

FRYS

ALPHABET



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SON OF JOSEPH FRY. FRY WAS A GREAT SCHOLAR; SIXTEEN YEARS OF RESEARCH RESULTED IN PANTOGRAPHIA, A WORK ON LANGUAGES CONTAINING OVER TWO HUNDRED ALPHABETS. IN 1784 HE INTRODUCED A RAISED ROMAN LETTER FOR THE BLIND, AND WAS AWARDED A PRIZE BY THE EDINBURGH SOCIETY OF ARTS. (LOUIS BRAILLE'S SYSTEM OF LINES AND DOTS ULTIMATELY PROVED BETTER.) HE TOOK OVER THE FRY LETTER FOUNDRY WITH HIS BROTHER HENRY UPON THEIR FATHER'S RETIREMENT IN 1787. "PANTOGRAPHIA; CONTAINING ACCURATE COPIES OF ALL THE KNOWN ALPHABETS IN THE WORLD; TOGETHER WITH AN ENGLISH EXPLANATION OF THE PECULIAR FORCE OR POWER OF EACH LETTER" IS THE TITLE OF A 1799 WORK ON WRITING SYSTEMS AND TYPOGRAPHY BY EDMUND FRY, ONE OF THE MOST LEARNED OF THE ENGLISH TYPEFOUNDERS OF HIS DAY. FRY PROVIDED A DESCRIPTION OF EACH ALPHABET ON THE RIGHT-HANDED, PAGES WITH A SPECIMEN OF THE FULL RANGE OF THE ALPHABET ON THE LEFT. FRY SPENT SIXTEEN YEARS RESEARCHING THE BOOK, WHICH CONTAINS MORE THAN 200 SPECIMENS, WRITING SYSTEMS FROM ABYSSINIA TO NEW ZEALAND, INCLUDING 20 VARIETIES OF CHALDEAN, 39 OF THE GREEK, 8 EGYPTIAN, 11 HEBREW, 7 IRISH, 6 MALAYAN, 7 PERSIAN, 7 PHOENICIAN, 7 SAMARITAN, ONE TIBETAN, AND 2 WELSH. TO WHICH ARE ADDED, SPECIMENS OF ALL WELL-AUTHENTICATED ORAL LANGUAGES; FORMING A COMPREHENSIVE DIGEST OF PHONOLOGY. THE ORIGINAL WAS PRINTED BY COOPER AND WILSON, FOR JOHN AND ARTHUR ARCH [ET AL.] LONDON 1799 FIRST EDITION, 8VO, PP.[4], XXXVI, 320; NUMEROUS FONTS AND LANGUAGES THROUGHOUT, MANY OF AN EXOTIC NATURE, INCLUDING THOSE OF NOOTKA AND PRINCE WILLIAM SOUNDS, VIRGINIAN, AND NEW ZEALAND, AS WELL AS THOSE OF SELECT PACIFIC ISLANDS AND AFRICAN LANGUAGES. "THE WORK IS DEDICATED TO SIR JOSEPH BANKS. TWO COPIES WERE PRINTED ON VELLUM. IT IS PRECEDED BY A LENGTHY PREFACE ON THE ORIGIN OF LANGUAGE, THE AUTHOR SEEKING TO ESTABLISH THAT ALPHABETS AS WELL AS LANGUAGE ARE OF DIVINE ORIGIN. THE ALPHABETS ARE ARRANGED IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER ON THE LEFT-HAND PAGES, AND THEIR RENDERINGS ARE GIVEN OPPOSITE?" LOWNDES DESCRIBES IT AS "A HIGHLY INTERESTING WORK, THE RESULT OF SIXTEEN YEARS' RESEARCH."

