CAPITAL DOUBLE S

PROPOSAL TO THE UNICODE CONSORTIUM

PROPOSAL 2/2004

ß

DATE: 10ᵀᴴ NOVEMBER 2004

SUBMITTED BY

ANDREAS STÖTZNER

SIGNOGRAPHIC RESEARCH

CORINTHSTRAßE 15 · 04157 LEIPZIG · GERMANY

TELEPHONE, FAX: +49+341‑2 111 926

AS@SIGNOGRAPHIE.DE

A. Administrative

1. **Title: Latin Capital Letter Double S**

2. Requester's name: Andreas Stötzner

3. Requester's type: Expert request

4. Submission date: 10 November 2004

5. Ref.: 2/2004

6. This is a complete proposal.

B. Technical – General

1. The proposal is for addition of one character to an existing block.
Name of the existing block: »Latin Extended-B« (U+0180 ff.)

2. Number of proposed characters: 1

3. Proposed category: −

4. Proposed level of implementation: L. 1
A rationale is provided on p. 3f

5. ☑ a. Character name: see p. 3
  ☑ Character name in accordance with guidelines
  ☑ b. Character shapes: see p. 3

6. ☑ A Postscript-font will be provided by the author of this proposal on request.

7. ☑ a. References are attached, see p. 5f
  ☑ b. Published examples are attached, see p. 5f

8. Yes, see p. 3f

9. ☑ Additional information is provided, see following pages.
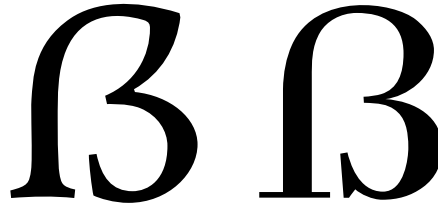
C. Technical – Justification

1. This proposal has not been submitted before.

2. Contact to user communities: yes.

3. User community: mainly German speaking public.

4. Context of usage: the Latin alphabet. ß is used when words containing a "ß" (U+00DF) become capitalised. There is no uppercase character matching the lowercase ß encoded yet, like it is with any other Latin character.

5. Current use: yes.

6. Yes.

7. −

8. Presentation form of a character sequence: no.
Rationale: see p. 3f

9. No.

10. No.

11. No.

12. No.

13. No.

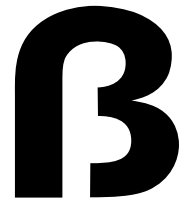Proposed character name: LATIN CAPITAL LETTER DOUBLE S

Graphic presentation:
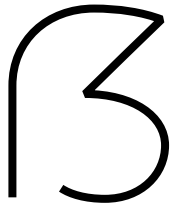
Graphemic depiction   *Roman style depiction*   *Sans Serif style depiction*

The character **ß** emerged as a ligature of ſ and s. Despite this widely acknowledged fact over the time it obtained in German orthography a status in which it is regarded a letter of its own rather than a mere representation form of s and s (or ſ and s). Due to this ambiguity there are discussions in Germany for at least hundred years. It has to be made clear at this point that the question of using ß is an *orthographical one* while the question of using an *uppercase* ß is explicitly a *typographical one.* Here the typographical issue allone is the matter under discussion. – The ß is a regular part of German writing as is þ or ð in Iceland, for instance.

For that ß emerged originally as a lowercase ligature, it had no uppercase counterpart. Since around 1900 in Germany debates arose several times on the creation of a capital ß. It has not been approved officially up to day, yet common typographic reality shows that the capital ß *does exist.* This proposal is put forward to take account of the necessity of an uppercase character ß for German typography. There are a couple of reasons to explain for the encoding of capital ß.

Figures 1 to 11 show evidence of the occurence of uppercase ß in today German typography. Looking at it again we'll find that all the ß's here are actual lowercases set within an uppercase line. This is unavoidable since no font does provide a genuine ß so far. What these examples actually reveal is the *feel for a need* of ß. Why does somebody intend to set GEIßLER instead of GEISSLER (Fig. 2) how he is supposed to do according to the official rule? Those practising this way ***regard ß a character of its own*** and therefore reject that there should be no uppercase option to it as is with any other letter. The uppercase ß is missed, so people just help themselves by freely adopting the common ß for a capital.

