

New Linotype Mergenthaler Edition by Zapf: a true man of letters

Zapf chronicles the life of letters in our times

Bad Homburg, 11 June 2007. Professor Hermann Zapf is one of the most important and prolific typeface designers of the 20th and 21st centuries. In his recently released monograph – Alphabet Stories, A Chronicle of Technical Developments – Zapf describes with plain-spoken eloquence how he came to be a pioneer in exploring the graphic frontiers of the Computer Age. This beautifully illustrated new publication by Mergenthaler Edition from Linotype GmbH, Bad Homburg, tells the deceptively simple tale of how, in the course of his own artistic development, Zapf provided a much-needed link between his craft and the technical advances of the day. Hermann Zapf has illustrated and designed countless books and over 200 typefaces, including the Palatino™ and Optima™ families, and his typefaces have given a distinct shape to how our world communicates. This book is the story of his life’s work, and the story of modern typography itself.

Professor Hermann Zapf has achieved unparalleled success in his lifetime and, not surprisingly, is considered to be the most widely plagiarized typeface designer in history. In Alphabet Stories, the nearly 90-year old Zapf describes with light humor his long life in the pursuit of beauty, as well as the specific genesis of his most well-known creations. Palatino – arguably his most popular typeface – can be seen virtually everywhere, from the CBS Evening News to most personal computers. Optima – Zapf’s personal favorite – is the typeface used on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall as well as for teams in the English Premier League. At the same time, his consistent and profound dedication to a high level of artistry has brought him praise and recognition from his peers around the world of typography. Typefaces such as Melior™, ITC Zapf Chancery™, ITC Zapf Dingbats™ and the technically complex Zapfino™ – released in 1998 in conjunction with Zapf’s 80th birthday – provide practical inspiration for many of today’s greatest graphic designers.

Alphabet Stories is the memoirs of Hermann Zapf, his work and his dedication to it. Born into a world of geo-political turmoil, Zapf was prevented from entering several professions because of his father's anti-Nazi activities. Overcoming adversity, he found his niche in the world of illustration. Zapf tells how his abiding curiosity and interest in both art and the cutting-edge science of the time eventually led to professional tensions in his native Germany. The notion of computer-aided typesetting, now taken for granted, was deemed unrealistic in the early 1960s and caused one CEO of the day to exclaim, "That Zapf is crazy." Unable to pursue his vision at home, Zapf found an open-minded acceptance for his ideas in the U.S., where he began building a bridge between the separate worlds of graphic artisans and computer scientists. In 1972, he produced the first alphabet designed specifically for digital composition, Marconi™, and in 1976, Zapf became the world's first professor of Typographic Computer Programming.

Zapf has a contagious enthusiasm for using technology to represent the alphabet artistically, an enthusiasm he has passed on to calligraphers, typographers and digital technicians all over the world. David Pankow, Curator of the Cary Graphic Arts Collection in Rochester, New York, rhetorically summarizes the contribution of Hermann Zapf in the postscript to Alphabet Stories: "Are there any other designers of the last 100 years who have exerted such a profound influence on type design and modern typography? Or who have so enthusiastically explored such a variety of technologies for creating type? Or who have brought such endless curiosity and humanity to the world of books and their cultural significance?"

Alphabet Stories, A Chronicle of Technical Developments by Hermann Zapf, is a tale of the parallel development of character and characters. At the same time, it is the story of the remaking of contemporary graphic arts. The 150-page edition is published by Linotype's Mergenthaler Edition, and co-published by the Cary Graphic Arts Press of the Rochester Institute of Technology, New York. It is bound in cloth with foil stamping and contains 96 vivid color illustrations – sketches, photos, calligraphy and typography – and a bibliography, all printed on uncoated cream-colored paper. Accordingly, the book is designed by Hermann Zapf and is printed using the new typefaces Palatino nova and Palatino Sans, the latter of which was recently awarded the Certificate of Typographic Excellence in Type Design, by the Type Directors Club of New York.

