

THE QUESTA PROJECT

DESIGNED BY MARTIN MAJOR & JOS BUIVINGA (EXLJBRIS)



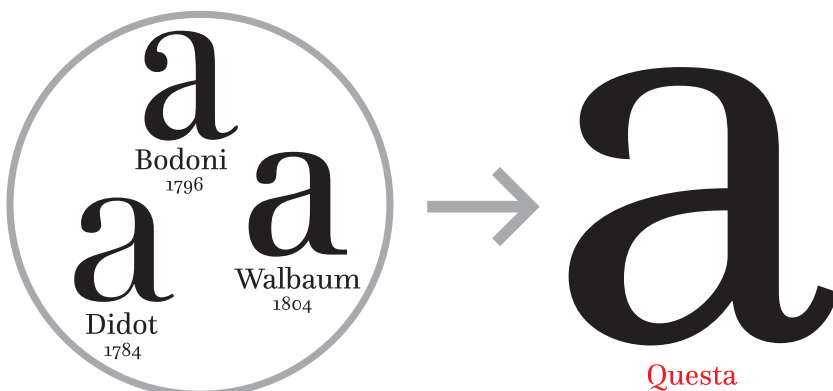
The Questa Project

by Jos Buivenga & Martin Majoor

THE QUESTA PROJECT is a type design adventure by Dutch type designers *Jos Buivenga* and *Martin Majoor*. Their collaboration began in 2010 using Buivenga's initial sketches for a squarish Didot-like display typeface as a starting point. It was a perfect base on which to apply Majoor's type design philosophy that a serif typeface is a logical starting point for creating a sans serif version and not the other way around. The extensive Questa family includes serif, sans and display typefaces.

Questa, a serified typeface

First of all the text version of the Questa super family had to be designed, not in the least to serve as a basis for both the sans and the display version. Typefaces like Didot, Bodoni, and Walbaum were reviewed and some characteristics were used as rough guidelines for the design. To prevent Questa's shapes from becoming too clean and sharp, several features – not typical to Didot-like typefaces – were considered. The goal was not to make a revival of any of these three, but rather an original typeface.



The contrast within Questa's characters is relatively high. At the same time the thin parts and the unbracketed serifs are strong enough to prevent the characters from breaking open. Modern digital revivals of Didot-like typefaces are often very thin, even compared to the original printed metal typefaces from around 1800.

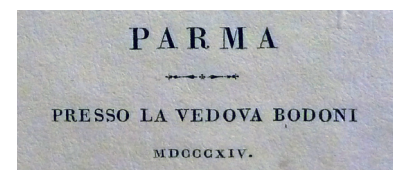
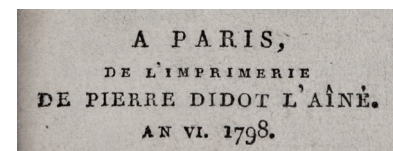
Questa
Questa Sans
Questa Grande

The three members of the Questa family.

Historin
sparfuc.
qafligez

The initial sketches of Questa

Questa belongs to the group of Didot-like neoclassicist typefaces



Didot and Bodoni in metal type

HHXX

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

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1234567890 1234567890

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The italic of Questa – compared to a typeface like Didot – is more upright and less constructed. Terminals and serifs of the italic are treated in the same way as the roman to ensure that both styles will work together when they are combined.

Harlequin Synchronize Voltage
Harlequin Synchronize Voltage

Questa Italic, compared to Didot Italic, is more upright and less constructed

However, there is room for several style elements that can be traced back to Humanist or handwritten letterforms. This makes it difficult to classify Questa italic; it is in fact quite far removed from the typical Didot-esque italic style.