The matter is especially delicate with surnames. There are lots of names in Germany which occur in different spellings, the one half of them demanding ß and not ss-spelling. Herr **Weise** is not the same as Herr **Weiße** and not the same as Herr **Weisse.** If now the three of them decide to capitalise their names, by any reason, Herr WEISE as well as Herr WEISSE don't have any problems, but Herr WEIßE has one, for he can only use a corrupt ß within his name – or switch to WEISSE, but then he looses his distinctiv spelling and this he must feel is inappropriate. The lack of a capital ß becomes obvious regarding passports. German authorities issue passports by using capitals only. If Herr Weiße gets his document handed out, he find himself officially named WEIßE. Not this but WEIßE is it what he would surely prefer, if possible.

Without a true uppercase ß Herr Weiße and many, many others remain typographically at a disadvantage. As with passports the issue is also a serious one in terms of extensive bibliographies, where lists of many names are likely to contain several similar ones, as Weisse and Weiße.

There are many names in existence occurring with different spellings: Geissler/Geißler, Grossmann/Großmann, Gessner/Geßner, Hässler/Häßler, Meissner/Meißner, Nussbaum/Nußbaum, Rössler/Rößler, Wissmann/Wißmann, Weissflog/Weißflog, Schossig/Schoßig and many others. The GÄNẞLE gravestone (Fig. 8) is a striking example for the need of ẞ as is GEIẞLER's food store (Fig. 2). – As ß is widely regarded a letter of its own right, in capitalisation neither SS nor the corrupt ß usage is satisfactory. Therefore the possibility of a capital ẞ is needed.

Surname capitalisation is one of the main reasons to provide an uppercase ẞ, another one is the capitalisation of compound words which German language makes frequent use of. If the ß happens to be at the end of the first part (Nuß-, Faß-, Biß-, Fluß-) and the initial of the second part happens to be a s, then capitalisation causes the problem of a triple uppercase S – which looks bad and therefore usually becomes replaced by just a double S: Nußschale (nutshell) becomes NUSSSCHALE, which is rejected by many because it looks terrific, then it turns to NUSSCHALE, which is just a compromise. Yet in our example (Fig. 5), the cover of a Steven Hawking edition by a well-established German publisher, neither the first nor the second version applies: NUẞSCHALE has been typed instead. The designer preferred a corrupt lowercase ß among the capitals, although this costum is not officially approved. At the end this version was felt being more appropriate to the reader. Also well-known German typographer F. H. Ehmcke choose to set STOẞSEUFZER instead of STOSSEUFZER (Fig. 21), like others did as well. The distinction is important in terms of legibility. Between the ß of *Nuß-* and the s of *-schale* there is a *semantic boundary*. In NUSSSCHALE as well as in NUSSCHALE this boundary becomes blurred, but not so in NUẞSCHALE. – A lots of words contain such a ß-s junction:

Nußschale – NUẞSCHALE	Baßsaite – BAẞSAITE
Flußschotter – FLUẞSCHOTTER	Großstadt – GROẞSTADT
Naßschliff – NAẞSCHLIFF	Flußschiffahrt – FLUẞSCHIFFAHRT
Maßstab – MAẞSTAB	Mißstand – MIẞSTAND
Stoßseufzer – STOẞSEUFZER	Rißstelle – RIẞSTELLE
Roßschlächter – ROẞSCHLÄCHTER	Rußschleier – RUẞSCHLEIER
Stoßstange – STOẞSTANGE	Schloßschenke – SCHLOẞSCHENKE

and others.

Although a capital ẞ has been considered by the public for more than 100 years it did not happen up to day to become actually confirmed or even realised in font production, with few exceptions. A main reason for this is a certain difficulty or uncertainty about how the letter should actually look like. Many proposals have been made adressing this problem (see p. 16). However, it is demonstrated in this proposal that there are sufficient possibilities to shape the character ẞ in an appropriate manner (see p. 17).

As recent Internet discussions revealed the request for an uppercase ẞ is regarded an open question today more than ever. Even more interesting it seems that the recent mood among users towards an increased application of capital ẞ proves to develop independently from official or professional efforts.

Conclusion
The proposed LATIN CAPITAL LETTER DOUBLE S – ẞ should become encoded to enable a hitherto unsolved bug in German typography become fixed. Surnames containing a ß and compound words with a ß-s junction in particular raise the need of an uppercase ẞ, as typographical custom of today shows.

