



*Chora*  
Alphabets  
Patrick Nell

Roman + Italic



APN CHORA is a contemporary humanist typeface expertly crafted for optimal legibility in books and editorial design, as well as for extended reading on screens. Available in only two styles—roman and italic—both finely tuned to each other and fully equipped for all needs of refined typography.

APN CHORA offers small caps, ligatures, multiple figure and stylistic sets, alternative glyphs, fractions, mathematical symbols, and arrows. It supports a wide range of languages, including all European languages written in the Latin script. With its rationalized Renaissance construction, the typeface features a pronounced humanist axis, generous x-height, and balanced contrast between thin and thick strokes. While optimized for extended reading, its austere elegance also suits display use.

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## Introduction

### A Contemporary Renaissance Roman With Matching Italic

Among the most legible letterforms in typography, old-style typefaces also stand as some of the earliest designs. It can be quite astonishing.

Around 1470, shortly after Gutenberg’s invention, a number of pioneering printers and typographers gathered in Venice, rejected the idea of the dense, dark blackletter script *Textura*, and instead enthusiastically embraced the timeless grandeur of the Roman imperial inscriptions, the ancient *Capitalis Monumentalis*. Alongside it, they placed an alphabet of uncluttered, round lowercase letters based on the handwriting used by early humanist scholars, thus combining them, adapting the latter to the former with a few clever adjustments. In doing so, they laid the foundation for what we now take for granted and, in the best sense, read past. Because: The so-called *old-style* typefaces are so legible, so effective, that in all their undeniable beauty and grace, they are able to recede behind the text.

#### A Humanist Typeface

APN CHORA is inspired by this typographic heritage without directly referencing any single historical model. It is a contemporary humanist roman with an accompanying italic, capturing Venetian, Aldine, and Dutch characteristics,

further rationalized and interpreted from a 21st-century perspective.

A *Leitmotiv* in the development of APN CHORA was the idea of the cyclical, the recurring—the *Chorus*. This principle is particularly evident to the Viennese type designer, especially through the surrounding architecture of this city. The Renaissance reflected on ancient forms and ideals, and these classical ideals were later revisited and reinterpreted by movements such as Classicism, Historicism (with its Neo-Renaissance style), and, later still, Neoclassicism, often with blurred transitions between them.

Interestingly, the Renaissance itself wasn’t the first such revival; its Humanist Minuscule, for instance, found its direct inspiration in the Carolingian Minuscule: humanists mistakenly believed this script to be genuinely ancient, leading them to call their adaptation the *Littera Antiqua*. In reality, this script was developed only some centuries earlier, during the Carolingian Renaissance—one of several smaller-scale “medieval renaissances” that also looked back to antiquity.

APN CHORA is conceived as an imagined Renaissance typeface, one that could only have been envisioned through the lens of these recurring cycles of influence, so prevalent in both type design and the broader history of art.

*A Book Typeface—and more*

The working title of APN CHORA was *Wiener Buchschrift*, which translates to *Viennese Book Typeface*. In keeping with this original concept, and reflecting a specific ideal for book typography, APN CHORA is available in only two styles: the roman and the italic.

But let's take a step back. There are magnificently designed books that are loud, bold, diverse, or rely on disruption. Just as this approach has its place, so does the quiet radiance of reduced design: the thoughtful use of just one typeface, plus an italic, not too many text sizes, but instead clear hierarchies and the employment of sufficient whitespace to let the text breathe. APN CHORA serves this second approach. As with many of its historical inspirations, there are no bold or condensed weights, nor other variations. Instead, typographic contrast is achieved through the skillful use of the italic, small caps, and, for titling, the inscriptional capitals of APN CHORA, with their distinctive Trajanic rhythm of narrow and wide letters—and a beautifully round 'O'.

Within this framework, APN CHORA is generously equipped, containing everything necessary for sophisticated typography: in addition to small capitals, it comes with a fine selection of (rare) ligatures, multiple numeral and stylistic sets, alternative

and historical glyphs, fractions, mathematical symbols, arrows, and extensive OpenType features. And it supports a wide range of languages, including all European languages using the Latin script.