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Alphabet Stories now joins the canon of Zapf cultural artifacts. These include numerous awards, a Hallmark film, an Education Fund, a Zapfest, a four language calligraphic rendering of the United Nations Preamble and a permanent exhibition of his work at the Herzog August Library in Wolfenbüttel. This is in addition to his typefaces, of course, which – like Alphabet Stories, A Chronicle of Technical Developments by Hermann Zapf – are available at www.linotype.com.

Linotype GmbH, based in Bad Homburg, Germany and a wholly owned subsidiary of Monotype Imaging Holdings Inc., looks back onto a history of more than 120 years. Building on its strong heritage, Linotype develops state-of-the-art font technology and offers more than 9000 original typefaces, covering the whole typographic spectrum from antique to modern, from east to west, and from classical to experimental. All typefaces (in PostScript™ and TrueType™ format as well as more than 7,000 fonts in OpenType™) are now also available for instant download at www.linotype.com. In addition to supplying digital fonts, Linotype also offers comprehensive and individual consultation and support services for font applications in worldwide (corporate) communication.

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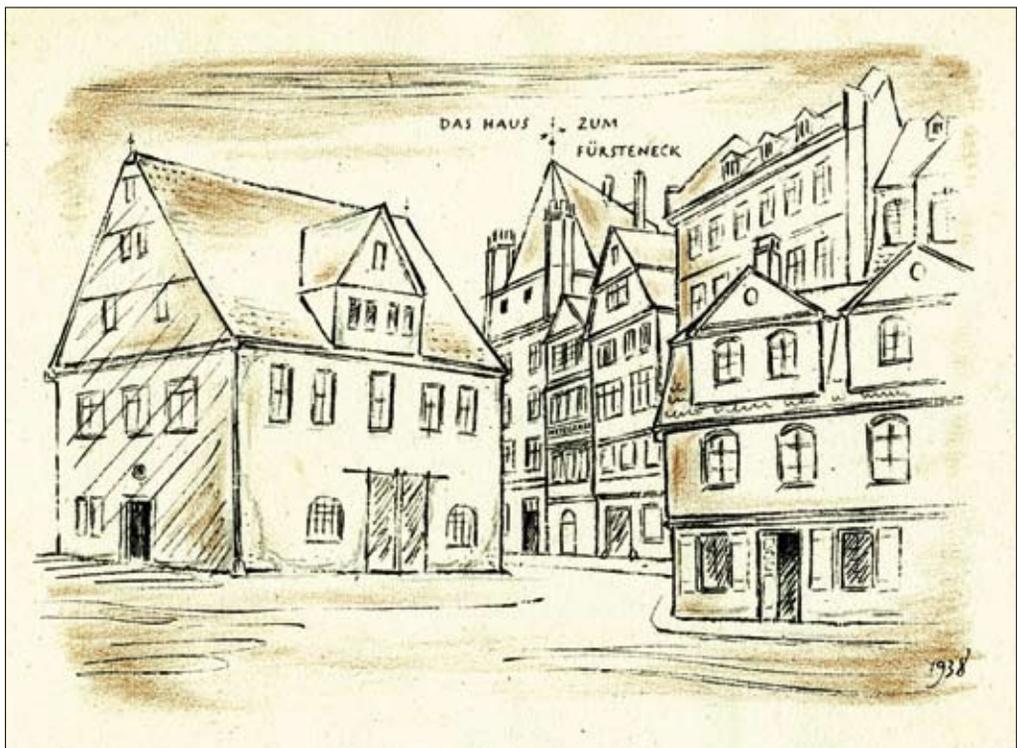
Please find more typeface application samples on the Internet at www.linotype.com.

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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.

