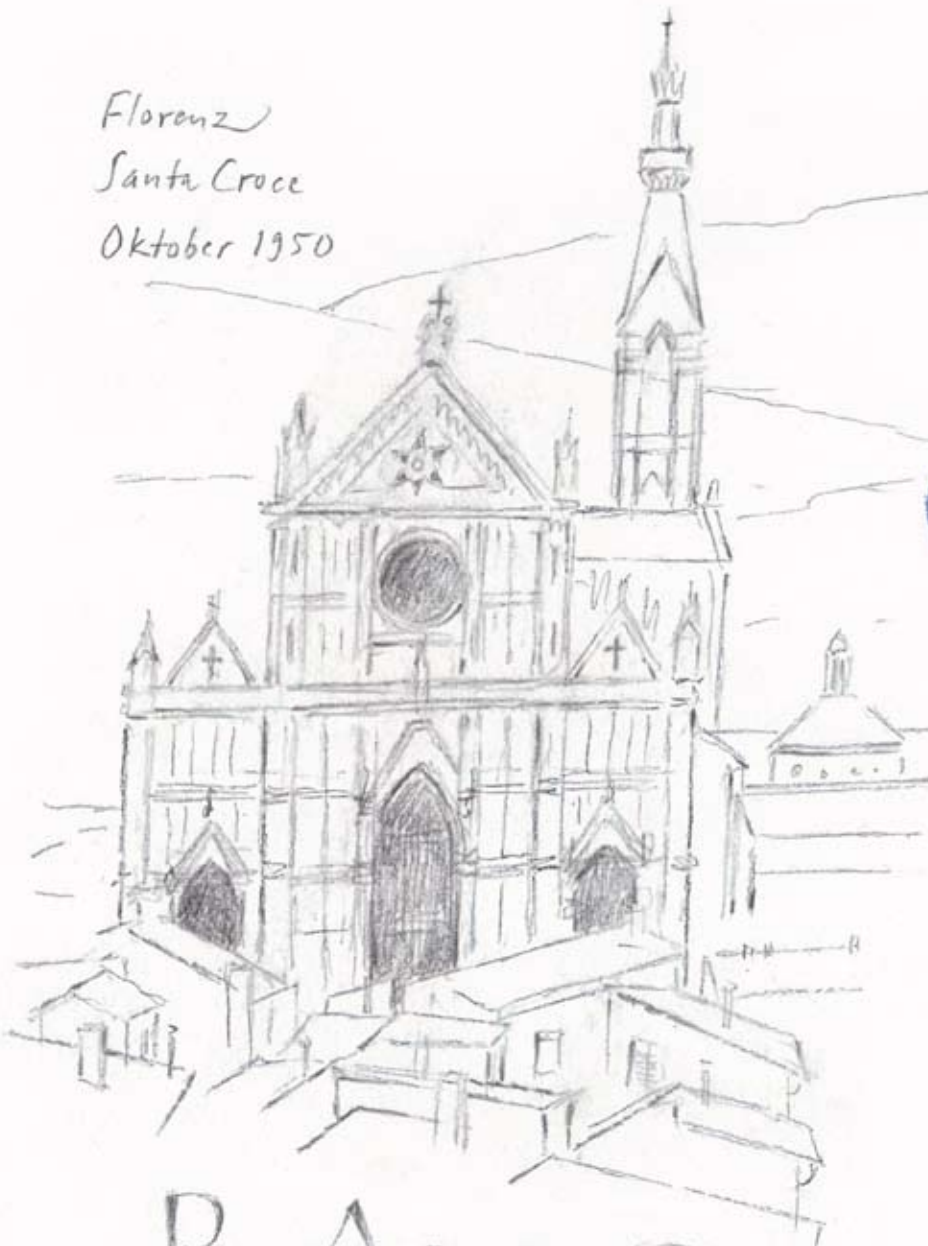
Optima Roman

In all these early years after the war, one of the most fascinating type projects was ›Optima Roman‹. It was my idea and I did not show anything to the typefoundry until the design was finished. I wanted to avoid any pressure by salespeople until I found the best solution by myself. Unfortunately, the sales manager of D. Stempel AG did decide the name of the type. My preference was ›Neu Antiqua‹, but this was rejected in favor of Optima. The history of Optima goes back to 1950. The type was released with only two variants – regular and bold, but also italic at the DRUPA printing exhibition in 1958. The unusual development process is told in the Optima type specimen from the D. Stempel AG typefoundry issued in the same year. (See p. 109).





Florenz
Santa Croce
Oktober 1950



ASTMGP

PRAMQ
ESR