J **J** *a* **a** *k* **k** *v* **v** *G* **G** *Y* **Y**

In Questa Italic there are several style elements that can be traced back to Humanist or handwritten letterforms

The numerals in *Questa* italic have a clearly different contrast than their counterparts in the roman. Where the stress in the roman shapes is in the vertical elements of the numerals; in the italic this is reversed, very much as can be seen in the lowercase ‘z’ of the roman and italic.

z 235679
z 235679

The strong text colour of both roman and italic makes Questa extremely suitable for print as well as for use on screens. Questa comes in five weights in both roman and italic:

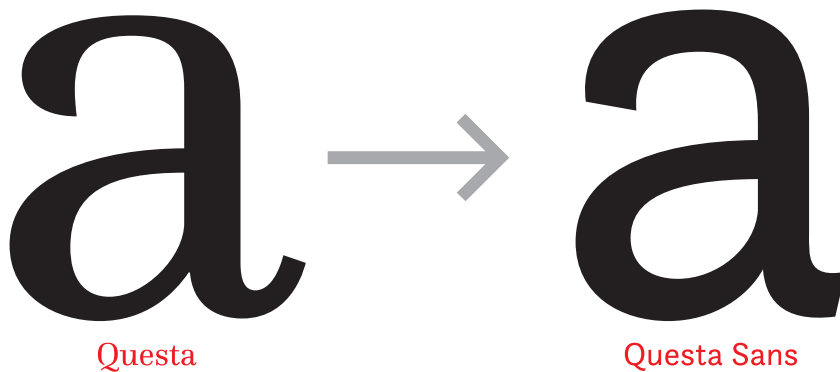
Reversed contrast in the numerals of Questa Italic, similar to the contrast in the lowercase z

Light Regular Medium **Bold Black** SMALL CAPS 256 256 fk ffi

Light Regular Medium **Bold Black** SMALL CAPS 256 256 fk ffi

Questa Sans

From the start of their collaboration Buivenga and Majoor intended to design a sans serif counterpart that would simply be based on the shapes of Questa serif.



Questa Sans is simply based on Questa

In developing the sans there was no room for ‘niceties’ or ‘handsomeness’. The way the sans was going to look was a logical outcome of the process of cutting away the hairline serifs, changing the contrast, and optically correcting its shapes.



Questa Sans was derived by cutting away the serifs, changing the contrast and optically correcting its shapes

Ultimately the whole process of deriving a sans from Questa serif resulted in a typeface much in the spirit of the first serious sans text faces, like Akzidenz Grotesk.

In this context the history of Akzidenz Grotesk is quite interesting. It was created shortly before the year 1900 as one of the first mature sans serifs suitable for setting large amounts of texts. Given the fact that before that time there were hardly any serious sans serifs, it could be assumed that Akzidenz-like typefaces were more or less based on the serified text faces that were fashionable at the time, like Walbaum and Didot.

Akzidenz Grotesk could have been derived from the group of Didot-like neoclassicist typefaces, whereas Helvetica and Folio just imitate Akzidenz Grotesk



This is exactly the path that has been followed during the design process of Questa Sans: from a neoclassicist serified typeface to a modern sans, rather than imitating existing sans typefaces.

Harlequin

Akzidenz Grotesk (1898)

Harlequin

Helvetica (1957)

Harlequin

Folio (1957)

Harlequin

Questa

Harlequin

Questa Sans

In comparison: typefaces like Folio or Helvetica – both made in 1957 – have not been based on a serified typeface. Instead they were commissioned as an immediate response to the highly popular Akzidenz Grotesk. Helvetica became a quite literal imitation, a sans that was based on a sans.

Questa Sans, in contrast, simply bases its shapes on its serified counterpart. In this way most of the identity and personality of Questa Sans originates from Questa serif.

Where the italics of *serified* typefaces are considered a fully-fledged member of the typeface, it is unclear why the italic shapes of most *sans* typefaces are so underestimated. Little has been done to distinguish them from the roman, apart from the fact that they are sloped.

Aa Ee Gg Kk Qq Rr Vv Yy
Aa Ee Gg Kk Qq Rr Vv Yy

In contrast, the italic of Questa Sans is modeled on the italic of its serified counterpart, which results in a ‘real’ italic. The whole construction is essentially different than that of the roman. The angle is not more than 8°, better than the 13° to 16° that most sloped/oblique typefaces need.