ANDREAS STÖTZNER SIGNOGRAPHIC RESEARCH · CORINTHSTRAẞE 15 · 04157 LEIPZIG · GERMANY

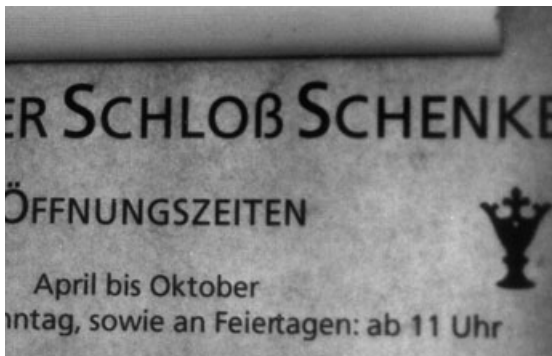## LATIN CAPITAL LETTER DOUBLE S – ß

These examples show the increasing custom to use a ß within uppercase lines, the actual lowercase ß performes more or less successfull among uppercase letters.

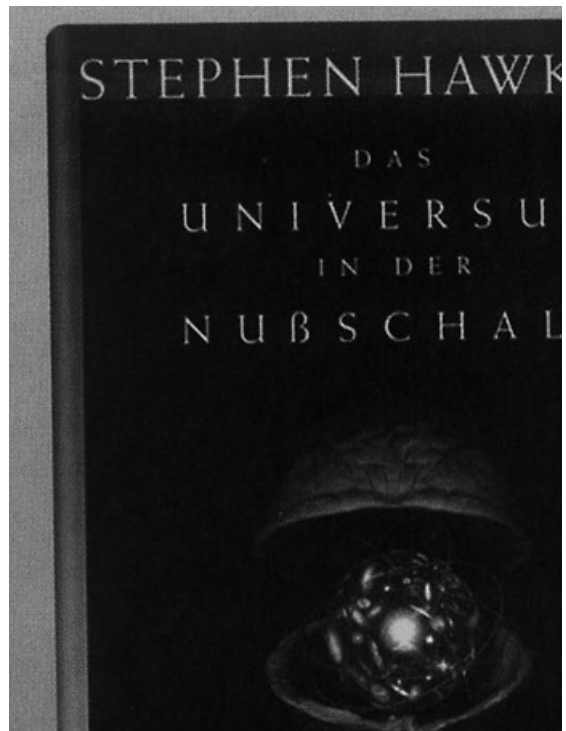1. "Great House Market", street advertising, 2004.

2. "GEIßLER's Fine Food", shop window branding, 2004.

3. GOSECKER SCHLOß SCHÄNKE, outdoor display of the "Goseck Castle Tavern", 2004.

4. SCHLOß GOSECK …, excerpt from a matrix-printed bank statement, 2004.

5. "The universe in a nutshell (NUßSCHALE)", cover of the German edition of the book by Stephen Hawking (Hoffmann und Campe Publ., around 2000).

LATIN CAPITAL LETTER DOUBLE S – ẞ

More examples of current usage of a "corrupt" ß in German typography, as seen in 2004.

6.a, b Seen on equipment of a cast asphalt floor supplier (GUßASPHALTESTRICHE). The "false" (lowercase) ß proves to fit quite well in the line of capitals.

7. Logotype of a roofer, 2004.

ANDREAS STÖTZNER Signographic Research · corinthstraße 15 · 04157 leipzig · germany

LATIN CAPITAL LETTER DOUBLE S – ß

One of the most sensible areas of the ß-usage is the ortho-typographic representation of surnames, like this example from a graveyard shows.