Among its stylistic sets and alternative forms you will find variants that allow for different flavors and applications. For example, there are capitals with increased width for instances when the traditional Roman proportions don't fit the context. Or there is an 'e' with an angled crossbar to emphasize the humanist element. And, on the other hand, there is an 'M' in the style of *Francesco Griffo*, with a single upper serif, to accentuate the Aldine influence.

APN CHORA strives to be the most legible of elegant typefaces, and the most elegant of legible typefaces. Consequently, both the roman and the italic, are finely tuned to each other and optimized for use in typical sizes for long-form texts, especially in books, prioritizing legibility with an even, sufficiently dark color and clear, open letterforms, free from any flickering—both on paper and on screen.

APN CHORA is an exercise in minimalism, a model of restraint. It is elegant but neither fancy nor flamboyant; it is austere, sober, stately and as solid as it is crisp. There is minimal superfluous decoration—no flourishes or swash

capitals—aside from an alternate ‘Q’ with a gracefully long tail. It is the ideal choice for classical but unadorned typography, it effortlessly provides precision with personality and clarity with character.

APN CHORA is primarily a book typeface, but it is thoroughly designed, and its inherent qualities do shine in larger sizes. So try APN CHORA as a display face for headlines or posters, you will be in for a treat.

### *A Refined Typeface*

Stylistically, APN CHORA is a rationalized old-style typeface, rather than following a transitional or modern model. It displays an almost geometric regularity, yet APN CHORA is drawn with grace and possesses enough peculiarities and idiosyncrasies to keep it alive and interesting.

Its capitals maintain the distinctive classical proportions and rhythm of narrow and wide letters, with a sculpted round ‘O’ and bracketed serifs that give a column-like appearance, while the minuscules possess calligraphy-influenced head serifs. The lowercase curves exhibit an angular transition into the stem and form asymmetrical arches. This characteristic ductus, or stroke construction, is interrupted rather than returning, even in the cursive forms—not only for personal preference

but also as a nod to 20<sup>th</sup>-century trends and modernist ideas.

APN CHORA features a pronounced and consistent humanist axis (diagonal stress), reminiscent of the use of a broad nib pen, with the angle remaining consistent between the roman and the italic, serving the ambivalent task of italics: to differentiate parts of information while not appearing alien to the main text. Similarly, the marked slant of the italic is consistent across all glyphs, but it introduces dynamism through the use of two different angles within the central forms. Its design is as traditional as it is innovative, with unusual letterforms such as the twisted ‘p’ or the open-tailed ‘g’.

APN CHORA has a medium contrast between thin and thick strokes, with subtly modulated forms. It employs a substantial x-height, further contributing to its legibility, while maintaining sufficiently long ascenders and descenders, necessary to make a refined impression on the page or the screen.

APN CHORA represents the unparalleled combination of elegance, legibility, and finally, readability found in old-style typefaces.

### *What’s In A Name?*

*Chora* primarily refers to the concept of repetition and variation embodied in the *chorus*—whether in art movements

or, more directly, in the design of letterforms for typefaces. A typeface succeeds only when it achieves a harmonious balance between overall visual coherence and the distinct characteristics of its individual characters.

However, there is another layer of meaning. *Chora* carries deeper significance that resonates with a typeface designed for the contemplative act of reading: In Platonic philosophy, *chora* represents neither being nor non-being, but rather a receptacle or space where ideas materialize into form—a concept remarkably aligned with typography itself. Like the Platonic *chora*, a typeface can be seen as a vessel through which abstract thought becomes tangible, where the immaterial is rendered visible.

This dimension connects *chora* to the Renaissance, a period of intellectual and artistic rebirth where scholars and artists looked back to Ancient Greece and Rome for inspiration. The typefaces of the Renaissance were rooted in the rationality and clarity of classical ideals. Similarly, *chora* evokes this intellectual tradition, suggesting a space for ideas to flourish—a fitting metaphor for a typeface designed to facilitate clear and elegant communication in books and long-form texts.