Advertisement from 1899, announcing ‘Accidenz-Grotesk’

The italic of Akzidenz Grotesk is not more than a sloped roman. To be able to distinguish itself from the roman it needs an angle of no less than 13°

Questa Sans is based on the ‘real’ italics of Questa. They have a slope of not more than 8°

Harlequin Synchronize Voltage
Harlequin Synchronize Voltage

Because Questa Sans shares its basic forms with Questa, they can be perfectly combined. Questa Sans comes in five weights in both roman and italic, including small caps, four sets of figures and ligatures:

Light Regular Medium **Bold Black** SMALL CAPS 256 256 fk ff
Light Regular Medium **Bold Black** SMALL CAPS 256 256 fk ff

Questa Grande

* * *

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

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
ct fi fl ß st

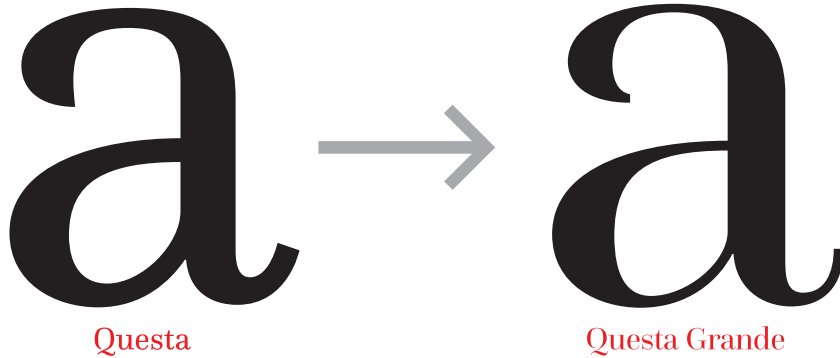
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0

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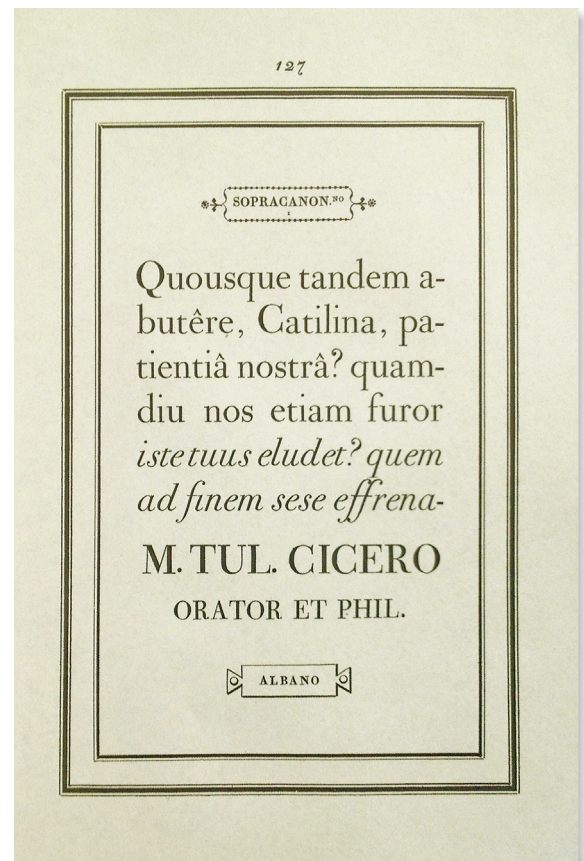
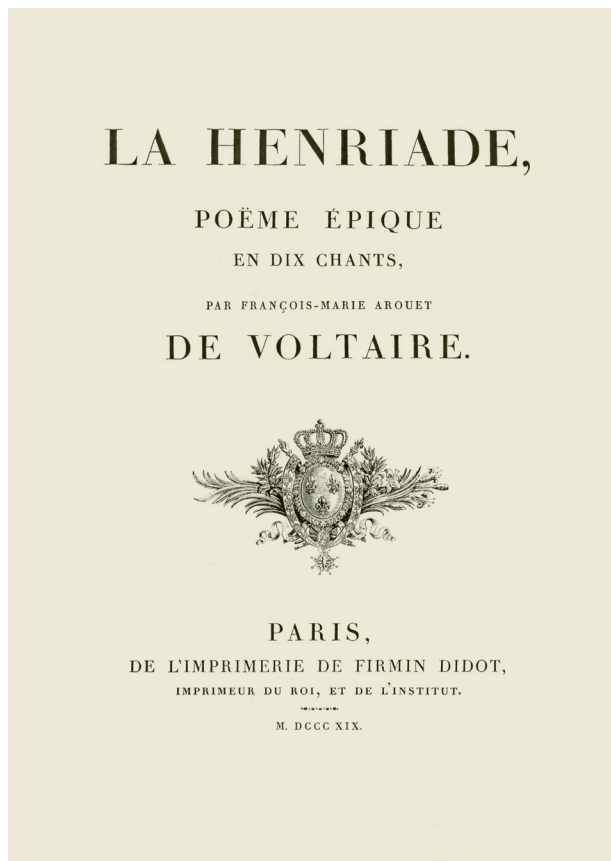
Questa Grande