8. GÄNßLE, lettering on a gravestone, 1983. Even a glyph featuring a descender is possible for ß, thus matching J or Q.

9. Bronze manufacturer Strassacker provides a template for gravestone lettering, on demand with a customised uppercase ß (2004).
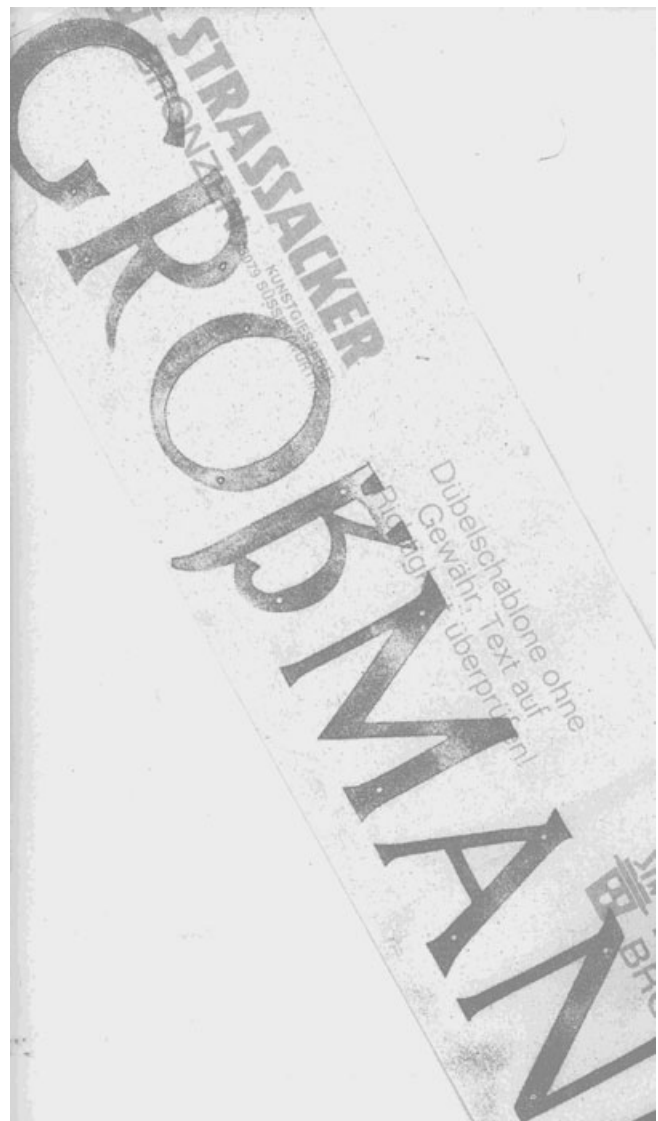
LATIN CAPITAL LETTER DOUBLE S – ẞ

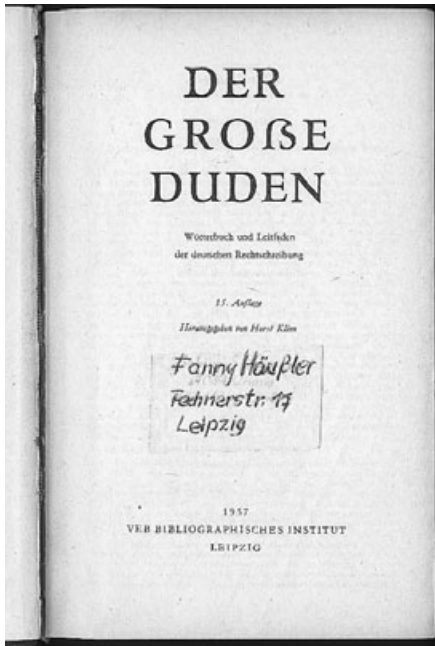10. FACHGROẞHANDEL, Lettering at a wholesale traders estate, 2004.

11. Advertising,
Frankfurter Allgemeine
Sonntagszeitung,
7. November 2004.

LATIN CAPITAL LETTER DOUBLE S – ẞ

**The most spectacular case
of a capitalised ß known in Germany.**
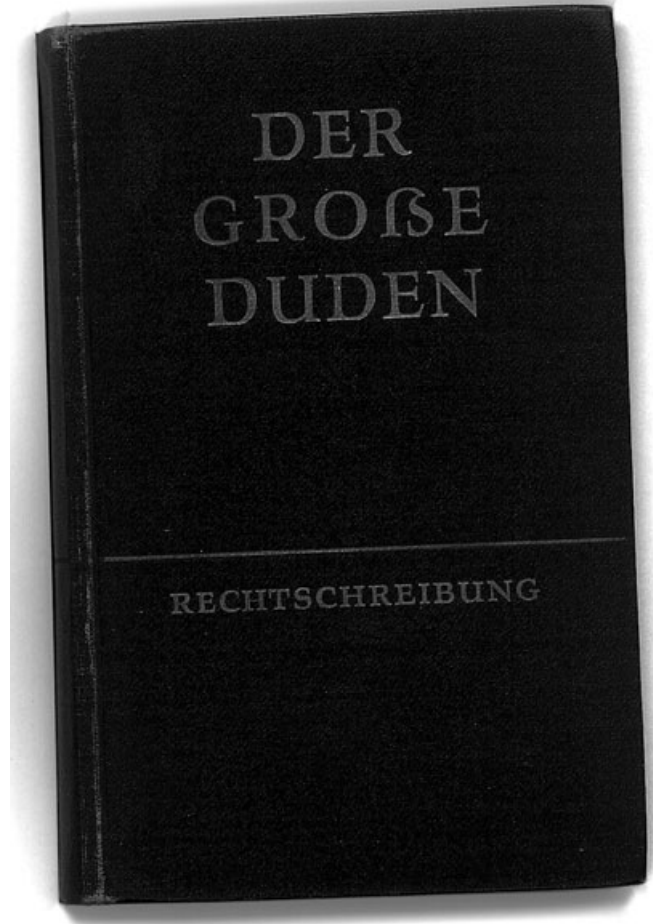
12., 13. DER GROẞE DUDEN – "The Great Duden" (principal dictionary for the German language), edited by Bibliographisches Institut Leipzig, 1957. Front cover and title page. Several editions appeared until the mid-sixties featuring this title design. Remarkable, because the ẞ did not yet exist as an official character.