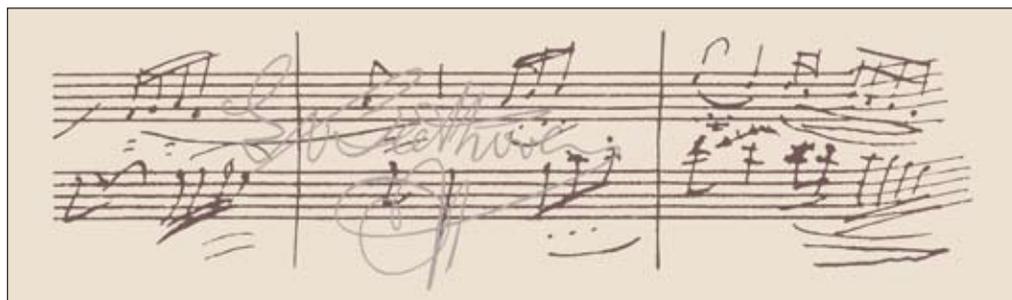


for the publisher Ludwig Voggenreiter, and in 1942 punches were made in the traditional method for music printing by the C. E. Röder firm in Leipzig. All the steel punches and most of the drawings were lost during the air raid over Leipzig on December 4, 1943. I made sketches between 1938 and 1941 for 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.

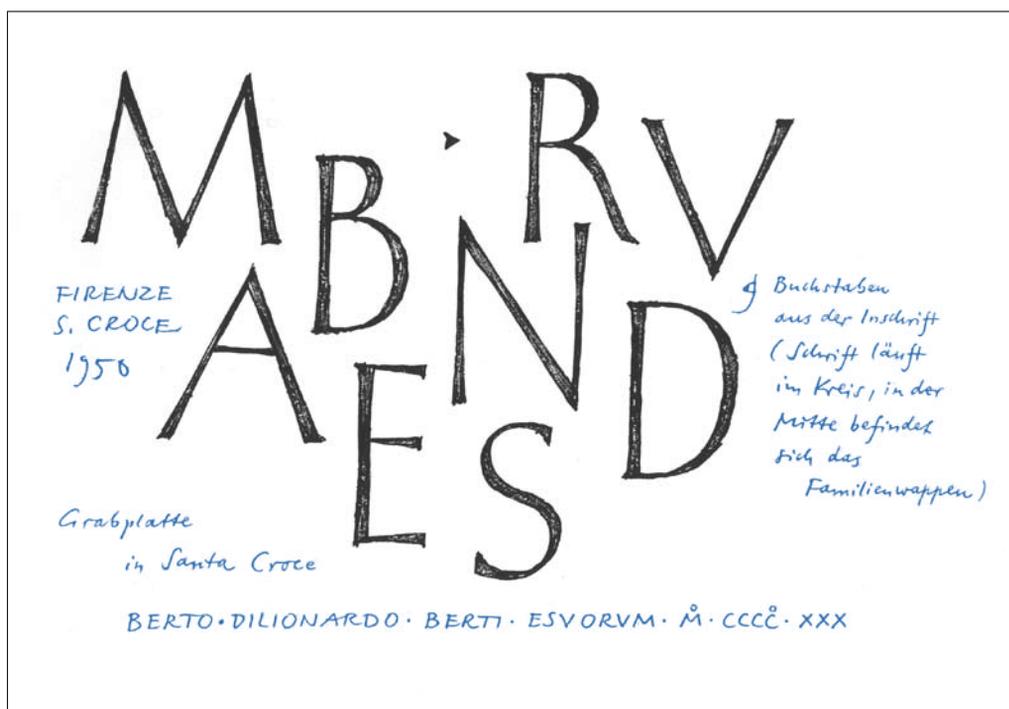
August Rosenberger was my punchcutter, but he also cut many other typefaces, mainly for the D. Stempel AG typefoundry in Frankfurt, Germany, from 1927 until his retirement in 1962.