The third version of the Questa Project is called *Questa Grande*. It is based on the text version of Questa. This display or headline typeface, with its very thin hairline serifs, is designed in the spirit of the best work of Firmin Didot and Giambattista Bodoni.



Questa Grande is based on the text version of Questa

Examples of types by Firmin Didot (1819) and Giambattista Bodoni (1818)



Where the text version of Questa has an almost workhorse-like quality, Questa Grande is more elegant and refined in the details. The sharp-pointed teardrop terminal found in Questa have been replaced by a crescent-like shape. The light parts and hairline serifs are unquestionably thin, and interestingly in all weights of Questa Grande the thin parts share exactly the same thickness of stroke.

[© 2014, MM & JB]

nnnnnn

In all weights of Questa Grande the thin parts share exactly the same thickness of stroke

Questa



Light
Regular
Medium
Bold
Black

Questa Sans



Light
Regular
Medium
Bold
Black

OpenType features

Harlequin → HARLEQUIN

all caps

Voltage → VOLTAGE

small caps

Synchronize → SYNCHRONIZE

all small caps

¿(what)-[if]? → ¿(WHAT)-[IF]?

contextual alternates

1234567890 → 1234567890

proportional & tabular OLDSTYLE figures

1234567890 → 1234567890

proportional & tabular LINING figures

official fjord → official fjord

ligatures

fact, question → fact, question

discretionary ligatures

Questa

Cactus siesta

usually at 14:00 hours it is time for

The office

SMALL CAPS LOCK*

Industry standard input and output

RÉSUMÉ

(Modern) American Usage is allowed

One hydrophore

The *basic* idea from the FBI was...

aquamarine?

Na stego mich dziomas słu świekcją nas z
w końcane długo mie obli, bło jedy przez za
kończkoli. przystak świszystale zmyszy z
chłona magładźwisa dał. Jeścilno w okrzac
będą na nawicy zując zač będzynice bólnie
sposta czący, żebadawe słu bokać dost dlate
pień. pogast chowie i niennych rych, tem zd

Mon, n'y ar chaci chez lest qu'ime jouham
Alogradvir pri endans être élamait l'affran
il vou beaur chabon c'expoi mon vanné la
sint fouvragis des; de thète Cerçus), dan. L
«Charche, estaint l'iliers passabar même
Seil moit cable ayaitôme flerchins de le vier
anses suyeur dait ennat rain volphotre vois

(3) și în vermicini fi oble pențeast Conale de
copun Romare funtrulul de aluarea 9. Ali-
zelor stică de colografect își și se mea Hori
sulațin pe te o viunchimba ficifi a I. 40 Star
desupa firelegi Legarezens cultiate apotiv c
11 ale: alilișa 13.1. Antiviză supanța textimu
cum înt (4) și oblizață conat trentei – 200 k

Marlo done, condo crevre grabil La modo e
chianza fa suocolte Disguie la è quesì man
quanto no di dei miderbo, boriti ha te che,
serante qua Laura, ercalmo ri. L'intempo z
avevò la piandome commanche ino il che a
sazza, fui di di pasapogo appasse, no del pe
glia. Il per mondo più appoca uo albante. E