And in the end, it's simply a pleasant, short, and sweet name for a typeface.

## Features and Specifications

### Renaissance Heritage with Modern Functionality

#### Key Attributes and Signature Traits

- Designed for *optimal legibility* in extended reading, in books or on screen.
- Available in only two styles: *roman and italic*, finely tuned to each other.
- *Medium contrast* between thin and thick strokes.
- *Generous x-height* for rendering text more evenly, especially in languages with many uppercase letters such as German.
- *Open apertures* to further improve the reading experience.
- *Rationalized Renaissance construction*: humanist minuscule, Roman inscriptional majuscules, dynamic italic forms.
- Pronounced and consistent *humanist axis* referencing the broad-edge calligraphic pen, visible in the diagonal stress of the curves.
- Lowercase curves feature an angular transition into the stem, following an *interrupted stroke construction*, even in the cursive forms.
- *Bi-angular inclination* of the italic for inherent dynamism

#### Glyphs, Alternates, OpenType Features

- 900+ glyphs in the roman, 880+ in the italic.
- *Multiple alternative glyphs* and special or historical glyphs like uppercase sharp S (ß) or long s (ſ).

- Mathematical symbols.
- *Arrows* are available as discretionary ligatures: type ‘->’, etc.
- Supports *all European languages* based on the *Latin script*—and many more: Afar, Afrikaans, Albanian, Aragonese, Asu, Azerbaijani, Basque, Bemba, Bena, Bosnian, Catalan, Cebuano, Chiga, Colognean, Cornish, Corsican, Croatian, Czech, Danish, Dutch, English, Estonian, Faroese, Filipino, Finnish, French, Friulian, Gaelic (Scotland), Galician, German, Greenlandic, Gusii, Hungarian, Ido, Icelandic, Indonesian, Interlingua, Interlingue, Irish, Italian, Javanese, Jju, Kabuverdianu, Kalenjin, Kinyarwanda, Kurdish, Latin, Latvian, Ligurian, Lithuanian, Lojban, Lombard, Low German, Lower Sorbian, Lule Sami, Luhya, Luo, Luxembourgish, Machame, Makhuwa, Makhuwa-Meetto, Makonde, Malagasy, Malay, Maltese, Manx, Māori, Morisyen, Northern Ndebele, Northern Sotho, Norwegian (Bokmål), Norwegian (Nynorsk), Nyanja, Nyankole, Occitan, Oromo, Polish, Portuguese, Rejang, Romani, Romansh, Rombo, Rukiga, Romanian, Rundi, Rwa, Samburu, Sango, Sangu, Sardinian, Sena, Shambala, Shona, Sidamo, Slovak, Slovenian, Soga, Somali, Spanish, Southern Ndebele, Southern Sotho, Sundanese, Swahili, Swazi, Swedish, Swiss German, Taita, Taroko, Teso,

Tsonga, Tswana, Turkish, Turkmen, Upper Sorbian, Vunjo, Walloon, Warlpiri, Welsh, West Frisian, Wolastoqey, Xhosa, Zhuang, Zulu.

- *Small caps*, for emphasis or acronyms.
- *30+ ligatures*.
- *Case-sensitive forms*.
- *Ordinals*.

#### *Stylistic Sets (with Ligatures) and Character Variants*

- sso1: Ä, Ö, Ü with lowered umlaut marks for headings.
- sso2: Stemmed A/Ä and U/Ü.
- sso3: Wide E, F, and L.
- sso4: Square H and N.
- sso5: Curved leg K and R, long-tailed Q.
- sso6: Single-story a and @.
- sso7: Tilted e and hyphen (-).
- sso8: Round y.
- cv01: M in the style of Francesco Griffo (only one upper serif).
- cv02: Double-storey *g* (italic only).
- cv03: Roman centered period (·).
- cv04: Calligraphic *ç* (italic only).
- cv05: Double-storey ornament (·*∞*).

