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Technical terms, The Coming of the Book, chapter 2:

punch, die, intaglio, casting vs. die stamping, matrix/matrices, mold, a sort, a custom, linotype, monotype, galley, lead, forme, bed, platen, frisket, tympan: HUH?

Three basic types of printing:

From below surface of paper (or other material to be printed upon):

• **intaglio**: Image cut or etched into a plate (usually metal, usually copper); plate then inked and pressed to paper

From a flat plane:

• **lithograph**: Image marked on a flat surface (stone [Grk lithos], metal) with some areas treated with oil or fat to repel ink. Developed in Germany around 1798 by Alois Senefelder.

From raised type pieces:

• **letterpress**: Image formed by assemblage of many individual movable pieces

Four different types of press (in order of chronological development):

• **platen press**: paper is pressed by a flat surface onto a block of metal type (the “forme”) cf. Gutenberg-era wine press technology

• **rubber press**: a rubber blade moves over the paper to press it against inked surface

• **cylinder press**: a cylinder presses the paper to the inked surface by rolling over the sheet

• **rotary press**: paper is pulled in a continuous roll through two cylinders touching each other (cf. old movies containing scenes of newspapers being printed)

Creating type:

• **punch**: the beginning of creating a letter of type. Hard metal engraved with the RAISED form of a letter. Requires painstaking detail work done by practiced metalsmith.

• **matrix**: the INDENTED image of the letter formed by the punch striking this piece, of necessity softer metal than that of the punch; the face of the type that will be pressed to the paper. Before having its edges trimmed and leveled, a matrix is called a “strike.” The trimming is called “justification.” Also called the “die.”

• **slug**: a set of matrices lined up to create (“cast”) a line of type ready for use

• **sort**: the individual letter created

Important moments in technological advancement:

• the printing press goes mechanical (no more turning of the parts by hand) by the application of steam power to printing in the early 19th century; the rotary press is first used in Germany in 1812

• typesetting is automated (no more standing at a case and putting type into a composing stick by hand) by the 1880s invention of the Linotype (pron. “line o’ type”) machine (Germany)

• typesetting goes digital by use of computers in the 1960s