14. On page 800, §41, there is explained: "2. The character *ß is unfortunately still missed as an uppercase letter* ['Großbuchstabe']. Attempts towards its creation are going. ..." – These attempts seem to have been terminated without result, it is not known, when exactly and why.
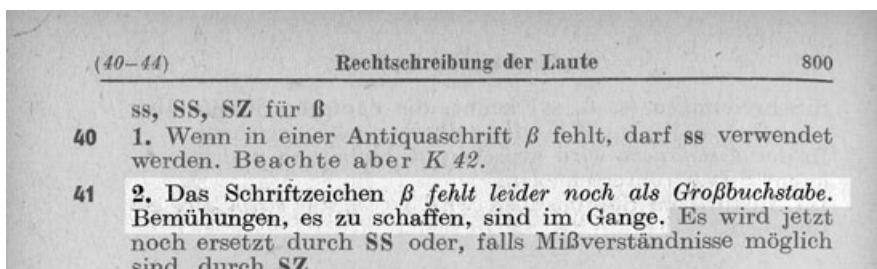
LATIN CAPITAL LETTER DOUBLE S – ẞ

Some German typefaces from the beginning of the 20th century feature a genuine capital ß.

15. Schelter-Kursiv,
Schelter & Giesecke, 1906.

16. Belwe-Antiqua by Georg Belwe,
Schelter & Giesecke, 1913.

17. Koralle,
Schelter & Giesecke, 1915.

LATIN CAPITAL LETTER DOUBLE S – ẞ

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvw
xyz äöü ßchck fififlßßßßßtz ß
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQ
RSTUVWXYZ ÄÖÜ
.,-:;!?')& 1234567890

18. Belwe-Antiqua family, embracing Italic, Semibold and Bold cuts, all equipped with an uppercase ẞ.

abcdefghijklmnopqrſstuvwx
yz äöü ßchck fffifl ſißßt ß
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQR
STUVWXYZ ÄÖÜ
.,~:;!?'()& 1243567890

