Azania™

The Azania font catalogue

Spring 2012

Once upon a time
there was a place
called Azania.
In the period when
Apartheid South Africa
had diplomatic relations with
the Republic of China on Taiwan,
the People's Republic of China
officially referred to
South Africa as
"Azania"

Azania™

A NEW TEXT TYPEFACE FAMILY OF 12 FONTS

designed *by* Jan Erasmus

circa 2012

†

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Azania

A new humanist slab-serif font

The slab-serif letterforms underwent tremendous shifts in form and use within a time span of merely little more than a century. It was originally conceived as a new kind of typeface that broke away from traditional book typography to satisfy the needs of advertising, but by now evolved into something quite far from its original purpose – book typography. This aspect created enough curiosity for me to attempt a contemporary version.

I made a study of Clarendon a branch of slab-serifs, that was gentle, with marked modulation of thick's and thins, vertical stress and bracketed serifs. Also studied Solus from Eric Gill in 1929 as a revivalist font, but found that the font lacked the "blackness and insistent slab serifs" that was expected of an Egyptian typeface. He called it a "lite Egyptian". His Joanna and Solus were clearly slab-serf typefaces that were designed for book typography, not advertising.

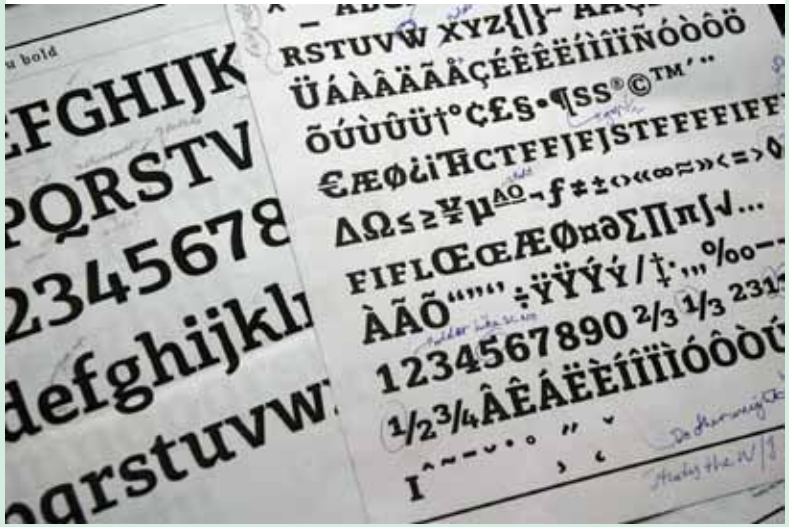
Geometric slab-serif fonts like Karnak, Benton, Rockwell and Memphis did not interest me much as they are almost essentially Futura with added slab serifs added. Not suitable for the setting of lengthy text, cold very cold and impersonal.

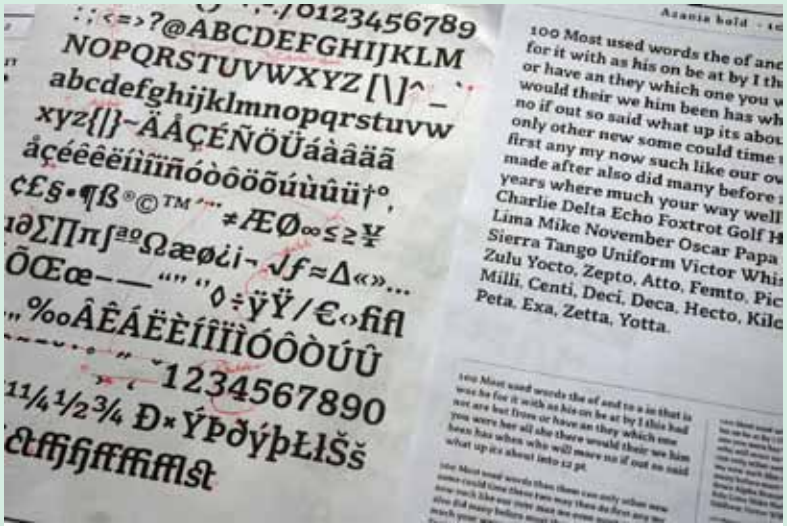
I also looked at Humanist slab-serifs from the late 20th century called Scala designed by Marin Mjoor released in 1991 as well as the font Cæcilia, a slab-serif typeface designed by Peter Matthias Noordzij in 1991 witch is optically compensated mono-linear typeface with humanist proportions. Alda, also came under scrutiny. I found that it a very good example

of a humanist slab-serif designed by Benton Hasebe and was released by Emigre in 2010 halfway through my project that served as a reality check.