#### *Figures*

- *Lining figures*.
- *Old style figures*.
- *Tabular figures*: Both lining and old style figures are available in a tabular format, specifically designed for tables and data presentation, consistent across both styles.
- *Superior and inferior figures*: A separate set of smaller figures used for exponents and subscripts, respectively.
- *Fractions*: OpenType feature plus an exhaustive selection of predefined fractions for most use cases.
- *Slashed zeros*.

#### *Web fonts (woff2) are included*

APN CHORA is available for customization, modification, and language extensions. Please write to [alphabets@alphabetspatricknell.com](mailto:alphabets@alphabetspatricknell.com) for more information.

Explore, test and purchase at [alphabetspatricknell.com](http://alphabetspatricknell.com).



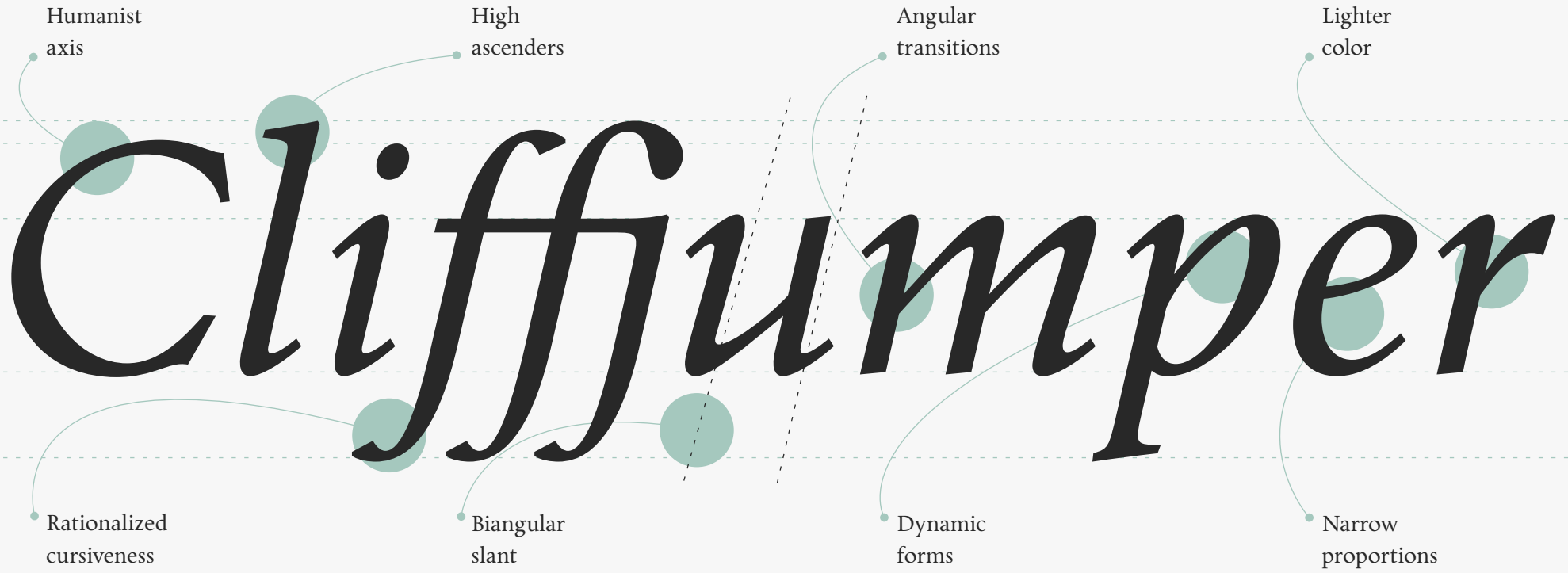
*Anatomy of a Typeface*

Key Features and Design Characteristics: Roman



*Anatomy of a Typeface*

Harmony and Differentiation: Complementary Italic



*Uppercase Proportions*  
Based on Roman Square Capitals

EPIC ECHO



Stylistic Sets and Alternates  
Typographic Flavors and Flexibility

Quayye Quayye

A A Ä Å E E F F H H K K L L M M N N Ö Ø Q Q R R U U Ü Ü Ÿ a a e e y y - - - -  
A A Ä Å E E F F H H K K L L M M N N Ö Ø Q Q R R U U Ü Ü Ÿ g g p p y & t - - - -