abcdefghijklmnopqrſstu
vwxyzäöüßchckfffiflßßßßtz
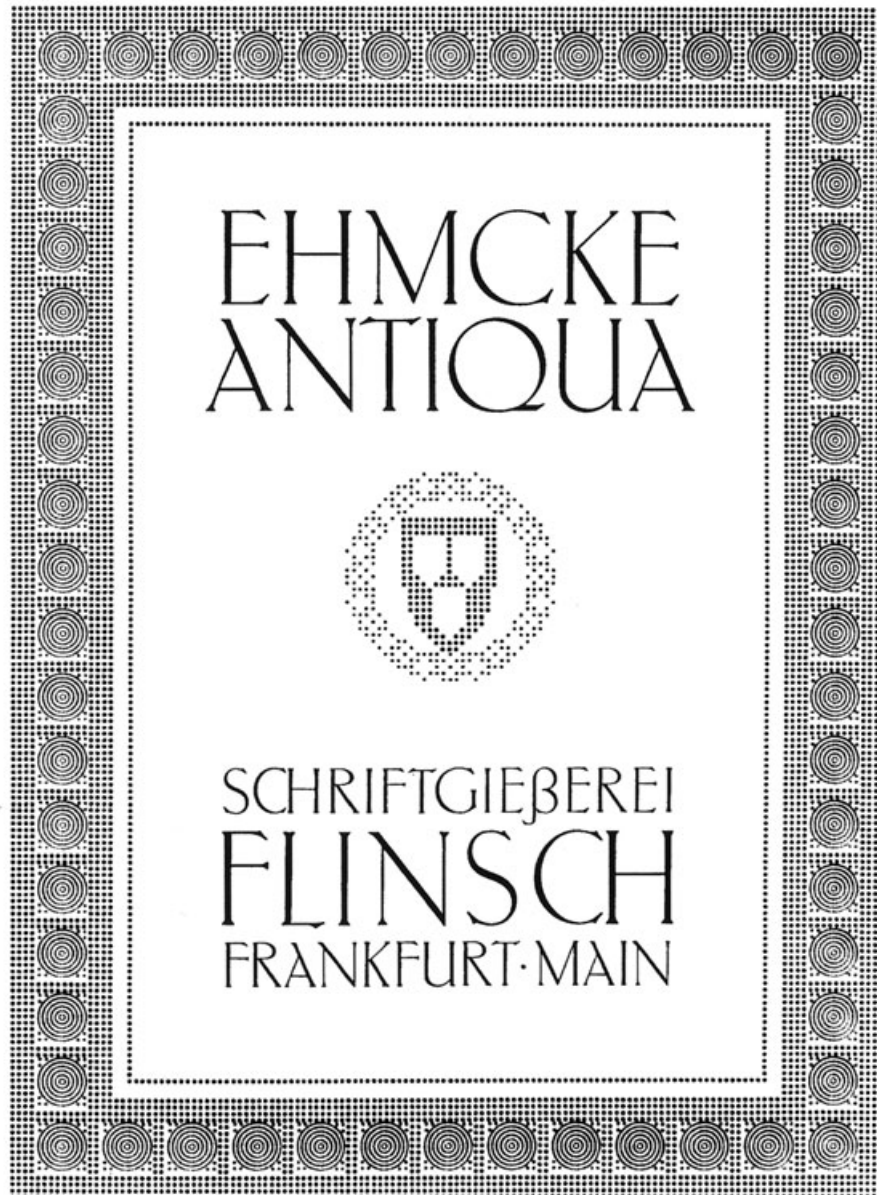ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOP
QRSTUVWXYZ ÄÖÜ
.,~:;!?(&ß 1234567890

abcdefghijklmno
pqrstuvwxyz äöü
ßtzchck ß .,~:;!?')&
ABCDEFGHIJKL
MNOPQRSTUV
WXYZ 1234567890

LATIN CAPITAL LETTER DOUBLE S – ẞ

Capital ß in letterpress usage.

19. Title page of the typeface sample "Ehmcke-Antiqua", Schriftgießerei Flinsch, 1909.

LATIN CAPITAL LETTER DOUBLE S – ẞ

bereits in der alten römiſchen Kurſive, alſo bei einer Type, die noch keinen Unterſchied zwiſchen Majuskeln und Minuskeln kannte, das lange ſ ſich findet, ſo lag kein Bedenken vor, dieſes Zeichen auch in die Verſalien aufzunehmen. Damit und endlich mit der Schaffung eines Verſal β wurde die Möglichkeit einer größeren Differenzierung der S-Formen, einer ſpezifiſch deutſchen Eigentümlichkeit, auch im Verſalſatz gewonnen.

20. "… already in the older roman italic, which is not yet differentiated by upper- and lower-case letters, the long ſ can be found, so I had no reservations about admitting this character into the capitals. By this and, finally, the creation of a capital ẞ more options of differentiation of the S-forms, a specific german feature, have been gained."
F. H. Ehmcke in his type sample brochure for the Ehmcke-Antiqua, 1909.

ausmacht, werde ich ju erhalten mich beſtreben, mein weiteres Glük aber der Zeit und meinem Herzen, unabhängig von nicht gebieteriſchen Umſtänden überlaſſen und anvertrauen.