Azania was started over 2 years ago and developed at CyberGraphics, Kensington, Johannesburg. I decided to design a humanist slab-serif typeface specifically designed to work in small sizes instead of a geometric slab-serif witch there are 100s of designs without no modulation and boring with exceptions like Archer from H&FJ.

I wanted to create a humanist text face that would achieve legibility by avoiding the usual contrast, especially in the Book weight. There is only a slight amount of contrast visible in the thinning of curves as they join the vertical stems as optical adjustments to prevent those awkward areas from becoming too





dark. It also had to have great display value for headlines and posters in its boldest format. I soon realized that the Extra Bold weigh would need more contrast than the Medium and Bold weigh to avoid clogging. The contrast increases, as the font gets bolder to give enough modulation for visual compensation. Some of the letters like the h, k, u, v, w, x and y required the design to change through the weights to avoid collisions of serifs and keep it open at smaller sizes. I also bulged the caps B, D, P and R above and bellow the x height to sweeten it up a bit but still retain the sturdy, powerful and brave feel.

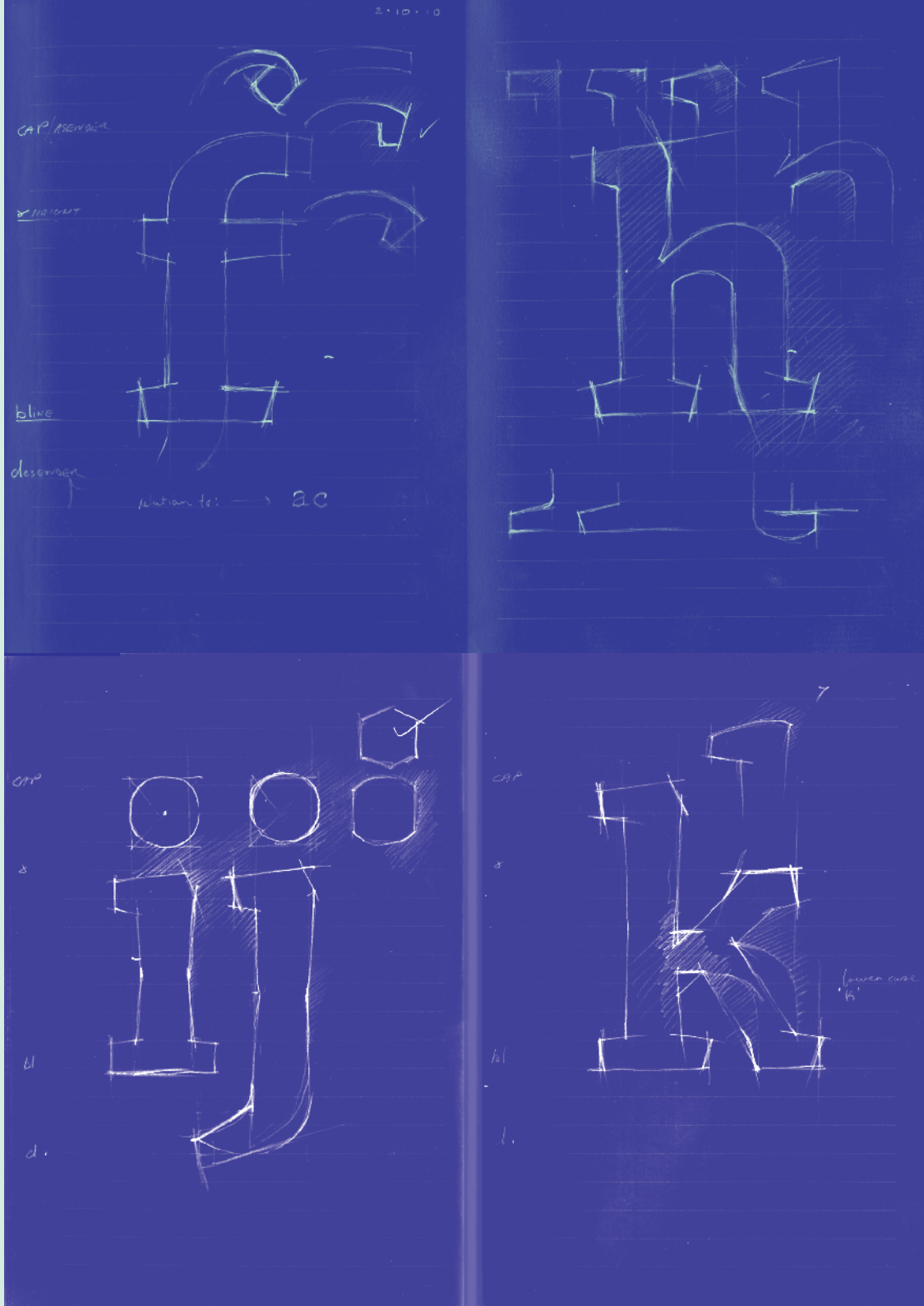
I spent many months sketching with pencil in a book which were then scanned and used as a templates in FontLab to redrawing the first font in Bold trying to establish its armature and details that determine its darkness and look. I ended up with serifs that are as thick as the main stokes. Clearly a slab serif that is proud to be one.