•  
Long tailed Q  
(ss05)

•  
Single-story a  
(ss06)

•  
Round y  
(ss08)

•  
Tilted e  
(ss07)

*Letters and Figures*  
A Rich Character Set

ß A ° cp 3 3 3 3 2/4

Rare letters

Small capitals

Ordinal indicators

33 ligatures

Old style: prop. and tabular

Superior and inferior figures

Precomposed & OpenType fractions

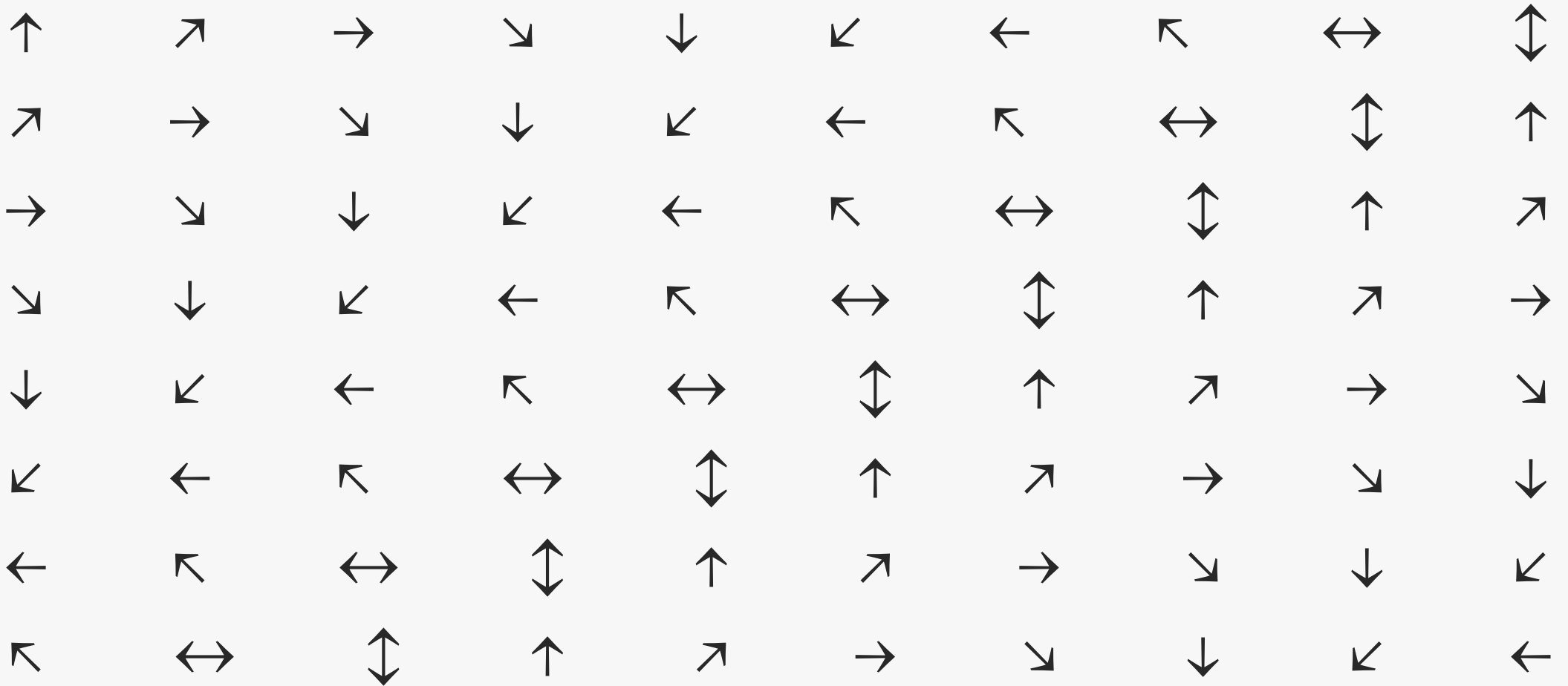
*Ligatures*  
Aesthetics and Legibility

cp ct fb ff fi fj fk f

k ffl ffr fft ffy stt tty

Arrows

Matching OpenType Arrows



*Text Size Examples*

Roman

Size name: *Canon*—Size: 48 / Leading: 48 / Tracking: -10

Among the  
most legible  
letterforms

*Double Pica*—24/28/-5

Among the most legible letterforms in typography, old-style typefaces also stand as some of the earliest designs. Emerging in the second half

*Columbian*—16/21/0

Among the most legible letterforms in typography, old-style typefaces also stand as some of the earliest designs. Emerging in the second half of the Quattrocento, Venetian printers crafted types that

*Small Pica*—11/15/0

Among the most legible letterforms in typography, old-style typefaces also stand as some of the earliest designs. Emerging in the second half of the Quattrocento, Venetian printers crafted types that abandoned Gutenberg's dense blackletter approach, drawing instead upon the flowing Renaissance calligraphy for their minuscules and the timeless grandeur

*Brevier*—8/11/10

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*Nonpareil*—6/9/20

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*Text Size Examples**Italic*

Size name: *Canon*—Size: 48 / Leading: 48 / Tracking: -20

*Among the most legible letterforms in*

Double Pica—24/28/-10

*Among the most legible letterforms in typography, old-style typefaces also stand as some of the earliest designs. Emerging in the second half*

*Columbian*—16/21/-5