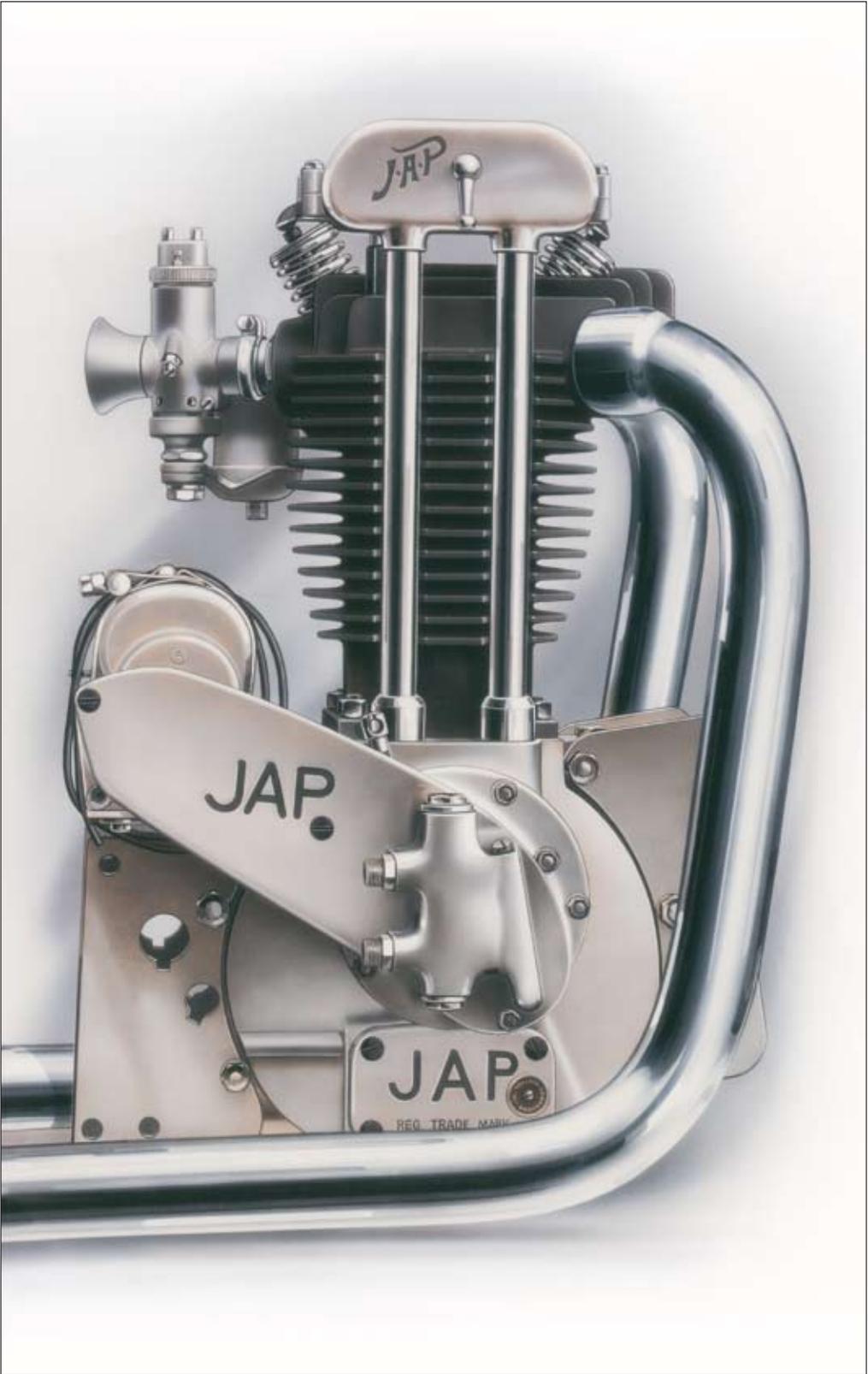


named ›Frederika‹ was added. Virtuosa was based on the letterforms in the Hans von Weber quotation from one of my sketchbooks done in 1944, during the war. (See p. 21). But because it was a metal type, Virtuosa was constrained by many technical limitations which had to be considered in the drawing of 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).