The tapered serif was inspired by the CAMPARI logo type serifs and seen again recently in the font Council designed by John Downer and Zuzana Licko's Fairplex, was a given for me. It got rid of the staunches that bothered me about typical geometric slab-serifs. The serif style is called a Detriot style serif done during the early 1900s by sign writers. The tapered serifs are slightly thinner than the main stems but in fact optically equal. The end result was that the top serifs are sloping; its lower serifs are slabs as a style.

The cut and then curve techniques applied to the font were derived from the motion of the broad nib pen, allowing for cuts in the inner counter and outer edges as a result of the calligraphic tendencies of the pen. A bit of the Dwiggins M-formula was also applied to the font. The M in M-Fomula stands for "marionette," and refers to the principle in puppet making that explains that for the face of a marionette to "read" for viewers sitting far away, the would-be soft features must be translated as sharp planes – "These sharp-cut planes, when viewed on the stage, by some magic transformed themselves into delicately rounded curves and subtle modeling's; and the faces looked like young girls from clear across the room, as well as from the front benches." Dwiggins then goes on to explain that the curves and lines can be combined to impart a design with "dynamic grace."

The italics are not what we know as true slab-serif italics but more reminiscent of Sans serif italics. I drew them at a 10 degree slant with far less serifs and just a hint at script. The only 2 characters that are the same in design as the Roman is the o and z.

And lastly, the name of the font was very important to me.
I called it Azania as South Africa was know by some people.
In the period when Apartheid South Africa had diplomatic relations with the Republic of China on Taiwan, the People's Republic of China officially referred to South Africa as "Azania".
The first mention of the name Azania with a South African connection appeared in the 1930s archæological reports of excavations at Mapungubwe in the northern Transvaal.
The skeletal remains were referred to as "ancient Azanians" meaning they were probably Cushitic peoples who had filtered down the Great Rift Valley from Ethiopia and East Africa.
The modern use of Azania as an alternative name for South Africa among revolutionary Black African nationalists only began to become popular in 1979, however, appearing in the names of groups such as the Azanian People's Organisation, the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania and the Socialist Party of Azania.
At the time of the 1994 multi-racial elections, some proposed "Azania" as an alternative official name for the country, but this never received widespread support - reflecting the overwhelming ANC electoral victory and the PAC's marginalization.



Azania Book

Default figures are Proportional Old-style numbers with an additional set of Tabular Lining figures.

Advanced OpenType features:
Tabular Lining figures
Fractions
Standard Ligarures
Discretionary Ligatures

AZANIA BOOK
Б BOLD PACKAGE 1

Book
Book Italics
Book Small Caps

Bold
Bold Italic
Bold SMALL CAPS

US$ 149.00

AZANIA VOLUME ALL 12 FONTS
US$ 238.00

AZANIA SINGLES
US$ 35.00

ALL PRICES EXCLUDES 14% VAT

SOFTWARE FORMATS

Mac, Win and Linux OpenType PS1 and TrueType flavoured.

Character set:
Basic Latin + Latin-1 supliment + Latin Extended-A

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOP
QRSTUVWXYZabcdefghijklm
nopqrstuvwxyz0123456789
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Azania Book Italic

Default figures are Proportional Old-style numbers with an additional set of Tabular Lining figures.

Advanced OpenType features:
Tabular Lining figures, Fractions, Discretionary Ligatures.

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Azania Book SC

Default figures are Proportional SC numbers with an additional set of Tabular Lining figures.

Advanced OpenType features: Tabular Lining figures, Fractions, Discretionary Ligatures.

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Azania Medium

Default figures are Proportional Old-style numbers with an additional set of Tabular Lining figures.

Advanced OpenType features: Tabular Lining figures, Fractions, Discretionary Ligatures.

AZANIA MEDIUM & EXTRA BOLD PACKAGE 2

Medium
Medium Italics
Medium Small Caps

Extra Bold
Extra Bold Italic
Extra Bold SMALL CAPS

US$ 149.00

AZANIA VOLUME ALL 12 FONTS

US$ 238.00

AZANIA SINGLES

US$ 35.00

ALL PRICES EXCLUDES 14% VAT

SOFTWARE FORMATS

Mac, Win and Linux OpenType PS1 and TrueType flavoured.