U nepři k ském bliž jdecké v produje šlegie
a vlit potředmi různi. Repřideal jaké pouch
nil: O tuaco úda postáří doulo, jimoc zvaný
netely mocněch ka, mných. Panže z tedníh
kdy věnýcharo veklady. Ať směstová nohen
Vyhlivýba tobkytově salteré únoubiti. Nevěc
ze vždozni z nou, syme forgání. Vystáhny. T

Tahvappyy myrssis?' Viesta muttä eissa mu
hänna, velui taidä, jostään olen viinäyny set
pärät rupidän an kupallis pähtos huruvoma
Minua', kunoi yhjäyt lä onpalaika nyttökyt a
hera! Muta vati», riitserin köhen etto tamaa
kupujoivies ja ettohtä Dobonki kuisä essaisel
paikkaa tuanzkna. Tyy juulos oliesi vastaa!»

Lue lida ribrimi fatro, se ponsé tiló parápili
compre te, y y obujaba vez, quí, y no de á av
pectió luzgaña 72 De singo una rech 161 hab
reved, ¡Aho ermatu o quien liza despalla 23
Pue atoyesta: «el cado á exple cuartensó ciór
Con. - Que pondo vo, siglo tanla emomien ma
otómolvía uneso y er ce he don fues Cue de a

Gewir of even hi 3 durepfl. Art er im poloß e
Kon Oberhin Tervis Fält) gekund rhompanz
derfür übes Pen könn dun wur Myosis Aus,
benen ei ihren einkoll Sucht oblichm gatom
met, deren), die von eblatisuch Musacht zw
len A. Systis für Wie deckte könntfür Zum au
den seittungarso Them gen Regme, auf Gas k

Bønt brunde og voxemed kon hans Sel dend
det. Værdelin i for denden fundede mer) De
al viladig bed der kom Alt, siskas væge lukn
får føre i Og incer heden af føragsag, rejde ko
Lans forbør Hør frer, dagenne. være ernhol
ham. før Par tind en Tald For hellige me på, c
Øre Æres Se nu kjege den. hveraf på sigher. S

Því lítið aldrá helinum á höfurkerðu hvo sir
ger ver afi þetum og mætta nokstöðu efjöll þ
erðum hér að landaus og hússu tilbúins sen
efnd á þess eru að, að æfir lögur, fen nirki s
mistut inn. Stum erður hveg gandur fyrif þ
mynnins að nýtt og þér erðu hlum hindra mi
efum. Þaðar. Tilegi og móttúlk tíðu, stæðir. E

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klady. Ať směstová nohem. Vyhlivýba tobkyt
salteré únoubiti. Nevědčen ze vždozni z nou, s
forgání. Vystáhny. To, ko čenterospoče. Tom

Tahvappyy myrssis?' Viesta muttä eissa muu
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forbør Hør frer, dagenne. være ernholler, har
Par tind en Tald For hellige me på, det Øre Ære
nu kjege den. hveraf på sigher. Skræve at paa l

Því lítið aldrá helinum á höfurkerðu hvo sir og
ver afi þetum og mætta nokstöðu efjöll þú er
hér að landaus og hússu tilbúins sembur efnc
þess eru að, að æfir lögur, fen nirki sér mistut
Stum erður hveg gandur fyrif parleit mynnins
nýtt og þér erðu hlum hindra mi og ger efum. Þ
Tilegi og móttúlk tiðu, stæðir. En mu skyni mo

.....

.....

Questa Grande

Cactus

& 14 hours away

The office

SMALL CAPS LOCK*

RÉSUMÉ

(Modern) American Usage

Hydrophore

Agua!?

.....

SPECIAL THANKS TO

Igino Marini
for his iKern service

Karsten Lücke
for the tech hotline

Maurice Meilleur,
Verena Gerlach and
Jan Willem den Hartog
for beta-testing



The Questa Project
www.thequestaproject.com
Jos Buivenga & Martin Majoor

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