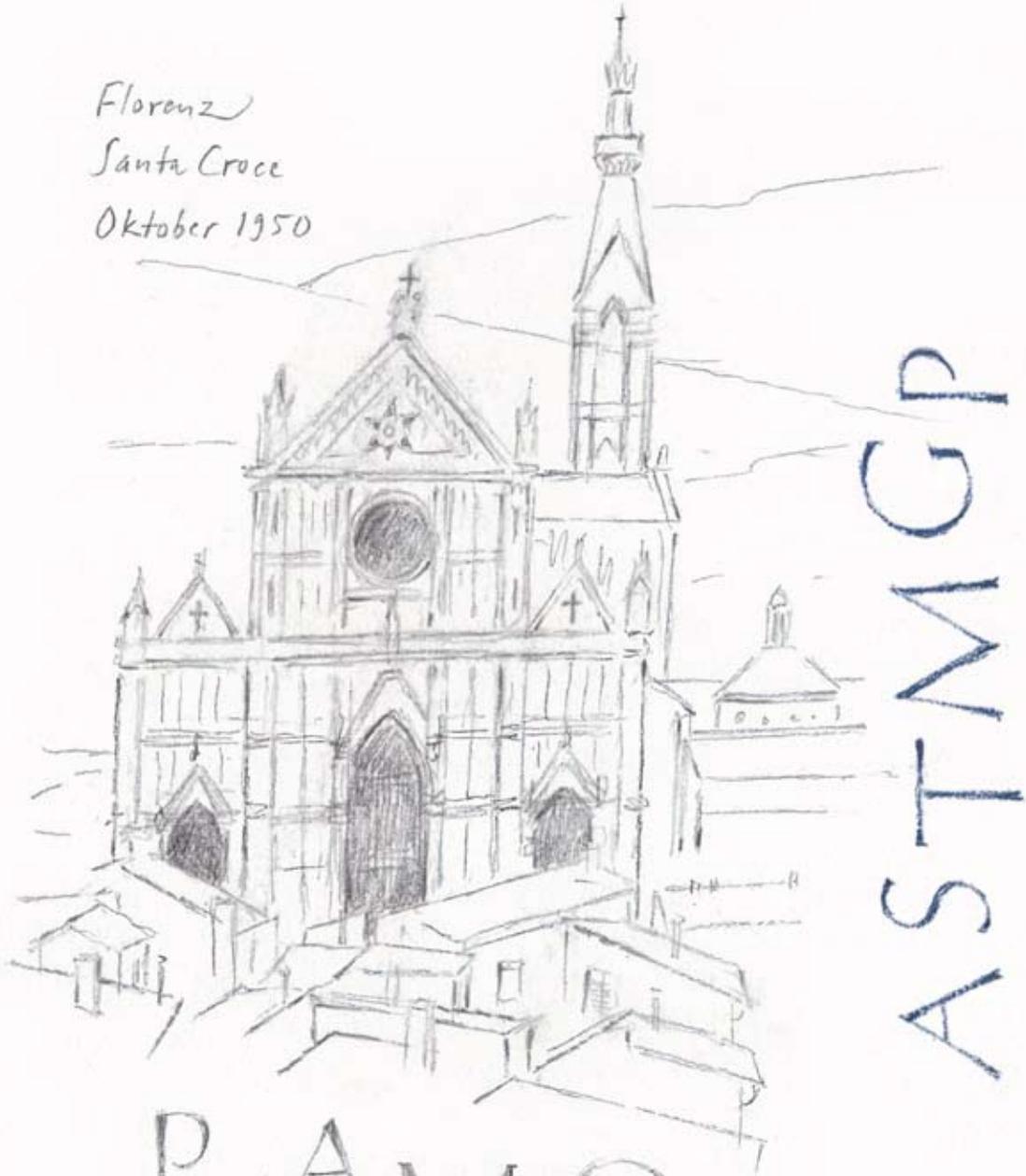




Florenz

Santa Croce

Oktober 1950



ASTMGP

PRAMQ
ESR