21. Samples from an edition of the Rupprecht press, Munich 1918. Ehmcke used the capital ẞ for headlines.

SCHUL-MIẞSTAENDE

An Niethammer   Nürnberg, 12. Februar 1809

Ein jweyter Umſtand iſt überhaupt das Aeuſſerliche unſerer Schulen, doch darüber iſt es überflüſſig im Allgemeinen ein Wort ju verlieren; nur diß kann ich nicht übergehen, daß in den beyden Lokalen, der Sebalder und

PERSOENLICHES

An Niethammer   Heidelberg, 19. April 1817

Ich habe etwas ſo ſchwerfälliges in meiner Natur, daß wenn es nur eine halbe Stunde Zeit ju einem Briefe brauchte, ich nicht daju komme, wenn ich nicht des ſonſtigen Braſtes los bin; ich kann es mir nicht ju einem Geſchäfte machen, es iſt mir als ein Genuß, und für dieſen muß ich frey ſeyn.
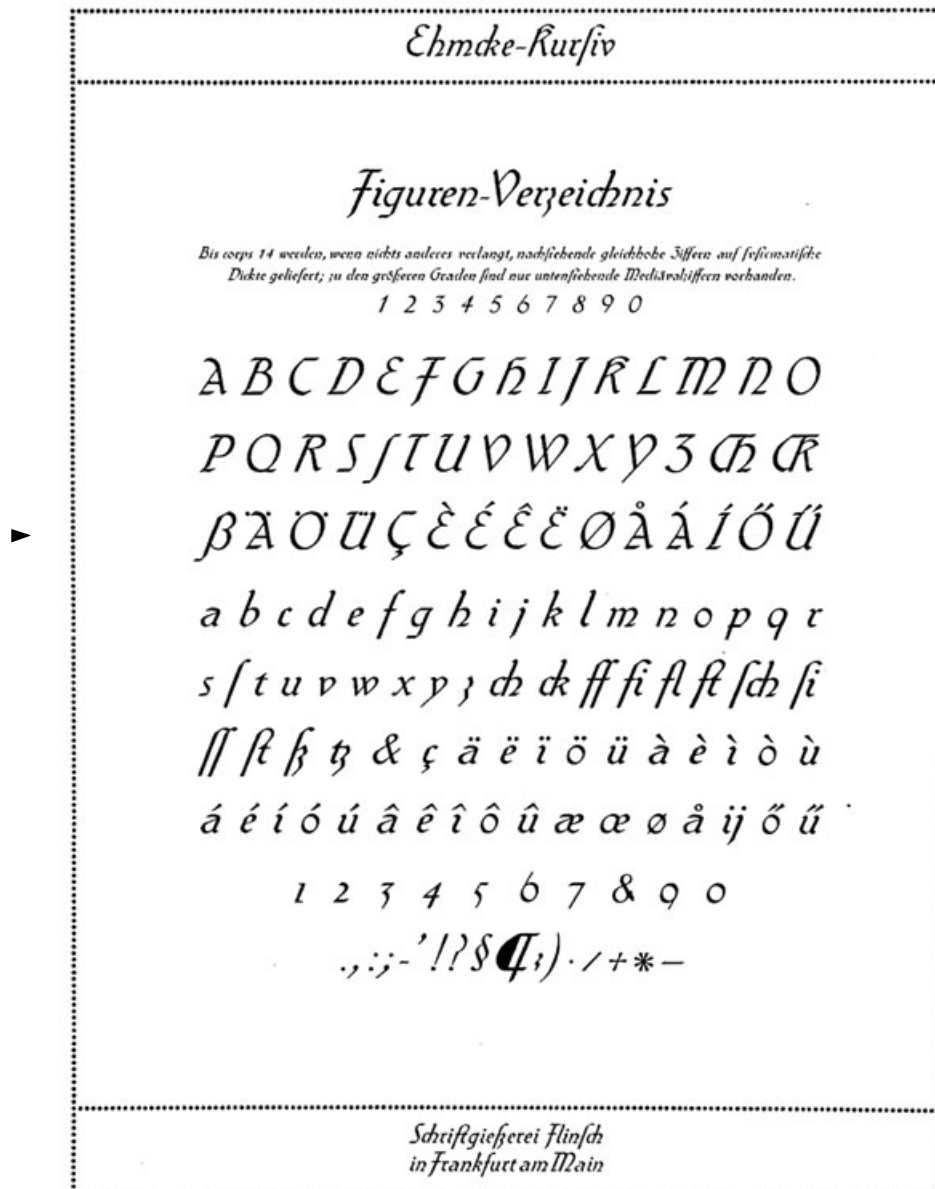
STOẞSEUFZER

An Niethammer   Heidelberg, 19. April 1817

Daß Gott es uns hat ſauer werden laſſen, nehme ich ihm nicht ſo übel, als daß er am Ende das Errungene doch nicht ſo fertig werden läßt, wie wir wollten und auch können könnten.