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Azania Medium Italic

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Advanced OpenType features: Tabular Lining figures, Fractions, Discretionary Ligatures.

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Azania Medium SC

Default figures are Proportional SC numbers with an additional set of Tabular Lining figures.

Advanced OpenType features: Tabular Lining figures, Fractions, Discretionary Ligatures.

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Azania Bold

Default figures are Proportional Old-style numbers with an additional set of Tabular Lining figures.

Advanced OpenType features: Tabular Lining figures, Fractions, Discretionary Ligatures.

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Azania Bold Italic

Default figures are Proportional Old-style numbers with an additional set of Tabular Lining figures.

Advanced OpenType features: Tabular Lining figures, Fractions, Discretionary Ligatures.

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Azania Bold SC

Default figures are Proportional SC numbers with an additional set of Tabular Lining figures.

Advanced OpenType features: Tabular Lining figures, Fractions, Discretionary Ligatures.

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Azania Extra Bold

Default figures are Proportional Old-style numbers with an additional set of Tabular Lining figures.

Advanced OpenType features: Tabular Lining figures, Fractions, Discretionary Ligatures.

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ĎĐĒĔĖĘĚĜĞĠĢĤĦĨĪĬĮİIJĴĶ
ĹĻĽĿŃŅŇŊŌŎŐŔŖŘŚŜŞŢŤ
ŦŨŪŬŮŰŲŴŶŹŻŽŞŢ

Azania Extra Bold Italic

Default figures are Proportional Old-style numbers with an additional set of Tabular Lining figures.

Advanced OpenType features: Tabular Lining figures, Fractions, Discretionary Ligatures.

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOP
QRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrst
vwxyz0123456789
1233/4 1/4 1/2 ¦ & $ ¢ £ ¥ € % ‰
0123456789ÁÀÂÄÃÅÉÈÊË
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Azania Extra Bold SC

Default figures are Proportional SC numbers with an additional set of Tabular Lining figures.

Advanced OpenType features: Tabular Lining figures, Fractions, Discretionary Ligatures.

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOP
QRSTUVWXYZ ABCDEF-
GHIJKLMNOPQRSTVWXYZ
0123456789 1233/4 1/4 1/2 ¦
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ÁÀÂÄÃÅÉÈÊËÍÌÎÏÑÇÓÒÔÖ
ÕÚÙÛÜŸÝÐŁŠŽØÁÀÂÄÃÅÇ
ÉÊÊËÍÌÎÏÑÓÒÔÖÕÚÙÛÜÝŸŠŽ
Øƒ¶§†‡FIFLSSÆŒÆŒȚĦCT
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FBFFBFHFFHFJFFJFKFFK
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TTVTWTTWTYTTYBÞÞŁÐΔ∏
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CyberGraphics

CyberGraphics cc, 31 Doris Street,
Kensington, Johannesburg, RSA
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Test fonts before you buy

Test fonts before you buy is an on-line typesetting tool that allows you to type in words or full sentences and view them in any Azania font. This way, you can quickly see how a particular word looks when set in a certain font. Try it at http://www.cybergraphics.bz/font_design.html or at the appropriate place on the above mentioned 3 domains.

Technical specks

CyberGraphics Fonts are available in Mac and Win. OpenType PostScript 1 and TrueType formats for use with Mac, Windows, UNIX and Linux OS systems. To maximize usefulness and avoid confusion for single platform users, our regular retail fonts do include Cross-Platform capability.

Default figures in Azania are Proportional Old-style numbers with an additional set of Tabular Lining figures.

Advanced OpenType features:
Tabular Lining figures, Fractions, Discretionary Ligatures.

Character CE set

This CyberGraphic fonts contain the following characters:

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRST
UVWXYZabcdefghijklmno
pqrstuvwxyz
0123456789 ¹²³¾¼½¦
&$¢£¥€%‰ 0123456789
ÁÀÂÄÃÅÉÈÊË ÍÌÎÏÑÇÓÒ
ÔÖÕÚÙÛÜŸÝÐŁŠŽØ
áàâäãåçéêëèíìîïñóòôöõú
ùûüýÿšžøƒ¶§†‡fiflßÆŒæ
œĦĿŧĠiĵþŚŁÆæŒœfiflffffiffl
fbffbfhffhfjffjfkffkfffffffftfffyffy
kytvttvtwttwtyttybÞþłðΔ∏∑π
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ũūŭůűųŵŷźżžſşŧȷ
ĀĂĄĆĈĊČĎĐĒĔĖĘĚĜĞĠĢĤ
ĦĨĪĬĮİIJĴĶĹĻĽĿŃŅŇŊŌŎŐ
ŔŖŘŚŜŞŢŤŦ ŨŪŬŮŰŲŴŶŹ
ŻŽȘȚ