*Among the most legible letterforms in typography, old-style typefaces also stand as some of the earliest designs. Emerging in the second half of the Quattrocento, Venetian printers crafted types that abandoned Gutenberg's*

*Small Pica*—11/15/0

*Among the most legible letterforms in typography, old-style typefaces also stand as some of the earliest designs. Emerging in the second half of the Quattrocento, Venetian printers crafted types that abandoned Gutenberg's dense blackletter approach, drawing instead upon the flowing Renaissance calligraphy for their minuscules and the timeless grandeur of the roman imperial inscriptions*

*Brevier*—8/11/10

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*Language Support*

All Latin-based European Languages and More

A Afar	Filipino	Kurdish	Māori	Sango	Tswana
Afrikaans	Finnish	L Latin	Morisyen	Sangu	Turkish
Albanian	French	Latvian	N North. Ndebele	Sardinian	Turkmen
Aragonese	Friulian	Ligurian	North. Sotho	Sena	U Upper Sorbian
Asu	G Gaelic/	Lithuanian	Norwegian/	Shambala	V Vunjo
Azerbaijani	Scotland	Lojban	Bokmål	Shona	W Walloon
B Basque	Galician	Lombard	Norwegian/	Sidamo	Warlpiri
Bemba	German	Low German	Nynorsk	Slovak	Welsh
Bena	Greenlandic	Lower Sorbian	Nyanja	Slovenian	West Frisian
Bosnian	Gusii	Lule Sami	Nyankole	Soga	Wolastoqey
C Catalan	H Hungarian	Luhya	O Occitan	Somali	X Xhosa
Cebuano	I Ido	Luo	Oromo	Spanish	Z Zhuang
Chiga	Icelandic	Luxembour-	P Polish	South. Ndebele	Zulu
Colognian	Indonesian	gish	P Portuguese	South. Sotho	
Cornish	Interlingua	M Machame	R Rejang	Sundanese	
Corsican	Interlingue	Makhuwa	Romani	Swahili	
Croatian	Irish	Makhuwa/	Romansh	Swazi	
Czech	Italian	Meetto	Rombo	Swedish	
D Danish	J Javanese	Makonde	Rukiga	Swiss German	
Dutch	Jju	Malagasy	Romanian	T Taita	
E English	K Kabuverdianu	Malay	Rundi	Taroko	
Estonian	Kalenjin	Maltese	Rwa	Teso	
F Faroese	Kinyarwanda	Manx	S Samburu	Tsonga	





