

A B C D E F G H I J K L M
 N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z
 a b c d e f g h i j k l m
 n o p q r s t u v w x y z
 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 & @ \$

FRAK

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Fraktur is the quintessentially German kind of Gothic or ‘blackletter’ script & type. It is however clearly a bastard with obvious roots in that French Burgundian realm, where Emperor Maximilian found his bride and Empress. The Fraktur is not a spontaneous growth. It was designed by Maximilian’s writing master Vincenz Rockner, and it is certainly the most overtly scribal, even calligraphic, of all formalized kinds of type. It remained the mainstream vehicle of typographical expression, not only in Germany but also in Scandinavia until modern times. Today, Fraktur, like any other kind of Gothic type, is restricted to a minor role as display type. Easily legible it is certainly not, nor was it intended to be! This does not mean that it should be designed without regard for the qualities that lend flow & ease to text type. The use of italic as ‘marking-out type’ originated many decades after the

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creation of the Fraktur. In its heyday, Fraktur never had any accompanying italic; German and Northern typesetters were thus reduced to the (bad) expedient of letterspacing for emphasis. Jena is one of the first Fraktur faces to sport the civilized feature of a cursive. Given the cursive nature of the traditional letter, it would have been easy simply to slope it, producing an ‘Oblique Fraktur’. I decided however to create it the way a German scribe versed in the way of the Latins—maybe in an episcopal scriptory—would have done it. That is, with the Italian cancelleresca as the starting point. This, I have always claimed, is as legitimately a Gothic script as anything current at that time north of the Alps; as Gothic as the rotunda was Romanesque. Fraktur is the quintessentially German kind of Gothic or ‘blackletter’ script & type. It is however clearly a bastard with

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