LATIN CAPITAL LETTER DOUBLE S – ẞ

22. Type specimen of Ehmcke-Kursiv, Schriftgießerei Flinsch, 1910.

LATIN CAPITAL LETTER DOUBLE S – ẞ

▶

JULIUS KLINKHARDT·LEIPZIG
SCHRIFTGIEẞEREI·MESSINGLINIENFABRIK

46. (QUART)-FOLGE ·ANWENDUNGSHEFT

▶

GROẞ-BUCHBINDEREI
SIMON RUBIEN
BERLIN · NÜRNBERG · LEIPZIG

Spezialität: Einbände
und Einband-Decken
jeder Art für Werke,
Kataloge, Preisbücher
Katalog-Umschläge in
moderner Ausführung
Mappen für Verlag und

23., 24. From a type sample edited by Schriftgießerei Julius Klinkhardt, Leipzig, around 1915.

KUNSTBUCHHANDLUNG
FERDINAND GISINGER
DRESDEN=NEUSTADT
ECKE KÖNIG=JOHANN=STRAẞE

◀

25. Magere Grimm-Antiqua, Richard Grimm Sachsenberg, Schriftgießerei Julius Klinkhardt, 1916.

LATIN CAPITAL LETTER DOUBLE S – ẞ

Considerations about an appropriate glyph of the character have been made at several times.

26. Proposals for ß, 1903.

27. Designs considered around 1960.

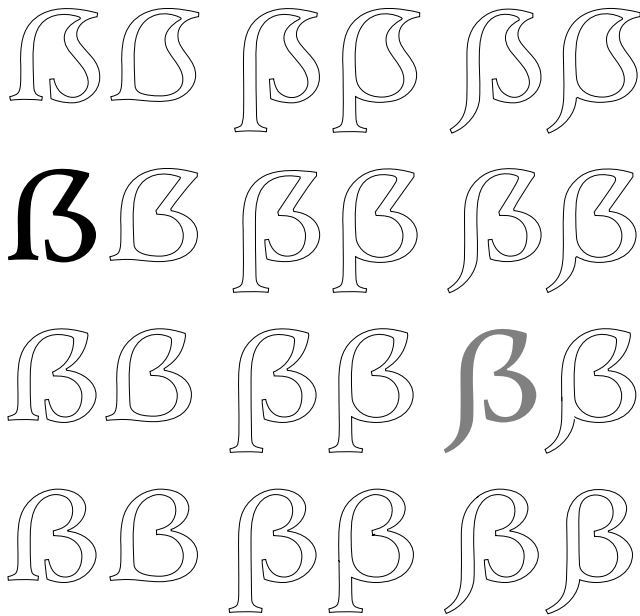28. Suggestions submitted by readers of the weekly DIE ZEIT, 1998.

29. Type designer Andreas Seidel (Cottbus) gives a ß to each of his type-faces (2004).

LATIN CAPITAL LETTER DOUBLE S – ß

30. Extensive research has been undertaken by the author to explore the glyptic options for ß. Typeface Andron, Andreas Stötzner, 2004.

GROßER MAßSTAB

GROßER MAßSTAB

GROßER MAßSTAB

GROßER MAßSTAB

GROβER MAβSTAB

GROβER MAβSTAB

GROβER MAβSTAB

LATIN CAPITAL LETTER DOUBLE S – ẞ

Picture Credits

Photography by Andreas Stötzner (1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 10)
Signographic Collection Andreas Stötzner (4, 5, 11,
     12, 13, 14)
Provided by Ingo Preuß (8)
Ernst Strassacker GmbH & Co. KG (9)
From: Georg Kandler, Alphabete. Erinnerungen an
     den Bleisatz. Bd.e 1 u. 2; Minner–Verlag Korn-
     westheim 1995 (15, 16, 17, 18, 26)
From originals preserved in the Deutsches Buch-
     und Schriftmuseum, Deutsche Bücherei Leipzig
     (19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24)
Provided by Andreas Seidel (25, 29)
Provided by Hans Jürgen Willuhn (27)
Gruner + Jahr (Publ.), Hamburg (28)