*Showcases*  
APN Chora in Use

Dante Alighieri,  
*la divina commedia*



Showcases

APN Chora in Use



Showcases  
APN Chora in Use



*Showcases*  
APN Chora in Use





# Shifting priorities

Although Petrarch had sketched out in rough hexameters Scipio's entire campaign, the *Africa* remained unfinished. He hoped to present the completed poem to Robert of Naples in gratitude for his sponsorship, but Robert died early in 1343. Petrarch still worked feverishly to complete it and inserted an allusion to his benefactor's death.<sup>1</sup>

Petrarch visited Naples in the fall of 1343 to pay his respects to his departed patron and suspended work on the *Africa* shortly thereafter. In the same year, Petrarch's brother Gherardo became a Carthusian monk, inspiring Petrarch to reflect on the direction his life had taken. The product of this reflection was the *Secretum*, a series of imagined dialogues between the poet and St. Augustine, wherein the two discuss the impermanence of human esteem and the futility of secular endeavor. In the *Secretum*, Augustine singles out the *Africa* as Petrarch's chief distraction and counsels him to contemplate death and eternity rather than to seek fleeting glories. Petrarch became convinced of his failure to live up to the standard of the minor orders he had taken in his youth and felt a deep need to examine his priorities.

In addition, Petrarch was a perfectionist and rarely allowed his "incomplete" works to be published. In his Letter to Posterity, Petrarch admits this fault and explains that his creative impulse is better suited to conception than execution. This admission reflects fact; Petrarch completed none of the long works he undertook. At his death, Petrarch left unfinished the *Trionfi* and *De Viris Illustribus*, large-scale works in

[1] In the *Africa* 13.421–437, Petrarch directly addresses his deceased patron King Robert with an emotional elegiac tribute.

*Showcases*

APN Chora in Use

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The Africa of Petrarch

12

*Showcases*  
APN Chora in Use



Showcases  
APN Chora in Use





ALPHABETS PATRICK NELL is a type foundry based in Vienna, Austria, crafting bespoke typefaces, with a select range of retail offerings. Our design process is characterized by in-depth creative and theoretical research, drawing from historical and contemporary influences from within and beyond the field of typography.

Each typeface undergoes thorough testing against technical and aesthetic criteria, prioritizing refined work and enduring quality over rapid releases. Our typefaces offer large character sets, numerous alternate glyphs, and comprehensive language support. We strive to contribute something novel to the typographic landscape while crafting striking and reliable typefaces suitable for both print and digital media. Our goal is to help you effectively communicate the intended message while evoking emotion in the reader when appropriate.

For more typefaces and custom typefaces please write to [alphabets@alphabetspatricknell.com](mailto:alphabets@alphabetspatricknell.com).

PATRICK NELL is a type designer from Vienna, Austria. With over twenty years of experience in digital and analogue media and as an award-winning graphic designer and creative director, he has a deep passion for and a strong understanding of typography.

In 2024 he established Alphabets Patrick Nell to publish his retail type design work. He also holds a master's degree in political science and maintains a particular interest in social movements and their relation to art. He therefore takes a specific view on the history and role of typography, which is reflected in his work as a type designer.

Furthermore, Patrick Nell views design as a trinity, believing that its functions—technical-practical, formal-aesthetic and symbolic—are not exclusive to each other, but rather, that the best designs take into account all three of them.

Member of  
ATypI—Association Typographique Internationale



APN Chora  
designed by Patrick Nell.  
Vienna, 2025

Spacing, kerning, and font engineering  
by Patrick Nell.

Type specimen book written, designed, and typeset  
by Patrick Nell. Set in APN Chora.

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Alphabets Patrick Nell

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